

BEKI Bulletin

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February 2000 Vol. 6 Issue 2

ק"ק בית אל-כתר ישראל

Adar 1 5760

Liatis Foundation Builds BEKI Endowment

The Borick family has made a significant new contribution to The Borick Family Endowment for Special Education for Youth at Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel through the Liatis Foundation. The Borick Family Endowment was established last year to provide continuous funding for programs helping children with the greatest needs.

The Liatis Foundation supports numerous local, national and international causes. The Foundation has taken a particular interest in providing for children in challenging environments and difficult circumstances.



LIATIS Foundation

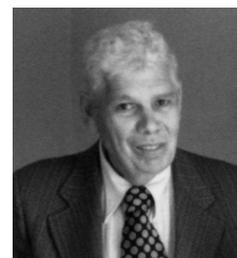
The Congregation has been at the forefront of addressing the special needs of children and adults in our region. In 1995, the Congregation initiated the Talmud Torah Meyuhad (TTM) Special Education Hebrew School as part of its religious school. It was the first program in the region to provide a "protected" learning environment specifically tailored to the special needs of each student. The TTM program at BEKI, now supported and directed by the Department of Jewish Education of the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven, has continued to grow and to serve the special needs of our students.

Since 1983, the BEKI

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February Congregational Brunch To Honor Robert Goodwin

A Sunday Brunch will be held in honor of the late Robert Goodwin, on 13 February. Robert Goodwin was active in the development of the synagogue from its construction in 1960 throughout the following 25 years. He was a brother of BEKI member Pat Goodwin.



Robert Goodwin

Robert Goodwin, the third oldest of four brothers, was a Hillhouse High School graduate and World War II veteran. He was especially active in the BEKI Men's Club, and was known for lining up stimulating speakers for its events. He was associated with the Eastern Steel and Metal Company for many years.

Robert, who passed away in 1993, is survived by his wife, Lilyan, who lives in Florida, and two adult children.



Rabbi Murray Levine

The brunch will feature Rabbi Murray Levine, who will introduce a unique means of Torah study through his presentation of a Bibliodrama. This dramatic approach to biblical stories features impromptu audience participation, promising to make the program both informative and entertaining.

The brunch will be from 9:30a through 11:00a on Sunday 13 February in the BEKI Ballroom. Suggested donation is \$2.00. Reservations are not required. ☆

Helen Rosenberg

Bring a Friend Day

Shabbat 4 & 5 February 2000
Friday Evening Service 6:00p to 6:50p
Shabbat Morning Service 9:15a to noon
Children's Programs 10:45a to noon
Singers' Group 11:00a to noon
Minha, Maariv & Havdala 5:00p to 6:15p
Saturday Night at the Movies 7:00p to 9:00p

How to Contact the BEKI Bulletin

Responses to "A Message from Rabbi Tilsen," questions for "Dear Rabbi" and Letters to the Editor can be sent to: Editor, BEKI-Bulletin, 85 Harrison Street, New Haven, CT 06515 or by email to jjtilsen@beki.org.

Rabbi Tilsen's mail and e-mail are opened directly and exclusively by the Rabbi himself and are as secure and confidential as mail and e-mail can be.

Calling BEKI

To call BEKI, dial (203) 389-2108.

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BEKI-Bulletin

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

To contribute articles or for inquiries regarding membership, donations, or special activities, call the Synagogue office (203) 389-2108, or write to 85 Harrison Street, New Haven, CT 06515-1724
or email: jjtilsen@beki.org

or see our web page created by Phill Simon:
www.beki.org

For information about advertising, call the synagogue office. Deadline for submission of ads or articles is the 1st of the month preceding publication.

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BEKI-Bulletin

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A Message from Rabbi Tilsen & Dear Rabbi
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New on the web

Useful information and resources can be found at BEKI's web site, at www.beki.org. New items include "Birth & Baby Event Notices," "Weddings," and "Death Notices." There is also a directory of the email addresses of some members. Let us know if you would like your name and address added. The Master Rotation Schedule for Shabbat Service Leaders and the candle lighting times for 5760/2000 are there as well. Check it out!

Rotation List Sent

In mid-December, the "Master Rotation" for Shabbat and Festival service leaders for the period of January through June 2000 was mailed. The list includes the names of those who have volunteered to lead one or more of the services listed. For an additional copy of the Master Rotation, please either call the BEKI office at 389-2108 x14, pick one up from the counter by the coatroom, or download www.beki.org/rotate.html. If you would like to lead any service, or learn how, please contact Rabbi Tilsen at 389-2108 x10 for jjtilsen@beki.org

Predicting the Past

From time to time in recent months I have been asked, "What will the world (or the synagogue) be like in the next century?" Assuming the question was about the distant future (i.e. more than a month down the road), I have to confess that I have no idea.

I am reminded of the story of an Israeli who was out hiking and came upon a Bedouin scout lying flat on the ground with his ear pressed against the sandy earth. Without looking up the Bedouin said: "Jeep... 6-cylinder jeep... man driving jeep... long beard... wearing green shirt... woman in passenger seat... dressed in jeans..." The Israeli was duly impressed. "You can tell all of that just by pressing your ear to the ground?" he asked.

"No," replied the Bedouin, "The Jeep ran me over twenty minutes ago."

My understanding of how the world works is hardly sufficient to explain the past, let alone predict the future. And back in Rabbinical School I skipped the elective course "Practical Prophecy 101," in favor of "Investing for your Retirement." That makes me as qualified as the pundits to predict the future, so here goes.

RABBI TILSEN'S PREDICATIONS FOR THE YEAR 2100

Assuming we don't destroy all life or civilization through pollution, war or the successful attempt of physicists to recreate the Big Bang in their particle accelerators, we might expect the following.

- A new battery is developed that derives energy from the body's own heat or chemistry. It is wildly popular, as people no longer need to plug their heads in at night to recharge their cell phone implants.
- Replacement body parts, grown from one's own DNA, can be ordered from Amazon.com.
- The Social Security retirement age is raised to

135.

- A cancer cure is available at CVS without prescription.
- The first class letter rate is \$49.99.
- Non-Conservative conversions to Judaism are not recognized by the government of Mars.
- All financial transactions are registered by fingerprint.
- Cars get over 200 mpg.
- New York City is expelled from the United States of North America, and Manhattan Island is towed to a location near Greenland.
- The Tel Aviv-Beirut Commuter Train line is overcrowded.
- BEKI operates franchises in 2,000 locations in 70 countries. Phase 27 is completed of the BEKI 2000 Project.
- New Haven real estate prices are astronomical as Sun Birds flock here in the summer to escape the blistering heat of the South.
- The City is renamed "New Haven at Yale." California is renamed "California at Microsoft."
- Construction nears completion on I-95.
- The Catholic Church returns to tradition and continues its reconciliation with Jewry, as Catholics now eat gefilte fish on Fridays.
- Ham, grown as genetically altered watermelons, is kosher-certified by the OU.
- You don't have to be Jewish to be Jewish, but it helps.



Rabbi Tilsen

Those are my predications. One thing I know for sure is that the future can be whatever we make it. As we sing in the hymn "Lekha Dodi" each Shabbat Evening, "*sof ma'asei bemahshava tehila* – what becomes reality begins as thought." May your future, beginning today, be a happy one. ☆



Dear Rabbi

Dear Rabbi

I would be very grateful if you could let me know how long after childbirth a Jewish woman would undergo the ritual of purification. I am a Christian prison chaplain, very interested in the Jewish traditions.

Sincerely, Behind Bars

Dear Behind Bars,

According to the 16th century law code "Shulhan Arukh," which remains the standard reference volume for Conservative and most Orthodox Jews, a woman will undergo immersion in a *miqva* (ritual bath) at the end of a minimum of 7 days after the birth of a boy or 14 days after the birth of a girl. However, depending on the woman's menstrual cycles, and the customs of her particular locale and community, the period may be longer, up to 33 days for a boy and 66 for a girl. For a concise comprehensive discussion of the issue in English, see (HaRav) Mordechai Eliyahu, "The Paths of Purity — the Laws of Niddah and Family Purity." ☆

Liatis Foundation Builds BEKI Endowment

Continued from page 1

Sisterhood has hosted a Special Needs Model Seder for adults in conjunction with the Jewish Family Service. In 1997, the Congregation initiated the "Kulanu Ke'Ehad Havura" for adults with special needs, which is now funded in part through the support of the **David & Lillian Levine Endowment for People with Special Needs** and through the generous support of **Roger & Susan Levine**. In 1999, BEKI initiated "Saul's Circle," an outreach program for adults with chronic debilitating mental illness, with major grant funding from the Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven. Kulanu and Saul's Circle are directed by BEKI member **Anne Johnston**.

The **Borick Family Endowment** is managed by the Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven for the benefit of the Congregation. Only the interest from the Endowment is used so that children with special needs will be supported in perpetuity. ☆

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and

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Sat. 8:00-3:00

New Thursday Morning Service Time

Beginning on 2 March 2000, the time for the weekly Thursday morning service will change to 8:15a (ending by 9:00a). Only the time for the Thursday morning service has changed; all other service times remain unchanged.

This change was made after careful consideration by the Ritual Committee under the leadership of Steven Fraade and by Rabbi Tilsen. It is felt that there are a number of Congregants who would like to attend a weekday morning service but are simply not able to attend the 7:00a service, or who would strongly prefer this later starting time.

This change was made knowing that there is no hour that is most convenient for everyone, and that this new time might preclude some willing participants from attending on that one day of the week. It is hoped, however, that this new service time for Thursday morning will enable a few more of us to fulfill the mitzva of communal worship.

There is a fundamental obligation for individual daily prayer, particularly the recitation of the Shema and the Amida. These prayers are direct Biblical and Rabbinic *mitzvot* (religious imperatives) and are vital to individual spiritual health. This obligation, for men and women alike, can be fulfilled just about anywhere.

Much effort has been spent in the past few centuries encouraging Jews to come to *shul* (synagogue) to help make a minyan. By “minyan” we mean the quorum of ten adult Jews needed for public worship. Only when a minyan is present is it appropriate to recite certain segments of the liturgy such as qaddish and qedusha and to read Torah. Each community has an obligation to maintain a minyan for each of the three or four daily services, and early sources depict God as being displeased when there is no minyan.

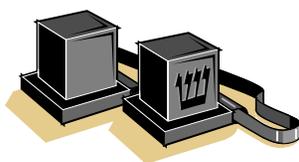
As Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob said, “The Holy One declared to Israel: ‘When you pray, pray in the synagogue of your city.’” The sages placed great importance on communal worship at the shul regardless of the numerical attendance. The individual fulfills this obligation whether there are two or two hundred others present. It is an obligation to recite the daily prayers, and the ideal place to pray is in the shul.

There is an extra measure of merit and *qedusha* (holiness) when the group prays as a Minyan, as that is the only way for the community to fulfill its obligation to hold public Torah readings. This mitzva is for the community, not the individual.

For some people, being able to say Mourners’ Qaddish properly is the main reason for having a minyan. The original idea was for mourners to attend the public worship as a public memorial to their loved ones, and the mourners would lead the service. As it was impossible for everyone to lead the service, either because they had not mastered the liturgy or because there was more than one mourner present, it became the custom in some places for the mourners to recite Qaddish in place of leading the whole service. The Qaddish was chosen because it is Aramaic and not Hebrew, which made it more accessible to worshipers in a time when Aramaic was widely spoken.

Why do people come to daily services? Some people attend daily morning and evening services in order to fulfill the obligation of personal prayer in the shul. Some come to help “make the minyan.” Some find that daily prayer helps them center themselves spiritually — better to stop off at shul on the way home from work than at a bar. Better to take a few minutes for God, for oneself, before coming home from a day of stressful work. Better to get up in the morning and go where you will be appreciated and needed. Better to come out to shul once or twice a day or week than to sit home all the time and watch TV. And better to pray at our shul, in the George G. Posener Daily Chapel, where the memories of Mr. Friedman, Izzy, Abe & Marion, Eddie, Bob, Moishe and numerous loved ones of blessed memory can still be felt.

Your comment and suggestion to Steven Fraade (397-9430 or steve.fraade@yale.edu) or to Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen (389-2108 x10 or jjtilsen@beki.org) would be welcome. If you would like guidance in attending any of our 22 weekly services, or would like to learn to lead a service, read Torah or Haftara, put on *tefillin* (phylacteries), or understand Hebrew, please let us know; the doors are open and seats are still available. ✧



LifeCycle

With sorrow we note the passing of

Harry Y. Miller, father of Phillip (& Lynn Coleman) Miller, on Tuesday night 4 January 2000.

Herbert Graff, father of Bennett (& Sharon Lovett-) Graff on Sunday 9 January 2000.

Mazal Tov

To Ellen Jawitz & Robert Leikind

Calling Old Kippot

A collection box for "recycling" kippot (yarmulkes) has been placed in the coatroom by BEKI member Patricia Zusman to be sent to communities in need in Africa through the offices of the National Council of Jewish Women. For more information on the project, call Pat Zusman at 799-9995.

Winter Warmth Drive

Until Sunday 13 February there will be a winter warmth drive organized by Jake Stern. There is a box in the synagogue coatroom for collection of winter garments such as jackets, gloves, mittens, scarves and blankets. These winter garments will be given to a homeless shelter. Garments in good condition would be highly preferred. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Jake Stern

BEKI Sisterhood News

Sisterhood President Adele Tyson advises that plans are being considered for the Spring and for the annual Book of Life Luncheon. She always welcomes suggestions from members.

Patronize the Sisterhood Gift Shop. It is well stocked with beautiful items for all occasions and suitable for men, women and children.

Donations to Sisterhood were recently received from Joan Gelbert, Shirley Mattler, Rena Miller and Mikki Ratner.

Donations in memory of Mae Etkind were received from Herbert Etkind and Family, David and Ellen Murachver, Marcia Minuskin and Jeff Zonenshine, Lois Feldman, Adele Tyson, Eli and Goldie Kasimer, and the following Griffin Hospital colleagues: Patrick Charmel, Bill Powanda, Lynn Wardel, Marge Deegan, Dr. Kenneth Schwartz, Nancy Stroud, Diana Serebnitsky, Mary Beth Troy, and Michael Gaeta.

BEKI Members: Who we are

About 257 membership units (individuals or families) formally belong to the Congregation. It is estimated that an additional 200 families or individuals identify BEKI as their synagogue but do not hold formal membership. Member families include over 200 minor children; an additional 30 children are formal or regular participants in BEKI programs. Fully one-half of our member families have joined since August 1993. Almost two-thirds (61%) live in the City of New Haven.

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New: Mishna Berakhot

A seven-week survey of the second-century law compendium tractate Berakhot begins in BEKI's Rosenkrantz Library on Sunday 5 March 2000. The class meets immediately after the 5:45p evening service, from 6:00p to 7:00p. There is an \$18 registration fee. Participants should also bring any edition of "Mishna Berakhot," available at Jewish Book stores and from Amazon.com (see BEKI's link at www.beki.org/links.html). Library copies of the text are also available. This class will be lead by Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen. To register call Mary Ellen at 389-2108 x14 or beki@snet.net.

New: Song of Songs - Biblical Love Poetry

A seven-week study of the ancient Biblical Book Shir HaShirim - Song of Songs begins in BEKI's Rosenkrantz Library on Sunday 5 March 2000. The class meets from 7:15p to 8:15p. There is an \$18 registration fee. Participants may either use a text available in the Library or bring their own copy. This class will be lead by Rabbi Murray Levine. To register call Mary Ellen at 389-2108 x14 or beki@snet.net.

Avot

Join us every Shabbat afternoon following the Minha service during February and March for a thirty-minute Pirque Avot Study session. Study and discuss this early collection of wise sayings of our sages, also known as "Mishna Avot" or as "Avot." "Pirque" means chapters or quotations; "avot" means "of the ancestors." Avot was edited in the second century of the Common Era by Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi and contains material from that period as well as from several centuries earlier. As Hillel says, "Do not say, 'When I have leisure, I will study,' for you may never have leisure" (Avot, 2:5). That's the same Hillel who says, "If not now, when?" (Avot, 1:14).

Siyyum 2001

A group of adults who have made a commitment to a yearlong program of study have begun studying together. If you are interested in learning more about the program or would like to join, please contact Rabbi Tilsen at 389-2108 x10 or jjtilsen@beki.org.

Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan

The "Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan," which meets every other Saturday morning at 10:45a in BEKI's Rosenkrantz Library, is an ideal setting for veteran and novice shul-goers alike to become more comfortable and expert in the Shaharit (morning) and Torah services in a supportive setting. Led by Steven Fraade and Rabbi Alan Lovins, the Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan has helped many feel a deeper sense of awe born of greater understanding while increasing the level of comfort through nurturing step-by-step practice in a non-threatening multi-generational setting. The SSLM will meet on 12 & 26 February.

Rashi Study Group

Each Monday morning from 7:45a to 8:30a adults meets in BEKI's Rosenkrantz Library to read Rashi's commentary to the Torah. It is possible to attend the study for a single meeting or to begin at any time. Knowledge of Hebrew is not necessary but helpful. For more information, just come once and find out what it is about. (On 21 February, Presidents' Day, the Rashi Group will meet at 9:45a.)

New: Midrasha Winter Series

BEKI has joined with neighboring Conservative and non-Conservative congregations under the auspices of the Department of Jewish Education of the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven in offering a program of adult study known as "Midrasha." Midrasha will meet for six weeks on Monday nights beginning 28 February 2000 (excluding 20 March) at Temple Beth Sholom. For more information please see the BEKI's community events bulletin board or call Valerie Sandler at the DJE at 387-2424 x316 (vsandler@jewishnewhaven.org).

Gourmet Shabbat Dinner to Welcome New Members

11 February 2000

Following the 6:00p Service

Adults \$16.00 (age 12+)

Children \$8.00 (age 3-11)

Entrees: Chicken or Broiled Tofu with Sun-Dried Tomatoes

Please call or send your reservations by 4 February to Mary Ellen at the synagogue office – 389-2108 x14 beki@snet.net

פּוּרִים



Purim is Coming

This year we will again help you celebrate the Purim mitzvot of mishloach manot - the sending of gifts - and matanot la evyonim - presents to the poor - with our beautiful BEKI Purim Baskets.

No worry! No fuss! No shopping!

Just send in the order forms you will receive later this month. Start making your list. There's enough time to check it twice!

Gloria Cohen

JTS Shabbat at BEKI

On Shabbat morning 26 February BEKI will be visited by Joshua Cahan, a first year student in the Rabbinical School of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. He is originally from Potomac, Maryland, and is a graduate of Yale University. Josh has spent two years of study in Israel, including one at the Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem. He spent a year working for the Joint Distribution Committee in Yekaterinburg, Russia, where he worked to develop educational programming for the Jewish Community.

On Shabbat morning, Josh will present a *Devar Torah* (sermon). At the 5:15p Minha service, he will discuss his work in Russia and his studies in Israel.

On that Shabbat we will recognize the central importance of JTS in our religious lives. The Jewish Theological Seminary of America includes a rabbinical school, cantorial school, graduate school, school of education, and an undergraduate program. It has been in New York City for over 100 years.

The Seminary has "sister" schools in Los Angeles, Buenos Aires, Jerusalem and Budapest. The Seminary is the beneficiary of BEKI Sisterhood's "Torah Fund."

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