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Central Conference of American Rabbis, including 1963 article,
"The World of Abba Hillel Silver," by Charles E. Shulman, 1960-
1961, 1963.

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

40 WEST 68th STREET

NEW YORK 23, N. Y.

August 23, 1960

Rabbi Abba H. Silver
East 105th Street at Silver Park
Cleveland 6, Ohio

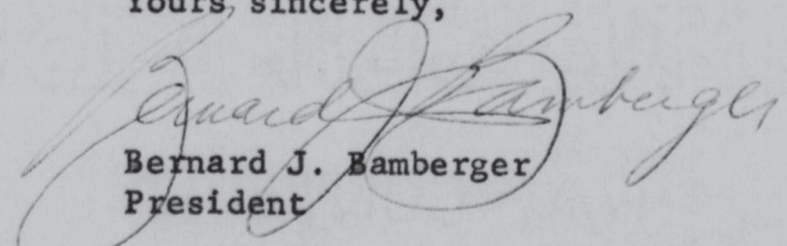
Dear Dr. Silver:

In my message to the CCAR last June, I called for a committee which should attempt to formulate a new statement of our attitude toward Jewish nationalism and the State of Israel. I enclose a copy of the message. The Conference approved my recommendation.

The Committee to undertake this task must of necessity be rather small in order to get its work done. Nevertheless, I was keenly aware of the considerable number of men - the elders and honored leaders of the Conference - who have through the years made important contributions toward the clarification of the problem. I therefore proposed to Ely Pilchik, whom I have appointed chairman, the creation of an advisory group, who might offer the committee suggestions, serve as sources of information, and react to the draft (or drafts) the committee produces. I write now to ask you, as one of those who have long studied the subject, to serve in this advisory capacity. I feel that you can make a distinctive contribution and hope you will accept the appointment.

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely,


Bernard J. Bamberger
President

BJB:ehc
Encl.

Your writings will certainly be an important source - I hope we may also profit from yours (see 10/11).

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October 3, 1960

My dear Dr. Bamberger:

Please pardon the delay in answering your letter of August 23rd. I have been away from the city a good deal of the time and the holidays have intervened. I shall, of course, be very happy to serve on the advisory committee who might help the committee which you appointed to formulate a new statement of our attitude toward Jewish nationalism and the State of Israel. I shall be very happy to help the committee in any way I can.

With warmest regards and all good wishes for the New Year, I remain

Most cordially yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

AHS:bfm

Dr. Bernard J. Bamberger, President
Central Conference of American Rabbis
40 West 68th Street
New York 23, New York

Congregation B'nai Jeshurun

Established 1848

17 Waverly Avenue

Newark 8, N. J.

Ely E. Pilchik, Rabbi

October 17, 1960

Dear Colleague:

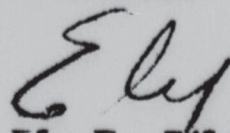
The President of the Conference has requested me to chair a committee, on which you have accepted membership, for the purpose of implementing the following recommendation, which I quote from the President's message of June 21, 1960.

"I recommend the creation of a special committee to draft for submission to the Conference a declaration of principles on the relation of Reform Judaism to Jewish nationalism and the relation of American Jewry to the State of Israel."

May I ask you to begin thinking about this declaration in the light of the statement of our Pittsburgh platform and our Columbus platform, and the expressions of our colleagues at Conferences since 1935 as quoted in our annuals. I refer to such specifics as Silver's lecture on the democratic impulse in Jewish history, the two papers on Israel in 1935, Feuer's "Beyond Zionism" in 1957 and Bamberger's remarks at Chicago in 1958. May I further ask you to set down in preliminary form, after a study of these materials, your own conception of such a declaration. I shall endeavor to collate these statements and to hold one meeting of the Active Committee in December at which I hope we might hammer out a statement, which we would submit to the Advisory Group for their comment. Your prompt and thoughtful cooperation on this exceedingly important matter will be much appreciated.

Let me hear from you.

Cordially,



Ely E. Pilchik
Rabbi

eep/ep

DIRECTOR OF ARCHIVES: JACOB R. MARCUS, PH. D.

Adolph S. Ochs Professor of American Jewish History, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

CLIFTON AVENUE • CINCINNATI 20, OHIO

Reverend

Dr. Burton E. Levinson

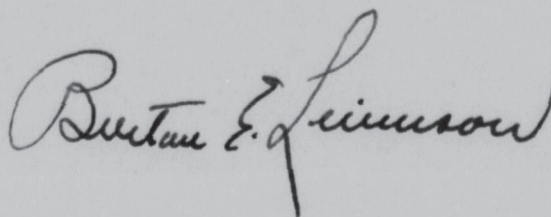
October 24, 1960

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
The Temple
Ansel Road at East 105th St.
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Dr. Silver:

I am enclosing a copy of a letter which I have written to Dr. Sandmel. I believe the material is self-explanatory. However, I might add that although I had agreed to meet with the Advisement Placement Committee I had hoped that the Conference would see the problems that I have faced and both unfair treatment that I have received in this matter of placement would justify a meeting at a higher level. I would even hope that you might effectively have my experiences shared with the Executive Committee of the Conference after I have met with the Advisory Placement Committee.

Cordially,



October 24, 1960

Dr. Samuel Sandmel
Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute
of Religion
Clifton Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Dr. Sandmel:

I am replying to your letter of October 17th in which you have advised me that you have cancelled a meeting in my behalf with the Advisory Placement Committee. You stated in this letter that 1) "Such a meeting amounts to a decision as to whether a man can be considered as available for employment." 2) "It was the opinion of the Placement Committee that only if and when you have received some psychiatric help will you be amenable to cooperation with them."

I appreciate your expressions of friendship and solicitude. However, I am afraid that I cannot appreciate your acting upon my behalf to cancel a meeting without my approval. I cannot permit you or anyone else to speak for me. Secondly, I want you to know that I am not meeting with any psychiatrist nor do I have any intention of doing so. What you have said in effect, in this letter, is that you question my ability to serve a congregation effectively in America. I respect your scholarship in your field. I question your competence in the field of medicine or on the problems of the active pulpit. I have rather painfully been working for this past year attempting to arrive at a definition of Judaism for the American Jew and the position of the American Rabbi. I hope I may not seem immodest if I suggest to you that the presentation of my material and experiences might prove to be a benefit to both the students and faculty of the college.

I am therefore requesting that before a proper official committee of our conference you show cause for the statements that you have made. A copy of this letter is being sent to Reverend Dr. Freehof Silver and Bamberger.

Cordially,

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

4-8--W-E-S-T--S-T-R-E-E-T

N-E-W--Y-O-R-K--2-3,--N--Y.

Office of the Vice President

Rabbi Albert G. Minda
2324 Emerson Avenue So.
Minneapolis 5, Minn.

April 25, 1961

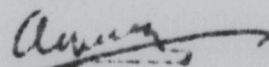
Rabbi Martin B. Ryback,
100 Washington Ave.,
Evansville, Indiana

Dear Martin:

Some time ago you wrote to Bernie Bamberger in reference to holding an early morning service at our Conference Convention. This was discussed at our executive meeting. It was felt that we could not officially schedule this on our program because we were fearful that it might not draw attendance worthy of the Conference. It was, however, felt that if you should want to take charge of such a service we would give it oral announcement and provide our regular Conference Hall in which the service could take place. If this is agreeable to you kindly let me know.

With my warm regards to you and my Evansville friends of my youthful days, I am

As ever,



Rabbi Albert G. Minda

AGM/a

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CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL • FOUNDED 1857

100 Washington Avenue
EVANSVILLE 13, INDIANA

May 18, 1961

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
1855 Ansel Road
Cleveland 6, Ohio

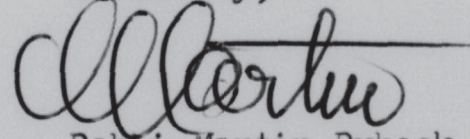
Dear Dr. Silver:

I am sending you herewith copies of two CCAR letters which are self-explanatory. For many years I have had the feeling that "Es Passt Nicht" for a Rabbinical Convention not to begin each day with worship. When our colleagues lecture at Christian camps and colleges I am told that they eagerly enter into early morning or sunrise services. Some Rabbis who "pooh-pooh" worship at the CCAR wax very sanctimonious at NFTY camps.

Please let me have your thinking with regard to this matter as soon as possible. Can I count on your help to get the early morning Worship Service "off the ground"?

With kindest personal greetings, I remain

Cordially,


Rabbi Martin Ryback

P. S. Do you think that a letter from you to Bernie Bamberger and/or Albert Minda can be helpful?

MR:em



October 14, 1960

Rabbi Bernard Hamberger
225 W. 86th Street
New York 24, N. Y.

Dear Bernie:

I know that you will not think me too presumptuous in making the following suggestion. For a long time I have felt that the CCAR conventions should have an early morning brief worship service beginning each convention day. This will introduce additional "K'dusha" to our deliberations. I mean for this worship service to be held very early in the morning before breakfast time. Why not try to schedule this worship on an experimental basis and those who wish to come will come.

Though I am sure that most of our men pray "B'Yechidoos" I have always been struck by the image of inconsistency in Rabbis rushing to breakfast first thing every morning. Now, please believe me, I do not mean to be sanctimonious or preachy, but I sincerely believe something ought to be done.

With kindest personal greeting, I remain

Cordially,

Rabbi Martin B. Ryback

MBR:GB

May 29, 1961

My dear Rabbi Ryback:

Thank you for your letter of May 18th. I think that Rabbi Minda's reply to your suggestion and the feeling of the executive board is sound. You may wish to experiment with such a service as was suggested to you by Rabbi Minda.

With all good wishes, I remain

Very cordially yours,

ABRA HILLEL SILVER

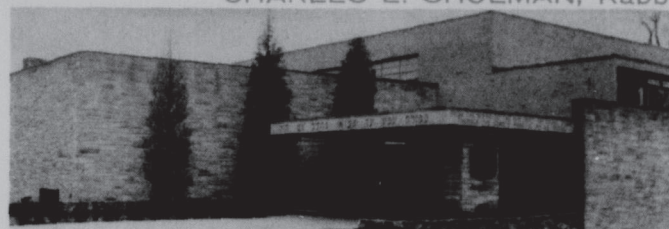
AHS:bfm

Rabbi Martin Ryback
Washington Avenue Temple
100 Washington Avenue
Evansville 13, Indiana

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Deceased*

March 19, 1963

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver,
The Temple,
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Abba:

I am offering my congratulations to you on your seventieth birthday in the form of the enclosed piece on you which is scheduled to appear in the March issue of the American Zionist in a week or so. I hope you like it.

I thought that your contributions both to Reform Judaism and to Zionism were never better manifested than in the conventions of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and I therefore dwelt on this phase of your activity in your rabbinate in the belief that it ought to be recorded not only for the sake of your colleagues who might be stimulated to turn to the Yearbooks and read your pieces as I have done, but for the sake of the public generally. It is my feeling that your contribution to Zionism in changing the thinking of Reform Judaism on this subject is as profound as your labors among the masses of Jews in your life of activity on behalf of this cause. In the Conference you had to face an array of intellectual foes--diehards that were worthy of your steel. And your Conference lectures raised you to heights you could not have scaled in your pulpit only because of the particular type of audience and because of the necessity of penetrating deeper into Jewish issues.

Had I not been limited by the space allocations in the paper I would have, of course, dealt with your written contributions in extenso. But it might be just as well to have a brief piece that conveys a bit more pungently the essence of your thought and labors in concentrated form. I know your many friends throughout the Zionist world will share with me the satisfaction of seeing this piece in print.

With warm personal greetings and a hearty shehecheyonu to you and yours.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Shulman
Charles E. Shulman

THE WORLD OF ABBA HILLEL SILVER

Charles E. Shulman
Rabbi, Riverdale Temple, New York

Modern Rabbis generally labor in a limited vineyard in a relatively small world, conscientiously caring for the needs of their people and representing them fully in their community. Very few Rabbis live in larger worlds. Abba Hillel Silver, whose seventieth birthday is now being observed, is one of these. His manifest talents in his chosen profession were recognized early enough in his career to mark his preeminence in a field of great rabbis. There were in his day such recognized giants in the American rabbinate as Stephen S. Wise, Kaufmann Kohler, Samuel Schulman, Hyman G. Enelow, Emil G. Hirsch. And he was a giant among them. His penetrating mind and his scholarly propensities were already seen in the volume "Messianic Speculations in Israel" published in his younger years. No less a scholar than Jacob Mann termed this work an exceptional piece of research in Jewish studies. His oratorical powers won him a place alongside of Stephen S. Wise as the authentic voice of American Judaism on the American pulpit and on the American platform. And his presence before his colleagues at meetings of the Central Conference of American Rabbis commanded a respect given only to leaders. His opponents may not have been happy at his arguments but they could not help admiring the clarity of his reasoning and the power of his thrusts at their intrenched positions. When he became a ~~member~~ member of the Conference this body was dominated in its thinking by the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 which had abandoned Jewish nationalism and which was bitterly opposed to Zionism. He was a moving figure in the many debates and deliberations which resulted in making the Pittsburgh Platform a dead letter and which eventually turned the Conference--and Reform Judaism--toward overwhelming support of the Zionist movement. Had he remained only the Rabbi he would have fulfilled

-2-

...s days in an illustrious career that would have left its deep imprint on American Jewish life.

But from his earliest ^{YEARS} ~~days~~ in the rabbinate Dr. Silver sensed the destiny of his people in their return to Zion, the Herzlian program of a publicly secured, legally recognized home in the ancient land of Israel. He was also drawn to the conviction that the peoplehood of Israel must be recognized in conformity to the dignity of its historic proportions. He tied himself to the Zionist movement which already had involved such figures as Stephen S. Wise, Shmarya Levin, Nahum Sokolow, Chaim Weizmann, ~~many~~ and a host of others. And here again as in his rabbinate, he won preeminence by his gifts and capacities. He not only became a great voice ~~farxian~~ on behalf of Zionism throughout the world, but also a respected leader capable of winning converts and representing followers in many lands besides his own. Thus the Rabbi of Cleveland lived in the greater world of his people as individuals from all walks of life acknowledged his powers of leadership in a cause imbedded deep in the centuries of Jewish experience. He, the Reform Rabbi, was as well known among the Yiddish masses of New York as their own revered idol Masliansky and as familiar a figure at world Zionist meetings as ~~many~~ Jabotinsky or Ben Gurion ~~or~~ WEIZMANN.

A third world inhabited by Dr. Silver, and not the least, was the world of scholarship. Many who were stirred by his extraordinary power of speech may not have been aware that his capacities as orator were based on the disciplines which all scholarship demands. In the book commemorating his seventieth birthday "In Time of Harvest" there is published a collection of gleanings from his sermons in the Cleveland pulpit over a period of close to half a century. Keen and perceptive as they are in character these sermons do not portray as effectively his depth of penetration of the Jewish processes as do his papers delivered before his colleagues of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, or his published studies in Judaism. It was at the Central Conference that he invariably rose to great

heights as Rabbi and representative Jew of his time. A few excerpts from his papers may perhaps best illustrate the importance he attached to his appearance before his fellow Rabbis and the challenges which he issued through them to the American Jewish community.

Speaking on the subject "The Democratic Impulse in Jewish History" at the 1928 Conference he said:

"The great social message of Israel--its heroic code of justice--is incomprehensible without an understanding of the pervading democratic spirit of the race. Every individual life was conceived to be inviolable, a reflex of divinity and an end in the cosmic scheme. Every act of wrong and injustice which mars the life of a man defaces also the image of God. Oppression and exploitation are therefore more than violations of the law of society. They distort and mutilate that which is the end and goal of all being--the free, untrammelled unfoldment of every human personality."

In the year 1935 an historic debate took place at the Central Conference meeting in Chicago. It was the last major fight ~~xxx~~ on the Conference floor on the issue of Zionism, and Silver played the principal role in effecting the change in the Pittsburgh Platform. Thereafter Zionism was to have the support of the overwhelming majority of the Reform rabbinic leadership in America and the ghost of the "Protest Rabbiner" of Herzl's day imported from Germany to the United States was finally buried here. It is true that a small minority of the Reform Rabbis were later to form the American Council for Judaism, but these never attained much popularity or influence in liberal Jewish circles in America. Silver's paper at that 1935 Conference was a memorable one. He accused the anti-Zionist members of ~~Raukian~~ Paulinian ~~xxxxxxx~~ thinking in their denial of Jewish nationalism in the ethical and spiritual development of Jewish life and he reminded them:

"A messianic hope not bound up with the restoration of Israel to Palestine is simply not found in Jewish literature anywhere from the time of the second Isaiah to our own day except, of course, in the writings of those Reformers and some of the Hellenistic writers who, through allegory and other devices, attempted to universalize the teachings of the Torah, so as to impress the non-Jewish world with the excellency of the Jewish faith, and who converted the Jewish national Messiah into an "incarnation of divine power who should judge men at the end of days". National restoration was the very heart of messianic ideal from its inception.

substitute for this national ideal an anti-national purely transcendental nebulous messianic age on the plea of evolution is to be guilty not of revision but of distortion. It is both new and counterfeit."

Of those who joined the American Council for Judaism and of their incessant attacks on the integrity of the Zionist movement he spoke his contempt by a biblical allusion more powerful than a direct attack on their libelous campaigns stimulated by their own fear and self hatred. He recalled that when King David came to Bahurim there came out a man of the family of the house of Saul whose name was Shimei the son of Gera who cursed David and cast stones at him. So do these super-patriotic American Jews curse those helping to build the Jewish homeland and cast stones at them.

In the year 1946 Dr. Silver was President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. His message to his colleagues dealt with the problems of recovery that faced a generation torn by the ravages of war and a Jewish household decimated by Nazi brutality to a degree never before known in the long history of the Jewish people. It was a time of the binding of wounds and he held out hope for the morrow while warning that the effects of the slaughter of the Jewish people in Europe would long be felt. He said:

"The household of Israel stands more in need of the ministrations of its religion than all the other peoples on earth because it has suffered more from the ravages of war and because of the large measure of insecurity in its life. No people lost a third of its population in the war. The Jewish people did--and in the most horrible manner unparalleled in all the dark and cruel annals of mankind. Our people will continue to feel the traumatism of the physical and psychic shock which it has suffered long after the Second World War will have become a faded memory among men. The Crusades, the Spanish Expulsion and the Chmielnicki pogroms of the Seventeenth Century left their deep scars on the mind and the body of our people for generations. Even deeper scars will remain as a result of the slaughter of the six million Jews of Europe and the total destruction of nearly all centers of creative Jewish life on the Continent. A thousand years and more of Jewish history in the heart of Europe is winding up in an epilogue of blood, terror and death. Our people everywhere, even those who live in the land of freedom are deeply shaken and disturbed by what has occurred."

While Silver may be best remembered for his life-long contributions to the Zionist cause, students of Jewish thought will turn to his notable

"Messianic Speculations in Israel" and "Where Judaism Differed" for evidence of his enduring labors. The latter is perhaps the most lucid and authoritative exposition of the Jewish beliefs contrasted with those of the Christian, Greek, Islamic, and Buddhist to be found in the English language. It is written in popular vein but drawn from a deep well of scholarship and is indicative of many years of devotion to the theme. It represents a man who has a profound knowledge of Jewish history in all its labyrinthine patterns and it is marked by a spirit of dedication and love of Jewish learning. Here one may follow the author as he examines the golden thread of Jewish thought in Biblical, Talmudic, medieval and modern literatures and learn of the significance, the vitality and the force which is Judaism among the religions of mankind.

Throughout his long and colorful career Abba Hillel Silver has remained the Rabbi, combining the Jewish scholarship attached to this traditionally respected office with public representation of his people both at home and abroad. His power in the pulpit and on the platform was already legendary in his younger years and it grew with time. His voice was the mouthpiece of Reform Judaism, but it was the kind of Reform which embraces the noblest qualities of the four thousand year old Jewish contribution to Civilization in its thinking, and does not abandon the peoplehood of Israel in its search for the good and satisfactory life in the modern world. He was in the forefront of the struggle to alter Reform Judaism's encrusted attitude toward Zionism and he lived to see the change in its thinking. His voice was heard at the United Nations in the historic hour when the State of Israel given its rebirth at Lake Success. He has etched his influence deeply upon the Jewish life of modern times.

April 22, 1963

My dear Charles:

Upon my return from Israel, I found your letter of March 19th and the enclosed article which I have since seen in the "American Zionist". I want to thank you for your thoughtfulness in writing it and for the special emphasis which you placed, in your article, on my presentation at the various Conferences of the C. C. A. R., on the subject of Zionism and Reform Judaism.

With all good wishes and hoping to see you soon, I remain

Most cordially yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

AHS:bbf

Rabbi Charles E. Shulman
Riverdale Temple
W. 246th Street and
Independence Avenue
Riverdale 71, New York

June 12, 1963

Central Conference of
American Rabbis
40 West 68th Street
New York 23, New York

Gentlemen:

I am enclosing herewith a check for \$10.00, my annual
dues to the C. C. A. R.

I should also like to make a contribution to the work of
the Conference of \$100.00 -- check also enclosed.

Very sincerely yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

AHS:bfm

Enclosures (2)

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

40 WEST 68th STREET

NEW YORK 23, N. Y.

September 4, 1963

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
University Circle & Silver Park
Cleveland 6, Ohio

Dear Dr. Silver:

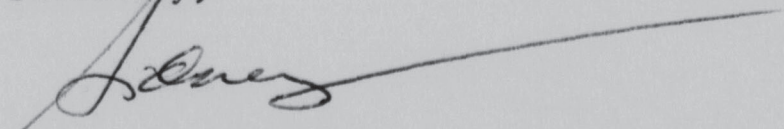
Since the format you used for the symposium at the Conference precluded having a manuscript for the Yearbook, I must now ask you to go over the discussion you and Dr. Freehof had at the Conference so that we may have it in proper form for the Yearbook.

I am enclosing a copy of the typescript. Will you please go over your own remarks and return the material to me with whatever revisions you see fit to make. I am also sending a copy to Dr. Freehof so that he may do the same with his part of the discussion.

May I ask a further favor of you? I want to get the material to the printer as soon as possible and would appreciate having it back from you as soon as you are able to get to it.

With good wishes,

Sincerely,


Sidney L. Regner
Executive Vice President

SLR:id
enc.

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September 27, 1963

My dear Sidney:

I am returning herewith the manuscript of the symposium which was held at the Central Conference of American Rabbis. I have tried to make the necessary corrections.

With all good wishes for a very happy New Year, I remain

Very cordially yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

AHS:bfm

Mr. Sidney L. Regner
Executive Vice President
Central Conference of
American Rabbis
40 West 68th Street
New York 23, New York

CODE OF ETHICS BETWEEN
RABBI AND RABBI

In keeping with the high traditions of the rabbinate, the Central Conference of American Rabbis sets forth the following Code of Rabbinical Ethics for the guidance of its members.

1. No rabbi should occupy a colleague's pulpit except at the direct invitation of that colleague, nor should he speak at any function of the congregation or of any auxiliary or subsidiary organization of the congregation except with the consent of the incumbent rabbi.

2. When a rabbi is concluding his term of service with a congregation and the congregation is seeking his successor, the restrictions described in paragraph one shall not apply to candidates for the rabbinical position.

3. When a rabbi refuses on grounds of principle to officiate at religious occasions for members of his own congregation, rabbis of other congregations should also refuse to officiate for those persons. When a rabbi declines for personal reasons to officiate at religious occasions for members of his own congregation or is not invited to officiate, another rabbi may officiate only with the consent of his colleague. In such cases, the consent should be granted.

When an emergency arises due to the rabbi's unavailability or absence from the city, other rabbis may officiate as though the persons requesting his services were members of his own congregation.

4. When persons who are affiliated with Orthodox or Conservative congregations invite a Reform rabbi to perform a marriage at which the rabbi of their congregation may not officiate because of traditional halachic considerations, the Reform rabbi should also decline to officiate.

5. No rabbi should offer such pastoral attentions to members of other congregations as will disturb the relations between rabbinical colleagues, between congregations or between a rabbi and a member of his congregation.

6. A rabbi should neither participate in nor approve efforts on the part of his own membership to solicit affiliation from persons who are already affiliated with another congregation.

7. When a rabbi disagrees in public with an opinion expressed by a colleague, his disagreement should be stated in terms of the principles involved and should under no circumstances descend to the level of personal attack.

8. An alleged violation of this Code may be brought to the attention of the Mediation and Ethics Committee of the Conference by any member of the Conference and shall be dealt with by that Committee in accordance with its judgment. If in the judgment of the Committee on Mediation and Ethics the matter can be resolved by conciliation, mediation or arbitration, the Committee shall proceed to attempt such a resolution. If, however, the Committee determines that disciplinary action is warranted, it shall refer the matter with recommendations to the Executive Board of the Conference for appropriate action.

9. Relationships between rabbis serving the same congregation should develop with due regard for the dignity and the status which are appropriate to all rabbis. Older rabbis should be mindful of their obligation to share the fruits of their experience with younger colleagues and to assure them ample opportunity to exercise their talents in the service of the congregation. Younger rabbis should be aware that ultimate responsibility and authority reside in their senior colleagues and should act in such a way as

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to uphold the senior rabbi in his task. Rabbis emeriti, having served their congregations honorably and faithfully during their years of active service, should so arrange their relationship to their congregations as to help establish their successors effectively in their sacred office.

