Fiddling with the Roof

As much as we love BEKI and everything it brings to our lives, there are a few minor aspects we don’t really like. First in that category is our aging building and the need to take care of it. This year, the roof over the sanctuary, lobby and offices is showing signs of its age. There are several spots that became vulnerable with age and minor leaking is starting to develop. If bigger leaks develop, the ceiling will sustain damage that will be very expensive to fix. Our plan is to replace these roof sections in the spring. Once replaced, we will be blessed with an essentially new roof over the entire building. This will give us many years of peace and quiet on that front.

Unfortunately, replacing these roof sections is an expensive proposition. It will cost about $100,000 and those funds are not available in our annual budget. Our goal is to stay away from taking another loan. BEKI is still paying off the loan we took to complete the lobby renovation and payments will continue until the year 2021. Therefore, we are appealing to the entire BEKI community for help. Anyone who can provide monetary support is welcome to contact Peggy at the BEKI office, Andy Hirshfield, Steve Rudof or Yaron Lew.

– Yaron Lew, Chair of Income Development; Steve Rudof, Treasurer; Andy Hirshfield, President.
Benefit Congregation
Beth El-Keser Israel

Ask us about establishing a fund, trust or annuity to ensure BEKI’s future.

Charitable giving strengthens our Community and provides the donor with tax savings.

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Director
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If you are buying items from Amazon and use the link on BEKI’s home page beki.org (bottom) then BEKI will receive a small commission on the sale at no cost to you. Bookmark our link.

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Visit us at www.beki.org
Mazal Tov

Artist Talk
Leah Caroline, Sunday Dec. 6, 10–11:30 a.m.

Cookbook
The BEKI Kiddush Committee cookbook, “Is It Kiddush Yet?” makes a wonderful gift on Hanuka, birthdays, for your Thanksgiving host, or even for yourself. Available through the synagogue office or Sisterhood Gift Shop every day except Shabbat. Get them before they’re gone

Lounge Lizards
Lounge Nights Mondays in December 6:30-7:45 p.m. at BEKI. All high school students invited for snacks, games, talk.

Pets Qiddush
Qiddush Dec. 12 will be a ‘Pets Qiddush.’ All pet-owners are welcome to join a group sponsorship in honor of their pets. Contact Becky May for more information, bseashoremay@aol.com

Guest Speaker

Keep Out
Please keep food and beverages in the Social Hall, and do not bring food and beverages into the lobby or other areas.

Torah Reading Bereishit
David Wright is coordinating Torah Readings for Bereishit. To volunteer to read, contact David Wright (rndavid-louis@yahoo.com).

Ritual
Want to lead services, read haftara, greet members and guests?
The calendar is now open to request specific dates to lead Shabbat and Festival services, recite haftara, and serve as Friday Night or Shabbat morning greeter from January to June. Please send email to Jon-Jay at jitilsen@beki.org or call (203) 389-2108 x10 with your requested dates, or to be added or dropped from the rotation schedule. For participation and leadership of Children’s Programs, contact Miriam Benson at mirbenson@aol.com (203) 389-6137. If you would like to learn to lead services or to read Torah, contact Jon-Jay.
Friday night ushering (from 5:45 to 7 p.m.) includes greeting members, helping guests find the correct book and otherwise guiding visitors, and serving wine or grape juice. If you would like to serve in this way at least one time in the next six months, contact Jon-Jay at jitilsen@beki.org or (203) 389-2108 x10.
Torah for the Hungry Mind – Adult Studies

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:

Eitan Hirshfield, bar mitzva, Dec. 5, parashat VaYeshev.

Shabbat Shalom Torah Study

The Shabbat Shalom Torah Study meets every other Saturday morning at 10:45 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, 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 regardless of religious status or background. It is suitable for mature, or at least well-behaved, youth along with adults.

Mishna Ta`anit

On most Shabbat afternoons between Minha and Maariv through February 2016, survey Mishna Tractate Ta`anit, which centers on public fasts, especially those declared by the leaders, such as in response to drought. Minha begins about 20 minutes before sunset. With Rabbi Tilsen.

Mondays

Rashi Study Group: Shemuel

Each Monday morning from 7:45 to 8:30 adults meet in the Library Chapel to read Rashi’s commentary on the TaNaKh (Hebrew Bible). The Rashi Study Group (RSG) is reading Shemuel Bet (Second Samuel), called “second” as it is the second volume of a single continuous narrative split in two for convenience. Characters in the narrative include the Prophet Samuel, King Saul and King David, Mikhal, Batsheva, and more. 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 a.m. shaharit service. With 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 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

Continued on Page 5
News

Adult Studies
Continued from Page 4

meets Wednesday mornings in the Rosenkrantz Family Library. For more information, call Rabbi Murray Levine at (203) 397-2513.

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 8:15 to 9:15 a.m. on Thursdays; on other weekdays, the service begins at 7 a.m.

Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group: New Time
The Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group meets on Thursdays from 1 to 2 p.m. 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. Class will not meet on Dec. 24 and 31.

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 BKEI’s Rosenkrantz Family Library. For information, contact Isaiah Cooper at his law office icooper@cooperlaw.net. With Rabbi Tilsen.

Every Day
Divrei Torah on the Web
A collection of Divrei Torah (Torah commentaries) and essays by members and Rabbi Tilsen are posted on BKEI’s website under “Learning.”

To the Memory of
Janet Werner
beloved and cherished mother of
Sarah, Harry, Diane, Brion & Rachel

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Contribute to your community.

Rabbi’s Tzedakah Fund (minimum $25)
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Qiddush Sponsors (minimum $280)
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- The Klein & Berger family

Chai Fund (minimum $18) to support synagogue operations
- To Owen Kempton in honor of his Bar Mitzva by Ann Myer
- In honor of Leon Cummings by Diane Cummings
- To the Friedman & Bruce family in honor of Aaron & Ben’s Benei Mitzva by Linda Schultz & Howard Gralla
- To the Avni-Singer family in honor of Eran’s Bar Mitzva by Linda Schultz & Howard Gralla
- To Ron Zlotoff & Donna Kemper with sympathy on the passing of Ivan Sachs by Allian Greenberg
- To Ron Zlotoff & Donna Kemper with sympathy on the passing of Robert Zlotoff by Rachel Lovins & Andrew Hogan
- To Ron Zlotoff & Donna Kemper with sympathy on the passing of Robert Zlotoff by Sharon & Ira Goldman
- To Linda Saslow with sympathy on the passing of Harold Saslow by Joanne Foodim & Rob Forbes
- To Linda Saslow with sympathy on the passing of Harold Saslow by Rachel Lovins & Andrew Hogan
- To Barbara & Len Stern with sympathy on the passing of Patricia Corcoran Moldawsky by Steve & Rachel Wizner
- To Barbara & Len Stern with sympathy on the passing of Patricia Corcoran Moldawsky by Joanne Foodim & Rob Forbes
- To Barbara & Len Stern with sympathy on the passing of Patricia Corcoran Moldawsky by Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade
- To Jennifer Myer & James Kempton & family with sympathy on the passing of Edwin Myer by Anne, Robert, Alex & Jacob Klee
- To Shoshana Zax & John Weiser for them being honored by BEKI Sisterhood by Albert & Marilyn Zax
- To Aaron & Benjamin Bruce in honor of their B’nei Mitzva by Gloria Cohen
- To Rena Cheskos-Gold & Marty Gold in honor of their daughter’s wedding by Gloria Cohen
- To Eran Avni-Singer in honor of his Bar Mitzva by Gloria Cohen
- To Aaron & Benjamin Bruce in honor of their B’nei Mitzva by the Colodner and Stenger family
- To Aaron & Benjamin Bruce in honor of their B’nei Mitzva by Steve & Rachel Wizner
- To Eran Avni-Singer in honor of his Bar Mitzva by Steve & Rachel Wizner
- To Aaron & Benjamin Bruce in honor of their B’nei Mitzva by Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade
- To the Zlotoff and Kemper family with sympathy on the passing of Robert Zlotoff by Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade
- To Aaron & Benjamin Bruce in honor of their B’nei Mitzva by Julie Cohen & Larry Visochek
- To Eran Avni-Singer in honor of his Bar Mitzva by Julie Cohen & Larry Visochek
- To Eran Avni-Singer in honor of his Bar Mitzva by Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade

Cemetery Association
- Dr. & Mrs. Harold D. Levy in memory of Ivan Sachs

Synagogue Fund (minimum $10) to support synagogue operations
- To Rick & Judy Eisenberg with sympathy on the passing of Susan Eisenberg by Linda Schultz & Howard Gralla
- To Jennifer Myer & family with sympathy on the passing of Edwin Myer by Linda Schultz & Howard Gralla
- To Mr. & Mrs. Peter Feldman in memory of Bernard Feldman by Thelma Parker
- To Ron Zlotoff & Donna Kemper with sympathy on the passing of Robert Zlotoff by David & Darryl Kuperstock
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- To Jennifer Myer & James Kempton & family with sympathy on the passing of Edwin Myer by Mariisol Sanchez-Moycik & Thomas Moycik
- To Owen Kempton in honor of his Bar Mitzva by Mimi & Effi Glenn

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- To Sid Levine & family with sympathy on the passing of Ann Levine by Linda Schultz & Howard Gralla
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The Barzillai Cheskos BEKI Youth Israel Scholarship Fund
- To Eran Avni-Singer in honor of his Bar Mitzva by Rena Cheskos-Gold & Marty Gold

The Harold & Arthur Ratner Memorial Fund
- In memory of her father-in-law Harold Ratner by Betsy Ratner
- In memory of her sister and their aunt Nora Gimble by Betsy Ratner and Howie, Shilo & Indigo Ratner
- In memory of their mother Miriam L. Kahn by Richard & Michael Kahn
- In loving memory of her husband Harold Ratner by Mikki Ratner

Yahrzeit Fund ($5 minimum) to support synagogue operations
- In memory of Irma Sandler by Diane Cummings
- In memory of Bell Hope by Jonathan & Catherine Bell
- In memory of George & Rose Feen by Hildy Feen
- In memory of Helene & Jacob Pepper by Marilyn & Basil Friedman
- In memory of Susan Gell by John & Marcia Gell
- In memory of Sylvia Feldman by Lois K. Feldman
- In memory of Avie Cohen by Jochai Ben-Avie
- In memory of Sylvia Feldman by Sara Salomon
- In loving memory of her parents Kitty & Irving Greenberg by Toby & Alan Ignal
- In memory of Reuben “Rubie” Vine by Roberta Vine
- In memory of Herbert Altman by Bruce Altman & Darcy McGraw
- In memory of Moe Ziegler by Pearle Schaperow
- In memory of her mother Rose Goldring Brunswick by Barbara Cushen
- In memory of her aunt Martha Kantrowitz by Sherry Kent
- In memory of her beloved grandfather Irving M. Greenberg by Kim Tefft
- In memory of Bruce Newman by Rhea Newman
- In memory of Irving Rudof by Steve & Joanne Rudof
- In memory of Regina Faymann by Bea & Gordon Brodie
- In memory of Elsie Miller by Bobbie & Harold Miller
- In memory of Samuel Flamer by Mickey & Bud Chorney
- In memory of Morris Chain by Shirley & Max Shepro
- In memory of her beloved father Ben Kugell by Harriet Pearlin
- In memory of Evelyn Cohen by Cliff & Donna Cohen
- In memory of Betty Katten by Henry Katten
- In memory of Edith Sokoloff Goldstein by Shirley Goldstein Frumento
- In memory of Bernice Auerbach by Hillel & Sara-Ann Auerbach
- In memory of Mae Tevelitz by Elma Guttenberg
- In memory of Marshall Eisenberg by Rick & Judy Eisenberg
- In memory of Jacob Ripkin by Jeri Ripkin
Taxpayer Information

Taxpayers are reminded that synagogue dues, paid pledges and contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. BEKI has been determined to be a 501(c)3 organization by the US Treasury. (The letter is posted at http://beki.org/forms/letterofdetermination.pdf.) For many people it is advantageous to pay dues, pledges and contributions before the end of the tax year (for most people Dec. 31). It is also helpful to BEKI to receive your payment at an early date. For those over age 70 1/2 by Dec. 31, payment may be made by a direct rollover from your retirement account. This can avoid taxation or a mandatory distribution for federal and state purposes. Additional benefits may be realized by contributing appreciated securities. Contributing appreciated assets can obviate the need for complex and costly calculating capital gains. Please consult your tax advisor for more information.

Memorial Plaques Available

The Memorial plaques displayed at BEKI serve as a reminder and memorial to departed loved ones. Plaques are available for $360 by calling Peggy at (203) 389-2108 x14. Prepayment reserves a space and a plaque.

Tree Of Life Leaves

We have a beautiful Tree of Life in our synagogue. The fruit from our Tree of Life can serve as a great way to contribute to the life and strength of our synagogue. Inscribing a leaf on our magnificent tree is a thoughtful and meaningful way to commemorate a joyous event. Inscribe a leaf to celebrate an event like a Bar or Bat Mitzva and you will have a lasting memory of the great day. Inscribe a leaf to celebrate a milestone birthday. Inscribe a leaf because someone is near and dear to you. Inscribe a leaf to honor your mother, father, sister or brother. Inscribe a leaf for an anniversary. Inscribe a leaf for your good health. Do it now and enjoy looking at your special leaf.

Barbara Cushen can assist you with the wording; call her at (203) 407-0314.

Winter Schedule

Shabbat afternoon and Saturday evening services follow a winter schedule from November through March. Services on Shabbat (Saturday) afternoon begin about 20 minutes before sunset. As the time varies, please check the calendar in this Bulletin for exact times for each week. All other services at BEKI remain at their usual times.

Following Shemini Atseret, we began including the phrase “mashiv ha-ruah u-morid ha-gashem” (“You cause the wind to blow and the rain to fall”) in all recitations of the amida. Beginning Saturday night 5 December in the Maariv service, we use the phrase “ve-ten tal u-matar li-verakha” (“give winter dew and rain in proportion”) in each daily amida. The date in December is based on the agri-cultural cycle in Bavel (Iraq) calculated according to the uncorrected Julian calendar.

Tenth of Tevet Minor Fast

The tenth day of the Hebrew month of Tevet, corresponding to Tuesday Dec. 22, is a minor fast day (pre-dawn to dark). It commemorates the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar II in 588 BCE, two and a half years before the destruction of the First Temple on 9-10 Av 586 BCE. The destruction of the Temple marked the suspension of Jewish autonomy in that period and the beginning of the first exile.

The day is observed with a fast (beginning 5:01 a.m., ending 5:13 p.m.), a morning Torah reading, and the inclusion of the Aneinu prayer in the Amida, Avinu Malkenu. The morning service typically takes 12 to 15 minutes longer than usual.

There are no other particular restrictions beyond fasting, and those with medical contraindications should not undertake the fast.

Hanuka

The first night of Hanuka is Sunday night Dec. 6. The blessings for candle lighting are available as audio files at www.beki.org/audio.html and are printed in our prayerbook Siddur Sim Shalom on p. 192 (weekday edition), p. 242 (classic edition) or p. 307 (Shabbat edition). The hanukiya (Hanuka menorah) can be lit around 4 p.m. or later except Friday (best at 4 but no later than 4:23 p.m.) and Saturday (after 5:06 p.m.).

The Hanukiya (Hanuka Menora) will be lighted each evening (except Friday and Saturday) at BEKI at 5:45, immediately before the Maariv evening service. It is also lighted during the morning for “decorative” purposes, although not in fulfillment of a specific mitzva. On Friday night, light the Hanuka lights at 4 and the Shabbat candles immediately after (4:06 and not later than 4:23).

Tefillin are worn each day of Hanuka (except, of course, on Shabbat). The passage “Al ha-Nisim – For the Miracles” is added to each amida, and Hallel, a collection of celebratory Psalms, is recited each morning. The Torah is read each day of Hanuka. Tahanun, the penitential prayer, is not recited.

Holiday Schedule

Weekday morning services coinciding with most federal holidays are at 9 a.m.. On Friday Dec. 25 and Friday Jan. 1, morning services are at 9. Evening services are at their usual time, 5:45.

The office will be closed from noon Thursday Dec. 24 until reopening on Monday Jan. 4. The closure is for federal and staff holidays. Services will be held at their scheduled hours during that period.
The Hanukia: Historical and Regional Developments

In ancient times the hanukia was made of stone or metal and burned pure beaten olive oil produced in olive presses supervised by representatives of the priesthood.

In the Middle Ages artisans developed back walls for the hanukiot since they were to be placed outside. The back wall, often triangular in shape, allowed for many distinctive motifs. Around the same time, the “utility light” was added.

Since the lamp was hung outside, it had a ninth light or utility light – later called the shamash – for keeping it lit in all kinds of weather. The shamash was placed higher than the other lights. A drip pan was put under the oil burners, and some time later, sides were added so that the hanukia could be placed on windowsills or tables.

Hanukiot for the inside of the home became very elaborate as time went on. From Morocco they were made of pierced brass; others from Iraq, painted glass and featured magical hands or hamsas. Later Jews began to display large standing lamps in their synagogues. These synagogue hanukiot, like today’s synagogue menorahs, were intended to replicate those found in the first and second Temple, and were placed to the right (or south) of the ark (Exodus 26:35).

Today we have many hanukiot made of brass, ceramic, plastic, sterling silver and glass.

Part of the Hanuka celebration is eating sufganiot (Israeli doughnuts); try them; you’ll like them.

Ingredients: 2 cups flour, 3 teaspoons baking powder, 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1 egg beaten, 3/4 cup milk or non dairy milk, 3 tablespoons oil, plus oil for cooking.

Stir together flour, baking powder, cinnamon and salt. Pour in egg, milk and oil. Mix until combined.

Fill large pot halfway with oil, leaving 2 inches at the top. Heat until it reaches 365 degrees.

Lower batter by spoonful into oil; fry, turning until all sides are golden. Be careful not to splatter the hot oil.

Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels; sprinkle with powdered sugar while warm.

Enjoy, BeTeavon.

Enhance your home with beautiful Jewish things, purchased in our Sisterhood gift store for Hanuka and all year long.

We feature many beautiful hanukiot, sevivonim, Hanuka candles as well as decorated Shabbat candles, qiddush cups and many other items to purchase for your home and give as gifts.

We are open when Religious School is in session on Sundays 11:30 a.m. -12:15 p.m., Wednesdays 5:30-6:15 p.m. and by appointment. Peggy, our office manager, can also help you the rest of the week.
Child and Adolescent Health Care, L.L.C.

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We celebrated National Mix It Up Day in October to foster greater respect and understanding among our students.

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News

Kadima

Our sukka building was a huge, fun-filled success. We thoroughly enjoyed eating in our newly-built sukka (and so did a few ants), followed by dodgeball, capture the flag and pizza. Can’t wait to see everyone at the next event. – Matt P
Israel’s governance and development of the West Bank (also called PA-controlled Palestine, or Judea and Samaria) is perfectly legal under international law. This, despite popular misconception, proclamations of European parliaments, and the thousand-fold repetition in the New York Times that “most of the world views Israel’s settlements as illegal.” Here is why Israel’s control and development of the West Bank is lawful, and here is why this legal point is important.

The sovereignty of the Jewish Agency (later, the State of Israel) over the territory defined in the Mandate for Palestine was established in international law by the post-World War One treaties and agreements that disposed of the Ottoman Empire’s territories (1920). This disposition was given preeminent status in international law by the Mandate’s incorporation into the Covenant of the League of Nations (see article 22), detailed in the text of the Mandate, and then directly built into the charter (chapter XII) of its successor, the United Nations.

Although the British Government’s Balfour Declaration (1917) is said to have “led to the creation of the State of Israel,” there was no particular legal significance to that British declaration, though it was politically important. Later, some of the language of the Balfour Declaration was incorporated into the Mandate for Palestine, and for that reason the declaration was a key to understanding the Mandate’s language, in the way that legislative history can be a source for legal interpretation.

The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181, the “Partition Vote” (1947), contrary to popular misconception, also had no particular legal import. It is no more than a “recommendation,” as it states in its preamble. The UN Charter itself gives the General Assembly only the power to “recommend” and not “legislate” international law, and numerous cases over the years have been decided by courts accordingly. Further, the partition recommendation was explicitly rejected by the pertinent parties (except for the Jewish Agency, which would have accepted it), so as a matter of international law the resolution was dead on arrival. The resolution held great political import, by most accounts, and whether it was (or would have been, or still is) a good idea is a matter of opinion.

The 1949 Armistice Agreements explicitly (at the demand of the Arab governments) stated that the armistice lines (“Green Line”) do not represent permanent or recognized borders. The Egyptian-Israeli agreement stipulates, “The Armistice Demarcation Line is not to be construed in any sense as a political or territorial boundary, and is delineated without prejudice to rights, claims and positions of either Party to the Armistice as regards ultimate settlement of the Palestine question;” the agreement with Jordan has similar language. Only many decades later, Israel signed treaties with Jordan and Egypt that established boundaries – and the boundary agreed upon with Jordan is the Jordan River, “without prejudice to the status of any territories that came under Israeli military government control in 1967.” Jordan’s occupation of the West Bank from 1948 – 1967 was not legal at the outset and was not recognized by other nations; Jordan later renounced its claim, and later formalized that stance in its treaty with Israel.

There is a widespread misconception about Israel’s Supreme Court landmark Elon Moreh decision (1979). In that case, the Court ruled that these territories are treated under Israeli law according to the set of rules of International law that would apply to belligerently occupied territories, not because that is the Court’s view of
A Message from Rabbi Tilsen

Law of the Land
Continued from Page 12

the territories’ status under international law, but because Israel’s own laws of incorporating territory into the State require a formal annexation for Israeli civil law to be extended there. Absent annexation, Israeli law follows the rules of the Geneva Conventions and other international rules. The decision characterizes its scope in brief by saying:

ębli להתייחס לשאלה המשפטית בדבר עצם תחולת כללי המשפט הבינלאומי באזור 1967

This is without reference to the legal question of the fundamental applicability of the Principles of International Law to the territories controlled by the IDF since 1967.

It is a distinction that makes a difference.

A domestic analog would be the case of property owned by a municipality that is not incorporated into the municipality itself. Say the town of Cannonball, ND, purchases a plot of land outside of, but contiguous to, city limits, on which it builds a fire station. The town owns the land free, clear and legally, but its municipal ordinances such as parking rules and building codes do not apply. Instead, under Cannonball law, the parking regulations and building codes that apply to the fire station are the rules described in the State of North Dakota’s statutes for unincorporated areas. Meanwhile, the State of North Dakota may have assigned that acreage and more to Cannonball, seeing that there is no other town nearby that could want it. So under State Law, the territory is subject to Cannonball rules, but Cannonball chooses to subsume the State rules for unincorporated territories into its municipal code and govern the fire station accordingly, “as if” State Law applied. If the Cannonball city council passes an ordinance incorporating the plot, it would then become subject to the law of Cannonball.

In our case, the Israeli courts have ruled that until the Knesset applies the rules for acquired territories to these areas (i.e., formally annexation), Israeli law provides that the rules of international law govern this plot. For a variety of political, military and practical considerations, the Knesset has not extended Israeli law to these areas except for municipal Jerusalem. At the same time, following the rules of the Geneva Convention hedges Israel’s position, keeps “options” open, limits the rights in Israeli law of the area’s residents, and may protect its leaders from charges of war crimes or other exposure in international and other nations’ courts.

Another point of confusion is that some West Bank construction is indeed illegal under Israeli law. Constructing buildings and entire developments without proper permits and clear title is a violation of Israeli law (and this is done by Israelis as well as Palestinian Arab residents), and so some settlements and structures are indeed illegal. This is a distinct issue from the larger question of the legality of Israel’s control and development.

Ironically, no country was established in international law in a more legal or legitimate way than was Israel, and this specifically included the territory of the West Bank. Israel’s legal status is important for several reasons.

Claim of illegality undermines Israel’s standing in the world, and most importantly in the eyes of the Jewish world. As a critic, I would have to say that the Government of Israel, like the US Government and that of every other country, has taken actions and policies that I believe are unwise, unjust and dangerous. But that is different than the complaint that its existence on its own territory is fundamentally illegal, which is to define Israel as an outlaw state. We need to understand that in this matter the State of Israel is operating on solid grounds within international law, for our own sense of pride and honor, and as a matter of Israel’s standing in the world.

The right wingers are correct in stating that Israel’s sovereignty over Tel Aviv is based on precisely the same international laws as Israel’s occupation of the West Bank. If you believe that Israel’s control of the West Bank is illegal, then you must conclude that the Government of Israel is illegal altogether.

I believe that respect for international law holds great promise for the future of humanity. The campaign to treat Israel’s occupation as illegal undermines that, because it either so egregiously misrepresents international law as it has evolved, or proposes an alternative theory of law
A Message from Rabbi Tilsen

Law of the Land
Continued from Page 13

that is tantamount to the rejection of all law. Each time the *New York Times* repeats its report that “most of the world” considers Israel’s West Bank settlements “illegal,” it debases international law and undermines its credibility. Beyond the political consequences, this exposes Israeli government officials and employees to prosecution in other countries, and subjects Israel to sanction, including the most recent European Union product-labeling regulations (though these should eventually be overturned by the trade courts).

The question of legality affects our sense of honor, which is important in Jewish culture as well as in that of Israel’s Arab residents and neighbors. By consistently staying within the boundary of law in the question of territory, Israel helps create one condition of trust. Given the absence of trust in so many other realms, this point should be elevated, not mocked. Acting consistently within the law, and with an identifiable set of principles, can contribute to trust between nations. Adherence to this legal framework may have contributed to Israel’s “good” relationship with the Kingdom of Jordan.

This correct understanding of the legal status of the territories enhances Israel’s claim of “entitlement” to these territories, which in the political realm may be a barrier to compromise on Israel’s part. But that does not justify misrepresenting or deprecating the law. It is not clear to what degree a notion of entitlement based on legality really is or would be a barrier to adopting “The Two State Solution” or some other rubric that cedes control or sovereignty. Discourse in Israel usually focuses on military, political and economic considerations, and less on questions of legal rights. But this right is something that should not be traded away or taken lightly.

At the same time, the calumny of illegality buttresses a sense of entitlement among advocates for Palestinian Arab independence. Some commentators have observed that the Palestinian Arab claim of right to control of all of Palestine is itself a barrier to progress toward peaceful coexistence. It seems, though, that the Palestinian Arab claim of entitlement is based more on Arab nationalist chauvinism and ideas of Islamic conquest than on a thoughtful view of international law. In the unfortunate dynamic of current relations, this consideration may be a zero-sum equation, or worse, as it contributes to an unwarranted sense of entitlement by both parties.

A consistent and correct view of law has to be incorporated in any plan to establish in fact and law a Palestinian Arab State (or some variation of autonomous control), or in a partial or complete Israeli annexation, or in whatever other governance rubric is implemented. Israel’s peace treaty with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (formerly Transjordan, and formerly the eastern three-quarters of Palestine) created a legally irreversible condition in which Israel ceded claim to that portion of Mandatory Palestine, or as the Hashemite Kingdom puts it, “the treaty defined Jordan’s western borders clearly and conclusively for the first time, putting an end to the dangerous and false Zionist claim that ‘Jordan is Palestine.’” So too a treaty with a sovereign and recognized State of Palestine in the West Bank and Gaza would create a new legal reality. That would mean that were Israel to send military or police units to apprehend or interdict terrorists, it could constitute an act of war, or otherwise be a violation of international law. This could greatly limit Israel’s options, absent a Palestinian government that welcomes Israeli troops.

A foundational principle of the Jewish People is that law has the potential to bring peace among individuals and nations. Promoting this theory and making it a reality is central to our mission. Thus establishing and defending Israel’s sovereign rights can only be good for the Jewish People and the world if those rights exist in a larger context of compassion and justice, or, in a classic formulation, “Justice and Mercy.” That potential can be realized when we build institutions, select leaders, speak and act with respect for law in a way that promotes the larger set of values that we hold dear.

The Fine Print

“Legal” does not mean wise, fair, practical or safe; those are different issues. You have the right to cut off your arm and stuff it up your chimney, but having the right does not make it a smart thing to do. This discussion excludes the Golan Heights, which has a different legal history and status, and Greater Jerusalem, which has additional considerations. Also excluded are individual cases of unlawful actions by the State of Israel, by other government agencies, and by private bodies. This discussion does not deal with the rights of people, specifically the non-Israeli-citizen residents of the West Bank, who have or should have certain legal rights.
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<th>Sunday</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2:00pm Sisterhood &amp; Hadassah program w/ Elin Schoen Brockman &quot;Visions and Voices: Writers at Work&quot; 7:30pm Israeli Dancing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9:00am Rabbi's Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Ben Eli Mitzva Program</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1:00pm Talmud Study Group</td>
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<td>24 Kislev</td>
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<td>6 Erev Hanukkah</td>
<td>7 Hanukkah I 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour</td>
<td>8 Hanukkah II 7:30pm Israeli Dancing</td>
<td>9 Hanukkah III 9:00am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Ben Eli Mitzva Program</td>
<td>10 Hanukkah IV 1:00pm Talmud Study Group</td>
<td>11 Hanukkah V 4:04pm Candle Lighting</td>
<td>12 Rosh Hashanah - Hanukkah VI 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Shabbat Shalom Torah Study Giddush: BEKI Pet Owners 4:05pm Minha-Maariv</td>
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<td>13 Rosh Hashanah - Hanukkah VII 9:00am Religious School</td>
<td>14 Hanukkah VIII 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour 7:30pm Executive Board Meeting (off-site)</td>
<td>15 Hanukkah VIII 7:30pm Israeli Dancing</td>
<td>16 9:00am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Ben Eli Mitzva Program</td>
<td>17 1:00pm Talmud Study Group</td>
<td>18 4:06pm Candle Lighting 8:00pm BEKI-Ezra Academy Community Shabbat Dinner (reservations required)</td>
<td>19 Rosh Hashanah - Hanukkah VII 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Shabbat Shalom Torah Study Giddush: Levine aufruf 4:05pm Minha-Maariv</td>
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<td>20 9:00am Religious School</td>
<td>21 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour</td>
<td>22 Fast of Tevet 19 7:30pm Israeli Dancing</td>
<td>23 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Ben Eli Mitzva Program</td>
<td>24 Office Closing at 1:00pm No Talmud Study Group</td>
<td>25 Office Closed 4:10pm Candle Lighting</td>
<td>26 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Shabbat Shalom Torah Study Giddush: TBA 4:10pm Minha-Maariv</td>
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<td>27 No Religious School</td>
<td>28 Office Closed 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour</td>
<td>29 Office Closed 7:30pm Israeli Dancing</td>
<td>30 Office Closed No Religious School No Ben Eli Mitzva Program</td>
<td>31 Office Closed No Talmud Study Group</td>
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**Service Times**

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<th>Sundays</th>
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<tr>
<td>9 a.m. Shaharit</td>
<td>7 a.m. Shaharit</td>
<td>7 a.m. Shaharit</td>
<td>8:15 a.m. Shaharit</td>
<td>7 a.m. Shaharit</td>
<td>6 p.m. Qabbalat Shabbat</td>
<td>Before sunset: Minha</td>
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<td>5:45 p.m. Maariv</td>
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<td>5:45 p.m. Maariv</td>
<td>5:05 p.m. Maariv</td>
<td>Before sunset: Minha</td>
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Help New Refugees

Are you interested in welcoming new refugees to the New Haven area? BEKI is joining with other area synagogues in a Jewish Federation initiative that is still in development. Currently we are compiling a list of potential volunteers and donors. We are especially interested in hearing from BEKI members who might attend an upcoming IRIS (Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services) training workshops. Contact: Angela Oren adotoren@gmail.com or Cynthia Beth Rubin cbr@cbrubin.net