

1990

High Holiday Address to the Congregation by Donald M. Povich (1990)

Donald M. Povich

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Good evening and Happy New Year to you all. Do you believe in miracles? The Bible is full of them, seas that part bushes that burn and are not consumed and manna from heaven. I want to tell you that right here and now in 1990 you are seeing a miracle, as a matter of fact you are sitting right in the middle ~~off~~ of one. The miracle I speak of is the Beth Israel Congregation,

From its struggling beginnings it has always overcome the odds. Its founders were a group of poor, very poor immigrants who came to this largely Christian community and with very little money but a wallet full of perseverance and a heart full of hope. Not a day went by that they did not have a penny collection or a quilt auction or a fund raiser. Can you imagine what the first families of Bath some of whose relatives had come to America before the Pilgrims, thought of this tiny group of foreigners, who spoke English badly who were mostly peddlers and shopkeepers. I don't know, but what I do know that to their lasting credit some of them made contributions to these Jews to help build this building in which you sit. A Miracle? Perhaps.

And these first founders had their glory years. With their large families they held their services here in what was largely an empty hall. They held suppers and games and shows never forgetting to raise funds and they finished the interior and the heating system and the plumbing and they turned this empty hall into their "shul" AND THAT WAS MIRACULOUS TOO. But as time went by these founders passed away and many of their families moved away until at last the congregation grew smaller and smaller until at last despite the efforts of those who were left it seemed that the dream of this congregation might die.

Only eight or nine years ago a young couple who lived in Bath had a little boy. A few Jewish children whose parents wanted them to have a Jewish education were being driven to Lewiston But it so happened

that there was no room in the car for that one little boy. As a result his mother and another Young Jewish woman began a ^{SMALL} humble Sunday School here in Bath . From that humble beginning that school has grown to nearly forty students and a budget of over \$10,000 . What followed was a reorganization of the synagogue , the arrival of other young Jewish people who wanted not only to have the Hebrew School thrive but also to have the congregation to which it belong thrive, and their THAT furver and desire was no less than ~~those~~ ^{AND THAT WAS A MIRACLE TOO} founders of Beth Israel.

And so today our congregation is alive and well. its vital signs are good. With little money, no full time rabbi, but with our own efforts, we are making this miracle work

I know you want to be a part of the miracle . I know you want to be active members. I know you want to give generously of you time, effort and your money. all of which are greatly needed . Please ~~x~~ don't forget our special need for interior painting of which I spoke on Rosh Hashona. ^{OF MONIES} If you do not have one, there are special envelopes in the lobby to make it easy to send your contribution ^{and you dues.} . Please do so at ~~one~~ and keep this miracle alive and growing . Thank You.

THE PROJECT WILL COST 2800.00 THE BOARD HAS VOTED TO USE AN ANNOUOUS gift OF 1000 FOR THIS UNDERTAKING. LEAVING 1800 TO BE RAISED