

## Editorial

I have always believed that a Synagogue bulletin is no place for a discussion of what might be considered partisan politics. Other than to encourage people to vote in every election, I believe I have always steered clear of expressing my political views in these pages. While some may consider what follows to be a criticism of one political party and/or an endorsement of another, that is not my intention. Rather I speak from the point of view of one who believes in the principle, kol yisrael areivim zeh lazeh, we, as Jews, are responsible for the actions of one another.

I never thought I would be in total agreement with Boston Globe columnist, Jeff Jacoby. However, his article on Sunday, January 8, expressed exactly what my feelings are and what I had already been planning to write.

The subject of the article was Washington lobbyist, Jack Abramoff. The fact that Mr. Abramoff has pleaded guilty to charges of bribery and other illegal activities is indeed a good thing. The fact that miscreants are caught, will be prosecuted, and perhaps even lead to the prosecution of others in government is a wonderful thing and a proof that our judicial system usually works.

What upsets me, and should upset all of us is that Mr. Abramoff is a Jew. Worse yet, he has for years portrayed himself as an observant orthodox Jew. He is very often seen in public with his head covered, either with a kippah or the "traditional" black hat of many truly religious people. Because this is the way he has portrayed himself, the press feels perfectly justified in portraying

him as such. Rarely does the press refer to the religion of criminals, alleged or proven. We have not been told the religions of others either under indictment or investigation by grand juries in various very public cases. But we are often told about the allegations against "...Orthodox Jew Jack Abramoff."

Unfortunately, by his actions, Mr. Abramoff has done more to further the cause of the antisemites in the non-Jewish community than almost anything since the resurgence of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. For this is exactly how that horrible publication pictures Jews, as money grubbing, influence peddling monsters who try to subvert and then take over the government.

Worse yet, it makes other Jews think twice about what Orthodox Judaism is all about. If one of our publicly observant people professes the beliefs of or faith and then acts so publicly immorally and illegally, then what does that say about Judaism in general and Orthodoxy in particular.

By our words and deeds we must show those doubters and haters what Judaism is really about; justice, fairness, charity, honesty in all our social and business dealings, kindness to animals, protecting the land so that it will continue to yield abundant crops, serving G-d in truth and all of the other social, religious and economic laws that the truly observant honor and live by every day. We at Congregation Ahabat Sholom have an obligation to live by those tenets and to prove to the world what Judaism is truly about.