

MINUTES OF LIBRARY MINYAN MEETING / AUGUST 26, 1984

The meeting of the Library Minyan (the "Minyan") and representatives of Temple Beth Am ("Beth Am") was called to order at 10:12 a.m. by David Nimmer, Chairman. Among others, the following Board members of Temple Beth Am attended the meeting: Milton Goodman, Erwin Glinlcher, Lyonel Canes, Sylvia Kaplan, Dvorah and Jack Colker, Howard Pilch and Sigi Ziering, Morris Goren, president of Beth Am, welcomed all present and indicated that "we are all family." He emphasized that the Board of Directors of Beth Am (the "Board") had had a special meeting on August 20th where the Board had adopted a resolution apologizing to the Minyan for any miscommunications and indicating a willingness to "start from scratch."

After Mr. Gorren made his opening remarks, Mitch Miller gave a history of the recent relations between Beth Am and the Minyan. Approximately two years ago, the parties agreed to a dues structure whereby the annual Minyan dues would be \$100.00 per person, going up \$18.00 a year for two years, with the dues to be renegotiated at the end of two years. At a meeting on May 9, 1984, the Minyan Liaison committee of the Beth Am Board indicated that it wanted to increase the dues of Minyan members for the following year. The liaison committee of the Library Minyan (the "Committee") sought to review the budget of Beth Am, which has not been delivered to the Committee by July 9, 1984. The Board indicated on that date that the Minyan's dues would go up \$36.00 a year, or 27%, that the Board could do this unilaterally, and that the Board felt that it was not necessary for the Committee to see the budget. As a result of those statements, Hershel Elkins resigned from the Minyan Liaison Committee of the Synagogue. The members of the Minyan's Synagogue Liaison Committee indicated that further negotiations would be unproductive and that the Temple leadership should address the Minyan directly. Mr. Miller emphasized that based upon the conciliatory statements of Mr. Goren, this background information may be moot, but he stressed that he wanted everyone to be aware of the background of this particular meeting.

Rather than focus on the precise issues of dues, it was agreed to discuss the general issue of the relationship between the Minyan and Beth Am.

Rabbi Pressman spoke at length regarding the history and purpose of the Minyan. Rabbi Pressman emphasized that at all times he considered the Minyan to be a parallel service of Beth Am. He indicated that he was not happy with any perceived adversary relationship between Beth Am and the Minyan. He stressed that his basic philosophy is that we are "under one umbrella" and that we are all part of the Beth Am family.

After Rabbi Pressman's statement, there were various comments from members of the Minyan regarding the communal responsibility and commitment of the individual members of the Minyan. There was discussion regarding the Minyan's focus on different projects that are done at the Library Minyan that are not done at other synagogues. The following remarks represent a consensus of view expressed:

(a) Deborah Lipstadt noted that the Minyan enhances the national and international reputation of Beth Am, as scores of visitors from all parts of the world. visit the Minyan when they are in Los Angeles;

(b) Joel Grossman commended Minyan members for their commitment of time to keep the Minyan running. Those members who read torah, lead davening, make kiddushes, etc. contribute to Beth Am in as vital and devoted a manner as, for instance, other Beth Am members who help man the Beth Am Purim carnival.

Given the extensive contribution of Minyan members who offer Beth Am a complete, well-executed shabbat service every week, as well as many other activities, any criticism of the Minyan for failing to contribute to Beth Am is misguided.

(c) Many individuals pointed out that the Minyan derives its identity from offering a type of religious service unavailable elsewhere. This alternative service enhances the diversity of Beth Am. While joint activities between the Minyan and Beth Am are to be encouraged, religious services are not the best grounds for such joint activities. As Rabbi Elliot Dorff pointed out, we should retain the distinctiveness of each separate service. Grace Grossman summarized the various contributions of the Library Minyan, both as a Minyan and as individuals, by stating that the Minyan makes a significant contribution to Jewish life from "lamaze to geriatrics."

There was much discussion regarding the structural format of the relationship between Beth Am and the Minyan. A motion was made to maintain the Minyan's Synagogue Liaison Committee. There were two main points of view. First, that relations should continue to be carried out through the Liaison's Committee. Second, that there was no need for such a formal structure in accordance with the "all in the family" concept. A motion to table that motion was defeated, and the Minyan members agreed that the Committee should remain in full force and effect.

Another motion was made to recommend to the Board that there be an amendment to the by-laws of Beth Am requiring that there be a fixed number of directors on the Board who would be selected from the Minyan by a process to be determined by the Minyan. During the discussion on the motion, it was noted that there are presently five members of the Minyan who serve on the Board and that these members were selected by the present Board of Directors, not by the Minyan. After additional discussion, this resolution was passed.

Another motion was made requiring that written notice of all Minyan meetings be given at least two weeks prior to the meeting. There was some discussion regarding amending this motion to require either written or telephonic notice. That amendment was defeated, as was the underlying motion to require written notice.

At approximately 12:15 p.m., representatives of the Board discussed in detail the budget of Beth Am. At the Board's request for confidentiality that budget is not reproduced herein.

In summary, after accounting for all anticipated income and all anticipated expenses, Beth Am has a deficit of over \$250,000.00. This is the first time that Beth Am has had such a substantial deficit and the deficit is attributable to educational expenses, building expenses, and expenses incurred in obtaining and paying for a new rabbi and cantor.

A question was raised regarding how the Minyan's present dues structure compared to the dues for other members of Beth Am. Bill Strick indicated that the regular membership price was \$275.00 per person, which entailed one high holiday seat at Beverly Hills High School. This \$275.00 price is approximately twice what the Library Minyan members are currently paying and approximately \$100.00 more than the proposed Minyan increase to \$172.00. Mr. Strick emphasized that tickets to the main sanctuary service were \$710.00 and \$980.00 per family, i.e., two seats.

A motion was made that the Minyan adopt the regular Beth Am dues structure, that is, full parity with "main" sanctuary members. That motion was defeated.

A motion was then made to accept the dues proposed by the Board for the members of the Minyan at \$172.00 per person, provided that there would be equitable processes involved in the event any person was unable to meet this \$172.00 membership fee. The Board emphasized that these equitable processes were done for all congregation members if they had financial problems and were unable to pay membership fees. A motion was made that the Minyan adopt the regular Beth Am dues structure, that is, full parity with "main" sanctuary members, that motion was defeated.

There was a motion to table this motion and let the Committee meet and discuss the issue further. After much discussion on the issue, the motion to table the motion was defeated. At that point, another motion was brought to set the dues at \$150.00 per person instead of \$172.00. The \$150.00 figure would reflect an increase of approximately 10% and would be consistent with the announced 10% increase across the board. After much discussion, the Minyan agreed to pass the motion setting the dues for the 1984-1985 fiscal year at \$172.00 per person.

After this motion was passed, Rabbi Aronson addressed concluding remarks to the meeting. The meeting was then adjourned at approximately 1:00 p.m.

Submitted by: Alan Brody, Secretary pro tem