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Call for Papers: Nashim no. 9: Jewish Women's Spirituality

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CALL FOR PAPERS: *NASHIM* no. 9

Jewish Women's Spirituality

If it is a commonplace that almost all religions are male-dominated, we also know that women have always participated in the spiritual strivings and imaginings of humankind. Before the spread of monotheism, female deities were served by priestesses and orders of women, and the latter survived in Catholic Christianity. Ever since the biblical period, however, Judaism has offered few formal religious roles to women beyond the privacy of their homes. Their active spiritual lives are attested only in scattered remarks in Judaism's sacred texts, and it is only from the last three centuries that we have just a few vernacular religious texts written for and occasionally by Jewish women.

In recent decades, however, the spread of Jewish literacy among women and the renewed interest in women's religious roles spurred by feminism have generated heightened interest in the spirituality of Jewish women. On the practical level, women have taken on new roles in the synagogue, been ordained as rabbis, created new rituals, and engaged intensively in the study of Jewish sacred texts and even in the creation of new ones. Academically, feminist scholars have begun combing records and traditions in search of a "usable" spiritual past for Jewish women, and they have already begun studying the innovative spiritual practices, unprecedented in scope, of Jewish women today.

The editors of *Nashim* invite proposals for articles on any aspect of Jewish women's spirituality, throughout history and in the present day, for an issue to be devoted to this topic under the guest editorship of Vanessa Ochs, to be published in Spring 2005. In particular, we hope to discover new models for addressing and analyzing Jewish women's spirituality. For example, it has been suggested that women's expressions of spirituality are less text-based than the tradition's standard models, more fluid, idiosyncratic, and free of rules, or more centered in emotion, community, and individual psyches. How are these qualities to be studied, and are they indeed borne out by inquiry? Other issues that might fruitfully be raised in this context include: How has Jewish women's spirituality been influenced by other faith traditions and syncretistic trends? How do we analyze the spiritual contributions of such diverse groups as orthodox feminists, lesbian rabbis, Lubavich women

Call for Papers

emmisaries, female composers of new Jewish liturgical music, liturgists sensitive to gendered language, and artists and craftswomen making objects for new women's rituals? Is there a subliminal conversation among different groups of women? Has marginality been a source of creative spiritual license?

Please send proposals to the Managing Editor of *Nashim* by January 1, 2004, by e-mail to nashim@schechter.ac.il; by mail to *Nashim*, The Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies, POB 16080, Jerusalem 91160; or by fax to +972-2-6790840. Final date for submission of articles: April 1, 2004. All scholarly articles will be subject to academic review. Academic Editor of *Nashim*: Renée Levine Melammed.

Call for Contributors

ETHIOPIAN WOMEN AND ADOLESCENT GIRLS
IN CROSS-CULTURAL TRANSITION

You are invited to propose and contribute an article for a collection on various aspects of this topic.

The article may be based on graduate or other research, or on excellent seminar work.

The book will be published in Hebrew.

Please contact Dr. Malka Shabtay, e-mail: mat@netvision.net.il Articles should be submitted by January 30, 2004.