

SHORESH

שורש

**Congregation Etz Chayim
Community News**

FEBRUARY 2020

שבט תש"פ | SHEVAT 5780

One Year In

Purim Primer

Shabbat Blessings



When Life Slows Down

Celebrating the Blessings of Shabbat

Shabbat. For a Jew, there may be no other word that conjures as much joy, peace, and love. The seventh day of the week, Shabbat extends from twilight on Friday until nightfall on Saturday. On Shabbat, an interval of almost timelessness set off from the other six days, God commanded us to rest, to honour His act of creation and His rest from that act. We are encouraged to take advantage of the blessings of Shabbat—a call for pursuits such as mindfulness, introspection, contemplation, connection, tuning in, breathing, stopping, and letting go.

“Throughout Jewish history, Shabbat has had an almost supernatural power,” said Samuel Dresner in *The Sabbath* (Burning Bush Press, 1970). “Within its bounds is one of the surest means of finding peace in the war-torn realm of the soul.”

Claudia Griner, program director at Etz Chayim, puts it a little differently.

“The air you breathe on a Shabbat morning at *shul* is different,” she says. “When you pray with your community, that elevates us. Being Jewish is being part of a community. On Shabbat, taking part in the service with the community completes my Jewish environment, my Jewish self.”

For Shabbat dinner on Friday night, we bring out the good dishes and we serve special food. It is a mitzvah to invite guests to this festive dinner.

“We have friends over, sometimes,” says Ryan Richters, 13, acknowledging that his grandparents live too far away to be regular Shabbat dinner guests.

Community

Shabbat is a day for enjoying one's community.

“It's a day not only to relax and think about the week, but really, it's a day for community,” says Claudia. “For me, before becoming part of the staff, coming here every Shabbat morning meant being part of the community and being Jewish.”

“It's about how we interact with other Jewish people.”

Last November, people from the Etz Chayim community and beyond came together to celebrate Shabbat as part of the Shabbat Project, an international initiative whereby “Jews from all walks of life, from across the spectrum of religious affiliation, young and old, from all corners of the world come together to experience the magic of one full Shabbat kept together” (Shabbat Project website). First introduced in South Africa in 2013, the initiative has spread across the Jewish world. Elissa Abrams was instrumental in bringing the initiative to Etz Chayim, in 2016.

“There is something so unique about the Shabbat Project knowing there are people all over the world celebrating Shabbat together as communities, cities, countries. There is a feeling that you are part of something bigger, more important. It adds something to an already special Jewish holiday to know it's being celebrated all over the world,” she says.

The evening began with a casual service—“camp style,” so in the *shul* auditorium, not the sanctuary, with guests at tables in the shape of a U. B'nai Brith and Camp Massad



Photo: ציון הלוי, Shabbat candles



Photo: Elana Schultz, Challot

tunes were incorporated into the service, and dinner was also camp-fare—hotdogs, pasta and fries. After dinner, professional local storyteller Jamie Oliviero told stories about friendship and community. Following the *Birkat Hamazon*, the program closed with circle time and a special indoor bonfire made from a fishbowl filled with water and glow sticks.

Family

As much as Shabbat is about community, the beloved festival is also about family.

“Friday night at our house is together time,” says Tracy Kasner-Greaves, cantor for Congregation Etz Chayim. “We have Friday night dinner, and everything is more relaxed. Life slows down.”

Dena Stitz, a member of the Etz Chayim Young Adult Committee and daughter of Etz Chayim members Mia Elfenbaum and Marshall Stitz, says for her family, Shabbat is a time to be together without the distractions of the week.

“No matter what else is going on in our lives, on Shabbat we come together to eat, talk, and laugh as a family,” says Dena, 25, an occupational therapist.

“We have family Shabbat dinners every Friday night,” she continues. “We light candles and do the blessings. There are no phones at the table and no TV on in the background, which helps us appreciate our time together.”

At the Abrams-Singer household, Friday night is about connecting, while Saturday morning is about learning.

“The rituals of Shabbat—lighting the candles, making and eating challah, saying the blessings over the wine (and grape juice), and over the children—are a way to anchor our week and provide consistency and special family time. We find that time in synagogue on Shabbat is a ritual that is both comforting and meaningful and teaches the children so much about tradition, respect, learning from others, music, and religion,” says Elissa, an Etz Chayim member.

“It is a time that our family is joined, relaxed, mindful, connected, and it is by far the most relaxed we are all week,” Elissa continues.

“I can't imagine our lives without it.”

“I think everyone can find some piece of Shabbat that resonates with them,” says Dena Stitz. “Try doing something differently on Shabbat, whether it is taking a break from answering work email, not running errands, having a family meal, or going to Shabbat services.”

“Shabbat gives us the opportunity to take time for ourselves and our families after a busy week. Having that time to reflect is important and meaningful.” ■



CEC Young Adult Committee (L-R): Adi Farage, Talia Gunn, Dena Stitz, Ezra Lazar



CEC Book Club (L-R): Linda Calnitsky, Shayna Shulman, Sandy Hyman, Emily Shane, Maylene Ludwig, and Edith Kimelman



Pre-Chanukah Etz Chayim festivities (December, 2019)



Pre-Chanukah Etz Chayim festivities



Pre-Chanukah Etz Chayim festivities



L-R: Jessee Havey, Nathaniel Good, Phyllis Dana



Pre-Chanukah Etz Chayim festivities led by Rabbi Kliel and Cantor Tracy

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Congregation | עין חיים
Etz Chayim

FINDING MEANING IN JEWISH LIFE

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for Shabbat



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One Year In

Etz Chayim looked long and hard for a new rabbi to lead their congregation.

But patience and persistence paid off because one year in, Rabbi Kliel Rose says many goals he had in mind for Congregation Etz Chayim have already come to fruition or are slowly being implemented.

When a congregational Rabbi begins serving a new community, they bring goals, objectives, and ideas of their own—a vision for the future of the synagogue community in which they are being installed. After just one year with Congregation Etz Chayim, Rabbi Kliel says he has accomplished several of the goals he came in with.

“Folks at the *shul* were receptive to the ideas I brought with me,” Kliel says. “But being in the thick of it and dealing with real human beings has a way of altering your objectives,” he explains. “Some things I thought would be easier to do have taken longer; other goals are on hold, because we have different priorities.”



As important as the building is in the life of the congregation, I’m also trying to bring the synagogue to where the people are, make it accessible and prevent obstacles.

Improving Working Relationships

One of Kliel’s primary goals has been to build strong relationships with all facets of the Etz Chayim community—staff, lay leadership, and members.

“Working with other senior staff is a priority. We’ve invested a lot of time into figuring out who’s responsible for various functions of the congregation.”

Kliel notes that he, Etz Chayim executive director Jonathan Buchwald, and Cantor Tracy Kasner-Greaves work together closely to balance the administrative and the spiritual components of synagogue life. He is also cultivating good relationships with the lay leadership, CEC President Myron Schultz and Vice President Avrom Charach.

“I’ve studied institutions and how to restructure organizations. These things interest me and are critical to the success of what we will do here.”

Kliel was also determined to develop the trust of the Etz Chayim membership and have greater exposure within the larger Winnipeg Jewish community.

“It boils down to this: as important as the building is in the life of the congregation, I’m also trying to bring the synagogue to where the people are, make it accessible and prevent obstacles.” He cites Winnipeg’s north/south dichotomy as one such potential obstacle.

“I’m trying to be accessible,” explains Kliel, “without burning out. I’m trying to be acutely aware of my boundaries so I can be more available to my family and more effective in the job I’m doing for the congregation.”

“But, I am committed to serving members and being with them when they need my support,” he notes.



Developing Educational Programming

Another chief goal for Rabbi Kliel has been to develop all levels of Etz Chayim’s Jewish education.

“We synagogue folk make children our primary focus, and we forget about the adults. The emphasis on children has to be there, but we have also done something spectacular with adult education,” he says, offering as example the Journeying into Judaism course. Kliel says the *shul* now uses an internationally recognized curriculum through the Miller Introduction to Judaism program (American Jewish University). While the class is geared to people considering conversion, Kliel says it does a wonderful job of including anybody seeking to build a foundation in Jewish knowledge.

“There are different access points to the class, so different folks will find the material compelling,” Kliel explains. Students enrolled in the current session include some seeking conversion to Judaism, others born into the Jewish tradition who want to add to their Jewish intellectual and spiritual knowledge, and one staunch Christian.

“We’ve transformed the quality of education we provide for adults—from 18 to 99, focusing a bit on young adults in their 20s and 30s,” he says. “And I think we’re doing an exceptional job,” adds Kliel, who also brought the Shalom Hartman Institute program *iEngage* to Etz Chayim (see page 10).

As well, Kliel works individually with students before their B’nai Mitzvah, to help them create their *d’var* Torah (Torah discussion).

First column: Aziza Kosmin Rose Bat Mitzvah, Rabbi Kliel Rose

Facing page: Rabbi Kliel with a Bar Mitzvah student putting on T’fillin.



While Cantor Tracy leads the group B'nai Mitzvah class, teaching her students liturgical ritual skills they need for their B'nai Mitzvah, Kliei leads a monthly focused conversation with students about a topic of benefit as they prepare to become young adults in the Jewish community. He offers as example a recent session in which students explored the difference between *gemilut chasadim*, acts of loving-kindness, and *tzdakah*, charity.

"I tell students, it's your job to make me look good," he laughs. "Seriously, I want them to be the attraction, give them the pulpit, so they can shine. Then, they can hold onto that experience and cherish it."

"My job was to give them a historical background, show them which concept is a direct commandment from the Torah, and which is an expectation of us as Jewish adults." And then, he adds, have them teach it back to their parents. "The kids were able to speak coherently about the differences between acts of loving-kindness and monetary support for people in serious need," Kliei says proudly.

He believes there is an expectation on every child to donate some of the money they have received as B'nai Mitzvah gifts to a charity of their choosing, in addition to learning how to read Torah and how to give a speech.

So, Kliei guided the group of B'nai Mitzvah families through discussion about how parents can help enhance the experience by considering various organizations with their child, exploring the ones they are interested in supporting, and examining the core values each one embodies.

Kliei also discussed with the group one way to really express loving-kindness.

"I'm pushing hard for kids to have a direct-service project, dedicate a certain amount of time to interfacing with people with a particular need, who could benefit from direct encounter with young students, and potentially their parents."

Kliei says when a child becomes a son or daughter of the commandments, they now have greater autonomy, greater independence. They can make choices about how to fulfill some of the responsibilities that come with being a Jew.

"It's important for them to articulate that in front of their parents. Then we can get parents to commit to helping their child succeed with that pursuit." This is where the B'nai Mitzvah project comes in, which Kliei urges students engage in, often as a social-justice venture of the student's choosing.

Encouraging Engagement With Jewish Ideas

The *shul* has put the engagement sessions which Kliei began last January on hold, but he hopes to return to the small informal *Shma Koleinu* discussions in the future.

"At those intimate gatherings, people feel able to express concerns or sentiments they have about congregational life, or thoughts about life as a Jew, and how we as a synagogue can serve them."

Another idea Kliei embraces as part of his vision is to be a real presence in the wider general community.

"I'm making that a focus of my rabbinate here," he says. "And I've come to understand that there's this mindset: when we're in the congregation we do only Jewish things, but in our private lives we volunteer and interact with people outside the Jewish community."

"How can we make that a Jewish imperative?" he asks. "How do we get people to realize that an active Jewish life isn't restricted to helping our own? That may be under the category of social justice," Kliei says, "and I'm trying to address it both in terms of what I write and what I speak about."

"I would also love to see that happen through collective action as a congregation," he adds. ■

The Rose Family

Rabbi Kliei Rose was not installed into the Congregation Etz Chayim community alone, he came to Winnipeg from Edmonton with his family: his wife Dorit, and their children, Toviel (18), Kolya (15), Aziza (13), Dia (11) and Anaya (6).

"Dorit is incredibly supportive in many different ways," Kliei says, "and I think most days she is very proud of what I do. But she has her own life outside of being married to a rabbi," he acknowledges. A social worker for Jewish child and Family Services, Dorit initially worked with the Yazidi population, and now she is a fulltime case worker within the addictions department.

"She talks the talk and walks the walk; she lives out her values and doesn't necessarily do it in the most public way," he says with admiration, adding that Dorit "doesn't do a lot of grandstanding."

"That's something that I've come to really appreciate."

During the high holidays, Dorit has lead prayers for the alternative service hosted by Kliei's parents, Rabbi Rose and Carol Rose, in the lower level of Etz Chayim. Dorit is also a regular at synagogue and brings their kids to *shul* almost every week.

Rabbi Dad

Kliei's eldest daughter Aziza was Bat Mitzvah last August. "That was an unbelievable milestone," Kliei says. "We're so grateful for the way Etz Chayim folks supported us, it was incredible. And while I'm somewhat biased, my kid was terrific."

Kliei got to wear his Dad-hat along with his *kippah* for this experience.

"I had a chance to see what it's like for a parent of a child to go through our B'nai Mitzvah process. And, I can't say enough about Cantor Tracy and how she trains our children," he says.

"At the same time, I had the opportunity to have that 'rabbinic role' with my own daughter. I've done it before," he says, with his two older kids. "And in certain ways it poses particular challenges. But on all three occasions, I gave my kids the choice: I said, 'we could find somebody else to

Congregation Etz Chayim Annual Lottery Update

by Linda Waldman

Congregation Etz Chayim held its Annual Lottery on Sunday, November 24, 2019, and all who attended had a great time. The morning had all the proper components: fun, suspense, great food, good camaraderie, and the inevitable winners. No program can be held without the dedicated contributions of many people. Thank you to the canvassers who spent endless hours phoning and contacting individuals to purchase tickets; to Dina and Bruce Granove, and Joyce and Sid Rosenhek who outdid themselves selling tickets to the lottery; to Joyce and Sid Rosenhek, Gary Margolis, and Fivie Gunn who helped out at the telethon; to Jonathan Buchwald who, as emcee, ensured an orderly flow of the proceedings; to Boguslaw and Ewa Stras, Margo Carr, and their staff, who prepared the wonderful food; to Jonathan Buchwald, CEC Executive Director, Marina Kory, and Linda Waldman, who processed all of the tickets in the office; to Alex Zlatopolsky and Yan Bleznitsky, who were in charge of set up; to Karyn Glass and Lisa Selchen, the auditors from the chartered accountants firm Booke and Partners, who ensured everything went off without a hitch and was absolutely accurate; to Avery Spigelman and Gordon Steindel who pulled cards from the lottery board. We owe you all a debt of gratitude.

The proceeds of the 210 tickets sold, after expenses, will be used toward the new dinnerware for the synagogue. Ticket winnings were valued at \$5500. ■



Top and bottom: Aziza Kosmin Rose Bat Mitzvah

work with you on your *d'var Torah*, your speech,' because there were moments when I got frustrated and they got frustrated."

"So, I told them, 'this is really hard, when your father is also the rabbi. But there are other good people you could work with, for your speech. But in all three cases they said, 'No, Abba, we want to work with you.' I'm happy that happened, and hopefully they haven't been traumatized by it," Kliel laughs.

Kliel's eldest son Toviel launched out on his own at Ryerson University in Toronto, last fall. Tovi is enrolled in the English department but is considering the school of journalism. "He's a fascinating person," Kliel says proudly, mentioning that "when Tovi was in grade 12 here, he volunteered at the holiday camps we co-sponsor with Gray Academy,"

Kolya is a regular at Shabbat services. Aziza has also volunteered at the *shul* holiday camps, and she has read Torah a couple times.

"That's something we really want to work on," Kliel notes: "What happens in the post B'nai Mitzvah years? Can we keep them engaged after their Bar or Bat Mitzvah?" Reading Torah, or some other way of participating in the service, is one more reason for them to stay," he says.

His two youngest children, Dia and Anaya, are at *shul* every Shabbat, and Kliel can't say enough about the Shabbat programming planned by program director Claudia Griner.

"She does a wonderful job of creating programming that I think is enticing to people of all ages, so I give her a lot of credit," he says.

And enticing programming leads to a fulfilled congregation—which is exactly what Kliel wants. ■

Drawn	Ticket	Name	Amount
1st	33	Steven Freed	\$100
25th	37	Alex Feder	\$100
50th	164	Jerry and Darlene Davis	\$50
50th	164	Sheldon and Cathy Itscovich	\$50
75th	36	Ed Shinewald	\$100
100th	174	Colette and Darryl Segal	\$100
100th	174	Dina and Frank Weinfeld	\$100
125th	189	David Levene	\$100
150th	121	Leslie Litman	\$50
150th	121	Gene Schacter	\$50
175th	157	Fay Reich	\$100
200th	160	David and Roslind Minuk	\$100
5th last	188	Richard Ross	\$400
winner	217	Kevin McIntyre	\$1000
winner	129	Earl Barish	\$1000
winner	40	Paul Knight	\$1000
winner	104	Paul Winestock	\$500
winner	104	Lloyd Baker	\$500

Member News and Life-Cycle Events

SPECIAL BIRTHDAYS

DECEMBER

Willa Adelman, Ron Cantor,
Joel Cogan, Michael Conner,
Ed Feuer, Sharon Goldenberg,
Ben Hirt, Mickey Rosenberg,
Janet Simon

JANUARY

Michael Bass, Diane Boroditsky,
Joe Elfenbaum, Orah Kleiman,
Donna Lazar, Jacqueline
Meyers, Natalie Newman,
Betty Sparber

FEBRUARY

Bryan Borzykowski,
Louis Colish, Walter Griner,
Adam Levene, Steven London,
William Mahon, Leslie Marks,
Henry Wolfe, Bella (Bev) Wolk

MARCH

Allan Cogan, Samuel Lantz,
Gene Schacter, Darryl Segal,
Karen Yamron Shpeller,
Frank Weinfeld

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARIES

DECEMBER

Michelle and Brent Apter (35);
Orah and Sody Kleiman (65);
Marli and David Lerner (50);
Dawn and Ron Rittberg (35)

JANUARY

Sybil and Frank Steele (60)

MARCH

Lil and Ben Hirt (60)

IN MEMORIAM

Ted Hechter
Molly Lachter
Jack Litvack
Elaine Rappaport
Frank Shiffman
Edith Shpeller
Earl Simmons
Larry Tabachnick

MAZEL TOVS

Melanie and Michael Richters
on the Bar Mitzvah of their son,
Ryan, on January 18
Sharon and Jonathan
Goldenberg on the Bar Mitzvah
of their son, Ben, on February 15
Elaine and Bert Schaffer on the
Bar Mitzvah of their grandson,
Ben Goldenberg, on February 15
Viviana Steinberg and Daniel
Faingold on the Bat Mitzvah of
their daughter, Mijal Faingold,
on March 28
Selma Albersheim on the birth
of great granddaughter Mira
Issie Frost on being appointed to
Queens Counsel
Lynne and Henry Trachtenberg
on the birth of grandson Daniel
Samuel Trachtenberg
Donna and Mark Cohen on
the birth of grandson Amaryah
Na'im Cohen

Funeral and Cemetery Services

Congregation Etz Chayim provides funeral services at the synagogue, graveside, or at Chesed Shel Emes community funeral chapel. Etz Chayim also operates three cemeteries: Bnay Abraham, Hebrew Sick Benefit, and Rosh Pina Memorial Park. For help or information, please contact Etz Chayim Funeral Director Shelley Sklover at (204) 589-6305 ext. 214 or ssklover@etzchayim.ca.

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How to Have a Bar (or Bat) Mitzvah at Congregation Etz Chayim

A Practical Guide for Kids and Parents

Ryan Richters is entering a new juncture in his life.

At time of writing, Ryan, 13, was just a few weeks shy of his Bar Mitzvah, planned for January 18, 2020. Ryan and his family were busy with last-minute tasks as they prepared to host family, friends, and out of town guests for Ryan's Bar Mitzvah at Etz Chayim.

When a Jewish boy turns 13 and a girl 12, they assume all privileges and obligations of a Jewish adult: they must follow the Torah commandments, wear *tefillin* (boys) and take their place within the Jewish community. Many celebrate the milestone with a ceremony, during which the child is called to the Torah and delivers a *d'var torah* (Torah discussion), demonstrating his or her newfound status. Many follow the service with a kiddush and party.

"It means a new stage in my life," Ryan says. "And it's a pretty big one."

"It's one of the things that's happening in that new stage, like my new school (Ryan is in grade 7 at River Heights, French immersion).

Learning How to Be a Bar or Bat Mitzvah

For most kids, having a Bar or Bat Mitzvah requires a good amount of preparation. Ryan began weekly group B'nai Mitzvah classes when he was 11. Etz Chayim Cantor Tracy Kasner-Greaves teaches this class, held at Gray Academy.

"In that class they learn the equation of a service," says Cantor Tracy. "They learn how to chant a *Haftarah*, how to chant the service, the trope." They don't just memorize their own Torah reading, she explains. They learn how to read *any* Torah portion or *Haftarah*.

"You give them the opportunity to be Torah- and *Haftarah*-literate, to be synagogue-literate. You teach them to be comfortable in a synagogue, not just on the day of their reading. The hope is that in the future, they'll be able to chant any *Haftarah* or Torah portion. They learn the structure for the Shabbat morning service."



Ryan Richters

The kids, with their young, curious minds and their boundless energy, readily absorb the language and synagogue skills, and "they get to socialize with other kids in the same boat," who have upcoming B'nai Mitzvot.

Ryan explains that he learned Torah and *Haftarah* trope and common prayers like the *Shacharit* in the group class—common elements needed by all B'nai Mitzvah.

"In the group class, everyone learns the same thing, versus their individual Torah portion," Ryan clarifies. "We had the group class for a while before we started the individual stuff."

A Family Affair

Once a month, Rabbi Kliel took over leading the group class with a session for B'nai Mitzvah families.

"We learned things about Judaism in those classes, *Halachic* stuff, and teachings from the rabbis," explains Ryan, who has two younger sisters. "Then, we'd break for dinner, and after dinner we'd teach what we'd learned to our parents."

Ryan's mom, Melanie Richters, says the Rabbi-led family group classes were very helpful.

"It's a great idea," she says. "I had felt sort of disconnected from the other families, and it gave us a chance to get to know them." Some family sessions included theoretical learning, such as about *tzdakah* (charity) and *chesed* (loving-kindness/world repair); other



B'nai Mitzvah group class

sessions were more practically focused on the Bar or Bat Mitzvah, which Melanie found particularly helpful.

Along with the weekly classes, beginning about eight months before their Bar or Bat Mitzvah, the child receives an individual weekly lesson with Cantor Tracy, at school or at Tracy's home.

"We practised stuff like individual phrases," Ryan explains, "and then I started putting it together and learning the Aliyah slowly, from start to finish. Then we'd move on to the next Aliyah."

At time of writing, Ryan had not yet received his private lessons from Rabbi Kliel to guide him through writing his *d'var Torah*, which will reflect something he learned from or connected to his Torah portion.

Making It Personal

Some kids personalize their B'nai Mitzvah by including a favourite song or prayer or reading; others honour a family member. In Ryan's case, at time of writing, his dad, Michael, was weaving a *tallit* for his Bar Mitzvah year. If it wouldn't be ready for the actual event, they had a backup plan figured out, involving another family member.

"We have a couple *tallitot* that were my grandfather's," says Melanie, adding that Ryan is named after this particular great-grandfather. Wearing one of his grandfather's *tallitot* would be a special way of bringing the spirit of his great grandfather Lloyd into his *simcha*.

As for the tallit Michael is making, Ryan clarifies that his dad is not a professional weaver (in fact, Michael is a computer programmer), although he did take some weaving classes. Ryan also had a photo journey planned for after the service.

A Huge Accomplishment

Melanie says planning a Bar or Bat Mitzvah can be an overwhelming endeavour—especially the first one.

“I’ve gone through waves of panic. This being the first time we’ve done it, I didn’t have a good sense of how to put one together,” she says. But her mom stepped-in to help long-distance from Ottawa, and things fell into place, from photographer to DJ, thanks to mom.

“It’s pretty big, definitely,” says Ryan about a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. It is a milestone in a Jew’s life; it acknowledges their identity and responsibilities as a Jew.

“Do kids of 12 or 13 really recognize that they are taking their spot in the lineage of Jewish people and their connection to God? I’m not sure,” Cantor Tracy laughs. “At that age it’s hard to get them to see that it’s about more than themselves, so it’s a ridiculous time to lay these expectations on a kid and expect them to have some sort of spiritual awakening—they’re not ready. Often kids don’t come to it spiritually until years later.”

“But I’ve never talked to anyone at the end of their life that doesn’t look back to the time of their Bar or Bat Mitzvah and reflect on it as a spiritual experience.”

And a huge accomplishment, too.

“Kids who have that grasp of the structure of the service find the Bar or Bat Mitzvah process intellectually fulfilling, even if it’s not spiritually fulfilling,” she says.

“It’s a huge accomplishment, and they understand what they’re doing from that perspective.” ■

Hamantashen Hoopla

Whether you prefer dried fruit filling or you’re more of a poppyseed person, you probably find it hard to resist gobbling down the three corners of at least one sweet Purim dainty—the *hamantashen*. Try making your own, using one of Congregation Etz Chayim Chef Boguslaw (Bogie) Stras’s recipes.



Photo: Yoninah

Hamantashen Dough

Ingredients

3 large eggs, + 1 for egg wash
1 c oil
2 c sugar
2 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. salt
4 c all purpose flour
2 tsp. vanilla extract
Juice and zest from 1 orange

Method

1. Combine dry ingredients.
2. Beat eggs well, add sugar, and beat well again.
3. Add oil, vanilla extract, orange juice, and zest, and mix until well blended.
4. Gradually add dry ingredients to wet ones, and mix well.
5. Use a small ice cream scoop to form dough into balls.
6. Flatten ball with your hand, and place 1 tsp of filling in the middle.
7. Pinch edges together to form a triangle. Leave the centre open slightly to expose filling.
8. Beat 1 egg with 1 tsp water.
9. Place hamantashen onto baking pan and brush with egg wash.
10. Bake at 350° F for 20 minutes, or until tan.

Poppy Seed Filling

Ingredients

2 c poppyseed
1 c water
¼ c sugar
½ c honey
Pinch of salt
1 well-beaten egg
½ tsp. lemon zest

Method

1. Pour 1 c boiling water over poppyseed.
2. Let stand until seeds have settled, and drain. Reserve liquid.
3. Put poppyseeds through grinder, using finest grinding plate.
4. Combine ground poppyseed with liquid left over from draining, adding sugar, honey, and salt.
5. Cook over low heat until thick, stirring frequently.
6. Allow to cool completely.
7. Add egg and lemon zest, and mix well.

Prune Filling

Ingredients

1 lb prunes
1 tbsp. lemon juice
1 tbsp. orange juice
Zest of 1 lemon and 1 orange

Method

1. Soak prunes overnight.
2. Cook until soft.
3. Drain, and chop fine.
4. Add juices and zests and mix well.

Photo: Evan Swigart



Kosher Catering Service

Congregation Etz Chayim Catering offers a variety of Kosher Shabbat, *Kiddush*, dinner, and party menus. We also cater home events, office meetings, shiva meals, and more. Let us know how we can help you: (204) 589-6305.



Kurdish *Megillat Esther*

Purim Primer

Purim is a Jewish festival during which we read from *Megillat Esther*, the scroll of Esther, to tell the story of how the wicked Haman, appointed Prime Minister of the Persian Empire by King Achashverosh, was outwitted. Haman hated Jews and plotted to destroy all Jews on a fixed date, drawing lots to determine when he would execute his evil plan (*Purim* means “lots” in ancient Persian). But thanks to Mordechai, leader of the Jews in Persia, and his cousin Esther, queen of Persia, the Jews were spared, Haman was hanged, peace was restored, and everyone celebrated.

The *Megillat Esther* is traditionally written on a scroll of parchment, but unlike the Torah, it has a wood winder on only one end. The *Megillah* is the only book of the Bible that never mentions the Name of God. Because of this, ornate illustrations can decorate the text of a *Megillah*, since there is no requirement to create within it an image of God. *Megillah* reading is often done in a comical way, using different voices and unexpected dramatics.

An amusing part of the *Megillah* reading involves a commitment to “blot out” any mention of Haman’s name. When *Haman* is pronounced by the reader, the congregation is encouraged to make noise—yell, stamp their feet, shake a *gragger* or other noisemaker. Some Jews record Haman’s name on the soles of their shoes, then stamp out the name. Others bang together rocks with Haman’s name recorded. Some congregations blow a shofar or trumpet or play organ music to blot out Haman’s name. Still others beat a drum or shake a tin can of nails.

On Purim we perform four mitzvot: we read the *Megillah* to tell the Purim story; we give gifts of money, food or clothing to the poor; we send food gifts to friends; and we eat and drink at a festive meal, including *hamantashen* (three-cornered Purim pastries shaped to resemble Haman’s three-cornered hat, filled with poppyseed or dried fruit).

Celebrate Purim with Congregation Etz Chayim on Monday, March 9 at the South-End Winnipeg location, Soul Sanctuary (2050 Chevrier Blvd). The fun-filled evening will include *Megillah* reading and a carnival/family circus with bouncers, games, hot dogs, drinks, and plenty of *hamantashen*. ■

Mark Purim in Your Calendar

When we celebrate Purim depends on where we live. Outside Jerusalem, in the *diaspora*, Purim is celebrated on 14 Adar (or March 10, this year, in the Gregorian calendar) while in Jerusalem, Shushan Purim is celebrated on 15 Adar (March 11).

“The discrepancy in dates is based on whether a city is ‘walled’ or not,” says Rabbi Kliel Rose. The Book of Esther differentiates between Jews who lived and fought their enemies for two days within the walled, capital city of Shushan, and those who lived in unwalled towns, where only one day was needed to subdue the enemy,” he explains.

“The Rabbis who instituted Purim as a holiday determined we should make that same distinction when memorializing the event. Thus, if a person lives in a city that has been walled since the days of Joshua (circa 1250 BCE), as Shushan was, Purim is celebrated on the 15th of Adar, a day referred to as ‘Shushan Purim.’” ■

Re-framing the Discussion—*iEngage*

Gather at *shul* with Etz Chayim folk and friends Sunday mornings, this winter, for ***iEngage – Engaging Israel: Foundations for a New Relationship***. The Shalom Hartman Institute lecture and study series explores ideas like the benefits of Jewish sovereignty, how we can create and maintain a Jewish democracy, and why North American Jews should care about Israel. Through video lectures and intelligent interviews with Hartman scholars, stimulating text study, and thought-provoking group discussion, *iEngage* goes deeper than the political issues of the day, to re-frame the discussion about the significance of the State of Israel for contemporary Jews worldwide.

“With *iEngage*, they are trying to highlight the relationship between Israel and the Jewish diaspora, to be intellectually honest about how that relationship evolved, historically, and shed some light on the holes within the current relationship that are taking place as Israel grows and becomes its own independent entity,” says Rabbi Kliel.

Delving into topics like how a Jewish state should exercise military power ethically, what values a Jewish state should embody, and what Israel can offer the rest of the world, *iEngage* elevates the North American conversation about Israel, equipping participants with a characteristically Jewish values-based vocabulary, to define and articulate why Israel and Zionism are fundamental to our Jewish identity. *iEngage* runs at Etz Chayim through March 22, 2020. Contact the *shul* office to register: 204-589-6305. ■

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