



Jewish Women's Center of Pittsburgh, Inc.  
Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan

We gather to welcome the new moon and the new month of Cheshvan. As Jewish women, we understand Rosh Chodesh as a symbol of renewal, as a woman's covenant, as a reminder of the cycles of nature, and as a marking of time. Rosh Chodesh is a recurring opportunity for spiritual development and for healing, for learning and for sharing.

As is our custom, let us introduce ourselves by our names and the names of our mothers and grandmothers.

Together: בְּרוּכָה אַתְּ יְהוָה, רוּחַ הַעוֹלָם, שֶׁעָשִׂתָּנִי אִשָּׁה.

B'ru'cha at Yah, ru'ach ha'o'lam she'as'ta'ni i'sha  
Praised are you, Breath of Life, who made me a woman.

Gifts of the Month

Mat'not Hachodesh: Hodayah

As the new month approaches, we call to mind the gifts of the current month and give thanks.

Together:

Witnessing

Cypresses point to the night,  
through clouds and beyond them.  
We follow them up the mountain  
to stake our site.

And now the blade of night  
gleams through the briars.  
We gather twigs for the fires:  
New Moon, old light.

We wait. The air is still.  
The leaf, the branch, the bark -  
our signposts in the darkness  
of the hill



Tonight we celebrate Cheshvan. This month is often referred to as *mar* Cheshvan, "bitter" Cheshvan, because it contains no holidays or festivals and because it often coincides with the arrival of colder weather. *Mar* can also mean a drop of water. According to a midrash, more rain falls in watery Cheshvan because it marks the beginning of the great flood during the time of Noah. We can also think of Cheshvan as a quiet time to reap the benefits of the spiritual growth of the preceding month of Tishrei.

May our hearts be lifted and our spirits refreshed as we light this candle to welcome Rosh Hodesh Cheshvan.

Together:

Yehi ratzon sheyitchadesh aleynu  
Sheyitchadesh aleynu chodesh Cheshvan

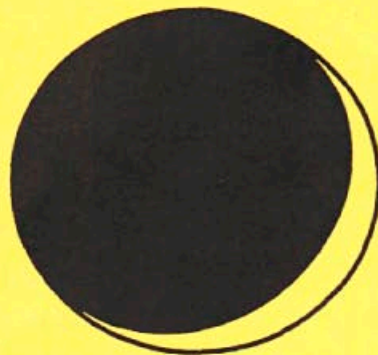
L'tovah v'livracha, l'sason ul'simcha, l'shalom v'achavah, rey'ut v'ahavah

La'avodah v'tzirah, parnasah v'chalkalah, l'shalvat hanefesh u'vrioot hagoof

L'chayim shel derech eretz v'ahavat torah, l'chayim sheyimalu bam  
mishalot libeynu l'tovah

Yehi ratzon sheyitchadesh aleynu  
Sheyitchadesh aleynu

Ken yehi ratzon



Together:

May the month of Cheshvan  
be a month of blessings:

blessings of goodness,  
blessings of joy,

peace and kindness,  
friendship and love,

creativity, strength,  
serenity,

fulfilling work  
and dignity,

satisfaction, success,  
and sustenance,

physical health  
and radiance.

May truth and justice  
guide our acts,

and compassion  
temper our lives

that we may blossom  
as we age

and become  
our sweetest selves.

May it be so.

Meditation for the New Moon

A Poem for Cheshvan

There are as many ways to view the new moon  
as there are days in our lives.

to view a moon, a poet's moon  
you need only three things:  
a silent spot inside you  
a willingness to wait in the dark  
and a wily nature that refuses to accept  
the "Man-in-the-Moon"  
as the ultimate authority.

here is one way to observe the new moon:  
settle upon a path from which to grasp  
the handle of white gold waiting above  
find a quiet spot inside your sight.

in the darkness, close your eyes  
and cover them, as if blessing the Shabbos candles

"Praised are You, O Shechinah  
who parts the days of the month  
calls attention to our covenant  
and helps us to be a light upon the earth."

then, slowly open your eyes  
and behold the beginning of time.

Cheshvan contains the *yahrzeits* of many important women in Jewish history, including Rachel *Imeynu* (according to tradition, Cheshvan 11), Emma Lazarus (Cheshvan 19), Hannah Senesh (Cheshvan 20), and Anzia Yeziarska (Cheshvan 22).

We now honor the women in our lives whose *yahrzeits* are in the month of Cheshvan.

Together we recite Kiddush and Shehecheyanu:

נְבָרְךָ אֵת עֵין הַחַיִּים מְצַמֵּיחַת פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן, וְנִקְדָּשׁ אֵת רֹאשׁ הַחֹדֶשׁ בְּאַרְיֵגַת פְּתִילֵי חַיִּינוּ לְתוֹךְ מִסְכַּת הַדּוֹרוֹת.

*N'va-rech et ein ha-cha-yim matz-mi-chat p'ri ha-ge-fen, un-ka-deish et rosh ha-cho-desh ba-a-ri-gat p'ti-lei cha-yei-nu l'toch ma-se-chet ha-do-rot.*

Let us bless the Source of life that ripens fruit on the vine, as we hallow the *Rosh Chodesh* festival, weaving new threads into the tapestry of tradition.

נְבָרְךָ אֵת מַעַן חַיִּינוּ, שֶׁחַיֵּנוּ וְקִיְמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנוֹ הַזֶּה.  
*N'va-rekh et ma-yan cha-yei-nu, she-he-chi-ya-nu, v'ki-a-ma-nu, v'hi-gi-a-nu laz-man ha-zeh.*

Let us bless the flow of life that revives us, sustains us, and brings us to this joyous moment, this holy time.