

A New Haven Tradition since 1892



BEKI

bulletin

Kislev-Tevet 5774

Vol. 19 Issue 11

Page 10: Dear Rabbi

HANUKA

The first night of Hanuka is Wednesday Nov. 27. The blessings for candle lighting are available as audio files at www.beki.org/audio.html and are printed in our prayerbook *Siddur Sim Shalom* on page 192 (weekday edition), page 242 (classic edition) or page 307 (Shabbat edition). The *hanukiya* (Hanuka *menora*) can be lit around 4:20 p.m. or later except Friday (4 p.m.) and Saturday (after 5:05 p.m.).

The *hanukiya* (Hanuka Menora) will be lighted each evening (except Thursday, Friday and Saturday) at BEKI at 5:45, immediately before the Maariv evening service. It is also lighted during the morning for “decorative” purposes, although not in fulfillment of a specific *mitzva*. On Friday night, light the Hanuka lights at 4 p.m. and the Shabbat candles immediately after (4:06 p.m. and not later than 4:20 p.m.).

Tefillin are worn each day of Hanuka (except, of course, on Shabbat). The passage “Al ha-Nisim – For the Miracles” is added to each *amida*, and Hallel, a collection of celebratory Psalms, is recited each morning. The Torah is read each day of Hanuka. Tahanun, the penitential prayer, is not recited.

If you have a turkey-shaped *hanukiya*, this is your chance to use it. This is the earliest date that Hanuka occurs relative to the civil calendar, and the only time Hanuka will coincide with Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is the fourth Thursday in November, so it can fall on Nov. 22 to 28. Of those seven possibilities, the 28th is the latest. The relationship to the Hebrew calendar is also affected by the four-year cycle of leap years in which an extra day is added in February.

The Hebrew calendar follows a 19-year cycle relative

to the civil calendar. The Hebrew month corresponds with a lunar cycle (the beginning of each month is on the new moon). Some years have 12 months, and some have 13 months, according to a 19-year cycle, in which the number of days in those 12- or 13-month years add up to about the same number as nineteen $365 \frac{1}{4}$ - day years. That is, every 19 years, the Hebrew and civil date will converge, give or take a day due to the effect of the 4-year cycle of “leap year” (Feb. 29) or the occasional variation in that schedule on the civil calendar.

The Hebrew year has two months of variable length, that is, months that can be either 29 or 30 days. Hence a Hebrew year could have 353, 354 or 355 days if it is a 12-month year, or 383, 384 or 385 days, if it is a 13-month year. The “leap days” on the Hebrew calendar are used to insure that Yom Kippur does not occur on Friday or Sunday (and so that Hoshana Rabba does not occur on Shabbat), and to keep the new moon on the first day of the month.

This year (5774), itself a 13-month year, follows two consecutive 12-month (short) years on the Hebrew calendar, making the Hebrew dates in the first part of this Hebrew year (i.e., until Adar Sheni is inserted) fall at their earliest relative to the civil calendar. These several cycles converged this year, each at their extremes – the latest Thanksgiving and the earliest Hanuka.

However, the 19-year cycle of Hebrew years does not exactly equal 365.25×19 . The year on the Hebrew calendar, which keeps the new moon as the first of the month, is about 6 minutes 25.4 seconds longer than the

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

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

To contribute articles or for inquiries regarding membership:

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

For advertising information, call the synagogue office.

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A Message from Rabbi Tilsen & Dear Rabbi

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המקום ינחם

HaMaqom Yenahem

With sorrow we note the passing of

Rosalyn Olin,
mother of Margaret Olin (& Robert Nelson)

Marshall Eisenberg,
father of Rabbi Richard & Judith Eisenberg


Anna Altman,
daughter of Darcy McGraw & Bruce Altman

May the Almighty comfort those who mourn

Hanuka

Continued from Page 1

solar year. Consequently, that difference adds up to a full day about every 231 years, at which point the two calendars will have diverged by one day.

By the time the various cycles would next converge – Thanksgiving on its latest date and Hanuka at the earliest possible date relative to the civil calendar – assuming Thanksgiving is still celebrated at all – the calendars will have gotten one more day out of sync, so Hanuka will begin at the end of Thanksgiving, not the night before. Hence, this year is the only time the first night of Hanuka will coincide with the Wednesday night before Thanksgiving. 

Contributions

Rabbi's Tzedaga Fund (minimum \$25)

- Jimmy Shure in gratitude for a life-long friendship with Jimmy & Melanie Wolf
- Alan Lovins & Trish Loving in memory of Marshall Eisenberg, father of Rabbi Richard (& Judith) Eisenberg
- Alan Lovins & Trish Loving in memory of Anna Altman, daughter of Darcy McGraw & Bruce Altman
- Cynthia Beth Rubin with condolences to Darcy & Bruce in memory of Anna Altman
- Cynthia Beth Rubin with condolences to Peg Olin in memory of Rosalyn Wechter Olin and Ned Porte
- Ina Silverman & Jay Sokolow in memory of Robert Silverman
- Robin Goldberg
- Jimmy Shure in memory of Anna Altman

Qiddush Sponsors (minimum \$280)

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- Rachel Light & Jonathan Freiman

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

- To BEKI from Erin Karsif through the People's United Bank's Volunteer Recognition Program
- To Jonathan Freiman & Rachel Light in honor of their wedding by Amy Schechter
- To Noah Sobel-Lewin in honor of his Bar Mitzva by the Friedman & Bruce Family
- To Margie & Jay Hirshfield in honor of their moving into their new home by Nanette Stahl & William Hallo
- To the family of Muriel Kaltman with sympathy on her passing by Charlene Saportin-Disler & Mark Disler
- To Charles & Jonathan Alpert with sympathy on the passing of Lillian Alpert by Marcie & Richard Sugarmann
- To Leon Cummings with sympathy on the passing of Irma Sandler by Rebecca Weiner & Mike Rastelli
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- To Leon Cummings with sympathy on the passing of Irma Sandler by Ruth Silver
- To Becky & CJ May in honor of their son Nick reaching the age

- of bar mitzva by David & Darryl Kuperstock
- To Ruthie Greenblatt with sympathy on the passing of Evelyn Greenblatt by the Kassap & Caldwell family
- To Leon Cummings with sympathy on the passing of Irma Sandler by the Kassap & Caldwell family
- To Leon Cummings with sympathy on the passing of Irma Sandler by Hannah & Herb Winer

BEKI Religious School

- To Leon Cummings with sympathy on the passing of Irma Sandler by Ina Silverman & Jay Sokolow

Qiddush Fund

- In memory of Esther Melnick by Jay & Marjorie Hirshfield

Social Action/ Tikkun Olam Fund

- To Amy Margolis with sympathy on the passing of Robert Goldhamer by Jimmy Shure

The Barzillai Cheskis BEKI Youth Israel Scholarship Fund

- To Leon Cummings with sympathy on the passing of Irma Sandler by Rena Cheskis-Gold & Marty Gold

The Harold & Arthur Ratner Memorial Fund

- In memory of Miriam L. Kahn by Richard Kahn and Michael Kahn
- To Mr. & Mrs. Howard Ratner in honor of the birth of Indigo "Indie" Aura Ratner by Betsy Ratner
- In memory of Nora Ellen Gimbel by Betsy Ratner
- In memory of Harold Ratner by Mikki Ratner

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

- In memory of Irving Rudof by Steve & Joanne Rudof
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- In memory of her father Lester Isenberg by Janis Isenberg
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- In memory of Eli Rozycki by Shirley Chain
- In memory of Rose Bailey Sugarmann by Richard & Marcie Sugarmann

USY at Lake Compounce: Learning Lessons in Unlikely Places

BEKI-BJ USY is a great place to make and hang out with friends, eat lots of food, and enjoy fantastic events. Our USYers have Lounge Nights on Mondays at B'nai Jacob (moving to BEKI in January) where they hang out, do homework, and snack, all in a Jewish setting, of course. Other aspects of USY are clearly community service oriented, and our chapter is involved with a toy and book drive for IRIS (Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services) and we just finished a hugely successful Thanksgiving Pie Drive with proceeds going to different charities and pies donated to those in need. Our Regional Fall Kinnus had classes and discussions on Jewish topics and Shabbat services with so much Ruach and Spirit, New Haven definitely knew the USYers were in town. However, what is absolutely amazing about this group, is its ability to integrate Jewish values and great lessons even in unlikely places.

Our big chapter kick-off this year was a nighttime excursion to Lake Compounce. There were skeptics that a trip to Halloweenified Lake Compounce was an appropriate trip for a Jewish Youth Group, but the cause of Jewish teens spending time with other Jewish teens, no matter the place, overruled the critics. Our USYers hit the rides in force and really enjoyed the Halloween-transformed theme park with its creepy lighting, scary monsters, and Phantom of the Opera soundtrack. I am pretty sure the pervading mist was a natural nighttime phenomenon, but if not, the park did a great job with that too. We decided to get combo tickets so we could do the rides but also go to the Haunted Graveyard, Connecticut's largest Halloween attraction. It is a 45-minute walk through of haunted house, graveyard, farm, forest, cave, and all around creepy places with amazing props and sets and actors in scary costumes popping out at every turn.

The line for the Haunted Graveyard wrapped around the entire front half of the park. We stood in line for about 40 minutes until we could finally see the entrance to this maze of horrors. I asked a nearby guard how long the wait was from where we were. He answered that it was another hour and a half because there were also lines inside the complex. I felt horrible. I had to make sure the USYers were back to their parents in New Haven by 11:30 and it was already 10:15. I pulled our kids out of line and told them that I was sorry but we wouldn't be able to make the Haunted Graveyard because of the line and that they should discuss what final rides they wanted to go on before we had to leave.

The guard I had spoken to saw me pull our teens out of line and clearly overheard our conversation. He asked what was going on so I told him that we were a youth group

from New Haven and that I had to get my teens back to their parents at a reasonable hour. The guard asked if we already had tickets. We answered yes and he went to go get his supervisor. He explained our situation to his supervisor and the supervisor brought us the back way around the rest of the hour and a half line, including the lines inside, to the real entrance of the Haunted Graveyard. While walking, we thanked him profusely and his response was simply, "When you are nice to people, treat them with respect, and tell the truth, they do the same for you."

It is amazing that even while partaking in such a secular and American pastime as the Haunted Graveyard at Lake Compounce we can teach Torah values like honesty and kindness. Other teens might have complained about having to leave the park early, or tried to cut the line, or made up some story explaining why they should be allowed to go ahead, but I love working with our BEKI-BJ USY chapter because they did none of the above. We never asked for special treatment, and their honest gratitude and excitement were so touching it reached the Lake Compounce Security Guards at ten o'clock on a packed Saturday night. Although we were not sitting in synagogue learning the moral values in Pirkei Avot (Chapters of the Fathers), our teens still learned a valuable lesson, maybe even more valuable because it was tangible in the real and secular world in which we all have to live.

Lake Compounce was an amazing event. Everyone made new friends and solidified old friendships while hanging on to each other for dear life in ride and graveyard. I screamed myself silly in the Haunted Graveyard and really enjoyed the rollercoasters and the spinning swings, but I don't think I will ever forget the kindness or the words of those security guards that really made the night for my USYers. Sometimes we all have to be reminded that every minute has a teachable moment and that every minute gives us the opportunity to live by the values and morals that we try to pass on to our children.

Coming Up In USY

Monday Lounge Nights: 6:30 - 8 p.m. at B'nai Jacob.

Dec. 14: Movie Extravaganza and Sleepover.

Dec. 22-26: USY Int'l Convention in New Orleans

Dec. 27-30: USY Int'l Post Convention in New Orleans

Coming Up In Kadima

Dec. 8: Ice Skating and *Sufganiyot*

Jan. 11-12: Regional Kadima Rock Climbing Overnight

Any questions, comments, or ideas, please let me know.

Jennifer Greene, BEKI-BJ Joint Youth Group
Coordinator, bekibjusy@gmail.com bekibjkadima@gmail.com
www.bekibjkadima.blogspot.com

Windows 2014 Update

In the [November BEKI Bulletin](#), we reported on a new major building maintenance and renovation project in the works for 2014. The “Windows 2014” project will replace original single-pane and mostly non-working windows in the George G. Posener Daily Chapel, as well as in the office and possibly the classrooms. Deterioration in the associated masonry will be addressed at the same time. Installation of new custom-manufactured windows will enhance energy efficiency and ventilation, provide better temperature control, eliminate the water penetration and damage to masonry, finishes and office equipment, and will control dampness and mold. The new windows will also enhance safety and security.

The project will cost between \$40,000 and \$150,000, depending on how much of our need we address in this phase. Our current plan is that this will be an \$80,000 project. All of these windows will have to be replaced, but we are determined to avoid over-extending our resources. It is most efficient if we can replace all of them at once, but the needs have been prioritized. If we don’t replace all of these windows now, there will be a similar-sized project sooner or later. Thanks to the efforts of Barbara Rader, Dennis Rader, Bob Spear, Eric Dunsker, David Wright, Jay Sokolow and the officers, a detailed plan has been prepared,

and a grant has been sought from the current Federation-Foundation Special Grant Program.

This grant program may provide a match of 50% for up to the first \$37,500 raised for the project. That means that earmarked contributions for this project will be matched by the Federation-Foundation grant.

Inasmuch as the Congregation has recently completed major (and costly) building work, and has also just completed its BEKI 120 Campaign and the Annual Appeal, the directors decided not to undertake another major general fundraising campaign. Instead, the Congregation is seeking support from a small number of supporters who may be interested and able to help in this project. For the project to proceed, we will need payment or pledge of part of the funding by Dec. 31, and part by March 31, 2014. The work order will be placed this winter, and the windows will be installed in the spring and summer. We are trying to schedule the work to minimize the disruption to ongoing synagogue activities and special events.

To learn more about the project, or to provide significant support, please contact Peggy at office@beki.org (203) 389-2108 x14, who can direct your communication to the person in charge of technical or financial matters.

Sisterhood

Jewish Family Ethics: Respect

Honor Your Father and Mother

Our tradition emphasizes the importance of honoring our parents. The family plays a central role in Judaism, both socially and in transmitting the traditions of the religion. To honor one’s father and mother is one of the Ten Commandments.

Jewish families try to have close, respectful family relationships, with care for both the elderly and young. Religious observance is an integral part of home life, including the weekly Shabbat and keeping kosher dietary laws. The Talmud tells parents to teach their children a trade and survival skills, and children are asked to look

after their parents.

More Sisterhood News

Early in the spring of 2014, Sisterhood is planning to recognize the special place of Carole and Paul Bass in our community and in our hearts by dedicating the Sisterhood Book of Life 5774 in their names. Forms to sponsor a dedication listing will be sent our members and supporters in February.

Sisterhood, along with the Buckman family and other supporters, are hard at work planning an update to the upstairs ladies’ and men’s bathrooms.

Shabbatot (Saturdays)

דַּרְשָׁנִים

Darshanim

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

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

Steven Fraade will serve as darshan on Shabbat morning Dec. 21, parashat Shemot.

Mark Oppenheimer will serve as darshan on Shabbat morning Jan. 4, parashat Bo.

Hana Feldman, bat mitzva, will serve as darshanit on Shabbat morning Jan. 11, parashat BeShalah.

Shabbat Shalom Torah Study

The *Shabbat Shalom Torah Study* meets every other Saturday morning at 10:45 in the office and is an ideal setting for veteran and novice shul-goers alike to explore the scriptural readings and liturgy of the day in a supportive setting.

Expertly led by **Steven Fraade**, with **Rabbi Alan Lovins**, **Rabbi Murray Levine**, **Nadav Sela**, **David Kuperstock**, **Isaiah Cooper**, **Rabbi Eric Silver** and others, the Shabbat Shalom Torah

Study is a nurturing exploration of practice and theory presented in a participatory, non-threatening and multi-generational setting. Many members who take advantage of this unique offering feel a deeper sense of awe born of increased understanding and appreciation of the Torah reading, Haftara (Prophetic reading) and liturgy.

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

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

Mishna Sanhedrin at Mincha

Every Shabbat afternoon through March 1, between Mincha and Maariv services, a 25-minute study period featuring the classic Mishna text of Mishna Sanhedrin. The masekhet deals with judicial procedure in capital and other cases, along with related subjects. The Mishna is a compilation of Jewish law redacted by Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi around the year 220

CE in Tzipori, northern Israel, based largely, apparently, on the teachings of Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Aqiva.

Who knows six? *Shisha sidrei Mishna*: Six are the Orders of the Mishna. The volume Sanhedrin (Supreme Council) is a tractate within the order Neziqin (Damages). The other five orders are Zeraim (Seeds); Moed (Festivals); Nashim (Women); Qodashim (Holies); and Tohorot (Purities). Sanhedrin is one of the sixty tractates of the Mishna.

Following the compilation of the Mishna, two sets of extended outlines of discussions based on the Mishna and called “Gemara,” were composed, one is Bavel (Iraq) and one in Jerusalem (Israel). The two works published together, usually with extensive commentaries and apparatuses, are called the Talmud.

Mondays

Rashi Study Group: Shemuel

Each Monday morning from 7:45 to 8:30 adults meet in the Library Chapel to read Rashi’s commentary on the TaNaKh (Hebrew Bible). The Rashi Study Group (RSG) is has begun the Book of Shemuel (Samuel). Characters in the narrative include the Prophet Samuel, King Saul and King David, Mikhal, Batsheva, and more. 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 more. 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



Steven Fraade



Mark Oppenheimer



Alan Lovins



Nadav Sela



David Kuperstock



Eric Silver



Jon-Jay Tilsen

Continued on **Page 7**

Adult Studies

Continued from Page 6

and linguistic context. Visitors and new participants are welcome. Hebrew and English texts are available. The RSG meets immediately following the 7 a.m. *shaharit* service. On Jan. 20, MLK Day, and on Feb. 17, Presidents Day, morning services begin at 9 a.m., and the RSG meets 9:45 to 10:30. With Jon-Jay Tilsen.

Wednesdays

Hebrew Word of the Week

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

Rabbis’ Study Group

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



Murray Levine

Thursdays

Mini Morning Learning Service

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

Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group

New Time: The *Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group* meets on Thursdays during the lunch hour (noon to 1). The Group has met weekly since 1999. For some participants, this is their first direct experience with Talmud text; for others, it is a continuation of a long journey. The Group focuses on

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

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



Isaiah Cooper

The Sanhedrin Study Group will not meet on Dec. 26 and Jan. 2.

Sundays

Liturgical Hebrew I (עברית)

Introduction to Liturgical (Prayerbook) Hebrew, six one-hour lessons, consecutive Sunday mornings, beginning Nov. 3, 9:45 to 10:45 a.m., library, with Gilah Benson-Tilsen.

Late registrants accepted. Familiarity with Hebrew alef-bet prerequisite. Ideal for students interested in understanding the prayerbook and participating in public worship. Also suitable for students interested in Biblical and Modern Hebrew. *Siddur Hebrew* represents a core vocabulary and basic grammar common in all forms of the language.

Fee: \$40 (book plus registration; \$15 without book). To register contact Peggy office@beki.org.

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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Dear Rabbi: What is the symbolism of throwing the dirt on a coffin at a Jewish funeral? Signed, Dying to Know

Dear Dying: It is not a symbol. It is part of an actual burial.

The first shovels of dirt at a burial service can be a very difficult moment, because it makes an abstract idea real. The mitzva of qevura (burial) is an opportunity to provide an act of kindness that cannot be reciprocated by the direct beneficiary. Even after life has departed, the human body is a most sacred object and is treated with reverence; burial is considered the most honorable treatment for the lifeless.

There is a range of ways that world cultures view the lifeless human body. Rabbinic tradition is that we treat it with reverence. Even the body of a non-citizen convicted and executed for a terrible crime or killed in battle is treated with reverence. Absent protocols requiring respectful treatment of the human body (living or dead), it is likely that the body will end up being treated as no more than a side of meat or waste.

Dear Rabbi: What is the symbolism of lighting Shabbat candles? Signed, In the Dark

Dear Dark: It is not a symbol. Originally, the lighting of Shabbat lamps was primarily to give light so that people would not have to (as they say in the punch line of many Jewish mother jokes) “sit in the dark.” In most times and places, if Jews did not light Shabbat lamps, it would be dark, because most people did not otherwise have artificial lighting to illuminate the night. When the sun went down, it got dark. Lighting Shabbat lamps meant that this one day of the week was special in that people could see, and so could stay up later talking, singing, eating, studying, and reading. Shabbat was a very special day for that reason.

It is important to light Shabbat candles before sundown (by tradition, we aim for 18 minutes before sunset) in order to avoid violating the Biblical commandment against igniting and transferring flames on Shabbat. This is part of the elevation and celebration of the value of human labor; by ceasing from a specific and large set of tasks on Shabbat, we affirm and insist upon control of our own labor, which is essential to our humanity. In the Creation Story, the Omnipotent God “works” to create the world in six days and rests on the seventh, thereby attributing a Divine value to labor as well as a God-given right for every person and work animal to a day of rest. In the Exodus Story, we must leave Egypt because we were not created to work for Pharaoh but rather to do God’s work in the world and so that our own families can enjoy the fruit of our labor.

Thousands of years later, the question of the value and dignity of labor and labor rights are central to the political and economic struggles around the globe. Preparing in advance for Shabbat (i.e., preparing meals and lighting candles before sundown) is a great sign of respect (as one would prepare in advance for a distinguished guest) and an affirmation of control over our own labor.

In our day the lighting serves as a moment for an individual or family to pause and begin a period of sacred time. The act of lighting the candles links one Jewish household to another and one generation to another.

Lighting candles also trains our children and habituates us to prepare. While preparation and planning seem to come naturally to some, others procrastinate or otherwise struggle to complete their assignments on time. The weekly planning and execution of a Shabbat celebration *by the book* is an excellent exercise with broad benefits.

Dear Rabbi: I see some young men in shul who don’t wear a tallit, but I think they are observant and so what is the deal? Signed, Coming un-fringed

Dear Cornered: The mitzva to place fringes (tsitsit) on the corners of our garments is referenced in the Shema (Num. 15), as a visual aid to remember and perform all of the mitzvot. This mitzva is considered obligatory for adult (age 13 and older) men and optional for adult women (optional in the sense that they are exempt from the requirement but may nevertheless wear fringes if they wish). However, in our day, most of our garments do not have corners that require these fringes. As a matter of piety, we go to the trouble of wearing a small toga called a “tallit” so that we have the opportunity to fulfill the mitzva each day, at least for a few minutes while at prayer.

Since the Shema refers to the mitzva of tsitsit, it is most appropriate to wear a tallit at least during the recitation of the Shema (and while we are at it, for the morning service).

In some communities, perhaps due to poverty or immaturity of the youth, or to emphasize the importance of marriage and to advertise the man’s availability, young men did not fulfill this mitzva until they married (typically at age 15-18). It is no violation to not wear a tallit; it is simply a missed opportunity. In our day and in our community, when tallitot are freely available, and men often do not marry until well after age 15, there is no good reason for men to miss the opportunity to fulfill this mitzva. Some men fulfill the mitzva of tsitsit by wearing a smaller tallit qatan (arba kanfot), a smock-like shirt often worn as an under-garment; some sages hold the opinion that while that is meritorious, we must also *wrap* ourselves which requires a larger over-garment, i.e. tallit.

For most of the mitzvot, it is our practice to encourage minor children to fulfill them, as a matter of training and piety. Tefillin are normally reserved for adulthood because they require care that younger children cannot provide. We encourage men to delay the mitzva to father children for social and economic reasons. Kids who run around during tefila are not ready to wear a tallit; but the minor who is habituated to recite the shema and amida is, arguably, ready to take on this mitzva.



December 2013

28 Kislev 5774 - 28 Tevet 5774

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1 <i>Hanukkah IV Numbers</i> No Religious School 9:45am Introduction to Liturgical (Prayerbook) Hebrew w/Gilah Benson-Tilsen (reservations required)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">28 Kislev</p>	<p>2 <i>Hanukkah V Numbers</i> 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour</p> <p style="text-align: center;">29 Kislev</p>	<p>3 <i>Rosh Hodesh - Hanukkah VI Numbers</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">30 Kislev</p>	<p>4 <i>Rosh Hodesh - Hanukkah VII Numbers</i> 9:00am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program 6:15pm Hanuka Party (reservations required)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 Tevet</p>	<p>5 <i>Hanukkah VIII Numbers</i> 12:00pm Talmud Study Group</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2 Tevet</p>	<p>6 4:06pm Candle Lighting</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3 Tevet</p>	<p>7 <i>Vayigash</i> 10:45am Children's Programs Qiddush: Cohen (Gloria) 4:05pm Minha-Maariv</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4 Tevet</p>
<p>8 9:00am Religious School 9:45am Introduction to Liturgical (Prayerbook) Hebrew w/Gilah Benson-Tilsen (reservations required)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5 Tevet</p>	<p>9 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour 7:30pm Executive Board Meeting (off-site)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">6 Tevet</p>	<p>10</p> <p style="text-align: center;">7 Tevet</p>	<p>11 9:00am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program</p> <p style="text-align: center;">8 Tevet</p>	<p>12 12:00pm Talmud Study Group</p> <p style="text-align: center;">9 Tevet</p>	<p>13 <i>Fast of Tevet 10 Exodus Isaiah</i> 4:06pm Candle Lighting</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10 Tevet</p>	<p>14 <i>Vayehi</i> 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Shabbat Shalom Study Group Qiddush: Kliffield & Levy 12:45pm Shabbat Schmooze: Will Fogel "Green Energy in our Homes" 4:05pm Minha-Maariv</p> <p style="text-align: center;">11 Tevet</p>
<p>15 9:00am Religious School</p> <p style="text-align: center;">12 Tevet</p>	<p>16 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour</p> <p style="text-align: center;">13 Tevet</p>	<p>17</p> <p style="text-align: center;">14 Tevet</p>	<p>18 9:00am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program</p> <p style="text-align: center;">15 Tevet</p>	<p>19 12:00pm Talmud Study Group</p> <p style="text-align: center;">16 Tevet</p>	<p>20 4:09pm Candle Lighting 6:00pm 20's/30's Havura Dinner (reservations required)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">17 Tevet</p>	<p>21 <i>Shemot</i> Darshan; Steven Fraade 10:45am Children's Programs Qiddush: TBA 4:10pm Minha-Maariv</p> <p style="text-align: center;">18 Tevet</p>
<p>22 No Religious School</p> <p style="text-align: center;">19 Tevet</p>	<p>23 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour 7:30pm General Board Meeting</p> <p style="text-align: center;">20 Tevet</p>	<p>24</p> <p style="text-align: center;">21 Tevet</p>	<p>25 Office Closed 9:00am Shaharit No Rabbi's Study Group No Religious School No Benei Mitzva Program</p> <p style="text-align: center;">22 Tevet</p>	<p>26 Office Closed 12:00pm Talmud Study Group</p> <p style="text-align: center;">23 Tevet</p>	<p>27 Office Closed 4:13pm Candle Lighting</p> <p style="text-align: center;">24 Tevet</p>	<p>28 <i>Vaera</i> 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Shabbat Shalom Torah Study Qiddush: Kemper/Zlotoff 4:10pm Minha-Maariv</p> <p style="text-align: center;">25 Tevet</p>
<p>29 No Religious School</p> <p style="text-align: center;">26 Tevet</p>	<p>30 Office Closed 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour</p> <p style="text-align: center;">27 Tevet</p>	<p>31 Office Closed</p> <p style="text-align: center;">28 Tevet</p>	<p>Reserve Your Date</p> <p>Bar- and bat-mitzva celebrants for 2014 to 2018 who do not have a written confirmation of a date reservation may wish to reserve a date by contacting Peggy at office@beki.org (203) 389-2108 x14. Dates are available on a first-come basis to members. Your early reservation maximizes your chance to reserve your choice of dates.</p>			

Service Times

Sundays 9 a.m. Shaharit 5:45 p.m. Maariv	Mondays 7 a.m. Shaharit 5:45 p.m. Maariv	Tuesdays 7 a.m. Shaharit 5:45 p.m. Maariv	Wednesdays 7 a.m. Shaharit 5:45 p.m. Maariv	Thursdays 8:15 a.m. Shaharit 5:45 p.m. Maariv	Fridays 7 a.m. Shaharit 6 p.m. Qabbalat Shabbat	Saturdays 9:15 a.m. Shaharit Before sunset: Minha
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Federal & Staff Holiday Schedule

Weekday morning services coinciding with most federal holidays are at 9 a.m. On Thursday Nov. 28., Wednesday Dec. 25 and Wednesday Jan. 1, morning services are at 9 a.m. Evening services are at their usual time, 5:45, except for Thanksgiving, when public worship is not held at BEKI.

The office will be closed from Wednesday Dec. 25 through Wednesday Jan. 1, and will reopen Thursday Jan. 2 at 9 a.m. The closure is for federal and staff holidays. Services will be held at their scheduled hours during that period.



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