

MOONLIGHT

The UK's Quarterly e-Newsletter for Jewish Women

EDITORIAL

*The Talmud says
"Kol Yisrael Arevim" - Each Jew is responsible one for the other. When there is love and unity amongst us, even the wrongdoers become righteous and our enemies cannot harm us!*

At this time of year we are celebrating survival; surviving the anti-semitism of Haman and surviving the Exodus to become the Jewish nation. We have a right to celebrate, but we also have the mitzva of being responsible for one another. Nationhood implies a collective responsibility, our faith articulates it. At Purim we have a mitzvah of hearing the Megillah, having a festive seuda, of sending at least two types of food to friends and family and giving matanot la'evonim.

As we fulfil the mitzvah of sending baskets of goodies to family and friends should we not give more serious consideration to giving to charities that will help our brothers and sisters both here and in Israel. The community is in need as times become harder for so many. Let us go even further and remember our responsibility to society as a whole and ensure any tins and opened packets that we find in our cupboards whilst Pesach cleaning are donated to UK Charities, where the need is just as acute.

This year let us ensure we fulfill all four of the mitzvot of Purim so that this Pesach celebrates freedom not just from oppression but also from poverty and hardship.

Contents:

Marriage and Divorce in Jewish Law by Judge Dawn Freeman Page 2

The breakdown of a Jewish marriage is a highly stressful time given the requirements of both civil law and Halacha. But behind the scenes work is going on to ensure that the *Get* issue will never be swept under the carpet or forgotten again.

Redemption Will Come Through the Women Page 3

If you don't do anything else today, listen to this video of an incredibly brave Arab woman, Wafa Sultan, telling off Muslims on Al Jazeera

Volunteering, or What You See Is Not Always What You Get by Merrill Dresner Page 3

Volunteering means making a difference, for some it is a reconnecting with community for others it is an expression of Torah Values. Have you ever thought what those few hours a week actually mean to you?

Designer Babies – Can I Shop For One by Roselyn Gouragey Page 5

Imagine that you are newly married and you would like to have children. However rather than try in the normal way, you make a visit to the doctor, who gives you a questionnaire to fill out. Would you like a baby girl or boy and what colour hair would you prefer?

"Knock, Knock"; "Who's There", "Elijah"; "Elijah Who?" by Samantha Witkin Page 6

Delve into the identity of the man for whom we set aside a fifth cup of wine and explore the relentless mystique in Jewish tradition and legends that surround the prophet Elijah

What Pesach Means to Us – The Rebbetzins speak Page 7

Home security and Street Awareness Page 9

With the crime rate and anti-semitic incidents on the rise, now is the time to make sure you are safe in your home and on the streets

ILAN, Israel's Foundation For The Handicapped Page 10

*"Strengthen Ye The Weak Hands And Confirm The Feeble Knees"
(Isaiah 35:3)*

Purim & Pesach Cookery – Celebrity Chef Denise Phillips Page 11

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MARRIAGE & DIVORCE IN JEWISH LAW

By Judge Dawn Freeman

Jewish law has always recognised that, just as marriage is a consensual union between two people, divorce is a matter of consent between them. It took English law very many centuries to catch up with that concept.

In my early days at the Bar, no marriage could be dissolved because the parties agreed that they wished it to be. Indeed, if the Court found that the parties had colluded in the divorce, the Judge could refuse to grant a divorce.

In 1969 the Divorce Reform Act changed that and introduced “no fault” divorce whereby the parties could live apart for two years and then agree to a divorce by consent. Also, after living apart for five years either party could apply to the Court for a divorce without consent.

That latter provision unfortunately does not exist in Jewish law (Halacha).

If the husband refuses to deliver a bill of divorce to his wife (a Get) no religious divorce can take place. If the wife refuses to accept the Get no religious divorce can take place. In the former case, the wife becomes an Agunah – in the latter the husband becomes an Agun; - in both cases, they are “chained” to a marriage which has broken down and in most cases already dissolved by civil decree. They are free to remarry according to the law of the State but not according to Jewish law and so not in the Orthodox Community with the benefit of Chupah.

It is a terrible situation for both – but for a woman the consequences are worse. If she has children by another Jewish man while she is an Agunah, those children are mamzerim and suffer serious problems in relation to their Jewish status.

There have been many attempts to solve the problem.

During the times of war, conditional Gittin has been delivered so that if a man is “missing”, the Get can be accepted by the wife. That does not prevail in normal times.

Maimoides approved beating a man into submission on the basis that he was being helped to overcome his evil inclination – for which he was no doubt grateful.

In the U.S.A. a triumvirate of dedicated and learned Rabbonim introduced the idea of annulment so a Get was not required, on the basis that there was something about the husband which, had the wife known of it as the date of the marriage, would have caused her not to marry him. This extended a halachic precept but is not universally accepted on the basis that it is a contortion too far.

And that is where the difficulty lies. It is imperative that the Get be delivered and accepted voluntarily – and where there is an element of coercion, it will not be regarded as valid. And if any inroad into this principle by whatever device is not universally accepted, it will produce horrendous difficulties for future generations who have been born of marriages where the wife’s Get might be regarded retrospectively as invalid by a Beth Din. And that is why it is so important to get it right.

Progress has been made recently. Couples marrying under the auspices of the Office of the Chief Rabbi are offered a pre-nuptial agreement which has been sanctioned by the London Beth Din as not constituting coercion. By it, the bride and groom agree that in the said event of the marriage breaking down, they will cooperate in attending the Beth Din and doing all they can to comply with the requirements of that Beth Din.

A pre-nuptial agreement is not at the present time legally binding. However, more and more people are entering financial pre-nuptial agreements which have come to be regarded by the Courts as of persuasive evidential value as to the parties’ intentions at the start of the marriage. Similarly, in addition to explaining to a couple what their obligation is, if G-d forbid, the marriage on which they are embarking breaks down, it will have evidential value as to their intention should the matter come to a Civil Court. This is because now, thanks to the Divorce (Religious Marriages) Act 2003, the Civil Court has a discretion to postpone the granting of a Decree Absolute until the parties have done all that is required of them to give an receive a Get. This clause – about ten years in the crafting – has been sanctioned by the Beth Din as being non-coercive; as well as being approved by the then President of the Family Law Division of the High Court.

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Studies continue, most significantly by a renowned academic and halachic scholar, Professor Bernard Jackson, into seeking a halachic solution that will cover every situation. It may be of comfort to the Community to know that the issue will never, as it was in the past, be swept under the carpet or forgotten.

Judge Dawn Freedman a Crown Court Judge in Harrow, London, is one of the drafters of the Chief Rabbi's pre-nuptial Agreement

REDEMPTION WILL COME THROUGH THE WOMEN

Islamisation and Islamaphobia are two of the new words that dominate the media and politicians around the world. We in the West are concerned about the silent majority of moderate Muslims who seem fearful to speak out publicly against the actions and threats of a tiny minority of radicals who threaten global stability and enthusiastically blame Israel for all the ills of the world and call for its destruction. But it seems that it takes just one woman to stand up for what she believes is right.

It is not often that an Arab Woman is interviewed on the Al Jazeera Television Station. It is even rarer for one to be seen lambasting the Muslim world. Wafa Sultan an American Arab psychologist is just such a woman. A highly educated and articulate woman, in her interview she clearly states that, "What we are seeing is not a clash of religions in the world, not a clash of civilizations. It is a clash between two opposites, two eras: It is a clash between a mentality that belongs to the Middle Ages and another mentality that belongs in the 21st century...It is a clash between human rights and those who violate human rights. It is a clash between those who treat women like beasts and those who treat them like human beings.

She goes on to talk about the Jews, how no Jew, even after the Holocaust, has blown himself up in a German restaurant. How all the most important scientific discoveries were made by Jews....

If you would like to see the whole interview please click on <http://tinyurl.com/ze772>

If you are unable to watch the interview because your computer programmes are incompatible then you can read a transcript of the interview by clicking on <http://www.memritv.org/Transcript.asp?P1=1050>

We are grateful to author Naomi Ragen for circulating this link to this important interview. If you don't do anything else today, or tomorrow, or the next day, listen to this video of an incredibly brave Arab woman.

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.

VOLUNTEERING, OR WHAT YOU SEE IS NOT ALWAYS WHAT YOU GET.

Most orthodox Jews that I meet in London are very surprised when I tell them about my job. I work at the Headquarters of the largest group of orthodox synagogues in the UK – the United Synagogue (US). As Volunteer Manager, my aim is to encourage members to engage in a wider variety of activities than most of us can imagine orthodox Jews getting involved in. The important aspect of their involvement is that they do it through their synagogue community, and that they do it as Jews together. Why?

My work helps make the connection between synagogue and meaningful chesed activities. The membership of the United Synagogue is not only made up of regular worshippers. Life cycle events may bring people into the synagogue, but does not always keep them involved. Some are unmoved by the service. They do not associate the shul with anything meaningful.

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Make A Difference

This is the 21st century. Communities are changing rapidly and improved communications mean that members can be reached more easily. Marketing has encouraged segmentation and choice. We know that it is a waste of time and effort trying to interest everyone in everything, so we no longer try and do that. Instead we try targeted marketing, with some shuls offering specific types of synagogue services to people whose tastes and needs have been more closely measured. The US now asks itself, what can we offer disaffected members? And one answer is that we can offer them the chance to volunteer to do a job in the community and to make a difference.

Reaching out to people

And thus, the Volunteer Department was created, in order to offer members a variety of activities more closely allied to their specific interests. Some communities carried out Task Audits to see what was actually being done, and then to see where the gaps were. Others sent questionnaires to their members asking them what they would like to do. One of these experiments, in one community alone resulted in a new Israel Committee, a revamped Care team, and a 10th Anniversary Committee – mostly involving new people who had previously been uninvolved in community life.

US communities now offer their members more opportunities to “reconnect to Jewish life and practice” to quote from the Mission, Vision and Values of the United Synagogue on the website www.unitedsynagogue.org.uk. What form should this “reconnecting” take?

Most of us have been volunteering all our lives without thinking of ourselves as volunteers – we see our communal involvement as part of continuing our own family tradition. Speaking personally, being part of a community came naturally to me, as I discovered my Jewish identity through involvement with a small community where every individual mattered. Individuals could easily start activities or join in existing ones. Energy in my small community went into the obvious areas of ritual Judaism, and caring for each other within the community.

Our larger communities are another story. All the obvious rituals of Jewish life are fully functioning and need careful nurturing of course, the Shabbat and Yomtov services, the caring for the elderly and comforting the bereaved. But there can be other principles at work. Being part of a larger community allows us the luxury of looking at the Jewish responsibilities that we have towards one another. Giving food and shelter to the poor is based on the Jewish idea that we are not absolute owners of anything, and we possess things only with the responsibility to use them properly to benefit the world.

Some communities interpret this by giving food and shelter to the poor. Individual volunteers go and help non-Jews at Crisis at Christmas. Some make a point of collecting chametz before Pesach to take it to non-Jewish charities. Others make regular collections of food which they send in large consignments to Jewish communities in poor parts of the world. People who do not see themselves as practicing Jews, given an opportunity by their synagogue to partake in some practical social action, are quick to volunteer to follow a highly principled alternative.

The Beauty Of Mitzvot

My job involves finding the areas of social action that will excite the most interest and encourage members to undertake mitzvot. As well as the usual Yomtov mitzvot involving food (mishloach manot – gifts of food on Purim, Pesach parcels to the needy, honey cake on Rosh Hashana) there are numerous other ways in which we can use the resources of our community. Let's try and be creative. Using the shul building for blood donation units has the merit of involving neighbouring communities, both Jewish and non-Jewish, in a really important mitzvah. Making your community Fairtrade is another – this may interest people purely because we need to serve tea, coffee and fruit juices at all our meetings – why not simply purchase only Fairtrade products which helps the producers of these goods at the same time? Look at the website for more information on this www.fairtrade.org.uk. We now have the means to make communities Fairtrade synagogues, and receive accreditation, which reverberates well in both the Jewish world and the wider non-Jewish world.

Doing Gemilut Chasadim

The Torah wants us to transform principles into actions. As Jews we are actually saying “look, we have this intimate connection with God – let's not be embarrassed by it – let's use it for more good causes.”

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As Pesach approaches we should use the opportunities it gives us to think more widely about how to do gemilut chasadim, and how to create opportunities to do so. Could we somehow create more caring communities based on Jewish principles – carried out through our synagogues? I certainly hope so. **Merrill Dresner is the Volunteer Manager for the Community Development Group at the United Synagogue**

DESIGNER BABIES – CAN I SHOP FOR ONE?

Imagine that you are newly married and you would like to have children. However rather than try in the normal way, you make a visit to the doctor. The doctor gives you a questionnaire to fill out. Would you like a baby girl or boy? What colour hair would you like your baby to have - brown, black, red or blond? Would you like your child to be of average or above average height? Do you want your child to grow up to be sporty, musical, arty or scientific or all of the above?

The technology to be able to choose these types of characteristics for our children is not far off and it is already feasible to be able to choose the sex of our children. But the types of characteristics that I have mentioned are frivolous ones, not life saving characteristics.

What really interests me and what I explored when I was doing my Masters degree at the London School of Jewish Studies is the creation of “designer babies” for life saving reasons and whether according to Jewish law this is permissible.

So the two questions that I am going to address here are these; first, if I realise that I am a carrier of a genetic disease such as cystic fibrosis is it technologically feasible to have children who will not be afflicted with the disease? secondly, is it halachically acceptable?

Until quite recently, if you were a carrier of a genetic disease and you were married to someone else who was also a carrier, then the medical profession would recommend testing the embryo for genetic disease, a process known as prenatal screening. This is performed by collecting fluid from the amniotic cavity where the baby is living and analysing it. However, the embryo at this stage is between 9 or 18 weeks old and if the results are positive, the only option available is to have a termination (abortion). But as an orthodox Jew it is not generally permitted to terminate the life of a fetus inside the mother’s womb at the age at which these tests can be performed.

There is now a technique that allows genetic disease free babies to be created. This technique is called *preimplantation genetic diagnosis* (PGD) and involves the following:

- 1) Collecting eggs from the mother as in In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF)
- 2) Fertilising the eggs with sperm in a petri dish to produce embryos
- 3) At the 8-cell stage (embryo 3 days old) removing a single cell and analysing it for the defective gene
- 4) Implanting genetic disease free embryos into the womb.

The answer to the first question posed is that, yes, it is feasible to have genetically disease-free children today using PGD, although the likelihood of conception for each IVF cycle is between 25-35% depending on the age of the mother.

So does PGD open the door to orthodox Jewish couples with high risk of passing on genetic disease?

There are four key halachic concerns that need addressing in order to answer this question. When trying to see the way through this problem I have looked at similar medical situations and applied the principles. I would like to add a ‘health warning’ at this point. My analysis should by no means be seen as a halachic ruling but rather as my suggestion as to how the rabbis would look at this question. In order to get a definitive ruling, a rabbi should be consulted so as to consider each particular case on its merits.

The first concern that arises from creating our designer baby is that sperm needs to be collected for fertilising the egg in the test tube/ Petri dish and that there is a prohibition against wasting male seed (*hashhataf zera*). However the majority of rabbinic authorities have concluded that if sperm is collected for procreation, then an otherwise infertile couple does not violate the prohibition. Also R. Issiah de Trani in the 13th Century ruled that the wasteful emission of seed is permitted if it is to avoid hazard to the mother. Therefore, in our context, the positive commandment of procreation and the desire to remove mental anguish of the would-be mother (which is halachically a major illness) would appear to override the prohibition.

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The second point to consider is the status of the embryo because those that are not implanted in the mother will be destroyed. In this case it is the status of the embryo at 3 days old that we need to look at. In the Talmud there are 2 occasions, Yevamot 69b and Niddah 30a, where reference is made to embryos and in both cases the discussion would suggest that until 40-days the embryo *is only mere fluid*. In addition, in Sanhedrin 57b it would appear that a fetus does not have status until it is inside the womb. Therefore in our case our embryo is both outside the womb and less than 40-days old and discarding the excessive embryos with a gene fault should not pose a halachic prohibition.

The third issue is to weigh up the risks and benefits. Judaism allows one to take a reasonable risk for gain and the procedures required for PGD would appear to offer minimal risk to both the mother and the child and potentially great gains in having a healthy disease free child.

Finally the fourth concern is that some contemporary rabbis are worried about where new medical advancements may lead. And yes, the development of this technology might lead to some people wanting to exploit it and choose designer babies with blond hair and blue eyes and an IQ of 150. However, as the Torah permits and obligates Jews to use all the means available to heal, these worries should not be used to deny treatment for those with very pressing needs

On this basis, I suggest that PGD is an acceptable procedure for Jewish couples who are carriers of serious genetic disease and who wish to prevent the disease being transmitted to their children. The few written rulings by rabbis would appear to support this view. I believe this new technique provides a new avenue for orthodox Jewish couples where both partners are carriers of serious genetic disease to having, please God, healthy children.

Rosalynd Gourgey is graduate of the Bradfield Programme at the London School for Jewish Studies with a particular interest in medical ethics, especially fertility treatments

“KNOCK, KNOCK”; “WHO’S THERE”, “ELIJAH”ELIJAH WHO?”
(by Samantha Witkin)

The Hagadah celebrates the story of the Israelite’s path to freedom. As a young girl, I was always fascinated by the part of the Seder where we welcome our invisible guest Elijah. In recent years, observing this mysterious custom with more mature eyes, I have become curious as to the meaning and significance of the prophet’s entry into our homes as well as the three verses that we recite to accompany his arrival.

As I grew more curious I delved into the identity of the man for whom we set aside a fifth cup of wine. The prophet Elijah has assumed a relentless mystique in Jewish tradition and legends. This mystical image was enhanced and epitomized by the enigma surrounding Elijah’s departure from this world (2 Kings: 2) when he ascended to heaven in a chariot of fire through a whirlwind. The mystery surrounding Elijah is heightened by the prophet Malachi, who long after Elijah’s ‘death’, speaks of a peaceful Elijah heralding in the redemption of mankind by Mashiach (Malachi 3, 23-24). Not only does Elijah appear at our Seders, he is seemingly present at all circumcision ceremonies, where a special chair is set aside for him. The Midrash and Talmud describe stories of his revelation and conversations with several Rabbis. Elijah is also alleged to have saved and comforted many individual Jews and communities during times of trouble and despair throughout Jewish history. Elijah is thus generally associated with being a peaceful redeemer of and consoler to our people.

Accordingly, one would expect to find soulful and comforting words to accompany Elijah at our Seder. Instead the following is said immediately after his entrance:

“Pour out thy wrath upon the nations that have not known you and upon the kingdoms that have not proclaimed your name. For they have devoured Jacob and laid waste his dwelling place” (Psalm 79,6-7);
“Pour out your indignation upon them and let your wrathful anger take hold of them (Psalm 69, 25);
“Pursue them with anger and destroy them from under the Heavens of the Lord” (Lamentations 3,66).

It is the contrast between this traditional image of Elijah and the ruthless nature of these verses that is particularly perplexing. Indeed, these verses do not speak of a forthcoming redemption or consolation but call for G-d to invoke his fury and vengeance against those who do not proclaim His Name.

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In order to resolve the dichotomy between the verses and the traditional image of Elijah, it is necessary to establish the history of the insertion of these verses and the Biblical description of Elijah.

These verses were added to the Hagadah during the Middle Ages when the Crusaders were marching through Europe, beginning in 1096. At the same time the phenomenon of the blood libel was spreading. The notion that Jews require blood to celebrate Pesach first came to the fore in Norwich in 1144. The Jews would suffer such accusations, their consequences and various other troubles throughout Europe for the rest of the millennium. It is understandable that during this time of despair and persecution that the Jews could identify with their forefathers in ancient Egypt and hoped that G-d exhibit the same vengeance on their persecutors as he did on the Egyptians. However, it was only in 16th century Prague when Elijah is inserted into the Hagadah immediately before we recite this text.

A further examination of the Biblical text provides clues to the insertion of Elijah at this point in the seder. We are introduced to Elijah in the first Book of Kings, chapter 17 where we are told that "Elijah the Tishbite", an inhabitant of Gilead, addresses Ahab, the seventh king of Israel (the ten Northern tribes). King Ahab reigned in ninth century BCE and married the haughty and merciless Phoenician princess Jezebel, who brought her idols and priests to her new home in Israel thus influencing Ahab to establish shrines to the most popular Phoenician god Baal and spreading idol worship among the people. Elijah, in an extraordinary public move on Mount Carmel, challenges the 450 priests of Baal hired by Jezebel, to compete against the one G-d of Israel. Both sides are to slaughter a bull and invoke their Gods to consume the sacrifice. After the idol worshippers attempt several times in vain to rouse a response from Baal, Elijah entreats G-d who sends a fire to consume the offering. The crowd react by falling on their faces and shouting out the famous words twice "Adonai hu – ha- Elokim" ("The Lord, alone is G-d"). Elijah then incites the people to slaughter the 450 priests of Baal.

Elijah's reputation as being a passionate and zealous defender of G-d does not end there. Later in chapter 21, when Queen Jezebel has procured the murder of an Israelite, Navot, through false testimony following his refusal to sell Ahab his vineyard, Elijah admonishes Ahab. He prophesies Ahab and his family's downfall and the devouring of Jezebel's body by dogs. So whilst the zealous Elijah of the text displays little similarity to the Elijah that has emerged in our tradition, this latter portrayal of Elijah is more akin to the verses in the Hagadah that are recited on his apparent arrival, invoking G-d to avenge other nations.

The history of the insertion of these verses and of Elijah in the Hagadah as well as a closer examination of the Biblical text, illustrates two central themes to the Hagadah. Firstly, Divine justice is sometimes dealt through vengeance and wrath. As difficult as the angel of death and the crushing of the sea on the Egyptians is to digest, they are the harsh realities of our story and journey to freedom. Being faced with massacres, inquisitions, forced conversions and pogroms, it is understandable why the Rabbis of the Middle Ages felt compelled to insert into the Hagadah verses that speak of wrath and vengeance in the midst of a story that focuses on celebrating freedom and deliverance. It is my view that by the 16th century, the Rabbis recognized that the meaning of these verses needed to be further explained. In order to do this, they inserted Elijah's presence. The prophet represents both the peaceful and kind redeemer as well as the ruthless executioner of revenge. It is the combination of these two facets that lead to a better understanding of the verses which call for Divine justice. Whilst, as Jews, we are primarily peaceful people, who desire the freedom of all mankind, we cannot ignore the occasional need for Divine justice, whatever form that may take.

Samantha Witkin, who lives in New York, is a graduate of the Bradfield Programme at the London School for Jewish Studies

WHAT PESACH MEANS TO ME

We asked some Rebbetzins from around the UK what Pesach means to them:

What Pesach Means to Me by Rebbetzin Shoshana Hill, Potters Bar Synagogue

Just to hear the name of Pesach
Is enough to make me shudder.
The work (and fear) start months before
We open the Haggadah.

"From bondage to redemption"
I try to remind myself,
As I empty out another drawer,

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Scrub another shelf.

My little 'uns are no longer kids,
"Chametz-spreaders" now are they.
The shopping bills grow larger,
As we prepare through night and day.

"Lehadlik ner shel Yom Tov"
At last I can recite.
The brightness of the flames
Reflect the effort for this night.

Sitting down for Seder,
Deep feelings of nostalgia,
Our youngest is now old enough
To sing the Mah Nishtanah.

And as I look around my table,
My exhaustion will disappear.
Baruch HaShem, it's Pesach-
The BEST time of the year!

Rebbetzin Ruth Kahan, Highams Park & Chingford

Cleaning and preparing for Pesach is not exactly one of the thrills of being a mother/housewife, however, at this time of year my big concern is will I be calm enough to portray a relaxed atmosphere in the house?! Do I want my children growing up feeling Pesach is a pleasure or a burden, which is easier said than done. A couple of months before Pesach, I'll promise to have the upstairs done before Purim. But it doesn't materialize!!! Last year I only began after Purim. I've made the same resolution this year..... So just think of all the women in the same position as you and smile! It's the only time of year that you can say the house is truly spotless!

Rebbetzin Esther Livingstone, Hampstead Garden Suburb

Mind over matter. Don't allow yourself to get bogged down by all the physical tasks and preparations involved for this Chag. Ensure that you keep focused on the eternal lessons and transformative powers of the Chag.... Read up...Go to a Shiur....Make time for the spiritual nourishment you need. Make time to keep proper focus and balance in your life.

Rebbetzin Anne Shisler, New West End Synagogue, London

Panic – Have I started in time? When will I do the main shop – and when will I shop for the Shul? We have a communal Seder, which is lovely and so enjoyable, with lots of stories and singing. Pesach means metres and metres of aluminum foil, excitement and surprise as the china is brought out and we remember who brought this and who bought that. Every year we bring out one of the sets of china that was a wedding present. It was we thought so ugly that we consigned it to be used for Pesach. Now we look forward to using it!!!

Rebbetzin Tzipora Sufrin, Highgate Synagogue

Slavery/Freedom. Inclusion of family, friends. Pesach Food. Stained Tablecloths. Singing, staying up until 3.00am discussing. Always ends on a high note – Next Year in Jerusalem!

Rebbetzin Irene Tann, Birmingham Hebrew Congregation

If I don't fall asleep during the first Seder, I don't feel as if I have done a good job of preparing for Pesach

Rebbetzin Anna van den Bergh, Wembley Synagogue

Pesach means family, sharing the experience of preparation as well as participating in the Seder. Abigail, our daughter, celebrated her first birthday just before Pesach. As we packed the chometz pots away, she was no where to be seen, then we heard a rustle from one of the boxes. There she was sitting inside with two wooden spoons and a big smile. Joshua, her brother, specialized in cupboards, he would sit inside and slowly empty them. He even took all the screws out of the sandwich maker to ensure we cleaned it properly. The years have flown by and now we share our Pesach table with our granddaughter and the cycle begins again. Pesach memories are as priceless as the freedom we celebrate.

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Rebbetzin Blima Wollenberg, Cardiff Synagogue

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STREET AWARENESS COURSES WITH THE CST

The Community Security Trust (CST) is the British Jewish community's defence organisation and exists to protect the Jewish community from antisemitism and terrorist threats. The CST was formed in 1994 and continues a heritage of Jewish defence dating back to the 1930s when Jewish activists joined together to combat British fascist Oswald Mosley and his followers.

The CST's work covers many different areas. We provide security and security training for synagogues, schools and communal organisations and advise on safety measures such as window protection, CCTV and perimeter fences. In 2005 we secured approximately 1,000 communal events through our network of over 3,000 trained volunteers.

The CST records and analyses antisemitic incidents and publishes these figures annually in an *Antisemitic Incidents Report*. We offer support to victims of incidents and assist the Police in their investigations. In 2005 there were 455 incidents - the second-highest figures since records began.

The CST has a strong relationship with the Police, and provides expert advice to government, international organisations and the media. We represent the Jewish community to Police, legislative and policy-making bodies. Indeed, we are recognised by Government and Police as a model for how an ethnic minority community should organise its communal security and defence.

Approximately 7,000 people received security training from the CST in 2005. We offer self-defence courses that are tailor made for the following: women only, men only, mixed groups, parents, organisations, teachers, Rabbis.

Our Street Awareness courses are designed to teach how to cope in various different situations on the street and provide skills to deal with incidents where safety is threatened or compromised. Some of the topics covered in our tailor made courses include:

- developing awareness to avoid threatening situations
- assessing the situation quickly and responding sensibly
- reading non-verbal communication to avoid confrontation
- reacting rather than freezing
- deescalating threatening situations
- using voice and body language assertively

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e-mail: moonlightnewsletter@hotmail.co.uk

- running to safe places for help

Scenarios on the course include:

- travelling on buses and trains
- walking home safely in the dark
- riding bicycles safely
- precautions to take whilst shopping
- using minicabs and taxis with care
- using a mobile phone discreetly and safely
- safe driving practices

All courses are taught by highly-trained CST instructors.

CST in conjunction with **Moonlight** has arranged a talk for women on Home Security and Street Awareness on **Wednesday 24 May, 8.15pm at Wembley Synagogue**, Forty Avenue, Wembley. This is one of the most important lectures you could attend this year and is intended for women of all ages.

CST and **Moonlight** are also offering a free four week course in self defense for women who are interested. Further details will be available at the meeting or e-mail moonlightnewsletter@hotmail.co.uk

For more information on CST call 020 8457 9999.

SATC (Sister Act Theatre Company) in association with Chai Cancer Care
Presents

‘A Night on Broadway’

Featuring hits from all your favourite Broadway & West End musicals

Tickets £15

Sunday 26 March 2006

“Watersmeet Theatre” High Street, Rickmansworth (near Watford)

Matinee Performance 2pm

Evening Performance 7pm

Tickets from Louise 020 8203 5242

This is a Women Only Event

Sisters Louise Leach and Caroline Cohen, in association with Chai Cancer Care, are putting on a women’s only musical evening of singing and dancing with a cast of over fifty women. The show comprises of hits from a number of top Broadway shows and she and her sister will both be performing. Part proceeds go to Chai and tickets are selling fast! The show is at a theatre called “Watersmeet” in Rickmansworth which is near Watford. A map will be issued with the tickets.

ILAN, ISRAEL'S FOUNDATION FOR THE HANDICAPPED

“Strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees” (Isaiah 35:3)

ILAN, Israel's Foundation for the Handicapped, cares for thousands of physically disadvantaged adults and children suffering from diseases that affect the muscles and nerves such as cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis and other neuromuscular diseases. With 41 branches all over Israel, ILAN remains in constant contact with the disabled by presenting a channel of information for tracing and assisting the disabled and their special needs.

When it was founded in 1952, ILAN identified child victims of the polio epidemic and organized mass vaccinations for children in Israel. In time, the State of Israel accepted responsibility for providing this service and freed ILAN to concentrate its efforts and resources on providing assistance and relief for the disabled individual and his/her family. By promoting facilities for the physically disadvantaged and their

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special needs, and developing services for the disabled within the context of the community, today's ILAN is a full service organization including:

- A network of over 30 kindergartens, special schools and vocational training centers, sheltered workshops, rehabilitation and occupation units, residential homes for physically disadvantaged adults, as well as social centers and sports facilities.
- Two large sports centers for handicapped children and adults, as well as rehabilitation and employment centers. In addition, ILAN operates hostels for handicapped adults, thus providing a warm and supportive household for those who cannot continue living at home such as, Tamar House in Jerusalem and Kassler Home in Haifa.
- Individual assistance for the purchase of vital rehabilitation accessories, in order to relieve the distress of the families which must cope, on a daily basis, with the care of a handicapped child.

ILAN enables those it cares for to enjoy cultural activities, such as wheelchair dancing, 'youth encounters', and theatre. Focusing on providing solutions for those special needs which are not catered for by the official authorities, ILAN arranges grants to the disabled and their families for the purchase of essential rehabilitative and educational equipment.

ILAN is dependent for most of its funding from private donations. If you would like more information please contact:

Friends of Ilan

18 Osprey Court, 256-258 Finchley Road, London NW3 7AA

e-mail: friendsofilan@hotmail.com

Tel: 020 7431 3792 Fax: 020 7431 3865

PURIM AND PESACH COOKERY BY DENISE PHILLIPS

Poppy Seed Roll

This is one of those cakes that feature in most Eastern European Jewish patisseries, particularly during Purim time when nuts and seeds are so popular. Personally, I don't need an excuse to make this poppy seed roll as it is so delicious. But remember to brush your teeth afterwards as the poppy seeds do tend to catch in your teeth and spoil your smile! Using soya milk makes no difference to the final taste, so make them all parev if you wish and they can be eaten any time.

My recipe makes 4 rolled cakes or bread loaves and although it sounds a lot, they tend to get eaten quickly and they do freeze beautifully.

Try some delicious variations of fillings: 250g/ 1 cup of mixed chopped nuts like pistachio nuts, walnuts and almonds combined with a cup of icing sugar or 1 cup cocoa powder with 1 cup icing sugar.

Preparation Time: 25 minutes plus 2 hours rising Cooking Time: 30 minutes

Makes: 4 rolls

Ingredients

1 kg/ 2.2 pound strong flour

2 sachet dried yeast

600ml / 2 cups warm milk or soya milk

3 eggs

70g / ½ cup sugar

1 teaspoon salt

100 ml / 1/3 cup vegetable oil

100g / 1/3 cup melted margarine

400g / 4 cups poppy seeds

200g / 2 cups icing sugar

2 tablespoons milk or soya milk

Variations

See above

1 tablespoon vegetable oil – to grease the bowl

4 tablespoons vegetable oil – to brush the dough on the base and to glaze on the top

Filling

Sweet Potato and Carrot Soup with Pistou

Once the kitchen is ready for Passover, I make my list of dishes to cook. A tasty vegetable soup is always on high on the list as it is perfect for lunch or try it as a family friendly recipe for Seder night. This sweet potatoes and carrot soup combines well and produce a vibrant orange coloured broth. Full of goodness, the

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sweet potato contains huge amounts of beta carotene, vitamin C and Vitamin E, making it one of the best anti cancer foods.

Also this particular recipe has 'No bits' for the fussy eaters and has a delicious pistou dressing for the adventurous. Pistou is a puree of basil, garlic and olive oil, very similar to pesto but without the toasted pine nuts. Parmesan cheese is an optional addition but can of course be omitted if you want to keep the soup parev.

Preparation Time: 20 minutes **Cooking Time:** 35 minutes
Serves: 8- 10 people

Ingredients

1.5 kg carrots – peeled and sliced
1 kg sweet potatoes –peeled and sliced
1 teaspoon cinnamon
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
3 onions – peeled and sliced
1 litre vegetable or parev chicken stock
Salt and freshly ground black pepper – to taste

Pistou Sauce

8 cloves garlic – peeled and roughly chopped
Salt and pepper
25g/1 cup of fresh basil leaves
55g/ ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan - optional
120ml /1/2 cup olive oil

Method

- 1) Heat the vegetable oil in a deep saucepan.

- 2) Sauté the onions and cinnamon.
- 3) Add the carrots and sweet potatoes. Pour in the stock.
- 4) Bring to the boil. Cover and reduce the heat to simmer for 30 minutes.
- 5) Make the pistou sauce by placing the basil, garlic, salt and pepper, and Parmesan –if using in to a food processor.
- 6) Keeping the motor going on the food processor, gradually add the oil.
- 7) Taste and adjust seasoning accordingly.
- 8) Puree the soup in a liquidizer or food processor until smooth. For a more textured effect, only puree half of the liquid.

To serve the stylish way: Serve the soup hot in warmed bowls and drizzle over some pistou dressing

Turkey Goulash

Choosing the Seder night main course is always a great dilemma and I know that this cookery column will be read by more people than normal, all looking for a good new idea. Well this year, I have yet another great creation for your seder table. Turkey is not only economical but this recipe is easy to prepare and above all straight forward to serve. It will keep well on the hot plate so if you spend more time than expected discussing the delights of the Haggadah story, it will not spoil.

I like to serve it on a bed of curly kale or stir fried shredded savoy cabbage. All the vegetables are in the goulash and the cabbage just gives the dish some extra colour.

Preparation Time: 25 minutes Cooking Time: 1 hour 15 minutes Serves: 10

Ingredient

3 tablespoons vegetable oil
6 garlic cloves – peeled and crushed
4 large onions – peeled and roughly chopped
3 tablespoons potato flour
1kg or 2.2 pound boneless turkey, cut into small cubes
2 tablespoons sweet paprika
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
750g mushrooms - sliced
10 medium carrots –peeled and cut into chunks
6 stalks of sliced celery
1 kg or 5 medium potatoes- peeled and cubed
450ml chicken stock
200ml red wine
4 tablespoons ketchup
Salt and pepper – to taste
Garnish: Sprigs of parsley
Paprika – to dust the plate

Method

1. Heat the vegetable oil in a large frying pan. Add the onion and garlic and sauté until for about 4 minutes or until the onion is no longer transparent.
2. Add turkey cubes, salt, pepper, cinnamon and paprika, and cook gently on all sides for approximately 10 minutes.
3. Stir in the potato flour and cook for 1 minute.
4. Add the potato, mushrooms, carrots, celery and tomato ketchup.
5. Pour in the chicken stock and red wine.
6. Cover, bring to the boil and simmer over low heat for 1 hour.
7. Taste and adjust seasoning accordingly.

To serve the stylish way: Dust the plate with paprika. Make a circle of cooked cabbage and place a large helping of turkey goulash into the centre.

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Almond Pear Bake

Pears are a naturally versatile food. Eaten simply as fresh fruit or as a salad they are flavoursome, textured and healthy. Their perfumed flavour blends so well when cooked with other ingredients such as coconut, wine and in my bake - almonds. All the other ingredients are standard Pesach ones although this dessert is a treat at any time.

Preparation Time: 20 minutes Cooking Time: 45 minutes Serves: 6 people Parev
Can be made in advance. Will freeze

Ingredients

6 firm pears – peeled, cored and cut into 2 cm thick slices
1 tablespoon margarine
2 tablespoons dark brown sugar
1 tablespoons ground cinnamon

For the almond mixture

150g/ 2/3 cup margarine
150g/ 2/3 cup caster sugar
150g / 1 ¼ cup ground almonds
2 tablespoons vanilla sugar
6 eggs
3 tablespoons potato flour

Topping

6 tablespoons split almonds

Method

- 1) Pre-heat the oven to 375C/190 F/ Gas mark 5.
- 2) Grease a 34 cm x 24 cm (14 ½ inches x 9 ½ inches) and 4 cm (2 inches) deep pie or casserole dish with margarine.
- 3) Mixed the sliced pears with the brown sugar, and cinnamon and put into the dish.
- 4) Place all the almond mixture ingredients in a food mixer and whiz
- 5) together until creamy. This will take about 3 minutes.
- 6) Spread over the pears and level with a spoon. Sprinkle with the split almonds.
- 7) Bake for 45 minutes or until golden brown.

Garnish: Serve with non-dairy ice-cream or sorbet.

LEARN TO COOK - THE STYLISH WAY

My popular Cookery Demonstrations are the ideal, yet informal way of adding to your cookery skills. These comprehensive "hands-on" classes, presented in her trademark simple but stylish manner, will enhance your love of food and add to your cooking repertoire. Pick a theme and see the difference it will make. Choose from:

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