

February 13, 1981

RELIGIOUS SERVICE, Friday, February 13, 1981, 8:30 p.m.
BAFTY CREATIVE SERVICE
"L'DOR V'DOR: FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION"
TORAH SERVICE, Saturday, February 14, 9:15 and 11:15 a.m.

Beth Am Commentator

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Brotherhood Debate on Taxing Religious and Other Tax Exempt Institutions Feb. 15th

"SHOULD RELIGIOUS AND OTHER TAX-EXEMPT INSTITUTIONS PAY TAXES?" will be the question to be debated at the next Brotherhood Congregational Breakfast Forum on Sunday morning, Feb. 15th, at 9:30 a.m. in the Youth Lounge. Participants in the debate will be:

Rev. Dr. Kim Porter, Educator, Minister, who says YES.

Joel Hirschhorn, prominent attorney, who says NO.

Circuit Court Judge Gerald Kogan will be the Moderator.

With taxpayers revolting against higher taxes, many new areas for additional taxes are being researched. One of the new areas being explored is the tax exempt institution. These include religious organizations, fraternal groups, foundations, and others. All these organizations receive some governmental services that are free of taxes, i.e., police and fire services and others. Should they now start to pay their fair share? Evangelists collect millions of dollars on T.V. which is all tax-exempt. The Anita Bryant Ministry collected almost two million dollars so far which is also tax exempt. Should the government be entitled to tax all these organizations? Are we not violating the First Amendment to the Constitution on the separation of church and state? The problems are manifold and the questions are many. They will all be debated with much vigor on Feb. 15th. Come on down and bring your own questions and thoughts.

Admission to this all-you-can-eat breakfast forum is FREE to all Brotherhood members. Sustaining and Life Members may bring one guest in free. All others are \$2.50. Your friends and neighbors are invited as well as the ladies.

"From Generation to Generation" Theme of Youth Group Worship Service on Fri., Feb. 13

BAFTY, our Senior High Youth Group is quickly developing a reputation for creating beautiful and meaningful worship services.

This coming Friday night the members of the Youth Group will conduct our regular Friday night service. The young people have woven together a series of traditional prayers and contemporary selections based on the theme, "L'dor v'dor: From Generation to Generation."

The students chose this theme because they wanted to reach out in both directions—to those younger than themselves and to those who are older as well. The words "l'dor v'dor" come from the traditional liturgy. They are part of the prayer which states that we Jews will praise God and tell of His greatness "from generation to generation."

The music of the service will include some of the tunes which we usually sing on Friday nights and some of the newer music of the Reform youth movements.

Melissa Smith is the chairman of the Religious Committee which has worked on the service. They have worked closely with Rabbi Weinblatt, who commented, "The essence of all prayer is to try to reach out. We seek to reach out to God and to reach in to our inner selves as well. The youngsters who have worked on this service have gained a greater appreciation of prayer. Hopefully we can convey some of that through the context of the worship service this coming Friday night. All members of BAFTY are urged to attend, and to come to the Oneg Shabbat following services.

Hours Extended For 4 Year Olds In Summer Program This Year

There seems to be a need for some extension of hours in the Summer Program for 4 year olds.

We have opened up an 8 week program for 4 year olds which will end at 2:00 p.m. This is contingent on having enough children to make a full group and restricted to children attending for 8 weeks.

You may still send your 4 year old to our half-day program which ends at 1:00 p.m. or to our full day program which ends at 4:00 p.m. Contact Rhoda in the Temple office at 667-6667 for full details and fees.

Tryouts For Beth Americans

Third Graders

Call

Harriet Potlock at 595-0743

Mondays and Wednesdays

3:00 to 5:00 P.M.

Deadline - March 6th



Two Week Tour
of Israel
For Beth Amites
June 1981

Plan Now - Details in the Mail

JUDAISM and ISLAM

Four Adult Lecture/Discussion Sessions

by

PROFESSOR YEHUDAH SHAMIR

University of Miami, Middle East Studies Department

BEGINNING FEB. 17TH at 8:00 p.m. in ROOM 24

Continuing for four Tuesdays

*Learn about a religious faith which is
becoming a strong political force
to be reckoned with both by Israel and the U.S.*



MAGIC AND RELIGION

(An excerpt from "The Beckoning God," a sermon by Rabbi Baumgard, available in full at the Rabbi's office or in the book, "Loving What Is Close.")

The first great civilizations attempted to systemize man's religious search. Ancient Egyptian religious leaders thought of the gods as super-magicians working miracles whenever they so fancied. The Egyptian priests operated on the premise that if they could assemble the secrets of magic, they could compel the gods to act as they wished. The religious texts of ancient Egypt are a study in voodoo. There is no record there of a prophet like Isaiah proclaiming the way to international peace, but there are detailed instructions on how to survive after death by pre-arranged magic. Look closely at the Pyramids, when you are able to go there, and you will see that they are merely houses for the dead, with magical drawings and symbols all around.

Small wonder, then, that when Moses and Aaron sought to convince Pharaoh that their God wanted them to leave Egypt, the two men had to present themselves as super-magicians, able to outduel the high priests of Egypt. The drama of the plagues can only be understood in the light of Egyptian religion. Other remnants of magical belief can, indeed, be found in our Bible, but it is obvious that the hints at magic are not part of the dominant thrust of biblical teaching.

Magick-oriented religions generally assume that we can not know what the gods are going to do or when they are going to do it. These religions are based on the belief that the gods are willful and capricious. The great Babylonian religious texts are somewhat different in this regard. Their magic is tied to a body of knowledge concerning the movement of the heavenly bodies. It was the Babylonians who invented astrology, and modern-day astrology is but little changed from the Babylonian creation. The Babylonian priests believed that if a certain planet was in a particular position with relation to the moon or another star, then, this meant the gods would act in a certain way. If the planet was in a different position than anticipated, this meant the gods would act differently. With deep devotion, the Babylonian priests searched for the divine message spelled out there in the evening sky. Was the message favorable or unfavorable to the petitioner? Was the divine answer "tabu" or "limnu," good or bad? The Jews were brought as captives to the land of Babylonia in the sixth century B.C.E. They could hardly escape some influences of the astrological cult. A remnant of this influence is found in our Hebrew phrase "mazel tov," which we translate to mean "congratulations" or "good luck." The root of these two originally Babylonian words is "mazel"—constellation, "tov"—favorable. "Mazel tov" is an astrological term meaning "a favorable sign."

The Hebrew prophets, however, would have none of this pseudo-science, this magic clothed in scientific garb. Isaiah attacks the astrologers along with the sorcerers and enchanters who try to deceive the people into believing that God's decisions are to be interpreted on the basis of such things as shifts in the wind or movement of birds in flight. It was the Israelites who insisted that there were not many wills in the world, but one, and that Will was above all, constant, consistent, tied to the very moral law which It wished men to follow.

More than a thousand years after Abraham and five hundred years after Moses, the Greeks also broke free of the realm of magic and created a high form of religious philosophy. Plato spoke of ideal patterns of Good, Truth, and Justice that existed in the world, but the average person in Greece could get no comfort from Plato's ideal "Good." Plato said that "The Good" had no personality or feeling. It could not be addressed as an object of prayer. It knew no compassion. It was not capable of forgiveness. It was something that only those who specialized in mathematics and philosophy could ever come to know.

THE FEELING GOD

While the Hebraism of Moses has a profound philosophical base, the God of Moses is not just a philosopher's ideal. He is very much *alive*. He is a God of intense *feeling* and *action*. Every Jew should recite to himself over and over the story of Moses and his encounter with God in the desert. Engaged in the mundane activity of sheep-herding, Moses, we are told, saw a bush aflame, a miraculous bush which burned but was not consumed. Then Moses seemed to hear a voice which exclaimed, "I hear the cry of My people who are enslaved ... I know their pain ... go help them in My name." This was a God who was not beyond descending from His Olympian heights to deal with man at his level of basic need. Seven hundred years before Plato and the flower of Greek genius, Moses

(Continued in Column Alongside)

8TH GRADE YOUTH GROUP

What a **fantastic dance** we had at the lovely home of Eric Gould! A special thanks goes to Sherry and Mark Gould for their gracious hospitality. Everyone who came brought delicious goodies which were enjoyed by all! We still have members joining our dynamite group. If you're interested, call **Sandy** at 233-4455.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

1. A super Shabbaton Feb. 13 and 14 here at Temple! We're hosting several visiting youth groups.
2. Roller Skating Party - details will be available soon.

"BUILDING YOUR CHILD'S SELF-ESTEEM"

Monday afternoons 12:15-2:15---February 23--March 16th


The parent is the psychological mirror used by the child to build his identity. His whole life is affected by the conclusions he draws. Explore new methods of child development and learn to build the sense of self-worth. Co-sponsored with Miami-Dade Community College. Cost \$5.00. Make check payable to Miami-Dade Community College. Ms. Nancy Kirsner, M.Ed.

JOAN'S JEMS By Joan Schwartzman


We are proud to report that our Day School Senior Bloc class was featured on WTVJ Channel 4 television program Montage. The program was aired on Saturday, February 7th..... Did you know that Marilyn Finkelstein is the co-ordinator of Miami-Dade Community College's The Parent Center. Beth Am's current adult education class on Building Your Child's Self Esteem is the result of a combined effort. Beth Am looks forward to serving the community's needs in this regard thanks to Beth Amite Marilyn..... For further information call her at 596-1161 Oops we made a boo-boo. We forgot to mention that Jessica Ellen, daughter of Harry and Sherri Speizer was named at Beth Am during the year 1980. We apologize to little Jessica..... Gail and Mort Podell are quelling. Their daughter Alison Rosenberg has just been appointed to the staff of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee.....

B'Nai Mitzvah Saturday, February 14

9:15 a.m.




Ronni Ellen, daughter of
Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer Kass




Fernando, son of
Mr. and Mrs. Alberto J. Socol

11:15 a.m.



Ralph Barry, son of
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Breslaw



Kenneth, son of
Dr. and Mrs. Marvin Himmel

Moses. "Does God have something to say about kindness and centered his search for God around the question, "Do the *slaves* have someone who cares for them?" "Who cares about the poor man?", asked compassion?" The uniqueness of the Jewish search for God is that it went in a direction no other people had ever gone before, and no other people has since spelled out the concept of a God who cares in such all-encompassing detail. The message that Jesus presents in this regard is the message of his Jewish tradition.