

BEKI Bulletin

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December 2001 Vol. 7 Issue 12

ק"ק בית אל-כתר ישראל

Kislev 5762

Hanuka & Shabbat candles

Hanuka candles are lit beginning on Sunday night 9 December. On Friday night 14 December, the Hanuka candles should be lit at about 4:00, before the Shabbat candles are lit.

The Shabbat candle lighting times listed in every issue of the BEKI Bulletin on the calendar page, and listed at our website at www.beki.org/schedule.html, represent the exact lighting time within one minute for the location of the synagogue. Anyone within a several mile radius of BEKI can use the time table with confidence. The candle lighting times listed are about 18 minutes before the "sunset" as it is defined in Jewish law. It is permitted to light candles before the listed lighting time, but according to Jewish law candles should not be lit after sunset. The 18 minutes serve as a "margin of error" and are a way for us to show our enthusiasm for Shabbat by welcoming it in a timely, but not hurried, fashion.

The *berakhot* (blessings) for lighting the Hanuka candles are printed in *Siddur Sim Shalom* (the prayer book we use at BEKI) and most other prayerbooks.

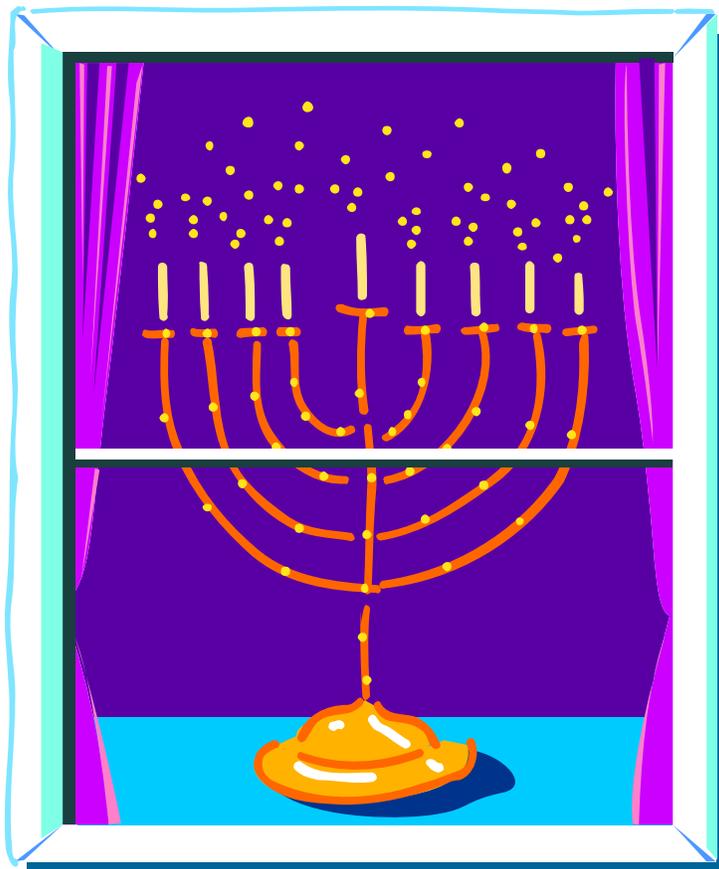
Recordings of the blessings may be available on BEKI's website at www.beki.org/audio.html. On each night of Hanuka, two *berakhot* are recited before lighting the candles. On the first night, the *she-hehiyanu* blessing is added.

One purpose of Shabbat candles is to enable us

to see during the darkness of night. This was especially important in times and places where artificial lighting was uncommon and people generally were in the dark once night fell. It is permitted to use the Shabbat candles for general lighting, but one should avoid using them for reading or for other uses where one might normally make some adjustment in their brightness or location.

The purpose of Hanuka candles is to "publicize the miracle" of Hanuka. One should *not* use

the Hanuka candles for any other purpose. For this reason, a "*shamash*" or "utility" candle is added, so that if we need to see in the room with the *hanukiya* (*hanuka menorah*), we can use the light of the *shamash*.



Email Update

Please note that Rabbi Tilsen's email address is jjtilsen@beki.org. If you would like to be added to the list of members who receive occasional email messages of lifecycle and other events, please let Rabbi Tilsen know.

Our office (beki@snet.net) will also be very happy to learn of your new or revised email address.

No Parking

Members and visitors are advised that parking is prohibited at all times on the East side of Harrison Street as indicated by the "No Parking" signs. Parking is usually available across Harrison Street, and ample parking is available in the BEKI lot at the rear of the building. When driving in the BEKI parking lot, please observe the five miles-per-hour speed limit.

Daily Services

Daily services at BEKI provide an opportunity to learn, pray, reflect, transition and center one's own spiritual life. Services provide a context for fulfilling the *mitzva* (religious obligation) of daily worship. Services are held every weekday morning and evening. See the calendar for a schedule. During this month, there will be a special need for more participants on Tuesday mornings (7:00a), Thursday mornings (8:15a) and Sunday nights (5:45p).

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, donations, or special activities, call the Synagogue office (203) 389-2108, or write to 85 Harrison Street, New Haven, CT 06515-1724 or email: jjtilsen@beki.org

or see our web page: www.beki.org

For information about advertising, call the synagogue office. Deadline for submission of ads or articles is the 1st of the month preceding publication.

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BEKI-Bulletin

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A Message from Rabbi Tilsen & Dear Rabbi
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Animal Rights & Wrongs

“What did the animals do to deserve destruction?” This question, raised by our students when discussing the Noah story, is also asked in the Zohar (Perush HaSulam I:68a), the 12th century work on Jewish mysticism (Qabbala).

The Torah text explains that humanity had become corrupt and irredeemably sinful. But why should the innocent animals be washed away with the guilty people?

The question assumes that there is some value to the life of the *individual* animal. After all, Noah rescues at least two of each kind of animal, insuring *species* survival.

It may be that in ancient times the Torah was suggesting that species survival is more fundamental than individual survival for animals. It may also be that the Torah is alerting us to the fact that animal survival (or destruction) depends on the deeds of humans. The fate of the animals is in our hands and is our responsibility. Indeed, in the Jonah story, when Jonah is reluctant to urge the people of Nineveh to repent, the Holy One notes that the animals would suffer along with the people: “And should not I care about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not yet know their right hand from their left, and many beasts as well!” (Jonah 4:11).

The value of the life of the individual animal is recognized in Torah tradition. That value is implied in the Zohar’s question and codified in laws that prohibit cruelty to animals (*tsa’ar ba’alei hayim*) and wanton destruction (*bal tashhit*). There is reason to believe that these prohibitions are for the benefit of the animal as well as for that of humanity.

(The Zohar’s answer to the question, “What did the animals do to deserve destruction,” is that – I’m not making this up – they committed “bestiality,” i.e., mating across species, a sin the natural consequences of which would compromise the species’ prospect for survival!)

In our day, advocates for “Animal Rights” have taken extreme measures to protest and protect against the exploitation of animals. The sentiment behind this is noble, and represents valid Torah values.

Beyond the value of the animal’s life and well-being in and of itself, and an independent being in God’s creation, we believe that the way we view and treat animals affects the way we treat other people. Cruelty toward animals is often a precursor to cruelty toward people.

In our panoply of values, we might in general rank our values as human life first, then animal species survival, then individual animal survival. The weight of law and tradition, I would assert, supports such an order.

Some have complained that “Animal Rights” activists are at best “ahead of their time” or at worst placing animal “rights” ahead of human life. How can they worry about a few laboratory rabbits or a bunch of uncomfortable farm chickens while children (and adults) are literally starving and dying from easily preventable and treatable conditions? Would not their efforts be better toward promoting human welfare first? While in Cali-

fornia a \$40,000 reward was offered to find the person who killed a dog, there is no reward for missing children in California, let alone concern for those in distant lands.



Rabbi Tilsen

An old Dave Berg cartoon, “Mutt’s the Word,” depicts a man highly annoyed at the neighbor’s dog’s barking. “Bark! Bark! Bark! That’s all that dog does all day. He’s driving me out of my skull. I’d like to get some arsenic and poison that dog.”

“Poison the dog?” his wife scolds him. “How inhuman. How beastly! A dog is one of God’s creations, a thing of beauty, a friend to Man, and you want to poison him. You’re out and out vicious.”

“I’m sorry,” responds the husband, “I forgot you’re an animal lover. But that mutt is still annoying. What about the dog’s owner? Why doesn’t he shut him up? I’d like to get a gun and kill that guy!”

The wife concludes, “That’s better!”

Continued on page 6

A Message from Education Director Dr. Lauren Kempton

I decided this month to institute a new format for my Director's Message. In the first part I will report on the activities of the BEKI Religious School. In the second part I will be more reflective concerning my work and studies for BEKI.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL: Our Religious School classes are progressing well. Our addition of the three Hebrew teachers for Grades Six and Seven is working nicely. We are still trying



Dr. Lauren Kempton

to implement a class in Torah studies within our time constraints. We would like to express a special thank-you to Helene and Molly Sapadin for their book donations to the BEKI Religious School Library. Hattie McMillian spent three days organizing and

cataloging all the books. Lauri Lowell helped organize the teaching library materials for lending to parents. Brian Karsif marshaled the volunteer forces to move up sofas and chairs to lend the Library/Lounge a friendly environment.

The BEKI Religious School Library is looking for a name. Any suggestions? We will be announcing the date of the official dedication. Applications are now being accepted for Camp Ramah for next summer. If you would like to learn more please stop in the Religious School office.

INTERFAITH JOURNEY: As I departed for Rome, I kept in my mind a thought: "Days are scrolls: write on them what you want to be remembered." I went to Rome with a Jewish eye for what I could learn and then impart to my BEKI Religious School students. My trip was sponsored by the Center for Christian Jewish Understanding, which is based at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, and of which I am a member of the Board of Directors. CCJU was founded ten years ago by Dr. Anthony Cernera, President of Sacred Heart University, Rabbi Jack Bemperaud and Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz. The mission of our delegation was to continue to work toward improved Christian-Jewish dialogue and to deliver to Pope John Paul II a bronze bust of the Pope done by Marc Mellon; a Jewish sculptor from Ridgefield, Connecticut. We were guided in our journey by *Dabru Emet*, "To Speak the Truth,"

a formal statement on Christian-Jewish relations issued in 2000 by 170 leading Jewish academic and religious figures.

The delegation visited Assisi, the Roman Forum, the Vatican, Basilica de San Pietro, the Rome Synagogue, the Trastevere (old Jewish Ghetto), the Vatican Museum, Villa Borghese and the Sistine Chapel. We met several times with Cardinal Kasper from the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. Together we explored Christian-Jewish relations and the premise that dialogue is for the sake of truth. We agreed that respectful discussion rooted in care would lead us into deeper expressions of our own and others' traditions and beliefs.

A highlight of the pilgrimage was a public audience with Pope John Paul II. It was our privilege to be on the dais with him as he addressed the crowd of 40,000 in St. Peter's Square in seven languages. When Cardinal Casper announced the presence of groups from the United States, a group from England began singing softly, "God Bless America." The voices of those singing swelled and reverber-



Lauren Kempton and Pope John Paul II

A Message from Education Director Dr. Lauren Kempton

ated throughout St. Peter's Square and the Vatican. We were deeply touched. Following this, we had a private audience with the Pope. The next day we were escorted to the Pope's private chapel by the Swiss Guards and spent one hour there with Father Rudnik, the priest, artisan, and creator of the mosaics of the chapel. The artists in our delegation likened this experience to touring the Sistine chapel with Michelangelo. The chapel walls and ceiling are composed of 5 million tiles in 600 colors. One wall depicts the history of the Papacy, one the martyrs of Nazism, Communism and Islam. The main wall is four biblical scenes: Noah and the Ark, Abraham and Isaac, Jonah and the whale, and Moses parting the Red Sea. The colors were so vibrant, I felt myself drawn into the remembrance of these stories of our people.

We then visited the residence of Ambassador Lamdan, the Israeli Ambassador to the Vatican. He strongly denounced the assassination of Minister Rehavam Ze'evi and asked of us as Americans, what would be the United States retaliation for the

death of a Cabinet Minister? We heatedly discussed the US request for Israel to pull its troops out of Bethlehem in support of the US efforts to build a coalition against terrorism. We also discussed possible solutions to improve dialogue between the Palestinians and the Israelis, such as revised textbooks for Palestinian school children. From there we met the newly appointed US Ambassador to the Holy See, Ambassador Nicholson.

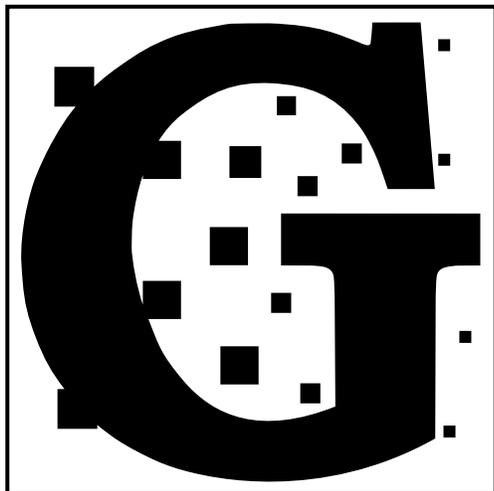
Our visit to the Jewish Ghetto and the Rome Synagogue was a reminder of the constant vigilance we must keep as a Jewish people. As we took photos, two bullet-proof vested Italian police approached us and reminded us that in 1982 the PLO had gunned down children leaving shul on Sukkot at that site. They asked us to enter the synagogue. The synagogues in Rome and throughout Italy are all Orthodox. All Jews pay one fee, which maintains the synagogues (this topic needs further exploring).

Leaving Rome I thought of how the pilgrimage affected me: historically, artistically and spiritually. Jews have been in Rome since 181 BCE, sent by Judah Maccabee. Yet, today there are only 35,000 Jews in the entire country. Over 80% of Italian Jews were, however, able to survive the Shoah even during the anti-Semitic papacy of Pope Pius XII.

Artistically, I was awed by the sculptures, tapestries, paintings, buildings, and frescoes. The magnificent art is everywhere to be seen in Rome.

And spiritually, because I held to an image of the dove holding an olive branch-soaring over Noah's Ark on the mosaic wall of the Pope's Chapel and I hoped that small dove did indeed depict both peace and the covenant we so need today.

KULANU AND SAUL'S CIRCLE: We are planning a series of workshops for Saul's Circle that will be held at Fellowship Place in New Haven. The first was to focus on the Tenets of Islam as they compare to Judaism. We are gearing up for a Hanuka workshop and party. We are also instituting an Advisory Board for both groups. If you are interested, please call Dr. Kempton at BEKI.



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Jewish Family Education

All community members are reminded to watch the lobby display for flyers and project sheets related to Jewish Family Education Programs at BEKI. BEKI Religious School families will receive these sheets in children's mailboxes / folders, so please be on the lookout for them! Parents should note that these programs are an extension of our school curriculum, and are designed for family participation. Studies show that Jewish education is most successful when families share these types of experiences. (BEKI Jewish Family Education programs are partially funded by Kesher L'Mishpacha, through a grant from the Jewish Foundation and the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven.)

Please call Betsy Rosenberg at BEKI ext. 25, for more information.

Upcoming Dates to Note:

2 December - Hanuka Program, BEKI Social Hall, 10:30a - 11:45a "Focus to the East" will look at the concept of 're-dedication', and how we can be linked to Jerusalem (and Israel) through this idea.

Week of 6 January 2002 - Pre-program sheets available, for the Tu BeShevat program on 27 January 2002. Save the date.

*Note from Jewish Family Educator Betsy Rosenberg: I would like to offer a personal thank you to Sherry Rothman, Roz Ben-Chitrit, Lauren Kempton, Mary Ellen Mack, the BEKI Board, and Rabbi Tilsen. Their assistance in the transitions, and support of our "JFE" programs, has been priceless! Thank you, also, to those who attend our committee meetings, and to those who have pledged support for our future programs. Toda Rabba!

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Message from Rabbi Tilsen

Continued from page 3

As far as it goes, this criticism is valid. But the same reasoning should apply to all other causes. How can people advocate for the "right" to have a new sports stadium, to drive gas-guzzlers, to own and carry guns, when "children (and adults) are literally starving." It seems strange to condemn Animal Rights activists for promoting a value less important than human life while others are directing even greater resources to promote causes that are (arguably) unworthy, trivial or, at least, less important.

The values of human life and "Animal Rights" are not mutually exclusive; rather, they are complementary. I believe that human life and rights should rightly be among our highest values and should have priority in our limited activism. But I would not condemn Animal Rights activists for promoting a cause that is not self-serving and that aims to elevate the ethical quality of our society, insofar as their advocacy and activism is lawful and not directly at the expense of human welfare or dignity.

Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi taught, in the second century CE in Israel: "Be as attentive to a minor mitzva as to a major one, for you do not know the reward for each of the mitzvot" (Pirke Avot 2:1).

See BEKI's website www.beki.org for more *Writings of Rabbi Tilsen*.

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LifeCycle

With Sorrow We Note the Passing of

Mania Reichentahl
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Andrew DeMatteo, brother of Elaine Olmer-Luther
Harold "Hal" Tyson, son of Adele Tyson, brother of Liann (& Paul) Cyr
Minnie Lebowsky
Yetta Engelhardt, grandmother of Donald (& Ann) Green

May the Almighty Comfort All Who Mourn

Additional Death Notices and Yahrzeit Observances listed by name and date can be found on BEKI's website www.beki.org in the [LifeCycle](#) section.

Mazal Tov to

Ellen Jawitz & Robert Leikind

Herbert Etkind on the bat mitzva observance of his granddaughter **Mollie Etkind**

Evelyn Benson on the publication of her book *As we see Ourselves: Jewish Women in Nursing*

BEKI Welcomes New Members, New Supporters and their Families

The following individuals and families have formally joined as members or have otherwise made a commitment to provide ongoing support to the synagogue community. Additional new members and supporters will be listed as their applications are processed.

- Howard Sugarmann
- Evelyn Benson
- Armand & Cecilia Moscovici
- Hattie McMillian
- Geoffrey & Renee Hartman
- James Spielman
- Debby & Stephen Joy, Olivia and Julia
- Lynn Coville
- Tammy Baitch & Samuel Katz
- Betty Leiter
- Celia Shultz & David Driscoll
- Elisabeth Haas

Bar Mitzva in December

Sam Weiser, son of Shoshana Zax & John Weiser, will participate in and lead services as a bar mitzva on Shabbat 7-8 December 2001. Sam is a graduate of BEKI's Religious School and of the Benei Mitzva Program.



Sam Weiser

Keeping in Touch

New address for Robert & Anne Johnston, Sandy & Isaac: 18 Efrata, Apt. 1, 93384 Jerusalem, Israel, phone (972)-2-672-4083, email anne@beki.org or Robert.Johnston@yale.edu.

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Torah Readers Wanted

Dr. Paula Hyman (387-3100) is coordinating Shabbat Morning Torah Readings for Bereshit (Genesis). If you would like to read Torah on a Shabbat morning in December, or would like to learn how to read Torah, please call Paula at your earliest opportunity. If you would like to plan to read Torah on a Shabbat afternoon, Monday morning or after 1 January 2002, please contact Rabbi Tilsen (389-2108 x10 jjtilsen@beki.org).

Rosenkrantz Family Library News

New in BEKI's Rosenkrantz Family Library:

Rashbam's Commentary on Exodus: An Annotated Translation, Martin Lockshin, editor and translator

Greek in Jewish Palestine and Hellenism in Jewish Palestine, Saul Lieberman

Proceedings of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Conservative Movement 1986-1990, The Rabbinical Assembly

Mahzor Hadesh Yameinu: Renew Our Days, Ronald Aigen

See "[Library](#)" on BEKI's web site for information on book and audio collections and other Library information.



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933-2886	Thurs.	8:00-7:00
	Sat.	8:00-3:00

USY: United Synagogue Youth

Lights, camera, action! On Motse'ei Shabbat (Saturday night) 15 December 2001, many eager USYers will depart on a Limousine Scavenger Hunt. The scavenger hunt will include four teams of USYers, each with an adult chaperone, cruising around a city to find clues which will lead them to the final prize! These clues, planted throughout the area, will help the teams go from place to place, collecting all their evidence on a video camera with which each team will be equipped.

The first team to make it back to the starting point wins! A Hanuka party will follow the scavenger hunt. The Limo event costs \$20 and it will take place from 7:00p to 11:30p. If you are interested in attending this second annual Hanuka bash, please RSVP to Rachel Schulman at 389-0873 or Lv4Nsync57@aol.com by 5 December. Join us for this night of fun, snacking, meeting new people and hanging out with friends. Hope to see you there!

You must be a paid member of BEKI-BJ USY to participate in this event.

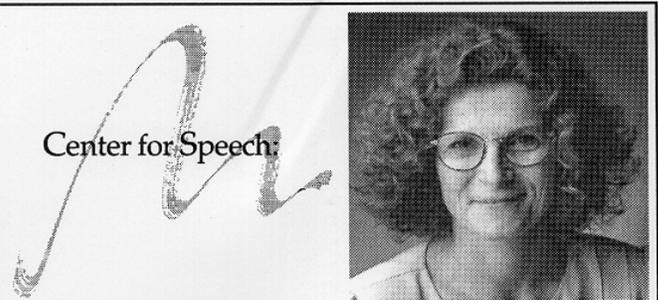
To join the chapter, please contact Membership-Kadima VP Ellie Reis at 387-2641 or Clem1010@aol.com. Membership is \$25.

Also, keep a hungry eye out for USY Deli Boxes, our Annual January fundraiser for our Youth Commission! You will get an order form in the mail.

JKO

Singers Wanted

Those interested in exploring the formation of a singing group at BEKI are invited to contact Dan Michael (467-2544) for more information.



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BEKI Events

December - Kislev - Tevet

5762

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						16 Kislev 1
Shaharit=Morning Minha =Afternoon Maariv=Evening SSLM=Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan BRS=BEKI Religious School	BEKI phone numbers: (203) 389-2108 Fax (203) 389-5899 Mary Ellen-Office x14 Religious School x13 Rabbi x10 Dr. Lauren Kempton x 13	Office Hours: Mon 9a-12 & 1p-3p Tue by appt. only Wed 10a-12 & 1p-6p Thu 9a-12 & 1p-3p Fri 9a-2p	Office: beki@snet.net Rabbi: jjtilsen@beki.org Religious School/Education Director: lkempton@beki.org website: www:beki.org			9:15a Shaharit <i>Children's Havura Siddur Presentation</i> 10:45a Children's Programs 10:45a SSLM 4:10p Minha, Avot, Maariv, Havdala
17 Kislev 2	18 Kislev 3	19 Kislev 4	20 Kislev 5	21 Kislev 6	22 Kislev 7	23 Kislev 8
9:00a Shaharit 9:00a Religious School 9:30a Congr. Brunch 5:45p Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Group 5:45p Maariv 7:45p General Board	7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 4:00p Religious School 4:15p Benei Mitzva Pgm 5:45p Maariv	8:15a Shaharit 5:45p Maariv 8:00p A.A.	7:00a Shaharit 4:06p Candles 6:00p Maariv	9:15a Shaharit <i>Sam Weiser Bar Mitzva</i> 10:45a Children's Programs 10:45a Cosmic Conversations 4:10p Minha, Avot, Maariv, Havdala
24 Kislev 9	25 Kislev 10	26 Kislev 11	27 Kislev 12	28 Kislev 13	29 Kislev 14	30 Kislev 15
<i>Erev Hanuka</i>	<i>Hanuka</i>	<i>Hanuka</i>	<i>Hanuka</i>	<i>Hanuka</i>	<i>Hanuka</i>	<i>Hanuka / Rosh Hodesh</i>
9:00a Shaharit 9:00a Religious School 5:45p Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Group 9:30a Calendar Meeting 5:45p Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 4:00p Religious School 4:15p Benei Mitzva Pgm 5:45p Maariv	8:15a Shaharit 5:45p Maariv 8:00p A.A.	7:00a Shaharit 4:06p Candles (Light Hanuka Candles 1st) 6:00p Maariv 6:30p Hanuka Dinner	9:15a Shaharit 10:45a Children's Programs 10:45a SSLM 4:15p Minha, Avot, Maariv, Havdala
1 Tevet 16	2 Tevet 17	3 Tevet 18	4 Tevet 19	5 Tevet 20	6 Tevet 21	7 Tevet 22
<i>Hanuka</i>	<i>Hanuka</i>					
9:00a Shaharit 9:00a Religious School 5:45p Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Grp 5:45p Maariv 7:45p Executive Board	7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 4:00p Religious School 4:15p Benei Mitzva Pgm 5:45p Maariv	9:00a Shaharit 5:45p Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 4:09p Candles 6:00p Maariv 6:30p 20s/30s Havura Group Dinner	9:15a Shaharit <i>Kiddush Sponsor: George Posener</i> 10:45a Children's Programs 10:45a Cosmic Conversations 1:00p-2:30p Book Group 4:15p Minha, Avot, Maariv, Havdala
8 Tevet 23	9 Tevet 24	10 Tevet 25	11 Tevet 26	12 Tevet 27	13 Tevet 28	14 Tevet 29
9:00a Shaharit No Religious School 5:45p Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Grp 5:45p Maariv	<i>Christmas</i>	7:00a Shaharit No Religious School or Benei Mitzva Pgm 5:45p Maariv	8:15a Shaharit 5:45p Maariv 8:00p A.A.	7:00a Shaharit 4:13p Candles 6:00p Maariv	9:15a Shaharit 10:45a Children's Programs 10:45a SSLM 4:15p Minha, Avot, Maariv, Havdala
15 Tevet 30	16 Tevet 31					
9:00a Shaharit No Religious School 5:45p Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Grp 5:45p Maariv					

Shabbat Hanuka Dinner

There will be an Erev Shabbat Hanuka dinner and celebration on Friday 14 December at 6:30p following Qabbalat Shabbat services. Dinner will include salad, roast chicken, latkes and applesauce, cooked vegetables with apple strudel and coffee/tea for dessert. A vegetarian option is also available - it will be an eggplant dish in place of the chicken. Children will feast on chicken nuggets, latkes and the rest. There will be entertainment as well. *Advance reservations are required.* Dinner is \$12.50 for adults and \$7.50 for children under 12.

RB-C



Weekday morning services at BEKI

Begin your day in fellowship and with a spiritual direction. Monday morning services (7:00a to 7:45a) includes a brief Torah service, and is followed by the [Rashi Study Group](#) (7:45a to 8:30a). Tuesday mornings (7:00a to 7:30a) are attended by a unique mix of people. Wednesday mornings (7:00a to 7:30a) features "Friends of Betty Levy." Thursday mornings (8:15a to 9:00a) are ideal for people who either may not wish to rise earlier or who bring children to school, and includes a brief Torah service. Friday mornings (7:00a to 7:30a) presents an ideal setting for someone wishing to help develop a cadre of dedicated daily *daveners*. Regular participants in these services are always glad to welcome additional worshippers. Call our office at 389-2108 x14 or see www.beki.org/schedule.html for a complete schedule.

Posener Birthday Qiddush

George Posener and friends invite the community to join in marking George's milestone birthday on Shabbat day 22 December 2001. Following the morning service, George will provide a qiddush meal to celebrate this day.



George Posener

20s-30s Havura Dinner

The BEKI 20s-30s Havura (Friendship Circle) for single people and couples in their 20s and 30s will meet for a Shabbat evening dinner on Friday 21 December. For information and reservations, contact Val Sandler at 777-4784 or Valerie.sandler@yale.edu. *Advance reservations are required to attend the dinner.* Programs are also scheduled for 11 January 2002 & 8 February 2002.

Shabbat Mincha Afternoon & Maariv Evening & Havdala on Winter Schedule

Shabbat afternoon and Saturday evening services follow a winter schedule from November through March. Services on *Shabbat* (Saturday) afternoon begin about 20 minutes before sunset. As the time varies, please check the calendar in this Bulletin or www.beki.org/schedule.html for exact times for each week.

Where There's A Will...

Tradition recommends that one bequeath at least 10% of their estate to Tzedaka (charity) such as to Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel. Financial advisers and estate lawyers have shown how such gifts can be increased through careful planning that takes tax policies into account. Willing a proportion of one's estate to the Congregation is a concrete way to demonstrate commitment to Judaism and model a moral example for others.

For many, particularly senior citizens, it is possible to earn a guaranteed 8% or more annual return for life on a secured investment and help the Synagogue at the same time. With as little as \$10,000 (sometimes even less) you can make a charitable remainder gift that allows you and your spouse or other loved one to receive a guaranteed annual interest payment for the rest of your life, all or much of which is tax-free.

If you would like more information on how to make a bequest or a charitable remainder gift for the benefit of BEKI, contact your own attorney or financial consultant, or call estate planning attorney Donna Levine at 787-1633 (sdsij@aol.com) for a confidential consultation. Attorney Levine will donate her time to help you establish a will or trust for the benefit of the Congregation. You may also contact Rabbi Tilsen at 389-2108 x10 (jjtilsen@beki.org) for more information on bequests and endowment opportunities, or call David Tein at The Jewish Foundation at 387-2424 ext. 304 (dtein@jewishnewhaven.org) for a confidential discussion.

BEKI can also accept stocks and securities as gifts during a donor's lifetime or as part of an estate. Please speak with your financial advisor or broker about the potential tax advantages of giving stock and securities. To arrange a transfer, call Mary Ellen Mack at 389-2108 x14 (beki@snet.net).

Buying Books?

Buying books, music, software, or electronics on the internet? BEKI earns a small referral fee for purchases made from Amazon.com when the purchaser accesses Amazon from the Amazon icon at the bottom of www.beki.org/links.html. A list of recommended books is available at www.beki.org/books.html. There is no added charge to the purchaser.

Tax Reminder

Taxpayers are reminded that synagogue dues, pledges and contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. For many people it is advantageous to pay dues, pledges and contributions before the end of the tax year (for most people 31 December). It is also helpful to BEKI to receive your payment at an early date. Please consult your tax advisor for more information.

Take Care of Your Cemetery Need

The time to take care of your cemetery need is before there is a need. Now is the perfect time to select your sites...while there is a good selection. BEKI cemeteries are located in Hamden and West Haven, within minutes of the synagogue and with easy access to main thoroughfares. Member discounts are available.

We can help you select a site and discuss payment terms. Call the BEKI Cemetery Association office today at 389-2108 x57 and arrange a meeting of one of the officers of the cemetery association. For directions to the cemeteries see our website at www.beki.org under "Directions."

Torah for the Hungry Mind Adult Studies

Neviim Rishonim: Book of Joshua Study Group

The Neviim Rishonim: Book of Joshua Study Group will meet from 6:00p to 7:30p on Sundays 2, 9, and 16 December. All are welcome. For more information contact Nadav Sela at nadav.sela@yale.edu (624-2035).

Teaching the Shoah

Coming soon, Dr. Lauren Kempton will teach a class on the *Shoah* (Holocaust). The course will meet on Sunday nights from 7:30p to 9:00p beginning 6 January 2002.

Rashi Study Group

After more than seven years of weekly study, the Rashi Study Group has completed the reading of *Bereshit* (Genesis) and *Shemot* (Exodus) with Rashi's commentary. The Group is now beginning *VaYiqra* (Leviticus). All are welcome to join for one or more meetings. Knowledge of English, Hebrew, Aramaic and Old French is helpful but not required. The Rashi Study Group meets on Monday mornings from 7:45a to 8:30a, following Shaharit morning services.

Pirqe Avot

The Pirqe Avot – Ethics of our Sages Study Session is held every Shabbat afternoon before the evening service from November through March. This half-hour of study gives a taste of the wisdom of our sages and an opportunity to discuss the application of the teachings to our lives. Pirqe Avot is a section of the Mishna, the law compendium compiled in the second century CE by Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. Unlike the rest of the Mishna, Avot does not contain legal material, but rather records the wise sayings and provocative insights of sages spanning several centuries. The study session lasts 30 to 40 minutes. As the time of the class varies from week to week, please consult the calendar when you plan to attend.

Talmud Sanhedrin

A weekly Talmud study group meets on Thurs-
December 2001

days at a downtown professional office. If you are interested in participating please contact Marc Schwartz at mschwartzmd@hotmail.com or 562-9873.

Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan

The Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan for adults meets in BEKI's Rosenkrantz Family Library every second Shabbat (Saturday) morning year-round from 10:45a to noon. The SSLM meets on the 1st, 15th and 29th of this month. Everyone is welcome to participate regardless of religious status or background.

Reading Group

If you would like to be notified by e-mail about the plans and schedule of the BEKI book discussion group that starts this fall, please send an e-mail to marc.schwartz@healthcalls.com. The group meets in the Rosenkrantz Family Library on Shabbat afternoon 22 December at 1:00p to 2:30p (after qiddush) under the auspices of the Education Committee and the Library Committee.

Books that illuminate some aspect of the Jewish experience and lend themselves to interesting discussion have been selected.

Upcoming selections include Mimi Sheraton, *Bialy Eaters – The Story of a Bread and a Lost World* (22 December); Chaim Potok, *The Chosen* (19 January 2002); Neil Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* (23 February); Shulamith Hareven, *Thirst: The Desert Trilogy* (23 March); Sam G. Freedman, *Jew vs. Jew* (20 April); Stephen G. Bloom, *Postville: A Clash of Cultures in Heartland America* (1 June).

Information on purchasing these books, and an updated list, can be found at www.beki.org/books.html.

For further information, contact Helen Rosenberg at 389-9594.

Darshanim in December

A special guest will serve as darshan on Shabbat morning 29 December.

Sam Weiser will serve as darshan (Torah Commentator) on Shabbat morning 8 December (*parashat VaYeshev*) as a bar mitzva. BEKI Bulletin 14

Kulanu Program

Kulanu, BEKI's outreach program for adults with developmental disabilities, will begin its fourth year this autumn. For information on Kulanu, please contact BEKI's Education Director Dr. Lauren Kempton at 389-2108 x33 or Lkempton@beki.org. Kulanu is funded by the [David & Lillian Levine Endowment for People with Special Needs](#) at BEKI and by the Congregation.

Cosmic Discussion Group Meeting

The Shabbat morning Discussion Group for young adults in grades 6 to 8, [Cosmic Conversations](#), meets every two weeks. In addition, the Children's Shabbat Havura for preschoolers and their adults, the K-2 Kehila for kids in grades K-2, and the Junior Congregation for elementary age children continue to meet every Shabbat.

Donate with Visa or Mastercard

Internet users can pay commitments and make donations to BEKI using a VISA or Mastercard. The AOL Foundation pays for the usual credit-card fees that would normally be paid by the merchant (in this case, BEKI), so BEKI receives 100% of your donation. You can find the easy-to-use links at www.beki.org/donate.html.

Memorial Plaques Available

The Memorial plaques displayed at BEKI serve as a reminder and memorial to departed loved ones. Plaques are available for \$360 by calling Mary Ellen Mack at 389-2108 x14. Prepayment reserves a space and a plaque.

KISS "Snow Days - No School Days" Program

Elementary schools close for scheduled "teacher training" and "parent conference" days as well as unplanned "snow days." Many families need placement for their children on such days. BEKI has a comfortable children's room and library, conveniently located on a State snow emergency route, with ample and convenient parking.

The BEKI "Snow Days - No School Days" program provides an educational and recreational Judaic activity day on scheduled school-closed days when businesses are normally open, and on unplanned "snow days" for the New Haven Public Schools and Ezra Academy. Space is limited. The Program will be held regardless of weather conditions. The Program does not guarantee that streets, sidewalks or the BEKI driveway will be passable. Only the parents determine whether they can safely transport their children to and from the program in inclement weather. Parents will have a "hot line" phone number for last minute information on program plans.

The "Snow Days - No School Days" program will use the Claire Goodwin Youth Room and BEKI's Rosenkrantz Library. Participants bring their own dairy lunch. Snacks are provided. Activities are lead by Sybil Richards and Lauren Kempton, as well as others under her supervision.

The participation fee is \$20 per day or part thereof per child; a "subscriber" discount is available. Pre-payment reserves a space; otherwise, spaces are available on a first-come-first-served basis, with priority to BEKI members. Payment is required before service. Reservations are non-transferable (except between siblings). A pre-payment of \$20 reserves a space for the first New Haven or Ezra "Snow Day."

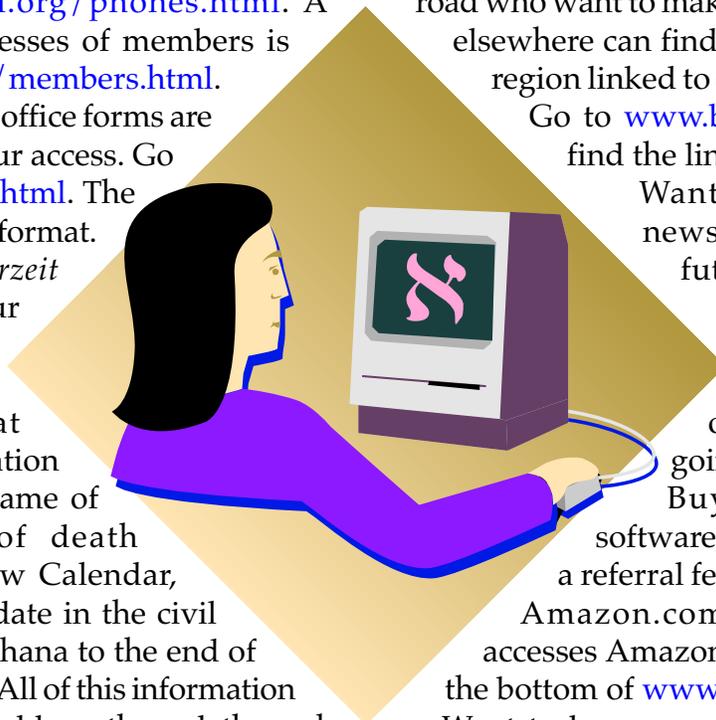
For a list of scheduled school closing dates, or to register, or for more information, please call Lauren Kempton, 389-2108 x33 or download a form at www.beki.org/forms.html.

BEKI Online

Need to contact someone at BEKI? A phone directory of staff members and program chairs is available at www.beki.org/phones.html. A directory of email addresses of members is available www.beki.org/members.html.

Need a form? Selected office forms are on the website for 24-hour access. Go to www.beki.org/forms.html. The forms are in Acrobat .pdf format.

Need to know a *yahrzeit* (death anniversary)? Our *yahrzeit* records are now available at www.beki.org at "yahrzeits." The information available includes the name of the deceased, date of death according to the Hebrew Calendar, and the corresponding date in the civil calendar from Rosh HaShana to the end of the current Hebrew year. All of this information and more is already available on the web through public sources. There is no private information displayed.



Want to pray elsewhere? BEKI members on the road who want to make a daily or Shabbat service elsewhere can find a minyan schedule of our region linked to our Service Schedule page. Go to www.beki.org/schedule.html to find the link.

Want to preview the next newsletter? Past, current and future editions of the BEKI Bulletin are available at www.beki.org/newsindex.html. Find out what happened or is going to happen.

Buying books, music, software, or electronics? BEKI earns a referral fee for purchases made from Amazon.com when the purchaser accesses Amazon from the Amazon icon at the bottom of www.beki.org/links.html.

Want to learn more about Judaism or about BEKI and its programs? A wealth of information is available at BEKI's website. Go explore!

Planning a bar- or bat-mitzva at BEKI?

Parents planning a bar- or bat-mitzva observance at BEKI during the next three years are urged to call the BEKI office (389-2108 x14 or beki@snet.net) to reserve a date and to request a copy of the "Guide to Benei Mitzva Observance at Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel, third edition." The "Guide" is also available as a PDF document at www.beki.org/bmitzva.pdf. For more information on the Benei Mitzva program, contact Liora Lew at 389-1048 lioralew@aol.com.

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