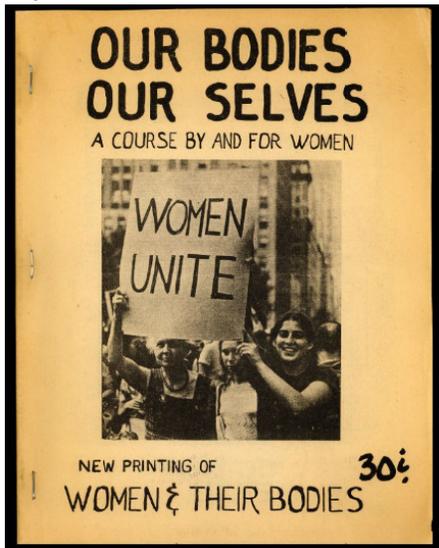


Sources for Week 4: Jews and the Women's Movement

Nancy Miriam Hawley

There was a larger social context for the formation of the Boston Women's Health Book Collective, which created *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. Many of us were involved in other movements for liberation – the New Left or civil rights or the antiwar movement. When the women's movement came along, it hit home, because it was addressing our oppression as women, which we hadn't identified before.

My involvement in the women's movement began in 1968, when some of the



women I knew from Students for a Democratic Society and I began meeting to talk about what it was like to be a woman within the Left. Out of these monthly meetings several of us decided to put on a conference at Emmanuel College in Boston, on May 4, 1969, that would offer different approaches to many issues of concern to women.

It was at this conference that I led the first workshop on "women and their bodies." A number of us were particularly concerned about health issues because as young women, we were having our first babies, and birth control and childbirth were prominent

issues for us. After the workshop, people wanted to continue the conversation. We began talking about creating a list of good doctors. We felt that we couldn't fully evaluate the doctors because we were not health professionals, but we could talk about how we experienced doctors treating us. We began to research health issues, and ultimately developed our research into a course on women and their bodies. We wrote up our findings, which became the first edition, printed by the New England Free Press in 1970 on stapled newsprint. It sold 200,000 copies by word-of-mouth alone.

At some point in these early printings, we realized that the title "Women and Their Bodies" was itself a sign of our alienation from our bodies. We changed the title to "Our Bodies, Ourselves," because that was what we were really talking about.

About a year later, we began to be courted by publishers. We realized that we had to let go of our reservations about a capitalist publisher in order to get the information out to as many women as possible. So we chose Simon and Schuster, and incorporated our collective.

The chapter on sexuality was the first chapter ever written by women for

women about what it was like to be a sexual being. And of course that honest conversation threatened some people, and there were efforts to ban the book. Here we were, putting information out in the world, and people wanted to hide it away. But there was a groundswell of support for us, and we continued our work.

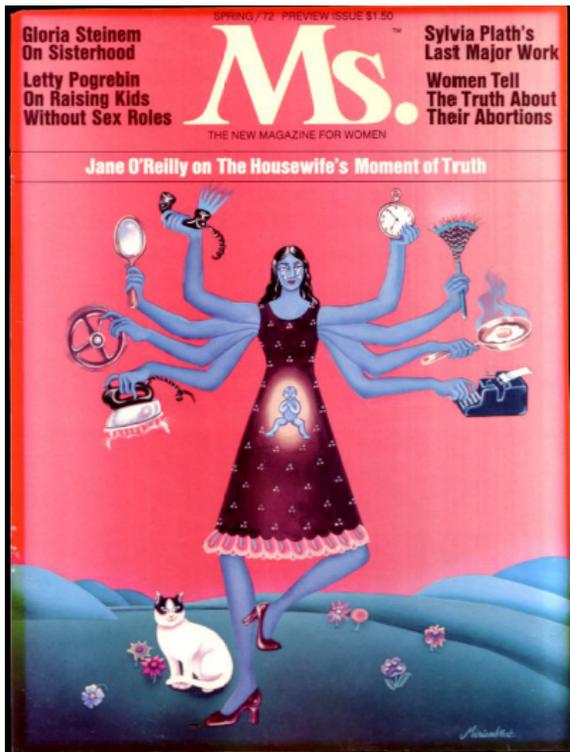
We began with mimeographed copies, and have since published eight editions and 19 translations and/or adaptations. Members of the Collective have also written other books including *Changing Bodies, Changing Lives* (for teens); *Ourselves, Growing Older*; and *Sacrificing Ourselves for Love*.

The women of the Collective are my family. We've been connected, some of us, since 1969. We've been together through marriages, divorces, coming out, and births of children and grandchildren. Some of us many years ago created a seder, and we celebrate Passover together, Jews and non-Jews alike. We've supported each other through illnesses, the death of one of our members (Esther Rome), and the deaths of three husbands. It's been a lifetime of work and a lifetime of relationships.

See more at: <http://jwa.org/feminism/index.html?id=JWA034>

Letty Cottin Pogrebin (b. 1939)

The Preview issue of *Ms.*, which hit the newstands in January 1972, speaks volumes about the concerns of Second Wave feminism and the commitments of the magazine's five founding editors, myself among them.



The multi-armed, blue-skinned cover image—we purposely chose an iconic figure to avoid racial favoritism—embodies the burdens and obligations of the female role.

Mother, worker, housekeeper, cook, car-pool driver, keeper of the social life, slave to time, seeker of beauty, object of the male gaze, she is weeping because she cannot do it all. She cries because her labor is unseen, taken for granted, unrewarded. She cries because she is dancing as fast as she can and has no energy left for herself. She is Everywoman, and she is exhausted.

Our goal at *Ms.* was to make such lives visible, to honor women's work, and to expose the legal, economic, and social barriers that stand in the

way of women's full humanity. *Ms.* provided a forum where disparate voices—housewives, lesbians, political radicals, cancer survivors, victims of rape, violence, and incest, brave feminist trouble-makers—could be heard on issues that were being ignored by mainstream women's magazines and papered over by "feminine" propriety in the public square. *Ms.* showcased women writers and artists. We publicized grass-roots organizations and local feminist leaders. We reported on street demonstrations, consciousness-raising groups, cutting-edge lawsuits, and legislative initiatives. We advocated for the beleaguered and the silenced. We were rabble-rousers. We helped make a revolution.

The cover lines on the Preview issue are illustrative of where we began: Gloria Steinem's paean to sex pride and sisterhood. The fight to legalize abortion. Sylvia Plath's luminous fiction. Jane O'Reilly's epiphanic essay on housework. My piece on sex role stereotyping and how it squelches children's dreams.

There is no question in my mind that my 20-year involvement in *Ms.*—like my 35-year commitment to the women's movement, both secular and Jewish—is rooted in faith and family. I grew up in a home where advancing social justice was as integral to Judaism as lighting Shabbat candles. My parents, both passionate Zionists, were active volunteers in our synagogue and the wider Jewish community. Having learned from them to stand up for my dignity as a Jew, I suppose it was natural for me to stand up for my dignity as a woman, which, after all, is what feminism is all about.

Letty Cottin Pogrebin earned her B.A. from Brandeis University and became a writer and strong advocate for women's rights in the early 1970s. In 1971, she was one of the founding editors of Ms. magazine, where she worked for 17 years, and a co-founder of the National Women's Political Caucus. She was also a consultant on Free To Be You And Me, an album of non-sexist children's stories and songs, and edited Stories for Free Children. When the United Nations International Women's Decade Conference equated Zionism with Racism in 1975, Pogrebin was provoked to combat anti-Semitism within the women's movement just as she fought sexism within Judaism. Over the last three decades, Pogrebin has been a fixture in feminist, Jewish, and Jewish-feminist causes, as well as an outspoken political activist on issues including hunger, the Israel-Palestine conflict, and Black-Jewish relations. She is a prolific author whose publications include Getting Yours: How to Make the System Work for the Working Woman; Growing Up Free: Raising Your Child in the 80s; Deborah, Golda, and Me: Being Female and Jewish in America; and Three Daughters. See more at: <http://jwa.org/feminism/index.html?id=JWA058>

Susan Brownmiller (b. 1935)

As a child I was sent to the East Midwood Jewish Center on Ocean Avenue two afternoons a week for lessons in Hebrew and Jewish history. Biblical history, Palestine's history, Eastern European history. The High Holy Days and all the other holidays. There was a lot to cover, and it all got sort of mishmashed in my brain except for one thread: a helluva lot of people over the centuries seemed to want to harm the Jewish people.

Jewish Brooklyn had been swept into a Zionist fervor in the wake of World War II and the Holocaust. In 1948, when Israel was declared a Jewish state, our Hebrew teachers instantly switched us from Yiddish-inflected Ashkenazi to the fluttery t-t-t and ah-ah-ah of the Sephardic pronunciation. With misty eyes and strong, quavering voices, they talked about emigrating to "Eretz" to work the land. They encouraged us to join a youth group. Wow, the idea was thrilling. I wanted to work the land, I wanted to be part of this brave, new movement. I wanted to help. I went to the Ocean Avenue synagogue on Saturday mornings and chanted the prayers.

My parents grew somewhat alarmed by my sudden intensity. My aunts and uncles started calling me "the *Rebbetzin*." "What's a 'rebbetzin'?" I asked my mother, thinking it must mean a serious, dedicated, intelligent person. "A *rebbetzin* is a rabbi's wife," she laughed.

What a deflating blow to my ego and ambitions! A rabbi was a revered personage; a rabbi's wife served cake and tea and preened in his reflected glory. My instinctive feminism (no lessons needed) could not be reconciled with this severe limitation on my life's path. The sly mockery had its effect. So much for Judaism, so much for religion—I became an atheist, a secularist, and never looked back.

Somewhere in *Against Our Will*, my book on rape (1975), I mention quietly that I am Jewish from Brooklyn, but I have never stressed my Jewish heritage in my writing. Yet the heritage is still with me, and I can argue that my chosen path—to fight against physical harm, specifically the terror of violence against women—had its origins in what I had learned in Hebrew School about the pogroms and the Holocaust.

I have to say that I was surprised, and ultimately heartened, during the heady days of Women's Liberation to see the emergence of committed, observant, Jewish feminists who took on the task of creating equality within organized religion. This wasn't a project I had given any thought to, and it remains an uphill struggle, as do all feminist issues. But one thing became certain: these women weren't going to settle for being *rebbetzins*.

When Susan Brownmiller left Cornell University, she was determined to be a Broadway actress. Quite accidentally, she started working in editorial jobs for magazines. Brownmiller was profoundly influenced by the Southern sit-in movement to end lunch counter segregation that began in February 1960. She joined CORE, organized a picket line in front of a New York Woolworth's, and became a political activist. In 1964, while working as a researcher at Newsweek, she was among 1000 white volunteers who joined Freedom Summer in Mississippi. In 1968, Brownmiller was working as a television newswriter at ABC and marching against the war in Vietnam, when the Women's Liberation Movement erupted. Brownmiller's book on the history of the movement, In Our Time: Memoir of a Revolution, details the story of feminism and her intimate involvement with it, particularly in working to end violence against women. Her groundbreaking book, Against Our Will, defined rape as a serious social problem of violence against women.

See more at: <http://jwa.org/feminism/index.html?id=JWA008>

Shifra Bronznick (b. 1954)

Looking over the program for the annual Women's Festival at Queens College in New York that I helped to plan in the early 1970s brought back the rush of exhilaration that I experienced during that time, as a member of the Women's Collective. Feminism was exploding, illuminating my life with new ideas.

Feminism gave women the power to change the world, and the world was changing for women. We ranged across an extraordinary terrain—from politics to culture to family life—and there was no territory that our feminist imaginations and visions could not discover, recover, or transform.

Jewish feminism was more complicated for me. I loved Network's first National Conference of Jewish Women at the McAlpin Hotel in 1973, and I dedicated myself to moving these issues forward in the Jewish world. But Jewish feminism always seemed more laborious and more constricting. And yet, at the same time, my commitment to Jewish feminism was a powerful calling that kept me returning again and again to my communal roots.

I lived in two parallel universes. As a feminist I expanded my consciousness. As a counterculture Jewish activist and Jewish feminist, I explored within, to discover my identity as a Jewish woman. My feminism went wide; my Jewish feminism went deep. Sometimes these roles have been in conflict. Sometimes they have converged.

Thirty years later, I continue to exist in these parallel worlds—emotionally, politically, and intellectually. Often I feel confident that feminism has *truly* changed the world—remaking the family, reshaping the relationships between men and women, expanding our notions of leadership, challenging the assumption that status derives from wealth and work, and opening every single field to women's influence. Other times, I feel the weariness that comes from seeing the dirt under our fingernails as we labor to make some small plants grow in a garden that seems so far from Eden, where our huge efforts seem so disproportionate to our modest outcomes.

Still committed and still questioning: when will our women's work become the work of the world?

Shifra Bronznick is the founder of Bronznick & Co., LLC, a change management firm that specializes in launching new initiatives, restructuring organizations, and developing programs for the not-for-profit sector. An expert in the field of leadership and women's advancement, Bronznick is the founding President of "Advancing Women Professionals and the Jewish Community." In collaboration with Ma'yan, she launched the National Women's Leadership Initiative and Impact & Influence, a summit for Jewish women volunteer leaders. Bronznick also designed the program for the White House Project's National Women's Leadership Summit.

See more at: <http://jwa.org/feminism/index.html?id=JWA007>

Paula Hyman (1946-2011)

A small Jewish feminist group, which we called Ezrat Nashim, presented the "Call for Change" to the Rabbinical Assembly of the Conservative movement on March 14, 1972 and disseminated it to the press. The rabbis received it in their convention packets, but we managed to arrange a face-to-face session with the rabbis' wives.

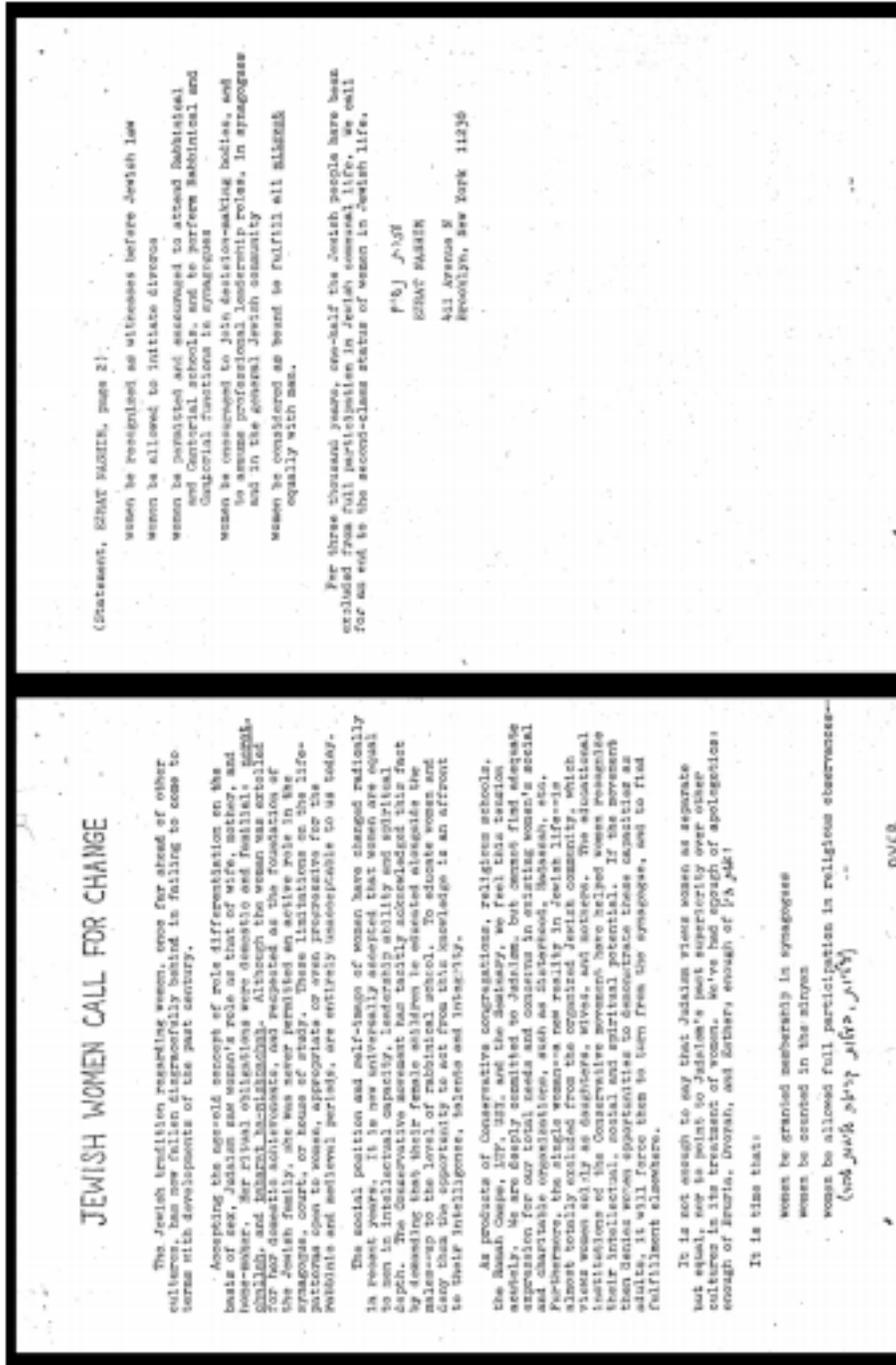
Ezrat Nashim grew out of a study group on the status of women in Judaism that formed in the fall of 1971 in the New York Havurah, a countercultural community of young Jews who studied, observed Judaism, and engaged in politics together. (Not all members of Ezrat Nashim, however, belonged to the Havurah.) We were all well-educated, in both Jewish and secular terms, and had been deeply affected by the nascent American feminist movement in which we participated. Within several months we determined that if any Jewish issue required political action, it was this one, the status of women. At the time we were ten women, the oldest of whom was 27. We chose to target the Conservative movement because most of us had grown up in its ranks, and because the Reform movement was already moving on the issue while Orthodoxy presented too many obstacles.

The "Call for Change" represents a liberal feminist stance, arguing for equal access to positions of leadership and religious participation from which Jewish women were excluded because of their gender. We recognized that the subordinate status of women was linked to their exemption from positive time-bound *mitzvot* (commandments), and we therefore accepted increased obligation as the corollary of equality. We were not yet able to articulate the ways in which women might seek to transform the Judaism that had marginalized us.

Ezrat Nashim responded publicly, through a press release on October 24, 1983, to the decision of the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), the central educational institution of the Conservative movement, to accept women into the Rabbinical School. Two members of Ezrat Nashim, Judith Hauptman and myself, participated in the vote as members of the JTS faculty. For Ezrat Nashim, the vote marked the culmination of achievement of almost all that we had lobbied for over the course of more than a decade. (It should be noted that women still do not have the right to initiate divorce within Judaism, the source of the problem of the *agunah*, the chained wife who cannot remarry.) It seemed like a prolonged struggle, but I remember pointing out to my "sisters" that in the context of Jewish history 11 years was like the blink of an eye. The evening of the vote, we had dinner together to celebrate.

Paula E. Hyman, a founding member of Ezrat Nashim, was the Lucy Moses Professor of Modern Jewish History at Yale University. She also served as the first female dean of the Seminary College of Jewish Studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary. In addition to several books on French Jewry, she wrote widely on Jewish women's history. Among her books are The Jewish Woman in America; Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History; the

two-volume encyclopedia Jewish Women in America, which she co-edited with Deborah Dash Moore; and Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia, a DVD, now online, with Dalia Ofer. She also edited and introduced Puah Rakovsky's My Life as a Radical Jewish Woman: Memoirs of a Zionist Feminist in Poland.



Ezrat Nashim Call for Change, presented to the Rabbinical Assembly of the Conservative movement in March 1972. <http://jwa.org/feminism/index.html?id=JWA039>

Hadassah April 1976

Feminism IS IT GOOD FOR THE JEWS?

By BLU GREENBERG

Conference's call in 1846 for full equality of men and women in all areas of religion. However, this equalization was largely formal; little substance or leadership was given to women. (Moreover, Reform made fewer religious demands upon both men and women, and the changes it made tended to flow from adoption of liberal, modern values, not from Jewish considerations.)

Basically, the response of most Jews, both male and female, can be characterized in this way: the more traditionally Jewish they were—or the more Jewish their orientation, including elements within Reform—the more they tended to resist the challenges that flowed from feminist ideology.

There are many reasons for this reaction. First, Jewish women, on the whole, have been well treated by Jewish men, who have been imbued with strong cultural values sanctioning or demanding good treatment. So Jewish women have been quite content to live with the traditional rules, both religious and social, assigned them. They agreed with the argument that freedom from communal religious responsibilities, such as synagogue prayer, enabled them to better fulfill the familial role which Jewish society had ordained for them.

Second, halakic Judaism is currently resistant to change, and halakic includes in its all-encompassing rubric the religious institutionalization of social status. What was a sociological truth about women in previous generations—that they were the "second sex"—was codified in many minute ways into the halakic or religio-ethical concepts binding upon future generations as well.

What is often overlooked today is that, over the ages, Jewish tradition by and large upgraded the status of women, often in response to changes in society at large. One of the virtues of the halakic system is that it has tried to maintain the dialectical relationship of needs between community and individual, Jew and non-Jew, authority and freedom, religion and society. However, in this century the halakic authorities have been restricted to the Orthodox. But feminism will not disappear simply because we ignore it or reject it as a danger. Rather, the dangers posed by feminism should be identified and guarded against in the context of a positive incorporation of feminist virtues into Jewish life.

Today, secular society has opened a great new range of roles and psychological expectations to women, while, at the same time, traditional status and religious life of Jewish women remain circumscribed. The situation is comparable to sitting in a stationary vehicle alongside a moving one. The net effect upon one is a sense of moving backwards; upon the other, a sense of pulling away, of losing connection, of leaving others behind.

When confronted with harsh but often valid criticism, religious resistance takes the form of apologetics and defensiveness. Some Jewish women cling to traditional prescriptions; others abandon not only observance, but all traditional religious values as well. Since there is no currently sanctioned universe of discourse between feminism and Judaism regarding the religious status of women, the feminist movement has often attacked and rejected the basic structures and values which Judaism has contributed to human society.

What is sorely needed today is the creation of a dialectical tension between Jewish values, and the mores of modern society in light of the far-reaching implications of Women's Liberation. One crucial part of the dialectic would be to measure the halakic and religious status of Jewish women by the feminist notion of equality. But there must be a two-way relationship of communication and influence instead of withdrawal and widening of the gap.

An authentic Jewish women's movement would seek to find new approaches within halakic to respond to and express women's concerns. Simultaneously, it would seek to imbue women's concerns with Jewish values.

There are four areas in Jewish re-

Hadassah Magazine, April 1976. Courtesy of Blu Greenberg and Hadassah Magazine.
<http://jwa.org/feminism/index.html?id=JWA031>

Premiere Issue

Lilith

a quarterly magazine

PRICE \$1.50

Volume 1 Number 1

EXPLORING THE WORLD OF THE JEWISH WOMAN

Lilith magazine, premiere issue, 1976. Courtesy of Susan Weidman Schneider.
<http://jwa.org/feminism/index.html?id=JWA061>

Marcia Falk (b. 1946)

The first time I presented my own blessings in public, I was daunted, and I might never have taken that step at all if not for something that happened in the summer of 1983, when I was teaching at the National Havurah Institute in Princeton, New Jersey. On Friday afternoon, my friend Arthur Waskow asked me to help him prepare the *havdalah* ritual, the brief but dramatic ceremony that closes the Sabbath. Art would be leading the recitation of the *havdalah*'s four blessings, and he wondered whether I would compose and read some introductory meditations. It was a moment of truth: I told Art what I had not yet told anyone – what I had not yet fully admitted even to myself – that I no longer prayed with the traditional liturgy. Hesitating at first, I explained how the words of those blessings stuck in my throat, how I could no longer pretend to worship God as lord and king.

"Fine," said Art, without skipping a beat, "so write your own blessings – we'll use those instead."

"My *own* blessings? Are you out of your mind? They'll stone me!"

Art looked down at me – he's a good-sized man – with a half-puzzled, half-exasperated expression. "Marcia," he sighed, "they won't stone *you*." I wondered at that moment whether Art had ever experienced the kind of intimidation that sometimes prevented me – and lots of other women, despite all the changes of the 1970s – from doing things my own way, convention be damned. But with him towering over me – daring me, so it seemed – I didn't have the heart to say no. Instead I took a deep breath, and agreed.

The next night, in a darkened hall lit only by the multi-wicked candle of the *havdalah* ritual, I recited four new blessings, in Hebrew and in English, before a community of 300 Jews of almost every religious persuasion, from atheist to modern Orthodox. I recited these blessings as though they had been written a couple of millennia ago by the rabbis, rather than the day before, by me. I offered no apology or explanation (I didn't dare to), and, to my puzzlement and disbelief, the community said *Amen*.

Word got out, and the next summer Rabbi Laura Geller asked if I would give a presentation on prayer at the conference "Illuminating the Unwritten Scrolls: Women's Spirituality and Jewish Tradition," to take place in Los Angeles that November. I decided to create a new *kiddush* (a sanctification over wine) and to present it as part of a speech that would take the audience through the why and how of its creation. The talk, entitled "A Blessing for This Day," received a standing ovation.

Some have said that the presentation of that speech marked the beginning of an era in which Jewish women – and also Jewish men – would begin writing prayers of their own. For the most part, however, the new prayers that

began to be written were in English; I was alone in composing Hebrew blessings. And as these became known in wider circles, they stirred up considerable controversy: vigorous – even vehement – debates began happening over whether we have the “right” to change the words of Hebrew prayer. Believing that we have not only the right but the responsibility to keep alive the Hebrew liturgical tradition by adding our own voices to it, I continued over the course of the next decade to write new Hebrew blessings for both the home and the synagogue.

In 1996, my new prayer book, *The Book of Blessings*, was published, and since that time, passages from *The Book of Blessings* have been reprinted in the prayer books of every major non-Orthodox movement of Judaism. Apparently – and to no one’s surprise more than my own – new feminist prayer in Hebrew has started to become part of the Jewish mainstream.

Marcia Falk is a poet, translator, and liturgist, who has been a professor of literature and creative writing at SUNY Binghamton, the Claremont Colleges, and Hebrew Union College. She is the author of The Book of Blessings, a bilingual re-creation of Jewish prayer in poetic forms, written from a nonhierarchical, gender-inclusive perspective. Her translations include The Song of Songs: Love Lyrics from the Bible; With Teeth in the Earth: Selected Poems of Malka Heifetz Tussman (translated from the Yiddish); and The Spectacular Difference: Selected Poems of Zelda (translated from the Hebrew). She also has two books of her own poetry: This Year in Jerusalem and It Is July in Virginia. Falk lectures widely on Jewish feminism, women’s literature, and other topics.

See more at: <http://jwa.org/feminism/index.html?id=JWA023>

Tamara Cohen (b. 1971)

One of the key ways that Judaism continues to live and be lived throughout the world is through holiday celebrations and rituals.



Knowing this and valuing the importance of ritual and practice, Ma’yan: The Jewish Women’s Project of the JCC in Manhattan devoted resources and much energy during its first ten years as a Jewish feminist organization (1994-2004) to bringing Jewish feminist practice into homes and synagogues throughout the United States and beyond.

I remember sitting at many meetings with the rest of the Ma’yan staff and various friends and co-conspirators, trying to figure out creative ways to translate into accessible and usable forms and objects the transformative effect that Jewish feminist thought had had on our lives. We wanted to bring Jewish feminism into mainstream synagogues and community centers and to help make it part of the vocabulary of Jewish teachers and families, sometimes without their even noticing. We didn’t want to let Jewish feminism be one “topic” or bookshelf in a Jewish library. Instead we knew that Jewish feminism needed to be suffused through all of Jewish practice so that it would be impossible to ignore. We also had the good sense to realize that by bringing together Jewish feminist thought with a perhaps more traditional form of Jewish women’s contribution to the

home and community—the making of beautiful Judaica—we could help make Jewish feminism not just intellectually and spiritually fulfilling, but also aesthetically and sensually engaging.

In the case of Miriam's Cups, Ma'yan did not invent the ritual object; we simply set out to bring it from the fringes into the mainstream. Born out of a meditation on the midrash of Miriam's Well in a Rosh Hodesh group in a suburb of Boston, the idea of a ritual goblet filled with water which would symbolize the mythic healing waters of Miriam's Well immediately struck the members of the group as something that "already existed and was just waiting to be discovered." In 1992, *Lilith* magazine began spreading news of the new ritual object more widely when it first commissioned a Miriam's Cup. Then in 1998, Ma'yan invited 80 artists from around the world to participate in an exhibition and sale entitled "Drawing From the Source: Miriam, Women's Creativity and New Ritual." Artists were invited to make usable original Miriam's Cups. Many have continued to produce Miriam's Cups, which have become part of seders and other rituals across the country and the world.

Through Miriam's Cups and many other ritual objects like them, Jewish feminism has brought new shape, color, sound, and experience to our seder tables, sukkot, and synagogue celebrations. As these objects grow older and more used, I delight to think that they will soon become family heirlooms, treasured symbols of Jewish tradition strengthened, enhanced, and transformed through feminist innovation.

Tamara Cohen is a Jewish feminist writer, activist and educator. In 2004, Cohen directed a national study of Jewish women and feminism for [Ma'yan: The Jewish Women's Project](#), a program of the JCC in Manhattan for whom she worked as Program Director for many years. While at [Ma'yan](#), she worked in partnership with the Jewish Women's Archive to create the first Women of Valor posters. Cohen has also worked as an educator with Jewish women in the former Soviet Union through Project Keshet. She has served on the boards of Joshua Venture, Brit Tzedek V'Shalom, and Jews for Racial and Economic Justice. She is the editor of the [Ma'yan](#) feminist Haggadah, The Journey Continues, as well as an author of numerous articles and poems on Jewish women's spirituality and feminist approaches to text. Cohen holds a M.A. in Women's History from Sarah Lawrence College and a B.A. in Women's Studies and English from Barnard College. She is currently a rabbinical student at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College.
See more at: <http://jwa.org/feminism/index.html?id=JWA014>

Lynn Gottlieb (b. 1950)

My initial passion for healing the world was kindled by the Holocaust and further enflamed when the civil rights movement of the 1960s taught me about America's hidden history of genocide and racism. Not until I entered the rabbinic path in 1972 did I realize that women bore an equally oppressive history, even within the Jewish community. I was surprised to learn that Jewish women did not enjoy the same privileges as Jewish men, and that our written words and public persona were barely present. I also soon discovered that, like members of other groups who experience prejudice, I was vulnerable to verbal and physical attack when I stepped outside conventional

norms and expectations with a new vision and an active program for women's human rights.

Because history cast me into the role of one of the first ten women rabbis, I was invited to stand before hundreds of Jewish and Christian communities in order to explain why women should seek a change in their status. I came to realize that it is not enough to gain equal access to rabbinic seminaries, to be counted in a *minyan* (prayer quorum), or to read from the Torah. Rather, in order to fully redeem women from the limitations, violence, and despair associated with sexism, I dedicated myself to the transformation of ideas, practices, and narratives rooted in sexist notions of what it means to be a woman.

During the last 32 years of my rabbinic practice, I have come to understand more deeply the profound



interconnectedness of all human rights struggles and the primary place of women within these struggles. We who seek liberation from the oppressive structures that deny us the same economic, educational, and spiritual opportunities as the privileged among us need each other. We need coalitions of broad diversity. We need the entire range of creativity and wisdom gained

through the struggle for human rights throughout the world. We are not separate one from another.

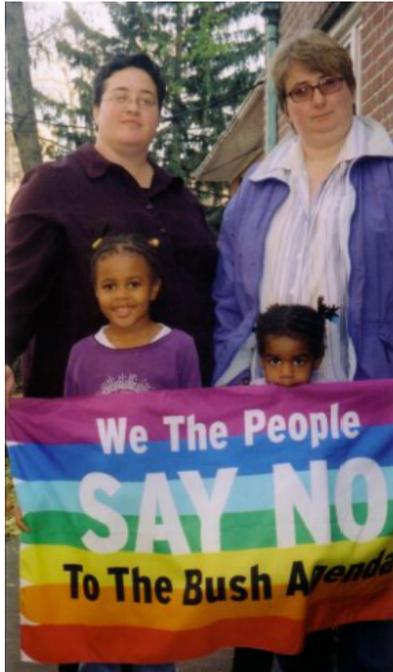
By 1975, I was committed to the belief that active non-violence is the only viable spiritual foundation for meaningful social change. From the time I began working on Jewish-Palestinian reconciliation in 1966, I came to see that Jews are also tempted to ensure their security and safety by military strength. As a woman and a rabbi, I reject this solution. I believe that the highest rendering of our tradition teaches us that non-violent activism is the only way to achieve long-lasting security and peaceful coexistence with our neighbors. As a woman and a rabbi, I embrace the courage and wisdom of the nonviolence I learned as a young adult and continue to apply its lessons to the task of repairing the world and making a safe place for Jews, women, and all people to flourish in peace.

Lynn Gottlieb entered pulpit life in 1973, as rabbi to Temple Beth Or of the Deaf in New York City. In 1981, she became the first woman ordained in the Jewish Renewal Movement. Gottlieb's creativity, peace and justice activism, feminism, and focus on spiritual meaning helped shape the Jewish Renewal Movement. In 1974, she founded a Jewish feminist theatre troupe called Bat Kol, which brought feminist midrash, ceremony, and storytelling to hundreds of communities throughout the United States, Europe, and Canada. In 1983, she moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico, where she lived for 22 years, co-founding Congregation Nahalat

Shalom. Gottlieb recently moved to Southern California to head a new organization called Interfaith Inventions. It is an extension of her work as co-founder of the Muslim-Jewish Peace Walk that created pilgrimages between synagogues and mosques and other supporting faith communities throughout the U.S. and Canada. She is currently working on issues that relate to the way globalization is impacting the lives of young women around the world. See more at: <http://jwa.org/feminism/index.html?id=JWA030>

Marla Brettschneider

In the past half-century, feminism has foundationally altered the possibilities for the ways we might organize ourselves in our society, our politics, and our



relations. Jewish feminists have similarly transformed Jewish life and politics in the U.S. This is a photograph of my family of choice at our home in the Bronx. We are an adoptive, multi-racial, two mom family with a mix of Jews birthed, raised, and by choice. One key feminist insight this artifact expresses is the feminist notion that the personal is political. Jewish feminists are queering our worlds: re-gender-ing, re-race-ing, and re-sex-ing the archetypal European-Jewish male icon of modern U.S. Jewish life.

I also chose this artifact because it expresses the core political orientation of my Jewish identity. In this photo, my partner – rabbi and professor – Dawn Rose, our children Paris Mayan and Toni Louise Brettschneider/Rose, and I stand on our terrace with a banner. The banner was the standard issue of United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ), the organizers of the march protesting the Republican National Convention in New York City, August 29, 2004. UFPJ was co-founded by Leslie Cagan, a radical Jewish lesbian and partner to Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz, a Jewish lesbian feminist writer and activist. Our family marched with the Jewish contingent organized by Jews for Racial and Economic Justice and the Workmen’s Circle.

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See more at: <http://jwa.org/feminism/index.html?id=JWA005>