

A New Haven Tradition since 1892

BEKI bulletin

Congregation
Beth El-Keser Israel

Nisan-Iyar 5776

Vol. 22 Issue 5

Message from Rabbi Tilsen: Page 12

FROM PESAH TO SHAVUOT

Sefira – Counting the Omer

At the second Seder (Saturday night 23 April 2016), we begin daily *sefirat ha-omer* (counting of the *omer*), a counting of days to Shavuot, the next major festival. The counting, preferably done each night for 49 nights, is an expression of eager anticipation, commemorating the period of expectation and preparation we experienced in the Exodus from Egypt until the revelation at Sinai.

The simple home ceremony is printed in most *siddurim* (prayer books), including *Sim Shalom*, immediately after the weekday evening service. While it is a mitzva prescribed for adults, *sefirat ha-omer* can also be a fun, artistic and joyous ritual for families with children.

In the days before printed calendars, calendar watches and daily newspapers, the *sefira* served to keep the liturgical calendar of the Jewish People synchronized, no simple accomplishment, given the dispersion and isolation of much of the community. The term *omer* refers to the measure (one handful) of grain that was used to create a physical relic of the counting. With a physical reminder, even illiterate people could do a recount in case they forgot the day's number.

Families with young children may use this opportunity to help their children understand and experience anticipation, planning, counting and hope.

Teach us to number our days, that we may attain a heart of wisdom

– Psalm 90:12

Yizkor Memorial Service

The Yizkor Memorial Service will be held during the 9:15a Shabbat Festival morning service on Shabbat 30 April 2016. The Festival service includes a *Shaharit* morning service, *Hallel* (Psalms of praise), a Torah reading and *Haftara*, and the *Musaf* additional service, and concludes by 12:15p. The Yizkor memorial service is one of four such services during the year that help us recognize our feelings of loss, which are often especially intense during the Pesah season, and to honor the memories of our loved ones.

Yom HaShoah – Holocaust Memorial Day

Yom HaShoah, a memorial day for the *hurban*, the destruction of Jewish civilization in Europe, will be observed on Wednesday night 4 May and Thursday 5 May 2016. See the Sisterhood section in this issue for information on yellow Holocaust memorial candles.



Yom HaZikaron, Yom HaAtzmaut

Yom HaZikaron, Israeli Memorial Day, is observed Tuesday 10 May and Wednesday 11 May 2016; [Yom HaAtzmaut](#), Israel Independence Day, is observed on Wednesday night 11 May and Thursday 12 May 2016. These back-to-back holidays recognize the combination of suffering and joy, of sacrifice and achievement that often necessarily

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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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Pesah to Shavuot

Continued from **Page 1**

come together in our lives. All of these days are marked liturgically in public worship at BEKI. This Year, BEKI will participate with other local synagogues and agencies in New Haven Israel Fest marking the day.

LaG BeOmer

BEKI's Practically Annual LaG BeOmer Kumsitz Campfire Sing-along will be on Wednesday night 25 May 2016, at the residence of hosts Andy Hirshfield & Monica Starr, 145 Cleveland Road, New Haven. Gathering begins at 6:30p; counting the Omer will be after 8:15p. Hebrew and other Jewish folk-songs will be sung, many bags of marshmallows will be consumed, and countless twigs will be burned in the fire. Free parking for BEKI members and their guests.

This Sing-along is made possible with the support of the Morris & Sara Oppenheim Endowment for Sacred Music at Beth El-Keser Israel and by Andy & Monica.

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* – חג שמח – 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.

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.

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 hamiqra* ("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.



May is a busy month starting off with Yom HaShoah and ending with Lag BeOmer. Sisterhood is sponsoring a Yom HaShoah program on Saturday 21 May after qiddush. Our guest is Dr. Krystyna Gorniak-Kocikowska, Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Southern Connecticut State University. She will discuss her family's experiences during and after the Holocaust.

Yom HaZikaron

Yom HaZikaron is observed on 11 May. It was established with the founding of the State of Israel in 1948, and enacted into law in 1963, the day preceding Yom Ha'Atzmaut (Israeli Independence Day). Yom HaZikaron is observed as a memorial day for soldiers and others who lost their lives in battle or otherwise defending Israel.

In Israel, beginning at sunset the night before and lasting throughout the entire day, places of entertainment are closed by law while shops, restaurants and movie theaters are shut down by tradition. The radio and television stations play stories about Israel's wars and air programming that conveys the somber mood of the day.

Air raid sirens are sounded twice during the course of the day. During the two-minute blast, all activity – including traffic on the highways – immediately ceases. People stand in respect for the sacrifice of those who died defending Israel.

Public ceremonies are held throughout Israel with special readings and poems often recited. There is a

national ceremony at the military cemetery on Mt. Herzl, where many of Israel's leaders and soldiers are buried.

Today people also remember security guards who have given their lives while protecting public buildings, restaurants and cafes from terrorist attacks.

In tune with the Jewish tradition of recognizing joy in times of sadness and sadness in times of joy, Yom HaZikaron's somber end heralds the beginning of the joyous and festive Yom Ha'Atzmaut.

Yom Ha'Atzmaut: Israel Independence Day

Held on the fifth day of the Hebrew month of Iyar, this year 12 May, Yom Ha'Atzmaut is a modern holiday celebrating Israeli's Independence in 1948. It always occurs immediately after Yom HaZikaron. The message is that Israelis owe their independence – the very existence of the state – to the soldiers who sacrificed their lives for it.

There is a ceremony after sundown at Jerusalem's Mount Herzl military cemetery in which the national flag is raised from half staff to the top of the pole. The President of Israel will deliver a speech of congratulations while soldiers representing all the various branches and units of the Israel Defense Forces parade with their flags. An evening parade is followed by a torch lighting ceremony, symbolically marking the country's achievements in all spheres of life.

For American Jews, celebrating Yom HaAtzmaut is a way to express solidarity with the State of Israel and to strengthen their alliance with it.

News

Chorney Exhibit Continues

David Chorney, a Financial Advisor by day, is sharing his inventive and eclectic artwork at BEKI through the end of June. He will hold an artist's reception about the exhibit on Shabbat 7 May from 12:45p – 2p.

USY Summer

USY Summer Experience offers teens in grades 7–12 the opportunity to travel across North America, Europe, and

Israel. An amazing adventure is just a [click](#) away. BEKI's Barzillai Cheskis Fund and the [Marcel Gutman Memorial Fund](#) support BEKI teens going on Israel trips.

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.

• Rabbi's Tzedaka Fund

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- *Not listed? Check June edition or other funds. All hametz owners for whom a POA for Selling Hametz form was received are assured that their hametz was sold the morning before Passover.*

• Rachel & Stephen Wizner for *maot hittim*

• Esther & Irwin Nash for *maot hittim*

• Lou & Lisa Petrillo

• Judith Resnik & Dennis Curtis in memory of Dorothy Nachman

Qiddush Sponsors (minimum \$280)

- BEKI honoring the Legacy L'chayim families
- Esther & Irwin Nash
- Daniel Lovins & Keiko Suzuki
- Dominic Kinsley & Judith Hoberman
- Sara Labowe
- Steven Stoll

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

- To Monica Starr in honor of her milestone birthday by the Freiman-Light family
- To Brian Karsif, Elizabeth Karpf and family with sympathy on the passing of Marian Karsif by Carol & Marc Weitzman
- To the Berger & Klein family with sympathy on the passing of Arthur Berger by Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade
- To Brian Karsif, Elizabeth Karpf and family with sympathy on the passing of Marian Karsif by Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade
- To Suzanne Fields and family with sympathy on the passing of Albert Shepard by the Weiner & Rastelli family
- To the Berger & Klein family with sympathy on the passing of Arthur Berger by the Weiner & Rastelli family
- To Suzanne Fields and family with sympathy on the passing of Albert Shepard by Joanne Foodim & Rob Forbes
- To Brian Karsif, Elizabeth Karpf and family with sympathy on the passing of Marian Karsif by the Freiman-Light family
- To Barbara Cushen with wishes for a speedy recovery by Al Barnett
- To Brian Karsif, Elizabeth Karpf and family with sympathy on the passing of Marian Karsif by Robert & Janice Lettick
- To the Berger & Klein family with sympathy on the passing of Arthur Berger by Robert & Janice Lettick
- To Suzanne Fields and family with sympathy on the passing of Albert Shepard by Robert & Janice Lettick
- To Karel Koenig with sympathy on the passing of Bob Oakes by Robert & Janice Lettick
- To the Berger & Klein family with sympathy on the passing of Arthur Berger by the Marx & Schonberger family
- To Karel Koenig with sympathy on the passing of Bob Oakes by Ruth Silver
- To Barbara Cushen with wishes for a speedy recovery by Ruth Silver
- To Karel Koenig with sympathy on the passing of Bob Oakes by Harriet Friedman, Charles Bruce & family
- To Brian Karsif, Elizabeth Karpf and family with sympathy on the passing of Marian Karsif by the Kemper & Zlotoff family
- To Barbara Cushen with wishes for a speedy recovery by Marjorie & Jay Hirshfield
- To Brian Karsif, Elizabeth Karpf and family with sympathy on the passing of Marian Karsif by Marjorie & Jay Hirshfield
- To Suzanne Fields and family with sympathy on the passing of Albert Shepard by Karel Koenig

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

- To Brian Karsif, Elizabeth Karpf and family with sympathy on the passing of Marian Karsif by David & Darryl Kuperstock
- To the Berger & Klein family with sympathy on the passing of Arthur Berger by David & Darryl Kuperstock
- To Suzanne Fields and family with sympathy on the passing of Albert Shepard by David & Darryl Kuperstock
- To Brian Karsif, Elizabeth Karpf and family with sympathy on the passing of Marian Karsif by Mimi Glenn

The Barzillai Cheskis BEKI Youth Israel Scholarship Fund

- To Rabbi David Silverman & Julie Silverman in honor of the weddings of their children by Varda Cheskis Sauer & Ken Sauer
- To Karel Koenig with sympathy on the passing of Bob Oakes by Varda Cheskis Sauer
- To Marty Gold and Rena Cheskis-Gold & family with sympathy on the passing of Tina Brooks by Varda Cheskis Sauer

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

- In memory of Meyer A. Freiman by Jonathan Freiman & family
- In memory of Michael Castroll by David Schwartz
- In memory of Milton & Tema Hirshfield by Marjorie & Jay Hirshfield
- In memory of Marvin Spielman by James Spielman
- In memory of James J. Barnett by Al Barnett
- In loving memory of Bessie Kaufman by Florence Kaufman

- In memory of Ronet Zeehandelaar by Sascha van Creveld and her children
- In memory of Charles & Etta Miller by Julian D. & Susan Miller
- In memory of Frances Ray by Barbara Rader
- In memory of Anita Palmer by Marsha & John Reynolds
- In memory of John Liner by Howard Miller
- In memory of Irving Golden by Diane & George Dumigan
- In memory of her grandmother Rose Friedman by Harriet Friedman
- In memory of Sylvia Matloff by Harriet & Jack Kitavitz
- In memory of Rose & Louis Katz by Sharon & Dan Prober
- In memory of Sidney Sylvan Kemper by Donna Kemper & Ron Zlotoff
- In memory of Shirley Rudolf by Steve & Joanne Rudolf
- In memory of Paul Klein by Elaine Klein
- In memory of Moe Epstein by Kranie & Earl Baker
- In memory of Kate Rochlin by Kranie & Earl Baker
- In memory of her beloved mother Thelma Kugell by Harriet Pearlman
- In memory of Samuel Maltin by Ted Maltin
- In memory of Bluma Soloway by Minna & Lewis Kaufman
- In memory of Lillian Gell by John & Marcia Gell
- In memory of Bessie Flamer by Mickey & Bud Chorney
- In memory of Ethel Epstein by Fran Goldberg-Cohen
- In memory of Charles Byer by Barbara & Larry Tiven
- In memory of Charlotte Isenberg by Janice Isenberg
- In memory of Lilyan Goodwin by Stacey Goodwin Podell & Jeffrey Podell
- In memory of her grandfather Phillip Kantrowitz by Sherry Kent
- In memory of her aunt Violet Ludwig by Sherry Kent
- In memory of her uncle Irving Berman by Sherry Kent
- In memory of Max Gad by Martin & Lana Gad

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:

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.



Noam Benson-Tilsen



Steven Fraade



Alan Lovins



Nadav Sela



Isaiah Cooper

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.

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). 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, Mikhal, 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. 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

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Adult Studies

Continued from **Page 6**

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. 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.

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. With Rabbi Tilsen.



Jon-Jay Tilsen

Every Day

Divrei Torah on the Web

A [collection of Divrei Torah](#) (Torah commentaries) and essays by members and Rabbi Tilsen are posted on BEKI’s website under “Learning.” Most recently, Bruce Oren’s devar Torah on Parashat Pequdei was added, at <http://www.beki.org/wp-content/uploads/Oren-Bruce-DT-Pequdei-5776.pdf>.



Youth

Kadima News

Kadimaniks have been enjoying lots of fun and games. Between our Game Night and the BEKI Purim Seuda, it has been a blast. We came together for a Shabbat dinner in April and can’t wait for our trampoline park event in May.

USY participated in community events for Purim, making *mishloach manot* for the folks at Coachman Square, which were delivered with Bnai Jacob’s own Rabbi Rona. We ran the carnival booths at BEKI’s amazing Purim Seuda. We also collaborated with our West Hartford friends for an epic paintball event, and we can’t

forget our Deli Boxes fundraiser, in which the whole community came together to support us. Thank you so much to everyone who participated. We had a delicious Shabbat dinner, and we are very excited for our camping trip at the end of the year.

BRS Graduation

Join students, families and faculty for the BEKI Religious School Graduation and Promotion event on Sunday 15 May.

Kadima Parents Meet

Parents of Kadima-eligible people are invited to a meeting on Sunday 22 May at 10a to discuss plans and possibilities for the program.



The Late George G. Posener with students at BRS Graduation 2007.

המקום ינחם

HaMaqom Yinahem

With sorrow we note the passing of

Marilyn Salk, mother of Nancy Salk

Enid Weisz Stone, mother of Corey Stone (& Sue McDonald)

Ruth Gutherz, mother of Daniel Gutherz

Mary R. Kinsley, mother of Dominic Kinsley (& Judy Hoberman)

May the Almighty comfort those who mourn

Benei Mitzva

Caleb Freiman, son of Jonathan Freiman & Rachel Light, and of the late Amy Aaland, 13-14 May 2016, *parashat Qe-doshim*

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*

Mazal tov to

To Shai & Robyn Silverman on the birth of Maya Rose Silverman, and to grandparents Ina Silverman & Jay Sokolow.

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.



Noam Benson-Tilsen

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.

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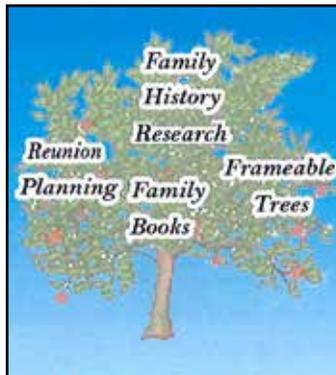
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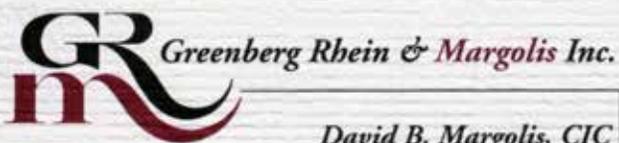
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Purim Thank Yous

Thanks to Megilla Readers Steven Fraade, Ellen Cohen, Esther Serkin, Rachel Gerber, Rachel Light, Marsha Beller, Corey Stone, Noam Benson-Tilsen and Rabbi Tilsen, for a proficient and engaging reading of Megillat Esther on Purim night and morning. Thanks to Mishloah Manot Purim Basket leaders Ina Silverman and David Kuperstock. Thanks to Purim Seuda organizers and helpers, including Eva Shragis, Bill Broome, Robin Goldberg, Jacques Ben-Avie, Hadassah Reimer, Richard Kantrowitz, Sherry Kent, Joyce Handleman, Isaiah Cooper, Helene Sapadin, Suzanne Fields, Marisol Sanchez- Moycik, Liora Lew, Mark Oppenheimer, Ivan Alvarez, Isaiah Cooper, Helene Sapadin,

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Attack on *Liberty*

The billboard on I-95 simply states, “Help the USS Liberty Survivors, attacked by Israel, www.HonorLibertyVets.org.” Here is an explanation of why this is nothing more or less than anti-Jewish hate speech, as well as an explanation of what the USS *Liberty* incident was about.

On 8 June 1967, in the midst of the Six Day War, the Israel Air Force and Navy attacked the US Naval vessel *Liberty* off the coast of Sinai, killing 34 American crew members and wounding 171 others. The official Israeli and American explanation was that it was a case of mistaken identity; the Israeli government apologized and paid reparations. However, numerous conspiracy theories have circulated claiming that the attack was intentional.

There is no explanation that can neutralize the raw narrative that Israeli forces bombed a US Naval vessel and killed 34 crew members. Raising the incident in the context of a freeway billboard is simply a tool to promote hostility toward Jews and Israel. The billboard does nothing beyond impugning Israel (“attacked by Israel”), while falsely implying that it represents the voices or honor of American veterans. A billboard on I-95 is not going to elicit another Congressional hearing on the incident, but it will affect viewers’ attitudes toward Israel.

There are thousands of [recorded instances](#) of “friendly fire,” in which military forces kill and maim their own soldiers or allies, either through some unlikely chain of unfortunate events, equipment failure, or just as likely a long string of stupid deadly screw-ups or SNAFUs (to use the military term). Rarely is there a claim that this was done intentionally, because those involved understand that the fog of battle and the other circumstances lead to such

incidents.

One of the thousands of recorded friendly fire incidents occurred near Kandahar, Afghanistan, in April 2002, when four members of Princess Patricia’s Canadian light infantry regiment were killed (and others injured) after a US Air National Guard major dropped a bomb on them from an F-16 jet fighter. The pilot claimed he was confused. There was no American apology. Could it be that a trained American warrior could not tell the difference between Princess Patricia and the Taliban? Was this the

first salvo in an effort to conquer Canada, or payback for one of those many historical Canadian atrocities? Is “accident” really enough of an excuse to these dead Canadian patriots? Don’t they deserve a better explanation? Are Canadians placing billboards along



their freeways demanding an investigation into America’s attack on the Princess Patricia’s regiment, in the name of HonorPrincessPatriciasRegimentVets.org, with the lead line “attacked by the United States”?

There is a long history of American military cover-ups concerning war dead. I have directly heard from WWII veterans that they occasionally covered up (lied about) the circumstances of the deaths of soldiers under their command. The letter to the bereaved family would say, “your son died a hero in the battle of such-and-such,” when the truth would have been, “your idiot son got drunk and drove a jeep into a tree.”

But it is worse than that. There are hundreds of famous *intentional* “surprise” attacks in the context of wars or conflicts – Fort Sumter, Pearl Harbor, Hiroshima, Dresden,

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London, Bay of Pigs – as well as hundreds of memorable terrorist attacks. While we can talk about them and memorialize them, generally we don't use them to stir up anti-Dixie or anti-Japanese or anti-American sentiments at this point. We can have our judgments, but there is no point in complaining about the Japanese today due to their attack on Pearl Harbor or the British for their treachery in 1812.

The billboard, sponsored by known anti-Semites, was followed by several letters to the *New Haven Register* from collaborating anti-Semites from California, Colorado and Massachusetts, whom I can only guess are not daily readers of the *Register*. Talk about conspiracy.

You don't have to accept my classification of those writers as "anti-Semites." You can Google them and see what else they have written and draw your own conclusions.

The billboard sponsor and supporters claim that the US Naval and other personnel have a "right to know what really happened." That proposition is dubious. The USS *Liberty* was operating under the command of the National Security Agency (NSA), not the Navy, and it is the ethic of the intelligence services -- formalized in law -- that personnel do not have a right to know the details or purpose of their mission, particularly when the mission is classified. (The military also has a similar ethic.) Whether releasing the truth about the incident at this point would be harmful to national security is a judgment that is left to the Obama Administration and Congress. Military and intelligence secrecy is inherently at odds with democratic ideals, but it is ubiquitous; this one case is not remarkable. The slip of a lip can sink a ship. The billboard sponsors do not seek the investigation of or release of classified information about any of the large number of casualties related to botched intelligence operations – just this one, which just happens

to involve Israel. If their cause were about the public's right or the veterans' right to know, it should be a wide claim, not focused on Israel.

The billboard inspired anti-Semites to write to the *Register* and to discuss the incident in other media. Statements from those letters include "the U.S. government at the time bowed down to Israel," "Israel lobby's lock-hold on Congress," "what Israel is doing to the Palestinians," "the ADL's loyalties are with Israel and not America," Israel's "atrocities," "the extrajudicial killing of an unarmed Palestinian man at a checkpoint," suggesting that this is



nothing more than an anti-Israel free-for-all. Those statements have nothing really to do with the incident of the *Liberty*. There is no real concern for the naval personnel, no concern for promoting international law, no concern for Palestinians or Egyptians, and

probably no real concern for the truth. Just an opportunity to bash Israel. Indeed, mainstream veterans' groups have refused to recognize or support this off-the-wall outfit which purports to be the voice of veterans but is really just another congeries of anti-Semites, a "Swift Boat Veterans for the Truth: anti-Israel edition." Their only consistent aim is to promote hostility toward Israel.

Having said all that, I agree with the claim of these anti-Semites that Israel's attack on the *Liberty* was not an accident and that the American government covered it up, with Israel's cooperation. Israel's bombing of the ship was in self-defense and was in itself lawful under conventional international rules of war, and was proportional. The USS *Liberty* -- the most technologically-sophisticated communications spy ship in the world -- was collecting data for a secret operation that included "leaking" Israel's Order of Battle to the Egyptians, Syrians and Jordanians. Conveying Israel's battle plans to its enemies during the war would likely have cost Israel many fatalities and

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possibly brought military failure. The US committed an act of war against a friendly nation, which may have been illegal under American law. We know this today through declassified materials, published accounts of the Israeli, American and British personnel involved, and the recordings of Arab leaders (Egypt's Nasser and Jordan's King Hussein) discussing the information leaked to them by the Americans (via the British in Cyprus) – recordings intercepted by Israeli intelligence.

Israel's attack was surgical and designed to minimize fatalities – and indeed, only 34 persons were killed, despite Israel's capacity to blow the ship out of the water, and despite the remarkable fact

that no air cover or rescue support was provided the *Liberty* by the US Navy, even though American forces were only minutes away. Specifically, Israel made sure the crew knew it was about to be attacked so they could seek cover (which they did at the right moment), and then dropped chemicals on the deck to destroy the communication equipment the *Liberty* was using to sabotage Israel. Immediately after the attack to destroy the communications equipment, by all accounts, Israel offered assistance to the survivors.

Today, any computer science or math student can readily grasp how the *Liberty* was able to discern Israel's battle plans, but in 1967 this cutting-edge technology was classified and beyond the imagination of most Americans (including those on the ship). It was an act of genius for Israeli intelligence to figure it out in 1967 (or at least clever spying to learn what the *Liberty* was doing), though it seems obvious 50 years later to people who understand the power of big data à la Twitter and Google.

It is not clear if the White House was aware of the American act of war against Israel, or if it was a rogue NSA operation, but it is clear that the Administration wanted the incident suppressed. Why exactly that served American purposes is open to speculation. Whether it was the intelligence agencies, the Democratic White House, or the oil industry that most wanted this story squelched is unclear. The use of British intelligence to circumvent America's own laws is a well-documented and continuing practice, which American Administrations do not want to discuss; perhaps this was what the Administration was

hiding.

By the same token, why Israel collaborated in the cover-up is also open to speculation. Perhaps Israel was just trying to accommodate the American administration. Or perhaps Israel's leaders did not want "everyone" to know how utterly alone Israel



really was during the war, to the point that even the United States betrayed them. Recall that this incident occurred after the United Nations capitulated to Egyptian threats and withdrew its peacekeeping forces from Sinai, and America and its allies failed to keep their commitment to insure free international maritime passage, which was critical for Israel and for the rule of law. The White House had talked about organizing or leading an international naval flotilla to assert freedom on the seas, but failed to deliver, which was a major contributing factor to the outbreak of war. Perhaps Israel did not want to have to explain how it figured out what the American ship was really doing, or perhaps Israel thought it could continue to extract a price for keeping America's secret. Or maybe Israel simply did not want to be subject to endless conspiracy theories.

It is clear, though, that the billboard is part of an anti-Jewish conspiracy.



April 2016

22 Adar II 5776 - 22 Nisan 5776

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

					1 7:00pm Candle Lighting 22 Adar II	2 Darshanit: Nanette Stahl 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Shabbat Shalom Torah Study Qiddush: Akresh 5:45pm Minha 23 Adar II
3 9:00am Religious School 10:00am BEKI Builds! Habitat for Humanity (off-site) 6:15pm Prayerbook Hebrew 101 with Rabbi Tilsen 24 Adar II	4 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour 6:10pm Principles of Judaism: Torah on One Foot with Rabbi Tilsen 25 Adar II	5 7:30pm Israeli Dance 26 Adar II	6 9:00am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program 27 Adar II	7 1:00pm Talmud Study Group 28 Adar II	8 7:07pm Candle Lighting 29 Adar II	9 Rosh Hodesh 10:45am Children's Programs 11:00am Beginning Hebrew with Will Auriemme Qiddush: Sanchez-Moycik, Purvin & Rosenthal, Frame & Werlin, Robbins 5:45pm Minha 1 Nisan
10 9:00am Religious School 6:15pm Prayerbook Hebrew 101 with Rabbi Tilsen 2 Nisan	11 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour 7:30pm Executive Board Meeting (off-site) 3 Nisan	12 7:30pm Israeli Dance 4 Nisan	13 9:00am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program 5 Nisan	14 1:00pm Talmud Study Group 6 Nisan	15 7:15pm Candle Lighting 7 Nisan	16 Religious School Shabbat 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Shabbat Shalom Torah Study Qiddush: Weiner/Rastelli & Goldfield/Bourne 5:45pm Minha 8 Nisan
17 No Religious School 4:00pm The Afro-Semitic Experience Concert "Songs of Freedom" 9 Nisan	18 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour 6:10pm Principles of Judaism: Torah on One Foot with Rabbi Tilsen 10 Nisan	19 7:30pm Israeli Dance 11 Nisan	20 9:00am Rabbi's Group No Religious School No Benei Mitzva Program 12 Nisan	21 No Talmud Study Group 13 Nisan	22 Erev Passover 7:00am Siyyum Bekhorot 6:00pm Minha & Shabbat Festival Service 7:22pm Candle Lighting 14 Nisan	23 Passover I 9:15am Festival Service 10:45am Children's Programs 1:05pm Minha No evening services 15 Nisan
24 Passover II No Religious School 9:15am Festival Service 5:45pm Minha-Maariv 16 Nisan/1 L'Omer	25 Hol Hamoed Passover I 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour 7:30pm General Board Meeting 17 Nisan/2 L'Omer	26 Hol Hamoed Passover II 7:30pm Israeli Dance 18 Nisan/3 L'Omer	27 Hol Hamoed Passover III 9:00am Rabbi's Study Group No Religious School No Benei Mitzva Program 19 Nisan/4 L'Omer	28 Hol Hamoed Passover IV No Talmud Study Group 7:26 Candle Lighting 20 Nisan/5 L'Omer	29 Passover VII Office Closed/Passover 9:15am Festival Service 6:00pm Minha-Maariv 7:29pm Candle Lighting 21 Nisan/6 L'Omer	30 Passover VIII (Yizkor) 9:15am Festival Service 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Shabbat Shalom Torah Study Qiddush: Rosenthal/Purvin 5:45pm Minha 22 Nisan/7 L'Omer

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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