



# Beth Am COMMENTATOR

## A Council Of Organizations And The Committee Of 100

The progressive synagogue of modern times is more like a council of organizations. Within Beth Am, for example, is a highly organized youth program with its own staff. We have three separate "single" groups for non-marrieds. We have a highly organized Sisterhood and Brotherhood; a magnificent new library with a professional group of librarians; a weekend Religious School, and a Sunday night high school program for eleventh and twelfth graders; a Nursery/Kindergarten and a Day School program through the sixth grade; a Hebrew school program for beginners and advanced students; a summer camp program, and could go on and on. Each of these programs have their own leaders and directors, and we have yet to mention our weekly religious services, our hospital visitation program and our personal counselling service.

### A COUNCIL OF ORGANIZATIONS

So, you can see that Beth Am is truly a "Council of Organizations" and we serve as the greater home of the Jewish community in southwest Dade County. It should be obvious to any person who knows how large organizations work, that this requires huge sums of money to operate successfully, especially in today's inflated economy. Like all budgets, ours is increasing at a rate higher than our growth in membership. Our current budget is almost \$700,000.

There is a limit, however, to how much money one can raise with the normal dues structure. Families with limited income cannot simply increase their payments to the Temple. To require them to do so would be to impose an unfair tax upon them. It would be much fairer to tax those with greater income at a proportionally larger fee, for those with larger incomes can best afford charitable contributions. So, we at Beth Am established a Fair Share schedule, giving our families the opportunity to choose for themselves the level of dues they can afford to give. This, after all, is what charity is all about.

### THE COMMITTEE OF 100

In the past few years, an increasing number of families have chosen voluntarily to give \$1,000 and more as their Fair Share contribution. We have named this group the Committee of 100 because we are hoping to have 100 families join this committee. Those who join the committee meet once a year at a social function to discuss Temple and community problems. The Committee of 100 has become a sustaining group, and this year we hope to reach the figure of 100 members.

## Confirmation At Beth Am What Is It?

Within a few days, approximately 120 young people will be confirmed at Beth Am. On Friday, May 30, they will present a creative service which they themselves prepared. On Sunday, June 1, at their graduation exercises, they will present a musical relating to Israel and to Judaism. They will provide the chorus and the band. The art work created especially for the occasion is their handiwork. There will also be a dance.

Confirmation is a kind of graduation from a minimum of three years of study in the Religious School (eighth grade through tenth). Most of the young people have been in the school since kindergarten. In the Confirmation Ceremony, the young people confirm their faith, as young adults, in the religion of Abraham and Moses, of Hosea and Jeremiah, of Buber and Einstein.

The preparation for the Confirmation Exercises is both serious and fun. The young people get to know each other by participation in smaller classes, retreats, and social affairs. They study such things as the Bible, Jewish mysticism, anti-semitism, wisdom for our time, Jewish attitudes towards sex and marriage, how to be a Reform Jew. In addition, they spend time in creative art, dance, drama, band, etc. At the present time, the eighth grade meets on Saturdays and Sundays. The ninth and tenth grades meet on Monday nights.

Part of the requirement in each of these grades is that the young people attend at least one religious service a month. During the next year (1975-6), an attempt will be made to have all of the young people attend on a special Friday in the month with social programming following the service.

This year (1974-5), approximately 30 students took a class for college credit as part of their confirmation. Outstanding instructors from nearby colleges participated along with our Rabbi.

## It's Time To Register

## Summer Program Starts June 18

MAY 26 IS A NATIONAL HOLIDAY, MEMORIAL DAY. ACCORDINGLY, THE TEMPLE OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED. THERE WILL BE NO NURSERY OR DAY SCHOOL CLASSES.

FRIDAY, MAY 23  
8:30 p.m.

## RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Adult Choir will perform  
Selma Baumgard, Choirmaster

RABBI BARRY ALTMAN

## 'The Immigrant Generation'

Heroes of American History



SATURDAY, MAY 24  
9:15 and 11:15 a.m.

TORAH SERVICE

Henry Le Clair  
Cantorial Soloist



## Let's Study Torah

Read the Bible along with me. Read "Nasoh," Numbers 4:21 — 7:89. Then read my column in the COMMENTATOR of May 16. We review now B'halotechah, Num. 8:1 — 12:16, which will be read in the Synagogues on May 31.

B'halotechah — This parasha begins with a description of the original Menorah in the Tabernacle of Moses. Contrary to the cliché that the ancient Hebrews had an aversion to art work in their Houses of Worship, the Bible tells us that the Menorahs had beautiful flowers made of beaten metal.

We also have a description of the ceremony for making atonement, whereby the Levites, who were assistants to the priests, placed their hands on the head of a bullock and offered him as an atonement (Num. 8:10-14). The Levites, we are again reminded, are "given" to God for service in His Tabernacle in place of the first-born of the Israelites, who, under most ancient law dominant in the Middle East, are appropriately "given" to the gods (8:14-19).

We have here the mixing of two ideas, the ancient idea that the first fruits of field and womb belong to the gods, and the idea of substitutionary atonement, whereby one human being (or an animal) is sacrificed to eliminate the sins of many. Judaism eliminated the notion of human sacrifice immediately (this is the meaning of the story of the sacrifice of Isaac), but it is retained in Christianity. In the latter religion, we are told that God gave His first-born son (i.e. Jesus) so that the sins of many might be forgiven.

The notion of human sacrifice was eliminated from Judaism in the teaching of its founder, Abraham. The notion of animal sacrifice was attacked repeatedly by the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, etc. It was left to Micah to teach that God detests animal sacrifices and seeks from us only that we "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God."

The greatness of our Bible is that it does not erase older ideas even though they are later supplanted by newer and broader ones. The old teaching remains as evidence of what our fathers used to do, and as evidence of what other peoples did before Judaism came on the scene.

In this parasha, we have a description of how the Passover is to be observed (Ch. 9). The story of the march through the wilderness continues with a description of how "manna" provided the food needs for the people (11:1-9), and how quail was later provided (11:31-35). We learn also that when the people rebelled against Moses, the congress, or Sanhedrin of 70 elders, was created to share the load of authority (11:16-30). In early America, the colonists pointed to this institution as the inspiration for their congress.

Ultimately, Aaron and Miriam, too, revolted against Moses, and it was necessary for God to take His stand beside Moses (Ch. 12). We learn from this chapter something of how a prophet gathered his knowledge from God (12:5-8). One cannot help but wonder about Aaron's fickleness, evidence for which occurs again and again.

## Youth Group Elects New Officers

We are proud to announce that B.A.F.T.Y., our senior youth group, has chosen its officers for the coming year. At recent elections, Debbie Kaiser was selected president of the 140 member organization. Executive vice president will be Cathy Futernick. Committee vice presidents were elected as follows: Project, Joan Weiner; Program, Debbie Liebling; Religious, Pam Abelson; Publicity, Jan Rosenberg. Robbie Kessler was elected treasurer, and Janet Franco is the new secretary. The new board also chose Bruce Katzen to be their Junior Advisor. Rabbi Cook will serve as the organization's advisor for the 75-76 year.

The youth group will conclude its busy calendar of events with its final banquet, to be held on May 25. The new board is already at work planning next year's exciting program.

## Joan's Gems

By JOAN SCHWARTZMAN

Mazel tov to Larry and Beverly Marks upon the arrival of their baby boy, Edward Hadley, on April 14. . . . Were you among the many who attended our Cabaret Night? Wasn't it fun to get reacquainted? . . . Eric, son of Marvin and Norma Lieberman, won third place in the Dade County Social Studies Fair in the category of political studies. He attends Glades Junior High School. . . . Get well wishes to Sidney Gorchoy, Lois Goldstein, Bernice Kowalsky, Lena Rago, Honey Burwick, Norma Stone, and Sol Cohen who have been hospitalized recently. . . . Mazel to Harvey and Rebecca Slavin upon the birth of their daughter.

Congratulations to Steven, son of Dr. Gil and Natalie Snyder, who has won the Silver Knight award in general scholarship and is a National Merit finalist and will attend Princeton in the fall.

9:15 a.m.



*B'nai*

Deborah, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. David Weisfeld

*Mitzvah*

Andrea, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Winston

Saturday  
May 24

11:15 a.m.



Fran, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Erwin Lesser

Rochelle, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Rubin