

Dear friends

I would like to start by saying that I am not currently a member of Shaarei Tefila. I also owe close to \$5000 in past dues and pledges. With that being said, I have also been a member of the shul for over 20 years, a board member 15 of those years, had 3 Bar Mitzvahs, an aufruf in the shul and have been President for 6 years. AND I am worried. I am worried that our current executive board is not representing the shul members and is being run solely for their own personal issues and gains. I will not pay my dues to the shul unless I am comfortable that a board that represents its members is in place. These are some of the points and questions that concern me

- 1) Are we a community shul?? We are as close to a community shul as I am to 170 lbs. Did you know that **MANY MANY** organizations are not allowed in the shul. Y.U., O.U., KOLLEL, YAVNEH ARE NOT ALLOWED IN OUR SHUL!!!! Why? A certain member had personal issues with these organizations and thus disallows them entrance to Shaarei Tefila. In fact, a well respected Rabbi was told that if he was ever offered the job as Rav of S.T, he could not have any dealings with the above organizations or other Rabbis in town. Our most respected member paid for our O.U. dues and the executive board demanded that that the check be returned. Does that seem like a community shul to you?
- 2) The ex. board controls the membership list--There was one person who wanted to join the shul and his check and application were returned because he was considered a "foe". The current membership list consists of many people from the other side of town, the valley and people who have never set foot in our building. There are many single members who joined at the last minute to turn the tables in favor of our current board. There are 4 or 5 votes from one household on the list. Does this seem menshlich to you?? Do we have to resort to the same tactics? Should we have our people recruit members from other parts of the city or country or have our single kids join the shul just to manipulate the membership.
- 3) Merging--I am sure you have heard about other shuls wanting to merge with us. The current ex. board says that all these other shuls just want our building and they don't care about us. I know if I was another shul I would be dying to be a part of a 20 member Shabbos morning minyan or a 13 people shalosh seudos or a shul that has no classes, speakers or shiurim. Of course they want the building!!!!!! DUH!! I know the people that want to merge and they are good people and rest assured they want to work with us. On the other hand...maybe merger is not the answer. Maybe a young vivacious Rabbi is the answer. I know for a fact there are some incredible candidates that are interested but the members are being left out in the cold. All of the above sounds good. Should we go more right, left center, up, down?? I don't know the answer...BUT let's sit down with a new board and MEMBERS to discuss what's best for the shul.
- 4) CHABAD ISSUE--I feel that the Nusach Ari minyan is an incredible addition to our shul. Any future plans in our shul should include the Beis Menachem minyanim and their families. I was unable to attend the Purim Seudah but I heard that the entire event was FABULOUS. They were told last year that they would be ousted if a new executive board would be in place so they recruited many members to ensure their place in the shul. Their ruach and kindness is much needed in S.T. and they should not be grouped into the fiasco of last year's elections but welcomed into our shul
- 5) Every move performed by the ex. board is being done at the most cost effective manner for the shul WHICH IS GREAT!! In hindsight, I did some needless overspending as President. However, the ex. board should know that the cheapest way is not always the best way. I know for a fact that the Chazan job for Rosh Hoshanah and Yom Kippur was offered to someone else in town. This other Chazan told me directly that the reason he never responded was that he felt it should be discussed with Chazan Scharf first, which it was not. This decision was made by executive board members that DON'T even daven here on Rosh Hoshanah and Yom Kippur!!! I know that the highlight of past High Holy Day davening was Chazan Scharf's beautiful davening and of course David Fishof's shofar blowing (I put a plug in there for you David) Is this a move that is the best

interest of the members ? Does the ex. board really care about its members?? The board has every right to chose who they want as Chazan but do it in a menshclach way..not behind someone's back.

6) It's gotten so bad within the ex. board itself that President Gene Moskowitz has resigned.

I know that people on the ex. board will say that I am a jealous ex-President who owes a ton of money to the shul. Who am I to make all these suggestions and complaints??The damage control will soon start. BUT I think you get my point. The bottom line is Are you happy with the current situation? Do you care ? Is it that you care but you are just tired of fighting and would rather just daven somewhere else?

When I was President I always liked using sports analogies. I am sure you have all heard of 'Shoeless' Joe Jackson of the 1919 Black Sox. Well I am 'Shulless' Richie Katz There are many other shulless ex-members davening at YIHP, Yavneh and Aish Tamid I would also like to add, I have NO NO NO interest in becoming President. Been there done that. But we as a shul owe it to the past founders--Frank Horny A"H, Abe Spiegel A"H, Marcus Lowy A"H and many others.....to the present founders---Jack Nagel, Simcha Deutsch, Emil Fish, Alan Goldstein and Sam Frankand to the future --us and our children to ensure that Shaarei Tefila regains its status as a major synagogue based on Torah, tradition, family and Israel and not the butt of jokes around town. A shul which is truly a community shul where the entire neighborhood is welcome.

In the spirit of Pesach we are asking the current members of the executive board to step down at the next election. Let your people go does not mean let them go to other shuls!! Don't you feel some obligation as you see members wandering (seems like 40 years) the streets from shul to shul or not showing up. Doesn't it bother you that the shul is EMPTY...

What do we do?? If the current ex. members decide that they want to continue, we need people to get involved. The rumor that I have 150 Harei Krishnajs (THEY ARE ALL JEWISH??) ready to sign up is totally false. Many people have asked me to get involved. Well, let's see if you will do your part. I am asking anyone reading this letter to please call me at cell-213-804-2351, home 323-936-2186, email -breathdds@aol.com if you agree that a change must be made. If you get this letter and no longer daven at S.T., show it to your friends. We need the community to band together. Also, if you are willing if necessary to work with us to make this change and to sign a petition that you agree that a change must be made. In the true spirit of Pesach it is time to **CLEAN HOUSE.**

Wishing everyone a Chag Kosher V'Sameach

Richie Katz