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BEKI

Congregation
Beth El-Keser Israel

bulletin

April 2008

Adar II – Nisan 5768
Vol. 14 Issue 4

Passover at BEKI

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Café Israel

Congregations BEKI and BJ invite you to Café Israel: A Night of Israeli Food, Dancing, and Celebration in Honor of Israel's 60th Anniversary with Dance Leader Shmulik Gov-Ari.

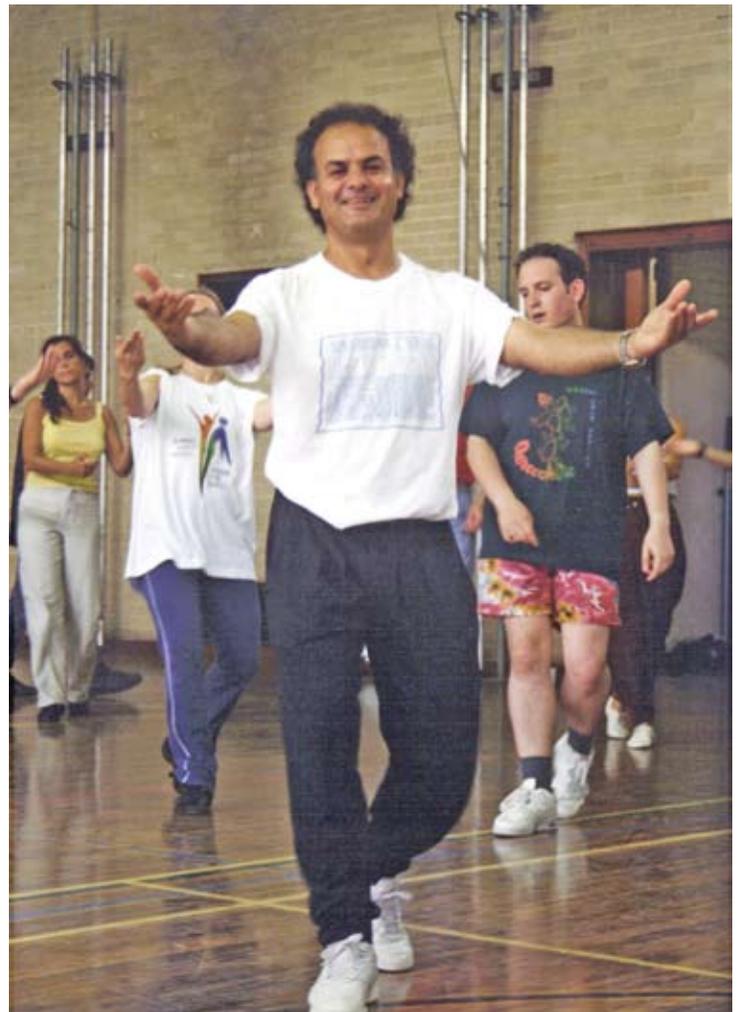
On Saturday, April 5, from 8:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. at Congregation B'nai Jacob, we hope you will join us for a fun, high-energy community-wide evening of Israeli culture in celebration of the 60th anniversary of Israel's founding. Internationally-known dance choreographer Shmulik Gov-Ari will lead us at the event. (Shmulik leads dance groups from Paris to Australia. Check him out on YouTube).

Come learn how to do circle and line dances with a Middle-Eastern beat — not just the basic 'horas' you do at Bar Mitzvahs and weddings. Do you enjoy salsa or swing? You'll be surprised at how many modern Israeli dances incorporate elements of those great dances. Not a dancer? Come and enjoy great music, eat and drink delicious Israeli wines, snacks, and desserts. Shop on the side for Israeli and other goods from the B'nai Jacob and BEKI gift shops.

But, most of all, join us for a wonderful adult-only community event, and bring your friends!

Tickets can be obtained at www.bnaijacob.org (under News/Events), or call the B'nai Jacob office at 389-2111. \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door. Event sponsorships also available. Reservations recommended.

If you are interested in volunteering to help, please contact BEKI chairpersons Rena Cheskis-Gold at 397-1497, or Marsha Beller at 387-4657.



Shmulik Gov-Ari

BABYSITTERS

Need a babysitter so you can attend Café Israel, or any other reason? A group of 10th grade BEKI girls will babysit for you! We charge \$8 per hour and can be contacted at BEKIBabies@gmail.com.

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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 information about advertising, call the synagogue office.

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

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A Message from Rabbi Tilsen & Dear Rabbi
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Passover at BEKI

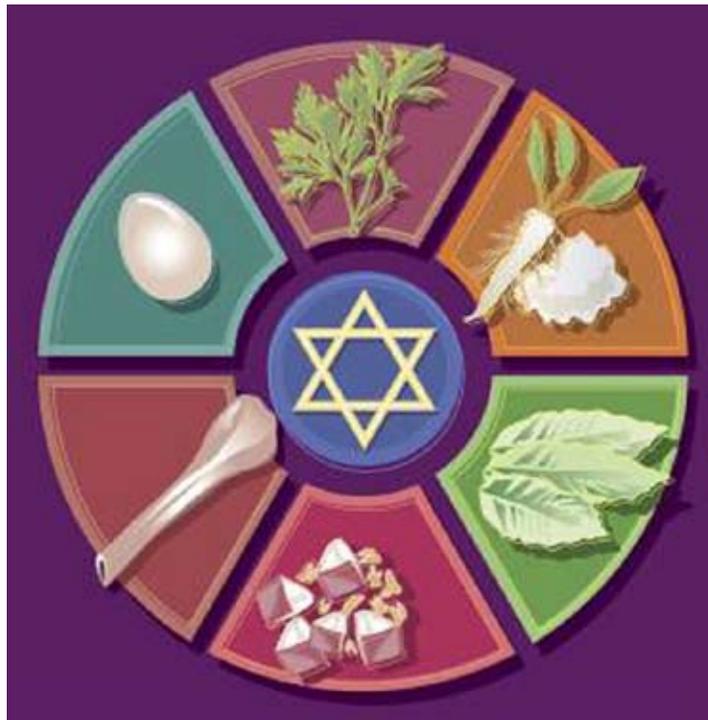
Kosher for Pesah guidelines, are available in the “Rabbinical Assembly Pesah Guide” in the BEKI literature rack (also available by request from the office) and at www.rabbinicalassembly.org. This includes information on the particular issues that arise when Pesah begins Motse’ei Shabbat (Saturday night), as it does this year.

Selling of Hametz

During the eight days of Pesah (Passover), it is forbidden for Jews to eat or own edible *hametz*. Hametz is any product containing wheat, barley, oats, spelt or rye that has not been especially prepared kosher for Pesah. Ideally, one physically disposes of all hametz by the morning before Pesah. In order to be sure that this has taken place, or to avoid the loss of expensive hametz such as liquor, one can sell their hametz for the period of Pesah. If you would like to authorize Rabbi Tilsen to sell your hametz to someone who is allowed to own it, please sign the form available at each daily morning and evening service beginning at Purim or sign and return the form included in the March synagogue mailing for that purpose. If you need a form faxed to you, give Peggy (389-2108 x14 or office@beki.org) your fax number or fax her at 389-5899; you can also find a form at www.beki.org/forms.html. The form is a power of attorney allowing Rabbi Tilsen to sell your hametz for you.

Kinahara: Kosher for Pesah

BEKI members and supporters with questions regarding Passover observances are welcome to contact Rabbi Tilsen at 389-2108 x10. Answers to frequently asked questions can also be found at the website of the Kashrut Initiative of the New Haven Area Rabbinical Assembly: www.kinahara.org.



Kulanu – Special Needs Seder

The Sisterhood of Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel, and Kulanu, in conjunction with Jewish Family Service and Abel

Catering, will host the twenty-sixth annual Adult Special Needs Model Seder at BEKI on Monday, April 7. Each year the Sisterhood has hosted an enthusiastic group of Jewish adults from the New Haven area with a variety of special needs. This year, about 75 people are expected to participate.

For many, this is their only taste of Passover and one that they relish and look forward to each year. The Torah teaches of four types of children, and the Hagada reminds us that we must tell the story of the Exodus to each son and daughter of Israel in the way that is most meaningful to him or her. Through the efforts of Sisterhood, Kulanu Director Dr. Lauren Kempton, the generosity of Abel Catering and the good offices of the Jewish Family Services, the Exodus is re-enacted through song, food and story at a table set in the Passover tradition.

Kulanu is BEKI’s outreach program for adults with special needs. Kulanu is supported by The David & Lillian Levine Endowment for People with Special Needs at Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel, which is managed by the Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven.

Hagadot and Seder Plates at Giftshop

Hagadot (do-it-yourself guide and service books) for Pesah, including the Rabbinical Assembly’s *Passover Haggadah: The Feast of Freedom*, are available at the Sisterhood Giftshop and wherever fine

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Judaica is sold. The Giftshop also offers a significant collection of decorative seder plates and other Pesah supplies (such as toy frogs).

If you purchase your *hagadot* or other items from Amazon.com or Buy.com and access these merchants via the links at www.beki.org/links.html, BEKI receives a small commission on your purchase, at no additional cost to you. You must use these links each time you access the merchants' website in order for BEKI to receive a commission.

Siyyum Bekhorot: Feast or Famine

The Fast of the First Born is Thursday, April 17, beginning at dawn. Firstborn who attend the Thursday morning service at 8:15 may conclude their fast by partaking of the *seudat mitzva* (obligatory feast) celebrating a *siyyum*, the conclusion of a study project. Services and *siyyum* will end by 9:30 a.m. All may attend.

The Fast is normally observed the morning before Pesah. It is advanced this year as fasting is usually not permitted on Friday or Shabbat.

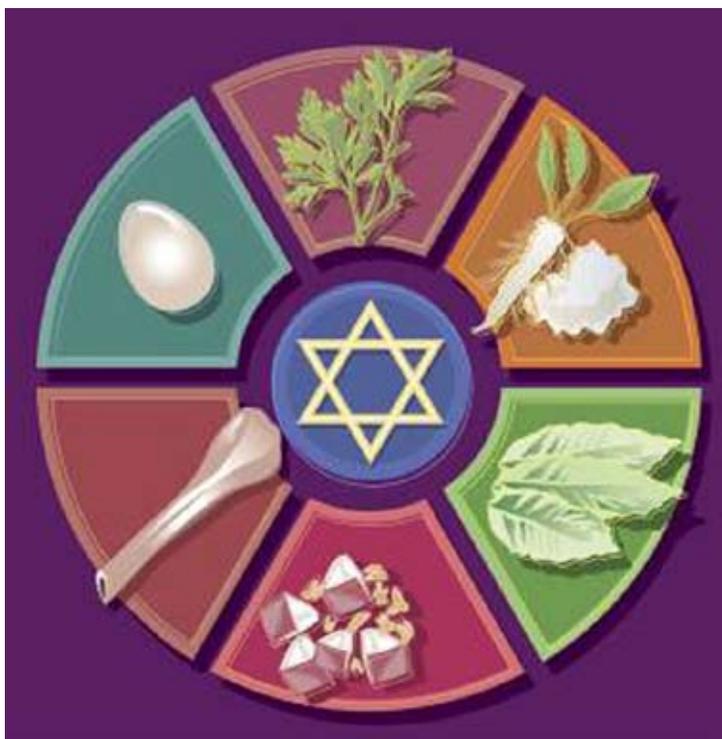
Bediqat Hametz and Biur Hametz

On the night of Thursday, April 17, it is customary to perform *Bediqat Hametz*, the final check for leaven before Passover. This procedure can be done as a spiritual or fun ritual with children or adults. The next morning, Friday, April 18, it is customary to perform *Biur Hametz*, a final "search and destroy" mission for leavening, to insure compliance with the rule against possessing or eating hametz dur-

ing the festival. Instructions for *Bediqat Hametz* and *Biur Hametz* can be found in most *Hagadot*, including the Rabbinical Assembly's *Passover Haggadah: The Feast of Freedom*.

Let All Who Are Hungry...

The Seder of Pesah is a wonderful opportunity to welcome others into our homes. Our congregation comprises many people who may not have extended family locally, do not have Jewish relatives, are



new to the area, or who otherwise would benefit greatly from a Seder invitation. If you are able to open your Seder to additional guests, please contact Rabbi Tilsen at your earliest opportunity at 389-2108 x10 (jjtilsen@beki.org). If you are able to host an adult who is a mental health services consumer or who has developmental disabilities, please contact Education Director Dr. Lauren Kempton (389-2108 x33 or lkempton@beki.org).

Service Times for Pesah

The Shabbat *mincha* service on April 19, the afternoon immediately before Pesah, will be at 1 p.m. On Sunday morning, April 20, festival services begin at 9:15 a.m.; on Sunday evening, services are at 6:30. Monday morning, April 21, festival services are at 9:15, and Monday afternoon festival service begins at 5:45.

Pesah Candle Lighting

The first night of Passover is Motse'ei Shabbat (Saturday) night April 19; candle lighting in New Haven is *after* 8:21 p.m. For the second night, candle lighting should be *after* 7:22. Because it is not permitted to light candles on Shabbat or on the Festival days, our practice is light a flame before Shabbat that will burn at least 26 hours, and to use that flame to light the Pesah candles.

Conservative Community Second Seder

On the second night of Pesah, Sunday, April 20, BEKI is hosting the Conservative Community Second Seder, which is presented along with Congregation B'nai Jacob, Temple Beth Shalom and Congregation Or Shalom. For information or reservations

contact the BEKI office. Advance reservations are required; contact Peggy at 389-2108 x14 or office@beki.org. Worship services are at 6:30 p.m.; the seder and dinner begin at 7 p.m.

Shir HaShirim – Song of Songs

The Biblical love poetry of *Shir HaShirim* — *Song of Songs* will be read on the morning of Shabbat Pesah, April 26 during the morning service. Tradition as-

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cribes the work to King Solomon himself, writing 2,900 years ago. Celebrate the spring holiday of Pesah with this beautiful and moving reading.

Yizkor Memorial Service

The Yizkor Memorial Service will be held during the 9:15 Festival morning service on Sunday, April 27. The Festival service includes a *Shaharit* morning service, *Hallel* (Psalms of praise), a Torah reading and *Haftara*, and the *Musaf* additional service, and concludes by noon. 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 Pesah season, and to honor the memories of our loved ones.

Sefira – Counting the Omer

At the second Seder (Sunday, April 20), we begin 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 experi-

enced in the Exodus from Egypt until the revelation at Sinai.

The simple home ceremony is printed

calendar of the Jewish People synchronized, no simple accomplishment, given the dispersion and isolation of much of

the community. The term *omer* refers to the measure (one handful) of grain that was used to create a physical relic of the counting. With a physical reminder, even illiterate people could do a recount in case they forgot the day's number.

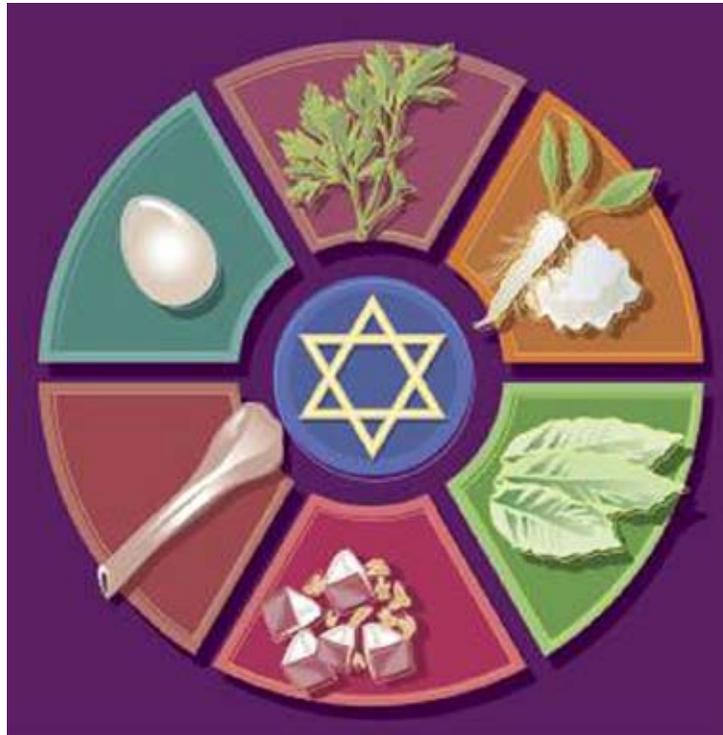
Families with young children may use this opportunity to help their children understand and experience anticipation, planning, counting and hope.

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

— Psalm 90:12

Beyond Pesah: Yom HaShoah Candles

Sisterhood is selling yellow Holocaust memorial candles this year. Candles may be purchased from the Sisterhood Giftshop on Sundays 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., when Religious School is in session, or call Mimi Glenn 397-3851 any other time.



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

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Scholarship Available

There is a scholarship available for High School Seniors from the Jewish Home for Children Scholarship Foundation. The scholarship is for the 2008-09 year and is based on financial need. Applicants must have resided in New Haven County for the past year. If interested please contact Pat McClintick at the office of Sidney Gimple at 776-8100.

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Mazal Tov to

Jennifer Klein on her award of tenure at Yale University
Karel Koenig on the birth of her grandson Wyatt Charles Koenig

Welcome New Members and Their Families

Ellie Klein & Dan Finkel and Oren

News

BEKI Email Notices

Some subscribers, particularly those using AOL, ATT (SBC, SNET, Yahoo) email, have reported that they are no longer receiving weekly “BEKI Happenings” and occasional lifecycle “BEKI Alerts.” If this has happened to you, please let us know (jjtilsen@beki.org) and check your spam/junk/bulk email box and mark mail from BEKI as “safe sender” or “not junk” or similar. If you can’t find it at all, please contact your service provider and tell them you want to receive all of your mail from @beki.org.

If you have not received these messages in the past but would like to know, just send an email request to jjtilsen@beki.org.

Children’s Shabbat Havura Siddur Workshop

A Children’s Shabbat Havura Siddur Workshop for BEKI children ages 4 and younger with a parent (or adult) will be

held on Sunday, April 6, from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. in the upstairs social hall. Participants will create a personalized Siddur (prayerbook) cover for the Siddur that the child and parent will use at the Children’s Shabbat Havura. Bring your creativity and your child’s Hebrew name. Please register by calling Dorothy Bowser at 389-2108 x13 or writing dbowser@beki.org.

The siddurim will then be laminated and ready for use the following Shabbat. The Children’s Shabbat Havura meets every Shabbat morning at 10:45 year-round and is led by participating parents.

Rosenkrantz Family Library News

The Library Committee is happy to announce that it has nearly completed its transfer of the BEKI library collection to the new Rozenkrantz Family Library. There congregants will find books of Jewish literature, Talmudic texts, a collection

of liturgical works, such as many different types of siddurim, works of Jewish history, philosophy, and social science, and a gathering of children’s picture books and young adult literature. The next phase in the Library Committee’s work will be the topical organization and cataloging of the library’s holdings.

Individual interested in donating to BEKI’s library should contact Bennett Lovett-Graff by phone 387-2683 or by email at bennett_lovett_graff@hotmail.com. Please note that the library prefers books that are in good condition, related to Judaism and Jewish culture, and are likely to be used by our congregants. Please do not donate books that fail to meet these basic criteria. Your donation can be treated as a tax-deductible contribution. Please contact office manager Peggy Hackett by phone at 389-2108 or by email at office@beki.org for more information.

Join the Minyan Seekers / Minyan Makers Mailing List

If you would like email notification when BEKI members are seeking additional participants for a daily service in order to insure a minyan, and might like to request that others attend on a specific date on which you seek a minyan, send a message to minyan-subscribe@beki.org. You can unsubscribe by sending a message to minyan-unsubscribe@beki.org and obtain additional instructions at minyan-help@beki.org. If that doesn’t work, just send a request to jjtilsen@beki.org. (You may need to copy and paste these addresses to send your message, as the hyperlinks do not work in some email programs.)

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Shabbatot

Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan

The "Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan," which meets every other Saturday morning at 10:45 in BEKI's Library Chapel, is an ideal setting for veteran and novice shul-goers alike to become more comfortable and proficient in the Shoharim (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.

New: Kulanu Discussion Group

Adults who may take part in the Kulanu Friendship Circle and the Saul's Circle outreach programs are invited to participate in a Shabbat morning discussion group which will meet on Shabbat morning, April 12 from 10:45 to 11:45 with Dr. Lauren Kempton. For information, contact Lauren at 389-2108 x33 or lkempton@beki.org

Sundays

Talmud with Moshe Meiri

Serious high school students are studying Talmud on Sunday mornings with Moshe Meiri. The class meets Sunday mornings from 9:45 to 11:45. Students wishing to enroll for the Spring Semester should speak with Moshe and should register with the office (office@beki.org). The classes are open only to students in

grades 8 to 12. This class is taught in an academic Jewish Studies style. Disciplined attendance is expected. Registration and materials fee is \$120 for the spring semester. Moshe may be reached at moshe@snet.net.

Mondays

Rashi Study Group

Each Monday morning from 7:45a to 8:30a 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 7:00a *shoharim* morning service. New participants are welcome.

Wednesdays

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

Mishna Makot with Rabbi Peter Stein

Wednesday nights, April 2 and 9, 7:30 to 9 p.m., George G. Posener Daily Chapel Beit Midrash at BEKI

This class will cover the laws concerning scheming witnesses, cities of refuge and corporal punishment as recorded by the rabbis of the 2nd century in Mishna Makot. Discussion will focus on the religious and social ideas presented as well as the



Peter Stein

structure and literary features of the text. Each class will include learning in both *hevruta* (partners) and *shiur* (seminar). No prior knowledge

of Hebrew or rabbinic texts is necessary. Free with advance registration to office@beki.org 389-2108 x14. The class began in March and will continue at least into mid-April.

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@cooper-law.net.

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."

BEKI Sisterhood was pleased to provide the refreshments for the Megila reading and for the Religious School Purim Carnival. Everyone had a great time!

Planning a Bar or Bat Mitzvah? Sisterhood rents tablecloths – please call Adele Tyson at 389-9599 for details.

In memory of her father, Marcel Gutman, Mimi Glenn has set up a teen scholarship program through the Sisterhood. Eligible teens are those in grades 8 to 12 who are going to Israel with a youth group or school program, or engaging in Jewish youth programs during the year or the summer. Some examples of appropriate programs would be the Ezra 8th Grade Israel trip, Mifgash, March of the Living, USY Kinnus, USY on Wheels, Camp Ramah. The parent or guardian of the eligible teen must be a member of BEKI and BEKI Sisterhood (annual dues \$25).

Applications for the scholarship and information about Sisterhood membership can be picked up at the BEKI Office.

Tax-deductible donations to the scholarship fund can be sent to:

**BEKI Sisterhood,
c/o Miriam Ratner
135 Seneca Rd.
New Haven, CT 06515**



Marcel Gutman

Don't forget to patronize our gift shop – Beautiful items for brides, Bar & Bat Mitzvah teens and house warmings.

Adele Tyson
Ruthie Greenblatt
Co-Presidents

Torah Fund

For Conservative Judaism to continue to flourish, it depends on a very small seg-

ment of the Jewish population, and every one of us counts enormously to insure this success.



The Jewish Theological Seminary is at its heart, and by purchasing cards your dollars go directly to its benefit. BEKI Sisterhood has always been a faithful supporter and this year (2007-08) we have sent in over \$1800. Everyone in our BEKI community can participate – just send Torah Fund cards for simchas, get-well and sympathy. They are just \$4 (includes postage). Save gas too! Call Barbara Cushen – 407-0314 – and your card will be sent for you.

Donations will be listed next month.

Barbara Cushen
Torah Fund Chair

BEKI/BJ USY Spring 2008 Calendar

- April 4-6** – Regional Spring Convention * #
- April 13** – Chocolate Seder *
- May 18** – Final Regional Event – Six Flags * #
- May 30-June 1** – Inter-Chapter Shabbaton * #
- June 8** – Beach Day/Beach Bonfire/Elections * #

Plus Shabbat Dinners, SATO Events!

Visit our Facebook group (BEKI/BJ USY)

Advisor: Shiri Friedman 789-0322; shirisf@gmail.com

- * 8th graders welcome
- # Members-only event

