



Wembley synagogue Press Release

Contact Alison Friend

Email: AllisonFriend@wembleysynagogue.org

Morris Wiseman (Editor WSN)

Email: wsn@wembleysynagogue.org

77 years of serving the community

Sunday 3rd September 2006 Wembley says Farewell

The Wembley Synagogue Community turned out in force on Sunday 3rd September, to bid a warm and emotional farewell to Rabbi Martin van den Bergh and his wife, Anna, shortly before they depart to take up a new post as Rabbi for the Ohel Leah community in Hong Kong.

Amongst the wealth of special guests were the Chief Rabbi, Sir Jonathan Sacks and Lady Sacks, two local MPs, Barry Gardiner and Dawn Butler, the Mayor of Brent, Cllr Bertha Joseph, Rabbi Dr Abraham Levy, representing the Sephardi community as well as being the Rabbi's close friend and mentor, The President of the United Synagogue, Dr Simon Hochhauser, Vice President, Geoff Hartnell and Cllr Dr Alan Mendoza.

The Chief Rabbi said in tribute to Rabbi van den Bergh it was "rare to see such love between a community and its Rabbi and Rebbetzin". In his response, Rabbi van den Bergh emphasised the importance he attached in trying to understand every individual member of one's community. He continued, "That when you go and help someone, they are giving you the privilege of allowing you to enter their lives. It is never your right but you do have a responsibility".

The enormous value of Anna van den Bergh's contribution to the community was mentioned repeatedly. As well as her involvement in establishing a Community welfare group, she will also be remembered for initiating the women's Rosh Chodesh Group and its newsletter, Moonlight, which now has a momentum of its own.

Other distinguished guests included the Director and Chairman of the United Synagogue's Visitation and Bereavement Committee, on which Rabbi van den Bergh had so ably served. There were also several multi-faith representatives from his work within the forum of National Health Chaplaincy, all of whom spoke very highly of

the Rabbi's continuous sensitivity, dedication and enthusiasm in meeting all the challenges associated in this particular specialist area.

A presentation was made by the Chairman of the Kingsbury, Kenton, Wembley (KKW) Adult Education Committee, Doreen Morris to the van den Berghs of a certificate marking a donation in their name to the Giles van Colle memorial fund.

Stuart Hart, Chairman of Wembley Synagogue, summed up all the compliments given by saying that the Rabbi had always been the greatest ambassador for the Shul and that his memorable Shofar-blowing will probably remain unsurpassed. In token of appreciation, the community had bought some beautiful crockery and cutlery, which had already been shipped to Hong Kong to grace their new home. He thanked them both on behalf of the whole community for everything they had done over the last twelve years and wished them every success and a very happy future.

A book of Good Wishes was available to sign as a memento for the van den Berghs and amid the usual observations was one which encapsulated it all: "You made a difference!"

If you require any further information please contact the people above.