

October 13, 1957

Dear Sir:

My friend and I, both Kodimoh members, were visiting the other night. The subject of our Synagogue came up and we discussed a few problems and wondered what the answers were. We wondered what was going on. Since there has been no congregational meeting, and since we do not belong to the Board of Directors, we thought that we would write to you in the form of a 'Letter to the Editor', and perhaps you would have the information, or better still would refer these questions to the proper individual or committee.

We have heard considerable talk about the possibility of building a new edifice - perhaps to compete with the other temples in our community. Everyone would agree that it is high time that Kodimoh took steps to provide adequate facilities for its expanded program. According to the Rabbi's announcement on Yon Kippur, something is about to be done. Some people apparently question the advisability of continuing in our present form. We do not believe that the seating problem is a real serious one - we would be willing to accept this as a theological question to be settled by the Rabbi. We think, rather, that some changes should be made in the present policy - in order to make the program more interesting. On these past high holidays, we admit, the services were outstanding; the decorum was excellent; the sermons were outstanding; and there were even some English prayers. Why can't we have some English prayers included during the weekly Sabbath services, and on the other holidays. During the recent holiday of Succos, one of us attended - there wasn't one English prayer. Most of us, you know, don't understand much of the actual meaning of most of the prayers.

The same applies to the community singing. We have some on Saturday, some on the high holidays - but none on other holidays. Why can't we have more? We are singing the same number of melodies to-day as we did twenty years ago. It would seem that the Cantor should get more seriously interested in the music program of our Synagogue. He is a nice fellow - but it does not seem as if he is "producing". Have there not been any new melodies for community singing instituted in the modern orthodox synagogues elsewhere?

What about the Friday night services? They seem to have changed. We came a few times last year - not too often - but this was due mostly to the fact that the services were not very interesting or inspiring. There were a few English prayers, but they didn't seem to have any relationship to us. They didn't seem to reach us with a Sabbath spirit. The

sermonette was fine. However the conducting staff didn't seem too interested in making the evening a success. The cantorial selections usually were monotonous and without enthusiasm. It is well known that in order to sell a product the salesman must himself be enthusiastic about it - or appear so. It would seem that some reappraisal should be made of this important function of the Synagogue. There are a certain number of people who depend on these services - and they are loyal Kodimoh members. It is impossible, at the moment at least, for these people to come to the Saturday service. The other Synagogues seem to provide this function successfully. The membership dues has been increased. We have a right to ask for some sort of an interesting program - presented by capable and enthusiastic personnel.

A word about the Bulletin. This past issue has had to serve us for four long weeks. There is no doubt that the general nature of the bulletin has improved tremendously. It seems, however, that the bulletin is not personal enough. There isn't even one personal notice in the entire publication. Despite the fact that there has been no bulletin for several months, no mention is made of any personals. Perhaps the Synagogue office isn't interested in this phase of its members. We hardly think so. Apparently somebody wasn't on the job. Is it true that the bulletin is published out of town? Is there a special reason for this?

What about the educational program of our Synagogue? Why must we always be behind the others in getting started on our programs? The neighboring temples have filled the press with information of their programs which will run all year long. Will we have a similar program?

During the summer months, when the Rabbi was away, young boys served as Assistant Rabbi. Very nice. It seems that one young man is picked more often than others. It is startling to find out that this boy's family isn't even a member of the Synagogue. Don't we have any boys - sons of members - who can serve in this capacity?

It seems to us that these questions point to an underlying absence of a personal attachment between the people who are in charge and the personal needs of our members. A personal greeting or a word of sympathy can go much further than a thousand speeches, bulletins etc.

You may agree or disagree with these questions and comments. Whether you publish this letter is immaterial; perhaps you will refer it to the proper committee for discussion and solution. A copy is also being sent to the president of the Synagogue.

Very truly yours,
Two Loyal Members,
in good standing