Abraham’s Tent

If your brother becomes poor and cannot maintain himself with you, you shall support him as though he was a stranger and a sojourner, and he shall live with you. – Leviticus 25:35

Abraham’s Tent is a community-based program with the Columbus House shelter which, through the generosity of local religious congregations and organizations, provides shelter and case management for 12 adult men for about 15 weeks from the end of December through March in Greater New Haven. On a rotating basis, volunteers from each host site provide shelter, meals, and fellowship from early evening through breakfast each day for one week. The program is named to remind us of Abraham’s hospitality to strangers in the book of Genesis.

BEKI has participated in this outstanding initiative since the winter of 2011-12, working closely each year with our partners (and after all these years – our friends) at the Church of the Holy Spirit (COHS) in West Haven. BEKI has been the primary host site for this partnership since 2015, and we look forward to continuing to work together in this wonderful program.

BEKI will host Abraham’s Tent
February 10 through February 17, 2020

The Abraham’s Tent participants must apply before the winter to participate. Once chosen and the program begins, the men arrive in the late afternoon daily to Columbus House, are interviewed to make sure they are in suitable condition to participate that day, shower, collect or store their belongings and bedding, and travel together by van to that week’s host location, arriving by about 6pm with several members of the Columbus House staff. After settling in, participants and volunteers dine and spend the evening together, and the staff leaves for the night. The men will spend a comfortable, warm and safe overnight at BEKI, with several BEKI or COHS volunteers on-site. In the early morning, breakfast is served for all, and the van will transport the participants to Columbus House to continue their daily activities. They will return each night of that week to BEKI. All case management is done by professionals from Columbus House.

Most host organizations prepare meals through pot-luck.

Continued on Page 3
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

What will your Jewish Legacy be?

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.
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543 George Street, New Haven, CT 06511
Robert E. Shure 203-562-8244 shurefuneralhome.com
Founder President
participation of their members. Because of BEKI’s kashrut standards, all meals will be prepared either in the BEKI kitchen or through an approved kosher caterer.

Over the last 11 years, most of the men who participated in this program have moved to transitional or permanent housing. Each works with a case manager to figure out his best next step. There are times when BEKI members have offered additional support to some of the men as they settle into their new situations, providing employment opportunities, furniture, food and friendship.

The BEKI Tikun Olam Committee is proud once again to coordinate BEKI’s effort in this worthwhile project.

Volunteer Now

Sign up online at tinyurl.com/ATatBEKI2020 as soon as possible. Your help is needed in all of the following ways:

- Volunteer to help **cook** dinners and/or breakfasts before or during the hosting week
- Volunteer to help **serve** dinners and/or breakfasts
- Volunteer to **dine** with our guests one or more nights
- Volunteer to **lead an activity** or presentation for our guests
- **Sponsor** dinner or breakfast for one or more nights
- **Volunteer to lead an activity** or presentation for our guests
- **Volunteer to serve** dinners and/or breakfasts
- **Volunteer to shop** before and during the hosting week
- **Volunteer to dine** with our guests one or more nights
- **Volunteer to lead an activity** or presentation for our guests

- **Sponsor** dinner or breakfast for one or more nights
- **Sign up as an overnight volunteer** for one or more nights
- **Help with logistics, equipment and set-up** (moving around furniture, TVs, provide power strips, computers, etc.)
- **Donate** funds to help defray additional costs
- We’ll be running a **One Day Toiletries Drive** on Sunday, February 9th. Please bring in what you can and leave in the bins provided in the BEKI lobby.

For more information about this and other Tikun Olam (Social Action/Justice) programs at BEKI, please contact co-chairs Darryl Kuperstock (kuperst@gmail.com 203-215-8555) or Steve Werlin (shwerlin@gmail.com 617-721-8213).
Be Happy It’s Adar

משנכנס אדר מרבים בשמחה
Mishenikhnas Adar marbim besimha – When Adar inaugurates, joy accumulates. – Talmud Eruvin 29a

Mishloah Manot – Purim Baskets

See the online form (beki.org under “Resources/Forms”) or contact the office at 203-389-2108 x 114 or office@beki.org if you need a form to order Purim Baskets. Please distribute mishloah manot on Purim evening and day.

Shabbat Zakhor

The “Sabbath of Remember!” occurs immediately before Purim, Shabbat 7 March 2020. This Sabbath is marked by reading the Biblical passage reminding us to remember and never forget the cruelty of Amalek. The reading of this passage is in fulfillment of the mitzva which it references, and hearing this reading is considered a mitzva unto itself. For that reason, children’s programs may be timed to let adults and children hear this required reading. Like Taanit Esther, Shabbat Zakhor expresses the serious side of Purim.

Fast of Esther

The holiday of Purim commemorates the failure of a genocidal plot against the Jews in the Persian Kingdom over twenty centuries ago. The dramatic (and some would say comic) story is told in the Biblical Book of Esther, which is read on the night and morning of the holiday.

Taanit Esther (The Fast of Esther) is observed on Monday 9 March 2020, the day immediately before Purim, which begins that night. While on Purim we joyously celebrate the failure of the plot and mock the racism of its hatchers, on the Fast of Esther we fast and pray that we will bring the world to an era that does not know the threat of genocide. This year, the Fast of Esther begins at dawn (5:51a Eastern Daylight Time) on Monday 9 March 2020. The Monday shaharit morning service is from 7a – 7:50a and includes “Avinu Malkenu -- Our Father, Our King,” as on Yom Kippur. No food or drink is consumed. The Fast of Esther is a minor observance, and therefore those with any significant medical contraindication should not undertake the fast. This year, we will hold a minha afternoon service at 5:45p. The fast ends at 7:23p EDT, or when the person observing the fast eats or drinks, whichever comes first.

See Rabbi Tilsen’s essay, The Problem of Purim.

Megilla Readings

Most of the Jewish world will observe Purim on Monday night 9 March and the following day, Tuesday 10 March 2020.

The Monday afternoon service is from 5:45p to 6:25p. The Megilla (Scroll of Esther) is read during the evening services (6:30p to 7:50p) on Monday night 9 March, and then again during the Tuesday morning service, which begins at 7:00a (ending 8:50a) on 10 March. The reading is from the Megilla scroll produced according to ancient custom, which, like a Torah scroll, is hand-written on parchment by a trained sofer. Children are welcome to dress as children in pajamas ready for bed, asleep in sleeping bags, napping in knapsacks, or rocking in rucksacks.

Hearing the reading of the megilla (or reading it oneself) in the evening and morning is a Biblical commandment (mitzva). Other Purim mitzvot (religious imperatives) include sending food gifts to a neighbor (mishloah manot), alms for the poor (matanot le-evyonim) and a feast on Purim day (mishte or seuda). Children are reminded to keep their adults from talking or making too much ruckus during

The Whole Megilla

The ruler of the most powerful country on the globe has trouble with the women in his life – and with every woman in the country. His chief advisor has a problem with Jews – especially a refugee journalist. What could go wrong? Hear this implausible fantasy story from long ago retold in its original form by skilled performers (with signing for the musically impaired), see the all-new executive summary projected on two screens. Come in costume or pajamas, bring a grogger or use ours, enjoy light fare before and Sisterhood-provided refreshments after the service. How far does this go? ‘Ad de-lo Yoda’ – until you can’t tell the difference between the heroes and the villains, at which point you are qualified to vote. Monday night 9 March 6:30p–7:50p in the sanctuary.

Continued on Page 5
the actual Megilla reading at BEKI. If the congregation makes too much noise during the reading, we will have to start over to ensure that everyone hears each word.

Groggers (noisemakers) will be available so that no one will have to hear the name of the Purim story’s villain. The use of internal combustion engines, explosives or blackboards as noisemakers is no longer permitted at BEKI. Please keep hands and feet within the sanctuary until the service comes to a complete stop.

Please do not bring assault rifles, firearms, explosive devices or weapons of any sort, or any toy that realistically resembles any form of weapon (these will be confiscated at the door – we mean it). Absolutely no weapons of mass destruction are permitted in the sanctuary or lobby during the service.

Enhanced security procedures will be in place. Members and guests may be wanded at the entryway, by Tinkerbell or Hermiones. Shushers have been trained to tape shut mouths of those violating the gag rules or otherwise talking in the sanctuary during the evening service or Megila reading.

During the morning reading, when some participants may be groggier than usual due to late drinking or the early hour, groggers are limited to 4 decibels (equivalent to the sound of a marshmallow dropped on a pillow from 18 centimeters).

Following the evening and morning services, help is requested in collecting and delivering the mishloah manot (Purim Baskets) to neighboring households. Delivering just one can be a big help and a great joy.

**BEKI Purim Seuda (Festive Meal)**

A Purim Seuda (Feast) will be held at BEKI on Tuesday 10 March from 5p–7p; payment and reservation are required. The information form is at beki.org under “Resources/Forms” or contact Peggy at 203-389-2108 x 114 or office@beki.org.

**Shushan Purim**

Persons who live in ancient cities that were walled in the 13th century BCE (such as Jerusalem and Mundigak, Afghanistan) will celebrate Purim a day later than the rest of the Jewish world. The observance of Shushan Purim is Tuesday night 10 March and Wednesday 11 March 2020. At BEKI this day will be marked liturgically by the omission of the recitation of the tahanun prayer.

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**Purim**

Continued from Page 4

Monsters have invaded BEKI’s sanctuary in Purims past.
USY and Kadima News

Our youth groups had a terrific fall programming schedule, starting with a joint USY and Kadima opening event. Other Kadima events included an afternoon of bowling and a movie night complete with Havdallah, playing Apples to Apples: Jewish edition, a pasta supper, and watching the original “Charlotte’s Web” film. Latke-making closed out 2019, and in 2020, we plan a series of community-based events including clothing drives and helping with Abraham’s Tent. Kadima is for grades 5-8, but by spring, rising 5th graders are eligible.

USY fall events included the annual Thanksgiving pie-baking, which we combined with an overnight. Everyone enjoyed helping with this traditional tzedakah fundraiser. Our USY bakers made well over 200 pies, nearly a quarter of which were donated. Spring plans include community events, discussions, and events for Purim and Passover.

To suggest a future event, please contact youth advisor Seth Zabin, sethbekiadvisor@gmail.com.

Regional and International USY Events

by Noam Benson-Tilson

At Spring Convention last May, we had elections for the Regional Executive Board for USY (United Synagogue Youth), along with learning sessions and other activities. The 2018-19 programming year ended with a day at the Seekonk Grand Prix. USYers came from all over New England for an afternoon of bumper cars, go-karts, arcade games, mini-golf, and more. August brought Encampment with the Eastern Canada Region and Tzafon (upstate New York). Notable events included a day at Six Flags, the Maccabiah color war, the Color Run, a dance, and Shabbat. Many new members attended these events, the vast majority without leadership positions.

Next came the Fall Boards Weekend in Newark, NJ. This was the annual meeting of all the Regional Executive Boards, as well the International General and Executive Boards. Various speakers came and some business meetings were held. In November, the BEKI Chapter Board delegation went to Leadership Convention at Camp Ramah, during which we participated in various workshops and chapter-to-chapter discussions, as well as a Saturday night of bowling and dodgeball. Our regional leaders of the new HaNer Region – as well as many first-timers – discussed ways to improve our local chapters.

International Convention is December 22-26 in southern California; hundreds of USYers and USCJ staff will attend a week of tefillah, study sessions, and sightseeing in the Los Angeles area.
JOIN US!

12th Annual BEKI - Ezra Academy Community
Shabbat Dinner

Friday eve January 10, 2020
(around 7pm)

immediately following
6:00 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat/Ma’ariv services

85 Harrison Street, New Haven
Register by January 7

$18 per adult; $10 per child aged 4-12; $50 maximum per family.

Please consider making a donation to host a teacher,
prospective family, or other guest.

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Names: ___________________________________________________________

Please reserve places for _____ Adults _____ Children

#chicken meals: _________

#parve (non-dairy, vegetarian) meals: _________

dietary restrictions: ________________________________

We are unable to attend but would like to make a contribution: ____________

Send your check (payable to Ezra Academy) to Ezra Academy, 75 Rimmon Rd,
Woodbridge, CT 06525

Questions? Contact Rachel at 203-887-1182 or wisemangerber@gmail.com.
The BEKI Art Gallery is pleased to present Sanjeet Chowdhury, *Photographs of Jewish Calcutta*, during the months of January and February.

Although only about twenty Jews currently reside in Kolkata (as the city is now known), the city retains the traces of the Jewish visual culture that informed the visual culture of its urban spaces. Many monuments, including a cemetery in North Kolkata where gravestones are occasionally written in three languages, remain and are cared for by non-Jewish Bengalis, many of them Muslims. Nahoum’s, the Jewish bakery, remains one of the city’s favorites.

Sanjeet Chowdhury’s beautiful photographs illustrate the diversity, poignancy and history of Jewish culture in Calcutta. An independent photographer, filmmaker, and curator committed to representing the everyday, Chowdhury is based in Kolkata. His photographic works have been exhibited in London, New York, Basel, and other cities worldwide. His video arts and films have been screened at international festivals in Washington, Berlin, Tel Aviv and Stockholm. He is currently involved in several book projects, among them an anthology of the culinary history of Bengal.

While Chowdhury’s photos will be in the upper gallery during this period, the newly renovated lower lobby gallery will feature selected artwork from the BEKI collection, including some paintings and prints from Congregation Sinai.
Shabbatot (Saturdays)

Darshanim

Darshan – noun, plural dar-sha-nim. Judaism. a preacher or teacher of Aggada or Halakha in a synagogue.

Rabbi Tilsen has invited the following speakers to serve as guest Darshanim in the coming weeks:

Isaiah Cooper, 4 January 2020, parashat VaYigash
Maytal Saltiel, 11 January 2020, parashat VaYehi
Nanette Stahl, 18 January 2020, parashat Shemot
Steve Werlin, 25 January 2020, parashat VaEra
Corinne Blackmer, 1 February 2020, parashat Bo
Shula Chernoff, 8 February 2020, Shabbat Shira, parashat BeShaleh
Becky May, 15 February 2020, parashat Yitro
Josh Zelinsky, 22 February 2020, parashat Mishpatim
Rabbi Joshua Ratner, 29 February 2020, parashat Terumah

Shabbat Shalom Torah Study

The Shabbat Shalom Torah Study meets every other Saturday morning at 10:45a in the office and is an ideal setting for veteran and novice shul-goers alike to explore the scriptural readings and liturgy of the day in a supportive setting. Expertly led by Steven Fraade, with Rabbi Alan Lovins, Nadav Sela, Isaiah Cooper and others, the Shabbat Shalom Torah Study 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 Torah reading, Haftara (Prophetic reading) and liturgy.

The program often focuses on the scriptural readings, but also addresses the prayer liturgy and other topics related to the liturgical calendar, scriptural readings or current issues of concern.

Everyone is welcome to participate regardless of religious status or background. It is suitable for mature youths along with adults.

Mondays

The Rashi Study Group
The group is on winter break, and resumes Monday 2 March 2020.

Wednesdays

Hebrew Word of the Week
The class is on winter break and resumes 4 March 2020.

The Rabbis’ Study Group
The group is on winter break and resumes in March.

Thursdays

Mini Morning Learning Service
The Thursday morning services are supplemented with commentary and teaching relating to the history, themes, choreography and language of the daily morning service. Shacharit service is from 8:15a to 9:15a on Thursdays; on other weekdays, the service begins at 7:00a.

The Berakhot Talmud Study Group
The group is on winter break and resumes on 8 March 2020.
Mazal Tov to
Rabbi Carl & Sharon Astor on the birth of a grandchild, and to parents Avi and Lucija, and on his being entered into the covenant through brit mila, in November in Spain.

James Stacey and Libby Abraham & family on the birth of baby boy Aaron Edwards Stacey to their son & brother Timothy E. Stacey & Kathryn A. Edwards.

Welcome New Members
Lauren & Phillip Brown

Upcoming Benei Mitzva
Dylan Sachs, son of Robert & Betsy Sachs, grandson of Rita Sachs, afternoon of 7 March 2020, parashat Ki Tisa

Herb Winer
Herbert Isaac Winer, son of the late Herman Leo Winer and Hajnalka Langer Winer, born in New York City Sept. 19, 1921, died in New Haven, CT on Dec. 11, 2019 at the age of 98.

Brother of the late Joseph, the late Fruma (late Albert Ginsburgh), the late David (Janet), and the late Louis.

Widower of the late Harriet Herzog Winer, and survived by their children, Lise, Daniel and Laura Winer, grandson Joshua Vazquez-Winer, and great-granddaughter Jasmine Vazquez. Survived by his loving wife Hannah Bress Breitman Winer and step-son David Breitman (Kathryn Stuart).

Herbert Winer was born in Manhattan, and grew up in Mount Vernon and Spring Valley, N.Y. A member of the Yale Class of ‘42, he served in the U.S. Army in the Pacific during World War II. He returned to Yale, completed a PhD in Forestry, and taught at the Forestry School. He was a member of Congregation Beth El until moving to Montreal in 1964, where he worked in pulp and paper research. In 1979 he became head of woodlands management at Mead in Dayton, Ohio. On retirement, he returned to New Haven and BEKI, and to the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

A devoted son and brother, husband and father, grandfather and great-grandfather, Herbert Winer was a mensch, a man of great integrity and high standards, a generous and compassionate person, curious and knowledgeable, and a great wit. He will be sorely missed by extended family, colleagues, friends, and all those whose lives he touched.

Very special thanks to Jane Pettway, and the staff at Coachman Residence for their compassionate care.
Contributions

Rabbi’s Tzedqa Fund
- Lou & Lisa Petrillo marking the yahrzeit of Dr. Melvin Stanger
- (The rest to be published in the March bulletin, when Rabbi Tilsen is back from sabbatical)

Qiddush Sponsors (minimum $320)
- Anonymous
- Harold Birn, Lauren Brown, Joanne Foodim & Rob Forbes, Mimi Glenn, Karel Koenig, Donna Levine, May family, Angela Oren, Jesse Palumbo, Dan & Sharon Prober, Tamara Schecter, Amy Schwartz, Weiner & Rastelli family, Wyner family, Rhoda Zalter
- Samuel honoring BEKI Veterans family, Wyner family, Rhoda Zahler
- BEKI in honor of Corey Stone & Sue McDonald
- Steven Fraade & Ellen Cohen

Chai Fund (minimum $18) to support synagogue operations
- To David & Darryl Kuperstock in honor of the birth of their granddaughter by Helen Rosenberg & Keith Richter
- To David & Darryl Kuperstock in honor of the birth of their granddaughter by Joanne Foodim & Rob Forbes
- To Marsha Beller and family in honor of the birth of her granddaughter by Joanne Foodim & Rob Forbes
- To David & Darryl Kuperstock in honor of the birth of their granddaughter by Bobbie & Harold Miller
- To Marsha Beller and family in honor of the birth of their granddaughter by Bobbie & Harold Miller
- To David & Darryl Kuperstock in honor of the birth of their granddaughter by Trish Loving & Alan Lovins
- To Helen Rosenberg and family with sympathy on the passing of Barbara Wambach by Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade
- To Sarah Berry and family with sympathy on the passing of Marianne Schoeffer Nelson by Jay Sokolow & Ina Silverman

BEKI Religious School
- To Sarah Berry and family with sympathy on the passing of Marianne Schoeffer Nelson by Jay Sokolow & Ina Silverman

Harold & Arthur Ratner Memorial Fund
- In memory of their mother Miriam Lubov Kahn by Richard & Michael Kahn

Frankel-Mattler Memorial Fund
- To Shirley Mattler in honor of her 100th birthday by Gloria E. Frankel & Steven Mattler
- To Shirley Mattler in honor of her 100th birthday by Julie Abrams

Yahrzeit Fund ($5 minimum) to support synagogue operations
- In memory of his wife Ellen Slopak Schwartz and her parents Gertrude & Eli Slopak by David Schwartz
- In memory of Anna Altman by Darcy McGraw & Bruce Altman
- In memory of Peter Altman by Bruce Altman & Darcy McGraw
- In memory of Renee Eckstein by William Eckstein
- In memory of Elsie Miller by Bobbie & Harold Miller
- In memory of her son Bruce Newman by Rheda Newman
- In memory of Arlene Chirgwin by Roberta Atteson
- In memory of Susan Gell by John & Marcia Gell
- In memory of her dear father Irving Greenberg by Toby & Alan Ignal
- In memory of her grandfather Morris Gray by Toby & Alan Ignal
- In memory of her mother Esther Melnick by Margie & Jay Hirshfield
- In memory of Jacob Sokoloff by Shirley Goldstein Frumento
- In memory of Herman Goldstein by Shirley Goldstein Frumento
- In memory of Edith Sokoloff Goldstein by Shirley Goldstein Frumento
- In memory of Sarah Schwartz by Joan Gelbert
- In memory of Herman Pintell by Janet Chernikoff
- In memory of Evelyn Cohen by Cliff & Donna Cohen
- In memory of Samuel Flamer by Mickey & Bud Chorney
- In memory of her beloved father Ben Kugell by Harriet Pearl
- In memory of Dr. Melvin Stanger by Louis Petitto
- In memory of Samuel Snyder by Robert Snyder & Eileen Schuman
- In memory of Joyce Napierski by Seymour Napierski
- In memory of Sadie Kiser by Annette Kiser
- In memory of his grandmother Sarah Rosenblatt by Dan Jennes
- In memory of his aunt Anna Rosenblatt by Dan Jennes
- In memory of his cousin Joseph Mona by Dan Jennes
- In memory of Morris Chain by Marty & Shirley Shepro
- In memory of her father Lester P. Isenberg by Janis Isenberg
- In memory of her aunt Jean Govrin Alderman by Susan Jacobson
- In memory of her uncle Sol Govrin by Susan Jacobson
- In memory of Cynthia Schneider by Lana & Martin Gad
- In memory of her grandmother Ida Kantrowitz by Sherry Kent
- In memory of Herbie Silver by Ruth Silver
- In memory of Harry Goldberg by Eileen Schuman
- In memory of Pauline Altschuler by Roberta Atteson
- In memory of Mary Epstein by Kranie & Earl Baker
- In memory of Jacob Ripkin by Jeri Ripkin
28th Annual
Super Deli Boxes

Sunday, February 2, 2020!!!
PICK-UP at BEKI from 11:45 – 1:30pm
85 Harrison St., New Haven

On SuperBowl Sunday, don't worry about the food

LET US PREPARE
THE MEAL FOR YOU!

Remember - You don’t have to be watching the big game – watch a movie, play bridge, have a party or just relax and enjoy the break! Invite some friends over!

All order forms MUST be received by FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 2020

3 WAYS TO ORDER!

BY MAIL:
Enclose Pre-Payment by check
(to “BEKI YOUTH COMMISSION”)  
Send to:  Eva Shragis, 10 Vernon Court, Woodbridge, CT 06525

BY EMAIL OR PHONE
(or for more information):
Eva: eshragis@hotmail.com/203-258-1243
Payment due at pick-up (check or cash only)

Still only $13 each!!!

Each Deli box contains:
1 delicious Deli Sandwich on freshly baked rye bread/roll (see choices of sandwiches on order form below) OR Fresh Garden Salad (no bread), 1 container of freshly made coleslaw, 1 bag of potato chips, 1 scrumptious pareve brownie, 1 large pickle spear, 1 piece of fresh fruit, condiments, napkin, flatware

all food certified KOSHER and prepared under supervision

Please do not send or drop-off any orders to the BEKI office

DELI BOXES ORDER - 2020 (please fill in ALL information (beverage) choices and return w/payment – PLEASE PRINT)

Name ______________________ Cell Phone ______________________ Email ______________________

Please indicate the NUMBER of boxes you would like of each type:

____ Corned Beef  ____ Pastrami  ____ Salami  ____ Turkey Breast  ____ Roast Beef
____ Tuna Salad  ____ Egg Salad (vegetarian)  ____ Portobello & Peppers (vegan/served on hard roll)
____ Garden Salad (no bread) - specify 1 only: ____ plain  ____ w/turkey  ____ w/sliced hard-boiled egg

Total # of Boxes _____ x $13 = $ ________

Beverage (CHOOSE 1 PER BOX)  ____ Coke  ____ Diet Coke  ____ Sprite  ____ Apple Juice  ____ Spring Water

ADDITIONAL DONATION TO BEKI Youth Programs $ ________

Total amount of payment payable to BEKI Youth Commission $ ________
We celebrated National Mix It Up Day in October to foster greater respect and understanding among our students.

www.hamdenhall.org  203.752.2610
1108 Whitney Ave., Hamden, CT 06517
The attack on Ukrainian-born US Army Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman’s loyalty to the United States seems absurd to most observers, in part simply because most cannot imagine having a deeper commitment to Ukraine than to the United States or to one’s own sense of integrity. Often, when given a choice as to their “identity,” people choose the “better” one – the one with most benefits, prestige, comfort. The talk of “dual-loyalty” in this case may be most disturbing not because it is likely to be true, but because American Jews have heard that trope before and don’t like the sound of it.

American and European Jews are high on the list of citizens whose loyalty can be questioned, in part because many Jews do have a strong loyalty to the Jewish People or to the State of Israel. When I’ve been told, “If you like Israel so much, why don’t you move there?” my first thought is to reply “Maybe I will,” which does not truly address the underlying problem with the suggestion.

Jews are essentially and primarily a nation, from ancient times until today. The Wikipedia definition recognizes the complexity of our identity:

**The Elements of “Being Jewish”**

The elements that define a nation – language, locale, law, lore, and more – have been present all along, even as that national religion had evolved.

In ancient times, our ancestors were called Hebrews, Israelites and Jews even while the dominant (though unofficial) religion was idolatrous. In recent centuries, Jews who converted to other religions and their descendants were still treated as “Jews” in many places. Arab lands have Christian Arabs and Muslim Arabs, but not “Jewish Arabs” – just “Jews who speak Arabic.” The Preamble to the League of Nations Mandate (1922) states:

*Whereas the Principal Allied Powers have also agreed that the Mandatory should be responsible for putting into effect the declaration originally made on November 2nd, 1917, by the Government of His Britannic Majesty, and adopted by the said Powers, in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people ...*

At its inception, the Reform Movement sought to denationalize the Jewish People, removing all elements of peoplehood, and re-forming “Judaism” into nothing more than a religion (See Pittsburgh Platform 1885). While continuing to hold that aspiration, the movement recognized that historically, and presently, the Jews were at the core a people – an inescapable conclusion in the 1930s:

By 1937 the CCAR [Central Conference of American Rabbis] [the Reform Rabbinic association] had reversed its stand on Jewish peoplehood…. This affirmation of Jewish peoplehood was accompanied by a reaffirmation of Reform Judaism’s universal message: “We regard it as our historic...
A Certain People
Continued from Page 15

A hundred years ago, The United States, in its official documents, labeled the Jewish People a “Race or People.” Most recently (2019), federal courts determined that laws prohibiting “racial discrimination” apply to Jews. Other well-known federal cases recognized the Hanuka menorah as a “national symbol” and not essentially religious—consistent with the self-definition of the many utterly non- or anti-religious Jews who proudly display a menorah on Hanuka.

“Judaism” is the national religion of the Jewish People. The Jewish People have an “official religion” but many Jews do not subscribe to that religion. This explains the existence of “atheist” and “non-observant” Jews who nonetheless insist on their Jewish identity.

Other nations have national religions. Denmark, Armenia, Monaco, Costa Rica, South Korea, Iraq, Iran, Jordan and dozens of other countries have official state (national) religions. (See chart at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_religion). Unlike dozens of other countries, Israel, which defines itself as “the Nation-State of the Jewish People,” (Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People) does not have an official state religion. The State of Israel funds common law, Sharia (Sunni and Shiite) and Jewish religious courts.

For complex historical reasons, the State of Israel has been a laggard among decolonizing countries restoring their own legal traditions. For the most part, Ottoman and British common law still form the backbone of Israel’s legal system. The contested legal status of the unincorporated territories (West Bank) is one factor; the pro-Western bias of the State’s founders is another.

“Jewish law,” as the law of the Jewish People, distinguishes between “religious” and “secular” areas of law. The distinction between laws “concerning the relationship between one person and another” and those “concerning the relationship between an individual and God” goes back to ancient times. The sixteenth-century law code Shulhan Arukh, the widely-cited and universally recognized reference work for contemporary Jewish law, divides Jewish Law into four sections. Two of those sections are devoted to what in modern terms is called “Religious Law,” and two sections, Even ha-Ezer and Hoshen Mishpat, are devoted to “Secular Law.”

This is explained by Former Israeli Supreme Court Chief Justice Professor Menachem Elon (Jewish Law: History, Sources, Principles. Ha-Mishpat Ha-Ivri, Vol. 1, Philadelphia and Jerusalem, 1994)

The term mishpat ivri [Hebrew law], in its currently accepted meaning, includes only those parts of the Halakah corresponding to what generally is included in the corpus juris of other contemporary legal systems, namely, laws that govern relationships in human society, and not the precepts that deal with the relationship between people and God. An alternative and more specific definition of mishpat ivri as currently used is that it includes only those subjects covered in the parts of the Shulhan Arukh titled Even ha-Ezer and

Continued on Page 17
A Certain People
Continued from Page 16

Hoshen Mishpat (plus certain “legal” matters contained in the two other parts of the Shulhan Arukh, such as the law of usury in the part titled Yoreh De'ah). It does not, however, include the other subjects dealt with in the parts Orah Hayyim and Yoreh De'ah.

Jewish civil law, for the past two thousand years or so, has developed in a way that is largely independent of the Biblical law. The codes and arguments developed without reference to, and at times in literal opposition to, the Biblical law as the society and the law evolved together. Law was based on logic and precedent, and if an ancient text needed to be consulted or interpreted, it was the Talmud, not the Torah. “Torah law” became either a reference to a historical artifact, or the technical name and source of authority of a contemporary civil and religious legal system. Judges were qualified based on mastery of subject matter, intelligence and integrity, not by religious test or ritual piety (Shulhan Arukh, Hoshen Mishpat, section 1).

In comparison, Connecticut civil law claimed to be derived directly and explicitly from “Scripture” as recently as 200 years ago. Connecticut (and Massachusetts) were still executing women for sorcery 1,700 years after the Sanhedrin’s last judicial execution for that or any other offense. Until recently, Connecticut banned interracial marriage, and disallowed divorce, based directly on scriptural interpretations, where such rules have not existed as a matter of social policy in Jewish law in the past 2,000 years.

There are people who hold a principled opposition to nationality or nation-states, as there are those who oppose anything called religion. If those principles are applied first and foremost or exclusively to Jews and Judaism, we have a problem. If they are applied in a principled manner across the board, that is a different matter – and I would just observe that erasing national identities and religions is the aim of every great empire, every colonizer and hegemon.

My answer to a charge of “dual-loyalty” is that it is not really a sensible idea at the outset. My loyalties are multiple: God, parents, children, siblings, community, my employer, the Revolution, the Jewish People, Torah law, the State of Connecticut, USA, Israel, my IRA. These loyalties are often competing, and sometimes “at war,” but I manage. When push comes to shove, I end up getting shoved. Specifically in the realm of “citizenship,” I am a citizen of Connecticut and of the United States, and their interests often diverge, and I don’t have a consistent or simple system to resolve the conflict, but my dual-loyalty arguably is beneficial to both entities. There are certain ideals, of decency, kindness and fairness, of truth and integrity, that I may honor above politics or expedience, and anyone or anything that desires my loyalty will have to compete for it.

Just letting you know where I stand.

There is a certain people, scattered and dispersed among the other peoples in all the provinces of your realm, whose laws are different from those that of any other people and who do not obey the king’s laws….

– The Villain speaking to King Ahashverosh, Esther 3:8
## January 2020

### 4 Tevet 5780 - 5 Shevat 5780

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Rabbi Away
Rabbi Tilsen will be away on sabbatical December 2019 – February 2020, and will return to duty 1 March 2020. For urgent matters contact office@beki.org cc jjtilsen@beki.org.

Giftshop@BEKI
Sisterhood Store offers a diversity of Judaica items, open Sundays and Wednesdays during Religious School hours, Tuesdays around services and any time by appointment Giftshop@beki.org.

Help Make Qiddush
Qiddush Committee prep teams need reinforcements. Whether you appreciate BEKI’s weekly Shabbat lunch for its delicious food, its role in supporting community, or both, please consider joining a Thursday afternoon or evening qiddush team on either a monthly or more occasional basis. Contact Ellen Cohen ellen.cohen@snet.net 203-397-9430

Donate
Fast and easy at www.beki.org/give.

Hesed
To be notified of opportunities to help your fellow congregants, follow the link below to join the BEKI Hesed Committee via lotsahelpinghands. https://my.lotsahelpinghands.com/community/beki-hesed-committee/home

Got Announcements?
Ask President Yaron Lew to include your BEKI event in live Shabbat morning announcements by writing to announcements@beki.org. “This Week at BEKI” listings may be up to 50 words.