

INITIAL DIFFICULTIES AS HAZZAN

The first few years at the Ezra Bessaroth were difficult when it came to reading the weekly Torah portion. What with raising a family and working full time at Boeing, it was difficult to put in the many hours that were required for the learning of each perasha week after week. There are some weeks during the year when one Torah portion is joined together with the following one, i.e. two Torah portions on the same Sabbath. That was the most difficult time of all. Many were the times when I would walk to synagogue on Shabbat morning and Reverend Behar was already there. I would meekly ask, 'Reverend, I was only able to learn until 'shishi' (the sixth of seven portions). Would you be able to do 'shevii' for me?' And he would very graciously say yes. This happened a few times during the first few years. I believe he knew all the weekly Torah portions by heart. I also feel that I have carried on the tradition as passed down to me by Reverend Behar, but I'm sorry that I didn't spend more time recording various customs that are specific to the Rhodes tradition. It was a sad day when Reverend Behar passed away in August of 1977.