



IFR NEWS Av/Elul 5783



The Book of Lamentations

This special reading for Tisha B'Av sets the tone for this tragic and mournful day - Rabbi Irving Greenberg- reprinted from My Jewish Learning

Also called *Eicha*, the Book of Lamentations (which is in the Writings/ Ketuvim section of the Tanakh/ Hebrew Bible) is an intricate set of dirges and descriptions of Jerusalem under siege and of the destruction of the First Temple.

The elegy bewails Jerusalem, once teeming with life and now sitting abandoned and alone like a solitary widow.

It captures the horror of the siege: children pleading for water and bread in vain; cannibalism on the part of hunger-maddened mothers ("those who died by the sword were better off than those who perished by hunger"); nobles hanged; women raped; priests defiled.

The prophet basically blames Jewish immorality and idolatry for the tragedy. Yet there is a fascinating outburst in Lamentations 3 in which the believer, as it were, accuses God of being the enemy — like a lion lying in ambush to destroy his victim.

The prophet comes close to losing his faith ("I thought my strength and hope in the Lord had perished") before the memory of God's

past kindnesses restores it — barely. The Book of Lamentations is read softly at first. The volume of the reader's voice builds to the climax, which is sung aloud by the entire congregation: "Turn us to you, O Lord, and we will return. Renew our days as of old."

Most of the *kinot* chanted after *Eicha* (Lamentations) were composed during the difficult times of the Crusades and the Spanish Inquisition.

Describing the transgressions of the Jews and their love for Israel, the most popular ones were written by Elazar Hakallir (the eighth-century liturgical poet), Judah Halevi (1085-1145, the Spanish philosopher also considered to be the greatest post-biblical poet), and Solomon ibn Gabirol (another product of the Golden Age of Spain, 1021-1058).

Embodying a timeless quality that has given them lasting impact in the liturgy, they express the prayers and dreams of a persecuted people who look to God for hope.

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IFR Mission Statement

The IFR is a professional organization of rabbis united by a commitment to Jewish tradition and a desire to facilitate the Jewish spiritual growth and life cycle needs of all.

The IFR provides a progressive, pluralistic forum, linking member rabbis in a spirit of friendship and a sense of community.

The IFR provides support for members in their professional endeavors and offers continuing education.

The IFR encourages professional relationships with rabbis and other rabbinic organizations.

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Often in acrostic or altered acrostic form, they frequently draw on imagery from Talmud and Midrash.

Most liturgies begin with a *kinah* of Hakallir, and end with a series known as Zionides, which extol the glory of Zion.

In a favored elegy, written by Halevi, the poet expands on Jeremiah's vision of the weeping woman identified as the matriarch Rachel in Jeremiah 31:15.

He imagines himself walking on Jerusalem's holy ground and encountering Mother Zion, who asks about the welfare of her children throughout the world.

Other kinot recited were written in response to tragedies in Jewish history. One commemorates the public burning of the Torah in Paris, another the massacres of German Jews during the first Crusade, another the slaughter of the Jews of York, and a recent one the annihilation of European Jewry in the Holocaust.

In the Synagogue - the service.

In addition to the traditions described above, there is a custom of sitting on the floor or low benches during evening and morning services on Tisha B'Av, as an additional sign of mourning.

The synagogue services on Tisha B'av are most unusual. The room where the evening service is held often has its lights dimmed, and candles are lit. The prayers are spoken rather than chanted with melody. The reading of the Book of Lamentations is chanted using special musical notations that create a tone of weeping and mourning.

Knowledgeable congregants often take turns reading different sections of the book. During the service there may be a discussion related to the

themes of tragedy and destruction, often led by the rabbi.

The morning service the next day is also unique. The tallit and tefillin are not worn, as a sign of mourning.

Special prayers of mourning, kinot, are read during this service. There is a reading from the Torah (Deuteronomy 4:25-40) whose theme is the punishment of Israel for its sins, and opportunity and hope for redemption. Israelis listen to the Lamentations while sitting on the ground, a sign of mourning, at a public square in Jerusalem. (Yosef Silver/Flickr)

In the haftarah of the morning (which is chanted in the same mournful melody as Eicha), Jeremiah speaks of the despair of the Israelites, describing Jerusalem as a total wasteland.

During the afternoon Mincha service, the mood of Tisha B'av becomes more hopeful. Tallit and tefillin are worn at this service.

Both the Torah reading and the haftarah reading of this service are the same as on all other public fasts, describing the Thirteen Attributes of God and the promise of salvation. Special prayers of comfort are also a feature of this service. The evening service marks the official end of the fast of Tisha B'av.



Reprinted from *Sacred Celebrations: A Jewish Holiday Handbook* from Ktav Publishing House, Inc.

Kamtza and Bar-Kamtza "on one foot": In Three Acts. This Talmudic story is associated with Tisha B'Av.

Act 1

אֶקְמָצָא וְבַר קָמְצָא חָרוּב יְרוּשָׁלַיִם דִּהְהוּא גִבְרָא דְרַחֲמִיָּה קָמָצָא
וּבְעֵל דְּבִיָּה בַר קָמָצָא עָבַד סְעוּדָתָא אֲמַר לִיהּ לִשְׁמַעְיָה זִיל אֵייתִי לִי
קָמָצָא אֲזַל אֵייתִי לִיהּ בַר קָמָצָא אֲתָא אֲשַׁכְחִיהּ דִּהְהוּא יְתִיב אֲמַר לִיהּ
מִדִּי הָהוּא גִבְרָא בְּעֵל דְּבִיָּה דִּהְהוּא גִבְרָא הוּא מֵאִי בְּעִית הָכָא קוּם
פּוֹק אֲמַר לִיהּ הוּאִיל וְאַתָּא שָׁבָקוּ וְיַהֲיִבְנָא לָךְ דְּמִי מָה דְּאֶכִּילְנָא
וְשִׁתִּינָא אֲמַר לִיהּ לֹא אֲמַר לִיהּ יַהֲיִבְנָא לָךְ דְּמִי פִלְגָא דְּסְעוּדָתִיךְ
אֲמַר לִיהּ לֹא אֲמַר לִיהּ יַהֲיִבְנָא לָךְ דְּמִי כּוֹלָה סְעוּדָתִיךְ אֲמַר לִיהּ לֹא
נִקְטִיָּה בִּידֵיהּ וְאוֹקְמִיהּ וְאַפְקִיָּה

Gittin 55b:17-56a:1

The Gemara explains: Jerusalem was destroyed on account of Kamtza and bar Kamtza. This is as there was a certain man whose friend was named Kamtza and whose enemy was named bar Kamtza. He once made a large feast and said to his servant: Go bring me my friend Kamtza. The servant went and mistakenly brought him his enemy bar Kamtza.

The man who was hosting the feast came and found bar Kamtza sitting at the feast. The host said to bar Kamtza. That man is the enemy of that man, that is, you are my enemy. What then do you want here? Arise and leave. Bar Kamtza said to him: Since I have already come, let me stay and I will give you money for whatever I eat and drink. Just do not embarrass me by sending me out.

The host said to him: No, you must leave. Bar Kamtza said to him: I will give you money for half of the feast; just do not send me away. The host said to him: No, you must leave. Bar Kamtza then said to him: I will give you money for the entire feast; just let me stay. The host said to him: No, you must leave. Finally, the host took bar Kamtza by his hand, stood him up, and took him out.

Act 2

אֲמַר הוּאִיל וְהוּוּ יְתִיב רַבֵּנּוּ וְלֹא מַחוּ בֵּיהּ שְׁמַע מִינָהּ קָא נִיחָא לֵהוּ
אֵיזִיל אִיכּוֹל בְּהוּ קוֹרְצָא בִּי מִלְכָּא אֲזַל אֲמַר לִיהּ לְקִיסְר מְרִדּוּ בָּךְ
יְהוּדָאִי אֲמַר לִיהּ מִי יִימַר אֲמַר לִיהּ שְׂדֵר לֵהוּ קוֹרְבָנָא חַזִּית אִי
מִקְרָבִין לִיהּ אֲזַל שְׂדֵר בִּידֵיהּ עֲגָלָא תִלְתָּא בִּהְדִּי דְקָאֲתִי שְׂדָא בֵּיהּ
מוֹמָא בְּנִיב שְׁפָתִים וְאַמְרִי לֵהּ בְּדוּקִין שְׁבַעֲנִין דּוּכְתָא דְלִדִּידּוּ הָהּ
מוֹמָא וְלִדִּידּוּ לֹא מוֹמָא הוּא

Gittin 56a:2-3

After having been cast out from the feast, bar Kamtza said to himself: Since the Sages were sitting there and did not protest the actions of the host, although they saw how he humiliated me, learn from it that they were content with what he did. I will therefore go and inform [eikhul kurtza] against them to the king.

He went and said to the emperor: The Jews have rebelled against you. The emperor said to him: Who says that this is the case? Bar Kamtza said to him: Go and test them; send them an offering to be brought in honor of the government, and see whether they will sacrifice it.

The emperor went and sent with him a choice three-year-old calf. While bar Kamtza was coming with the calf to the Temple, he made a blemish on the calf's upper lip. And some say he made the blemish on its eyelids, a place where according to us, i.e., *halakha*, it is a blemish, but according to them, gentile rules for their offerings, it is not a blemish.

Therefore, when bar Kamtza brought the animal to the Temple, the priests would not sacrifice it on the altar since it was blemished, but they also could not explain this satisfactorily to the gentile authorities, who did not consider it to be blemished.

Act 3

סְבוּר רַבֵּנּוּ לְקְרוֹבִיָּה מְשׁוּם שְׁלוֹם מְלָכוֹת אֲמַר לֵהוּ רַבִּי זְכַרְיָה בֶּן
אֶבְקוּלָס יֵאמְרוּ בְּעָלֵי מוֹמִין קְרִיבִין לְגַבִּי מִזְבֵּחַ סְבוּר לְמִיקְטְלִיָּה דְלָא
לִיזִיל וְלִימָא אֲמַר לֵהוּ רַבִּי זְכַרְיָה יֵאמְרוּ מְטִיל מוֹם בְּקַדְשֵׁים יִהְיֶה
אֲמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן עֲנוּתָנוּתוֹ שֶׁל רַבִּי זְכַרְיָה בֶּן אֶבְקוּלָס הִתְרִיבָה אֶת
בֵּיתָנוּ וְשָׂרְפָה אֶת הַיִּכְלָנוּ וְהִגְלִיתָנוּ מֵאַרְצָנוּ

Gittin 57a:5

To conclude the story of Kamtza and bar Kamtza and the destruction of Jerusalem, the Gemara cites a *baraita*. It is taught: Rabbi Elazar says: Come and see how great is the power of shame, for the Holy One, Blessed be God, assisted bar Kamtza, who had been humiliated, and due to this humiliation and shame God destroyed God's Temple and burned God's Sanctuary.



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The Origins of Chodesh AV

Av (Hebrew: אָב Modern: 'Av, Tiberian: 'Āḇ; from Akkadian 'Abū "father") is the eleventh month of the civil year and the fifth month of the ecclesiastical year on the Hebrew calendar. The name comes from Araḥ Abu, "month of Abu", from the Babylonian calendar. The name Ab (Arabic: آب) also appears in the Arabic language for the month of August in the Levant (see Arabic names of calendar months). The name first appears in Second Temple literature, such as Megillat Taanit.[3] It is one of several months which are not explicitly named in the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh). It is a month of 30 days. Av usually occurs in July–August on the Gregorian calendar. The Babylonian Talmud, Taanit 29a, states that "when we enter [the month of] Av, our joy is diminished". This is because the darkest events in Jewish history occurred during the first week and a half of this month, particularly the Nine Days which culminate in Tisha B'Av, the 9th of Av.

There is a minor and largely unknown holiday during the full moon of the month called Tu B'Av which was, in ancient times, one of the happiest days of the year. The month is also sometimes referred to as Menachem Av (Av of Comfort or Comforter of Father(s) but most only use this title in the sanctification of the month recited on the Shabbat before Rosh Chodesh and following Tisha B'Av.

Important dates in the month of AV

Av 9 – Tisha B'Av

Av 15 – Tu B'Av

Av in Jewish history

1 Av (circa 1273 BCE) – Death of high priest Aaron

1 Av (513 BCE) – Ezra and his followers arrive in Israel

5 Av (1572 CE) – Hillula of the Arizal

7 Av (586 BCE) – First Temple invaded by King Nebuchadnezzar

7 Av (67 CE) – Civil war breaks out in besieged Jerusalem; one group set fire to the city's food stores, which is said to have quickened starvation

7 Av (1492 CE) – Jews of Spain expelled by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella.

9 Av (586 BCE and 70 CE) – Holy Temples destroyed by the Babylonians and Romans respectively.

9 Av (133 CE) – Fall of Betar to the Romans, ending Bar Kochba's rebellion.

9 Av (1290 CE) – Jews are expelled from England by King Edward I and not permitted to legally return for 350 years.

10 Av (70 CE) – The Holy Temple, set on fire the previous day, finishes burning.

12 Av (1263) – Disputation of Barcelona between Nachmanides and Pablo Christiani.

15 Av (148 CE) – Betar dead buried, 15 years after the fall of the fortress.

15 Av – The Day of the Breaking of the Ax – when the Holy Temple existed, the cutting of firewood for the altar was completed on this date every year. The event was celebrated by feasting, rejoicing, and the ceremonial breaking of the axes

17 Av (1929) – 67 Jews are killed in the Hebron Massacre.

24 Av (circa 100 BCE) – A Hasmonean holiday commemorates the reinstatement of Jewish civil law in place of Hellenist secular law on this day.



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IFR President Rabbi Suzanne (shosh) Carter

My Personal Tisha B'Av Story

Tisha B'av, my Tallit and my dear father z"l

On Friday July 23, 2004 I made reservations to fly to Cincinnati on Sunday morning after my father had been admitted to Hospice. On Shabbat morning July 24, 2004, the Hospice nurse in Cincinnati called to inform me that my father's breathing was labored, I told the nurse to hold the phone next to his ear so he could hear my voice.

Once he heard my voice he calmed down and I began to recite his final vidui, as I finished the Shema he literally took his last breath.

I called my two brothers in Cincinnati to find dad's Tallit - nobody knew where it was. The next day, my third brother, two sons and I flew into Cincinnati, carrying my favorite Tallit onboard. I had been ordained in that Tallit while my father sat in the first row smiling. The Tallit was off-white linen with the Old City of Jerusalem on the silk Atarah. (pictured)

Once in Cincinnati, due to unforeseen circumstances, we had no other choice but to bury him on Tisha B'Av. Early Monday morning the 8th of Av, we all went to Weil funeral home (only Jewish funeral home in Cincinnati) I handed the funeral director my Tallit for the Chevra Kadisha to place on my father after Tahara, and in a small room I conducted a short private service. I sang El Maleh for my father as he lay on the other side of a glass partition before his Tahara. We wept in private and had "some" family

closure which was needed.

The following day at the chapel after kriyah, we sat with our father in silence. He was one of the very few of our once large family in Silesia who survived the Shoah. He was buried that day, next to our mother who had died twenty years earlier, wrapped in a shroud and wearing their oldest child's Tallit, with a tear /rip on the seam of the Old City of Jerusalem on Tisha B'Av 5764.



At a Baby Naming in 2002 wearing my favorite Tallit



תנוח בשלום אבי היקר

IFR Schmooze and NEWS



Moshe Ben Etel
Ari Ben Shoshanna



The **IFR Lapel Pin** was minted in 2020 in commemoration of our 20th anniversary. The pin is solid brass with an antique brass finish and black enamel. The pin is one inch across, and is available for IFR Members @ \$55.00 USD - ships free in the continental USA. email scarter@intfedrabbis.org to order - and inquire about overseas shipping fees



Our heartfelt condolences to long time IFR Member Rabbi Shael Siegel, and his family on the passing of his beloved wife, loving mother and adoring grandmother to three, Semadar Siegel z"l 1955 - 2023





IFR NEWS Av /Elul 5783



Elul: Selected Laws and Customs

by Alan Lucas
Excerpted from The Observant Life
The Rabbinical Assembly

Every great experience requires preparation, and the High Holy Days are no exception. Indeed, the preparations for the yamim nora'im begin a full month in advance with the onset of the month of Elul. In a certain sense, the High Holy Day period could be said to begin as early as the first day of Elul and only to end with Yom Kippur.

This creates a period of approximately forty days during which the dominant theme is repentance (Some, however, understand the High Holy Day period to extend until Hoshana Rabbah, the seventh day of Sukkot and the final one of its intermediate days).

The number forty resonates in Jewish tradition on many levels; it is the number of years the Israelites wandered in the wilderness before reaching the Promised Land and the number of days that Moses dwelt in the presence of God while receiving the Torah on Mount Sinai. Similarly, Elul initiates a very special period of introspection and self-analysis when every Jew is challenged to re-enact the journey from exile to redemption on a personal level and to strive to experience the presence of God in a way that echoes Moses' communion with God during his time atop the mountain.

The shofar is sounded at the end of every weekday morning service beginning with the first day of Elul and ending the morning before Erev Rosh Hashanah (glosses of the Rema to SA Orah Hayyim 581:1 and 581:3). The shofar is not sounded

on the day before Rosh Hashanah, in order to differentiate between the blasts heard during Elul, which are merely a custom, and the blasts of the shofar sounded on Rosh Hashanah itself, which are ordained by Scripture (gloss of the Rema to SA Orah Hayyim 581:3). Hearing the shofar alerts attentive worshipers to the approach of the Days of Awe and challenges even the hesitant among them to get busy with the work of teshuvah, repentance. The concept of teshuvah is discussed in more detail by Rabbi David Lincoln.

It is also the custom to recite Psalm 27 at the conclusion of the Morning Service, just after the shofar is sounded, and also at the end of the Evening Service, throughout the entire Holy Day period from the first of Elul to Hoshana Rabbah (Some end the recitation of this psalm at Yom Kippur). Psalm 27 promulgates the themes of the season, as evidenced by an ancient midrash on its opening line preserved at Midrash Tehilim 27:4: "God is my light – on Rosh Hashanah – and my salvation – on Yom Kippur. Whom then shall I fear – on Hoshana Rabbah?"

We also prepare for the coming of the High Holy Days at home. Just as with Shabbat, there is an increase in the tempo of the household routine as everything is cleaned, polished, and made ready for the holidays. Friends and relations begin to arrive, sometimes from great distances. Indeed, no matter how far a sibling, child, or cousin may have wandered during the course of the year, Rosh Hashanah is a time for all Jewish people to come home to their families, their people, and their God.

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Elul: Selected Laws and Customs

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There is also the touching custom of visiting the graves of loved ones in anticipation of the New Year. Some do this the day before Rosh Hashanah (cf. the gloss of the Rema to the SA Orah Hayyim 581:4), but many go at any convenient time throughout this period from Elul through Yom Kippur.

Many synagogues hold communal memorial services at their congregational cemetery during this time of the year. At these services, there is usually an opportunity for shared communal prayers as well as private time for individuals to visit their family members' graves. Visiting the graves of one's parents and grandparents helps establish a sense of continuity between the sacred past and the unborn future and fosters a sense of oneself as the vital link between the two.

Tradition also imagines our late relations, and especially our parents, as intercessors capable of pleading our case and cause before God. It is therefore appropriate that we not take them for granted, and this custom of visiting their graves reflects that hope.

Many have adopted the custom of sending New Year's cards to family and friends wishing them good things for the new year that is about to begin.

While it is tempting to dismiss this as an example of crass commercial opportunism on the part of the greeting card industry, the truth is that this practice is well grounded in Jewish custom (see, e.g., the gloss of the Rema to the SA Orah Hayyim 582:9).

Originally, the concept was simply to wish others that they be inscribed in the Book of Life for the year to come, but sending out cards has become less theologically charged over the years and is now hardly more than an effort to reconnect with loved ones near and far. Even so, sending out Rosh Hashanah cards as a way to strengthen the bonds we share with our friends and family is a commendable endeavor.

Another commendable and widespread custom is the practice of making charitable contributions in anticipation of the High Holy Days (gloss of the Rema to SA Orah Hayyim 581:4). Giving charity is a mitzvah all year round, but there is something especially beautiful about making a special effort around the High Holy Days to help others.

As we strive to be our best selves, the giving of charity emphasizes that self-inspection must lead to outward improvement. A person wrapped up in him or herself makes for a small package. Participation in synagogue charity appeals, on the other hand, constitutes a tangible expression of one's determination to translate good intentions into the kind of good deeds that can transform and improve the world.





Elul: A Selichot Prayer Petition

Compassionate One, remember
we are Your children
help us to know again
that we are cradled
*during these awesome days
of changing light
we want to return
to Your lap, to Your arms
remind us how to believe
that we are loved
not for our achievements
but because we are Yours
as the moon of Elul wanes
and the new year rushes in
hear us with compassion
enfold us, don't let us go*

*Rabbi Rachel Barenblat is on the ALEPH
board of directors.*



Elul: An Island in the Year Experiencing Elul through words, our breath

Before we slip too quickly into the
Season of the Soul -

let there be a Sabbath of
Sabbaths for the heart.

Before the music of Creation's
majesty —

let there be a silent praise of
existence.

Before the feast of sanctified words

let there be a poetry of solitude.

Before we enter the palaces of
prayer —

let us find within ourselves a
place of calm.

Before we revel in the wondrous
and sublime —

let there be an honest, inward
gaze.

Before the rites and ceremonies of
Awe —

let there be quieter days, an
island of attentiveness.

*Sarah Avner -Congregation Beth Israel
Austin Texas*



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Meet Your New IFR Colleague Rabbi Michael A. Sarko Rabbi and Hospital Chaplain



Rabbi Michael A. Sarko was ordained by Rabbinical Seminary International in June 2022.

He celebrated his *smicha* with his wife Kara and then-4-year-old son Cameron. In November of 2022 the family welcomed a new life named Seth.

They live in Seattle, Washington where Rabbi Sarko works as a hospital chaplain at Harborview Medical Center and an at-large life cycle and pastoral care provider for Greater Seattle's Jewish community.

Michael, Kara, Cameron, and Seth are active congregants at the Kol HaNeshamah Progressive Synagogue Community.

Michael follows the example of his father, Rabbi Leonard Sarko, also a graduate of RSI and a long time member of the IFR.



חזל טוב

To Rabbi Michael A. Sarko and his parents!

IFR NEWSLETTER TEAM

Rabbi Barbara Aiello

Rabbi Frank Tamburello

shosh/layout



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Meet Your IFR Colleague - Interview Rabbi Jill Hausman from the Actors' Temple NYC With IFR Editor Rabbi Frank Tamburello

RABBI JILL HAUSMAN - interviewed
by Rabbi Frank Tamburello

What a pleasure and a privilege to have been asked to interview my longtime friend and colleague in New York, Rabbi Jill Hausman.

Rabbi Jill and I were Rabbinical Seminary International classmates, members of the class of 2004. Today, we are both pulpit rabbis in Manhattan, and currently Rabbi Jill serves on the Beit Din of the RSI as Associate Dean.

For the last seventeen years, Rabbi Jill has been the spiritual leader of Congregation Ezrath Israel on West 47th St. Commonly known as the Actors' Temple, this landmark congregation has a unique and proud history.

It was organized in 1917 by local Orthodox shopkeepers. The first full time rabbi, Bernard Birstein, who loved actors, became a personal friend of the singer and comedian Sophie Tucker.

From then on the Actors' Temple became a hub in New York for Jewish members of the entertainment industry.

Some of the former synagogue members were Al Jolson, Joe E. Lewis, Sophie Tucker, Edward G. Robinson, Jack Benny, Shelley Winters, Milton Berle, Henny Youngman, Eddie Cantor, Moe and



Curley of the Three Stooges, and many, many others. Today, The Actors' Temple, true to its heritage, remains an active venue for theater in New York.

The Actors' Temple maintains an eclectic, post-denominational approach to Judaism, and lovingly welcomes all to actively participate in the spiritual life of this dynamic community. After discussing the amazing history of her congregation, the topic turned to our rabbinics and to the type of messages that we feel would be the best way to approach today's concerns especially during the upcoming High Holidays.



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Meet Your IFR Colleague - Interview Rabbi Jill Hausman from the Actors' Temple NYC With IFR Editor Rabbi Frank Tamburello

Jill said: "We have to be where people are, and although religion is conservative by nature, people are more spiritually evolved.

We often give people at services the same old Judaism, and this is not compelling for them.

"Our people want to appreciate the beauty of their own traditions. They want to be uplifted, and they want spiritual nourishment. Rabbi Gelberman, our mentor, taught us that our services should not be too long, and when we deliver our sermons, we should try not to over-verbalize but rather receive and convey the wisdom of the moment."

"The High Holidays should be an opportunity for us to reinforce confidence, and to challenge our fears. We need to reject negativity. It is a poison, and it is an easy way out. The message should be positive and life-affirming."

Jill and I discussed that a good example of her approach to spirituality is found in the book *Wrapped in a Holy Flame* by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi. In the book, an article by Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach quotes a teaching of Rabbi Zadok HaKohen of Lublin (1823-1900).

"The world is becoming less and less religious,' but I say, 'On the contrary, the souls of

people are becoming more and more refined.' Perhaps on the outside it looks as if they are breaking away from G-d, but on the inside, they are getting closer and closer."

Rabbi Jill is a woman of many talents. As a former cantor, she has delighted her congregants with her beautiful voice. She is a prolific writer.

Having written many Torah commentaries for *The Jewish Week*, she was recently featured in Tikkun Magazine with her article **Hiding in Plain Sight - Equality in the Wilderness** (April 24, 2023) Rabbi Jill lives in Manhattan, and has two married sons and four grandchildren.





IFR NEWS Av/Elul 5783

Meet Your IFR Colleague - Rabbi Shael Siegel Tribute to his beloved wife Semadar z"l The Greatest Pin Ball Machine

I love Pin Ball machines. I have always been attracted to the mystery behind the lights, glitter, and glamour highlighted when the lights began blinking and blasting upon scoring. There was even a time when as a young boy I was an avid player, terminated however by my father's stern worldview.

I'm not sure what attracted me to the game; it may have been the atmosphere of the game rooms: the fun-filled atmosphere of young teens finding a magical place to hang out or the graphics of exotic images of women on the backboard. Maybe it was the lights and bells going off randomly every time a pinball connected with pins, pockets, or hollows while bouncing wildly off bumpers and ramps. Perhaps it was the preternatural sense that one day I would come to know and love Semadar, the quintessential Pin Ball machine.

Later with the inescapable advent of technology Pin Ball machines became a thing of the past, play stations capturing the imagination of a new generation coming up. I never connected to the new technology when it came to game playing, preferring the feel of the steel ball responding to the delicate pull of the lever achieving the right tension, gently releasing the pressure



on the spring, launching the ball into orbit, randomly colliding with the borders, corners, and crevices of this special universe all the while tracking that steel ball to the connections it was about to make. I never forgot that feeling of anticipation. If the launch was successful my little steel ball would light up the board in a maddening rally driving my adrenaline to new heights and then some, every time it rebounded hitting a contact and reenergizing, lightening up the board, one last time before it ultimately went down the small dark hole, disappearing.

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Meet Your IFR Colleague - Rabbi Shael Siegel Tribute to his beloved wife Semadar Siegel z"l The Greatest Pin Ball Machine

As much as I loved the game I never had the passion when playing Pin Ball until I met the woman who became my wife and best friend 39 years ago. Semadar was the ultimate, the cat's meow, the most sophisticated Pin Ball machine that ever existed. Semadar didn't play Pin Balls but lived it every moment of her too-short life, merging with the mechanics as Yuval Harari would later comment, becoming one with the game throughout her life.

She had a never-ending, limitless supply of energy, reenergizing whenever making dead-on contact with bumpers, launching her to other pins, pockets, and hollows, and worlds she craved to see and experience, always managing to avoid the small black hole that swallowed up most of us.

The more contact Semadar had with the surface of the colorful, fanciful motherboard the more energy accrued to her until she was a ball of light, lightening up the machine, transforming into the machine, the world, and her ever-expanding universe. Her unique magical qualities nearly assured her of the ability to avoid the dark hole located between the bumpers at the bottom of the board where all pinballs roll and rest after losing power, finally sinking

into the inevitable abyss. Those lucky enough to be in her proximity felt her bright burning light and were energized and forever transformed.

Semadar lit up my life from the moment I laid eyes on her and everyone she touched, reenergizing with every volt of energy that bounced off her connections exponentially giving her renewed energy to continue lightening up my world, our universe. Unique however about my Semadar was the never-ending magical rally she was able to maintain effortlessly throughout her special and in her words "bewitched" life.

Like everything else about Semadar, her energy level was of epic proportions but so was the reverse. With her rapidly weakening energy due to a fatal illness, her unique light and mysterious energy source began to diminish. The special light she emitted, which sparkled and lit up so many people and places wherever she happened to be sadly grew dimmer, as she used the last of her special magical energy to reunite with the Ein Sof, the ultimate source of light and power.

Rabbi Shael Siegel - July 4, 2023



IFR NEWS Av/Elul 5783

Meet Your IFR Colleague - Hebrew Braille Sefer Torah Rabbi Leonard Sarko Congregation Emanu-El Israel, PA A Path to Community for the Jewish Blind and Visually Impaired



Regardless of Jewish denomination, the Jewish blind and visually impaired are considered full members of the community.

However, for millennia they have not been given the opportunity to read Torah for a congregational service and therefore have never received a bar/bat mitzvah or Aliya. Prayerbooks, when translated into braille, go from one book to many, and is not practical for use during a service.

This combination has isolated this Jewish group and have relegated them to something outside the community. It has also resulted in most of this demographic not attending or participating in their local Jewish communities.

With over 400,000 Jewish blind and visually impaired in the United States, this is a significant problem. Rabbi Lenny Sarko became visually impaired seven years ago.

Hebrew braille was invented in the 1940s. When looking worldwide for who had a Hebrew Braille Sefer Torah, he found it did not exist. Reasons were plentiful, but on further examination, none prevented a braille sefer Torah from being made.

A six year project ensued which created this scroll. Pictures can be found online at devarim.org.

The idea behind the operations would be to allow any blind or visually impaired person to borrow the scroll at their congregations for use.

As this group is spread in small numbers throughout the USA, purchase by them or their congregations is not economically feasible. In this way the only cost involved is for shipping and insurance.

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Meet Your IFR Colleague - Hebrew Braille Sefer Torah Rabbi Leonard Sarko Congregation Emanu-El Israel, PA A Path to Community for the Jewish Blind and Visually Impaired

An ancillary issue came up. As the Jewish blind and visually impaired were isolated from their communities, almost all did not take the time to learn Hebrew braille. As a result there were no institutions that taught it in the United States.

Rabbi Sarko, with his background in education, created a home course to teach Hebrew braille. He also provides backend support for the learners. The course and support are provided for free.

He then turned its eyes to the prayerbook issue. The Federal government through the National Library System, began a program to provide free refreshable braille devices to the blind and visually impaired.

It is currently operating in forty states and will be rolled out the remainder shortly.

This provided an opportunity to place a denominational prayerbook on a portable device which is small, about 3"x 7"x 1" and weighs less than a pound. An entire prayerbook can be placed on it.

The device was designed for reading books, line by line. Jewish services use of prayerbooks tend to skip around.

Rabbi Sarko took the time to develop computer coding to place onto a refreshable braille file to allow use as it is needed within a service.

The Mishkan Tefila Reform Prayerbook is currently available and we hope the remainder of the denominational prayerbooks will soon follow. It is also offered for free to the blind and visually impaired.

Rabbi Sarko sees the three programs as interconnected in a way to allow a blind or visually impaired Jew to become fully involved in both their synagogue and their community. If you know of a blind or visually impaired Jew please have them communicate with Rabbi Sarko at email rabbi@rabbisarko.org

Hebrew Braille Scroll without Cover





IFR NEWS Av/Elul 5783

Why I'm Not Excited That Science Hasn't (Yet) Found Consciousness in Your Brain

Let's Get Straight What We Mean by a Soul

By Tzvi Freeman an excerpt from Chabad.org Torah and Science

In 1998, a scientist and a philosopher made a bet. Neuroscientist Christof Koch bet philosopher David Chalmers that science would uncover the mechanism by which the brain's neurons produce consciousness within the next 25 years.

The 25 years were up this June. Koch lost; Chalmers won. At the annual meeting of the Association for the Scientific Study of Consciousness (ASSC) in New York City, they both agreed that we have not yet found a satisfactory mechanism to describe how consciousness emerges from the brain. Koch came with the case of wine he had wagered and handed over the goods.

Now I'm receiving emails and texts telling me "they'll never figure it out," and "eventually, they'll have to realize there's a soul."

Which all seems rather misguided. First of all, is this really all the soul is — an invisible cog in the system? Or, as the skeptic Richard Dawkins would mockingly say (quoting Gilbert Ryle), "a ghost in the machine?" That's Cartesian mind-body dualism, quite foreign to traditional Jewish

concepts of body and soul. Aside from that, in a set of six independent studies conducted in the shadow of this wager, the two major competing theories fared surprisingly well.

Now I'm receiving emails and texts telling me "they'll never figure it out," and "eventually, they'll have to realize there's a soul."

These theories push the frontiers of scientific theory. Integrated Information Theory (IIT) associates consciousness with information structures in your brain that are "integrated" — meaning, they cannot be reduced to their parts.

That's a good description of a living organism, or any particular system within such an organism — an organ, cell, organelle, etc. It's also a good description of chunks of language, such as words, sentences, and well-crafted paragraphs and essays.

In all of these, the whole cannot be reduced any further than by a description of what each of its parts is doing.

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IIT postulates that when you are conscious of something, a corresponding integrated structure forms in your brain's posterior. It also postulates a recursive loop of sorts, by which your brain is registering its own structures.

Global Network Workspace Theory (GNWT) is similar in many ways, but more concerned with how information is distributed throughout the brain — since consciousness seems to involve multiple elements. Instead of locating the information in one area, GWNT proposes that it is broadcast by the prefrontal cortex, at the front of the brain, to other areas of the brain through an interconnected network.

The neat thing about these theories is that they generate predictions that can be falsified or verified to some degree. We can observe your posterior or prefrontal cortex and check what sort of structures form when we switch the object of your consciousness.

And indeed, the fMRI scans came through for both of them on several key points. That wasn't enough, however, because both also contain predictions that failed.

So some revisions are necessary. Or perhaps a better theory.

So, rather than a disappointment for science, this is stunning progress that has important implications in our understanding of consciousness within other species.

Body and Soul Are One

Let's put this in perspective. We're dealing with only one facet of a much bigger question that keeps returning in many different costumes. I'm a student of the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, that's where I look for guidance on issues of Torah and science, so let me quote him writing on this many years back.

In 1956, a certain Dr. D. Elkana penned a letter in Hebrew attempting, among other things, to enlighten the Rebbe to the science of happiness — it being, of course, nothing more than the "hormonal secretions of certain glands transported via the circulatory system to the brain."

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Dr. Elkana likely figured he was dealing with an old-world chassidic rabbi ignorant of scientific progress.

The Rebbe gave him a run for his money. He had studied the sciences and philosophy of science at the University of Berlin, attending multiple courses from such giants of 20th century science as Johnny von Neumann, Erwin Schrodinger, Walter Nernst, Hans Reichenbach, and Wolfgang Kohler.¹

His response demonstrates that he had put a lot of thought towards contrasting materialist reductionism to traditional Jewish notions, especially as they appear in Chabad thought.

The body and soul are truly integrated and united as a single whole, therefore anything that occurs in the soul will cause some corresponding phenomenon in the body.

An excerpt from the Rebbe's response (my translation):² Allow me to point out that since the body and soul are truly inte-

grated and united as a single whole, therefore anything that occurs in the soul will cause some corresponding phenomenon in the body.

I trust you will agree with me that the concept of oneness within the microcosm of the human being – which serves as an analogy and example of the true oneness of the macrocosmos – is not aligned with the pantheistic view that all that exists is nature and matter. Quite the contrary, all that exists is spiritual. Yet further, everything is divine.

Applied to the problem of consciousness, this would translate as saying: Of course consciousness will have some material manifestation in the brain. Body and soul are one. Nothing can occur in the soul without some corresponding occurrence in the body, and nothing happens in the body unless it is occurring in the soul. The body resonates with the soul because the soul is not a distinct entity from it. Rather, the soul is the fundamental reality of the phenomena of life.

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Is the activity in your brain consciousness? As much as the printed words inside a book are a story, or the notes played by the piano are music. The story comes clothed within words, the music comes clothed within sounds, and the consciousness of your soul comes clothed within electrical activity in the brain.

So Who Wins?

What would suffice to falsify the notion of a soul as we have presented it here? Is it possible to falsify someone's view of reality? This is a little beyond my pay grade. What I can say with certainty is that whatever would support the Cartesian vitalist notion — that ghost-in-the-machine idea — would chalk one down for our very non-dualist view of the universe.

Are we on the path to proving or disproving the existence of the soul?

As we come to observe this deeper, more unified substrate as it is sharply manifest in the wondrous patterns of the observable world, we come closer to recognizing that matter and spirit are one, because their Creator is one.

I believe we are on a good path, one which allows us to better clarify and articulate that which every human being intuitively knows, even when in denial: That there is a deeper reality behind all we see. As we come to observe this deeper, more unified substrate as it is sharply manifest in the wondrous patterns of the observable world, we come closer to recognizing that matter and spirit are one, because their Creator is one.

As the Rebbe continues in that letter:

In truth, not only is there no contradiction, but quite the contrary: This is the logical outcome of the absolute truth of the oneness of the Creator.

By oneness, I mean that G-d is one and there is none else besides Him — not simply that there is no other divinity besides Him, but that there is literally nothing else, no existence aside from His.

Indeed, this is one of the most fundamental ideas of the teachings of chassidut, as explained in The Portal of Unity and Faith by the Alter Rebbe.

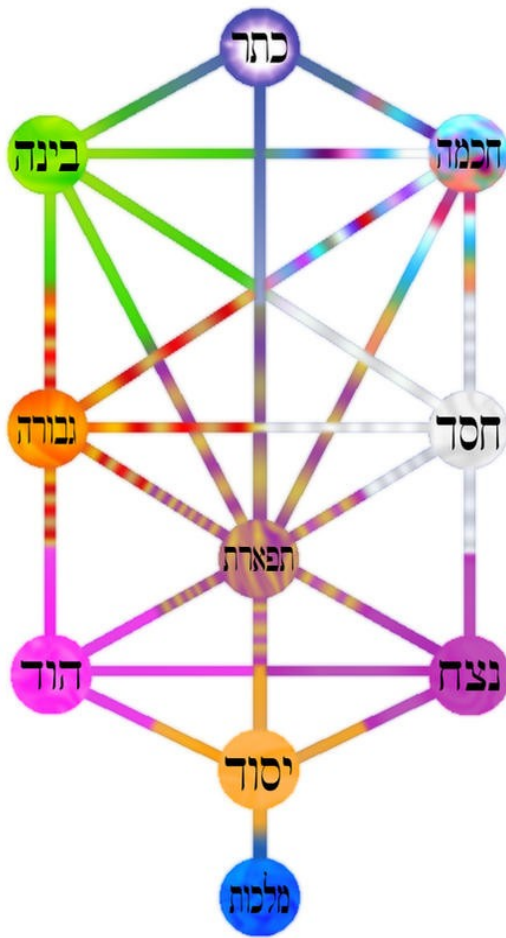


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FOOTNOTES

1. JEM archives, from the records of the University of Berlin (Humboldt University). The Rebbe also studied at the Sorbonne, but his academic records appear to have been destroyed during the student occupation in 1968.

2. Igrot Kodesh vol. 13, #4501.

3. See especially Maamar Lma'an Da'at 5713, se'if 6.

4. Rema, Shulchan Aruch Orech Chaim 6:1.

5. See especially the end of Etz Chaim.

6. Sha'ar Hayichud V'Ha-emunah, chapter 1.

7. Shabbat Parshat Shelach, 5729.

By Tzvi Freeman



Tzvi Freeman is the author of Bringing Heaven Down to Earth and, more recently, Wisdom to Heal the Earth.

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Rabbi Frank Tamburello's column featuring

Jewish holiday Eats and Treats

Ravenous Ravs

HONEY CARDAMOM BREAD WITH SILAN (DATE SYRUP) (Israeli recipe)

You will need:

Standing mixer with dough hook or a bread bowl

Baking pan or sheet w/baking paper

Kitchen scale

Rolling Pin

Dough scraper

Ingredients for bread

1 1/2 tablespoons of yeast

250g Warm honey water

120g Olive oil

2 eggs

30g Honey

700g Unbleached flour

1 Tablespoon ground cardamom

1/2 Tablespoon salt

20g Flax meal

2 eggs + 1 more for brushing over loaves before baking

Ingredients for the fillings

30g Raw Tehina

30g Silan (date syrup)

10g Sesame seeds

30g Chopped spiced nuts

Phase 1 - yeast slurry:

Combine yeast and 150g of flour together in the bowl, then mix in the warm honey

water until smooth. Let it sit for 10-20 minutes until it begins to puff slightly

Phase 2 - knead : Mix the oil, salt, cardamom, and honey into the yeast slurry until dissolved. Stir in the remaining flour and eventually knead for about 5 minutes the dough should be soft but not gooey.

Phase 3 - rest: Allow to rest, covered until triple in bulk

Phase 4 - shaping: Punch down your risen dough and divide into desired loaf sizes you will be dividing each of these into 3.

Oil your work surface

Divide one of the loaf portions into 3, and roll each one out into a slab

Mix the Tehina and Silan together in a small bowl additional bowls for the nuts and sesame seeds are helpful

4. Slather each slab with the designated filling and roll into a tight, lengthwise log
5. Braid those 3 pieces together
6. Form into rounds, tucking one end underneath.

7. Using some reserved honey water, brush your loaves and sprinkle with sesame seeds



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8. Place gently on your papered baking pan and cover

9. Cover and allow to rise once more for 30-60 minutes.

10. Preheat your oven to 180c/350 F

11. Beat your reserved egg with a little water and brush liberally and carefully on the risen loaves.

12. If you have more sesame seeds and chopped nuts remaining, sprinkle them liberally over the loaves.

Bake for 20-25 minutes, until golden and the centre looks set.

The loaves are done when they sound hollow when tapped. Allow to cool on wire racks.

The air circulation is important





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SEPHARDIC RAINBOW SALAD

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 small red cabbage, shredded in small pieces
- 3 small ripe tomatoes, diced
- 1 whole yellow bell pepper, seeded and diced
- 1 pound persian cucumbers, diced small with skin on
- 4 ounces small white button mushrooms, sliced
- 3/4 cup Kalamata olives, pitted
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon sea salt, or more to taste

Combine all vegetables in a large mixing bowl, and mix well. In a smaller mixing bowl, combine lemon juice, olive oil, salt, and mix well. Pour over the chopped vegetables to coat, and serve.



VISCIOLE

The Jewish community of Rome has existed for more than 2000 years but it was after the creation of the Jewish Ghetto in 1555 that Roman-Jewish cuisine began to form its own identity.

The restrictions and poor living conditions imposed on the Roman Jews, along with religious traditions and celebrations, all contributed to the creation of the community's own recipes which, over the centuries, have filtered into the broader category of cucina romana.

However, there are still recipes that can only be found (or perhaps are more traditionally prepared) in the Jewish Ghetto area of the city. One such dish is the crostata di ricotta e visciole.

The authentic version of this pastry tart is made with a double layer of sweet pastry which encases sweetened ricotta cheese and sour black cherry jam made from a local variety of wild cherry called visciole.



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VISCOLE

The pie is baked until the top is golden and the end result is a perfect balance between crumbly, melt-in-the-mouth, pastry, creamy ricotta and slightly acidic cherry; a harmonious combination of sweet and sour.

Interestingly, while most sweet tarts in Italy are made with only a pastry base and an open or lattice design on top, the traditional preparation of this pie has a full pastry lid covering the filling.

This is thought to trace back to a papal decree which forbade the Roman Jews from trading in dairy products. The ever-resourceful Jewish community simply worked around this by concealing the ricotta between layers of pastry and thus the *crostata ricotta e visciole* was born.



Pastry

2 cups (470 ml) all-purpose flour
½ cup (120 ml) cold unsalted butter, cut into cubes

2/3 cup (160 ml) sugar
¼ teaspoon (1.25 ml) salt
1 lemon, zest

2 eggs
1 egg yolk

Filling

2 cups (470) fresh ricotta
1/3 cup (80 ml) sugar
2 eggs
Splash of sambuca
1 cup (240 ml) sour cherry jam

Egg wash

1 egg
1 teaspoon (5 ml) milk

Equipment

10-inch (25.5 cm) round tart pan
pan spray or butter, for greasing the tart pan
Icing sugar, for garnish.

Add flour and butter to a large bowl. Use fingers to work the butter into the flour until it resembles breadcrumbs.

Stir in the sugar, salt, and zest and mix well. In a separate bowl, beat together eggs and egg yolk. Combine the egg mixture with flour mixture, stirring until combined, then working into a smooth dough.

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Divide into 2 and shape into discs, then cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 350 F (175 C).

Grease the tart pan.

In a bowl, make a filling by combining ricotta, sugar, eggs, and sambuca, and mixing until well combined. Reserve to the side.

On a lightly floured surface, roll out one disc of the chilled dough to a thickness of 1/8-inch (3 mm).

Transfer dough into the greased tart pan, cutting away any excess. Use a fork to evenly prick the bottom of the dough.

Add the sour cherry jam over the dough, using a spatula to spread into a smooth, even layer.

Carefully spread an even layer of the ricotta filling mixture over the sour cherry jam.

Roll out the second disk of dough to 1/8-inch (3 mm). Cut into even, narrow strips.

Make a lattice design by weaving the strips over the top, one strip at a time, alternating directions with each strip, or cover pie completely without lattice effect. Make an egg wash by beating together egg and milk.

Brush the wash over the pastry lattice.

Bake for 45-50 minutes, or until pastry is lightly golden brown.

Cool at room temperature.

Dust with icing sugar, slice, and serve.



Crostata Ricotta e Marmellata di Visciole (Ricotta and Sour Cherry Crostata), a delicious and irresistible dessert of the Jewish Roman cuisine. A lemon flavored pasta frolla (shortcrust pastry), filled with a layer of visciole (sour cherry jam or fresh sour cherries), and a layer of sweetened ricotta. To this day, you can enjoy this crostata in Rome in the Jewish Ghetto's bakeries, or in many restaurants specialized in traditional Roman cuisine.



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CLASSIC CAPRESE SALAD

INGREDIENTS

- 4 tomatoes
- 1 medium eggplant or three baby eggplants
- 1 ball of fresh mozzarella
- 1/3 cup capers
- 1/2 cup basil leaves
- 1 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Flaky sea salt
- 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar

PREPARATION

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Slice eggplant into one-inch slices, drizzle with a bit of oil, and roast for 20 minutes.
3. Thinly slice tomatoes and mozzarella to the same width as the eggplant.
4. While eggplant is roasting, blend basil leaves and olive oil until smooth.
5. Layer eggplant, mozzarella, and tomatoes.
6. Top with capers, basil, oil, drizzle of balsamic, and sea salt flakes.



As it's called in Italian, Insalata caprese, Caprese salad literally means "Salad of Capri." Although nobody knows whether or not the salad was actually first made on the Italian island, it likely originated from a dish made in Capri from a different type of cheese, cacio, served with tomatoes.



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ANISE AND WINE COOKIES

1-1/4 cups sugar, divided

1 cup canola oil

1 cup white wine or dry red wine

2 teaspoons aniseed, crushed

Dash salt

4 to 4-1/2 cups all-purpose flour

In a large bowl, whisk 1 cup sugar, oil, wine, aniseed and salt until blended. Gradually stir in enough flour to form a soft dough.

Cover; let rest 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 350°.

Shape level tablespoons of dough into 6-in. ropes. Shape each into a ring, pinching ends together to seal.

Dip tops of cookies into remaining sugar. Place 1 in. apart on greased baking sheets.

Bake until golden brown, 20-25 minutes. Remove from pans to wire racks to cool.





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TUNISIAN HAMIN (Shabbat T'fina) (Cholent with heat and a kick!)

Hamin is a popular Israeli/Jewish dish associated with home and family gathering time. Hamin literally means heat and refers to its slow and long cooking method.

True to its name, Hamin offers the warmth feelings of home and the coziness of a family gathering on that very special time of the week – Shabbat day.

This dish has so much beauty and so many qualities: You see, Hamin is more than a delicious and satisfying dish on a winter day. It has an aroma that fills the whole house early in the morning, and is calling everybody to get together.

Hamin – in Hebrew, “Shabbat T'fina” in Tunisian, “Cholent” in Yiddish...

Hamin is not only unique to Tunisian culture and cuisine. The many different versions of Hamin show us a tradition that is being carried from generation to generation. Each unique recipe made out from the simple available ingredients of that place and time, offers to create this magical dish that brings us all together.

Ingredients

¼ cup Olive Oil

500 gr. (dry) Chickpeas (about 3 cups)

500 gr. (dry) White Beans (Cannellini) – medium size (about 3 cups)

8-10 small-medium Potatoes (butter potato/yellow potatoes)

8-10 medium Shallots

1 Garlic head

2 dried Dates

8 Eggs

1 tsp. Harissa (optional)





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Ingredients continued

1 tsp. Black Peppers

1 tsp. Cumin

1½ tsp. Turmeric

1 tbsp. Sweet Paprika

1 tbsp. Salt

Cast-Iron – Dutch Oven or other large oven proof pot.

(Mine is 9 1/2 QT. oval shaped pot)

For the “Hita” Wheat Berries Dish in a cooking bag

You will also need:

a Cooking bag

2 ½ cups Wheat Berries

3 Garlic cloves

½ chopped Shallot

1 tsp. Olive Oil

½ tsp. Black Pepper

½ tsp. Cumin

½ tsp. Turmeric

½ tsp. Sweet Paprika

1 tsp. Salt

3 cups Water

Fresh chopped Parsley

This is a vegetarian Tunisian version of Hamin, but of course you can explore other versions. If you wish to create a **meat version** simply start this same recipe by **searing stew meat pieces** in the pot, remove them aside, follow the recipe and add them on top right after adding the beans to the pot. Continue to follow the recipe as is.

Start by soaking the beans and chickpeas in cold water overnight or for at least 12 hours. The motto here is kind of “the longer the better” ...just so you know they can be soaked a little over 24 hours... You also need to change their water a few times during the soaking process.

When the water turns a little yellowish or just do it every few hours. Soak the wheat berries in water for couple of hours.



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Peeling the shallots while keeping them a whole can become frustrating, the best way I know is to cut a little of its 'head', create another cut to the side and remove couple of the first layers.

Start with a big pot and the olive oil on low heat then add the shallots. Peel the potatoes and add them as well.

Continue with the head of garlic, we are going to use it whole. Even though we do not need to wash it, make sure it is clean by checking the bottom and removing a few of its external layers. Cut a little of its top to expose the cloves and add to the pot.

To retrieve the most flavors out of the garlic, I like to add it facing down just for 30 second and then flip it up.

Remove pit from both dates and add to the pot. Drain the beans and chickpeas

Time to add the beans and chickpeas: I find it is best to have them at the bottom of the pot, so move the shallots, potatoes, garlic head and dates to the top as you add the bean to the pot.

Add the spices and Harissa excluding the salt – we will add it at the very end right before we send our Hamin to the oven.

Add water just enough to cover and a little over the pot dwellers. Bring to a boil and let it boil for five minutes. After that you may low the heat and at this stage you can add wheat berries in the cooking bag and the half boiled eggs.

After the wheat berries have been soaked in water for couple of hours, drain them and add to the cooking bag. We are going to echo the flavors of the Hamin, so start by adding 3 cloves of garlic. Chop half a shallot and add it in together with spices.

Add the little olive oil and water and tie the bag at the top. Tilt the bag a few times to mix everything well.

Using your knife poke two or three small holes at the top of the bag close to the knot. Add the bag to the pot and make sure the top part with the poked wholes is under the water surface.

Pre-boil the eggs just for a few minutes on low heat before adding them to the Hamin. After adding the cooking bag you may carefully add the eggs around.



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Rabbi Frank Tamburello's column featuring
Jewish holiday Eats and Treats

Ravenous Ravens

Cover the pot and cook with a low simmer for 45 minutes. Right before the oven, add the salt in and mix lightly for even spread. Transfer the covered pot to 225° preheated oven for at least 12 hours.

While the Hamin is in the oven you may check couple of times to see whether you may need to add a little more water... I usually don't need to add any...

When the Hamin is ready in the morning its aroma surrounds the whole house and actually calls me to open the oven and see what's going on ...

Before serving the Hamin, take out the eggs, peel them and serve them in a separate serving dish on the side.

Carefully take out the cooking bag, open it and move into a serving bowl.

Top with freshly chopped parsley, it will brighten up the depth of this long cooked dish's flavors.

Even though served in separate serving dishes, you may eat them all together on one plate/bowl.

B'teyavon





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