

# BEKI Bulletin

A New Haven Tradition since 1892. Visit us at [www.beki.org](http://www.beki.org)

November 2003 Vol. 9 Issue 11

ק"ק בית אל-כתר ישראל

Heshvan 5764



## ***Renovations Congregational Meeting***

***Sunday 9 November 9:30a to 11a***

***Renovations are about to begin!  
Construction starts in November***

What's going to happen? How will we function during the renovations? Come and find out. Brunch, of course. Babysitting available

### ***Coming to BEKI this fall:***

New lobby, elevator,  
entry direct from the parking lot  
offices, coatroom,  
new George Posener Daily Chapel,  
new Rosenkrantz Family Library,  
new Claire Goodwin Youth Room

## New Expanded Office Hours

Monday 9:00a to 5:00p  
Tuesday by appointment only  
Wednesday 10:00a to 6:00p  
Thursday 9:00a 5:00pp  
Friday 9:00a-3:00p

## Veterans Day Observance

On Tuesday 11 November, Veterans Day, daily services will be held at their usual times, 7:00a and 5:45p. The office is closed.

## National "Have a Minyan at Home" Day

Beth El-Keser Israel will join with other shuls in observing "National Have a Minyan at Home" day on Thursday evening 27 November. In marking this occasion, no afternoon-evening service will be held at the shul so that participants may have services in their own homes. For this purpose, plenty of *kippot* are available in your suit pockets or auto glove compartments where you have been stuffing them. Years ago, when this program was initiated, skeptics predicted it would be a real turkey and would be axed, but our actual response has been positive, for which we offer thanksgiving.

Weekday morning services on Thursday 27 November are on the Federal Holiday schedule, from 9:00a to 9:45a.

## Important Tax Information

Taxpayers are reminded that synagogue dues, paid pledges and contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. BEKI is a recognized 501c3 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 31 December). It is also helpful to BEKI to receive your payment at an early date. Please consult your tax advisor for more information.

### 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](mailto:jjtilsen@beki.org)

or see our web page: [www.beki.org](http://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.

Annual subscription is \$36.00.

### BEKI-Bulletin

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A Message from Rabbi Tilsen & Dear Rabbi  
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## The Racial Superiority of the Jews?

At first glance, the notion of racial superiority of the Jewish People seems absurd. After all, we are a global people, comprising members of almost every racial and national group. Although North American Jewry is predominantly of Ashkenazic background, any of us who have traveled to Israel or anywhere else outside of the Americas and Europe realize that our people span the racial spectrum. Although we have biological connections, our national identity is based more on culture and religion, more on a shared history and destiny, than on biology.

At second glance, the idea of racial superiority of the Jewish People seems dangerous and offensive. Even a brief glance at the history of the twentieth century reveals the catastrophic results of racism. The eugenics movement, more the product of American than German scientists and politicians, served as a basis for genocide against the Jewish People, and proved disastrous for many other groups and individuals as well.

Unfortunately, the idea of racial superiority is found scattered throughout Jewish religious literature, particularly in Qabala, the “mystical” teachings.

Rabbi Moshe Greenberg, a Conservative scholar in Israel, described his increasing awareness of this problem.

What emerged for me from the study of the first chapters of ... *Sefer Hatanya*, the foundation document of Habad hasidim ... and their antecedents was the discovery that ... Jewish thought is permeated by notions of the genetic spiritual superiority of Jews over gentiles, disconcertingly reminiscent of racist notions of our time. ...I am more than ever convinced that the hold Judaism will have on this and future generations will be gravely impaired unless these notions are neutralized....

(Moshe Greenberg, “A Problematic Heritage: The Attitude Toward the Gentile in Jewish Tradition – An Israel Perspective,” *Conservative Judaism*, Winter 1996, p. 23.)



Rabbi Tilsen

The *Tanya* teaches, “The souls of the non-Jews, however, emanate from the other, unclean *kelipot* which contain no good whatever” (chapter 1) and interprets the term “human” in the Proverb “The light of God is the human soul” (20:27) as referring to Jews only (chapter 19).

We repudiate the notion of racial superiority as being scientifically specious and spiritually noxious, and we refuse to teach such notions to our children. That is one reason I have disallowed our BEKI Religious School from participating in Chabad education programs directed at children, no matter how wonderfully creative those programs have sometimes been. I have also voiced my objection to Ezra Academy’s reliance on Chabad programs and its distribution of Chabad educational material to children. I will hold this stance until Chabad stops promoting the *Tanya* as the pinnacle of rabbinic wisdom and explicitly renounces the racist underpinnings of its mystical teachings. Ideology does matter.

We provide an alternative traditional understanding of Israel’s “choseness.” Israel is specifically chosen to bring the text and ideals of a Torah-based society to humanity. Its basis, the notion of One God, means that all humanity is one family that must work together, and that God is a God of love, who created the potential for goodness and the possibility of progress in history. This incorporates the idea of rule of law and due process to which all are subject no matter how powerful or weak. The Torah explicitly recognizes that other peoples are chosen for specific missions as well, and specifically dismisses the notion that Israel is “superior” to other nations. God loves each nation, and each individual, just as a parent can have

Continued on page 16

## A Message from Education Director

The High Holidays are over. The beautiful *mahzorim* are lovingly collected and stored for the year. The High Holy Days Committee is meeting and receiving input on how to make the services and programming for next year even better. And we are left with the sweetness of the New Year and the awe of Yom Kippur.

The Sixth and Seventh Graders in Project Etgar at BEKI Religious School have been constructing a biblical timeline. They just learned and discussed the meaning of B.C.E, Before the Common Era. This led into a discussion on the Hebrew calendar. Our Hebrew calendar is based on the notion of two kinds of time: historical and cyclical. Michael Strassfeld, in his book "The Jewish Holidays, a Guide and Commentary," reminds us that "historical time teaches us that to be alive is to move, cyclical time teaches us that sometimes, to wait in place is more important than moving on."

Historical time is our linear movement created by men and women. We set our clocks, study our

calendars, check our PDAs, drive our car pools, and record our events, failures and accomplishments. Cyclical time has an entirely different feeling. Cyclical time is set by nature. It is driven by the seasons which in themselves are ever changing. We record cyclical time by the phases of the moon.



Dr. Lauren Kempton

Perhaps our two calendars also symbolize that as Jews we exist in two worlds; if we follow the calendar of Historical Time we are rushed: meet the deadline...entertain... progress... achieve. And perhaps we, in our two worlds, should rather follow our Hebrew calendar and in this new year of 5764 follow the timeless comfort of the seasons. This calendar wraps us in our faith and connects us to communal life and mutual solidarity. So keeping two calendars, one for our outside self and one for our inner being may be a path to a new year of peace.

## BEKI Religious School

The BEKI Religious School hosted a Religious School Open House that was well attended. The parents previewed the new Project Etgar curriculum for Grade Six and additional meetings will be held to study the Religious School curriculum in all grades. The parents were introduced to Sahar Gasman and Ziv Abekasis, our Teen Emisaries from Afula. Sahar and Ziv gave an overview of the activities they will be planning and leading for the Religious School.

Sahar is an Israeli Folk dancer. She will be teaching Israeli Dance to our Religious School students. Ziv has a rich background in Drama and will work with students on Bibliodrama. Our Teen Emisaries also conducted a Memorial Service for Yitzhak Rabin.

At the close of the meeting Sherry Rothman asked for volunteers for the various Parent Committees that keep the Religious School running.

LK



Open House

**With sorrow we note the passing of**

- *Ralph Bertazzo*, husband of Rhona Bertazzo
- *Anne Scherr*, mother of Polly (& Paul) Rieser

May the Almighty Comfort Those Who Mourn

**Mazal Tov to:**

- **John Weiser** on being recognized for his contribution to BEKI at the Interfaith Cooperative Ministries 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner
- **Ruthie Greenblatt** on the birth of her granddaughter, Gabriella Nicole D'Agostino, born on Wednesday 08 October 2003 to Leila & Tony D'Agostino

**LeHitraot**

Robert & Anne and Sandy and Isaac Johnston can be contacted at 2301 W. Arthur St., Unit 3, Chicago, IL 60645. Anne (work) 847-328-7678 x26; Robert (work) 312-413-9164. Anne [ajohnston@jrc-evanston.org](mailto:ajohnston@jrc-evanston.org); Robert [johnsto1@uic.edu](mailto:johnsto1@uic.edu)

**We Welcome New Members and Their Families**

- Melissa Perkal & Jim Graham, Aubrey and Allison
- Steven & Jill Citron-Pousty, Fay and Tessie
- Bentsion & Elizabeth Bronstein
- Michael Serulneck & Carla Eastis, Sarasota
- Robert & Eileen Serow, Andrew

**Bar Mitzva Observance**

**Jonah Cooper**, son of Lauri Lowell & Isaiah Cooper, will lead and participate in services as a bar mitzva on Shabbat Lekh Lekha 07-08 November during the Friday Night Shabbat Evening Service and the Shabbat Morning Service. Jonah is a graduate of the BEKI Religious School and the Benei Mitzva Program.



*Jonah Cooper*

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## Kulanu

Kulanu is a pilot project begun in the summer of 1997 to enable adults with developmental disabilities to live richer lives as Jews in their own homes and to participate more fully in the synagogue community.

Kulanu participants welcomed Mary Meade, the new leader of the Shalom Group for Jewish Family Services. Shalom group members visited BEKI during Sukkot for a dinner in BEKI's sukka.

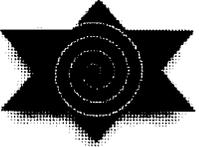
After the dinner, Mattie Prober, our *madrikh* (guide), explained the tradition of the *lulav* and *etrog* to the group. The program was led by Dr. Lauren Kempton. She discussed the relationship of Thanksgiving to Sukkot and shared the story of "Mollie's Pilgrim." The group ended with a *sheheheyanu* to recognize the specialness of the friends gathered in the BEKI sukka.

LK

## Take Care of Your Cemetery Need

The time to take care of your cemetery need is before there is a need. Now is the perfect time to select your sites...while there is a good selection. BEKI cemeteries are located in Hamden and West Haven, within minutes of the synagogue and with easy access to main thoroughfares. Member discounts are available.

We can help you select a site and discuss payment terms. Call the BEKI Cemetery Association office today at 389-2108 x57 and arrange a meeting with one of the officers of the cemetery association. For directions to the cemeteries see our website at [www.beki.org](http://www.beki.org) under "Directions."

<p><b>JEWISH FOUNDATION</b></p>  <p><i>of Greater New Haven</i></p> <p>STEPHEN L. SALTZMAN CHAIR</p> <p>IRENE R. JECUSCO ADMINISTRATOR</p> <p>360 AMITY ROAD, WOODBRIDGE, CT 06525 (203) 387-2424 EXT. 312</p>	<p><b>CONTACT THE FOUNDATION TO DISCUSS HOW YOU CAN BENEFIT BETH EL - KESER ISRAEL AND THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF GREATER NEW HAVEN THROUGH THE JEWISH FOUNDATION OF GREATER NEW HAVEN.</b></p>
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Hours									
M, T, W, F	8:00-5:30								
Thurs.	8:00-7:00								
Sat.	8:00-3:00								

## Youth News

### USY Pumpkin & Apple Pie

*Top Off your Thanksgiving Dinner with a Delicious Pumpkin or Apple Pie!*

Again this year, BEKI/BJ USY will be preparing delicious fresh Kosher pareve pumpkin and apple pies for pick-up before Thanksgiving. These pies are made in the BEKI and B'nai Jacob kitchens under the strict supervision of KINAHARA (Kashrut Inspection of the New Haven Area Rabbinical Assembly). The pies are unbaked and frozen so that you can bake them fresh for the holiday. Full baking instructions are included.

Each pie you purchase helps to support our USY (United Synagogue Youth) program and the Tikun Olam *tsedaqa* fund (philanthropic fund) to which the group is committed. If you would like to support USY but do not want a pie, you can sponsor a pie to be delivered to a local soup kitchen or family in need, or you can contribute funds directly.



Watch for order forms in the mail and please return promptly. Additional forms are available in the synagogue offices, in the lobby literature rack, online at [www.beki.org/forms.html](http://www.beki.org/forms.html), and from our USYers. You can also email [abadaba54@yahoo.com](mailto:abadaba54@yahoo.com) or call Sharon at 393-3059.

Pies can be picked up at BEKI on Tuesday, November 25 from 5:30p to 7:00p. Feel free to participate in the Maariv Evening service at BEKI from 5:45p to 6:00p that night. Thanks for your support.

## Library News

*Benjamin Disraeli: The Fabricated Jew in Myth and Memory*

by Bernard Glassman (University Press of America, Lanham, Maryland, 2003)

### Reviewed by Rabbi Murray Levine

Like so many others, I have been taught that Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881) was an outstanding Jew, only to be disillusioned by this well-researched and scholarly work by Bernard Glassman, a historian, rabbi and scholar.

The author raises the question, is a native-born Jew Jewish if he is baptized a Catholic, married a Christian, is a member of the Anglican Church and is later buried in a Christian cemetery? Supposing a person feels Jewish and has no association with the Jewish people, is he Jewish? Supposing he is remembered as a Jew by Jew and non-Jew alike, does that make him a Jew? What if he believes and says that the Jewish people is racially superior to other peoples, is he Jewish? Perhaps if he is thought of as being a good Zionist, does that make him Jewish?

Glassman summarizes Disraeli's Jewishness as having "boasted of the superiority of his ancient people...but which in reality, he hardly knew or cared to join." For insight into the character of Benjamin Disraeli in his varied roles as Prime Minister of England, outstanding novelist and alleged Zionist, one only needs to read this well-documented biography.

*A copy of this book is available and may be borrowed from BEKI's [Rosenkrantz Library](#).*

## Torah For the Hungry Mind - Adult Studies

### Rashi Study Group

Each Monday morning from 7:45a to 8:30a adults meet in the [Rosenkrantz Family Library](#) to read Rashi's commentary on the Torah. Knowledge of Hebrew is not necessary. Rashi purported to explain the *peshat* of the Biblical text, i.e., the meaning in its historical, literary and linguistic context. Visitors and new participants are welcome. The Rashi Study Group has been meeting weekly since 1994.

### AA Meeting

A Thursday night AA meeting is held at BEKI every Thursday night at 8:00p. The weekly 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 [drjays.nai@rcn.com](mailto:drjays.nai@rcn.com).

### Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan

The "Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan," which meets every other Saturday morning at 10:45a in BEKI's [Rosenkrantz Family 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. Everyone is welcome to participate regardless of religious status or background.

### Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group

The "Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group" meets weekly on Thursdays during the lunch hour at a downtown New Haven professional office for Talmud study. The Group has met weekly since 1999. For many participants, this is their first direct experience with Talmud text. The Group focuses on the issues raised in the Talmud, with less attention to the technical aspects of the text. For information contact Marc Schwartz at 562-9873 or [mschwartzmd@hotmail.com](mailto:mschwartzmd@hotmail.com).

### Berakhot Talmud Study Group

A Berakhot Talmud Study Group meets weekly on Wednesday mornings from 7:30a to 8:00a. The Study Group will focus on the original text and the issues that arise from the Mishna and Gemara, with attention to the technical aspects of the text. A knowledge of basic Hebrew is very helpful but not required; the Group is open to all. The study group will meet every Wednesday morning through and including 24 December, except 26 November (Rosh Hodesh).

### **Put Ah in Shabbat: Or, Should Massage Therapy be Declared a Mitzva?**

In our crazy, fast-paced world, it takes a conscious effort to carve out a day of rest, study and renewal. How can we carry some of the peace of Shabbat with us during the hectic week?

Heighten your ability to keep "in touch" through this introductory class to Massage Therapy. Jennifer Botwick will lead "Put the Ah in Shabbat" on Tuesday evenings from 7:00p to 8:30p beginning 14 October. Registration fee is \$50.00 for six weeks. Preregistration is required; subject to minimum enrollment. The class, which began in October, meets 04, 18 November, 02 December.

## **Kosher Fitness Or, What You are Looking for is not in the Refrigerator**

Food is central to Jewish family life and celebrations. Our Western consumer culture reinforces the mitzva of *ess, ess mine kind* – eat, eat, dear children! But the super-sized fast-food portions have led to an epidemic of obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes and other ailments.

Kosher Fitness asks us to be conscious when we eat through attention to the five Ws: Why, where, when, what and with whom we eat. Sanctification, moderation, and celebration will nourish us as we bring attention and awareness to our meals and snacks.

Kosher Fitness will be lead by Jennifer Botwick on Monday evenings from 7:00p to 8:00p, beginning 13 October. Registration fee is \$50.00 for six weeks. Preregistration is required; subject to minimum enrollment. The class, which began in October, meets 03, 10, & 17 November.

## **Darshan in November**

Lauren Kempton will serve as darshan on Shabbat 01 November 2003.

## **Laws of Hanuka: Shabbat Afternoon Study**

During November and December, the laws of Hanuka will be studied between *minha* afternoon service and *maariv* evening services in November and December. The sixteenth century law code *Shulhan Arukh* will be the basic texts. The study period is about one-half hour.

## **Required Reading & Reference Books on Web**

A listing of basic Judaic reference and introductory works is posted on BEKI's website at [www.beki.org/books.html](http://www.beki.org/books.html) with a brief annotation by Rabbi Tilsen.

## **Rabbi's High Holy Days Sermons Available**

Copies of Rabbi Tilsen's High Holy Days and Yizkor messages are available in the literature rack in the synagogue lobby, or by request from the BEKI office (389-2108 x14). They are also available, along with other writings, at [www.beki.org/tilsen.html](http://www.beki.org/tilsen.html).

## **Reading Torah at BEKI**

Paula Hyman is coordinating the readings for *Bereishit* (Genesis). If you would like to read Torah, or learn how to read Torah, call Rabbi Jon-Jay at (203) 389-2108 x10 ([jjtilsen@beki.org](mailto:jjtilsen@beki.org)) or Darryl Kuperstock at (203) 387-0304 ([kuperst@aol.com](mailto:kuperst@aol.com)).

# November 2003

## 6 Heshvan 5764 - 5 Kislev 5764

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

*Sisterhood Giftshop Open Each Sunday from 10:30a to 12:15p in November*

1  
9:15a Shaharit  
Qiddush Sponsor: Saul Bell  
10:45a Children's Program  
10:45a Learner's Minyan  
4:30p Minha, Hilkhoh Hanuka, Maariv, Havdala  
  
6 Heshvan

<p>2 9a Shahrar 9a Religious School  10:30a-12:15p Sisterhood Giftshop Open 5:45 Maariv  7 Heshvan</p>	<p>3 7a Shahrar 7:45a Rashi Study Group 5:45p Maariv 7p Kosher Fitness  8 Heshvan</p>	<p>4 7a Shahrar 5:45p Maariv 7p Put the Ah in Shabbat  9 Heshvan</p>	<p>5 7a Shahrar 7:30a Talmud Study Group 8:30a Rabbi's Study Group 4p Benei Mitzva Program 4p Religious School 5:45 Maariv  10 Heshvan</p>	<p>6 8:15a Shahrar 12:30pm Talmud Study (off-site) 5:45p Maariv 8p A.A.  11 Heshvan</p>	<p>7 7a Shahrar 4:24p Candle Lighting 6p Maariv Jonah Cooper Bar Mitzva  12 Heshvan</p>	<p>8 9:15a Shahrar Jonah Cooper Bar Mitzva Qiddush Sponsor: Isaiah Cooper &amp; Lauri Lowell 10:45a Children's Program 4:25p Minha, Hilkhoh Hanuka, Maariv, Havdala  13 Heshvan</p>
<p>9 9a Shahrar 9a Religious School 9:30a Congregational Meeting/Brunch(Renovations Update) 10:30a-12:15p Sisterhood Giftshop Open 5:45p Maariv  14 Heshvan</p>	<p>10 7a Shahrar 7:45a Rashi Study Group 5:45p Maariv 7p Kosher Fitness 7:30p Exec.Board Meeting  15 Heshvan</p>	<p>11 7a Shahrar 5:45p Maariv  16 Heshvan</p>	<p>12 7a Shahrar 7:30a Talmud Berakhoh Study Group 8:30a Rabbi's Study Group 4p Benei Mitzva Program 4p Religious School 5:45p Maariv  17 Heshvan</p>	<p>13 8:15a Shahrar 12:30p Talmud Study (off-site) 5:45p Maariv 8p A.A.  18 Heshvan</p>	<p>14 7a Shahrar 4:18p Candle Lighting 6p Maariv  19 Heshvan</p>	<p>15 9:15a Shahrar BRS Shabbat (Grades 5-7) Ashrei 10:45a Children's Program 10:45a Learner's Minyan 4:15p Minha, Hilkhoh Hanuka, Maariv, Havdala  20 Heshvan</p>
<p>16 9a Shahrar 9a Religious School 10:30a-12:15p Sisterhood Giftshop Open 5:45p Maariv  21 Heshvan</p>	<p>17 7a Shahrar 7:45a Rashi Study Group 5:45p Maariv 7p Kosher Fitness  22 Heshvan</p>	<p>18 7a Shahrar 5:45p Maariv 7p Put the Ah in Shabbat  23 Heshvan</p>	<p>19 7a Shahrar 7:30a Talmud Berakhoh Study Group 8:30a Rabbi's Study Group 4p Benei Mitzva Program 4p Religious School 5:45p Maariv  24 Heshvan</p>	<p>20 8:15a Shahrar 12:30p Talmud Study (off-site) 5:45p Maariv 8p A.A.  25 Heshvan</p>	<p>21 7a Shahrar 4:11p Candle Lighting 6p Maariv  26 Heshvan</p>	<p>22 9:15a Shahrar 10:45a Children's Program 4:10p Minha, Hilkhoh Hanuka, Maariv, Havdala  27 Heshvan</p>
<p>23 9a Shahrar 9a Religious School 10:30a-12:15p Sisterhood Giftshop Open 5:45p Maariv  28 Heshvan</p>	<p>24 7a Shahrar 7:45a Rashi Study Group 5:45p Maariv 7:30p General Board Meeting  29 Heshvan</p>	<p>25 Rosh Hodesh I 7a Shahrar 5:45p Maariv  30 Heshvan</p>	<p>26 Rosh Hodesh II 7a Shahrar 8:30a Rabbi's Study Group NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL 5:45p Maariv  1 Kislev</p>	<p>27 Thanksgiving Office Closed 9a Shahrar NO Maariv NO A.A.  2 Kislev</p>	<p>28 Office Closed 7a Shahrar 4:11p Candle Lighting 6p Maariv  3 Kislev</p>	<p>29 9:15a Shahrar 10:45p Children's Program 10:45 Learner's Minyan 4:10p Minha, Hilkhoh Hanuka, Maariv, Havdala  4 Kislev</p>
<p>30 9a Shahrar NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL 5:45 Maariv  5 Kislev</p>						

## Weekday morning services at BEKI

Begin your day in fellowship and with a spiritual direction. Monday morning services (7:00a to 7:45a) includes a brief Torah service, and is followed by the [Rashi Study Group](#) (7:45a to 8:30a). Tuesday mornings (7:00a to 7:30a) are attended by a unique mix of people. Wednesday mornings (7:00a to 7:30a) features a continuing group of friends and is followed by the [Berakhot Study Group](#) (7:30a to 8:00a). Thursday mornings (8:15a to 9:00a) are ideal for people who either may not wish to rise earlier or who bring children to school, and includes a brief Torah service. Friday mornings (7:00a to 7:30a) present an ideal setting for someone wishing to help develop a cadre of dedicated daily *daveners*. Regular participants in these services are always glad to welcome additional worshipers. Call our office at 389-2108 x14 or see [www.beki.org/schedule.html](http://www.beki.org/schedule.html) for a complete schedule.

## Shabbat Mincha Afternoon & Maariv Evening & Havdala on Winter Schedule

Shabbat afternoon and Saturday evening services follow a winter schedule from November through March. Services on Shabbat (Saturday) afternoon begin about 20 minutes before sunset. As the time varies, please check the calendar in this Bulletin or [www.beki.org/schedule.html](http://www.beki.org/schedule.html) for exact times for each week.

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## ***Tiqun Olam – Social Action***

### ***Leave a Legacy***

There's no end to the good you can do.

BEKI has joined a statewide effort to promote charitable giving through estate planning called Leave a Legacy Connecticut. This effort is organized by the Connecticut Council for Philanthropy. Leave a Legacy Connecticut encourages individuals to leave a gift in their wills for causes they care about.

Connecticut's Leave A Legacy program urges people to leave their mark on the community. Our synagogue comforts the afflicted, teaches our children, and empowers people to repair their lives. Our mission of teaching and living Torah, honoring and worshiping the Almighty, and serving humanity depends on financial support.

The Jewish community of Greater New Haven has lagged far behind many other American cities in its philanthropy, including support of Jewish institutions such as BEKI. This is the unfortunate truth despite the emphasis our tradition places on Tzedaqa as a religious obligation, and despite the generally civic-minded orientation of our community.

In Connecticut, only 5.7 percent of decedents leave charitable bequests in their wills. The number one reason for this gap: most people say they were never asked, or did not think about it.

Leave a Legacy Connecticut is a statewide public awareness effort to promote charitable bequests. The campaign encourages people to make gifts from their estates to their favorite nonprofit organizations such as BEKI. We urge people to discuss their intentions with financial and estate planners who specialize in this field. Many estate-planning professional organizations are a part of Leave a Legacy's collaborative efforts, as are more than 500 Connecticut nonprofit organizations.

"Everyone can help, regardless of income, and each gift makes an impact," says Lyn Walker, co-chair of Leave a Legacy Connecticut and a partner at Day, Berry & Howard.

BEKI members **Paul Goodwin, George G. Posener, Rabbi Murray Levine, Marvin Missan and Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen** are among those who have included the Congregation in their estate plans, and welcome the opportunity to encourage others to do so as well. "I love BEKI," says Rabbi Levine, "and I want to do what I can now to support it, and to insure its strength in the future."

Consider including BEKI and other organizations in your will, so that you can continue to make a difference for generations to come. By remembering nonprofits in your estate plans, you can help improve the lives of generations of Connecticut residents. To find out more, contact BEKI officer and estate planning attorney Donna Levine at 785-8079 ([sdsij@aol.com](mailto:sdsij@aol.com)) or Rabbi Tilsen at 389-2108 x10 ([jjtilsen@beki.org](mailto:jjtilsen@beki.org)).

## A Message From Rabbi Tilsen

Continued from page 3

a special love for each child without one being “superior” to another. (See my essay, “The Frozen Chosen” at [www.beki.org/chosen.html](http://www.beki.org/chosen.html).)

We teach the tradition of the oneness and equality of humanity. This ideal is shared by some religious teachings such as Bahaiism and political philosophies such as Communism (at least in theory). In contrast, some non-Jewish groups teach that white people are devils, infidels are to be exterminated, black people are subhuman, women are mentally or spiritually inferior to men, and the like. Jews rank the lowest in every taxonomy. While the conflict with Israel’s Arab neighbors, subjects and residents creates a breeding ground for racism and hatred, many in our Conservative-Masorti Movement are working hard with others to promote among the Jews the ideals of equality and human rights while reaching out to non-Jews. Nowhere is such teaching more difficult, and more needed, than in our own land.

This approach of interpreting tradition and choosing to promote certain teachings while allowing others to fade into obscurity is applied to other problems in our tradition, such as the scattered expressions of misogyny. Although we revere our sages such as Maimonides and Rabbi Meir of Rothenberg, we also understand that they, like us, are products of their times and in some realms could not see beyond the limits of their cultural environments. This ability to recognize the shortcomings of our sages seems to be encouraged in Scripture, where our patriarchs and matriarchs are presented as noble but flawed – as real people. Minimally, this keeps us from turning them into saints or messiahs. We can revere them, but not worship them. We can learn from their greatness as well as their shortcomings.

Just as we can see glaring flaws in others, others can see them in us. We ought to take seriously the reasons why Chabad and some other groups scorn

Conservative Judaism, and when doing so we should either change our ways or reaffirm our confidence in our path. We are given the insight to recognize flaws in others because those same flaws exist, either as potential or fully expressed, in ourselves. The flaws in others that bother us most are often those that we ourselves have to work hardest to overcome. We can only hope that our children will grow beyond us in wisdom, and that they will dismiss our folly and honor us for our achievements. One of those achievements ought to be transmitting to our children a tradition that affirms human equality and promotes human rights.

*Blessed are You...who chose us from among the nations by giving us your Torah.*

— Daily Prayer Book

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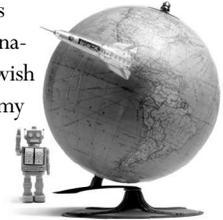
## Saul's Circle

**Saul's Circle** is BEKI's program of outreach and directed services to address the spiritual and Jewish communal religious needs of adult Jews who are mental health services consumers. Programs are held at the synagogue and at other sites in Greater New Haven. **Saul's Circle** helps adults locate the resources in Jewish tradition and synagogue community that add meaning and structure to our lives, including those that can be of particular value to mental health services consumers. Concomitantly, the project helps synagogue members and staff learn to better understand and welcome this segment of our community.

Saul's Circle participants are currently involved in a series of classes at the Learning Barn located at Fellowship Place in New Haven. Some of the classes are led by Dr. Lauren Kempton as part of her work for Saul's Circle at BEKI. The classes for the Fall include "Teshuva," "The Spiritual Path to Recovery," "We Are All Pilgrims," "December Dilemma," and "Holy Days or Wholly Dazed."

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