



# KESHER ISRAEL - 100 YEARS

A C E N T E N N I A L C E L E B R A T I O N

ORTHODOXY AT A TURNING POINT,  
A NATIONAL CONVERSATION  
PANEL #2: WOMEN AND THE FUTURE  
OF JUDAISM

GUEST PANELISTS:

RABBI DR. ARYEH FRIMER  
RABBANIT CHANA HENKIN  
RABBA SARA HURWITZ  
RABBI DR. DANIEL SPERBER

MODERATED BY  
REBBETZIN SHARON FREUNDEL

SUNDAY EVENING  
NOVEMBER 7, 2010  
7PM

## KESHER ISRAEL: A HISTORY

In the winter of 1910, six merchants living in Georgetown, met to discuss the “possibility of forming a Hebrew society for worship and other communal activities.” Joseph Bremmer, Joseph Scher, Max Whitkin, L. Brenner, Mr. Rakysen, and Mr. Gamzy, all Eastern European immigrants, founded the Georgetown Hebrew Benevolent Society, based out of the home of Harris Levy on 28th and M Streets, NW, with “about 25 persons.” On March 16, their registration application to the DC Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs as a domestic non-profit corporation was approved. Their first president was a man named Abe Mostow. We don’t know much about Mr. Mostow and the other founding families, but we do know that thanks to their efforts, we enjoy a wonderful Modern Orthodox shul and can celebrate the seeds of community that they planted a century ago.

That autumn, for their first High Holidays together, they moved to 3062 M Street, NW, a larger space located above a storefront. They borrowed a *sefer Torah*, hired a cantor, sold tickets for \$3 each, and began holding religious services. Over time, their numbers increased, and “out of a small *kehvre* grew a large *farein*”—from a small group of 25 people, they became united as one community. In 1915, the leaders of the community purchased a small house at 2801 N Street NW, converted it into a shul, and renamed themselves “Keshet Israel Congregation.” Over time, they outgrew the small house and the need to expand became apparent.

With a membership of 150 people, and a Ladies Auxiliary that raised \$10,000 (a lot of money in those days!) for the building, the cornerstone of the new building was laid on February 1, 1931, and a new chapter began to unfold. On September 6, just in time for *Rosh Hashbanab*, the new **Keshet Israel Synagogue of Georgetown** formally opened its doors....

*To mark the special occasion of our Centennial Celebration, and to enhance the intellectual and spiritual life of our community in Washington D.C., Keshet Israel is hosting a year-long salute called “**Keshet100: Celebration and Reflection.**”*

The centerpiece of this endeavor is a four-part series called “**Orthodoxy at a Turning Point: A National Conversation.**” These panel discussions, which will take place over the course of the anniversary year, will explore the major themes and pressures surrounding Orthodoxy -- the historical, social, textual, and halakhic dimension of what we live and practice. The topics will include Orthodoxy and Innovation, Women and the Future of Judaism, Spirituality and the Future of Institutions, and The Denominations: The Ways We Believe Now.

## TONIGHT’S PROGRAM

### Orthodoxy at a Turning Point, A National Conversation: Panel #2: Women and the Future of Judaism

*Does Orthodoxy recognize the concept of equality that so many Orthodox Jews live by in other walks of life? How should the new position of women in the larger society affect their position in the traditional Jewish community?*

**Rabbi Dr. Aryeh Frimer** is the Ethel and David Resnick Professor of Active Oxygen Chemistry at Bar Ilan University. He has published over 115 articles, reviews, and books in the area of active oxygen chemistry. In addition to his scientific work, Rabbi Frimer has published over 30 Torah articles and lectured internationally on various aspects of Jewish tradition and *halakha*, but most prominently on Religious Zionism and the status of women in Jewish law.

**Rabbanit Chana Henkin** Dean and founder of Nishmat, is one of today’s most acclaimed Jewish educators, known worldwide for opening the highest reaches of Torah to women. She was awarded Israel’s prestigious Agrest Prize for innovative religious education. In 2001, Yeshiva University conferred upon her the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, for “pioneering achievements in the establishment of advanced Jewish study opportunities for women.”

**Rabba Sara Hurwitz** is a member of the clergy at the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale and is Dean of Yeshivat Maharat, the first Orthodox school to confirm women as *halakhic* and leaders. She graduated from Drisha’s 3-year Scholars Circle Program and studied Jewish law under the supervision of Rabbi Avi Weiss for 5 years. She also helped create JOFA’s Gender and Orthodoxy Curriculum Project.

**Rabbi Dr. Daniel Sperber** is a professor of Talmud at Bar Ilan University and an expert in classical philology, history of Jewish customs, Jewish art history, Jewish education, and Talmudic studies. He is the author of *Minhagei Yisrael*, on the character and evolution of Jewish customs. He has written extensively on how Jewish law can and has evolved.

**Rebbetzin Sharon Freundel** is the Rabbanit of Keshet Israel. Following several years of working in the nursing field, Mrs. Freundel began teaching Torah and is now the Director of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at the Jewish Primary Day School. She also gives regular classes at Keshet Israel, and teaches *Tanach*, Jewish philosophy and contemporary *halakhic* issues in multiple venues including the University of Maryland, the George Washington University, the American Jewish Committee, and the Foundation for Jewish Studies, and has lectured in Canada, Australia and throughout the United States.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Kesher Israel begins its 100<sup>th</sup> year in September 2010. Events honoring the Centennial are scheduled between September 2010 and December 2011, with something for everyone in mind. From lectures to social gatherings, from walking tours to cultural events, activities have been planned to celebrate and honor the unique and rich history of our synagogue. This is just a taste of what is to come!

- September 13, 2010**     *Orthodox Judaism: What it Was, What it Is*  
*Kickoff Lecture by Rabbi Dr. Barry Freundel*
- October 10, 2010**     *Orthodoxy at a Turning Point: A National Conversation*  
*Panel #1: Orthodoxy and Innovation*
- November 7, 2010**     *Orthodoxy at a Turning Point: A National Conversation*  
*Panel #2: Women and the Future of Judaism*
- December 11, 2010**     *Kesher Israel Celebrates! A Night in Monte Carlo*
- December 12, 2010**     *Tzvi Daremblum Memorial Lecture:*  
*Jonathan Safran Foer and Leon Wieseltier in Conversation*
- February 2011**     *Orthodoxy at a Turning Point: A National Conversation*  
*Panel #3: Spirituality and the Future of Institutions*
- March 13, 2011**     *Kesher Israel Celebrates! A Gala Dinner*
- May 15, 2011**     *Israel and the Jewish Soul:*  
*A Discussion of the Place of Israel in our Lives and our*  
*Beliefs with Elie Wiesel*
- June 2011**     *Orthodoxy at a Turning Point: A National Conversation*  
*Panel #4: The Denominations – the Way We Believe Now*

*And this is just the beginning...*

### **Kesher Israel: The Georgetown Synagogue**

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