

**Reading:**  
**The Heart and Soul of *Hiddur Mitzvah***

Over the centuries women have been dedicated to *hiddur mitzvah* – the sacred act of creating lovely ritual objects. Members of our sisterhood have contributed to the beautification of our synagogue as well. It is a mitzvah that engages both the woman’s heart and soul – through the physical act of creation, and the spiritual desire to glorify God’s presence.

The following prayer was recited by women of the Jewish community of Rome. They sometimes added personal details, such as her date of birth, a dedication in memory of a family member, a prayer for long life.

*He who blessed Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah – may He  
bless every daughter of Israel who fashions a coat or covering  
with which to adorn the Torah, or who prepares a candle in  
honor of the Torah. May the Holy One, blessed be He, pay  
her reward and grant her the good that she deserves, and let  
us say: Amen.\**

\*From *A Jewish Woman’s Prayer Book* by Aliza Lavi (2008)