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Split in Sephardic Community of Boston

By Lawrence Harmon
Advocate Staff

The arrival of the new year (5745) will find a major rift in the Sephardic Jewish community of Greater Boston. For the first time in 25 years, Jews here of Asian and North African descent will not be praying together as one community during the coming High Holy Days.

According to Baruch Mazor, a Brookline resident, many members of the Sephardic Congregation of Greater Boston grew despondent at "extreme forms of Orthodoxy" and in recent weeks broke away to form a new congregation which, though adhering to the tenets of Orthodoxy, will be more liberal in matters of philosophy and ritual.

Before the split, approximately 50 families comprised the Sephardic congregation, which meets regularly in separate facilities at Young Israel of Brookline. Mazor, who at one time served as *gabbai* of the congregation, indicated that approximately 15 families have joined the breakaway group.

The Sephardic community here is estimated to number from 500-700 individuals. Most members are of Iranian and Egyptian descent, but the community also includes considerable numbers of Libyans, Iraqis, Yemenites and Israelis.

David Sheena, acting president of the breakaway congregants, stated that there was no single catalytic event which led to the split, rather a "difference of philosophy" with the Sephardic rabbi and several congregation leaders.

"The major difference is that we are going to follow our Sephardic Orthodox customs, traditions and ways of prayer but without any bias toward how an individual conducts his private life outside the synagogue," stated Sheena. "We will also expand, within the halachic framework, the role of women in communal life," he added.

Breakaway congregants are reportedly incensed at Rabbi

(Continued on Page 16)

Head of Jordan Marsh to Lead CJP Industry Wing



Photo cap: Elliot J. Stone

Elliot J. Stone of Newton, president and chief executive officer of the Jordan Marsh Company and vice president of Allied Stores Corporation, has been named chairman of the new Business and Industry Division of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston.

Stone's appointment was announced by CJP Campaign Chairman Joel B. Sherman as the first of a number of structural changes that will broaden the leadership of the 1985 "Challenge" Campaign.

"Elliot Stone is the model of the businessman-community leader who brings exceptional talent and skill to all his endeavors," Sherman stated. "We are extraordinarily fortunate that he will lead our 1985 Challenge Campaign in Business and Industry."

As the first chairman of the new division, Stone will coordinate the efforts of teams of campaign workers in areas as diverse as general

merchandising, high technology, hotels and hospitality, real estate and construction. Some have been integral to the CJP campaign structure for many years, while others, such as the High Technology Team, have been formed to give a focus to campaign efforts in this important Massachusetts industry.

Named to his current position in 1979, Stone entered retailing soon after his World War II military service. Starting as a buyer in the R.H. White Stores in Boston, he held a succession of merchandising and management

(Continued on Page 15)

Saturday Night Selichos

Can We Recapture Its Purpose?

By Nehemia Polen

Editor's Note: Nehemia Polen is Rabbi of Congregation Tifereth Israel of Everett. Selichos is this Saturday night.

It is no secret that it is difficult for contemporary Jews to pray. If this is true all year long, it is particularly so with respect to *Selichos* (prayers for forgiveness recited during the High Holy Day season). The traditional confession seems rigid and formulaic (an alphabetic catalogue of sins!); the language is often extravagantly hyperbolic ("We are more guilty than any people . . ."); and the mood of self-abasement is hardly consonant with the assertiveness, pride and self-confidence which pervades our culture.

The *Shulchan Arukh* (Code of Jewish Law, *Orach Hayyim* section 581) tells us that "it is the custom to rise before dawn to say *Selichos*." Sefardim do so for the entire month before Rosh Hashana, while Ashkenazic Jews begin the Sunday before Rosh Hashana; when the holiday falls on a Monday or Tuesday, then *Selichos* are begun the Sunday of the previous week. In many contemporary American congregations, however, the week or so of pre-dawn services has been, in effect, abrogated, and replaced by a single service, held around

midnight of the Saturday evening preceding Rosh Hashana. (The idea of getting up before dawn on a Sunday morning for a religious service would evidently strike most of us as rather bizarre.)

Even this vestigial *Selichos* service seldom wins awards for attendance. In order to encourage people to come, rabbis (myself included) have taken to stressing the importance of introspection and reflection before the High Holy Days, and linking this theme with *Selichos*. However, while self-analysis and introspection are indeed central to this season, it is not at all clear why these activities must be done at midnight, nor why they are facilitated by the presence of a crowd of people or a fixed order of loudly intoned prayers.

The Hasidic masters and the Musar teachers knew much about introspection and self-betterment (or, to use the contemporary terminology, "realizing our full potential"), but they never attempted to buttress *Selichos* by linking the former to the latter. The work of self-improvement is crucial to the spirit of the High Holy Day season, and it deserves to be conducted with utter concentration, alone or with a trusted friend.

The truth is that *Selichos* really has very little to do with us as individuals. It is a collective activity which joins us to the *Knesses Yisrael* (the metaphysical body of Israel), composed not only of all Jews living today, but all Jews who have ever lived in the past, or will come to this earth

(Continued on Page 16)



NEW ISRAELI IMMIGRANTS FROM ETHIOPIA are shown during their pre-army training, during which they learn Hebrew and aspects of life in the Jewish State. In the photo, they relax with their instructor. (Israel Sun Photo)

75 Area Synagogues Prepare for Israel Bond High Holy Day Effort

Seventy-five congregations in the Greater Boston area will join with 1,100 synagogues in a massive nationwide effort to mobilize funds to help overcome Israel's current economic problems when they participate in the 1984-5745 Israel Bond High Holy Day appeals during Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.

According to Boston Israel

Bond congregations co-chairmen Malcolm H. Flash and A.I. Lerner, synagogue members will be urged to purchase Israel Bonds in commemoration of the 36th or "Double Chai" anniversary of Israel's rebirth and also of the 18th, "Chai" anniversary of United Jerusalem.

Congregants will be asked to make Bond purchases and then to make additional pur-

chases of new improved \$250 Israel Certificates.

"The newest securities offered by the Bond Organization, the Certificates were established to increase identification with Israel by encouraging larger numbers of people to visit the country," Flash and Lerner explained. "Certificates will have graduated increases in value each year for five years if cashed in Israel. They will also be accepted by El Al Israel Airlines toward the purchase of tickets after they are held one year."

In announcing this year's High Holy Day appeals, Greater Boston Israel Bond General Chairman Ralph Kaplan lauded the participation of the area synagogues. He noted, "Israel's 36th anniversary and the 18th anniversary of Jerusalem's Reunification are cause for rejoicing. Our joy, however, must be tempered by the knowledge that Israel's economy faces a

(Continued on Page 16)



Malcolm H. Flash



A.I. Lerner

Netanyahu Appointed Israel's New UN Ambassador

By David Landau

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Binyamin Netanyahu, the Minister, or No. 2 official at the Israel Embassy in Washington, has been appointed Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations and will head the Israel delegation at the General Assembly under Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

Netanyahu will succeed Yehuda Blum, who last June concluded six years as Israeli representative to the world body. The appointment of Netanyahu was announced officially Sunday, after the first weekly Cabinet meeting of the newly installed unity government. Acting Cabinet Secretary Michael Nir said the appointment was endorsed unanimously, having been submitted by Shamir.

In political circles, it is believed that Shamir was prompted to appoint Netanyahu by the young diplomat's political patron and mentor, Minister-Without-Portfolio Moshe Arens. It was Arens

who brought Netanyahu, then 33 years old, from an executive position in industry into the state service as Minister in Washington when Arens was named Ambassador there in 1982.

Profile of the New Envoy
Born in Israel in 1949, and educated in the United States, Netanyahu is the younger brother of Yonathan Netanyahu, the Israel Defense Force commander who led and was killed in the Entebbe rescue operation in 1976. Binyamin has been the

(Continued on Page 15)

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By David Friedman

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The Senate foreign relations committee voted 16-0 Wednesday to recommend that the Senate ratify the 35-year-old United Nations convention against genocide.

Sen. Jesse Helms (R., N.C.) who voted present Wednesday joined the other members of the committee in unanimously approving the resolution sponsored by Sen. Christopher Dodd (D., Conn.) urging the senate

leadership to proceed immediately "to place the treaty on the Senate agenda and seek to complete action" before Congress adjourns on October 5.

However, Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker (R., Tenn.), who will make the decision on scheduling, was the only member of the committee not present and not voting Wednesday. The earliest that the convention can be brought to the floor is September 15.

(Continued on Page 15)

How Jews Voted in the Mass. Primary

Democrat		Republican	
Kerry	47%	Shamie	60%
Shannon	37%	Richardson	40%
Connolly	8%		
Bartley	8%		

Advocate Report

Jewish voters, who comprised 10 percent of the electorate in Tuesday's Massachusetts U.S. Senate primary, favored winners. Lt. Gov. John Kerry and conservative businessman Ray Shamie in the Democratic and Republican primaries, respectively.

According to Stephen Teichner, pollster for WCVB-TV, Jews, who cast approximately 100,000 ballots on Tuesday, voted 47 percent for Lt. Gov. Kerry; 37 percent for U.S. Congressman James Shannon; eight percent for Secretary of State Michael Connolly; and eight percent for House Speaker David Bartley.

In the Republican primary, 60 percent of Jewish voters gave the nod to Shamie and 40 percent voted for former Cabinet member Elliot Richardson.

Among the general voting population, Kerry captured 41 percent of the vote; Shannon, 38 percent; Bartley, 11 percent; Connolly, 10 percent; Shamie, 62 percent; and Richardson, 38 percent.

Based on Teichner's exit polls, 60 percent of Jewish respondents said they favor former Vice-President Mondale in the upcoming November presidential election. Twenty-six percent of Mass. Jewish voters indicated they support President Reagan. The remainder stated they are still undecided.

Teichner's pollsters also queried Jewish voters on the following issues: Almost 87 percent of Jewish respondents stated that they support free choice regarding a woman's right to abortion. Statewide, 52 percent of Mass. voters stated that they are pro-choice.

Only one percent of Jewish voters said abortion should be banned outright.

Regarding the upcoming U.S. Senate final election, 56 percent stated that they would vote for the Democratic candidate regardless of the outcome; 19 percent stated they would support the Republican and 24 percent stated they were not sure.

On the question of Political Action Committee (PAC) money, 59 percent of the Jewish respondents indicated they did not oppose a candidate accepting PAC money. Forty-one percent said they opposed PAC funds.

Anti-Semitism by Postcard:
"Wish You Weren't Here"
See Page 3, Sec. II

New Possibilities
for Jewish Singles
See Page 4

The Day Hank Greenberg
Wouldn't Play
See Page 6

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Kenneth J. Bialkin

As the chairman of the Conference of Presidents, Bialkin represents the consensus of some 38 Jewish organizations including: the B'nai B'rith, B'nai B'rith Women, American Jewish Congress, Conference of American Rabbis, AIPAC, Hadassah and ORT, on issues pertaining to the Jewish community nationally and throughout the world.

In recent months, Bialkin has had an audience with Pope John Paul II, met at the White House with President Reagan and Vice President Bush, and discussed present

and future directions of policy matters affecting the Jewish community with Democratic nominee for President Walter Mondale.

A former chairman of the Section of Corporation Business and Banking Law of the American Bar Association, Bialkin has been adjunct professor of law at New York University Law School for 15 years. He is a former editor of *The Business Lawyer* and served for five years as chairman of the Federal Regulation of Securities Committee of the American Bar Association.

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Saturday Night Selichos

(Continued from Page 1)

sometime in the future. As the *Tanna de-Vei Eliyahu Zutta* (an aggadic Midrash which is the earliest source to mention explicitly the "order of *Selichos*") puts it:

"David knew that the Temple was destined to be destroyed and that the sacrifices would be abolished... and David was distressed for Israel: with what would they effect atonement for their sins? And the Holy One blessed be He said, 'When troubles come upon Israel because of their sins, let

them stand before me together, as one group; let them confess their sins before me, let them recite the order of *Selichos* before me, and I will answer them. . . ."

As the continuation of the Midrash makes clear, the model for *Selichos* is Moses' intercession with G-d on behalf of Israel after the sin of the Golden Calf, during which G-d taught Moses the Thirteen Divine Attributes of Mercy (Exodus 34:6-7). A similar intercession by Moses is recorded in the book of Numbers, after the sin of the

spies, at which G-d says to Moses, "I have pardoned [*salahti*] (Num. 14:20).

Our true concern at *Selichos* is the destiny of the Jewish people. Our presence and our participation are meant to be a kind of offering — an offering to the One who can grant His people relief from their oppressors and surcease from their troubles. The prayers we utter reaffirm our commitment to the Biblical covenant which binds us to our G-d and to *Keneses Yisrael*. If the litanies we invoke appear repetitive, we must recall that we speak not only for ourselves, but also (perhaps primarily) for those who cannot speak for themselves.

This understanding of *Selichos*, however, brings us face to face with theological suppositions which hardly seem tenable to many of us these days. It assumes a relational mode of Divine-human interaction. It assumes that our prayers can have real effects. Most of all, it assumes G-d to be a direct, personal reality.

An "idea" or "concept" cannot forgive; only the living G-d can do that. (Of course, for wrongs committed against our fellow human beings, we must first seek forgiveness from our fellow.)

Sometimes theory leads praxis; sometimes it follows. The hard truth is that our regnant contemporary theological simply do not have the power to inspire genuine religious awakening, during *Selichos* or any other time. If *Selichos* is to retain its meaning, we must somehow find our way back to the deep well-springs of thought and feeling which inspired the prayers in the first place.

If we somehow succeed in capturing such experiences for ourselves, despite the ideology-bound obstacles which stand in our way, then we may discover that we've not only revitalized *Selichos*, but have encountered someone who's been missing from our houses of worship for a long time: the Holy One of Israel.

Split in Sephardic

(Continued from Page 1)

Aharon Hamaoui, a native of Egypt, who ruled that individuals who do not adhere to strict Orthodox doctrine could no longer read from the Torah in front of fellow congregants. They also expressed anger that the rabbi was insensitive to the needs of women congregants. Hamaoui has led the congregation for approximately fourteen months.

"Most of our members are not as strict as this rabbi," stated Mazor. "I anticipated a rupture. We Sephardim never had a taste for extreme Orthodoxy."

Mazor, who also served as the congregation's *hazzan*, related that the Rabbi visited him last summer to determine the extent of his observance. When the rabbi wasn't satisfied, Mazor explained, Hamaoui restricted his communal involvement.

Breakaway congregants also cited Rabbi Hamaoui's refusal to participate in blessings for the State of Israel, based on what they say is the rabbi's "anti-Zionist" philosophy. "During the prayers for Israel," Mazor said, "he (the Rabbi) would sit while the rest of the congregation stood."

Rabbi Hamaoui told the *Advocate* that he does not anticipate a narrowing of the schism between the original and departing congregants.

"I can't change my religious beliefs," the rabbi stated. He corroborated statements pertaining to his governance at the synagogue. "The person who prays for everyone else (reads from the Torah) must be a completely Orthodox Jew," Hamaoui stated. "This is a tradition we have kept for 2,000 years."

Rabbi Hamaoui also stated that many of the breakaway group wanted to adopt practices more appropriate to Conservative than Orthodox congregations. "They wanted bat mitzvah," the rabbi stated and "they disagreed on having a partition between the men and the women."

Breakaway congregants maintain that they utilize a *mehit-zah* (partition) during their services.

Rabbi Hamaoui also stated that he does not participate personally in blessings for the State of Israel based on his belief that a secular state cannot replace Israel as "the palace of G-d."

"I wouldn't burn a flag of Israel but I can't say the blessings



LIVING MEMORIAL — The William Katz Memorial Grove of trees in the American Independence Park just outside of Jerusalem, Israel has been planted by his son, Herbert Katz, and grandsons, Jerry, Rick and Chuck. Participating in the dedication ceremonies in Israel were Herbert Katz (right) and Laraine Redmond (left). For more information on Jewish National Fund activities, call 731-6850 or write to the Jewish National Fund, 1330 Beacon Street, Brookline, 02146.

for the State of Israel. I don't keep anybody from holding other ideas," he stated.

The rabbi also indicated that the exodus of congregant, has not caused any serious disruption in plans for the Holy Days. Services, he said, would likely take place at Young Israel in Brookline.

Mazor indicated that Holy Day services for the breakaway group, who refer to themselves as the Sephardic Congregation of New England, will take place in separate facilities at Temple Beth Zion in Brookline. Services, he said, will be conducted communally and there are currently no plans to hire a rabbi.

The Sephardic split is the second such incident which has taken place this year in an Orthodox congregation in Greater Boston. Last January, 45 families broke off from Congregation Beth El of Newton when they opted for "a more intense personal involvement in religious and spiritual activities."

Named to National Jewish Coalition for Reagan-Bush



Hon. Judge Matthew Brown and Vice President Bush drive for a second term. Similar activities have been

The Honorable Judge Matthew Brown of Boston has been named Massachusetts Chairman of the National Jewish Coalition for Reagan-Bush, according to an announcement by Richard Fox, National Chairman of the Coalition, Philadelphia.

Judge Brown is former president of the Jewish Community Council of Metropolitan Boston and former president of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies. He has served as chairman of the Brookline Board of Selectmen, as director of the Brookline Citizens Committee and the Brookline Forum.

The Massachusetts group is part of a nation-wide campaign to mobilize Jewish support for the Reagan-Bush

Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, and Michigan.

"The goal of the National Jewish Coalition," stated Chairman Brown, "is to marshal workers, contributors and voters of all political persuasions behind the Reagan-Bush re-election effort."

"Primarily, as Americans, we believe that the Reagan administration has provided forceful and forward looking policies that have influenced for the better the lives of all Americans."

"As Jews," said Brown, "we are aware and grateful that President Reagan has demonstrated an unyielding stance in support of Israel and an uncompromising commitment to erase bigotry in this country."

CJP Holds 89th Meeting

Almost 500 leaders of the Boston Jewish community are expected to turn out for the 89th Annual Meeting of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston. The meeting will be held at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, September 23, at the Gosman Jewish Community Campus in Newton.

Election of 1984-85 CJP officers and trustees and presentation of the President's Young Leadership Awards are major items on the agenda.

Archbishop of Boston Bernard F. Law will be the guest

speaker. The Meeting is being chaired by Lester and Connie Gilson of Brockton, both of whom have been leaders in Jewish community activities. Lester Gilson, president of the F.B. Washburn Candy Corporation of Brockton, is the overall chairman of CJP's ad hoc South Area Jewish Community Center Development Project Committee and New England Region Chairman of the Anti-Defamation League. Connie Gilson has been 1983-84 president of CJP's Women's Division.

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Israel Bond Holy Day Effort

(Continued from Page 1)

difficult period and enormous challenges. The efforts of Israel's own government and citizens to turn the economy around must be bolstered by our generous support through the Bond campaign during the High Holy Days."

Kaplan also noted that, by purchasing \$1,000 or more in Israel Bonds, participants in the appeal can enroll as Shomrei Yerushalayim, "Guardians of Jerusalem."

The bond leaders ex-

pressed appreciation to the Rabbis and congregational leaders for their enthusiastic support and cooperation in helping to make the traditional annual High Holy Day program of Israel Bonds the single most productive element in the year-round campaign.

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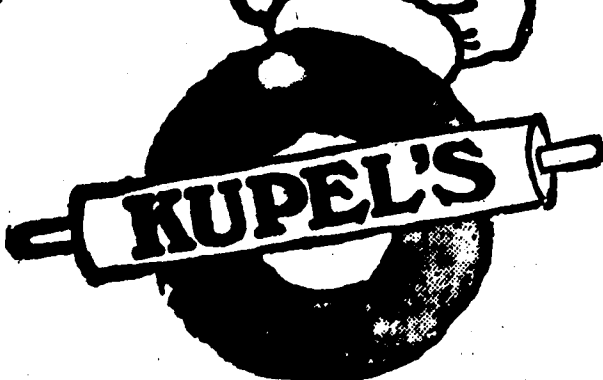
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