

M A ' Y A N

מעין

The Jewish Women's Project
a program of the JCC
on the Upper West Side

J O U R N E Y

Winter 2000 | חרף 5760



MA'YAN

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Ma'yan acts as a catalyst for change in the Jewish community in order to create an environment more inclusive of and responsive to women, their needs and their experiences. Ma'yan facilitates this transformation by training and supporting advocates for change and developing and disseminating innovative educational programs.

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MA'YAN JOURNEY

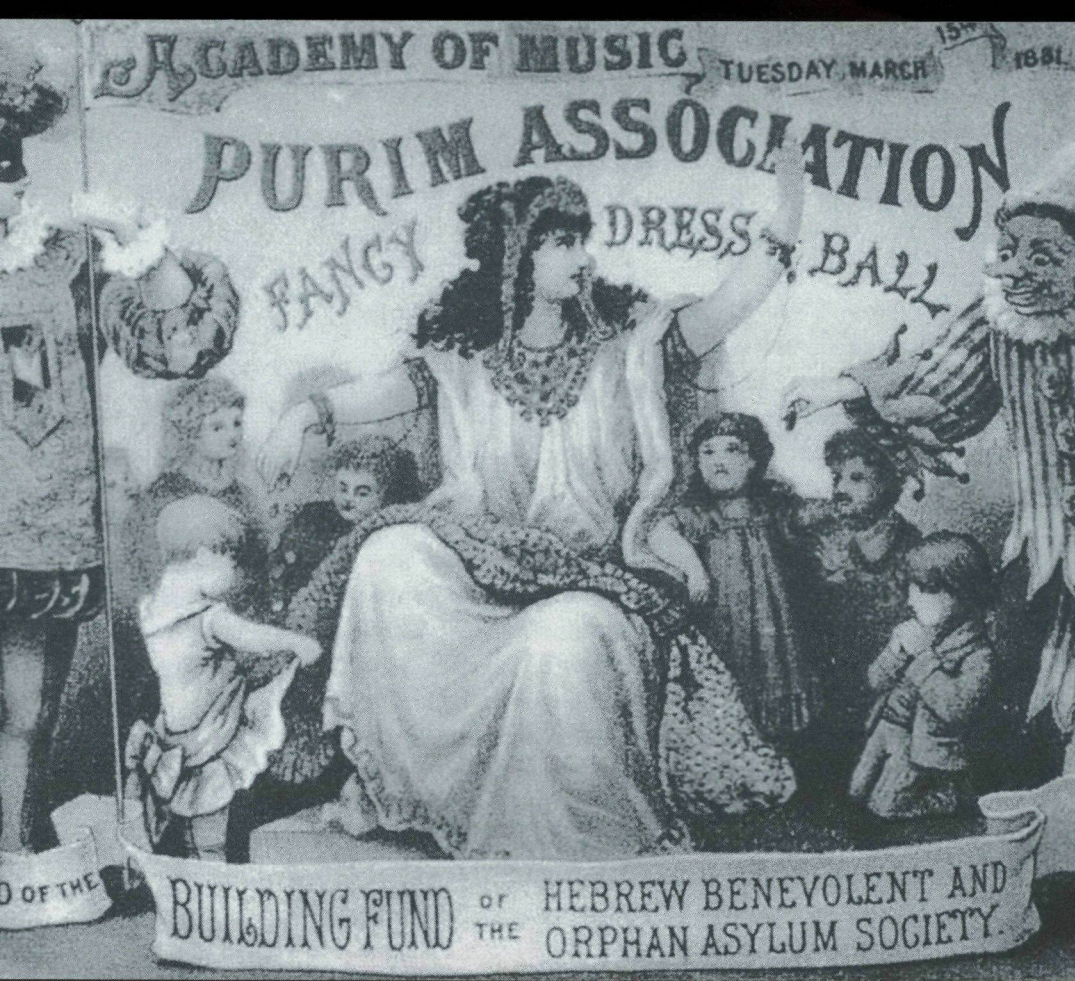
For three years, Ma'yan has joined with the Jewish Women's Archive to create exciting and eye-catching posters that bring American Jewish women from our past into our present. They now decorate the walls of schools throughout North America, providing boys and girls with new role models and teaching Jews and non-Jews of all ages about the proud legacy of Jewish women's achievements and their varied involvement in *tikkun olam*, repair of the world. This issue of *Journey* takes as its theme the Women of Valor selected for Women's History Month in March 2000. The opening articles on *Purim* provide one way to think about the link between the cycle of the Jewish year and Women's History Month, a new arrival to our secular calendars.

This year's Women of Valor, Bella Abzug, Barbara Myerhoff and Bobbie Rosenfeld, are introduced in the next pages. Each of these remarkable women is presented in a different way. Bella Abzug is honored through an exploration of one of her earliest acts of courage, saying *kaddish* for her father at the age of thirteen, as well as through some of her last words, a rousing speech she delivered in March 1998. Barbara Myerhoff is movingly remembered by a former student and a scholar in her own right, Riv Ellen Prell. Bobbie Rosenfeld's achievements as a pioneering female athlete are celebrated through an interview with a contemporary Jewish woman boxer who is continuing Rosenfeld's legacy of athletic prowess and boundary crossing.

The step after learning about the Women of Valor is figuring out how you can involve yourself in the important work of preserving, transmitting and continuing the legacy of these women. A variety of approaches are modeled here—funding the preservation of women's history, incorporating women's history into everything from life cycle celebrations to organizational meetings and bringing women's history into the classroom in a meaningful way. Enjoy the articles, share them with others, but most of all use them as jumping off points for your own celebrations of Women's History Month and for your own continuing and increasing activism as proud advocates of Jewish women's past, present and future.

Tamara Cohen, Editor





RECLAIMING ESTHER

PURIM HISTORY LESSONS

Purim 1951

My second favorite holiday approaches. (*Simchat Torah* was always the best. No section of my Orthodox synagogue was off limits as we marched around following the *Sifrei Torah*, apples impaled atop our Israeli flags, Hershey Bars waiting for us in the wings at the conclusion of the service.) Who shall I be this year? I'm old enough to know that Vashti is bad, even though I have no idea why, and unfortunately I am old enough to feel that all those Hershey Bars have made me unfit to portray the beautiful Queen Esther. I can't be a boy, so this year I will be a *hamantaschen*. At least I have already developed a sense of humor.

Purim 1971

I am a feminist, a mother and a traditionally educated Jew; the practice of my religion is limited to the big three (the High Holidays, *Pesach* and *Chanukah* for my babies). Vashti's refusal to entertain (most certainly to dance sparsely clothed or maybe even naked) before her husband and his drunk cohorts has made her my role model. Esther represents the pliant woman I no longer want to be. We do not belong to a synagogue.

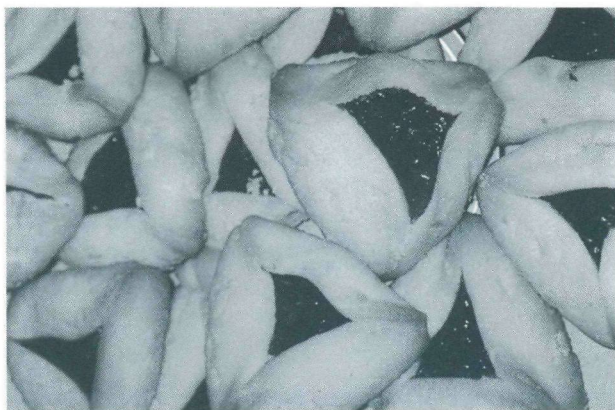
Purim 1981

Why did the Jews, already victorious in their battle against Haman, have to murder all their enemies? Am I supposed to be proud that in the midst of the slaughter they did not loot?

Purim 1999

With thanks to our sages who made incessant interpretation of the text a *mitzvah* and to our feminist scholars who have engaged in the process, I am able to reclaim much from which I felt excluded. With sincere thanks and appreciation to my mentor and friend Gail Reimer, whose elucidation of text keeps me an inspired Jew, I share her interpretation of the final chapters of *Megillat Esther*.

We read near the end of the scroll that Mordechai recorded the events of the *Purim* story in a letter. He then sent dispatches to Jews near and far, charging them to observe the 14th and 15th days of *Adar* annually. They are to commemorate the "days in which the Jews enjoyed relief from their foes." Mordechai's retelling of the story begins with Haman's scheme to destroy the Jews. Then "she came before the king"



and the king commands that Haman be destroyed instead. She? How quickly Esther's name has dropped from the official story. Esther has become just "she," another unnamed woman in the Jewish narrative.

Clearly the *Megilla* could have ended with Mordechai's retelling of the story in his dispatch. But it does not. A second letter is written—by Esther. This seems superfluous. Why does Esther write a second letter? The *Megilla* tells us that the words of Esther's missive are *divrei shalom v'emet*, words of peace and truth, equity and honesty. We are also told that it is Esther's rendition—the one that includes her by name—which is recorded in the scroll for posterity. Interestingly enough, there is still one last short chapter, just three verses, where the full glory of the *Purim* story is recorded once again, this time in the "annals of kings of Media and Persia." This official account of "full glory" mentions only Mordechai and Ahchasverosh! There isn't even a "she" implied. Esther is left out completely. No wonder Esther had to write her own letter. Were it not for Esther's retelling, once again a Jewish woman's role in the history of our people would have been obliterated.

Most people assume that history is an unalterable set of facts. It **is** what happened. As the final chapters of the *Megilla* teach, history is an **account** of what happened, determined by who tells it, what they care about and what they want future generations to know. As a child I was taught about *Purim's* beauty contest. I know now that the contest is far more critical. It is a contest over Jewish history. It is a contest over memory. It is my mission to ensure that the lost history of Jewish women is recovered to whatever extent possible and that Jewish women's contributions to both the Jewish and secular world are recorded for future generations.

Barbara Dobkin

IMAGINING A FUTURE FOR THE FAST OF ESTHER

Shira Milgrom is co-rabbi of Congregation Kol Ami in White Plains, New York. She is married to David Elcott, and they are the parents of Talia, Noam, Yaron and Liore.

We live our stories. That was the conclusion Bonnie and I reached, as we walked through the cycle of holiday celebrations. We don't just talk about memories and feelings—we taste the bitterness of slavery, we dance the joy of freedom. Much more than rabbi and congregant we were two friends, adult women engaged in the study of our tradition. We had come to the stories of *Purim*. And through a feminist reading, it occurred to us, as if anew, that *Purim* is the celebration of one woman—one woman who took Jewish destiny into her hands. *Megillat Esther*, the story of *Purim*, tells us that when Esther decides to act on behalf of the Jewish people, her first step is to mobilize the Jewish people behind her. “Go, assemble all the Jews who live in Shushan,” she says to Mordechai, “and fast in my behalf.” (Esther 4:16) Esther knows that she cannot do this alone.

We do live our stories. Remembering Esther's fast, the Jewish people established *Ta'anit Esther*, the Fast of Esther, on the day before *Purim*. As Bonnie and I continued to study, we were struck by the power of Esther's words and actions. She took what might have appeared to be a personal crisis—her fear of confronting the King—and turned it into a communal observance. Suddenly it occurred to us that the Fast of Esther has tremendous potential as a women's holiday. It is time for us to reappropriate it. As Esther once did, we too need to mobilize the people on behalf of greater justice. But first—justice for women. As we began our research, we learned that others have also thought of re-creating elements of *Purim* as a women's celebration. We have begun to pull ideas together—to revive conversations—and to actively create an event for Jewish women in the New York area for *Purim* 2000 that will celebrate Jewish women's roles as shapers of Jewish destiny. We hope that this event will precede *Purim* (so as not to take women away from their families and friends on *Purim* itself). We welcome your ideas and



invite you to use our ideas to brainstorm other events, celebrations, political and communal gatherings on *Ta'anit Esther* in your own communities.

Many Jewish women and men will tell you that the voices of biblical women are submerged beneath the prevailing patriarchal tradition—that women are essentially powerless and of little import. Though there is truth in these assumptions, they are only part of the story. The Book of Esther is the only book of the Bible without mention of God. Later Talmudic tradition will teach that the Book of Esther, alone among the biblical books, ranks in importance with the Five Books of the *Torah*—for Esther provides a paradigm for the world we inhabit. We, too, know a world in which God's Presence feels distant, if not altogether absent. For people like us, the Talmud teaches that in world of *hester*—of God's hiddenness—we must be like Esther. We must have the courage, the vision and the faith to act in the world—to restore the possibilities of a world of justice and godliness.

It took a woman to do it in the time of Esther! It is time for us, as Jewish women, to do it again. We must unmask the story of Esther, and use the Fast of Esther to celebrate Jewish women, to restore dignity and power to our image of what it means to be Jewish women, and to urge our community to join us in the pursuit of justice.

For more information on the Esther 2000 Project, see p. 49.





WOMEN OF VALOR 2000

Bella Abzug (1920-1998)

"WOMEN
will change the nature of
POWER
rather than power changing the nature of women"

BE!LA ABZUG!

WOMEN OF VALOR
Bella Abzug's activism, from Justice
McLean The Jewish Women's Project of JCC, NYC

Whether she was campaigning with a bullhorn on the New York City streets or inspiring women to action worldwide with an impassioned speech, Bella Abzug was always a force to be reckoned with. Dedicated to empowering the powerless, she was an international activist for women's rights, an influential and nationally known feminist Congresswoman, an expert lawyer, a tireless environmentalist, and a visionary for a more just world.



Whether she was campaigning with a bullhorn on the streets of New York City or inspiring women to action worldwide with an impassioned speech, **Bella Abzug** was always a force to be reckoned with. Dedicated to empowering the powerless, she was an international activist for women's rights, an influential and nationally known feminist congresswoman, an expert lawyer, a tireless environmentalist and a visionary for a more just world.

B E L L A ' S " B A T M I T Z V A H "

"Do you have daily services?"

"For what purpose, may I ask?"

... "For me," I say, "to mourn for my father."

"Oh no," says the secretary.

"We do not allow our women to mourn."

Esther Broner, *Mornings and Mourning: A Kaddish Journal*,
1994, p. 6.

"The elimination of women from such duties was never intended by our law and custom...It was never intended that, if they could perform them, their performance of them should not be considered as valuable and valid as when one of the male sex performed them. And of the *Kaddish* I feel this is particularly true."

Henrietta Szold, 1916

"My father died suddenly when I was thirteen, and I broke tradition by reciting the *Kaddish* for him, a ritual that in the custom of those days was reserved for his male relatives. Every morning for the following year I went to the synagogue on my way to school to recite the holy prayer for the dead. No one tried to stop me, and as I stood in a corner reciting my mourner's prayers, I came to understand that one way to change outmoded traditions was to challenge them."

Bella Abzug, 1976

Bella Abzug never had a *bat mitzvah*. Though she turned thirteen in 1932, a full decade after Judith Kaplan Eisenstein became the first girl to be called to the *Torah* as a *bat mitzvah*, Abzug's Orthodox synagogue, like most synagogues of all denominations during her era, still did nothing to celebrate a girl's coming of age as a Jewish adult.

Yet through a combination of personal tragedy and triumph, Bella Abzug did in her unique way become a *bat mitzvah* in her thirteenth year. And she did so through public action in the context of a synagogue. She did so by taking on the obligation of an observant adult Jewish mourner (assumed to be male) and by daring to define a new set of responsibilities or at least possibilities for adult Jewish women.

“We were living in the Kingsbridge section of The Bronx when my father’s weak heart gave out, and he was dead at 52. I was almost 13, and every morning before school for the following year, I went to our synagogue to say *Kaddish* for him... No one could have stopped me from performing the duty traditionally reserved for a son, from honoring the man who had taught me to love peace who had educated me in Jewish values. So it was lucky that no one ever tried.”¹

At the age of thirteen, perhaps unconsciously, Bella defined Jewish adulthood for herself through the experience of saying *kaddish* (the mourner’s prayer) for her father. Being a Jewish adult meant daily commitment, an honoring of the past which demanded action in the present, a sense of confidence in her own convictions, a refusal to see conventions and traditions as obstacles. While these elements would be defined in a more secular way for much of Bella’s life, they were already at play in this early religious commitment.

Bella herself credited the experience of saying *kaddish* for her father in an Orthodox synagogue as having taught her that the way to “change outmoded traditions was to challenge them.” Certainly this is true. But day after day, standing behind the *mechitza* (traditional separation between men and women) thirteen-year-old Bella was not only challenging “outmoded traditions,” she was mourning for her father.

Esther Broner’s evocative *Mornings and Mourning: A Kaddish Journal*, helps clarify what is at stake in the issue of women and *kaddish* by quoting the words of a synagogue secretary who, with seemingly no sense of the impact of words, explains “We do not allow our women to mourn.”

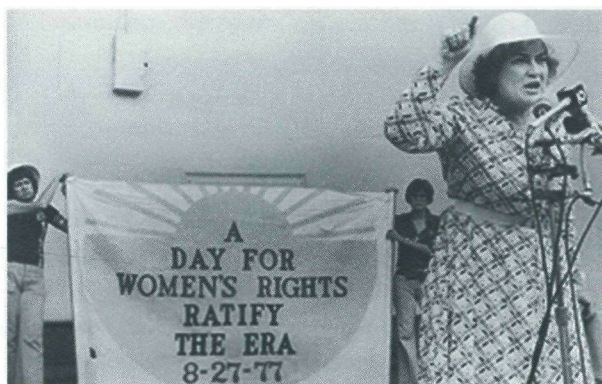
What then does it mean to “be allowed to mourn?” And what might it have meant to the young Bella to claim this right? To have the right to mourn as an adult member of the Jewish community is to have the right to acknowledge personal loss as communal loss. It is to see oneself as a full participant of the Jewish community and by

1. Abzug, Bella, “Bella on Bella,” *Moment*, February 1976, pp. 26-27.

extension, of the whole Jewish people. But there is something more. Being “allowed” to mourn is not just the other side of being allowed to celebrate. Being allowed to mourn publicly is being allowed to be vulnerable in community. When Jews stand up to say *kaddish* and are then answered with the community’s “Amen,” they are being given the message that there is room in the community—indeed sacred space—for their pain and loss as well as for their joys and victories.

Thus Bella’s early experience of reciting *kaddish* for her father was not only a challenging of tradition, it was also a claiming of strength in loss. Bella was perceived as strong at the same time as she was publicly acknowledged as a mourner. This ability to claim strength in loss would serve Bella throughout her life as she weathered defeat at the polls, public censure, the loss of important court cases and crucial political battles, as well as the more personal experiences of a miscarriage, the death of a beloved husband, and a struggle with breast cancer.

Women of Valor like Bella are inspirational in their legacies of achievement and activism. But their stories are also eloquent testimonies to the loss that is part of the narrative of any life committed to a serious struggle for social change. To be a Woman of Valor is not to win or achieve all the time. To be a Woman of Valor is to act with bold conviction as if no one would dare stop you and at the same time to know that when you do need to mourn a loss, you have the right to—in community and with strength.



CONTEMPORARY WOMEN OF VALOR ON KADDISH

Refer to the previous article and the excerpts that follow to plan for a *Rosh Chodesh* or Sisterhood program. Share your own *kaddish* stories. Are they similar or different from the experiences recounted below? How do you want your death to be observed? What are the options for daily prayer and reciting *kaddish* in your community? Do you think the experiences below describe a phenomenon of the past, or do they still resonate as true today? Do these stories shed a new light on Bella Abzug's *kaddish* experience?

“One night, about twenty people are milling about the house but by Jewish computation, there are only nine Jews in our living room. This is because only nine men have shown up for the memorial service. A *minyan*, the quorum required for Jewish communal prayer, calls for ten men. ‘I know Hebrew.’ I say. “You can count me, Daddy.” I meant, *I want to count*. I meant, don’t count me out just because I am a girl. ‘You know it’s not allowed,’ he replies, frowning. “For my own mother’s *kaddish* I can be counted in the *minyan*. For God’s sake, it’s *your* house! It’s *your minyan*, Daddy.’ ‘Not allowed!’ says my father. He calls the synagogue and asks them to send us a tenth man... A strange man was called in to say *kaddish* for my mother, because he was more ‘Jew’ than I... I refused to be an illegitimate child in my own religion. I could not be a ghost in the *minyan*. If I did not count, I would not stay... I mourned as a daughter, and left Judaism behind... Thirty-five years later, I am still trying to mend that...broken faith.”

Letty Cottin Pogrebin, a longtime feminist activist, author and advocate for Middle East peace.

“The experience which made me a feminist was my grandmother’s death. I loved her greatly and wanted her to have a *Kaddish*. Since she had no male relative, I asked if I might assume the responsibility. I was told that I could not say *kaddish* because I was a woman, but that for \$350 I could hire a man to say *kaddish* for her... I wondered why the prayer of someone who had learned her whole morality from the deceased and

helped nurse her through her last illness should be less pleasing to God than that of a man who had to be paid \$350 for his services.”

Rachel Adler, the author of *Engendering Judaism*, teaches at the University of Southern California and Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles.

“The worst experience occurred when my father died and I wanted to say *kaddish*, the mourner’s prayer, for him. I’m an only child and women are not supposed to say *kaddish*. So my male Hasidic cousins, as encouraging and supportive as they were of my intentions, said they would take the obligation on themselves—my *kaddish* didn’t count. The real trouble began when I needed a daily *minyan*... Once, when I was driving from Boston to New York, I stopped in New Haven for *minhah* [afternoon] services. I found the Orthodox synagogue where they had a daily *minyan*, but the services were held in a small classroom with no partition. One old man said, “We can’t *daven* as long as you remain in the room.” I told them that I had to say *kaddish*, and that I would stand in the back of the room or even in the hallway. But that made no difference; they told me I had to leave. So I left in tears, absolutely broken. It was the first time in my life that I really needed a Jewish community, and I expected to be received with warmth and love.”

Susannah Heschel, Eli Black Professor of Jewish Studies at Dartmouth College, is the editor of *On Being a Jewish Feminist: A Reader*.

“The rabbi usually managed to gather a *minyan*. Sometimes we would have to wait for an hour for the required ten men to arrive. I, on the other hand, was always called half-a-man. They would say, ‘Here comes half-a-man,’ when I came into the room.”

E.M. Broner, the author of nine books, is a creator and passionate advocate of Jewish feminist ritual.

“When I said *kaddish* for my mother, may her memory be blessed, I had to fight to have the lights turned on in the women’s section. The rabbi refused to have the *tzedaka* box passed to me, proclaiming this action ‘immodest’ and no member of the *minyan* spoke to me, certainly not words of comfort.”

Rochelle L. Millen is Associate Professor of Religion at Wittenberg University in Ohio.



Sources for kaddish anecdotes:

See: Letty Cottin Pogrebin, *Deborah, Golda, and Me*, pp. 42-43 and 50-1; Rachel Adler quoted in Susan Weidman Schneider's, *Jewish and Female*, pp. 143-148; Susannah Heschel in *The Invisible Thread: A Portrait of Jewish American Women*, p.22; Esther Broner in *Half the Kingdom: Seven Jewish Feminists*, p.16; Rochelle Millen, "The Female Voice of Kaddish," in *Jewish Legal Writings by Women*, p.181.

See also: Sylvia Barack Fishman, *A Breath of Life: Feminism in the American Jewish Community*, pp. 138-141; Sara Reguer, "Kaddish from the 'Wrong' Side of the Mehitzha," in Susannah Heschel, ed. *On Being a Jewish Feminist: A Reader*, pp. 177-181; E. M. Broner, *Mornings and Mourning: A Kaddish Journal*. For an Orthodox feminist discussion of the *halachic* (Jewish legal) issues regarding women and the recitation of *kaddish*, see Rochelle L. Millen, "The Female Voice of Kaddish," in *Jewish Legal Writings by Women*. Jerusalem: Urim Publications, 1998.

BELLA'S LAST WORDS

Excerpts from Bella Abzug's last speech, given at the 42nd Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (3/16/98)

"...This is the time to declare as we approach the great millennium that women must be made free. We cannot be free as long as our human rights are violated, as long as we don't have economic equality and as long as we are not participating in gender-balanced political bodies.... We have done almost everything in pairs since Noah except govern. And the world has suffered for it. And we must make it our business to make certain that as we move into the millennium, the millennium will be not only the year but the century of the woman. And until we understand that our economic and political power is also deeply wound up with human rights, we will not achieve that.

Yes, we are here to speak on behalf of those who have not had an opportunity to go to school: the girl child. We are here to speak of the thousands of women who have been destroyed through war, who have been raped, battered and butchered. We are here to speak of the violence against women done every single day in the family, in the home, on the street. We are here to speak for the women who have struggled in a life that may be different from that of many of us, but as the bell tolls for them, we must hear another sound.

We must hear the sound of a whistle. We must hear the sound of a whistle blowing, demanding that freedom is our right, that liberation is our right. In my own country 150 years ago, women gathered to get the right to vote.

In all of our countries women have been in the forefront of the struggle for freedom and liberation, not only for themselves but for others, as well as themselves, to create democracies instead of hypocrisies which seek to deny them equality.... The United Nations has shown its strength by preventing a war. But a war still continues against the women of this world. And we must use the strength of this women's commission and the strength of the United Nations to end that war, to end the war against the civil rights of women and the human rights of women, and our children and people everywhere.... Women will be sharing space in the political arena side by side with men to make a better world, not only for women, but also for men, women and children. We will be making space in every single institution, national, international, regional and local in which we find that men and women do not share power equally."

Barbara Myerhoff (1935-1985)

Barbara Myerhoff

Someday I'll be a
little old Jewish lady myself.

If I am, is my work as an anthropologist... make it clear
to others who they are and what they feel and what they have,
if I can take what they've shown me and pass that through
me and put into the world, then my work is done.

And I have been that Jewish lady myself, that that old
eighty-something woman, an actress, historian, anthropologist,
and a woman who has been in the world for a long time,
where we are in intimate relationships with each other,
where we are in intimate relationships with each other.

A life attended to not as an act of narcissism or
disregard for others; on the contrary, it is
exercised through the treasure and desire of
ordinary existence for the clear reality of
intensity that do not fade, do not separate us,
that are most intensely our own, yet other
people's too. The last lines are often as made
up of whole particulars that remain as also
integrated and of use to others as well as oneself.

A story told about... is of course more than a text.
It is an event. What is it done properly, the listener
is more than a mere passive receiver or teller,
he [or she] is changed.

WOMEN OF FAITH
Jewish Women's Archive, www.jwa.org
Mayan: The Jewish Women's Project of JCC NYC

Anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff was a renowned scholar, writer,
gifted teacher, and Oscar-winning documentary filmmaker.
She touched countless lives with her work on how people from
diverse cultures make everyday life sacred and meaningful.
Her studies of Los Angeles Jewish communities were pioneering
contributions to the anthropology of the United States, and
her scholarship shaped our understanding of ritual, women and
religion, the elderly, and life stories.

- 1929 Born in Cleveland Ohio and attended the University of California at Berkeley. She studied for her master's degree in anthropology and received her Ph.D. in 1962.
- 1954 Married Leon Myerhoff. They had two sons: Michael and Matthew. They divorced in 1967.
- 1958 Received M.A. in Sociology from University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA).
- 1963 Received Master's Degree in Human Development at University of Chicago.
- 1965 Wrote *Women of the Sacred* (later *Women of the Sacred: The First Year*), the first yearbook of the Jewish Women's Project of JCC NYC, which is now in the permanent collection of the JCC NYC.
- 1968 Received doctorate in Anthropology from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). She was the first woman to receive a Ph.D. in Anthropology from UCLA.
- 1972 Wrote *Women of the Sacred* (later *Women of the Sacred: The First Year*), the first yearbook of the Jewish Women's Project of JCC NYC, which is now in the permanent collection of the JCC NYC.
- 1974 Published her first book, *Women of the Sacred: The First Year*, which is now in the permanent collection of the JCC NYC.
- 1976 Received her first book, *Women of the Sacred: The First Year*, which is now in the permanent collection of the JCC NYC.
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- 1982 Published her first book, *Women of the Sacred: The First Year*, which is now in the permanent collection of the JCC NYC.
- 1984 Published her first book, *Women of the Sacred: The First Year*, which is now in the permanent collection of the JCC NYC.
- 1985 Published her first book, *Women of the Sacred: The First Year*, which is now in the permanent collection of the JCC NYC.

Anthropologist **Barbara Myerhoff** was a renowned scholar, writer, gifted teacher, and Oscar winning documentary filmmaker. She touched countless lives with her work on how people from diverse cultures make everyday life sacred and meaningful. Her studies of Los Angeles Jewish communities were pioneering contributions to the study of anthropology, and her scholarship shaped our understanding of ritual, women and religion, the elderly, and life stories.

REMEMBERING BARBARA

Riv-Ellen Prell is the author of *Fighting to Become Americans: Jews, Gender, and the Anxiety of Assimilation* and *Prayer and Community: The Havurah in American Judaism*. She is currently Associate Professor of American Studies at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis.

Barbara Myerhoff was my teacher in 1969 and 1970 when I was an undergraduate, and briefly a graduate student at the University of Southern California. But well beyond her role as a formal instructor, until her death in 1985, she taught me about how to make a life as a scholar, teacher, and mother. Not yet fifty when she died, she had more to teach me than anyone I have met before or since.

Nothing she conveyed to me was more important than her conviction that every person has a story to tell, and that in telling their life stories men and women realize their full humanity. Barbara treasured the stories of those most often overlooked by people who were powerful or in a hurry. Her work with elderly Jews was only one extraordinary example of her ability to hear and then re-tell these stories. *Number Our Days*' pivotal figure, Shmuel the tailor, was marginal to his community and often a contentious man. Myerhoff, however, found in his life story a person who sought justice and humanity not only in his political activism, but in the way he thought about and sewed coats for his customers. Without presenting him as 'typical,' nevertheless she wove his life into the fabric of immigrant Jewish male experience. Through him she expressed her most deeply felt conviction that greatness may be found in unexpected places.

Was it Shmuel who moved us to tears, or Barbara's telling of Shmuel's story? They were in some sense inseparable. He had a story to tell; she had a heart that allowed her to hear it, and the rare gift as a writer to write with her heart.

Initially it felt like a burden to have her as a model. Less than a decade after *Number Our Days* was published I was looking for a publisher for my study of a *havurah* (community for fellowship and prayer.) More than one editor would inevitably ask me when he or she discovered that I was an anthropologist who had written a manuscript about a Jewish community, "Is it like *Number Our Days*?" And each time I would have to say, "There is only one *Number our Days*."

But now I understand that this burden was also her legacy to me. She and I were both so young when she died, and I lost such an important teacher. But when I have interviewed a Jewish Partisan about his joining the resistance to fight the Nazis in the forests of Poland, or a Conservative Jewish woman in her forties battling heart disease in part through a ritual immersion after her surgery, or a founder of *Havurat Shalom* describing the presence of God in a community of worshipers, Barbara has been with me. When I turned to historical texts for part of my research in the last decade and found in century-old letters published in the Jewish press tales of hope, dreams, and vulnerabilities of immigrants yearning to become Americans, I know that she taught me to recognize such stories. And on an endless night, when my little daughter could not breathe because she was suffering with croup, and I sat in a steamy bathroom and told her the story of every single birthday party she had celebrated, and then made her tell me all of them over again until her lungs cleared, Barbara was with us.

The *Mishneh Torah* (Chapter 5:9) requires that “when one’s teacher dies the student rends her garment until her heart is exposed and the tear may never be stitched back.” Over the past fifteen years, I have used the stories I have encountered in my work—stories that I believe Barbara taught me to see and tell, to keep the garment of my friendship/apprenticeship with her from unraveling. It is the way that she gave me to hold fast to her and her legacy.



Bobbie Rosenfeld (1904-1969)



BOBBIE ROSENFELD

WOMEN OF VALOR
Athletic Women's History, 1900-1969
Read more: The Jewish Women's Project at JCC NYC

Olympic gold medalist Bobbie Rosenfeld was one of Canada's most outstanding athletes. A celebrated track and field star, she excelled at virtually every sport from tennis to softball to ice hockey. With almost no formal coaching, Rosenfeld shattered national records and starred at the 1928 Olympics. As a legendary talent and later as a sports columnist, she helped smash traditional barriers to women's participation in athletics.

"SHE SIMPLY WENT AFTER EVERYTHING WITH FULL FORCE"

1904
Bobbie Rosenfeld born in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

1905
Rosenfeld's family moves to Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

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Rosenfeld's family moves to Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

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Rosenfeld's family moves to Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

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Rosenfeld's family moves to Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Olympic gold medallist **Bobbie Rosenfeld** was one of Canada's most outstanding athletes. A celebrated track and field star, she excelled at virtually every sport from tennis to softball to ice hockey. With almost no formal coaching, Rosenfeld shattered national records and starred at the 1928 Olympics. As a legendary talent and later as a sports columnist, she helped smash traditional barriers to women's participation in athletics.

CRASHING THE SACRED SANCTUM

An Interview with Jill Matthews

Jill Matthews became the International Female Boxing Association and the International Women's Boxing Federation's junior flyweight world champion in 1998. In 1995 she became the first female to win the New York Golden Gloves. She continues to train at Gleason's Gym in Brooklyn, N.Y. Matthews also has earned a B.S. in nutrition from Hunter College and fronts her own band, *Times Square*.

Excerpts from a conversation with Jill "The Zion Lion" Matthews.

"I grew up in the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union building in the Chelsea section of Manhattan. By the time I reached sixth grade my family was one of the few Jewish families that hadn't moved up and out. When all the kids were yelling 'Black power, black power', my brother and I would yell back 'Jewish power, Jewish power.' We were never religious, but I always felt very deeply Jewish. I have my stepfather's name, Matthews, so I took on Zion Lion because I wanted everyone to know that I am Jewish. Being Jewish is about what's inside. To me being Jewish is about being a survivor and a fighter and using our disadvantage as a motivator to fight harder and achieve."

"...I didn't have any role models growing up. No one encouraged me to do my gymnastics, which is what I did before boxing. No one encouraged me to read or be the first person in my family to graduate from college either. I was expected to grow up and become a teacher or something like that, so that I could come home at three every afternoon and make dinner for my husband and children. There is nothing wrong with that, of course."

"...I got a call last summer from the Maccabi Games. They wanted me to speak for them. I had never heard of the Maccabi Games before. My husband told me that they have been around for a very long time. I was furious. How come I never heard of Maccabi? Because these kinds of groups don't come looking for poor Jewish kids, the kids who are playing on the street and who more than anyone else need to be given the chance to be taken seriously as athletes. I bet they only recruit at

day schools and private schools, places my family never would have been.”

“...Two weeks ago I was at an Orthodox wedding. There was this little girl, seven or eight, running around. She was running all over the place and you could tell the adults were looking at her like something was wrong with her. Why couldn’t she behave? I look at a girl like that and I think: athlete. In Russia they would see a girl like that and pick her out right away and get her a coach, a trainer. Here they are going to tell her to behave, put her on Ritalin to calm her down and make her into a good little Jewish girl. If there is one thing I could say to parents, it’s try the gym before you try Ritalin.”

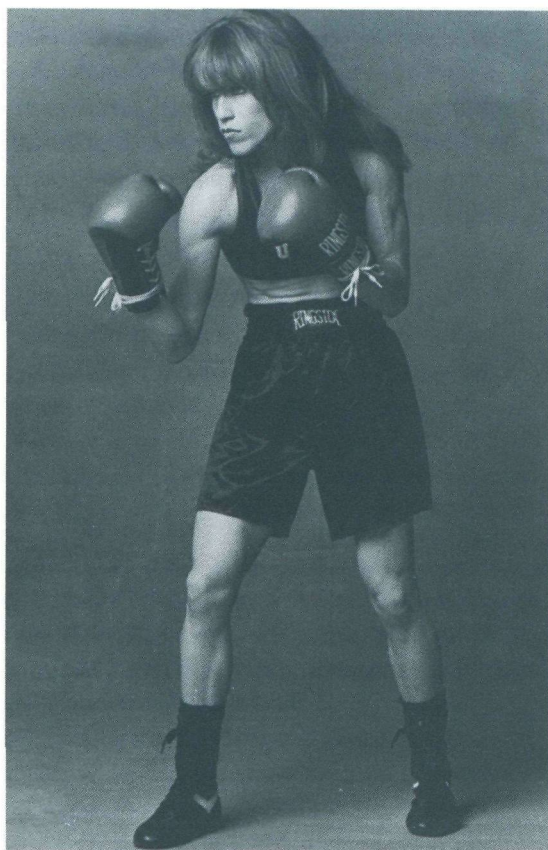
“Also, a lot of parents will see a girl like that, a tomboy like I was, and they start getting worried. They won’t encourage her to do sports because they are afraid to encourage her to be masculine. That’s why I dress the way I do. I wear make-up and have long blond hair. Being an athlete doesn’t mean I want to be a man. Girls should know that. I was a tomboy, and I felt like I wished I could have been normal. Now people look at me and say I don’t look like a boxer. I went to an audition answering a call for female boxers and they told me I wasn’t what they were looking for. They wanted a real woman boxer. I am a world champion woman boxer, but that’s not what they want. They want someone to fit into their stereotype.”

“...Being a white Jewish girl in my gym in Brooklyn where all the best boxers in the world train, I’m breaking stereotypes every day. They think that just because I am white and Jewish and my husband is a lawyer I’ve got everything easy. Some of the women at the gym don’t like me because I wear make-up and don’t wear warm up suits. But I can dress however I want to dress. It’s what I do in the ring that makes me a world champion boxer.”

“I really feel most alive and most at home when I am in the gym and in the ring. I always wanted to accomplish something. To do something big. And I’ve done it now. I am a world champion. It is true that I didn’t get all the recognition or the money that comes along with being a male champion boxer. But I did it. I’m part of history. We’re starting something new and big with women’s boxing. And when I look at the list of names of world champions on the wall at Gleason’s Gym and I read through all the men’s names and then I see mine, it’s pretty thrilling. It’s frightening too. Because now that I’ve done it, now what?”

"I do want to do something with kids and nutrition. Its very important to me that kids, especially Jewish kids, girls and boys, learn to treat their bodies right. My own struggle with bulimia taught me a lot. God gave us the gift of our bodies and every day should be a celebration of the health and strength we have. I also want Jewish kids to know that they don't have to only be doctors and lawyers and businessmen. I have to figure out how to deliver my message. I will. I will figure it out."

No doubt.



IN SPORTS FOR GOOD

A Partial History

**How many noted Jewish female athletes can you name?
Here's what we've uncovered so far. There's a playing card
set here just aching to be created....Do you know others?
Send them to us.**

Ice Hockey: Sara de Costa (goalie, US National Hockey Team),
Lauren Goldstein, Carisa Zaban

Golf: Amy Alcott (LPGA Title Holder, Hall of Fame), Emilee Klein
(LPGA Tour Player)

Basketball: Jamila Wideman (WNBA's Los Angeles Sparks),
Anita Kaplan (WNBA), Amy Berman

Equestrian: Margie Goldstein (US Equestrian Team)

Racquetball: Robin Levine

Skiing: Carrie Sheinberg

Squash: Amy Gross

Cycling: Nicole Freedman

Ice-Dancing: Eva Chalom

Weightlifting: Giselle Shepatin, Amy Weisbarger (strongest woman
in the world in her weight class)

Wrestling: Lauren Wolfe

Cross-Country: Deena Drossin, (1999 US Champion)

Soccer: Sarah Whalen (US World Cup Team)

Judo: Rusty Kanokogi (US Olympic Coach & highest ranked
American woman in the sport)

Gymnastics: Kerri Strug (US Olympic Champion)

Tennis: Elise Burgin (top 30 player in the 80s), Angela Buxton
(Winner, Wimbledon Doubles, 1956), Gladys Heldman (founder
of the WTA Tour), Julie Heldman (top 10 player in the early 70s),
Ilana Kloss (won French Mixed Doubles & US Women's Doubles
titles in 1976), Anna Smashnova (current #1 Israeli women's
tennis player)

Boxing: Jill "Zion Lion" Matthews (IFBA & IWBF Junior Flyweight
Champ), Dana Rosenblatt (current super middle weight boxer)

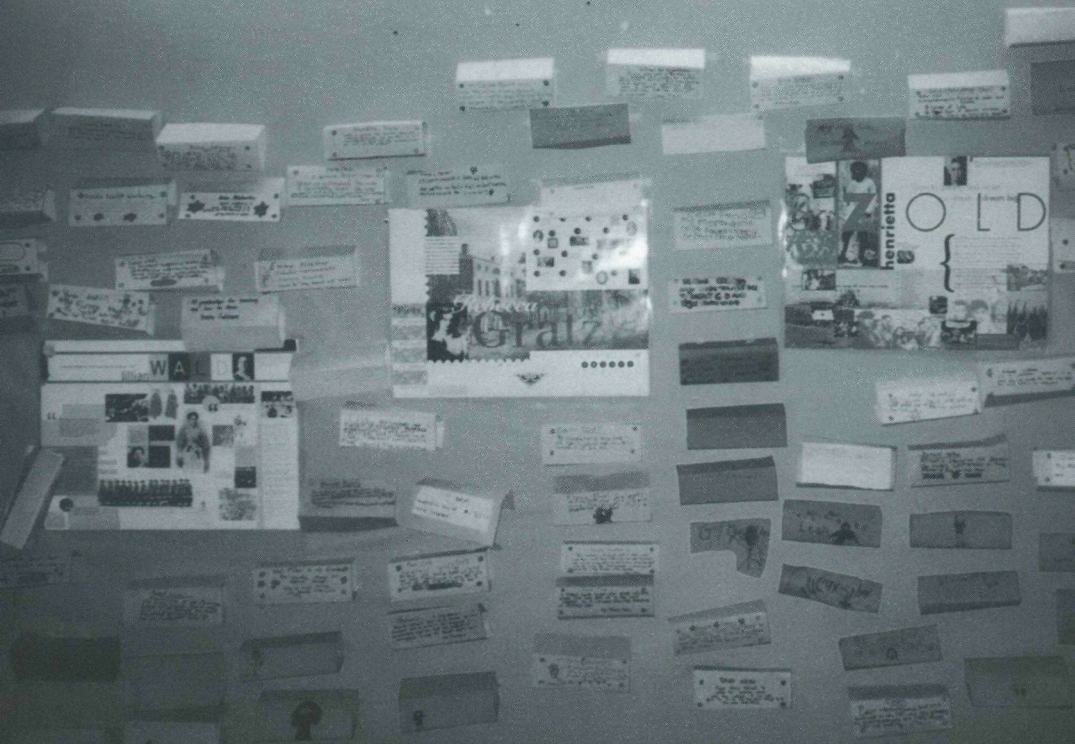
Sportscasters: Bonnie Bernstein (CBS Sports), Susan Waldman
(WFAN radio)



Justice White Potter (1903-1987)

A committed Jewish leader, Justice White Potter served as a distinguished judge
 of the West Coast City County Court for over 30 years. An advocate for
 children, she worked to ensure children's rights, child rights, and education.
 Justice White Potter was the daughter of a Jewish immigrant, the late
 Justice, Justice White Potter, who was a pioneer and social reformer. Justice
 Potter advocated for child rights, fighting injustice and ensuring the well-being
 of the children of her parents and that of the Jewish people. Because of
 these influences, Justice Potter adopted an active respect of the law and a
 rehabilitative model of judicial process. Particularly for children who were in
 trouble with the legal system, she believed it was better to establish mental
 health, educational and other services to rehabilitate these children rather than
 to punish them. She also believed that discrimination was wrong and that
 Jews should stand up and fight discrimination against and against. Justice
 Potter believed that West Coast Jews first and discrimination law.

A WALL OF JEWISH WOMEN



MAKING CHANGE

FUNDING JEWISH WOMEN'S HISTORY

Changemaker profile

Prudence Steiner is a member of the board of the Jewish Women's Archive. She is also involved as a volunteer in Harvard-Radcliffe Hillel, Hebrew College, Friends of the Harvard College Library and the Harvard University Native American Program. Steiner, who was born in New York City in 1936, received her BA from Radcliffe College, her MA from NYU and her Ph.D. from Harvard. She has taught in public schools in NYC, Washington, DC and Cambridge, Massachusetts and at Harvard University. She is presently the Book Review editor for the Harvard Review. She has been married for almost forty years and is a proud mother and grandmother.



I don't remember much about my relatives who came to the United States in the 1880's; and World War II was an event "out there." My father, like uncles, cousins, and Aunt Rita, wore a military uniform. We saved ration points and scrap paper, but otherwise my sister and I were insulated from the terrible events in Europe and Asia.

In 1944 my father was transferred from a desk job in Washington, D.C. to London, to work with the Joint Distribution Committee (where he had worked before the United States entered the war) to plan for the rescue and resettlement of Jews from the concentration camps. He never spoke much about his work; when he came home, twenty pounds thinner, he seemed to pick up life where it had left off, and we—mother, sister, and I—were a reunited and happy family.

When I turned twenty-one, my father wrote me a letter that wove together many of the threads of my life. "You are about to inherit a little money from your grandfathers [two of the immigrants in the 1880s], and eventually you'll inherit some more. You will want to buy a car, or some nice clothes, or to travel, and these are all good things to do. But with the money comes responsibility to others, and I want you to remember that. Not everyone has grown up healthy and

safe, educated, prepared to play a part in the world. Have you thought about that?" The letter (most of which was less solemn) didn't surprise me. I knew that my grandparents and parents gave generously to Jewish and secular causes; I knew of my father's work before and during the War; I knew that I should and could be part of family tradition. What I didn't know was how, or what to do with my inheritance.

For forty years, I, like my parents, gave to schools and universities, to Jewish causes, to musical groups and museums—all well-established organizations that had proved their worth, and with which, for the most part I had little personal connection. But recently I had the privilege of joining with others who were developing a brand-new enterprise, the Jewish Women's Archive. I was invited to join the Board, to wrestle with the budget, comment on the programmatic choices, help raise money. I was directly involved, and I began to feel the pleasure of helping something important take its first steps.

The Jewish Women's Archive is still a very young organization, but its purpose and the wisdom behind it are significantly mature. Its mission is to transform Jewish memory by uncovering, chronicling and transmitting the neglected history of Jewish women. Not just the Henrietta Szolds, the Justine Wise Poliers, but the "ordinary" women—my aunt Rita the WAC, my cousin Miriam who worked for Hadassah, my mother who worked during World War II for the Russian War Relief, my grandmothers—and other women whose cousins and aunts and mothers had, perhaps, been helped by my father's work between the buzz-bombs in London. My family never discussed the emigrations to the United States or their experiences during World War II (was I sheltered because I was young, or because I was a girl?).

The Jewish Women's Archive links my taciturn and protective family to other, more outspoken women with similar experiences. It helps me expand my understanding of the history of the Jews, of women, of the United States. Being a part of the process of

uncovering, chronicling and transmitting the histories of these women ties me more closely to my family, my nation, my people. Perhaps my father would question my contributing to an untried, unorthodox enterprise that does so much for me; but he might also be pleased to think that his daughter, remembering his example, is helping future generations to know who they are and what they can do. I will not be a historian, a social or political scientist; it's enough to be the grandmother of four grandchildren who will carry on the traditions that link three centuries. And it's enough to help support the work of scholars and activists who will weave those traditions into the fabric of history.

Interested in supporting the preservation of historical documents about Jewish women? Here are three institutions to keep in mind for Women's History Month tzedakah:

Emma Goldman Papers Project

The Emma Goldman Papers is the only archival publishing project of its scale to document the life and work of a prominent Jewish woman. Initiated in 1980 by a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission of the National Archives, the Goldman Papers was given the mandate of collecting, organizing and publishing the papers of Emma Goldman in a comprehensive microfilm edition and selected book edition. Traveling exhibitions and a high school curriculum guide have also been developed.

Visit <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Goldman>

Contributions, payable to UC Regents and earmarked for Emma Goldman Papers may be sent to:

Candace Falk, Ph.D.

Emma Goldman Papers

2372 Ellsworth Street (MC 6030)

Berkeley, CA 94720



Jewish Women's Archive

Launched in 1996, the Jewish Women's Archive's mission is to uncover, chronicle, and transmit the rich legacy of Jewish Women and their contributions to our families and our communities, to our people and our world.

Visit <http://www.jwa.org>

Contributions payable to Jewish Women's Archive may be sent to:
Jewish Women's Archive
68 Harvard Street, Brookline, MA 02445

Lesbian Herstory Archives

Founded in 1973 by two Jewish lesbians, the Lesbian Herstory Archives of New York City is the largest and oldest Lesbian archive in the world. A grassroots organization, it gathers and preserves records of Lesbian lives and activities so that future generations will have ready access to materials relevant to their lives.

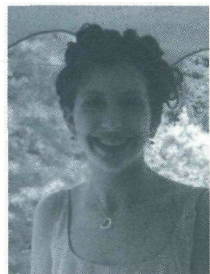
Visit datalounge.net/network/pages/lha/welc.htm

Contributions payable to the Lesbian Herstory Education Fund (LHEF) may be sent to:
LHEF, Inc.
POB 1258, New York, NY 10116

A WOMAN OF VALOR BAT MITZVAH

Changemaker profile

Anna Friedman is an eighth grade student at the Krieger Schechter Day School in Baltimore. This article is reprinted with permission from *Re://Collections*, the newsletter of the Jewish Women's Archive.



When planning to become a *bat mitzvah*, I realized that there was more to this occasion than the ceremony itself. I would be assuming my role as one of the Jewish women of the world. I would count in a *minyán*, be responsible for observing the *mitzvot* and commandments, and be expected to take an active role in my congregation, Beth El. Most important to me, however, was to study and understand how I could emulate great Jewish women as I become an adult.

Ellen Kahan Zager, a family friend who does graphic design for the Jewish Women's Archive, recommended that my mom and I visit the JWA website. There, we saw the Women of Valor exhibit and decided to buy the posters for my *bat mitzvah* celebration. Through many e-mails, phone calls, and letters, the Archive helped me incorporate my study of great Jewish women into almost every aspect of my *bat mitzvah*. The prayers at my service were all gender-equal. We incorporated the names of the matriarchs in the *Amidah*, and we included several readings about great Jewish women. My *d'var Torah*, from the portion *Beha'alotcha*, focused not on the *menorah*, but on the story of Miriam. Because my *haftorah* is also read on *Shabbat Hanukkah*, Alison Trachtman from the Archive suggested that I use a neglected heroine from the Hanukkah story, Judith, in my *d'var Torah*, and I did.

Using the Women of Valor posters and exhibit information and various research materials, I selected 18 great Jewish women. Each table at my luncheon featured a different woman whose life was summarized in a report I prepared and which my mom framed and placed on the table. The woman's photo was placed on top of a flowery stand, which sat on a cake. (We made the stands and framed the photos at a "craft day" which we held at the home of our caterer,

a great Jewish woman named Connie Crabtree. Another great Jewish woman and close family friend, Marcia Moylan, also helped us.) To help the guests find their tables at the luncheon, my parents made a donation to the Jewish Women's Archive in honor of each of the guests, and the Archive printed tribute cards which directed the guests to the table of one of the great Jewish women.

Each of the women I studied taught me something new; her intelligence, determination, courage, and concern for the welfare of others inspire me as I take my place among the Jewish women of the world. Even as I become a *bat mitzvah* and as I look toward my future and toward the future of my people, I cannot forget the women who worked so hard to make the world a better place for the Jewish women of today. I hope that I have succeeded in my mission to keep the memory of these great Jewish women alive and to encourage the next generation to become great like their ancestors, in the same way that these women and the Jewish Women's Archive have encouraged me to strive to become great.

For more information see the Bat Mitzvah Guide at www.jwa.org, a comprehensive resource for planning a meaningful *bat mitzvah* with a Jewish women's history theme.



TEACHING JEWISH WOMEN'S HISTORY

Rhonda L. Rosenheck is principal of the Rebecca and Israel Ivry Prozdor [the supplementary high school at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York] and a doctoral student in Jewish education whose areas of specialty are Jewish secondary education and teacher education.

For the last three years, when the Women of Valor posters arrived at Prozdor, the (then) principal, Rabbi Judd Kruger Levingston would hand me the posters and attendant booklet and ask, "Shouldn't we do something with this?" Each time I would answer, "Yes, but I have no idea what." I would then hang the posters in the hall and throw that year's resource guide in a drawer. Finally this year, as principal, with increased Ma'yan and Jewish Women's Archive contacts and a nearly complete set of posters, the time seemed ripe to really "do something."

An exciting adventure is underway at the Rebecca & Ivry Prozdor Hebrew schools in New York City and more than two hundred students in grades 8-11 are on board. Women of Valor, a curriculum based on the Women of Valor poster series, is serving as the contemporary history course for this year's weekday program. Students will not only learn about individual heroic women who made an impact on the lives of Jewish and non-Jewish Americans (and Canadians), they will also delve into the very issues that stirred these women to action. Five women and one man are teaching the course, collaborating to develop the curriculum as they teach.

Women of Valor is being taught to *all* students attending the Ivry Prozdor's weeknight programs—boys and girls. Why? The most current research into Conservative teenagers' thoughts and attitudes (The North American Study of Conservative Synagogues and Their Members, 1995-1996) reflects a clear bias toward male heroes among both boys and girls. Traditional texts and textbooks lead us to believe falsely that only men shape our society. There is a world of action, perspective and influence we all miss when we neglect to study the female heroes of our past.

Our plans are to cull the best ideas from teachers' notes and student feedback over the summer and to develop a curriculum for national distribution.

Meeting Invocation for Women's History Month

An easy way to commemorate National Women's History Month and the accomplishments of Jewish women is to introduce meetings you attend in March with a short invocation modeled on the following text:

As we officially open this meeting of _____ (your organization's name), I call your attention to the fact that we are meeting during Women's History Month. Thus, I ask you to join me in dedicating this meeting to the memories of the countless Jewish women who came before us, women who like us labored on behalf of the welfare of their communities, their families, the Jewish people and the world. In particular I would like to share a few words about three outstanding Jewish women, chosen by the Jewish Women's Archive and Ma'yan as the Women of Valor for the year 2000 and who are being celebrated across North America. Each of these women made unique contributions to their fields and as we honor them, we commit to making their memories part of the proud history we pass on to the next generation of Jews. Today, we honor the memories of **Bobbie Rosenfeld, Bella Abzug and Barbara Myerhoff.**

An Olympic gold medallist and popular sportswriter, **Bobbie Rosenfeld** (1904-1969) was a Russian Jewish immigrant who came to Canada as an infant and went on to earn a reputation as the world's greatest all-around athlete in the 1920s. She excelled in track and field, ice hockey, basketball, softball and tennis and helped break through barriers to women's participation in athletics.

Always a force to be reckoned with, **Bella Abzug** (1920-1998) was the first Jewish woman to be elected to Congress on a women's rights and peace platform. She was an international fighter for women's freedom, a tireless environmentalist and a dedicated civil rights lawyer.

Barbara Myerhoff (1935-1985) was a groundbreaking anthropologist and an Oscar-winning documentary filmmaker who explored the culture and rituals of Jewish elderly and who pioneered a new approach to the study of contemporary Jewish culture.

If you want to know more about these women, I invite you to visit the on-line exhibition of their lives and accomplishments on the web at <http://www.jwa.org>. During the next month try to share something about at least one of them with someone else in your life. Think of someone who might be particularly inspired by their examples. By doing so you will be partaking in the preservation of our history as North American Jewish women. It is certainly a history of which we can be very proud. Thank you.





WINTER PROGRAMS

MA'YAN UPDATES

The Women's Leadership Initiative

Collaborating with Women Board Members:

- We are convening working groups of women leaders from a wide range of national Jewish organizations to gain a deeper understanding of the obstacles to women's advancement as board members and officers. Through these consultations we are developing strategies to strengthen women's impact as leaders in the community. We are also exploring the best ways to make the issue of parity for women a top priority item on the Jewish communal agenda.

Educating the Broader Community:

- Shifra Bronznick, consultant to Ma'yan's Women's Leadership Initiative, presented the issue of women's leadership and its potential to reshape the Jewish community at Leadership 2000, a gathering of Jewish philanthropists that took place in Aspen this August.
- Bronznick's article "Positioning Women for National Leadership" has been requested by many board members and executives of Jewish organizations. It appears in *The Director Had a Heart Attack and the President Resigned: Board-Staff Relations for the 21st Century*, edited by Dr. Gerald Bubis. For a copy of the article call Ma'yan.

New Haggadah

New for the year 2000, Ma'yan's Passover *haggadah*, *The Journey Continues*, has been redesigned and expanded. It will be available after the first of the year. This beautifully illustrated *haggadah* includes additional commentary on the text and an improved "user friendly" format. *The Journey Continues* weaves songs, poetry and readings that are both traditional and new. It includes gender-inclusive English blessings and transliterated Hebrew. Both traditional and feminine versions of the Hebrew blessings are given. *The Journey Continues* can be ordered by calling Ma'yan at 212. 580. 0099. Discounts are available for bulk orders. Debbie Friedman's cassette, CD, and new songbook, of *The Journey Continues* may also be purchased from Ma'yan.

NEW BOOKS IN THE MAYAN LIBRARY

"Establish a place for me in history," Queen Esther proclaims to the Wise Men of Israel in an imagined conversation in the Babylonian Talmud (*Megilla 7a*). These new books by and about Jewish women take up Esther's mandate to record the lives and deeds of Jewish women, both ancient and contemporary.

History

Uncertain Travelers: Conversations with Jewish Women Immigrants to America. By Marjorie Agosin. Published by Brandeis University Press/University Press of New England. Interviews with Jewish women who came to the United States from Latin America and Europe between the beginning of the Second World War and the 1970s.

Voices of Women Historians: The Personal, the Political, the Professional. Edited by Eileen Boris and Nupur Chaudhuri. Published by Indiana University Press. Reflections by feminist historians (many of whom are Jewish) on the activism and scholarship that created women's history.

Blessed is the Daughter. Edited by Carolyn Starman Hessel. Published by Shengold Books. Biographies of Jewish women for young adults. Includes women athletes, biblical figures, rabbis, ritual artists, and women in business, politics, and law.

Integrating Women into Second Temple History. By Tal Ilan. Published by Mohr Siebeck. Traces the role of women in public spaces and in Second Temple Judaism.

Jews and Gender

God Gave Us the Right: Conservative Catholic, Evangelical Protestant, and Orthodox Jewish Women Grapple with Feminism. By Christel Manning. Published by Rutgers University Press. Based on interviews and fieldwork, examines how conservative religious women negotiate the tensions between traditional gender roles and feminist values.

Fighting to Become Americans: Jews, Gender, and the Anxiety of Assimilation. By Riv-Ellen Prell. Published by Beacon Press. Examination of Jewish gender stereotypes of the twentieth century, from the immigrant "Ghetto Girl" to the JAP.

Prayer and Ritual

Bringing Home the Light: A Jewish Woman's Handbook of Rituals. By E. M. Broner. Published by Council Oak Books. Mixing memoir with practical suggestions, explores the ways in which Jewish women can create ceremonies for all occasions: personal, political, and religious.

Siddur Chaverim Kol Yisrael. By the Siddur Committee of the Progressive Chavurah of Boston. <http://www.mintz.net/chavurah/siddur>. Gender inclusive prayerbook for *Shabbat* and Festival evenings, with songs and rituals for the entire year. Transliteration, traditional and alternative liturgy, explanations.

Literature

The Defiant Muse: Hebrew Feminist Poetry from Antiquity to the Present—A Bilingual Anthology. Edited by Shirley Kaufman, Galit Hasan-Rokem, and Tamar S. Hess. Foreword by Alicia Suskin Ostriker. Published by the Feminist Press. Women's poetry from the Bible and rabbinic period to medieval Spain and modern Israel presented in a clear bilingual format.

The Literary Imagination of Ultra-Orthodox Jewish Women: An Assessment of a Writing Community. By Alyse Fisher Roller. Published by McFarland & Company. An analysis of the religious and personal philosophies of ultra-Orthodox women as represented through their writings in English.

Bible

Women in the Hebrew Bible: A Reader. Edited by Alice Bach. Published by Routledge. The first one-volume collection of scholarly essays examining women in the Bible. Essays explore particular biblical figures as well as troubling biblical passages.

The Women of the Torah: Commentaries from the Talmud, Midrash, and Kabbalah. By Barbara L. Thaw Ronson. Published by Jason Aronson, Inc. A compilation of commentaries on biblical women from traditional rabbinic sources.

Escaping Eden: New Feminist Perspectives on the Bible. Edited by Harold C. Washington, Susan Lochrie Graham and Pamela Thimmes. Published by New York University Press. Feminist methodologies and interpretations of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament.

MA'YAN PROGRAMS WINTER 2000

Thursday, January 27

The Memoirs of Gluckel of Hameln—A Collaborative Music-Theater Work by Jenny Romaine, Frank London and Adrienne Cooper. Yiddish Theater meets the avant-garde meets puppet theater meets a 17th century Jewish heroine equals a humorous and thought provoking night of theater not to be missed. Theater/puppet artist Jenny Romaine, along with Yiddish balladeer extraordinaire Adrienne Cooper look forward and back and bring to life the memoirs of one of the earliest known Jewish women, Gluckel of Hameln—successful business woman, mother of twelve and writer. Using giant puppets, soulful Yiddish ballads and quirky humor, they've created a rare gem of contemporary theater that all can enjoy. A discussion with the artists and with historian [Elisheva Carlebach](#), a member of the Doctoral Faculty in the Program in History at CUNY Graduate School, will follow the performance.

Co-sponsored with the JCC. Held at LaMaMa E.T.C., 74A East 4th Street. 7:30 pm. Call the box office directly to order your tickets. 212. 475. 7710. \$15. **Note:** *The Memoirs of Gluckel of Hameln* will be at LaMaMa E.T.C. Jan. 20–Feb. 6, Thursday–Sunday at 7:30 and Sunday matinees at 3pm.



Wednesday, March 1

Afternoon at the Movies: *Number Our Days*—Join us for a screening of the Oscar winning short film by Barbara Myerhoff, anthropologist, filmmaker and one of this year's Women of Valor. The film examines how older adults at a JCC in California deal with illness and other issues of aging. A discussion with cultural anthropologist and museum curator [Jill Vexler](#) will follow the screening.

Co-sponsored by the JCC. Held at the JCC, 15 West 65th Street.
1 pm. Free.

Wednesday, March 1

UJA Federation Task Force on the Jewish Woman celebrates Women's History Month with Ma'yan. Noon. Lunch and program. \$12. For reservations call Margie Stern at 212. 836. 1605.

Tuesday, March 7

Sports Dinner for Women and Girls—An exciting evening celebrating Jewish women athletes and honoring the legacy of Bobbie Rosenfield, 1920s' Canadian track and field star and one of this year's Women of Valor. Dinner and a panel featuring Jewish female sports figures.

Co-sponsored with the JCC and the Rodeph Sholom School. 6-8 pm.
For further information and reservations call Ma'yan at 212. 580. 0099.

3 Tuesdays, March 14, 21, 28

Pre-Seder Workshops. Each session will include an opportunity to study the traditional *haggadah*, explore feminist innovations and learn the Ma'yan seder music. These workshops will increase your comfort with the *haggadah* and help you prepare to assume greater leadership at your own seder table. Facilitated by [Tamara Cohen](#) and singer/songwriter [Debbie Friedman](#).

7-9 pm. To register call Ma'yan at 212. 580. 0099. \$32 JCC members/
\$35 non members.

ONGOING MA'YAN PROGRAMS

This Month's for You: Early Morning Rosh Chodesh Group

Rosh Chodesh, the beginning of the month (on the Hebrew calendar), is traditionally a gift to Jewish women. This group is your opportunity to share in this wonderful gift of time, connection, and meaningful interaction with other women around Jewish text, song, and meditation.

Held once a month in private homes. Call for dates and location.
7:30-8:30 am. \$18 for Winter/Spring.

Weekly Feminist Haftorah Study

Haftorah portions, excerpts from the Prophets and Writings that accompany the weekly *Torah* readings, offer us a chance to learn from some of the lesser known books of the Bible and to gain insight into biblical passages and the way they have traditionally been understood. The engaging, informal, creative approach to study of this weekly discussion group is welcoming to individuals at all levels of Jewish education and background with very diverse approaches to tradition and text. Facilitated by Ma'yan staff.

Held at Ma'yan. Fridays, 8:30–9:30 am. \$18 for Winter/Spring.

Visit the Ma'yan Library!

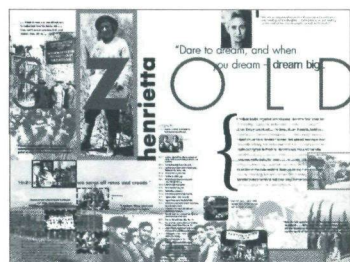
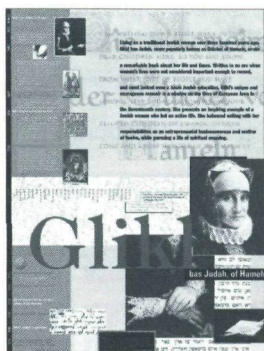
Whether you are celebrating a special birthday, having your first child, planning a wedding or commitment ceremony or struggling with illness, Ma'yan wants to help you find a meaningful way to mark the transition in your life through creative Jewish feminist ritual. Maybe you are a member of a *Rosh Chodesh* group in need of new ideas, or a student researching women's seders. Call to make an appointment to visit the Ma'yan library and consult with our staff. Ma'yan's library is open by appointment for daytime and evening hours.

Available Resources

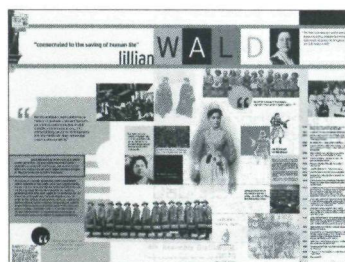
A Ma'yan Guide to Planning Communal Women's Seders. In this very helpful resource we have included advice gathered from our own seder experiences as well as the experiences of communities around the country who hold successful communal seders. It is clear, informative and available **FREE**.

Women of Valor Posters

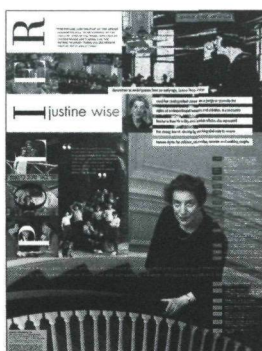
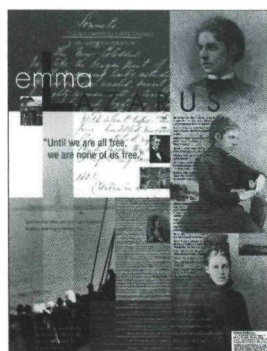
To order a set of this year's or past years' Women of Valor posters call the Jewish Women's Archive at 617. 232. 2258 and visit the online exhibit at www.jwa.org. The posters are produced as part of a joint project of Ma'yan and the Jewish Women's Archive.



1997



1998



1999

JEWISH FEMINIST RESEARCH GROUP

The Jewish Feminist Research Group is an interdisciplinary forum for scholars, students and others interested in the intersection of feminist scholarship and Jewish studies. Each month during the academic year, the JFRG meets to discuss unpublished research papers and works-in-progress. To subscribe to the JFRG, send \$36 for the 1999-2000 season. This entitles you to receive each paper by mail prior to the meeting. Individual papers can be ordered for \$5. The sessions are open to all. For more information, call Susan Sapiro, the JFRG coordinator 212. 580. 0099 ext. 209.

Winter/Spring 2000 Sessions

All Winter and Spring Sessions begin at 5: 30 PM and take place at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1 West Fourth Street. Conference level.

Thursday, January 20

Femininity or Feminism?: Jewish Women in Viennese Zionism, Psychoanalysis, Literature and the Arts. Alison Rose, PhD in Jewish History, Hebrew University

Thursday, February 17

Home Made—Food and the Meanings of Home for German and American Jews: 1850-1914. Ruth Abusch-Magder, doctoral candidate in Jewish History, Yale University

Wednesday, March 8

The Impact of Bella Abzug's Youthful Commitment to Labor Zionism on her Life-Long Political Theory and Practice. Amy Swerdlow, Professor Emerita and Director Emerita, Graduate Program in Women's History, Sarah Lawrence College

Thursday, April 6

Buried in Her Wedding Veil: Death Imagery and Jewish Brides in the Greco-Roman World. Susan Marks, doctoral candidate in Judaic studies, University of Pennsylvania.

Thursday, May 11

Purity and Integrity of the Home Imperiled: Communal Promotion of the Jewish Family Purity Laws in the US, 1900-1940. Jane Rothstein., doctoral candidate in American History and Jewish History, NYU.

This program is co-sponsored by the JTS Jewish Women's Studies Program, the CUNY Center for the Study of Women and Society, and Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.



COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

JCC Programs

Monday, February 7. Writers: Lesbian & Jewish. Moderated panel with distinguished authors. 7 pm. Co-sponsored with Congregation Beth Simchat Torah.

Held at the JCC, 15 West 65th Street, 8th floor. For information call 212. 580. 0099. \$10 JCC members/\$15 non-members.

6 Wednesdays, March 8–April 12. Women's Group—Age 60+. Meet with other women to discuss issues of mutual interest. Facilitated by Carol Chinn, CSW. 12 noon.

Held at the JCC. For information call 212. 580. 0099. **FREE**

Conferences/Shabbatons

February 20–21. Social Change and Halakha: Tensions, Contradictions and Accommodations. Third International Conference on Feminism and Orthodoxy. For further information call the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance (JOFA) at 212. 752. 7133.

March 12–14. Jewish Women and Adult Education in North America. Hadassah Research Institute on Jewish Women. Held at Brandeis University, Waltham, MA. For more information call 781. 736. 2064 or e-mail to: hrijw@brandeis.edu

March 17–19. Shabbat Vayikra: *Shabbaton* weekend for girls and women featuring JoAnne Tucker and dancers from AVODAH. Held at Camp Jewell, Colebrook, CT. For further information contact Andrea Cohen-Kiener at 860. 233.6838, ahuva@trincoll.edu, or Linda Stanger at 860. 232. 2523, lstanger@home.com

Exhibitions

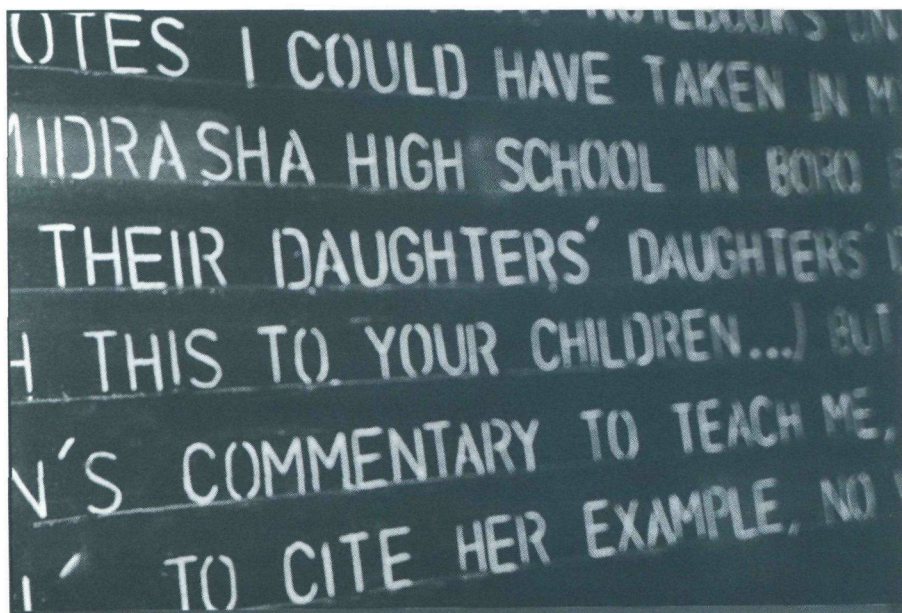
Memories of the Past/Visions of the Future: Women's Roles in Jewish Life. Through July 13. This show explores the cultural and religious changes that transformed the lives of Jewish women in 20th century America. The Judaica Museum—The Hebrew Home for the Aged at Riverdale. River House West, 5961 Palisade Avenue, Riverdale, NY. For hours call 718. 548. 1006.

Religious Innovation. Exhibition features a woman's prayer shawl created by photographer Beth Shepherd Peters incorporating photographic images printed on silk honoring six generations of women in her family. Museum of Jewish Heritage, One Battery Park Plaza. For hours call 212. 968. 1800.

Giving the Statue a Voice: Emma Lazarus Rediscovered.

December 6–March 31. This exhibition marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of Emma Lazarus, the remarkable 19th century American Jewish poet whose words grace the base of the Statue of Liberty. A special symposium on Lazarus will be held in conjunction with the exhibit on Sunday, March 26. Ellis Island Immigration Museum. For further information, call 212. 363. 3200.

Faith: The Impact of Judeo-Christian Religion on Art at the Millennium. January 23–May 29. Includes "My Notebooks" by provocative Jewish feminist artist Helene Aylon. Aldrich Museum, Ridgefield, CT. For further information call 203. 438. 4519.



Helene Aylon: "My Notebooks"

COURSES, WORKSHOPS, DISCUSSION GROUPS

Drisha Institute for Jewish Education: Spring Semester January 31–May 12. Full and part-time courses for women in Bible, Talmud, Biblical Hebrew, Jewish Law and Jewish Philosophy. 131 West 86th Street. For more information or a free catalogue call 212. 595. 0307 or e-mail inquiry@drisha.org.

National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW): Ongoing book discussion group, poetry workshops and women's empowerment group. For more information call 212. 535. 5900.

The Jewish Women's Program at the Sol Goldman YM/YWHA of the Educational Alliance: Why Women: Women Poets, Women's Words. Thursdays: January 6: *Loving Thy Neighbor*; February 3: *Experiencing America: Women Writers Outside The Pale*; March 2: *Men in Praise of Women*; April 6: *Disturbing The Peace: Miriam, The Midwives and Midrash*. 7 pm. \$7 per session. For information call 212. 780. 0800, ext. 246.

Congregation Beth Simchat Torah Rosh Chodesh Group: Saturdays, February 5; March 4; April 1. 6 pm. Refreshments. Held at CBST, 57 Bethune Street. For further information call 212. 929. 9498.

Esther 2000 Project: Unmasking Esther: A New Celebration. Sunday, March 19, 3-5 pm. A special Purim event with renowned artists and scholars celebrating Jewish women. For further information and details call Ma'yan at 212. 580. 0099.

New York Chapter of Hadassah: Our Voices, Our Visions: Jewish Women Create. Sunday, March 19. Panel discussion and workshops with prominent women in the arts covering the areas of literature, dance and theater. 9:15 am–3:15 pm. Breakfast and lunch included. Held at Tisch Hall, NYU, 40 West 4th Street. \$54/\$36 students. For further information call 212. 751. 7050, ext. 239.



Seder Sister

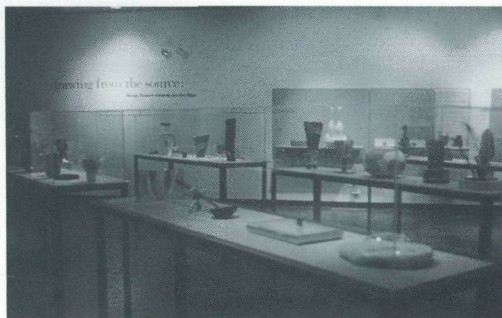
This year, over 1,500 people—women and men, adults and young people—will attend Ma'yan's feminist seders in New York City. Most of the participants will come from the tri-state area. Others will travel from different parts of the country. Still others from Canada, Europe and Israel.

This year, Jewish women from every part of our community will travel out of Egypt together. Students from Syracuse University, the Jewish Theological Seminary and Hebrew Union College will sing with women from *Rosh Chodesh* groups and synagogue sisterhoods. Women who are approaching Judaism for the first time will dance with those who were raised Orthodox. All will be invited to share in the celebration of Jewish women, and no one will be turned away for lack of funds.

This year, like every year, Ma'yan will spend more on the Seder than we will collect in registration fees. The cost of the space, Kosher catering, the *Haggadah* and the program are not fully covered by the ticket price.

Each year we ask those who are able, to make this event possible for as broad a community as possible by supporting our Seder Sister Scholarship Fund. By buying an extra seat or rounding up the cost of your registration, you can help ensure participation by as diverse a community of women as possible.

If you have already made a contribution, thank you. If you haven't, we would appreciate your help. Your gift will help us continue to expand the growing community of women reinvigorating Judaism and Jewish life.



Ma'yan's Miriam's Cup Exhibition, 1997

seder registration/send a sister to the seder

As you make your reservations, please consider helping others attend.

Dates: Sunday and Monday Seders are
S O L D O U T Tuesday, April 11

Please reserve _____ place(s) at \$60 for the Ma'yan Seder on: _____

Please reserve _____ place(s) at the scholarship price of \$30 on: _____

Please reserve _____ tables (10 seats) at \$600 for the Ma'yan Seder on: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Please print the names and addresses of people for whom you are reserving below:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Enclosed is a check for: _____ for _____ Reservations
_____ Seder Sister Fund*

*(Every \$60 gift enables another woman to attend. Your contribution is tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.)

total enclosed _____

Please charge my credit card: ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ American Express

Card no. _____

Exp. Date _____

Name as it appears on your card _____

Reservations will only be accepted by mail or fax and must be accompanied by a check or credit card information. **Refunds for reserved tickets will not be offered after March 13, 2000.** All seating will be assigned according to the date the payment is received. Reservations will be confirmed by mail—**please do not call our office to confirm.** If you have other questions, please call us at 212. 580. 0099 ext. 231.

Checks should be made payable to Ma'yan/JCC. All reservations should be sent to Ma'yan: 15 West 65th Street, 8th Floor, New York, NY 10023, Fax: 212. 580. 9498

Ma'yan Staff

Eve Landau, Executive Director

Tamara Cohen, Program Director

Barbara Dobkin, Founder and Chair

Erika Katske, Officer Manager/Program Assistant

Susan Sapiro, Program Associate

Ruth Silverman, Director of Special Events

Rachel Dobkin, Web Consultant

Debby Hirshman, Executive Director;

JCC on the Upper West Side

Photography

cover; © Diana Mara Henry, 1978; 2000 mile torch relay for First National Women's Conference, 1977.

pp. 2, 16, 50, inside back cover; Beth Shepherd Peters

pp. 5, 7, inside front cover; Ruth Silverman

p. 8 Canada Sports Hall of Fame; Bobbie Rosenfeld, 100 meter dash, Canadian National Exhibition, 1923.

p. 9 Anne Kukral; Girls Tennis Team, 1999 Maccabi Games.

p. 20 University of Southern California, University Archive

p. 13 Bettye Lane

p. 24 courtesy of Jill Matthews

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pp. 36, 41 Neil Bereket; "Memoirs of Gluckel of Hameln"

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The Jewish Women's Project
a program of the JCC
on the Upper West Side

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