**Simultaneous appeal to various populations and the creation of the fee-for-service-model**

The uniqueness of the model of Beit Daniel is noticeable on the background of the differences between this congregation and American Jewish liberal congregations. First, in contrast with the fact that at the US the congregation serves only its paying fees members, from the establishment of Beit Daniel its founders decided to reach out to the general public. Second, while in American liberal congregations the members fund the activity, in contrast in Beit Daniel a large part of the budget is funded by consumers of specific services, like Jewish classes (Beit-Midrash), Bar/Bat mitzvah ceremonies, weddings and conversion courses. This characteristic is noticeable on the background of the fact that in Israel the public expects to receive religious services for free or in low price, because the state spend/ invest large sums of money in orthodox rabbis and synagogues. For this reason Beit Daniel does not count only on membership fees for funding its activity and created a fee-for-service model for activities for the general public.

It became clear that Israelis are willing to pay for services that they choose as long as they do not feel pressed to take upon themselves commitment and join the congregation. The fee-for-service model of Beit Daniel deserves to be adopted by American congregations, among other things due to economic changes that badly affected non-profit organizations like synagogues.

## The Rabbis attracting factor to involvement in the congregation

The most active members are the ones who have close and continuous contacts with the Rabbis of Beit Daniel. This fact indicates the central role of the rabbis in the creation of the atmosphere in their congregation and that they are an attracting factor to strengthening involvement in the congregation. From the words of many active members it appears that the rabbis attracted them to be active; the rabbis identifies who will be willing to dedicate time to the congregation and they didn't wait for the will to be involved to come from the person himself.

The members that the rabbis approached were willing to volunteer, among other reasons, because in their eyes the rabbis represent the congregation. The rabbis are charismatic and authoritative, yet they are welcoming and create personal contacts easily. Thanks to this personal contact to the rabbi the member feels that he personally helps the rabbi to run the congregation affairs. In this context Yehudit, a dedicated active member for many years says that "Rabbi Meir sensed that it is worth to invest in us, and he was very interested in us. It is really nice to fell wanted, easily we joined the congregation". Other active members repeated on a description which is similar to Yehudit's description.

**Beit Daniel as a "thin community"**

In nowadays fragmentary society the individual belongs to a wide range of communities with different density/ intensity of social relations and obligations. Those communities are called "thin communities", because they relating to just one domain of the individual life, in contrast with traditional communities of the past, that encompassed the whole life domains of the individual. It means that a religious congregation is just one among the multiple communities which the individual participates in. Also, the meaning is that the individual chooses his friends from an ample supply of individuals who are active in the various communities in which he is a member. So, actually the friendships of the individual become more spread today in contrast with the past.

Beit Daniel functions as a thin community for his most active members. The belonging to Beit Daniel express just one identity aspect of its active members. In a like manner only some of their friends can be found in Beit Daniel.

**The commitment of young active members (in their 40s) as an example for today congregational commitment**

Many of the active members in their 40s, who joined Beit Daniel in their 20s and 30s were not willing to be full-fledged n the beginning of their way in the congregation, they preffered to participate regularly in the different activities for their age group. They spoke about Judaism that fits the needs of the middle-class secular Israeli of the 21st century, who does not look for [congregational] commitment. According to one of them "The Reform movement became user-friendly". He also explained in this context that "young adults treat Judaism as they treat the internet- meaning they surf". He added that "in the internet you do not get delayed in the sites and everybody surf as long as he wants and wherever he wants". His words are a metaphor that explain that in the mobile modern society Judaism is likened to surfing the internet, meaning that there is no need to commit to one congregation only which expressed one type of Judaism, since there is a possibility to float between congregations who offer different versions of Judaism. His words reflect the transfer from membership in a congregation which operates in one specific territory ("sites" in according to him), whose members share one agreed upon version of religious faith, to searching and choosing between congregations who offer various options of Judaism ("surfing of each person wherever he wants" in his words). Each one of the young active members surfed by himself between variety of social and spiritual-religious options, among them Jewish options, and chose at the end the Reform option that Beit Daniel offered, an option of "Judaism which suits the needs of those who do not look for [congregational] commitment"

**Ideological reasons of parents for choosing to conduct Bar Mitzvah ceremony in Beit Daniel**

#### There are parents who choose to celebrate their child's ceremony because they appreciate the values that guide the life of the congregation. Among those values are compromise, integration and openness to various religious practices and Jewish traditions, accepting the "others" in society, an attempt to answer different needs simultaneously, flexibility and ritual creativity. This is reflected in Nava's description of the possibility that was given to her brothers to recite the priestly blessing, and for this to be the first ones to read from the Torah.

#### Nava who was raised in a traditional Yemenite family told:

#### "I came from a family of Cohanim (priests), I asked that my brother will go up to the Bimah and bless the Priestly blessing, a touching Yemenite blessing. In a reform congregation there is no such thing that a Cohen (priest) will be the first one to be called to the Torah, openness and compromise are needed for this to happen. My brother was the first to be called to the Torah, and there was the Priestly blessing, people were so excited. In the same synagogue, there were two style of prayers of different Jewish denominations, at the same prayer.

#### Or- at the same synagogue, the prayer combined different prayer styles of two Jewish denominations. This is redemption, the third temple".

#### She saw Beit as the most suitable place for her needs, since his heads enabled her to conduct a Bar Mitzvah ceremony which combined between religious customs of sepharadic Jews with those of Ashkenazic Jews; and between Orthodoxy and Reform.

**A search after a welcoming and open community**

In the eyes of all the target populations of Beit Daniel its attraction power lies in the openness and acceptance of each individual without asking him about his commandments (mitzvoth) observance and belief in God.

In addition Beit Daniel's attraction power lies in giving a feeling to the individual that he can choose to adapt values from his tradition, values that are close to his heart and are suitable the spirit of our times. Beit Daniel can give this feeling to the individual because of its ideological openness [as a reform congregation].

Due to its openness and tolerance the target populations hold positive feelings towards Beit Daniel, feelings that are connected to a familiar place, to family and home.

The attraction to Beit Daniel also lies in the feeling of Tel Avivan ease that it invoke in the people who enter its gates and due to the light Judaism which ease the demands from the individual.

**A new and light communality**

In light of the fact that Tel Aviv is a world city, Beit Daniel offers weak communality to individuals that eases a little bit the anonymity and loneliness, which they feel as part of their lives in this big city. This isn't a binding communality, because it is limited in time. It seems that individuals prefer the mass prayers which are conducted in Beit Daniel, since the participants do not know each other, a fact that enables them to experience a communality for the limited time of the prayer, and at the same time to stay anonymous.

**Conservatism and Innovation**

The founders of Beit Daniel and its senior rabbi are familiar with the hegemonic status of Halacha in the Israeli public life and of the state sponsored religious establishment, and the belief of many in the secular Israeli public the Orthodoxy represents the authentic Judaism. They wanted to make the Reform version of Judaism legitimate and accepted in the eyes of the secular Tel Avivan public, and because of that reason the religious ways of their congregation became partly traditional .They adopted basic patterns of Orthodox Judaism, and combined them with American reform models, patterns and conceptions, that were adapted to Israel. For example, on the one hand the prayers in Beit Daniel include New Hebrew literature pieces, which are not part of orthodox prayers. On the other hand the prayers in Beit Daniel are much more traditional compared to American reform prayers. This is reflected by the fact that the prayers are conducted entirely in Hebrew, most of the women do not wear a skullcap and tallit, and hardly ever the feminine language is used to describe God. However, the activity model of Beit Daniel has American characteristics, which are the focus on the individual and the using of marketing approach. Those characteristics are expressed in the possibility that is given to families to adapt the Bar/ Bat Mitzvah to their wishes, i.e. to conduct the ceremony in the presence of family and friends and not as part of the congregational prayer.

Another example of limited innovation concerned the use of musical instruments as part of the prayer. The origin of this innovation can be found in the development of the Reform movement in Europe and later on in the US. In contrast to the regular use of musical instruments as part of the prayer in American reform congregations, in Beit Daniel it happens only once a month. It seems that Beit Daniel as the biggest and institutionalized center of the Reform movement in Israel is characterized by limited innovation, at the same time that the innovation happens in its branches. Those branches functions as an experiment field for creating new ritual aspects.

**Gender equality as a motive to conduct Bar/ Bat Mitzva ceremony in Beit Daniel**

Many of the parents that I have interviewed mentioned the gender equality in Beit Daniel as the reason to choose this congregation for the Bar/ Bat mitzvah celebration. Most of the mothers connected it to their wish to sit with their entire family (husband and children). In this context Naomi said: "I was impressed that in the ceremony in Beit Daniel the whole family sat together, the mother can sit next to her son, and not be hiding up. I do not think that I did something wrong, that I need to hide up in the women gallery, and move a curtain [in order to see the ceremony]. I have a son and I want to celebrate with him. It is nice to be together, its fun".

Gender equality characterizes the course that prepares families and children to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, part of the course/ the preparation includes Tefillin-laying ceremony. In this context Dafna, whose daughter celebrated Bat Mitzvah in Beit Daniel mentioned: "It felt good to lay Tefillin for the first time in my life. I was excited from the fact that it was the first time I am in a religious congregation that treates me in contrast to other religious congregations and organizations that ignore my existence just because I am a woman….This [the Tefillin-laying] is a great contribution [of Beit Daniel] to the Jewish identity of girls.

Her words imply that taking an active part in a ritual, which considered until today, as a male property is meaningful and exciting to mothers and their daughters, and connects them in an unmediated manner to liberal Jewish identity, as the leaders of Beit Daniel wanted.

Furthermore, a woman-rabbi guides all the participants how to lay the Tefillin, and thereby serves as a Jewish role model for the bar/ bat mitzvah children and their families.