

TOUCHING THE LIVES OF ISRAELIS

Strengthening KBY congregations makes progressive Judaism more accessible to the **vast majority of Israelis** who yearn for an alternative to the orthodox approach to Judaism.

STRENGTHENING THE JEWISH STATE

Contributing to KBY makes a positive statement to Israel about the value, validity and authenticity of progressive Judaism by strengthening and empowering the 50+ Reform and Conservative kehillot in Israel.

Why Would You Support an Israeli Congregation? (Page 2)



Worldwide, of course, the Reform and Conservative communities dwarf Orthodox communities; but in Israel historic concessions to Orthodoxy have placed our movements at the periphery. These concessions, and in practice their application, have alienated the majority of Israelis from organized religious practice.

Even today, Reform and Conservative rabbis cannot perform weddings recognized by the State. Reform and Conservative synagogues in Israel are not publicly supported, whereas Orthodox synagogues receive state funding.

Existing progressive congregations offer a few rays of hope. However, scattered across Israel, they have been historically under funded, restricted by law and discriminated against in public access and support. No one questions that progressive Judaism has been adversely affected by an Orthodox religious monopoly that is politically powerful and adverse to a modern approach to religious practice. For 50 years we have overlooked the situation because of other national concerns. It has never been the "right time" to aid our constituent communities. As the Masorti (Conservative) Movement declares, "**And if not now...when?**"

Supporting KBY congregations makes modern, pluralistic and progressive Judaism available as an option to Israelis who have never been effectively given the choice. It is for the individual congregations to provide services and education and meet the needs of the communities they serve. But for them to effectively compete for the hearts and loyalties of Israelis, they need to be unburdened from the fear for their own economic survival.

Reform and Conservative synagogues throughout the country number about 50, and the majority of these communities have memberships of under 100 families. These figures compare with thousands of Orthodox synagogues. With the exception of perhaps five synagogues, most R/C communities are not financially viable without outside help. Both the Reform and Conservative movements provide modest funding for the continuing operations of their institutions, but these resources are limited. Our purpose is to expand the total resource levels available to our sister communities.