



JEWISH ORTHODOX FEMINIST ALLIANCE

אדר ב תשע"א / March 2011

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Dear Friend of JOFA,

Even as I write this Passover letter, I am reminded of a story that I heard of two women discussing their preparations for Passover and one commenting to the other, "How fortunate we are that God didn't command us to celebrate Pesah in the Sukkah." Preparation for the Passover holiday is always a difficult and busy time. I suppose it has always been that way — which is why we can read of rabbis sitting and discussing the exodus from Egypt, and whether it should be done by day, by night, or both...while the women no doubt, were in the kitchen. And yet...women were profoundly involved in the story if not in the storytelling. Where would Moses have been without Miriam, or the rescuing arms of Pharaoh's daughter? What of the courage of Yocheved in carrying this child and then giving him up? How would the Hebrews have survived without the dedication and defiance of the midwives Shifra and Pua? We are surrounded by the stories of women, and perhaps this year it is we who should sit and tell our stories until the morning and the call of the Shema.

We at JOFA sit long hours, not recounting the story of the exodus or plotting the rebellion against the Romans, but talking about the injustices that still exist in our communities and how to remedy them. Mitzrayim has often been described not only as a country, but as a narrow place, a difficult place that many of us must travel through or from. The *agunah* must emerge from her Mitzrayim, the *akara hilkhatit* (the halakhically barren woman) from her place of sorrow. On another level, women and girls must be given opportunities to learn, to teach, and to lead within the Jewish Orthodox fold.

And so once again we invite you to be our partners in leading from "*avdut l'herut*," from a place of dejection to a place of possibilities. We need your financial support now more than ever so we can make sure that our story continues to be told and that it has a happy ending.

Wishing you a meaningful *yetziat Mitzrayim*, an exit from any narrow place, and a *hag sameah*, a very happy Passover.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Belda Lindenbaum'.

Belda Lindenbaum
Vice President of Development