



שוֹפָר  
The Shofar  
May 2022/5782

The United Synagogue of Hoboken  
[www.hobokensynagogue.org](http://www.hobokensynagogue.org)

# Israel's 74th birthday: gratitude for the honey and the sting

*by Rabbi Robert Scheinberg*

**In honor of Israel's 70th anniversary in 2018**, the organization Koolulam released a video of 12,000 Israelis singing together. In a stadium in Tel Aviv, they learned and performed the vocal parts for the classic song "Al Kol Eleh," "For all these things." I find it to be a very emotionally affecting video (though that's in part because, since the pandemic, simply seeing 12,000 people singing together is emotionally affecting!).

**In 1980**, to comfort her sister Ruth on the loss of her husband, the Israeli songwriter Naomi Shemer dedicated a song to her sister called "Al Kol Eleh," "For all these things." It has become one of the most popular songs of contemporary Israel. Like many iconic songs, many regard it as hackneyed and cliched. But there's a reason why it became such a popular song. It reflects powerfully deep wisdom.

**The opening words of this song**, "Al hadvash ve-al ha-oketz, al ha-mar ve-hamatok," "For the honey and the sting, for the bitter and the sweet," have their roots in a midrashic comment on the Book of Numbers (Tanhuma Balak 6).

**The midrash pictures a person** who sees a bee, and says, "Bee, get away from me! I have no use for you. Lo mi-duvshakh, ve-lo me-uktzakh. I don't want your honey, and I don't want your sting." In its context in the midrash, this phrase cautions against things that look attractive but are actually bundled together with strong negatives, such that the bad far outweighs the good. The prudent course implied by the midrash is to avoid the bee's honey, because it is accompanied by the bee's sting.

**But Naomi Shemer's song** turns this midrashic phrase on its head. Naomi Shemer realized that as a life strategy, "I don't want your honey, and I don't want your sting" is deeply flawed. Such a strategy can lead someone to avoid any endeavor that includes the possibility of pain or failure.

**Which is why in her famous song**, Naomi Shemer thanks God "al kol eleh," "for all these things," "al hadvash ve-al ha-oketz," "for the honey and for the sting." Shemer says: don't avoid the honey because of the sting. Rather, appreciate the honey despite the sting.

**This month we celebrate Israel's 74th anniversary** of independence, and it's an opportunity to take stock of the entirety of the experience of Israel, the honey and the sting, the bitter and the sweet.

**It is breathtaking to behold** how much Israel has accomplished in its few short decades: reconstituting a Jewish national community; becoming a place where Israeli culture is normative, where Jews and Judaism are at home. Being a place of refuge for Jews experiencing persecution around the world, who otherwise would have nowhere to go. Building a society that is animated by Jewish values, as well as by the values of the democracies that have been the places where Jews have been most likely to thrive in freedom. Becoming a center for the world-wide Jewish community, and the home to the largest Jewish community in the world. Reestablishing a deep Jewish connection to the land of the Bible, where so much of Jewish history took place. Becoming a leader in worldwide technology and innovation. Granting freedoms to its citizens, of all religions, that are so far beyond the freedoms that they could experience anywhere else in the entire region. Succeeding in recent years to build alliances with Arab neighbors like Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain. Expressing deeply held humanitarian impulses as it responds to crises around the world and endeavors to play its part in making the world better. The list of everything sweet about Israel goes on and on.

# So, What's New?

*by Jeremy Morley*



**Amir Orbach**  
*Director of Education*

There's a lot going on at USH. I'll mention just a few. Our new Director of Education, Amir Orbach, will be on board soon and is raring to go, with new ideas and great enthusiasm.

Our Security Team is hard at work with plans and strategies, some of which you will see and others will be in place and unseen.



A new Task Force on Space in our facilities is launching. They will conduct a needs assessment with regard to our building space. This comes at a time when we as an institution are looking once again at the possibility of expanding our space. The task force will explore how we are currently utilizing the building and how we might optimize our space in the future.



We will soon be upgrading the rear upper level of the sanctuary. It is currently "used" for storage. It will be transformed into a beautiful air-conditioned meeting room, with a front glass wall, so that the view of the beautiful rose window will remain visible. We will be upgrading the two small "tower" rooms, which are hidden at the top rear of the sanctuary. One will be the office for the new Director of Education.

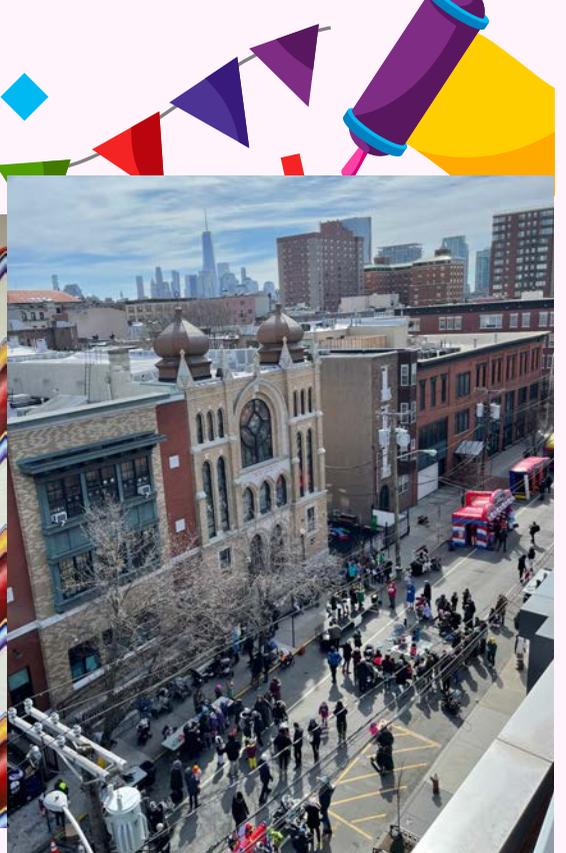
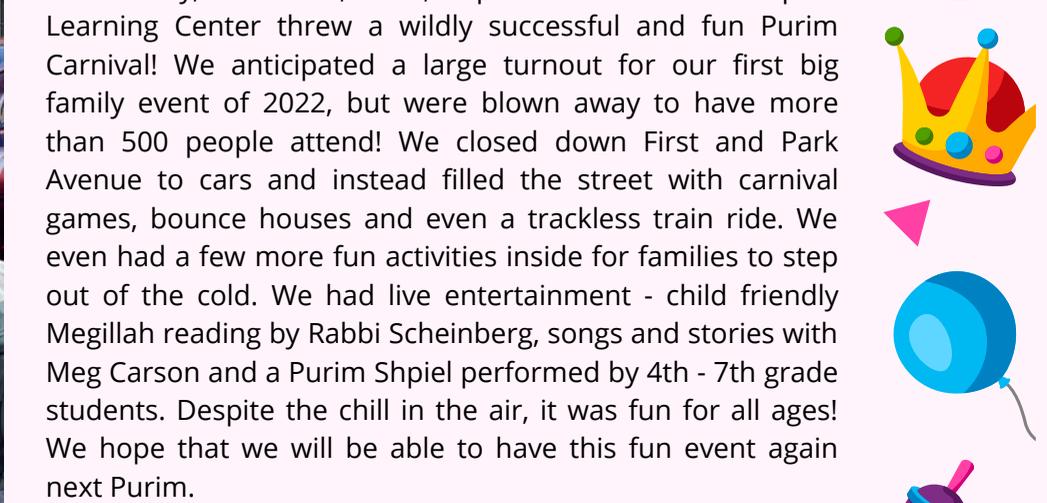
These are exciting times.

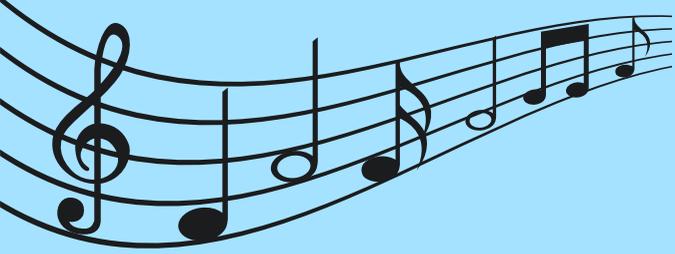
Please reach out to me or any board member if you would like to contribute your time to these or any other initiatives.



## Purim Carnival

On Sunday, March 13, 2022, Kaplan Preschool and Kaplan Learning Center threw a wildly successful and fun Purim Carnival! We anticipated a large turnout for our first big family event of 2022, but were blown away to have more than 500 people attend! We closed down First and Park Avenue to cars and instead filled the street with carnival games, bounce houses and even a trackless train ride. We even had a few more fun activities inside for families to step out of the cold. We had live entertainment - child friendly Megillah reading by Rabbi Scheinberg, songs and stories with Meg Carson and a Purim Shpiel performed by 4th - 7th grade students. Despite the chill in the air, it was fun for all ages! We hope that we will be able to have this fun event again next Purim.





# KLC Return to Shabbat - a Family Affair!

*By Rhonda Strosberg*

Rabbi Rob and Molly Rose Hoenig welcomed families with song and prayers for a melodic and joyful Friday Night service on April 1st.

Kindergarten through 6th grade students attended with their parents in the USH sanctuary. It was such a joyous night filled with familiar melodies, allowing students to start learning tunes that will carry them throughout their lives. It felt like a return of fond childhood memories and we look forward to more events where we can join together in song.

The service ended with blessings over grape juice and challah in the lobby with the Star of Israel doors propped open - sharing a promise of spring that's around the corner we hope. The evening concluded with an ice cream social - with yummy flavors and toppings for all to enjoy!

A decorative floral wreath made of pink and white flowers with green leaves, forming a circular frame around the central text.

## Save the Date: June 3rd

Join us for a Musical Family Shabbat Service  
led by Rabbi Scheinberg and Molly Rose Hoenig

*Followed by Kiddush and a cheesecake toppings bar.*

Welcoming families from the community.

Best for children in grades K-5.

Bring your friends!!

More details to follow, check USH events for further details:  
<https://www.hobokensynagogue.org>

# Passover Wrap Up!

*by Shana Lee*



The Pesach story is one of the greatest stories every told, a journey from slavery to freedom. The PJ Library River Ride is a beautifully illustrated activity that helps families bring the Pesach story to life as you travel up and down the Nile River, encountering Pesach scenes and characters. Children can also search for hidden matzah in the River Ride artwork.



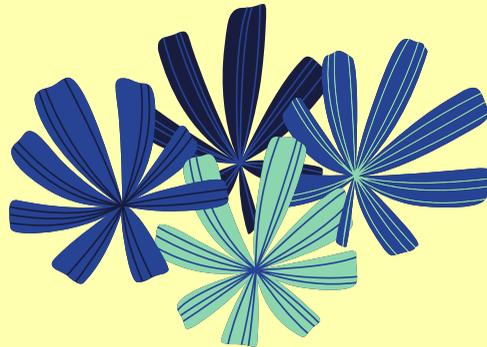
The week before Pesach we held our River Ride. It was nothing less than amazing! We set up interactive stations around the social hall for both the Kaplan Preschool and the Kaplan Learning Center! Moses, Miriam and Pharaoh were all there. The feedback was awesome.

We made our way through the Passover story exploring the concepts of slavery and freedom. We built pyramids with triangle blocks, floated babies in "the Nile" in foil baskets, made bricks out of sand and glue and created a large burning bush mural. We explored the idea of the plagues. We compared challah and matzah, ran from Pharaoh's soldiers through the Red Sea using bells to celebrate and afterwards we sang and danced! A perfect time for Passover exploration. Finally we had a chance to experience the Passover seder items and taste a little bit of parsley in salt water.



Our Kaplan Learning Center students created beautiful matzah covers for their families. This was a multi week activity where we first looked at Passover symbols and decided what we were going to sew onto the cover. Everyone worked so hard to create a masterpiece that can be used on their seder table for years to come.











# Tot Shabbat!

for children 3 and younger w/ adult

## SPRING SESSION

Now on Thursdays  
April 28 - June 9 2022

Church Square Park @ 9:15-10:00am  
(Hoboken)

Hamilton Park @ 10:30-11:15am  
(Jersey City)



SIGN UP:

[www.hobokensynagogue.org/form/KPSTOTSHABBAT](http://www.hobokensynagogue.org/form/KPSTOTSHABBAT)  
 Email [director@kaplanpreschool.org](mailto:director@kaplanpreschool.org) for more info  
 or to try out the first class for free!

## Tot Shabbat

Kaplan Preschool was excited to continue our Tot Shabbat program during the winter months in an indoor location in Jersey City but for Spring we're heading back to the park!

We are thrilled to announce the return of our outdoor Tot Shabbat with Tkiya class beginning on Thursday April 28, 2022 in both Hoboken and Jersey City! For more information, please scan the QR code or email [office@kaplanpreschool.org](mailto:office@kaplanpreschool.org).

This Caregiver and Me class is a great introduction and way to connect to the joy of our holidays, songs, customs and stories that we love at Kaplan Preschool.



# Virtual OPEN HOUSE

Sunday, May 15, 2022

**TIME: 8:30PM**

*"Drop in" to ask questions and find out what we are all about!*

RSVP today! <https://www.hobokensynagogue.org/event/VirtualOpenHouse>

 [www.hobokensynagogue.org](http://www.hobokensynagogue.org)

## USH SHABBAT DINNER

May 20, 2022  
Shabbat Service 6:30p  
Dinner 7:30p

**ASIAN FUSION Live Music with Adam & Rabbi**

RSVP at [Hobokensynagogue.org](http://Hobokensynagogue.org)



## Beer Mitzvah is BACK!

Wednesday, May 25th @ 7pm

Please join us in welcoming our special guests:  
David Glass, President of the Northern NJ Region of the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs  
Denis Vogel, Vice President of the Northern NJ Region of the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs

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For updates and event information hosted by TRIBE of Hoboken & Jersey City, go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/TRIBEHOBOKENJC>

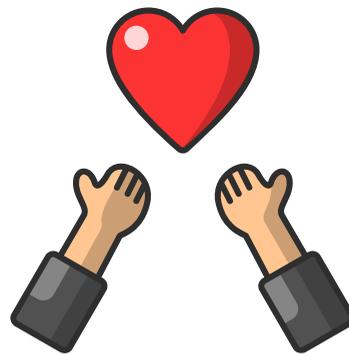
# THANK YOU

*A delicious Thank You to all of the volunteers who delivered the Mishloach Manot on Sunday, March 13!*

Thanks to the efforts, on a very cold day, of Lauren and Mike Blumenfeld; Damian and Eva Bucovsky; Simone Crespi and Rebecca Rodgers; Joel and Marilyn Freiser; Sheera Glass; Debbie Greenberger and Greg Marx; Erica and David Guarna; Jennifer Hill and Colin Freund; Anat Klein; Russel and Marni Kriegel; Jenny Labendz, Zalman Newfield and Maya and Liba;

John Leonardi; Laetitia Leproust; Eve Mensch; Samantha and Drew Nathanson; Donna Olah-Reikin; Kathy Prussak; Allen Reuben; Lauren Sapira; Jeri Slavin; Irene Stein; The Teen Team of Danielle Katell, Hannah Morley, and Emily Critz; and Almut Trinius, USH members received a bag of sweet treats in advance of Purim 2022!

**The Mishloach Manot organizing team -- Merry Firschein, Hope Koturo, and Louise Kurtz -- are so grateful for your help!**  
**See you next year!**



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# HUDSON COUNTY SWAT TEAM Exercises at USH

On April 20th and 21st, USH was the site for SWAT Team exercises.

Thank you to the Hudson County Sheriff for using us as a site;  
Ron Rosenberg and Jeff Corwin for their volunteer efforts to keep USH safe;  
and our volunteer participants, employees, Mike, Christian, Kevin and Barbara,  
members Barbara Malach, Allen Reuben and our ever faithful security guard, Sokol.



Thank  
you

## Hoboken Arts & Music Festival

On **Sunday May 1st**, USH had a booth at the **Hoboken Arts & Music Festival** providing information about our community and programs.

**Thank you** to all that volunteered to help out!



**But the honey is accompanied by the sting**, the bitterness that is often overwhelming. The dream of return to the land of our ancestors has been realized - but the dream of being fully accepted in the Middle East has not been realized. Every Israeli family and community has experienced the sting of the violent deaths of loved ones, often in the prime of life, in the struggle for the legitimacy of an official Jewish presence in its historic homeland. Enough of Israel's neighbors have not yet accepted its presence that the spectre of an attack upon Israel - even an attack with nuclear weapons - must be seriously considered and prepared for. Whereas criticism of Israel is not always the same thing as antisemitism, much of the criticism of Israel in our world is thoroughly intertwined with antisemitism.

**And the thus-far intractable conflict** between Israelis and Palestinians stings so deeply: terrible losses on both sides, and the corrosive effects on both sides of long-term war and the long-term subjection of a civilian population to military control. Israel is not solely responsible for this predicament, but it shares in both the responsibility and the consequences. Implications of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict also cast thorny questions on the character of Israel's future: will it be a Jewish and democratic state as it strives to be, as per the vision of its founders? Or will it compromise its democratic character in order to remain Jewish, or compromise its Jewish character in order to remain democratic? If Israel pursues either of these paths, what will be its future and what will be its risks? As I see the children of my Israeli friends reaching military age, and as I see the Israeli friends of my children reaching military age, all these questions are not at all theoretical; they burn with an intensity that nearly matches the sweetness of all of Israel's achievements.

**Some respond:** lo mi-duvshakh ve-lo me-uktzakh. Israel, I don't want your honey, no matter how sweet, because I don't want your sting. But I sing along with Naomi Shemer: Al hadvash ve-al ha-oketz. I take the honey despite the sting, even as I do what I can to minimize the sting.

**Israel is the most significant Jewish project** of the current era. As the Israeli writer Amos Oz likes to say, Israel is a dream come true, which is why it is flawed. Dreams come true are always flawed, and the only way to keep a dream in its pristine condition is to never attempt to bring it into reality. A dream come true, like a milestone birthday, should prompt both celebration and introspection -- both prayers of gratitude and prayers for guidance to chart a wise future. On this anniversary of Israel's independence, my gratitude overflows - as do my prayers that Israel's leaders be guided to make wise decisions.

**In the words of the Prayer for Israel** in Siddur Lev Shalem:

*We pray for God's blessing upon the State of Israel, her government, and all who dwell within her boundaries and under her authority.*

*Grant her leaders the fortitude to keep ever before us those ideals upon which the State of Israel was founded. Grant courage, wisdom, and strength to those entrusted with guiding Israel's destiny to do Your will.*

*Be with those on whose shoulders Israel's safety depends and defend them from all harm.*

*Spread over Israel and all the world Your shelter of peace, and may the vision of Your prophet soon be fulfilled: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." (Isaiah 2:4)*

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