

## FEATURES AND LOCAL NEWS

**Traveling with Jewish Taste<sup>®</sup>****Ve-nahafoch hu: Upside Down**

By Carol Goodman Kaufman



In last year's Purim column, I wrote about the various delicacies prepared by Jews throughout Israel and the Diaspora. In addition to the ubiquitous Hamantaschen, we looked at sweet couscous with nuts and dried fruit from Morocco, halvah from the Caucasus, and caraway cake in tribute to Queen Esther's vegetarian diet.

This year, I thought we'd try something a little different, so I give you not one, but two recipes that are not traditional Purim treats. Rather, they represent my idea of participating in the spirit of "ve-nahafoch hu."

"Ve-nahafoch hu" refers to the last-minute salvation from annihilation of the Jews planned by the evil vizier, Haman.

In the Megillat Esther, we read in Chapter 9, Verse 1: "Now in the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have rule over them; whereas it was turned to the contrary (ve-nahafoch hu), that the Jews had rule over them that hated them."

In other words, things in ancient Shushan were overturned. In our celebration of going "from sorrow to gladness, and from mourning into a holiday" (Esther 9:22), on Purim we witness normally sober and serious Jews getting so drunk that the world spins upside down.

This silly behavior all takes place, of course, in adherence to the Talmudic prescription by Rava, who said, "A person is obligated to drink on Purim until he does not know the difference between 'cursed be Haman' and 'blessed be Mordechai.'"

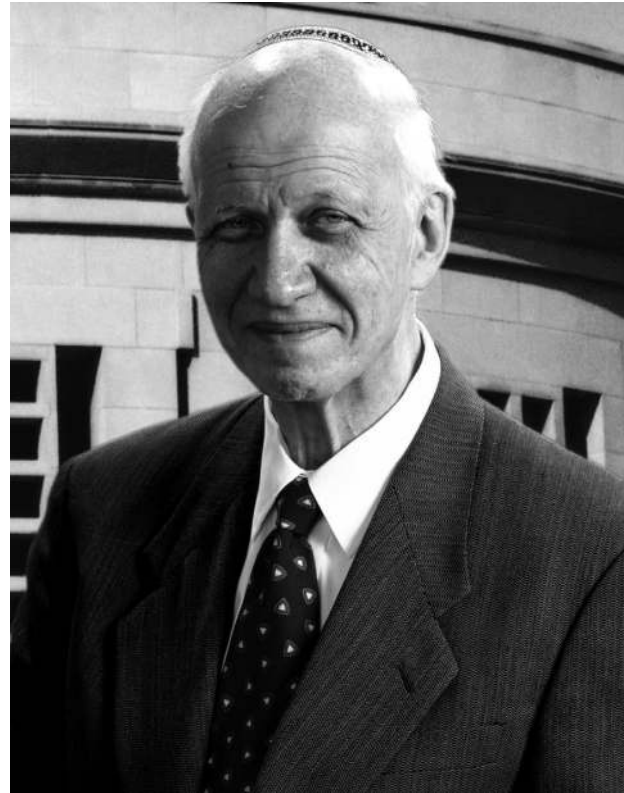
Oh, my! A rabbinic injunction to get loaded.

Turning things upside down again, we also perform mitzvot in addition to our feasting and merrymaking. We bring goodie baskets called mishlo'ach manot to friends, family, and shut-ins, and we give matanot le'evyonim, gifts to the poor.

As Rabbi Irving "Yitz" Greenberg wrote in, "Confronting Jewish Destiny: Purim," in his book *The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays*:

*Part of the dizzying paradox of Purim is the extraordinary and capricious reversals it reflects. Vashti is deposed as queen for showing modesty. Esther wins favor for the queenship because of her modesty ... Mordechai, in one day, is raised from gallows candidate to prime minister. The very name of the holiday – Purim (meaning lottery) – suggests the absurdity and vulnerability of historical events when a turn of the wheel, a night's insomnia, a moment of jealousy on the part of a drunken king, spells the difference between degradation and exaltation, between genocide and survival ... On*

*Purim, we wear costumes, get drunk, and let go of the daily inhibitions – the cloak of order – that characterizes our lives, in order to acknowledge that our lives can change on a dime, and that a situation that looks devastating and grim can in fact become uplifting and celebratory.*



Rabbi Irving "Yitz" Greenberg: 'get drunk, and let go of the daily inhibitions'

Another major theme of the holiday is that things aren't always what they seem to be, and that secrets abound. Royal courtiers are either ignorant or evil despite all the trappings of wealth. Haman secretly plans to murder all the Jews. Esther must hide her Jewish identity in order to survive in the king's palace.

So, in this spirit of the topsy-turvy, upside down "ve-nahafoch hu," ....let's eat!

Carol Goodman Kaufman is a psychologist and author with a passion for travel and food. She recently launched the blog "Food for Thought," on her website at [carolgoodmankaufman.com](http://carolgoodmankaufman.com). She invites visits and comments.

This column is copyrighted © by Carol Goodman Kaufman and the Berkshire Jewish Voice. It may not be reprinted or reproduced, in whole or in part, in any manner. All rights reserved.

**Individual Chocolate Lava Cupcakes**

One of the lessons of Purim is that things aren't always as they seem. Quiet, demure Esther was a heroine while the exalted Haman was a villain. In homage, we wear disguises.

The following recipe shows that desserts, too, can seem to be one thing but be hiding something beneath the surface. These delicious lava cakes would be a perfect ending to a Purim seudah, or feast – yet another mitzvah that makes the holiday a real celebration.

*Nota bene:* One thing these cakes are not pretending to be is dietetic!

Before you start, make sure to have six 4-oz. ramekins or custard cups.

**Ingredients:**

6 ounces of bittersweet baking chocolate	2 egg yolks
2 eggs	1/3 cup sugar
1/4 cup heavy cream	1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 stick butter	1/4 cup cake flour

**Directions:**

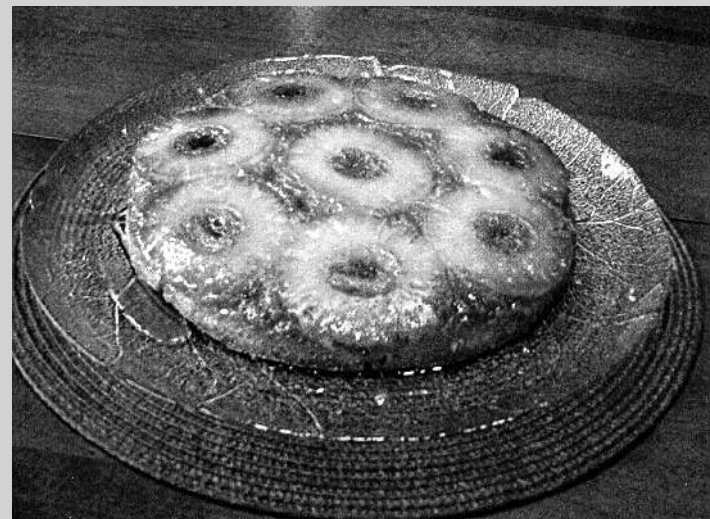
- To make lava centers, melt 2 oz. of the chocolate together with the cream in a Pyrex measuring cup in the microwave. Start at one minute, checking to make sure it doesn't burn, and continue until completely melted. Whisk gently to blend.
- Refrigerate 2-3 hours or until firm.
- Form into 6 balls and then refrigerate until needed for next step.
- Preheat oven to 400°. Coat ramekins or custard cups with cooking spray.
- Melt the rest of the chocolate (4 oz.) and the butter in microwave. Start at one minute, checking that it doesn't burn, and continue until chocolate is completely melted.
- Whisk gently to blend. With an electric mixer, beat eggs, egg yolks, sugar, and vanilla on high speed about five minutes or until thick and light.
- Fold melted chocolate mixture and flour into egg mixture just until combined.
- Spoon cake batter into ramekins.
- Place a refrigerated chocolate ball in the middle of each ramekin.
- Bake about fifteen minutes or until cake is firm to the touch.
- Let stand for about 5 minutes and then run a sharp knife around inside of each ramekin. Invert each cake onto an individual dessert plate and remove ramekin.

Top with two or three raspberries and serve.

Serves 6

**Pineapple Upside Down Cake**

Purim is a holiday in which everything is topsy-turvy, so what dessert could be more appropriate than a cake that is upside down?

**Ingredients: Topping**

1/2 stick butter	1 20-oz. can sliced pineapple
3/4 cup packed brown sugar	

**Directions:**

In a ten-inch cast-iron frying pan or a nine-inch round cake pan over low heat, melt butter. Stir in brown sugar until well blended. Remove from heat. Drain canned pineapple, reserving two tablespoons pineapple syrup. Arrange pineapple slices onto top of sugar mixture. Set aside until ready to pour the prepared cake batter on top.

**Ingredients: Cake**

1 cup all-purpose flour	1/4 cup canola oil
3/4 cup sugar	1/4 teaspoon grated lemon rind
1-1/2 teaspoons baking powder	1 teaspoon lemon juice, fresh preferred
1/4 teaspoon salt	1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 egg, room temperature	
1/2 cup milk	

**Directions:**

Preheat oven to 350°. Prepare topping. In a large bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. Add egg, milk, and canola oil. Beat 2-3 minutes. Add two tablespoons pineapple syrup, lemon rind, lemon juice, and vanilla extract; beat two minutes. Pour cake batter over prepared topping, spreading evenly. Bake about forty-five minutes or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Remove from oven and cool on a wire rack for five to ten minutes. Run knife around edge of pan to loosen; cover with a cake plate and invert. Serve warm.

Serves 8