



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

June 1999 - Tammuz 5759

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Book of Life Luncheon

[Sisterhood](#)'s major event of the year, the annual "[Book of Life](#)" luncheon, will take place on Tuesday 22 June at 12 noon. This is a not-to-be-missed event! When you receive the invitation, Sisterhood President Adele Tyson urges that you respond immediately. Come and honor three wonderful friends of Sisterhood: Martin Faymann, Charlie Ludwig (pictured at right) and Louis Rogoff, enjoy the program featuring a national entertainer, and eat some delicious food. See you there!

 Charlie

Sisterhood also reports that Sisterhood has sent Women's League for Conservative Judaism a donation for Kosovo Refugee Relief. The funds will be forwarded to American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee for disbursement.

Annual Meeting

The BEKI Annual Meeting will be on Monday 28 June 1999 beginning at 7:30p. Come see your friends and find out what is happening in the congregation.

Speakers in June

 Hannah Goldfield

Hannah Goldfield (pictured at left), daughter of **Carl Goldfield & Gaylord Bourne**, will lead and participate in services as a *bat mitzva* on Shabbat 5 June 1999. Hannah is a graduating student at the [United Hebrew School](#).

Stephen Wizner (pictured at right) will discuss the Torah reading as darshan on Shabbat morning 19 June. Steve teaches law at Yale University and lives with his wife **Rachel** in New Haven. He has held numerous leadership positions at BEKI.

 Stephen Wizner

 Robert Forbes

Robert Forbes (pictured at left) will discuss the Torah reading as darshan on Shabbat morning 26 June. Robert serves on BEKI's Board of Directors and is the Executive Coordinator of the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance and Abolition, at Yale University. He lives with his wife, **Dr. Joanne Foodim**, and their children in New Haven.

A Message from Rabbi Tilsen

Use your words

The Almighty sent us a message recorded in the Torah: "You shall not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor."

The Jewish People sent a message to the world after the Shoah, the Holocaust in Europe: "Never Again."

Those words seem clear. But words can be understood and misunderstood, construed and misconstrued, in many ways. The same holds true for gestures and deeds.

"Use your words!" My wife taught me to say this to little children, to help them express their desires, anger and other feelings. Instead of throwing the apple sauce on the floor, you say, "No, thanks." Instead of kicking your playmate, you say, "I'm angry at you!" And she has had to say "use your words" to me a few times when I was using some of my more primitive "male" means of communication. It is a good lesson.

Words can be very effective. Absence of verbal communication can be disastrous. Robert McNamara, one of the masterminds of the American war in Indochina, explains that the "Domino Theory," which underpinned American war policy in that era, had no basis in reality. According to the Domino Theory, if the Communist regime of North Vietnam succeeded in overthrowing the dictatorship of South Vietnam, the North Vietnamese would

proceed to foment Communist revolution throughout Indochina and conquer the region. As it turns out, no leader or politician in North Vietnam during that period ever expressed the slightest interest in such a venture. North Vietnamese leaders and scholars -- including those who opposed the Communist government -- were dumbfounded, perplexed, and aghast to learn that the Americans actually believed anything as ridiculous as that.

Robert McNamara also said that the Americans never talked with the North Vietnamese leaders. They did not understand each other at all -- not their motives, their ideas, their values, their plans. Had they spoken with each other, things could have been different, says McNamara.

Today our government is sending a message to Yugoslavia. The message is being delivered by cruise missiles and other smart bombs. The message, apparently, is supposed to be, "stop uprooting and slaughtering people in Kosovo or we'll bomb your military and government facilities. We are doing this only because we care about innocent civilians." But the message the Serbs are hearing is, "We are America, the most powerful country in the world, and while we didn't do much when the Croats were expelling and slaughtering ethnic Serbs, we must object when your military tries to stop the Kosovo Liberation Army from terrorizing people and destabilizing the government. We are the superior nation and we will bomb you until you agree to all of our demands, such as the stationing of thousands of our armed troops in your country." Or something like that. A bomb speaks louder than a thousand words.

Some have suggested that the American government try communicating in a different way with the Yugoslavian Serbs. If you want to "send a message," try beaming pictures of murdered or homeless Albanians on every Yugoslav TV channel. Or flooding the radiowaves with the cries of newly orphaned children, or with world leaders condemning the violence of their government. Or dropping piles of manure from F-15s onto Belgrade. Saying, "stop the violence. Violence is wrong."

So far, Secretary Albright has broadcast only three messages to the Yugoslavian people on Voice of America. Imagine if Budweiser or McDonalds broadcast only three advertisements in the course of six months.

Our government spends about over half a trillion dollars a year on its military programs and adventures. This is over 20 times what is spent on diplomacy, education, propaganda and foreign aid. That means that the most fully developed tool - by far - available to our respected leaders is the military. We are not prepared to make any other serious response. Our policy to treat violence with violence can put us in the same category as those regimes we criticize and perpetuates this destructive behavior. Instead of being a last resort, violence is often our first resort.

Some have said that the answer to NATO bombing was more violence by the Yugoslav government, an intensification of their program.

The American action in Yugoslavia is a significant development in the technology of warfare. It is a major trial of the remote-control war. Cruise missiles are launched from hundreds of miles away, and make their bullseye within six feet. Airplanes fly so high the people on the ground cannot see them. Targets are selected to inflict maximum damage to the military and government, but not to terrorize the population. Sorry if anyone gets hurt. Little cans open over Yugoslav power substations, dropping silicon tape that shorts out the

wires and knocks out power without permanently damaging the equipment. Most importantly, American soldiers are not being killed. Consequently, few Americans are protesting.

People have asked, "Why are we so eager to help the innocent people being slaughtered in Kosovo, but did precious little for those in Rwanda?" Now we know: This techno-war would not work in Rwanda, against an army slaughtering people with machetes. There was no economic infrastructure, no military equipment to destroy, no power grid to disrupt. And anyway, the Rwandans are African, so America cared less.

Mahatma Gandhi, this century's greatest champion of nonviolence, said that violence is not always the worst response. But he was convinced that it was never the best. My people, the Jewish People, have a long and glorious history of confronting violence and injustice through nonviolent means. Let's try using our words. The best way to "support our troops" is not to cheer mindlessly but to listen and talk to the parties to the conflict. In the meantime, we must help the refugees and survivors.

Reader response is welcomed. Email to Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen: jjtilsen@aol.com.

Dear Rabbi: Answers, Advice and Helpful Household Hints

Dear Rabbi,

I have a perplexing question concerning the Kashrut of yogurt -- which I had always assumed would be dairy by nature. A certain brand, Yoplait, uses Kosher gelatin. Is Kosher gelatin the same product I think it is (i.e, derived from a Kosher animal)? And so is Yoplait a mixture of dairy and (kosher!) meat? What is the story?

Signed, Kosher consumer

Dear Kosher,

Kosher gelatin is sometimes made from fish parts, and thus parve, although I would be surprised if this were the case with the gelatin used in Yoplait. Most kashrut agencies permit gelatin derived from kosher animals on the basis of "devar hadash" -- that is, the material is so highly processed that it no longer is recognizable as the original substance, but rather has become a "devar hadash," a "new substance." Gelatin would thus be parve. In my view, this particular application of the "devar hadash" principle is a problem, since in the public's eye gelatin is always viewed as an animal-derived product. The BEKI kitchen does not permit the use of any animal-derived gelatins. And the last time I looked, Yoplait had a plain "K" symbol, which is not an acceptable indication of rabbinic supervision. This product would not be accepted for use in the BEKI kitchen.

Dear Rabbi,

Why is the Keser Israel Memorial Park (cemetery) all the way out where it is? Similarly, the Beth El Memorial Park (cemetery) must also have been way out when it was dedicated.

Signed, Dying to Know

Dear Know,

Long ago when the sites were obtained, land was cheaper outside the city. Moreover, it is viewed as proper that a cemetery be a little bit out of sight.

UHS Promotion & Graduation

The [United Hebrew School](#) Promotion & Graduation Exercises will be held on Sunday 13 June. Everyone is welcomed.

To Your Health

The family of Daniel Fine of Peabody, Massachusetts, who died of melanoma last year at the age of 26, has established an educational website in his memory. Dan was a member of Temple Beth Shalom in Peabody. All members of Congregation Beth El Keser Israel with internet access are urged to visit the site at www.skincheck.com for life-saving information.

The site, which emphasizes early detection of melanoma by monthly self-examination of the skin, provides factual information, illustrations, and photographs of early melanomas. When found early, melanoma is curable by simple painless removal in a doctor's office. Waiting can be fatal. Over 600 new cases of melanoma are expected in Connecticut in 1999.

Buying Books on the Web?

Those buying books over the internet can find a registered referral link on BEKI's website to Amazon.com. If you are ordering books through Amazon.com, and you get there through our website, a 5% referral fee will go to BEKI. There is no cost to the book purchaser. The link is at BEKI's Web Site www.uscj.org/ctvalley/beki/linksofinterest.html at the bottom of the page -- you'll see the Amazon.com logo. Or just click on the logo here:



Where There's A Will...

Tradition recommends that one bequeath at least 10% of their estate to *Tzedaka* (charity) such as to Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel, although in many cases financial advisers and estate lawyers have shown how such gifts can be increased through careful planning that takes tax policies into account. Willing a proportion of one's estate to the Congregation is a concrete way of demonstrating one's commitment to Judaism and establishing a moral example for others.

For many, particularly senior citizens, it is possible to earn a guaranteed 8% or more annual return for life on a secured investment and help the Synagogue at the same time. With as little as \$10,000 you can make a charitable remainder gift that allows you and your spouse or other loved one to receive a guaranteed annual interest payment for the rest of your life, all

or much of which is tax-free.

If you would like more information on how to make a bequest or a charitable remainder gift for the benefit of BEKI, contact your own attorney or financial consultant, or call estate planning attorney Donna Levine at 787-1633 for a confidential consultation. Attorney Levine will donate her time to help you establish a will or trust for the benefit of the Congregation. You may also contact Stephen Wizner at 432-4800 or Rabbi Tilsen at 389-2108 ext. 10 for more information on bequests and [endowment](#) opportunities, or call Deborah Kaplan Polivy at the Jewish Foundation (387-2424 ext. 304) for a confidential discussion.

Letters

We wish to thank our many friends at BEKI for their acts of *gemilut hasadim* ("loving-kindness") during Ellen's recent illness and treatment. Your prayers, meals, cards, calls, contributions, and other expressions of support reminded us of how blessed we are to live in such a loving community.

Ellen Cohen and Steven Fraade

LifeCycle

HaMaqom Yinahem Etkhem: We Mourn the Passing of **Sherwin Brotman**, father of BEKI member Jay Brotman, and **Herman Braginsky**, father of BEKI member Dorothea Braginsky

May the memory of our departed be for a blessing.

Mazal tov to **Sara & Steven Stoll**, and **Batsheva Stoll**, on the birth of their daughter and sister **Katya Elisheva Labowe Stoll** on Sunday 11 April 1999.

Mazal tov to **Sarah Dahlia Beller**, **Shoshana Cohen-Fraade**, **Dina Batsheva Kuperstock**, and **Maya Roberts** on graduating from MAKOM.

Corporate Donors

Corporations and S-corporations paying Connecticut State income tax may be eligible for significant tax credits (in addition to federal and state charitable deductions) for contributions to approved programs at BEKI. Programs include providing Access to the Handicapped; [Kulanu](#) for Adults with Developmental Disabilities and Mental Illness;

Energy Conservation; Children's Room Improvements; and Beautification of the BEKI Grounds. Programs also include Beautification and Maintenance of BEKI Cemeteries.

An individual or corporation can contribute toward any of these programs even if they are not able to take advantage of the tax credits. If you have a connection to a corporation that might be willing to contribute toward any of these programs, or if you might like to contribute in an individual capacity, please contact Rabbi Tilsen at (203) 389-2108 or Dr. Brian Karsif at (203) 387-9268.

Publication Deadline Summer Issue

The editorial deadline for the July - August issue of the BEKI *Bulletin* is 1 June. Please be sure to send all of your submissions to Mary Ellen in the BEKI office beki@snet.net or Rabbi Tilsen at jjtilsen@aol.com by that date.

For more information call or write to:

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Email to the BEKI Office: beki@snet.net

Email to Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen: jjtilsen@beki.org