

A New Haven Tradition since 1892

BEKI

Congregation
Beth El-Keser Israel

bulletin

Nisan-Iyar 5777

Vol. 23 Issue 4

A Message from Rabbi Tilsen: Page 13

PESAH AT BEKI

Selling of Hametz

During the eight days of Pesah (Passover), it is forbidden for Jews to eat or own edible *hametz*. Hametz is any product containing wheat, barley, oats, spelt or rye that has not been especially prepared kosher for Pesah. Ideally, one physically disposes of all hametz by the morning before Pesah. In order to be sure that this has taken place, or to avoid the loss of expensive hametz such as liquor, you can sell your hametz for the period of Pesah. If you would like to authorize Rabbi Tilsen to sell your hametz to someone who is allowed to own it (a pedigreed righteous gentile), please sign and return the form available at www.beki.org/hametz and in the literature rack. The form is a power of attorney allowing Rabbi Tilsen to sell your hametz for you.



KINAHARA: Kosher for Pesah

The Rabbinical Assembly's Pesah Guide is available at <http://rabbinicalassembly.org/pesah-guide>.

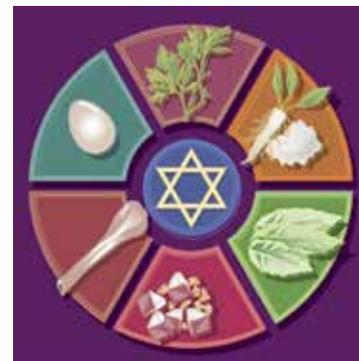
Hagadot and Seder Plates at Giftshop

Hagadot (do-it-yourself guide and service books) for Pesah, including the Rabbinical Assembly's *Passover Haggadah: The Feast of Freedom*, are available at the Sisterhood Giftshop and wherever fine Judaica is sold. The Giftshop also offers a significant collection of decorative seder plates and other Pesah supplies (such as toy frogs).

Bediqat Hametz & Biur Hametz

On the night of Sunday 9 April 2017, it is customary to perform *Bediqat Hametz*, the final check for leaven before Passover. This procedure can be done as a spiritual or fun

ritual with children or adults. On the next morning, Monday 10 April, it is customary to perform *Biur Hametz*, a final "search and destroy" mission for leaven, to insure compliance with the rule against possessing or eating hametz during the festival. Instructions for *Bediqat Hametz* and *Biur Hametz* can be found in most *Hagadot*, including the Rabbinical Assembly's *Passover Haggadah: The Feast of Freedom*. Hametz should not be eaten after 10:18a on Friday morning; hametz should be burned before 11:35a.



Siyyum Bekhorot: Feast or Famine

The Fast of the First Born is Monday 10 April 2017, the morning before the first seder. Firstborn who attend the Monday morning service from 7:00a to 7:45a may conclude their fast by partaking of the *seudat mitzva* (obligatory feast) celebrating a *siyyum*, the conclusion of a study project. Services and *siyyum* will end by 8:15a. All may attend and participate in the *siyyum* and mini-seuda.

Matza Baking

Baking *matzat mitzva*, the matza to be used for the fulfillment of the requirement to eat unleavened bread at the Pesah seder, can be done only (or preferably) after the prohibition against eating or possessing *hametz* (leavened items) has begun, namely, the afternoon before the Pesah seder.

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BEKI Bulletin

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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

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A Message from Rabbi Tilsen & Dear Rabbi
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Pesah

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BEKI members have baked *matzat mitzva* on the afternoon before Pesah in the (then newly-renovated) BEKI kitchen since Passover 2011, when quality ovens suitable for matza baking were acquired.

Grain (wheat, barley, oats, rye or spelt) is milled in a cool, dark, dry area of the building on the night before (i.e., about 24 hours before) the seder. The flour is secured (“*shemura*”) from moisture and heat, or any conditions that could promote leavening or other contamination. Water is drawn that evening as well to insure it is cool and clear for use on the afternoon of matza baking.

Chief Matza

Bakers have studied the *Shulhan Arukh* and other codes to insure the rules for matza baking are strictly followed. During baking, the process is scrupulously monitored and each matza is continuously inspected.

Join Bill, David, Sascha, Noam, Pablo, Mateo, Sarah, Jon-Jay and others on Friday morning 10 April 2017 from about 11:30a to 1:15p in the BEKI kitchen for matza baking. For info contact Jon-Jay at jjtilsen@beki.org.

Let All Who Are Hungry . . .

The Seder of Pesah is a wonderful opportunity to welcome others into our homes. Our congregation comprises many people who may not have extended family locally, do not have Jewish relatives, are new to the area, or who otherwise would benefit greatly from a Seder invitation. If you are able to open your Seder to additional guests, please contact Rabbi Tilsen at your earliest opportunity at jjtilsen@beki.org. If you are able to host an adult who is a mental health services consumer or who has developmental disabilities, or would like to host another guest, please contact Special Outreach Coordinator Ina Silverman (389-2108

x13 or principal@beki.org).

Community Second Seder at TBS

Temple Beth Sholom in Hamden is hosting the Masorti-Conservative Community Second Seder open to the public on the second night of Passover, Tuesday night 11 April 2017 at 5:30p. Reservations required.

For reservations (required) and information, contact

Temple Beth Sholom 203.288.7748
bethsholomhamden@aol.com.

People needing help with transportation are asked to call 203.288.7748.

Service Times for Pesah

Festival morning service is 9:15a to 11:45a on Tuesday 11 April. Afternoon and evening services that night, the night of the second seder, will not be held at BEKI.

Festival morning

services on Wednesday 12 April 2017 are 9:15a to 11:30a, and afternoon service is 5:45p to 6:05p. Havdala is 8:11p or later.

Hol HaMoed: The Intermediate Days

While we observe the two initial and two final days of Pesah as major holidays, which include most of the restrictions on *melakha* (“work”) followed on Shabbat, the intermediate days are observed as semi-holidays. Ideally, one avoids or minimizes *melakha* during this period as well, but in our setting most observant Jews simply go to work or school as usual. *Melakha* is a technical rabbinic term used to define the set of actions that are prohibited on the Sabbath Day, based on the 39 categories of acts involved in creating the Temple, which is the Biblical context in which the term is used.

On the festival days (*haggim*), tefillin are not worn, but on Hol HaMoed it is common to wear tefillin in the morning until after the amida and to remove them before Hallel. (Others omit tefillin altogether in this period.) During Hol



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Pesah

Continued from Page 3

HaMoed, as in the entire month of Nisan, the Tahanun (supplication) is omitted in the daily services. Hallel and musaf are recited daily, and the passage *Ya`ale veYavo* is included in the amida and in Birkat haMazon (grace after meals).

The prohibition against possessing and eating hametz remains in force. One should seek to make the period celebratory. In the idyllic future, the period should be a general public holiday when all can skip work without concern for income or security.

Pesah Candle Lighting

The first night of Passover is Monday 10 April 2017; candle lighting in New Haven is at 7:09p. For the second night, candle lighting should be *after* 8:09p (twenty-five hours later). Because it is not permitted to strike matches on the Festival days, our practice is to light a flame before the festival begins that will burn at least 26 hours, and to use that flame to light the Pesah candles the second night.

Candle lighting for the seventh day, Sunday 16 April 2017, is at 7:15p or earlier, and on Monday night 17 April at 8:15p.

Sefira – Counting the Omer

At the second Seder (Tuesday night 11 April 2017), we begin daily *sefirat ha-omer* (counting of the *omer*), a counting of days to Shavuot, the next major festival. The counting, preferably done each night for 49 nights, is an expression of eager anticipation, commemorating the period of expectation and preparation we experienced in the Exodus from Egypt until the revelation at Sinai.

The simple home ceremony is printed in most *siddurim* (prayer books), including *Sim Shalom*, immediately after the weekday evening service. While it is a mitzva prescribed for adults, *sefirat ha-omer* can also be a fun, artistic and joyous ritual for families with children.

In the days before printed calendars, calendar watches and daily newspapers, the *sefira* served to keep the liturgical calendar of the Jewish People synchronized, no simple accomplishment, given the dispersion and isolation of much of the community. The term *omer* refers to the measure (one handful) of grain that was used to create a physical relic of the counting. With a physical reminder, even illiterate people could do a recount in case they forgot the day's number.

Families with young children may use this opportunity to help their children understand and experience anticipa-

tion, planning, counting and hope.

Teach us to number our days, that we may attain a heart of wisdom

– Psalm 90:12

Shir HaShirim – Song of Songs

The Biblical love poetry of *Shir HaShirim - Song of Songs* will be read on the morning of Shabbat Pesah 15 April 2017 after the haftara reading. Tradition ascribes the work to King Solomon himself, writing 2,900 years ago. Celebrate the spring holiday of Pesah with this beautiful and moving reading.

Yizkor Memorial Service

The Yizkor Memorial Service will be held during the 9:15a Festival morning service on Tuesday 18 April 2017. The Festival service includes a *Shaharit* morning service, *Hallel* (Psalms of praise), a Torah reading and *Haftara*, and the *Musaf* additional service, and concludes by 12:15p. The Yizkor memorial service is one of four such services during the year that help us recognize our feelings of loss, which are often especially intense during the Pesah season, and to honor the memories of our loved ones.



Yom HaShoah – Holocaust Memorial Day

Yom HaShoah, a memorial day for the *hurban*, the destruction of Jewish civilization in Europe, will be observed on Sunday night 23 April and Monday 24 April 2017. See the Sisterhood section in this issue for information on yellow Holocaust memorial candles.

Yom HaZikaron, Yom HaAtzmaut

Yom HaZikaron, Israeli Memorial Day, is observed Sunday 30 April and Monday 1 May 2017; Yom HaAtzmaut, Israel Independence Day, is observed on Monday night 1 May and Tuesday 2 May 2017. These back-to-back holidays recognize the combination of suffering and joy, of sacrifice and achievement that often necessarily come together in our lives. All of these days are marked liturgically in public worship at BEKI.



PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT

“Capturing Bialik’s Butterflies, Poet’s Voice Meets Camera’s Eye,” a series of large digital print images of Monarch butterflies on canvas produced by the photographer Henry J. Spencer, which are surrounded by the poetry of Hebrew poet Chaim Nachman Bialik, will be exhibited at BEKI from 23 April through 9 July. The Woodbridge-based artist will discuss his work at Shabbat Schmooze on 6 May following qiddush.

Spencer attributes the genesis of these pieces to his father’s passion for the poetry of Bialik, to which his father was introduced as a student in pre-war Poland, and his mother’s artistic interests, which instilled in him “a love of art through classes, lectures, frequent museum visits, and peering through our collection of art folios together.”

Spencer recalls that in his childhood home in Providence, RI, his father “maintained a custom of reading different Bialik poems each week...” as well as singing Bialik’s *HaHama Merosh* on Friday nights. “This mystical ode fused elements from several hymns recited in the synagogue to welcome Shabbat, including *Lekha Dodi* and *Shalom Aleikhem*.”

His avocation as a photographer developed from “...a desire to document objects I encounter on my daily walks

in the picturesque wooded and coastal areas of New England. My interest in the form and texture of natural phenomena partly derives from my professional training as a dermatologist; the close observation and analysis of the human skin sharpens my attention to intricate details in nature. This photographic journey has helped me bond with the environment, opening my eyes to subtleties in nature that I would have otherwise overlooked.”



The butterfly, a significant image for Bialik, appears in many of his poems.

Spencer explains that the symbolism represented by the butterfly “varies according to the context in which it appears. In his children’s poetry the butterfly is nurturing. In his love poetry the butterfly captures the struggle between physical and spiritual desire and in his poetry of spiritual crisis the butterfly represents the conflict between faith and doubt.”

The images in the exhibit were taken at the Butterfly Garden at Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven. The poetry are excerpts from two of Bialik’s popular children’s poems: “The Butterfly to the Blossom,” and “The Blossom to the Butterfly,” as well as two additional poems with powerful butterfly imagery: “Tziporet,” and “G-d Did Not Show Me.”

Lifecycle

המקום ינחם

HaMaqom Yinahem

With sorrow we note the passing of

Elvira L. David, mother of Daryn David (& Jeffrey Levick)

Ruth Day, grandmother of Daryn David (& Jeffrey Levick)

Joseph Winer, brother of Herbert (& Hannah) Winer

Alan Abramovitz

P. Dennis Carnine, father of Peggy (& Don) Hackett

Richard Horenstein

May the Almighty comfort those who mourn



Elijah Light

Mazal tov to

Jacob Botwick-Ries on attaining the rank of Eagle Scout, Boy Scout Troop 41

Upcoming Benei Mitzva

Elijah Light, son of Rachel Light & Jonathan Freiman, and of Eben Light, 12-13 May 2017, *parashat Emor*

Welcome Newest Members

- Chaya & Edward Manning and Daniel and Tobias
- Maytal Salitiel & Dan Shetler



Pesah Yom Tov

The opening chapters of Leviticus are difficult today for some modern readers of the Torah. We are troubled by the centrality of sacrifices and the power of the priesthood. Yet there is more to Leviticus than just sacrifices. This is the book that commands us to “Love your neighbor as yourself” and “To proclaim liberty throughout the land.” Holiness is more than sacrifices and prayer; it is living a life of justice, truth and compassion.

During the intermediate Sabbath of Passover, we read about the aftermath of the incident of the Golden Calf. His faith shaken, Moses asks “to see God’s glory.” What did Moses see in his mysterious encounter with God? How did this encounter help answer the questions and doubts he expressed after the people worshiped the Golden Calf?

Light a Yellow Candle

This year on 24 April we observe Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Memorial Day. Candles maybe lighted on the evening of Sunday 23 April. The Sisterhood is offering yellow Holocaust memorial candles in the gift shop for \$6 each. The revenue will be donated to the expansion of the New Haven Holocaust Memorial which is located of Whalley Avenue and West Park, the first Holocaust Memorial built in the U.S. on public land. The memorial was erected solely with private funds and donated time from private individuals. The expansion will be completed in spring 2017, and a small opening commemoration is planned. For further details please contact Doris Zelinsky at doris.zelinsky@sbcglobal.net.

BEKI Sisterhood is presenting a Shabbat Shmooze with Andy Sarkany on 22 April after qiddush. Andy lived

through the Holocaust in the Budapest ghetto. Over the past 15 years, he has been working for the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven as Manager of Donor Services and Campaign Manager.

Shulamith Chernoff will be honored at the Jewish Historical Society of New Haven Annual Meeting/Hall of Fame Brunch on Sunday 21 May 10a-1p at BEKI. Please join the JHSNH by attending and donating in her honor. RSVP Mimi Glenn 203-397-3851 info@jhsgnh.org.

Sisterhood Gift Shop

Please come in and shop for your Passover gifts for yourself and host gifts. We also carry children’s toys. Your support helps Sisterhood pay for the refreshments we supply during some of the holidays during the year. We also give a generous donation to the Synagogue during our annual meeting. The store is open on Religious School days, which are Sundays 11a-12m and Wednesdays 5p-6:15p. Peggy can help you during the week during office hours.

Wanted

A Sisterhood member is needed to lead our Torah Fund campaign of Women’s League for Conservative Judaism. The campaign supports The Jewish Theological Seminary, Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies and Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies. No meetings to attend; everything is done online. All you have to do is encourage and collect money for this project. Adele Tyson will guide you through the campaign

We hate not to be part of this campaign. All the other synagogue Sisterhoods participate in this campaign. Please call Adele at 203-389-9599.

Rabbi's Tzedaga Fund (minimum \$25)

- Marsha & Barry Cohen with thanks to BEKI
- Stewart Frankel & Joy Kaufman in memory of Hagnazar Hakakian
- Rachel Bashevkin & Eric Dunsker for mekhirat hametz
- Esther & Irwin Nash for mekhirat hametz
- Sharon & Dan Prober for mekhirat hametz
- Barbara & Dennis Rader for mekhirat hametz

Qiddush Sponsors (minimum \$320)

- Gerber Family
- Hurwitz & Chirnomas Family
- Shula Chernoff
- BEKI Qiddush Committee Team #1 "Iron Chef – Clean Out the Pantry Challenge"

Chai Fund (minimum \$18) to support synagogue operations

- To the BEKI community in appreciation for all it does by Diane & George Dumigan
- To Roya Hakakian, Ramin Ahmadi & family with sympathy on the passing of Hagnazar Hakakian by Beth & Dan Weintraub
- To Shula Chernoff in honor of her birthday and having her book published, by Marjorie Weiner
- To Ben Zlotoff in honor of his engagement to Sarah Peteraf by Donna Kemper & Ron Zlotoff
- To Stan Saxe in honor of his birthday by Marilyn Margolis
- To Stan Saxe in honor of his birthday by Bea Smirnoff
- To Murray Levine in honor of his birthday by Willa & Howard Needler
- To Louis Bruni with sympathy on the passing of John Bruni by David & Rayna Belowsky
- To Rachel Wizner with wishes for a speedy recovery by Ruth Silver
- To Rachel Wizner with wishes for a speedy recovery by Joanne & Steve Rudof
- To Rachel Wizner with wishes for a speedy recovery by Gloria Cohen
- To Rachel Wizner with wishes for a speedy recovery by Hannah & Herb Winer

Synagogue Fund (minimum \$10) to support synagogue operations

- To Roya Hakakian, Ramin Ahmadi & family with sympathy on the passing of Hagnazar Hakakian by Donna & Sid Levine
- To Amy Schwartz & David Levy in honor of the birth of their son Ezra by Bill Shragis
- To Jacob Botwick-Ries in honor of his becoming an Eagle Scout by Susan Jacobson

Barzillai Cheskis BEKI Youth Israel Scholarship Fund

- To David & Aviva Aviel with sympathy on the passing of Ayala Aviel by Marty Gold & Rena Cheskis-Gold
- To Matan Aviel with sympathy on the passing of Ayala Aviel by Marty Gold & Rena Cheskis-Gold

Harold & Arthur Ratner Memorial Fund

- In memory of Etta & Charles Miller by Julian & Susan Miller
- To Sol Hitzig with wishes for a speedy recovery by Betsy and Mikki Ratner & family
- To Sherry & Larry Shanbrom in honor of their new home by Betsy and Mikki Ratner and the rest of the Ratners
- To Vinny & Jean Martire in honor of their 50th wedding anniversary by Betsy Ratner
- To David Rothberg & Nan Birdwhistle in memory of Lillian Rothberg by Betsy Ratner
- To Mal Rudner with sympathy on the passing of Jane Rudner by Betsy Ratner

Yahrzeit Fund (\$5 minimum) to support synagogue operations

- In memory of Jack Greenberg by Belle K. Greenberg
- In memory of Sam Miller by Richard & Vicki Miller
- In memory of Jack Nankin by Sheldon & Sandra Nankin
- In memory of Mae Goldberg by Dan Goldberg
- In memory of Louis Miller by Howard Miller
- In loving memory of her mother Eunice S. Rogoff by Eileen S. Rogoff
- In memory of Morris & Esther Baer by Irving Baer
- In memory of Sydney Kemper by Donna Kemper & Ron Zlotoff
- In memory of Moses Ray by Barbara Rader
- In memory of Annie Cohen by Ted Maltin
- In memory of Sidney Yaffe by David Yaffe
- In memory of Arthur Silver by Ruth Silver
- In memory of Morris Oppenheim by Joyce & Michael Bohnen
- In memory of Martin Faymann by Bea & Gordon Brodie
- In memory of Sally Zantrotsky by Stan Saxe
- In memory of Anita Palmer by Marsha & John Reynolds
- In memory of Celia Ross by Doris & Stephen Brody
- In memory of Ethel Lerner Segan Prete by Alan J. Segan

- In memory of Samuel Segan by Alan J. Segan
- In memory of Irving Nabatoff by Carol Nabatoff
- In memory of William Morton Miller by Bobbie & Harold Miller
- In memory of her father Irving Golden by Diane & George Dumigan
- In memory of her mother Elizabeth Blackmer by Corinne Blackmer & Pilar Stewart
- In memory of her mother Charlotte Isenberg by Janis Isenberg
- In memory of Joseph Gimple by Sidney Gimple
- In memory of James Barnett by Caroline Barnett
- In memory of Marcie Goldberg by Robin Goldberg
- In memory of Freda Kaufman by Lewis & Minna Kaufman
- In memory of Abraham Epstein by Kranie & Earl Baker
- In memory of Rose Witten by Marvin & Susan Witten
- In memory of Sydney Weiss by Suzanne Weinstein
- In memory of Else & Siegfried Gesund by Hans & Irmgard Gesund
- In loving memory of Benjamin Wiznia by Carolann & Robert Wiznia
- In loving memory of Dr. Israel Kamens by Carolann & Robert Wiznia
- In memory of Lillie Stern by Murray & Barbara Akresh
- In memory of Herman L. Grenet by Alan & Shirley Silver
- In memory of William Silverman by Marc Silverman
- In memory of Tillie & Samuel Saxe by Stan Saxe
- In memory of Lillian Rutenberg Chorney by Bud & Mickey Chorney
- In memory of his father Aaron Ignal by Alan Ignal
- In memory of his grandmother Anna Ignal by Alan Ignal
- In memory of her dear mother Kitty Greenberg by Toby Ignal
- In memory of Ronda Bromberg by Debra & Louis Siegel
- In memory of Herbert Herschbain by Debra & Louis Siegal
- In memory of their father William Handelman by Rheba Newman & Joyce Handelman
- In memory of his parents by Guy Levine
- In loving memory of Bessie Kaufman by Florence Kaufman
- In memory of Max Jack Gad by Martin & Lana Gad

Purim Thanks

Thanks everyone who made the Purim Seuda not only possible but great fun: **Singalong:** Isaiah Cooper and Helene Sapadin; **Purim Shpiel:** produced and directed by Jonathan Gordon, **Shpiel Stars:** Jonathan Gordon, Noam Benson-Tilsen, Gilah Benson-Tilsen, Robin Goldberg, Alice Kosowsky, Betsy Ratner and David Wright; **Food Committee Chair:** Eva Shragis, with Chris Sewell, Marge Wiener, and Becky May; **Decorations:** Shoshana Zax, with John Weiser, Marge Wiener, and Alice Kosowsky; **Face painting and Arts & Crafts:** Diane Purvin & Marisol Sanchez-Moycik; **BEKI Bulletin, Special Edition:** Rebecca Weiner; **Clean up:** Jonas Cedeno-Marquez, Becky May, Marge Wiener, Eva Shragis and Chris Sewell; **Delivery of leftovers:** Gilah Benson-Tilsen

BEKI Hesed Committee

To volunteer, contact Robert Lettick [203-671-4705](tel:203-671-4705) robolettick@aol.com

De-Camping

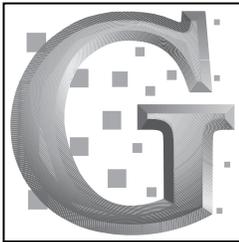
Volunteers needed to help break down the Abraham's Tent furniture on Sunday 2 April, following 9a-9:30a morning service. All welcome. No prior experience needed. Let Steve Werlin know shwerlin@gmail.com that you're coming. BEKI hosted a group of men experiencing homelessness for a week in March, along with our partners including Church of the Holy Spirit and in conjunction with Columbus House.



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Shabbatot (Saturdays)

דרשנים

Darshanim

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

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

Jay Sokolow, 29 April 2017, parashat Tazria-Metsora

Elijah Light, bar mitzva, 13 May 2017, parashat Emor

Rabbi Murray Levine, 20 May 2017, parashiyot BeHar–BeHuqotai

Special Guest, 27 May 2017, parashat BeMidbar

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 shulgoers alike to explore the scriptural readings and liturgy of the day in a supportive setting. Expertly led by **Steven Fraade**, with **Rabbi Alan Lovins**, **Rabbi Murray Levine**, **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



Jay Sokolow



Steven Fraade



Alan Lovins



Nadav Sela



Isaiah Cooper

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

Hebrew with Will

Hebrew with Will meets every other Saturday morning from 10:45a – 11:45a in the office (on the weeks that Shabbat Shalom Torah Study does not meet). Practice Hebrew listening, speaking, and Alef-Bet recognition. Modern Hebrew; suitable for those interested in Biblical and Prayer Book study as well. Free; all welcome. With Will Auriemme.

Mondays

Rashi Study Group: I Kings

Each Monday morning from 7:45a to 8:30a adults meet in the Library Chapel to read Rashi's commentary on the TaNaKh (Hebrew Bible). The Rashi Study Group (RSG) is reading First Kings. It is possible to join the study group for a single meeting or to begin at any time. Knowledge of Hebrew is not necessary. Rashi purported to explain the *peshat* of the text, i.e., the meaning in its historical, literary and linguistic context. Visitors and new participants are welcome. Hebrew and English texts are available. The RSG meets immediately following the 7:00a *shaharit* morning service; not meeting on 10 April (instead, siyyum bechorot) or on 17 April (festival day). With Jon-Jay Tilsen.



Jon-Jay Tilsen

Wednesdays

Hebrew Word of the Week

The Wednesday morning service (*shaharit*) features a 180-second “Hebrew word of the Week” to promote the learning of Hebrew. The Hebrew language is highly structured. Most words are based on three-letter roots, and are made with a limited set of verb or noun forms. By learning a few dozen roots and a small set of word-forms, it is possible to roughly translate Hebrew words isolated from any context, something less often possible in English. The Word of the Week often relates to the weekly scriptural readings, enhancing personal study and public Torah discussion.

Rabbis' Study Group

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

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Adult Studies

Continued from **Page 9**

an opportunity to pursue their own *talmud torah* (Torah study) in a “safe” setting and with opportunities to learn from each other’s experience and insight. The study group meets Wednesday mornings in the Rosenkrantz Family Library. For more information, call Rabbi Murray Levine at 203.397.2513.



Murray Levine

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. Shaharit service is from 8:15a to 9:15a on Thursdays; on other weekdays, the service begins at 7:00a.

Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group

The *Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group* meets on Thursdays from 1p to 2p and has met weekly since 1999. For some participants, this is their first direct experience with Talmud text; for others, it is a continuation of a long journey. The Group focuses on the issues raised in the Talmud, with less attention to the technical aspects of the text. Knowledge of Hebrew or Aramaic is helpful but not required.

The Talmud, based on an oral text, has no beginning or end. One can begin study at any point; now is the best time. The Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group meets in BEKI’s Rosenkrantz Family Library.



Youth

Since the last issue, some of our USYers attended the Regional USY Neon Dance in Bloomfield, CT. We are experiencing exponential growth in attendance – one participant at the fall Kinnus (convention), two at winter conference and now six to this regional event... Woohoo. (Which means we need twenty-four kids to attend spring conference to continue the pattern – a tall order but if each tribe sends two....) We were joined by kids from Westport, West Hartford, and Massachusetts and a good time was had by all despite, or perhaps, on account of, the unanticipated attendance of the four elements: the Massachusetts contingent dealt with a flat tire (air) on the way down, water made its entrance in the form of the girls’ bathroom flooding, the fire alarm was triggered by the DJ’s fog machine, and ev-

eryone stayed down to earth and neon-ed on. Other events are in the works for spring...so many ideas, so little time...

Still regional but on a more local level, two brave souls from Kadima made the foray across town as ambassadors to our sister chapter at Temple Beth Shalom for an afternoon of Purim preparations in the form of holiday themed Mad Libs, Charades, Apples to Apples, and Pictionary.

This April we get a little more serious with plans to observe Yom HaZikaron (Israeli Memorial Day) with public service at BEKI’s cemetery: picking up litter, maybe a little planting and exploring the interesting bits of information we can glean from gravestones of those who came before.

Until next issue...Becky May, BEKI Youth Advisor

Security Committee

Seeking members with interest or knowledge in security, building protection, and fire safety. Contact Security Committee Chair Jay Sokolow sokolow@snet.net.

Run Time

Our Shabbat morning services always begin at 9:15a. The weekly listing in “Happenings” shows the variable end time, which is estimated based on length of Torah reading and

liturgy for that day and records from prior years.

Israeli Dance

Meets Tuesdays 7:30p (beginners) and 8:30p–11p (everyone).

Pre-Pesah Frenzy

Clarification – “Pre-Pesah Frenzy” is not a scheduled synagogue event; it is merely a state of mind.

JCARR

BEKI partners with Jewish Community Alliance for Refugee

Resettlement. Info Rachel Doft rdoft@yahoo.com.

Torah Reading Coordinator

[J-J Tilsen](#) is coordinating VaYiqra (1 April–17 June). Thanks to Rachel Light for coordinating Shemot.

[Torah Sparks](#)

Brief commentary on weekly parasha from the Conservative Yeshiva (Jerusalem). Also see JTS Student Sam Blustin’s *Divrei Torah* at <http://samblustin.com/divrei-torah/>.

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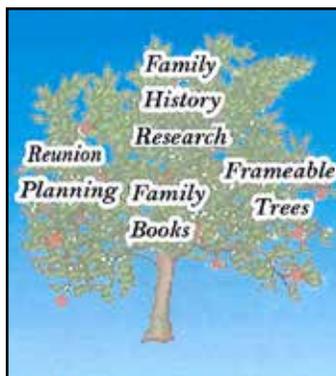
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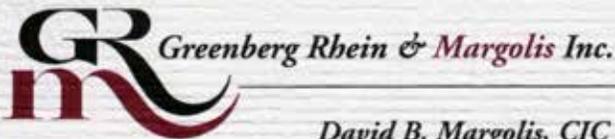
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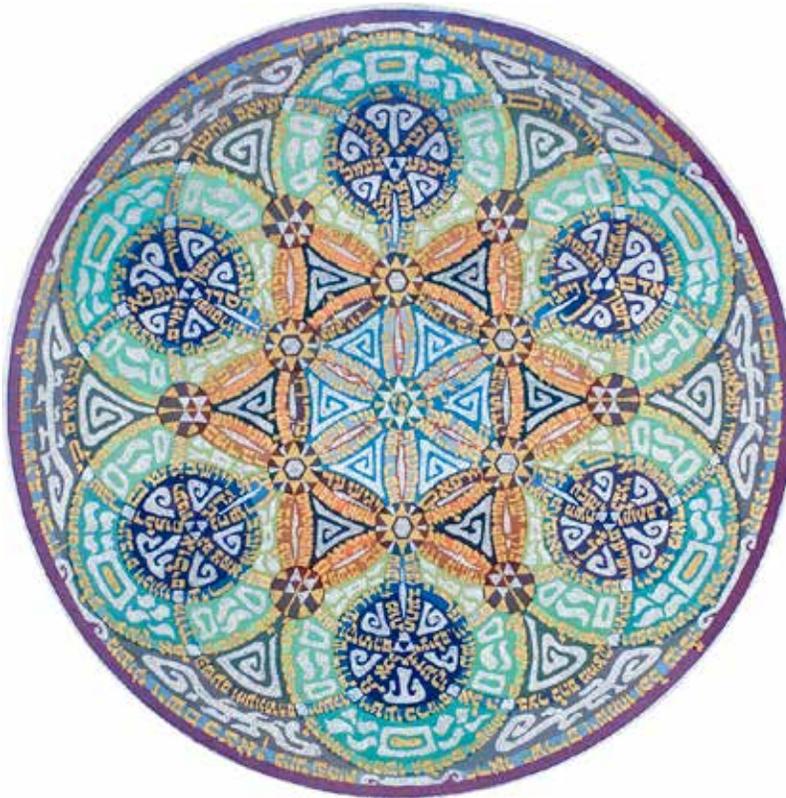
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RUB-A-DUB-DUB

The recitation of blessings before and after eating is the fulfillment of the Biblical commandment (mitzva de-Ore-ita) based on the passage “you shall eat and be satisfied and bless Adonai your God...” The requirement is Biblical, but the specific formulas we use are not. While there is advantage to shared wording and great richness in the particular versions we use, one can constructively fulfill the essential purpose by stating the point in one form or another. As noted in the Talmud (Ber. 40b), “Binyamin the shepherd made a sandwich and said, ‘Blessed be the Master of this bread,’ and Rav said that he fulfilled the obligation.” He could have said, “Rub-a-dub-dub, thanks for the grub,” which is less elegant but equally sufficient. (Clarification: Prayer leaders at BEKI should stick to the wording in our siddur.)

While I urge our students to learn and use the complete, specific and several blessing formulas, heed this warning: It is better to say a general or non-standard blessing than to say none at all. It would be a mistake to say, “I don’t know the correct blessings, so I won’t say anything at all.” The words of the blessings are not magic formulas; they are phrases with meaning, and this meaning can be expressed in other ways. Most essential is the expression of apprecia-

tion, an idea encapsulated in the English terms “please” and “thank you.” We commonly call them “magic words,” but really it is quite the opposite: They are real expressions that work in ways that are mostly apparent.



Although others disagree with me, I believe the kippa (yarmulke or beanie) is not a sacred item. It is a simple, functional form of a hat or cap. We have a rule that a person’s (or a male person’s) head should be covered when in public, or when engaged in certain sacred activities, and this can be accomplished by wearing a turban, kaffiya, derby, top hat, fez, kippa or other headgear. This hat is no more sacred than a shirt, which is also required and for similar reasons (whence the expression, “No shirt, no shoes, no service”). While it is

perhaps meritorious to wear nice clothing in public functions, and thus a nice kippa, the kippa is still nothing more than a minimalist form of headcovering. When I drop one, I pick it up without ceremony, and when it wears out, I throw it in the rag pile. It gets no special treatment in my house. Just as one does not need to know the rabbinic blessing formula to say “thank you” for food, one does not need a kippa to use as a head covering. It is a mistake to not pro-

Continued on **Page 14**

Rub-a-Dub-Dub

Continued from **Page 13**

ceed with prayer or a meal absent a kippa when some other perfectly fine head covering is available.

In a more somber setting, I am often asked at a cemetery burial, “What is the symbolism of the dirt thrown on the casket?” There is no symbolism: The person is dead, and the dirt is used for burial. It is actual, not symbolic. Now, we do attribute meaning to the act – it is considered the most respectful mode of disposition of the body – but there is simply nothing abstract about the act of burial.

The lighting of Shabbat candles or lamps is another instance where the point gets lost in the ritualization of the act. The purpose of lighting Shabbat candles or lamps is to enhance the joy of Shabbat by providing lighting at night, inasmuch as it gets dark when the sun goes down, and to do so in a way that avoids violating the Biblical prohibition against lighting fires on Shabbat – hence candle lighting is by convention about 18 minutes before sundown. Candle lighting also serves to mark the beginning of Shabbat in the household – we stop everything else, gather and begin our observance of Shabbat.

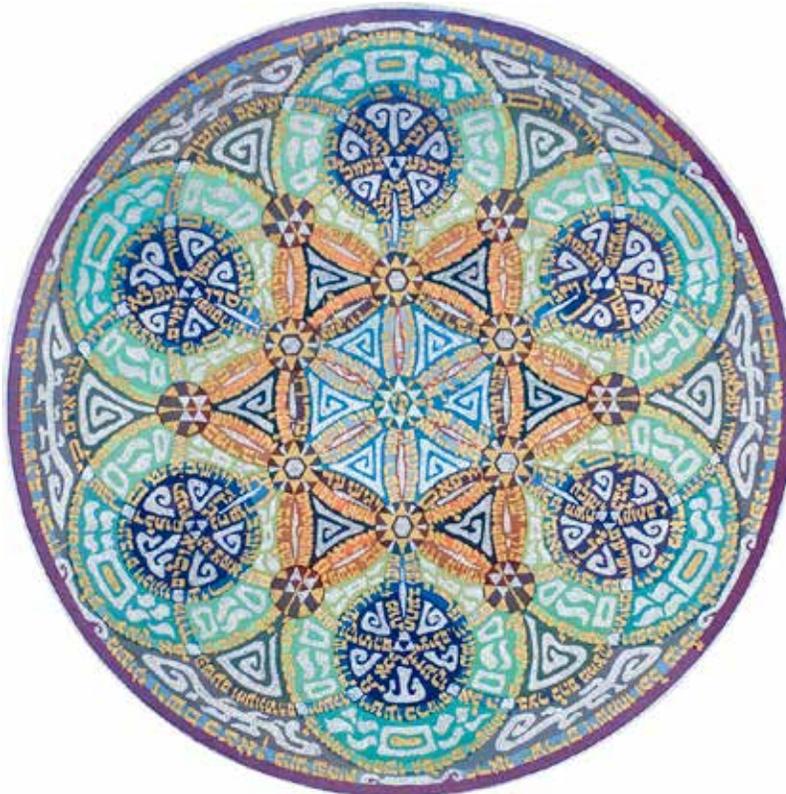
The burning candles show us that Shabbat has begun and the work has ended. Since today most of us enjoy inexpensive artificial lighting 24/7, having light at night is no longer an indulgence reserved for Shabbat. But if the purpose of the lighting is forgotten, and candle lighting becomes a ritual detached from its meaning, it can have exactly the opposite

result from what was intended – lighting the candles after *sunset* is the very thing the ritual was designed to prevent. If the sun has set, then Shabbat has begun with or without ceremony, and candles should not be lit.

On Pesah, the purpose of the seder is to fulfill the specific mitzvot of Passover – eating matza with bitter herbs and the recollection of the Passover offering, drinking four cups, and telling the story of the Exodus. The single major prohibition is against eating hametz (fermented or leavened wheat, barley, oats, spelt

or rye). That is where our focus should lie. We are supposed to enjoy the festival. Moses freed the slaves – and we are supposed to *remember*, not re-impose, that part of our past. If these central purposes are not being met, then it is a sign that something is wrong.

It is good to know how to do things. It is even better to know how, and why, we do things.



April 2017

5 Nisan 5777 - 4 Iyar 5777

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|--|---|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | 1 Religious School Shabbat 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Shabbat Shalom Torah Study Qiddush: Honoring The Legacy L'Chayim Society 5:45pm Minha 5 Nisan |
| 2 No Religious School 6 Nisan | 3 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour 7 Nisan | 4 7:30pm Israeli Dance 8 Nisan | 5 9:00am Rabbi's Study Group No Religious School No Benei Mitzva Program 9 Nisan | 6 1:00pm Talmud Study Group 10 Nisan | 7 7:06pm Candle Lighting 11 Nisan | 8 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Hebrew with Will Qiddush: "Use Up the Hametz" Iron Chef Challenge 12:45pm Shabbat Schmooze: Meet the Artist with Margaret Olin 5:45pm Minha 12 Nisan |
| 9 No Religious School 13 Nisan | 10 Erev Passover 7:45-8:05am Siyyum Bekhorot 10:00am Yoga Hour No Evening Service 7:09pm Candle Lighting 14 Nisan | 11 Passover I Office Closed/Passover 9:15am Festival Service No Evening Service 8:18pm Candle Lighting 15 Nisan | 12 Passover II Office Closed/Passover 9:15am Festival Service No Religious School No Benei Mitzva Program 5:45pm Minha 16 Nisan/1 L'Omer | 13 Hol Hamoed Passover I No Talmud Study Group 17 Nisan/2 L'Omer | 14 Hol Hamoed Passover II 7:13pm Candle Lighting 18 Nisan/3 L'Omer | 15 Hol Hamoed Passover III 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Shabbat Shalom Torah Study Qiddush: TBA 5:45pm Minha 19 Nisan/4 L'Omer |
| 16 Hol Hamoed Passover IV No Religious School 7:15pm Candle Lighting 20 Nisan/5 L'Omer | 17 Passover VII Office Closed/Passover No Rashi Study Group No Yoga Hour 9:15am Festival Service 8:24pm Candle Lighting 21 Nisan/6 L'Omer | 18 Passover VIII (Yizkor) Office Closed/Passover 9:15am Festival Service 22 Nisan/7 L'Omer | 19 9:00am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program 23 Nisan/8 L'Omer | 20 1:00pm Talmud Study Group 24 Nisan/9 L'Omer | 21 7:21pm Candle Lighting 25 Nisan/10 L'Omer | 22 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Hebrew with Will Qiddush: Glenn Shabbat Schmooze: Commemorating the Holocaust with guest speaker Andre Sarkany 5:45pm Minha 26 Nisan/11 L'Omer |
| 23 Yom Hashoah 9:00am Religious School 10:30am Face to Face: A Get-Together for Seniors 27 Nisan/12 L'Omer | 24 7:45am Rashi Study Group 9:00am FBI Security Training Session 10:00am Yoga Hour 7:30pm Executive Board Meeting (off-site) 28 Nisan/13 L'Omer | 25 7:30pm Israeli Dance 29 Nisan/14 L'Omer | 26 Rosh Hodesh I 9:00am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program 30 Nisan/15 L'Omer | 27 Rosh Hodesh II 1:00pm Talmud Study Group 1 Iyar/16 L'Omer | 28 7:28pm Candle Lighting 2 Iyar/17 L'Omer | 29 Darshan: Jay Sokolow 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Shabbat Shalom Torah Study Qiddush: Zahler/Samuel 5:45pm Minha 3 Iyar/18 L'Omer |
| 30 9:00am Religious School 9:30am BMKC Cook 'n Freeze 4 Iyar/19 L'Omer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meditation with Robin 1 April • Shabbat HaGadol 8 April • Shabbat Schmooze: Conversation with Artist Margaret Olin 8 April • Bediqat Hametz (Search for Hametz) (Home Ritual) 9 April • Fast or Siyyum Bekhorot 10 April • Selling of Hametz (Last Chance) 10 April • Baking Matza BEKI Kitchen 10 April | | | | | |

Service Times

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



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