

A New Haven Tradition since 1892

BEKI bulletin

Congregation
Beth El-Keser Israel

Adar-Nisan 5777

Vol. 23 Issue 3

A Message from Rabbi Tilsen: Page 13

TAKING A STAND

A Message from BEKI President Harold Birn

The Conservative movement of Judaism through its constituent organizations, including United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, of which BEKI is a member, issued a statement on 19 January 2017 in regard to the recent executive order related to immigrants and refugees. This statement and the underlying principles were discussed at length by the directors and officers at the most recent BEKI Board of Directors meeting. It was the consensus of the BEKI Board to bring this statement to the attention of the BEKI membership and community. The Board voted to support the statement and the underlying principle that action by government that is directed against a particular group defined by their religious beliefs stands against the values of Judaism. The Board does not take such a statement lightly and does so with the understanding that this is a complex issue with many points of view and may not be speaking for its membership as a whole. That diversity of opinion and respect for each other's beliefs is part of what makes the BEKI community a strong and vibrant one. In that regard, this is

also a time when we can come together in reasoned discourse to share opinions and ideas. BEKI will be hosting a Shabbat Schmooze to facilitate such a conversation on 11 March immediately after the Qiddush (around 1p). A copy of the statement of the Conservative movement follows and can also be found on the USCJ website.

Harold M. Birn

President, Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel on behalf of the officers and directors of the congregation

Conservative Movement Statement on Immigrants and Refugees

NEW YORK - The Conservative/Masorti movement of Judaism as represented by its constituent organizations listed below has issued the following statement regarding the executive order President Donald Trump signed on Friday barring many refugees and immigrants from entering the United States:

Deeply rooted in our tradition, faith, and values, we are a people of immigrants. Throughout our history we often were the stranger in a strange land and were persecuted and attacked simply



The Whole Megilla

The ruler of the most powerful country on the globe has trouble with the women in his life – and with every woman in the country. His chief advisor has a problem with Jews. What could go wrong? Hear this implausible fantasy story from long ago retold in its original form by skilled performers (with signing for the musically impaired), see the all-new executive summary projected on two screens. Come in costume or pajamas, bring a grogger or use ours, enjoy Sisterhood-provided refreshments after the service. How far does this go? 'Ad de-lo Yoda – until you can't tell the difference between the heroes and the villains, at which point you are qualified to vote. Saturday night 11 March 6:45p–8:15p in the sanctuary.

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Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven



All of us. One Foundation.

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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BEKI congregants march for immigration justice Feb. 5 on New Haven Green.

Statement

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for being the other. As Jews, it is not only our religious values that speak to welcoming those who seek shelter and safety, but it is also a pillar of free, democratic nations.

Our religious tradition repeatedly forbids us from oppressing the stranger. For instance, Leviticus 19:34 commands us, ‘The strangers who reside with you shall be to you as your citizens; you shall love each one as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.’ And Exodus 22:21, ‘And you shall not wrong a stranger, neither shall you oppress them; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.’ It is a betrayal of Jewish history and our own Jewish values to stand quiet as victims of war and terror are left helpless – especially on the basis of religion.

The protracted war in Syria has created 7 million displaced persons

within Syria alone and millions more throughout the Middle East, with refugees escaping through Turkey, the Balkans and Europe. Meanwhile, millions of undocumented immigrants in America live in fear of imprisonment, deportation or worse.

The Conservative movement has continuously and consistently advocated for the rights of immigrants including pathways to citizenship and family reunification as a top priority. We call on the US government to reject policy proposals that would halt, limit, or curtail refugee resettlement in the U.S. or prioritize certain refugees over others; and urge President Trump and the U.S. Congress to instead take bold leadership by providing robust funding to support refugees around the world as well as provide necessary resources to refugees who are already resettled in the U.S.

Most importantly, the Conservative Movement completely rejects

the targeting of individuals based on their religion. As Jews, it is an affront to our fundamental values. We are all enriched by the diverse set of experiences that immigrants bring to our society. We see it not only throughout our economy and educational system, but also in our synagogues, camps, schools, and institutions where people of diverse backgrounds, countries of origin and experiences come together to pray to the same God, who sees us all as equals. To do otherwise betrays the Jewish values we find deeply engrained in our faith and history.

Rabbinical Assembly
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
The Jewish Theological Seminary
Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies
Cantors Assembly
Federation of Jewish Men’s Clubs
Mercaz USA
Women’s League for Conservative Judaism
Jewish Educators Assembly



PURIM AT BEKI: BE HAPPY IT'S ADAR

משנכנס אדר מרבים בשמחה

Mishenikhnas Adar marbim besimha – When Adar begins, joy accumulates. – Talmud Eruvin 29a

Mishloah Manot – Purim Baskets

Contact the office at 203-389-2108 x 14 or office@beki.org if you need a form to order Purim Baskets. Please distribute mishloah manot on Purim evening and day.

Shabbat Zakhor

The “Sabbath of Remember!” occurs immediately before Purim, Shabbat 11 March 2017. This Sabbath is marked by reading the Biblical passage reminding us to remember and never forget the cruelty of Amalek. The reading of this passage is in fulfillment of the mitzva which it references, and hearing this reading is considered a mitzva unto itself. For that reason, children’s programs may be timed to let adults and children hear this required reading. Like Taanit Esther, Shabbat Zakhor expresses the serious side of Purim.

Fast of Esther

The holiday of Purim commemorates the failure of a genocidal plot against the Jews in the Persian Kingdom over twenty centuries ago. The dramatic (and some would say comic) story is told in the Biblical Book of Esther, which is read on the night and morning of the holiday.

Taanit Esther (The Fast of Esther) is usually observed the day immediately before Purim; however, to avoid fasting on Shabbat or Friday, the fast this year is advanced to Thursday 9 March. While on Purim we joyously celebrate the failure of the plot and mock the racism of its hatches, on the Fast of Esther we fast and pray that we will bring the world to an era that does not know the threat of genocide. This year, the Fast of Esther begins at dawn (5:01a Eastern Standard Time) on Thursday 9 March 2017. The Thursday *shaharit* morning service is from 8:15a to 9:15a and includes “Avinu Malkenu -- Our Father, Our King,” as



משתה גדול The Big Gulp Purim Seuda (Feast & Party)

Sunday 12 March 2017, 11a-1p
Social Hall – Light Dairy dinner will be served
\$13 per adult, \$11 per child (age 3-12); free age 0-2
[Preregistration](#) by noon 6 March 2017

on Yom Kippur. No food or drink is consumed. The Fast of Esther is a minor observance, and therefore those with any significant medical contraindication should not undertake the fast. The *minha* afternoon service is at 5:45p. The fast ends at 6:34p EST, or when the person observing the

fast eats or drinks, whichever comes first.

See Rabbi Tilsen’s essay, [The Problem of Purim](#).

Megilla Readings

11 & 12 March 2017

Most of the Jewish world will observe Purim on Saturday night 11 March and the following day, Sunday 12 March 2017.

The Shabbat afternoon service is from 5:45p to 6:20p. The Megilla (Scroll of Esther) is read during the evening

services (6:45p to 8:15p) on Saturday night 11 March, and then again during the Sunday morning service, which begins at 9a (ending 10:50a) on 12 March. That Sunday morning we adopt Daylight Saving Time, so plan to set your clocks ahead one hour. The reading is from the Megilla scroll produced according to ancient custom, which, like a Torah scroll, is hand-written on parchment by a trained *sofer*. Children are welcome to dress as children in pajamas ready for bed, asleep in sleeping bags, napping in napsacks, or rocking in rucksacks.

Hearing the reading of the *megilla* (or reading it oneself) in the evening and morning is a Biblical commandment (*mitzva*). Other Purim *mitzvot* (religious imperatives)

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Purim

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include sending food gifts to a neighbor (*mishloah manot*), alms for the poor (*matanot le-eyonim*) and a feast on Purim day (*mishte* or *seuda*). Children are reminded to keep their adults from talking or making too much ruckus during the actual Megilla reading at BEKI. If the congregation makes too much noise during the reading, we will have to start over to insure that everyone hears each word.

Groggers (noisemakers) will be available so that no one will have to hear the name of the Purim story's villain. The use of internal combustion engines, explosives or blackboards as noisemakers is no longer permitted at BEKI. Please keep hands and feet within the sanctuary until the service comes to a complete stop.

Please do not bring assault rifles, firearms, explosive devices or weapons of any sort, or any toy that *realistically* resembles any form of weapon (these will be confiscated at the door – we mean it). Absolutely no weapons of mass destruction are permitted in the sanctuary or lobby during the service.

Persons dressed as Lady Gaga wearing meat suits should sit in the designated fleishig area and are advised to keep a distance from people wearing M&M and other dairy costumes. This year, there will be a refrigerated section for those dressed as fresh vegetables.

Persons associated with Occupy Shushan, Occupy BEKI, or other Occupy groups, as well as people impeding pipelines, must remain behind police barriers. Since our police are unarmed (see above), Occupy participants are asked to be



especially gentle in any confrontation. If you are coming with a group of 10,000 or more women, please notify the office in advance to allow coordination of logistics.

During the morning reading, when some participants may be *groggier* than usual due to late drinking or the early hour, groggers are limited to 4 decibels (equivalent to the sound of a marshmallow dropped on a pillow from 18 centimeters).

Following the evening and morning services, help is requested in collecting and delivering the *mishloah manot* (Purim Baskets) to neighboring households. Delivering just one can be a big help and a great joy.

ing just one can be a big help and a great joy.

BEKI Purim Seuda (Festive Meal)

A Purim Seuda (Feast) will be held at BEKI Sunday 12 March from 11a–1p; payment and reservation are required.

The registration form is at [on the BEKI calendar](#) at www.beki.org or contact Peggy office@beki.org.

Shushan Purim

Persons who live in ancient cities that were walled in the 13th century BCE (such as Jerusalem and Mundigak, Afghanistan) will celebrate Purim a day later, and one dollar shorter, than the rest of the Jewish world. The observance of Shushan Purim is Sunday night 12 March and Monday 13 March 2017. At BEKI this day will be marked liturgically by the omission of the recitation of the *tahanun* prayer. Also on this date, we will not recite the Star Spangled Banner, Yellow Submarine, The Gettysburg Address, and Miranda Rights. Please join us on Sunday evening from 5:45p–6:10p, and then again

on Monday morning from 7:00a–7:47a, for this joyous non-recital marking Shushan Purim.





Enjoying the Hootenanny on February 11.

Sisterhood

Interesting Facts About Purim

Purim is one of the trickiest holidays in that it is a time for merriment, riddles, masks and food gifts. Did you know that there are rich symbolic and mystical traditions and legends surrounding Purim?

God's name is not mentioned even once in the entire Book of Esther.

Haman was hanged on the second day of Passover. Purim is the anniversary of the Jews' victory celebration after their war against their enemies 11 months later.

Mordekhai was the first person in literature to be called a "Jew." Before then, Jews were called "Hebrews" or "Israelites."

Vashti (Ahasverosh's first queen) was the great-granddaughter of Nebukhadnezzar, the Babylonian emperor who destroyed the first Holy Temple.

Mordekhai, who refused to bow to Haman, was a descendant of Benjamin, the only one of Jacob's sons who didn't bow to Haman's ancestor Esau.

Mordekhai was a very old man during the story of Purim. He was already a member of the Sanhedrin, the

highest court of Torah law in Jerusalem, 79 years before the miracle of Purim, according to folklore.

Every Jew in the world lived in Ahashverosh's kingdom, so that they were all included in Haman's decree.

Haman's decree was never executed; Ahashverosh issued a second decree, giving the Jews the right to defend themselves.

Sisterhood will be serving delicious Haman-taschen (Oznei Haman) for your enjoyment and handing out groggers for you to make the biggest noise ever when Haman's name is mentioned while the Megila is read out loud in our sanctuary.

Passover is just around the corner

Our Sisterhood gift store will be open to help you select Passover gifts for your Seder as well as host/hostess gifts. Please come in and choose the items that you need to make your seder table complete.

Thanks to all of you who became members of Sisterhood this year. We have 68 members. We hope that more people will become members – it's not too late. Please contact Mimi Glenn if you wish to support us 203-397-3851.

Rabbi's Tzedaga Fund (minimum \$25)

- Deborah Craig in appreciation of Rabbi Tilsen & NAHARA
- Lou & Lisa Petrillo with prayers of refua shelema to friends and more
- **Qiddush Sponsors** (minimum \$320)
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- Joanne Foodim & Rob Forbes
- Robin Goldberg
- Anonymous
- Corey Stone & Sue McDonald

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

- To Ina Silverman & Jay Sokolow with thanks for their very gracious hosting during the High Holidays by Michael Stern & Kathy Rosenbluh
- To Howard & Willa Needler with thanks for their very gracious hosting during the High Holidays by Michael Stern & Kathy Rosenbluh
- To Joe & Ravit Avni-Singer with thanks for their very gracious hosting during the High Holidays by Michael Stern & Kathy Rosenbluh
- To Marty Gold & Rena Cheskis-Gold with thanks for their very gracious hosting during the High Holidays by Michael Stern & Kathy Rosenbluh
- To the BEKI community by Adena Herskovitz
- To the BEKI community in appreciation for all it does by Diane & George Dumigan
- To the lovely BEKI community by Sarah Magidson
- To the BEKI community by Ellen Jawitz & Rob Leikind
- To Roya Hakakian, Ramin Ahmadi and family with sympathy on the passing of Hagnazar Hakakian by Amy Marx & Rob, Sophie, Jacob & Esther Schonberger
- To Roya Hakakian, Ramin Ahmadi and family with sympathy on the passing of Hagnazar Hakakian by Karel Koenig
- To Roya Hakakian, Ramin Ahmadi and family with sympathy on the passing of Hagnazar Hakakian by Corinne Blackmer & Pilar Stewart
- To Roya Hakakian, Ramin Ahmadi and family with sympathy on the passing of Hagnazar Hakakian by Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade
- To Roya Hakakian, Ramin Ahmadi and family with sympathy on the passing of Hagnazar Hakakian by Joanne Foodim & Rob Forbes
- To Roya Hakakian, Ramin Ahmadi and family with sympathy on the passing of Hagnazar Hakakian by Caryl & Michael Kligfeld
- To Roya Hakakian, Ramin Ahmadi and family with sympathy on the passing of

Hagnazar Hakakian by the Avni-Singer family

- To Roya Hakakian, Ramin Ahmadi and family with sympathy on the passing of Hagnazar Hakakian by Morris Bell & Raina Sotsky
- To Roya Hakakian, Ramin Ahmadi and family with sympathy on the passing of Hagnazar Hakakian by Steve & Rachel Wizner
- To Roya Hakakian, Ramin Ahmadi and family with sympathy on the passing of Hagnazar Hakakian by the Freiman-Light family
- To Roya Hakakian, Ramin Ahmadi and family with sympathy on the passing of Hagnazar Hakakian by the Rastelli-Weiner family
- To Roya Hakakian, Ramin Ahmadi and family with sympathy on the passing of Hagnazar Hakakian by Julie Cohen
- To Frank Donnelly with sympathy on the passing of Aileen Donnelly by David & Rayna Belowsky

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

- To Roya Hakakian, Ramin Ahmadi and family with sympathy on the passing of Hagnazar Hakakian by Dan & Sharon Prober
- To Roya Hakakian, Ramin Ahmadi and family with sympathy on the passing of Hagnazar Hakakian by Bill Shragis
- To Roya Hakakian, Ramin Ahmadi and family with sympathy on the passing of Hagnazar Hakakian by David & Darryl Kuperstock
- To Roya Hakakian, Ramin Ahmadi and family with sympathy on the passing of Hagnazar Hakakian by Donna & Sid Levine
- Ari Nathan Levine Memorial Fund
- To Donna & Sid Levine in honor of the birth of their grandson by Rachel Bashevkin & Eric Dunsker

BEKI Religious School

- In honor of Ina Silverman & Jay Sokolow by Jill Rathus & Lloyd Goldsamt
- To Roya Hakakian, Ramin Ahmadi and family with sympathy on the passing of Hagnazar Hakakian by the Silverman & Sokolow family

Barzillai Cheskis BEKI Youth Israel Scholarship Fund

- To Marty Gold, Rena Cheskis-Gold and family with sympathy on the passing of Dorothy Gold by Harriet Friedman, Charles Bruce & family
- To Roya Hakakian, Ramin Ahmadi and family with sympathy on the passing of Hagnazar Hakakian by Rena Cheskis-Gold & Marty Gold

Frankel-Mattler Memorial Fund

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

Edward & Tillie Horwitz Fund

- In honor of Becky Seashore May by Lisa Kaston & Tom Behrendt

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

- In memory of Abraham Golden by Martin Shore
- In memory of Jack Yasgar by Howard Yasgar
- In memory of Stanley Watsky by Kal Watsky & Deborah Fried
- In memory of Diana Friedman Opton by Charles & Sami Shalman
- In memory of Sam Miller by Richard & Vicki Miller
- In memory of Lawrence Moscovitz by Mike Moscovitz
- In memory of Rita Moscovitz by Mike Moscovitz
- In memory of David Levine by Richard Levine
- In memory of Jack Nankin by Sheldon & Sandra Nankin
- In memory of Rose Olmer by Diana Bander
- In memory of Irving Weinstein by Elaine Weinstein
- In memory of Sheldon Wolpin by Ellen Wolpin
- In memory of Shirley Brodner by Leatrice & Richard Brodner
- In memory of Pearl Wiznia by Dr. Robert & Carolann Wiznia
- In memory of Sidney Yaffe by Clifford Yaffe
- In memory of Louis Rochlin by Kranie & Earl Baker
- In memory of Marjorie Golden Weiss Simson by Joan & Marshall Weiss
- In memory of her mother Esther Heller by Rhoda Lemkin
- In memory of her father George Brunswick by Barbara Cushen
- In memory of her husband Sidney Cushen by Barbara Cushen
- In memory of her grandfather Louis Ginzberg by Barbara Greenberg
- In memory of her brother Mel Miller by Marsha Landsberg
- In memory of Haie-Bertha Naiman by Polina Naiman
- In memory of Elizabeth Mohr by Judy Hayward
- In memory of Rebecca Rader by Dennis & Barbara Rader
- In memory of Reuben Gralla by Linda Schultz & Howard Gralla

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Thanks Endowment Donors

Thank you to all of our Legacy L'Chayim Donors who have made or plan to make provisions in their estate planning for a gift to BEKI. A Shabbat Noon Qiddush honoring donors will be held on Shabbat 1 April 2017; please come to show your appreciation. Below are the names of those who have contributed or have indicated that they plan to do so as of 1 January 2017. If you are not already included, but would like to be, or we have inadvertently omitted your name, please contact Donna Levine at sdsij@aol.com or 203-234-9867. She would be happy to assist you in your planning.

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Continued from Page 7

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- In memory of Ida Akresh by Murray & Barbara Akresh
- In memory of Benjamin & Rebecca Yankeloff by Shirley & Donald Halprin
- In memory of Wilbur Witten by Marvin & Susan Witten
- In memory of Jack Nankin by David Nankin
- In memory of Gertrude Slopak by David Schwartz
- In memory of Dr. Nathan Chorney by Bud & Mickey Chorney
- In memory of Irving Golden by Diane & George Dumigan
- In memory of her parents Edith & Maurice Levy by Paula Rudnick
- In blessed memory of his father Rubin Schwartz by David Schwartz
- In memory of Morris & Sara Oppenheim by Anita & Michael Malina
- In memory of Anne Schnitman Irwin by Helene & Edward Vanderhoef
- In memory of Saul Ripps by Ronald Ripps



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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:

Becky May, 4 March 2017, parashat Teruma

Sarah Rastelli, bat mitzva, 18 March 2017, Shabbat Para – parashat Ki Tisa

Jay Sokolow, 29 April 2017, parashat Tazria-Metsora

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

Hebrew with Will

Hebrew with Will meets every other Saturday morning



Becky May



Sarah Rastelli



Jay Sokolow



Steven Fraade

from 10:45a – 11:45a in the office (on the weeks that Shabbat Shalom Torah Study does not meet). 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: 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 beginning 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; not meeting on Festivals. With Jon-Jay Tilsen.



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



Murray Levine

Continued on **Page 10**

Adult Studies

Continued from **Page 9**

experience and insight. The study group meets Wednesday mornings in the Rosenkrantz Family Library. 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. 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 be on pre-Purim winter break 2 and 9 March, resuming 16 March. ✡

LifeCycle

HaNolad beMazal Tov

Mazal tov to Amy Schwartz & David Levy on the birth of Ezra Levy in February. Ezra Leib was welcomed into the Covenant of Abraham through the rite of *brit mila* on the eighth day at BEKI in February.

Upcoming [Benei Mitzva](#)

Sarah Rastelli, daughter of Rebecca Weiner & Michael Rastelli, 17-18 March 2017, Shabbat



Sarah Rastelli

Para (Sabbath of the Cow), *parashat Ki Tisa*
Elijah Light, son of Rachel Light & Jonathan Freiman, and of Eban Light, 12-13 May 2017, *parashat Emor*

Hannah Herbst, daughter of Roy & Karen Herbst, 9-10 June 2017, *parashat BeHa'alotekha*

Welcome Newest Members

Amy Schwartz & David Levy and Ezra.

Youth

First things first...February follow-up: How many new USY-ers does it take to bake 16 dozen brownies for BEKI's Annual Super Deli Box Youth Commission Fundraiser? (Say that five times real fast.) And furthermore, how long? Well, four of our guys, Caleb, Aaron, Ben (Bruce) and Eitan, did it in an hour while schmoozing it up with new USY Assistant Advisor, BEKI member, and recent college grad, James Hayward. (Welcome James!) Meanwhile, Noam and Ezra Academy classmate, Eviatar, were off representing BEKI USY at the USY Regional Winter Conference with our high school chapter member and regional officer, Hallel Shapiro. Boo-ya!

So...March already? That's the month that spring starts (or should I say... Adar already? That's the month *Aviv* arrives). Since I had to write this in February, with snow falling outside my window and when Adar *actually* starts, spring still felt far away though we had Tu B'Shabbat (Tu BeShevat + Shabbat), celebrating the Jewish New Year

of the Trees, to remind us it was already in the works, at least in Israel. In any case, come Adar, we are to increase our joy, something Kadima and USY are known for being good at. We might go snowtubing – again– for those who couldn't make the first trip in January and those who couldn't get enough, or seal watching in Long Island Sound where they winter over. Or we might stay in and have a movie night in the Youth Lounge. Or all of the above! If you can wait until April, we'll let you know what fun thing we did or chances are good you've already seen it up on the BEKI bulletin board or Facebook page.

Youth Scholarships for Israel & Local Schools & Camp

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

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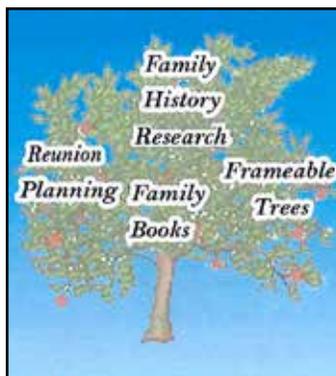
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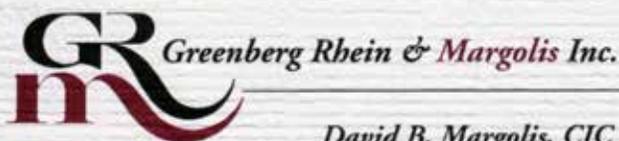
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ABOUT THAT \$38 BILLION

In my essay “[A Verbal Holocaust](#)” ([Bulletin](#), October 2016), while stating my support for the worthy aims of the “Black Lives Matter” movement, I condemned the platform of the specific organization Movement for Black Lives that used the terms “genocide” and “apartheid” to describe Israeli policies as nothing other than hate speech. I discussed the lack of merit and context in the use of those terms. But there was another charge that I did not address – until now. While I am no longer interested in that particular MBL organization, the calumny they promote demands response.

Their platform states that “The U.S. requires Israel to use 75 percent of all the military aid it receives to buy U.S.-made arms. Consequently, every year billions of dollars are funneled from U.S. taxpayers to hundreds of arms corporations, who then wage lobbying campaigns pushing for even more foreign military aid. The results of this policy are twofold: it not only diverts much needed funding from domestic education and social programs, but it makes U.S. citizens complicit in the abuses committed by the Israeli government.” Other political organizations and writers have complained that Israel has recently been promised by the Obama Administration another \$38 billion in direct U.S. military aid, and that Israel is by far the largest recipient of such aid.

Is that anti-Israel or anti-Semitic hate speech? Yes. Here’s why.

The United States spends \$600 billion to \$1 trillion a year on its military. And the United States has made a new \$38 billion commitment of military aid to Israel – that is, \$3.8 billion a year for ten years. Now, as our members of congress like to say, \$3.8 billion is a tiny proportion of annual military spending, about 0.5 percent. But \$3.8 billion here, \$3.8 billion there, eventually it starts to add up to real money.

This \$3.8 billion is in fact by far the largest *direct* grant that the U.S. makes. However, it is small when considered in its context, which includes the \$150 billion a year the U.S. spends to maintain overseas military bases, or expenditures on peace-keeping forces. Israel has insisted on relying on its own forces, not American troops, and so spends a far larger portion of its budget or GNP on military than most other countries. This means that the United States is spending more money “protecting” other countries, and instead of protecting Israel through maintaining a U.S. military presence, the U.S. is subsidizing Israeli arms purchases to help Israel defend itself. That is the

conventional thinking, anyway. The claim that U.S. military support of Israel is way out of scale to U.S. military support for other countries is unfounded. Whether this support is a good idea or not is a different question.

The MBL statement is anti-Israel hate speech because it singles out Israel for condemnation from a large field, as if Israel is the primary culprit in perpetuating the “military-industrial complex” and alone drives the political aspect of the military procurement system. Now, if the context had been a principled critique of United States military policy, or the international arms industry, then Israel would have been a fair target along with its peers. And, broadly speaking, I might agree with such a critique, because I think that everyone would be better off with less spent globally on armaments. It is deeply ironic that MBL finds it objectionable when the one black guy doing 70 (or 55) on the highway is the one guy who gets pulled over and shot, but when MBL sees the Hebrew National Wiermobile approaching at any speed, MBL immediately flips on the anti-Israel siren.

The MBL complaint observes that Israel has to spend this grant on U.S. armaments. The effect is simply that Israel is getting a giant 50 percent-off coupon or rebate for the hardware it is purchasing from the United States – that is, Israel is paying wholesale, while the Saudis are paying retail. Due to the complex and convoluted procurement system, the result of this discount to Israel is to lower the unit price of the hardware, primarily the F-22 Raptor aircraft. When the U.S. gives Israel a \$3.8 billion coupon toward its purchase, the U.S. itself ends up with a lower price for its own F-22 purchases, and so recovers some of the taxpayer dollars in that way. Were it not for the discount, Israel might not buy any at all, because it needs a fleet, not just isolated planes. Convoluted and complex? Military Marketing 101.

But the United States gets something even bigger in the deal. It is not just that the U.S. enjoys the military might its proxy projects without having to maintain a U.S. base and troops, and it is not just a way to increase the scale of its weapons programs. Here is why part of Israel’s right wing joins with the anti-Israel left in opposing the deal, though for different reasons: The deal restricts Israel’s *own* weapons development and exports. Israel is spending billions of its own money, in addition to the “grant” from the U.S. government, to buy U.S. weapons, instead

Continued on **Page 14**

\$38 billion

Continued from Page 13

of developing its own competing products. Israel is agreeing to an extensive set of restrictions against selling Israeli, American and other hardware and technology. In other words, America is paying one of its chief competitors to limit its presence in the international arms market.

The alternative scenario, in which Israel competes full-throttle in the international arms market, would entangle Israel even more in international conflicts and questionable civil wars than is already the case. It would likely work at cross-purposes to United States policy. Until they found more advanced and abundant arms, much of the armaments used by Hezbollah against Israel was originally supplied by or manufactured in Israel – arms earlier supplied to Iran or the South Lebanon Army.

Ancient Hebrew law, discussed in the Talmud (Avoda Zara) and other primary sources, generally prohibited the provision of arms to idolaters and criminals. While idolatrous cults, *per se*, may not be the greatest threat to humanity or to Israel in our day, there is a relevant core idea. Do we really want Israel to provide weapons to governments or agents that hold as a core value conquest of territory or conversion to their exclusive true religion or economic system, through force of arms, or to actors who believe in their own racial superiority or entitlement, or who do not comply with international norms? Will anyone be better off if Israeli policy makers are impelled by the desire to survive or by greed to become a true giant of weapons sales?

While we might agree wholeheartedly (or not) that the United States should spend more on educating and caring for its own resi-

dents than on maintaining its global military position, the reality of our federal budget process is not well described by the claim that this foreign military aid "...diverts much needed funding from domestic education and social programs." If Mr. Netanyahu calls to decline this year's subsidy, do we think Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is going to say, "Oh, good, now we have \$3.8 billion more to spend on medical care and education in *this* country"? But the language of "diversion" is itself the diversion from the reality, and serves to imply that We the People have had educational and medical services taken away from us and the money shipped off to Israel. It is just not so.

If one is anti-Israel, then of course any aid to Israel would be objectionable. But the implication of this \$38 billion complaint is that Israel is exceptionally bad because of this very aid and its impact on Americans. This circular logic is not resolvable by a satisfying answer to the \$38 billion complaint, because those who hate Israel will just move on to the next item on their list of why the State of Israel is monstrous. The reasons for hating Israel are fully fungible.

For more on the subject of U.S. military aid to Israel, see Hillel Frisch, "[Myth: Israel is the Largest Beneficiary of US Military Aid](#)," The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, 10 February 2017.



Another Message from Rabbi Tilsen

Yeah, I still think so.

LETTERS

Take careful aim lest we miss target

President Bush, with the backing of Congress and the public, has declared war on terrorism. Indeed, it is time America took the lead along with Israel and other democratic nations in this struggle.

But we must correctly identify the target. The target is those organizations and countries that use violence and threat of violence against innocents as a weapon to advance their cause. The target is those individuals who follow a creed of racism, hatred and violence.

The correct target of the anti-terror effort does not include the vast majority of Arabs, Muslims, and others of Middle Eastern origin whether in America or elsewhere. Arabs and Muslims in America are peace-loving and law-abiding citizens.

Like in every community, there

are exceptions to that rule, and those exceptions are appropriately dealt with through our police, criminal justice system and immigration services.

It is a disgrace and an affront to American values to defame or attack Arabs, Muslims and others simply because of their religious beliefs or ethnic background. Like all citizens they must be free to practice their religion and express their political views, even when they differ from those of the majority.

It is ridiculous to blame Israel for all of the conflict in the Middle East and thereby for the violence coming from that region. Israel had nothing to do with the war between Iran and Iraq, nothing to do with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, nothing

to do with the civil wars in Yemen. While Israel shares responsibility for the conflict with Palestinians, this is only one part of a much larger set of problems. America is right to support Israel as a partner in promoting democracy and security.

If we must divide the world into "us" and "them," then at least let's be clear who we mean by "them." Let's take careful aim lest we miss our target or shoot ourselves in the foot.

Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen

New Haven

Editor's note: Jon-Jay Tilsen is rabbi of Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel, the corresponding secretary of the New Haven Area Rabbinical Assembly, and president of the Greater New Haven Board of Rabbis.

New Haven Register, Sunday 30 September 2001, p. B2

March 2017

3 Adar 5777 - 4 Nisan 5777

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Senior Friends: Face to Face

Sunday 19 March 2017 10a BEKI Library,
info Rabbi Murray Levine (mlevine4986@
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			1 9:00am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program 3 Adar	2 4 Adar	3 5:27pm Candle Lighting 5 Adar	4 Darshanit: Becky May 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Shabbat Shalom Torah Study Qiddush: Saxe & Levine 5:30pm Minha 6 Adar
5 9:00am Religious School 7 Adar	6 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour 8 Adar	7 7:30pm Israeli Dance 9 Adar	8 9:00am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program 10 Adar	9 Fast of Esther 1:00pm Talmud Study Group 11 Adar	10 5:35pm Candle Lighting 12 Adar	11 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Hebrew with Will Qiddush: Gloria Cohen 12:45pm Shabbat Schmooze: Forum on Travel/Refugee Ban 5:45pm Minha 6:45pm Purim Megila Reading 13 Adar
12 Purim 9:00am Purim Megila Reading (with Religious School) 11:00am Purim Seuda 14 Adar	13 Shushan Purim 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour 15 Adar	14 7:30pm Israeli Dance 16 Adar	15 9:00am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program 17 Adar	16 1:00pm Talmud Study Group 18 Adar	17 6:00pm Sarah Rastelli Bat Mitzva 6:43pm Candle Lighting 19 Adar	18 Sarah Rastelli Bat Mitzva 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Shabbat Shalom Torah Study Qiddush: Rastelli-Weiner 5:45pm Minha 20 Adar
19 9:00am Religious School 10:30am Face to Face: A Get-Together for Seniors 21 Adar	20 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour 5:00pm Abraham's Tent 7:30pm Executive Board Meeting (off-site) 22 Adar	21 5:00pm Abraham's Tent 7:30pm Israeli Dance 23 Adar	22 9:00am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program 5:00pm Abraham's Tent 24 Adar	23 1:00pm Talmud Study Group 5:00pm Abraham's Tent 25 Adar	24 5:00pm Abraham's Tent 6:51pm Candle Lighting 26 Adar	25 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Hebrew with Will Qiddush: Stahl 5:00pm Abraham's Tent 5:45pm Minha 27 Adar
26 9:00am Religious School 5:00pm Abraham's Tent 28 Adar	27 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour 5:00pm Abraham's Tent 7:30pm General Board Meeting 29 Adar	28 Rosh Hodesh 7:30pm Israeli Dance 1 Nisan	29 9:00am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program 2 Nisan	30 1:00pm Talmud Study Group 3 Nisan	31 6:58pm Candle Lighting 4 Nisan	

Service Times

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



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As of Shabbat (Saturday) afternoon 18 March, our Minḥa service will be 5:45p–6:15p each week until after Sukkot. Maariv and Havdala will be listed as “Home Rituals,” meaning that we will not have organized Saturday night services at BEKI except on special occasions in this period. Weekday services will include both Minḥa and Maariv, at the usual time, 5:45p–6:15p.

JCARR

We greatly appreciate the many generous offers we have received to help JCARR’s families — our newest one as well as Family #1 and Family #2. In order to manage the quantity of offers to contribute goods, we can accept only items you have committed to on our SignUP link. Please note that in addition to signing up for the donation of house-

hold items, we are now initiating a drive to obtain used, but not too old (not older than 2010 or 2011), automobiles for our three families. You can offer to donate a car or donate financially. The SignUp link for all these donations is here:

<http://signup.com/go/GMuJF1>

In addition, JCARR’s greatest needs include JOBS for refugees! If you are willing to join our Employment Task Force, we can really use your help. For more information, please contact Rachel Doft at rdoft@yahoo.com. Thank you

Shabbat Schmooze

Forum on Immigrants & Refugees. With David Kuperstock, Shabbat 11 March, 1p in the Library-Chapel.

Purim Baskets

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Purim Seuda Feast Signup

[Register](#) for a feast for people of all ages Sunday 12 March 11a–1p, with theatre, song, food, body art.

Megilla Reading

Saturday Night 11 March 2017, 6:45p–8:15p, for adults and people of all ages; costumes optional; dual-screen Megilla Show; groggers and refreshments provided by Sisterhood.