

BETH ISRAEL CENTER GENERAL MEETING

As a result of a recent Religious Affairs Committee meeting (attached), a general congregational meeting will be held at BIC next Thursday, June 19th at 7:30 PM to discuss the following:

Policy

It shall be the policy of Beth Israel Center that women and men are to be considered equal in responsibility and proviledge in Congregational worship.

1. Women shall be counted in the quorum for Congregational worship.
2. At personal option, women may be called to the Torah, including Maftir, Hagbah and G'klah, in addition to the other regular portions.
3. When called to the Torah, women will be expected to pronounce both benedictions; they may read from the Torah, if prepared.
4. When called to the Torah, use of the Tallit by women is optional; however, some form of head covering must always be worn.
5. A woman may serve as Cantor during any service. When she does so, she must wear a Tallit and a head covering.

Decisions on these matters have far reaching effects and I urge that you be in attendance at this meeting to express your thoughts.

Stanley Glöckstein, President

Report of the Policy Subcommittee  
of  
The Religious Affairs Committee

The Policy Subcommittee of the Religious Affairs Committee (Markowitz, Glickstein, Duker, Horvitz), augmented by interested participants, met on June 1, 1975 to consider the participation of women in Congregational worship. Present were J. M. Markowitz, chmn., J. Duker, F. Horvitz, S. Glickstein, F. Davidson, S. Schultz, H. Rosenberg, and E. Shapiro.

Working from a draft resolution, the subcommittee formulated and presents the following working document to the Board of Directors, along with a series of qualifications and reflections which arose at the meeting. The subcommittee neither endorsed nor disapproved the basic policy document, but simply presents it to the Board as a working policy paper. Because of its nature, the subcommittee was unanimous in feeling that the congregation must have the opportunity for public discussion of the policy, and therefore recommends that the Board call a special meeting for this purpose before making the policy, or any portion of it, effective.

This report satisfies the obligation undertaken by the Religious Affairs Committee to provide a policy for increased participation of women in the service, provided that this is what the Congregation desires.

## Reflections

1. The policy formulated above is only a portion of the "equality" that should be being considered; true religious equality includes, for example, a single male-female organization to replace sisterhood, and male participation in the preparation of the Oneg Shabbat.
2. The implied increase in female responsibility contained in this policy may well work toward decreasing male participation and so may have a negative overall effect; moreover, it may tend to decrease female participation in present women's activities, which are already in difficulties in staffing various projects.
3. The policy as written is inconsistent since true equality is not really established in all areas. For instance, the wearing of the Tallit is optional, as is the wearing of head coverings during the service, for women but not for men.

The Board is advised that, in the opinion of the Chairman, this subject, religious participation of women, is full of controversy and formal implementation of even Policy #1, which we have been doing on an informal basis for some time, should be carried out only after full congregational discussion. The same applies with even more force to the other policies.

The Chairman discussed this matter with Rabbi Steindel of Beth El (where substantially the same policy is now in effect) and assures the Board that the policy, as written above, is completely consonant with conservative Judaic principles, on the basis of local option,

Resp. Submitted,

*J M M.*  
J. M. Markowitz, Chairman

**Informal P.S.:** The chairman was astonished at the degree of opposition to the policies above. Maybe we didn't have sufficient "pro-" voices at the meeting. I depend on F. Duker and others then present to elaborate on the "Reflections" above.