Shavuot Two-Day Festival: The Jewish Hajj

The Festival of Shavuot ("Weeks"), one of the three major pilgrimage festivals, celebrates the anniversary of the Giving of the Torah at Sinai some 3,328 years ago. The word hag (pilgrimage festival) is known widely by its Arabic cognate, hajj (which, for Muslims, means pilgrimage to Mecca). The Torah commands, “Three times a year—on the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the Feast of Weeks, and on the Feast of Booths—all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place that He will choose. They shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed, but each with his own gift, according to the blessing that the Lord your God has bestowed upon you” (Deut. 16:16-17).

Shavuot comes at the culmination of the counting of seven weeks from Pesah, and will be a major observance at BEKI this summer. Just as we look forward to important events in our personal lives, so too our ancestors enthusiastically and devoutly anticipated the event at Sinai. By participating in BEKI’s Shavuot observance, we re-enact the extraordinary experience of our ancestors and show our own enthusiasm for receiving Torah.

The traditional greeting is Hagg Sameah – חַג שָׁמָּהָ – Happy Festival.

Tiqun Leil Shavuot

Our annual Tiqun Leil Shavuot Night of Study takes place on the first night of Shavuot, Motse’ei Shabbat (Saturday Night) 11 June 2016. Dairy and pareve refreshments will be served.

Tiqun Leil Shavuot presenters

Mark Oppenheimer  Paul Bass  Jay Sokolow

The Shabbat minha afternoon service is at its usual hour, 5:45p – 6:15p. The Shavuot evening begins with the Festival Evening Service from 9p – 9:20p in the George G. Posener Daily Chapel. A shiur (text study or lecture) will begin at 9:20p.

Shiurim (sessions) will be presented late into the evening. Please see “This Week at BEKI” for a complete list of presenters and schedule.

Shavuot Mornings

Yizkor Memorial Service

Book of Ruth

The Shavuot First Day Festival Shaharit Morning Service begins at 9:15a on Sunday 12 June 2016. The service includes the full recitation of Hallel. The afternoon and evening services begin at 5:45p. Candle lighting Sunday night is at 9:07p or later.
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.

Amazon Commission

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

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.
Deadline for submission of ads or articles is the first of the month preceding publication.
Annual subscription is $36
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Shavuot
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The Shavuot Second Day Morning service begins at 9:15a on Monday 13 June 2016. The Festival service includes a Shaharit morning service, Hallel (Psalms of praise), a Torah reading and Haftara. Following the Haftara (prophetic reading), the Yizkor Memorial Service is held. The Yizkor memorial service is one of four such services during the year that help us recognize our feelings of loss, which are sometimes especially intense during the Festival season, and to honor the memories of our loved ones.

Following Yizkor, the Book of Ruth is read to a uniquely beautiful and ancient melody based on the same system of ta’amei hamigra (“trope”) found in most of the Hebrew Bible. Then the Festival Musaf additional service is recited.

Some Congregants may leave during qiddush for a hike to the top of West Rock. Weather permitting, bring appropriate shoes and leave with friends from the lobby.

The Festival Minha service is held in the George G. Posener Daily Chapel from 5:45p to 6:05p.

Endowment for BEKI Kids at Camp Ramah

As part of his preparation for becoming a Bar Mitzva, Noam Benson-Tilsen, son of Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen & Miriam Benson, completed a course of study in the BEKI Benei Mitzva Program, which included study of sacred and contemporary texts and learning to lead services. To mark the beginning of Noam’s acceptance of adult responsibilities toward God and Humanity, Noam has established an endowment at the Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven to support BEKI youth in attending Camp Ramah, our affiliated summer day camp.

Last summer, 22 BEKI youth attended Camp Ramah of New England, in Palmer, Mass., including two on staff. BEKI has one of the largest Ramah contingents in Connecticut and the largest in proportion to membership. Ramah has been the single most popular camp among BEKI youth for many years. The Camp offers a wide range of activities, all in the context of a kosher and Shabbat-observant community. Staff members come from across the United States and Israel, and include Jewish Theological Seminary students and faculty.

The endowment will provide a small subsidy each year to BEKI youth to attend Camp Ramah. While camp tuition is expensive, Ramah provides a generous package of scholarships and aid to enable qualified youth to attend. In addition, BEKI Sisterhood’s Marcel Gutman Scholarship Fund provides a subsidy to youth in grades 8-12 to attend Ramah and other Jewish camps and Israel programs, and the Jewish Federation and Jewish Foundation’s Jewish Scholarship Initiative also provides support for Jewish camping. This new endowed camp scholarship could use up to $1.25 million to provide full support, though the expectation is that it will be funded on the order of 1 percent to 2 percent of that full amount.

If you would like to contribute to this endowment, checks payable to “Cong. Beth El-Keser Israel” can be sent to “BEKI, 85 Harrison St., New Haven, CT 06515” with a memo notation “NOAM.” Contributions are tax-deductible; BEKI is a recognized 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Contributions can also be made directly to the Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven and directed to the Noam Benson-Tilsen Fund.

For more information on this fund or on creating other funds for the benefit of BEKI, contact Jewish Foundation Director Lisa Stanger (lstanger@jewishnewhaven.org) 203.387.2424 x382.
Sisterhood

One of the nicest of the Jewish Holidays is Shavuot. To me, the story of Naomi and Ruth epitomizes the relationship between a mother-in-law and daughter-in law. Naomi, her husband Elimelekh, and their two sons Mahlon and Khilion, leave the land of Israel during time of famine and settle in the neighboring land of Moab. After the death of Elimelekh, the two sons marry Moabite women. Ten years later, Naomi’s sons also die. Naomi sets out to return to her native land, accompanied by her two daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah. She argues, however, that her two widowed daughters-in-law will be better off in their own country, and she urges them to return to their mothers’ homes. Initially they both protest, but eventually a weeping Orpah heeds Naomi’s advice. Naomi urges Ruth to follow Orpah’s example.

Ruth replied: “Do not urge me to leave you, to turn back and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go; wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus and more may the Lord do to me if anything but death parts me from you.”

On the eve of Shavuot some women gather together and discuss these questions:

Questions for Ruth

1. When did you decide to stay with Naomi?
2. What made you choose Naomi over the family you had left when you married Naomi’s son?
3. Did you ever have second thoughts about your decision?
4. What did you mean when you said “your people shall be my people, and your God my God?”

Question for Naomi

1. Why did you try to convince the two daughters-in-law to return to their mothers’ homes?
2. What did Ruth say that convinced you that she was sincere in her desire to stay with you?
3. Would you have done the same thing as Ruth if you had been in her place?
4. Why or why not?

4. Ruth is considered the first convert to Judaism. Which statement is a greater expression of her identity as a Jew – “your people shall be my people” or “your God shall be my God”?

How do you express your identity as a Jew? Or, how is Jewish identity expressed today?

* * *

Please consider shopping in our Sisterhood Gift Store at the synagogue for your wedding, graduation and general gifts.

Once again Adele Tyson, Sisterhood co-president, will present BEKI president Andy Hirshfield with a donation to the BEKI community.

Sisterhood wishes you all a happy and healthy summer and we hope to greet you all in the fall.

— Mimi Glenn and Adele Tyson, co-presidents of Sisterhood.

Solar Update

Last year, the Congregation purchased a 40 kW solar array that was installed on the classroom wing and social hall roofs. Production of the new array in April was 5.21 MWh, and in March was 4.49 MWh, as projected. The 5.21 MWh can be seen in the context of BEKI’s typical annual use of about 80 MWh.

Monthly production increases as we approach the summer solstice, and then decreases to the winter solstice. This is a function of the duration of sunlight in the summer (about 15 hours) versus the winter (about 9 hours), the angle of the sun, snow cover and cloud cover.

The photovoltaic production of the “Old Array,” operating since 2006 on the school wing roof, is about one-fourth the output of the new array. Together, the arrays produce more than half of BEKI’s electric consumption, and replace the most expensive electricity that would otherwise have been purchased from the utility company. Electric rates for BEKI (and others on similar rate plans, but not most homes) are higher in the afternoons, and higher in the summer, which is exactly when most of the solar arrays’ production occurs.

Because rate structures are very complicated, and usage and weather and other conditions vary, it is difficult to make a precise calculation of how much our electric bill was reduced. Rates change from year to year (general trend: up). A gross comparison would put our May bill, after credits, at about - $100 (that is, a

Continued on Page 7
Contributions

Rabbi’s Tzedaqa Fund
- Lou & Lisa Petrillo in appreciation
- Lori & Natan Weinstein marking the yahrzeit of father Bernard Bober
- Harriet Friedman & Family marking the yahrzeit of Samuel Friedman
- Lou & Lisa Petrillo in thanksgiving

Qiddush Sponsors (minimum $280)
- Murray & Barbara Akresh
- Marisol Sanchez-Moycik & Thomas Moycik; Seth & Lily Rosenthal & Diane Purvin; Julie, Gadiel, Aviva & Aaron Robbins; Lesley Frame & Steve, Sam & Jacob Werlin
- Nanette Stahl
- Carl Goldfield & Gaylord Bourne
- The Weiner & Rastelli family
- Diane Purvin & Seth Rosenthal

Chai Fund (minimum $18) to support synagogue operations
- To Nancy Salk with sympathy on the passing of Marilyn Salk by Sherry Kent
- To Nancy Salk with sympathy on the passing of Marilyn Salk by Joanne Foodim & Rob Forbes
- To Corey Stone & Sue McDonald with sympathy on the passing of Enid Weisz Stone by Rhoda Zahler Samuel & Al Samuel
- To Corey Stone & Sue McDonald with sympathy on the passing of Enid Weisz Stone by Rachel Bashevkin & Eric Dunsker
- To Monica Starr in honor of her milestone birthday & Andy Hirshfield in honor of his non-milestone birthday from the Birn family (to the roof fund)
- To Monica Starr in honor of her 50th birthday & Andy Hirshfield in honor of his birthday by Joan Jablow
- To Monica Starr in honor of her birthday by Sue & Emily McMillan
- To Meredith Abel with sympathy on the passing of Carolyn Anne Abel by Sherry & Steve Rothman
- To Nancy Salk with sympathy on that passing of Marilyn Salk by Rita & Nadav Sela

Synagogue Fund (minimum $10) to support synagogue operations
- To Nancy Salk with sympathy on the passing of Marilyn Salk by David & Darryl Kuperstock
- To Corey Stone & Sue McDonald with sympathy on the passing of Enid Weisz Stone by David & Darryl Kuperstock
- To Corey Stone & Sue McDonald with sympathy on the passing of Enid Weisz Stone by Leon Cummings

BEKI Religious School
- To Nancy Salk with sympathy on the passing of Marilyn Salk by the Silverman & Sokolow family
- To Corey Stone & Sue McDonald with sympathy on the passing of Enid Weisz Stone by the Silverman & Sokolow family
- To Andy Hirshfield & Monica Starr in honor of their birthdays by the Silverman & Sokolow family

The Harold & Arthur Ratner Memorial Fund
- To Richard Kahn in honor of his healthy recovery and his upcoming nuptials to Slotka from the Ratner family
- Thanks to the BEKI community for the Purim basket by Betsy Ratner
- To Howard, Shilo & Indigo Ratner in honor of the birth of Sage Sky Ratner by Betsy & Mikki Ratner
- To Ann Tilow with sympathy on the passing of Jeffrey Yefim Fleshler by Betsy & Mikki Ratner
- In memory of her parents Etta & Charles Miller by Mikki Ratner
- In memory of her sister Louise Egalika by Mikki Ratner
- In memory of Max Bronfin by Mikki Ratner

Yahrzeit Fund (minimum $5)

Visit us at www.beki.org
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:

Caleb Freiman, bar mitzva, parashat Qedoshim, 14 May.
Ayelet Kaminski, bat mitzva, parashat BeHuqotai, 4 June.
Dmitri Ratner, bar mitzva, parashat Naso, 18 June.
Noam Benson-Tilsen, bar mitzva, parashat BeHa’alotekha, 25 June.

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 shulgoers 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.

VeNomar Amen! Beginning Hebrew with Will

Beginning Hebrew with Will meets every other Saturday morning from 10:45a – 11:45a in the office (on the weeks that Shabbat Shalom Torah Study does not meet) in June. Practice Hebrew listening, speaking, and Alef-Bet recognition. Modern Hebrew; suitable for those interested in Biblical and Prayer Book study as well. Free; all welcome. With Will Auriemme.

Mondays

Rashi Study Group: Shemuel

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 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, Michal, 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 7:00a shaharit morning service, but will not meet on Monday 13 June, the second festival day of Shavuot. 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 meets Wednesday mornings in the Rosenkrantz Family Library, but is on summer recess. 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.

**Solar**

Continued from Page 4

credit of $100), compared to $1,412.5 in May 2015. Our heaviest use is in August, September and October, where, in recent years, a monthly bill has reached $2,332.

Technical information about the array is available at beki.org under “Our Community / Ecology.”

Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel seeks to be a model urban institution and to promote good citizenship among its members. The community seeks to comply with the Biblical law of *bal tashhit*, which prohibits destruction of the natural environment and wasting of resources. Stewardship of community resources and responsible management are also central values. Under present circumstances, installation of this array enables us to better comply with the rule against environmental destruction and at the same time exercise responsible financial management – this thanks to the generous support of our members and friends, and the efforts of Yaron Lew and the officers in executing this plan. Special thanks go to the Batsheva Labowe-Stoll Fund, the Borick Family, Carol Cohen & Marc Weitzman, Gloria Cohen, Lloyd & Kai Yang Friedman, Jay & Marjorie Hirschfield, Donna Kemper & Ronald Zlotoff, Sid & Donna Levine, Stanley Rosenbaum, Rebecca Weiner & Mike Rastelli, two anonymous supporters, and several additional members and supporters for funding this project. In addition to the leadership of Yaron Lew, the project also enjoyed the assistance of Bob Spear, David Wright, Andy Hirschfield and others.

While most of the cost of the array has been covered by our supporters named above, additional support is welcomed. No contribution is too large or too small.

Shaharit service is from 8:15a to 9:15a on Thursdays; on other weekdays, the service begins at 7:00a.

**Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group**

The *Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group* meets on Thursdays from 1p to 2p 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.

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 BEKI’s Rosenkrantz Family Library. The group will meet in June and July, and then will be on recess until after the festivals. With Rabbi Tilsen.

**Every Day**

**Divrei Torah on the Web**

Mazal tov to

Mollie Sapadin & Austen Katz on their aufruf at BEKI on Shavuot morning (Sunday 12 June) and their plan to enter qiddushin (Jewish marriage) under a huppa this summer.

Benei Mitzva

Caleb Freiman, son of Jonathan Freiman & Rachel Light, and of the late Amy Aaland, 13-14 May 2016, parashat Qedoshim
Ayelet Kaminski, daughter of Naftali & Iris Kaminski, 3-4 June 2016, parashat BeHuqotai
Dmitri Ratner, son of Rabbi Joshua & Elena Ratner, 17-18 June 2016, parashat Naso
Noam Benson-Tilsen, son of Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen & Miriam Benson, grandson of Evelyn Benson, 24-25 June 2016, parashat BeHa’alotekha
David Walstedter, son of Scott & Lisa Walstedter, 22-23 July 2016, parashat Balaq
Michelle Grutzendler, daughter of Nicole & Jaime Grutzendler, 16-17 September 2016, parashat Ki Tetsei

Come One Come All

Yes, you are invited to the benei mitzva services. All of our prayer services are open to the public (with some restrictions on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur) and it is not only desired that our members and neighbors attend, it is demanded, at least from the perspective of tradition. Some celebrant families send invitations to the entire congregation or to a group of friends or associates in order to help publicize the celebration, to aid in planning for food service, or to promote a project. That fact does not imply that absence of direct or personal invitation is a disinvitation; to the contrary. Some people do not send invitations because they assume everyone knows they are “invited” or to avoid the expense or effort.

Much of the point of benei mitzva services is to celebrate the emergence of the former child into the adult Jewish community, and for that to be maximally meaningful, that actual community needs to be present. Aside from the main event of the service or services, some families have private parties or family gatherings, which is a different matter.

Annual Meeting

Members and guests are invited to our Annual Meeting, Monday 20 June, 6:30p–7:45p. Includes retrospective reports, memorial to departed members, recognition of Legacy Donors, and election of officers. And food.

USY Camping

29-30 May 2016, American Legion Forest, info bekibjusy@gmail.com.

Get Camp Scholarships

BEKI Kids going to Jewish summer camps can receive support from Federation-Foundation JSI (all ages).

Give Camp Scholarships

To contribute to existing BEKI Camp Scholarship funds, send check to “Cong. Beth El-Keser Israel” with memo “NBT Ramah Fund”; to create a new named fund, contact Lisa Stanger (lstanger@jewishnewhaven.org) or Donna Levine (Sdsjj@aol.com) or Rabbi Tilsen (jtitlsen@beki.org).

Jewish Support to Refugees

JCARR is helping a refugee family from Democratic Republic of Congo via Rwanda. Refugees need jobs, and English tutors; if you can help contact Jean jsilk@jewishnewhaven.org. To donate, visit www.crowdrise.com/JCARR. Info from BEKI reps Rachel Doft (rdoft@yahoo.com) or Megan Doherty (rabbi.doherty@gmail.com).

Charge It

You can pay most BEKI fees and make donations using VISA, MasterCard, Discover and American Express cards. See https://www.beki.org/about/make-a-donation/ or ask Office Manager Peggy office@beki.org for help.

May the Almighty comfort those who mourn
We celebrated National Mix It Up Day in October to foster greater respect and understanding among our students.
## June 2016
### 24 Iyar 5776 - 24 Sivan 5776

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<td>1:00pm Talmud Study Group</td>
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<td>10:45am Children's Programs Qiddush: Kaminsky 9:45pm Minha</td>
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| **Yom Yaruhaleiyim** | 7:45am Rashi Study Group | Rosh Hodesh | 7:30pm Israeli Dance | 1:00pm Talmud Study Group | 8:07pm Candle Lighting | 11:00pm Shavout
| 7:30pm Executive Board Meeting (off-site) | 28 Iyar/43 L'Omer | 29 Iyar/44 L'Omer | 1 Sivan/45 L'Omer | 2 Sivan/46 L'Omer | 3 Sivan/47 L'Omer | 4 Sivan/48 L'Omer |

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<td><strong>Shavuot</strong></td>
<td>9:15am Festival Service Aufrauf: Sapadin</td>
<td>Qiddush: Sapadin</td>
<td>5:45pm Festival Minha &amp; Maariv</td>
<td>1:00pm Talmud Study Group</td>
<td>6:00pm Dimitri Ratner Bar Mitzva</td>
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<td>7:45am Rashi Study Group</td>
<td>Rosh Chodesh</td>
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<td><strong>Shavuot II (Yizkor)</strong></td>
<td>7:45am Rashi Study Group</td>
<td>7:30pm Israeli Dance</td>
<td>1:00pm Talmud Study Group</td>
<td>6:00pm Noam Benson-Tilsen Bar Mitzva</td>
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### Service Times

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<td>5:45 p.m. Maariv</td>
<td>5:45 p.m. Maariv</td>
<td>5:45 p.m. Maariv</td>
<td>6 p.m. Qabbalat Shabbat</td>
<td>Before sunset: Minha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>