

Trenton, N. J. July 9th, 1929

Board of Directors
Adath Israel Synagogue
Trenton, N. J.

Friends and Members of the Board:

Due to many misunderstandings and disappointments I am satisfied that it has become necessary for me to resign as a member of the Adath Israel Synagogue. One, in the course of his life, meets with many unpleasant experiences and disappointments and this is but another one that I have to contend with. My resignation is prompted by many reasons which are probably too numerous to mention in this letter, but I do wish to review some of the things that have taken place since the organizing of the Synagogue.

I am sure you gentlemen will recall what hard work I did for the Synagogue. And how Mr. I. C. Rednor and I were compelled to arrange for the finances and funds, and how difficult it was for the both of us to obtain accomodation endorsements from some of our good members of the Board of Directors. Some of them, in fact, went to the extent of flatly refusing to obligate themselves. This obstacle, however, was soon overcome.

When we had reached the point where a Rabbi was to be elected; after much consideration Rabbi Rosenblatt was elected. The Rabbi proved himself an ideal leader and he had my utmost support. When the time came for the Rabbi to put his ideas into effect he met with some opposition that was wholly unjustified. It was only natural for me to go along with the Rabbi's ideas because I recognized his ability, yet despite the fact that there was a constitutional majority in favor of Rabbi Rosenblatt, I for the welfare of the Synagogue, went to the extent of pleading with some of my former followers to yield to popular opinion.

Then a Cantor was elected who also proved satisfactory to the Congregation, but during his term when he acted in an unreasonable manner, it was I who felt that we should do without a Cantor entirely, except for the High Holy Days, and thus enable the Synagogue to save money to meet its maturing obligations. This thought was rejected and it was decided to maintain a Cantor, but that a new one should be elected. In view of the fact that the Cantor had already settled down in this city, I felt that he should have not been cut off so abruptly but should be given a chance to adjust himself to the change.

Then an unpleasant incident arose in connection with Rabbi Liebreich. It occurred in the Vestry rooms on a Friday evening, when I merely expressed an honest opinion about a book that he discussed. What followed was a shameful attack upon me by the President and a display, by some of the members of the Board, of ungratefullness and inappreciation of the conscientious efforts that I have put into the organization. Instead of the Board adjusting the matter peaceably, some members of the Board had organized to do away with the matter by just styling me as a "criticiser". This in my opinion was entirely unfair as I have always had the welfare of the Synagogue nearest my heart. This is merely one of the things that prompts me to write this letter.

Harry Segal July 9-1929

When I did not desire to remain a criticiser and refused to accept the nomination for the Board of Directors, thinking that it would be for the good of the Synagogue, after all it being only a new enterprise, some of the members of the board insisted that I accept. As a compromise, I suggested that my son Hyman be put forth for the nomination, and then what happened? There was a strong political lobby against him. Though it may be only the feeling of myself, nevertheless, I am sure that he was and is just as fit and capable as some of the young men who came there when everything was ready and prepared for them.

You see, gentlemen; while I do not profess to be the best Jew in existence nor even the most religious Jew in our Synagogue, yet when I have thrown myself into the organizing of it and the establishment of a religious home, little did I dream that it would be a house of underhanded policies instead of a house of worship, a house, ~~a house~~ of intrigues instead of a house of the Lord, a community of petty business instead of a community of good will and honest thought. When once I determined to serve my God, I determined to serve Him with all sincerity and with no two ways about it. You see, gentlemen, I never considered it a place where one could show the other that he is either bigger, better or otherwise. I feel that I have always tried to go along with the conservative idea, but only to the extent of righteousness and justice.

In conclusion I desire to make clear to you, gentlemen, that it is with regret and perhaps, with great inconvenience and discomfort that I am compelled to forward this my resignation and to subject myself to long-distance walking at a time when I was dreaming that toward my declining years my family and myself would be together in the immediate neighborhood of a Synagogue that was so beautifully planned and laid out with much of my own efforts, means and hard labor, but as I mentioned before it is one more disappointment and unpleasant experience that one has to encounter in life. On the other hand there may be folks in our community that may find themselves in the same position as I, and that may feel as I feel, and maybe while we may not have all the attractive and beautiful things that our Synagogue has at present, yet it may be that we will have less to criticise.

Should there be anything due from me to the Congregation kindly mail me your bill and I will forward my check to you. With my best hopes and wishes that you may continue your work for a better Adath Israel, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

Harry Segal