

18th Century Iraqi Torah for Women

There was much to celebrate at Drisha Institute this past October. Dancing, klezmer music and hundreds of singing voices heralded the arrival of a Torah scroll to its new permanent home.

Founded in 1979 by Rabbi David Silber, Drisha pioneered classical Jewish text study for women. Making history once again, Drisha is the first American women's educational center to receive its own Torah scroll, a milestone because women traditionally were denied access to Torah scrolls in public prayer. Blu Greenberg, activist and author in the areas of feminism and Orthodoxy, donated it with her extended family in memory of her father, Rabbi Samuel Genauer.

The Torah scroll originated in Baghdad 150-200 years ago. Its journey to Drisha began prior to the Persian Gulf War, when it was among many Torah scrolls confiscated in Iraq. After an arduous trip to Israel, the scroll was

repaired by a scribe in Jerusalem, then transported to America.

"All the pieces are beginning to come together in my mind and in my



JOAN ROTH

The women of Drisha make history as they receive their own Torah scroll.

heart," reflected Greenberg at the dedication. "What it means to ransom a Sefer Torah stolen by a tyrant and destroyer and restore it to loving use, what it means for there to be a Drisha to want a Sefer Torah."

Many women at the celebration had never held a Torah scroll before and were deeply moved by the experience. Devorah Zlochower, Drisha's Director of Full-Time Programs, danced with her two young sons. "It was clear from the happiness on people's faces and the way they were dancing with the Torahs that Drisha has entered a new level of growth."

Lisa Schlaff, a former full-time Drisha student and a granddaughter of Rabbi Genauer commented, "It is my hope that this Sefer Torah... will serve as a reminder to all of us that study and prayer do not have to remain separate entities."

"This generation carries in its mind the image of thousands upon thousands of Sifrei Torah trashed, trampled and burnt by the Nazis," said Greenberg. "The idea of redeeming a Torah that belonged to a once vibrant Jewish community is very poignant."

—Lisa S. Taubenblat

(Lisa Taubenblat was formerly the Program Assistant at Drisha Institute for Jewish Education.)

45% of the population over the age of 85 have Alzheimer's.

43% of the population over the age of 65 will end up in a long-term care scenario.

0.1% of homeowner insurance policies will ever have a claim filed against them.

Consider the statistics when you plan for the future. Long-Term Care Insurance — in the long run, it pays, not you.

For access to quality care and peace of mind for yourself and your family.

**Contact: Elon Emanuel
(800) 288-2110**

