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BEKI bulletin
Congregation
Beth El-Keser Israel

Tammuz-Av-Elul 5777

Vol. 23 Issues 7 & 8

Rabbi's Message: Page 12

TISHA BEAV: DON'T BE ALONE

The fast day of Tisha Be'Av ("ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av") will be observed on Monday night 31 July and Tuesday 1 August 2017. The Mincha afternoon service on Monday will be at 8p, followed immediately at 8:10p by the Maariv evening service. The fast begins at sunset, 8:08p Monday. The evening service also includes communal singing of qinot (dirges) and modern songs fitting the theme and mood. Preview our booklet of [Tisha BeAv Songs, Poems and Dirges \(Qinot\)](#).

The Shaharit (morning) service on Tuesday 1 August is from 7:00a to 8:20a. Both the Monday evening and Tuesday morning services include the reading of the Biblical Book of Eikha (Lamentations). On Tuesday morning, according to the Ashkenazic custom generally followed in our community, *tallit* and *tefillin* are not worn (although *tallit qatan* is worn).

At the Tuesday afternoon Mincha service, from 5:45p to 6:40p, *tallit* and *tefillin* are worn, with the recitation of their usual *berakhot*, and a brief Torah reading is chanted along with a *haftara*.

The fast is observed from 8:08p Monday night until 8:44p on Tuesday evening. As a sign of mourning, many refrain from wearing leather shoes and ostentatious clothing, and do not enjoy music, intimate physical relations or entertainment until Wednesday night (i.e., 24 hours *after* the end of the fast of Tisha BeAv). The extension of the mourning practices is in part recognition that the Temple burned for two days and some of the early sages believed that the memorial should be observed on the tenth as much as or instead of the ninth.



Tisha BeAv commemorates the destruction of the first two Temples and other tragedies that have taken place in our long history. The destruction of the Temples represents the downfall of the independent Jewish government, the devastation of Jewish society and tragic loss of life. The downfall of the Bar Kokhba government and the Roman massacre and destruction of Betar occurred in 135 C.E., and is associated with the execution of 100,000 to over a million Jews in Israel and the exile of many others. On Tisha Be'Av

in 1290, King Edward I signed an edict expelling the Jews from England. Likewise, the expulsion of Jews from Spain occurred on that date in 1492.

The Talmudic discussion associates the destruction of the Temple, and the collapse of the Commonwealth, with unfounded contempt or excessive contention *among* the Jewish People in Israel, which made Israel vulnerable to foreign hegemony. The problem of unfounded contention continues in our day among the Jewish People. Likewise, as Americans, we experience unfounded hatred among ethnic and political groups, which is associated with violence and oppression.

Don't be alone on Tisha BeAv. Join your community for the reading of Lamentations. This year, a contingent from Temple Or Shalom (Orange), with Rabbi Alvin Wainhaus, will join us for the evening of Tisha BeAv, as an expression of solidarity among the Jewish People and a reminder that we as

Continued on Page 3

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BEKI Bulletin

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Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel is affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

To contribute articles or for inquiries regarding membership:

- Call the Synagogue office: 203.389.2108
- Write: 85 Harrison Street, New Haven, CT 06515-1724
- Email: jjtilsen@beki.org
- Visit our web page: www.beki.org

For advertising information, call the synagogue office.

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Tisha BeAv

Continued from **Page 1**

a synagogue community are part of larger people.

The Fast of Av is the only full-day fast on the Hebrew calendar besides Yom Kippur. Those with medical conditions that require oral medications or eating are urged to consult their medical and rabbinic authorities.

A *seudat mafseget* (meal before a fast) is traditionally modest, not a feast. Before undertaking any fast, one should eat a nutritious meal of normal proportions. Fresh fruits and vegetables are believed to help maintain hydration. Consult your dietician or medical references for dietary and medical advice. The [New York Times](#) reported in June 2015 that over 1,000 people died while fasting in Karachi, Pakistan, during Ramadan, in part due to a heat wave in which temperatures regularly exceeded 110 degrees, and the social and police enforcement of fasting. On Tisha BeAv, we commemorate the death of our forebears, but we do not seek to re-enact it; it is prohibited to endanger one's life fasting and anyone with doubt about safety or with any risk factors should consult their physician. In keeping with tradition, those who cannot fast should drink or eat modestly, minimally and privately.

Courtyard Cookout: Tu BeAv Celebration

Tu BeAv (15 Av) occurs on Sunday night 6 August and Monday 7 August 2017

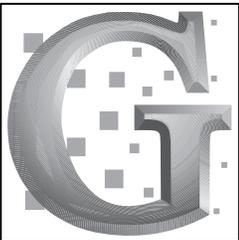
Join members and friends for a Tu BeAv summer cookout in the courtyard (indoors if bad weather) on Sunday night 6 August. Come for the 5:45p minha-maariv services in the air-conditioned beit midrash and stay for the celebratory event that follows. This event is a revival of a popular festive day from the time of the Mishna.

From *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (1906), s.v. Ab, 15th Day of:

Popular festival in Judea during the time of the Second Temple.... According to a tradition preserved in the Mishnah (Ta'anit, iv. 9, 10; Gem. pp. 26, 31), on that day, as well as on the Day of Atonement, the maidens of Jerusalem, rich and poor, without exception, dressed in white, went out to dance in the vineyards with the young men, asking them to make their choice of a partner for life. The fair ones sang: "Young men, turn your eyes to beauty; for woman stands for beauty." The patricians' daughters sang: "Young men, turn your eyes to noble parentage; for woman is the preserver of family pride." Those possessing neither beauty nor noble birth sang: "Grace is [deceptive] and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." Of the many reasons given in the Talmud for the celebration of this day, that attested by the oldest authority, R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus of the first century (Megillat Ta'anit, v.) is that it was the great day of wood-offering, when both priests and people brought kindling-wood in large quantities to the altar, for use in the burning of sacrifices during the whole year. ... The actual explanation is given in Meg. Ta'anit, v. and Mishnah, iv. 5, according to which nine families of Judah brought at certain times during the year the wood for the burning of the sacrifices on the altar, in accordance with Neh. x. 34; on the Fifteenth Day of Ab, however, all the people, the priests as well as the Levites, took part in the wood-offering.

– Kaufmann Kohler





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Mary Lesser's "Immigrant Journals"

A recurring theme of BEKI-member artist Mary Lesser's evolving artwork has been the plight of the refugee, captured through images in various media. Her latest exhibit entitled "Immigrant Stories" will be installed in the BEKI art gallery from 9 July through mid-September.

The collection portrays images of immigrants, mostly women and children, from many countries who have found a home in the United States, as well as those of refugees and displaced persons who are still vulnerable. Of the latter pieces, she states "some contain layers of collage pieces combined with acrylic paint."

Over a lifetime (from the age of 7) as an artist Mary has explored both abstract and representational forms in

print, acrylic, oil and collage. Her abstract work reflects her interest in science and contains scientific formulae. Her representational images evoke emotional responses. Mary explains, "While I am clearly interested in storytelling, I hope to make the work sufficiently mysterious that viewers will be inspired to develop their own stories about the images."

A graduate of Brandeis University (and Yale Law School) Mary has continued her art studies over the years at the Creative Arts Workshop in New Haven, as well as at the Rhode Island School of Design, Bennington College, and the New York Studio School. She has exhibited in many solo and group shows, primarily throughout Connecticut.



המקום ינחם

HaMaqom Yinahem

With sorrow we note the passing of

Evelyn Woolfson, mother of Roni Woolfson

Rita O. Smith, mother of Carole (& Paul) Bass

Patricia Lee Eagle, sister of Morton Dimenstein

Morton Dimenstein

May the Almighty comfort those who mourn



Deborah Craig and David Wright marry.

Mazal tov to

Ezra Academy (Eighth Grade) Graduates Noam Benson-Tilsen • Aaron Bruce • Benjamin Bruce • Caleb Freiman • Eitan Hirshfield • Jaden Labowe-Stoll • Dimitri Ratner

David Wright & Deborah Craig on their Qiddushin (Jewish wedding) under a huppa at BEKI

Louis & Lisa Petrillo on the birth of grandchild Lina Gong

News

Cemetery News

A few weeks ago the New Haven Register ran an article about the State Street Cemetery in Hamden. The article discussed the fact that nobody was responsible for that cemetery, it was not maintained, and it was impossible to find out who is buried in unmarked graves.

Beth El-Keser Israel owns two cemeteries, one in Hamden on Warner Street (the Beth El Memorial Park) and one in West Haven on Farwell Street (the Keser Israel Memorial Park). Both are owned and maintained by The Beth-El Keser Israel Cemetery Association, out of funds from sale of plots and donations.

To prevent the loss of grave information, the towns now require us, and all cemeteries, to file records when a burial takes place. These records are kept with the town as well as the Cemetery Association, the BEKI office and

rabbi, Shure Funeral Home and Weller Funeral Home.

Karel Koenig, a member of the cemetery committee, has been working to be sure the cemeteries are well-maintained. In the past year we had the fence on Warner Street painted by volunteers, and sunken footstones have been raised.

Plots are available at both cemeteries for sale to members and non members. — Jay Brown

BEKI Honored with JCC-Federation Award

Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel was a recipient of the Robert Eisner Community Service Award from the Jewish Federation – Jewish Foundation – JCC of Greater New Haven in special recognition for our congregation’s help in responding and recovering from the JCC fire of December 2016. Recognition was made at the

community’s annual meeting.

Book Discussion

Rereading the Rabbis: A Woman’s Voice by Judith Hauptman, Sunday 16 July 2017, 6:15p-7p, Library. Read the book, discuss it with others. Everyone welcome. No special guest, no food, just people getting together to talk about an important book. Fascinating insights into the development of the status of women in Jewish law and culture.

Plan Bee

In planning for a program on 27 August exploring bees, honey and their relationship to Rosh Hashana, we are seeking recipes (dairy or pareve) in which honey is a significant ingredient. If you are willing to help prepare samples and share your recipe, contact Darryl Kuperstock kuperst@gmail.com 203-215-8555 by 1 August. Program info forthcoming

Rabbi's Tzedaka Fund (minimum \$25)

- The Robert Spear Family in memory of Susan Spear
- Cindy Smernoff and Nathan Smernoff with condolences to the Volain family
- Robert & Jane Stern marking the *yahrzeit* of mother Tusi Stern
- Leonard & Linda Cohen wishing *mazal tov* to Deborah Craig & David Wright on their *nisuin* (Jewish marriage)
- Shirley Bober marking the *yahrzeit* of Rebecca Bloom
- Harriet Friedman honoring the memory of her grandfather Sam Friedman
- Louis & Lisa Petrillo celebrating the birth of granddaughter Lina Gong

Qiddush Sponsors (minimum \$320)

- Brian Karsif & Elizabeth Karpf
- Rachel Light, Eben Light and Jonathan Freiman
- The Lebowitz family
- Amanda Pogach & Alex Panaccione
- Jay Sokolow & Ina Silverman
- Richard Kantrowitz & Sherry Kent
- The Botwick-Ries family

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

- To Rabbi Murray Levine in memory of Marilyn Levine by Judah Levine & Adina Kling
- To the Abraham family in honor of the birth of their son by Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade
- To the Karsif families in honor of the birth of their son & grandson by Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade
- To Bob Spear with sympathy on the passing of Susan

- Spear by Ruth Silver
- To Bob Spear with sympathy on the passing of Susan Spear by Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade
- To Elijah Light in honor of his Bar Mitzva by Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade
- To Elijah Light in honor of his Bar Mitzva by the Friedman-Bruce family
- To Sarah Rastelli in honor of her Bat Mitzva by Gloria Cohen
- To Elijah Light in honor of his Bar Mitzva by Gloria Cohen
- To Miriam Benson in honor of her birthday by Donna Kemper & Ron Zlotoff
- To Steve & Rachel Wizner in honor of their granddaughter's Bat Mitzva by Donna Kemper & Ron Zlotoff
- To the Abramovitz family with sympathy on the passing of Alan Abramovitz by Donna Kemper & Ron Zlotoff
- To Helene Sapadin in honor of her birthday by Corey Stone & Sue McDonald
- To Adina Kling with sympathy on the passing of Reena Kling by Moshe Levine & Goldie Taub

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

- To Rachel & Steve Wizner in honor of their granddaughter's Bat Mitzva by Margie & Jay Hirshfield
- To Elijah Light in honor of his Bar Mitzva by Margie & Jay Hirshfield

David & Lillian Levine Endowment for People with Special Needs

- In memory of his mother Lillian Levine and brother Robert Levine by Richard & Nancy Levine

- To Agnes Simon with sympathy on the passing of Susanne Simon by Giselle Kurz

Harold & Arthur Ratner Memorial Fund

- To Jay Korman in memory of his beloved father Steven Korman from all the Ratners

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

- In memory of her father Irving Bashevkin by Rachel Bashevkin
- In memory of Beverly Zerwitz Zlotoff by Ron Zlotoff & Donna Kemper
- In memory of Margo Siegel by Louis Siegel
- In memory of Walter Harvey Greenwald by Roberta Vine
- In memory of Eric Beller by Andrea Beller
- In memory of Hyman H. Haves by Maeera Haves Mouglin
- In memory of Dora Shure by Betsy Shure Gross, Gary Gross and the late Gertrude Shure
- In memory of Sylvia Kindis by Shirley & Marty Shepro
- In loving memory of Sara Oppenheim by Joyce & Michael Bohnen
- In memory of her late husband Israel Glazman by Polina Naiman
- In memory of her late mother Goldythe N. Eskin Hyman by Shirley & Harold Fidler
- In memory of Marilyn Levine by Mordy & Elizabeth Levine
- In memory of Kate Press by Jeff & Lynne Heisner
- In memory of Rose Hodes by Jeff & Lynne Heisner
- In memory of Regina Lowi by Leatrice & Richard Brodner
- In memory of Barbara Gilbert by Richard & Leatrice Brodner
- In memory of Samuel Olmer by Diana O. Bander
- In memory of Molka Blank by Fania Levine
- In memory of Estelle Gottfried by Helene & Edward Vanderhoef
- In memory of Nathan Spear by Bob Spear
- In memory of Eli & Goldie Kasimer by Joe Kasimer
- In memory of her grandmother Ida Brunswick by Barbara Cushen
- In memory of Eli & Sy Berman by Richard Neveloff
- In memory of Marilyn Levine by Rabbi Murray Levine
- In memory of Breindel Levine by Rabbi Murray Levine
- In memory of Anne Benson by Joanne & Steve Rudof
- In memory of Ida Weiss by Suzanne Weinstein
- In memory of Morris Maltin by Ted Maltin
- In memory of Bessie & Samuel Flamer by Mickey & Bud Chorney
- In memory of Lillian & Nathan Chorney by Bud & Mickey Chorney
- In memory of Leah Wallach by Mickey & Bud Chorney
- In memory of Harriet Chorney by Bud & Mickey Chorney
- In memory of Anna Levine by Diane Hoberman
- In memory of Rose Cohen by Doris & Stephen Brody
- In memory of Milton Weiner by Joanne & Steve Rudof
- In memory of Milton Smirnoff by Bea Smirnoff
- In memory of Eli Slopak by David Schwartz
- In memory of Henry Cohen by Cliff & Donna Cohen
- In memory of Harry Kabakoff by Marvin Kabakoff

Shabbatot (Saturdays)

דַּרְשָׁנִים

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:

Rabbi Elli Cohn, 15 July, *parashat Pinhas*

Ella May, Bat Mitzva, 12 August, *parashat Ekev*

David Hirshfield, 19 August, *parashat Re'ei*

Guest Darshan, 28 October, *parashat Lekh Lekha*

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, 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



Elli Cohn



Ella May



Steven Fraade



Alan Lovins



Nadav Sela

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

Sunday 16 July 2017

Book Discussion: Rereading the Rabbis

Discuss Judith Hauptman's [Rereading the Rabbis](#) on Sunday night 16 July from 6:15p to 7:15p (following the Mincha and Maariv services) with fellow congregants and friends who have read all or part of the book. This scholarly but popular book provides fascinating insights into the development of the status of women in Jewish law and culture.

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.



Jon-Jay Tilsen

Hebrew and English texts are available. The RSG meets immediately following the 7:00a *shaharit* morning service, but will meet at 9:45a on the Monday of Labor Day (4 September) following the 9a 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 or current events.

Rabbis' Study Group

Wednesdays with Murray is a weekly study group exclusively for rabbis, facilitated by Rabbi Murray

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Adult Studies

Continued from Page 7

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 meets Wednesday mornings in the Rosenkrantz Family Library during the school year; the Rabbis’ Group is on summer recess in July and August. For more information, call Rabbi Murray Levine at 203.397.2513.



Murray Levine

Thursdays

Mini Morning Learning Service

The Thursday morning services are supplemented with commentary and teaching relating to the history, themes, choreography and language of the daily morning service. Shaharit service is from 8:15a to 9:15a on Thursdays; on other weekdays, the service begins at 7:00a.

New: Berakhot Talmud Study Group

Beginning now, a weekly study of the Mishna, leading to Gemara study, 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. The Berakhot Talmud Study Group will meet each Thursday in July and August except 17 August 2017.

Done: Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group

The Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group met on Thursdays weekly since 1999. In the summer of 2001, the group marked the completion of their study of Mishna Sanhedrin, in preparation for the Talmud study; at that time, Eric I.B. Beller, Robert Forbes, Carl Goldfield, Michael Koenigsberg, Dr. Marc Schwartz, and Dr. Kal Watsky participated in the siyyum along with Rabbi Tilsen. Over the years, about two dozen people have studied in the group. In April 2017, the group completed the tractate. Congratulations to all those who participated over the years.



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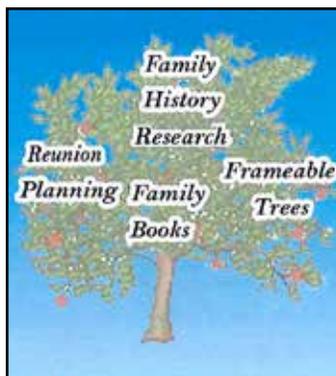
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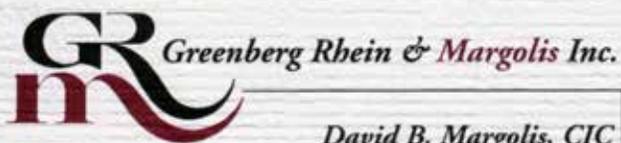
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Service Leaders' & Volunteers' Rotation

The schedule for service leaders for July-Dec 2017 was mailed to 100 participating households in June. It is posted at www.beki.org/worship/service-leader-rotation and available in the literature rack in the lobby or by request via schleppost from office@beki.org. If you would like to request specific dates for January-December 2018, or to be added or dropped from a roster, please contact Jon-Jay at jjtilsen@beki.org for all services, and Miriam Benson mirbenson@aol.com for children's programs. Additional leaders are needed for Pesuqei DeZimra, Friday Night and Shabbat Morning Greeters, Shabbat Minha (Saturday afternoon) and Maariv (Saturday night during winter).

If your name was left out by mistake or you'd now like to be included, please request an "available" date from Rabbi Tilsen by email (but not in person on Shabbat, as we cannot schedule on that day). Normally several additional dates become available during the course of the semester, and anyone erroneously omitted will be the first to be asked to fill those dates.

✧ Blood Drive

American Red Cross (the US branch of Magen David Adom) blood drive at BEKI, Thursday 20 July 2017 11a-4:30p. [Info and sign up](#) .

Away with Kids

Twenty BEKI kids are at Camp Ramah, and many at other fine Jewish and special interest camps. Children's Program leaders are asked to make every effort to provide quality and on-time programs even when the groups are small in number.

Tisha BeAv

Monday night 31 July 8p-9:30p & Tuesday 1 August 7a-8:30a and 5:45p-6:40p. Daily services, chanting of Eikha (Lamentations), qinot (dirges) and songs. Don't be alone on Tisha BeAv.

Tu BeAv

Jewish Holiday of Love, Sunday 6 August, 6:15p-8p, courtyard, cookout, meat and pareve, beer, \$5 per person, age 0-5 free, RSVP office@beki.org.

Beit Midrash AC

The air conditioning in the George G. Posener Daily Chapel operates according to a programmed schedule. (It will occasionally operate when the room is unoccupied in order to keep the temperature and humidity at a level safe for the Torah scrolls and books.) If you are planning to use

the room during unscheduled hours, please notify the office in advance so the AC can be programmed accordingly. Manual operation is not available. Art from Home

Helen Rosenberg is looking for volunteers to lend Jewish-themed art work from their homes for this year's 5th "Off Our Walls" High Holiday Exhibit. If you would like to participate with one or several pictures, or have any questions about the exhibit, contact Helen HelR12@aol.com 203-389-9594

Disturbing the Peace

Film & discussion, Sunday 10 September, 7p, free.

JCARR

BEKI partners with Jewish Community Alliance for Refugee Resettlement. Info Gilah Benson-Tilsen gilahbt@gmail.com .

Kadima & USY Advisor

Gilah Benson-Tilsen is the Kadima and USY Advisor for 5778. Thanks to Becky May who served in 5777 and to the Youth Commission for a great year.

BEKI Hesed Committee

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

Torah Reading Coordinator

[Darryl Kuperstock](#) is coordinating BeMidbar (through 22 July).

Loaners

Public-use tefillin are available in the George G. Posener Daily Chapel in a wooden bin behind the *pushkes*. They are new and available for use to members and guests, or for purchase at cost.

Youth Scholarships for Israel & Local Schools & Camps

For Jewish students, see www.jewishnewhaven.org/scholarships .

Israeli Dance

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

Torah Sparks

Brief commentary on weekly parasha from the Conservative Yeshiva (Jerusalem).

Social Eating

Please keep food in social hall, not in lobby or elsewhere, during qiddush and other events.

The Great Satan & The Little Satan

A Message from Rabbi Tilsen

My friend in Israel writes, “Israel is an imperfect democracy for the Jews, and an ethnocratic Jewish State for the Palestinians.... It is difficult to defend the claim that Israel is a democracy. A regime that allows only some of its subjects to take part in politics is not a democracy.”

As an advocate of civil rights, human rights and democracy, and as a proud Israel supporter, I take that criticism to heart. The complaint points not merely to a theoretical deficiency in a purportedly democratic system, but to a reality that profoundly and negatively impacts the lives of real people, subjects and subjugators alike. It points to a problem that constitutes a threat to Israel’s survival, and to Israel’s future as a good place to live.

My concerns are based in love and hopes for a better future, and as far as I know, that characterizes the mind-set of my friend in Israel. Yet the words by themselves could have come equally from the most rabid anti-Israel quarters. Is the aim to democratize, demonize or demoralize? Worrisome to me is that such critiques, lacking a broader perspective, lead some people to develop a thoroughly negative attitude toward Israel and turn away from Israel and the Jewish People. Also worrisome are those who ignore these fundamental problems.

Let’s leave aside the fact that West Bank Palestinian Arabs can vote in Palestinian Authority elections, supposedly for their embryonic government that will eventually subjugate them instead of Israel. Leave aside the 200,000 West Bank Palestinian Arab – Jerusalem residents – who have been invited to take Israeli citizenship but declined, that is, who could participate as citizens if they wanted to. Leave aside the fact that a large proportion of West Bank Palestinian Arabs have been very clear that they do not wish to be Israeli citizens, and do not want to participate in Israeli democracy. And leave aside the fact that this population has never had a greater degree of human or political rights, nor do most of their neighbors in the Arab world.

We can even leave aside the observation that the majority of people living on planet earth today have no more political rights or civil rights than the effectively stateless and unenfranchised West Bank Palestinian Arabs. In the end, there are close to a million adults who are

subjects of Israel but have no say in the Israeli political process. That condition is offensive to an American sensibility, where the objection to mere “taxation without representation” incited violent revolution against British tyranny. And it is utterly contrary to the ideals, and interests, of classical Zionism and traditional Judaism as we know it.

Israel advocates, as well as anti-Israel activists, share a certain obsession and focus on Israel, often ignoring the interests of others or broader perspectives. While there are actual people and groups who care about and advocate on behalf of the interests of Palestinian Arab people, it seems that much of the anti-Israel activity has other purposes and motives.

Consider an analogous situation in the United States today. This is without saying anything about the creation of the United States through the genocide against the Native Peoples, nor to say anything about the role of slavery in building America and creating pervasive and persistent problems. And this is to say nothing about the wars in progress or the current Administration or Congress and the sense of crises that many Americans across the political spectrum feel. The situation I point out is old, chronic and intensifying.

More than four million people live in US territories, such as Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands, of whom 98% are of racial or ethnic minorities, without the right to vote in US presidential or other national elections. They are subjects of the United States who lack the most essential power of participation in its democracy. While the history is very different, this is exactly the same condition that my Israeli friend complained about with respect to West Bank Palestinian Arabs.

Further: There are more than six million American adults who lack the right to vote in national or state elections, due to past felony convictions. While they may have “done their time,” this punishment continues. A felony conviction could be the result of being caught with a single joint of weed in 1969 – and after doing time, the ex-con can never vote again. Most other democracies have no such program of disenfranchisement. About 15% of the male adult African-American citizenry in this country lacks the right to vote. In Florida, 40%, and in Kentucky, 50% of adult

Continued on **Page 13**

Satans

Continued from **Page 12**

African-American male citizens do not have a right to vote.

Together, more than 10 million American citizens are subjects of the federal government but lack the most basic political right, that of voting. This is before we take into account the gerrymandering that skews state and national elections (accounting for about a dozen seats in the US House of Representatives), and without considering the discrepancy in presidential voting power between low- and high-population states, which in some instances is a difference of over 300%. And this is without reference to the expiration, revocation and lack of enforcement of Voting Rights Act provisions that were originally designed to ensure voting rights, and without reference to new barriers to voting being promoted in some states – most of which are consciously and intentionally designed to prevent racial and ethnic minorities from voting.

This response to my Israeli friend is not a [whataboutism](#) – it is a whataboutmeism, and in my book, a crucial distinction.

Oddly, despite these fundamental and outrageous flaws in American democracy, people around the world – not so much Norwegians or Canadians – look to the United States as a beacon of democracy, security and opportunity. While focusing on the other serious problems of the United States, not just the issue described here, one might be tempted to use the Iranian regime’s epithet of “The Great Satan.” But in comparing these conditions to those in China, Russia, Ukraine, Nigeria, Mozambique, Turkey, Iran or Syria, America does not look like such a monster.

There is no comparing Israel and the United States – the West Bank is not an island 3,000 miles off Israel’s mainland – nor can we easily compare societies generally, as each has its own unique conditions and history. But Israel should be evaluated by the same standards as other countries, as well as by Israelis’ aspirations and our traditional Jewish ideals.

Several organizations use a set of objective measures of “democracy” or human rights compliance to compare countries around the world. Freedom House, The Economist, the World Economic Forum, all publish annual comparisons. We might measure the proportion of residents who can vote, the proportion of women (if any) in the legislature (if any), the independence of the judiciary, citizens’ access to courts. The Economist, a classical liberal British media company, using 60 indicators, offered the following “[Democracy Index](#),” a ranking of 167 countries,

North Korea	1.03
China	3.14
Russia	3.24
Egypt	3.31
Jordan	3.96
Mozambique	4.02
Moldova	6.01
Mexico	6.47
Israel	7.85
U.S.	7.98
Britain	8.36
Canada	9.15
Norway	9.93

on a scale of 0 (Authoritarian) to 10 (Full Democracy).

In this ranking, both Israel and the United States are deemed “flawed democracies.” Similar rankings of “democracy” and “freedom” by liberal and conservative organizations place Israel close to the United States. These almost-good scores might not mean much to the person

who has no access to medical care or clean water, no job or no right to vote. But the comparisons suggest that the belief held by some that Israel is a uniquely monstrous entity worthy of dissolution, or that American Jews should be particularly ashamed of our association with Israel, are not founded in objective, quantifiable reality, but rather are based on hate, prejudice and fantasy.

Sometimes visiting American Jews are shocked to see the conditions in the territories under Israeli military control, such as the regime in Hebron, and are disillusioned; such was reported recently in *Haaretz* concerning a senior Connecticut rabbi. Who knew? It has been that way more or less since 1968.

Israel has many wonderful, progressive institutions and practices, as well as some terrible ones. Before deciding to reject Israel, these Americans should learn more about the country they live in. That means seeing rural poverty in the south (and elsewhere), isolated Indian reservations, urban decay in Baltimore and Detroit. That means getting to know people who live in fear of the police, who are homeless, who have gone bankrupt due to medical conditions. While it is one thing to *experience* these circumstances and another to be *concerned* about them, it is yet another problem that many American have no idea of what goes on in their own country.

I reject the Iranian government’s characterization of Israel as “The Little Satan” and of the United States as “The Great Satan.” Many Israelis and friends are working to address the problems in Israeli society, just as Americans are trying to make this country better. It may be that due to its scale and reach, the United States is the greatest threat to world peace and human existence, but if you think *America* has problems, take a look at the rest of the world. As a great power, America offers vast potential for advancing or for destroying human civilization.

My response to my Israeli friend is, you think *you* have problems? Let’s compare notes.



July 2017

7 Tammuz 5777 - 8 Av 5777

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

Mark Your Calendar

Fast of Tamuz 11 July 2017
 Book Discussion: Rereading the Rabbis 16 July 2017
 Blood Drive 20 July 2017
 Rosh Hodesh Av 23-24 July 2017-05-01
 Shabbat Hazon 29 July 2017
 Tisha BeAv 31 July – 1 August 2017
 Shabbat Nahamu 5 August 2017

Tu BeAv Cookout 6 August 2017
 Tu BeAv 6-7 August 2017
 Darshanit Ella May 12 August 2017
 Chapel on the Green with Church of the Holy Spirit 13 August 2017
 Darshan David Hirshfield 19 August 2017
 Rosh Hodesh Elul 21-23 August 2017
 Disturbing the Peace: Film & discussion 10 September 2017
 Global Character Day: Dinner & Program 13 September 2017

1
 10:45am Children's Programs
 Qiddush: Wallace & Doft
 5:45pm Minha

 7 Tammuz

2 8 Tammuz	3 Office Closed 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour	4 Office Closed/Independence Day 9:00am Shaharit No Israeli Dance	5	6 10:00am Berakhot Study Group	7 8:09pm Candle Lighting	8 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Shabbat Shalom Torah Study Qiddush: Levine (Sid & Donna) 5:45pm Minha
9	10 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour	11 Fast of Tammuz 17 7:30pm Israeli Dance	12	13 10:00am Berakhot Study Group	14 8:05pm Candle Lighting	15 Darshan: Elli Cohn 10:45am Children's Programs Qiddush: Rader 5:45pm Minha
16	17 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour	18 7:30pm Israeli Dance	19	20 10:00am Berakhot Study Group	21 8:00pm Candle Lighting	22 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Shabbat Shalom Torah Study Qiddush: Bashevkin/Dunsker 5:45pm Minha
23	24 Rosh Hodesh 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour 7:30pm Executive Board Meeting (off-site)	25 7:30pm Israeli Dance	26	27 10:00am Berakhot Study Group	28 7:54pm Candle Lighting	29 10:45am Children's Programs Qiddush: TBA 5:45pm Minha
30 7 Av	31 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour 8:00pm Minha 8:10pm Maariv & Eikha	Selihot Night 16 September 2017 Rosh HaShana Night 20 September 2017 Rosh HaShana Days 1 & 2 21-22 September 2017 Shabbat Shuva 23 September 2017 Fast of Gedalia 24 September 2017 Qever Avot Cemetery Memorial Service 24 Sept. 2017 Kol Nidre & Yom Kippur Night 29 September 2017 Yom Kippur Day 30 September 2017		Posener Family Memorial Break-Fast 30 Sept. 2017 Sukkot First Night 4 October 2017 Shabbat Hol HaMoed Sukkot 2017 Hoshana Rabba Morning 11 October 2017 Shemini Atseret 11-12 October 2017 Simhat Torah Night 12 October 2017 Simhat Torah Day 13 October 2017 Visiting Scholar Noam Zion 27-29 October 2017		

Service Times

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

August 2017

9 Av 5777 - 9 Elul 5777

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Fast of Tisha B'Av 7:00am Shaharit No Israeli Dance 5:45pm Minha 9 Av	2 10 Av	3 10:00am Berakhot Study Group 11 Av	4 7:46pm Candle Lighting 12 Av	5 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Shabbat Shalom Torah Study Qiddush: TBA 5:45pm Minha 13 Av
6 14 Av	7 Tu B'Av 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour 15 Av	8 7:30pm Israeli Dance 16 Av	9 17 Av	10 10:00am Berakhot Study Group 18 Av	11 7:37pm Candle Lighting 19 Av	12 10:45am Children's Programs Bat Mitzva: Ella May 5:45pm Minha 20 Av
13 9:45am Chapel on the Green (off-site) 21 Av	14 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour 7:30pm General Board Meeting 22 Av	15 7:30pm Israeli Dance 23 Av	16 24 Av	17 25 Av	18 7:27pm Candle Lighting 26 Av	19 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Shabbat Shalom Torah Study Qiddush: Starr/Hirshfield 5:45pm Minha 27 Av
20 28 Av	21 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour 29 Av	22 Rosh Hodesh I 7:30pm Israeli Dance 30 Av	23 Rosh Hodesh II 1 Elul	24 2 Elul	25 7:16pm Candle Lighting 3 Elul	26 10:45am Children's Programs Qiddush: Palumbo 5:45pm Minha 4 Elul
27 5 Elul	28 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour 7:30pm Executive Board Meeting (off-site) 6 Elul	29 7:30pm Israeli Dance 7 Elul	30 8 Elul	31 10:00am Berakhot Study Group 9 Elul		

Service Times

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



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