

The Rabbis Of Beth Israel

*By a man of understanding and knowledge
established order shall long continue — Proverbs 28:2*

Judaism as a faith is a democratic theocracy that recognized the ability of every human being to commune with God. Man and his maker require no special intermediary. Our ancient faith, therefore, has never made any distinction between rabbi and layman with regard to ecclesiastical attributes or religious obligations. Both he and the layman are equally responsible for the fulfillment of the duties placed upon all Jews by the sacred law.

The rabbinate, however, without being a special group of theologians, has, nevertheless, exercised a profound influence upon Jewish life over the centuries. The positive continuity of this way of life may well depend upon the influence exerted by the men in the rabbinate.

The real significance and the place of the synagogue can be understood all the better, if we can appreciate the character and place of the rabbi in Israel. As the custodian of the ideals for which the synagogue stands, the rabbi symbolizes the House of Assembly. He is the leader of the Jewish community and of all that pertains to community welfare. He is the social architect and is motivated by a spiritual purpose which makes it in the deepest sense religious.

The rabbi symbolizes the House of Prayer in the piety of his own personal life. Above all, the rabbi symbolizes the House of Study, for the reservoir from which he draws his inspiration is the Torah and the hundreds of tomes that serve as commentaries that are contained in the rich repositories of Jewish learning. We can take deep pride that the rabbis of Beth Israel have been men of great learning and well qualified in



expounding the higher moral and spiritual purpose of Judaism. The synagogue and the rabbi are the unifying and creative forces of Jewish life.

This section on the rabbis of Beth Israel was expanded and updated by John Ripley.

Rabbi Louis Seltzer 1903 - 1906

Rabbi Louis Seltzer, Beth Israel's first spiritual leader, had been well chosen for the post he assumed. Born in Poland in 1869, he received his education at the yeshivas of Vilna and Krakow. Both a scholar and an author Seltzer emigrated to the United States in 1903.

Rabbi Seltzer gave leadership to the Jews of Bangor in the early 20th century. An effective leader, and a valiant interpreter of the old in an effort to make it applicable to conditions that were new, it was good sense that enabled him to make Jewish law the instrument with which he helped to create unity and establish a pattern of Jewish life in this new land.

His great love for all Jews was demonstrated in the leadership he gave throughout the state to the Committee for the Relief of Russian Jews after the massacres of 1905.

Rabbi Seltzer left Bangor in 1906 to accept a pulpit in Paterson, N.J. In 1911 he left for Palestine and remained there until 1913. While there he wrote and published a scholarly work titled "*Maasa Yehouda*." He then returned to the United States and became a rabbi of Shaarai Zedeck of Minneapolis, Minn. In 1921 he answered the call of the community of Bridgeport, Conn., where he served until 1924. His election as executive director of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada brought him to New York, where he remained until 1954. In 1935 he was elected honorary president of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada. Rabbi Seltzer moved to Israel in 1954 to make his permanent home. In 1957, he published his second book, "*Vezot Leyheouda*." He died Oct. 18, 1959, at the age of 90.

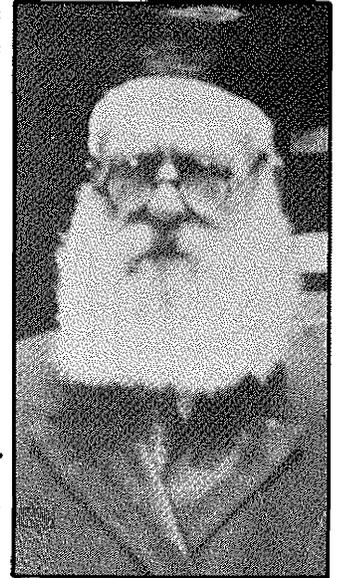
Rabbi Louis Plotkin 1906 - 1909

Rabbi Louis Plotkin was spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Israel from 1906 to 1909, succeeding his friend and colleague Rabbi Louis Seltzer. In addition



Rabbi Seltzer

to his rabbinical duties, he also took charge of the Hebrew School and taught the classes. He was a spokesman for the Jewish community and wrote frequently for the Bangor Daily News. His articles for the NEWS on Judaism, Jewish theology, biblical and Talmudic law, problems of the Jewish people and public affairs, were collected in his book, "*Some Talmudic Gems*." These revealed great biblical and Talmudic learning, as well as a deep insight into the contemporary world and a passionate concern for the fate of the Jewish people.



Rabbi Plotkin

Rabbi Plotkin, who died in 1942 at the age of 79, was born in Slutsk, White Russia, famed center of Jewish learning. He studied there and in Bobroisk, and became known as the Bobroisk Masmid — the diligent student of Bobroisk. He received ordination from a number of distinguished rabbis, including Reb Yankel David of Slutsk, known the world over as "Ridvaz," whose commentary on the Talmud is well-known to scholars. He was a member of the Augudas Ha-Rabanim, America's oldest and most distinguished organization of Orthodox rabbis.

An erudite Talmudist, Rabbi Plotkin was also a brilliant, inspired biblical scholar and Hebrew grammarian. In addition, he was devoted to modern Hebrew and especially to the cause of Zion. He came to America in 1891 with his wife, Sarah Shimka, a brilliant and learned woman, and became one of the earliest Zionists in the country. He was a Zionist before Herzl and the creation of the World Zionist Organization.

Rabbi Plotkin was a gifted writer and wielded a facile pen in Hebrew, Yiddish and English.

For many years after his return to New York City, Rabbi Plotkin was rabbi of Congregation Adath Jewhuran of Brooklyn. His oldest son, Rabbi Benjamin Plotkin, was spiritual leader of Congregation Emanuel, Jersey City, which he founded in 1930. He was formerly chairman of the Committee on Peace and International Relations of the Rabbinical Assembly of America and president of the New Jersey branch of the United Synagogue of America. Another son, David, became a well-known writer. The Plotkins had five other sons and daughters.

Rabbi Mordecai Klatchko 1909 - 1912

Rabbi Mordecai Klatchko was born in 1860 in Vilna, Russia, the son of wealthy parents who wanted him to follow in his father's footsteps and become a merchant. His love for learning, however, and his love of the Torah induced him to go to Volozin, the center of learning and the seat of the famous yeshiva.



Rabbi Klatchko

There he studied under Rabbi Naphtali Zwi Yehudah Berlin. Rabbi Klatchko was a prodigy at the age of 15. At 22 he received his S'micha, and also attended the Yeshiva of Byalistock and received S'micha from the famous Rabbi Samuel Molivar.

He arrived in the United States in 1905. His first position was that of rabbi in Altoona, Penn. A few years later he accepted the rabbinate in Bangor. It was while in Bangor that Rabbi Klatchko conceived the idea of writing a Sefer.

Subsequently, the Congregation of Volozin in New York City invited him to become its rabbi.

Later, as his fame increased, he was called to Boston where a special congregation was organized by the name of Chevra Shas and a beautiful synagogue was erected and dedicated as a monument to Rabbi Klatchko.

He served as the leader of this large congregation until his death in 1933 at the age of 73. He also was known and respected as one of the leaders of the entire community, and was the author of a two-volume Sefer known as "*Tachlas Mordecai*."

Rabbi Moishe Shohet 1912 - 1921

The scion of a rabbinical family, Moishe Shohet was born in 1877 in Shamantzer, Lithuania. As a young man he attended the famous Lithuanian yeshivas and obtained his ordination from the Yeshiva of Novogorod, a school of learning founded by a pupil of the Goan of Vilna. A younger brother followed him in the rabbinate while another studied medicine.

His father and grandfather were Jewish leaders in their community, distinguished by fine minds and deep

faith. This legacy was inherited by Moishe Shohet. While still in Europe he was a devoted adherent to the Mussar movement founded by Israel Salanter. Upon coming to America he served the community of Quincy, Mass., and in 1912, came to Beth Israel. In 1921, Rabbi Shohet left Bangor for Portland to take over the Shaarey Tphiloh Synagogue for his father, Hyman Shohet, who had passed away. Rabbi Shohet was a most able preacher and lost no opportunity to engage in the moral rebuke of his congregants.



Rabbi Shohet

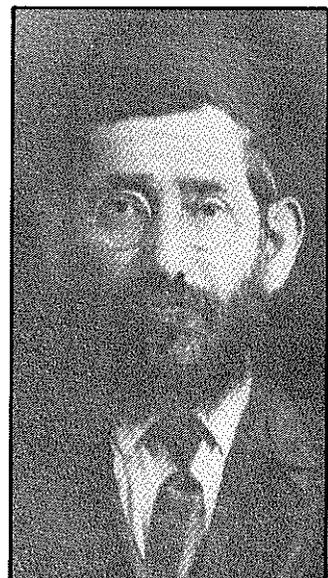
He conducted seminars in the synagogue for the Chevra Mishnayoth. Rabbi Shohet never allowed the pressure of other communal duties to interfere with these lectures. During World War I and the critical period that followed, he gave his leadership to the entire Maine community in raising funds for war relief.

In 1923 he left America and made his home in B'nai Brak, a town famous for scholarly pursuit. He devoted his remaining years to writing commentaries and glosses to the works of the erudite scholars of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Rabbi Eliezer Levine 1925 - 1930

Rabbi Eliezer Levine, a son of Rabbi Shalom Levine, was born in 1882 in Luzk, Poland. He was a descendant of 36 generations of rabbis. He studied with Rabbi Mehel, Chief Rabbi of Luzk, and was ordained by Rabbi Kliger, Chief Rabbi of Brod, Poland.

Rabbi Levine served as a spiritual leader in Pinsk from 1903 to 1915. That year he became dean of the Yeshiva of Rovno, Poland, and held this post until 1925, when he moved to the United States.



Rabbi Levine

He served both Beth Israel and Beth Abraham and nearly succeeded in uniting these congregations.

In 1910 a major controversy regarding kashruth took place in Poland, and Rabbi Levine served on the Board of Rabbis to decide the issue. It was his decision that was finally accepted as the correct and authoritative interpretation of the law, and his opinion was recorded by Rabbi Malkiel of Lomzo, which can be found in his writings, "*Divre Malkiel*."

Rabbi Levine passed away on the 19th day of Tishri, 1950.

Rabbi Bernard L. Berzon 1937 - 1939

The history of Beth Israel illustrates that the synagogue has been, throughout the years, a training ground for rabbis who leave Bangor and become famous and respected in their fields both nationally, and at times, internationally. Rabbi Bernard L. Berzon fits that mold.

Rabbi Berzon was born in 1913 in Plissa, Poland, a small town near Vilna, Russia, the renowned center that Berzon described as being famous for rabbis and malaria.

He came to the United States when he was 9 years old, and had lived in Akron, Ohio, before his parents sent him to school in New York. Educated with a bachelor's degree in liberal arts from Yeshiva University in 1935, Rabbi Berzon was ordained from the yeshiva in the same year. During his tenure at Beth Israel, Rabbi Berzon also earned a master's degree in labor economics from the University of Maine. His thesis on the non-economic elements involving a local workers' strike became well-known and was a timely and interesting work that related to the fever of sit-down strikes that were happening throughout the country. In 1942, Rabbi Berzon earned a doctoral degree in social psychology while he was in New York, and in 1976 was also awarded an honorary doctorate of divinity from his alma mater in New York.

Before coming to Beth Israel in 1937, Rabbi Berzon had spent part of the previous year teaching Jewish subjects at a synagogue in Scranton, Penn. While in Bangor, Rabbi Berzon was the sole rabbi of the three orthodox shuls in the city, and also enjoyed good relations with the non-Jewish clergy.

Although his time at Beth Israel was short, Rabbi Berzon became well-known after his departure from Bangor. He credited his tenure here with providing him the formal training that was needed to apply what he had learned in school to actual practice.

After spending 44 years at Congregation Ahavath Israel in Brooklyn, N.Y., Rabbi Berzon retired from

the pulpit in 1982 to move to Israel where three of his children were living. Before leaving the pulpit, however, Rabbi Berzon also had served as editor of the Rabbinical Council of America Manual of Sermons in 1943, as president of the Rabbinical Alumni of Yeshiva University from 1966 to 1968, as president of the Rabbinical Council of America from 1970 to 1972, and as vice president of the Religious Zionists of America from 1971 to 1973. Also, Rabbi Berzon was awarded a life contract at Congregation Ahavath Israel.



Rabbi Berzon

After his retirement, he soon found that he missed his work. He decided to apply his maxim that "as long as a person can be active he should not retire" to his own life and accepted a part-time position as rabbi at the Crown Hotel in Miami, Fla., where he also has a residence. Although he still lists Jerusalem as his permanent home, Rabbi Berzon also spends part of the year in New York City.

Rabbi Berzon said that he still had fond memories of his service in Bangor, and at times still has contact with some members of the old community. His activities frequently are covered by local newspapers, and at times Mainers, now living in Florida, will inquire as to whether Berzon was the same rabbi who served in the 1930s.

During his long career, Rabbi Berzon also wrote five books as well as many articles dealing with labor problems. His books include: "*Sects in Israel*," which he started while in Maine, "*Good Beginnings*," a book he described as concerning people who had great ideas but ended up in the "spiritual doghouse," and another titled "*Sermons the Year Round*."

Rabbi Berzon and his wife, Sylvia, have four children, 15 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. Their children are Judith Greenwald, 51, who lives in Brooklyn with her husband, Rabbi Eli B. Greenwald; Chananya Berzon, 47, a rabbi and teacher of rabbinics at Bar Ilan University near Jerusalem; Adina Gertz, 39, who is married to a doctor and teacher of neuro-anatomy at the Hadassah Medical School in Jerusalem; and Azarya Berzon, 34, a Talmudic professor at Shalarim University near Jerusalem.

Rabbi Moishe Zucker 1945 - 1947

Rabbi Moishe Zucker was more a scholar and teacher than an advocate. He preferred not to engage in controversy, but rather, to show both sides of every debatable issue and let the individual choose his own course of action. He impressed upon the lay leadership of the congregation to respect his scholarship and to free him from the burden of many administrative duties. He believed that synagogues had the same obligation to Jewish culture that universities had to the general culture. Even those



Rabbi Zucker

who were not too ardent about Jewish culture recognized what Rabbi Zucker meant to the community. His Bible classes, his discourses on the Talmud, and his sermons were equally attractive to eye and ear.

His fine record as a scholar won for him an appointment in 1947 as Rabbis professor on the faculty of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City, where he also served as chairman of the undergraduate Talmud department, a position awarded to him in 1958, as well as chairman of the Talmudic department in the Teacher's Institute and Seminary College. Dr. Zucker remained at the Seminary for 33 years, retiring in 1980.

During his tenure at the seminary, he published his magnum opus, a two-volume work on Saadia Gaon, a writer who lived from 982 to 1042. He also published a smaller volume on Hefetz Ben Yatzliah, as well as numerous articles in scholarly journals in the United States and Israel, all concerning literary works of the Gaonic period.

In 1952 a generous grant from the late James Gimpel Striar enabled Dr. Zucker to make his first research trip to England and Israel. In 1956 he received a grant from the Philosophical Society of America which enabled him to study in the great libraries of England, Holland and Paris. In 1962 he was appointed a fellow of the Guggenheim Foundation and revisited the European libraries.

During his European research trips, Dr. Zucker examined documents from the Cairo Geniza papers, a cache of ancient manuscripts with material from the ninth to the 13th century, including a fragment of the

Hebrew text of Ecclesiasticus, that was discovered in 1896 in an old Cairo synagogue by Solomon Schechter, the second president of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Dr. Zucker was born on Jan. 14, 1902, in Kopeczowka, Poland. He studied philosophy at the University of Vienna from 1925 to 1930, and also attended the Jewish Theological Seminary of Vienna, where he was ordained in 1931. He came to the United States in 1937, and served as rabbi of the Avenue N Jewish Community Center in Brooklyn from 1938 to 1945. During this period he also studied at Dropsie University in Philadelphia, which awarded him a doctoral degree.

The great scope of Dr. Zucker's mind and ability can be illustrated by these two anecdotes:

When he was preparing to travel to the United States, Dr. Zucker was advised to play down his thorough knowledge of the Talmud, and tell the American scholars, whose knowledge was more finite than European rabbis, that he knew only half of what he really did know. In one interview, he was asked whether he knew the Talmud. He did, he replied. "How much?" he was asked. "Half," Dr. Zucker said. When asked "Which half?" Dr. Zucker asked, "Which half do you want?"

The other anecdote describes Dr. Zucker as a teacher at the Jewish Theological Seminary, where his almost total recall memory of the Torah and Bible began to bother one student who pleaded that Dr. Zucker at least refer to the books during lectures. The next day, the book was indeed in place before him as he taught, but when the student came to him after class to thank him for his consideration, he noticed that the book was upside down.

Rabbi Zucker was married to the former Mania Kuperwaser, who predeceased him. They had no children. Rabbi Zucker passed away at a Miami nursing home Aug. 7, 1987. He was 85 years old.

Rabbi Avraham Freedman 1949 - 1969

No review of Beth Israel's 100 years of history would be complete without considering the significance of Rabbi Avraham Freedman's 20 years in the pulpit and the notable contribution he made to the spiritual and physical development of the congregation.

Rabbi Freedman was the spiritual leader of the Beth Israel congregation during the synagogue's period of rapid growth.

Born in Russia on July 26, 1906, he served in Ottawa, Ontario, after his ordination from Yeshiva University in New York City. In 1937, he received a call

to serve in Durban, South Africa, where he also served part time as chaplain to the South African army during World War II. Rabbi Freedman served in Durban until 1949, when he left South Africa for Bangor.

During the next 20 years the size of Beth Israel's congregation grew considerably, and Rabbi Freedman set himself the task of conveying to his congregants that the synagogue should be a living fountain of inspiration and that it could give rich personal satisfaction while gently persuading its devotees to put their religion to work in all avenues of daily life.

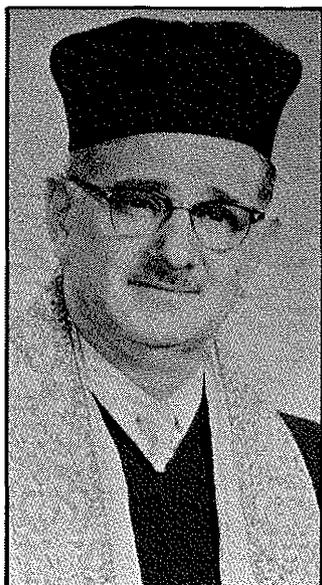
Although the multitude of activities engaged in by the rabbi took a great deal of time, they did not infringe upon the services he gave to his congregation; in every sense of the word, he was its spiritual leader and also its administrative mainspring. He held a deep conviction that once a rabbi is elected to serve, he must become the guide, and the members of his congregation, his followers. Though he often came into minor disagreement with shul leaders because of his espousal of tradition, when the question was one of principle, he refused to compromise.

His conception of his office was that of "The Rabbi in Action" and he always was ready to enlist in any humanitarian effort. Under Rabbi Freedman's leadership, the synagogue grew in influence. In and out of the pulpit, on radio and television, Rabbi Freedman demonstrated the qualities of heart and mind that brought him recognition as the distinguished spokesman for Jewry in this region. Of him it may be said that he was a fearless and articulate crusader for human rights. To the cause of unity and brotherhood he gave leadership and utmost loyalty by his involvement in interfaith activities and service clubs.

Rabbi Freedman conceived it his duty to march beyond the walls of one building and to minister to the community, moved by the love of God and man.

Rabbi Freedman was especially effective as an interpreter of Judaism to Christian ministers and teachers. His profound, philosophic knowledge, his deep rabbinic scholarship, and his eloquent oratory made him a favored spokesman.

Through the media, Rabbi Freedman contributed uniquely and with distinction to the development of a



Rabbi Freedman

liberal, progressive approach to social, communal and cultural issues. His presentation of the "Jewish Points of View" to the faculty and students of the University of Maine and the Bangor Theological Seminary, was highly commended for its clarity, courage, dignity and self-restraint.

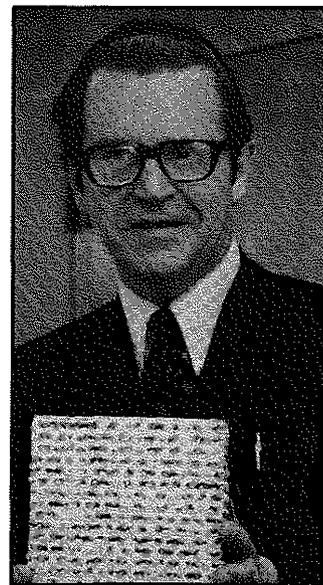
In local, civic, cultural and communal matters, Rabbi Freedman was active in support of the Community Chest, the United Jewish Appeal, and many other significant endeavors. He was also the supervisor of the Bangor Hebrew School.

On his 10th anniversary, Rabbi Freedman was lauded in the press by his and other congregations for his contributions to his synagogue and community. His record of achievement was duly noted when the board of directors voted the rabbi a life tenure at its July 1963 meeting.

Rabbi Freedman and his wife, Hannah, also a very active member of the community, have two children — a son, David, and a daughter, Kadimah. In 1969, Rabbi Freedman retired from the pulpit, and spent the next two years studying in Israel. He now lives in Brookline, Mass.

Rabbi Irving A. Margolies 1971 - 1976

Rabbi Irving Margolies arrived at Beth Israel in 1971. The son of a rabbi, Margolies was born in Jerusalem in 1924 and studied in New York, where he earned a bachelor of arts degree in 1946, and was ordained in 1948. In 1956, he earned a doctorate degree in Hebrew literature at the Bernard Revel Graduate School. Before coming to Bangor, he held pulpits in northern Ontario and in Hackensack and Emerson, N.J. From 1950 to 1958 he was the spiritual leader of Young Israel of Parkchester, N.Y.



Rabbi Margolies

During his five years in Bangor, Rabbi Margolies was active in shul and community affairs. Interested in the educational aspects of adults, he organized the Adult Education Institute, which provided classes in Judaism, and he also served as principal of the Hebrew School.

Rabbi Margolies also continued the breakfast and

lecture series after Sunday services at the synagogue, which brought such distinguished Maine guests as former U.S. Sen. Edmund Muskie and then U.S. Rep. William Cohen to the podium to speak on issues of the day. Rabbi Margolies was often the spokesman for the community, and his activities ranged from lecturing on Jewish law to reviewing literature during Jewish Book Month.

After leaving Beth Israel in 1976, Rabbi Margolies served at pulpits in New York, Tennessee and Pennsylvania.

Rabbi Margolies died May 20, 1989, in Cherry Hill, N.J. He is survived by two sons, a daughter and his wife, Shoshana.

Rabbi Alan M. Kalinsky 1976 - 1981

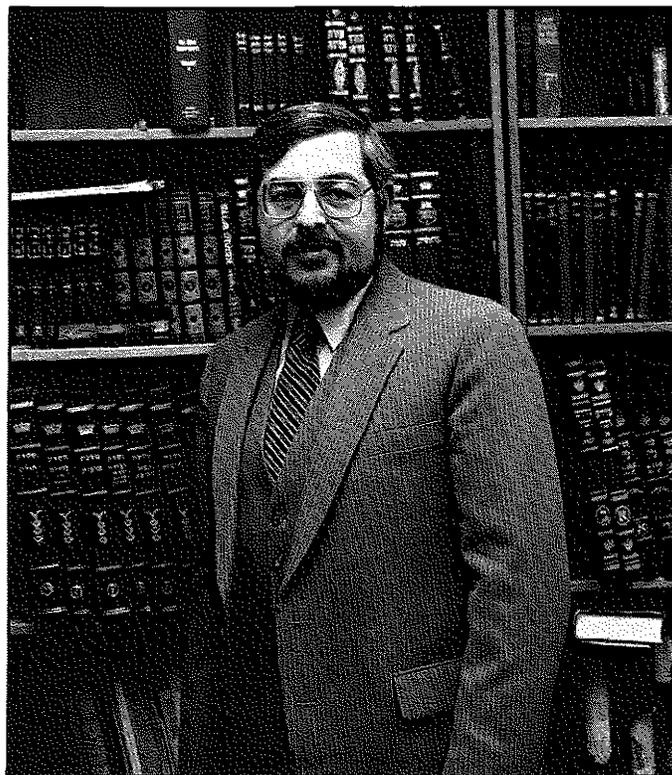
Upon being named rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel at age 25, Rabbi Kalinsky appeared the opposite of the staid, somber spiritual leader that was often associated with rabbis.

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., in 1951, Rabbi Kalinsky was educated and ordained in his home state, and in 1988 was a doctoral candidate in Educational Administration from the David J. Azrielli School of Graduate Education in New York City.

Rabbinical duties, according to Rabbi Kalinsky, were more than providing spiritual leadership. He said those duties extended to friendship and a thorough knowledge of diplomatic and scholarly aspects of Jewish life. As a bridge between the past and present, Rabbi Kalinsky supported the expanded role of women in Judaism and believed that a women's role in family, religion and community were indispensable and equal to the man's.

Rabbi Kalinsky did not view empty seats in the shul as a problem. Rather, he believed that the community was able to band together during the High Holy Days to affirm its heritage and inspiration.

Rabbi Kalinsky's services to the Maine Jewish Community stretched beyond the bounds of Bangor, as he also served as chaplain in the U.S. Air Force Reserves. In October of 1978 Rabbi Kalinsky, now a



Rabbi Kalinsky

major in the Reserves, sued the Air Force and the U.S. Secretary of Defense over an Air Force requirement that he shave his beard while performing his duties. Citing a conflict with religion, Rabbi Kalinsky was confident of winning the case, which he did, because both the Navy and Army allowed men to grow beards.

After leaving Bangor in 1981, Rabbi Kalinsky traveled to Schenectady, N.Y., where he served for two years as rabbi of the Orthodox Beth Israel Synagogue. In 1986, he was elected to serve as West Coast director of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, a Los Angeles-based organization that encompasses congregations from Edmonton, Alberta, to Santa Fe, N.M., and is involved with political action and youth activities. Rabbi Kalinsky also serves as secretary of the Rabbinical Council of California and as a chaplain at Los Angeles Air Force Base.

Rabbi Kalinsky lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Sandy, and their three children: Michael, 3, Elissa, 10, and Joseph, 11.

Rabbi Joseph P. Schonberger 1982 - present

Once again, the dynamic service of youth came to Beth Israel in 1982 in the form of Rabbi Joseph Schonberger.

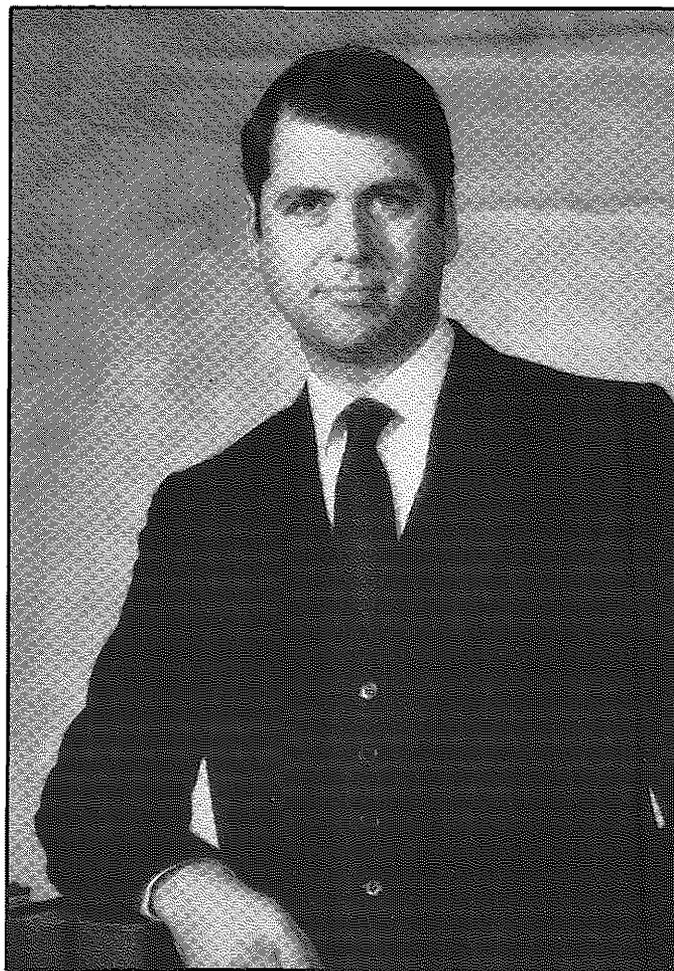
Rabbi Schonberger was born in Rehovot, Israel, in 1953, but was raised in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, where he maintains his citizenship.

Educated with a master's degree in Judaica and his ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary, a bachelor's degree in psychology from Columbia University, and associate's degrees in psychology and sociology from Miami-Dade Community College, Rabbi Schonberger brought with him to Bangor a wide range of knowledge and interests.

Rabbi Schonberger has worked to stress the involvement of people of all ages, and to re-establish the synagogue in its historic role as a community hub. One of his goals as the synagogue's first Conservative rabbi is to spread his belief that the congregation should be viewed as an extended family. He believes that Judaism and its traditions are indispensable guides for every aspect of religious and secular life, essential for Jewish life to be whole. The shul is empowered as an ethical and spiritual force when individual Jews are sensitive to Jewish imperatives to nurture each other and their community. He stresses a positive approach to life and an allowance for progress as traditional Jewish values.

Rabbi Schonberger sees his role as leader of Congregation Beth Israel as a means of demonstrating Jewish values to the larger community. He interacts with other clergy and their congregations by meeting with Sunday school classes, Bible study groups, and assisting in the organization of ecumenical services. Rabbi Schonberger also participates on several hospital and volunteer boards, bringing a Jewish perspective to areas of ethical review, hospice care and communal needs.

Rabbi Schonberger says that as Jews plan for the future they should remember the past. Only by confronting injustice and prejudice can humanity prevent another Holocaust, which his parents survived. It is historically the responsibility of all Jews to apply their abilities and learning to the development and improvement of humankind, a task Rabbi Schonberger believes Jews upheld quite well as leading innovators of almost



Rabbi Schonberger

every constructive field, from medicine to law and government.

As a Conservative rabbi serving his first full-time pulpit, Rabbi Schonberger does not reject modern advances nor traditional standards, but seeks benefits from both. It is through the Conservative outlook that Rabbi Schonberger believes he can lead his congregation through rapidly changing times and still maintain Jewish beliefs and traditions. The key to Schonberger's philosophy is the dynamic balance between tradition and modernity, which he believes guides Judaism flexibly and sensibly in every generation.

It is the intent of Rabbi Schonberger to increase the participation of the youth in shul affairs, and to stress "historically mainstream and mutually respectful Judaism."

During a trip to Honduras in July 1988, Rabbi Schonberger and his wife, Susan, extended the Beth Israel family even more, and adopted a baby, David Zev Schonberger.