Yamim Noraim: Days of Awe

Schedules, Information, Order Forms

Information, schedules, registration and order forms for Yamim Noraim – Days of Awe are available at [www.beki.org](http://www.beki.org) under the “Worship” tab. A schedule of Sukkot and Shemini Atseret services is available there as well.

Volunteers Needed

To volunteer either to help with planning or to participate in our High Holy Day worship services, please contact Darryl Kuperstock at [kuperst@gmail.com](mailto:kuperst@gmail.com). Help is needed for mailings, Break Fast shopping and planning, greeters and ushers, minyan makers (early attendees), English readings, printing Yizkor Memorial Book, and more. If you have any questions, please speak with Darryl.

Need a Letter for Employer or School?

Shul members occasionally need letters to employers or principals explaining the nature of the Jewish holiday observance. Despite the high level of understanding in our community, there is still a need for education and information. It is important that our children be in shul for all of Yontif.

It is also important to defend your right – by tradition a God-given right – to not have to work on these days. So often, we find that if we can work, we must work. Nuanced reservations and distinctions are often lost in practice, and so clear-cut and undifferentiated rules are needed.

If you would like such a letter for Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur or Sukkot, contact Rabbi Tilsen at [jtilsen@beki.org](mailto:jtilsen@beki.org) or (203) 389-2108 x10.

Shofar So Good

The sound of the shofar calls us to teshuva each morning from Rosh Hodesh Elul (Sunday Aug. 16) through Rosh HaShana. Psalm 27 is also included in each morning and evening service from Saturday night Aug. 15.

Selihot at BEKI

Our congregation will be a guest of our USCJ-affiliate and neighboring Congregation B’nai Jacob for the First Selihot Service on Saturday night Sept. 5. Havdala and refreshments will be held at 8 p.m.; the presentation “Forgiveness” will begin at 8:30; and the Selihot service will be 10 to 10:45 p.m.

The *selihot* (penitential) prayers are said during the middle of the night during the period immediately before Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur. It is believed that a heightened sense of spiritual awareness can be achieved during those hours.

Days of Awe

Michael Stern will serve as our Hazan Rishon (lead cantor) for the High Holy Days, as he has done each year since 5773. Michael, a resident of Skokie, Illinois, is a BEKI alumnus and a student of Rabbi Alan Lovins, who served as Hazan Rishon for 17 years. In addition to Michael, the services will again be led by BEKI members serving as volunteer *hazzanim*. Rabbi Tilsen will conduct the services, as he has each year since 1993.

Most services are organized and led by our members.

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Benefit Congregation
Beth El-Keser Israel

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• 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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Visit us at www.beki.org
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Generally, Michael will lead the morning Torah service and musaf on all three days, as well as Kol Nidre, Maariv and Neila on Yom Kippur. Birkhot ha-Shahar (morning blessings) and Pesuqei de-Zimra (Verses of Song) represent a poetry reading that creates or reinforces a spiritually sensitive atmosphere, which is an experience unto itself as well as prelude to the recitation of Shema and Amida. Shaharit morning services, essentially the recitation of Shema and Amida, include popular “sing along” Hebrew *piyyutim* (poems). Musaf services, the particular additional Amida for the holy day, include several interpretative or contemporary English readings as well as cantorial (and sometimes choral) elaborations. The shofar is sounded after the haftara reading and again during musaf on both days of Rosh HaShana. The recitation of Shema and hearing the shofar are both considered biblical precepts not to be missed.

Tickets are required for adult entrance to most services. Among other reasons, this is to ensure the safety and security of the congregation. Full-time students and military personnel on active duty may enter upon presentation of proper identification. Every person in the building must be identified before entry and is subject to search.

Some of the ushers serving during the Holy Days may be new members. Veteran members who do not recognize the ushers are urged to introduce themselves, as our ushers wish to meet as many members and visitors as they can. If you forget your tickets, our ushers will be able to find your name on the members or guests list.

For safety and planning reasons, children must be pre-registered to participate in children’s services. For registration information, contact office@beki.org or (203) 389-2108 x14.

If you are interested in babysitting service, please contact office@beki.org or (203) 389-2108 x14. Walk-in babysitting is not available and will not be available at all unless a prior arrangement is made. Children and infants are welcome in the sanctuary; quiet non-electric toys are permitted.

Rosh HaShana

Rosh HaShana services begin Sunday night Sept. 13 September at 6:45 with the Minha service, followed by Maariv at 7 p.m. Candle Lighting is at 6:48. The service concludes by 7:45. Morning services begin at 8:30 on Monday Sept. 14; several services for children and youth, and a learners’ service, are held as well. Shofar is sounded at about 10:30 a.m. in the sanctuary; please come to the sanctuary at that hour, or as directed by the ushers, if you are elsewhere in the building.

*Tashlikh* ("casting") services will be held on the *first* day of Rosh HaShana, Monday Sept. 14, at 5:45 p.m., at the Edgewood Bridge and at the Whitney Museum Covered Bridge. The *Tashlikh* service is a popular outdoor event for people of all ages, and includes a brief prayer, poetry and singing. It is held beside a body of natural water.

On Monday afternoon of Rosh HaShana, Minha service begins at 6:45, followed by the evening service at 7 p.m. Candle lighting is after 7:48.

On Tuesday Sept. 15, morning services are also at 8:30. Youth services are held as well. Shofar is sounded on Tuesday morning. Afternoon service (Minha) begins at 5:45 on Tuesday. Havdala (Home Ritual) is at 7:48 p.m. or later.

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Qever Avot Cemetery Memorial Services

The annual Qever Avot Cemetery Memorial Services will be held at 10 a.m. at the Hamden Cemetery, and at 11 a.m. at the West Haven Cemetery on Sunday Sept. 20, which is the Sunday between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur. Rabbi Tilsen will lead a brief communal memorial service and will be available for individual prayers. Those who wish to visit the graves of their ancestors or loved ones but are unable to do so because of distance are invited to attend along with those whose loved ones are buried in the BEKI cemeteries. If you would like a ride to the service, please contact the office a few days in advance.

In addition, a representative of the Cemetery Association will be present to answer questions and concerns of those owning or considering the purchase of plots at the BEKI cemeteries. Now is a good time to purchase your choice of prime locations for traditional Jewish burial in these historic cemeteries. Members enjoy a substantial discount; only traditionally honored remains of legally Jewish persons may be interred in these cemeteries.

Directions to the cemeteries and more information can be found at http://www.beki.org/about/directions-to-the-cemeteries/. For information on cemetery purchases or upkeep, please contact the BEKI Cemetery Association at cemetery@beki.org or (203) 389-2108 x57.

Yom Kippur

On the afternoon before Yom Kippur, Tuesday Sept. 22, the minha service begins at 6:30 p.m. Candle Lighting is 6:32 p.m. (or earlier). The Kol Nidre and Maariv Evening services begin promptly at 6:45 and end by 8:45.

On Wednesday Sept. 23, the Shaharit services begin at 9 a.m.; the Yizkor Memorial Service begins after 11 a.m. The minha afternoon service begins at 5, and is followed immediately by the Neila and Maariv services. The services end with Havdala and the sounding of the shofar at 7:32 p.m.

For security reasons, tickets are required for all Yom Kippur services, including the afternoon and Neila services. If you arrive without your tickets, please introduce yourself to a greeter who will be able to find your name on the members and guest list.
Posener Break Fast Concludes Yom Kippur

Following the concluding Yom Kippur services on Wednesday Sept. 23, members and ticket holders are invited to gather for our amazing break fast. For many years, George G. Posener sponsored the break fast in memory of his family. George G. Posener died on Yom Kippur 5772 (2011), so the break fast now honors his memory as well.

The George G. Posener Family Memorial Break Fast is prepared entirely by members of the BEKI community. Overseen by Darryl Kuperstock, most of the preparation and all of the cooking is done in advance, but the assembly and plating (and clean-up) of this banquet is done by the fantastic volunteers who join us in the kitchen during the afternoon break on Yom Kippur. It’s fun, intense, and extremely satisfying – so come help us out this year. Help is also appreciated in the days before Yom Kippur.

The George G. Posener Family Memorial Yom Kippur Break Fast Fund at Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel in blessed memory of his wife, parents, sisters, brother and two precious sons was established by George G. Posener in 2001 to create a lasting memorial at the time of the yahrzeits of his family members. Proceeds from this endowment provide for a special and meaningful community gathering at the end of Yom Kippur. The Posener Fund is held and managed by the Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven.

Sukkot is Coming

A complete schedule of services is available in table format at www.beki.org/sukkot.html.

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. Information on the festival observances and schedules are published at http://www.beki.org/worship/sukkot-thru-simhat-torah/.

Set up of the Morris “Moishe” Schnitman Memorial Sukka is planned for Thursday Sept. 24 from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. 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 Oct. 19, 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 will offer lulav and etrog sets. To order, please contact Ina at principal@beki.org (203) 389-2108 x13.

Sukkot & Shabbat Ḥol HaMoed

Sukkot begins on Sunday evening ept. 27. Minḥa afternoon service begins at 5:45, followed immediately by the evening service, ending at 6:20. The services will be held in the Sukka, weather permitting. Candle lighting on Sunday night is at 6:24.

The morning service on Monday Sept. 28 begins at 9:15 and includes the recitation of Hallel, waving of Lulav and Etrog, and the recitation of a Hoshana for that day. Services on Monday night also begin at 5:45, but candle lighting on Monday is after 7:25 p.m. Services on Tuesday morning Sept. 29 are from 9:15 to 11:36 and again include the taking of Lulav and Etrog. Havdala that evening is after 7:25.

On Friday night Oct. 2, afternoon and Shabbat Festival Evening Services begin at 6 p.m. Services the next morning, Shabbat Ḥol HaMoed Sukkot, begin at 9:15. We do not use Lulav and Etrog on Shabbat.

Shabbat Ḥol HaMoed

Shabbat Hol HaMoed, Saturday Oct. 2, is marked by reading selections from the Biblical Book of Qohelet.
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(“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 5:45 and ends about 6:20 p.m.

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 Shabbat and 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 Sunday Oct. 4 begins at 9 a.m. and ends by 10:50. This is one of the most colorful, fun and tactile services of the year, featuring seven circuits around the suka 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.”

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. Weather permitting, the Hoshana Rabba service will be in the suka.

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 Sunday night Oct. 4. The Minha service begins at 5:45 p.m.; the festival ma’ariv service begins immediately after, about 5:55. It is customary to light a memorial candle on that night immediately before lighting the Festival candles. Candle lighting is 6:12 p.m. (or earlier).

During the morning service, which begins at 9:15 on Monday Oct. 5, 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 5:45 p.m. and evening services begin at 6 p.m. on Monday Oct. 5. Evening services include seven haqafot

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(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 7:12.

Festival morning services begin at 9:15 on Tuesday Oct. 6. Three Torah scrolls are removed from the ark (around 10 a.m.) and seven brief haqafot are conducted. 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. Afternoon minha service begins at 5:45 as is usual at BEKI.

**Youth**

**Shabbat Clock at Whalley & Harrison**

The crosswalk at Whalley Avenue at Harrison Street operates according to a Shabbat timer. On Friday nights and Saturdays, a 15-second exclusive pedestrian phase occurs periodically. It is not necessary to push the “walk” button. Please exercise extreme caution at all times as some drivers do not obey the stop light, as they may have urgent text messages or phone calls that require their attention.

**Don’t Cross the Line**

A sensor on Harrison Street at the corner of Whalley Avenue detects vehicles on Harrison Street (such as those leaving BEKI) and after a delay of less than three minutes provides a green light to vehicles on Harrison Street. The sensor may not work if a vehicle approaches at a very low speed. When vehicles cross the stop line (the white perpendicular line before the crosswalk) and partially enter the intersection, the system may treat it as if the vehicle is gone and will not provide a green light, so be sure to stop at the “stop line” before the sidewalk as the law requires. If you don’t stop where you are supposed to, you won’t get a green light.

**Daily Services**

Additional participants are needed for the morning service in September and October. Can you come one morning a week? Sunday, 9 to 9:36; Monday 7 to 7:47; Tuesday 7 to 7:32; Wednesday 7 to 7:33; Thursday 8:15 to 9:11; Friday 7 to 7:32. Let our minyan captains know care of jjtilsen@beki.org or just come.

**LifeCycle**

**המcrop הזומ הוכת**

*HaMaqom Yinahem*

With sorrow we note the passing of

Scott Wizner, brother of Stephen (& Rachel) Wizner


Susan Eisenberg, sister of Rabbi Richard (& Judith) Eisenberg

*May the Almighty comfort those who mourn*

**Benei Mitzva Observances**

Aaron Bruce and Benjamin Bruce, sons of Harriet Friedman & Charles Bruce, grandsons of Albert Friedman, Oct. 9-10, parashat Bereishit.

Eran Avni-Singer, son of A. Joseph & Ravit Avni-Singer, Oct. 16-17, parashat Noah.

**Welcome New Members**

• Fania Levine
• Jonathan Gordon & Jonathan Rohner
Once again BEKI Religious School will offer lulav and etrog sets for Sukkot!

Please fill out the order form below and return to the BEKI office by Wednesday, September 16th

Sets are expected to be available in the office 9am to noon on Sunday, September 27th, Erev Sukkot

Thank you for supporting the BEKI Religious School!

I wish to order ______ set/sets X $38.00 = ______

TOTAL ORDER

Name: ________________________________

Payment: Check or Cash

Please return to BEKI, 85 Harrison Street, New Haven CT 06515
Shabbatot (Saturdays)

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:

Aaron Bruce, Bar Mitzva, Oct. 10, parashat Bereishit.
Ben Bruce, Bar Mitzva, Oct. 10, parashat Bereishit.
Eran Avni-Singer, Bar Mitzva, Oct. 17, parashat Noah.

Shabbat Shalom Torah Study

The Shabbat Shalom Torah Study meets every other Saturday morning at 10:45 in the office and is an ideal setting for veteran and novice shulgoers alike to explore the scriptural readings and liturgy of the day in a supportive setting. Expertly led by Steven Fraade, with Rabbi Alan Lovins, Rabbi Murray Levine, Nadav Sela, Isaiah Cooper and others, the Shabbat Shalom Torah Study is a nurturing exploration of practice and theory presented in a participatory, non-threatening and multi-generational setting. Many members who take advantage of this unique offering feel a deeper sense of awe born of increased understanding and appreciation of the Torah reading, Haftara (Prophetic reading) and liturgy.

The program often focuses on the scriptural readings, but also addresses the prayer liturgy and other topics related to the liturgical calendar, scriptural readings or current issues of concern.

Everyone is welcome to participate regardless of religious status or background. It is suitable for mature, or at least well-behaved, youth along with adults.

Mondays

Rashi Study Group: Shemuel

Each Monday morning from 7:45 to 8:30 adults meet in the Library Chapel to read Rashi’s commentary on the TaNaKh (Hebrew Bible). The Rashi Study Group (RSG) has begun the Book of 2 Shemuel (Samuel). 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 a.m. Shaharit service. On Monday Sept. 7, Labor Day, the morning service begins at 9 and the RSG meets 9:45 to 10:30. The RSG will not meet on Sept. 14 (Rosh HaShana), Sept. 28 (Sukkot), or Oct. 5 (Shemini Atseret). On Monday Oct. 12, Columbus Day, the service begins at 9 a.m. and the RSG meets 9:45 to 10:30. 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. Word of the Week will resume on Oct. 7 (after the festivals).

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. For information, call Rabbi Murray Levine at (203) 397-2513. The group is on summer recess and will resume Sept. 2, with a special meeting time and place.

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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 8:15 to 9:15 a.m. on Thursdays; on other weekdays, the service begins at 7 a.m.

Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group
The Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group is on summer recess and will next meet on Thursday, Oct. 8. The group meets on Thursdays from noon to 1 p.m. 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.

For information, contact Isaiah Cooper at his law office icoope@cooperlaw.net . With Rabbi Tilsen.

Every Day

Divrei Torah on the Web
A collection of Divrei Torah (Torah commentaries) and essays by members and Rabbi Tilsen is posted on BEKI’s website under “Learning.”

Sisterhood

As we sit and write Rosh Hashana greeting cards to our family and friends we do so with love and good wishes for a happy . . . sweet . . . healthy new year.

Did you ever wonder how Jewish New Year cards came about? It is a long tradition of taking an opportunity to be in contact with even remote relatives and catching up on the past year. Even in what is thought of as the Dark Ages of greeting card history (between ancient China and Egypt and 15th century Europe) there were exchanges of Rosh Hashana cards. Rosh Hashana cards became a feature of Jewish New Year celebrations well before greeting cards were established in other cultures.

There is a belief that from the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashana until Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the book of Judgment is open and on Yom Kippur one’s fate for the coming year will be sealed.

A 14th century letter written by an Ashkenazi rabbi known as the Maharil (Jacob ben Moses Moelin 1360-1427) who was the spiritual leader of German Jewry encouraged to have “shana tova” greetings sent to friends and family. He followed a Talmudic dictum concerning the “setting down” of one’s fate in one of the Heavenly books that are opened on the Jewish New Year.

By the 18th century, the custom of sending greeting cards had begun to be adopted by the Jews of Eastern Europe, especially in Poland. By the middle of the 19th century changes in postal systems, the introduction of postage stamps, advances in printing and reduction in postal rates led to an upsurge in the use of greeting cards. Cards were a key part of communication between family and friends residing at a distance.

During the Golden Age of Postcards (1898-1918), cards and photo cards featuring family members became popular. Many of the cards of this period provide a historical perspective on Jewish life in Europe prior to the Holocaust, as well as life in the Land of Israel 50-60 years before the establishment of the State of Israel.

Today, in the age of the Internet, there has been a move away from mailed physical cards to e-cards. They are often cute, musical or animated. Rosh Hashana cards can be bought online, fully customized and delivered by mail. The senders don’t have to move from their computers and recipients have the excitement of opening a special e-mail.
Dear Rabbi,

Can we daven [lead or participate in services] barefoot at BEKI?

Signed, Not Annie Bass

Dear Not Annie Bass,

Footwear (sandals, shoes, boots) is considered either contaminating or, alternatively, luxurious in our texts and traditions, and its appropriate use depends on local conditions and sentiment.

Moshe and Joshua are commanded to remove their sandals because “the place where you stand is holy” (Ex. 3:5, Josh. 5:15). It was not permitted to enter the Temple Mount with shoes or with dust on one’s feet (Mishna Berakhot 9:5). During birkat hakohanim (olim ladukhan), the re-enactment of the Kohanic blessing in the musaf service performed in some communities, the Kohanim may not wear shoes, although they are permitted to wear socks. (Shulhan Arukh OH128:5). Muslims have a similar rule for entering a mosque, and the same rule applies in synagogues in parts of Arabia, Africa, America and Asia.

In this view, shoes are dirty. Their function is to protect our feet from injury and soil while in transit, but are not for indoor use, particularly not on carpets or decorated flooring. Sandals and shoes were viewed the way we might think of galoshes, snow shoes or army boots.

On the other hand, shoes are seen as a sign of civilization and progress; what was once a luxury item has become a universal human aspiration: “All God’s children got shoes.” Shoddedness is an expectation in public settings as a matter of politeness or respect: “No shirt, no shoes, no service.” You can go without them on the beach, but not in a bank or theatre.

If shoes are viewed as a luxury or amenity, it follows that shoes are expected to be removed as a sign of mourning or contrition. A luxury item, one of life’s simple pleasures, is avoided as inappropriate. Thus mourners go stockingfooted during shiva (see II Samuel 25:30), and similarly the pious on Tisha BeAv (a national day of mourning) and on Yom Kippur go shoeless.

The rule, and its force, is presented in the sixteenth century law code, the Shulhan Arukh (OH 614:2): “

אסור لنעול סנדל או מנעל של עור...ומ"מ המחמיר תע"ב

On Yom Kippur] It is forbidden to wear sandals or leather shoes… or wood shoes… but gum or straw or cloth or other materials are permitted. [Rama:] In any case, one who is strict about this is blessed.” The author mentions conditions that would justify leniency, such as risk of injury from scorpions or sharp objects; Rabbi Isserles adds that wet or muddy conditions or an intense personal aversion to being barefoot would also override the prohibition.

But then the other shoe dropped: The shoes were off, but the socks remained, and from then on going in socks became associated with mourning. That is, the visibility of stockings, and not the absence of the shoes, came to be the sign of mourning. Though derivative, the association of stockingfootedness with mourning is widespread and persistent in our community, even while the original relationship of mourning to barefootedness is obsolete.

In private prayer, one is answerable only to the One who hears our prayers, or perhaps to other members of the household. There is no reason to require footwear in your own home, so you should do as you like.

Codifying decorum in the public sphere may require a distinction between Shabbat and Festival (or other occasions) on the one hand, and weekdays on the other, as the Sabbath and miqra’ei qodesh are by definition and of essence days on which special rules apply. On weekdays, at BEKI, it is acceptable by most accounts to “come as you are” – in work or leisure clothes, without undue consideration beyond what is required for any public appearance. In the summer months, commonly half of those in attendance at daily services are wearing sandals without socks.

But on Shabbat, two somewhat opposing viewpoints prevail. The specialness and distinctness of Shabbat (and Festivals) can be celebrated through formality: elaborate, colorful or strictly black-and-white, highly conventional, intentional, or unique. This could be a suit-and-tie, a morning coat, evening gown, and leather shoes. Alternatively, the specialness can be expressed by celebrating the leisure aspect of Shabbat, preferring a costume intentionally different from work gear and preferring comfort to convention, looseness to stricture.

Continued on Page 12
Here, the necktie – *de rigueur* for the banker or car salesman – becomes anathema, the pantsuit deprecated, while the loafer, sandal or even sneaker serves its purpose in making the day joyful and restful. The bank manager dresses like a gardener, and the gardener dresses like a bank manager.

What is deemed “respectful” and “modest” is completely a matter of local perception. These are not independently defined terms in *halakha*, but rather are determined “*lefi minhag hamaqom* – according to local custom” (see for example at Tur YD 182). Sandals might connote leisure, but so does a bathing suit or beach chair; there might be some limits to the degree of leisure and pleasure we exhibit.

And what exactly is our current “local custom”? Is it static, and what is at its essence? Presently, it is common for members to wear sandals on Shabbat as well as weekdays, and there is little objection. This might not have been so 20 or 40 or 60 years ago. That suggests that either sandals were always permitted even though no one wore them, or that local standards might change. Perhaps barefootedness has always been permitted, even though no one came that way, or perhaps it is not within acceptable parameters. The same form of analysis was followed in evaluating the status of the *mekhitsa*, the physical barrier between men and women in the synagogue – a wide-spread practice reflecting Jewish and non-Jewish social custom in many spheres but without any particular basis in law or clear purpose.

Beyond the specific history and rules of barefootedness and of the specialness and dignity of Shabbat and daily prayer, which do not seem to prohibit the practice, we must ask if there is any other reason to refrain from barefootedness. Are feet too distracting or likely to cause arousal? At the extremes, although not precisely studied, sexologists believe that foot fetishism is only a little more common than shoe fetishism. If our goal is to avoid affecting those so afflicted, we should require all to wear socks only (which is believed to less fetishized than either shoes or bare feet). It is not known whether, or to what degree, bare feet, feet tops and toes (when sandals are worn), or footwear are more distracting or arousing to the “average” person. It is believed that the extent of arousal is somewhat socially conditioned in any case. Thanks to the fixed-seat configuration in our sanctuary, it is usually rather difficult to see the feet (or shoes) of others, or even one’s own, so the scope of the issue is surely limited.

We should not impose our own prejudices or fashion preferences in matters of law. We should also refrain from needlessly constraining the spiritual expression or style of others, especially if it does not directly affect us. If it is not expressly prohibited, then it is *permitted*. Whether it is a good idea or not is a different question. At the same time, we need to be considerate of others, including accommodating their irrational or idiosyncratic wishes and aesthetic preferences, at least to some extent, in order to enable us to function as a community.

Is it safe to go barefooted at BEKI? We track in a lot of junk at BEKI; our carpets and floors need daily cleaning. But we have advanced flooring and cleaning processes, and most importantly, dedicated staff (mostly Clarence) who ensure that our floors and carpets are clean. Still, there is no guarantee you won’t impale your pes on a random staple or sharp object, get a raisin squished on your heal during a meal in the social hall, or get your toe stepped on in a stampede to the buffet table. There is some protective property of shoes, appreciated especially by the tender-footed.

We cannot clean our shoes well on Shabbat beyond simply wiping them in the entry vestibule; we should shake off or remove outer footwear, especially in winter. Some people carry an indoor pair of shoes with them. If you can keep a tallit in the coatroom, you could also keep an extra pair of indoor shoes in the same place (put them in a shoe box with a name label). That might make your journey safer and preserve the beauty and extend the life of your decorative shoes and help us keep BEKI clean. Or maybe you can go without shoes altogether….

There is not a simple answer as a matter of law, and thus a definitive answer is not within the jurisdiction of Dear Rabbi. The question will be referred to the Ritual Committee or another governing body.
**Rabbi’s Tzedaka Fund**
- Louis & Lisa Petrillo in memory of Peter Myer
- Stephanie & Justin Landrie in appreciation
- Ken Dubak in memory of Sheila and in appreciation
- Alan Lovins & Trish Loving with condolences to Stephen & Rachel Wizner on the passing of brother Scott Wizner
- Richard Fidler in appreciation
- Jay & Marjorie Hirshfield in memory of Scott Wizner, brother of Stephen & Rachel Wizner
- Ruth Silver in memory of Morton Silver and in appreciation
- Harriet Friedman & Charlie Bruce Family in sympathy to Stephen & Rachel Wizner on the passing of brother Scott
- Harriet Friedman & Charlie Bruce Family in sympathy to Rabbi Richard & Judy Eisenberg on the passing of sister Susan
- Alan Lovins & Trish Loving in sympathy to Rabbi Richard & Judy Eisenberg on the passing of sister Susan
- Michael & Kathy Silver, Elian and Ethan, in memory of Morton Silver and in appreciation
- Albert Friedman in appreciation

**Qiddush Sponsors**

- The Kantrowitz & Kent families
- To Steve & Rachel Wizner with sympathy on the passing of Scott Wizner by the Avni-Singer family
- To Steve & Rachel Wizner with sympathy on the passing of Scott Wizner by the Freiman-Light family
- To Steve & Rachel Wizner with sympathy on the passing of Scott Wizner by Paul & Carole Bass
- To Steve & Rachel Wizner with sympathy on the passing of Scott Wizner by Rachel Lovins & Andrew Hogan
- To Steve & Rachel Wizner with sympathy on the passing of Scott Wizner by Helen Rosenberg & Keith Richter
- To Steve & Rachel Wizner with sympathy on the passing of Scott Wizner by Bobbie & Harold Miller
- To Robert & Betsy Sachs with sympathy on the passing of Ivan Sachs by Bobbie & Harold Miller
- To Rita Sachs & family with sympathy on the passing of Ivan Sachs by Joanne Foodim & Rob Forbes
- To Rita Sachs & family with sympathy on the passing of Ivan Sachs by Rosemary Sasso & Mary Beth Laudano
- To Linda & Ken Buckman with sympathy on the passing of Ivan Sachs by Jay & Lynn Brotman
- To Rita Sachs & family with sympathy on the passing of Ivan Sachs by Cynthia & Jack Kanell
- To the Odessa & Engle families with sympathy on the passing of Bernice Engle by the Rothman family
- To Rita Sachs & family with sympathy on the passing of Ivan Sachs by Ed & Rhoda Lenkin
- To Rita Sachs & family with sympathy on the passing of Ivan Sachs by Beth Bodie
- To Rabbi Rick & Judy Eisenberg with sympathy on the passing of Susan Eisenberg by the Rothman family
- To Rabbi Rick & Judy Eisenberg with sympathy on the passing of Susan Eisenberg by Aimlee Laderman
- To Rabbi Rick & Judy Eisenberg with sympathy on the passing of Susan Eisenberg by Leon Cummings
- To Rabbi Rick & Judy Eisenberg with sympathy on the passing of Susan Eisenberg by the Freiman-Light family
- To Steve & Rachel Wizner with sympathy on the passing of Scott Wizner by Steve,
Contributions

Joanne, Mavis, Atticus, Paul & Dom Rudof
• To Larry & Sherry Shanbrom with sympathy on the passing of Arlene & Arnold Shanbrom by the Rothman family

Synagogue Fund (minimum $10) to support synagogue operations
• To Rachel Bashevkin with sympathy on the passing of Irving Bashevkin by Leon Cummings
• To Rachel Bashevkin with sympathy on the passing of Irving Bashevkin by David & Darryl Kuperstock
• To the Benson-Tilsen family in honor of Tsvi’s graduation from college and Tova’s graduation from high school by David & Darryl Kuperstock
• To Josh & Elena Ratner in honor of the birth of their daughter Sasha by David & Darryl Kuperstock
• To Steve & Rachel Wizner with sympathy on the passing of Scott Wizner by David & Darryl Kuperstock
• To Steve & Rachel Wizner with sympathy on the passing of Scott Wizner by Barbara Cusen
• To Steve & Rachel Wizner with sympathy on the passing of Scott Wizner by Linda Schultz & Howard Gralla
• To Steve & Rachel Wizner with sympathy on the passing of Scott Wizner by Hannah & Herb Winer
• To Linda & Ken Buckman & family with sympathy on the passing of Ivan Sachs by Linda Schultz & Howard Gralla
• To Rick & Judy Eisenberg with sympathy on the passing of Susan Eisenberg by David & Darryl Kuperstock
• To Rita Sachs with sympathy on the passing of Ivan Sachs by David & Darryl Kuperstock
• To Linda & Ken Buckman with sympathy on the passing of Ivan Sachs by David & Darryl Kuperstock
• To Steve & Rachel Wizner with sympathy on the passing of Scott Wizner by Mimi & Effi Glenn
• To Joanne & Steve Rudof in honor of their 50th wedding anniversary by Mimi & Effi Glenn
• To Alan Lovins in honor of his 80th birthday by David & Darryl Kuperstock

Eric I.B. Beller Fund for the Environment
• In memory of Eric Beller, Alfred Beller, Helen Beller, Lester Bloom and Bess Bloom by Marsha Beller
• Ari Nathan Levine Children’s Library Fund
• To Rachel Bashevkin with sympathy on the passing of Irving Bashevkin by Donna & Sid Levine

BEKI Religious School
• To Ari Gad in honor of his Bar Mitzva by the Birn family
• To Rachel Bashevkin with sympathy on the passing of Irving Bashevkin by the Silverman & Sokolow family
• To Steve & Rachel Wizner with sympathy on the passing of Scott Wizner by the Sokolow & Silverman family

Louis Friedman Scholarship Fund
• In honor of and with thanks to Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen, Sascha van Creveld, Julie Cohen, Rachel Light, Yedidya Ben-Avie, Noam Benson-Tilsen, Gary Kupfer & Joe Avni-Singer by the Sechmiaroli family

The Barzillai Cheskis BEKI Youth Israel Scholarship Fund
• To Rachel Bashevkin with sympathy on the passing of Irving Bashevkin by Renya Cheskis-Gold & Marty Gold
• To Rabbi Rick & Judy Eisenberg with sympathy on the passing of Susan Eisenberg by Rena Cheskis-Gold & Marty Gold

The Harold & Arthur Ratner Memorial Fund
• To the Ginsenberg family with sympathy on the passing of Cheryl Satin Ginsenberg by Leah Ratner & Paul Sobel
• To Mikki & Betsy Ratner in memory of Arthur Ratner on his yahrzeit by Leah Ratner & Paul Sobel
• To Richard Shiffman with sympathy on the passing of Ruth Blum by Mikki Ratner
• To Steve & Rachel Wizner with sympathy on the passing of Scott Wizner by Mikki Ratner
• In memory of Artie Ratner by Betsy, Howie, Shilo & Indigo Ratner
• To Rabbi Rick & Judy Eisenberg with sympathy on the passing of Susan Eisenberg by Betsy, Mikki, Howie, Shilo & Indigo Ratner

Frankel-Mattler Memorial Fund
• In memory of her sister Zelda Katz by Shirley Mattler
• In memory of her sister-in-law Dorothy Seigle Mattler by Shirley Mattler

Yahrzeit Fund ($5 minimum) to support synagogue operations
• In memory of Hajnalka Winer by Herbert Winer
• In memory of Herman Leo Winer by Herbert Winer
• In memory of Miriam Zerwitz by Ronald Zlotoff
• In memory of Ruth Rosner by Sara-Ann & Hillel Auerbach
• In memory of Louis & Diane Margolis by Les & Bernice Margolis
• In memory of her father Dr. Julius H. Sachs by Rhoda Zahler Samuel
• In memory of Samuel Kitavitz by Betty Swinkin
• In memory of Louis Melnick by Jay & Marjorie Hirshfield
• In loving memory of their mother Linda Evelyn Cohen Adkins by Susan Marek, Donna Mignosa-Bauer & children
• In memory of Louis Rogoff by Ann Rogoff
• In memory of Grace Cohen Geisinger by Carol Cohen & Sandra Blair
• In memory of Isadore Miller by Bobbie & Harold Miller
• In memory of Rebecca Bloom by Shirley Bober
• In memory of her father Nathan Tevelitz by Elma Guttenberg
• In memory of his father Henry Ashton Crosby Forbes by Rob Forbes & Joanne Foodim
• In memory of Dov-Bear Naiman by Polina Naiman
• In memory of Samuel Kitavitz by Jack & Harriet Kitavitz
• In memory of Samuel Matloff by Harriet & Jack Kitavitz
• In memory of Joseph Stern by Barbara & Murray Akresh
• In memory of David “Frank” Goldberg by Anna Goldberg
• In memory of Everett Rader by Dennis & Barbara Rader
• In memory of Mordechai Rosmarin by Jessey & Joe Palumbo
• In memory of Morton Benson by Evelyn Benson
• In memory of Richard Weinstein by Suzanne Weinstein & family
• In memory of Bernard Weinstein by Suzanne Weinstein & family
• In memory of her aunt Lillian Senderoff Resnick by Sherry Kent
• In memory of her mother Shirley Chain by Susan & Alan Woodyard
• In loving memory of Max Pencerek by Yvonne & Herb Kolodny
• In memory of her sister Louise Egalka by Mikki Ratner
• In memory of Joseph Swinkin by Betty Swinkin
• In memory of Louis Blatt by Marilyn Margolis
• In memory of Ruth Alderman by Richard Alderman
• In memory of Samuel B. “Pookie” Alderman by Richard Alderman

Visit us at www.beki.org
We celebrated National Mix It Up Day in October to foster greater respect and understanding among our students.

www.hamdenhall.org  203.752.2649
1108 Whitney Ave., Hamden, CT 06517
Solar 2015 Update

The project to purchase and install another grid-tied photovoltaic (PV) system on BEKI’s rooftops was near completion at the beginning of August.

BEKI’s electric bill is about 12 times that of a typical homeowner’s. The new array will mean BEKI is producing about two-thirds of its electricity on-site. The array will be most productive when power is most needed, which is on sunny summer days and on clear cold winter afternoons. The array will reduce our “carbon footprint” by 30 metric tons per year for 25 years.

The BEKI array has the added virtue of reclaiming the unused rooftop of our building, and of providing shade, which reduces deterioration of the roof surface and overheating of the classroom building in the summer.

When the rooftop system’s output exceeds our usage, the electricity generated is deducted from our bill.

The project’s budget was $140,000 which includes the equipment, installation, regulatory compliance, roof inspection and other associated costs. It is projected to come in at or under budget. About $100,000 has been raised in donations from BEKI members and supporters.

Additional major donors are welcome. Some BEKI members who have wished to use solar on their own residence but could not due to technical reasons (shading, orientation, structural conditions, tenancy) have decided to fulfill this objective by providing the equivalent for BEKI. Residential systems retail for $5,000 to $20,000. Donors enjoy a charitable tax deduction immediately, while the community a lower electric bill for the next 20 to 30 years.

The system has 141 LG PV panels with matching Enphase microconverters, and was provided and installed by Sun-Wind Solutions (Fairfield). Additional technical information is available at http://www.beki.org/our-community/ ecology/#solar2015.

Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel seeks to be a model urban institution and to promote good citizenship among its members. The community seeks to comply with the Biblical law of bal tashhit, which prohibits destruction of the natural environment and wasting of resources. The congregation aims to put the conserve into Conservative Judaism. Stewardship of community finances and responsible management are also central values. Under present circumstances, installation of this array enables us to better comply with the rule against environmental destruction and at the same time exercise responsible financial management – this thanks to the generous support of our members and supporters, and the efforts of Yaron Lew and the officers in executing this plan. Special thanks go to the Batsheva Labowe-Stoll Fund, the Borick Family, Carol Cohen & Marc Weitzman, Gloria Cohen, Jay & Marjorie Hirshfield, Donna Kemper & Ronald Zlotoff, Sid & Donna Levine, Stanley Rosenbaum, Rebecca Weiner & Mike Rastelli, Llyod & Kai Friedman, and several additional members and supporters for funding this project.

Want to support the project or know more? Contact Yaron yaronl@ aol.com or Jon-Jay jjiitlsen@beki.org or Andy president@beki.org.
If I Ran

Upon taking office, each newly-elected BEKI president receives a copy of Dr. Seuss’s If I Ran the Circus. The next president, though, might get a copy of If Iran Got Nukes.

The fact that I don’t actually have any direct or special knowledge or expertise on the subject of the Nuclear Threat of Iran does not stop me from talking about it. After all, like many of my colleagues, as well as entertainers, athletes and academics, I am happy to address important public policy issues about which I don’t actually know anything.

The question of the “Nuclear Deal with Iran” (formally the “Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action” and henceforth “The Deal”) is not suitable for discussion in our usual forums. There is a cognitive bias that prefers polarities allowing us to think that one answer or the other is the correct answer – either The Deal or The Alternative (whatever that is, or simply “no deal”) leads to salvation, while the other choice to destruction. We are used to heads-or-tails, choosing Curtain One or Curtain two, picking either “true” or “false.” It could, logically, be possible that either The Deal or The Alternative will prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons, or that either way we are doomed. Though the choice is presented as either-or, the consequences may not be.

An analysis of The Deal from the perspective of the discipline of arms control is very complex. The mechanism by which materials, tools and technology is monitored and controlled, and what it all means in practice, can only be understood well by someone with a large knowledge base. Most who comment on The Deal have not even read it (takes about two hours to read quickly, and a lot longer if you have to think about the implications). There is no simple summary that does it justice.

Further, it is unknowable who will be “in charge” of the United States, Iran, Russia and the other parties in two or five or ten years. We don’t know whether they will all want to follow The Deal, or pretend to, or have the competence or focus to enforce it or to effectively circumvent it. We don’t know how The Deal will affect Iranian domestic politics or foreign policy – will it bolster and further entrench the regime, lead it to moderate, or cause its collapse. We don’t know what Israel, Saudi Arabia and other actors will do in response to The Deal being implemented or not, and how that response will affect the larger questions of nuclear proliferation and the arms race.

The conversations about the issue are taking place in the context of the contentious Democratic and Republican politics in this country – already in the throes of the 2016 election campaigns – and the multi-party brutal hyper-politics of Israel. These conversations may have more to do with electoral politics and other issues than with the actual merits of this particular deal. All of the Republican presidential contenders are against The Deal, but for inconsistent and sometimes unarticulated reasons. Is the question “are we for or against The Deal,” or is it “are we for or against Obama” or “for or against Netanyahu” or “for or against Israel”? Do we assume playing high-risk diplomacy is more irresponsible than relying on high-risk military threat or assault?

How will The Deal be judged if it is implemented? If Iran violates the agreement and sanctions re instituted, will it be deemed a “success” or “failure”? If Iran doesn’t get nuclear weapons until the year 2028, will that be deemed a success for delaying the date or a failure because it did not prevent it from ever happening?

Many Israeli politicians are taking the position that Netanyahu is right, expecting him to fail in the attempt to block the adoption of The Deal, and then to point out that he was ineffective in office in handling a crucial issue. If The Deal is blocked, these politicians will claim credit for surmounting politics in the name of national security and will say they worked behind the scenes to block it. One might prefer to listen to technical experts, but it is difficult to be sure how independent they are from party politics.

And this all takes place in the context of UN and European politics, as well as those of Iran, areas that are “black boxes” for most Americans. What if Iranian politics are as complex and unpredictable as are American and Israeli politics?

Some actors (Israel, neighboring Arab governments) may simply prefer the continuation of the sanctions against Iran, independent of the concern of Iran’s nuclear program, because they may believe that the sanctions impose some continuing constraint on Iran’s mendacious regional activity (such as supporting Hizballah and Assad) and may hasten regime change – and that on the assumption that “change” implies “improvement.” If I could guess with any confidence whether the Israeli or American intelligence and political echelon are better at predicting and influencing the future course of Iranian government, then I would be smarter than all of them combined.

The technical aspects are too complex, and the political context too speculative and unfocused, for us to have sensible discourse in a simple public forum. The stakes are high, the deck is loaded, and there is no agreement on the rules. Good luck, everyone.
## Service Times

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## September 2015

### 17 Elul 5775 - 17 Tishri 5776

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### Erev Rosh Hashanah
- 6:45 Minha
- 6:48pm Candle Lighting
- 7:00pm Maariv

### Labor Day/Office Closed
- 9:00am Shaharit
- 9:45am Rashi Study Group
- 10:00am Yoga Hour

### Sukkot
- 3:15pm Sukka Construction
- 6:25pm Candle Lighting
- Haazinu

### Fast of Gedaliah
- 4:00pm Religious School
- 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program

### Sukkot I
- Leviticus, Numbers
- Sukkot I
- Sukkah Construction

### Sukkot II
- Leviticus, Numbers
- Sukkah Construction

### Sukka Hop
(reservations required)
In Memoriam for
Sissy Hankshaw
July 22, 1994 - June 22, 2015

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