



beth am commentator

February 9, 1979

Miami, Florida

Rabbi Herbert M. Baumgard
"ARE WE THE CHOSEN PEOPLE"

Friday, February 9th, 8:30 p.m., RELIGIOUS SERVICE
Saturday, February 10th, 9:15 a.m., 11:15 a.m., TORAH SERVICE

GARY EISENBERG TEACHES CLASS ON CULTS AND MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS COURSE BEGINS WEDNESDAY, FEB. 21

We did not need the horrors of Jonestown to make us aware of the extraordinary danger to our families and especially to our children represented by various cults and missionary movements, many of which have active organizations here in Miami. But now after Jonestown, it would be utterly irresponsible not to make ourselves more aware of the danger, and to take appropriate measures to be certain that our own families are not affected.

For this reason we have asked Gary Eisenberg to teach his course on cults and missionary movements as a part of our Adult Jewish Studies program at Beth Am. Mr. Eisenberg, in his counseling practice, has worked with families of cult members and cult members themselves.

The course is offered on four Wednesday evenings beginning February 21, 8:00-10:00 in Room 25. There is no fee. Call the Temple office to register.

LEADERSHIP WEEKEND RETREAT FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS, FEB. 16-18

The U.A.H.D. College Education Dept. will be conducting a reform Campus Leadership Weekend at Camp Sharom of Central Florida, Orange Springs (near Ocala), February 16-18. The cost is \$25. If you are a college student currently active in leadership of a Reform Jewish campus group, or would like to become active in such a group, you can reserve a place on the weekend by writing to Beverly Engel, 700-202 SW 16 Ave., Gainesville, FL 32601. Telephone 377-2771. Time is short! Act now! Partial funding for this retreat came from a grant from the Beth Am Brotherhood.

HOW TO PLAN A BAR/BAR MITZVAH CELEBRATION

On Thursday evening, March 1st, at 8:00 p.m. in the Chapel of the Teenage Building, Joan Schwartzman, assistant Administrator will give an informal talk on the "A.B.C.'s" of planning that special day in your child's life.

All the things you want to know and were afraid to ask will be discussed. This is an informal meeting and a "question and answer" period.

Call the Temple office at 667-5587 and leave your name. Be sure and bring a pad and a pencil for notes to this meeting.

**Purim Carnival
Sunday, March 11th
11 AM to 3:00 PM
At The Temple
Rides, Games, Food,
Costumes, Relay Races
Volunteers Needed:
Call Cathy Revitz 233-6442**

NEW CONCEPTS FOR SISTERHOOD

ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21 at 8:00 P.M. Sisterhood will meet in the Social Hall for a different kind of program. On that evening everyone who attends will have the opportunity to offer suggestions and ideas for and about Sisterhood. Until then, jot down every brain-storm you get and plan to share with the rest of us. In the event your imagination isn't being used for and about Sisterhood, come along anyway to listen to the others and digest a delicious dessert during this informal free program. RSVP: Temple Office 667-5587.

LOOKING AHEAD

THE PURIM CARNIVAL is coming on Sunday, March 11th. Your participation is wanted and needed, so please call the Temple Office now if you want to help the Carnival Committee.

LOOKING BACK

The Chanukah Family Dinner and the New Year's Eve Disco Ball provided a good time and fond memories for the many people who attended. A big thank you goes out to all who helped make these events a success!

PURIM CARNIVAL NEWS

KATHY REVITZ, Sisterhood's 1979 Purim Carnival Chairperson, tells us that plans for this year's Purim Carnival are progressing. This big event will take place on Sunday, March 11th from 11:00 A.M. until 3:00 P.M. This celebration will appeal to both children and adults. There will be advance ticket sales. Games galore, rides and more rides, food ad more food, etc. will be featured on this day. In the meantime, please volunteer to help in one or more of the following ways: 1. By landing a Hand. 2. By baking a cake for the Cake-Walk 3. By Sending a plant for the Plant Sale 4. By sending something(s) for the White Elephant Sale. Kathy will be waiting to hear from you, so please call her at 233-6442 or 233-6436.

BREAKFAST, FEB. 25 WILL FEATURE SENATOR KENNEDY'S NATIONAL HEALTH PLAN

The overwhelming problem of national health insurance will be the question for debate at the next Brotherhood Breakfast Forum on Sunday morning, February 25, at 9:30 a.m., in the Youth Lounge. Topic for the debate will be "IS THE U.S. READY FOR SENATOR KENNEDY'S NATIONAL HEALTH PLAN?" Because of the soaring costs for everyone of health and hospital care some sort of national health has been a priority of many in Congress as well as President Carter. The plan of Senator Kennedy is presently the one receiving the most consideration and discussion in and out of the halls of Congress.

Participants in the debate will be Senator Jack Gordon of Miami, who is a strong advocate of national health insurance and Dr. Edward Annis, former President of the American Medical Association who staunchly opposes any national health insurance plan. Moderator for the debate will be Mr. A. Budd Cutler, well-known Florida attorney and former president of the Health System Agency of South Florida. He was recently named to Who's Who in American Law. This will be a most interesting discussion on a subject that will affect everybody in some way or another and will be very much discussed by your legislators and the press this year.

Admission to this Breakfast Forum will be \$1.50 for Brotherhood members and \$2.00 for non-members. Please feel free to invite your neighbors and friends. They will Also enjoy the all-you-can-eat breakfast. Ladies are always welcome to the Brotherhood discussion.

From the Rabbi's Study

THE MORMONS AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

Recently two nice ladies came to the door of my home. Apparently, they didn't know I was a Rabbi. They wanted to come inside to talk to me about Mormonism. I told them that I appreciated their desire, but I knew something about their religion, and I didn't have the time to meet with them. They left most reluctantly, but, first, they gave me a pamphlet entitled, "The Mormons and the Jewish People."

The pamphlet tells us that the Mormons are really very close to the Jews. The key to understanding the pamphlet, which makes some curious claims, is the fact that the ancient Hebrew nation was split into two parts after the death of King Solomon. The southern part of the kingdom was henceforth called Judah and had its capital in Jerusalem. The northern part of the kingdom was called Israel and had its capital in various cities, among them Samaria.

The Mormon pamphlet tells us the tribes in the northern kingdom were descended from Joseph (through Ephraim and Menasseh, his sons). The founder of Mormonism, a man named Joseph Smith, we are told, was a descendent of this same Joseph (of Egypt fame). Joseph Smith, the pamphlet says, was a prophet (presumably like all the famous prophets of ancient times), although he lived in America in the 19th century of this era.

The pamphlet tells us that a Prophet named Mormon made a record of all the notes kept by the descendents of the original Joseph. These descendents, we are told, came to America around 600 BC, 2,000 years before Columbus (an important point in their message!). The Prophet Mormon made his summary record on plates of gold in the language of the Egyptians (Why Egyptian?, the people of Israel in 600 BC did not speak or write in Egyptian. They had been out of Egypt and living in Israel over 500 years).

The next link concerns how this gold Egyptian record, prepared in America in 600 BC came to the founder of modern Mormonism, Joseph Smith. The answer, according to the pamphlet, is that the Angel Moroni gave them to Joseph Smith, who, thenceforth was known as a prophet himself. At the same time the Angel Moroni gave Mr. Smith the Urim and Thummim, through which he was able to translate the engravings from Egyptian into English (For your information, the Urim and Thimmim, about which little is known, although they are mentioned in the Bible, were certainly not translating devices).

The conclusion of the Mormons and this pamphlet is that the Mormons, through the new prophet Joseph Smith, are the real descendents of the ancient Israelites (the northern kingdom), while America is the new Zion or Israel. This means, the pamphlet suggests, that we Jews, who are descendents of the Judeans (according to the pamphlet) ought to recognize **our long lost brothers** in the Mormons.

We ought not to forget to mention that in addition to being visited by the Angel Moroni, Joseph Smith was also visited by Elijah and Moses, as the New Testament says Jesus was. The invitation in the pamphlet is for modern Jews to let the prophet Joseph Smith (i.e. the Mormon Church) tell us what God has told him/they because we ought to accept him/them as our prophet and guide.

As I read this fascinating and imaginatively woven story, I couldn't help but wonder once again, how important we Jews are to the world. The New Testament, followed by so many tens of millions, bases its authority on the Jewish Bible and claims its right to the truth only if Jesus is in fact the Messiah forecast by the Jewish prophets. The Koran, followed by tens of millions of Mohammedans, bases its authority on the God of Israel, who presumably has chosen a prophet from another people, Mohammed, and Mohammed calls upon the Jews to follow him as our prophet also. Thus it is with the Mormons.

We must really have something, we Jews, if they all have to base their claim to the truth on our books, on our teachers, and on our God!

TU-BI-SHEVAT—Jewish Arbor Day Celebrated, Monday, February 12

The 15th of the Hebrew month of Shevat is Jewish Arbor Day. "Tu" is the Hebrew way of saying 15. School children in Israel use this day for the **planting of the trees**. In the Diaspora (countries outside of Israel) it is used as an occasion for stressing the significance of the up-building of Israel.

It was in Israel that our great culture was developed. Our distinctive language, the great literature written in that language, our inspiring music, and, above all, our great moral heritage were developed through the social, economic, political and religious institutions which were peculiar to the land of Israel.

The Bible could not have been written in any other land. It reveals the simple, moral ethics of the semitic nomad. The Mishna, which is the base of the Talmud, was prepared in Israel. Except for the Babylonian Gemara (commentary on the Mishna), Jews have not produced any literature to match the Bible and Mishna. (Individual Jews in many other countries have produced quality literature, and Jews have created art and scientific discoveries which have been of the highest benefit to man). Israel remains unique as the land of special Jewish creativeness.

Today in Israel, the Hebrew language is once again spoken as the native tongue. Once again, Jews are creating institutions expressly for Jews. They are turning out more new books than any other country in the world. They are developing new social and economic systems. (They may prove to the world that there are other economic alternatives than Communism and capitalism). Jewish religious life throughout the world has been stimulated by the resurgence of Israel. Modern Israel customs are being absorbed into American Jewish life. The study of the Hebrew language has taken on a new significance in America. The revitalization of Israel has meant more than a haven of Jewish life everywhere. It has emphasized the **future** in Jewish life which has emphasized, perhaps, too much from the past.

Camp Coleman Reunion Feb. 18

"On Sunday, February 18, Camp Coleman will host a Reunion at Temple Israel of Greater Miami from 2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. There will be singing, dancing and a beautiful slide presentation which will explain Camp Coleman, 1979. Staff will be introduced. Refreshments will be served. This program is geared towards our Reform children between the ages of 8-15 years and their parents.

Please make every effort to attend a fun-filled, informative afternoon."

B'Nai Mitzvah, Saturday, February 10

9:15 a.m.

11:15 a.m.



Jonathan, son of
Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Major



Joy, daughter of
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Clein



Andrew, son of
Dr. and Mrs. Ronald Tikofsky