Abraham’s Tent

ךְָּיִן יִמְשָׁה אָחִיךָ, וּמָטָה יָדוֹ עִמָּךְ—וְהֶחֱזַקְתָּ בּוֹ, גֵּר וְתוֹשָׁב וָחַי עִמָּךְ.

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

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

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

Exhibition of Masks

The spirit of Purim arrives early at BEKI with the display of a variety of masks by Beckie Kravetz, a Massachusetts-based sculptor and mask-maker, whose work will be featured in the BEKI gallery from 30 January through 31 March 2019. Kravetz will kick off the days before Purim with a Shabbat Shmooze after kiddush on March 16 and a mask-making workshop for BEKI children Sunday morning, 10:30a 17 March.

As a Yale School of Drama-trained makeup artist, wig master, and mask-maker, she has helped transform the faces of dozens of opera singers, including Placido Domingo. She contributed to the Disney film The Haunted Mansion, and she has also created masks for Madonna’s Max Factor Gold international campaign and the opera-themed Nike and Pepsi commercials featuring Charles Barkley and Michael Jackson.

Kravetz studied internationally at Taller de Madera in Guatemala, the Instituto Allende in Mexico, and the Centro Maschere e Strutture Gestuali in Italy. In 2001, she was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to study wood carving, ritual masks and puppets in Spain.

Her work has been exhibited at the

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BEKI Bulletin

The newsletter is published monthly by Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel for the benefit of its members. Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel is affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

To contribute articles or for inquiries regarding membership:
• Call the Synagogue office: 203.389.2108
• Write: 85 Harrison Street, New Haven, CT 06515-1724
• Email: jjtilsen@beki.org
• Visit our web page: www.beki.org

For advertising information, call the synagogue office.
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Editor
Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen
Associate Editor
Donna Levine
Associate Editor
Donna Kemper
Associate Editor
Herbert Winer
Photographer
Charles Ludwig
Layout & Design
Bruce Oren
work together in this wonderful program.

This year, BEKI will host Abraham’s Tent from February 25 through March 4, 2019.

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

Most host organization prepare meals through pot-luck participation of their members. Because of BEKI’s kashrut standards, all meals will either be prepared in the BEKI kitchen or through an approved kosher caterer.

Over the last 10 years, most of the men who participated in this program have moved to transitional or permanent housing. Each works with a case manager to figure out their best next step.

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

Sign up online at tinyurl.com/abestentatBEKI2019 as soon as possible. Your help is needed in the following ways:

• Volunteer to help shop before and during the hosting week
• Volunteer to help cook dinners and/or breakfasts before or during the hosting week
• Volunteer to help serve dinners and/or breakfasts
• Volunteer to dine with our guests one or more nights
• Volunteer to lead an activity or presentation for our guests
• Sponsor dinner or breakfast for one or more nights
• Sign up as an overnight volunteer for one or more nights
• Help with logistics, equipment and set-up (moving around furniture, TVs, provide power strips, computers, etc.)
• Donate funds to help defray additional costs

We’ll be running a one day toiletries drive on Sunday, February 24. Please bring in what you can and leave in the bins provided in the BEKI lobby.

For more information about this and other Tikun Olam (Social Action/Justice) programs at BEKI, please contact co-chairs: Darryl Kuperstock (kuperst@gmail.com 203-215-8555) or Steve Werlin (shwerlin@gmail.com 617-721-8213).
Masks
Continued from Page 1

Metropolitan Opera and Lincoln Center Library (New York), Roark Gallery and Dorothy Chandler Pavilion (Los Angeles), Tansey Contemporary Gallery and Downey Galleries (Santa Fe), Jewish Community Museum (San Francisco), Shidoni Gallery (Santa Fe), Gallery 10 and Minds Eye Gallery (Scottsdale, AZ), Tucson Museum of Art, and Tucson Museum of Contemporary Art.

At her studio in Cummington, Mass., Kravetz creates theater and fine art masks. Her designs include classic Comedia masks and Greek theater masks, realistic human faces, portrait masks, neutral masks, opera masks, Purim masks, cosplay masks, helmet masks, animal masks and fantasy creatures.

Please call the BEKI Office to reserve a place for the mask-making workshop, if your child is not a BEKI Religious School student. There will be a small fee for the hour-long workshop.
Purim

The book of Esther is part of the Bible called The Writings. It tells the Jews to celebrate the deliverance of the Jews of Persia with “days of feasting and gladness.” The Book of Esther never mentions the name of God. But the story does suggest that God works in mysterious ways. It celebrates Esther’s faith and determination in the face of danger.

On Purim, it is usual to dress up in masks and costumes, and become characters in the Book of Esther. Making noise and dressing up were originally ways of protecting oneself against evil spirits at the change of seasons. Many communities traditionally perform Purim shpiels, Yiddish for “plays.” Each person on Purim should be so joyful as “not to know” the difference between “blessed Mordecai” and “cursed Haman.” For this reason, in Israel the festive Purim carnival is called Adloyada.

Besides celebrating, Purim is observed by fasting on Taanit Esther, reading Megillat Esther (The Scroll of Esther), sending Mishloah Manot (portions of ready-to-eat foods) and giving Matanot L’evyonim (gifts of charity to the poor).

In the 16-18th century Purim players might be a band of boys from a local religious school, or sons of poor laborers, sometimes accompanied by extra musicians, absurdly dressed. With the performers were cantors and choir boys who “scandalized the pious by using the same melodies both for rowdy Purim songs and for prayers.” In one guise or another, the Purim shpiel has continued until present, though since the Holocaust it is performed in Hebrew, or English, French or Spanish, rather than Yiddish. — From Music in Jewish History and Culture Emanuel Rubin and John H Baron p.190

Is BEKI having a Purim Shpiel this year? Stay tuned for a bulletin with more information.

Gift Store

Sisterhood gift store now features a large array of gifts for Passover. Avoid the rush and come in now, choose a new Seder plate, qiddush cup, toys, hostess gift and so much more.

Store hours Sunday 11a-12:15p, Wednesdays 5:30p-6:15p and by appointment 203-397-3851. Peggy in the office can also assist you with the purchase. Credit cards accepted.
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:

Miles Katz, bar mitzva, 2 February, parashat Mishpatim

Darshanit: Nanette Stahl 23 February 2019

Shabbat Shalom Torah Study

The Shabbat Shalom Torah Study meets every other Saturday morning at 10:45a in the office and is an ideal setting for veteran and novice shul-goers alike to explore the scriptural readings and liturgy of the day in a supportive setting. Expertly led by Steven Fraade, with Rabbi Alan Lovins, Nadav Sela, Isaiah Cooper and others, the Shabbat Shalom Torah Study is a nurturing exploration of practice and theory presented in a participatory, non-threatening and multi-generational setting. Many members who take advantage of this unique offering feel a deeper sense of awe born of increased understanding and appreciation of the Torah reading, Haftara (Prophetic reading) and liturgy.

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

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

Mondays

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. On 18 February 2019, Presidents Day, the morning service begins at 9a; RSG follows, until 10:30a. 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 or current events.

Rabbis’ Study Group

The Rabbis’ Study Group is a weekly study group exclusively for rabbis, initiated and taught by Rabbi Murray Levine from 2004 to 2018. 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 meets Wednesday mornings in the Rosenkrantz Family Library during the school year. The Rabbis’ Group continues under the direction of Rabbi Eric Silver, and is studying Sota. For more information, contact J-J Tilsen jjtilsen@beki.org.

Thursdays

Mini Morning Learning Service

The Thursday morning services are supplemented with

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Adult Studies
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Torah for the Hungry Mind – Adult Studies

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.

Berakhot Talmud Study Group
A weekly study of the Talmud Bavli Berakhot meets in the Beit Midrash on Thursday mornings 10a–11a with Rabbi Tilsen.
The Talmud, based on an oral text, has no beginning or end. One can begin study at any point; now is the best time. No prior knowledge is required, but basic facility in English is helpful; students with all backgrounds are welcome, beginner to advanced.

Jon-Jay Tilsen

LifeCycle

Mazal Tov
• Sherry & Steve Rothman, and siblings Leah, Esti, Rivky and Moshe Chaim, on the birth of grandson and brother baby boy Carr in November to Danielle & Aryeh
• Rabbi Murray Levine on the birth great-grandchild Noah Marc Seltzer, and to parents Michael & Lauren, and grandparents Rena & Arthur
• Brian Karsif & Elizabeth – on the birth of Baby Boy Chalmer in January, and to parents Jessie & Eli
• Rabbi Carl & Sharon Astor on the birth of a grand-child in January

Benei Mitzva
• Miles Katz, son of Julie & Samuel Katz, 1-2 February 2019, parashat Mishpatim

Amazon Commission
Buying items from Amazon? Use this link or the link on BEKI’s home page beki.org (bottom) so BEKI will receive a commission (about 4%) on the sale at no cost to you. Bookmark our link. (Other Amazon programs such as Smiles provide only 0.5% so use our link instead.) See instructions and explanation under “Resources.” The August 2018 commission was $125.

visit us at www.beki.org
Contributions

Rabbi’s Tzedaqa Fund (minimum $25)
• Renee Gutman, Rachel Light & Jonathan Freiman, Ben & Felice Gutman, in appreciation and marking the hanukat matzeva for husband and father Jonathan Gutman
• Mark & Linda Malkin in support of the community
• Lev & Lisa Petrillo in memory of Jacob Pepper
• Sandy & John Balayan in memory of Moe & Helen Miller
• Golden Shadowmen in appreciation

Qiddush Sponsors (minimum $320)
• Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade
• Rabbi Carl & Sharon Astor
• Rena Cheski-Gold & Marty Gold
• Gary & Michele Kupfer
• Karel Koenig & family
• “Birthdays of December”\nOwen Boone, Julie Cohen, Eli Lebowitz, Mary Lesser, Simonne Levick, Lauri Lowell, CJ May, Amy Schwartz & David Wright
• Ken & Linda Buckman

Chai Fund (minimum $18) to support synagogue operations
• To BEKI in appreciation by Layla Loren
• To Mrs. Martha Everson & family with sympathy on the passing of Roger Everson by Sandy Naclerio
• To Paul Yontef with sympathy on the passing of Andre Yontef by the Zlotoff family
• To the BEKI community in appreciation for all the gifts given in honor of our b’nai mitzva by Marcia & Reuben Colten

Synagogue Fund (minimum $10) to support synagogue operations
• To Judy Manasevit with sympathy on the passing of Michael Manasevit by David & Darryl Kuperstock
• To Nathan Levine Children’s Library
• To the Oppenheimer family in honor of the birth of David Walter by Sid & Donna Levine

Barzillai Cheski BEKI Youth Israel Scholarship Fund
• To Rena Cheski-Gold & Marty Gold in honor of Carmi & Meg’s engagement by Lisa Stanger & Greg Colodner
• In memory of her sister Phyllis C. Rogoff by Eileen S. Rogoff
• In memory of the Alper, Abramovitz & Rosenblatt families by Joseph & Lynn Alper
• In memory of Sam Miller by Richard & Vicky Miller
• In memory of Rita Moscowitz by Mike Moscowitz
• In memory of Martin Buckman by Ken & Linda Buckman
• In memory of Esther Landau by Ken & Linda Buckman
• In memory of Irving Weinstein by Elaine Weinstein
• In memory of Sarah Schnitman by Helene Schnitman Vanderhof
• In memory of Pauline Altschuler by Roberta Atteson
• In memory of Robert Goodwin by Stacey & Jeffrey Podell
• In memory of Esther Bashhevin by Rachel Bashhevin
• In memory of her dear nana Yetta Gray by Toby & Alan Ignal
• In memory of Morris Feldman by Lois K. Feldman
• In memory of Isaac Press by Jeffrey & Lynne Heisner
• In memory of Rabbi Samuel Simon by Marshall & Joan Weiss
• In memory of Edith Fields by

Harold & Arthur Ratner Memorial Fund
• In memory of their aunt Evelyn Kahn by Richard & Michael Kahn
• In memory of their father Murray E. Kahn by Richard & Michael Kahn

Frankel-Mattler Memorial Fund
• In memory of Ida & Isadore Frankel by Shirley Mattler
• In memory of Esther Mattler Black by Shirley Mattler
• In memory of Jacob Mattler by Shirley Mattler
• In memory of David Black by Shirley Mattler

Rabbi Andrew Klein Scholarship Fund
• In memory of Rabbi Andrew Klein by Rabbi Mindy Portnoy

Yahrzeit Fund ($5 minimum) to support synagogue operations
• In memory of her sister Phyllis C. Rogoff by Eileen S. Rogoff
• In memory of the Alper, Abramovitz & Rosenblatt families by Joseph & Lynn Alper
• In memory of Sam Miller by Richard & Vicky Miller
• In memory of Rita Moscowitz by Mike Moscowitz
• In memory of Martin Buckman by Ken & Linda Buckman
• In memory of Esther Landau by Ken & Linda Buckman
• In memory of Irving Weinstein by Elaine Weinstein
• In memory of Sarah Schnitman by Helene Schnitman Vanderhof
• In memory of Pauline Altschuler by Roberta Atteson
• In memory of Robert Goodwin by Stacey & Jeffrey Podell
• In memory of Esther Bashhevin by Rachel Bashhevin
• In memory of her dear nana Yetta Gray by Toby & Alan Ignal
• In memory of Morris Feldman by Lois K. Feldman
• In memory of Isaac Press by Jeffrey & Lynne Heisner
• In memory of Rabbi Samuel Simon by Marshall & Joan Weiss
• In memory of Edith Fields by

Stan Saxe
• In memory of Helen Silverman by Marc Silverman
• In memory of Pearl Weiner by Joanne & Steve Rudof
• In memory of Freda Virshup by Richard & Georgi Virshup
• In memory of Harold Chernikoff by Janet Chernikoff
• In memory of Maxwell Robbins by Teddy Detich
• In memory of Ann A. Jennes by Dan Jennes
• In memory of Ida Buckman by Ken & Linda Buckman
• In memory of Morris Buckman by Ken & Linda Buckman
• In memory of Lawrence Moscowitz by Mike Moscowitz
• In memory of Shirley Brodner by Richard & Leatrice Brodner
• In memory of Stanley Watsky by Kal Watsky & Deborah Fried
• In memory of Lester Feldman by Sara Salomon
• In memory of Lester Feldman by Lois K. Feldman
• In memory of Kate Weinstein by Suzanne Weinstein
• In memory of George Weiss by Suzanne Weinstein
• In memory of Benjamin Levine by Lillian & Irwin Gross
• In memory of Sidney Weinstein by Dan A. Goldberg
• In memory of Elsie Hodes by Joyce Popowski
• In memory of Mollie Cohen Fleischner by Sara-Ann & Hillel Auerbach
• In memory of Jack Nankin by Sheldon Nankin
• In memory of Deborah Mendelson by Myra & Andrew Harris
• In memory of Anna Chain by Marty & Shirley Shepro
• In memory of Annie Cohen by Ted Maltin
• In memory of her grandfather Adolph Weisberg by Joan Gelbert
• In memory of her father Jack Nucht by Joan Gelbert
• In memory of her aunt Florence Lorne by Joan Gelbert
• In memory of her aunt Mona Zitomer by Joan Gelbert
• In memory of Haie-Bartha Neman by Polma Naiman
• In memory of Sasha Snyder by Irwin & Zelda Snyder
• In memory of his father Philip Jennes by Dan Jennes
• In memory of his cousin Ruth Levin by Dan Jennes
• In memory of friend Alvin Crumb by Dan Jennes
• In memory of Elsie Hodes by Lucia Press
• In memory of Ethel Lerner Segan Preet by Alan Segan
• In memory of Samuel Segan by Alan Segan
• In memory of Jacob Pepper by Marilyn & Basil Friedman
• In memory of Willbur Witten by Marvin & Susan Witten
• In memory of Anne Mushin Venetianer & William Victor Mushin by Allen & Sheila Mushin
• In memory of Benjamin & Jeanette Spivak by Sheila & Allen Mushin
• In memory of Michael & Sarah Franzman by Larry & Susan Franzman
• In memory of her grandmother Rose Friedman by Harriet Friedman & family
• In memory of Sidney Yaffe by David Yaffe
• In memory of Morris Altschuler by Roberta Atteson
• In memory of Arnold Thalberg by Marjorie Sydney
• In memory of Morris Oppenheimer by Anita & Michael Malina
• In memory of Jack Nankin by David Nankin
• In memory of Harry A. Jacobson by Susan E. Jacobson
• In memory of his father Sidney Yaffe by Cliff Yaffe
• In memory of Louis Rochlin by Kranie & Earl Baker
• In memory of Thelma Chernikoff by Janet Chernikoff
• In memory of Kate Herschderfer by Sherman Herschderfer
• In memory of her mother Esther Siegelbaum by Rissa & Jack Mendlestein
• In memory of his father Samuel Mendlestein by Jack & Rissa Mendlestein
• In memory of Abraham Goldman by Judy & Martin Shore
• In memory of Ethel Siegel by Louis & Debbie Siegel
• In memory of Jacob Cohen by Carol Cohen
• In memory of Saul Ripp by Ronald Ripp
• In memory of Max Brunswick by Barbara Cusen
• In memory of Donna Wright by Barbara Cusen
• In memory of her father George Brunswick by Barbara Cusen
**Uncle Shemuel Wants You**

Volunteer to be a BEKI safety marshal. Learn what to do in all kinds of emergencies - Fire! Medical! Security! Running out of herring at qiddush! Develop and practice procedures. Be prepared to lead the way when needed. Meeting Sunday 3 February 10:30a–12m. Contact Jay for more info sokolow@snet.net.

**Ramah at Camp Fair**

Ramah Sports Camp (Fairfield), Camp Ramah of New England (Palmer, MA) and several other camps will be represented at a Jewish Camps Fair at the JCC Sunday 10 February 1p; also fun activities for kids including wall climbing; see Jewish Foundation Scholarship Info. Explore your options.

**Abraham’s Tent**

Monday evening 25 February – Monday morning 4 March. Part of a program in Greater New Haven, BEKI will host a group of men experiencing homelessness for a week. Volunteers needed for set-up Sunday 17 February, cooking 24 February and each day during the program to dine with our guests (breakfast and dinner), spend time in the evenings and for overnight supervision. Online volunteer sign-up HERE. More info: Darryl Kuperstock or Steve Werlin.

**Artist Talk with Beckie Kravetz**

Shabbat 16 March 2019 about 12:45p.

**BEKI USY-Kadima at the JFS Food Pantry**

Sunday 17 March, 1p - 3p. Grades 4-12 and other volunteers needed to prepare backpacks of food at the Jewish Family Services Food Pantry.

**Shabbat Schmooze**


**BEKI USY-Kadima at JCC Mitzvah Day**

Sunday 7 April. Grades 4-12 invited to join their Hane-fesh/NERUSY youth groups peers volunteering at the JCC.

**Security Protocols**

Our officers periodically review and update security protocols, training and equipment. Security enhancements are ongoing. Your feedback welcomed. Info Jay Sokolow c/o office@beki.org.

**Hesed**

To be notified of opportunities to help your fellow congregants, please click/enter the link below to join the BEKI Hesed Committee. We are now using the lotsahelpinghands website to communicate. Signing up does not obligate you to do anything, it just gives you the opportunity to volunteer. https://my.lotsahelpinghands.com/community/beki-hesed-committee/home

**Is it a Cookbook Yet?**

Ever wonder how to make that amazing soup or salad that you had recently at Shabbat Kiddush or Break Fast? Want to share the secrets of BEKI’s buffet bounty with others? Get Is It Kiddush Yet for yourself or as a gift. The BEKI Kiddush Committee’s cookbook (easy-to-use format, clear and concise, delicious kosher recipes) is available at the Sisterhood Gift Shop or through the office for $18 each.

**SATs?**

Need a letter from the Rabbi so you can take an SAT / ACT / MCAT or other exam on Sunday (and not Shabbat)? Write to jjtilsen@beki.org.

**Torah Torah Torah**

Torah Reading coordinator for Sefer Shemot (through 9 March) is Noam Benson-Tilsen noam@tilsen.org; coordinator for VaYiqra (15 March through 1 June, including Pesah) is JJTilsen jjtilsen@beki.org.

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**Got Announcements?**

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

**Shabbat Shalom Torah Study**

Study of Torah is considered equal or superior to prayers as a form of “worship.” Join Steven Fraade and other scholars for an hour of study (weekly portion, liturgy, Q&A) every other Shabbat morning 10:45a–11:45a in the office.
Scholarships
Jewish Foundation offers BRS, college, Israel experience, and Jewish camping scholarships. Info and application at [www.jewishnewhaven.org/scholarships](http://www.jewishnewhaven.org/scholarships).

BEKI Bulletin – Pre-1993?
Back issues of the BEKI Bulletin from 1993 to today are available at [https://www.beki.org/calendar-events/news-happenings-and-beki-bulletins/](https://www.beki.org/calendar-events/news-happenings-and-beki-bulletins/). If you have print copies of the BEKI Bulletin (AKA The Scroll: Bulletin of Beth El-Keser Israel; or the Beth El Notes or Keser Israel from before November 1993, please share with our office or Rabbi Tilsen.

Mark Your Calendar
- Miles Katz Bar Mitzva 1-2 February 2019
- Security Marshals Meeting 3 February 2019
- Rosh Hodesh I Adar 4-6 February 2019
- Darshanit: Nanette Stahl 23 February 2019
- Abraham’s Tent at BEKI 25 February – 4 March 2019
- Shabbat Sheqalim 2 March 2019
- Rosh Hodesh II Adar 6-8 March 2019
- Aufrauf: Carmi Cheskis-Gold & Meg Kennedy 9 March 2019
- Adopt DST 10 March 2019
- Artist Talk [Beckie Kravetz](#) 16 March 2019
- Artist Beckie Kravetz Mask-Making with BRS & Others 17 March 2019
- Ta’anit Esther 20 March 2019
- Purim Evening Megila Reading 20 March 2019
- Purim Day Megila Reading & Seuda 21 March 2019
- Shabbat Schmooze: Dan Mariaschin from B’nai Brith 23 March 2019
- Shabbat Para – Sabbath of the Cow 30 March 2019

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Visit us at [www.beki.org](http://www.beki.org)
We celebrated National Mix It Up Day in October to foster greater respect and understanding among our students.

www.hamdenhall.org  203.752.2610
1108 Whitney Ave., Hamden, CT 06517
The Exodus story makes no sense. The Biblical account, central to the history and mythology of our people and an inspiration to others, makes no sense at the outset. It is a crazy story.

Consider the problem as described in the opening passage of Shemot:

The new King of Egypt said: “Look, the Israelites are growing too numerous for us to handle. Let us outsmart them, lest they multiply such that when a war is thrown they join our enemies against us and rise up [or, go up] from this land.” So they placed taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor; and they built garrison cities for Pharaoh: Pithom and Ramses. But the more they were oppressed, the more they increased, so that they came to dread the Israelites. (Ex. 1:8-12)

It is hard to make sense of the ancient Egyptians. They want Israelite labor – when the Israelite laborers depart, Pharaoh sends his army to recall them. Someone has to do the work. But they don’t want too many Israelites – lest they get too strong, make war, and leave. So they don’t want them to leave, and they don’t want too many of them. The Egyptians are afraid the Israelites will become hostile, so they impose hard labor and bitter conditions, and then start killing their children – actions unlikely to win the good will and cooperation of the Israelites.

At the same time, the Hebrews who are suffering under harsh conditions are not prisoners. There are no walls or fences keeping them in Egypt. They can walk out into the desert whenever they want. Moses does not come to demand “Let My People Go,” as the popular mistranslated slogan has it, but rather demands, “Send My People Out,” or in some instances, “Expel My People.” The Biblical account is eminently clear that the Hebrews do not want to leave.

In short, Pharaoh, representing the totality of the ruling class or government of Egypt, holds contradictory goals and implements self-defeating policies to achieve them.

The Hebrew people cry out because of their suffering but seem determined to stay in the belly of the beast and not make waves.

The only way to understand that crazy Pharaoh’s contradictory and self-defeating public policy and the Hebrews’ dysfunction is through what is familiar to us: contemporary life. Start in the United States, not that I have anything in particular against the USA – it’s a great country, or at least it could be.

Consider government policy toward immigrants, Latin American immigrants in particular, for example. Leave aside for a moment racist attitudes that underlie much of the public discourse, and consider only what seem to be sincerely held rational viewpoints.

Some interest groups favor large-scale, increased or unlimited immigration. Reasons include family reunification, a humanitarian desire to save people from deadly or life-diminishing violence and poverty, a wish to increase the numbers paying into Social Security to provide for those who hope to collect from the system in the coming decades, a need for people willing to work at low wages in difficult manual fields such as agriculture and construction, and a desire to see a growing population in order to drive consumer demand for housing and other goods and services, or simply as a value statement about human freedom against global zoning laws.

Others oppose the current levels of immigration, on the theory that there are already too many people in this country unable to get decent jobs who don’t need more competition from unskilled laborers; or on the theory that the immigrants are lazy and demand too much in social services and welfare, or because immigrants undercut the wages of skilled citizens with good jobs. Low-wage farm laborers only enrich wealthy corporations and subsidize environmentally destructive agriculture. Immigrants strain existing infrastructure and overload the system. They bring criminal syndicates (gangs and drug cartels) to places that already

Continued on Page 14
have enough organized crime. Too many immigrants will vote for the wrong party. They might even be racist, unlike us; perhaps a judge of Mexican ancestry would favor other Mexicans in civil litigation. We don’t need to import more anti-Semitism, which permeates their native cultures. Who knows what else could go wrong, and who needs the risk.

All of these ideas are honestly held by arguably intelligent people of good will, and all of these ideas are reflected in actual Federal and State policies. The result of contradictory policy goals is incoherent and dysfunctional policy. Eleven million people live without the benefit of legal status and will not be deported because we need them and will not be naturalized because we don’t want them. Sometimes we get the worst of both worlds. Eventually, we come to throw their children into the Nile or the Rio Grande.

And with all that, the USA is so horrible that thousands are trying, and dying, to get in, one way or another. Parents, like Yokheved, risk their children’s lives to provide them with some hope for a better life, or at least a life at all.

Even a protracted series of plagues that shut down the Egyptian government, and decimated its economy and population, were not enough to produce a coherent policy. Pharaoh was quite clear that he would not be coerced, and that Egypt could pay the price to maintain their system.

If locusts destroy crops, Pharaoh said, “Let them hold a garage sale.” If the public water was undrinkable, Pharaoh said, “Let them drink Perrier.” Only after exceeding a point of crisis, where the suffering of Egypt reached even Pharaoh’s own house, did Pharaoh change policy, a change he quickly regretted and revoked.

The Hebrews in Egypt were not kept in by a wall or by chains. They could have just walked off into the desert. For them, slavery in Egypt was the life they knew; it was their lot in life. They would not listen to Moses who offered an alternative plan. People who risk their lives to come to America seem similarly crazy – until we realize that as bad as undocumented and dangerous immigration is, staying where they were was even worse. What distinguishes the ancient Hebrews from moderns is that they came to believe that they had a distinct destiny that they could fulfill only by taking control of their own lives, which required autonomy in a land beyond Crazy Pharaoh’s control. Reform and redress, or improving conditions in Egypt was not enough: They had to leave Egypt.

That was one way out. Maybe there are other possibilities for us today.
### February 2019
#### 26 Shevat 5779 - 23 Adar I 5779

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
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<tr>
<td>9:00am Religious School</td>
<td>7:45am Rashi Study Group</td>
<td>9:00am Rabbi's Study Group</td>
<td>9:00am Rabbi's Study Group</td>
<td>10:00am Berakhot Talmud Study Group</td>
<td>4:50pm Candle Lighting</td>
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<td>5:00pm Deli Box Pick-Up</td>
<td>10:00am Yoga Hour</td>
<td>4:00pm Religious School Program</td>
<td>5:00pm Benel Mitzva Program</td>
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<td>9:00am Religious School</td>
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<td>9:00am Rabbi's Study Group</td>
<td>10:00am Berakhot Talmud Study Group</td>
<td>5:08pm Candle Lighting</td>
<td>10:45am Children's Programs</td>
<td>10:45am Shabbat Shalom Torah Study Qiddush: Katz 1:00pm Minha</td>
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<td>5 Adar I</td>
<td>6 Adar I</td>
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<td>30 Shevat</td>
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<td>No Religious School</td>
<td>Office Closed/Presidents' Day</td>
<td>Purim Katan I</td>
<td>Purim Katan II</td>
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<td>5:16pm Candle Lighting</td>
<td>Darshanit: Nanette Stahl 10:45am Children's Programs Qiddush: Shula Chernoff 1:00pm Minha</td>
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<tr>
<td>No Religious School</td>
<td>7:45am Rashi Study Group</td>
<td>5:00pm Abraham's Tent</td>
<td>9:00am Rabbi's Study Group</td>
<td>10:00am Berakhot Talmud Study Group</td>
<td>19 Adar I</td>
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<td>7:30pm General Board Meeting</td>
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<td>5:00pm Benel Mitzva Program</td>
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**Service Times**

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<td>9 a.m. Shaharit</td>
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<td>5:45 p.m. Maariv</td>
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<td>5:45 p.m. Maariv</td>
<td>6 p.m. Qabbalat Shabbat</td>
<td>1 p.m. Minha</td>
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