



THE SHOFAR שופר

United Synagogue of Hoboken

NISSAN/IYYAR 5779

May 2019

ETHICS, REPUTATION, AND SANCTIFYING GOD'S NAME

By Rabbi Robert Scheinberg



Hudson County, New Jersey is one of the most culturally diverse counties in the United States. Our synagogue's presence here gives us many opportunities to celebrate our region's diversity. One such initiative is the Hudson County Teen Dialogue for Peace Fellowship, which brings together teens from various religious communities to learn about each other's faiths and communities, and to learn from adults who work in the fields of interfaith coexistence. This program, sponsored by the Hudson County Brotherhood/Sisterhood Association and led by Rabbi Naomi Kalish, has brought together teens representing Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Baha'i, Buddhist, and Sikh religious traditions.

Last year, I had the opportunity hear to be at a meeting of the Teen Dialogue for Peace Fellowship where the presenter was Simran Jeet Singh, a professor and member of the Sikh religious community. He discussed what it is like to wear a turban and to be publicly identified as a Sikh wherever he has gone throughout his life.

According to Professor Singh: "When I tie my turban in the morning, I reflect on what it represents -- core Sikh values like love, service and justice. I recommit myself to these values every day, and, when I walk out the door, I know I am making a public commitment to live these values as best I can. Yes, we know that going out in today's world with a turban marks us as perpetually foreign, and that this comes with a risk of security -- but we still wear our turbans proudly, both because of who we are and what our turbans mean to us. This is our tradition as Sikhs." *(Continued on Page 2)*

FIRST FRIDAYS: WELCOME SHABBAT WITH MUSIC AT USH



Fri, May 3, 7pm

Welcome Shabbat with vibrant music and community - for all ages. With Adam Laden, Rabbi Rob Scheinberg, Siobhan Barry-Bratcher, Adam Parker, Howard Olah-Reiken, Pamela Strell, and other musicians from our community!

Fri., May 3, 7pm. Free and open to the public, followed by refreshments.

Following last week's tragic synagogue shooting in Poway, let's gather in prayer and solidarity and pride.



115 Park Avenue, Hoboken NJ. More info: hobokensynagogue.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY 2019

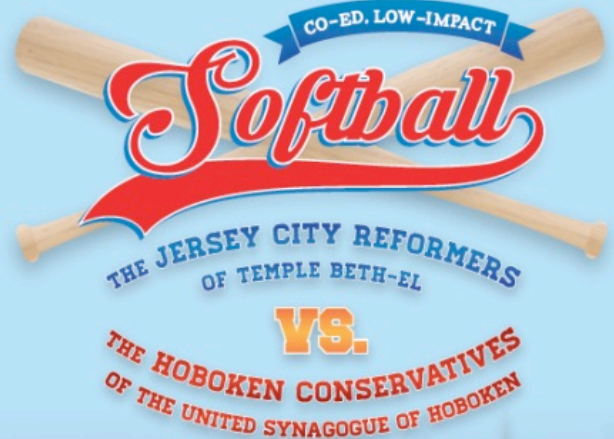
- 2,9,16 Tot Shabbat at Urban Jungle
- 5 End of Year Celebration at Kaplan Learning Center
- 7 Yom Hazikaron Commemoration
- 9 Yom Ha'Atzmaut
- 13 USH at the Shelter
- 19 Stamp Out Despair
- 19 USH vs. Beth El Softball
- 23 Menashe film screening at USH

JUNE 2019

- 8 Tikkun Layl Erev Shavuot Torah Study 9pm
- 9,10 Shavuot at USH, Yizkor 2nd day

Friday night services 7:00 pm
Saturday morning services 9:30 am
Thursday Torah Study 9:30am

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



CALLING ALL SOFTBALL PLAYERS & PARK LOVERS!

This is a great chance to play some ball, get outside, have some fun, and meet other members of the growing Hudson County Jewish Community. Lincoln Park West also has nature trails for the kids and non-players! Returning after a one year hiatus!

SUN MAY 19 12:00 NOON
Lincoln Park WEST, Field #2

(over the bridge)

Bagels with cream cheese and water provided. Feel free to pack a picnic lunch.

PLEASE RSVP!

Beth-El Contact: Neil Schulman nasjc1@aol.com and (201) 622-8048

USH Contact: Jordan Firestein, jfirestein@gmail.com and at (908) 510-8467



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Visit us online at HobokenSynagogue.org



Visit us online at BethEJC.org

(continued from Page 1)

Listening to him speak, I thought about what it means to me to wear a kippah in public every day, and the values that I publicly commit to when I publicly identify myself as a Jew. I know that adherents of other religions who wear religious garb in public have a similar understanding of what these gestures mean to them.

A parallel notion is found in the Torah, in the book of Leviticus (in Parashat Emor, to be read this year on May 18, 2019): “*Do not desecrate my holy name; rather, let me be made holy in the midst of the people of Israel.*” (Leviticus 22:32)

This verse is understood as the biblical root of two concepts in the torah, known as *kiddush hashem* and *chilul hashem*, or “sanctifying God’s name” and “desecrating God’s name.”

Kiddush hashem -- the sanctification of God’s name -- refers to anything a Jew can do that results in other people praising God’s name and expressing admiration for the Jewish way of life. Our sages have long realized that many people around the world found reasons to think negatively of Jews. If you could do an especially righteous act that would result in others expressing admiration for Jewish ethics, this would help to counteract negative sentiment about Jews. Certainly this ought not be one’s primary motivation for doing the right thing; we ought to act ethically because it’s the right thing to do, not just for the sake of the reputation of the Jewish people.

But there may be times when *kiddush hashem* serves as an additional motivation, reminding Jews that our actions are not only interpreted as having implications on us as individuals, but are also interpreted symbolically, as every Jew is a stand-in for the entire Jewish people.

Conversely, if someone Jewish were to do something blatantly unethical, it, too, would have implications on the Jewish people in general -- and this is referred to as *chilul hashem*, the desecration of God’s name.

About 5 years ago, I read a news story about a young rabbi, Noah Muroff, in the New Haven area who bought a used desk on Craigslist. Soon after purchasing it, he was trying to move it from one room in his home to another and realized that he had to disassemble it. When he did so, he found, to his surprise, that something had fallen in the space within the desk behind the drawers -- it was \$98,000 in cash.

He and his wife remembered that the woman they had bought the desk from had said that she had assembled it herself, so they assumed it must have been her money. They called her immediately, even though it was in the middle of the night. Yes, it was hers, and she was so extremely relieved; she knew that she had put that money in one of the drawers, but when she had seen that it wasn’t in the drawer, she assumed she had misplaced it and it was somewhere else in her home. She could not believe that someone who could have kept the money with absolutely no one knowing would have contacted her to return it.

The next day, Rabbi Muroff brought his young children to join him as they returned the money to the person who sold them the desk. He had no intention of accepting a reward, but she insisted on refunding to him the sale price of the desk and giving him a small reward, and she wrote him a note in which she said: “I cannot thank you enough for your honesty and integrity. I do not think there are too many people in this world that would have done what you did... I do like to believe that there are still good people left in this crazy world we live in. You certainly are one of them.”

But how do we know this story? For months, Rabbi Muroff had no intention of telling anyone. But he happened to be teaching some of his high-school-age students about how the Torah includes laws about returning lost objects. He realized that he had a great story to illustrate this point, but he wasn’t sure if he should tell it or not. Clearly he did not return the money to show what a great guy he is. He did it because it was simply the right thing to do. But he consulted with one of his teachers who said: If your telling the story will possibly motivate others to do the right and honest thing, then you should share the story. He did share the story with his students -- and soon the story had circulated, and before he knew it, there were TV crews calling him to interview him. In some of these news stories, he was referred to as “the most honest man in America.” To which Rabbi Muroff responds: How sad that anyone would consider him the most honest man in America, when he simply followed the dictates of the Torah. He agrees that his opportunity was extraordinary, but that from his perspective, his decision was completely ordinary. To the extent that his action brought honor upon God and the Jewish community, what he did was not only the right thing to do, but it was also a *kiddush hashem*.

Today it sometimes feels like intergroup tensions are at an all time high, like we are being trained to be suspicious of people who are different from us, and to assume the best of our own group and the worst of other groups (whether we’re talking about religious or ethnic affiliations or political affiliations). Increasingly I feel like some of the values that I have always assumed were commonly held, like civility and respect for difference and refraining from bullying and name-calling and caring for the needs of others, aren’t quite as intuitive as I had assumed. Maybe these values actually need to be applauded and reinforced, when we see so many prominent examples of people who so callously disregard these values. Maybe this is why I find myself especially drawn to those stories about people reaching across a divide and being honest and generous. Perhaps this too is part of the rationale for the concept of *kiddush hashem* and *chilul hashem*.

Even if we would hope that we would all be motivated to consistently do the right thing for its own sake, perhaps the quotient of ethical behavior in the world gets a boost when people are also motivated by reputation, including the reputation of their community or their group. I have come to appreciate that Judaism’s sense of collective pride and collective shame is in fact a blessing. It’s a special honor and responsibility part of a people and a tradition that views itself as having high moral standards to maintain☆

PASSOVER AT THE USH LEARNING CENTER



Looking back on another successful year...

Kaplan Learning Center (KLC) at USH

2018-2019 Calendar, Year 5779

SEPTEMBER 2018 	OCTOBER 2018 	NOVEMBER 2018 	DECEMBER 2018 	JANUARY 2019
FEBRUARY 2019 	MARCH 2019 	APRIL 2019 	MAY 2019 	JUNE 2019

END OF YEAR CELEBRATION

United Synagogue of Hoboken

SUNDAY | MAY 5, 2019
10AM - 12:30PM

Service in USH Main Sanctuary
Followed by Refreshments in Social Hall

Luncheon hosted by 6th grade families,
in honor of 6th grade students having their 1st torah reading.

This year we will celebrate before
Learning Center actually ends...

Please let us know if you'll be able to
join the celebration!

Students will perform parts of the service and
songs that they have been rehearsing
& can't wait to share it all with you!

Good Luck

בהצלחה



The Altberger family has been an integral part of our synagogue community for close to seventeen years. While our community may be losing them to the Denver area at the beginning of the summer, we should be grateful for those seventeen years, that, while not necessarily planned by the Altbergers, may very well have been *Beshert* (Yiddish for “meant to be”) for USH.

Long before their entrance into our community, Cindy and Jason met on President’s Day 1994 at Union Station in Washington D.C. Both seniors in college at the time (Cindy at George Washington University and Jason at Georgetown), Jason was the last person boarding a northbound Amtrak, planning to stop off in Philadelphia to visit his brother. Just making the train, he quickly scanned the train car for available seats. When he saw the seat next to Cindy, who was heading to New York to visit family, was being used for her luggage, he asked if he could sit down. Cindy replied that she was saving it for a friend, but since Jason knew he was the last person to board, he pulled a life changing “power move” by saying he would gladly get up if her “friend” ever came, placing her baggage in overhead storage. While doing so, he noticed Cindy was wearing a Jewish star around her neck, and decided it wouldn’t be a bad idea to strike up a conversation. They quickly learned that Cindy was interning near Jason’s campus, and that they were both graduating at the end of the semester. They conversed and exchanged phone numbers, and when Jason departed the train, he told his brother about the girl he had just met, and how that if they got married, it would be a great story. When Cindy departed the train in New York, she told her cousin that she just met her husband.

Dating through the remainder of college, they both moved to New York after graduation, became engaged three years later, and marrying in 1998. During those years, Cindy worked within various roles in Jewish philanthropies, including social work at the Jewish Federation of North America, as well as employment consulting for mentally and physically disabled at FECS (the Federation Employment Guidance Services). From 1998 to 2000, Cindy and Jason then spent two years in Philadelphia as Jason earned his MBA from the Wharton School of Business and Cindy worked for the University of Pennsylvania, and then they returned to New York City.

Just after the birth of their daughter Hannah in 2002, the Altbergers moved to Hoboken, as Jason was working for the group that redeveloped the Hudson Tea Building. Moving into the building, not knowing anyone in town, and “showing up with a three month old,” Cindy and Jason assumed that they would remain in Hoboken for maybe six months before transitioning out of city living. Reflecting back almost seventeen years later, Cindy and Jason said that USH played the major role in convincing them to stay in Hoboken long term. Cindy reminisced on the warm environment at USH during their first few visits to a synagogue where “everyone seemed to know everyone.”



To The Altbergers

by Jordan Firestein

The Altbergers enrolled Hannah in the Kaplan Cooperative Preschool, and followed suit with their sons, Sam and Noah. Cindy and Jason look back fondly on how the Kaplan program involved parents in activities with the children, providing great memories and wonderful bonding experiences for both the family and with other USH parents and children.

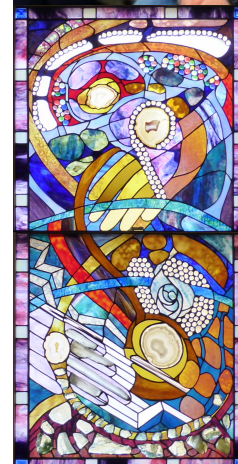
Over the years, Cindy took on various leadership roles at USH, including being elected to the Kaplan Cooperative Preschool board, the USH Board as V.P. of Membership, and eventually becoming a Trustee at Large. For Jason, USH provided him with an authentic sense of Jewish community. Comparing his childhood experiences at synagogue to his experience at USH, Jason stated that at other shuls he felt like “a spectator,” but at USH he felt like a “participant,” especially at special moments such as reading from the Torah at Hannah’s Bat Mitzvah and on many other occasions. As for Hannah and Sam, both are graduates of the Kaplan Cooperative Preschool, the Kaplan Learning Center, and you may recognize them both as Torah and prayer leaders in our community following their bat and bar mitzvahs in 2015 and 2018 respectively, which they happily celebrated with our community. Both Hannah and Sam continue being prime examples of involvement and participation by the next generation of young Jews in our community. While their youngest son Noah will continue his Jewish education, as well as celebrating his Bar Mitzvah in Denver, he looked back on his time in USH’s youth schools and programs with fond memories. When asked to sum up his experience in a few short words, he quickly replied “Friendship.”

When asking the Altbergers to explain just exactly what makes the USH community so special, Cindy and Jason highlighted that it is inclusive, welcoming, and on a personal level, a place where they ended up with so many of their close friends. Jason’s new role as Chief Investment Officer at Sage Hospitality is the primary reason for the move, and as a Denver native, he is familiar with the Jewish community in the area. While they are currently in the very early process of “synagogue shopping” in the Denver area, the family bittersweetly said that they don’t think it will be possible to replicate the experience USH has been for them.

The Altbergers are especially grateful to the entire USH community, and want to stress how lucky and fortunate they all feel to have been a part of this synagogue. While we wish them much Mazel in their new city, home, and community, USH can be grateful that what was intended to be a few short months turned into seventeen years of involvement, simchas, and many great memories with the Altbergers. When looking at our beautiful stained glassed windows commemorating the first day of creation, donated by Cindy and Jason in honor of Hannah, Sam, and Noah, our current and future congregants will be reminded of a special Jewish family who, to paraphrase Jason, were never spectators, but always participants☆



With Cindy’s family at the Kotel during their recent family trip to Israel celebrating Cindy and Jason’s twentieth and Cindy’s parents fiftieth wedding anniversaries,



אהבתם את־הגר כִּי־גרים הֵייתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

You too must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

SAVE THE DATE!

Over 2000 people are held in immigration detention in Hudson County. Without stationery, stamps, pens, and paper, there is no way for detainees to contact people outside the jail. On May 19th, the Refugee Support Committee invites you to USH to help assemble Stationery Kits from 10-11:30 a.m. Our goal is to gift each detained person with a writing supply kit. Bring your children, too. We would love to include your child's drawing in the kit as a burst of sunshine and the outside world. Let our neighbors know they are not forgotten.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

David Swirnoff



I want to keep my article this month short and sweet. I want to extend an invitation to all members of the USH community including parents in the Preschool and Learning Center to join us at our annual meeting on Tuesday, June 11. We'll review our year, vote in a new Board of Trustees and get a preview of what the coming year will bring. We'll start our meeting at 7:45pm in the social hall and refreshments will be served. I hope to see you there so you can have a say in our Synagogue leadership.

*Board Meeting: Tuesday June 11th
7:45 pm in the Social Hall at USH*

In Memoriam

Lori Gilbert Kaye

זכרונה לברכה

May Her Memory Be A Blessing



Got any Jewish Summer Memories?

Whether spending time with family at a bungalow colony, a classic "Borscht Belt" resort, Jewish Sleepaway Camp, USY on Wheels, volunteering at Kibbutzim, or Habonim Dror, distinctive summer experiences are part of the American (and global) Jewish experience. If you would like to be featured in our June article, please reach out to the editors at jfirestein@gmail.com. If you have any photos or memories to share!



Holocaust Remembrance Day Commemoration

Sunday, May 7,
2:30pm at
Temple Beth-El,
2419 Kennedy Blvd.
Jersey City



Guest speaker:
Ernest Mathias,
Holocaust survivor who
survived the Holocaust by
fleeing to Shanghai, China with
his family. Mr. Mathias will
show portions of a film, "The
Last Refuge," about the
community of Jewish emigres
who found refuge in Shanghai.
With musical selections by the
USH Choir.

More info: www.betheljc.org or www.hobokensynagogue.org

PosterMyWall.com

The USH "Pair for Prayer" Initiative

The skill of leading Jewish prayer services has long been an important aspect of Jewish leadership. A knowledgeable Jewish community like ours has many people who have these skills (and all bar/bat mitzvah students in our community acquire some of these skills), but we can always use more. You are invited to fill out the form at http://bit.ly/pair_for_prayer_USH_2019, to indicate what skills you have and what skills you are willing to teach as a volunteer. We will then make an effort to pair people together to acquire these skills. Many recordings, texts, etc are available to assist you, whether you are a teacher or a learner, at rabbischeinberg.blogspot.com.

Shabbat Dinner Initiative

We would like to try a new approach to encouraging people in our community to share shabbat meals together. We invite you to fill out this questionnaire (http://bit.ly/USH_Shabbat_Dinner_Initiative_2019) and to indicate if you are interested in hosting a shabbat dinner and inviting others from our community, and/or in being a guest at a shabbat dinner. We also invite you to indicate your approximate age and life stage, if you would be interested in connecting with others who are demographically similar to you. We will then work with the hosts to help them to invite people who have indicated a desire to be guests. We also have resources available to help people to learn and lead the Shabbat evening rituals (see <http://rabbischeinberg.blogspot.com/p/resources-for-hosting-shabbat-dinner.html>). It is our hope that this initiative will strengthen the bonds that connect us to each other, as well as strengthen our connection to Shabbat. There is also an opportunity on the questionnaire to indicate if you would like to assist in organizing this initiative.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS:

General Fund

Evan & Nicole Sussman, in honor of their daughter Scarlet's baby naming ceremony
Alix Biel
Beth Feinstein
Schroeders Investment, as an employee match with Lauren Ferry
Grace Gurman-Chan and Kenneth Chan

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Sara Welch & Sergio Stifelman
Louise Kurtz
Lydia Schleyer
Gordon & Monique Haas
Gary Spector & Elizabeth Szabla, in memory of her father Frank Szabla
Nora & David Levinson
Michael & Lauren Blumenfeld

THANK YOU FOR SPONSORING KIDDUSH:

Apr 6: The Calmas Family in honor of Alyssa's Bat Mitzvah

Apr 13: The Weintraub Family in honor of Daniel's Bar Mitzvah

CONDOLENCES TO:

Michael Blumenfeld on the loss of his father, Lou Blumenfeld

Andrew Heiden on the loss of his mother, Arlene Heiden

Marc Weinstein on the loss of his father, Ira Weinstein

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Alyssa Calmas on her Bat Mitzvah, to her parents Steve & Lauren Calmas, and to her brother Samuel.

Daniel Weintraub on his Bar Mitzvah, to his parents, Herman & Joanna, and to his sister Rebecca

Adam & Jessica Crystal on the birth of their daughter, Abigail Rose, and to her sister Emma

PARTY RENTALS

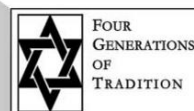


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KEYNOTE SPEAKER: ISRAEL NITZAN, DEPUTY CONSUL GENERAL, NY

THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2019 | 2PM
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS | 280 GROVE STREET, JERSEY CITY, NJ

For more information, contact Ariella Noveck at email: AriellaN@jfnj.org



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