



FAMILY WORSHIP SERVICE, Friday, January 2, 1981, 7:30 p.m.  
RABBI STUART G. WEINBLATT  
"THE FIRST TIME"

SINGLES TORAH SERVICE, Friday, January 2, 1981, 9:30 p.m.  
In Chapel of Teenage Building

TORAH SERVICE, Saturday, January 3, 1981, 11:15 a.m.

# Beth Am Commentator

5950 North Kendall Drive, Miami, Florida 33156 • Telephone: 667-6667

## CALENDAR OF ADULT EDUCATION WINTER 1981

1. **"What Jews Believe About God"** ..... Rabbi Herbert Baumgard, D.H.L.  
Tuesday evenings, 8:00 P.M. January 20th -- February 10th.  
Is the God of Abraham the same God whom Moses worshipped? Did the Prophet Amos see God the same way the Prophet Hosea did? How did Einstein understand God? Spinoza? What do Jews believe today?
2. **"Judaism and Islam"** ..... Prof. Yehuda Shamir, Ph.D.  
Tuesday evenings, 8:00 P.M. February 17th -- March 10th  
At a time when Islam has become a resurgent religious and political force in the world, how can Jews better understand it, what prospects are there for Israel and for Jews everywhere in dealing with Arabs and other Muslims?
3. **"Sholom Aleichem, Yiddish Humorist"** ..... Rabbi Morton Hoffman, M.H.L.  
Tuesday evenings, 8:00 P.M. March 17th -- April 7th  
Short selections from some of Sholom Aleichem's best loved stories about Tevye, Menachem Mendel, and other magnificent shlemiels from such legendary places as Kasrilevke, Yehupetz, and Boiberik will be discussed (in English translation with as much Yiddish as reasonable thrown in).
4. **"Hebrew From Scratch"** ..... Mrs. Lenore Kipper  
Wednesday evenings, 8:00 P.M. January 21st -- February 11th  
For beginners who were not able to enroll in the starting class last Autumn, a new opportunity is offered. Learn to read basic prayer responses. Required for adult Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
5. **"More Hebrew, In Preparation for Pesach"** ..... Mrs. Lenore Kipper  
Wednesday evenings, 8:00 P.M. February 25th -- March 18th  
This course will emphasize the Four Questions, The Four Sons, Dayenu, and other well known passages from the Haggadah so that at your own Passover Seder you will be able to recite or chant in Hebrew.
6. **"Building Your Child's Self Esteem"** ..... Ms. Nancy Kirsner, M.Ed.  
Monday afternoons, 12:15-2:15 January 12 -- February 2nd  
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**.
7. **"Building Your Child's Self Esteem"** ..... Ms. Nancy Kirsner, M.Ed.  
A second offering of the same course as listed above.  
Monday afternoons, 12:15-2:15 February 23 -- March 16th  
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## Mrs. Ceil Coonin Appointed New Director of Beth Am Day School Starting July, 1981



Dr. William Silver, Beth Am President, announced that Mrs. Ceil Coonin has been appointed the new Director of the Beth Am Day School, effective July, 1981. The appointment follows the resignation of the founding Director, Sima Lesser, who is looking towards new horizons.

Dr. Silver has stated, "It is with regret that the Temple Board accepts the resignation of Mrs. Lesser who we had hoped would be with us for many more years. We will not stand in her way, however, if she wishes to enter new phases of educational work. On the other hand, we are extremely fortunate to have such a capable and experienced person as Ceil Coonin to step forward to take over the school she has done so much to help build.

Mrs. Coonin has been with the Day School almost from its inception, having pioneered as the teacher of the first group of students to enter the school. Mrs. Coonin has been with the school ever since, co-authoring the curriculum and training teachers, as well as teaching herself in every grade level. She is currently teaching and supervising in the Senior bloc.

The new appointment makes it possible for Mrs. Coonin to assume the reins of the school gradually. She will be working with Mrs. Lesser for the next six months.

Mrs. Lesser will continue as Director of the school through June. She will leave behind not only a legacy for Beth Am, but a legacy for reform Judaism in the United States, since ours is the first Reform Day School in our country.

## IT'S TIME TO THINK OF BETH AM'S

### SUMMER CAMP

Your Summer Program Committee, under the leadership of Chairman Michael Wexler, is planning for the summer of 1981. Last year's new concept for the summer proved rewarding and meaningful for the children. Under the guidance of Nancy Weinfeld, Camp Director, and Ellie Robbins, who handled the pre-school group, our summer camp was a unique experience for campers, parents and staff.

We handled your children from 2½ to 4 years of age in our half day program. Older children from 4 through 8 were enrolled in our full day program. This year, the full day program will be expanded to handle children through the age of 9.

### Plan Ahead - Save on Fees

Through March 31 of 1981, the fees for the coming year will be maintained at the 1980 level. There will be no increase in fees for those parents who can register early. This will help beat inflation and will allow us to purchase supplies and equipment early and allow us to hire staff at the proper level. If you want to save money and can plan ahead, register before March 31, 1981. Fees will be raised as of April 1 to compensate for increased costs.

A complete brochure with all details of our summer program will be mailed to all members early in January. Any questions can be answered by Rhoda in the Temple Office. (667-6667)

**The Officers, Board of Directors and Staff Wish You a Happy New Year**



FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY

WHY CAN'T I HAVE A CHRISTMAS TREE?



Question: My Jewish neighbor has a Christmas tree. She says Christmas is a secular holiday and that it's okay for Jews to observe the holiday. I feel instinctively that this is not so. How do you feel about it?

Most Jews who have a Christmas tree are those who felt great pain at not having one when they were young. That is to say, for some reason they did not get from their own home enough joy in relation to Chanukah that they envied the Christians for their Christmas joy. Jews who did not feel deprived when they were young rarely seek out the customs of another group for gratification as adults.

When the Jew who was deprived as a youngster (from the pleasures of a Jewish experience) gets older, he or she tries to fill that void by adopting Christian customs. Such a Jewish parent thus inflicts upon his or her youngster the problem that the parent had when he/she was young - only doubly so; for the parent is now actively training the child to desire a Christian custom. It ought to be quite clear - if the parent teaches the child to enjoy the symbols of a Christian holiday, the child will always long for them. If the parent teaches the child, lovingly, to enjoy Jewish symbols, the child grown into an adult will long for them.

While the parent may look upon the tree as a secular symbol, the child is not able to disassociate the tree from other aspects of the Christmas holiday - no matter how much the parent may explain this to them.

Jews have survived for so many centuries precisely because we have maintained our own symbols (and the ideas associated with them), and we have steadfastly refused to adopt the symbols of other religions. The Christ-day tree (Christmas tree) is definitely associated with the birthday of a child whom, Christians say, became God and who alone "can save us from the burden of our sins." The Menorah is associated with an historic episode in which the Jews revolted against a conqueror who commanded the Jews to worship him as God (Antiochus Epiphanes). In this sense, the two holidays stand strongly opposed. Chanukah is a reminder tht no one man can be God (for all of us are created in the image of the devine, and no one of us is above God's law). Christmas is a holiday which teaches that one man, Jesus, was indeed God, and salvation is through him alone.

Not long ago, a mother came into my office with a big problem. "Rabbi," she said, "My daughter cries because she wants a Christmas tree, and I find it hard to deny it to her." "Tell me," I immediately said to the mother, "How did you feel about the tree when you were a child?" I knew that the problem was the mother's need for the tree, for otherwise she could have channelled the child's need towards constructive Jewish purposes.

We have so many wonderful Jewish symbols, why can't we use them creatively and wonderfully to excite our children? Chanukah is the earlier festival of lights; why can't we imaginatively decorate our homes, USING JEWISH THEMES (Menorahs, Stars of David, Thorahs, Dreidles, Eternal Lights, etc.)? There is no reason Jews can't use electric lights in various designs at this season. What we should stay away from is the tree because that has come to be uniquely a Christmas Christian symbol for this season (although it was originally used by North European pagans).

Those who wish to appropriate the symbols of other should spend a little time researching their own symbols in our library. They might find the study extremely rewarding - even exciting!

BAFTY Begins Year With a Bang

BAFTY will hold its regular general meeting on Monday, January 5th, at 6 p.m. in the Social Hall. This dinner meeting will be an important one. An exciting slide show about Kutz Camp will be shown, and many upcoming events will be discussed. Cost for dinner will be \$1.25 for members, \$2.75 for non-members.

CALENDAR OF ADULT EDUCATION

(Continued From Page 1)

- 8. "Person to Person": A four week seminar on the art of inter-personal communicating and relating. Three consecutive sessions will be conducted individually by three outstanding psychiatrists, Dr. Harry Graff, Dr. Morton Notarius, and Dr. Howard Golden. The fourth session will bring all three together in a panel discussion. DATES: February 4, 11, 18, and 25 at 8:00 P.M. in the Youth Lounge.
9. "Family Observance Training" (To be announced) the most important Jewish festival for home observance during the winter to spring season is Pesach. The family which provides a rich Passover Seder experience for its members fulfills a more important educational role than the synagogue can possibly provide.

For those who don't yet know how to observe the festival at home, the synagogue can help you to learn. The Adult Educational program will provide a mid-day session in conjunction with Sisterhood on how to "make Passover" at home, and an evening session will be held as well. Look for the dates in the Commentator.

Registration Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please enroll me in the following courses (circle your choices):

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

For those interested in 6 or 7 only: Enclosed is my check for \$5.00 made out to Miami-Dade Community College.

I wish to be a candidate for Bar/Bat Mitzvah Adult Confirmation

Please return to Rabbi Morton Hoffman at the Temple Office.

Evelyn Goodman Honored At Synagogue Council of America Brunch



Evelyn (Mrs. Bernard) Goodman, a Beth Am Vice-President, has been honored by the Synagogue Council of America, at a brunch held at the Konover Hotel on Saturday, December 21st. Evelyn was honored as the representative of Reform Judaism in South Florida who has done the most for the S.C.A.

The S.C.A. is the national agency which represents Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform congregations on the national scene. Representatives of the S.C.A. meet with representatives of the National Council of Churches and the Catholic Church in matters of common interest to all faiths.

Rabbi Baumgard is co-chairperson of the Southeast Region of the S.C.A.

B'Nai Mitzvah

Saturday, January 3 11:15 a.m.



Gary, son of Mr. and Mrs. Max Bender



Alan, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Wildstein