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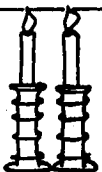
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May 5748 Be a Good Year For All!



Illustration by Aleta Goldstein-Devork

Jews, Blacks Back From Israel; Vow Cooperation

By Allison Barnett
Special to the Advocate

Stressing the positive isn't always the easiest thing to do when faced with a group of reporters.

At a September 18 press conference, black and Jewish leaders who had just returned from a 10-day trip to Israel sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League fended off questions about Jesse Jackson and Minister Louis Farrakhan and geared dis-

cussion toward successful joint efforts which, they said, more accurately reflect the relationship between blacks and Jews in 1987.

"We're not about to let black/Jewish relations be de-

fined by any one person," said Leonard Zakim, ADL Regional Director and co-leader of the black/Jewish mission to Israel. "The Farakhan problem is not a (Continued on Page 28)

Our Deeds Bear an 'Ethereal Signature'

By Nehemia Polen

Jews are not concerned with personal salvation. The Hebrew word for salvation, *yeshu'ah*, is generally reserved for the collective salvation of the Jewish people within a context of national restoration. The Christian obsession with the salvation of one's eternal soul is not generally a topic which animates even the most pious among us. Because we understand the biblical account

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AJ Congress Takes Stance Against Shamir on Parley

By Charles Hoffman

JERUSALEM (JPFS) — The American Jewish Congress has issued a statement supporting a compromise solution for the administered territories and backing the idea of an international peace conference to further the peace process between Israel and the Arab states.

This position breaks with the tradition that American organizations have generally maintained of not taking a public position which is opposed to Israel's official foreign policy. Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir vowed again just this week that there would never be an international conference on the peace issue. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, however, has reiterated his support time and time again for such a parley. This split has kept the Israel Government from en-

dorsing such a meeting.

The Jewish Congress policy statement said that the organization had decided to take a position on these issues because of the high stakes that world Jewry has in the future of a democratic Jewish Israel and because of the political deadlock between the two major parties that has paralyzed the peace process.

The statement holds that the continuation of the status quo in the territories is harmful to Israel and untenable from a political and humani-

tarian standpoint.

It says that an insistence on maintaining the status quo would force Israel to adopt an increasingly repressive policy towards the Arabs, while annexing the territories and granting citizenship to the Arab population would lead to a bi-national state.

The Congress rejects both of these alternatives, as it does the proposal for a "transfer" of the Arab population in the territories to Arab states.

While not explicitly recom-

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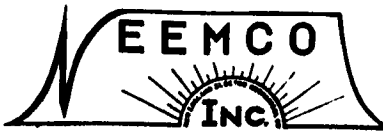
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Jews, Blacks Cooperate

(Continued from Page 1)

black/Jewish problem; it's a problem of bigotry."

When pressed to say whether the group would issue a statement about Farrah Fawcett (who spoke in Boston last weekend), delegation co-leader Rev. Charles Stith of Boston's Union United Methodist Church and national president of the newly-formed Organization for a New Equality (O.N.E.) said, "It is important to speak coherently and clearly on any issues of racism. But not to create a flashpoint where there is none. He's been saying what he's saying for thirty years."

"The real strength of black/Jewish relations is in the communities where we are working together," said Zakim. "Efforts are going on in many places around the country that haven't been focused on by the media, who have focused on the strains."

Zakim, emphasizing the "bridge-building" goal of the mission, said the group is committed to working on an alliance between blacks and Jews that is relevant in 1987. "This is no longer the 1960s. The relationship between blacks and Jews is different than it was in the '60s." He said it is important to spread the word about cooperative efforts and accomplishments.

Zakim and Stith spoke to the press with others who had visited Israel with them: George Bachrach, City of Boston Treasurer George Russell, State Rep. Susan Schur and Dr. Nathan Allen of the Lena Park Community Center. Twenty-five black and Jewish leaders in all from across the country participated in the trip.

In Israel, the delegation met with Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Political Director General Yossi Beilin, as well as a number of other officials, to raise issues that concern blacks and Jews in the United States. A major issue was Israel's economic and military ties to South Africa.

"It was kind of a unique meeting," said Zakim. "We raised together in a strong voice our concerns as Americans about policy in South Africa."

The group was pleased — and surprised — when on September 17 the Israeli government announced the imposition of new sanctions on South Africa. "It was satisfying to hear that a process which we expected to take a



George Bachrach smiles upon returning from his trip to Israel.

Photo by Fred Valnas

couple of months was accelerated," said Zakim.

"We were pleased . . . that we played a role," said Stith. "As important as the steps against South Africa is that black and Jewish Americans raised the issue."

The group is now committed to raising the issue with Japan, South Africa's number

"We raised together in a strong voice our concerns as Americans about policy in South Africa."

one trade partner and a complicit with the Arab boycott of Israel, they said.

"There was no lack of radical statements on the part of the participants on this trip,"

said Rep. Schur, when a reporter implied that "radical" leaders were not included in the mission. "I'm proud we could come up with our strong statement on South Africa."

Meetings with officials in Israel were "candid" and "very intense," all participants agreed. The group sought the broadest range of opinions available, said Zakim, and did not shy away from negative issues.

"We met with Black Hebrews and got a sense of their concerns, and the need for greater care and humanitarian treatment by Israel (as well as the U.S.) is something we felt we should address," said Bachrach.

"We met with the editor of the largest Palestinian newspaper and could understand his feelings about the right of self-determination — not a minor concern for any of us. It was by no means an Israel cheerleading mission."

The group was struck by the complexity and multi-sided nature of many of Israel's problems — from the status of the Black Hebrews to the West Bank — but came away with a great deal of hope.

"It's important to realize that Israel is really a Third World country," said Zakim. "Israel is struggling to find its identity."

Zakim said, "one of the most beautiful scenes" of the trip was a visit to a kindergarten class in an absorption center where Ethiopian children were being assimilated along with Canadians and Americans. "But not without respect for their different cul-

achievements is still valid today, although much of it has since been realized.

It is, however, not enough. Positioned at a strategic point in what has become one of the few surviving centers



This is no longer the '60s in terms of Jewish-black relations, said ADL Director Leonard Zakim (on right) at a press conference at the Union United Methodist Church last week. Beside him is the Reverend Charles Stith. The pair led a delegation to Israel.

Photo by Fred Valnas



Susan Schur benefited from the trip.

Photo by Fred Valnas

tures," he said. "We were pleased at the extent of that absorption and only wish immigrants to America were so quickly absorbed."

AJ Congress

(Continued from Page 1)

mending specific alternative courses of action, the statement leans strongly to the views that a territorial or functional compromise in the territories would be best for Israel, and that an international peace conference should be explored as the most promising path to peace.

The six-page statement points out that although American Jews are reluctant to differ publicly with the Israeli Government on matters of security, it was both "necessary and appropriate" for them to take part in the current debate because the Israeli Government itself "is divided and deadlocked over how to approach the peace process."

The statement was adopted

by a large majority of the organization's 220-member governing board on Sept. 13.

The statement makes it clear that an international Mideast peace conference is only acceptable if the conditions stated by Foreign Minister Peres are met.

In a prepared response, Morris B. Abram, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said: "There are strongly divergent views about the wisdom and nature of an international peace conference both in Israel and in the United States. The people and the Government of Israel have the responsibility for the safety of the state and therefore they must make their decision through their democratic process."

Today's Cantor

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The cantor is known in Jewish tradition by more than one name. As well as "hazan" he is also called "ba'al tefila" and "shaliach tsibbur." Each of these names represents a different aspect of what is required and expected of him.

Cantor is a term that derives from the Latin "cantare," to sing. The earliest hazan in Jewish tradition were the Levites, who would accompany with songs and music the sacrifices offered by the priests in the Sanctuary.

The Mishna (Bikkurim, 1:4) describes their role in the words: "the Levites would speak in song." The divine music in the ancient Hebrew sanctuary was intended not only to please the listener, it had to speak and convey a message.

Some commentators suggest that the word hazan comes from the Hebrew root het-zayin-hei, meaning: "envision" (see Otzar Yisrael Vol. 4, p. 260). A hazan is thus a man of vision, a person with some kind of "Jewish dream."

What is the Jewish dream of the cantor today? It should certainly consist of more than the personal ambition of making a name for oneself and obtaining a "good contract" with the congregation.

The hazan is known also as "ba'al tefila," a master of prayer, one who is not just pulled along by the routine text or enlivened by a musical score, but is the master of the art of prayer.

The question: "does prayer really change the mind of the Lord?" troubled some medieval Jewish philosophers. Does God withhold his bounties until we ask for them?

The answer is that prayer may not change God's willingness to bestow his goodness upon us; it does however change us, making us worthy of receiving God's goodness. "Prayer may not save the world, it may make the world worth saving."

A genuine master of prayer is not a soloist performer, but one who leads his congregation in prayer.

For many years, rabbis and cantors used to leave their audiences behind; the latter were present, but only as spectators, watching in silence, sometimes in apathy, what was going on "up front."

But in recent years, the audiences have changed. They can no longer be left behind, reconciled to their ignorance.

The role of the "ba'al tefila" today is to lead people in

prayer, to make them understand the meaning of the prayers and participate in them.

Today, more people than we normally assume are ready to take this step. Concerts can be heard elsewhere, but people come to the synagogue to express their Jewishness and the siddur still best represents Jewish philosophy and history, Jewish hopes for mending the world.

The cantor is above all a "shaliach tsibbur," an emissary, ambassador or spokesman of the community.

To be a proper spokesman for the community one has to know where the community is and what its deepest aspirations are. One has to be able to read the new map which is emerging in the midst of our generation and which cries out for a renewal of our Jewishness.

Most Jews are not running away from Judaism as they did in the past; yet they cannot stay within it if their grasp of it does not undergo renewal.

"If I were to pray today the same way I prayed yesterday," said a great hassidic master, "I had better not pray at all."

As masters of prayer, hazanim know that the "keva" of Jewish prayer, its fixed form, must undergo constant renewal, in order to secure its "kavana," its intention and direction.

To the esthetic and intellectual achievements of the cantor, one must add now the aspect of leadership in the continuing struggle for a Judaism of personal involvement of every member of the community.

The cantor is in a position to make a major contribution in this area. He holds one of the keys to the hidden treasures of our heritage from which so many of our people were locked out and are now ready to re-enter: the key of prayer and of song.

The cantor as "shaliach tsibbur," as an emissary of the congregation, represents the entire community and never merely one part of it.

The Hebrew word "tsibbur," which means community or congregation, was interpreted to stand as an acronym for "zadikim" (the pious), "benonim" (those in the middle) and "reshaim" (the wicked).

No community is made up of any one kind of people, either all pious or all wicked. By definition, "tsibbur" means a pluralistic conglomerate of people.

The cantor, as "shaliach

Our 'Ethereal Signature'

(Continued from Page 1)

of original sin differently than do Christians, we do not believe that the very fact of human birth condemns man to perdition without the personal intervention of some putative savior.

Some people conclude from this that Judaism is a "this-worldly" religion, in which what matters is what we do and what happens to us in the here-and-now, not in some nebulous afterlife. There is much truth in this perspective. As the Mishnah in Avot (4:22) puts it, "One hour spent in repentance and good deeds in this world is better than the whole life of the World to Come." Yet the same Mishnah continues, rather paradoxically, "One hour of satisfaction in the World to Come is better than the entire life of this world."

Rabbi Jacob, the author of this Mishnah, also states, "This world is like a lobby before the World to Come; prepare yourself in the lobby, so that you may enter the banquet hall." While talmudic descriptions of the World to Come are necessarily vague ("The righteous sit with crowns upon their heads and bask in the glow of the Divine Presence . . ."), there can be no doubt that, along with Judaism's this-worldly concerns, there is an essential focus on spiritual destiny. How could it be otherwise in our resolutely monistic religion which insists on the intimate linkage between body and soul?

A religious viewpoint which focuses exclusively on externally observable activities, and neglects to concern itself with internal states, with thoughts, feelings, and the contours of the spirit, undermines the origins of its own legitimacy, and comes perilously close to a functionalist behaviorism. As Maimonides (*Laws of Repentance* 7:3) states, "Do not say that repentance is limited to sinful acts. . . . One must also search his evil character traits, repenting of anger, hatred, envy, scoffing, the lust for money and glory . . ."

Good deeds are not enough. One cannot buy one's way into paradise with lavish acts of charity, especially if such acts are intended to cover a lengthy trail of crimes of the heart. Philanthropy is not an antidote for venality.

The great hasidic masters, as well as the masters of the *Musar* movement, would always consider the character of a contributor before accepting a donation to a worthy cause. Every act, every feeling, leaves a spiritual residue, a positive or negative aura that clings to one's possessions. This ethereal signature is transferred to the person or institution that accepts a gift from a donor, and its influence continues to be detectable.

In Oscar Wilde's novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the principal character is a handsome young man who has just sat for a portrait, and regrets that his destiny is to grow old and withered, while his portrait would remain forever young. Striking a Faustian bargain, Dorian lives a life of cruelty, betrayal, and lust, but the effects appear only on his portrait, while he remains seemingly untouched, until the novel's shocking conclusion. Wilde's theme is an apt parable for our times. It is also strongly reminiscent of the Jewish mystical notion of the *demut*, the spiritual image, which faithfully mirrors the changes of one's character and inner self.

On Rosh Hashana it is customary to speak of good deeds, of acts of kindness and charity. It is perhaps even more important to be concerned with our inner state, with our character, for the influence of the latter is more subtle, but ultimately determinative. The contours of our soul must once again become a matter of concern. The notion of character-building must be redeemed from the air of mustiness which now surrounds it.

The idea that every thought and feeling leaves a spiritual residue and shapes the contours of our soul will force us to reconsider some aspects of our culture which most of us now take for granted. One example is the pervasive representation of violence and pornography in all our visual media. Seldom have rabbis spoken out about the corrosive effects of such visual images. We say that we are concerned about First Amendment freedoms, but the real reason, one suspects, is that we do not want to be dismissed as stuffy, old-fashioned prudes. So instead we have had to learn from feminist theorists, who have correctly pointed out the linkage between pornography, violence, and the degradation of women. What is not pointed out, however, is that such images are equally degrading to men. The words were penned by Walt Whitman, but they might have been uttered by a hasidic master: "There was a child went forth every day/ and the first object he looked upon, that image he became."

Just after the shofar is sounded on Rosh Hashana, we read a verse from Psalms (89:16) which goes as follows: "Happy is the people that knows the blast of the shofar; they walk, O Lord, in the light of your countenance." A hasidic interpretation understands this to refer to the radiant image of our own soul, which God fashioned for us before we were born, but which may become tarnished as we walk through life. May the sound of the shofar wake us up to restore our inner selves to their original shape and lustre.

Rabbi Dr. Nehemia Polen is Rabbi of Congregation Tifereth Israel in Everett. Teacher and writer, he is a leading interpreter of the contemporary scene in the light of eternal Jewish standards. The Advocate is privileged to print his thoughts intended for a popular audience.

tsibbur," is thus both an ambassador and an exemplar of Jewish unity without uniformity.

The language of sacred music, both the traditional and the innovative, can, if properly explored and used, serve as a much-needed bridge between the various segments of the community.

The liturgy of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur includes several prayers in which the hazan prays for the congregation ("hineni he-anni") and also those in which the congregation prays for its hazan.

In one of the latter ("heye im pipiyot") we pray concerning those who are chosen to be our leaders of prayer and say:

"Teach them what to say/ Instruct them what to speak/ Grant them what they ask/ And make known to them how they may glorify Thee."

This prayer, written centuries ago, is still relevant when we consider the pitfalls

but also the potential of the cantor's vocation in our own days.

Rabbi Peli is professor of Jewish Thought and Literature at Ben Gurion University of the Negev.

Arab Consul

(Continued from Page 3)

power to break through the barriers of conflict between my state and my people. It is very difficult to swim against the stream, but strong people can do it. I am very proud to be both Arabic and an Israeli citizen at the same time. I have the honor and the privilege to be the first Arab to represent Israel in a diplomatic position. I will continue our quest for peace to be sure that our children and the next generation will grow up in peace. Let us build the New Year with the first steps toward peace. Happy New Year, L'Shanah Tovah," Masarwa concluded.

OCT. 1

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