



# WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

*Women's League Shabbat 2015/5775*

## Mishpachah II: Lessons From Our Sisters

### Family Matters/Families Matter

I am pleased to speak today about the most recent Women's League initiative, **Mishpachah II: Lessons from Our Sisters**.

This, from the introduction on the Women's League website: "*Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.*"

In this opening line of *Anna Karenina*, Leo Tolstoy demonstrates his unique brilliance as an interpreter of the human condition. Happiness, he purports, is so rare that it defies diversity. Unhappiness, on the other hand, in all of its variety, complexity and uniqueness – that is something we can all relate to. But in modern parlance, we call those families – for the most part *our* families – complicated.

*Complicated* is a much friendlier word. It suggests the possibility of disentanglement.

And so Women's League has created **Mishpachah II** on the Jewish family, designed to expand the goals of last year's **Mishpachah I**, which focused on modern Jewish families in all of their diverse structures and identities. In this year's material, **Lessons from Our Sisters**, we are engaging with four archetypal Jewish women: Sarah, Ruth, Mathilde, and Golda. Through the lens of their family stories we will examine contemporary challenges, strengthen our understanding of complicated family dynamics, and encourage dialogue about creating supportive and cohesive families, no matter their configurations.

The material is varied and offers many portals of entry for members, either on their own or with a group. It includes text study, theme-related books and films, and a rich selection of Conversation Pieces. These personal vignettes underscore the reality that no challenge is unique, but rather that our stories and experiences are shared and understood.

New units will be posted every two months reflecting our four goals: celebrating, caring, healing, learning.

I encourage everyone here to visit the Women's League website at [www.wlcj.org](http://www.wlcj.org). Study the material from this year, as well as from last year. In this ongoing dialogue about the transformation of the Jewish family, Women's League has opened channels of discussion that are innovative, modern, and vital to the continued growth and health of our community.

Shabbat shalom!