

## **Kesher Israel Board Meeting Minutes – November 18, 2007, 9:15 a.m.**

Attendees: Rabbi Barry Freundel, Rabbi Yoel Oz , Gary Winters, Jerome Chapman, Gamliel Kronemer, Elana Lederman, Roz Singer, Jesse Mendelson, Shana Siesser, David Barak, Seth Olpert, Elanit Rothschild, Baruch Fellner, Dave Sloan, David Levin

1. Dvar Torah—Rabbi .Freundel spoke about the issues surrounding conversion and how they are ever so much larger than the act of conversion itself. Conversion has become a means for trying to legitimize a segment of orthodoxy that, through its opposition to conversions, highlights the shortcomings and dangers of failing to recognize converts from beyond your own borders. Failure to be accepting creates a potential for a schism within orthodoxy. In reaction to this fringe orthodox segment, the Bet Din Tzedek of Jerusalem has reduced the threat of schism by discouraging attendance at conferences that are divisive and otherwise counterproductive.
2. The draft August and October minutes, which had been circulated for comment, were moved and accepted as circulated.
3. Baruch asked that the Trustees make a report at another meeting about the Trust funds and, in particular, about the Bayit. Gary suggested that we have a meeting like that when David Epstein is present. Gary mentioned that the lease on the Bayit ends in May of 2008.
4. Jesse noted that the newly requested line items for the budget had not yet been added, as reflected in the October 2007 financial statement. Gary said that the Kol Nidre combined pledge was almost \$100,000. Jesse pointed out that the ritual items budget had been exceeded by \$3000. This was due to unanticipated costs for Sefer Torah repair. Rabbi Freundel emphasized that our Sifrei Torah are in need of repair and that part of our financial planning must take into consideration the need for new Sifrei Torah. In response to questions, David Barak explained the implications of having few Sifrei Torah—fewer scrolls, more rolling, more abrasion, resulting in faster and greater wear.
5. There was discussion about the procedure for acknowledging donations; the consensus was that the procedure appears to be working; discussion turned to yahrzeit reminders, but no conclusions were reached.
6. Gamliel said that the new Kesher member directory will be mailed in the coming week along with the Chanukah newsletter. Seth noted that more people are requesting of him that there be more substance in the newsletter. Consideration is being given to adding another page to the newsletter.
7. Gamiliel present a mini report on plans for Hachnasat Sefer Torah, which is scheduled for January 27, 2008. Rabbi Freundel and Rabbi Oz will speak on the preceding Shabbat and a guest speaker (yet to be selected) will speak on the 27<sup>th</sup>. The event is scheduled to last 3 hours. Gamliel explained that the failure to get a speaker has led to a delay in publicizing the event. There was discussion about whether this should be a general fund raiser or a fund raiser specifically for Sifrei Torah. During the discussion, which resulted in no consensus, David Barak spoke against establishing a dedicated Sifrei Torah fund, in light of the continuing need.

8. In memory of their son, Jaime and Gina Daremblum want to establish and endow the Zvi Daremblum Memorial Lecture and to provide someone the wherewithal to learn in a Jewish institution in the Washington DC area or in Israel. As to the lecture, Ken is working with the Daremblums to identify a lecturer. The expectation is that the program will be in place by the summer of 2008. There was discussion about prior, similar efforts and the absence of any defined way in which to satisfy the expectation that those selected to learn would give back to the community through some form of service. In recognition that those selected for such a program may have vastly different talents and levels of learning, Gamliel suggested that any guideline for how a person who is selected shares his/her learning with the community should take into consideration the experience of the person selected.
9. Seth announced that an someone (unnamed) wants to donate to have the back stairs scraped and double painted. This led to discussion about the kitchen in the Bayit and the need for running water and a clean refrigerator. In response to Rabbi Freundel's cautions about hashgachah issues, Roz said that there would be no cooking and that there was no expressed interest in the Bayit having a "working" kitchen.
10. David Barak announced that there may be a problem with cracking in the walls in the mikvah.
11. Baruch turned the discussion to the Carlebach minyan—the significant positive impact on the Shul's outreach efforts, but the disruption to the regular minyan due to the failure to make known which minyan is upstairs and which is downstairs. Baruch recommended that the Carlebach minyan have a permanent place. Gamliel opined that if that is upstairs, then there should be no-foot stomping. Baruch disagreed as did others, not wanting to limit the spirit of the daveners. Gary recommended against a permanent place for the Carlebach minyan, suggesting that the venue confusion could be avoided with proper signage. Gary suggested that Carlebach be downstairs until Pesach. There was no vote on the issue.
12. Elanit said that at the Aish Shabbaton, there may have been underage drinking and there was cellular phone usage at minchah on Shabbat. The group had rented the Shul, but this was contrary to the arrangement. Gary said that he would speak with Rabbi Mathias about these issues.
13. Gamliel stated that there had been cooking in the Shul Sukkah during Sukkot, contrary to the Shul's rules. Although announcements were daily made about this during Sukkot, Gamliel suggested a sign in the Sukkah with the "no cooking" rules and that the sign be in English and Yiddish.
14. Gary mentioned that he may be in Montana for three or four months this Spring.
15. Rabbi Freundel mentioned that the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel, who had been in DC earlier in the month, was impressed by the Shul's mikvah and minyan.
16. The next Board meeting is scheduled for December 16, 2007.
17. The meeting was adjourned.