

WHY LIBERAL JUDAISM?

WHY TEMPLE B'NAI ISRAEL?

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Most of American Jewry has drifted or broken away from "Orthodox" Judaism. More and more the adjective applied to the newly organized congregations is "Liberal". American Jews who are trained in a liberal orientation towards economics and politics seek also a liberal interpretation of religion.

Over 450 congregations in America call themselves "Liberal" as distinguished from Orthodox or Conservative. Their membership consists of Jews who assert the right to select from the Jewish tradition those features which are most meaningful to modern times.

THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE

Liberal Judaism recognizes the Bible as the primary authority in Jewish life. It looks upon the Bible as the writings of inspired men who recorded the history of the Jewish people as accurately as the science of their time made possible. It looks upon the moral law which is laid down in the Old Testament as binding upon modern Jews. It holds, however, that the ceremony and the ritual of Biblical days may not necessarily be meaningful to Jews of today. It reserves the right to select those ceremonies which stimulate the religious conscience of men today, and it assumes the right to create new ceremonies which will bring Jews closer to their religion.

JUDAISM, A CHANGING RELIGION

Historically, it is true that Judaism has always been a liberal approach to religion. Jews have always shed old ceremonies and created new ones when the new ceremonies were more meaningful. For example, worship by

means of animal sacrifice was customary in Biblical times, but few Jews today would insist upon the restitution of this ritual. Passover used to be the New Year Festival for the ancient Jews, but later Jews saw fit to establish Rosh Ha-shanah as the New Year Festival. Biblical Jews used to worship with all sorts of musical instruments, but <sup>LATER</sup> ~~Orthodox~~ Jews have altered that practice. Many Jewish communities in Europe worshipped without hats, but the wearing of hats later became a universal custom. While Jews have always stressed the significance of the moral law, they have likewise changed the ceremonial law when necessary.

#### CHANGES BY LIBERAL JUDAISM

When Liberal Jews first introduced the vernacular language into the religious service (the national language other than Hebrew), they were severely reprimanded. Today most of America's congregations incorporate English in the religious service. Liberal Judaism stresses the necessity of Comprehension.

Liberal Jews feel that the age of Bar Mitzvah is too soon to have children put away their religious books. Consequently, the ceremony of Confirmation for boys and girls of high school age was introduced. This course of study concentrates on a knowledge of Jewish history, Jewish religious concepts, and modern Jewish problems.

Liberal Jews employ musical instruments, usually an organ at the Religious Service. This modern change is actually a return to the ancient Jewish practice in the Temple.

#### SOCIAL ACTION

Liberal Judaism differentiated between the moral and ceremonial law, that Jews might be free to concentrate upon the ethical precepts of their

religion. Liberal congregations are encouraged to form Social Action Committees which seek to operate upon the real problems of the local and national scene.

WHY TEMPLE B'NAI ISRAEL?

Temple B'nai Israel is the Liberal Congregation of South-central Nassau. It is located on Elmont Road at Baylis Avenue in Elmont, Long Island, New York. It includes in its membership Jews of liberal persuasion from Elmont, Valley Stream, Cambria Heights, ~~Franklin Square~~, Floral Park, and other nearby towns. Most of its membership is from Greater Elmont, *which, according to The Town of Hempstead,* (includes ~~is~~ North Valley Stream, Alden Manor and Alden Terrace).

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

We hold regular Sabbath Services on Friday evening at 8:45 P.M. and Saturday Morning at 10 A.M. Our Rabbi and Cantor officiate at both services. Daily Minyan Services are held at the request of members and mourners. Our cantor is trained at the finest cantorial school in America. Our Rabbi is free to give his views on contemporary social problems as well as to preach on religious concepts. We use the Union Prayer-book. Our Service is divided equally between English and Hebrew prayers. Those who wish to say the complete traditional Hebrew prayer will find a special supplement in our book. Those who cannot read Hebrew will find the basic Hebrew responses transliterated. Everyone who opens our book will find it possible to pray with us and to feel "at home!"

Also participating in the Sabbath morning service are members of the Bar Mitzvah Clubs. A second service for members of the Hebrew School is also held on Saturday morning. These young people conduct their own service.

We encourage the participation of young and old, men and women, in our service.

### RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Our Temple has over 500 children in the Sunday School and 175 children in the week-day Hebrew School. Our Sunday School employs only professional teachers. Arts and crafts projects and special music instruction are part of our program. We employ movies, film-strips, and other modern aids to teaching. Our assemblies and parties for the children are memorable occasions.

The Hebrew School is one of the finest in the New York area. Four teachers are employed. We train for the ceremonies of Bar Mitzvah and Bas Mitzvah (for girls). Our primary objective is to have our children read and translate the basic responses in the prayer service. This is accomplished in the first year of training. The student then goes into Biblical stories written at the child's level, (in Hebrew). Our better students then graduate to the text for modern Hebrew used in the New York City high schools for which "regent's credit" is given. Ours is a functional school employing the newest texts and latest techniques in teaching. *A Regular School Bus Takes our children to Hebrew School.*

### ANTICIPATED QUESTIONS

Do you wear hats? We chose, after congregational deliberation, to wear hats, but we recognize the propriety of not wearing a hat in other congregations.

Is the Temple kitchen Kosher? We chose to have a kosher kitchen, but we do not teach the necessity of keeping a kosher home. We insist on the right to choose whether or not we shall observe these and other customs.

*We Ride to Services. We Fast on Yom Kippur. We Do Not Sell "Aliyoth" or Pews, in keeping with our emphasis on democracy.*

YOUTH GROUPS

Our children graduate from the Religious School to the Confirmation Club where <sup>15 and</sup> 16 year old boys and girls study informally with the Rabbi. Discussions are held on the problems nearest to the young people and much is learned in this informal manner.

We have a trained Director of Youth Activities who supervises a number of youth clubs. There is a club for Junior High School Children, a club for the children in the lower High School grades, and a group for children in the upper High School grades. Our groups are affiliated with the Long Island Federation of Temple Youth and the National Federation of Temple Youth. We join in youth conclaves held all over the Island, and we send our young people to national conclaves and camps on scholarships.

ADULT EDUCATION

The progress of our adult education program has been heart-warming. We attract a considerable number of people to courses on Jewish History, Customs and Ceremonies, Jewish Ethics, Bible, Arts and Crafts, etc. We hold courses on Teen-Age Problems, Vocational Guidance for Teen-Agers, etc. Our Forum Committee has brought nationally famous speakers to us. Panel Discussions on current topics are a favorite method of programming. Those who complete our adult courses qualify for certification from the National Institute for Adult Education.

SISTERHOOD AND MENS CLUB

Many congregations have active sisterhoods, ours is a phenomenon! More unusual, we have one of the largest and most active Men's Clubs on Long Island. Our people are sociable and easy to know. Fellowship is one of the great gains of membership in these organizations.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Our spiritual leader is Rabbi Herbert Baumgard, who has been with us throughout our period of growth. Already well known in this area by peoples of all faiths, Rabbi Baumgard is recognized as one of the better young pulpiteers. *He has Lectured Frequently at Columbia University.* His writings, and original religious services have won national recognition. *He has appeared frequently on T.V. and Radio.* He is assisted in his labors by Cantor David Convisor and by Rabbi Bernard Zlotowitz, an un-commonly gifted teacher. Son of a famous choir leader, Cantor Convisor has sung with the Robert Shaw choral group, and is an accomplished musician. He trains a volunteer choir at the Temple which has given several well received concerts and cantatas.

OUR BUILDING

Temple B'nai Israel has the largest existing synagogue structure in South-central Nassau, although we are only five years old as a congregation. By the fall of 1954, we hope to double the size of our building so that it will include a permanent chapel, a large social hall, a large youth center, a beautiful library, a large kitchen, two stages, twelve classrooms and several large meeting rooms. Our present building is busy every day and night in the week with our varied program.

INTERESTING CREATIONS

We have a mid-nite Slichos Service the Saturday before Rosh Hashanah. This is a candle-light meditation service, without Prayer Books of any kind, which has thrilled our attenders. We have a candle-light service on the eve of Chanukah, in which each person holds a candle. The Temple is darkened and then the Nar Tomid is symbolically re-kindled. Then one candle lights another until all candles are lit. You'll like our original Shavuoth flower ceremony, also, the marching and singing at

Simchath Torah, the Queen Esther Masquerade at Purim, the Annual Temple Seder, the Annual Shavuoth Picnic.

Judaism can be a dynamic and ~~thrilling~~ <sup>CREATIVE</sup> experience. Join us and discover this for yourself. *We need your help as you need us.*

FOR INFORMATION PHONE -

Temple membership - Sam Schack VA-5-2410  
Sidney Siporin, PR-5-2606  
Men's Club membership - Dave Keznick, CU-5-7726  
Sisterhood membership - Dolly Kramer - CU-5-9647  
Rabbi Herbert Braumgard - VA-5-8943

Remember Temple B'nai Israel  
The Liberal Synagogue!