

# HAVURAH

AUGUST, 1998 • IYAR 5758 • VOLUME 1, NUMBER 3

## What Do We Do With Yizkor?

by Stephen Katz

What childhood images do the High Holidays stir in your memory? I remember my impatience over the seemingly endless synagogue services balanced with the excitement of knowing something special was happening. Then there was the unusual sight of Jews in uniform, piling in from a nearby naval base to worship with us. They helped pack out our synagogue on Rosh Hashanah. After the Ten Days of Awe came Yom Kippur, and I remember my dad fasting all day. More to the point, I remember the twinge of guilt I felt as I enjoyed my kosher hot dog, knowing the familiar aroma had probably escaped from the kitchen to make his fast just a little more difficult.

As I reminisce about the holiest day of the year, I recall one part of the synagogue service that confused me. Many of us had to leave the sanctuary while the others continued reading from the *machzor*. Later I learned that this mysterious practice is called the Yizkor service. The living remember loved ones who have died and pledge charity in their memory. Those whose parents are alive exit the room to prevent them from accidentally uttering the prayer for the dead on behalf of the living.

Yizkor is an unusual prayer, unfamiliar to many Jews today. It expresses a belief that might shock many people who recite it without much regard for its meaning.

An orthodox Jewish organization called the Kaddish Foundation explains it this way:

*"[Yizkor] is rooted in the fundamental Jewish belief in the eternity of the soul. When physical life ends, only the body dies, but the soul ascends to the realm of the spirit where it regularly attains higher levels of purity and holiness. When life is over, the soul can no longer perform good deeds . . . But there is a way that the disembodied soul can derive new sources of merit . . . If we, the living, give charity or do good deeds due to the lasting influence or in memory of a departed parent or other loved one, the merit is truly that of the soul in its spiritual realm."*<sup>1</sup>

It's doubtful that the majority of Jews actually believe that praying and giving charity on behalf of the dead can "elevate their souls" in the afterlife. Yet that is precisely the focus of Yizkor prayers:

*Continued on page 2*



*“May God remember the soul of my respected mother [father, husband, wife] who has passed into her eternal rest. I pledge charity in her behalf and pray that her soul be kept among the immortal souls of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Rebekah, Rachel, Leah, and the righteous men and women in paradise. Amen.”*

As believers in the Messiah, what do we do when we’re confronted with traditions such as Yizkor? Whether it be during the High Holidays or at the funeral of a friend or family member, what meaning do these prayers hold for us? Is it an appropriate vehicle to express our love for departed friends or relatives? Is it a time when we can join our unbelieving loved ones in Jewish tradition?

We *can* affirm much of the Yizkor service, which begins with a recitation of selections from Psalms, including 139, 90, 23, 144, 37, 49 and 73. It is always appropriate to turn to Scripture for comfort, whether individually or as part of corporate worship. Any time we have an opportunity to read God’s Word along with unbelieving family and friends, we should take it!

However, when the scriptural portion concludes and the prayers for the dead begin, I feel we should remain silent. We should not pretend to ask God for that which we know is contrary to His Word. The writer to the Hebrews tells us that “man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). It would be comforting to think that we can do something to alter a person’s destiny after he or she passes over, but it would be false comfort. When a person dies, he or she is in the hands of God. We must dwell on the mercy and justice of God at these times and affirm His perfect judgment. As we think about our departed family members, let’s put our trust in God.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps you would feel awkward reciting the scriptural portion of the Yizkor service, then keeping silent for the actual prayers for the dead. But stop and think: if one of your unbelieving relatives came to a worship service—be it at a messianic congregation or a traditional church—wouldn’t there be parts of the service that he or she could not say aloud? How would you feel about that? You would understand that it would be wrong for that relative to join in making statements he or she didn’t believe. Why not allow yourself the same consideration as a believer that you would allow someone else as an unbeliever? You can stand with someone, affirming those things you have in common and stating, by your silence, those areas where you disagree.

Of course, not all Jews view the Yizkor as described by the Kaddish Society. Non-Orthodox tend to see the service as a way to honor the memory of the departed and so

continue their legacy. Yizkor can be a sad time, a time for people to mourn the loss of those whose lives shaped their own. It can also be a time to express gratitude for all the positive qualities of those who are gone, qualities that have guided and enriched the lives of those who remain.

Even as we remain silent for the portion of the prayers supposed to affect the souls of the departed, we can remember those souls with gratitude for all they contributed to our lives. We can tenderly relate the stories of their lives to others and put into practice those life lessons we learned from them. Of course, in the case of those who have received eternal life in Messiah, we can rejoice in the certain and blessed hope that we will see them in heaven.

Some might wish to create their own Yizkor service for a messianic context. Along with the portions of the Psalms mentioned, perhaps we might add prayers of repentance (along the lines of s’lichot) for any missed opportunities to share the gospel. Our prayer can also affirm that even in the midst of our grief, we will praise God, for though “Weeping may endure for a night,” we know that “joy comes in the morning.” (Psalm 30:5). Finally, our prayer can call on God to help us trust Him and be bold to proclaim His gospel to the living.

After all, this time of year is a challenge for us to involve ourselves in the lives of family members who are still with us. May these holy days remind us to reach out to our family and friends in love with the saving message of Messiah. Yom Kippur provides especially good opportunities for us to do so, with its focus on sin and forgiveness as well as the fate of the dead. May God give us all the courage and compassion to love our families enough to tell them about Y’shua. And this year, may more of our loved ones be sealed in the Lamb’s Book of Life! ✨

#### Endnotes

1. <http://mnemotrix.master.com/kaddish/index.html>.
2. One of the most difficult challenges that faces us as Jewish believers in Jesus is to prepare for, or to mourn, the death of an unbelieving loved one. Three years ago, David Brickner wrote an article for *The Mishpochah Message* titled “The Facts of Death” dealing in depth with this and related issues. The article was reprinted in David’s book, *Mishpochah Matters*. If you would like a copy of this article, we will send it to you for free. Just send us a self-addressed business envelope with 32¢ postage on it to:

Minister-at-Large, Jews for Jesus,  
60 Haight Street, San Francisco, 94102



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# Ray Stolz: On Printmaking and Praise

The Messianic art movement is alive and well and growing in South Africa! Ray Stolz, elder at Beit Y’shua Messianic Congregation in Johannesburg, is a printmaker who weds traditional South African images with biblical narrative to bring praise to the Jewish Messiah Y’shua. Ray’s soft-spokenness is contrasted to and complemented by the bubbly personality of his wife Merle, a Jewish believer and mother of their two sons, Adham and Asher.

Ray was born in Luanshya, a small town near Zambia, the son of a copper miner. His family relocated to Johannesburg, where Ray studied bronze casting. The small sculptures he created at that time were cameos which reflected aspects of life in South Africa. One such sculpture, “Moses in the House of Parliament,” depicted a black man dressed in military-style clothes with his mouth strapped closed, cleaning a table in Parliament. Unlike the biblical Moses, however, this figure was allowed no voice against human injustice.

Ray’s marriage to Merle caused her family a great deal of anguish, as they were fiercely proud of their Jewish heritage. In fact, he did not meet her family until a year after the couple was married.

Ray writes, “Although I knew Merle was Jewish, the extent of my knowledge of Judaism did not prepare me for the many heartaches and trials we were to endure. All the while that these tribulations were impacting our lives, both of us were living in a spiritual vacuum. I came from a home where Jesus was accepted but not as One with whom a personal relationship was cultivated. In fact, over the years as I grew up, Jesus faded from my life and the business of this world took over. Merle did not believe either, and in our early married days this was a situation which suited both of us.”

Ray’s artwork at that time was “secular, uninspiring and eclectic.” But it would become the vehicle through which God would reveal Himself to Ray, Merle and their entire family. “I had it on my heart to paint a picture of the crucifixion. I struggled to understand why I was painting anything with religious subject matter. In the end this painting didn’t look anything like a scene of the crucifixion. It was a huge painting—1.5 meters high—which forced its presence on the viewer. When I explained it to Merle, I very cautiously told her about Jesus’ claims to be the Messiah. I wasn’t

very convincing however, because of my own confusion over Him. We both ended up with more questions than answers.

“From this point on, things moved very quickly and before we knew what was happening, Merle and I and our two sons attended a Jews for Jesus Hanukkah celebration. Andrew Barron preached a message on the first chapter of John. Immediately, we understood that Y’shua is the Light of the World. Andrew’s wife Laura visited with us and we all accepted Y’shua as our personal Savior.”

Ray and Merle continued to visit the Jews for Jesus Bible study, which eventually grew into an independent Messianic congregation. The Stolzs became actively involved there and Ray now co-leads the congregation with Malcolm Cohn and Eliyah Gould, present leader of the South African Jews for Jesus branch.

Ray’s artwork now reflects his growing understanding and appreciation for Jewish culture and life, nurtured by his involvement in the messianic movement and a visit to the land of Israel in recent years. “This exposure to the land of the Bible made an immense impact on me and became a source of inspiration for my art. From then onwards my subject matter became fiercely God-related. My desire is to express through my art, biblical narratives which proclaim the greatness of God.

“Printmaking is by its very character an expressive medium. It is also a very primitive and indigenous medium, which relates to my African upbringing. Through the use of biblical content and Jewish imagery I desire these prints to testify to the Jewishness of the gospel message and God’s plan for man in the Scriptures. I want my artwork to be both a ministry and an expression of praise to the Lord.” ✨





# Reaching the Unreachable God

## The Testimony of Dr. Les Berman

I was born in Pretoria and our family moved to Johannesburg when I was four years old. Both my parents are Jewish, and from my earliest years I had a sense of pride regarding my Jewish heritage. I can remember a keen fascination with the figures that emerged from the pages of the Hebrew Scriptures—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Joshua. What impressed me most about these men was that they had a vital and dynamic relationship with God. He communed with them, and they communed with Him, the King and Creator of the universe.

As a young boy, I can remember thinking about God's command to Abram in Genesis 12, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you." This was a difficult command, but Abram so readily obeyed. I imagined myself walking and communing with God as my forefathers had. I yearned for a dynamic, intimate relationship with the God of Israel.

Since I could not see the same presence in my life, I reasoned that the possibility existed that I was not "religious" enough, that I was not observing the laws of Judaism closely enough. I endeavored to do this more sincerely and became more actively involved in the life of our religious community in Johannesburg. However, the God of the patriarchs still remained distant and seemingly unreachable.

As time passed, my religious involvement was maintained, but the deep yearning of my soul persisted. Like the majority of Jewish people, I was antagonistic to anyone who suggested that there might be another facet to the God of the Jews. I was especially resistant when people expounded other faiths to me.

But I surprised myself the day I accepted an invitation to attend a Gospel service one weekend in 1973 at Edenvale Baptist Church. I attended the pre-service Bible class on Ezekiel 38 and 39. To my astonishment, I could not fault what the teacher had to say! To make matters worse, he quoted from Jewish sources and challenged the class to check the validity of his teaching by looking into the texts themselves.

We then went on to the worship service. Pastor Derek Stone's sermon was about Naaman the Leper. Most Jewish children learn about Naaman, as I had. I was affronted that a Christian had the audacity to expound on the Jewish Scriptures so accurately! It was also interesting that both teachings that morning centered around the Old Testament. Had the teaching been from other sources I might not have been as willing to hear and listen.

Although I was certainly unsettled, I had to admit to myself that both the Bible class teacher and Pastor Stone seemed to have the type of relationship with God for which my heart yearned. But I was unnerved by the fact that they believed that Jesus was the Messiah for whom my Jewish people were so patiently waiting.

I remained troubled afterwards for some days. I went so far as to obtain a copy of the tape from that Sunday's messages and, after listening to the tape, I knew without a doubt that the Jesus spoken about was the One who could bring me into a relationship with God. I didn't need to look any further or strive any harder, because Y'shua the Messiah had come to me. He was no longer unreachable. ✨

*Dr. Leslie Berman is a radiologist in private practice in Pretoria, South Africa. He has served on the Board of the Radiological Society of South Africa. Presently, Dr. Berman serves on the Board of Jews for Jesus in South Africa. He and his wife Wendy and their two children, Robert and Claire, attend Beit Y'shua Congregation and Rosebank Union Fellowship in Kingsmead, where Dr. Berman serves as a church council member.*

### A Congregation Grows in Johannesburg

by Elyah Gould, Chief of Station

The Friday after Jews for Jesus missionaries, Laura and Andrew Barron, stepped off the plane onto South African soil in November 1989, they immediately initiated a weekly fellowship meeting. To their delight, it was quickly attended by 30 people and the numbers grew each week as more people came to faith. Jews for Jesus was then approached by some of the more regular attendees who longed for their own messianic congregation. Beit Y'shua Congregation was born in November of 1993. Today it stands as an independent congregation, largely supported by the local Jews for Jesus staff in the areas of leadership, preaching, teaching, worship and discipleship of new Jewish believers.

As the only messianic congregation in Johannesburg, Beit Y'shua serves the larger believing community and attendance swells during the High Holiday season and for other holiday celebrations. Jewish believers from churches in the surrounding area are drawn in at these times. Many unbelieving family members attend as well, and they are able to observe the dedication of a messianic community celebrating their faith in Messiah (see Ray Stolz's testimony in this issue).

Although Jews for Jesus is not geared toward church or congregation planting, the value of our interrelationship is seen in the area of discipleship. A regular Tuesday night Bible study provides good, solid teaching for the new believer. There is a continuing, one-on-one visitation program as well. Beit Y'shua is a place where seekers can ask questions and find answers. Many couples from mixed marriages find the congregation to be the best option for themselves and their children. The bar mitzvah training program is a particularly valuable means of discipleship for younger people.

This visible and growing remnant of God's people has become an anchor for the messianic community in Johannesburg. Rejoice with us in the good work God is doing in the "utmost parts of the earth" ✨

### From the Editor:

It was a very bright, warm Soweto day, perfect for a wedding. A local pastor, friend of the Jews for Jesus ministry, had remarried after his wife's death. Our party of three—Lev and Jenifer Leigh (Jews for Jesus South Africa branch missionaries) and I—drove through the Johannesburg township in search of the home where the reception was being held. We took a right, then a left, then the same right and left again, obviously lost in this village of unmarked avenues and unpaved roads. We finally reached the small but well-swept home. Folding chairs were immediately brought out and dusted off, and we were ushered to a shady spot beneath a tree.

The wedding party arrived and was escorted up the street, preceded by women who "ullalated" their joy, an African custom that we Westerners could only liken to yodeling. And as they were escorted into the reception tent, the Leigh's and I were invited to enter as well. We found ourselves in a beautiful "room" decorated with tropical flowers, heady with scent.

Other people entered the tent, among them four other Jewish believers who were also invited guests. One of them was the pastor who married the couple! Seven Jewish believers in a sea of 200 native South African blacks. Only God could make such a wedding.

But the real place of honor was so obviously given to Jesus. In the back of the house, women tended huge pots of food over coal fires, and these cooking vessels were large enough to feed the community which had been invited in. Broad hugs, wide hearts, and ready smiles radiated God's love and encompassed those who attended. Though many from the community were not believers, a reverential hush seemed to dictate their behavior. Children stood patiently in line while waiting to be served from the huge pots and platters. Inside the tent, seats were quickly vacated, without protest, when guests had finished their meal in order to make room for a newcomer. The small tent had been transformed into a "house of love," the power of which radiated out through its canvas walls.

If the Jews for Jesus staff in South Africa can claim any "success," it most surely has something to do with the prayers of many black South African Christians, a microcosm of whom attended this wedding and welcomed the Jewish believers in like family. For a fraction of time, the small Soweto township seemed touched by the sea of eternity, and cultural differences were overpowered by the powerful love of the Messiah.

Many Jewish believers here at home enjoy the comfort and strengthening of identity we find by living with "our own." We strive to develop messianic



communities, congregations and culture that affirm our Jewishness. It is a stretching experience to be transported beyond familiar boundaries and experience the boundless love of Jesus in a culture not one's own. And yet it is the testimony of His love, which He allows us to enjoy here at home within the familiar confines of our own "tents," that needs to be broadened, widened and presented as all-encompassing. By it we will attract the unsaved stranger to come partake at His table and be saved by His abounding grace. ✨

*Melissa Dell Moskowitz*

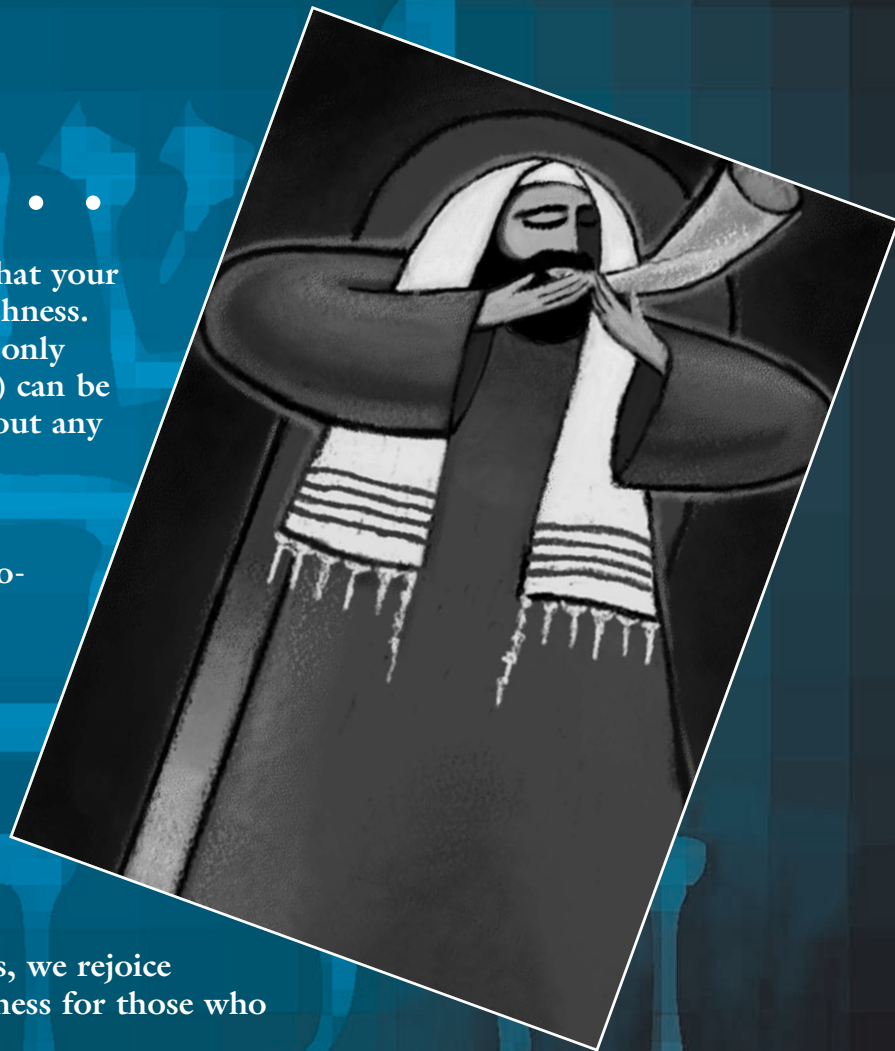
Melissa Dell Moskowitz



# HIGH HOLIDAY GREETINGS . . .

are an important way to show your family that your faith in Y'shua fits perfectly with your Jewishness. Unfortunately, the really nice cards (i.e. the only ones you'd want to send to your loved ones) can be terribly expensive. And most tend to leave out any meaningful mention of the LORD.

So—we designed messianic Rosh Hashanah cards! These vibrant, full-color cards are produced on richly textured felt paper with felt envelopes. They include a scripture verse appropriate for the holidays:



“If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, That You may be feared.” (Psalm 130:3-4)

as well as the following greeting:

“As the shofar of Rosh Hashanah sounds, we rejoice in the Lord's boundless love and forgiveness for those who fear His name.”

The cards measure 5" x 7" so there is plenty of room to include your personal note to family and friends. A box of eight cards is only \$5.50, an “awesome” price. Order yours today!

## Ingathering: A Child's Perspective

“When I first get to the Ingathering, I'm a little anxious, but mainly happy and excited to see my friends, the ones I know all year 'round and the ones I see only at Ingathering. All those special, crazy 'characters' are there too—Alien, Scripture Man, Scripture Princess and Walnut Man. One year we even had a Leper appear in our classroom (I think it was Jhan Moskowitz in disguise but I'm not sure). For me, going to the Ingathering is like going to camp. We do a lot of silly things, but also some serious ones like memorizing Scripture and hearing lessons from the Bible. I especially liked it the year we dipped our feet in paint and made footprints on a piece of wood, showing that we would always follow Y'shua. I like Ingathering so much that maybe I'd even save some of my allowance so that I could go!”

—Tali B., 10 ¾ years old, veteran of seven Ingatherings

With Scripture Man, Walnut Man and Scripture Princess greeting them at the door, children might think they stumbled into some sort of messianic Disneyland! But the spiritual core of the Jews for Jesus Ingathering Children's Program is anything but a fairy tale. Here, God's Word is taught in a fun, uplifting atmosphere where Y'shua is exalted and children are encouraged to follow Him. Teenagers too, are engaged in their own program for the weekend. In three and a half short days a community atmosphere is developed which encourages children to live for the Lord and strengthen their identity as messianic Jews. So send your children to the Ingathering and follow them there yourselves! ✨

## CLASSIFIEDS

### Wanted: Musicians

For the Liberated Wailing Wall, a mobile evangelistic team requiring an 18-month commitment. Singers and instrumentalists needed. Train in San Francisco January '99. Contact Stephen Katz at Jews for Jesus Headquarters. E-mail: mal60@aol.com

### Wanted: Messianic Jewish Humor

Heard any messianic jokes lately? Our movement is

young, our culture just emerging. Humor is part of our Jewish heritage. What has made you laugh lately? Share it with us, and maybe we'll share it in this publication. Contact the Havurah address in the masthead.

### Wanted: Traditions

For future Havurah articles on the holiday traditions enjoyed/employed by the messianic community. How do *you* include and

glorify Y'shua through observing Hanukkah, Passover, Resurrection Day, etc.? Contact the Havurah address.

### Are you in college? Are you on-line?

Be a part of *MessiahWire*, the new online community of Jewish believing college students nationwide. Exchange words of encouragement, prayer requests, ideas for reaching other students for the Lord.

*MessiahWire* is a private e-mail list service. Subscribe! E-mail Stephen Katz: Mal60@aol.com

### Spring Break

On the beach. College students, 18-25, spend your spring break in '99 on the beaches with Jews for Jesus, sharing your faith. Contact: Josh Sofaer 10962 LeConte Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90024 (310) 443-9553 E-mail: Jasof@aol.com

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# bulletin board

Have We Got an Ingathering for You!

### East Coast

October 29th–November 1st, 1998  
 Blue Ridge Mountain Christian Retreat Center,  
 New Ringgold, Pennsylvania  
 Contact: Mitch Forman, 109 E. 31st Street  
 New York, NY 10016 • 212-683-7077  
 E-Mail: nyj4jesus@aol.com

### West Coast

October 29th–November 1st, 1998  
 Mission Springs Conference Center  
 Scotts Valley, California  
 Contact: David Mishkin, PO Box 4359  
 Berkeley, CA 94704 • 510-883-0343  
 E-Mail: sfbranch@aol.com

### Midwest

November 19–22nd, 1998  
 Lake Lawn Lodges Resort Center,  
 Lake Delavan, Wisconsin  
 Contact: Jhan Moskowitz  
 PO Box 182, Skokie, IL 60076  
 847-679-2680  
 E-Mail: jfjchi@aol.com

Bulletin Board

Bulletin Board

# FAST FOODS

A popular Jewish cookbook features sample dinner menus that would knock your socks off and stuff you up to your eyebrows. One suggested meal consists of homemade knishes, stuffed breast of veal, sweet and sour cabbage, kasha varnishkes and poppyseed cake—and that's for just a weeknight meal. We at Jews for Jesus ask: Who eats like this anymore? Who cooks like this anymore? And how come there aren't any menus like this for Yom Kippur?

Okay, we're only kidding. Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, is traditionally a day of fasting and repentance. It's not a time to think about cooking. Jewish believers often spend the day at home or at their local congregations, thinking and praying about our people who do not know the fullness of forgiveness in our *kipporah*, the Lamb of God, the Messiah Y'shua. We ask God to forgive us for our own sins as well, fully aware that this is not a once-a-year experience. Our peace comes from the assurance of our daily relationship with God and the final and complete work He has done in the Messiah.

But at the end of the fast we celebrate and enjoy a meal together with others, and so once again we ask the age-

old question: "What's for supper?" It is traditional (perhaps because it is easier on the stomach) to have a dairy meal to break the fast. Offered here are two great meatless dishes (sometimes the word "vegetarian" scares people!) that can easily be prepared before Erev Yom Kippur and then reheated.



## Laure Brook-Krueger's Tofu-Spinach Pie

We have been meeting more and more people who, for either health (lactose-intolerance) or various other reasons, do not eat dairy products. Laure Brook-Krueger, a new Jewish believer from Evanston, Illinois, offers us such a recipe (*see below*) for Tofu-Spinach pie. She and her husband Jeffrey have two sons and four cats. Says Laure about herself, "I always enjoy finding new and different ways to honor and celebrate people and life events." We hope that this recipe will become a welcome addition to your Yom Kippur break-fast tradition. ✨

## Diane Cohens's Easy "Kosknop"

Pronounced "casenip" (not catnip), this recipe from Diane Cohen's mother is easy to prepare and gentle on the stomach. Diane, wife of Hyam (of Purple Pomegranate Productions fame) is a grandmother, nurse, missionary and unofficial winner of the Camp Gilgal "Jewish Mother" award.

- 1 package lasagna noodles, cooked according to box directions*
- 1 quart pot or dry curd cottage cheese*
- 4 eggs, beaten*
- ½ teaspoon salt*
- 2 cups stale toast cubes (use day-old bread)*
- 1 ½ tablespoons butter or margarine*

In large bowl beat together cheese with eggs and salt. Grease a 9" x 13" baking pan with cooking spray. Alternate layers of noodles and cheese mixture in pan. Cover tightly with aluminum foil and bake for 30 minutes in a preheated 325° oven. Remove foil and top with toast cubes; dot with butter or margarine. Bake 15 minutes more. Serves six.

## Tofu-Spinach Pie

*1 (10-ounce) package frozen, chopped spinach; thawed, water squeezed out*

OR

*2 (10-ounce) bags fresh spinach, steamed and well-drained*

*1 partially baked 9" pie shell*

*2 tablespoons vegetable oil*

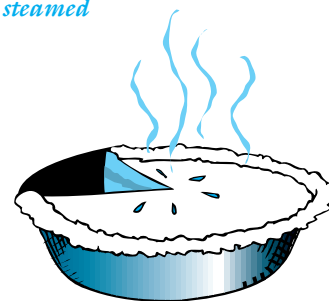
*1 ½ cups onions, chopped*

*1 ½ pounds tofu, crumbled*

*½ teaspoon dried thyme*

*1 tablespoon lemon juice*

*1 ½ teaspoons salt*



In large frying pan heat oil over medium heat; add onions and saute until soft and translucent. Add spinach, lower heat and saute together for two minutes, stirring until well mixed. Remove from heat and add remaining ingredients. Pour into pie shell and bake for 30 minutes in preheated 400° oven until crust is golden. Serves four to six.