

A Statement to the Officers, Directors and Members of Beth Shalom
Congregation by Rabbi Herman Kieval, April 14, 1953.

After having served Beth Shalom Congregation as spiritual leader for almost three years, I hereby request that a formal agreement now be entered into between the Congregation and myself.

- I. Before mentioning any specific terms of such an agreement, I would like to clarify certain general questions regarding Congregational-Rabbinical relationships.
 - A. A formal agreement, or contract, between a rabbi and a congregation is now the rule rather than the exception throughout the country. The same is becoming increasingly true of insurance plans for rabbis, since clergymen have no protection under social security. (I am attaching a leaflet entitled "Principles Governing Congregational-Rabbinical Agreements" plus a sample agreement, both drawn up by the New York Board of Rabbis.)
 - B. Such an agreement does not in any way reflect upon the trustworthiness or good name of either the Rabbi or the Congregation involved. It is simply a wise business procedure intended to make official and crystal-clear the status of a Rabbi with his Congregation and their mutual responsibilities.
 - C. Such an agreement also serves the additional purpose of providing the Rabbi with that invaluable feeling of emotional, as well as material, security which enables him to render the most effective service to his Congregation.
- II. The terms to be mentioned represent my reasoned and considered judgment. Consultation with officials of the United Synagogue and the Rabbinical Assembly has confirmed my opinion that they are in line with standards prevailing for congregations of Beth Shalom's stature and for rabbis of my standing.
 - A. Tenure: I request an agreement for the ensuing five-year period.
 - B. Salary: I request that my present annual salary of \$11,500.00 be increased, at intervals to be decided by the Congregation, until the salary of \$15,000.00 is reached for the concluding year of the agreement.
 - C. Insurance: for the sake of our mutual benefit and protection, I request to be enrolled in the "Retirement and Insurance Plan" administered jointly by the Rabbinical Assembly, the United Synagogue, and the Jewish Theological Seminary. (A copy of the Plan is attached.)

The annual premium is 11% of the Rabbi's salary at the date of his admission; four-elevenths of this contribution to be paid by the Rabbi and seven-elevenths by the Congregation.

NOTE: Miscellaneous provisions of a detailed nature such as are usually included in these agreements (see the models suggested by the United Synagogue and Rabbinical Assembly) may be worked out to mutual satisfaction at the time agreements are drawn up.

III. If the Congregation sees fit to act favorably upon the above requests, I would then ask that consideration be given toward assisting me in purchasing a suitable home in the neighborhood of the Synagogue. I have in mind a loan to be advanced by the Congregation in an amount sufficient for a down payment. The detailed arrangements would be worked out at the proper time.

In conclusion, allow me to state that an agreement entered into between a rabbi and his congregation goes beyond the stipulations of a legal agreement. It covers a spiritual relationship that goes far beyond the employer-employee level. The very nature of a Jewish Congregation as a "holy assembly" and the spiritual character of the Rabbi's office dictate that their relationship be preserved on the highest plane of mutual integrity, respect, and devotion to the religious ~~purposes~~ for which a congregation exists.

Respectfully submitted,

Herman Kieval