

MOONLIGHT

The UK's Quarterly Rosh Hodesh e-Newsletter

EDITORIAL

This is the time of year for reflection; of looking at our lives and reviewing our actions and relationships. This year is even more poignant for me, as my husband and I leave for Hong Kong, and I reflect on the last twelve years in London at the wonderful Wembley Synagogue and my three years of editing Moonlight.

Moonlight has grown from a newsletter for Rosh Hodesh project based at six Ashkenazi and Sephardi Synagogues in NW London to an international newsletter with a readership throughout the UK, Israel and the USA.

We have been privileged to have contributions from acclaimed writers and our own talented women. I believe that we have been able to stimulate debate and provide a new platform for Jewish women.

I am delighted to tell you that Moonlight's new editor is Doreen Samuels, a well known Jewish Educator, who was a founder member of the Stanmore Women's Tefillah Group; a founder member of the first English cross-communal Women's Rosh Chodesh Group and founder member of Pinner Women's Rosh Chodesh Group. I wish her great success and all our readers a Shana Tova Tikatevu
Anna van den Bergh

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ONE AMONG MANY: CAN ONE PERSON MAKE A DIFFERENCE? BY REBBETZIN HOLLY PAVLOV

When we think of the billions of people that God created, it is hard to think of any individual as significant. Even taking into account the uniqueness of the Jewish people, we ask ourselves, what difference do any of us make in the scheme of things? If we had not lived, would the world be different? Would the Jewish people be worse off? Each person seems so small and insignificant compared to the vast world. Does any one person make a difference?

Modern philosophers have asked and answered this question in various ways. Marxism taught us that mass movements dominate the world and influence the outcome of world events, but the individual is unimportant in changing the world. The pendulum of history swings back and forth, regardless of any one person or group of people.

Existentialism taught the futility of the individual, his insignificance in this lonely world and the emptiness of human existence. The postmodern world emphasized the individual's development, happiness, ego, and his ability to change himself. But very little is said about his ability to change the world, to make a difference.

The Torah sees it differently. The Torah teaches us that one person can make a difference, and that indeed, it is each person's responsibility to do so. The story of Josef, as told in Braishis, is an example of one person who changed the world. It describes a series of events that led the Jewish people into Egyptian exile. The jealousy of Yosef's brothers led to the sale of Yosef. Yosef ended up in prison in Egypt where, with God's help, he interpreted dreams of other prisoners. This eventually led him to the palace of Pharaoh where he interpreted a set of dreams that caused Pharaoh consternation.

Yosef's interpretation of the dream led to a change in Egypt's economic policy and prevented mass starvation. The entire world benefited from his plan and Egypt's power was strengthened. What would today's headlines say? "Bread Basket of the World Faces Starvation." "Can the Egyptian Economy Recover from Devastating Famine?" "Mass Immigration as Starving Seek Refuge." The Torah, on the other hand, describes the events as follows, "Yosef was brought down to Egypt." One person makes a difference. One person, who is brought down to Egypt, changed world history. To understand this, we must examine two ideas: the importance of the individual as one who stands completely alone and isolated in this world, and the necessity of individual contribution to society.

The Singularity of Man

The world is founded on the principle of individual significance. Our Rabbis teach:

"Man was created alone. To teach that whoever destroys a single soul in Israel, the scripture charges him as though he had destroyed a complete world; and whoever preserves a single soul in Israel, the scripture ascribes to him as though he had preserved a complete world. ... And to proclaim the greatness of the Holy One Blessed is He: For if a man strikes many coins from one mold, they all resemble one another. But the supreme King of Kings, the Holy One Blessed is He, fashioned every man in the stamp of the first man, and yet not one of them resembles his fellow. Therefore, every person is obliged to say, "The world was created for my sake." (Sanhedrin 37)

This Mishneh teaches us several important ideas.

- 1 Each person is world, unique, and brilliant in significance and individuality.
- 2 Each person is different – from the time of the creation of the first person until the end of history - there was and will never be a person like him. No one person is exactly like any other in his combination of talents, deficiencies, strengths, energies.
- 3 Every individual must view himself as so significant that God would have created the entire world for his sake alone.

This singularity of Adam is the inheritance of each person.

The Jewish nation was founded by one father who stood up against the rest of the world. Our Patriarch, Avraham, was called Avraham Halvri. The word "ivri" means "other side." Our Rabbis teach us that Avraham was called this because he stood on one side of the world, while everyone else stood on the other side of the world. (Pesachim 118) Avraham taught monotheism in a pagan world. He was ridiculed, threatened with

extermination and isolated; yet he remained firm in his belief and his teachings. This ability to stand alone was engrained and inherited by the children of Avraham, the Jewish people. We are dependent only on Torah for our identity, strengths and beliefs. However, although we are capable of standing alone, we often do not define ourselves this way. Often we avoid standing alone – we often validate ourselves only within relationships – marital, family, social sphere – or by our profession, power and prestige.

While relationships are an essential part of the human experience, and while professions provide us with use of our creative energy, they are not validation of our uniqueness as human beings. In fact, we often hide within those relationships and positions in order to avoid being alone and facing ourselves.

The High Holidays

Once a year, we are reminded of our aloneness, and we must account for ourselves as unique individuals. On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we stand completely alone before God. We realize that we stand in judgment on our own, and there is no one who can help us or save us. We cannot use our alliances with other people as justification for poor behavior, or as compensation for our own growth. Each of us is our own witness and our own defense. All guilt and failure belongs to us alone, and we stand naked before our Creator as if there is no one else in the world.

When our Creator asks, Why did you do this or that, we cannot answer, Because everyone was doing it. We cannot hide behind the actions of others, or hold onto the coattails of others in an effort to justify ourselves. Our rabbis describe this standing alone on Rosh Hashanah as the “children of Maron” On Rosh Hashanah, we walk before God as children of Maron. The Gemara gives three interpretations of what this means:

What is the meaning of the expression *“Like children of Maron?”* In Babylon it was translated, *“Like a flock of sheep.”* Resh Lakish said: as in the ascent of Beth Maron. Rabbi Yehudah said in the name of Shmuel: Like the troops of the house of David. Rabbah bar Bar Chanah said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: (All the same) they are viewed at a simple glance (Rosh Hashanah 18a)

The first interpretation is that we pass before God as sheep pass before the shepherd as they go through the sheep gates. We are part of a flock, yet each sheep counts. The second interpretation is that Maron is a narrow pass through which only one individual can walk at a time. This pass is called Beth Maron. As we walk through life, we walk through a narrow pass, alone, despite friendships and associations with others. The third interpretation is that God views us as His soldiers, and makes an assessment of each one’s achievements and capabilities. Each of us is important in our service of the King. No one soldier is less important for the job he has been assigned. The last interpretation is that God looks at us all at the same time, yet sees each of us individually.

The High Holy days provide us with days of solitude, days where we stand before our Creator as individuals, contemplating our uniqueness and our ability to stand alone, as our father Avraham Halvri did. It is a time to consider what we stand for and to acknowledge that we are not just an unimportant person, but we are each a significant soldier in God’s army. We are each unique individuals for whom the entire world was created, and we spend these days asking ourselves how we have used that world, how we have earned that world. These are days we measure up to our own ideals and we make decisions for further growth and accomplishments.

The ultimate goal of being alone is not to create individuals who stand completely alone as an island. The goal is to create individuals who know who they are, what they stand for and how they can use their individuality for the world and for the Jewish people.

This is a two-step process – to build one’s self into a person who is an individual and who stands alone and to use that strength to be part of the Jewish people. In so doing, we change the world.

Klal Yisroel

Klal Yisroel – the Jewish people – is more than just a nation. It is an identity that was forged at Sinai, when we all agreed to accept the Torah. From the moment of that acceptance, a new mechanism was formed, one in which all of its members counted and depended on each other; one in which the actions of any individual affected the other members of the group. Klal Yisroel is an all-inclusive unit that is more than the sum total of its parts. If a Jew hurts in one place in the world, it affects all Jews in other places in the world. If a Jew does

a mitzvah in America, it affects the reality of Jews in Israel. Likewise, a sin by one person affects all other people. This is the essence of Klal Yisrael.

This means that although we stand as individuals, we cannot ignore the affect of our actions on the group. Every mitzvah we do, every sin we transgress affects the Klal. This is true of actions that done in private, even in secret, unseen. We are one mechanism and part of the same whole. Our actions affect not just us, but the entire Jewish People.

The great Rabbi, the Chafetz Chaim, compared this to two people in a boat. One person decides to drill a hole under his seat. When his companion objects, the man with the drill retorts, But the hole is under my seat, not yours! Of course, the hole will sink both of them, and it would be wrong to think otherwise. So it is with the Jewish people – we cannot “drill a hole” under our own seat, by sinning, and assume it affects no one but us. We are all in the same boat, and the salvation of one is the salvation of all.

The existence of Klal Yisrael even affects the way we are judged. Whereas as an individual, we may not be able to stand in judgment because of our sins, as Klal Yisrael, we merit a different, more merciful, kind of judgment. This is why we pray in a minyan, and why we pray in the plural – not just for our individual healing and redemption but for the redemption of all of the Jewish people. In being part of the greater whole, we merit more Divine intervention and mercy.

Making a Difference

To make a difference, a person must first identify himself as a person who stands alone. He must know what he lives for and what he is willing, if necessary, to die for. He must know what he hopes to achieve and set goals for spiritual accomplishment.

He must also understand that Klal Yisrael needs him, and that every action he does can be a contribution to the well being of the Klal. Every positive thought, deed or word a person does has an affect on the Jewish people. Therefore, a person can make a tremendous difference even when he sits alone, if he carries the weight of the Klal on his shoulders. Once a person realizes this, his life has meaning way beyond himself. And he can make a difference.

Yosef changed the world. The entire world was saved from starvation because one Jew went down to Egypt, and knew that he had a mission. His actions sitting in jail would affect his future and that of his people. If he acted righteously, God would be with him; if he acted selfishly, he could not bring about a positive change. His devotion to the greater plan fed the world.

One Jew made a difference. And so can we!

Rebbetzin Holly Pavlov is the Director of Shearim Women's Seminary in Jerusalem. She is an internationally renowned lecturer and author of 'Mirror of our Lives: Reflections of Women in Tanach'. And 'Water from the Well: Reflections on Being a Jew at the End of History'.

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CAN WE FORGIVE AND FORGET BY LEE KUSHNIR

It seems almost cliché to say the pre-Rosh Hashona month is the time to begin reflecting on one's actions during the past year, in relation to the concept of forgiveness. Have I wronged anyone? Has anyone wronged me? The Talmud teaches us that someone who doesn't receive proper forgiveness from a person he may have treated shabbily during the year, may as well not bother davening on Rosh Hashonah or Yom Kippur. That's how worthless his prayers become.

Our teachers have been telling us the same thing since kindergarten, "Make sure you ask forgiveness from everyone before the New Year." In fact, as children, it wasn't the last day before Yom Tov without demanding "forgiveness" from all your friends, it almost became a game. "I'll forgive you, if you forgive me!" We would squeal in delight.

But, as adults, the entire concept suddenly brings new meaning. Forgiveness is not so simple, sometimes just the idea of "letting go" of a person or situation that was so incredibly hurtful brings along a whole slew of emotions you'd rather completely not address altogether. To "forgive and forget" sounds just fine, minus the "forgive" part.

We're humans, and even if holding a grudge is not your thing, it is still very difficult to completely wipe the slate clean for something or someone, who has done something terrible to you over the course of the year. As children, we would get swept up in the excitement of the chag, playfully demanding our friends to forgive us, for not sharing snack, or spending too much time on the monkey bars, or any wrongdoings that seem huge in the life of a child. But, the life experiences some of us undergo as adults may sometimes be too painful to really feel forgiveness, to honestly say "sure, I forgive you, don't worry about it," simply because it's that time of the year. "Forgiveness" is something you have to feel, and by just granting it to someone due to the fear of the chag's intensity, makes the mechila completely worthless. Unless you truly feel forgiveness with every emotion and feeling you may have bottled up inside, telling someone you forgive them, if you really don't mean it, is really nothing more than meaningless, empty words.

There is a famous machloket between the Chofetz Chaim and R'Yisrael Salanter regarding the concept of mechila. The Chofetz Chaim says one must ask everybody for forgiveness, no matter what. If it is too difficult to ask him or her at the time of the wrongdoing, then it must be asked before Yom Kippur. R'Yisrael Salanter feels if that by asking for forgiveness, more hurt will come, then one shouldn't ask. Interestingly enough, it was R' Salanter whose actions towards another person were anything but those of someone who has a problem with forgiving his fellow human being. For example, there once was a man who rudely insulted the great Rabbi. Afterwards, the man felt awful about what he'd done, and came to R. Yisrael to beg forgiveness. R. Yisrael immediately forgave him, and even asked the man if he needed any help, (the man was a visitor from out of town). The Rav was ready to do whatever he could on this man's behalf. The visiting man was shocked. He could not believe that after he had been so rude and insulting, the elderly Rabbi had not only forgiven him with a full heart, but, even wanted to go out of his way to help him out. The Rav replied with a quote from kiddushin, "A deed brings one out of a deed or a thought, but a thought does not bring us out of a deed or a thought." This is an amazing concept, and really fits in with what we said earlier. The words or even the thoughts of forgiveness mean NOTHING until you put them into action. The "thought" of forgiving, even the empty words, with no basis behind them, do not mean much until you actually put them into action. They are worthless until you do something to prove to yourself and to the person you have wronged, that you really mean it.

After hearing of a particularly cruel situation, Rabbi Ephraim Wachsman once said that sometimes people do things we can't understand, things that seem so cruel, they don't even sound real. Yes, even people who have been taught and educated to love our fellow human being since the time we could speak, sometimes behave in the most cruel manner possible. It is at times like these when the true concept of what makes us different matters most, and this is knowing that everything is really meant to be. By understanding this, and really believing it, you show you have the faith and ingenuity to realize that everything comes from above, that you are not in charge of what happens, that a G-d with only your best intentions in mind, is doing everything for a very specific reason. No matter how horrible and cruel a particular situation may be, it's all part of a greater plan, and it's realizing this that makes us stronger, more forgiving people. This is not meant to undermine a particular negative feeling you may have towards someone who has wronged you terribly, but, to help put the harsh and difficult feelings into context. If you really know there is a greater plan behind it all, then forgiving becomes easier. If you actually do something to put your words into actions, then eventually you may even convince yourself and move on from whatever was hurting you. May we all merit to have our tefilot accepted and to merit a Happy, Healthy New Year.

Lee Kushnir is an Assignment Editor for WCBS-TV in New York City.

QUANTUM PHYSICS AND THE NATURE OF HALAKHIC TEXTS BY SANDRA JACOBS

The reflective focus of Ellul allows us the space to think beyond our own yet can also be a good time to consider the origins and relationships of texts that determine our identities as Jews. We know the names of the men responsible for the transmission of these, listed chronologically in each generation in the first chapter of Pirke Avot, but how exactly did our core rabbinic teachings come into the form in which we have them today? And why does it matter? Mishnatenu (our Mishnah) informs us of the Halakhot, the rules and laws independently of their biblical basis. These are the teachings that generated our later Talmud traditions that remain vibrant rationale for all of Jewish Law today. Like the challenge of Everest, scaling its heights and reaching the peak are just the beginning steps in identifying its physical form and furthermore, how this complex reality came into being.

Often, absorbed by vitality of Talmudic debates, we skip the closely related but much longer Tosefta or "additions" that originally accompanied our Mishnah. Both these collections, Mishnah and Tosefta were taught orally, repeated and chanted till they were memorized by heart in the schools and academies in Israel. We know that although our sages did make private notes for personal reference (from the Jerusalem Talmud Shabbat 6b and Bava Metsia 92a) the full written text of the Mishnah did not appear till around 220ce, through the efforts of R. Yehuda ha Nasi, Judah the Prince.

Scholars have assumed that the accompanying Tosefta, followed straight after the publication of the Mishnah, as the Tosefta it was not a freestanding document, presenting its own position, but was clearly a secondary, derivative, and dependent work. It was a much longer commentary and its form fitted into the structure of the Mishnah as if to be almost integral to it. Each of the editorial layers of the Mishnah, identified in sequential can be matched their legal equivalents in the Tosefta. From the findings of R. Avraham Goldberg it's also clear that the Mishnah represents the scholarship of a generation earlier, so that the first layer of Tosefta corresponds to the second layer of the Mishnah. Following on from this, the second layer of the Tosefta then parallels the third layer of the Mishnah, and so on.

The research of Professor Shamma Friedman reveals further intrigue. He has found that the Tosefta possess a much later editorial "stratum" or layer that is evidently subsequent to the Mishnah in time. However, in this later layer the Tosefta retains much earlier forms of the laws, that were themselves reworked by the editor of the Mishnah.....but how can something produced later in time contain parts that were then earlier to the base – text of the Mishnah ? Is this practically possible? Could it simply be that since the Mishnah is older, when the Tosefta was produced it just incorporated earlier sources?

Professor Judith Hauptman suggests that the Mishnah was the formal consolidation of independent “clusters” of tannaitic materials or what she calls “source beraitot” (a beraita being any ‘outside’ first or second century traditions that’s not found in the Mishnah). These “source beraitot” inevitably existed in early antiquity and freely circulated but were not necessarily older than the Tosefta. Alternatively, she notes that it still also possible that the Mishnah and Tosefta derive from a third, more ancient undefined source, which is no longer accessible.

For us, these sources remain the most fundamental expression of who we are, and why we do what we do, possibly more than the Torah itself, which we do not follow literally but only through the interpretative frame of the Mishnah and Talmud. In thinking about how our halakhic sources first came into “publication” a striking parallel is witnessed from the unlikely discipline of quantum physics.

Quantum mechanics is simply what we see when we examine the smallest size levels of the Universe. In 1959 Werner Heisenberg published his Uncertainty Principle of Quantum Physics, for which he subsequently won the Nobel Prize. It’s a theory that no one has disproved or refuted since its publication and it describes the location and movement of infinitely small and indeterminate matter, namely the electron particle. Heisenberg found that the exact position AND the definite momentum and speed of any elementary particle could not both be measured with any degree of accuracy, simultaneously. Each of these could only be identified separately and irrespective of the technological precision of scientific equipment, there are absolutely no circumstances where we can ever identify where a particle physically is AND AT THE SAME TIME locate the precise direction in which it is moving. Likewise our “source beraitot” or otherwise unclassified, pre-Mishnaic “oral” traditions” which have a definite position and a transmissional movement, but like the electron particle, we cannot pinpoint them both simultaneously.

The significance of this comparison may be simply no more than to remind us of the limitations of our own knowledge. The description of these two processes are distanced in time by over 2,000 years, during which we as Jews have lived and learned these traditions and unfortunately frequently died for them also. The origination and development these teachings in our Mishnah and Tosefta should be of no less importance to us, and furthermore, when we examine them, we may find that as quantum mechanics and the wisdom of our own traditions suggests, the spiritual reality coded in these sources may operate like atoms in the Universe and remain beyond the finite vision of human perception:

Which path leads to the point at which light is refracted, where the sunlight diffuses out upon the earth? (Job 38:24)

If nothing else, this should generate a certain humility but also renewed appreciation not just for the contents of our preformative Rabbinic texts but also a deeper regard for the processes through which we have received them.

More than anything else Sandra Jacobs is a mother and homemaker; she is also completing a Master's Degree in Biblical Studies, at Kings' College, London and plans to start a PhD at Manchester, with Professor Bernard Jackson commencing in October 2006

DO NOT FORGET OUR SONS MISSING IN ACTION

It was in those heady days before my only son's Bar Mitzvah, two and half years ago, that I saw them.

There they were, a group of about five teenage boys, wearing knitted cuppels and blue jeans, standing under the bridge on Golders Green Road, distributing pamphlets about Israel.

I was interested to see exactly what it was that they were giving out. I took some of the pamphlets. A lot of them were about the Intifada, but one sheet in particular caught my eye. It was information about five Israeli soldiers who had been kidnapped in the last twenty years and held captive without any contact with their families. A passage from the Talmud was quoted 'Captivity is harder than all other punishments, for all sufferings are included in it'.

There was a photo of each captive soldier, the date he was captured, and a special prayer in English and Hebrew which could be said on behalf of the soldiers Missing In Action (MIA), which is printed below:

May He who blessed our forefathers Abraham, Issac and Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, David and Solomon, may He bless preserve and protect the captive and missing soldiers of the Israel Defence Forces including:

Yekutiel Nachman ben Sarah Katz

Zecharia Shlomo ben Miriam Baumel

Zvi ben Penina Feldman

Ron ben Batya Arad

Guy ben Rina Hever

**Gilad ben Aviva Shalit*

**Ehud ben Malka Goldwasser*

**Eldad ben Tova Regev*

May He rescue them from captivity and speedily restore them in peace, in the merit of my prayers. May the Holy One, blessed be He, show them mercy, increase their strength, remove their pain and send them a recovery of body and recovery of spirit may He return them to the bosom of their families, (On Sabbath: The Sabbath prohibits us from crying out, may salvation come speedily,) swiftly and soon, Now let us respond: Amen

Hey, I thought. These boys, each and every one of them, had also had a Bar Mitzvah. At that time, their parents were going through exactly what I am going through now: planning, running and worrying. What hopes, dreams and aspirations every Jewish parent has for their son at the time of his Bar Mitzvah. And then this! It was too horrible for words.

I am certain that had it not immediately before my only son's Bar Mitzvah, I would not have felt so passionately about this issue, not identified so closely with the parents and their tragedy of their loss. There is no doubt in my mind that Hashem had arranged it this way.

I decided that I had to do something. The first thing I did was to personalise the prayer so that it could be said by an individual and not a congregation, as it had originally been written. Then I had the prayer cards laminated. I wanted to distribute them at my son's Bar Mitzvah dinner. My intention was to instil in my son the message that every Jew is responsible for every other Jew, whether religious, like we were, or not. This was very important to me, and I believe that I was successful.

I dreamt of a world wide prayer movement. The issue of kidnapped soldiers cuts across all levels of religiosity and all political viewpoints. I saw this issue as a means of uniting our people. My hope was that a world wide prayer movement would open the Gates of Heaven, and the soldiers would be returned home, hopefully alive, but, if not at least they would receive a proper burial in Israel. It is the Mitzvah of *Pidyon Shevuim* – Redemption of Captives. It gives Hashem great *nachas* when there is unity amongst Jews.

As it was before Pesach that year, I distributed dozens of laminated prayer cards to groups that were making family and communal Seders. This included groups from every part of the religious spectrum: Zionist youth

groups, Betar, Lubavitch, SEED and so on. I also started to write articles about the MIA's which I distributed as background to the prayer.

In my research, one of the articles which I had read about the MIA's was an interview with Yona Baumel, father of Zachary, who made Aliyah from New York when Zachary was nine years old. I managed to contact Mr. Baumel, a retired real estate agent in Jerusalem, and have had a number of meaningful conversations with him. He and the other parents, have been deeply disappointed in what they perceive as the inadequate response of the Israeli government of their son's plight. The IDF has wanted to put closure on this issue, and the parents have fought this all the way up to the Supreme Court, demanding a proper investigation into their sons' disappearance. Yona Baumel himself has made contact with Arab negotiators and has paid private investigators, he is certain that his son is still alive and being held incommunicado in a military prison on the Syrian-Iraqi border. When I told him about my efforts, and those of other women, he said 'in the merit of righteous women, my son will be returned home alive'.

This is why we have to pray. This prayer was written by a Rabbi in Yona Baumel's home in Jerusalem shortly after his son was abducted. It is more important to pray, then to spend time speculating about whether the soldiers are alive or not. Their captors like to taunt and tease the families, releasing bits of information from time to time. No one knows whether or not their propaganda is true.

In addition to saying this prayer, one should recite Tehillim (Psalms) especially Psalms 20 – 22 and 69, and give Tzedaka (Charity). Some women say the prayer every day, others at candle lighting. Whenever you say it, it's good, and please encourage your friends and family to say it as well. In merit of our prayers, may all the soldiers soon be returned home.

- *These names have been added after the recent kidnapping of the three soldiers
- For a copy of the prayer card in English and Hebrew, please e-mail: raman.new@virgin.net
- For more information visit www.zacharybaumel.org

Please do not discard this prayer

THE WORLDS WE LIVE IN BY MIRIAM COHEN

When my uncle kisses me (managing, every time, with startling precision to place his lips somewhere in proximity to my own), I am slightly repulsed, vaguely amused, and embarrassed for both of us. But also I am thinking about the Torah law that prohibits him from touching me. My uncle, his children, my grandmother, would never think in terms of Torah. They are, collectively, comparatively to my Orthodox family, about as Jewish as a Hebrew National hot dog. That is to say, culturally. Vaguely.

In front of my extended family I feel my Orthodoxy like a blush. It is a stubborn toilet paper trail of an identity foreign to my aunts, uncles, cousins, and my grandmother. We are the family no one really likes. We are an anomaly; circus freaks.

The cousins banter with each other and my grandmother. Their love is easy; natural. But my parents made a choice, and really, don't the sins of the fathers fall on the sons? We are Orthodox. We don't eat their food, don't go to family events and celebrations on Saturday.

It is because of us the cousins can't eat lobster today. It is because of us the party is on Sunday. When we sit down to eat at the long table in the hotel VIP room we had rented out for the occasion of my grandmother's 80th birthday, my cousin Matt* clears his throat and I concentrate very hard on not laughing. We all know what is coming next: the spiritual meditation Matt has offered to lead.

Matt is a vegan now, and he hikes and chants and does yoga. He has become the most centered person I know. He also looks like he belongs in a jungle. Recently, I asked my sister, "Does Matt wear a shirt?" She laughed. "yes!" He does not, however, generally come equipped with shoes. His hair hangs in a twisted snarl of dreadlocks down his back. His eyes have the most intense gaze I've ever seen. When Matt looks, he probes, he stares, he strips you bare.

He scared us, at the 75th birthday party, when his hair rose in high spikes off his head, giving him the look of a fantastically overgrown porcupine. The spikes were so huge his head most closely resembled a gigantic sun. But his expression, as he might say now, “his aura” had been that of the darkest deepest night imaginable.

Today, I imagine us on the floor contorted in awkward yoga squats. But Matt asks us to reach out to the person next to us. Once all hands are grasped, forming an ungainly circle across the table of relatives, Matt asks us to reflect. “It’s a crazy world out there, but for this moment we are here in this nice hotel, all of us Cohens holding hands,” he says, his voice smooth and comforting as running water. Then comes the moment of silence. As I always do when commanded to shut my eyes, I peek. Miraculously everyone else has their eyes shut.

I meditate hard, during the interminable silence, on the fact that these strangers are my family. And I think, maybe, that Matt is right—that whatever differences that separate us are, at their core not much more than semantics—that beneath everything, really, we are family.

And then my father ruins it. He clears his throat, and in his deliberate, insufferable way, it takes him a good minute or two to spit out that, if Matt gets to lead a spiritual meditation, he wants to lead the extended family in a bracha.

I squirm in my seat, sharing a pained glance with my sister. I feel my face heat up and my shame, my anger toward my father, in this moment. Doesn’t he understand? Doesn’t he see the thin, thin, ice we are treading? As a rule of thumb, we as the Orthodox family, make a concentrated effort to ensure a certain degree of innocuous behavior in front of the extended family. When we wash, or daven, or say a bracha, it is all executed hastily, apologetically, as though that might erase the gulf, the world, that widens between us and our family with each ritual, each liturgical verse, each excruciating difference.

My father leads the bracha in a halting voice—his Hebrew will never be smooth—and when he is done we murmur Amen. “Can we eat now?” Chuckles Grandma. “What did that bracha mean?” asks the great Aunt. My mother self-importantly explains. They have made a choice, both of them, becoming Orthodox. And whatever goes on behind closed doors, within our community, inside our Shul, is irrelevant today. They are pious, they are certain, they are Orthodox. Because they chose to be.

As the child of Baali Tshevat, I personally did not make this choice. I was born and raised Orthodox, a point of pride for both of my parents—they actually raising the all elusive FFB’s (Frum From Birth)! But there has always been for me, (and this may or may not hold true for my siblings) a kind of glassy sheen of distinction that separated me out from my peers whose parents had grown up Orthodox.

We listened to Christmas songs in December, because their beauty, the kitsch factor of those songs, the holiday feeling they carried. We turned up our noses at Jewish approximations of the “real thing” when it came to broader culture. We ate on special plates when we visited our grandparents, and at our cousins Bar or Bat Mitzvot we ate packaged TV dinners and danced with a DJ.

We explained and apologized even as small children, putting on an air of piety that could not have been real. As a member of the sole Orthodox family in an extended family of secular Jews, I have always felt the smallness of the Orthodox community, and the largeness of the outside world.

It is only recently that I have begun to understand the distinction I once felt as vast, is tiny. The world outside, of culture and noise, and the world inside of tradition and heritage, are at the core, for me, the same. I live with an uneasy kind of pride, in both worlds.

*names have been changed to protect privacy

Miriam Cohen is majoring in English at Touro College

Yedid Nefesh

Calling all *frum* singles! Are you fed up with the opportunities on offer? Fancy a **new and different way of meeting new people**and – who knows – maybe that elusive bashert? Here's just what you have been waiting forSmall, intimate Friday night meals hosted by local families across the North-West London community, offering a truly **warm and relaxed environment** where you can get to know like-minded people of your own age and outlook.

If this sounds like your bowl of chicken soup, please contact Rebbetzin Judy Ginsbury (Hendon United Synagogue) on 8202 5514 or e-mail your contact details to yedidnefesh@hotmail.com
Shabbat networking for the young professional Council of United Synagogue. A joint venture with SAM (Strike A Match) promoted by the Rabbinical Council of United Synagogue.

PUTTING JUDAISM BACK INTO YOUR WEDDING PLANS

In the run up to a wedding, lots of time and effort is put into making the day 'just right'. Hours are spent worrying about the dress, where to hold the reception and how long the speeches should be. The spiritual dimension of the wedding can easily get lost. The United Synagogue Marriage Enhancement Programme (MEP) provides a wonderful Jewish perspective on marriage: a perspective that can help a relationship grow in the years beyond the wedding day.

A Jewish marriage is very special. Spiritually it fuses the energies of two individuals into a unique relationship as they begin building a new Jewish home. When a couple have a sense of the spirituality of their wedding and beyond, the rewards can be enormous.

Before the wedding day the experience of the visit to the mikveh can help celebrate the start of a new chapter in a couple's life. And after visiting as a bride, many women are enriched by immersing themselves in the Mikveh every month before renewing their marital relationship.

Couples give many personal reasons for their commitment to Mikveh. Many stress the way in which it improves their relationship, while some women say the mystical nature of the mikveh waters deeply affects them – giving them a spiritual high.

Mikveh strengthens the intimate aspect of marriage as well as promoting the growth of mutual respect and priceless friendship. It reflects the constant renewal and sanctification of a Jewish marriage as well as giving expression to the individual's right to separateness, self-direction and self-fulfillment. The mikveh is often misunderstood. Far from being 'old-fashioned' it is as relevant and rewarding for women in the 21st century as it has ever been. It is also a practice which unites Jewish women throughout the ages. For thousands of years, Jewish women cross the world have regarded this mitzvah as so precious that they have braved huge distances, inclement weather and severe danger rather than forsake it.

The Marriage Enhancement Programme provides both brides and grooms a chance to spend time one to one with a trained tutor. MEP tutors – who come from all parts of the community – are able to explain in a friendly, inform way, just what is so special and personal about this mitzvah.

MEP believes that it is the right of every couple to know and understand what Judaism has to say about marriage. They aim to give couples the opportunity to make choices about their marriage from a position of knowledge rather than ignorance.

The Marriage Enhancement Programme provides helpful and contemporary ideas about relationships as well as explaining the meaning behind the rituals that will take place on the wedding day itself. MEP courses are also available to couples who are already married but did not have this opportunity at an earlier stage or who would like a refresher course.

For further information on the Marriage Enhancement Programme contact Joanna Benarroch at:
joanna@usmep.co.uk

SHAARE ZEDEK – JERUSALEM'S 'HOSPITAL WITH A HEART' by Rhoda Goodman

In the late 1800's Jerusalem was a disease-ridden city and its 10,000 Jewish inhabitants were mostly old and poor. Against this background, a group of German and Dutch Jews travelled to Europe to establish a committee to raise funds for the construction of the first Jewish hospital in Jerusalem. They established groups in Frankfurt and Amsterdam and funds were raised to build Shaare Zedek – Gates of Righteousness. From the very beginning, the hospital was founded on the principle of "caring for all in need of medical science regardless of race or religion – Jews, Christians or Moslems".

The first building opened in 1902 on the Jaffa Road. Its director-general, Dr. Moshe Wallach, created a centre of healing that was run strictly according to Jewish law and Jewish values. Importantly, too, he insisted on treating the whole patient, not only his or her disease or impaired function. These principles have remained central to the hospital's practices and ethos to this very day. With its focus on individual care, Shaare Zedek is known in Jerusalem as the 'hospital with a heart'.

In 1979 Shaare Zedek outgrew its premises on Jaffa Road and moved to a new site opposite Mt. Herzl. As Jerusalem's population has expanded westwards, Shaare Zedek has become the city's most centrally located, major acute care hospital. Jerusalem has blossomed from a remote and backward town to a vibrant, modern city and Shaare Zedek has played an important role in this transformation, creating centres of excellence within the hospital that offer world-class expertise and treatment.

No department better justifies the hospital's reputation as a provider of compassionate care than the cancer pain and palliative medicine service which is committed to relieving cancer patients' suffering by treating their pain and addressing their emotional and spiritual needs. The department's expertise in this area has received international recognition and has ensured that optimum pain management is practised in every department of the hospital.

Another of Shaare Zedek's centres of excellence is the Woman and Infant Centre which opened in 1999. Encompassing 69,000 square feet, the Centre offers an unprecedented variety of medical services for women on one entire floor of the hospital. It is designed to address women's health problems at every stage of their adult life, from adolescence through childbearing years to old age.

When Shaare Zedek opened its maternity department at the beginning of this century on Jaffa Road just 20 babies were born each month. In today's Woman and Infant Centre that figure has grown to 900. Indeed, more than half the babies born in Jerusalem are born at Shaare Zedek. Approximately ten per cent of babies born at the hospital are treated in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), which is the largest in the city. One per cent of the premature babies admitted to the NICU weigh less than 1.5 kg.

Shaare Zedek's Comprehensive Heart Institute (CHI) is Israel's leading provider of cardiology care, attracting patients from all over Israel. The Institute was opened in 1994 in response to the high levels of heart disease found amongst Russian immigrants which swamped Israel's health care system. Since the establishment of the CHI, the waiting list for heart treatment in Jerusalem has been cut to zero. Procedures undertaken at Shaare Zedek are so state-of-the-art that the annual Washington Conference of Cardiologists regularly establishes a live video link-up with the hospital so that delegates can watch innovative non-invasive surgery performed there.

Since The Weinstock Family Department of Emergency Medicine was opened in September 2004, emergency patient numbers have increased by 22%. Shaare Zedek's very busy department is one of the leading emergency centres in the world. It encompasses many advanced services including an integral imaging unit, an infectious diseases unit (Shaare Zedek is designated by the Ministry of Health as the SARS hospital in Jerusalem), a shock and trauma unit, a negative pressure room, a chest pain clinic, an electronic tracking system for all patients and a special admittance unit for soldiers of the IDF. Many of these features were introduced at the planning stage by the then head of Shaare Zedek's Department of Emergency Medicine, Dr. David Applebaum, z"l.

In Jerusalem, of course, emergency services have an added dimension. In times of war and terrorist attack, Shaare Zedek has always been on the front line. Its entire emergency department is built underground and

includes an integral decontamination unit – the largest in Israel - for victims of chemical and biological warfare.

Shaare Zedek's Surgical Operating Centre is one of two new projects in the pipeline. Originally built in 1979 the operating theatres are now out-of-date and insufficient to meet the increasing surgical needs of patients. The hospital's eight theatres are to be expanded to twelve and all will be significantly upgraded with the latest technology.

At the same time, Shaare Zedek is addressing the needs of its paediatric patients. Now almost thirty years' old, the paediatric department is in urgent need of change. Many rooms have no windows, rooms allocated for infectious patients have no bathrooms and there are no facilities within the department for parents to be able to stay with young children. The type of hospitalised paediatric patient has altered considerably in the last 20 years. The community-based paediatrician can care for many of the mild-moderate problems and monitor stable chronic paediatric problems in local clinics. The hospitalised patient is therefore sicker, more unstable and complex and requires more intensive care and support from the medical, paramedical and nursing staff. The rebuilding and refurbishment of Shaare Zedek's paediatric department is now an urgent priority.

The hospital has begun its second century of service to the people of Jerusalem, leading the way in the provision of first-rate medicine along with a strong measure of compassion. It is amazing to contemplate that Shaare Zedek's many achievements over its long history have been attained without any government funding for new equipment, development or research. Its many centres of excellence could not have been established without the outstanding help of its wonderful family of supporters from around the world. To all of them, on behalf of our colleagues in Jerusalem, we extend our heartfelt thanks.

If you would like to make a donation or be involved with the Friends of Shaare Zedek then please contact: Shaare Zedek UK, 766 Finchley Road, London NW11 7TH t: 0208 201 8933 f: 0208 201 8935 Manchester Connection, PO Box 202, Salford, Manchester, M7 4WS t: 0161 720 9868 f: 0161 720 9761

AN ACT OF KINDNESS IN THE MIDDLE OF A WAR ZONE

A sincere, heartfelt 'thank you' to readers of Moonlight who responded so positively to our call for funds to help the residents of the north during the recent war between Hizbollah and Israel.

We raised, in total, over £10,000. Two trips were made during the war by our friends in Tel Aviv to distribute much-needed food and medicine to shelters and yeshivot. After the ceasefire, further trips were made when money was given to rabbonim in Kiryat Shemona and Sfat for them to pass on to the most needy. A final visit to the north is planned this coming week when the remaining £2,000 will be distributed in a similar fashion.

We pray that peace may prevail but, should the need arise again, our systems are firmly in place to immediately respond to any crisis.

Debbie French

SAFETY FOR WOMEN

Some sound advice for us all as we all sometimes forget to take our common sense with us when we go out.

Things women should know to stay safe: Please - Take the time to read these pointers. There may just be one or two you hadn't thought of.

After reading this, forward it to someone you care about. It never hurts to be careful.

1. Tip from Tae Kwon Do: The elbow is the strongest point on your body. If you are close enough to use it, do!

2. If a robber asks for your handbag, DO NOT HAND IT TO HIM. Toss it away from you.... he is probably more interested in your handbag than you and he will go for the handbag.
RUN LIKE MAD IN THE OTHER DIRECTION!

3. Women have a tendency to get into their cars after shopping, eating, working, etc., and just sit (doing their cheque book, or making a list). DON'T DO THIS! A predator could be watching you, and this is the perfect opportunity for him to get in on the passenger side, and attack you. AS SOON AS YOU GET INTO YOUR CAR, LOCK THE DOORS AND LEAVE.

4. Here are a few notes about getting into your car in a car park:

a.) Be aware: look around you; look into your car, at the passenger side floor, and check the back seat.

b.) If you are parked next to a big van, enter your car from the passenger door. Most attackers surprise their victims by pulling them into their vans while the women are attempting to get into their cars.

c.) Look at the car parked on the driver's side of your vehicle, and the passenger side. If a male is sitting alone in the seat nearest your car, you may want to walk back into the shop, or work, and get a guard/policeman to walk you back out.

IT IS ALWAYS BETTER TO BE SAFE THAN SORRY. (And better paranoid than dead.)

5. ALWAYS take the lift instead of the stairs. Stairwells are horrible places to be alone and the perfect crime spot.

I'd like you to forward this to all the women you know. It may save a life.

A candle is not dimmed by lighting another candle. Send this to any woman you know that may need to be reminded that the world we live in has some unpleasant people in it and it's better safe than sorry.

DENISE'S COOKERY COLUMN

Cooking for Rosh Hashanah requires a menu that is easy to serve and will be enjoyed by the whole family. Nothing too spicy, time consuming or using too many saucepans is on the menu! This dish tastes as delicious as it looks.

Glazed Lamb with Lemon Potatoes

I thought long and hard about this recipe so that we could capture the essence of Rosh Hashanah in this celebration meal. The lamb is cooked in red wine and pomegranate juice ensuring the meat is both tasty and succulent. Cooking the lamb covered prevents the meat drying out. The pomegranate juice provides a wonderful glaze over the meat and the lemon potatoes contrast well with the sweetness of the lamb.

Preparation Time: 25 minutes Cooking Time: 2 1/2 hours
Serves: 10 people

Ingredients

8 kg shoulder of lamb
10 cloves of garlic – peel and slice
300ml pomegranate juice
200ml red wine
2 kg floury potatoes – Maris Piper – scrubbed but not peeled
2 lemons
300ml chicken stock
6 sprigs each fresh thyme and oregano

4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Garnish: Sprigs of Thyme
3 pomegranates – seeds removed.

Method

- 1) Pre-heat the oven to 180/350F/ Gas mark 4.
- 2) Using the point of a sharp knife, score the top of the lamb with diagonal criss-cross lines.
- 3) Peel and slice 2 of the garlic cloves. Make slits in the lamb along the scored lines and press the garlic into them. Place the lamb into a deep roasting tin. Sprinkle with the juice of half a lemon and season well. Pour over the red wine and pomegranate juice.
- 4) Cover with foil and bake for 2 1/2 hours.
- 5) Roughly chop the potatoes and place in a saucepan of boiling water. Simmer for 5 minutes. Drain and place in a separate roasting tin. Drizzle with the olive oil and toss together.
- 6) Scatter over the remaining whole garlic cloves, sprigs of herbs, juice from the remaining 1 1/2 lemons and season well. Add the chicken stock, adding more if required.
- 7) Roast the potatoes for approximately 40 minutes or until golden.
- 8) When the lamb is cooked remove from the oven and leave to rest for 10 minutes before serving. Carve into thick slices.

To serve the stylish way: Sit several slices of lamb on a warmed plate with the lemon potatoes. Garnish with sprigs of thyme and a spoonful of pomegranate seeds.

Stuffed Aubergines

Succot is an exciting time and one always hopes that the weather will be nice so that meals in the Succah will not be too cold. During this time, stuffed vegetables – tomatoes, onions, peppers, courgettes and aubergines are all traditional, predominantly because it was and still is harvest time and these vegetables are at their best. We also celebrate the festival with seasonal fruits –like apples, figs, dates, pomegranate; all symbols of plenty.

I like to serve this stuffed aubergine with a plain green salad as it is quite filling; serve one aubergine per person for a main meal or half as a light meal or starter. The cumin seeds and herbs give it a truly authentic Middle Eastern flavour.

Preparation Time: 30 minutes Cooking Time: 50 minutes

Parev

Serves: 6 people

Ingredients

3 large aubergines – cut lengthways
2 large red peppers – halved and deseeded
3 tablespoons olive oil
225g / 1 cup cous cous
600ml/ 2 1/2 cups hot vegetable stock
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
2 tablespoons cumin seeds
6 cloves garlic- peeled and finely chopped
50g/ 1/2 cup raisins
400g/ 14 ounce tin chick peas
3 tablespoons fresh basil – chopped
3 tablespoons fresh mint – chopped
3 tablespoons fresh coriander – chopped
Salt and freshly ground black pepper – to taste

Garnish: Dust with paprika – 1 tablespoon

Method

- 1) Pre-heat the oven to 200 C/ 400 F/ Gas mark 6.
- 2) Score the flesh of the aubergine and place on a baking sheet lined with baking parchment paper. Drizzle with 2 tablespoons of olive oil.
- 3) Bake for 25 minutes.
- 4) Meanwhile pre-heat the grill to its highest setting. Place the red peppers on a baking tray. Brush with 1 tablespoon of olive oil.
- 5) Grill the peppers for 10 minutes or until blackened. Remove immediately, put into a dish and cover with cling film. Leave to cool.
- 6) Remove the aubergine from the oven and scoop out the flesh leaving a 1 cm / ½ inch thick shell next to the skin.
- 7) Chop the removed flesh and set aside.
- 8) Pour the hot stock over the cous cous. Cover with cling film and set aside.
- 9) Heat the vegetable oil in a medium sized frying pan. Sauté the cumin seeds for 1 minute and then add the garlic, and chopped aubergine flesh. Cook for 10 minutes or until soft.
- 10) Peel the skins off the red peppers and roughly chop the flesh. Add to the aubergine.
- 11) Stir the aubergine mixture into the cous cous. Add the chick peas, raisins, chopped basil and mint and half the coriander. Season well.
- 12) Divide the mixture between the 6 aubergine shells.
- 13) Bake for 15 minutes.

To serve: Sprinkle with paprika and remaining coriander.

The Ultimate Apple Cake

Will freeze
Parev

This special recipe is from my recent book, 'The Jewish Mamas Kitchen'. It is quick and straightforward to make..... I quite often make two and put one away for the freezer. As it uses a large quantity of apples, should you be lucky enough to have an apple tree in the garden and an abundant crop, this recipe makes a delicious way of using them up.

Certain recipes become family trade marks and this is definitely one of those; all my sisters make this recipe. I have often revamped it with various combinations of plums, apricots and pears instead of apples.

This cake is suitable for both tea and as a dessert served hot or cold.

Preparation Time: 20 minutes Cooking Time: 1 hour 15 minutes
Serves: 8 people

Ingredients

1 kg / 2.2 lb apples – peeled, cored and sliced
2 eggs
1 tablespoon vanilla sugar
150g ½ cup margarine
1 ½ teaspoon baking powder
225g 1 cup caster sugar
225g/1 cup self raising flour
1 teaspoon vanilla essence

Garnish: 1 tablespoon brown sugar – optional

Method

- 1) Pre-heat the oven to 180 C/ 350F/ Gas mark 4.
- 2) Grease and line a 21cm/ 8 1/2 inch loose bottom based cake tin.
- 3) Peel and slice the apples very thinly.
- 4) Whisk the eggs and caster sugar in a food mixer. Melt the margarine in a saucepan and add this to the egg and sugar mixture.
- 5) Add the baking powder and almond essence.
- 6) Slowly add the flour and combine together. The mixture should be very thick.
- 7) Put 2/3rd of the cake mixture on the base of the tin. Cover with all the apples then cover with the remaining cake mixture. The mixture will not completely cover the apples.
- 8) Sprinkle over the vanilla sugar.
- 9) Bake for 1 – 1 1/4 hours or until set.

To serve the stylish way: Sprinkle a little brown sugar over the top just before serving.



Enjoyed the recipes in this magazine? If so, why not join Denise Phillips, the noted cookery writer and food columnist, on her

Cookery Courses : Hands On classes including lunch. 10am – 1.30pm

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	Weds 8 Nov & Thurs 9 Nov :	Italian Favourites
	Weds 22 Nov & Thurs 23 Nov :	Stylish Dinner Party Cooking
	Weds 6 Dec & Thurs 7 Dec:	Gourmet Buffet

Date On A Plate : Cookery classes for singles aged 35-55. Meet and mingle while you learn new skills.

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For more information call **01923 836 456** or denise@jewishcookery.com