The “Solar Cycle” is also called “The 28-Year Cycle” or “The Major Cycle,” in contrast to the “Lunar Cycle” or “19-Year Cycle” or “The Minor Cycle.” The Solar Cycle is based on the calendrical calculations of Shemuel, which divides the year into 365 ¼ days, as does the Julian calendar. In this system, each year is divided into four seasons of 91 days, 7 ½ hours. According to this calendar, every 28 years the Spring Season (tequfat Nisan) as calculated by Shemuel begins on a Tuesday night at the hour “zero,” that is, at the same position as during year 1 (i.e., the year of Creation) on the Hebrew calendar. This moment is marked with the recitation of the blessing “… who creates the Beginning,” along with celebratory Psalms. As our lives are relatively short, individuals participate in this ceremony just two or three times. It may be compared to “watching the ball drop” on Jan. 1, 2000.

“We gather on that day in the early morning after shaharit prayers in a place where one can see the sun rays and we say the blessing with a crowd. It should be recited within three hours of sunrise” (R. Sar-Shalom).

The “moment” the vernal equinox occurs moves around the clock six hours each year, because the year is 365 ¼ days long. So in the first year of a four-year cycle, the “moment” of the equinox is “0” hours (call it 7 p.m. for our illustration). The next year, that moment will occur ¼ day (six hours) later, at 1 a.m. On the third year, it occurs at 7 a.m.; on the fourth, at 1 p.m. The next year it would occur at 7 p.m. – the first year of the new four-year cycle.

The first year of this four-year cycle, it turns out, occurs exactly once on each of the seven days of the week (because 365 is not evenly divisible by seven). It takes seven four-year cycles for the day of the week to “return” to Wednesday – hence the 28-year cycle.

Why on a Wednesday morning? According to the creation story in Genesis, the heavenly bodies were set in motion that day (or more precisely, what we call Tuesday night on the civil calendar). That is, Tuesday night represents the sun’s “starting point” in its annual and multi-year cycles. So, the coincidence of that Tuesday night with the four-year cycle of “quarter days” on which the vernal equinox as designated by Shemuel’s calendar occurs every 28 years.

This is also based on the rabbinic theory that the world was created in the springtime, which is why Nisan (and not Tishrei) is the first month on the Hebrew calendar.

In the Talmud (Berakhot 59b), it is described this way:

“Our sages taught: One who sees the sun at the equinox, the moon as it is waxing, the stars [or planets] on their paths and the constellations in alignment says, “Blessed are You... who initiates Creation.” We would say that Abayei said [regarding the sun], “Every 28 years the cycle begins and the moment of the vernal equinox coincides with the night after the third day of the week which we call Wednesday.”

We will observe the Birkat HaHama ceremony on Wednesday, April 8, at 7:30 a.m. (immediately following the 7 a.m. service). The ceremony takes just ten minutes. Birkat HaHama will be immediately followed by a Siyum Bekhorot (see Page 4), from 7:45 to 8.

The next Birkat HaHama will be on Wednesday, April 8, 2037. Mark your calendar.
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: jjtisen@beki.org
- Visit our web page: www.beki.org

For advertising information, call the synagogue office.
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Ask us about establishing a fund, trust or annuity to ensure BEKI’s future.
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Visit us at www.beki.org
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.

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 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.

Kulanu – Special Needs Seder
The Sisterhood of Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel, and BEKI’s Kulanu Havura outreach program, in conjunction with Jewish Family Service and Abel Catering, will host the 27th annual Adult Special Needs Model Seder at BEKI on Tuesday, March 31. 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 70 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 Hagadah: The Feast of Freedom, are available at the Sisterhood.
Passover at BEKI
Continued from Page 3

Giftshop and wherever fine 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 Wednesday, April 8, the morning before the Pesah seder, beginning at dawn. First-born who attend the Wednesday service at 7 a.m. 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 8:05 a.m. All may attend.

Bediqat Hametz & Biur Hametz
On the night of Tuesday, April 7, 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, Wednesday, April 8, it is customary to perform Biur Hametz, a final “search and destroy” mission for leaven, to insure compliance with the rule against possessing or eating hametz during 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 (jtitsen@beki.org). If you are able to host an adult who is a mental health services consumer or who has developmental disabilities, please contact Special Outreach Director Dr. Lauren Kempton (389-2108 x33 or lkempston@beki.org).

Service Times for Pesah
There will be no public evening service at BEKI on Wednesday April 8, and Thursday April 9, the evenings of the seders. On Thursday and Friday mornings, April 9 and 10, festival services begin at 9:15. The following week, the seventh and eighth days of Pesah, Wednesday and Thursday mornings, April 15 and 16, festival services begin at 9:15.

Pesah Candle Lighting
The first night of Passover is Wednesday, April 8; candle lighting in New Haven is at 7:06 p.m. For the second night, candle lighting should be after 8:06 p.m. Because it is not permitted to strike matches on the Festival days, our practice is to light a flame before the festival begins that will burn at least 26 hours, and to use that flame to light the Pesah candles the second night. This will be especially important for lighting the Shabbat candles, which should be lighted at 7:09 p.m. on Friday.

Candle lighting for the 7th day, Wednesday, April 15, is at 7:13 p.m., and on Thursday, April 16 after 8:14 p.m.

Conservative Community Second Seder
Congregations B’nai Jacob, Beth El-Keser Israel, Temple Beth Sholom, and Or Shalom invite you to join the community in celebrating the second night of Passover at our Community Seder, Thursday, April 9, at Congregation B’nai Jacob, 75 Rimmon Road in Woodbridge. The festival service begins at 6 p.m., and the seder at 7 p.m. Reservations and advance payment required. Menu: Gefilte fish on lettuce with horseradish; Chicken soup with matzo balls; Chicken marsala or eggplant marinara; Glazed carrots & potato kugel; Assorted cookies and macaroons; Coffee/tea. For reservations contact the B’nai Jacob office, 389-2111.

Shir HaShirim – Song of Songs
The Biblical love poetry of Shir HaShirim - Song of Songs will be read on Shabbat Hol HaMoed Pesah, April 11, during the morning service. Tradition ascribes 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 a.m. Festival service on Thursday, April 16. The Festival service includes a Shaharit morning service, Hashirarim (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.
**BEYOND PESAH**

**Sefira – Counting the Omer**

At the second Seder (Thursday, April 9), 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 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 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

**Yom HaShoah**

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.

The New Haven community Yom HaShoah commemoration will be held on Monday, April 20 at 7 p.m. at the JCC.

**Yom HaZikaron, Yom HaAtzmaut**

Yom HaZikaron, Israeli Memorial Day, is observed Tuesday, April 28; Yom HaAtzmaut, Israel Independence Day, on Wednesday, April 29. These back-to-back holidays recognize the combination of suffering and joy, of sacrifice and achievement that often necessarily come together in our lives.

All of these days are marked liturgically in public worship at BEKI.

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**News**

**Purim Roundup**

Thanks to so many for assisting with making a successful Seudat Purim, and especially to:

- **Food Committee**: Linden Grazier, Eva Shragis, Liora Lew, Jessey Palumbo, Deborah Ziskin
- **Decorations**: Liora Lew, Mimi Glenn
- **Cutesie the Clown**: Ruthie Greenblatt
- **Face Painting**: Rachel, Allan, Avital and Maya Sutin
- **Purim Shpiel**: Darcy McGraw, Anna Altman, and a cast of thousands
- **Other Purim Songs**: Tsvi Benson-Tilsen, Tova Benson-Tilsen, Nathan Janette
- **Clean-up**: Jay Sokolow, Eva Shragis, Darryl Kuperstock, Ina Silverman
- **Singalong**: Ada Fenick and Yair Minsky

- **Registration Table**: Janice Lettick

Thank you to everyone who helped make the Purim basket project such a success again this year by placing orders, and to all the blessed deliverers! If you were not in synagogue to pick up your bag and no one was able to deliver it, you should have received a note. Please let the office know if you did not so we can amend the list for next year.

This is a significant fundraiser for BEKI, as is the food card project. Let the magnetic grocery list pad jog your memory regularly to buy food cards and use them every time you shop at Stop & Shop, Shop Rite, and Westville Kosher! Contact Gloria Cohen at 389-2070 or Jennifer Myer at 407-0136 and they can even deliver them to your door.

Thank you again, everyone!
Just For Kids

CSH Workshop
The Children’s Shabbat Havura Siddur Cover Workshop, for BEKI children (4 years and under) and one parent or adult, will be held on Sunday, April 26, from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. in the upstairs social hall. Participants will create a Personalized Siddur Cover for the siddur he or she will use at the CSH, bringing creativity and personalization to the service. Rabbi Tilsen will present a devar Torah.

Please register by e-mail: Jennifer Myer, (jennifermyermd@hotmail.com), by April 21 (to ensure we have enough stickers!). We will have the covers laminated and ready for the next Shabbat. The CSH meets every Shabbat year-round at BEKI at 10:45 a.m. in the Claire Goodwin Youth Room and is led by parent-volunteers.

USY Spring Regional Convention
The biggest Hanefesh regional Kinnus of the year happens in nearby North Haven, April 3-5. The Kinnus is for 8th-12th grade members, and there are special tracks for 8th and 12th graders. All paid members will get info in the mail from the Hanefesh regional office. For more information contact our advisor NoriAnna Cohen at NoriAnna.Cohen@quinnipiac.com

Kadima News
Kadima started the year 2009 with a couple of fun events, including a cheerful Friday night dinner at Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen and Miriam Benson’s house in mid-January, where we met for a delicious meal, games, schmoozing and Divrei Torah after attending Kabbalat Shabbat at BEKI.

February started off with two events, the traditional Superbowl Sunday Delibox fundraiser by the joined BEKI/BJ youth commission and later that day, Snowtubing in Woodbury, together with other groups from our HaNefesh region. Thanks for all the parent volunteers attending and helping out at both events!

One other highlight for our local chapter was a Tu B’Shvat Seder, celebrating the new year of the trees. We had a first taste of spring by consuming four cups of grape juice, symbolizing the move from cold winter to the warm fruit-bearing summer and learned about the seasons in Israel and its seven species, tasting some of them on our “Seder” plate.

On Sunday, March 1, a small group of new 5th grade Kadimaniks took the lead and met at BEKI for a Juggling workshop with advisor Nitzan just in time for Purim.

Now that spring is in the air, check our calendar for more exciting events like another fun Shabbat Dinner in April, a Lag BaOmer bonfire, and a rock climbing challenge for Shavuot. The annual Kadima final event will be organized by the regional office and will take place in June.

All 5th graders are welcome to our events in the spring! For more details on upcoming events or for questions about membership or about Kadima in general contact BEKI/BJ Kadima advisor Nitzan Stein Kokin directly at Kadima5769@beki.org, or 752-0361. For regional event details and registration go to www.hanefesh.org.

Note: 8th graders can attend both Kadima and USY programs. For USY events contact NoriAnna Cohen at USY5769@beki.org.

Looking forward to seeing many old and new faces in the spring.

Nitzan Stein Kokin

BEKI/BJ Kadima Calendar
• April 3-5, 8th Graders @ Spring Convention, Regional event, details and registration at www.hanefesh.org.

Friday, April 24, Shabbat Dinner for Kadimaniks Join us for Kabbalat Shabbat Services at BEKI at 6 p.m., and then walk over with us to the Benson-Tilsen Residence for Dinner, Dvar Torah, Shabbat Zmirot and Schmoozing. Members only* Pick up: 9 p.m., 281 West Elm St., near Forest Rd. RSVP to Miriam Benson at mirbenson@aol.com or at 389-6137 by April 20.

Monday, May 11, 6-8 p.m., Lag Baomer Bonfire, schmooze, and find out more about the Carob eating rebel and mystic Shimon Bar Yohai. Location and more details to be announced.

Sunday afternoon, May 17, “Get Ready for Mount Sinai.” Follow in Moses’ footsteps and try out your rock climbing skills just in time for Shavuot at a local indoor climbing gym. Members only.*

Sunday, June 14 - USY/Kadima Final Event – regional event. More details available later in the spring or at www.hanefesh.org.

* For membership information contact Kadima advisor Nitzan Stein Kokin directly at steinkokin@yahoo.com or 203-752-0361.
**Shabbatot**

**Darshanim in April**

Mark Oppenheimer will serve as Darshan on Shabbat morning, April 25, Parashat Tazria-Metsora, Shabbat Rosh Hodesh Iyar.

**Shabbat Shalom Learners’ Minyan**

The “Shabbat Shalom Learners’ Minyan,” which meets every other Saturday morning at 10:45 in the office, 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 of the services. Everyone is welcome to participate regardless of religious status or background.

**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 this winter and spring. For more information, contact Moshe at 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**

**Book Discussions**

Join Bob Oakes with Jon-Jay Tilsen on Monday, April 20, from 6:15 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. for a conversation on Judith Hauptman’s *Rereading the Rabbis*.

The book is in print and available through the Amazon link at www.beki.org or wherever fine books are sold.

**Wednesdays**

**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.

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 397-2513.

**Mini Maariv Learning Service**

The Wednesday evening services during the spring 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 p.m to 6:15 p.m. on Wednesdays; on other weekdays, the service ends at 6 p.m.

**Thursdays**

**Mini Morning Learning Service**

Thursday morning services during the winter months 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 on Fridays; on other weekdays, the service begins at 7 a.m.

**Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group**

The Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group
Dear Friends at Beth El-Keser Israel,

I want to thank you for the incredible support you have provided our Jewish war-fighters over the years. In this new month of Adar when our joy is increased, I just wanted you to know that I was thinking of you and pray that this email finds you and your loved ones in health and happiness.

Shalom.

Rabbi Sarah Schechter, Ch, Capt, USAF
332d Air Expeditionary Wing
Joint Base Balad, Iraq

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**Torah for the Hungry Mind – Adult Studies (continued)**

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. The Study Group will not meet on April 9 and 16 (Pesah).

*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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**LifeCycle**

**Mazal tov to**

Dennis Curtis and Stephen Wizner, on having been honored at the Yale Law School on March 5, for their contributions to “Forty Years of Clinical Education at Yale: Generating Rights, Remedies, and Legal Services.” Other BEKI members who spoke on that occasion were Emily Bazelon, Amy Marx, Cyd Oppenheimer, Judith Resnik and Tanina Rostain.
Token of Generosity

Your donations to the pushkes (charity boxes) in the Beit Midrash (Daily Chapel – Library) support the Louis Friedman Scholarship Fund (metal box) and the Rabbi Andrew Klein Scholarship Fund (as marked on the receptacle). A third pushke accepts transit tokens and other tokens and foreign coins and currency (as well as US cash and checks), and supports the Rabbi’s Tzedqas Fund (as indicated on box).

Special Contribution

• Belle Greenberg in memory of Jack Greenberg

Rabbi’s Tzedqas Fund

• Deborah Ziskin & William Berson for matanot le-eyyonim at Purim
• For the selling of Hametz: Dan & Sharon Prober; Barbara Cushen
• David Wright in honor of Stanley Saxe at his birthday

Qiddush Sponsors

(Minimum $250)

• Joy Kaufman & Stewart Frankel
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In-Kind Donations

• A movie screen by Cynthia Beth Rubin

Chai Fund (minimum $18) to support synagogue operations

• To Morris Olmer with sympathy on the passing of Ruth Olmer by Cindy’s friends at Mack Prototype, Inc in Gardner, MA
• To Pat Goodwin in honor of his 90th birthday by Ruth & Sherman Jacobson
• To Paul Goodwin in honor of his 90th birthday by Mr. & Mrs. Arnold Shanbom
• To Pat Goodwin in honor of his 90th birthday by Barbara & Harry Tomsky
• To the Olmer family with sympathy on the passing of Ruth Olmer by Mr. & Mrs. Sam Merriam
• To Morris Olmer with sympathy on the passing of Ruth Olmer by Leon & Lillian Weinberg
• To Pat Goodwin in honor of his 90th birthday by Shirley Aarson
• To Pat Goodwin in honor of his 90th birthday by Doris & David Sagerman
• To the BEKI community with thanks for the Purim basket by Hillel & Sara-Anne Auersbach
• To BEKI on the occasion of his recovery by Rabbi Murray Levine
• To Morris Olmer with sympathy on the passing of Ruth Olmer by Rhoda Zabler

Synagogue Fund (minimum $10) to support synagogue operations

• To Nathan & Judi Janette in appreciation for their kindness by Susan Jacobson
• To Morris Olmer with sympathy on the passing of Ruth Olmer by Simeon Horwitz
• To Pat Goodwin in honor of his 90th birthday by Simeon Horwitz
• To Pat Goodwin in honor of his 90th birthday by Bea & Milt Smirnoff
• To Morris Olmer with sympathy on the passing of Ruth Olmer by Lila & David Rudnick
• To Morris Olmer with sympathy on the passing of Ruth Olmer by Rita & Jerry Benign
• To Pat Goodwin in honor of his 90th birthday by Violet & Charlie Ludwig
• To Morris Olmer & family with sympathy on the passing of Ruth Olmer by Norma LeVine & Sandy Horwitz
• To Pat Goodwin in honor of his 90th birthday by Norma LeVine & Sandy Horwitz
• To Pat Goodwin in honor of his 90th birthday by Phyllis Horton
• To Morris Olmer with sympathy on the passing of Ruth Olmer by Phyllis Horton
• To Mrs. Rose Dorchinsky & Miss Myrna Tevolitz with sympathy on the passing of Mrs. Ida Levin by Mr. & Mrs. Louis Pearlin & Mrs. Thelma Kugell

Yahrzeit Fund ($5 minimum) to support synagogue operations

• In memory of Forest London by Sharon & David Bender
• In memory of Helene C. Greenberg by Irene Greenberg
• In memory of Rebecca Rader by Dennis & Barbara Rader
• In memory of Harold Samowitz by Michael & Danielle Granoff
• In memory of Moses Ray by Barbara & Dennis Rader
• In memory of Martin Faymann by Beatrice & Gordon Brodie
• In memory of Sam Miller by Rich Miller
• In memory of Max Haves by Hyman & Ethel Haves
• In memory of Wilbur Witten by Marvin & Susan Witten
• In memory of her mother Ida Zelkovitz by Helen Z. Kaplan
• In memory of Rose Rogoff by Ann Rogoff
• In memory of Sam Rogoff by Ann Rogoff
• In memory of Ida Byer by Ann Rogoff
• In memory of Max Rogoff by Ann Rogoff
• In memory of Harry A. Jacobson by Susan Jacobson & family
• In memory of Saul Ripp by Ronald Ripp
• In memory of Abraham Goldman by Judy & Martin Shore
• In memory of Lillian & Nathan Chorney by Morton & Muriel Chorney
• In memory of Ruth Matloff by Kenneth Matloff
• In memory of Irving Golden by Diane & George Dumigan
• In memory of Sidney Cushen by Barbara Cushen
• In memory of Sarah Miller by Lillian Weinberg
• In memory of James Barnett by Caroline Barnett
• In memory of Nellie Eisenberg by Victor & Susan Stein
• In memory of Harry Stein by Victor & Susan Stein
• In memory of Joseph Samowitz by Michael & Danielle Granoff
• In memory of Abraham Epstein by Kranie & Earl Baker
• In memory of Charles & Etta Miller by Julian & Susan Miller
• In memory of Morris Oppenheim by Joyce & Michael Bohnen
• In memory of Helen Miller by Joyce & Michael Bohnen
• In memory of Emma Bigman Zahler by Rhoda Zahler
• In memory of William Miller by Bobbie & Harold Miller
• In memory of her mother Elizabeth Blackner by Corinne Blackner & Pilar Stewart
• In memory of Frances Ray by Barbara & Dennis Rader
• In memory of Evelyn Silver Spear by Robert & Susan Spear
• In memory of Mae Goldberg by Dan Goldberg
• In memory of Sydney Weiss by Richard & Suzanne Weinstein
• In memory of Shirley Rudof by Stephen & Joanne Rudoff
• In memory of Fayle Hankin by William Hankin
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A Message from Rabbi Tilsen

The Fuchsberg Jerusalem Center of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism is a home within the homeland for Conservative Jews from North America. It's your center of Conservative life and learning, prayer and play, culture and creativity in the heart of Jerusalem.

At the Fuchsberg Jerusalem Center, you can enjoy concerts in our auditorium, feast in our elegant dining rooms, attend discussions in lecture halls, pray in our synagogue, study in the Conservative Yeshiva, and there is so much more.

Now the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism is embarking on a major campaign to support this bastion of Conservative life. We urgently need your participation to help us complete this dream.

Support the Fuchsberg Jerusalem Center
Your Home Within the Homeland

Call Miriam Benson, Executive Director of United Synagogue’s Connecticut Valley Region at (860) 563-5531 or e-mail her at benson@uscj.org
A seemingly intractable point of contention in Palestinian-Israeli negotiations is the claim of a sacrosanct “right of return,” the right of any Palestinian to settle in Israel. The claim is unrealizable because it defies the laws of physics and common sense. Here’s why.

In the 1930s and 1940s, many Palestinians farmed small plots as sharecroppers on plots owned by Arabs in Damascus or Beirut; others farmed communal lands registered to local sheikhs. Few had clear land ownership records. In 1949, many farmers fled to avoid the war or at the urging of Arab leaders; some were chased out by the Irgun or Hagana. In the 1950s, Israel assigned unused farmland in the north to remaining Arab families.

In the intervening 60 years, the population of displaced Palestinians has skyrocketed. This is partly because the United Nations provides welfare benefits to anyone descended from a single displaced Palestinian, creating an incentive to identify as a “refugee” no matter what one’s circumstances. Most famously, Yasir Arafat claimed he was a Palestinian refugee from Jerusalem, when in fact he was born in Egypt while Israel was under British rule. Even Palestinians driving Mercedes and living in expansive homes enjoy a welfare package from the UN thanks to their status as permanent “refugees.”

The Palestinian population explosion means that the four acres worked by farmer Ahmed in 1930 might have to be divided among his 60 descendants today, creating miniature plots too small to farm. As Fakhri Abu Diab, Director of Jerusalem’s Al-Bustan Center, noted in the context of the Jerusalem municipality’s restrictive building codes, “My parents had a house of 602 square feet. They had ten children, each of whom has married and had more children. Does the city really think that all of us can live in 602 square feet?” (Jerusalem Report, 30 March 2009, p. 13). (For reference, BEKI’s George G. Posener Daily Chapel is about 1,000 square feet.)

Farmer Ahmed might also find that another Israeli Arab family is already working “his” land, or that his former farmland is now a fish pond, highway interchange or shopping mall. In the past 60 years, Israel has become about as developed as Connecticut. The world has changed.

In short, “returning” to the family’s original farm or house is often physically impossible, or would mean displacing a new vast population of Israeli Arabs. The adherence to a “right of return” is akin to the notion of the resurrection of the dead, a religious view held deeply by many, including some Jewish sects. If there is bodily resurrection, what happens to people who had multiple spouses, missing body parts, or chronic pain? Are all the dead who once lived in my house coming home? Those who believe in resurrection in this literal sense have no answer, other than “our Mighty God can manage it.” That is fine for a matter of faith set to take place in the indefinite future, but not for a political program for which imminent implementation is sought.

If we agree that farmer Ahmed does not need to return to the exact plot he left, but will accept a substitute nearby, then why can’t “nearby” be in the Palestinian territories, which are only nine miles from Tel Aviv, three miles from Afula, or one mile from Jerusalem, or in the Palestinian territories of Gaza and Jordan, or the uninhabited contiguous tracts of northern Sinai? Why insist on settling in Israel?

The “right of return,” while deeply resonant in the hearts of those who feel dispossessed, is brought to the public forum specifically in order to deny Jews the very rights Palestinians demand for themselves. It seeks to displace Jews, who have every right to autonomy and safety in our small portion of historic Israel.

The majority of Palestinians are descendents of Bosnians, Armenians, Georgians and other Europeans who colonized during the 19th and 20th centuries, or Arabized Turks who came during the 300-year Ottoman (non-Arab)
period immediately preceding British rule. This is a simple demographic fact, though not widely recognized. Many came during the time of Zionist development or British rule to enjoy the benefits of the economic growth that the Jews and British brought.

That is why so many Palestinians have Turkish, Egyptian and other foreign last names. That is why all of the cities and towns west of the Jordan River have original Hebrew, not Arabic, names. Even the name Palestine, imposed by the Romans to suppress Jewish identity, is not Arabic. Arabic doesn’t even have the letter “P.”

Those Arab families with the deepest roots in Palestine are descendent of the Arab conquerors. If conquest creates national autonomy rights, then the Israelis who “conquered” the land through population growth, immigration, development and defensive armed struggle must be declared the outright winners.

Connecticut was “white” well before Palestine was predominantly “Arab.” That is, Arab ethnicity came to dominate much of Palestine only in the past two hundred years. When Maimonides lived in Acco 850 years ago, French was the predominant language in Jerusalem.

None of this is to delegitimize Arab claims; after all, most of Israel’s Jewish population is descended from immigrants from Arab countries, Africa and Europe. The fact that my great-great-great grandfather Dov ben Ze’ev lived in northern Israel does not give me a “first come” claim over people who subsequently lived there. But the notion that Arabs are somehow more “native” than Jews is an historical absurdity. Yet it is a notion that underlies much of the writing of the European and American press, and that is held dearly by some Palestinian proponents.

Nor does this detract from the valid claims of Palestinian Arabs to national autonomy in Palestine, civil rights in Israel, and human rights everywhere. It does, though, detract from the offensive and hostile claim of exclusive rights.

The population of the State of Israel (its citizens), not counting the territories, includes about 18% Palestinian Arabs. Israel has defined itself as a state that embraces, or at least tolerates, a large non-Jewish minority. However, since the early 1920s, no Jews have been permitted to live in the balance of Mandatory Palestine, that is, Jordan; and no Jews are tolerated in the Palestinian territories west of the Jordan (Gaza and the West Bank). There is a certain asymmetry, in which Palestinians demand the right to live among Jews but refuse to grant the reciprocal right in return.

America is built on the ruins of native civilizations obliterated in genocidal conquest. I sympathize with Palestinians who, like whites in Connecticut, have enjoyed the fruits of their ancestors’ conquests, only to find the once-vanquished nation rising again. Like post-frontier Americans, Palestinians must face up to their own history and let Jews live on the Jewish reservation in peace.

If Americans can claim the right to regulate the migration of Mexicans into Texas and New Mexico, or any of the millions who in theory should have just as much right to live on these shores as the native born, then surely Israel, like any society, has a right to define itself and protect itself from inundation by larger surrounding ethnic groups.

Some “working groups” of Israelis and Palestinians have proposed that Palestinians can be mollified with some symbolic implementation of this “right of return.” Even the settler’s movement, in its plan to annex certain Palestinian populations and the land on which they reside, has acknowledged that “The State of Israel can digest an additional 4% [of Arab citizens] (out of 7.3 million) without a drastic impact on its Jewish character” (Adi Mintz, Nequda May 2006). Will the Palestinians then recognize the right of Jews to live anywhere in historic Palestine? Ultimately, peace and pragmatism must override theoretical claims of right by all parties.

Let the “right of return” mean the right of any Palestinian to settle in the ample Palestinian-controlled territories. Once Palestinians reconcile to living in peace with Israelis, they will find that they have no better friends than their Israeli neighbors. Israel is eager to share agricultural, medical and other technology, offer a hundred thousand good jobs, and celebrate the uniqueness of each nation.
In his essay “A Community of Conformists” (BEKI Bulletin July-August 2008), Rabbi Tilsen argued for adhering to the “standard” in leading services, that standard being Sim Shalom in its current edition, so that worshipers would feel “familiar” and would “recognize the service” in other synagogues. He indicated that it is “not… permissible to alter…” certain formulations of the prayer, for example in the Amida, even though he cited some exceptions to this statement. “The value of standardization is given priority…and synagogue etiquette (or halakha, if you will) requires the shaliach tsibbur to ‘use the version of the text placed before him or her.’”

I respect Rabbi Tilsen as the religious leader and the Jewish authority of our synagogue, and I appreciate the value of standardization and familiarity in our services, as in so many areas of our lives. The positions stated in his essay are, in my view, both conservative and Conservative. I would like to present for consideration a somewhat different point of view, with some reference to two “less traditional” American Jewish synagogue movements, Reform and Reconstructionist.

There are numerous editions of the prayerbook, even among the Orthodox. Conservative prayerbooks include the older Silverman edition and the two editions of Sim Shalom as well as Likrat Shabbat and Siddur Hadash, whose wording of prayers vary from Sim Shalom and from each other.

Jewish religion, and its expression in prayer, has continued to evolve over many centuries. All Jewish synagogue movements have, properly, added references in the prayerbook to such historic events as the Shoah and the modern State of Israel. These changes enhance the prayerbook; they do not invalidate it. Likewise, there are wordings in the prayerbook that I believe should be deleted or changed.

Our prayerbook, like the U.S. Constitution, rightly has procedures for amendment, because it is a living document that evolves to reflect the thinking and attitude of its users. Some Jewish prayerbooks are organized in looseleaf form (local examples include Temple Emanuel of Orange and Shabbat Alive), to permit easy modifications, to encourage innovation and experimentation, and to account for the time lag between the formulation of new ideas and the insertion of those ideas into published materials. Prayers represent our honest thoughts, and our deepest wishes, hopes and feelings. The words in our prayers, in order to address our intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs, must accurately reflect ourselves, as individuals and as a religious community. At times we must choose between reinterpreting words that no longer represent our views (cf. Rabbi Tilsen’s inspiring Yom Kippur sermon reminding us of the power and beauty of metaphor in our prayers), and modifying the words to bring the texts of our prayers up to date. While changes to the printed prayerbook must be made with thoughtfulness, sensitivity and good taste, conformity for the sake of conformity is, in my view, a mistake.

Some recent prayerbooks have sometimes made textual changes in somewhat different ways. For example, Sim Shalom added the matriarchs to the Amida. Other prayerbooks (cf. the current Reform siddur) added them in a different order.

Do our congregants believe in an individual personal messiah? Do we believe in the physical resurrection of the dead? Do we consider Jews to have been “chosen from among all peoples,” and therefore, by implication, better than “the nations of the world” (cf. the text of Aleinu)? Do we indeed wish for the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem and the reinstitution of its sacrificial cult? (“Give me that old time religion…. It was good enough for Moses, and it’s good enough for me.”) Do we accept the religious hierarchy of Kohen--Levi—Israel? If not, shouldn’t our prayerbook and public worship reflect our current thinking?
More than Conformity
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Is it enough to reinterpret the words and/or understand them as metaphor; or should those words be changed? In terms of familiarity, if you go to a Reform service, where the order of Rachel and Leah in the Amida is opposite that in Sim Shalom, and where the words “poqed Sarah” are rendered as “ezrat Sarah,” will you not recognize the Amida?

And is it not clear that changes in the printed text follow people’s changing what they say, verbally, first? I believe that we need to have our prayers conform to the religious thoughts and feelings in our minds and in our hearts, not to the words that were composed by the editors of a particular prayerbook.

Several of our congregants, upon being called to the Torah, recite the form of the blessing with the words “asher kervanu l’avodato” (who has drawn us close to His service) in place of “asher bachar banu mi-kol ha-amim” (who has chosen us from among all peoples). And Rabbi Tilsen, when blessing benot mitzva, departs from the printed text in the prayerbook in order to use the feminine form of the kohanic benediction, even though this blessing is a quotation from the Torah.

Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan (1881-1983), z”l, who invented Bat Mitzva, Jewish Community Centers, the concept of equal religious status for Jewish women (including being called up to the Torah, being counted in a minyan, and becoming rabbis), and who wrote new editions of the prayerbook (the second printing of his Sabbath Prayerbook was in 1946!), stated, “The tradition has a vote, but not a veto.” If we are not ready to adopt a more contemporary edition of the prayerbook, we ought at least to encourage prayer leaders to incorporate non-outmoded concepts in our public, as well as our private worship.

Worship is about Community

By Steven Fraade

Michael Kligfeld’s essay on public worship is a welcome expression as it touches on fundamental issues of the nature and norms of communal (rather than individual, private) prayer, the role of the shaliach tzibbur (public prayer leader/representative), the diversity of contemporary Jewish prayer services and prayer books, and the complex process by which Jewish worship has evolved over the millennia. It repeats key points that Michael made three years ago in a Shabbat devar Torah and in a discussion of his views with BEKI’s Ritual Committee. That discussion resulted in a year-long effort to encourage the articulation of a variety of perspectives on our public worship, which included several other divrei Torah by Rabbi Tilsen and BEKI members, as well as a series of study sessions on Shabbat afternoons, also led by BEKI members, specifically geared to the challenging questions, both general and specific, of how we worship together as a community. The upshot is that we are of diverse opinions on these questions, with little consensus except that we all prefer BEKI to the available alternatives.

At the heart of Michael’s essay is the view that “the words in our prayers . . . must be accurate reflections of ourselves....” Where those words “no longer represent our views,” and reinterpreting them is insufficient, we should consider “modifying the words to bring the texts of our prayer up to date.” Areas in which, according to Michael, speaking in the collective “we,” such dissonance exists are belief in “an individual personal messiah,” “resurrection of the dead,” “chosen[ess],” “rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem and the reinstitution of its sacrificial cult,” and the assignment of aliyyot to Kohen, Levi, Yisrael, in that hereditary hierarchical order. In short, in Michael’s view, expressions of such beliefs should be removed or emended so as to better “reflect our current thinking.”

It is not clear to me how Michael can so confidently speak on behalf of the beliefs of our collective, synagogue “we.” I have no doubt that these are his sincere, personal convictions, but to my knowledge no survey has been undertaken to determine our members’ religious (or political) beliefs. What would such a survey look like? “Do you believe that the concept of the Jews as a ‘chosen people’ no longer has meaning in the modern world?,” to which the respondent would be given the choice of checking...
“Yes,” “No,” “Maybe,” or “It depends what you mean.” My unscientific sense is that we would find quite a variety of responses, with as many checking the latter two choices as either of the former two. I would certainly not wish anyone to presume to know what I “believe” in such matters, as I am often not sure myself.

However, this very approach, with its emphasis on personal belief, misrepresents the very nature of Jewish prayer. It is not a liturgical catechism, in which we collectively declare our belief in a list of central doctrines of our collective faith. Perhaps the opening line of the Shema is such a declaration, but even its meaning as a central expression of Jewish belief is uncertain. Do we proclaim that Hashem is our/Israel’s God alone? If so, should such an “outmoded” view be removed or emended? Certainly, some great Jewish thinkers have sought to codify Jewish belief (e.g., Maimonides’s thirteen cardinal principles of faith), but such credos never became central to our liturgy. It should be noted that Maimonides’ list (twelfth century) finds its expression in the beautiful Yigdal liturgical poem (fourteenth century) that we (twenty-first century) joyfully sing at every Friday evening service, to a variety of beautiful melodies, even though it contains some of the “outmoded” beliefs that Michael finds so objectionable (personal messiah and resurrection of the dead). I can only hope that he spares it his pruning shears.

Our traditional liturgy is less the product of the “editors of a particular prayer book” than of a very long and complex process by which an assortment of scriptural passages from all parts of our Tanakh, blessing formulations that go back millennia (many of which are the subject of intense debate already in the Mishna and the Talmud), liturgical poems composed over a thousand years in countless lands in which Jews have lived, and relatively recent modern additions (the Prayer for the State of Israel). This is not to say that it lacks structure — very much to the contrary, its structure is profound — but that its structure and contents are the product of a long, slow evolution shaped by a collectivity of mainly anonymous hands. Like the members of our synagogue community, this potpourri of religious expression is very diverse and, if reductively viewed, contradictory. While at one moment it speaks of God as a “man of war,” in others it evokes God as the ultimate “peacemaker”; while some passages sharply contrast a superior Israel to the inferior nations (in both cases for their behaviors, as respectively informed or not by Torah), in others we denigrate ourselves for our spiritual and moral failings, while in yet others we express hopes for universal peace and redemption; while at times we adopt the perspective of the priests, at others we assume the voices of the prophets. Given the day and mood, we will resonate more with some than with others. Should we put it all through a “religiously correct” sieve so as to remove or reword those aspects of our liturgy, which is to say of our long collective cultural past, that make us uncomfortable? Should we filter out the particular for the universal, the priestly for the prophetic? Should we look into our prayer books so as to comfortably see ourselves as we would like to be seen? I prefer to retain the heterogeneity of our prayers to some “non-outmoded” homogeneity. I prefer the discomfort of struggling with aspects of our collective past through its “outmoded” expressions (including the bellicose, the priestly, and the tribal, but alongside and in dialogical tension with the peaceful, the prophetic, and the universal). It is precisely that challenging struggle, rather than a self-confirming comfort, with the diverse and difficult words of our prayers that makes them such powerful instruments.

Can we be sure that in removing what makes us uncomfortable, what does not “reflect our current thinking,” we are not projecting onto our prayers unfavorable aspects of Judaism that we have internalized from the negative gaze of our predominantly secular or Christian cultural environment, with its own reductive and supersessionist attitudes toward religion and Judaism? Let me illustrate this risk with examples from the prayer books of the Reform and Reconstructionist movements, held up by Michael as models for us to emulate:

In the introduction to the 1844 Berlin Reform Prayer Book we find: “The concept of tribal holiness and of a special vocation arising from this has become entirely foreign to us, as has the idea of an intimate covenant between God and Israel which is to remain significant for all eternity. Human character and dignity, and God’s image within us — these alone are signs of chosenness.” The Reform prayer book stripped (or sought to strip) expressions of particularistic chosenness and covenant from its liturgy, ideas central to the Hebrew Bible and the rabbinic tradition, in favor of expressions of a Jewish universal vocation that would

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Worship is about Community
Continued from Page 17

sit more comfortably with German idealism of their own “modern” time and place. Around the same time, the Reform Rabbinical Conference at Frankfurt declared that “the wish to return to Palestine in order to create there a political empire for those who are still oppressed because of their religion is superfluous,” necessitating the removal from the German Reform liturgy of another “outdated” but central Jewish idea, the age-old expressions of yearning to return to the geographic Zion. To the German Reformers, their native Germany provided all the promise of redemption that Jews could desire. Viewed with the unfortunate advantage of hindsight, such attempts to systematically “update” the liturgy by bringing it into consistency with “current thinking” now appear to us to be not simply naive, but tragic.

Similarly, the Reconstructionist movement’s more recent attempts to excise “chosenessness” from its prayer books has largely failed, since the concept is too deeply ingrained in our scriptures and prayers to remove it without destroying the central fabric of Judaism. It is neither a simple concept (e.g., of Jewish superiority), nor one that is immune to being hijacked by Jewish religious and political zealots, today and as it has always been. Yet, it is fair to say, had the intertwined concepts of covenant and chosenness been successfully stripped away much sooner, Jews and Judaism would long ago have disappeared in the face of historical vicissitudes.

I am not arguing against changes to our liturgy, since as a historian of Judaism I know full well that our liturgy has always been a “work in progress.” Most recently, the optional inclusion of our matriarchs at key moments in our liturgy, like our inclusion of women in all aspects of liturgical leadership, is a welcome case in point. However, I also know, to inversely rephrase Michael, that “our prayer book, [is] like the U.S. Constitution, rightly lacks procedures for amendment.” The analogy of our prayer book (or the Torah) to the Constitution is not apt. Although the traditional (including Conservative) Jewish prayer book is governed, at least in part, by Jewish law (which is itself a “work in progress”) it is not itself a law book, produced like the Constitution at a given time by a given group of people, and hence does not include “procedures for amendment.” It, like Jewish ritual more broadly, has changed over time slowly and organically, more from the bottom up than the top down, but not by readily identifiable “procedures.” In this regard, it has evolved as cultures themselves evolve, complexly, dialectically, and somewhat mysteriously through a combination of internal and external propellants. But even political constitutions rightly allow for being “updated” through supplemental amendments (albeit not quickly or easily), rather than through textual emendations. In either case, they evolve principally through the conflictual process of continual reinterpretation of an unchanging core text.

Finally, some thoughts on the role of the shaliah tzibbur (public prayer leader/representative). He/she is neither principally a song-leader, nor a musical performer, nor a liturgical innovator. Rather the shaliah tzibbur represents the community in its prayers to/before God, acting, as it were, as their intermediary or agent, standing on their behalf “before the (holy) ark.” This is a great responsibility, which requires considerable familiarity with the liturgy, intense kavana (“directedness”), and a pleasant and audible musical voice, but most importantly humility. There are tremendous opportunities, as Michael so beautifully models, for creative interpretation of the prayers through the choice of melodies, intonation, cadence, emphasis, etc. However, the shaliah tzibbur, in representing the community, employs as his/her principal instrument the matbeia tefilla, or liturgical “coinage,” of that particular community, even as it profoundly links that community, both normatively and narratively, to countless other Jewish communities across time and place.

We are fortunate to live in an area in which there is a wide variety of types of synagogues, each with its own particular matbeia tefilla, particular style of professional or lay prayer leadership, and degree of communal participation. People join BEKI not because they sign on to a particular set of religious (or political) beliefs, but because they value the richness of our diversity, the style of our mainly lay leadership and inclusive communal participation, across gender and age, our commitment to a vibrantly lived Jewish tradition, as well as our urban location and engagement.

They know that we are a member congregation of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. To the extent to which they participate in our communal worship, they can expect to find a service with a style of leadership and participation, as well as a matbeia tefilla, consistent with those qualities and that affiliation. It is a liturgy and liturgical experience as irreducibly diverse and dynamic in its constituent parts as we are as a community.

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**Service Times for Spring and Summer**

April 2009

7 Nisan 5769 - 6 Iyar 5769

**BEKI Events**

- April 8: Birkat HaHama: Blessing of the Sun
- April 8: Taanit/Seudat Bekhorot: Fast or Feast of Firstborn
- April 8: First Seder (Home Ritual)
- April 9: Second Seder (Home Ritual)
- April 9: Community Second Seder at BJ
- April 11: Shir HaShirim Reading – Shabbat Pesah
- April 16: Yizkor Memorial Service
- April 25: Darshani – Mark Oppenheimer
- April 26: CSH Siddur Cover Workshop

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Singers Needed

The 3rd annual fundraiser Concert for Amity Cares Habitat for Humanity in which BEKI is an active partner, will again this year feature (in addition to other performances) a United Community Choir comprising singers of all ages from synagogues, churches, schools, and civic organizations that support this project. All are welcome to participate.

Although the concert will begin before Shabbat is over on Saturday evening, May 9, the choir will be the absolute last performance of the evening, which will take place after Shabbat is over. Some of the rehearsals will be at BEKI. If you are interested in participating, please speak with Darryl Kuperstock.