

BEKI Bulletin

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June 2003 Vol. 9 Issue 6

ק"ק בית אל-כתר ישראל

Tammuz 5763

Shavuot Festival at BEKI

Sefira – Counting the Omer

At the second seder, 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, the *sefira* served to keep the liturgical calendar of the Jewish People synchronized, no simple accomplishment given 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.

Teach us to number our days, that we may attain a heart of wisdom

– Psalm 90:12

Rabbis Celebrate Siyyum

The Rabbis' Study Group, also known as "Wednesdays with Murray," celebrated the *siyyum* (completion) of a three-year study of the ancient *halakhic midrash Mekhilta deRabbi Yishmael*. The local rabbis met weekly in BEKI's Rosenkrantz Family Library for intense and sometimes animated study. The *Mekhilta* is an early work containing *midrashic* (homiletic) interpretations of Biblical passages that often are closely related to the actual law derived from those passages.

The Rabbis' Study Group is exclusively for rabbis and is 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. Regular participants include Rabbis Gerald Breiger, Richard Eisenberg, Gloria Rubin, Eric Silver, David Weisenthal and Jon-Jay Tilsen, along with the con-vener, Moshe "Murray" Levine.

"Given the many demands on the rabbi in the pulpit, it is essential for him or her to set aside fixed times for study," says Rabbi Moshe Levine, a BEKI member and Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Beth Sholom of Framingham, MA, and a nationally-recognized Jewish educator. "*Talmud Torah keneged kulam* – Torah study is essential to the understanding and fulfillment of all of the other *mitzvot*."



Rabbi Murray Levine

Continued on page 6

Food Donations

Food Donations for local food charities can be left in the BEKI coatroom. Canned and other dry packaged foods are accepted. Clean out your cupboard - if that can or box has been there for a year and you haven't used it, you may as well give it away.

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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, 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. Annual subscription is \$36.00.

BEKI-Bulletin

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A Message from Rabbi Tilsen & Dear Rabbi
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The Power of the Pushke

New Englanders are the stingiest Americans, at least as measured by their charitable contributions, according to recent analysis of government and private records on tax-deductible giving. The common wisdom in Jewish non-profit agencies is that this generalization applies to the New England Jewish community as well. This certainly is the case with respect to Jewish giving to Jewish causes in Connecticut, including – and especially – in the Greater New Haven area. By some estimates, New Haven Jewish charitable giving averages less than *one fourth* that of some other American communities for people in the same income ranges.

In speaking with veteran Jewish leader and philanthropist Paul Goodwin on the eve of his repeat honor of distinction at an award dinner by the Jewish

Foundation, a theme emerged to explain why some people give while others do not. “My parents were not wealthy people by any standard,” Paul explained, “but my father always supported the free burial society, orphan’s home,

the UJA. There was always a *puskhe*, a blue-and-white charity box, in our home. It was their example. I still have a *pushke*.”

George Posener, a Jewish philanthropist, and a native of New Haven, recalls, “a traveling rabbi from the big city would pick up the *pushke* every week and leave one for the following week.” *Tzedaka* was part of George’s Jewish upbringing. Today, George makes sure he verifies that his contributions are being well-used by a worthy cause, which is why BEKI and Ezra Academy are among his favorites.

That same theme emerged several years ago in my conversations with Rena Miller’s uncle David, of blessed memory. He described how his mother

would place a *groschen*, a small coin in circulation in pre-war Poland, in their *pushke*, every week before candle lighting in their very modest home. “Momma, we could use that penny!” he said. “Dovid, that *groschen* will join with many others and will change the world.” Ninety-some years later, at his death, David left the New Haven Jewish community five million dollars.

It seems that early childhood lessons of generosity at home play a major role in developing the charitable personality.

But many have not even reached the stage of the *groschen*, let alone significant giving.

Some years ago, when BEKI leaders were first discussing the present renovations and capital campaign, I surmised that we would have difficulty in raising funds because a large proportion of our membership is not native to Connecticut and therefore, I assumed, would be less willing to invest in our local institutions.

I was exactly wrong. As it turns out, at least in general, BEKI members who grew up in places other than New Haven tend to have an understanding of the culture of giving more than New Englanders. Of course, there are also very generous New Haven natives who should feel good about their accomplishments in building and sustaining a Jewish community. But by and large it is the middle-class and well-to-do natives who have provided inadequate support for local Jewish institutions. What I had expected to be our greatest weakness – the preponderance of “non-natives” in our Congregation – turns out to be our redeeming feature.

If you are a native of this region and give generously according to your means, then this is *not* meant as a criticism of you. As a rabbi I have no way of knowing how much people give to various charities other than what is acknowledged in public listings. But the cumulative statistics of tax returns and agency incomes confirms this generalization.



Rabbi Tilsen



Continued on page 4

New Haven native Paul Goodwin has racked up many years – and perhaps several million dollars – as a solicitor for the UJC (formerly UJA), the JCC, BEKI, and other local organizations. I joined him on a solicitation one day and clocked him at \$3,200 a minute.

“Someone who can give but doesn’t *want* to give” always finds an excuse, Paul remarks. “They are missing something important in their lives.”

It is a mitzva – a “commandment” or “religious imperative” – to give to the Jewish community, minimally at the level of 10% of one’s income *per year*. That can be to any of a number of qualifying agencies. One can fulfill the mitzva of *tsedaqa* without giving to this particular congregation. If someone doesn’t give to the synagogue, it’s our problem. But if someone doesn’t give *anywhere*, then *that person* has a problem. It is a religious problem, and it is one that concerns me as a rabbi. It also concerns the community.

Average levels of giving in some American cities – among people with incomes over \$50,000 – is over 10% per year, even over 12% in some places. That is not happening in New Haven. There is every reason for each of us to at least reach the minimum required by our law and tradition, despite the easy excuses. And that means giving away 10% each year.

Many Christians tithe (giving 10%), and observant Muslims donate at least their *zakat* (2.5%). If we want to

be responsible Jews, we must do no less. We must be true to our tradition. Those who give beyond 10% are giving generously; the rest of us are just doing our duty. Federation President and BEKI member Barry Etra often points out that giving *tsedaqa* is an obligation, not an act of “charity.” It is not the same as “helping the poor” or performing “*gemilut hasadim*,” deeds of kindness, although those are also *mitzvot*. *Tzedeqa* requires a check or credit card (or stocks, bonds or cash) and it is a responsibility, not a saintly kindness.

I personally do not literally use a *pushke* often, but instead donate by check or charge card, so I can keep track of my giving. I itemize my tax deductions. The *pushke* should not convey the incorrect notion that giving pennies is sufficient. Nevertheless, the *pushke* remains a powerful symbol. The BEKI *pushke* takes checks.

The ever-present *pushke* teaches us that giving is a daily mitzva. The federal and state governments’ requirements that we submit tax forms helps insure that we fulfill the mitzva of making an account of our giving on an annual basis. The *pushke* also reminds us that the contributions of many add up to much and can make a big difference.

Rabban Gamliel said: Do not make a habit of tithing by estimate

– *Avot* 1:16

A Message From BEKI President Gila Reinstein

You are cordially invited to three wonderful community events at BEKI this month on 8, 10, and 29 June.

Mitzva Heroes Brunch

Generally, we think of heroes as people who undertake acts of physical bravery, but there is a quieter kind of heroism that also touches our lives. This kind of heroism involves moral courage, dedication, vision and strength of character. This is the heroism that leads people to champion worthy causes, uphold values in the face of opposition and take on challenges — large and small.

Our Benei Mitzva students have been studying the lives and accomplishments of some of the wonderful people who fit this model. Most of them are familiar faces at BEKI. On 8 June, these “Mitzva Heroes” will be honored at a brunch to which all are invited. I look forward to seeing you there. Meanwhile, I extend my warmest *mazal tov* both to our heroes and to the young people whom they have inspired.

Sisterhood Book of Life Dinner

Every spring, one outstanding member of the Sisterhood is chosen to receive the Woman of Valor Award for her volunteer efforts and community service. This year, internationally recognized scholar Paula Hyman is the honoree at the Book of Life dinner on Tuesday 10 June. Paula is the Lucy G. Moses Professor of Modern Jewish History at Yale and author of several important books in her day job. We know her as a good friend, an active board member, one of our most faithful Torah readers, and a willing volunteer at all kinds of activities—including polishing the brass front door fixtures. *Kol ha-kavod*, Paula!

Annual Meeting and Brunch

Later this month, we will hold our annual meeting on Sunday morning 29 June. At that time, we will recognize new officers and board members, transact some obligatory synagogue business, give out “dubious distinction” awards, and have a chance to *schmooze* over good food and coffee. We expect our second annual silent auction to be even better than last year’s surprise success. I hope your schedule allows you to attend. It promises to be a lot of fun, and you have to eat breakfast anyway, right? You might as well do it at BEKI, and while you’re at it, you can catch up on synagogue news and bid on exciting auction items.

Silent Auction Sunday 29 June

The BEKI Annual Meeting (Sunday 29 June 9:30a) is approaching and with it the annual silent auction. The excitement is building! A sampling of available items:

*Two days of labor by carpenter Hugh Fryer
One-half day boat trip with Rick Goodwin
Therapy session with Alan Lovins, Ph.D.
Nutritional session with Dr. Jennifer Botwick
Estate plan by Attorney Donna Levine
Cabin in Nova Scotia compliments of Goldfields
\$25 gift certificate to Westville Bakery
Two sessions with a personal trainer
Four hours babysitting by Ilana Levine
Two hours of Torah chanting lessons by Ruth G.
Makeover by Rachel Forbes and Jessica Bell
Haircut at New Waves (Hair Power)
Jewelry by Bryna Pauker
Reserved Parking at BEKI
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Shavuot Festival at BEKI

Continued from page 1

The Festival of *Shavuot* ("Weeks"), one of the three major pilgrimage festivals, celebrates the anniversary of the Giving of the Torah at Sinai some 3,401 years ago. 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 reenact the extraordinary experience of our ancestors and show our own enthusiasm for receiving Torah.

Shavuot Candle Lighting

Those who are able may light Festival candles at 8:04p. It is also customary to light Yizkor Memorial candles immediately before lighting the festival candles. The blessing recited over the Festival candles is "Barukh...asher qideshanu bemitzvotav vetsivanu lehadliq ner shel yom tov" and the "Shehehianu," both of which can be found in most siddurim (prayerbooks).

Tiqun Leil Shavuot

Thursday 5 June at 7:00p, the Tiqun Leil Shavuot Night of Study will begin with a "Family Program" at 7:00p, meeting in the Goodwin Youth Room, and,

at the same time, a period of adult Torah Study with Steven Fraade on "Moses in the Middle at Mount Sinai" in the George G. Posener Daily Chapel.

The brief Minha Afternoon Service, from 8:00p to 8:10p, will be followed by the special refreshments of Shavuot, which may include Popsicles, fruit,

cheesecake, coffee, tea and soft drinks. The brief Festival Evening service, from 8:40p to 9:00p, will



Steven Fraade

be followed at 9:00p by Baruch Levine on "The 'Ten Commandments' – A Fresh Look."

After another break for refreshments, exploration of Torah continues with additional presentations by **Rabbi Lina Grazier-Zerbarini** and **Nadav Sela**. The evening will conclude sometime after midnight.



Baruch Levine

If you come late in the evening, please enter at the main lobby doors.

Friday Shavuot Shaharit Morning Services

The Shavuot Festival Shaharit Morning Service begins at 9:15a on Friday 6 June. The service includes the full recitation of Hallel.

Shabbat Shavuot Morning Recognizes BMP Participants Yizkor Memorial Service

The Shavuot Morning service, which begins at 9:15a on 7 June 2003, will recognize the class of BEKI's Benei Mitzva Program participants. The benei mitzva celebrants will lead and participate in services and present a qiddush following services

The Festival service includes a Shaharit morning service, *Hallel* (Psalms of praise), a Torah reading and Haftara. Following the *Haftara* (prophetic reading), the Book of Ruth will be 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.

The Yizkor memorial service is one of four such services during the year that help us recognize our feelings of loss, which are often especially intense during the Festival season, and to honor the memories of our loved ones. Then the Festival Musaf additional service is recited.

With sorrow we note the passing of

Robert Merriam

Doran Podoloff, brother of Evelyn Levine

May the Almighty comfort those who mourn

Benei Mitzva in June



Merav Stern

On Sunday morning 1 June, Rosh Hodesh Sivan, Merav Stern, daughter of Michael Stern & Kathy Rosenbluh, will lead and participate in services as a bat mitzva. Merav is a student at Ezra Academy. The Shahrarit morning service will begin at 9:15a (a special time).

On Shabbat afternoon 14 June, Misha Lehrer, son of Alex & Amy Lehrer, will lead and participate in services as a bar mitzva. Misha is a graduate of our Religious School and of our Benei Mitzva Program. The Shabbat Minha afternoon service begins at 5:45p.



Misha Lehrer

On Friday night 27 June & Shabbat morning 28 June, Hannah Katz, daughter of Matthew Katz & Ronni Rabin, will lead and participate in services as a bat mitzva. The Friday night service begins at 6:00p and the Shabbat Shahrarit morning service begins at 9:15a. Hannah is a graduate of the [BEKI Benei Mitzva Program](#) and of the [BEKI Religious School](#).



Hannah Katz

Auf-Rauf

Valerie Sandler and Alex Thaler invite the BEKI community to join them at their *auf-ruf* on Shabbat morning, 14 June. Valerie and Alex will each be called to the Torah for an aliya that day. They will meet under the *Huppa* (wedding canopy) at Tiferet Bet Israel in Blue Bell, Pennsylvania on 22 June (Valerie's parents' congregation).

Valerie is a Ph.D. student in Modern Jewish History at Yale University, where BEKI member Paula Hyman serves as her advisor. Alex teaches fifth grade at Meadowside Elementary School in Milford. Valerie's parents, Irena and David Sandler, live in Norristown, PA. Susan and Allan Thaler, Alex's parents, reside in West Haven.

Valerie has been a BEKI board member for two years and ran the 20s-30s Havura at BEKI from 2000-02. This year she served as a tutor for the Benei Mitzva Program.



Valerie Sandler and Alex Thaler

Cemetery Cleanup

Volunteers are welcome to clean and tend the [Beth El Memorial Park](#) and [Keser Israel Memorial Park](#). Your one hour or more, once a week, once a month, once a year or once, would be appreciated. To volunteer please contact David Sagerman at 389-2108 x57 or davdorsagerman@webtv.net.

Closing the Book

As BEKI approaches the end of our fiscal year (30 June), payments of outstanding dues, pledges and other obligations would be most appreciated. Because of the economic climate, some families are experiencing particular difficulty in making timely payments, and for that reason it is especially important for those who are not facing unusual difficulties to give a little more or a little sooner. Your support at this time is much appreciated.



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Where There's a Will...

Wills and estate plans are not just for the wealthy. Financial advisors suggest that anyone with children – regardless of age – and anyone who cares what happens to their financial resources or property after their death, must have a formal will or estate plan. Even if a donor leaves just 10% or 5% or even 1% to BEKI, it can make a big impact on the Congregation's future. Designating BEKI as a beneficiary in one's will demonstrates to one's heirs and neighbors the importance of *tzedaka* (charity), of BEKI, and of the continuity of the Jewish People.

If you would like information on including BEKI in your estate planning or current planned charitable giving, please contact your financial advisor or estate planning attorney and BEKI officer Donna Levine at 787-1633 (sdsij@aol.com). You may also contact Rabbi Tilsen at 389-2108 x10 (jjtilsen@beki.org) or David Tein at The Jewish Foundation at 387-2424 x304 (dtein@jewishnewhaven.org) for a confidential discussion.



Children's Library

Please note that the following items were acquired through the Ari Nathan Levine Fund, and will be of particular interest to and support for the parent volunteer leaders of our Shabbat Children's programs: Cosmic Conversations, Junior Congregation, K-2 Kehilla, and Children's Shabbat Havura. They are available on a non-lending basis in the back of the Chapel for Junior Congregation and in the Resource Center of the Claire Goodwin Youth Room for K-2 Kehilla and CSH. We welcome your use of these materials, and appreciate your cooperation in promptly returning them to the proper location so that others may find them when needed.

The Posener Daily Chapel:

Skits and Shpiels: 14 Plays for Grades 4 to 9, by Meridith Shaw Patera

Kings and Things: 20 Jewish Plays for Kids 8 to 18, by Meridith Shaw Patera (10 copies)

Extraordinary Jews: Staging Their Lives, One-Act Plays for Teens, by Gabrielle Suzanne Kaplan (10 copies)



Jeremiah's Promise: An Adventure in Modern Israel, by Kenneth Roseman

Escape from the Holocaust, by Kenneth Roseman

The Melting Pot: An Adventure in New York, by Kenneth Roseman

In the Resource Center, Claire Goodwin Youth Room:

A Torah Commentary for Our Times, Volume Two: Exodus and Leviticus, by Harvey J. Fields

A Torah Commentary for Our Times, Volume Three: Numbers and Deuteronomy, by Harvey J. Fields

Teaching Jewish Virtues: Sacred Sources and Arts Activities, by Susan Freeman

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BEKI Events

June - Sivan

5763

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Sivan 1	2 Sivan 2	3 Sivan 3	4 Sivan 4	5 Sivan 5	6 Sivan 6	7 Sivan 7
<i>Rosh Hodesh</i> 9:00a Religious School 9:30a Shaharit <i>Merav Stern Bat Mitzva</i> 12:30p Study the Stars 5:45p Minha 6:00p Benei Mitzva Parents Meeting	7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Grp 5:45p Minha-Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 4:00p Religious School 5:45p Minha-Maariv	8:15a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv 7:00p-?? Tiqun Leil Shavuot 8:04p Candles <i>Erev Shavuot</i>	<i>Shavuot</i> <i>Office Closed</i> 9:15a Festival Svc 6:00p Minha-Maariv 8:05p Candles	Shavuot - Yizkor <i>9:15a Festival Service</i> <i>Religious School & Benei Mitzva</i> <i>Program Shabbat</i> <i>Kiddush Sponsor: Religious School</i> <i>and Benei Mitzva Program Families</i> Book of Ruth 5:45p Minha
8 Sivan 8	9 Sivan 9	10 Sivan 10	11 Sivan 11	12 Sivan 12	13 Sivan 13	14 Sivan 14
9:00a Shaharit 9:30a Religious School Graduation 10:30a Mitzva Heroes Brunch 12:30p Study the Stars	<i>Office Closed for Vacation</i>					9:15a Shaharit <i>Kiddush Sponsors: Valerie Sandler &</i> <i>Alex Thayer and Parents of</i> <i>Graduating Ezra Students</i> 10:45a Children's Programs 10:45a Cosmic Conversations 10:45a SSLM 5:45p Minha <i>Misha Lehrer Bar Mitzva</i>
15 Sivan 15	16 Sivan 16	17 Sivan 17	18 Sivan 18	19 Sivan 19	20 Sivan 20	21 Sivan 21
<i>Father's Day</i> 9:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Grp 5:45p Minha-Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	8:15a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv 8:00p A.A.	7:00a Shaharit 6:00p Minha-Maariv 8:12p Candles	9:15a Shaharit 10:45a Children's Programs Shabbat Singalong (after Kiddush) 5:45p Minha
22 Sivan 22	23 Sivan 23	24 Sivan 24	25 Sivan 25	26 Sivan 26	27 Sivan 27	28 Sivan 28
9:00a Shaharit 12:30p Elder Hostel - A Jewish Perspective 5:45p Minha-Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Grp 9:00a Calendar Mtg 5:45p Minha-Maariv 7:45p General Board	7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	8:15a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv 8:00p A.A.	7:00a Shaharit 6:00p Minha-Maariv <i>Hannah Katz</i> <i>Bat Mitzva</i> 8:12p Candles	9:15a Shaharit <i>Hannah Katz Bat Mitzva</i> 10:45a Children's Programs 10:45p SSLM 5:45p Minha
29 Sivan 29	30 Sivan 30					
9:00a Shaharit 9:30a Congregation Annual Meeting, Brunch, and Silent Auction 5:45p Minha-Maariv	<i>Rosh Hodesh</i> 7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Grp 5:45p Minha-Maariv	BEKI phone numbers: (203) 389-2108 Fax (203) 389-5899 Mary Ellen-Office x14 Religious School x13 Rabbi x10 Dr.Lauren Kempton x 33 Cemetery Pres. x57	Shaharit=Morning Minha =Afternoon Minha-Maariv=Evening SSLM=Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan		Office Hours: Mon 9a-12 & 1p-3p Tue by appt. only Wed 10a-12 & 1p-6p Thu 9a-12 & 1p-3p Fri 9a-2p	Email Addresses: Office: office@beki.org Rabbi: jjtilsen@beki.org Religious School/Education Director: lkempton@beki.org Benei Mitzva Teacher: aschultz@beki.org BEKI/BJ Kadima: kadima@beki.org

Raffle Drawing at Annual Meeting

Foxwoods? Mohegan Sun?....Why Bother ?

Enter the BEKI Raffle for fabulous prizes including a **Free BEKI Membership** (yes, that's FREE!). The drawing will be held at the annual meeting on Sunday morning 29 June 2003 although your presence is not required. Tickets are only \$36.00. Watch your mail for entry forms or call Mary Ellen at the BEKI office at 389-2108 x14.

Annual Meeting

Congregation Beth El-Keser Isarel

Sunday Morning 29 June 2003

9:30a

All urged to attend
Silent Auction

BMP Program Meeting

Parents and guardians of youth who will celebrate becoming benei mitzva from January 2003 to February 2005 are invited to attend an orientation meeting of the Benei Mitzva Preparation Program on Sunday night 1 June from 6:00p to 7:25p in the BEKI Library. If you may be organizing or preparing for a Bar- or Bat-Mitzva observance for your child, be sure to attend. For information, please contact Dr. Lauren Kempton at 389-2108 x33 or lkempton@beki.org.

June Schedule Notes

Sunday Shahrarit Morning Rosh Hodesh service on 1 June will begin at 9:30a.

Ezra Academy Shabbat - 14 June 2003

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Torah for the Hungry Mind: Adult Studies at BEKI

Mashgiah Training

Those interested in learning to serve as *mashgi-him* (Kashrut Supervisors) at BEKI and at local Conservative synagogues and schools are invited to participate in a Mashgiah Training Program to be held in July. The Program is presented by **KINAHARA: The Kashrut Initiative of the New Haven Area Rabbinical Assembly** and is sponsored in part by a grant from the Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven. For information, contact Rabbi Tilsen at 389-2108 x10 or jjtilsen@beki.org.

Reading Torah at BEKI

Darryl Kuperstock is coordinating the readings for *BeMidbar* (Numbers). If you would like to read Torah, or learn how to read Torah, call Rabbi Jon-Jay at (203) 389-2108 x10 (jjtilsen@beki.org) or Darryl Kuperstock at (203) 387-0304 (kuperst@aol.com).

Rashi Study Group

Each Monday morning from 7:45a to 8:30a adults meet in the **Rosenkrantz Family Library** to read Rashi's commentary on the Torah. It is possible to participate for a single meeting or to begin at any time. Knowledge of Hebrew is not necessary. Rashi

purported to explain the *peshat* of the Biblical text, i.e., the meaning in its historical, literary and linguistic context. Visitors and new participants are welcome. The Rashi Study Group has been meeting weekly since 1994.

AA Meeting

A Thursday night **AA meeting** is held at BEKI every Thursday night at 8:00p. The weekly Meeting has been held at BEKI since May 1997. Open to any person who can benefit from a recovery program, the meeting is held according to standard AA procedure. This is not a specifically Jewish recovery group, although a large proportion of participants are Jewish. For information on the weekly meeting call Jay at (203) 387-6019 or email Jay at drjays.nai@rcn.com.

Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan

The "Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan," which meets every other Saturday morning at 10:45a in BEKI's **Rosenkrantz Family Library**, is an ideal setting for veteran and novice shul-goers alike to become more comfortable and expert in the *Shaharit* (morning) and Torah services in a supportive setting. Lead by **Steven Fraade** and **Rabbi Alan Lovins**, the Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan has helped many feel a deeper sense of awe born of greater understanding while increasing the level of comfort through nurturing step-by-step practice in a non-threatening multi-generational setting.

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Children's Shabbat Havura

The [Children's Shabbat Havura \(Friendship Circle\)](#) meets every Shabbat morning from 10:45a to 11:30a in the Claire Goodwin Youth Room. Designed to address the spiritual and social needs of preschool children, the Havura meets concurrently with K-2 Kehila, Junior Congregation and Cosmic Conversations.

Following the half-hour of songs, stories, prayers and dance, the children have their own qiddush refreshments and then enjoy play supervised by their adults until they join the other worshipers for the Concluding Service and *qiddush*.

The Havura enjoys strong support from parents and the Synagogue. Currently about 70 children and their parents actively participate in the Havura. Visitors have come from across New England to observe this program as a model for their own synagogues.

Meeting the spiritual and social needs of preschool children is an obligation of the Jewish community and an important part of the

Synagogue's mission. The Havura (Friendship Circle) links the children to one another, to other concerned Jewish parents, and to the Synagogue. The Havura enjoys the active participation of parents who themselves are enriched by the experience. For many adults, the Children's Shabbat Havura serves as their introduction to active participation in the Synagogue Community.

If you are interested in learning more about the BEKI Children's Shabbat Havura, come any Shabbat (Saturday) morning at 10:45a and see for yourself. Or contact Miriam Benson at 389-6137 or mirbenson@aol.com or Education Director Dr. Lauren Kempton at 389-2108 x33 or lkempton@beki.org, the staff person who supports this parent cooperative.

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