The 99th annual celebration of the birth of George G. Posener is to be held at the qiddush on Shabbat morning Dec. 26, at Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel. George was born in Connecticut on Dec. 25, 1911. He grew up in the loving home of his parents Israel (Isadore) and Anna Posener, along with his dear siblings Ida, Gussie, Mildred, and Morris, all of blessed memory. His father worked as a railroad conductor. During a lifetime both illustrious and industrious, George worked as a street-lamp lighter, mason (including overseeing the construction of Yale landmarks), and insurance agent. His genuine caring and ability to instill confidence in others brought him great success in his insurance agency, which he shared with his brother Morris.

George’s war service includes credit for inventing an improvement to a popular weapon.

George built an elegant and loving home with his wife Leah, of blessed memory. In later years, following Leah’s passing, George had a special friendship with Betty Zelen, of blessed memory.

George’s philanthropy has included a major medical endowment at Yale Medical School and establishing the George G. & Leah Posener Lower School at Ezra Academy. Nowhere has his support been more singular and appreciated than at Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel, where George has offered a profusion of his wisdom, work and wealth. His management of synagogue affairs, particularly in maintaining the physical plant from roof to drain, along with his recruitment and encouragement of new members through his warm personality, have been credited with creating a thriving community and a renewed pride among members. He has taken an active role in supporting the youth programs, particularly the Religious School. Most recently, he provided for a Shabbat Sukkot Dinner for School families and faculty.

George Posener was awarded the Congregation’s Distinguished Service award in 1995, and the Beit Midrash is named “The George G. Posener Daily Chapel” in his honor.

Commenting on his support for the Religious School, George said:

“As a youth, I was one of six children residing in a small town with no synagogue and no rabbi. My Hebrew education came from my observant parents. As I recall, a travelling rabbi from the big city would pick up the ‘pushka’ every week and leave one for the following week.”

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BEKI Bulletin

The newsletter is published monthly by Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel for the benefit of its members. Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel is affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

To contribute articles or for inquiries regarding membership:
• Call the Synagogue office: (203) 389-2108
• Write: 85 Harrison Street, New Haven, CT 06515-1724
• Email: jitsen@beki.org
• Visit our web page: www.beki.org

For advertising information, call the synagogue office.
Deadline for submission of ads or articles is the first of the month preceding publication.
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Benefit Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel
Ask us about establishing a fund, trust or annuity to ensure BEKI’s future.
Charitable giving strengthens our Community and provides the donor with tax savings.

Visit us at www.beki.org
99th Birthday
Continued from Page 1

Barukh Dayan HaEmet
With sorrow we note the passing of
Diana Friedman Opton
May the Almighty comfort those who mourn

was by trolley car.

“I was too young to travel alone to the big city, but as the time came closer to my Bar Mitzva, my parents felt I was now a man and able to travel by myself to Sunday school to be confirmed.”

“As I became older and moved to the city and attended synagogue, I realized how much I had missed by not attending Hebrew School. I also realized if I could help any Jewish child receive a Jewish education, which I missed, I would share whatever funds I could spare to assist them.”

George is a “forward looking” person, and for that reason counts his years at their beginning. His day of birth was his “first birthday,” and the first anniversary of that was his “second birthday.” In keeping with that outlook, we are celebrating the conclusion of Mr. Posener’s 98th year as his “99th birthday.” The same system of counting was used by Aaron to enumerate the days of his brother Moshe’s ascension to Mount Sinai.

Editor’s note: Mr. Posener’s birthday occurs during the cold and flu season, and his advisors have asked him to avoid further exposure to viruses, even if it means not attending services on his birthday. Your consideration in avoiding exposing Mr. Posener, as well as other susceptible individuals, through close contact, will be appreciated.

Lifecyle

Important Tax Information

Taxpayers are reminded that synagogue dues, pledges and contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. BEKI is recognized as a 501(c)3 organization by the US Treasury. For many people it is advantageous to pay dues, pledges and contributions before the end of the tax year (for most people Dec. 31). It is also helpful to BEKI to receive your payment at an early date. Please consult your tax advisor for more information.

You can contribute stocks and securities directly to BEKI. For some, significant tax advantages can be realized by contributing appreciated stocks. IRS regulations usually allow the donor to deduct the appreciated value of the security. Illustration: You bought 100 shares of XYZ at $10 two years ago and it is now trading at $20. If you sell your shares, you realize a gain of $1,000, and pay $150 in taxes – net $850 profit. If you donate the shares directly to BEKI, you pay no taxes on the appreciation, saving $150 in taxes, and you receive a tax deduction for $2,000 – which could be worth $600 if you pay a marginal rate of 30 percent. That means your $2,000 donation “costs” you only $1,250.

Charitable contributions also avoid the penalty of the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT). In addition, special tax advantages were created by Congress for some contributions for certain years. Please consult your tax or financial advisor for details.

Enter Only

The driveway ramp from Whalley Avenue to the parking area is for entrance only.

Stop & Go

The traffic light on Harrison St. at Whalley Ave. is controlled by a microwave sensor. It will detect a vehicle traveling at normal to slow (but not very slow) speed in the driving lane and will give Harrison St. a green light within two minutes. It may not detect a vehicle that approaches at less than 3 mph.
Darshanim in December

Stephen Wizner will serve as darshan on Shabbat parashat VaYishlah, Dec. 5.

Bob Oakes will serve as darshan on Shabbat Hanukah parashat VaYeshev, Dec. 12.

Mark Oppenheimer will serve as darshan on Shabbat parashat VaYigash, Dec. 26.

Shabbatot

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.

Shabbat Minha Winter Study

Each Shabbat (Saturday) afternoon, following the Minha service, there will be a 25-minute period of study before the Maariv service and havdala. Beginning Dec. 26, Nadav Sela will lead an investigation into parashat ha-shavua (the weekly Torah reading) and other selected texts.

Sundays

Sunday Talmud with Moshe Meiri

Adults and advanced youth are invited to bask in the light of Talmud on Sunday mornings with Moshe Meiri. The third chapter of masekhet Baba Qama (“First Gate”) will serve as the base text. This autumn series will meet on consecutive Sunday mornings from 10:30 until noon, according to the Religious School schedule. 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. During Rabbi Tilsen’s sabbatical, Nadav Sela will assist in facilitating the Study Group.

Books with Bob

Join Bob Oakes and Jon-Jay on Monday night Dec. 7 to discuss Alan Dershowitz’s The Case for Israel (2003), from 6:05 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. in the Beit Midrash. For more information on these books or to order, see www.beki.org/books.html.

Wednesdays

Word for the Day

The Wednesday morning service (shaharit) now includes a 60-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. Word for the Day will be on hiatus during Rabbi Tilsen’s sabbatical.

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

Continued on Page 4
$30,000+ In College Scholarships Available

For over 35 years, the B’nai B’rith career and counseling services of New York has administered a college scholarship program now totaling awards of more than $30,000 annually.

This year, we are again offering nine college scholarships to high school seniors who demonstrate a strong academic record and a financial need. Financial need is considered in a broad sense in order to give students the opportunity of attending a college they may not ordinarily be able to attend due to rising college costs.

Any graduating high school senior, who will be entering college next year and lives in New York State or the New England states, is eligible to apply for these awards.

To receive a college scholarship application, send a stamped, self addressed, #10 legal size envelope to Bershad college scholarship committee, c/o B’nai B’rith Metronorth Region, 801 Second Avenue -14th floor, New York, NY 10017. Important: deadline for submitting all application material is Dec. 31.

USY Summer

2010 USY Summer Programs in the U.S., Europe, and Israel are now open for registration (for students now in grades 8-12, and for the Parent Pilgrimage). Visit www.usy.org for more information. Apply by Dec. 31 and receive $100 off teen programs. BEKI Youth Commission subsidies are also available for teens; contact Rena Cheskiis-Gold at r.cheskis-gold@snet.net.

Announcements

To request to have your announcement presented on Shabbat, send a message to announcements@beki.org, which is directed to the President or other officer in charge of Shabbat announcements. Announcements may be included, excluded or abbreviated at the President’s discretion.

Torah for the Hungry Mind – Adult Studies (continued)

Hungry Mind
Continued from Page 4

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.

Mini Maariv Learning Service

The Wednesday evening services during the school year are supplemented with commentary and teaching relating to the history, themes, choreography and language of the daily evening service. The learning service resumed on Sept. 16. Minha and Maariv services are from 5:45 to 6:15 each weekday, and at 6 p.m. on Fridays, and 20 minutes before sundown on Shabbat (Saturday) afternoons in December. Tani Cohen-Fraade will conduct the service during Rabbi Tilsen’s sabbatical.

Siddur of the Future

Wednesday, Dec. 2, 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. “The Siddur of the Future.” A panel discussion moderated by Jon-Jay Tilsen, with Baruch Levine, Steven Fraade and Michael Kligfeld. Issues of the contemporary and future prayer, ideas for further development of the Siddur, the role of public input, the textual and musical possibilities.

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 on Thursdays; on other weekdays, the service begins at 7 a.m.

Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group

The Sanhedrin Study Group will meet each Thursday from 12:30p to 1:30p through the end of 2009 at the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce’s office, 900 Chapel Street, 10th floor (facing the Green). Thanks to attorney Isaiah Cooper for arrangements. For information, contact Isaiah at his law office icooper@cooperlaw.net. The SSG will not meet on Dec. 24 and 31 (winter break). Please see the January Bulletin or This Week at BEKI for the meeting location in January.

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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- Ellen & Peter DePaola in appreciation and in honor of daughter Andrea
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- Stewart Frankel & Joy Kaufman marking the yahrzeit of father Jack Frankel
- Jimmy Shure with wishes of refua shelema to Clifford Altschuler
- Anita Weinstein and Elaine Weinstein in memory of Irving Weinstein
- Polina Naiman with prayers of refua shelema for cousin Israel Tartakofsky

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- To BEKI in honor of Benji’s bris by Stefania & Dennis Borisov & the kids
- To the Miller family with sympathy on the passing of Rena Miller by Joyce & Michael Bohren
- To Carl Goldfield & family with sympathy on the passing of Morris Goldfield by David & Darryl Kuperstock
- To Carl Goldfield & family with sympathy on the passing of Morris Goldfield by Roger Colten & Sarah Berry
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- To the family of Diana Friedman-Opton with sympathy on her passing by Gila Reinstein

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- In honor of the marriage of Sarah Beller & Scott Rechler by Yvonne & Herb Kolodny

The Diana Friedman Opton Fund for the Benefit of Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel
- To the family of Diana Friedman-Opton with sympathy on her passing by Joanne Foodim & Rob Forbes
- To the family of Diana Friedman-Opton with sympathy on her passing by Joanne Foodim & Rob Forbes

Continued on Page 10
Liturgical Note
Beginning Saturday night, Dec. 5 in the Maariv service, we use the phrase “ve-ten tal u-matar li-verakha” (“give winter dew and rain in proportion”) in each daily amida. The date Dec. 5 is based on the agricultural cycle in Bavel (Iraq) calculated according to the uncorrected Julian calendar. Although many sages tried to change the date to match that of their local weather needs or to those of the Land of Israel, the general public has refused (thus far) to change from the ways of their ancestors.

Weekday morning services at BEKI
Begin your day with spiritual renewal and fellowship. The Monday morning service (7 to 7:45) includes a brief Torah service, and is followed by the Rashi Study Group (7:45 to 8:30). Tuesday mornings (7 to 7:30) are attended by a unique mix of people. Wednesday mornings (7 to 7:30) feature a continuing group of friends. Thursday mornings (8:15 to 9) are ideal for people who may not wish to rise earlier or who bring children to school, and includes a brief Torah service. It is perfect for those who wish to avoid crowds. Friday mornings (7 to 7:30) present an ideal setting for someone wishing to help develop a cadre of dedicated daily daveners.

In addition to fulfilling the daily mitzvot of qeriat shema (recitation of the Shema), tefila (prayer), Talmud Torah (study) and Tzedaqa (charity), attendance also affords those in mourning a Minyan so that they can recite qaddish. Audio recordings of some of the prayers are available at the BEKI website under “Audio Library.” Regular participants in these services are always glad to welcome additional worshipers. Call our office at (203) 389-2108 x14 or see www.beki.org/schedule.html for a complete schedule.

Open Sundays 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
By appointment – Adele (203) 389-9599, Mimi (203) 397-3851 and during office hours (see Peggy or call (203) 389-2108 x14).

Contributions (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Passing</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sympathy Message</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>passing by Paul Goodwin</td>
<td>Friedman-Opton with sympathy on her passing by Violet &amp; Charlie Ludwig</td>
<td>Synagogue Fund (minimum $10) to support synagogue operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>• To the family of Diana Friedman-Opton with sympathy on her passing by Stuart &amp; Sue Miller</td>
<td>To Carl Goldfield &amp; family with sympathy on the passing of Morris Goldfield by Paul Goodwin</td>
<td>• In memory of her mother Florence Supowitz by Barbara &amp; Alvin Greenberg</td>
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<td>• To the family of Diana Friedman-Opton with sympathy on her passing by Helen Rosenberg &amp; Keith Richter</td>
<td>To the Saperstein &amp; Kalkut families with sympathy on the passing of Eve Saperstein by Margy Simson, Marshall, Joan &amp; Robert</td>
<td>• In memory of Sylvia Feldman by Sara &amp; Steven Salomon</td>
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<td>• To the family of Diana Friedman-Opton with sympathy on her passing by Leon Cummings</td>
<td>To Carl Goldfield &amp; family with sympathy on the passing of Morris Goldfield by Leon Cummings</td>
<td>• In memory of her brother Jonathan Cooper by Willa &amp; Howard Needler</td>
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<td>• To the family of Diana Friedman-Opton with sympathy on her passing by Saul A., Michael I., Jonathan R. &amp; David H. Bell</td>
<td>• In memory of Bette Merriam by Dorothy &amp; Harry Levinson</td>
<td>• In memory of Frank Teitelman by Sidney Teitelman</td>
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<td>• To the family of Diana Friedman-Opton with sympathy on her passing by Kathryn Ross</td>
<td>• In memory of Herman Goldstein by Shirley Goldstein Frumento &amp; Frank Frumento</td>
<td>• In memory of Edith Sokoloff Goldstein by Shirley Goldstein Frumento &amp; Frank Frumento</td>
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<td>• To the family of Diana Friedman-Opton with sympathy on her passing by Bernnice &amp; Lester Margolis</td>
<td>• In memory of Jacob Sokoloff by Shirley Goldstein Frumento &amp; Frank Frumento</td>
<td>• In memory of Louis Chain by Barry Cushen</td>
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<td>• To the family of Diana Friedman-Opton with sympathy on her passing by Billie Chaplowe</td>
<td>• In memory of Betty Drobenes Block by Alfred Block</td>
<td>• In memory of Samuel Levine by Bernice &amp; Lester Margolis</td>
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<td>• To the family of Diana Friedman-Opton with sympathy on her passing by Billie Chaplowe</td>
<td>• In memory of Ellen Slopak Schwartz by David Schwartz</td>
<td>• In memory of Frank Teitelman by Sidney Teitelman</td>
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<td>• In memory of Ben Kugell by Thelma Kugell</td>
<td>• In memory of Louis Chain by Shirley Chain</td>
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<td>• In memory of her grandfather Louis Brunswick by Barbara Cushen</td>
<td>• In memory of Fannie Samowitz by Michael &amp; Danielle Granoff</td>
<td>• In memory of Eli Rosoff Brownstein by Patricia Pitt</td>
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<td>• In memory of her grandmother Lois Brunswick by Barbara Cushen</td>
<td>• In memory of Bess Rosoff Brownstein by Patricia Pitt</td>
<td>• In memory of Milton Cohen by Stephen &amp; Doris Brody</td>
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<td>• In memory of her brother Louis Brunswick by Bernice &amp; Lester Margolis</td>
<td>• In memory of Fannie Samowitz by Michael &amp; Danielle Granoff</td>
<td>• In memory of Edward Weinstein by James Weinstein</td>
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Renovations Pledge Payments Welcome
Thanks to those who have already sent in payment on your Renovations Campaign pledge. Your payment now will reduce our expense in carrying a construction loan and other finance charges.

Hanuka
The first night of Hanuka is Friday, Dec. 11. Hanuka candles or lamps should be lit at 4 p.m., immediately before Shabbat candles. 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) will be lighted each evening (except Friday) at BEKI at 5:45 p.m., immediately before the Maariv evening service. It is also lighted during the morning for “decorative” purposes, although not in fulfillment of a specific mitzva.

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.

Hanuka candles are available from the Sisterhood Giftshop and from the Religious School office.

Kulanu and Saul’s Circle
Kulanu participants who attend the Community Day program at Chapel Haven have been helping monitor and maintain the New Haven Holocaust Memorial as part of their program. In the summer they have the key and maintain the watering. In the Fall they weed the flower beds and do general maintenance. This work is very important to their sense of community.

Dr. Lauren Kempton, Kulanu and Saul’s Circle Advisor visited Fellowship Place in September to discuss the Jewish precepts of tigun olam and tsedaqa as part of programming on the High Holidays. At Fellowship Place, the Saul’s Circle group shared apples and honey and told stories of meaningful lessons from the High Holiday observances.

At Chapel Haven the group discussed the life of Eunice Shriver and her motivation for founding the Special Olympics. Kulanu participants are deeply involved in the Special Olympics throughout the year. It is a valuable and integral part of their life. They were deeply touched by the death of Eunice Shriver, the heart and soul of the Special Olympics. They made sympathy cards which they mailed to the Shriver Family. Several of them had met Tim Shriver at events for the Special Olympics.

Torah Fund
Women’s League for Conservative Judaism, through its Sisterhoods in synagogues across the country, supports the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies in Los Angeles and the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem.

Your donations and the purchase of cards, assures that these institutions remain viable for our future: producing rabbis, cantors, scholars, teachers and educated laity needed for the Conservative Movement.

We can all make a difference – just purchasing cards is a nice way of support. Please call me at (203) 407-0314 and your card for any occasion will go right out. Just $4 each and that includes postage.

Barbara Cushen, Torah Fund Chair, BEKI Sisterhood

Operation Isaiah
The Operation was a success – Operation Isaiah that is. Thanks to you, our congregation raised 1,385 pounds for the Connecticut Food Bank. The Operation was a success, but our work is not over. The need is high, so we continue our food drive into the winter, specifically for The Jewish Food Pantry. We ask for your support to help many in need in these different economic times. Our bins will once again be available in the lobby for your non-expired canned or dry goods. Thank you for your ongoing support to BEKI SATO and our community in need. Sincerely, Dr. Jennifer Botwick and Laina Pauker, SATO co-chairs.
The “miracle of Hanuka,” we are told, revolves around a cruse of oil containing a one-day supply that sufficed for eight days. It was an eight-day Mediterranean cruse. As it says in the Good Book, “oils well that ends well.” So what would have been so terrible if they ran out? Like, what if they ran out of herring at the *qiddush*?

Our people had just been through a drawn-out conflict with the greatest imperial power of the day, against the tyrant Antiochus and many homes had been destroyed, many people killed, the Temple had been desecrated. In that context, how important could a mere cruse of oil be?

During Hanuka, we read the “Story of Yosef” in our annual Torah reading cycle.

Yosef was blessed. He had everything. He was a lucky guy. His mamma loved him, and his pappa loved him more than all his 24 brothers and sisters. He had a good job. His father gave him a beautiful, *special* coat, and God gave him premonitions — dreams — about how great he would be. Yosef was so lucky that he was nearly killed, got thrown in a pit, sold into slavery, and put in prison in a foreign country with no parole.

So where did he go wrong? Yosef was not considerate of the feelings of others, his brothers in particular. They were *not* favored, and they had to work hard. Yosef was totally insensitive to their feelings. He just didn’t get it. It’s a miracle that everything worked out all right.

The central *mitzva* on Hanuka is the lighting of a *Hanukia* for the purpose of *pirsuma nesa*, of publicizing the miracle of Hanuka. It is important that each household light a *Hanukia*.

The performance of this *mitzva* is so important that the *Shulhan Arukh*, the sixteenth-century law code that serves as the common base for modern law, describes the obligation in this way:

> One needs to take great care in lighting the Hanuka lights; even a poor person subsisting on charity pawns or sells their cloak and buys oil for lighting.

— *Shulhan Arukh* O.H. §571

Lighting the Hanuka lights is so important that a poor person is instructed to take on additional hardship to do it. The *Shulhan Arukh* says the poor person ought to make whatever sacrifice is needed to fulfill this *mitzva*.

Everyone in our Congregation can afford Hanuka candles or oil. Lighting is very inexpensive in our country. But consider that for most of human history, most people could not afford fuel for lighting at night, and certainly not for merely ornamental purposes. When the sun went down, it got dark. That is the way that one-third of the people alive today live, as well. So imagine that getting oil or a candle was a significant expense.

There is a general commandment of *hidur mitzva*, of doing each religious act in the nicest way feasible. For the sake of *hidur mitzva*, we take a beautiful *Hanukia* (such as those available from the BEKI *Sisterhood Giftshop*),
A Message from Rabbi Tilsen

and use fine oil or lovely candles — you don’t want to use kerosene. Each member of the household has their own Hanukia, and each lights a number of lights corresponding to the number of the day of the holiday. We are fortunate that we are able to do this mitzva in such a complete and beautiful way.

But what of the poor person who can not afford all of this “hidur mitzva” but must struggle to light even one lamp? The Mishna Berura, written at the beginning of the twentieth century by the Hafetz Hayim, comments on the section of the Shulhan Arukh cited above:

“If one has a limited supply of oil for all the eight days [of Hanuka] and one’s neighbor has none at all, one should light each night only one light and give some to that neighbor…”

That is, we are told that we ought to meet the basic need of another person even at the expense of our own ability to fully perform the mitzva. This is to say nothing about helping others at the expense of our own pleasure, spiritual satisfaction, or bank account – we’re talking mitzva here.

Like the Biblical Yosef, if we flaunt – or simply enjoy – our material blessings while our brothers and sisters go without, we run the risk of being thrown in a pit. It may be a physical pit, or it may be a spiritual pit.

Many Americans are facing a relatively challenging fiscal climate. We are feeling that in Connecticut. Several of our officers are currently looking for work. Economic dislocation can be very difficult. But none of our BEKI families are facing hunger due to these conditions. The same cannot be said of our neighbors in the New Haven area.

Our state is facing a severe budget deficit. This is happening at a time when certain segments of our society were already suffering from a lack of support. There are families and children who are not able to receive the medical help or housing they need due to budget cutbacks.

When we share our spiritual, financial and other blessings with others and consequently see their Hanuka lights – or their Holiday Candles – glowing in their windows, then we are truly fulfilling the mandate of Hanuka: Pirsuma Nesa, Proclaiming the Miracle.

Rabbi Tilsen on Sabbatical Leave

Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen, who has served the Congregation since August 1993, will begin a 13-week Sabbatical leave on Sunday, Dec. 20. During this period, as during the rabbi’s periodic vacations, rabbinic and administrative functions will be distributed among the synagogue staff, officers, volunteers and rabbinic colleagues. Arrangements have been made to insure that each daily and Shabbat service will be led by a qualified member.

Members are encouraged to contact office manager Peggy Hackett (203) 389-2108 office@beki.org for any synagogue business. Submissions to the Bulletin and the weekly email message “This Week at BEKI” can be sent to Peggy at office@beki.org. For matters pertaining to services, please contact Ritual Committee chairperson Steven Fraade steven.fraade@yale.edu . For lifecycle events such as medical crises, births and deaths, please contact Hesed Committee chairperson Muriel Banquer (203) 787-3743 who along with Rabbi Murray Levine will continue to provide pastoral attention and support to members experiencing transitions or challenges. Peggy, Steven and Muriel along with President Jay Sokolow and the officers, may be calling on additional members to help cover for essential functions and services (in both senses of the word) during Rabbi Tilsen’s absence.

In the event of a local death, please contact the Jewish Funeral Director of your choice. The Robert E. Shure Funeral Home (Jimmy Shure) can be reached 24-hours at (203) 562-8244. The funeral director will arrange a suitable rabbinic officiate when Rabbi Tilsen is away. In any case of death of a congregant or a member of congregant’s immediate family (parent, child, spouse or sibling), regardless of their religious status, please inform the synagogue office (office@beki.org) and Ritual Committee (steven.fraade@yale.edu) so that our support and communication system will be activated.

Those with urgent personal issues are encouraged to contact Rabbi Murray Levine (203) 397-2513 or Dr. Alan...
Sabbatical
Continued from Page 13

Lovins (203) 787-3367. Those who are seeking a referral for a professional counselor, mediator or mental health professional are encouraged to contact Alan Lovins. For help in locating social services for families and individuals in crisis, adoption, foster care, family planning, immigration and domestic violence, please contact the Jewish Family Service at (203) 389-5599.

Benei Mitzva Program families are asked to contact Tani Cohen-Fraade (tanicf@gmail.com) for educational issues and with Office Manager Peggy Hackett for logistics of caterers and parties.

Sabbatical leave will afford Rabbi Tilsen opportunities to work on long-term projects, gain perspective and seek spiritual refreshment. Jon-Jay reports that he intends to spend part of the time in Israel (Jerusalem and the north), Minnesota, New Orleans, Boston and Florida, as well as in Greater New Haven. “I am looking forward to spending some time with my father and siblings, and celebrating Dad’s 85th birthday, my sister’s 50th birthday, my 20th anniversary with Miriam and other milestones. I am hoping to visit with family members whom I have not seen in decades, to meet my siblings’ grandchildren, and to further my family history research.” Other plans include reading, home repair, home computer upgrades, language study, vecturism and Talmud Torah.

A sabbatical (from the Hebrew “Shabbat”) is intended to be a period away from normal routine and environment. The sabbatical creates an opportunity to “step back” and consider life goals and work priorities, to re-focus on essential pursuits, and to gain broader perspective. For the Congregation, a period of rabbinic leave gives members new volunteer opportunities and variation in daily synagogue life. It may allow the leadership to form new insights into how to better utilize the rabbi’s talents, or to identify unmet needs of the congregation.

Rabbi Tilsen plans to be at BEKI for Taanit Esther and Purim, and to be back just before Passover.

“I’ve always wondered what is meant by signs on shop doors that say ‘Back in 15 minutes,’” Rabbi Tilsen commented. “How do they know what time the customer will see the sign? I’ll be back in 13 weeks, but for those who don’t notice I’m gone at all, I’ll be back in 15 minutes. The old joke has the synagogue president reporting to the hospitalized rabbi, ‘The Board of Directors wishes you a speedy recovery – by a vote of 12 to 9.’ I expect the Congregation will do just fine without me, but I hope that most people will look forward to my return at the end of March at least as much as I will look forward to it.”

Lights On

A 10-hour planned power outage on Oct. 20 was scheduled with United Illuminating for them to replace and upgrade their existing electrical transformers. The three 25-year-old transformers were showing physical signs of deterioration and a planned replacement was preferred to replacement under emergency conditions subsequent to eventual failure. The work was completed as planned and power was restored at the end of the day; all systems are operating normally.

The transformers are similar to those seen at the top of utility poles. They reduce the line voltage to match that of the building’s electrical service. The transformers are housed in a large vault under the loading dock (at the entrance to the upstairs kitchenette and social hall). One-half inch of accumulated muck was removed by the BEKI House Committee from the vault floor. House Committee member Bob Spear, a structural engineer, inspected the condition of the concrete vault, and determined that the exterior surface of the existing concrete ceiling slab has to be repaired and waterproofed to prevent further spalling.

Thanks to Bob Spear for overseeing this project and insuring that this was done right, with the help of Moshe Meiri and Eric Dunsker and the services of electrician Seth Pauker. Bob commended the utility company’s personnel for completing this work in a timely manner.
## Calendar Notes

Morning services begin at 9 o’clock on federal holidays, Dec. 25 and Jan. 1. Evening services are at their usual time, 5:45. The office will close early on the afternoons before those days, and is closed on those federal holidays.

### December 2009

**14 Kislev 5770 - 14 Tevet 5770**

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**Service Times**

- **Sundays**: 9 a.m. Shaharit / 5:45 p.m. Minha-Maariv
- **Mondays**: 7 a.m. Shaharit / 5:45 p.m. Minha-Maariv
- **Tuesdays**: 7 a.m. Shaharit / 5:45 p.m. Minha-Maariv
- **Wednesdays**: 7 a.m. Shaharit / 5:45 p.m. Minha-Maariv
- **Thursdays**: 8:15 a.m. Shaharit / 5:45 p.m. Minha-Maariv
- **Fridays**: 7 a.m. Shaharit / 6 p.m. Minha-Maariv
- **Saturdays**: 9:15 a.m. Shaharit / 5:45 p.m. Minha