

November 6, 1950

Bills

Special meeting of the Congregation

With the Consent and Approval of the membership present, the following bills were ordered paid:

Roll Call: H. Solomon,	Rabbi Joshua Weiss	300.00	"
Harold Hodoritz, H. Kunkler,	Harry Secantich - salary	143.50	
J. Greenstein, Dr. H. Fisher absent,	laundry	6.07	149.57
B. Stahl present.	R. A. Cohen, postage, etc.	7.87	"
	Duganew Light Co.	47.49	"
	Honestead Boro. water	1.00	"
	Equitable Gas Co.	.90	"
	Altschuler's - flags, etc. - Simcah Took	3.75	"
	Levine Bros.	10.01	"
	Sunday School	250.00	"
	John Lotak	12.00	"
	Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations	25.00	"
	Total	807.59.	

Community Chest
10.00
mitted

Motion by H. Grossman, seconded by J. Kaminshy in response to communication to donate to Community Chest \$1,000. Carried.

The Secretary read the letter from the Sisterhood requesting this special joint meeting and the call for the meeting to consider changes in the rules of the Congregation to consider: 1. Men and women sitting together at services and 2. Inclusion of responsive readings in English in the services. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved. The President opened the meeting for discussion of these questions.

J. Frank.

Joseph Frank asked the Rabbi if there was anything in the Bible that prevents men and women sitting together at services.

Rabbi Weiss

The Rabbi replied that there is nothing in the Bible itself but that Jewish law consists, not only of what is contained in the Bible, but in innumerable commentaries and interpretations. It would be contrary to Orthodox Judaism for men and women to sit together. In some Orthodox Congregations where there is no balcony men and women sit on the same floor, but on separate sides and separated by some sort of separation. This might be done here if it would serve some useful purpose.

As to the second question, the Rabbi said that responsive readings would be in order except that services otherwise would have to be curtailed. There can be none from the beginning of Musaph to the end of the Shemonah Esrah. This cannot be interrupted. The Rabbi concluded by inquiring what would be accomplished for good by this and if it might not be the beginning of something more.

E. E. Green

Mr. E. Green continued the discussion by stating that prayer can be

meaningful only if we understand what we are saying and the greatest good can come from this understanding.

Mrs. Louis Fisher stated that she was in favor of services downstairs as we had at one time with responsive readings, but not upstairs. The services upstairs should be as heretofore with a choir and made beautiful and enjoyable. The services downstairs were beautiful and interesting and services for children and young people downstairs can be made beautiful and interesting.

Mrs. H. Markowitz said that with new seating arrangements - with the children seated with their parents, we might have order brought out of chaos as we have now.

Mrs. E. Steiner told of a young woman who had gone to Homestead School for 25 years & had a good time there, but no religion, but when she attended services at the Beth Shalom it was a revelation & inspiration. No noise or confusion, but understandable services.

Mrs. E. Steiner stated that the separation of men & women was a carryover from the time when women were held in contempt and degradation and is continued because of opposition to change in any form in religions. The attitude toward women has changed and in spite of opposition to change, changes in forms and ceremonies in Orthodoxy have been made in the past and can be made now.

Rabbi Weiss stated in answer that women were never looked down on by the Jews, but they were exempted from responsibilities rather than imposed upon.

E. Green stated that the reason men & women did not sit together was because of the inferiorities of women.

Rabbi Weiss stated that it was to prevent thoughts of the opposite sex at services.

Mrs. E. Steiner stated that we had had Friday night services at which men & women sat together and they were beautiful, well attended and orderly.

Mrs. Hazel Weinberger pointed out that the younger people were not there to create a revolution, but because of a sincere interest in seeing that our children acquired and retained an interest in Judaism and that this could be ^{better} accomplished if the children understood what was said at the services.

M. Lefkowitz pointed out that people could have received some understanding of services if they had attended adult education classes held by Rabbi, but they had to be dropped because of lack of attendance.

Mrs. Sherman said that the inspiration of Judaism is lacking when we have difficulty in getting a Minyan & can't get the younger people to come to school. Something must be done to keep the children Jews. Additional remarks were made by Paul Cope, Mr. Newman, M. Vogel, B. Lantch, Mrs. Steiner.

S. H. Grossman said that something had to be done to keep ~~the~~ our children Jews & retain the interest and respect for the Synagogue. If this can be done within Orthodox Judaism, it should be done, but if not then we should take steps to amend the Congregation by laws to change to Conservative.

Additional remarks were made by Paul Carpe, B. Sliavitch, S. Fogel, L. Newman, Horbas and Mrs. Stein, Gertrude Keizer, Dr. Simon Rosenthal, ^{Chetlin} and others, the majority favoring having men and women sit together at services and responsive readings in English. The President stated that his generation was a lost generation, lost in the transition between the European and American Jew, which grew up without a good Jewish education and lacking the old spirit and some religious ties. He said that it is unfashionable to belong to an Orthodox Congregation. ~~He said~~ It would not make any difference if men and women sit together or apart, either in the services or in the spirit of the Congregation because this generation cannot change. Since the solution is uncertain, he believes it best to rely ^{on} and follow those who have gone before. The Beth Shalom services are more beautiful ^{and} because they have a professional choir because they have more money. The Sabbath services are identical with not one word of English. The solution, he believes is to train ourselves and our children. They stop Cheder at 13 and don't receive Jewish education in the years when they are most receptive to education and understanding from 13 to 21. The girls receive even less.

If we had services downstairs it would not be insulting to anyone who wanted to go upstairs. However, it is not only on the High Holiday it is the rest of the year. ~~He said~~ If Congregation wants ^{Friday} night services we will have them starting next Friday night. He said that if the people were sincere then it makes no difference where you sit if you come to pray. Women can sit upstairs and men and men downstairs. ~~He said~~ He concluded by saying that we would have someone to conduct services in English at the next high holiday services.

There being no further ~~business~~ discussion in the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
S. H. Grossman
Secy.