



There's No Free Lunch (Unless You Don't Pay)

A MESSAGE FROM BEKI PRESIDENT CAROLE BASS

Few things are as certain as death, taxes, and the BEKI Kol Nidre appeal. Except that we're not doing a Kol Nidre appeal this year.

What? Is nothing sacred?!

Well, yes. Yom Kippur is sacred, the holiest day of the Jewish year. Last fall, the BEKI Board of Directors decided that there's a more spiritually conducive way to practice teshuva, tefila, and tzedaka than having the president get up on the bima and ask for money.

So this year, we will conduct an annual appeal outside of shul. We'll do it before the High Holy Days, beginning in June. The president will still address the congregation on Yom Kippur, talking about the things that matter most to us as a community and a people – it just won't be a fundraising speech.

To my surprise, not everyone at BEKI sees this as a good move.

Some folks have told me that they genuinely like being asked to dig deep financially on Kol Nidre. For them, the fundraising appeal is one of the ways that the Days of Awe challenge us to do more, do better, live up to our ideals.

Others are attached to the practice because it is a long-standing tradition. Their reaction typically goes something like this: "The Kol Nidre appeal isn't so bad. In the old days, they used to auction off aliyot to raise money on Yom Kippur." The implication being: we would never do that, because it's offensive or out of keeping with our communal religious values.

Indeed, the notion of selling Torah honors is repugnant to me. So is the idea of charging rent for seats in the synagogue. But those were standard fundraising methods in 18th- and 19th-century American synagogues. Shuls also used

to bring in revenue by fining congregants who misbehaved during services, Rabbi Dan Judson writes in a fascinating article called "American Synagogues and Money: Lessons from History."

Rabbi Judson, who is getting his PhD in synagogues & money, tells a story about Shearith Israel, then New York City's only synagogue, back in 1825. A man was called to the Torah and then refused to make the customary payment to the tzedaka fund. Congregational leaders brought him up on trial. So bitter was the dispute that it caused a split in the congregation and the birth of New York's second synagogue.

Rabbi Judson's point: "Religious leaders hoping to make money and boards of synagogues worrying over how to raise money are issues that go back hundreds of years. But as some things regarding money have remained unchanged, it is important to note how much has changed."

Now, about those taxes.

The First Jewish Building Fund

In Exodus 30:11-16, we read about a head tax that is designated for the service of the sanctuary – the Jewish world's first building fund.

It's a flat tax: every man of fighting age pays one-half shekel. "The rich shall not pay more, and the poor shall not pay less." It's sort of as if BEKI set dues at a dollar a year, or \$18 a year, and then said: no abatements, no exceptions. Everybody pays the same.

Obviously, that would not be enough to meet BEKI's financial needs. And it apparently was not enough to meet the communal religious needs of the Israelites, either. Also in the book of Exodus, we read about the terumah, or freewill offering. "The Lord spoke to Moses saying: 'Tell the Israel-

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BEKI Bulletin

The newsletter is published monthly by Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel for the benefit of its members.

Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel is affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

To contribute articles or for inquiries regarding membership:

- Call the Synagogue office: (203) 389-2108
- Write: 85 Harrison Street, New Haven, CT 06515-1724
- Email: jjtilsen@beki.org
- Visit our web page: www.beki.org

For advertising information, call the synagogue office.

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A Message from Rabbi Tilsen & Dear Rabbi
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All of us. One Foundation.

No Free Lunch

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ite people to bring me gifts; you shall accept gifts for me from every person whose heart so moves him.” (Ex. 25:1-2) These gifts are a wide variety of valuables, earmarked for the construction of the sanctuary. These donations are voluntary – “every person whose heart so moves him” – but they are also commanded: “tell the Israelite people to bring me gifts.” We could compare this to our annual appeal.

Later on in the Torah, we learn of a third means of financial support by the Jewish community, for the Jewish community. That’s the tithing (Num. 18:20-26). All Israelites are commanded to give one-tenth of their wealth to support the Levites – the servants of the Temple – because the Levites don’t get a share of the land and can’t grow their own food.

We hear echoes of these ancient funding mechanisms in our contemporary practice. But our current methods of raising money – or, to look at it from the BEKI members’ perspective, our current methods of contributing money – do not come mi-Sinai, handed down with the Ten Commandments. They have evolved over the years, and they will continue to evolve.

Take our dues, for example. A few months ago I attended the funeral of one of our longtime members, Elsie Hodes. In his eulogy, Rabbi Tilsen mentioned that at the time of Elsie’s wedding, in the mid-20th century, dues at Congregation Keser Israel were \$25 a year. In current dollars, that’s maybe \$250 a year. So the dues structure we have now, which asks families for about \$1,500 a year, represents a very large change from just 60 or so years ago.

And the kind of dues structure we have now is not universal. Some synagogues use a “fair share” model, with a sliding scale based on income. Temple Israel, a Conservative shul in Sharon, Mass., has done away with dues altogether. They still ask members for money every year. In fact, they ask for a lot of money: this year, \$2,900 for households with two adults. They call that a “sustaining level” – if everyone paid it, the synagogue could meet its financial obligations. But it’s voluntary. People pay what they can. This system, which replaced a more conventional

dues structure, has helped Temple Israel increase both membership and revenues while ensuring that money is not a barrier to anyone who wants to join the community.

The Truth, and the Whole Truth

Where does all the money go?

It goes to fix the roof. It goes to pay back the money we borrowed the last time we had to fix the roof. It pays our outstanding employees. It heats and cools the sanctuary on Shabbat, and the chapel every day during services. It helps us run programs for our children, for our adults, for our teens. (By the way, copies of the budget are always available to BEKI members, and our financial officers are always ready to answer questions.)

That’s the truth, but it’s not the whole truth. The whole truth is: when we – BEKI’s volunteer leaders – ask our fellow members for financial support, it’s a package deal. The money goes toward all the things that bind our synagogue community together. Raising money is far from the most important thing we do at BEKI, but it is essential.

Judaism itself is a package deal. Shabbat preserves our sanity, our families, and our community. Keeping kosher makes us conscious of what we are eating and how it got onto our plates. Visiting sick people, bringing meals to families with new babies, cooking our Shabbat kiddush, stuffing flyers into envelopes, greeting visitors in a crowded lobby: these are all part of the package that holds our community together.

The core is our communal values – kindness, compassion, taking care of each other, fixing the world – as embodied by traditional Jewish ritual and practice. We’re all in this together, and together we need to find the means to allow our community to continue thriving.

Comments? Suggestions? Drop me a line: president@beki.org

You can read Rabbi Dan Judson’s article at www.ujafedny.org/get/167229/download

For additional articles and information about financial sustainability in synagogues, see <http://uscj.org/LeadingKehilla/Resources/Operations/KehillaOperationsFinanceandDues.aspx>



המקום ינחם

HaMaqom Yinahem

With sorrow we note the passing of

Morton Silver, husband of Ruth Silver

May the Almighty Comfort Those Who Mourn

to find kindred spirits for Klezmer and Irish fiddling. Lily loves to dance anytime, anywhere. We are excited to have found such a welcoming and supportive environment to introduce Lily to Judaism and the Jewish community! We're looking forward to getting to know people and making new friends.



Diane, Seth and Lily

Meet our New Members

We're the Purvin/Rosenthal family – Diane Purvin, Seth Rosenthal and Liliana (Lily) Rosenthal (who just turned 4). We moved to Hamden (Whitneyville) from the Boston area just before Lily was born, after finishing graduate school and postdocs. It was a bit of a home-coming – Seth grew up in Hamden, and we first met as undergrads at Wesleyan. As a family, we enjoy good food, good wine (or juice, as the case may be), Shabbat dinners with Seth's parents (who are also in Hamden), and parentheses. Diane is an avid reader of mysteries and other fiction. Seth plays violin, and is always happy



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The Women of Women's League: A Network of Committed and Connected Women

The women of Women's League are confident and have strived to fulfill the legacy that has been handed down for many years, that of "Torah, divine service and deeds of loving kindness." The primary purpose of Women's League has always been to promote a deeper understanding of these time-honored expressions of the Jewish soul, while signifying their relevance to the women of today. It is the mission of Women's League to enable Jewish women to appreciate these traditions and the role they have played throughout our history so that they will take pride in creating a richly Jewish life for themselves and their families.

In the past year women of Women's League, through the Torah Fund campaign, raised a substantial amount of dollars to support the Jewish Theological Seminary and other Jewish studies both in the U.S. and abroad.

Our theme for the year is "Uri, Uri... Awake Greet the New Dawn." That is what we are committed to do to the future of Conservative Judaism and to the engagement of women no matter their status or age. BEKI Sisterhood hopes that you will commit to becoming a Sisterhood member next fall.

We have 54 BEKI members who did so for the spring of 2013. Toda raba to all our Sisterhood members.

We are in full swing in updating the downstairs bathrooms.

Applications are now being accepted for the Marcel Gutman Scholarship. Please look on line for the application at <http://beki.org/forms/bsgs.pdf>.

Please shop in our gift store for all your needs for gradu-

ation, wedding, benei mitzva and general Judaic gifts. The sales allow us to help BEKI with many projects to enhance the synagogue.

Sisterhood and Hadassah will have a joint meeting on Sunday April 21 at 2 p.m. at BEKI featuring speaker Joshua Sayles, Assistant Director of Anti Defamation League.

Sisterhood is selling yellow candles to commemorate Yom Hashoah, which is April 7. Candles are \$6 each, with proceeds going toward the Holocaust Memorial in New Haven.

Torah Fund – April 2013

Thank you to everyone who very generously responded to the recent Torah Fund appeal letter. All funds go directly to support the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) and its schools: Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies and Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies.

From time immemorial, music has been integral to Jewish worship and the role of hazzan central to Jewish liturgy. The H.L. Miller Cantorial School at JTS and The College of Jewish Music offers baccalaureate through doctoral degrees to men & women training for the cantorate and preparing for careers as composers and teachers of Jewish sacred music.

You can continue to support the Torah Fund by purchasing cards for all occasions that are only \$4 each, including the stamp, and are very beautiful. Please call Barbara Cushen at (203) 407-0314 and your card will be sent out promptly.

Thank you,
Barbara Cushen
Torah Fund Chair for BEKI Sisterhood

News

Now Hear This

A chart showing the enhanced amplification zones in the sanctuary is posted in the sanctuary just inside the entry.

Building Codes

The old building access and alarm codes were deactivated. If you are

currently using the old code or do not know which code you have, contact the BEKI office office@beki.org (203) 389-2108 x14.

Lead On

BEKI is looking for new leadership ideas, energy, expertise, and commitment. If you would like to take on a

leadership role, please send me an email president@beki.org or give me a call (203) 397-3046 and let me know what area(s) you're interested in. Of course, if you'd rather be a worker bee, there's always room in the hive for that, too. – Carole Bass, president

Shabbatot (Saturdays)

דרשנים

Darshan in April & May

Darshan –noun, plural dar·sha·nim. Judaism. a preacher or teacher of Aggada or Halakha in a synagogue.

Rabbi Tilsen has invited the following speakers to serve as guest Darshan in the coming weeks.



Murray Levine

Rabbi Murray Levine will serve as darshan on April 6, parashat Shemini. Rabbi Levine is celebrating the 72nd anniversary of his becoming a bar mitzva.

Helene Sapadin will serve as darshanit on April 20, parashiyot Aharei Mot – Qedoshim. Helene is a faculty member of the BEKI Religious School.



Helene Sapadin

Sophia Colodner, bat mitzva, will serve as darshanit on Shabbat morning May 11, parashat BeMidbar

Ben Sauberman, bar mitzva, will serve as darshan on Shabbat morning May 25, parashat BeHa'alotekha

Shabbat Shalom Torah Study

The Shabbat Shalom Torah Study meets every other Saturday morning at 10:45 in the office

and is an ideal setting for veteran and novice shul-goers alike to explore the scriptural readings and liturgy of the day in a supportive setting.

Expertly led by Steven Fraade, with Rabbi Alan Lovins, Rabbi Murray Levine, Nadav Sela, David Kuperstock, Isaiah Cooper, Rabbi Eric Silver and others, the Shabbat Shalom Torah Study is a nurturing exploration of practice and theory presented in a participatory, non-threatening and multi-generational setting. Many members who take advantage of this unique offering feel a deeper sense of awe born of increased understanding and appreciation



Steven Fraade



Alan Lovins



Nadav Sela



David Kuperstock

of the Torah reading, Haftara (Prophetic reading) and liturgy.

The program often focuses on the scriptural readings, but also addresses the prayer liturgy and other topics related to the liturgical calendar, scriptural readings or current issues of concern.

Everyone is welcome to participate regardless of religious status or background. It is suitable for mature, or at least well-behaved, youth along with adults.

Mondays

Rashi Study Group: Shoftim

Each Monday morning from 7:45 to 8:30 adults meet in the Library Chapel to read Rashi's commentary

on the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible). The Rashi Study Group (RSG) is studying the Book of Shoftim (Judges). Characters in the narrative include the Prophet Deborah, General Baraq, Warlord Yiftah, Mrs. Manoah, and Samson and Delila. It is possible to join the study group for a single meeting or to begin at any time. Knowledge of Hebrew is not necessary. Rashi purported to explain the peshat of the text, i.e., the meaning in its historical, literary and linguistic context. Visitors and new participants



Eric Silver



Jon-Jay Tilsen

Continued on **Page 7**

Adult Studies

Continued from Page 6

are welcome. Hebrew and English texts are available. The RSG meets immediately following the 7 a.m. shaharit service. On Monday May 27, Memorial Day, the Study Group will meet after the 9 a.m. service, that is, from 9:45 to 10:30.

With Jon-Jay Tilsen.

Tuesdays

Hebrew (עברית)

New sections may open this season. To register for the next session, contact Peggy at office@beki.org.

Wednesdays

Hebrew Word of the Week

The Wednesday morning service (shaharit) features a 180-second “Hebrew word of the Week” to promote the learning of Hebrew. The Hebrew language is highly structured. Most words are based on three-letter roots, and are made with a limited set of verb or noun forms. By learning a few dozen roots and a small set of word-forms, it is possible to roughly translate Hebrew words isolated from any context, something less often possible in English. The Word of the Week often relates to the weekly scriptural readings, enhancing personal study

and public Torah discussion.

Rabbis’ Study Group

Wednesdays with Murray is a weekly study group exclusively for rabbis, facilitated by Rabbi Murray Levine. The Wednesday study group affords local rabbis an opportunity to pursue their own talmud torah (Torah study) in a “safe” setting and with opportunities to learn from each other’s experience and insight. The study group meets Wednesday mornings in the Rosenkrantz Family Library. For more information, call Rabbi Murray Levine at (203) 397-2513.

Thursdays

Mini Morning Learning Service

The Thursday morning services are supplemented with commentary and teaching relating to the history, themes, choreography and language of the daily morning service. Shaharit service is from 8:15 to 9:15 on Thursdays; on other weekdays, the service begins at 7 a.m.

Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group

The Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group meets weekly on Thursdays during the lunch hour (12:30 to 1:30). The Group has met weekly since 1999. For some

participants, this is their first direct experience with Talmud text; for others, it is a continuation of a long journey.

The Group focuses on the issues raised in the Talmud, with less attention to the technical aspects of the text. Knowledge of Hebrew or Aramaic is helpful but not required.

The Talmud, based on an oral text, has no beginning or end. One can begin study at any point; now is the best time. The Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group meets in BEKI’s Rosenkrantz Family Library. For information, contact Isaiah Cooper at his law office icooper@cooperlaw.net.

Hebrew: Modern and Prayerbook Hebrew

See description, above, under “Tuesdays”

Every Day

Divrei Torah on the Web

A collection of Divrei Torah (Torah commentaries) and essays by members and Rabbi Tilsen is posted on BEKI’s website under “Adult Studies” and “Meet Rabbi Tilsen.”



Isaiah Cooper



JBL
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Kadimaniks Maya Kostolitz, Sophia Colodner, and Arielle Lavi brandish cookies after loading up dozens of grocery bags at the Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen in February (with Lisa Stanger).

Kadima Update

This winter, the 5th-8th graders have been busy, busy, busy. In December, we made delicious latkes at our Hanuka party. In January, we baked brownies for the Super Bowl Deli Box fundraiser. And in February, we got our hands sticky making hamantaschen at the Kadima Purim Party. (Seeing a pattern here?) Non-food-related activities have included a wonderfully productive Leadership Meeting, a Steel Band Concert on a snowy MLK Day, and Laser Tag at CTSportsplex. Kadimaniks also joined friends from all over Connecticut and Western Massachusetts for the annual Kadima Overnight, this year at Prime Club in Wallingford, where they did some indoor rock-climbing. Plus, each month, we've also gotten together for a Shabbat Hangout at BEKI. Does the fun ever end?

Answer: No. On April 7, we're meeting up with our USY counterparts for a Dodgeball Tournament at Ezra Academy, and on April 13, we're taking our Shabbat Hangout one step further – or rather, several steps further – by morphing it into a Shabbat Hike to the top of West Rock Ridge. Anyone who is sick of winter and has a half-decent pair of sneakers is welcome to join us.

Let's you think that Kadima is all fun-and-games, we've been active in the community, as well. Each month, Kadimaniks have committed to loading up grocery bags to distribute at New Haven's Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen, and in March, we helped the Jewish Family Service assemble over 200 Passover Baskets at the JCC. (Full disclosure: We had some fun at these activities, as well.)

Although Kadima is officially for 5th-8th graders, each spring, we hold a few events for 4th graders. On April 7,

Kadima is hosting a 4th Grader Bowling Event at Amity Family Bowl in Woodbridge. It's our way of welcoming all the 4th graders and their parents to Kadima.

Curious about Kadima? Check out our website – bekibjkadima.blogspot.com – where you'll find information on membership, our upcoming events, photos, and the latest Kadima news. Our group operates through BEKI and B'nai Jacob, but we welcome kids from throughout the Jewish community. Membership in Kadima helps to fund our events and activities, so please join to support what we do! Feel free to contact me with any questions at bekibjkadima@gmail.com.

– Steve Werlin

BEKI-BJ USY

Youth in grades 8-12 are invited to join us on Tuesday April 9 at Froyo World (46 High St. in New Haven) for frozen yogurt and a showing of "Admission" (PG-13) at the Criterion Theater (86 Temple St.) Pick up is at the Criterion. Times and prices are to be announced. The date is subject to change. Members only. Also upcoming:

Services at B'nai Jacob on April 6 at 9:30 a.m.

Dodgeball event at the JCC on April 7 from 4-5 p.m. (and stay after with Kadima from 5-7 p.m.)

"Spread the Word Dinner Party" at the Benson-Tilsen home following 6 p.m. services on April 12. RSVPs are due by April 8. Email mirbenson@aol.com or phone (203) 389-6137. Pick up is at 10 p.m. Members only.

Spring Convention at the Holiday Inn in North Haven, on April 19-22. Details at <http://www.hanefesh.org/events/spring-convention-2013>. Scholarship application deadline March 22. Members only.



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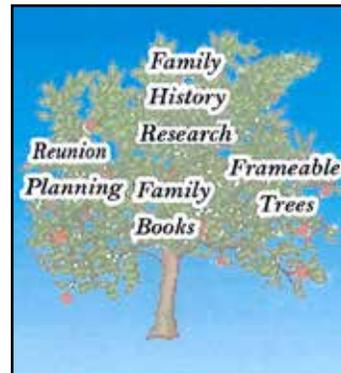
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- To Becky & C.J. May with sympathy on the passing of Edie Seashore by Jonathan Freiman
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- To Becky & C.J. May with sympathy on the passing of Edie Seashore by Roya Hakakian & Ramin Ahmadi
- To Becky & C.J. May with sympathy on the passing of Edie Seashore by Steve & Rachel Wizner

Synagogue Fund (minimum \$10) to support synagogue operations

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- Angel Luque & Sonia Moscoso-Luque

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- For "Abraham's Tent" by Anonymous
- To Donna Levine in gratitude by Jimmy Shure

BEKI Religious School

- To Becky & C.J. May with sympathy on the passing of Edie Seashore by Ina Silverman & Jay Sokolow
- To Ina Silverman & Jay Sokolow with sympathy on the passing of Robert Silverman by the Lew family

Qiddush Committee

- To Roz Ben-Chitrit in honor of her milestone birthday by the Lew family

The Harold & Arthur Ratner Memorial Fund

- In memory of Charles & Etta Miller by Julian & Susan Miller
- In memory of her parents Etta & Charles Miller by Mikki Ratner
- In memory of Max Bronfin by Mikki Ratner

Yahrzeit Fund (\$5 minimum) to support synagogue operations

- In memory of Louis Ginzberg by Barbara Greenberg
- In memory of her parents Harry & Lucille Winters by Martha Winters
- In memory of James Barnett by Caroline Barnett
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- In memory of Ronda Bromberg by Debbie & Lou Siegel
- In memory of Rose Witten by Marvin & Susan Witten
- In memory of loved ones by Howard Miller
- In memory of Norma Gerken by Ann & Don Green
- In memory of Morris Baer by Irving Baer
- In memory of Anna Hoffman by Bea Sherman
- In memory of Abraham Epstein by Kranie & Earl Baker
- In memory of Philip Abramowitz by Marcia & John Gell
- In memory of Shirley Rudof by Steve & Joanne Rudof
- In memory of Saul "Sunny" Hennes by Sheila Dubak
- In memory of Max Gad by Martin & Lana Gad
- In memory of Harry A. Jacobson by Rebecca, Susan & Stuart Jacobson
- In memory of her grandparents Anna & William Berman by Sherry Kent
- In memory of her uncle Irving Berman by Sherry Kent
- In memory of Mae Goldberg by Dan Goldberg
- In memory of Michael "Mickey" Glaser by Harriet Glaser
- In memory of Moses Henken by Gladys Lipkin
- In memory of Dr. Samuel B. Henken by Gladys Lipkin
- In memory of Kitty Greenberg by Irving Greenberg
- In memory of Kate Rochlin by Kranie & Earl Baker
- In memory of Moe Epstein by Kranie & Earl Baker
- In memory of Faye Hankin by William Hankin

Answers, advice and helpful household hints

Dear Rabbi,
I grew up in the synagogue and my family has a long history at the shul. But my children go to another synagogue and the truth is that I don't really attend except for Yom Kippur, Yizkor and when I'm invited, and even then I don't always go. Should I just go along with my children?

Signed, Past Perfect

Dear Perfect,

Your historic connection to the synagogue is to be honored and maintained. You may rightly experience a sense of continuity, accomplishment and pride in your long historical connection to the synagogue. This is the synagogue of Rabbi Klein and Mr. Friedman, as well as other distinguished rabbis and leaders. Children's whims come and go. They may have trivial reasons for attending elsewhere, and in any case, the reasons are theirs, not yours. Your membership at BEKI shows your commitment to community and religious stability, as opposed to being blown by the latest spiritual winds. Let your children come to shul with you at BEKI; as the Good Book says, "Honor your Father and Mother."

Dear Rabbi,
I grew up in an older, larger synagogue, which I like and still attend. But my children for some reason I can't explain go to BEKI, and that is where my grandchildren go. Should I come to BEKI, too?

Signed, Future Feature

Dear Future,

There is nothing more important than being together with your children and grandchildren, and for that reason alone you should join and attend BEKI. You are a source of religious continuity and moderation in your family, and one of the best ways to reinforce that and influence your children and grandchildren is to attend synagogue with them. Surely family unity is more important than matters of style – too much or too little Hebrew, services too long or too short. The children are our future, and you need to be there for them and with them. As stated in the midrash, "Our children are our assurance for the future." See you at BEKI.

Dear Rabbi,
I've moved. I'm now almost 45 minutes from the synagogue. Although I have a lot of friends there, the truth is that I'm rarely going to go the distance. There are several other synagogues closer, and though they are different, they are all good enough for me. Any problem if I go?

Signed, Too Far

Dear Far Out Member,

Despite our diasporas, the most recent of which lasted 2,000 years, the Jewish People always kept Jerusalem in our hearts as the center of our world. In the same way, your lifetime of memories and deep psychological associations with BEKI are an essential part of your personality and spiritual make-up. Your friends are here, familiar faces and favorite melodies are here, your memories are here. This is the synagogue of Rabbi Klein and Mr. Friedman, and a host of distinguished members and rabbis over the years. In this day and age, we can afford the luxury of choosing a synagogue based on its "personality," its teachings, ideas, programs and quality of community, not by which is most "conveniently" located. Did you go to the college nearest you, and if you needed special medical care would you just pick the nearest doctor, or would you go to the best? BEKI is a regional institution, with members from 23 different Connecticut municipalities, from Stamford to West Hartford, as well as several cities out of state. We live in a connected world where Shanghai is just a Twitter away. Even if you come only once in a while, you will be proud to keep up your membership and proud to say you are a BEKI member, and when you do come you'll be glad you did. See you at BEKI.

Dear Rabbi,
I am an almost life-long Connecticut resident, but am new to New Haven. I still have my membership in Congregation XXXXX, where I grew up. The rabbi married us, buried my parents, and bar mitzvaed our children. We like the congregation and the rabbi. It's a schlep but we can still go there for the holidays and occa-

Continued on **Page 13**

Dear Rabbi

Continued from **Page 12**

sional other dates. I don't mind being the only member of our synagogue in the area. Isn't that good enough?

Signed, Keeping the Ties

Dear Tied Down,

It is lovely that you have nice memories of your old congregation, but by moving you have demonstrated that in your heart you were really ready to move on. You are now part of a local community and that means supporting its merchants and institutions. The value of your house is tied to the success of the neighborhood, and that means invest-

ing in its institutions. BEKI is a neighborhood institution – two-thirds of our members live in the City of New Haven, and most of those in the Westville, Beaver Hill and Edgewood neighborhoods. Your sentimental attitude toward your old synagogue can interfere with forming new attachments in the place you actually live in now, and for that reason it is time to let yourself grow new roots. Like a kid at camp or teen at college, you have to let yourself separate and fully experience your new environment. Welcome to BEKI.



FROM PESAH TO SHAVUOT

Sefira – Counting the Omer

At the second Seder (Tuesday night March 26), we began daily sefirat ha-omer (counting of the omer), a counting of days to Shavuot, the next major festival. The counting, preferably done each night for 49 nights, is an expression of eager anticipation, commemorating the period of expectation and preparation we experienced in the Exodus from Egypt until the revelation at Sinai.

The simple home ceremony is printed in most siddurim (prayer books), including Sim Shalom, immediately after the weekday evening service. While it is a mitzva prescribed for adults, sefirat ha-omer can also be a fun, artistic and joyous ritual for families with children.

In the days before printed calendars, calendar watches and daily newspapers (and way before iPhones and

Droids), the sefira served to keep the liturgical calendar of the Jewish People synchronized, no simple accomplishment, given the dispersion and isolation of much of the community. The term omer refers to the measure (one handful) of grain that was used to create a physical relic of the counting. With a physical reminder, even illiterate people could do a recount in case they forgot the day's number.

Families with young children may use this opportunity to help their children understand and experience anticipation, planning, counting and hope.

*Teach us to number our days,
that we may attain a heart of
wisdom – Psalm 90:12*

Yom HaShoah: Holocaust Remembrance Day

We join in observing the official Israeli day of remembrance of the

destruction of European Jewry and the global nightmare of the Holocaust on Sunday April 7.

Yom HaZikaron: Israel Memorial Day

Israel's Day of Remembrance for Israeli Fallen Soldiers and Victims of Hostile Attack is observed on Monday April 15, and is recognized liturgically in our morning and afternoon services.

LaG BeOmer

Attend BEKI's Practically Annual LaG BeOmer Kumsitz Campfire Sing-along, on Motse'ei Shabbat (Saturday Night) April 27, from 8:30 to 10, at Andy & Monica's Residence (indoors in case of rain, sans campfire), 145 Cleveland Road in New Haven. Free Parking. Directions from BEKI: Go south about a mile and look for campfire.

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From Pesah to Shavuot

Continued from Page 13

Bring your musical instruments, Hebrew and Yiddish and other Jewish songs and songsheets, a blanket or chair to sit on – or just come. Gathering at 8:30; havdala at 8:36 p.m. sharp; fire starts after havdala.

This Singalong is made possible with the support of the Morris & Sara Oppenheim Endowment for Sacred Music at Beth El-Keser Israel and by Andy & Monica. The event is free and all are welcome. For more info contact office@beki.org (203) 389-2108 x14 or visit us at www.beki.org.

Yom HaAtzmaut: Israel Independence Day

Israel's Independence Day, 5 Iyar, is observed on Tuesday April 16 and is recognized liturgically in our morning and afternoon services that day. The day commemorates the Israeli Declaration of Independence on that date in 1948. Like the Fast of Esther and Purim, Sukkot and Shemini Atseret, and perhaps like Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, the holiday is observed as half of a pair of days that emphasize different aspects of a shared historical episode or spiritual journey.

Shavuot Two-Day Festival: The Jewish Hajj

The Festival of Shavuot ("Weeks"), one of the three major pilgrimage festivals, celebrates the anniversary of the Giving of the Torah at Sinai some 3,325 years ago. The word hag (pilgrimage festival) is known widely by its Arabic cognate, hajj (which,

for Muslims, means pilgrimage to Mecca). The Torah commands, "Three times a year – on the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the Feast of Weeks, and on the Feast of Booths – all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place that He will choose. They shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed, but each with his own gift, according to the blessing that the Lord your God has bestowed upon you" (Deut. 16:16-17).

Shavuot comes at the culmination of the counting of seven weeks from Pesah, and will be a major observance at BEKI this summer. Just as we look forward to important events in our personal lives, so too our ancestors enthusiastically and devoutly anticipated the event at Sinai. By participating in BEKI's Shavuot observance, we re-enact the extraordinary experience of our ancestors and show our own enthusiasm for receiving Torah.

Tiqun Leil Shavuot

Our annual Tiqun Leil Shavuot Night of Study takes place on the first night of Shavuot, Tuesday May 14. Dairy and pareve refreshments will be served. That means cheesecake.

Candle lighting is at 7:44 p.m. The evening begins with the Minha Afternoon Service, from 7:45 to 8 in the George G. Posener Daily Chapel. A shiur will begin at 8 p.m.

The brief Festival Evening service, from 9:15 to 9:35, will be followed by refreshments and additional presentations.

Shiurim will be presented late into the evening,

Shavuot Mornings

*Yizkor Memorial Service
Book of Ruth*

The Shavuot First Day Festival Shaharit Morning Service begins at 9:15 on Wednesday May 15. The service includes the full recitation of Hallel. The afternoon and evening services begin at 5:45. Candle lighting Wednesday night is at 8:45 or later.

The Shavuot Second Day Morning service begins at 9:15 on Thursday May 16 (Memorial Day). The Festival service includes a Shaharit morning service, Hallel (Psalms of praise), a Torah reading and Haftara. Following the Haftara (prophetic reading), the Yizkor Memorial Service is held. The Yizkor memorial service is one of four such services during the year that help us recognize our feelings of loss, which are sometimes especially intense during the Festival season, and to honor the memories of our loved ones.

Following Yizkor, the Book of Ruth is read to a uniquely beautiful and ancient melody based on the same system of ta'amei hamiqra ("trope") found in most of the Hebrew Bible. Then the Festival Musaf additional service is recited.

Some congregants may leave during qiddush for a hike to the top of West Rock. Weather permitting, bring appropriate shoes and leave with friends from the lobby.

The Festival Minha service is held in the George G. Posener Daily Chapel from 5:45 to 6:05 p.m.



April 2013

21 Nisan 5773 - 20 Iyar 5773

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Passover VII Exodus, Numbers II Samuel Office Closed/Passover 9:15am Festival Service 7:30pm USY Weekly Program 21 Nisan/6 L'Omer	2 Passover VIII (Yizkor) Deuteronomy, Numbers Isaiah Office Closed/Passover 9:15am Festival Service 22 Nisan/7 L'Omer	3 8:30am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program 23 Nisan/8 L'Omer	4 12:30pm Talmud Study Group 24 Nisan/9 L'Omer	5 7:03 Candle Lighting 25 Nisan/10 L'Omer	6 Shemini Darshan: Rabbi Murray Levine 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Shabbat Shalom Torah Study Qiddush: Levine 5:45pm Minha 26 Nisan/11 L'Omer
7 Yom Hashoah 9:00am Religious School 1:30pm Kadima 4th-Grader Bowling (off-site) 4:00pm USY Dodgeball event at JCC 5:00pm Kadima Dodgeball event at JCC 27 Nisan/12 L'Omer	8 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am 55+ Yoga Hour 1:00pm NCJW Meeting 7:30pm Executive Board Meeting (off-site) 7:30pm USY Religious Activity 28 Nisan/13 L'Omer	9 29 Nisan/14 L'Omer	10 Rosh Hodesh I Numbers 8:30am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00 pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program 30 Nisan/15 L'Omer	11 Rosh Hodesh II Numbers 21:30pm Talmud Study Group 1 Iyar/16 L'Omer	12 7:10pm Candle Lighting USY Shabbat Dinner (off-site/members only) 2 Iyar/17 L'Omer	13 Tazria Metzora 10:45am Children's Programs Qiddush: TBA 5:45pm Minha 3 Iyar/18 L'Omer
14 9:00am Religious School 1:00pm Pomegranate Guild 4 Iyar/19 L'Omer	15 Yom Hazikaron 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am 55+ Yoga Hour 7:30pm USY Communications Activity 5 Iyar/20 L'Omer	16 Yom Ha'Atzmaut Deuteronomy Isaiah 6 Iyar/21 L'Omer	17 8:30am Rabbi's Study Group 9:30am NHBOR meeting 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program 7 Iyar/22 L'Omer	18 12:30pm Talmud Study Group 8 Iyar/23 L'Omer	19 7:18pm Candle Lighting 9 Iyar/24 L'Omer	20 Ahare Mot Kedoshim Amos 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Shabbat Shalom Torah Study Qiddush: Rosenberg & Zahler-Samuel 5:45pm Minha 10 Iyar/25 L'Omer
21 9:00am Religious School 2:00pm Sisterhood/Hadassah program featuring Joshua Sayles, Assistant Director of the ADL 11 Iyar/26 L'Omer	22 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am 55+ Yoga Hour 7:30pm General Board Meeting 7:30pm USY Social Action/Tikkum Olam Activity 12 Iyar/27 L'Omer	23 13 Iyar/28 L'Omer	24 Pesach Sheini 8:30am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program 14 Iyar/29 L'Omer	25 12:30pm Talmud Study Group 15 Iyar/30 L'Omer	26 7:25 Candle Lighting ?Special Needs Shabbat Dinner w/JTS 16 Iyar/31 L'Omer	27 Emor 10:45am Children's Programs Qiddush: Nash 5:45pm Minha 7:30pm Lag B'Omer Campfire Singalong (off-site) 17 Iyar/32 L'Omer
28 Lag B'Omer 9:00am Religious School 18 Iyar/33 L'Omer	29 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am 55+ Yoga Hour 7:30pm USY Israeli Affairs Activity 19 Iyar/34 L'Omer	30 20 Iyar/35 L'Omer	<h3>Mark Your Calendar</h3> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 48%;"> <p>April 6: Darshan, Rabbi Murray Levine</p> <p>April 6: BEKI-BJ USY Shabbat Program</p> <p>April 7: Yom HaShoah</p> <p>April 7: BEKI-BJ USY Program</p> <p>April 12: BEKI-BJ USY Shabbat Dinner Program</p> </div> <div style="width: 48%;"> <p>April 15: Yom HaZikaron</p> <p>April 16: Yom HaAtzmaut</p> <p>April 20: Darshanit, Helene Sapadin</p> <p>April 19-22: USY Spring Convention</p> <p>April 27: LaG BeOmer Kumsitz Campfire</p> </div> </div>			

Service Times

Sundays	Mondays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays	Fridays	Saturdays
9 a.m. Shaharit 5:45 p.m. Minha-Maariv	7 a.m. Shaharit 5:45 p.m. Minha-Maariv	7 a.m. Shaharit 5:45 p.m. Minha-Maariv	7 a.m. Shaharit 5:45 p.m. Minha-Maariv	8:15 a.m. Shaharit 5:45 p.m. Minha-Maariv	7 a.m. Shaharit 6 p.m. Minha-Maariv	9:15 a.m. Shaharit 5:45 p.m. Minha



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