Wednesday, Jan. 6 at 8 pm
Levi Brackman will speak on Judaism as a Health and Wellness Religion, demonstrating how traditional Jewish practice dovetails with many practices that modern science has shown to improve wellness. A native of London, Levi has three rabbinic ordinations, a Ph.D. in psychology, and a Master’s in Judaic Studies from University College London. A congregational rabbi for more than 15 years, he is CEO and founder of Invown, a startup innovating in the home finance space. Now living with his wife and children in New Haven, Levi is a proud member of BEKI.

Levi Brackman

Wednesday, Jan. 13 at 8 pm
Our second racial justice film discussion will focus on the documentary Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North. After filmmaker Katrina Browne discovers that her New England ancestors were the largest slave-trading family in U.S. history, she and nine cousins retrace the Triangle Trade. Please watch the film on your own and join us for the discussion. The film is available free on Kanopy with a public library card (or for a fee on Vimeo).

Wednesday, Jan. 20 at 8 pm
We’ll start celebrating Tu BeShevat, the new year of the trees, with a conversation about the powerful connections between environmental sustainability and ethical Jewish life. Our speakers will be Nigel Savage, President & CEO of Hazon, the Jewish lab for sustainability, and Shamu Sadeh, Managing Director of Education at Hazon’s Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center, located on 400 acres in Falls Village, in the town of Canaan in Litchfield County.

Wednesday, Jan. 27 at 8 pm
Continuing our celebration of Tu BeShevat, we will talk with Caroline Scanlan from New Haven’s Urban Resources Initiative. URI is the university not-for-profit partnership that plants free street trees and creates park areas all over New Haven. Caro, who is originally from San Francisco, fell in love with New Haven while working for URI as a graduate student at Yale. She is an urban forester and ISA certified arborist.

All events are at Tinyurl.com/bekischmooze.
What will your Jewish Legacy be?

Create your legacy for Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel

For more information about Create A Jewish Legacy, contact Lisa Stanger, (203) 387-2424 x382, lstanger@jewishnewhaven.org. www.newhavenjewishfoundation.org | www.jewishlegacynewhaven.org

BEKI’s Board of Directors
If you have questions or concerns, please speak with a Board member.

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Evan Wyner
Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen (ex-officio)
USY Celebrates While Helping Those in Need

BY ANNIE NORMAN-SCHIFF,
YOUTH AND FAMILY PROGRAMMING DIRECTOR

BEKI USY celebrated Thanksgiving and Hanuka with joy, gratitude, and a commitment to helping others. The week of Thanksgiving, teens helped unload and organize canned food for Christian Community Action (CCA), a local organization with whom they have worked in the past.

CCA gave out 1,300 Thanksgiving food baskets this year in the Hill neighborhood of New Haven. We helped store and organize leftover shelf-stable food in CCA’s “Client Choice” style food pantry, which will let families choose the foods they like best all winter long. Most of our teen volunteers worked outside unloading the truck, while a few set up at socially distanced posts in the food pantry and storage area.

We worked so hard and so fast unloading half a truck of food that CCA ran out of tasks for our USYers to do! We finished up with high energy snacks while safely spread out from one another outdoors.

Instead of our normal Thanksgiving Pie Baking fundraiser, BEKI USY sold Pie Baking Kits. These featured canned apple pie filling or organic pumpkin, as well as a recipe booklet spilling all of USY’s long-held pie baking secrets. The proceeds went to the Jewish Family Services food pantry in New Haven.

For Hanuka, the teens planned an online party, with treats, games, and a Hanuka-themed television episode. But even here, they were focused on giving back. While snacking and watching the show, USYers also made encouraging New Year’s cards for adults who receive help from Columbus House.

So that everyone would be ready for the party, USY board members dropped off Hanuka gift bags on teens’ doorsteps earlier in the day. These contained materials for card making, fair-trade chocolate gelt, and potato chips. (They may not be latkes but they are still fried potatoes!) Even our virtual gatherings deserve actual food, and to make an actual difference in the world.

Outdoor Family Shabbat Services, Pop-Up Style

While we can no longer trust that the weather will be mild and clear enough to gather for outdoor children’s services every week, the members of Children’s Havura and K-2 Kehila are optimists. Each Thursday, if the weather looks decent, we schedule a “Pop-Up Style” Shabbat morning service. This is an outdoor service at 10:15 am open to families with kids of all ages, whoever feels like bundling up and gathering in (safe) community.

At the first pop-up service on November 28, the Schechter-Bod family led a spirited service, with bigger kids like Anna Oppenheimer helping to teach and lead.

If you’d like to receive the email newsletter that gives updates about Pop-Up Services, or if you’re willing be on call to lead a Pop-Up Service on a nice day, contact Annie at anormanschiff@beki.org.
SUNDAY FOOD COLLECTION, JAN. 3

The next drive-by food collection will be Sunday, January 3 from 10 to 11 am in the BEKI parking lot. Please provide a bag or box of non-perishable food, and share this information with friends. This month’s food will go to the Beth-El Center in Milford, which has a 34-bed homeless shelter and a food service program. Call 203.671.4705 to arrange for Rob Lettick to be in the parking lot to receive your donation. The next food drive will be on the first Sunday of February. If you have any questions, please write to Rob at robolettick@aol.com.

BY BECKY MAY

The next holiday in the Jewish calendar is Tu BeShevat, the birthday of the trees. One of the fruits celebrated at this holiday is carob, which grows on trees like cocoa and is sometimes used as a cocoa substitute. Now that we’re on the topic of cocoa… Maybe try celebrating with fair trade chocolate at your Tu BeShevat seder this year and/or that secular holiday often involving much chocolate that occurs in mid-February!

You can find fair trade chocolate in many area stores or order direct from divinechocolate.com. Fairtrade, UTZ, and Rainforest Alliance are among the certifications that indicate products are screened for child slavery, environmental sustainability and fair wages (images are provided on this page). You can look for that certification on other products too, such as vanilla, sugar, and coffee. Did you know…

Stop and Shop chocolate chips are fair trade? And if you buy them with Stop and Shop cards from BEKI, you help BEKI also!

By the way, thanks to all who purchased fair trade chocolate Hanuka gelt this year. The project, in its second year, sold 180 bags! There were two good sides to these coins: BEKI members paid less than retail through the power of non-profit, collective purchasing, and cocoa growers got paid more through fair trade. Win, win!

Just as the light in the Hanuka story was meant to burn eternally, you can extend your impact by buying fair trade products all year long, every time you shop, not only at holidays.

Contributions

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Rabbi’s Tzedaqa Fund</th>
<th>Synagogue Fund</th>
<th>BEKI Religious School</th>
<th>Yahrzeit Fund</th>
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<td>(minimum $25)</td>
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<td>In memory of Dorothy Stone by Karen E. Stone</td>
<td>To Naftali &amp; Iris Kaminski with sympathy on the passing of Bluma Lucy Kaminski by Linda Schultz &amp; Howard Gralla</td>
<td>To Naftali &amp; Iris Kaminski with sympathy on the passing of Bluma Lucy Kaminski by Ina Silverman &amp; Jay Sokolow</td>
<td>In memory of Esther Bashevkin by Rachel Bashevkin</td>
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<td>To Naftali &amp; Iris Kaminski with sympathy on the passing of Bluma Lucy Kaminski by the Rastelli-Weiner family</td>
<td>In memory of their beloved father and zayda Albert B. Friedman by Harriet Friedman, Charles Bruce &amp; family</td>
<td>In memory of Edward Weinstein by James Weinstein</td>
<td>In memory of Harold Rogovin by Ted Maltin</td>
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<td>To Naftali &amp; Iris Kaminski with sympathy on the passing of Bluma Lucy Kaminski by Yaron Lew</td>
<td>In memory of Edna Silverman by Carol Nabatoff</td>
<td>In memory of Robert Goodwin by Stacey Goodwin Podell</td>
<td>In memory of Harold Rogovin by Ted Maltin</td>
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<td>To Naftali &amp; Iris Kaminski with sympathy on the passing of Bluma Lucy Kaminski by Steve &amp; Rachel Wisner</td>
<td>In memory of Elsie Miller by Bobbie &amp; Harold Miller</td>
<td>In memory of her grandmother Ida Kantrowitz by Sherry Kent</td>
<td>In memory of Mary Epstein by Kranie &amp; Earl Baker</td>
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<td>To Naftali &amp; Iris Kaminski with sympathy on the passing of Bluma Lucy Kaminski by Trish Loving &amp; Alan Lovins</td>
<td>In memory of Sarah Hinde Alperowitz by the Alper family</td>
<td>In memory of Hyman Fleischner by Hillel &amp; Sara-Ann Auerbach</td>
<td>In memory of Mary Epstein by Kranie &amp; Earl Baker</td>
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<td>In memory of Hyman Fleischner by Hillel &amp; Sara-Ann Auerbach</td>
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</table>
Welcome New Members
• Naomi Shiloh & Menachem “Meny” Elimelech
• Della & Michael Leapman

Mishloah Manot – Purim Baskets
Purim is coming next month! Watch for the order form coming to your door or email soon. Due to Covid-19, things may be a bit different this year, but we’ll do our best to help you celebrate!

Easy Fundraiser
The BEKI office sells Stop & Shop gift cards, which are debit cards for groceries or gasoline. This is an ongoing fundraiser that costs you nothing. Contact Peggy office@beki.org to arrange safe pickup.

Message from President Yaron Lew
This year, things are different. We light the candles on Zoom and attempt to do the one thing that never succeeds on Zoom – a sing-along. I invite everyone to join in and feel the warmth of our community. We will draw strength from one another and brighten each other’s holiday. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me via President@beki.org if you need anything or have any creative ideas we can implement to lift each other’s spirits.

The Warmth of Our Community
Adapted from his Hanuka message on December 10

Torah for the Hungry Mind
Sundays
Parashat HaShavua
From 10:00 to 11:00 am via Zoom, an opportunity to dive into the new week’s Torah reading, with Rabbi Tilsen & guests.

Mondays
Rashi Study Group: II Kings
From 8:00 to 8:30 am adults meet via Zoom to read Rashi’s commentary.

Tuesdays
Tehilim in Times of Trouble
From 8 to 9 pm via Zoom, the group explores the ancient poetry of the Biblical Psalms with Professor Corinne Blackmer.

Thursdays
Mini Morning Learning Service
From 8:15 to 9:15 am, this later morning service via Zoom usually includes a d’var Torah by Captain Becky May or another volunteer.

Talmud Berakhot Study Group
From 10:00 to 11:00 am, a weekly online study of Talmud B. Masekhet Berakhot with Rabbi Tilsen.

May the Almighty comfort those who mourn

HaMaqom Yinahem
With sorrow we note the passing of
Bentsion Boris Bronstein, husband of Elizabeth Bronstein
Andrew Rotman-Zaid, brother-in-law of Darryl (& David) Kuperstock
Chana Rosmarin (née Tugentman), mother of Ghislaine (& Joseph) Palumbo
Lila Zlotoff, mother of Ronald Zlotoff (& Donna Kemper)

Visit us at www.beki.org
PLANT TREES FOR TU BE SHEVAT

BY MIMI GLENN, SISTERHOOD PRESIDENT

The fifteenth day of Shevat marks the “new year” for trees, opening the season in which trees begin to bud in Israel. On the eve of Tu BeShevat, it is customary to gather for a seder with blessings, stories and poems. Wine is served. On the menu are grapes, figs, pomegranates, olive, dates — the five fruits mentioned in the Torah in connection with the holy land — and almonds.

You could follow the old custom and donate $91 to a charity. In Jewish numerology, ninety-one is the numerical equivalent for the Hebrew word ilan, meaning tree. Some parents name their son Ilan or daughter Ilana.

If you wish to purchase trees in Israel, Wepawaug-CT Valley-West Rock Hadassah can help. Tree certificates are $18 each, three for $36 or ten for $144. Call Debbie Farber, 203-795-0651 or email dfthenace@aol.com

Thank you to our members who joined Sisterhood for 2020-21. It is not too late to join; dues are only $25. Please send your check to Jessey Palumbo, 77 Ford Rd., Woodbridge, CT 06525-1727.

Tree of Life Awaiting Your Leaf

BY MARJORIE WIENER

The Tree of Life in the entrance to the BEKI lobby has a few empty spots. It is waiting for you to place the names of friends or family. You can choose to honor or memorialize those you care about. Many have commemorated birthdays, bar and bat mitzva celebrations.

We have been fortunate to have Arnold Jewelers in North Haven support the engraving of these leaves. Mikki Ratner took me into the store three years ago to introduce me to Larry to insure a seamless transfer of responsibility.

If you are interested in purchasing a leaf, contact me at marjoriewiener@yahoo.com. I will be happy to help you.

Local Delivery from the Gift Shop

At the BEKI Gift Shop, we have a lovely selection of gifts for children and adults. Personalized shopping is provided by Karen or Harriet. No contact shopping and free local delivery: Karen 203-430-2182 kekassap@gmail.com; Harriet 203-675-8607 hrfriedman@gmail.com.
Facebook Digest Available

Everyone is encouraged to join the BEKI Facebook group. You’ll enjoy the humor, community information, and links to cultural opportunities.

For those members who do not have a Facebook account but want to see the information, conversations, and humor posted there, just email bulletin@beki.org to request the weekly Facebook digest, sent each Friday.

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Visit us at www.beki.org
Sweet Dreams

Jacob, our patriarch, fleeces his brother and deceives his father. He skips town to avoid the repercussions. On his way out, he has disturbing but profound dreams.

He gets a job working for Uncle Laban, who deceives Jacob twice, giving Jacob a taste of his own medicine. Years later, Jacob runs off again, this time with his wives and flocks, heading back to his homeland. He is facing the terrifying prospect of his brother’s wrath, not to mention his father’s. Again he has disturbing but profound dreams.

In his dream – or was it waking reality – he is up all night wrestling with a man (Gen. 32:25ff). Who is it? He won’t say, but he appears to be a man, just like Jacob. Dawn approaches. “Let me go.” “No,” Jacob says, “I won’t let you go unless you bless me.”

There is nothing wrong with wanting the blessings of prosperity and success. But when they come through exploitation, deceit or dishonesty – even if it is mom and dad’s fault – the blessings cannot be enjoyed. Your graduation ceremony will not seem right if you hired someone else to take the SATs for you, and your produce will not taste sweet if your 40 acres and mule were taken from others, no matter how hard you worked the land yourself.

Grandfather Abraham refused to expropriate even a bootstrap and declined to take advantage of another (Gen. 14:23) and thereby attained a reputation for integrity, but Jacob did not inherit that quality of character; Jacob had to learn it and earn it himself the hard way.

Jacob begins by desiring and “stealing” the blessings of his brother, his father, his uncle, but is not satisfied and is not at peace. He comes to a point where he needs his blessings to be legitimate – to be endorsed by God, to come from within himself. When he realizes this, he is a new man with a new name: Israel.

For a music-video representation of this verse (Gen. 32:27), hear Handikusiweyi by Vabati VaJehova (in Shona)

РЦЯІМ: Історія Мегилла Reading

Chanting of Prodigious Bible to Congregation Membership for Make Benefit Once Great Synagogue of Bekistan.

Follow-up reading to the 473 BCE comedy centering on the real-life adventures of a refugee Judean journalist named Mordekhai and his beautiful niece Esther.

Purim Megilla Readings

Thursday Night 25 February 6:30p-7:30p On-Line & In Sanctuary

Friday 26 February 7a-8a On-Line & TBA
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<th>Sunday</th>
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<td>9:00am Courtyard Service &amp; Zoom</td>
<td>9:00am No Religious School</td>
<td>10:00am Parashat HaShavua with Rabbi Tilsen &amp; Guests</td>
<td>9:00am Drive-By Food Drive</td>
<td>9:00am Rashi Study Group</td>
<td>8:00pm Tehilim in Times of Trouble with Corinne Blackmer via Zoom</td>
<td>8:00pm Levi Brackman on Judaism as a Health &amp; Wellness Religion via Zoom</td>
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<td>8:00pm Zoom Schmooze: Racial Justice Film Discussion “Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North”</td>
<td>10:00am Talmud Berakhot: Zoom with Rabbi Tilsen</td>
<td>10:45am Shabbat</td>
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<td>8:00pm Tu BeShevat Celebration (part 1) with Hazan via Zoom</td>
<td>10:00am Talmud Berakhot: Zoom with Rabbi Tilsen</td>
<td>4:38pm Candle Lighting 6:00pm Qabbalat Shabbat (Sanctuary &amp; Social Hall)</td>
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<td>10:00am Talmud Berakhot: Zoom with Rabbi Tilsen</td>
<td>4:47pm Candle Lighting 6:00pm Qabbalat Shabbat (Sanctuary &amp; Social Hall)</td>
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<td><strong>18 Shevat</strong></td>
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**Mark Your Calendar**

- Rosh Hodesh Adar February 12-13
- Shabbat Zakhor February 20
- Purim Night February 25
- Purim Day February 26
- Fast of the Firstborn March 25
- First Seder Night March 25
- Second Seder Night March 28
- Pesah Eighth Day April 4
- LaG BeOmer Night April 29

**Service Times**

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<th>Sundays</th>
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<th>Tuesdays</th>
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<td>9 am Shaharit</td>
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<td>6 pm Qabbalat Shabbat</td>
<td><strong>6 pm Qabbalat Shabbat</strong></td>
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</table>
BEKI Service Schedule

- **Sunday 9:00 to 9:30 am** (outdoors* & via Zoom)
- Sunday 5:45 pm (via Zoom)
- Monday 7:00 am (via Zoom)
- **Monday 5:45 to 6:00 pm** (outdoors* & via Zoom)
- Tuesday 7:00 am (via Zoom)
- Tuesday 5:45 pm (via Zoom)
- Wednesday 7:00 am (via Zoom)
- Wednesday 5:45 pm (via Zoom)
- Thursday 8:15 am (via Zoom)
- Thursday 5:45 pm (via Zoom)
- Friday 7:00 am (via Zoom)
- **Friday 6:00 to 6:40 pm** (inside: sanctuary)
- **Saturday 9:30 to 11:00 am** (outdoors*)
  
  Potential in-person service opportunities are **boldface**
  
  *Weather permitting (in sanctuary in inclement weather)

Please wear face masks and keep six feet distancing. Prayer books and chairs are provided, or bring your own. Weekday outdoor services are in the courtyard, Saturdays in the parking lot.

So that we can anticipate the size of the group and keep records for possible contact tracing, RSVP to jjtilsen@beki.org, bekitefilla@gmail.com, or the minyan captain. Please be aware that there might be changes to the in-person service plans in response to public health conditions or other circumstances. For the latest information, please check the weekly BEKI Happenings or email us about the specific date you are interested in.

**Since any group gathering has inherent risks, participants need to make their own informed choices as to what is best for them.**