



Selections from *BEKI Bulletin: The Newsletter of Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel*

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Goodwins Carpet Sanctuary

A generous gift from Douglas & Evelyne Goodwin, David Goodwin, and Betty Goodwin, in memory of Daisy & Samuel Goodwin, Florence & Louis Goodwin, Robert Goodwin, Claire Goodwin, and Sarah & Isadore Goodwin, has provided for the installation of new carpeting in our Sanctuary. Both the bima (raised platform) and the floor level have now been restored to an aesthetically pleasing and well-cared for appearance. The rows of seats have been slightly rearranged to allow for easier access to the readers table during shabbat services. Guests at a recent wedding as well as Shabbat worshippers have noticed the great improvement in the look of the sanctuary, and we expect the broader community will be equally pleased as we experience the High Holy Days in this fresh setting.

The benefactors, the children and grandchild of Samuel & Daisy Goodwin, have taken this step in order to honor the memory of their loved ones, whose names are so very closely associated with the Congregation. In addition the Goodwins honor the Congregation as well as the broader community who enjoy the use of our sanctuary on public occasions such as the community Holocaust Memorial and annual Sweeter than Honey Tiqun Leil Shavuot Night of Adult Study. And, "above all," the Goodwins honor the Almighty for whose praise and glorification the sanctuary exists.

Tisha BeAv Observance

The fast of Tisha BeAv (ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av) is Monday night 11 August and Tuesday 12 August. Traditional services begin with Minha (afternoon) service on Monday night at 7:45p, followed by Maariv (evening) service at 8:00p. The Shaharit (morning) service is from 7:00a to 8:45a. The evening and morning services include the reading of the Biblical Book of Eikha (Lamentations). The fast is observed from 7:50p Monday until no later than 8:28p Tuesday. Tisha BeAv commemorates the destruction of the first two Temples and other tragedies that have taken place in our long and glorious history. The fast is the only full-day fast besides Yom Kippur.

Dear Rabbi: Answers, Advice and Helpful Household Hints

Dear Rabbi,

Can say I say mourners' qaddish at a Shiva Minyan if I'm observing a yahrzeit but not one of the mourners during shiva?

Signed, Still Mourning

Dear Still,

Yes, you may. "Mourners' Qaddish" is specifically for anyone who is mourning and needs to say qaddish.

Dear Rabbi,

I know that the Conservative movement said it is okay to drive on shabbat, but I for one don't want to. Yet, the synagogue is a bit too far to walk. Can I ride a bike and still keep the rules of the sabbath?

Signed, At the limit

Dear Limit,

The problem you describe is typical of many of our neighbors: They don't want to drive to shul *and* they don't want to walk. So they do neither.

It was never stated by the Conservative movement that it is permitted to drive on shabbat. What was stated in 1950 was that many Jews live in places where the only way to get to shul--not the shopping mall, not the laundry, not the movies--was to drive, and since their spiritual health and identity as Jews may have depended on their coming to shul, we should not object if they drive directly to and from shul, on condition that they make no stops on the way. In places where Jews (of all affiliations) were already driving to shul it seemed hypocritical to rope off the parking lot and have them park a block away. The choice facing the Rabbis seemed to be: They come by car or they don't come, and the Rabbis wanted them to come. It seemed preferable to violate the prohibitions of driving than to have much of the religious fabric of life fall apart. At the time they stated, "the program that we propose is not to be regarded as the full and complete regimen of Sabbath observance, valid for all Jews for all times and for all places. On the contrary, it is aimed to meet the particular situation that confronts us." They further emphasized, "It should be understood that in their wisdom and in

light of the conditions prevailing in their respective communities, individual rabbis may find the easements here proposed unnecessary for the achievement of the larger goal herein envisaged."

This permission was misunderstood. The Rabbis who articulated this stance in the 1950s only meant that they would not object to driving to shul, because they believed the alternative of not going to shul at all was worse. They never envisioned that people would think that it was permitted to drive altogether, or that people would reasonably conclude that if they could drive to shul, they could drive to perform other significant mitzvas. Their permission turned out to be a very slippery slope indeed.

Notwithstanding the deficiencies in the Rabbis' approach (from both traditional and liberal viewpoints), let us consider your solution of riding a bike. It appears that a bike has several advantages over a car. Unlike driving a car, a bike does not involve the kindling of fire, which is a biblical prohibition.

Driving often entails handling "muqtza," items which may not be touched or carried on shabbat, such as a purse or wallet, money, and credit cards. One may have to buy gas, which is also prohibited on shabbat. Driving tempts us to stop at the laundry, grocery, or do other errands. These are much less likely to happen with a bike.

On the other hand, bicycles are apt to require repairs, which may entail shabbat violations. Bikes like cars may lead us to travel outside of the eruv or to carry outside of the eruv. Bikes may have electrical appliances such as lights and meters attached.

In short, bikes do infringe on shabbat prohibitions, but clearly not to the same degree as cars.

Another alternative for you is to consider moving closer to the shul. You can be sure other members will help you. Many BEKI members have made this move with great results.

As for your own decision, you must consider your health, the state of repair of your bicycle, and your religious outlook. Whether you come by Schwinn or Chevy or Hush Puppies, we are always happy to see you in shul.

A Message from Rabbi Tilsen

Who are the Real Jews?

Many in our community were outraged at the violent physical and verbal attack on a Conservative prayer group at dawn on Shavuot in Jerusalem by a mob of non-Conservative "Heridi" and "Ultra-Orthodox" yeshiva students and residents. The police offered some protection and evacuated the Conservative worshippers, but would not control or disperse the mob.

One religious leader in Israel, a renowned woman who considers herself "Orthodox," had this to say about the attackers: "They are not Jewish but an idolatrous sect that splintered away from God, from Torah, from holiness, from Jewish essence. People who use violence against other people just because they are too ignorant to recognize varieties of Jewish ritual are not Jews. People who destroy non-Jewish property because they think the Torah allows to hate non-Jews have not really received the Torah. People who violate the holiness of Shabbat and Yom Tov have not received the Torah properly and do not fear God. People

who push and harrass physically and verbally Jews in prayer cannot pretend to be Jews. People who desecrate a Torah because they don't know enough halakha (Jewish law) to realize that women can touch it and read from it should be banned from the people of the Torah. People who commit all these abominations near the site of the Temple should not be allowed near any Jewish holy site or object. Leaders and teachers of people who commit all these abominations should be officially forbidden from falsely using the title "rabbi." Houses of study where people are allowed to collect dirty diapers for the purpose of throwing them on other people should be closed permanently and dispersed, and never again allowed to be called "yeshivot." All the people involved in such practices worship themselves alone and no transcendent God, they bring disgrace on Jewish tradition and endanger the Jewish people and its future on its land."

While these words may sound harsh to many ears, they are tame in comparison to the malicious tirades delivered against Conservative and Reform Jews.

I would not want to be part of the verbal abuse of declaring other Jews to be "not Jews." But if we accept the proposition of our critic cited above, namely that those who carry out such attacks are not practicing Judaism, then we are left with a question: Who are the real Jews practicing real Judaism? The answer, terrifying as it may be, is you.

This can be terrifying because it means that the responsibility for the survival of Judaism as we know it rests on your shoulders alone. We have awakened from the delusion that if we send a few dollars to some Yeshiva in Israel then "they" will make sure Judaism survives. It means that we have to live as Jews, we have to be the Jews, and we have to support our institutions that teach the traditions of Judaism as we know them. Lighting shabbat candles, reciting the Shema, coming to a daily or shabbat service, baking a halla, reading a passage from the Torah or other Jewish book -- these are the redemptive acts that we ourselves must do. Our own synagogue, our United Hebrew School, Ezra Academy, Kadima-USY, Makom, JTS, MERCAZ, Masorti-Israel -- and above all our own family -- these are the institutions that we must support. No one else is going to Jew it for you.

LifeCycles

BEKI Welcomes New Members & Their Families: **Matthew & April Lieberman**; **Leona Kose Levine**, by marriage to Rabbi Murray Levine.

HaMaqom Yinahem: We Mourn the Deaths of **Bert Edwin Fraade**, *father of Steven Fraade*; **Sylvia Suslew**, *sister of Robert Merriam*.

Sing Song of Songs, Ruth & Ecclesiastes

Many BEKI members enjoyed the chanting of the Song of Songs on Passover, the Book of Ruth on Shavuot, and the Book of Ecclesiastes on Sukkot by Amy Pincus, Ariel Serkin, Esther Serkin, Sarah Serkin, Shoshana Cohen-Fraade, Elisa Beller, Sarah Beller, Liz Shanks and others in recent months. If you are interesting in learning to read the special trope (melody) of these books please call Rabbi Tilsen at 389-2108.

UHS Registration Deadline Approaching

Registration is open for the [United Hebrew School](#) for children entering K through 7th grade this fall. Registration deadline is 15 August; after that date a late-registration fee is required. Classes begin Sunday 7 September 1997 for all students. Classes will meet at BEKI in refreshed classrooms.

If you would like to volunteer to serve on the UHS Board or in another capacity, please contact Barbara Stern at 387-0056.

The United Hebrew School will offer the Talmud Torah Meyuhad taught by Claire Yale and others for students with special education needs. If your child might benefit from this program, please call Principal Ms Terri Stern (387-9268) at your earliest opportunity. Talmud Torah Meyuhad is supported by the Department of Jewish Education of the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven.

Contributions to BEKI toward the cost of operating the School are tax-deductible to the full extent provided by law.

A limited number of Louis Friedman Scholarships are available to students whose families have demonstrable financial need. To apply please complete the Scholarship Application form which is included in the BEKI UHS registration packet. The deadline for Scholarship applications is 15 August 1997. All scholarship applications are strictly confidential.

For registration material or additional information please call the BEKI office at 389-2108 or visit during office hours listed on page 2 of this Bulletin.

Letters

Bea and I will always have fond memories of the wonderful night we spent with our family and friends new and old, at the [Testimonial Tribute](#) to me as "Man of the Year." I thank all the people behind the scenes who worked long and hard to make it a success. It was a beautiful evening and one I will certainly cherish.

Sincerely, *Milton (Smirnoff)*

I sincerely appreciate all the concerns, offers of help, calls, cards donations, etc., made on my behalf during my broken wrist episode. My very warm thanks to all.

From, *Rose Feen*

Social Action Tikun HaOlam Update

[The Wardrobe Closet](#) is being used by the Community Action of New Haven Clients. It is very rewarding to see the Women come down to the synagogue and choose the clothes they want for themselves. Through the great generosity of Barry Vine, we are able to match jewelry to the outfits. We would also like to offer make up, panty hose and new undergarments to the women. If you have any connections in supplying these items, please let us know. If you wish to help in manning a room for an hour and a half, please call Mimi 397-3851 or Charles 389-0349. We also need large sizes 20 and up in very good condition.

If you wish to send a package for the High Holidays to a student in or out of town, please contact Mimi or Charles no later than the end of August (There is no fee for this gift).

We will be collecting children's books, new or used in very good condition for our Sister City Library of Afula-Gilboa Israel. Please leave the books in the lobby or cloak room. Our goal is to collect 100 books to send in time for Chanukah.

[Beaver Ponds Park Project](#): BEKI members have joined with neighbors and local church, synagogue and mosque members under the leadership of BEKI Board Member Robert Forbes in a creative project to build bridges between neighborhoods, increase awareness of environmental concerns, and improve the quality of life for all by reclaiming Beaver Ponds Park. The Friends of Beaver Ponds Park, which Robert Forbes helped to initiate early in 1997, has held several events and formed a working committee to further the agenda of reclaiming the once-abandoned urban treasure of the Beaver Ponds and the surrounding Park. Linking the ethnically-diverse neighborhoods of Beaver Hills, Dixwell and Newhallville, Beaver Pond Park is becoming a vital meeting ground for residents who share common interests. A Tashlikh service, a brief "casting of sins" ritual held on the first day of Rosh HasShana (New Year), is planned for Thursday afternoon, 2 October 1997/5778 at 5:00 p.m. the Pond. Time to be determined. To find out more about the Project contact Robert Forbes at 782-9101 (email robert.forbes@yale.edu).

Project Isaiah: We will be collecting non perishable canned goods during the months of August and September for the Food Pantry. Please bring your cans to the lobby or the cloak room. Boxes will be available.

Sisterhood News

[Sisterhood](#) is busy making plans for the year 1997-98. We always want each year to be bigger, better and more productive than the one before. We usually succeed because of the hard work and devotion of our Sisterhood members, their enthusiasm is contagious.

Join us if you are not yet a member! Our president, Adele Tyson, would love to hear from you (389-9599). Become a part of this busy, friendly group. All our endeavors are directed to the betterment of our beloved B.E.K.I.

Our most sincere thanks to Gladys Lipkin for donating the beautiful white lattice screens that add so much to our social hall. They have already been put to good use. Also thanks to Bertha Fleischer, Lois Feldman, Rita Buckman, and Tillie Horwitz for the plants. Sisterhood women and the congregation thank you for your generosity.

Other donations to Sisterhood were recently received from George Posener, Mary Ellen Mack, Eunice Rogoff and Rose Feen.

"Dear Rabbi" and "A Message from Rabbi Tilsen" copyright Jon-Jay Tilsen 1997.

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