

A New Haven Tradition since 1892

BEKI bulletin

Congregation
Beth El-Keser Israel

Tishri-Heshvan 5778

Vol. 23 Issue 10

Rabbi's Message: Page 11

SUKKOT IS HERE

Information on the festival observances A complete schedule of services is available at www.beki.org/worship/sukkot-thru-simhat-torah/

If you feel a sense of loss at the end of the High Holy Days, do not despair: it is time for Sukkot, called *the* Festival by our ancestors. Lulav & Etrog are used each day of Sukkot except Shabbat, until and including Hoshana Rabba.

Set up of the Morris "Moishe" Schnitman Memorial Sukka is planned for Sunday 1 Oct. 2017 from 9:30a to noon. Come when you can. Add a personal touch by bringing some of your own *sekhakh* (evergreen branches are preferred) for the roof to enhance the beauty and aroma of our congregational *sukka*. Breakdown and storage are planned for Sunday 15 Oct., following *Shaharit*. Bring gloves; portable power drivers and ladders are welcome. Please come and help. For information and to let us know if you can help, contact office@beki.org.



Lulav & Etrog Orders

BEKI Religious School offers *lulav* and *etrog* sets. To order, please contact Ina at principal@beki.org 203.389.2108 x13.

Sukkot & Shabbat Ḥol HaMoed

Sukkot begins on Wednesday evening 4 Oct. 2017. Minḥa afternoon service begins at 5:45p, followed immediately by the evening service, ending at 6:20p. The services will be held in the Sukka, weather permitting. Candle lighting on Wednes-

day night is at 6:09p.

The morning service on Thursday 5 Oct. begins at 9:15a and includes the recitation of Hallel, waving of Lulav and Etrog, and the recitation of a Hoshana for that day. A BEKI Family Sukka Hop will run (or hop) on Thursday from 2:45p to 5:45p, beginning at a local residence; reservations and location of first stop at mirbenson@aol.com. Services on Thursday night also begin at 5:45p, but candle lighting on Thursday is after 7:09p.

On Friday night 6 Oct. 2017, afternoon and Shabbat Festival Evening Services begin at 6:00p, in the Sukka if dry, and candle lighting is 6:06p. Services the next morning, Shabbat Ḥol HaMoed Sukkot, begin at 9:15a. We do not use Lulav and Etrog on Shabbat.

Shabbat Ḥol HaMoed

Shabbat Ḥol HaMoed, Saturday 7 Oct. 2017, is marked by reading selections from the Biblical Book of Qohelet ("Ecclesiastes"). Qohelet, attributed by tradition to King Solomon in his old age, is a "wisdom" book that many see as being out of step with the rest of the Torah. While it includes such well-known passages as "To everything there is a season" and "There is nothing new under the sun," it also contains statements that seem cynical or nihilistic. The Book will be chanted according to its beautiful and ancient melody.

Shabbat (Saturday) afternoon service begins at 5:45p and ends about 6:20p.

Benefit Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel

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BEKI Bulletin

The newsletter is published monthly by Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel for the benefit of its members.

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

To contribute articles or for inquiries regarding membership:

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

For advertising information, call the synagogue office.

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Sukkot

Continued from Page 1

Ḥol HaMoed Sukkot

“Ḥol HaMoed,” also known as the “intermediate” days of the festival, are those days between the first two and last two days of Sukkot (and of Pesah). They have a “semi-holiday” status. The rules against *melakha* (“work”) that apply on Festivals are not fully in force during this period, although we are encouraged to take this time as a holiday and to avoid work as much as possible. Our weekday morning services are enhanced with a brief Torah reading, the recitation of the musical “Hallel” section of Psalms, and a brief Musaf (additional) service. Weekday morning services thus take 60 minutes, instead of our usual 30 to 45 minutes. Afternoon and evening services are the usual length. The *lulav* (branches) and *etrog* (citron) are waved each morning of Ḥol HaMoed Sukkot (except Shabbat), and one is obliged to dwell (to eat is to live) in a *sukka*. Some morning and evening services will be held in the BEKI *sukka*. Some people do not wear tefillin during Ḥol HaMoed; others (common Ashkenazic practice outside of Israel) wear them for shaharit but remove them before Hallel. Tefillin are never used on the full festival day.

Hosanna! Hosanna!

The Hoshana Rabba (“Great Hosanna”) morning service on Wednesday 11 October 2017 begins at 9a and ends by 10:50a. This is one of the most colorful, fun and tactile services of the year, featuring seven circuits around the *sukka* or shul with *lulav* and *etrog* (palm and citron) and the *hoshana* service in which willow twigs are beaten on the chairs. Special holiday melodies make this an unforgettable spiritual experience. Be sure to come to this “service for all ages.” Jonathan Gordon will lead much of the Hoshana Rabba service according to the traditional festival melodies for this day.

Hoshana Rabba is a semi-festival on which work is *not* strictly prohibited as it is on the major festivals. It serves as a “closing ceremony” for the weeklong Sukkot observance in preparation for the concluding festival of Shemini Atseret. If the *sukka* is dry and rain or snow is not imminent, the Hoshanot and Haqafot will be in the *sukka*.

Shemini Atseret & Yizkor Memorial Service

The Festival of Shemini Atseret (“Eighth Day of Assembly”) serves as a conclusion to the autumn Festival of Sukkot (“Booths”). The festival begins Wednesday night 11 Oct. 2017. The *minha* service begins at 5:45p; the festival

maariv service begins immediately after, about 5:55p. It is customary to light a memorial candle on that night immediately before lighting the Festival candles. Candle lighting is 5:58p (or earlier).

During the morning service, which begins at 9:15a on Thursday 12 Oct., Hallel is chanted. The unique festival *nusah* (musical mode) is used for this service. For Carole Bass’s comment on Hallel, go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ak2Wqg2Xyks> (youtube cv “Carole Bass Hallel”).

The Yizkor Memorial Service is also incorporated into the Shemini Atseret liturgy. In the Yizkor service we call upon the memories of our ancestors and loved ones who, while not physically present, are part of our “Assembly.” During that memorial service, individual and communal prayers and remembrances will be offered for all of our departed loved ones.

Simhat Torah Celebration

Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel is the place to be for the evening and morning of Simhat Torah. *Minha* services begin at 5:45p and evening services begin at 6p on Thursday 12 Oct. 2017. Evening services include seven *haqafot* (circumambulatory dances) with Torah scrolls and a brief Torah reading, the only time that we read Torah in public at night. Candle lighting on Monday night is *after* 6:58p.

Festival Morning services begin at 9:15a on Friday 13 Oct.. Three Torah scrolls are removed from the ark (around 10:00a) and seven brief *haqafot* are conducted. Because this festival service is close to Shabbat, we intend to concentrate and expedite our joyfulness. The final chapters of the Book of Deuteronomy, *parashat Ve-Zot Ha-Berakha*, are read, followed by the opening passages of the Book of Genesis, part of *parasha Bereishit*. This concludes the annual Torah reading cycle, and begins the new cycle. This is particularly joyful at BEKI because so many members are involved in Torah reading throughout the year, and these readers dedicate considerable effort to preparing accurate and melodious chanting. A *maftir* portion is read from Numbers, which describes the observance of Shemini Atseret in the ancient Temple. The *haftara* is recited from the opening passages of Joshua, which is the sequel to Deuteronomy, sometimes called the “sixth book” of the Five Books of Moses. Goodie Bags will be presented by the [Sisterhood](#) to all the deserving children at services evening and morning. Shabbat candle lighting is 5:54p, Festival *minha* service is 6p, followed by Shabbat Festival Maariv, ending about 6:40p.



המקום ינחם

HaMaqom Yinahem

With sorrow we note the passing of

Dorothy Rutkin,

mother of Cindy Smernoff

Muriel Banquer

May the Almighty comfort those who mourn

Welcome New and Returning Members

- Benjamin Kann & Viviana Benitez and Eliana
- Deborah Craig
- Caroline Rosenstone
- Evan & Stacey Wyner and Jacob, Alex, Ari and Aviva
- Beth McDaniel and Geanna
- Susan & Alan Dardik
- Madeleine Kleinman
- Russell & Susan Epstein, and Hannah and Samuel

Mazal tov to

- Robert & Jane Stern on the birth of a grandchild Ramona Mae, to children Adam & Sarit, in August.
- Katriela Knight on the birth of a grandchild April, in September.

Sisterhood News from Mimi

Simhat Torah

Turn it (the Torah) and turn it, for everything is in it. And through it comes clarity of mind. *Pirke Avot — Ethics of the Elders 5:26*

Simhat Torah (celebration of the Torah) marks the completion of a year of Torah readings and the beginning of a new cycle. More than 800 liturgical songs of praise (*piyyutim*) have been written in various Jewish languages – Yiddish, Ladino, Hebrew, and Judeo-Arabic – to be recited on this day. The Torah scrolls are removed from the Holy Ark and are circled around the sanctuary seven times by the congregation. All except three Torah scrolls are returned to the Ark. In a mystical imitation of the wedding service, the remaining Torah is treated like a bride, showered with song, dance, and joy, and a deserving person, or an actual groom or bride, is designated the Groom or Bride of the Torah. This honoree is assigned the aliya in which the three final verses of the Torah are read. From a second scroll, a “groom” or “bride” is honored with the reading of the opening verses of Genesis. Thus the reading of the Torah never ends. The maftir aliya is read from the third scroll, set to the passage in Numbers that describes the Temple offering for the festival day.

The joyous holiday would not be complete without

special foods. Cabbage is featured, because the Hebrew word for cabbage (*keruv*) also means “cherub.” By eating cabbage, Jews are reminded of the *cherubim* on the Ark of the Covenant, which the Children of Israel built according to instructions in Exodus 25:18-22 and carried with them through their desert wanderings.

In our congregation the Rabbi and the congregants sing and dance with the Torah scrolls in the social hall. Thus we are close to the Torah scrolls that are kept in the Ark all year long.

In Israel, and in the Diaspora as well, children may march with an Israeli flag or a Simhat Torah paper flag topped by an apple to symbolize the sweet Torah.

Please join Sisterhood for light refreshments and dancing on the eve of 11 October in the social hall.

Sisterhood Membership

We are in the process of sending Sisterhood membership applications in the mail.

Please consider becoming a Sisterhood member for this coming year.

Membership is still only \$25 for the year.

The board and members of Sisterhood wishes you and your family a Happy Sukkot and Simhat Torah

Rabbi's Tzedaka Fund

- Cindy Smernoff in appreciation and in memory of mother Dorothy Rutkin
- Roy & Karen Merkel Herbst marking Hannah's Bat Mitzva observance

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- Jessey Palumbo

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

- To Tammy Edelkind with sympathy on the passing of Michele Edelkind Lechner by Helen Rosenberg & Keith Richter
- To Scott Serkez & Bryna Pauker with sympathy on the passing of Alvin Serkez by Michael Stern & Kathy Rosenbluh
- To Scott Serkez & Bryna Pauker with sympathy on the passing of Alvin Serkez by Jennifer Fleming
- To Tammy Edelkind with sympathy on the passing of Michele Edelkind Lechner by the Avni-Singer family
- To Herb & Hannah Winer with sympathy on the passing of Joseph Winer by Joy Kaufman & Stewart Frankel
- To Peggy & Don Hackett with sympathy on the passing of Dennis Carnine by Joy Kaufman & Stewart Frankel
- To Roni Woolfson with sympathy on the passing of Evelyn Woolfson by Joy Kaufman & Stewart Frankel
- To Carole & Paul Bass with sympathy on the passing of Rita Smith by Joy Kaufman & Stewart Frankel
- To Dennis & Barbara Rader in honor of their 50th wedding anniversary by Rachel Bashevkin & Eric Dunsker
- To David Wright & Debbie Craig in honor of their marriage by Rachel Bashevkin & Eric Dunsker
- To Margie & Jay Hirshfield in honor of their 60th anniversary by Joy Kaufman & Stewart Frankel
- To Margie & Jay Hirshfield in honor of their anniversary by Steve & Rachel Wizner
- To Ron Zlotoff and Donna Kemper in honor of the marriage of Ben Zlotoff to Sarah by Sharon & Ira Goldman
- To Team #3 of the Kiddush Committee in appreciation for the wonderful Kiddush you prepared for their anniversary celebration by Jay & Margie Hirshfield
- To Leon Cummings with sympathy on the passing of Ruth Gittelman by Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade
- To Tammy Edelkind with sympathy on the passing of Michele Edelkind Lechner by Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade
- To Jay & Margie Hirshfield in honor for their 60th anniversary by Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade

- To Jennifer Botwick & Michael Ries in honor of their 120-year-total birthdays by Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade
- To Ella May in honor of her Bat Mitzva by Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade
- To Jay & Margie Hirshfield in honor of their anniversary by Lana & Martin Gad
- To Tammy Edelkind with sympathy on the passing of Michele Edelkind Lechner by Gloria Cohen
- To Rachel Wizner with wishes for a speedy recovery by Betty & Art Levy
- To Jay & Margie Hirshfield in honor of their 60th wedding anniversary by Bobbie & Harold Miller

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

- To Tammy Edelkind, Esther & Sarah with sympathy on the passing of Michele Edelkind Lechner by David & Darryl Kuperstock
- To Scott Serkez & Bryna Pauker with sympathy on the passing of Alvin Serkez by David & Darryl Kuperstock
- To Scott Serkez & Bryna Pauker with sympathy on the passing of Alvin Serkez by Dan & Sharon Prober
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- To Tammy Edelkind with sympathy on the passing of Michele Edelkind Lechner by Bill Shragis

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- To Rena Cheskis-Gold in honor of her birthday by the Stanger & Colodner family
- To Rena Cheskis-Gold in honor of her birthday by Rachel Bashevkin & Eric Dunsker

Harold & Arthur Ratner Memorial Fund

- To Harriet Crocker in honor of her 60th birthday from the Ratners
- In loving memory of her son Arthur Ratner by Mikki Ratner

Frankel-Mattler Memorial Fund

- In memory of Zelda Frankel Katz by Shirley Mattler
- In memory of Dorothy Mattler by Shirley Mattler

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

- In memory of Barry Raymond Fritz by Mary Doyle Zuskin
- In memory of Rena Miller by Richard &

- Vicki Miller
- In memory of Ben Marks by Lynne Marks
- In memory of Ruth Rosner by Sara-Ann & Hillel Auerbach
- In memory of Louis Blatt by Marilyn Margolis
- In memory of Anita Deanna Fink Saxe by Stanley Saxe
- In memory of Joseph Baer by Irving Baer
- In memory of Sondra Herschderfer by Sherman Herschderfer
- In memory of David Herschderfer by Sherman Herschderfer
- In memory of Joseph Stern by Barbara & Murray Akresh
- In memory of Joan Edelstein Davenny by Amy Margolis
- In memory of Joan Rosenthal Goldhamer by Amy Margolis
- In memory of Norman Rosenberg by Lillian Rosenberg
- In memory of George R. Schnitman by Helene & Ed Vanderhoef
- In memory of Harry S. Fleischner by Robert Fleischner
- In memory of Faye Schwartz by David Schwartz
- In memory of Leah Wallach by Mickey & Bud Chorney
- In memory of loved ones by Marshall Presser and Nancy & Bea Sherman
- In memory of Dave Berger by Saul Berger
- In memory of Carl Gesund by Hans & Irmgard Gesund
- In memory of Rose Pergament by Deanna Tulin
- In memory of their mother Bessie Handleman by Joyce Handleman & Rheba Newman
- In memory of Muriel Kaltman by Anonymous
- In memory of Lev Malamud by Fania Levine
- In memory of her aunt Lillian Senderoff Resnick by Sherry Kent
- In memory of Hannah Zarnes by Doris Sagerman
- In memory of Renee Abend by Doris Sagerman
- In memory of Louis Epstein by Earl Baker
- In memory of Sylvia Fleischner by Sara-Ann & Hillel Auerbach
- In memory of Philip Auerbach by Hillel & Sara-Ann Auerbach
- In memory of Ted & Shirley Chatzek by Rayna & David Belowsky
- In memory of Irv Zerwitz by Donna Kemper
- In memory of Sarah Feldman by Lois K. Feldman
- In memory of Fannie Siegel by Eileen S. Rogoff
- In memory of Beth Margolis by Marilyn Margolis
- In memory of Martha Miller Schwartz by Bobbie & Harold Miller
- In memory of BeBe Greene by Bobbie & Harold Miller
- In memory of Eugene Greene by Bobbie & Harold Miller
- In memory of Belle Bender by Bobbie & Harold Miller

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:

Noam Zion, 28 October, parashat Lekh Lekha

Dani Callaghan, bat mitzva, 4 November 2017, parashat VaYera

Jalina Secchiaroli, bat mitzva, 11 November 2017, parashat Hayei Sara

Rabbi Murray Levine, 18 November 2017, parashat Toldot

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.



Steven Fraade



Alan Lovins



Nadav Sela



Isaiah Cooper

Mondays

Rashi Study Group: I Kings

Each Monday morning from 7:45a to 8:30a adults meet in the Library Chapel to read Rashi's commentary on the TaNaKh (Hebrew Bible). The Rashi Study Group (RSG) is reading First Kings. It is possible to join the study group for a single meeting or to begin at any time.

Knowledge of Hebrew is not necessary. Rashi purported to explain the *peshat* of the text, i.e., the meaning in its historical, literary and linguistic context. Visitors and new participants are welcome. Hebrew and English texts are available. The RSG meets immediately following the 7:00a *shaharit* morning service, but will not meet on the Monday of Columbus Day (8 October) following the 9a hol hamoed service due to the added duration of the semi-festival liturgy. 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 or current events. Word of the Week will be on holiday break and will resume 18 October 2017.

Rabbis' Study Group

Wednesdays with Murray is a weekly study group exclusively for rabbis, facilitated by Rabbi Murray Levine. The Wednesday study group affords local rabbis an opportunity to pursue their own *talmud torah* (Torah study) in a "safe" setting and with opportunities to learn from each other's experience and insight. The study group meets Wednesday mornings in the Rosenkrantz Family Library during the school year. The Rabbis' Group will resume after



Murray Levine

Continued on **Page 7**

Adult Studies

Continued from Page 6

Shemini Atseret, on 18 October. 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. Shahrut service is from 8:15a to 9:15a on Thursdays; on

other weekdays, the service begins at 7:00a.

Berakhot Talmud Study Group

A weekly study of the Talmud Bavli Berakhot meets in the Beit Midrash on Thursday mornings 10a–11a with Rabbi Tilsen.

The Talmud, based on an oral text, has no beginning or end. One can begin study at any point; now is the best time. No prior knowledge is required, but basic facility in English is helpful; students with all backgrounds are welcome, beginner to advanced. The Berakhot Talmud Study Group meets each Thursday but is on holiday break and will resume 19 October 2017.



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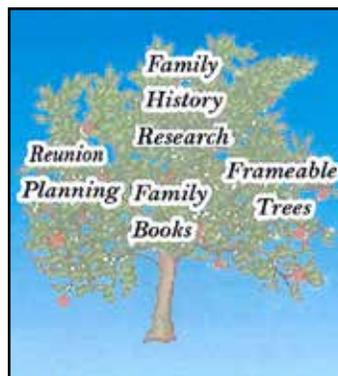
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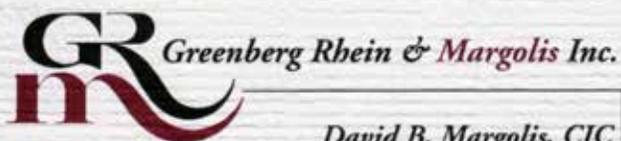
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Clarence Bromell Announces Retirement

After about thirty years of service, our custodian Clarence Bromell has retired. A gathering to honor him is being planned to take place in a few weeks.

Clarence has worked full-time for over 70 years, and for much of that time in two full-time positions – though he cut back to one 40+ hour job at BEKI when he joined our staff in the 1980s.

“It has been a pleasure, and an honor, to serve the Congregation with Mr. Bromell,” comments Rabbi Tilsen. “Clarence is the most reliable and responsible person you could hope to have on any job. He always sought to make every event and service the best it could be for our families, made sure things were done right, and stayed until everything was done – sometimes coming in hours before sunrise to get things ready. And on occasion I heard a little of his life-story and his acquired wisdom, which is both inspirational and interesting.”

Introducing: Michael Barone

Hello! It is very nice to be working among the friendly,



Michael Barone

supportive people of BEKI.

Although I was born in Rhode Island, lived in NY’s Greenwich Village for two years and have resided in Shelton for the past three years, I spent 35 years living in New Haven.

Music and films are the passions of my life as well as travel, nature, literature, animals and spirituality. I tend to have eclectic taste in things.

Before coming onboard at BEKI I was the manager of a 75,000 sq. ft. storage complex for 20 years until it changed ownership.

If you should happen to see me, please come up and say hello and if there is any way that I can be of assistance to you, please don’t hesitate to ask.

Tree of Life

Miriam Kahn z”l and Mikki Ratner have helped BEKI bring life to our Tree of Life in the lobby entrance. Take a look to your left on your way into the synagogue. For the small price of \$118, you can have engraved a leaf for a Bat- or Bar-Mitzva, birthday, wedding celebration or honoring or memorializing relatives or friends. What a beautiful way to honor the special people in your life.

Contact me for your order. Thanks.

Marjorie Wiener, 203-387-6278,
marjoriowiener@yahoo.com

Face-to-Face Senior Group

The opening meeting of the senior group, which met last year, will take place on Wednesday morning 18 October at 10:30a. Rabbi Murray Levine will review the book *Here and There* by Chaya Deitsch. All are invited to read the book in advance. RSVP by calling Rabbi Levine at 203.397.2513 by 16 October. Please come and bring

a friend. Coffee will be served.

Youth Scholarships

The Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven has scholarships for synagogue schools. The application deadline is 20 October. No tax return or other documentation is required but the online application must be completed and received by 20 October 2017 at <https://scholarships.jewishnewhaven.org/form/religious>. Applicant must live in and attend a synagogue school in the [Greater New Haven catchment area](#).

Hurricane & Flood Relief

See USCJ [Disaster Relief Fund](#) for Puerto Rico, Florida and Texas, and see other recognized agencies.

BMP

[Registration & Payment form for Benei Mitzva Program](#) and [more info](#) at beki.org under “Youth” tab. Class meets **Wednesdays** 5p-6:20p. **BMP** meets same Wednesdays as [BRS](#).

BRS

[BEKI Religious School](#) classes began **Sunday** 10 September, 9a-12m. Register or info principal@beki.org.

Dedicate a Mahzor

Dedicate one or more copies of the High Holy Day Prayerbook *Lev Shalem* to honor or memorialize a person or event, or simply as a gift to the Congregation. Dedications are recognized in specially-designed and customized bookplates and in the [Bulletin](#). Forms are in the lobby and at www.beki.org. Info at office@beki.org.

Operation Isaiah

Take a Bag, Fill a Bag. Bring it Back. Bring back a bag filled to the brim with non-perishable food for our annual Food Drive to benefit the Jewish Family Service Food Pantry for those in need locally. Take a bag from the display in the synagogue lobby. Let’s beat last year’s donation. For more info: Lynn Brotman lynnbrotman@aol.com.

WATER SOLD SEPARATELY

During the month of Elul, which precedes Rosh HaShana, we include the recitation of Psalm 27, “The Psalm for the Season of Repentance,” in each morning and evening service. It should be no surprise that this practice continues after the “Day of Judgment” – Rosh HaShana – on which the verdict is issued, through Yom Kippur, which is the day the sentence is pronounced (if we follow the rubric presented in the poem “Unetane Toqef”). But in our common tradition, this Psalm is recited through Hoshana Rabba, the last of the “regular” day of Sukkot.

Early sources such as the Mishna describe Hoshana Rabba as being a day of judgment for water (or rain). That is, while on Rosh HaShana it may be decided who shall live and who shall die, there is a separate process that determines water management – rain, flood, drought – that concludes on Hoshana Rabba. It is on the next day, Shemini Atseret, that we recite the “Prayer for Rain (Geshem)” in the musaf service.

In ancient times, there was a supposition that unfavorable weather had something to do with displeased deities, and various rituals such as throwing virgins into volcanoes or sacrificing children (preferably other people’s children) on an alter, or some dance or incantation, would appease those deities. It was a great advance in human civilization when the Torah of Moses replaced that with the notion that it is our ethical and legal behavior that determines the climate and weather events. As we say in the second paragraph of the Shema (Deut. 11), “If you follow My mitzvot...I will grant rain in due season...and you shall gather in your grain,” and if not, then those blessings will be withheld and you will perish.

With the Age of Enlightenment, when science and rational thinking became popular in some quarters, came the belief that weather has to do with tides and seasons, and has nothing to do with human behavior. Robbery and rape do not affect the rains. Our tradition demands that we seek and

recognize truth, and uttering statements that we believe are superstitious or simply incorrect is a violation of our fundamental mandate. This idea resonated so much that the Reform Movement removed the second paragraph of the Shema from its liturgy altogether, which at least had the merit of shortening our lengthy services, although by removing

what had been the single most venerated and obligatory passage.

It turns out, though, that in more recent years, especially since 1960s, there has been a growing understanding that human action does in fact affect climate and the weather, as well as the *impact* the weather has on our lives. What we realize now, that our ancestors probably did not, is that there are specific mitzvot the performance or violation of which impact “the rains and crops.” Those mitzvot include the Torah’s rule against wanton environmental change and destruction, the emission of pollution, and the rules that require us to provide for public safety by controlling hazardous conditions. The rules that require us to preserve life and avoid putting ourselves and others in harm’s way could also be pertinent.

Today, some of us have a deepening appreciation of how our communal policy and personal decisions can determine whether and how natural events occur and what their impact will be on the world.

Sukkot is a holiday that takes us outside of our walls and places us under the sky in a structure that is directly subject to the elements. It invites us to realize that while the simplest equation “if you are good, good will befall you” and its converse are generally true to some degree, we can actually achieve a deeper understanding by exploring our tradition and pursuing science. Now that we have sought forgiveness and teshuva before Yom Kippur, it is time to turn our attention to the water-related good and evil in our world. Water and weather are so important to life that sometimes we should think about them separately.





DATED MATERIAL

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Mini-Qiddush

A modest fare of grape juice, wine, cookies and fruit will be served on Shemini Atseret and Simhat Torah.

Face-to-Face Senior Group

Opening meeting 10:30a–12m Wednesday 18 October. Rabbi Murray Levine will review the book *Here and There* by Chaya Deitsch. RSVP to Rabbi Levine 203.397.2513. Come and bring a friend. Coffee will be served.

No Throw Zone

Reusable plates and utensils may be used some Shabbatot at qiddush. Please bus your utensils and assist those at your table.

No Go Zone

Please keep food and beverages in the social hall and sukka (and not lobby or beyond), and so direct family members.

Sunday Testing

Sign up for Sunday testing for SATs and ACTs. <http://sat.collegeboard.org/register/special-circumstances> and <http://www.actstudent.org/faq/nonsat.html> for more information.

Youth Scholarships

(A) Jewish Foundation, for local synagogue schools, [schol-](#)

[arships.jewishnewhaven.org/form/religious](#) ; (B) Foundation Israel Program scholarships [jewishnewhaven.org/scholarships](#) (C) Barzillai Cheskis Youth Israel Scholarship at BEKI (office@beki.org) .

JCARR

Help refugee families adjust to New Haven. Contact Gilah Benson-Tilsen jcarr.beki@gmail.com

Yibane – Rebuilding Update

Repair and restoration work on the south wall scheduled to begin shortly. We expect minimal disruption to planned events.

GOOD COPY
Printing & Digital Graphics

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