



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

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Shabbat Pre-Hanuka Dinner

Join friends and neighbors for a Shabbat evening dinner at BEKI in preparation for Hanuka on Friday 11 December 1998. Services begin at 6:00p. Dinner immediately follows service at about 6:45p. Please complete a reservation form available from the synagogue office, or call 389-2108 ext. 14 for your reservations.

Hanuka Begins Sunday Night 13 December

The first light of Hanuka is lit at the late afternoon or early evening of Sunday 13 December. Hanuka ("dedication") commemorates the rededication and purification of the Temple after the Hasmonean Revolt in ancient Israel. The central mitzva of Hanuka is the lighting of the *Hanukia* (Hanuka *menora*) which serves to publicize the miracle.

Rummage Sale

The BEKI Rummage Sale will be held on Sunday 6 December from 9:00a to 3:00p and on Monday 7 December from 9:00a to 1:00p. Find quality new and used clothing, household items, and unusual pieces. The Sale is held in the Social Hall on the Lower Level.

Torah for the Hungry Mind

Practical Kashrut 101

The fourth and final meeting of *Practical Kashrut 101* on the basic principles of kashrut, the Jewish dietary laws of keeping kosher, will be on Sunday morning 6 December from 9:30a to 10:45a in BEKI's Rosenkrantz Library with Rabbi Tilsen. For more information call 389-2108 ext. 14.

Siyyum '98 Classes in December

All who are interested are invited to the meetings of *Siyyum '98*, a group of adults who are approaching the conclusion of their 36-classroom-hour program of study. Meetings on various aspects of Liturgy will be held on Sunday 6 December from 11:00a to noon; Shabbat 12 December from 4:00p to 5:30p (on "The *Motse'ei Shabbat Maariv Service*"); and Sunday 13 December from 9:00a to 11:00a (practicum on "The Weekday Morning Service").

Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan

The "Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan," which meets every other Saturday morning at 10:45a in BEKI's Rosenkrantz Library, is an ideal setting for veteran and novice shul-goers alike to become more comfortable and expert in the Shahrith (morning) and Torah services in a supportive setting. Led by Steven Fraade and Rabbi Alan Lovins, the Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan has helped many feel a deeper sense of awe born of greater understanding while increasing the level of comfort through nurturing step-by-step practice in a non-threatening multi-generational setting. The SSLM meets on 5 and 19 December.

Rashi Study Group

Each Monday morning from 7:45a to 8:30a a small group of adults meets in the Rabbi's Study to read Rashi's commentary to the Torah. It is possible to join the study for a single meeting or to begin at any time. Knowledge of Hebrew is not necessary. For more information, don't call; just come once and find out what it is about.

Pirque Avot Study Begins Shabbat Afternoons

Join us every Shabbat afternoon following Minha afternoon service during fall and winter for a twenty-minute Pirque Avot Study session. Study and discuss this early collection of wise sayings of our sages, also known as "Mishna Avot" or as "Avot." "Pirque" means chapters or quotations; "avot" means "of the ancestors." Avot was edited in the second century of the common era by Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi and contains material from that period as well as from several centuries earlier. As Hillel says, "Do not say, 'When I have leisure, I will study,' for you may never have leisure" (Avot, 2:5). That's the same Hillel who says, "If not now, when?" (Avot, 1:14).

Kol Nidre Appeal Results

BEKI members and friends pledged over \$23,000 to the synagogue at the Kol Nidre appeal in October. These funds are directed to the synagogue's operating budget. Because dues provide only 40% of the synagogue's annual income, BEKI must rely on the generous voluntary donations of its members and friends in order to fund the day-to-day operation of the synagogue.

In addition, the special "youth appeal" raised over \$3,000. These funds will be directed to fund programs for BEKI's very successful [Kadima & USY](#) members.

The Board of Directors wishes to thank everyone for their generous contributions. If you did not have the opportunity to make a pledge and would like to do so, or would like to learn about other ways to support the synagogue, please contact Vice President Stephen Pincus at 397-8816 (h) or 787-3513 (w).

A Message from Rabbi Tilsen

Continuity at BEKI

Susan Wall and Steven M. Cohen published an analysis of Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel in May 1992. They reported that a significant number of members cited a "lack of continuity" as a major deficiency of the Congregation, stemming from the fact that the synagogue has only "one paid professional -- the rabbi -- who usually stays only for a few years." The one exception they noted was Mr. Louis Friedman, of blessed memory, who had served as *Shamash* (Ritual Director) for over 40 years.

Just one year after Susan and Steven wrote this, Rabbi Steven Kane left to lead another congregation, and Mr. Friedman retired. When I came to the Congregation in 1993, I was the twelfth Rabbi to serve in the 36-year period to that date -- an average term of just three years.

It was not surprising to me that during my first three or four years at BEKI I often met people in the community who, upon learning that I serve at BEKI, asked, "Oh, when did Rabbi Kane leave?" What was surprising was the number of people who asked, "Oh, when did Rabbi *Gertel* leave?" Rabbi Gertel was Rabbi Kane's predecessor at BEKI. While smaller or unstable congregations are accustomed to a "parade of rabbis" over the years, larger or more successful congregations are used to enjoying long-term relationships. In our

area, at least six synagogues are currently enjoying a rabbinic tenure of fifteen to over forty years. Many congregants enjoy and expect the benefits of continuity and stability.

There are other sources of stability in Congregations besides the rabbi and figures such as Mr. Friedman. **Myra Myers**, who served as the Congregation's Administrator for over a decade until leaving her position in October, was one such source of stability. Her level of experience and commitment were invaluable to the membership. It is very important for members to feel that when they call or walk into the shul, there is someone there who knows who they are, is aware of their special needs, and is looking after them. During her years of service, Myra provided a thousand kindnesses, great and small, to members and others who turned to the Congregation for help. It is in no small part due to her dedicated and thankless efforts, that the Congregation has managed to achieve its level of success in this past decade. We owe Myra a debt of gratitude.

In the aftermath of Myra's leaving her position and the departure of Lois Feldman, who served with distinction in the office over the past many months, we are hiring and training new personnel. During this period of transition, the forbearance of the congregation is appreciated amidst any disruptions in the administrative services. One positive outcome of this process is that the leadership is reexamining the administrative and staffing needs of the synagogue with renewed appreciation for the people who run the office.

In looking to the future, the Congregation's leaders recognize the value of fostering continuity in our professional and administrative staff, and they are committed to taking the steps necessary to insure that continuity. Like in a good marriage, fostering a relationship that allows for continuity requires thoughtful and determined effort on all sides, patience, forgiveness, and a shared commitment to the very purpose of the shul itself.

Dear Rabbi: Answers, Advice and Helpful Household Hints

Dear Rabbi,

Why did the cantor hop during services on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur?

Signed, Not Jumping to Conclusions

Dear Not Jumping,

During the recitation of the Amida prayer, it is customary for the worshiper to stand with feet and legs together such that it would appear that the worshiper were standing on one leg. On the High Holy Days, the cantor bows and prostrates during the middle of the Amida. In order to bow and bend without hitting his head on the table in front of him, our Hazan (cantor) moves back a few inches, all the while keeping his legs and feet together. Hence, the "hazan's hop" (or "kefatz hashatz" in Hebrew).

Dear Rabbi,

When Hanuka is on a Friday night, which lights do we light first, the Shabbat or the Hanuka?

Signed, Light Right

Dear Light Right,

Light the Hanuka candles first, then the Shabbat candles. Once Shabbat candles are lighted and the blessing recited, one should not kindle any lights until after the conclusion of Shabbat.

Dear Rabbi,

I thought all the candles on a Hanuka Menora have to be the same height. But in the BEKI giftshop there is a Menora and the candles are not all at the same height. What gives?

Signed, Level Headed

Dear Flat Head,

Candles burn at different rates, so they will never be at exactly the same height. There are two rules for a *Hanukia* (Hanuka Menora). First, the lights need to be in a straight line, in at least one vertical plane, so that they can be distinguished from each other. This precludes a round Hanukia, but you don't have to use a micron ruler to make sure your candles line up. The point is that the flames should be distinguishable from each other at the normal viewing angle. Second, the shamash must also be separate and distinguishable, and preferably higher than the others, because that is the one we use for seeing in the dark. We are not permitted to use the light of the Hanukia for any purpose other than celebrating the miracle of Hanuka, so one candle, the *shamash* ("utility"), is added so that we have one burning that we can use for other purposes, such as seeing in a dark room or re-igniting the Hanuka candles themselves. If your *shamash* is not high enough, use a longer candle.

BEKI Welcomes New & Returning Members

We welcomes new & returning members, and their families, who have joined the Congregation since July 1998.

- Alan & Sally Abramovitz, Edward & Anne
- Jacob & Rosalyn Ben-Chitrit, Ariel & Daniel
- David & Sharon Bender, Max & Nina
- Beth Brumberger
- Eugene Burger & Alida Engel
- Joel & Cathy Cohen, Rebecca, Danielle, Allison & Joshua
- Roger Colten & Sarah Berry, Talia & Shira
- Drs. Lloyd & Kai Yang Friedman, David & Jonathan
- David & Joanne Goldblum, Jesse, Mollie & Sherman
- Steven Gordon & Deborah Wittes, Daniel & Aaron
- Jon Gottlieb & Elizabeth Youngerman, Annie
- Bennett Kottler
- Marvin & Helaine Lender
- Andy Bedford & Becca Levy, Talya and Shira
- Sharon & Bennett Lovett-Graff, Shoshana
- Judith Prober
- Margo Roten
- Abraham & Stephanie Shteirman, Marcel

- Jonathan and Yoko Silk, Benjamin
- David & Cindy Smernoff, Nathan
- Clifford Tieger
- Dr. Julian Timoner
- Stanton & Marjorie Wiener, Matthew & Jason

Sisterhood News

[Sisterhood](#) is preparing for its Hanuka meeting on Monday 14 December, 7:45p. President Adele Tyson is looking forward to a good turnout. There will be entertainment and refreshments. Come and enjoy!

Following the meeting, the Sisterhood [Giftshop](#) will be open. This will be an opportune time to choose some gifts. Adele and Harriet have stocked the shop with some beautiful and practical items for men, women and children. Come in, browse and buy.

LifeCycle

HaMaqom Yinahem Etkhem:

We Mourn the Passing of **Abraham Yackerson**, brother of Jack Yackerson; **Irving Etkind**, brother of Herbert Etkind.

May God Comfort All Who Mourn

Mazal Tov to Richard & Marcia Witten, and to Wilbur Witten, on their grandson and great-grandson's celebration of becoming a bar mitzva

Alan & Joan Gelbert, and to Jack & Mollie Nuht, on the marriage of their son and grandson in November

George G. Posener on his milestone birthday

Irving Weinstein on his milestone birthday

Robert Leikind and Ellen Jawitz on their qiddushin (Jewish marriage) under a huppa at BEKI

Bat Mitzva in December

Danielle Rothman, daughter of Dr. Stephen & Sherry Rothman, will be called to the Torah and will lead services as a *bat mitzva* on Shabbat Rosh Hodesh Hanuka morning 19 December during the 9:15a service. Because Shabbat, Rosh Hodesh (new month), and

Hanuka coincide on this day, special liturgy is included in the service. Hallel, a collection of joyous Psalms, is added after the morning service (before the Torah service). Three Torah scrolls are taken from the ark, one for the regular weekly reading of *Miqetz*, one for the Hanuka reading, and one for the Rosh Hodesh reading. In addition, holiday-specific passages are added to the Amida.

For more information call or write to:

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