24 hours a day. If they were baked with milk products, they could not be served at dinner, which was almost always meat, nor could they be eaten as a snack before bedtime, for one had to wait 6 hours after meat before eating dairy. What good are cookies of love, cookies of home, cookies of belonging if they were off-limits for large blocks of time (especially prime noshing time)? As the cookies were there whenever we wanted them, no matter what we had done earlier, so was Bubbe Ema, and by extension the whole family. And so, we were being taught, should we be for our family and our children.

Reclaiming The Domestic Sphere

I write this not as a foray into the fields of nostalgia (although, in truth, in part it is). Rather I write this as a call for so many of us—especially women—who have, over the past 20 years of Jewish feminist creativity, overlooked the home as an arena of sacred space, to reclaim the domestic sphere. In turning our gaze to the public arena, we, purposely or not, turned our backs on a rich tradition of our mothers, grandmothers and great-grandmothers. Even as we enter the public sphere and continue to reshape it to reflect women's ways of leadership and public conduct, so must we expand our sphere of feminist energies and re-enter the domestic sphere, reclaiming and refashioning the wisdom we have lost.

Tools Of Her Priesthood

My grandmother had a stable of 4 or 5 cookie cutters that she used to shape her cookies: a diamond, a club (she played canasta every week), a rooster, a dog, and a horse. When I was growing up, I never paid much attention to them. But when I began to outfit a kitchen of my own, I recognized them for what they were, artifacts of her priestly rites.

My grandmother died making her famous cookies. It was fitting, it was a blessing, that she die performing her holiest of acts. The night before her funeral, the family gathered for dinner. And for dessert, we passed around the cookies, the last batch that would come from Bubbe Ema's kitchen. I did not want to eat mine. I wanted to save it, to preserve a last physical remnant of her being, her warmth, her magic. And why not? Did not God command the Jewish people to save a bit of manna for all time for a similar reason?

But, I knew, the manna did not last. And neither would Bubbe Ema's cookies. They were meant to give life, to give joy, to draw a circle of warmth, belonging and protection around those she loved. To freeze a life-giving force, to try to turn it into a memorial, would have been a defamation. Amid tears, amid unbearable sadness, we ate the last cookies together.

Weeks later, when it came time to divide up her life's possessions, the granddaughters took what we each wanted the most: Bubbe Ema's cookie cutters.

I got the horse and the rooster. ❖

Guidelines for an eco–kosher kitchen

Stewart Vile-Tahl

Eco–Kashrut is one of the most creative and powerful ideas to come out of the Jewish Renewal movement. The term was coined by Reb Zalman Shachter–Shalomi in the 70s and has been elaborated by Arthur Waskow and others more recently. Eco–Kashrut is a practice for sanctifying not only the act of eating, but every act of consuming some of the earth's resources. The power of the Eco–Kashrut principle is that it brings a diverse set of Jewish teachings together with the ecological needs of a planet devastated by human over–consumption of petroleum products, wood, water, minerals, etc., as well as food. But food is still our most intimate connection to the earth. Our *kishkes* and our moral teachings come face to face with one another in the kitchen and around the dinner table.

Among the many Jewish teachings that have a direct application to food, there are four key teachings that have particular significance. The first is *tza'ar ba'alei chayim* (consideration for the suffering of animals). There are numerous biblical, talmudic and latter rabbinic sources which discuss this principle (*Gittin* 62a; *Berakhot* 40a; *Exodus* 28:8–10; *Exodus* 23:5; *Deuteronomy* 22:10; *Deuteronomy* 25:4). Some of the highlights of these teachings include: providing food for one's animals before oneself; providing Shabbat for our animals as well as for ourselves; the obligation to relieve the suffering of an animal; the prohibition on teaming together animals with vastly differing levels of strength. There are also numerous stories of classical heroes who embody the principle of compassion for animals (Moses, *Exodus Rabbah* 2:2; Rebekah, *Genesis* 24:11–20; Rabbi Judah the Prince, *Baba Metzi* 85a).

In contrast to the dictates of *tza'ar ba'alei chayim*, farm animals now, including most animals raised for

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kosher slaughter, are treated in an obscenely cruel and callous fashion. This is particularly true of chickens, who are now raised in huge factories, sometimes 200,000 or more under one roof, crammed into small cages for their entire life, their beaks cut off to prevent them from pecking each other to death.

Dangerous Wastefulness

The second major principle is called *bal tashchit* (do not destroy). The primary text for this principle is the prohibition against cutting down fruit trees, even in time of war (*Deuteronomy 20:19–20*). Again, there are numerous biblical and rabbinic sources for the principle that one does not have the right to destroy something, even one's own property, without very good cause.

And yet, the habit of heavy meat eating has been and continues to be the single most ecologically destructive feature of wealthy industrialized societies. It's responsible for more than half the water pollution, well over half the use of fresh water and the erosion of millions of acres of soil each year. Travelling across the US, one is struck by how much of our land is devoted to cattle raising, either for grazing or for producing grain that is in turn fed to cattle. The rich ecosystems of the Great Plains and the west were plowed up or turned into scrub desert largely to grow more beef. In South and Central America, much of the rain forest has been and is being cut down to provide pasture for cattle that is consumed by the local elites or in the US and Europe. What would the rabbis of old have to say about this practice of destroying thousands of life forms so that we can have $.99 hamburgers?

Caring For One's Body

The third major principle is *shemirat haguf* (protecting the health of one's body). One of Judaism's fundamental teachings is that the body is no less holy than the soul. We're not allowed to do anything that would harm the "holy temple" of our bodies.

By contrast, in modern industrialized societies, a large portion of our most serious health problems, including heart disease, some cancers, diabetes, and arthritis have been linked to diets that are too high in animal foods—meat, dairy and eggs.

The fourth principle is *tzedakah*, particularly as it relates to feeding the hungry. Numerous laws and teachings of the prophets focus on the obligation to feed, clothe and care for those in need.

One of the greatest injustices in our world is the stark contrast between the approximately one billion people who are unable to feed themselves adequately and the approximately one billion people who are overfed, eating enough animal food to feed all the people of the world adequate grain-based diets. I like to illustrate this in my classes by bringing in two big casseroles of cornbread that could serve 20 using the corn that, if fed to a cow, would make just one quarter pound hamburger. The visual contrast between the casseroles of cornbread and the hamburger patty tells the story better than any words.

Eco-Kosher Made Easy:

The following are my own basic guidelines for an Eco-Kosher diet:

Bal Tashchit (do not destroy)

Eat towards the bottom of the food chain—more grains and fruits and vegetables and fewer animal products.

Buy organically grown foods, grown in harmony with other forms of life. (Check the label. If it is organically grown, chances are it will say so.) Organic farming enriches the soil and allows it to remain fertile indefinitely.

Buy more locally grown food thereby minimizing the use of foods that require the burning of fossil fuels to transport from far away. Grow more of our own food. Eat more with the seasons rather than importing, for example, tomatoes, to eat in the winter.

Buy more foods that use no or minimal disposable packaging. Disposable packaging consumes resources, pollutes our land and water and fills up our landfills.

Tza'ar Ba'alei Chayim (sensitivity to animal suffering)

If you eat meat, eat only animals that have been treated humanely during their life time. Ask for and buy only free-range chickens and eggs that come from them.

Shemirat Haguf (caring for the body)

Eat a plant-based diet. The point is not that a vegetarian diet is necessarily the healthiest diet for everyone. The point is that a meat and dairy based diet puts one at greater risk of numerous degenerative diseases. Also, industrialized society has been steadily dumping more and more toxic chemicals into our environment, chemicals which are many times more concentrated in animal foods than in plant foods.

Tzedakah (feeding the hungry and creating a world of peace and justice)

Eat more grains and vegetables. There is more than enough food being grown now to feed everyone an adequate diet if it were fed to humans rather than animals.

There's nothing terribly innovative or surprising about these guidelines. Many health professionals, environmen-

talists, animal rights advocates, and social justice advocates are saying essentially the same thing. But the point of Eco-Kashrut is that these guidelines have a spiritual foundation in Torah. As such, they can help sanctify our dinner tables and connect us to the divine while simultaneously serving the needs of our bodies, our communities, and our planetary eco-systems.❖

❦ Endthoughts ❦

A death in the family

Leonard Fein

There will be time, too much time, to contemplate the events of these last dark days, the days that began with the death of my daughter Nomi, my daughter who at age 30 was also the mother of Liat Gabrielle, who with her husband David and their friends Mark and Eileen was also a founder of the New Israel Funds' New Generations program here in Boston and a member of the board of the Solomon Schechter Day School, her alma mater; my daughter, a member of the Newton *minyan*, a person, as I have discovered with delight this bitter week, in her own right, pulling her own weight in the community.

But even now, the day after the oh-so-abrupt end of the *shiva*, there is this to say, and *Sh'ma* seems to me the place to say it:

To be a Jew at the end of the 20th century, to be the kind of Jew who has internalized Jewish history, who feels the linkage between personal biography and public history, is to live with the knowledge of sorrow, of tragedy, of death. It is to understand that the "natural order" of things is less natural and less orderly than is commonly supposed. It is to know that young people, even children, die before their time, die before their parents. And so when it is your young child, there is a sense in which the event, miserable though it is, is not, fundamentally, surprising. Such things, may God help us, happen.

Nomi, thank God, was spared all suffering. Her death was without premonition, without even a second's foreknowledge. (A theological confusion: I wish that I were a believer so I could curse God. At the same time, I thank God that Nomi never knew, does not know.)

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The Miracle Of Kindness

But though death is familiar, the response to death—to this death—has come as a revelation. Nothing in my prior experience, not all my thinking and talking and writing about goodness, has prepared me for the kindness, the generosity, the thoughtfulness of so many people. We—Rachel and Jessica, my daughters, and David, and David's parents, Bill and Rochelle, and Nomi's mother, Zelda, and all the other members of our families and Nomi's 90-year-old grandmother, Tamara—have been so thoroughly and gently embraced that I, even I, can barely describe what has happened. The *minyan* itself, starting even while we were still at the hospital to which she'd been taken in the vain hope that she might there be revived, continuing through the arrangement of *tefilot* (prayers) and food and the shoveling of snow from the walk to the house where we sat, the *minyan*, very many of whose members scarcely knew Nomi and David (who were among its younger members), has taught me what the abstraction we call "community" can mean in the most lovingly practical of ways.

And beyond the *minyan*, the friends and the acquaintances, the kindness even of strangers, reaching out in shock, in sorrow, and in consolation. It is not easy to visit a family that has suffered such a loss, it is not easy even to call or to write, yet people do. And here they have so done in such numbers and with such wisdom that I am dazzled and deeply, deeply moved.

Moved so deeply that the experience becomes one of healing, and that is perhaps the greatest surprise for so decisively non-new-age a person. On the morning of the funeral, I said to a friend that among the burdens of the day would be the hugging. (I am not from the California-style huggers; I prefer greater selectivity.) Yet by day's end I could say to that friend that there hadn't been a single hug that wasn't comforting.

And yes, perhaps this says more about my own limitations than it does about the nature of the universe. That distinction doesn't much matter to me just now. Of course, this lesson still undistilled, comes at an unbearably high price, but whereas on the day after Nomi left us I thought and said that there was no wisdom to be derived from so random an event, I end the week of mourning with a radically different view. Day one, the death itself—meaningless, hence no point at all in asking "why," in railing against the gods; there's no "if only" here. Nor can I connect this last sentence to the next with

(continued. p. 8)