

MOONLIGHT

The UK's Quarterly Rosh Hodesh e-Newsletter

EDITORIAL

This year the map of Israel changed as Gaza was returned. What ever the politics, given how the rest of the world behaves in such situations, the Israeli withdrawal was dignified

The world saw pictures of soldiers and settlers praying together before the evacuation; and of women soldiers caring for the women and male soldiers purely for the men so that Tnius was maintained.

Here was a nation torn apart and yet the respect for one another remained.

This is the time of year that we need to reflect on our relationship not just with G-d but also with our fellow Jews. Who of us is capable of finding the common thread of humanity and respect for each other? Is it easier for us to face the Almighty and apologise then look our fellow Jews in the eye?

May this year we find the respect & dignity in each other and our faith to be worthy of being inscribed in the Book of Life

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Caroline Cohen a successful West End actress/singer performs her one-woman show 'From Showbiz to Shabbat' telling her story from Eliza in 'My Fair Lady' to her return to Orthodox Judaism.

**THE POWER OF
PRIVATE PRAYER -
Nikki Rosenthal**

With the Yamim Tovim (High Holy Days) approaching this is the time to explore how we can effectively access the unique energy of our one to one connection with Hashem.

As women, we are not obligated to pray with a minyan (quorum of ten men); we are however obligated and encouraged, to pray. (Please note: whilst women are not *obligated* to pray with a minyan it is good if she can pray with a minyan.) Prayer is often associated merely with ritual services. This article seeks to highlight the power and uniqueness of spontaneous, personal and unstructured prayers, prayers said from the bottom of our hearts that are not printed in any Siddur. About the type of prayer that we might say when we hear that some one is G-d forbid unwell, or the prayer we say as we hear the evening news which so often broadcasts tragedy upon tragedy, I'm also referring to the prayers of Mazal Tov and blessings that we share at times of simcha and I'm also writing about the prayers we utter as we lay our tired heads onto the pillow at night which may be full of hope, uncertainty, appreciation....a vast array of personal prayers. These are not necessarily the

prayers we say in Shul, they follow little order and change day to day, week to week, in-fact they can change from minute to minute. They are the words from our inner depths and at this time of year I think it is particularly appropriate to consider their value.

In Tenach we learn from the story of Chana. She prayed from the depth of her heart and we learn many of the laws of prayer thanks to her. "Chana's prayer added a new dimension to our understanding of the relationship between G-d and the Jewish people. Chana asked for a personal blessing so that she might more fully serve G-d."¹ She realised that G-d was close to all and at any time, not just at shul, not just with minyan and not just for the big collective lofty things. She understood that Hashem listens to every one individually and hears our personal prayers, thoughts and emotions. In the structured format of the Amida- shemoneh esrei, we say towards the end 'Shema Koleinu' which means hear our voices, in other words we ask Hashem to hear what is not said exactly in words but rather we ask Him to hear the emotions that cannot always be put into words. Sometimes a voice can express so much

¹
www.torah.org/learning/wo/man/class11.html

more than the words themselves. The tone a prayer is said in can transmit a powerful message; said in a cold monotonous tone it may suggest that there is little heart felt energy within the prayer, whereas if said with fervour and intent the words can mean so much more. Chana prayed to have a child, and she realised that Hashem listens to her personal pleas. She prayed with all her heart and soul, so much so that people observing her thought she looked drunk as she poured all her energy and strength into asking Hashem for what she wanted. Hashem did indeed bless her with a child and Chana is the role model that men and women look to as a perfect example of some one who understood the power of prayer.

The power of private prayer is such that we can ask Hashem for what we need and want and He interacts with us personally. The power of a small personal supplication can reach Hashem in a very unique way. Of course first we need to ask ourselves...what is the point of prayer? If Hashem knows what I want then why do I need to tell Him? Clearly it is more for us to realise what we need and want, once articulated the words of our prayers actually change *us!* If we speak out loud the words, "Hashem, I need and

therefore ask You for a top of the range BMW and also would like to win the lottery so that I may go on shopping spree upon shopping spree..." we may feel that we could use our words to the Creator a bit more wisely, indeed speaking the words out actually make us realize what we actually need. We may find that saying, "Hashem please keep my family safe and well and provide me with the food and means to look after my family", sounds like a more sensible and real request. As we bring the words into fruition we hear what we are really asking for and alert ourselves to what it is that we REALLY want. Through this change, the realization that Hashem plays a part in our everyday life, we become worthy of having a closer relationship with Hashem, our Infinite Creator.

At this time of year, whilst communal prayer is essential as we endeavour to connect to Klal Yisroel (the entire Jewish people) we would also do well to introspect and connect to our inner selves. Through this self analysis we can privately pray in our own words and our own language and ask Hashem to help us change and improve ourselves. With this greater understanding and connection to Hashem we can hope to have our prayers answered for the good and be inscribed along with the entire House of Israel in the book of life.

I wish you and your families a sweet and happy new year and hope that all your private and public prayers are answered for the good.

Nikki Rosenthal is from Wembley, and studied at JFS. She has just completed a degree at the University of Birmingham and is now studying at Neve Yerushalayim School of Jewish studies for Women in Jerusalem.

WOMEN AND SIMCHAT TORAH - Sandy Littman

I laughed aloud when I read Rebbetzin Van Den Bergh's email suggesting that I write about women and Simchat Torah. Really, do those words even belong together? And then I thought... and I thought some more ... and decided that I should do more than simply dismiss the subject out of hand. I spend my time learning and teaching Tanach - this should be a key point in my calendar. What follows is the result of a little research and a lot of thinking and should be considered as part of a process rather than any definitive statement on the subject.

For Simchat Torah we have the obligation of lighting candles, kiddush, festive meals, and simchat yom tov – the enjoying of the day. We don't sit in the sukkah, we don't eat matzoh, we don't have to stay up all night, and we

don't have to dance. Because this is a Yom Tov, we don't work. There is a special prayer formula, but there is no yizkor. Unlike Israel, our Simchat Torah is not fused with Shemini Atzeret - the *yom tov sheni* of the Diaspora has resulted in something unique: where eighth day Pesach is a repeat of day seven and second day Sukkot is a rerun of this first, Simchat Torah is not Shemini Atzeret all over again. The exception to this is that the Yom Tov formula of *be-yom ha-shemini chag ha-atzeret ha-zeh* is the same both days: in our prayers Simchat Torah is not mentioned. Called Shemini Atzeret, it isn't Shemini Atzeret as we know it. In Israel, the *hakafot* and *yizkor* and dancing and everything are all squashed into one roller-coaster day. We have two days so the solemnity of the 'Eighth Day of Solemn Assembly' yields at evening prayers to the 'Rejoicing of the Law' – a festival not in the Torah.

How is this? And why? And when did it arise? The Talmud (Meg 31a) lists the torah and haftarah readings for 'the last day of the festival' and then states 'on the morrow we read *ve-zot ha-brachah*' which is what we read today as Simchat Torah leynung. The haftarah listed there is from the book of Kings. As the theme of the completion of Torah became the dominant one, the haftarah reading was changed to

the start of Joshua (9th century, Rav Amram Gaon), perhaps reflecting the fulfillment of Hashem's promise to Abraham to make him into a nation and bring that nation back to the Promised Land. The name Simchat Torah is not found in the Talmud; it appears to have been introduced during the Middle Ages, and is decisively set out in the 16th century Shulchan Aruch.

According to R. S Y Zeivin the basic idea of rejoicing in honor of the conclusion of the Torah has its source in the Midrash. The midrashic passage in question does not refer to this day in particular, but the Rishonim make use of the passage in connection with Simchas Torah. It is written, *And Shlomo awoke, and behold, it was a dream; and he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; and he offered up burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings and made a feast for all his servants* (1Kings 3:15). On this verse the Aggadah tells us: Rabbi Elazer said, From this we learn that we make a feast for the conclusion of Torah; for the Holy One, Blessed Be He, had just told Shlomo, *Behold, I have given you a wise and understanding heart* (ibid v 12) ... And immediately he made a feast for all his servants. From this you may learn

that one makes a feast upon the completion of Torah.²

Why this celebration at this particular time? I have found no answers but am willing to speculate. The *zot habrachah* leyning is Moses's blessing to all Israel; this is read at a time when all Israel would have gone up to Jerusalem for Sukkot. It also coincides with Hakhel – the national assembly at the end of the Shemittah cycle when the Torah was read at a public 'teach-in' to men, women, and children. With the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, this national assembly no longer occurred: the Torah became the homeland and heartland of the Jewish people. Further, Sukkot marks the end of the festival season, the onset of the rainy months; in this context, Simchat Torah is a last burst of rejoicing before short days and long dark nights. It is a good time to re-start the reading of the Torah, allowing a run through until Pesach with no interruptions. According to Rabbi Eliezer (Rosh Hashanah 10b), the world was created in Tishrei; perhaps it is appropriate to read of God's creation of the world at this time and Simchat Torah is the first opportunity after Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. And perhaps this recalls the rabbinic declaration about the Water-drawing Ceremony

² The Festivals in Halachah, page 352

'he who has not seen the *simchas beis ha-sho'evah* has never seen rejoicing' (Sukkah 51a) - this being the right point in the calendar for pure joy.

The key themes of Simchat Torah are Torah, joy/rejoicing, and community, which bring us to the present time. This Chag is not about me and my place in the shul, but rather about shul, and Torah, and the *tzibbur*, the collective entity. I miss the warmth of remembered Simchat Torah as a young girl – the flags and the sweets and particularly the dancing, threading in and around the dancing tallis-clad men. I miss the exuberant dancing of teen and student days, being part of a lively circle. And I miss the efforts made for our children when they were young. Now, I am older; our shul (stepped ladies' gallery) hasn't the physical space for women to dance; the emptiness is enhanced by the distance from the 'action', men dancing below in the main shul, the chaos of unclear singing, and my own (tuneless) voice in my own ears.

I once attended a service where the women were given a sefer torah with which to dance - but it didn't feel like 'rejoicing'; it just felt like women imitating men. It felt hollow. Last year, I walked to a friend's house for coffee Simchat Torah morning. We concluded that such a gathering might be a better

celebratory event than standing and watching the men dance and drink.

The challenge is to find the rejoicing in Simchat Torah. Any ideas?

Sandy Littman teaches at the LSJS Midrasha Women's Learning Programme & other places; MPhil Comparative Semitics, a Bradford Graduate, and a member of the AUSW Executive and is also a wife, mother and grandmother (but doesn't look it - bli ayin ha-ra)

OUR COMMUNITY MATTERS - Irene Leeman

Writing about women and our Jewish community life, and although I do not think I am writing anything new for you to read, it really is quite an eye opener just to think about just how much voluntary work is done and how it unifies the community. It is certainly something to celebrate because it really ensures Jewish continuity.

As Moonlight is for women, I concentrate here on the work women do for our community individually and in women's groups. However, at the outset I must say that I am not a feminist, and also that I fully recognise the work carried out by men and by men and women in mixed groups/charities/organisations, both local and national/international.

It is the Jewish woman who directly has the job of ensuring Jewish continuity. She teaches her children in the home, where she is responsible for the family needs including kashrut. How interesting it is that the woman is totally trusted in the home as the upholder of 'the rules'. A shomer is not needed while she prepares food for the family, even when she is rushed and is constantly multi-tasking. She points the way to observance of Jewish customs, and teaches the values of hospitality, welfare and charity.

The Synagogue is merely an extension of the home, where those values learned at home can be applied for the benefit of the community. Women are usually the backbone of Shul life, tending to the basic needs, supporting the kiddushim and other preparations for Shabbat and chagim, as well as some of the 'heavier' stuff of welfare, charity, and hospitality. This work extends throughout the community to the schools, shops and communal organisations.

I feel it is absolutely vital to support our local Jewish shops. They are there for us, and make our daily living that much easier, often going out of their way to provide our favourite 'little extra' to complete our table. They must be nurtured, for our homes and for our synagogues, because without them our communities will die. They

save us time and enrich the community. ...And how many communal problems have been sorted while waiting at the cash till?

When we first became a nation, Moshe set up a model for a community. He implored Pharaoh to let all the people go for a 3-day pilgrimage to the wilderness to observe a festival to G-d. Pharaoh could not understand the need to take the very young and very old, and all the herds. He saw some as a burden, non-productive consumers. As well as it being an escape from Egypt for all the people, Moshe was alluding to the value and importance of each section of the community having a role to play for the good of all. The right of redemption would be the same for everyone. If anyone were missing it would lead to an incomplete redemption. Without valuing everyone's contribution a community simply *cannot* succeed. The Torah was not given to individuals. Our relationship with G-d is only through the community.

'Do not separate from the community' said Hillel (Mishna: Avot 2:4).

One of the benefits of being part of the community is that ones' individual failings may be overlooked. Although each individual must have concerns about his/her own judgement on Rosh Hashanah, as a community we have a festive meal and wear our best new clothing to show

our confidence that we will be exonerated as members of the community. At this time we increase our links with the community. When Elisha offered to pray for the childless Shunamite woman on Rosh Hashanah, she said 'I live amongst my nation' which is explained as the power of the community being greater than the prayer of G-d's chosen prophet. John Donne said 'No Man is an Island, entire of itself, every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main'. No Jew is allowed to live by and for himself - every Jew is required to live as part of a community, as Judaism can only be fully experienced in a community. The individual is weak and mortal, but the community is strong and immortal. Time and effort spent on strengthening the community is an investment in its future.

Judaism covers all aspects of life and the task Torah imposes on us, is to live in the world. In order to safeguard the community we must nurture our members and include everyone, even the most vulnerable. And so it is that people get together to form organisations (both inside and outside of the Synagogue) for helping vulnerable members of society, for people with disabilities of all kinds, the sick, the hungry, the poor, the abused - giving moral, educational, practical and financial support. Also they form special interest

groups for Torah study, education, sports, social activities and the arts. Then of course there are groups, which give financial and practical help for every aspect of life in our beloved Israel.

In terms of women's contribution to this, I want to list some of them so that we can really see the actual breadth and volume of organisations. In addition of course, there are people doing individual acts of chesed, and care groups within each Shul, and communal organisation, and many charitable/support groups who have no name of their own and which carry on their work quietly in the background.

Just look at this impressive list of well-known groups. It is not exhaustive, but certainly illustrates my point. I hope I can be forgiven for my omissions. The groups cut across the community in terms of political and religious shades. (alphabetical order); AJWO – the Association of Jewish Women's Organisations, [which is the umbrella group, providing a council of Jewish Women's organisations, to further communal understanding and deliberate on matters of common interest and concern. Many of the following are affiliates of AJWO], Association of Masorti Women; Association of United Synagogue Women (AUSW); B'nai Brith Women; British Emunah, Friends of the Hebrew

University of Jerusalem Women's group, Friends of ORT Women's Division, JNF 'First' Ladies; Jewish Women's Aid; Jewish Women's Network, League of Jewish Women; Na'amat, Liberal Judaism Women, Reform Synagogue Guilds; Sephardi Women; The 35s, UJIA Women's Division; Women's International Zionist Organisation. (WIZO.UK), World Jewish Relief. Many of these have representation on the Board of Deputies, the National Council of Women, and AJWO is part of the Women's National Commission.

In addition there are many charities set up by women, often for medical causes or as support groups for people with family problems. There are also many women's prayer groups, Rosh Chodesh groups and regular learning groups.

Remembering that many women associated with these groups and others, may be involved with more than one, may work and possibly full time, and also look after their homes and families, then it really is quite a feat of dedication.

The United Synagogue recognises the work of its own volunteers in every synagogue, and has a special annual project celebrating and honouring them. The Community Development Department is currently spreading its wings organising social responsibility projects,

which meet challenges of the wider community both Jewish and in our whole mixed society. I am sure our community will respond.

In these turbulent times, may we draw inspiration from each other.
Shana Tova.

Irene Leeman is Vice-Chairman of Kenton Synagogue and is the current chairman of the Association of United Synagogue Women (AUSW)

STRIKING A MATCH YEDID NEFESH & S.A.M

Forty days before we are born Hashem calls out the name of each person's *beshef*. Sometimes finding your 'soulmate' can be a long and difficult journey. Especially today, when the pressures of developing a career or a profession can affect our work life balance and socialising is sacrificed to advancement. Out marriage and non-marriage are also increasing as it becomes more and more difficult for young Jews to meet suitable partners.

Yedid Nefesh was set up by a group of concerned *frum* professional singles in Hendon. They were concerned about the shortage of events aimed at them and the generally limited opportunities to meet other people of a similar age and outlook in the right environment.

Yedid Nefesh is all about creating a smaller setting and allowing singles from across the community to meet in a relaxed and un-intimidating atmosphere at a Shabbat lunch or dinner, where they can get to know like minded people of a similar age and outlook.

The first task was to find some families that were prepared to host these meals. They were overwhelmed with the response; people were only too thrilled to be able to help. Since the launch in November 2004 they have held five sets of Friday night dinners and three sets of Shabbat Lunches. Some of those have been followed by an equally relaxed Oneg or tea at which all the guests were able to come together and mingle. Total attendances have exceeded 250 and more than 25 families have acted as hosts. Many couples have met up or have been introduced afterwards and some great networking has been going on. Recently Yedid Nefesh was proud to announce its first engagement.

The name Yedid Nefesh has become very well known in the community and they have even been featured in the international media. Spreading the word means that there are fresh faces coming through the doors all the time.

So how does someone become a member?

To qualify you need to be *Shomer Shabbat* and:

1. Be ready to date seriously with a view to 'settling down'.
2. Be proactive in contacting a host or Rebbetzin Ginsbury if you would like to meet any of your fellow guests again.
3. Be prepared to network. If there is someone

If this sounds like your bowl of Chicken soup then please e-mail YedidNefesh@hotmail.com with the following information about yourself

- Age and contact details
- Shul affiliation and religious outlook
- Name of referee (Rabbi, Chavruta etc)

As well as all this Yedid Nefesh is always looking to extend the scope of its activities. In March 2005 they held a successful Purim Extravaganza raising over £1000 for charity. Future plans include a joint London/Manchester *Shabbaton*, a weekend away, a boat trip on the Thames and occasional *Shiurim*.

For further information please contact Rebbetzin Judy Ginsbury, Hendon United Synagogue on 020 8202 5514 or e-mail your contact details to YedidNefesh@hotmail.com

Yedid Nefesh Shabbat networking for the young professional NW London community is a joint venture with S.A.M. (Strike A Match), promoted by the Rabbinical Council of United Synagogue.

CHEVRA KADISHA: THE ULTIMATE MITZVAH – Doreen Samuel

What makes a businesswoman, a doctor; a lawyer and a retired teacher converge on Bushey early on a Sunday morning from different parts of North West London and the outer suburbs? They are not on their way to the David Lloyd Club, but to a very different club – the United Synagogue Women's Voluntary Chevra Kadisha.

All these women – members of various United Synagogue communities - are entrusted with the mitzvah of preparing the bodies of our members' loved ones for burial. Six days a week, from Sunday to Friday, all year round, teams of four ladies take their turn to carry out this special task.

One of the most beautiful ideals of Orthodox Judaism is that this responsibility is not something we shrug off onto paid officials, if possible, but is considered one of the highest privileges for volunteers to carry out.

In earlier times, the status of members of the Chevra Kadisha was extremely high and it was a mark of great honour to be allowed to join. The Chevra Kadisha, particularly the men's section, was also a very prominent body of people, well known among the local community.

The vast majority of our volunteers are involved in performing Taharot (the preparation of bodies for burial), washing them and then dressing them in the Tachrichim (the burial clothes).

Most of us have probably never thought – nor would we want to – what happens to our loved ones between death and burial. It is devastating enough to lose them without having to dwell on details which might upset us even more.

Perhaps it would surprise you to know that the preparation of bodies for burial is carried out with such loving care that those of us who are members find it very comforting, when we ourselves lose a loved one, to know exactly what will be done.

Yes, it is always sad, whether young or old, terminally ill or a sudden death. But we are encouraged by the knowledge that we have given the last possible service to that person with loving respect and dignity.

Jewish women are always very modest and reticent about performing mitzvot, as it would be wrong to seek recognition or worse, reward, for carrying out what we see as our natural duty to God.

With this mitzvah, women are even more reticent, as it is considered 'Chesed shel Emet' – the highest possible level of mitzvah, and no-one wants to imply that they are somehow 'holier' than anyone else.

It may well be that your neighbour in shul, or one of the members of your school rota, or even your best girlfriend is a member of the Chevra Kadisha and you would probably never know.

Unless you join us.

That is what I'm inviting you to do – right now.

Any female member of an Orthodox synagogue, or the wife of a male member, and who is Shomrei Shabbat (keeps Shabbat) is eligible to apply. You do not need to be married, have any medical or paramedical background, or any other qualification.

All we ask is that you feel that this is a mitzvah you might be able to do, and keep an open mind until you have completed your training. We expect members to make themselves available once a week, or at least once a fortnight, on a given day.

If you work full time during the week, you may want to make this a Sunday.

Currently we have about 90 members, of whom about 70 are active at any one time, due to illness, accidents, and pregnancy or family commitments.

Because some of our members are restricted in the days they are available, and others have family abroad whom they visit for long periods, there are some days on which our wonderful rota organiser has to call many volunteers before she can make up a team.

You could make a very real contribution and be part of the Chevra Kadisha, be you 23 or 73, housewife or bank manager!

If you think you would like to join, or even to learn more, please 'phone Doreen Samuels on 07831 11221.

Doreen Samuels is a Jewish Educator author of books, stories and articles on Jewish subjects; sometime wife, mother, daughter, sister (etc!), founder member of 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 and chair of the Women's Voluntary Chevra Kadisha.

YOMTOV COOKING – Denise Phillips

Getting together for the Rosh Hashanah celebration brings much excitement in most households and very often involves large family gatherings. Atonement and resolutions are in our thoughts together with the desire of producing a special festive family meal that all ages will enjoy. I have put together some dishes which are easy to prepare as well as delicious; they incorporate the significant symbolic foods - like apple, honey, pomegranates and fish.

Golden Potato Soup

This golden coloured Syrian soup is delicate and filling and is just what you need when eating a large pre- fast meal in a hurry. I have used lemon and turmeric with mashed potatoes to give it the beautiful colour and flavour. This soup freezes well and doubling the quantity will not affect the consistency of the recipe.

Preparation Time: 20 minutes Cooking Time: 1 hour 5 minutes
Serves: 6 people

Ingredients

1 large carrot – peeled and sliced
3 sticks of celery and leaves – sliced
1 onion – peeled and sliced
1.75litres / 7 cups chicken stock (1.5 litres hot water + 1 chicken cubes)
1 tablespoons olive oil
3 garlic cloves – peeled and finely chopped
900g / 2 pound potatoes – peeled and sliced
2 teaspoons salt or to taste
Juice of 1 lemon
¼ teaspoon turmeric

Garnish: Sprigs of flat leaf parsley
Serve with: 200g / 1 cup cooked rice

Method

- 1) Heat the olive oil in a deep saucepan. Add the carrots, garlic, onion, celery and 500ml/ 2 cups of the stock.
- 2) Cook for 15 minutes or until the vegetables are

soft. Transfer to a blender or liquidiser and puree. Return the pureed vegetables to the soup pot.

- 3) In a separate saucepan, cook the potatoes in boiling water until soft.
- 4) Mash the potatoes using a ricer or fork. Return the potatoes to the soup pot.
- 5) Add the salt, lemon juice, remaining stock and turmeric. Cook for a final 10 minutes, stirring from time to time to prevent the potatoes from sticking to the bottom of the pan.
- 6) Taste and adjust seasoning accordingly.

To serve the stylish way: Serve the hot soup garnished with sprigs of parsley and as much rice as wanted.

Poached Trout with Pomegranate Sauce

Fish and pomegranates feature highly on the Rosh Hashanah menu for several reasons. They are symbolically eaten on the first night (and often the second) with a relevant blessing. The custom of eating symbolic foods is based on the teaching in the Talmud certain omens. Certain omens are important – so we taste foods that represent either

a sweet year, an abundant year or the end of our sins and enemies.

The multi-seed pomegranate represents our wish to increase our merits. Allegedly it contains 613 seeds – the same number as the Torah's mitzvot but I have never counted to check! We also need a 'new' fruit to bless and the pomegranate comes into season just in time to fulfil this.

Fish is blessed and eaten because we hope to be fruitful and multiply like the fish in the sea. Fish heads are sometimes placed on the festive table – so we can be as the head and not as the tail.

My fishmonger de bones the trout leaving the whole fish intact (like a kipper). The fish skin can be left on and eaten or removed once cooked – its up to you!

Serves: 6 people

Ingredients

6 x 450g/ 1 pound whole trout (red snapper or sea bass can be substituted) with the centre bone removed – (get the fishmonger to do this for you.)
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper – to taste
6 tablespoons olive oil

Pomegranate Sauce

3 pomegranates 225g/ 8 ounces each
600ml / 2 ½ cups pomegranate juice

1 onion – peeled and minced
1 tablespoon cornflour mixed with 2 tablespoons of pomegranate juice
2 tablespoons fresh basil – roughly chopped
2 tablespoons fresh coriander – roughly chopped
1 garlic clove – peeled and crushed

Garnish: 6 tablespoons pomegranate seeds,
3 tablespoons fresh parsley – roughly chopped

Method

- 1) Pre-heat the oven to 190 C/ 375 F/ Gas mark 5.
- 2) Sprinkle the fish with salt and pepper and place in a single layer on a lined baking dish.
- 3) Drizzle with the olive oil. Add enough water to almost cover the fish.
- 4) Place in the pre-heated oven and poach, basting from time to time until tender – approximately 35 minutes.
- 5) For the sauce, cut the fruit in half and squeeze the juice into a strainer. Discard the hard white skin layer.
- 6) Boil the pomegranate juices with the onion until reduced by half. Stir in the mixed cornflour. Simmer for a further 3 minutes or until

thickened. Add the basil, coriander and garlic. Let it cool.

- 7) Transfer the fish when cooked to a serving platter and drizzle with pomegranate sauce.

Garnish with pomegranate seeds and chopped parsley.

I like to serve this dish with sliced fried aubergines.

Chocolate Apple Dessert

Parev

Every Rosh Hashanah, the family needs a special apple cake to mark the occasion and hopefully this recipe will be their favourite. Whether you serve for dessert or for tea, the chocolate coated cake will not disappoint your family and guests. It freezes beautifully so make it in advance of the festive preparations.

The chocolate topping needs 2 hours to set so make it in advance of your meal or even make it the night before.

Serves: 8 people

Ingredients

1 tablespoon margarine or oil – to grease the tin
500g/ 1 pound apples – peeled, cored and grated
350g / 2 ¼ cups icing sugar
3 teaspoons vanilla sugar
300g / 2 cups plain flour
5 eggs
100g / 1 cup walnuts – chopped
100g / 1 cup raisins

2 teaspoons baking powder

Topping

2 tablespoons apricot or raspberry jam
150g / 1 cup plain chocolate
75g/ 1 /4 cup margarine

Method

- 1) Pre-heat the oven to 180 C/ 350 F/ Gas mark 4.
- 2) Line and grease a 22 cm/ 9 inch loose base cake tin.
- 3) Put the eggs, icing sugar and vanilla sugar in a mixing bowl and whisk together.
- 4) Stir in the grated apple, raisins, flour, baking powder and nuts.
- 5) Bake for 45 - 50 minutes or until firm in the centre and golden brown.
- 6) Let it cool for 30 minutes before adding the topping.
- 7) Melt the chocolate and margarine over a double-boiler.
- 8) Spread the jam over the top of the cake and then pour over the chocolate mixture.
- 9) Leave to set in the refrigerator for 2 hours or overnight.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The Next Rosh Hodesh Celebration Wednesday 30 November, 8., 15pm at Wembley Synagogue

Caroline Cohen a successful West End actress/singer performs her one-woman show 'From Showbiz to Shabbat' telling her story from Eliza in 'My Fair Lady' to her return to Orthodox Judaism.

This promises to be an evening of beautiful music and inspirational stories.

Money from the evening will go towards a grant for a young woman going to Sem in 2006 from amongst the six Rosh Hodesh Group communities. Details to follow.

Tickets will be available shortly.

Donation £10 in advance from Big D and the usual suspects! Please tell your friends.

If you would like to contribute to Moonlight then please send articles, poems, book reviews or share your Jewish traveling tips to:

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