



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Debate

Tributes to Her Late Majesty the Queen

2.35pm **Robert Halfon (Conservative)**: ... I am a Jewish MP and I was brought up in the United Synagogue, which is traditional Judaism. Every single part of the service is in Hebrew and, not being the best of learners, I did not understand a lot of what was going on, but the one part of the service in English is the prayer for the Queen:

“May the Supreme King of Kings in His mercy preserve the Queen in life, guard her and deliver her from all trouble and sorrow.”

The one English part of the service said in synagogues across the land every week is a prayer for the Queen, and it made me very proud whenever I attended synagogue that I was able to say that prayer. The Queen embodied everybody, not just her deep Christianity but everyone of all faiths: Jews, Muslims, Hindus and people of many other faiths.

This week the synagogues will be saying not a prayer for the Queen, sadly, but a prayer for King Charles. The rest of the prayer says:

“May He put a spirit of wisdom and understanding into his heart and into the hearts of all his counsellors, that they may uphold the peace of the realm, advance the welfare of the nation and deal kindly and justly with all the house of Israel.”

On behalf of those of the Jewish faith in our country, and also my constituents of Harlow, Hastingwood, Matching, Nazeing, Roydon and Sheering, God save the King. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-09-10/debates/D0C7D2F5-F624-4AA6-9218-657481335AED/TributesToHerLateMajestyTheQueen#contribution-D90839A2-4B6D-482F-A3FF-607615F35EC7>

House of Lords Debate

Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Lord Polak (Conservative): ... On an occasion like today, I think I speak on behalf of the whole House when I say we miss the late Lord Sacks, who would have known exactly what to say.

On hearing of someone's passing, the Jewish tradition is to say “Baruch dayan ha'emet”,

which means “Blessed is the true judge”. In my earliest memories of going to synagogue on a Saturday morning, there was only one prayer that was said in English, and that prayer will be said tomorrow in synagogues up and down the country. I will read it as it was done last week: “He who giveth salvation unto kings and dominion unto princes, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, may he bless our sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth and all the Royal Family. May the supreme King of kings, in his mercy, preserve the Queen in life, guard her and deliver her from all trouble and sorrow.” In synagogues up and down the country tomorrow we will say it as usual for His Majesty King Charles. ...

The tributes to Her Majesty have all been magnificent, but I listened particularly carefully to Sir John Major, the former Prime Minister, whose tribute included the line, “There was almost no part of the world she had not visited.” Sir John was right. I will concentrate for a moment on the word “almost”. On 22 June 2016, the night before the EU referendum, I was at a small dinner with a few people raising a little bit of money for Gordonstoun at the home of the Princess Royal. As I was leaving, I said to the headmaster that I would happily come up to the school and speak to the students about politics. Princess Anne turned round and said, “I think they’d be more interested in your previous work.” We had a conversation and discussed how the Royal Family were prohibited by the Foreign Office from visiting Israel. We agreed that it was and is sad that the Queen, as someone who was deeply religious and God-fearing, never walked down the Via Dolorosa into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, visited the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem or experienced the peace and tranquillity on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

At a Jewish funeral, Psalm 116 is often recited in Hebrew. In translation, it ends:

“You will make known to me the path of life;

In your presence is fullness of joy,

at your right hand bliss for ever more.”

Yehi zichra baruch—may Her Majesty’s memory be for a blessing. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-09-09/debates/6BCCA83A-03BB-4D89-877A-FEA27493DF20/HerLateMajestyQueenElizabethII#contribution-95DCC4BD-7728-417D-ACB3-4BCA619E7229>

col 476 Lord Triesman (Labour): ... When I first went as a Lord in Waiting, I had the great good luck of her inviting me to have lunch, and we sat, just the two of us, at a small table. She said, “I always have a light lunch”—I think I am allowed to say something about what she said—“I have ordered a ham salad but I thought you would not want a ham salad, so I have ordered a smoked salmon salad for you”. I thought how nice and good to have thought that, as it was absolutely true that, for various religious reasons, I would not have been able to eat a ham salad. It was a most enjoyable discussion and a very enjoyable lunch. ...

Yesterday, the noble Lord, Lord Polak, said a little about Jewish tradition at the end of a person’s life, and with great respect to those who are going to shelter my faith under their umbrella—although it does not always seem to me to happen, but none the less I am very keen that they should—I want to do one other thing which is also from Jewish tradition. Many noble Lords may well know it: we wish the family and the people closest to the person who has died long life. It is not just because we wish for them a long life—though we do, of course—but because it is in the lives of the people who survive that memories survive to the greatest extent. We carry the memories. God bless the King. May he have long life and cherish those memories. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-09-10/debates/1A292C36-9BBE-4B5A-9366-ADD0154812E5/HerLateMajestyQueenElizabethII#contribution-45B9EB79-FD13-4E41-9AAE-BCC4F05AA00B>

Baroness Merron (Labour): ... As a vice-president of Liberal Judaism, I want to express our deep gratitude for an exceptional life that was unfailingly devoted to the service of her

people and every community in her realm. In their grief and sorrow, we wish a long life to His Majesty King Charles III and all the Royal Family.

Every week, in synagogues across the UK and the Commonwealth, Jews pray for the welfare of the Royal Family and all those who influence the quality of our national life. We have prayed for our sovereign lady, Queen Elizabeth—who has never fallen short—for 70 years, and this week, for the first time, we prayed for our sovereign, King Charles. That is continuity, and that is change.

This week, a special prayer written by our president was recited at Liberal synagogues throughout the country. I would like to share some of these words with noble Lords today: “During the 70 years of her reign, during which she saw many upheavals and changes, she served her people with enduring devotion and grace, uniting races, creeds and tongues with outstretched hand and cheerful countenance ... In times of turmoil and distress, she sought comfort from her faith and led by example, speaking truth, abiding by her oath of majesty, accepting the discipline of her sovereignty and serving God with humility and intent. She worked with abiding and conscientious duty for the good of all her people, overcoming her own trials and tribulations to unite us as one humanity, whose purpose it is to do God’s will for the good of all people ... May her reign remain an example to guide King Charles with integrity and truth, promoting freedom, justice and righteousness, so that all may be blessed with prosperity and peace. We pray for the health and well-being of the new King.”

May her memory be for a blessing. Long live the King. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-09-10/debates/1A292C36-9BBE-4B5A-9366-ADD0154812E5/HerLateMajestyQueenElizabethII#contribution-0257BD0A-B21B-435A-A4C7-4CBFC70B7CA3>

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

Guidance: National Mourning period: guidance for faith and belief groups and places of worship

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-mourning-period-guidance-for-faith-and-belief-groups-and-places-of-worship>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Bill of Rights Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3227>

Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3186>

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2862>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3325>

Online Safety Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137>

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3217>

Private Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3188>

Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3163>

Schools Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3156>

Scottish Parliament

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill>

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Consultations

** new or updated today

Equality Evidence Strategy 2023-25 (closing date 23 September 2022)

<https://tinyurl.com/mpunv6cw>

Increasing the use of mediation in the civil justice system (closing date 4 October 2022)

<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/dispute-resolution/increasing-the-use-of-mediation/>

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The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438