



EREV SHIRA ON SHABBAT SHIRA

Join us on Motse'ei Shabbat (Saturday night) Jan. 15 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Minsky-Fenick Residence in Woodbridge (RSVP 203-397-3789 by Jan. 12) marking Shabbat Shira (Sabbath of Song). Bring songsheets, musical instruments (no pianos or pipe organs), and a kosher dessert or drinks to share, or just bring your voice. This event is supported by the Morris & Sara Oppenheim Fund for Sacred Music at BEKI.

Participation Question of The Month

Are you familiar with any potential BEKI members that you can recommend our membership committee to call or to greet? If so, please email or call-in the names and contact information to office@beki.org, subject line 'Participation.'

ANL Library News

The following books were purchased thanks to generous donations to the Ari Nathan Levine Fund, and are available in the Ari Nathan Levine Library Collection, housed in the Claire Goodwin Children's Room. The ANL is a non-lending library, especially designed to provide materials and support to our parent volunteer leaders of our weekly Childrens' Shabbat Programs.

- *Baxter, the Pig Who Wanted to Be Kosher*, Laurel Snyder
- *The Hanukkah Trike*, Michelle Edwards
- *Beautiful Yetta, The Yiddish Chicken*, Daniel Pinkwater
- *Modeh Ani: A Good Morning Book*, Sarah Gershman
- *The Rooster Prince of Breslov*, Ann Redisch Stampler
- *The Kvetch Who Stole Hanukkah*, Bill Berlin

Bacon at BEKI?

Clarification of oral announcements: Invitation has been made to members and friends to help with an occasional "Bake and Freeze" (*not* "Bacon Freeze") to prepare stock items for Shabbat Qiddush presentations. Those not able to join a monthly Qiddush Prep Team are encouraged to come and help. To learn about or volunteer to join a monthly Qiddush Prep Team or the occasional "Bake & Freeze," contact a coordinator c/o office@beki.org (203) 389-2108 x14.



Exhibit and Schmooze

Join artist Edith Borax Morrison on Shabbat afternoon Jan. 8 at 1 p.m. in the Rosenkrantz Family Library for a Shabbat Schmooze presentation about her artwork, which is featured in the BEKI Lobby and Hallway Art Gallery. The exhibit is curated by the Kehler Liddell Gallery, 873 Whalley Ave. (203) 389-9555.



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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: jjtilsen@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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A Message from Rabbi Tilsen & Dear Rabbi
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Web Buys

If you purchase from Amazon.com via this link www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/redirect-home/congregabethelke) or at www.beki.org through the "Amazon" box at the bottom of the page, BEKI receives a small commission on your purchase at no cost to you. You must use these links each time you access the merchant's website in order for BEKI to receive a commission.

Benefit Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel

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Charitable giving strengthens our Community
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Darshanim in January

Rabbi Eric A. Silver will serve as darshan for parashat Bo on Shabbat morning Jan. 8.

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, Rabbi Eric Silver** 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 Afternoon Study Break

Each Shabbat afternoon from November through March, a 30-minute study break is held between the Shabbat Mincha and Motse'ei Shabbat and Havdala services, featuring popular texts. The mincha service begins on Shabbat (Saturday) afternoon at the same hour that candles were lit the night before, and ends about 85 minutes later. Set in the George G. Posener Daily Chapel, the service and study period are intimate, participatory and sometimes intense and uplifting.

Sundays

New: The Evolution of Judaism in the Second Temple Period (March)

Explore topics in the emergence of Rabbinic Judaism and its evolution in the Second Temple period with Steven Fraade on three consecutive Sunday nights in March (6, 13, 20) following the 5:45 afternoon and evening services. Steven Fraade is the Mark Taper Professor of the History of Judaism at Yale University; he teaches courses on rabbinic literature, the history of the Second Temple and rabbinic Judaism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. English and Hebrew texts (and occasionally texts in other languages) are provided. From 6:07 p.m. to 7 p.m. Suitable for adults and mature youth. Costume optional at the March 20 class. Coffee, tea and hot cocoa available.

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 RSG began in January 1994 with the first verse of Genesis and is currently reading the final chapters of Deuteronomy. The Rashi Study Group meets immediately following the 7 o'clock



Steven Fraade

shaharit morning service. Most participants attend the service before the Study Group. With Jon-Jay Tilsen.

On Monday Jan. 17, morning services begin at 9 o'clock, and the RSG begins at 9:45, marking Martin Luther King Jr. Day; the office is closed.

New: Survey of Mishna Sanhedrin (January)

On five Monday nights in January, survey the text of Mishna Sanhedrin. Compiled in the early third century of the common era by Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, a resident of Tsiptori in northern Israel, this tractate of the Mishna describes the procedures for trying capital cases and judicial execution; the Noahide laws (the bases for universal human rights); and other rules of evidence and procedure. Several notable quotations such as "He who saves one life..." will be encountered, as well as striking evidence of the evolutionary nature of law, philosophy and theology. Begins Monday night Jan. 3, from 5:55 (immediately following the 5:45 evening service) to 6:50, and each Monday night through Jan. 31 (five weeks), in the Beit Midrash. Texts available in English and Hebrew or bring your own Mishna. Ideal for anyone interested in an introduction to Mishna, or criminal law (in Hebrew law or other Western Law systems), and participants (continuing or new) in the Sanhedrin Study Group (a Talmud study group that meets on Thursdays; see below). Suitable for adults and mature youth. With Rabbi Tilsen.



Jon-Jay Tilsen

Continued on **Page 4**

Adult Studies

Continued from **Page 3**

Wednesdays

Word for the Day

The Wednesday morning service (shaharit) features a 90-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. The Word for the Day often relates to the weekly scriptural readings, enhancing personal study and public Torah discussion. The Wednesday morning service normally begins at 7 o’clock and ends at 7:31. (The service ends later on Hol HaMoed Sukkot and Pesah, Hanuka and Rosh Hodesh; Word for the Day is not presented on those occasions.)

Rabbis’ Study Group

Wednesdays with Murray is a weekly study group exclusively for rabbis, facilitated by Rabbi Murray Levine. The Wednesday study group

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

Thursdays

Mini Morning Learning Service

The Thursday morning services are dedicated to encouraging those learning to serve as ba’alei tefila (precursors or prayer leaders), ba’alei qeri’a (Torah readers), gabbaim and other leaders, and are sometimes 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 o’clock.

Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group

The *Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group* meets weekly on Thursdays during the lunch hour (12:30 to 1:30). The Group has met weekly since 1999. For some

participants, this is their first direct experience with Talmud text; for others, it is a continuation of a long journey.

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

The Sanhedrin Study Group meets in BEKI’s Rosenkrantz Family Library. For information, contact Isaiah Cooper at his law office icooper@cooperlaw.net.

Every Day

Divrei Torah on the Web

A collection of Divrei Torah (Torah commentaries) and essays by members and Rabbi Tilsen is posted on BEKI’s website under “Adult Studies” and “Meet Rabbi Tilsen.” Jonathan M. Freiman’s devar Torah on parashat Bereishit is the most recently posted; see <http://beki.org/dt/FreimanJM2010.pdf>. For a complete list, see <http://beki.org/hungry.html>.



Isaiah Cooper



Barzillai Cheskis,
of blessed memory

HaMaqom Yinahem

With sorrow we note the passing of

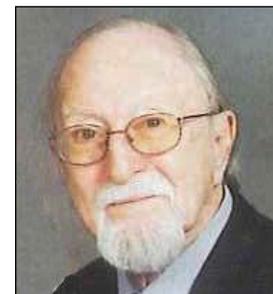
Barzillai Cheskis,

father of Rena Cheskis-Gold (& Martin Gold)

Morris L. Cohen,

husband of Gloria Cohen

May the Almighty comfort those who mourn



Morris L. Cohen,
of blessed memory

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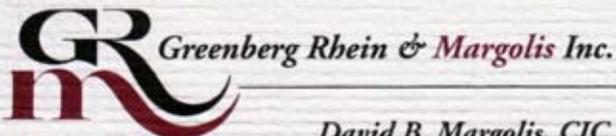


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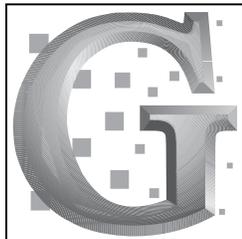
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Bidding for BEKI is Back

This year there are plans for a Country Auction to be held June 5. Gila Reinstein (gila.reinstein@yale.edu), Betsy Ratner (b.ratner@sbcglobal.net) and Donna Levine (sdsij@aol.com) will co-chair the event and they're looking for volunteers to get involved in all aspects of making this a fun and profitable fundraiser. Please contact one of the co-chairs or call Peggy in the office (203) 389-2108) if you wish to work on decorations, food, collecting items, selling tickets, or any other aspect of this sure-to-be-fun event. And....save the date!!!!

Torah Readers Wanted

If you would like to read from the Book of Shemot (through March 5), contact Carole Bass; if you would like to read from VaYiqra, contact Jon-Jay Tilsen at jjtilsen@beki.org . If you would like to learn how to read Torah, contact Darryl Kuperstock at kuperst@aol.com .

Buying Groceries?

Use gift cards for Stop & Shop, Westville Kosher Market and other local outlets, available at face value – no additional cost to you – and BEKI receives a significant commission. Available from Gloria Cohen and from Office.

Welcome New Members

Roni Woolfson and Benjamin



Sheqolarships

Your extra Israeli currency (New Israeli Sheqels) can be used for scholarships for BEKI youth studying in Israel. Deposit currency in the “foreign currency and tokens” *pushke* (charity box) in the beit midrash; or if you want a receipt (in U.S. dollars at current published exchange rate) please send or deliver to office. Save yourself and our students the cost of currency exchange and encourage them in their studies. Good ol’ greenbacks are also welcome.

You are They

Someone once complained to me, “You never call.” In response, I informed the complainant that I possess a two-way phone capable of *receiving* calls as well as *placing* them.

Although snarky and unsympathetic, my response was serious, and intended to challenge the complainant. Admittedly there are times when convention indicates which party is obliged to initiate communication, such as an adult child calling an elderly parent or calling a friend to offer condolences or a birthday greeting; it is often the case that complaints such as this one are based on a sense of helplessness, or, alternatively, undue entitlement.

Other responses to the complaint might be, “I’m so glad we’re talking now,” “Sorry about that; I’ll try to do better,” or the like. As a pastoral matter, the response might depend on the particular circumstances. Some complaints are valid as stated, but others are best understood as a call for help or indication of some other problem.

Members have sometimes complained, “No one ever invites me (or us) for a Shabbat dinner,” or “No one calls to ask me to come to a synagogue program” or to sit by them in services. Or, “There was not a minyan when I came to weekday services.” Those are real and serious observations, and suggest that our community needs more reminders and direction in fulfilling the mitzvot of *hakhnasat orkhim* (welcoming visitors), *qeruv* (inviting others into mitzva activities such as Shabbat meals, Torah study or services), fulfilling the *hiyuvim* (obligations) of daily prayer in public, and just being welcoming in general.

But there is also a “tough love” perspective. Did the complainant invite others to his or her Shabbat dinner? Is this person really incapable of doing so? There is a reasonable general presumption that long-term members ought to welcome newcomers; that is, politeness obliges the veteran to “make the call.” Yet such a large proportion of our mem-



bership comprises households who have been members for just a couple of years that perceptions might fairly vary as to who is a “veteran” and who a “new” member. If you joined BEKI in 2008, for example, there are about 45 households who joined after you, so who is the “new” member?

Likewise, some complainants seem to expect that others will attend daily services, and will thus be there when the complainant “needs” a quorum to say mourners’ qaddish. Or by the same token, there are those who expect synagogues and other public institutions to be there when they need them, but do not think that they are obliged to support those institutions themselves. Those who do attend daily services or financially support synagogues can feel discouraged when others expect to benefit from the services (in both senses) but don’t provide the continuing support. In the civic realm, we know of those who want good police and fire service, well-maintained highways and good schools, but don’t believe they should be taxed to pay it. As annoying as those situations are, the reality is that most of our members and friends are generous in their support. The bigger concern – far bigger in scope, importance and impact -- is that many don’t care about daily services or synagogues at all.

While there is a lot more that our “organized” congregation (including the rabbi) should do to reach out to those new in our community and to those who are somewhat isolated, the greatest advance comes from individuals taking responsibility for their own performance of mitzvot. It requires putting *tukhes ofn tisch* – putting your money where your mouth is, placing your own posterior in harm’s way, putting your own donkey on the queue. A fundamental rule of leadership, or parenting, is leading by example, and not expecting others to do what the leader is not willing to do himself or herself.

Rabbi Matya ben Harash says: Be the first to extend greetings to every human being. Avot 4:20

January 2011

25 Tevet 5771 - 26 Shevat 5771

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

						1 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Learner's Minyan Qiddush: Levine (Sid & Donna) 4:15pm Minha-Maariv 25 Tevet
2 No Religious School 26 Tevet	3 7:45am Rashi Study Group 5:55pm Survey of Mishna Sanhedrin w/Rabbi Tilsen 27 Tevet	4 28 Tevet	5 8:30am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program 29 Tevet	6 Rosh Hodesh 12:30pm Talmud Study Group 1 Shevat	7 4:20pm Candle Lighting 2 Shevat	8 Darshan: Rabbi Eric A. Silver 10:45am Children's Programs Qiddush: van Creveld & Labowe-Stoll 1:00pm Shabbat Schmooze w/artist Edith Borax Morrison 4:20pm Minha-Maariv 3 Shevat
9 9:00am Religious School 1:00pm Pomegranate Guild 1:00pm Kiddush Committee Cook 'n Freeze 4 Shevat	10 7:45am Rashi Study Group 5:55pm Survey of Mishna Sanhedrin w/Rabbi Tilsen 7:30pm Executive Board Meeting (off-site) 5 Shevat	11 6 Shevat	12 8:30am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program 7 Shevat	13 12:30pm Talmud Study Group 8 Shevat	14 4:28pm Candle Lighting 9 Shevat	15 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Learner's Minyan Qiddush: TBA 4:30pm Minha-Maariv 7:00pm Erev Shira @Minsky-Fenick Residence 10 Shevat
16 No Religious School 11 Shevat	17 Office Closed/Martin Luther King Day 9:00am Sha'arait 9:45am Rashi Study Group 5:55pm Survey of Mishna Sanhedrin w/Rabbi Tilsen 12 Shevat	18 13 Shevat	19 8:30am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program 14 Shevat	20 Tu B'Shevat 12:30pm Talmud Study Group 15 Shevat	21 4:36pm Candle Lighting 16 Shevat	22 10:45am Children's Programs Qiddush: Kaufman/Frankel & Gerber 4:40pm Minha-Maariv 17 Shevat
23 9:00am Religious School 18 Shevat	24 7:45am Rashi Study Group 5:55pm Survey of Mishna Sanhedrin w/Rabbi Tilsen 7:30pm General Board Meeting 19 Shevat	25 20 Shevat	26 8:30am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program 21 Shevat	27 12:30pm Talmud Study Group 22 Shevat	28 4:44pm Candle Lighting 23 Shevat	29 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Learner's Minyan Qiddush: Kassap/Caldwell 4:45pm Minha-Maariv USY Limo Scavenger Hunt (off-site) 24 Shevat
30 9:00am Religious School 25 Shevat	31 7:45am Rashi Study Group 5:55pm Survey of Mishna Sanhedrin w/Rabbi Tilsen 26 Shevat	<h3 style="margin: 0;">Kadima Schedule</h3> <p style="margin: 0;">Sunday Jan. 9: Bowling at Amity Family Bowl, Woodbridge. Member cost: \$15, non-member cost: \$18</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Sunday Jan. 30: Regional Snow Tubing Event in Woodbury</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Friday Feb. 11: Shabbat Dinner at the Benson-Tilsen's home</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Save the Date: Saturday March 5. Shabbaton & Movie Night</p> <p style="margin: 0;">For more information, http://bekibjkadima.blogspot.com</p>				

Service Times

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