

A TRIBUTE TO RABBI ISAACS



The story of Beth Abraham Synagogue would surely be incomplete if the years of inspired leadership by Rabbi Henry J. Isaacs were not emphasized.

He came to our Synagogue from Loring Air Force Base some 23 years ago with his wife, Roz and baby daughter Esther. He came to a disorganized congregation with bickering and dissension rampant - with factions and feuding - a congregation looking to be spiritually led - a Synagogue without beauty or hope: surely the many rabbis before had lasted too briefly to make an impact. To a young rabbi, even of Rabbi Isaacs' stature, the situation looked hopeless. The story from then until now speaks for itself.

For now stands a beautiful Synagogue - a Hebrew Day School that through the years has graduated countless numbers of young orthodox Jews - who are taking their places in the professional and business world, and many community members who have been touched by his life.

And what of his congregants? We love him, for Rabbi Isaacs is not only our teacher and spiritual leader - but he is also our friend!

A TRIBUTE TO ROZ ISAACS



The life of a "Rebbitzin" is not easy. Always under public scrutiny, she must lead an exemplary life. Rosa Leah Hirsch Isaacs is such a person. Roz, as she is affectionately known, is not only an outstanding helpmate to her husband, Rabbi Henry Isaacs, but, as the mother of five children, has always put her family's needs before her own. And what makes her even more unique, is her concern for Beth Abraham, her synagogue for the past twenty-three years. Her commitment to the shul and to the Sisterhood has been incomparable. When a helping hand is needed -from sorting rummage to grating potatoes for Chanukah latkes, Roz is always there.

She has, almost single handedly, over the past twenty years, raised thousands of dollars for Beth Abraham. But it is for more than the money Roz has raised that we extend this tribute. The generosity of her heart far outweighs any material gains. No one is ever turned away from her door. Strangers from all over the world, who somehow find their way to Bangor, find a warm welcome from Roz. Her warm smile and innate sense of goodness, have endeared her to all who know her. Not only is her family fortunate to have her as their guiding light, Beth Abraham shares in their good fortune as well. Roz Isaacs is a true Jewish woman of merit. May she continue to be a part of our lives for many years.

A TRIBUTE TO OUR PHILANTHROPISTS

Over the years most synagogues could boast of individuals who gave generously of their time and means. Beth Abraham, though small in membership compared to many other congregations, too, has had members whose philanthropic efforts have touched and affected countless lives. We proudly profile on these pages two outstanding examples of "Tzedakim" - righteous people upon whom the almighty shone his favor.

JAMES GIMPEL STRIAR
(1891 - 1959)



James Striar arrived in the United States from Stobichva, Russia, in 1902 at the age of 11. He married Sarah Schoenbaum in 1910. During his lifetime he was an outstanding and dedicated benefactor to countless persons, religious and secular educational institutions, the state of Israel and countless varied charities of all faiths.

He was a positive, proud, but humble, loyal and devout Jew. He loved his people and its Torah. He was zealous, open-hearted and open-handed to all mankind and to the land of his forefathers. He brought genuine happiness and a sense of self-fulfillment to many, for he had a genius for involving those who had some share of material substance on behalf of those who had too little. Anyone who turned to him for a helping hand found an ally and a friend. He truly believed, as he many times stated, "My wealth is the Lord's. I am only the trustee".

James Gimpel Striar was a great man and known all over America because his life was animated by a profound idea ... the perpetuation of Torah-true Judaism which he loved with his whole heart and his whole being. He therefore placed his genius for leadership and business enterprise at the service of Jewish learning, to provide the wherewithal that would enable scholars to pursue their studies, at least in minimal security.

He was a man with many sterling qualities which made him one of the most unforgettable of human beings. He had courage of body and courage of mind. His word was sacred, both in matters of business and philanthropy. Although he had gained international fame, he always remained a devout man of deep humility.

He fought and argued for numerous causes against many, never for his own personal gain or prestige, but for the benefit of others in the local or world community ... good education, kashrus, philanthropies, upholding of Halacha and the State of Israel, to mention a few.

Many, including the State of Israel, received his bounty and American democracy had his consecrated loyalty. Judaism and Americanism were happily blended in his remarkable personality.

His memory will long be in the minds of those who knew him and the fruits of his deeds will long remain with many generations.

BESSIE MOTIUK

1887 - 1977

**"MOTHER OF WIDOWS, ORPHANS & WOUNDED
SOLDIERS OF ISRAEL"**



As far back as I can remember my Aunt Bessie always had a cause. As a small child I vaguely recall my family talking about a person in Canada working to get relatives out of Europe during World War II. This person was Bessie Motiuk. She and her husband, Abe, came to live with my grandparents when I was five or six years old. Bessie was different from her sisters and other women of her generation.

She did not cook, nor was she interested in other domestic duties. Her cause at that time was to obtain a patent for an ointment she and her husband made. In spite of ridicule and criticism from her female peers she would not give up her fight for a patent. She was a liberated woman long before it became fashionable.

When Israel became a nation, Bessie's cause and almost sole purpose in life was to raise funds for the young country through the sale of Israel Bonds. Bessie would tie up the telephone for hours soliciting numerous individuals to buy bonds, much to the dismay of my grandmother. She referred to these people as her customers. She would open her conversation with a friendly greeting to her prospect asking about his health or his family, and without catching her breath, she would immediately convince this defenseless individual to buy another Israel Bond. No one had enough Israel Bonds according to Bessie. She had her list of customers whom she called again and again. Most of her customers resigned themselves to the fact that they could not say no to Bessie after the sale was made. She ended by saying, "And may you live to be 120."

Her greatest cause began after the first Arab-Israeli War when she established the "Widows, Orphans and Wounded Soldiers of Israel Fund." To her there was no greater cause than to raise funds for these unfortunate victims, and there was no one in the Jewish community of Bangor who would not be contacted by Bessie to contribute. It never ceased to amaze me how the \$5 and \$10 donations over the years totaled thousands of dollars. I regret that a record was never kept to determine the final sum which she raised.

One day she informed me that I was to be honored along with Norman Minsky. The two of us were to be her assistants. At first I was terrified. I imagined myself having to make phone calls soliciting funds. This would have been far from my favorite pastime! I was relieved to learn that Norman and I were to assist her in depositing the funds since she could not get to the bank. Also, I was to have the additional Mitzvah of being her secretary. As I said earlier, you couldn't say no to Bessie.

I now fondly recall the many afternoons when I would sit down at the kitchen table with my aunt to write letters to the President of Israel. It was the kind of task that one does not really appreciate until one no longer has the honor of doing it. The procedure was always the same. First she would instruct her husband, Abe, that she was not to be disturbed. Then there would be several minutes of silence while she collected her thoughts and I would sit ready with pen in hand. To take down every word as I knew I would have to repeat the letter to her several times so she could be sure nothing was left out. She always began her letters with the same greeting, "My dear President of Israel and for all Israel." Then she would mention how the community of Bangor had raised the enclosed funds. She never took credit for herself. She said that if it were not for the people of Bangor there would never have been a fund. She felt she honored people by mentioning them by name in these letters to the President.

It has been six years since I wrote Bessie's last letter to the President of Israel. I miss that honor which she bestowed upon me. During the last two years of her life, even though she was confined to a nursing home, the best medicine she had was the telephone from which she would constantly call her customers and would say "Hello sveetheat" ... "And may you live to be 120."

Darrell Cooper