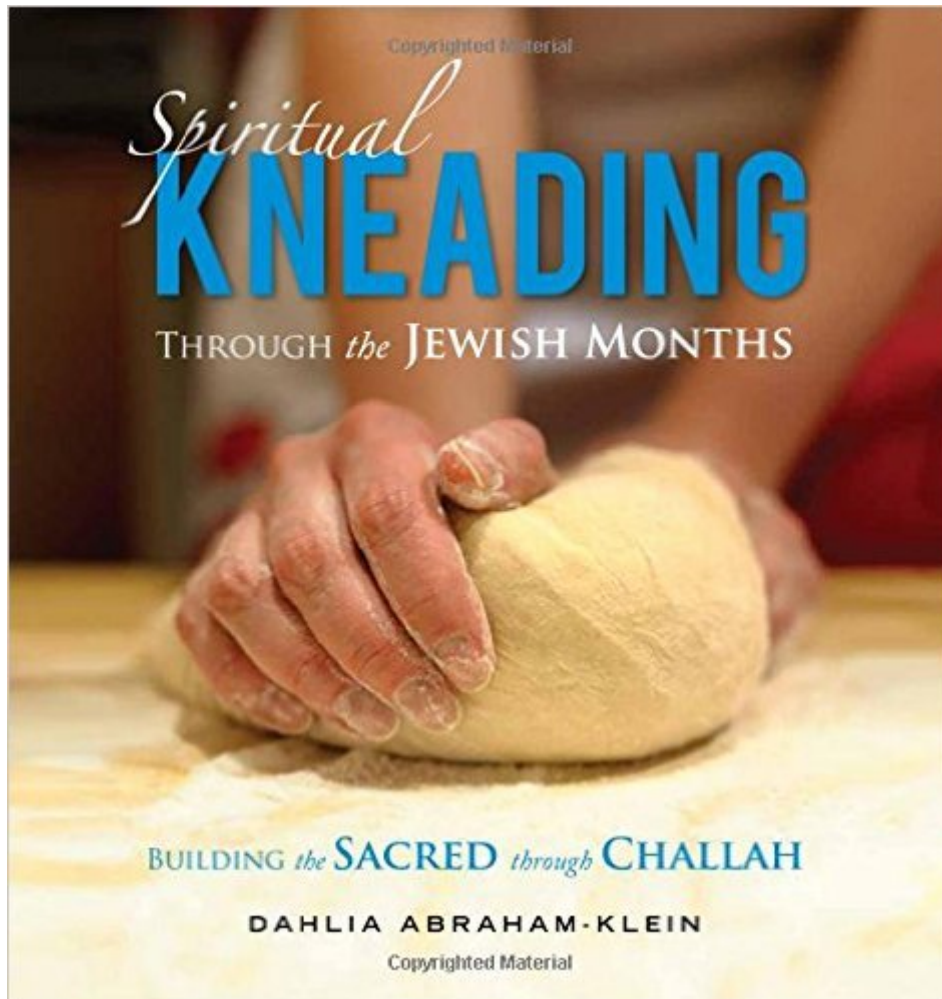


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Spiritual Kneading Through The Jewish Months: Building The Sacred Through Challah



Synopsis

Spiritual Kneading through the Jewish Months is an evocative collection of challah recipes, Jewish spiritual insights, and Torah study as it relates to each Jewish month, called Rosh Chodesh. Dahlia Abraham-Klein, pulls from Jewish texts a book that enhances women's spiritual growth via the tradition of challah baking while meditating upon the Jewish theme of the month. The book gives an extensive history of Rosh Chodesh and why it's traditionally been a woman's holiday. The book covers all twelve months of the Jewish year, with specific Torah text for each month as well as a specific challah that relates the Torah theme to that month. In essence Spiritual Kneading is palatable Torah. Each Jewish month includes a meditation guided through the kneading of the challah dough. The kneading is an action meditation, best understood as the performance of commandments and rituals. The inner essence of the dough elucidates divines in the challah and becomes a springboard to reach God. This conversation in turn is kneaded into the dough and becomes part of the spiritual wisdom transmitted to your loved ones. When commandments are seen in this light, particularly baking challah, the challah takes on a greater spiritual significance. Each chapter then goes on to give sources, ideas, and questions to be discussed by the group while the challah dough is rising. The purpose of baking challah in this particular way is to develop one's own personal spiritual growth within the context of a Rosh Chodesh group. Recipes and Shapes include: TISHREI Spiral Challah with Apple and Silan CHESHVAN Rainbow Shaped Challah KISLEV Cheese Loaf TEVET Star of David Challah

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Customer Reviews

I have been baking most of the bread that my family consumes for more than fifty years. Very little is more satisfying than the feel of the dough beneath your fingers as you knead it. Few things are as good for stress relief as kneading bread dough and making bread is a wonderful way to learn patience. As an extra boon, making your own bread is one of the easiest ways to cut your food bills dramatically. Dahlia Abraham-Klein's *Spiritual Kneading through the Jewish Months: Building the Sacred through Challah* brings an entirely new perspective to the art of bread baking. We've all heard that "Bread is the Staff of Life" but few of us have really thought about that idea. If you're Christian then bread shows up at services a few times a year as part of a communion service. If you're Jewish then the Challah on your Shabbat table might very well come from a bakery. Many of us, women in particular, simply never consider that it is to women that producing the Staff of Life has been given. How easy it is to overlook the story of Abraham entertaining his angelic visitors. Abraham prepared the finest meal with his own hands, but it was to Sarah that he turned for the bread, the very stuff of life. One of the things that I have always enjoyed most about kneading bread is the opportunity to think. For 10 or 20 minutes you are chained to one spot, rhythmically pushing and throwing the dough back and forth. I've had some of my best thoughts, worked out many a problem while kneading dough. Dahlia takes that opportunity to a new level, using the opportunity to focus the thoughts of the kneader on various religious themes as you move throughout the year. Each chapter of the book centers around the thirteen lunar months of the Jewish calendar year. In each chapter you'll find things to think about central to the events of that particular month along with several recipes for Challah, each of which has a unique and significant shape. Dahlia's recipes are large. Intended for use during communal baking sessions, each uses an entire 5 pounds of flour and makes 6 to 8 loaves - and there is a huge variety. Chocolate Challah, a rose shaped Challah flavored with rose water and studded with raisins, Gluten Free Challah, a spiral shaped Challah studded with apple and redolent of date honey are just a few of the enticing variations. There was a time that I baked a dozen loaves of bread at a time - several times a week no less. These days I do not have the stamina that I once had and my extra-large Kitchen Aid mixer which did my kneading for me has chosen to die (I cannot afford to replace it), so I bake just one or two. I did cut several of these recipes down to a size that is manageable for me, then waited until a couple of my daughters could be available at the same time to try a full-size recipe. They were all lovely. Bread freezes beautifully, both baked and unbaked, so if you've the freezer space don't be afraid to mix up the entire batch in order to have fresh-baked bread on hand at the drop of a pin. To freeze unbaked dough, cover the shaped but not risen dough with oiled plastic wrap and place in the freezer, still on a baking sheet, until firm, about one hour. Wrap the dough securely, then place it into a large ziplock

bag. Bake the dough within a month or two. Place the frozen dough, unwrapped, onto a prepared baking sheet, cover loosely with the wrapping to prevent it drying out, and allow to thaw in the refrigerator for several hours or overnight. Remove to room temperature to complete the rising, then bake as usual. Grandma's \$0.02 - Dahlia Abraham-Klein brings a new dimension of thought to baking bread while introducing a wide variety of shapes and flavors to our Daily Bread. Women of either Jewish or Christian heritage will find new ideas throughout the pages of *Spiritual Kneading through the Jewish Months: Building the Sacred through Challah*. Highly Recommended* Sample provided

It has become popular for cooks, professional and home trained, to declare that the secret ingredient in their recipes is *love*. Dahlia Abraham-Klein has, in fact, woven love throughout her book *Spiritual Kneading Through the Jewish Months*. I quote: *In the sanctuary of our homes, we are graced with a special capacity to meditate and to converse with God while kneading dough. Love and faith is infused into the challah, which then serves as both physical and spiritual sustenance for our families. We are the bread winners!* One must read this book carefully. It is far more than a challah cookbook. The erudite and careful way, the author expresses herself forces you to read slowly to try to take in what she is expressing. Dahlia speaks about the fatigue a woman feels in her arms as she kneads the challah; which she recommends as a way to connect ourselves to the generations before electric mixers were invented. Kneading forces us to slow down and enjoy its rhythm which brings about a feeling of peace and mental health. Meditation as a way of *elevating the action* which *brings us closer to God* is discussed in detail- a different meditation and intention for mitzvot for each month. The author points out that Rosh Chodesh is traditionally a woman's holiday and so it is a natural time for women to get together and participate in challah baking and contemplation; but she also points out that, in fact, this book can be used as simply a challah cookbook. Personally, when I received this book in the mail and started to read it, it made me nervous. I don't see myself as a particularly spiritual person; and I am not a challah baker. I've made challah a couple of times; but usually, I'm so swamped with preparing meals for family and guests for Shabbat, that I order in my challah. *Spiritual Kneading* is seductive. It appeals to your intellect, your heart and your soul- and gives you recipes. There are recipes for specific challahs for every new month, for every holiday plus a few basic ones thrown in. Every challah has a specific shape and very detailed directions for forming it. I made the rose shaped challah for Adar Bet and I look forward to making the Cheese Loaf and Three-Ringed Chocolate Challah-just to name a few. I

encourage everyone to buy this book; but you won't exactly know how to catalog it. Do you place it with Jewish cookbooks, books on bread, or do you slide it in with books that deal with the women's movement, meditation, or Jewish philosophy? Dahlia Abraham-Klein has created a very special volume that can give the reader even more than the author promises-if you let it.

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