

United Synagogue of Hoboken

TEVET / SHEVAT 5778

JANUARY 2018



In many traditional Jewish homes, it is the custom for parents to give

a blessing to their children every Friday night, immediately before the Kiddush. The children approach their parents, their parents put their hands over their children's heads, and they bestow blessings on their children, using the same words with which Jews have blessed their children for centuries.

For girls, the traditional blessing is: Yesimech Elohim Ke-Sarah, Rivka, Rachel ve-Leah – "May God make you like the four Matriarchs, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah." If you had to choose just a few women from our tradition as role models for Jewish girls, choosing these four matriarchs is a logical choice.



But for boys, the traditional blessing is a bit more peculiar: Yesimcha Elohim ke-Efrayim vechi-Menashe. May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe. Ephraim and Menashe? Now who were they again?

Not exactly household names, like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In fact, Ephraim and Menashe are fairly marginal characters in the Torah. They are the two sons of Joseph, who were born in Egypt while Joseph was serving as second-in-command to Pharaoh. In the Torah reading that will be read in our synagogue (and in synagogues around the world) this month, Joseph's father Jacob is on his deathbed, and he asks to give Ephraim and Menashe a special blessing. He places his hands on their heads, and he says: "By you will the future

generations of Israel bless, saying, 'May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe.'

" (Genesis 48:20). (Continued on next page)

UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY 2018

- **5** Artist-in-Residence Shabbat with Josh Warshawsky 9:30am
- 6 Concert with Josh Warshawsky & friends 7pm
- **7** Speakers Brunch *My Mother's Kitchen* 10:30am
- **12** JNFuture Shabbat Dinner for Young Professionals, 7:00pm
- **20** Parenting talk: How Jewish values help our children thrive & flourish 10:30am
- **20** Refugee Support C'ttee dinner, The Lighthouse, Jersey City 7:30pm

FEBRUARY 2018

- **4** Speakers Brunch *The Book Smugglers* 10:30am
- 28 Purim events: Very young children 5:30pm; children 6:15pm; adult shpiel & reading 7pm

MARCH 2018

3 Casino Night, Elks Club, 7pm

Friday night services 7pm

Saturday morning services 9:30am

See www.hobokensynagogue.org & USH Facebook page for more info on these and other upcoming events!





MISHLOACH MANOT.

Deadline to participate
February 16

Forms coming soon

CASINO NIGHT MARCH 3 Sponsors needed

Email casinonight@hobokensynagogue.org for info



(continued from first page)

However, this is virtually all the Torah tells us about Ephraim and Menashe. This does not sound like quite enough to warrant the kind of honor they have gotten through the centuries. What makes Ephraim and Menashe role models to emulate?

The answer may lie in the fact that Ephraim and Menashe were born in Pharaoh's palace. Their father was Joseph - the second-most powerful man in all of Egypt. They must have been completely at home in Egyptian society and culture. They probably received the finest Egyptian education available in those days, and they probably socialized with the rich and famous of Egypt. But still, throughout their lives, they never looked down upon their Jewish heritage. Rather than see it as an embarrassment, they saw it as a source of pride.

Many years ago, Naomi and I visited the Jewish Museum in San Francisco and saw an exhibit of Kiddush cups created by dozens of artists in the Bay area. Some of the Kiddush cups were rather traditional-looking, but most were more experimental, and they constituted the artists' efforts to convey some of their thoughts and feelings about Jewish tradition.

Some of the exhibits came with explanatory notes from the artists. One artist wrote: "When I think of Jewish tradition, I think of my grandmother, who used to drink tea from a glass.... so my kiddush cup is a glass, lovingly encased and protected in a wood frame."

This note reminded me that different people can find many different ways to attempt to boil down the meaning of Judaism into just one image. Some of us might choose the image of the Israelites fleeing from slavery in Egypt, determined to create a free and just society in their own land. Others might choose the image of the flickering Shabbat candles, ushering

in a weekly opportunity for rest and solitude. But for this artist, the one most prominent image of Judaism in her mind is the image of an immigrant to this country who doesn't

quite fit in: a woman who continues to do some things in the 'Old World' way, like drinking tea from a glass instead of from a teacup.

This artist is by no means unique in overlooking the best of what Judaism has to offer, and instead focusing on how Judaism makes us part of a minority. Surely we know of many Jews who were immigrants to this country, or children of immigrants, who tried as hard as possible to "become American". For them, the primary images of being Jewish were images of Old-World-ness, like drinking tea from a glass. So they distanced themselves from Jewish tradition, which they saw as a barrier to their Americanization. And thankfully, in many cases, it's the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of those immigrants who are discovering that there's more to Judaism than drinking tea from a glass, or speaking with a foreign accent. They are discovering how Judaism can be a way of life that is thousands of years old but still has much to say to our modern world.

It is so difficult for members of a minority to stay focused on what's best in their own tradition. When Jews in our

> country bless their sons with the words "May God make you as Ephraim and Menashe," maybe they are really saying:

- May God grant you the ability to live fully in two cultures at the same time, just as Ephraim and Menashe did.
- May God give you the inner strength to affirm the value of your own tradition, even as you live in a culture that sometimes devalues it, considering it to be quaint and out of style.
- May God grant you the discernment to identify and embrace the best of American culture and values, while at the same time using your Jewish values to reject those parts

of American culture and values which are destructive.



Marc Chagall Blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh

"May God grant you the ability to live fully in two cultures at the same time, just as Ephraim and Menashe did.

May God grant you the discernment to identify and embrace the best of American culture and values, while at the same time using your Jewish values to reject those parts of American culture and values which are destructive."

Questions, Questions

by David Swirnoff, President



As you're reading this, we're already in 2018, so I'll extend my hopes that your New Year was happy and healthy and safe. Over the past few months, I've written a number of articles talking about the things that you, both as individuals and as members of the Jewish community in Hoboken, can do for USH. So as we enter the new year, I want to focus on what USH can do for YOU, the members of our congregation and our community. The easiest way I can think to do this is to ask you some questions. So, here goes...

- What do you want to get out of your membership at USH that you don't already?
- When was the last time you went to a program or event, other than Shabbat services? Why did you go to it? Why haven't you gone to one since?
- What is the single best experience you've had at USH?
- Of the 10 people you are happiest to see or speak to on a regular basis, how many of them are because of your connection to USH? Do you value your friendship with them and do you value USH because it has facilitated those friendships?
- If you regularly visit USH, what's the main reason? Is it for religious services? Or opportunities for education (for you or your children)? Or is it for opportunities for social events?

I'm serious about finding out the answers because it's the answers to these questions that can help us ensure that you get what you value from your time at USH and KPS and LC. Please think about this and email me at President@hobokensynagogue.org.

Here's hoping that the new year brings professional and personal success for you, your family and your friends.







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HARRIET TAUB: SO MANY STORIES

by Jeremy Morley

Everyone has a story. Some have a few. Harriet Taub has lots! Here are just a few. They all have something in common. They are all about Harriet basically creating "something from nothing," with passion, commitment, energy and determination.

Story Number One

A MOVIE FROM NOTHING

Just out of college, Harriet and a girlfriend went on a cheap trip to the Dominican Republic. How cheap was it? So cheap that upon arrival in Santo Domingo they had nowhere to stay and were sent to the "wrong" side of the island. They found themselves in a remote place in the middle of banana plantations called Sosua. But they made something from nothing. In fact, they bumped into a great Jewish story.

The conference on refugees from Nazism held in Évian, France, in July, 1938 had been a complete failure. The only country that opened its doors to Jewish refugees was



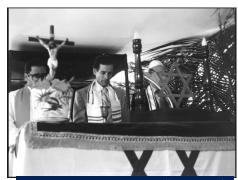
Jewish children in Sousa with friends

the Dominican Republic. Its dictator, Rafael Trujillo, apparently wanting a "whiter" and more economically successful population, invited Jews to move there. He provided land in remote Sosua and more than 1,000 Eastern Europe Jews accepted the invitation. They created a dairy and cheese factory, and founded a synagogue.

Harriet spent much of her vacation time learning about the story of Sosua's history by speaking to other tourists who were visiting the remote Dominican village. She was captivated by the story and upon returning to the US began to research what these refugees had left behind in Europe, and of their integration into Dominican life. Here was a tale to tell!

And so, with the prize money she had saved from winning *The \$25,000 Pyramid*, she returned to the Dominican Republic with her soon-to-be- husband Harry Kafka, and they made a documentary film, *Sosúa*, about the community. A reviewer praised the film for its deft portrayal of a community that had achieved so much and yet also highlighted the community's fragility in the face of change. The film was shown at many film festivals and led to many other interesting and unexpected opportunities for both Harriet and Harry.





A reviewer enthused that, "Filming of the ecumenical service captured images of a Catholic priest and a Jewish rabbi intoning prayers in Spanish and Hebrew, respectively, while elderly Jewish residents wearing skull caps and Dominican guests intently listened."



The synagogue in Sousa

Story Number Two

A BUSINESS FROM NOWHERE

When Harriet became a mom she found it hard to find cool kids' clothing. There was only pink and blue. Having sewed since childhood (taught by her











Halloween costumes made from reused materials for Harriet's children, Jacob and Sarah

2017 SLOAN PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD PRESENTATION SPEECH BY ARCHITECT MICHAEL ARAD

"The more I read about Ms Taub, the more convinced I became that we got it wrong... Santa Claus is not a fat jolly guy living at the North Pole, Santa ... is actually a tall skinny Jewish woman working out of a warehouse in Long Island City, with hundreds of elves as her industrious volunteers.

Where does one start describing the myriad of reasons Ms Taub is so deserving of this recognition? If you will allow me to borrow an expression that is recited at the reading of the Passover Haggadah which centers on the word 'Dayeynu', meaning it would have been enough.

In this case, if Materials for the Arts would have been an organization helping artistic groups by providing them with materials, it would have been meaningful and enough.... The arts make us human. So any organization that helps and promotes the arts... *Dayeynu*".

But Materials for the Arts is also a force for good in the world of sustainability and recycling. Diverting thousands of tons from land fills and turning what would have been trash, to art, and therapy, and time well spent... 'Dayeynu'. Mother Earth thanks you, we thank you.

But wait, there is more... Materials for the Arts is a force for arts education in New York City schools, thousands of children every year benefit from a free resource that vastly enriches their education and broadens their horizons. I say free, but we all know nothing in life is truly free, it is given freely, but acquired with great tenacity and perseverance by Ms. Taub and her staff, we should be so grateful. 'Dayeynu'. And Materials for the Arts doesn't just give the materials away, it provides the needed instruction to teachers to make the act of giving even more meaningful and impactful. Dayeynu.

But of course there is more, recently Materials for the Arts launched a pair of artist in studio fellowships, providing professional artists with studio space and materials, that too is enough, but she has leveraged that gift to serve her 'constituents' by fostering conversations and exchanges between the artists and those who come to 'shop' at her warehouse... 'Dayeynu'... this coupled with Ms. Taub's efforts to provide employment and volunteer work opportunities at this warehouse to groups that otherwise would find it very difficult to begin their work life... 'Dayeynu' we are grateful for all these good deeds.

Ms. Taub can wring every last drop out of the opportunities her position has provided her with. She will not let materials or opportunities go to waste. She continuously reaches for more ways to fulfill a charter she has drawn and imagined for herself and this organization. We are all very grateful to her and say together: 'Dayeynu.'"

father Irving), Harriet decided to *literally* take matters into her own hands and make her own kids' clothes! Harriet introduced black turtlenecks, animal prints and baggy pants, all made in New Jersey, and sold under Harriet's label, *Bumblewear*.

Sharp, fierce and cutting edge, Harriet and Harry's kids, Sarah and Jacob were redefining hip, and "we added what we would like to wearnatural fibers (no polyester), comfort (elastic waists), and oversized (longer lifespan/ longevity—you roll up the sleeves and the kids grow into it)." The business grew by word of mouth. "On the street, the clothes stopped people in their tracks" and "all the kids in shul were wearing *Bumblewear*." Eventually they were in trade shows and in the swanky fashion racks of Fred Segal Baby in Beverly Hills and other fashion destinations.

Story Number Three

ART FROM NOTHING

Harriet is the Executive Director of Materials for the Arts, a program of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs that creates art from nothing. It's a reuse center that redirects materials to non-profit arts organizations in New York City. Every year MFTA processes more than a million pounds of materials that otherwise would have been headed for the landfill and redirects them to schools, artists, designers, dancers,

cers, ed it as "like a Kmart

actors and musicians. The New York Times described it as "like a Kmart reimagined as Pee-wee's Big Adventure."

Harriet co-founded and helms

the affiliated nonprofit, Friends of Materials for the Arts, which provides teacher training, arts and environmental education, and arts programming like artist residencies. In an interview with the Huffington Post, she asserted that "without question, the thing I am most proud of and they can put it on my tombstone, is that I helped start the Education Program" at Materials for the Arts.



Giving a TED Talk on buttons. And the creative use of materials in general.

In recognition of "her unsurpassed commitment and impact in arts and culture, education and environmental sustainability for 19 years," Harriet won the 2017 Sloan Public Service Award, which is regarded as the "Nobel Peace Prize" of city government.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS

Building Maintenance Fund

Florence Pape

Hugh and Susan Moore in memory of Susan's mother, Edith Camhi

General Fund

Harry Kafka and Harriet Taub in memory of their parents, Michael and Guta Kafka, Irving and Belle Taub

Philip & Claire Meistrich Culture Series

Matt Meistrich

Kaplan Preschool

Josh and Sara Kalish Sean and Andrea Fletcher

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Sean and Amy Kron

Allen Levine

Joel Trugman and Razel Solow Frances Zaref in loving memory of a friend,

Mickey Dekoven

PJ Library

Josh and Sara Kalish

Special Needs Fund

Marty Gottlieb and Jeri Slavin

Refugee Support Fund

Jon Gellman and Mimi Lavine In honor of Louise Kurtz

Vivian Greene

Jane Klueger

Hope Koturo

Rachel Levy

Suellen Newman

Ken and Susan Schept

Joel Trugman and Razel Solow

Ben and Lisa Zablocki

Scholar-in-Residence

Marilyn and Joel Freiser, Vivian Greene, Rachel Glasgow Katell and Jonathan Katell, Louise Kurtz, Mimi Lavine and Jon Gellman, Matt Meistrich, Lauren and Valdi Sapira, Yvonne Silver, Razel Solow and Joel Trugman, Rebecca and Aaron Weitman in honor of the scholar in residence weekend with Rabbi Steven Wernick

Yom Kippur Appeal

Andrew Lee and Shana Goldberg-Lee Adam and Rhonda Strosberg Jim and Alicia Weinstein

THANK YOU FOR SPONSORING KIDDUSH:

Dec 2 Michael and Rachael Kerstetter and Zalman Newfield and Jenny Labendz Dec 9 Joel and Marilyn Freiser, Vivian Greene, Jonathan and Rachel Katell, Louise Kurtz, Matt Meistrich, Valdi and Lauren Sapira, Joel Trugman and Razel Solow, Aaron and Rebecca Weitman in honor of scholar in residence, Rabbi Wernick

Dec 16 Joe Epstein and Lynn Danzker in honor of Cole's bar mitzvah

Dec 23 Steven Gleicher and Tara Tripodi in honor of Joanna's birthday

Dec 30 Charles Rubin and Lenore Silver

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Cole Danzker Epstein on his bar mitzvah and to his parents, Joe Epstein and Lynn Danzker

CONDOLENCES TO:

Neil Blecher on the loss of his mother, Marsha Sondra Blecher

USH* Refugee Support COMMITTEE







Saturday, December 2nd, at the Hob'art Gallery in Hoboken. The dinner was a rousing success! We were able to enjoy delicious food cooked by Asmeret, a recent refugee from Eritrea who lives in Jersey City, as well as the Syrian Kurdish food cooked by Fadila. The gallery was able to accommodate 27 diners. Guests ate surrounded by the glorious and inspiring art of Ibou Ndoye and Liz Cohen Ndoye, whose show had just been hung in anticipation of their opening night the next weekend. (Many thanks to Liz for letting us use the gallery as a dining room!) Each of the five tables had either a refugee and a translator, or a volunteer from a local organization that supports refugees mixed in with the guests. Lively conversations took place throughout the evening. Our next dinner will be on Saturday, January 20th at the Lighthouse in Jersey

The Refugee Support Committee:

Syrian and Eritrean Food at the Hob'art Gallery: held its fifth dinner on

City. Stay tuned for more information about that dinner, especially if you couldn't attend last time. If you are interested in attending and/or hosting a future dinner, contact Ben Zablocki at zablocki@rutgers.edu

Collaborating with First Friends NJ/NY: There was a good turnout at the offices of First Friends of NJ/NY in Kearny on Sunday afternoon, December 6. Many volunteers of all ages assembled packets for asylees with donated supplies: lined paper, drawing paper, stationery, greeting and holiday cards, as well as envelopes and stamps so they can keep in touch with family members. Money was collected to purchase phone cards for the detainees. Each folder included a hand-written note of friendship and reassurance to let those refugees still being detained—over 1500 in New Jersey—that they have not been forgotten. There will be another opportunity to volunteer for STAMP OUT DESPAIR in the spring. For further information, visit firstfriendsnjny.org.

Heads up: The Committee will hold a similar event at the synagogue this spring. Please look for upcoming further information.

English Tutoring: There are 3 ways that volunteers can help:

- 1. Go to a refugee's home **weekly** and work 1-on-1 (or 1-on-2).
- 2. Drop in **flexibly** at the Church World Service office in Jersey City for English conversation with refugees.
- 3. Teach **weekly** at the Church of the Latter-Day Saints in Jersey City after being trained, or play with the children while their parents are in class. For further information about contacts and training, please contact Razel Solow, ESL Coordinator, at razelsolow@gmail.com.

Donations to the Refugee Support Fund: Some congregants have asked, "How much should I donate to this fund?" The answer is simple: "Any amount you want." Every dollar helps us to resettle refugee families and get them acclimated to life in the U.S. Remember your immigrant ancestors!

If you have only a half hour or less: Learn More: <u>Join</u> our Facebook Group. On Facebook press the "Shortcuts/Explore" icon. Choose "Groups" & "USH Refugee Support Committee." **Advocate:** <u>Read and share</u> an article with family and friends (in person or on social media) - https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/magazine/in-praise-of-refugee-chefs-they-came-from-syria-but-they-represent-an-american-ideal/2017/12/06/64e7c4be-c400-11e7-aae0-cb18a8c29c65 story.html?utm term=.6d70c760035a

Support: Donate to the Refugee Support Fund www.hobokensynagogue.org/donate.html (Scroll down to "Refugee Fund").

12TH ANNUAL CASINO NIGHT & 5TH ANNUAL POKER CLASSIC

Join the fun ~ Hold the date!

March 3rd, 2018

Doors open at 7PM ~ Gaming starts at 7:30

The Elks Club

1005 Washington St, Hoboken, NJ 07030

Purchase tickets to the event & find all details at HobokenSynagogue.org

Buy tickets by MIDNIGHT Jan. 21st, 2018 & receive \$200 in casino chips!

PURCHASE EARLYBIRD TICKETS AFTER THAT:

Jan.22nd - Feb. 11th & receive \$100 casino chips Feb. 12th - Feb. 28th & receive \$60 casino chips At the door, get \$40 casino chips



making a prize donation, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Please email us ... CasinoNight@hobokensynagogue.org to learn more.

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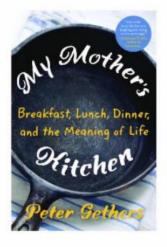
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USH FIFTEENTH ANNUAL CULTURE SERIES

THE PHILIP & CLAIRE MEISTRICH SPEAKER PROGRAMS

BOOK BRUNCH



Come hear author and TV producer Peter Gethers tell how he — a culinary novice — set out to cook the ultimate meal for his elderly mother, a gourmet cook and mentor to famous chefs like Wolfgang Puck. Learn how this labor of love



brought him closer to his discerning parent and member of the Ratner family, owners of the famous kosher restaurant.

Sun., Jan. 7, 2018 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM

\$18 for members

\$25 for nonmembers



RSVP: 201.659.4000 office@hobokensynagogue.org or online at HobokenSynagogue.org

