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# BEKI

Congregation  
Beth El-Keser Israel

## bulletin

February 2009

Shevat-Adar 5769

Vol. 15 Issue 2

# JEWISH WOMEN

## REDEFINING COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR ALL

BEKI will hold several programs in February and March dedicated to "Jewish Women: Redefining Community and Social Justice for All," as part of the ongoing Women of Vision series initiated last year with funding from the Women

of Vision Society of the Jewish Foundation and private donors. All these events are free and open to the community.

Several programs will lead up to a public address by Ruth Messinger, president of the American Jewish World

Service (AJWS), which will take place on Wednesday, March 4 at 7:30 p.m. at the Jewish Community Center. BEKI is co-host and co-sponsor of Messinger's

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## Jewish Theological Seminary Shabbat

Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) of America Rabbinical School student Catharine Clark will visit BEKI on Shabbat Feb. 27-28. She will present a devar Torah on Shabbat morning, visit with adults, and interact with youth.

Catharine grew up in Ohio and graduated from Ohio State University. She received an MA in Israeli archaeology in 1996 and a JD in 2000, both from the University of Chicago. For a year while Catharine lived in Chicago, she worked for Planned Parenthood. Following law school, Catharine clerked for two years in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana. She also practiced law at Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP in Manhattan for 4 years. Catharine is currently the Shomrei Haaretz Environmental Program rabbinic intern at the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs and is teaching benei mitzva students at The Society for the Advancement of Judaism. Last summer, she worked as a contract attorney, as a make-ends-meet experience, but her true calling is the

rabbinate. Catharine is a member of the Hadar Minyan leadership team, serves on the Hazon Food Conference Executive Committee and enjoys hosting Shabbat meals.

Several BEKI members and rabbis are graduates of JTS, and still others have taught there, or are parents or children of JTS students. The Seminary includes an undergraduate college, a graduate school, a graduate school of education, a cantorial school, a rabbinical school, and other programs. Currently JTS students include Shai Silverman (son of Jay Sokolow & Ina Silverman) and Sandy Johnston (son of Robert & Anne Johnston), both of whom are enrolled in the Albert A. List College of Jewish Studies.

Torah Cards (see Sisterhood listing this issue) support the Seminary, as do your direct donations. For more information on the Seminary and its programs, see [www.jtsa.edu](http://www.jtsa.edu).

Following the Shabbat morning service, there will be a Qiddush sponsored by BEKI Friends of JTS.

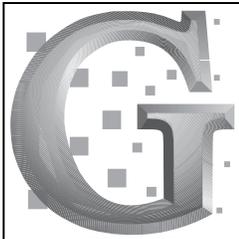


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**BEKI Bulletin**

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](mailto:jjtilsen@beki.org)
- Visit our web page: [www.beki.org](http://www.beki.org)

For advertising information, call the synagogue office.

Deadline for submission of ads or articles is the first of the month preceding publication.

Annual subscription is \$36

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A Message from Rabbi Tilsen & Dear Rabbi  
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**BEKI Funds Intact**

BEKI assets managed by the Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven, and other assets managed directly by the synagogue, were not invested with Madoff Securities.

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Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven



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## Sisterhood/Torah Fund

Thank you to everyone who very generously responded to the 2008 Torah Fund Appeal letter. All funds went directly to support The Jewish Theological Seminary.

An easy and effortless way to also support the JTS is to purchase cards for all occasions – birthdays, bar/bat mitzvahs, get well, sympathy – without leaving your home. Just call Barbara Cushen, 407-0314 and your card goes right out for only \$4, which includes postage.

Barbara Cushen  
Torah Fund Chair

### In Memory of:

- Edward Opton to Diana Friedman Opton from Barbara Cushen, Stanley Saxe, Sid & Donna Levine, Inge & Lenny Fish, Adele Tyson, the BEKI Hesed Committee, Sisterhood Women
- Irving Smirnoff to Milton Smirnoff from Harriet & Noel Barstein, Ruth & Sam Ralowitz, Adele Tyson, the BEKI Hesed Committee
- Robert Augello to Mrs. Robert Augello from Anna Goldberg
- On the yahrzeit of Stanley Watsky to Dr. Kalman Watsky from Louis Petrillo

### Get Well to:

- Helen Miller from Violet & Charlie Ludwig

- Raina Sotsky from the BEKI Hesed Committee

### Mazel Tov to:

- Cyd & Mark Oppenheimer on the birth of Elisabeth Adelaide from the BEKI Hesed Committee

### In Honor of:

- George G. Posener's 98<sup>th</sup> Birthday from Mikki Ratner, Barbara Cushen, Stanley Saxe, Adele Tyson, Violet & Charlie Ludwig, Inge & Lenny Fish, the BEKI Hesed Committee, Sisterhood



Soup kitchen volunteers

# Jewish Women: Redefining Community and Social Justice for All



<p><b>Paula Hyman</b> Professor of History Yale University Saturday Feb. 7 morning</p> <p>Paula Hyman will present a d'var Torah on Judaism, social justice, and the role of women activists</p> <p><i>Children's morning programs will also involve this theme</i></p>	<p><b>Lina Zerbarini</b> Rabbi, Joseph Slifka Center for Jewish Life at Yale Saturday Feb. 7 1:00 pm</p> <p>Rabbi Lina Zerbarini will speak after qiddush on her work coordinating service learning trips to Latin America</p>	<p><b>Cynthia Beth Rubin</b> Artist and Social Activist Sunday Feb. 8 6:30 pm</p> <p>Cynthia Beth Rubin will speak on her AJWS work in Senegal with sustainability</p> <p><i>Joined by Jeanie Graustein, Archdiocese of Hartford, on the environment and social justice</i></p>	<p><b>Ruth Messinger</b> President, American Jewish World Service Wednesday March 4 7:30 pm</p> <p>Ruth Messinger will speak on "Jews as Global Citizens: Our Responsibility in the World," at the JCC</p> <p><i>Makom, and the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven, cosponsors</i></p>	<p><b>Lauri J Lowell</b> Director, Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater New Haven Sunday March 29 9:45 am</p> <p>Lauri J. Lowell will speak on "Social Justice on the Home Front: From Protest to Policy"</p> <p><i>This program will take place during a kosher dairy brunch</i></p>
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### All Programs are Free and Open to the Public

February 7, 8, and March 29 programs at Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel, 85 Harrison Street, New Haven, CT  
For directions, see the BEKI web site, [www.beki.org](http://www.beki.org), or call BEKI at (203)389-2108  
Ruth Messinger's March 4 program at the JCC 360 Amity Road, Woodbridge, CT



Ruth Messinger photo © Chrystie Sherman

## Jewish Women

Continued from Page 1

visit to New Haven. An additional program will take place later in March, after Messinger's talk.

Messinger will speak on "Jews as Global Citizens: Our Responsibility in the World." After serving as Manhattan borough president from 1990 to 1998, Messinger became CEO of AJWS, an international aid organization inspired by Judaism's imperative to pursue justice. AJWS works to alleviate poverty, hunger and disease among the people of the developing world, regardless of race, religion or nationality.

The first weekend of February at BEKI will feature three notable events in this series.

On Shabbat morning, Feb. 7, Yale Professor Paula Hyman will present a devar Torah on Judaism, social justice, and the role of the Jewish women activists.

Rabbi Lina Zerbarini, director of operations at Joseph Slifka Center for Jewish Life at Yale will speak after qiddush that same day on why she has taken Yale students to Latin America to volunteer during their Spring Break and what they accomplished and learned during their stay. These trips were coordinated through the AJWS and other non-profit organizations.

Cynthia Beth Rubin, artist and social activist, will give a slide presentation at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 8, about her experiences volunteering for three months in Africa with the AJWS. Cynthia's talk will be part of BEKI's observance of Tu B'Shevat, the New Year of the Trees—an appropriate time to focus on the environment and Judaism's dedication to healing the natural world. Cynthia worked with Green Senegal, which promotes sustainable agriculture. She recalls that they "worked in villages that were irrigating huge fields of crops with the same little green watering cans that we get at Home Depot."

The final event in this year's Women of Vision series will be a brunch at BEKI on Sunday, March 29, when Lauri Lowell, director of the Jewish Community Relations Council, will give a talk on her life and work.

## Web Buys

If you purchase from Amazon.com via this link [www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/redirect-home/congregabethelke](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/redirect-home/congregabethelke)) or at [www.beki.org](http://www.beki.org) through the "Amazon" box at the bottom of the page, BEKI receives a small commission on your purchase at no cost to you. You must use these links each time you access the merchant's website in order for BEKI to receive a commission.

# Fruit of the Vine



## Kosher Wine Tasting

*Saturday, Feb. 21  
at 7:30 p.m., \$20 in  
advance, \$25 at the  
door, per person*

Not sure if you prefer an oaky Chardonnay or a fruity Moscato? Interested in the subtle differences among the dry reds? Come to a warm, casual Wine Tasting and sample fine Kosher wines from around the world. When you taste wines side by side, you can really tell them apart and figure out which ones you like best.

This relaxed educational and social event will take place in the upstairs Social Hall. Non-alcoholic beverages and snacks will be provided, too, and all for \$20 per person, in advance, and \$25 at the door.

Participants will have the opportunity to order wines at discount from the vendor in plenty of time for the Passover seders. In fact, in plenty of time for Purim. And of course, Shabbat offers a weekly opportunity to drink a glass of good wine. Wine not?

Oenophiles Roger Colten and Sarah Berry are coordinating this year's Wine Tasting. For more information, call 389-2108 or visit [www.beki.org](http://www.beki.org).

**Barukh Dayan HaEmet**

*With sorrow we note the passing of*

**Irving Smirnoff,**

brother of Milton (& Beatrice) Smirnoff

**Naomi Chernoff,**

daughter of Shulamith Chernoff

**Helen Miller,**

sister-in-law of Rena Miller

**Irving Weinstein**

**Phyllis Rogoff**

*May the Almighty comfort those who mourn*



**Irving Weinstein,  
of blessed memory**

**Mazal Tov to**

• Mary Doyle Fritz & Abe Zuskin on their *nisuin*, marriage under a *huppa*

• Edward Abramowitz & Michelle Rosen (of NJ) on their engagement

**Welcome New Members**

• Marilyn Katz  
<sup>a</sup> Melinda Wright

News

**Letters**

Dear friends at BEKI,

Your cards, calls, contributions and condolences during our time of mourning for our brother Irving Smirnoff are very much appreciated. Your kindness has helped us through a sad period.

Milt & Bea Smirnoff

Dear Rabbi Tilsen,

I am making this gift to BEKI from funds that were sent to me by the Austrian government. These funds are meant to compensate in some way for the losses to my brother and me as a result of my parents' flight from Vienna when the Nazis came to power.

I don't believe that their money belongs to me. I feel that the best possible use for it is to use it to insure the continuation of Jewish life. I am dividing it between Mishkan Israel and BEKI. It is for your Discretionary Fund and being made in memory of

my beloved parents David & Hannah Stahl and in honor of your distinguished leadership of our congregation.

Kol tuv,  
 Nanette Stahl

**“Is it Kiddush Yet?”**

Order your copy or gift copies of *Is it Kiddush Yet?*, a collection of recipes from the BEKI Kiddush Committee. Each book costs \$18. Look for order forms in the mid-month mailing, in the office, on the BEKI website at [www.beki.org/forms.html](http://www.beki.org/forms.html), in the literature rack or by email from Darryl ([kuperst@aol.com](mailto:kuperst@aol.com)).

**Torah Reading Coordinator**

Many thanks to Paula Hyman who coordinated Torah readings for Genesis. Carole Bass is coordinating the readings for the book of Exodus. If you would like to read Torah at BEKI during the next ten weeks, please

contact Carole at [bass.carole@gmail.com](mailto:bass.carole@gmail.com) or (203) 397-3046 or (203) 668-3749. If you would like to learn to read Torah, contact Darryl Kuperstock at [kuperst@aol.com](mailto:kuperst@aol.com) or Jon-Jay Tilsen at [jjtilsen@beki.org](mailto:jjtilsen@beki.org).

**Sisterhood Giftshop**

Open Sundays 11a to 12:15p; By Appointment – Adele 389-9599, Mimi 397-3851; and during office hours (see Peggy or call 389-2108 x14).

**Erev Shira on Shabbat Shira & Tu BiShevat**

Join us on Motse'ei Shabbat (Saturday night) 7 February 2009 from 7p to 9p at the Minsky-Fenick Residence, 56 McKinley Avenue (RSVP 397-3789). Bring your favorite songsheets, musical instruments, and a kosher dessert or drinks to share. This event is supported by the Morris & Sara Oppenheim Fund for Sacred Music at BEKI.

# A Response: On Truth

By Robert Oakes

At Qiddush a while back, following a post-*drash* discussion to which I made a small contribution, a friend commented to the group I was with, “I see Bob is interested in Jewish philosophy.” Somewhat ungraciously, I protested, “But Judaism isn’t about a philosophy; it’s not about an idea; it’s about a story.” Well, there the conversation stopped. Cold.

What I meant was that the story of Adonai entering the life of the earliest tribes of Judea and Israel, and the subsequent divine involvement in their lives (together and apart) is what our scriptures are about. They are not in any way about a philosophy or a doctrine or an ideology. That story, and its formative influence on our lives, and the life of the world in which we live, is what we are about as Jews, as the people of God.

Vain will be the search for a “doctrine of God,” a “doctrine of grace” or a “doctrine of atonement.” The list could go ad infinitum. Just open St. Thomas’ *Summa Theologica*. It’s all there. **Truth**. And it is the whole truth, too, with every “t” crossed and “i” dotted. It is next to impossible for us, as Americans in 2009, not to succumb to the idea that final reality is to be found in abstract concepts, fully reasoned and completely expounded. We not only have St. Thomas to thank for that, but also the great thinkers and philosophers of the past who lived their lives based on this premise, and often gave their lives for it.

Furthermore, we live and breathe the scientific method, crediting only evidence, and not anecdote, and confident that for every question there is an answer. Into the mix should also go the proposition that “the truth shall make you free.”

The problem is, this is completely unscriptural and, so, totally un-Hebraic. Our scriptures maintain that ultimate



Bob Oakes

reality is to be found in the story of God’s engagement with the people Israel. Put another way, if we are to understand the scriptures at all, we must understand that contact with Adonai is made as a people lives its life, in thanksgiving, not as an abstract truth or dogma is apprehended by the human mind.

Our modern minds, however, are conditioned to assume that reality finally lies in the abstract truths we derive from life and history and the witness of faith. That a story holds the meaning to life is as intolerable to us as Israel’s epic was to the people of the ancient Near East for whom it was impossible to believe that the highest god, the ruler of the cosmos, could be inseparably involved in the life of a human, historical people.

But, that is the way it is with the Scriptures. There just is no higher truth or deeper revelation than Israel’s recital of its own history out of its own, culturally conditioned faith. We are, as it were, stuck with that in spite of our purer theological pretensions. (*Our* questions wonder: “Do I believe, or not?” And if so, “What do I believe?” or “What must I believe?” Questions totally foreign to our Biblical writers.) For Adonai is known, from the covenant with Noah forward, as One who is uncompromisingly committed to a human historical community: not on protection of the Divine integrity.

That is why the humblest participant giving thanks today is more closely in touch with the Divine than is the proponent of high theological wisdom. That, finally, is the way Israel’s great epic writers would insist things really are.

Much of this is well conveyed in the old familiar joke about ten Jews gathered at a table who somehow hold eleven opinions. Clearly it is *not* a philosophy, or an ideology, or some abstract truth that keeps our ten Jews together. So what is it? Thousands of years along the road, if agreeing on the truths about life is not what holds us together, what does? Why do we still come and sit? It is the *Story*.



Andy Weinstein

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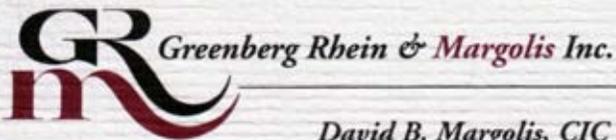
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- Please make checks payable to "Cong. Beth El-Keser Israel"
- Robert & Dianne Golub in support
- Michael Stern & Kathy Rosenbluh in appreciation to BEKI community
- Alan Lovins & Trish Loving in memory of Edward Opton
- Alan Lovins & Trish Loving in memory of Dr. Naomi Chernoff
- Karen & Ira Bloom in memory of Irving Weinstein
- Louis & Lisa Petrillo marking the yahrzeit of Stanley Watsky
- Louis & Lisa Petrillo marking the yahrzeit of Jacob Pepper
- Anita Weinstein and Elaine Weinstein in memory of father Irving Weinstein
- Alan Lovins & Trish Loving celebrating the birth of Elisabeth Oppenheimer

### Qiddush Sponsors (Minimum \$250)

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- Amy Marx & Robert Schonberger
- Friends of Linden Grazier
- Roger Colten & Sarah Berry
- Elayne & Morton Dimenstein
- George G. Posener
- Cary Caldwell & Karen Kassap

### Chai Fund (minimum \$18) to support synagogue operations

- To Matthew Lettick in honor of his Bar Mitzva by Jessey & Joe Palumbo
- To Hans Massaquoi Jr. in honor of his Bar Mitzva by Jessey & Joe Palumbo
- To Aliyah Driesen-Bixby in honor of her Bat Mitzva by Jessey & Joe Palumbo
- To Sophie Rosner in honor of her Bat Mitzva by Jessey & Joe Palumbo
- To Cyd & Mark Oppenheimer in honor of the

birth of Elisabeth Adelaide by Jessey & Joe Palumbo

- To Stephanie & Daniel Jacoby in honor of the birth of David Morris by Jessey & Joe Palumbo
- To Howard Zusman & family with sympathy on the passing of Patricia Zusman by Jessey & Joe Palumbo
- To Elayne & Morton Dimenstein with sympathy on the passing of Carol Tendler by Jessey & Joe Palumbo
- To George G. Posener in honor of his 98<sup>th</sup> birthday by Beatrice S. Gimbel & family
- To George G. Posener in honor of his 98<sup>th</sup> birthday by Evelyn Benson
- To Diana Friedman Opton with sympathy on the passing of Edward Opton by Pete Stein
- To Diana Friedman Opton with sympathy on the passing of Edward Opton by Paula Hyman & Stanley Rosenbaum
- To Diana Friedman Opton with sympathy on the passing of Edward Opton by Helen Rosenberg & Keith Richter
- To Diana Friedman Opton with sympathy on the passing of Edward Opton by Kathryn G. Ross
- To Diana Friedman Opton with sympathy on the passing of Edward Opton by Lillian & Jack Brown
- To Diana Friedman Opton with sympathy on the passing of Edward Opton by Rhoda Sachs Zahler
- To Milton & Bernice Smirnoff with sympathy on the passing of Irving Smirnoff by Joanne Foodim & Rob Forbes
- To Diana Friedman Opton with sympathy on the passing of Edward Opton by Joanne Foodim & Rob Forbes
- To Diana Friedman Opton with sympathy on the passing of Edward Opton by Howard Zusman
- To Diana Friedman Opton

with sympathy on the passing of Edward Opton by Joan & Alan Gelbert

- To Milton & Beatrice Smirnoff with sympathy on the passing of Irving Smirnoff by Doris & David Sagerman
- To Diana Friedman Opton with sympathy on the passing of Edward Opton by Doris & David Sagerman
- To Milton & Bea Smirnoff with sympathy on the passing of Irving Smirnoff by David & Darryl Kuperstock
- To Diana Friedman Opton with sympathy on the passing of Edward Opton by David & Darryl Kuperstock

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

- To Diana Friedman Opton with sympathy on the passing of Edward Opton by Pat Goodwin
- To Charlie & Carrie Schnee & family in honor of the birth of their great-grandson Ethan by Marjorie Simson
- To Milton & Bea Smirnoff with sympathy on the passing of Irving Smirnoff by cousins Margie, Matthew & Jason Wiener
- To Milt & Bea Smirnoff with sympathy on the passing of Irving Smirnoff by Gila Reinstein
- To Milt & Bea Smirnoff with sympathy on the passing of Irving Smirnoff by Violet & Charlie Ludwig
- To Diana Friedman Opton with sympathy on the passing of Edward Opton by Violet & Charlie Ludwig
- In memory of Fred Shure by Gertrude Shure
- In memory of Freda Barson Virshup by Richard & Georgi Virshup
- In memory of Rae Smirnoff by Milton & Beatrice Smirnoff
- In memory of Fred Shure by Betsy Shure Gross, Gertrude Shure & Gary L. Gross
- In memory of Milton Cohen by Doris & Stephen Brody
- In memory of Robert Goodwin by Stacey Goodwin Podell & Jeffrey Podell
- In memory of Pearl Weiner by Stephen & Joanne Rudof
- In memory of Deborah Mendelson by Myra & Andrew Harris
- In memory of Gloria & Jordan Goldberg by Arlene & David Thrope
- In memory of Marjorie Reynolds by Ellen Dixon
- In memory of her mom Shirley L. Charleston by Delci C. Lev
- In memory of Fanny Horlick by Norma Rifkin
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- In memory of Jordan & Belle Goldberg by Richard M. Goldberg
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- In memory of Abraham Goldberg by Ethel Epstein
- In memory of Hyman & Celia Goldberg by Ethel Epstein
- In memory of Ida & Julius Brody by Ethel Epstein

Continued on Page 10

## Contributions (continued)

- In memory of Jacob Pepper by Carol Pepper-Facin
- In memory of Fannie Maeyerson by Helen Elston
- In memory of Jack Nankin by David Nankin
- In memory of Sydney Weinstein by Dan Goldberg
- In memory of Jack Yasgar by Howard Yasgar
- In memory of Kate Herschderfer by Sherman Herschderfer
- In memory of Mary Sagerman by David & Doris Sagerman
- In memory of Louis Israel by Doris & David Sagerman
- In memory of Mildred Israel by Doris & David Sagerman
- In memory of her grandmother Anna Ginzberg by Barbara Supowitz Greenberg
- In memory of Jacob Cohen by Carol J. Cohen
- In memory of Geraldine Linda Lappe by Steven A. Hershman
- In memory of Mollie Fleischner by Sara-Ann & Hillel Auerbach
- In memory of Yosef Benarroch by Gerson & Rachel Benarroch
- In memory of Jack Nankin by Sheldon Nankin
- In memory of Sarah Schnitman by Helene & Ed Vanderhoef
- In memory of Michael & Sarah Franzman by Laurence & Susan Franzman
- In memory of Max Rubenstein by Allan Rubenstein & Carolyn Kone
- In memory of Truda Segal by Saul Bell
- In memory of Bella Bell by Saul Bell
- In memory of Edith Stein by Victor & Susan Stein
- In memory of Louis Friedman by Ralph Friedman
- In memory of Judith Friedman by Ralph Friedman
- In memory of Ida Kantrowitz by Samuel & Harriet Kantrowitz
- In memory of Abraham Goldberg by Fran Goldberg-Cohen
- In memory of loved ones by Allen & Sheila Mushin
- In memory of Sasha Snyder by Irwin & Zelda Snyder
- In memory of Seymour Snyder by Irwin & Zelda Snyder

## SHABBAT SHIRA SING-A-LONG

Motse'ei Shabbat (Saturday night) Feb. 7 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Minsky-Fenick Residence, 56 McKinley Avenue (RSVP 397-3789). Bring song sheets, musical

instruments, and a kosher dessert or drinks to share. This event is supported by the Morris & Sara Oppenheim Fund for Sacred Music at BEKI.

## News

## PURIM IS COMING

This year we will again help you celebrate the Purim mitzva of *mishloach manot* – the sending of gifts – and *matanot la-eyyonim* – presents to the poor – with beautiful BEKI Purim Baskets.

**No worry! No fuss! No shopping!**

Just send in the order forms you will receive in the mail. (Forms are available at [www.beki.org/forms.html](http://www.beki.org/forms.html) and will be on their way via *schlep-post*.) Start making your list. There is enough time to check it twice!

### Purim Baskets

Look for Purim Basket order forms in your mail and in the literature rack in the lobby, or download at [www.beki.org/forms.html](http://www.beki.org/forms.html). Get your order in early.

### BEKI Purim Seuda (Feast)

Tuesday, March 10, 5-8 p.m. (break for 5:45 Minyan).

In the BEKI Upstairs Social Hall. A light dairy dinner will be served; \$13 per adult, \$11 per child (age 3-12); 2 and under, no charge. Preregistration with payment please, by Tuesday March 3.

Highlights: • Purim Spiel: Starring Bruce Altman & Darcy McGraw • Ruth Greenblatt as Cutesie the Clown, with balloon animals • Face-painting with Rachel Sutin •

Special Purim Birkat Hamazon • Purim Songs Sing-a-long with Ada Fenick & Yair Minsky • Contradance! With caller Patricia Campbell • And More

Volunteers! Call Linden Grazier (397-1501, [hearth-keep@aol.com](mailto:hearth-keep@aol.com)), Food Chair, to help with food preparation and serving. Call Jessey Palumbo, Membership Chair, 387-8359, to volunteer to do outreach to, meet & greet new and prospective BEKI members at the Seuda. Call Liora Lew, Decorations Chair, at 389-1048, to assist with decorating. To volunteer for the set-up, registration table, or clean-up committees, call Miriam Benson at 389-6137.

Registration form & check due in BEKI office by Tuesday March 3, 2009. Your prompt registration will be appreciated.

*Shabbatot*

## Darshanim in February

Paula Hyman will serve as darshanit on Shabbat morning Feb. 7, *parashat* BeShelah.

Bob Oakes will serve as darshan on Shabbat morning Feb. 14, *parashat* Yitro.

Rabbi Catharine Clark will serve as darshanit on Jewish Theological Seminary Shabbat morning Feb. 28, *parashat* Teruma

## Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan

The "Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan," which meets every other Saturday morning at 10:45 in the of-



Steven Fraade

ice, is an ideal setting for veteran and novice shul-goers alike to become more comfortable and proficient in the Shaharit (morning) and Torah services in a supportive setting. Expertly led by **Steven Fraade, Rabbi Alan Lovins, Rabbi Murray Levine** and others, the Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan 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 for the services. Everyone is welcome to participate regardless of religious status or background.

## Shabbat Minha Study Break

Each Shabbat afternoon following the Minha service during this winter, there will be a 30-minute study of Maimonides' *Mishne Torah: Laws*

*of Kings and Their Wars*, before the Maariv evening service and havdala. This section from the classic law code, written some 800 years ago, sets forth the constitutional outline of a theoretical future Jewish government, and describes relationships with Christian, Muslim and other governments and individuals. It also describes a mainstream Jewish viewpoint on the notion of messiah. All are welcome.

*Sundays*

## Talmud for Teens with Moshe Meiri

Serious high school students are invited to delve into the depths of Talmud on Sunday mornings with Moshe Meiri on Sunday mornings this winter and spring. For more information, contact Moshe at [moshe@snet.net](mailto:moshe@snet.net).

*Mondays*

## Rashi Study Group

Each Monday morning from 7:45 to 8:30 adults meet in the Library Chapel to read Rashi's commentary on the Torah. 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 are welcome. The Rashi Study Group meets immediately following the 7 a.m. *shaharit* service.

*Occasional Monday Nights*

## New: Book Discussions

Join Bob Oakes with Jon-Jay Tilsen for a conversation about Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel's *God in Search of Man* on Monday, March 2 from 6 to 7:15 p.m. The book is in print and available through the Amazon link at [www.beki.org](http://www.beki.org) or wherever fine books are sold.

*Wednesdays*

## New: Word for the Day

The Wednesday morning service (*shaharit*) now includes a 36-second "Hebrew word for the day" 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 not normally possible in English.

## Rabbis' Study Group

*Wednesdays with Murray* is a weekly study group exclusively for rabbis, facilitated by Rabbi Murray Levine.



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. For more information, call Rabbi Murray Levine at (203) 397-2513.

## New: Mini Maariv Learning Service

The Wednesday evening services during the winter months are supplemented with commentary and teaching relating to the history, themes, choreography and language of the daily evening service. Maariv service is from 5:45 to 6:15 on Wednesdays; on other weekdays, the service ends at 6 p.m.

Continued on **Page 12**

Thursdays

**Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group**

The *Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group* meets weekly on Thursdays during the lunch hour (12:30 to 1:30) at the downtown New Haven professional office of attorney Isaiah Cooper for Talmud study. The Group has met weekly since 1999. For some participants, this is their first direct experience with Talmud text. 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. For location or information, contact Isaiah Cooper at 233.4547 or [icooper@cooperlaw.net](mailto:icooper@cooperlaw.net).

**New: Mini Morning Learning Service**

Thursday morning services during the winter months are supplemented with commentary and teaching relat-

ing to the history, themes, choreography and language of the daily morning service. Shaharit service is from 8:15 to 9 a.m. on Fridays; on other weekdays, the service begins at 7 a.m.

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."

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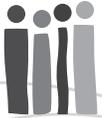
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# GLOSS ON GAZA

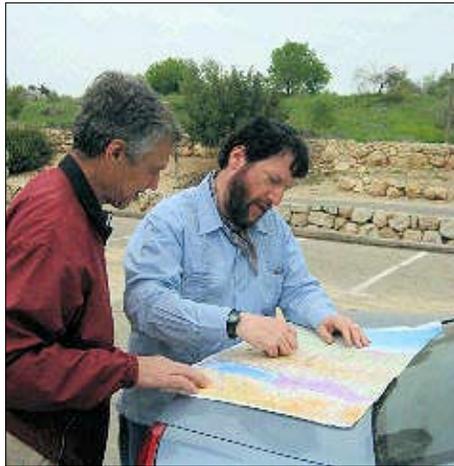
## 1

The death toll of Gazans in Israel's "Operation Cast Lead" has been reported to be "over 1,300" in the world press. Ultimately the most accurate number will come from Israeli human rights organizations, which want to highlight the number without exaggerating it. Al Jazeera reported that "at least 300 children" were among the dead, but of those children listed, about one-fourth are boys 15 to 18 years old, who are as likely to be combatants shooting rockets as school kids playing hopscotch. Palestinians accuse Israel, "Why were so many children killed?" Israelis accuse Palestinians, "Why were so many children killed?"

## 2

Israel apparently had no way to free captive Gilad Shalit, held by Hamas for 30 months, either through a daring commando raid or diplomacy. Shalit is said to be held in a Hamas bunker underneath Al-Shifa Hospital, or at a similarly sensitive location, where any military action would be brutal and futile. The diplomatic route is equally impossible, as releasing fifteen hundred Hamas leaders and agents in exchange for Shalit, as Hamas demands, could tip the balance of power in favor of Hamas in its civil war with FATAH (the Palestinian Authority). Israel would then be blamed for undermining the PA regime, and in any case would suffer from a significantly strengthened Hamas. The only hope might be if Israel determines

that Hamas is so weak that releasing a few hundred agents won't matter; or if Israel takes advantage of the fact that they can't legally kill Hamas leaders while they are in prison, but they can kill them after they are released back into Gaza or Ramallah. Sorry, Gilad.



David Wright with Jon-Jay Tilsen in Israel, 2007

## 3

Israel has created a database describing the circumstances of every one of its several thousand air and missile strikes during the Operation. The data include the reason for striking, as well as the steps taken to spare innocents. Such steps included thousands of phone calls and text-messages warning residents of impending strikes at their immediate location, and the use of "knock-knock" bombs that simulate an explosion to warn bystanders of an impending explosive missile strike. The intent of the database is to prepare to defend Israeli personnel from prosecution or lawsuit for war crimes. At the very least, military

analysts will be able to convince themselves that each strike was justified or accidental. Similarly the use of phosphorus bombs for generating smoke screens will be found to be perfectly legal and perfectly brutal. Whether the Israeli army adhered to the strictest code of purity of arms or reached the lowest level of depravity in human history probably does not matter much to the world court, where Israel has as much chance of getting a fair hearing as would a black man accused of rape in the old South. It also doesn't matter much to dead and maimed Gazans. But it should matter to Israelis and to Jews around the globe. We have to be able to live with ourselves, especially since so few others seem to want to.

## 4

Battlefields and war are generally chaotic. In the Gaza operation, undoubtedly Israeli forces misidentified targets and misdirected their fire. We know this for certain because most of the Israeli soldiers who died were killed by errant Israeli fire. Whether bombing a UN facility was an error, a justifiable target, or a war crime remains to be shown. The Chinese could not believe that the NATO bombing of their embassy in Belgrade in 1999 was an error. I will be surprised if any detached analysis shows that Israeli forces were any more criminal, cruel or careless than any other Western army, for what that's worth. We are certain though that Israel was not randomly shooting missiles at civil-

Continued on **Page 14**

### Gloss on Gaza

Continued from **Page 13**

ians or using children as shields as a matter of policy, nor has it vowed to destroy Palestinian society and Palestinians everywhere. In contrast, the very charter of Hamas is contrary to international law and all standards of decency.

# 5

“The only language they understand is force.” It would be nice if an Israeli leader could speak directly to the Gazans in good Arabic. Word has it that they can understand that language quite well. For their part, Gazans might try the language of brotherhood and peace; their current posture comes

across as racist bullying, which is especially pathetic given Israel’s vast military superiority. Of course, the average Gazan seems to view the Israelis as insanely violent and depraved. The “messages” they say they are trying to send each other through violence are not well received. Maybe they could use email instead.

# 6

Gaza is merely a sideshow, with all due respect to the Gazans, dead and alive, and to the residents of Sederot. Israeli military, intelligence and political leaders do not lose much sleep over Gaza. If the Gazans manage to rearm and bomb Ashqelon again, Israel can always blow up the aggressors (again). Israeli leaders do

lose sleep over Iran. Ironically, the weapons Hizbollah used to kill the Israeli soldiers guarding the border, which precipitated the war in Lebanon in 2006, were from a supply Iran had acquired from Israel. Does anyone remember the Iran-Contra scandal of the Reagan Administration, the hostages held in Iran during the Carter Administration, or the CIA’s overthrow of the (more or less) democratic Iranian government during the Eisenhower Administration?

# 7

I am planning to be in Israel, including Sederot and other areas in missile range of Gaza, in the second week of February. Please pray for peace, at least until I get back.

## Youth

### Shalom from BRS

Things have settled down after the fall holidays, our wonderful siddur presentation to third through sixth graders, and our Chanukah celebration that took place during a minor snowstorm. I was so impressed that almost all our students came that day even though most other schools had a snow day! We enjoyed singing led by Nathan Janette and Elie Azoff Slifstein, making magnets and dreidels, and creating menorahs from recyclables. Special thanks to the BRS parents’ group that provided Chanukah snacks and sponsored a successful candle sale.

I am always happy to contact potential BRS student families. If you know of someone who might be interested in learning more about us, please let me know.

Kol tuv,

Morah Ina Silverman

### BEKI-BJ USY Regional Mid-winter Kinnus

On Feb. 6-8, all kids in 9th to 12th grade who are paid members are welcome to join the entire region at Stamford for a mind-boggling weekend of fun. At \$95 the cost of Mid-Winter is the most affordable of all the kinnuses and

also gives your kid a nice chance to experience the raw power of USY. For more information contact our adviser NoriAnna Cohen at [Norianna.Cohen@quinnipiac.edu](mailto:Norianna.Cohen@quinnipiac.edu), and download the application at [www.hanefesh.org](http://www.hanefesh.org).

### USY Iron Chef

On Mar. 15 all cooks are ordered to assemble for the challenge of this year. What will the secret ingredient be? No one knows, but I can guarantee that fun abounds in this event. For more information, you can contact me at [ccheskisgold@gmail.com](mailto:ccheskisgold@gmail.com) or, once again, our advisor Norianna Cohen at [Norianna.Cohen@quinnipiac.edu](mailto:Norianna.Cohen@quinnipiac.edu).

### Superbowl Sunday DeliBox Fundraiser

This program raises money to subsidize youth attendance at local, regional, national, and Israel youth events. This is our only fundraiser in support of our youth programs; please order to show your support. Many volunteers are needed for the major assembly on Feb. 1; please contact Darryl Kuperstock at [kuperst@aol.com](mailto:kuperst@aol.com). Order forms for our delicious sandwiches are available at [www.beki.org/forms.html](http://www.beki.org/forms.html).

# February 2009

## 7 Shevat 5769 - 4 Adar 5769

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1 9:00am Religious School 10:00am Talmud for Teens with Moshe 11:45-1:30 Deli Box Pick- Up</p> <p style="text-align: right;">7 Shevat</p>	<p>2 7:45am Rashi Study Group</p> <p style="text-align: right;">8 Shevat</p>	<p>3</p> <p style="text-align: right;">9 Shevat</p>	<p>4 8:30am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program</p> <p style="text-align: right;">10 Shevat</p>	<p>5 12:30pm Talmud Study Group (off-site)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">11 Shevat</p>	<p>6 4:56pm Candle Lighting USY Winter Kinnus (off- site)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">12 Shevat</p>	<p>7 Darshanit: Paula Hyman (see related article) 10:45am Children's Programs Qiddush: Frankel/Kaufman After Qiddush Speaker: Rabbi Lina Zerbarini (see related article) 4:55pm Minha-Maariv</p> <p style="text-align: right;">13 Shevat</p>
<p>8 9:00am Religious School - Tu B'Shevat Program 10:00am Talmud for Teens with Moshe 6:30pm Guest Speaker Cynthia Beth Rubin (see related article)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">14 Shevat</p>	<p>9 Tu B'Shevat 7:45am Rashi Study Group 7:30pm Executive Board Meeting (off-site)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">15 Shevat</p>	<p>10</p> <p style="text-align: right;">16 Shevat</p>	<p>11 No Rabbi's Study Group No Religious Schhol (Professional Development Day) No Benei Mitzva Program</p> <p style="text-align: right;">17 Shevat</p>	<p>12 Talmud Study Group not meeting</p> <p style="text-align: right;">18 Shevat</p>	<p>13 5:04pm Candle Lighting</p> <p style="text-align: right;">19 Shevat</p>	<p>14 Darshan: Robert Oakes 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Learner's Minyan Qiddush: Chernoff 5:05pm Minha-Maariv</p> <p style="text-align: right;">20 Shevat</p>
<p>15 No Religious School No Talmud for Teens</p> <p style="text-align: right;">21 Shevat</p>	<p>16 Office Closed - President's Day 9:00am Shahrut 9:45am Rashi Study Group</p> <p style="text-align: right;">22 Shevat</p>	<p>17</p> <p style="text-align: right;">23 Shevat</p>	<p>18 No Rabbi's Study Group No Religious School No Benei Mitzva Program 7:30pm Finance Meeting</p> <p style="text-align: right;">24 Shevat</p>	<p>19 Talmud Study Group not meeting</p> <p style="text-align: right;">25 Shevat</p>	<p>20 5:13pm Candle Lighting</p> <p style="text-align: right;">26 Shevat</p>	<p>21 10:45am Children's Programs Qiddush: Birn 5:15pm Minha-Maariv 7:30pm Wine Tasting</p> <p style="text-align: right;">27 Shevat</p>
<p>22 No Religious School No Talmud for Teens</p> <p style="text-align: right;">28 Shevat</p>	<p>23 7:45am Rashi Study Group 7:30pm General Board Meeting</p> <p style="text-align: right;">29 Shevat</p>	<p>24 Rosh Hodesh I</p> <p style="text-align: right;">30 Shevat</p>	<p>25 Rosh Hodesh II 8:30am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School - Rosh Hodesh Party 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program</p> <p style="text-align: right;">1 Adar</p>	<p>26 12:30pm Talmud Study Group (off-site)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">2 Adar</p>	<p>27 5:21pm Candle Lighting</p> <p style="text-align: right;">3 Adar</p>	<p>28 JTS Shabbat Darshanit: Catharine Clark Qiddush: Friends &amp; Supporters of JTS 5:20pm Minha-Maariv</p> <p style="text-align: right;">4 Adar</p>

### Service Times for Winter

<b>Sundays</b>	<b>Mondays</b>	<b>Tuesdays</b>	<b>Wednesdays</b>	<b>Thursdays</b>	<b>Fridays</b>	<b>Saturdays</b>
9 a.m. Shahrut 5:45 p.m. Minha-Maariv	7 a.m. Shahrut 5:45 p.m. Minha-Maariv	7 a.m. Shahrut 5:45 p.m. Minha-Maariv	7 a.m. Shahrut 5:45 p.m. Minha-Maariv	8:15 a.m. Shahrut 5:45 p.m. Minha-Maariv	7 a.m. Shahrut 6 p.m. Minha-Maariv	9:15 a.m. Shahrut 5:45 Minha

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