

A Ritual to commence Bet Deborah

Erev Shabbat 1st June, 2001/Sivan 11th, 5761

We come together in the name of Deborah to celebrate and share, to learn and teach, to contemplate and reflect on the world in which we live and our place in it as Jewish women. Like Deborah, we live in times of confrontation and struggle. Yet, like Deborah, we have found our places as women in our communities. Some are 'leaders of Israel', some sit under the palm of Deborah to study and impart their learning to others, some offer support to those in need, encouragement to the faint-hearted, and some are still beginning a journey of discovery and understanding. Let us sing with Deborah a song of praise to God:

*"When locks are shaken loose in Israel,
when people volunteer themselves,
praise the Eternal One.
Listen, kings!
Hear, you rulers!
I sing, to the Eternal I sing,
I chant to the Eternal, the God of Israel.
Eternal One, when You went forward from Seir,
when You marched from the land of Edom,
earth shook, sky dripped,
Yes the clouds poured down water.
The mountains quaked before the Eternal One;
the One of Sinai,
before the Eternal, the God of Israel....*

*Rouse yourself, Deborah, rouse yourself,
rouse yourself and sing a song.....*

Let those who love You be as the sun rising in its might!

As the day turns and we move to a place of holiness and rest, we light this candle to invoke God's blessing on this conference of Bet Deborah.

A single candle is lit

We praise You, Source of light, Shelter of peace: have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love; blot out our sins and wash us clean from our iniquity. Then may we take refuge in the shadow of your wings and warm our souls in the light of Your presence. You, O God, are the fountain of life; in your light we see light.

Blessing each other and those we have left behind

Send out your light and your truth upon our family and friends, those we have left behind; bless them with health and contentment, with blessing and peace.

A moment of silence to reflect on those far from us

Bless the Eternal One, my soul, all that is within me bless God's holy name...

We bless each other saying:

..... *[invoke the Hebrew name of your companion]*

may God make you like Miriam and Deborah, Huldah and Noadiah, prophets in Israel

[for men present say] may God make you like Amos and Micah, Joel and Hosea, prophets in Israel.

יְבָרַכְךָ יְהוָה וַיְשַׂמְרֶךָ:
יְאֵר יְהוָה | פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֵי וַיְחַנֶּנְךָ:
יֵשׂא יְהוָה | פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֵי וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם:

May God bless you and keep you
May the face of the Eternal One enlighten you and be kind to you
May God reach out to you with tenderness and give you peace.

SHABBAT SHALOM