**Tisha Be'Av at BEKI**

The fast day of *Tisha Be'Av* (“ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av”) will be observed on Saturday night 28 July & Sunday 29 July. Minha afternoon services are from 5:45p to 6:20p Shabbat afternoon 28 July. The traditional *Maariv* (evening) service begins at 9:00p. The *Shaharit* (morning) service on Sunday is from 9:00a to 10:15a. The evening and morning services include the reading of the Biblical Book of *Eikha* (Lamentations). The fast is observed from sundown Saturday night until 8:50p Sunday night. As a sign of mourning, many refrain from wearing leather shoes and ostentatious clothing, and do not enjoy music, intimate physical relations or entertainment.

*Tisha Be’Av* commemorates the destruction of the first two Temples and other tragedies that have taken place in our long and glorious history. On *Tisha Be’Av* in 1290, King Edward I signed an edict expelling the Jews from England. Likewise, the expulsion of Jews from Spain occurred on that date in 1492. The fast is the only full day fast on the Hebrew calendar besides *Yom Kippur*. Those with medical conditions that require oral medications or eating are urged to consult their medical and rabbinic authorities.

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**BEKI’s Big Backyard: Jewish Tradition and Local Bioversity**

In honor of the talking donkey of *Parashat Balaq* in the book of Numbers, the Johnston family is organizing a mini-symposium on local biodiversity on the evening of Sandy’s bar mitzva observance, Saturday 7 July, from 7p to 8p. Come and learn about our own fascinating flora and fauna! We will begin with text study about biodiversity in Jewish law and tradition. Local experts will then discuss the natural history and inhabitants of West Rock Ridge and the West River watershed – BEKI’s backyard. A light *seuda shelishit* (in this case, desserts in honor of the Shabbat queen) will follow. Children are welcome, although the talk will be aimed at older children and adults, but some hands-on explorations will be available. Take home information for your own family nature study, as well as information about the local groups working to protect our natural treasures.

For information, please call Anne Johnston at 389-9184 or e-mail anne@beki.org.
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.

Information on the Counter

Literature may be placed in the literature rack, on the coatroom counter and on the Community Bulletin Board by permission only. To request permission for placement on this counter or on the Community Bulletin Board, please contact Synagogue Administrator Mary Ellen Mack at 389-2108 ext. 14 (beki@snet.net). After office hours, you may leave one copy of your submission, with your phone number, under Mary Ellen’s door, or you may fax it to Mary Ellen at (203) 389-5899 (24-hours).

The lobby display areas are reserved for BEKI programs and activities. We receive frequent requests to promote activities of the Jewish Community Center, Jewish Federation, Jewish Foundation, Jewish Home, Jewish Family Service, Ezra Academy, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, the Jewish Theological Seminary, and the Schechter Institute for Jewish Studies, along with a host of other worthy and important communal agencies and institutions. It would not be possible to place them all on the counter by the coatroom. Posters and flyers for these institutions are found on the Community Bulletin Board.

Sometimes flyers and posters that are inappropriate for display at BEKI have been found placed without permission. Flyers and posters placed without permission are immediately discarded. Your cooperation in maintaining a fair and respectful policy is appreciated.

Calling BEKI

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

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“Give me a banana!”
“Honey, how do you ask politely?”
“GIVE ME A BANANA PLEASE!”

Parents of young children (indeed, children of any age) are aware that the notion of “appreciation” is one that is learned. At some point in their development, children feel entitled to the complete and undivided attention and servitude of their parents. Parents, after having gone through the travail of childbirth or adoption, diapering and caring for an infant, feel that their appreciation is already earned. Only after these children grow to adulthood, support themselves and their family, and raise their own children, can they begin to realize the appreciation owed to their parents.

Parents, grandparents, teachers and others in a child’s life are as a rule taken for granted. Learning to feel and express appreciation is a learned behavior.

One way that our tradition teaches the notion of expressing appreciation is the ritual of reciting berakhot (blessings) before and after eating. These berakhot force us to be conscious of what we are eating, and the act of expressing appreciation to the Almighty is both uplifting to our own souls and instructive to our children.

Texts of various berakhot are presented in Siddur Sim Shalom (the one we use at BEKI) as well as in other prayer books. You can hear the blessings on the web by using BEKI’s audio library.

Parents of young children in particular are urged to make the recitation of these blessings part of their daily meal ritual.

AA Open Meeting at BEKI
marks fourth anniversary

A weekly AA Meeting has been held at BEKI since May 1997. Open to any person who can benefit from a recovery program, the meeting is held according to standard AA procedure. This is not a specifically Jewish recovery group, although a large proportion of participants are Jewish. For information on the weekly meeting call Jay at (203) 387-6019 or email Jay at jay@jacsweb.org.
Religious School Update

Registration Opens

Registration is open for BEKI’s religious school. All interested new and returning students should have registration material completed and sent to the BEKI office by 1 August to receive the early registration discount. For more information contact the school at 389-2108 x13.

We express our gratitude and best wishes to Terri Stern, who has completed her tenure as principal. Terri is now working full-time at the Peabody Museum. Under her direction, the School developed new and engaging curriculum and numerous innovative programs. Many parents and visitors observed a high level of engagement and depth of learning in our classrooms. We thank Terri for her years of dedicated teaching and leadership of the School. We are very glad to note that Terri will be just a “phone call away” to offer her continuing support during the transition and beyond, and will also be available to share her gifts in curriculum development and teaching in the coming years.

As this issue of the Bulletin goes to press at the end of May, a task force of synagogue leaders is interviewing candidates for principal. Information on the new principal will be distributed when arrangements are finalized.

Classes begin Wednesday 5 September. BEKI religious school meets on Sunday mornings and Wednesday afternoons. Note that school hours on Sundays this year will be from 9:00a to noon. (Last year hours were from 9:30a to 12:30a.) This change was made to make it easier for drivers and older students to attend the Congregation’s 9:00a morning service, and to make it easier for students to participate in afternoon activities after school (such as sports or music lessons). Wednesday classes will meet from 4:15p to 6:15p, the same time as in previous years.

David Goldblum is the School’s representative on the BEKI Board of Directors.

The School and its programs are supported by the Gladys R. Lipkin Fund, the George & Leah Posener Endowment for Jewish Education of BEKI Youth, and the Borick Family Endowment. The School is also supported by tuition, the Congregation, and the Louis Friedman Scholarship Fund.

Kadima News

Forty-five 6th, 7th, and 8th graders from BEKI, B’nai Jacob, and several other local synagogues recently participated in the End-of-the-Year Kadima Dance at BEKI. The dance capped off an exciting semester of local and regional events for BEKI/B’nai Jacob Kadima, including movie and game day, Broadway night, a community gardening event, and trips to the Maritime Aquarium and Lake Compounce Amusement Park. In addition, the chapter was recognized for its 32-person increase in membership over last year, the largest membership increase in the Connecticut Valley Region. If you are interested in getting involved in Kadima, please contact Adam Cuker (387-5221 or adam.cuker@yale.edu) for more information.

AC
LifeCycle

With Sorrow we Note the Passing of
• Bess Bloom, mother of Marsha (& Eric) Beller
• Sarah Blaustein, cousin of Betty (& Arthur) Levy
• Sophie Rossel, mother of Elayne (& Morton) Dimenstein

Sandy Johnston Bar Mitzva

Sandy Johnston, son of Robert & Anne Johnston, will lead and participate in services as a bar mitzva on Friday 6 July during the 8:00p service and Shabbat 7 July during the 9:15a morning, 5:45p afternoon and 9:30p evening services.

Bryna Pauker Bat Torah

Bryna Pauker will celebrate a Bat Torah (Woman of Torah) observance during Shabbat morning services on 14 July. Bryna has prepared to lead and participate in services and teach Torah as an adult to affirm her commitment to Torah and mitzvot.

Darshanim in July & August

• Peter Stein will serve as darshan (Torah commentator) on Shabbat morning 11 August. Pete has returned from studying at the Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem for 2000-2001 academic year and plans to begin Rabbinical School at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America this autumn.
• Steven Fraade will serve as darshan (Torah commentator) on Shabbat morning 25 August. Steve serves as the Chairperson of BEKI’s Ritual Committee.

LeHitraot

We extend our best wishes to Syma Solovitch & Bruce Haynes, who will be relocating to California following Bruce’s appointment at the University of California – Davis. During the past year, Syma served as Chairperson of BEKI’s Social Action Committee.

New Members

BEKI Welcomes a New Member!
Howard Sugarmann

Mazal Tov to

• Josh Prober, son of Dan & Sharon Prober, on receiving the Bronze Congressional Medal, the only recipient from Connecticut this year.
• Daniel Zlotoff, son of Ronald Zlotoff & Donna Kemper and of the late Beverly Zlotoff, on being named a Presidential Scholar by the US Department of Education.
• Beth Weinstein, daughter of Natan & Lori Weinstein, on her acceptance to the Disney College Internship Program in Florida.
• To Ezra Academy graduates Edward Aaron Abramovitz, son of Alan & Sally Abramovitz; Nathaniel Nissim Cohen-Fraade, son of Steven Fraade & Ellen Cohen; and Joanna Wolf Etra, daughter of Barry Etra & Janice Wolf.
Dear Rabbi,

How can a person do teshuva (repentance) when the person can’t make amends for various reasons, e.g. because it will cost too much personally (or financially) to make amends or because the other person doesn’t know amends are due and to ask for forgiveness will only stir up trouble?

Signed, Sorry to Ask

Dear Sorry,

Our sages note that there are some circumstances in which teshuva cannot be made by directly making amends with the injured party, such as when the victim is no longer living or the victim’s identity is unknown. One might do an act of kindness toward the family of the deceased, or contribute tsedaka (charity) in memory of the deceased. For an unknown victim, one might similarly do an act of kindness or give tsedaka to another person of the same class or locale.

I do not believe that “it costs too much” is a valid reason not to make amends. How much is it worth, monetarily, to know that one has done the right thing, and to be able to go forward in life with a clear conscience? If it is likely that an attempt to seek forgiveness or make amends will result in violence or other serious harm, then it might be desirable to find a “safe” way to make amends indirectly, such as through giving tsedaka in the name of the wronged party. Each case must be considered on its own.

For further ideas, consult Maimonides’ Hilkhot Teshuva – Laws of Repentance in his Mishne Torah Law Code, first published about 800 years ago.

Dear Rabbi,

I was recently paying a shiva call. Despite my intense effort to limit my conversation to words of comfort to the mourners, words of Torah, and recollections of the deceased, other callers attempted to make conversation with me about completely unrelated but pleasant matters. How can I, in the future, stick to the halakhot [rules] of paying a shiva call, while not seeming to reject, ignore or insult others who want to converse about tangential matters, and who are apparently unaware of the shiva halakhot? Normally I enjoy discourse about the topics that these others were raising; it was just not appropriate behavior in a house of shiva. I was unable to effectively change the subject back to what should have been the topic, despite my best efforts. I note that I did read the “Talk to Your Friends” section of “The Art of Paying a Shiva Call” in the BEKI Yizkor Memorial Booklet, which clarifies the proper halakhot; but you did not address the “what to do if confronted with idle conversation at a house of shiva” question in that booklet.

Signed, Very Sorry

Dear Very Sorry,

When friends gather it is only natural for them to want to greet each other and converse. Sometimes this even happens before a funeral, in the presence of the dead, when it is completely inappropriate to talk at all except as necessary for the funeral.

In a shiva house, furniture may be overturned and mirrors covered, and mourners may have their shoes off and wear torn clothes. These unusual sights serve to remind visitors that things are not “normal,” and that the lives of the mourners have been overturned. When making a shiva call, it is considered correct to wait for the mourners to speak and to keep the conversation to their concerns. One may share positive memories of the deceased. If another visitor speaks to you, you might try saying, “Okay, but now I need to listen to the mourner” or “that is interesting and maybe we can speak further about it after we leave this house of mourning.” If the other visitor does not take your hint, you might be more direct, as long as you can make the point without embarrassing him or her. Otherwise, one might leave and come back another time or find a reason to sit or stand in another part of the room.

In any event, your question gives us the opportunity to review proper shiva etiquette.
Yamim Noraim: Days of Awe

Rabbi Alan H. Lovins will again serve as our Hazzan Rishon (lead cantor) for the High Holy Days. Dr. Alan Lovins, a BEKI member, is a graduate of Yale University and holds a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Columbia University. He was ordained as a rabbi by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and lives in Westville with his wife, Trish Loving. In addition to Rabbi Lovins, the services will again be led by BEKI members serving as volunteer hazzanim. For the ninth consecutive year, Rabbi Tilsen will conduct the services.

The Conservative-Masorti Selihot Penitential service will be held at Temple Beth Sholom in Hamden on Saturday night, 8 September. Details will appear in the September BEKI Bulletin.

Qever Avot Cemetery Memorial Services will be held on Sunday 16 September, at 10:00a at Beth El Memorial Park in Hamden and at 11:00a at Keser Israel Memorial Park in West Haven. Families who wish to memorialize loved ones buried in distant cities are welcome to attend this service along with families with loved ones buried locally. Maps and verbal directions to the cemeteries can be found at www.beki.org/findbeki.html.

Rosh HaShana services begin Monday 17 September at 6:45p. Morning services begin at 8:30a. Information on celebrating the High Holy Days at BEKI, including schedules and ticketing, will be mailed in early September. For a complete schedule of services, please call the office at 389-2108 or see the schedule at www.beki.org/schedule.html.

Tickets are required for adult entrance to most services. Among other reasons, this is to ensure the safety and security of the Congregation. Full-time students and military personnel on active duty may enter upon presentation of proper identification and do not need tickets. Children should be pre-registered but do not need tickets.

For information on seating and ticketing, call 389-2108 ext. 14.
Crosswalk

During this summer, the pedestrian crosswalk at Fountain & Harrison Streets in front of the post office was restored. It had been removed three years ago by a state agency.

Last year, the traffic signal at the corner of Whalley Avenue and Harrison Street in front of BEKI was upgraded from a flashing amber light to a full three-color control signal. When leaving Harrison Street, be sure to wait for the green light, and wait for crossing traffic to stop. On Shabbat, the pedestrian cross light is timed to give an exclusive pedestrian phase for 17 seconds every two minutes. Please wait for the walk light and for traffic to halt before crossing.

Thanks to Mayor John DeStefano and his Parking and Traffic Director Brian McGrath for helping to make these busy intersections safer. Thanks also to Alderman Phil Voigt, Susan Voigt, Eric Beller and others for working with Mayor DeStefano and Mr. McGrath to implement these improvements.

BEKI Benei Mitzva Program to Begin Third Year

The new class of BEKI’s Benei Mitzva Preparation Program for Youth will have its first session on Wednesday 5 September 2001 from 4:15p to 6:15p. (Note that the Program generally meets on Wednesdays during those hours.) Parents wishing more information are urged to call Program Administrator Liora Lew at 389-I048 (lioralew@aol.com) or Mary Ellen at 389-2108 x14 (beki@snet.net).
Dear Rabbi

Library News

The following books have been acquired thanks to a generous donation from Rita and Ivan Sachs. The books will be part of the Ari Nathan Levine Collection, and will be of special interest to those parent volunteers who plan and lead the Children’s Shabbat Havura and K-2 Kehilla every Shabbat, year-round. The books are available on a non-lending basis in the Claire Goodwin Youth Room.

- *Raisel’s Riddle* by Erica Silverman
- *The Littlest Frog* by Sylvia Rouss
- *Queen Esther the Morning Star* by Mordicai Gersten
- *The Magic of Kol Nidre: A Yom Kippur Story* by Bruce H. Siegel
- *What-If Sara* by Rhea Tregebov
- *The Way Meat Loves Salt: A Cinderella Tale from the Jewish Tradition* by Nina Jaffe
- *A Thread of Kindness: A Tzedaka Story* by Leah Shollar
- *Shabbat* by Miriam Nerlove
- *Shabbos is Coming! We’re LOST in the ZOO* by Devorah-Leah
- *The Rooster Prince* by Sydell Waxman
- *Mummy and Sophy* by Miriam Cohen
- *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat* by Simms Taback
- *A Journey to Paradise and Other Jewish Tales* by Howard Schwartz
- *The Hebrew Letters Tell their Story* by Reudor
- *The Hebrew Months Tell their Story* by Reudor
- *Dance, Sing, Remember: A Celebration of Jewish Holidays* by Leslie Kimmelman
- *Why the Moon Only Glows* by Dina Rosenfeld
- *Yossi and Laibel Hot on the Trail* by Dina Rosenfeld
- *A Little Boy Named Avram* by Dina Rosenfeld
- *Labels for Laibel* by Dina Rosenfeld
- *Once Upon a Shabbos* by Jacqueline Jules
- *Mr. Belinsky’s Bagels* by Ellen Schwartz
- *The Brothers’ Promise* by Frances Harber
- *Fins and Scales: A Kosher Tale* by Deborah Uchill Miller
- *Sammy Spider’s First Shabbat* by Sylvia Rouss
- *The Demons’ Mistake: A Story from Chelm* by Francine Prose
- *What Zeesie Saw on Delancey Street* by Elsa Okon Rael

Gershon’s Monster: A Story for the Jewish New Year
- *Noah and the Great Flood* by Mordicai Gerstein
- *Behold the Trees* by Sue Alexander and Leonid Gore

The following books have been donated to the Ari Nathan Levine Fund thanks to a generous donation from Tamara Baker. These books will be housed in the Claire Goodwin Youth Room, and will be available on a non-lending basis to parents leading the Childrens’ Programs.

- *The Brand New Kid* by Katie Couric
- *Wemberly Worried* by Kevin Henkes
- *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes
- *Lilly’s Purple Plastic Purse* by Kevin Henkes
- *Julius The Baby of the World* by Kevin Henkes
- *Sheila Rae, The Brave* by Kevin Henkes
- *Where Do Balloons Go? An Uplifting Mystery* by Jamie Lee Curtis
- *The Little Engine That Could* by Watty Piper

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July-August 2001
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**BEKI Events**

**July - Tammuz - Av**

**5761**

**Sunday, July 10 - 27, 2001**

- **Sandy Johnston Bar Mitzva**
- **Bryna Pauker Bat Torah**
- **Rosh Hodesh**
- **Shabbat Chazon - Erev Tisha B’Av**
- **Tisha B’Av**

**BEKI phone numbers:**
- Office Hours:
  - (203) 389-2108
  - Fax (203) 389-5899
  - Mon 9a-12 & 1p-3p
  - Tue by appt. only
  - Wed 10a-12 & 1p-6p
  - Thu 9a-12 & 1p-3p
  - Fri 9a-2p

**BEKI email:**
- Office: beki@snet.net
- Rabbi: jjtilsen@beki.org
- Website: www.beki.org
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<td>Minha =Afternoon</td>
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Q & A with BEKI President Stephen Pincus

Why did you decide to accept the position of President at BEKI?
My wife Amy and I have been active members of the synagogue for the last eight years. In fact, the first time we visited was Rabbi Tilsen’s first Shabbat. It did not take us very long to realize what a unique and warm community BEKI is to so many people. I have enjoyed working in various positions on the Board over the past few years and believe that I will be able to contribute to the continued renewal of the synagogue.

What do you see as the main challenges facing BEKI?
Until recently, BEKI was running annual deficits and the synagogue does not have a very large “rainy day” fund. Over the past few years under Brian Karsif’s leadership, we have been able to balance our budget by asking members for significant contributions over and above dues. Just five years ago, BEKI was raising about $15,000 a year at the Kol Nidre appeal and another $20,000 in other direct giving. Last year, the Renaissance Campaign raised over $125,000 thanks to the generosity of so many people.

While BEKI’s financial situation has now been stabilized, over the next two years, BEKI will need to replace its 40 year-old heating and cooling systems. These projects were put off year after year due to the synagogue’s poor financial footing. These projects and associated expenses will cost over $300,000. To put this number in perspective, BEKI’s total operating budget next year will be $475,000. The Board is currently looking at a number of ways to finance these necessary expenditures.

What are some of your plans for the upcoming year?
I am committed to seeing that BEKI continues to grow in a number of ways over the next year. BEKI will be recommitting its efforts to increase membership. It is important for the social and financial health of the synagogue that our membership continues to grow. We lose at least 10 membership units each year due to people passing on or moving to other cities. I am very happy that Sharon Lovett-Graff will be returning to the position of membership chair and she will be assisted by Gila Reinstein, one of the Vice Presidents. About ten other synagogue members, including several Board members, have also agreed to work on this committee.

Over the next year, we will continue work on a feasibility study that is exploring how to fund BEKI’s master plan through a capital campaign. The results of this study will help us gauge the interest and willingness of our membership to fund the next stage of the master plan, which includes providing access to the lower level for persons who have physical disabilities.

In addition, there are already exciting plans to increase the offerings of adult education and other programs at the synagogue. Roz Ben-Chitrit will be focusing her volunteer efforts on education and will help see that BEKI’s Hebrew school makes a smooth transition under the new principal.

You can contact Stephen by email at sapincus@yahoo.com or by telephone at 387-1235.