



## The Abba Hillel Silver Digital Collection

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### **MS-4787: Abba Hillel Silver Papers, 1902-1989.**

Series 1: General Correspondence, 1914-1969, undated.

Sub-series A: Alphabetical, 1914-1965, undated.

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Silver, Samuel, Hebrew Union College monthly, 1937-1939.

*The* HEBREW UNION COLLEGE *Monthly*  
CINCINNATI  
*Ohio*

September 20, 1937

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver  
E. 105th st.  
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Rabbi Silver,

The Hebrew Union College Monthly is marking its 25th anniversary this year. To commemorate it we are asking several past editors of the magazine for articles either on general interest or on the magazine itself. As the first editor of The Monthly, we would like to have an article from you to head our Editors' Issue. Would you be good enough to submit something, therefore? I leave the choice of a title to you.

Please let me hear from you as soon as possible. With warmest regards, I am

Yours sincerely,

*Samuel M. Silver*

Samuel M. Silver, Ed.

# *The* HEBREW UNION COLLEGE *Monthly*

CINCINNATI

*Ohio*

November 30, 1937

Rabbi Abba H. Silver  
Cleveland  
Ohio

Dear Rabbi Silver,

I wish it weren't necessary to trouble you....

I wish you had never founded The Hebrew Union  
College Monthly....

I wish this weren't the 25th year since its  
founding....

because getting a reply from you requires the  
services of a particularly tenacious orthodontist.  
We want a few paragraphs from you as the first editor  
of The Monthly in a special issue celebrating our  
25th year. I have written. Your friend Irving Hous-  
man has written. But you apparently want to treat  
the magazine which you founded like the United States  
treats the League of Nations which it founded.

Remember: all we want is a very, very brief  
article as a sort of guest editorial. It needn't be  
about The Monthly; it needn't be about anything. It  
need only be a few words from the first editor. If  
you were not the first editor -- and I have been  
nagging you unnecessarily -- please let me know. That  
would make me very happy.

Also, please remember: when you have something  
you'd like your colleagues to hear, the columns of  
The Monthly are always open to you. For example,  
should you want to get in on the Feuerlicht-Newman  
scrap, come right ahead -- our presses are wide open.

With best regards and humble apologies for  
disturbing you, I am

Hopefully yours,

*Sam Silver*

Sam Silver

December 2, 1937

Mr. Samuel M. Silver, Editor,  
The Hebrew Union College Monthly,  
Cincinnati, Ohio.

My dear Mr. Silver:

If your name was not Silver I could not account for your irreverent letter to me. You express amazement at my failure to answer your several communications. A Silver should know better. Letters have a way of answering themselves if let alone. I have never subscribed to the dictum לכבוד ה' יתברך. Why should a Silver have to answer everybody?....

So you are going to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Hebrew Union College Monthly. Why? Are you acquainted with all the literary horrors which the Monthly has perpetrated upon its readers, fortunately few and mostly impounded, since its first issue? Personally, I have long since done penance for the sins which I committed during the first (and most notable) year of its publication. Are you sufficiently repentant? And the long line of editors, from Silver to Silver, who, each in his day, labored and brought forth - a Monthly? Should we not rather "bow down our heads as a bull-rueh" (what an appropriate term for an editor) "and spread sackcloth and ashes under us" (what a splendid suggestion for an editor's chair).

Go through the files and see the rich treasures of golden emerods and golden mice with which the undergraduates, who suffered from great discomfiture by reason of their "Weltschmerz", filled the columns of the Monthly. Is there any contributor who ever offered his literary first fruits to this magazine who did not, ten years later, bite his knuckles and lament the fact that he had not carried out the Biblical law concerning the offering of first fruits - "Thou shalt put it into a basket"?...

And speaking of undergraduates - what about the Faculty? Did they not drop into the helpless and desolate hopper of the Monthly whatever was not grist for

the mill of a real publication? And the Alumni - how often did they slip over a "nefel tamun" sermon on us in the guise of an essay. And the moles and the bats of the editorials which we wrote. And the poems and the songs which we published - what a tinkling they made with their flat feet! And all the other literary fillets and crescents and pendants of the sons of the daughter of Zion in their Monthlies. And the portraits which were published each year of the graduates! Was it only the Lord who looked down from Heaven upon them and smiled?....

And you wish to be congratulated on twenty-five years of this? And you a Silver! I founded the Monthly in order to have a place wherein to publish a few articles of mine which other magazines had thoughtfully rejected. Cunningly, I allowed a few other students to print their rejected material also, so as to give the impression of broadmindedness. In my day, remember, there were many men in the College who "could not discern between their right hand and their left, and also much cattle" - so that I could put over my scheme without much difficulty. I never intended the magazine to outlive me as editor. I felt cruelly betrayed when, year after year, the Monthly kept on appearing under editors who had taken the cue from me and had outplayed me at my own game.

"Who so keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof." You've got the fig tree now, Brother Silver! On that I congratulate you - with "Yasherkes" - as one Silver to another.

Yours in jocoseria,

AHS:BK

# *The* HEBREW UNION COLLEGE *Monthly*

CINCINNATI

*Ohio*

December 12, 1937

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver  
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Rabbi Silver,

It will be difficult to answer your letter without becoming downright ad hominem. I've suffered from you before. Being dark, big in height and hight Silver, I have again and again been mistaken for (1) a Cleveland (2) your son (3) your nephew (4) you. That is not so irritating. It is only when the mistaken identifier gushes, "Do you think that you'll be a great rabbi some day like the Rabbi Silver," that I grit my teeth and shake my mane. More than once I have considered asking my family to change its name back to the original Zilberman. Of course, I would expect Clevelanders to dote on you -- but before I came to HUC, I never was under this Silver cloud. I had my own idol (the late Rabbi Mischkind) whose memory I keep close to my bosom like the little boys in Stevenson's essay fondled their lamps. So at home (Wilmington, Del.) I rarely encountered Silveratry.

But I was naturally interested in you. And from the conversation of those who know you from the distance I gathered that you were a grim, glum, and grumpy man. What was my delightful surprise then to read your letter and find you on such intimate terms with the comic Muse. That was a pleasant revelation and it added another admirer to the host of others. Which means you'll have another hand to pump if, as, and when I get to Cleveland.

You want to know why we are celebrating our 25th anniversary? We might reply that with so many mapalahs round about us, it is justifiable to invent a simcha. And invented this one was. For it is not 25 yrs. but 23 yrs. since your first issue saw the light of scholarly eyes. But some editors, with superb disregard for figures, lost count and lo and behold this year's volume is no. 25. And since we need money badly, we are exploiting this accident by making much fuss about the 25th Anniversary and inviting all & sundry to congratulate us on reaching our maturity. We are strictly adhering to the term Silver Anniversary so that if any demurrer is raised, we can rejoin that it is a Silver Anniversary in honor of the first and latest editors. To others who may protest, we shall point out good historical analogies for observing the 25th year when there are only 23. After all, there werent' really twelve tribes of

# *The* HEBREW UNION COLLEGE *Monthly*

CINCINNATI

Ohio

Rabbi Silver -2-

Israel, or ten commandments of Moses, or a thousand wives of Solomon.

It's precisely because we are so anxious to exploit and advertise this event (our deficit is \$1000.00 -- a tribute to literary profligacy) that we need the support of your name. After all you did start the magazine and if it was a grievous sin why shouldn't it be visited upon you rather than upon others? We want but a few paragraphs on any topic "from Jesus to birth control" (quotation from recent speech here by Rabbi Goldman). A subject I would like to have you write on is:

Compromises I Would Be Willing to Make for the  
Sake of Jewish Unity

Other suggestions:

Reform Reformed (the back-to-ceremonies movement)  
What Every Jewish Child Should Know  
Seminaries vs. the Rabbinical Profession  
Ghetto Benches and Ghetto Benchen: What Can We Do  
for the Polish Jew?  
Some of My Best Jews are Friends  
The Parturition of Palestine

I know I haven't answered your question, "Why The Monthly?" One good *raison d'etre* is the relief it gives some students from the ennui of classes. The Monthly is, furthermore, the only magazine wherein Reform Rabbis can mingle without rubbing shoulders against a Jewish Committee-man or Congress-man or, l'habdil, a professional journalist. What this country really needs is a bigger and better Monthly. We can't promise you a Jewish Century overnight, but the magazine is today a far cry (which sometimes sounds like a shriek to be sure) from the academic repository of slightly used theses, sermons, and bibliographies that it was in years gone by.

Whatever a Silver is he cannot be among those described by Isaiah (12.17) as those "who do not pay attention to a fellow-Silver." I appeal to you, therefore, in the name of the name we share not fail me, but to let me have in a few weeks a brief guest editorial. If you don't, I'll reprint one of those articles which you seem to regard as literary indiscretions of your youth (for I've got vol. 1 in our morgue).

With many thanks and cordial regards, I am  
Faithfully yours,

*Sam Silver*

December 14, 1937

Mr. Samuel M. Silver, Editor,  
The Hebrew Union College Monthly,  
Cincinnati, Ohio.

My dear Mr. Silver:

Let me thank you for your kind letter of December 12. I read it with a great deal of pleasure. The letter which I sent you was in reply to your request for greetings to the HUC Monthly. I suggest that you print it. I think that your readers will be interested in it, perhaps more than in a hackneyed editorial of mine.

With all good wishes, I remain

Very cordially yours,

AHS:BK

# *The* HEBREW UNION COLLEGE *Monthly*

CINCINNATI

*Ohio*

December 15, 1937

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver  
E. 105 & Ansel  
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Rabbi Silver,

Thanks very much for permission to reprint your letter. It's just what The Monthly needs.

Latest developments of the Silver Anniversary Issue:

1. Connected with it will be a supplement in honor of the N.F.T.S., which is also celebrating its 25th birthday.

2. The Issue, with supplement, will be peddled at Palmer House on the day of the Convention, Jan. 13.

From the inside we have learned that you are the main speaker at the convention. If you would say a word about The Monthly, it will be deeply appreciated.

With warmest regards, I am

Cordially yours,

*Sam Silver*

Sam Silver

# THE HEBREW UNION COLLEGE MONTHLY

SAMUEL M. SILVER, Editor

MORTON M. APPLEBAUM, Bus. Manager

CINCINNATI, OHIO

August 30, 1939

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver  
Cleveland  
Ohio

Dear Dr. Silver,

If you ignore this letter, it will not be the first time I have withstood such treatment from you. Nor will I be surprised, considering how multitudinous are your tasks these days. However, I am only a poor editor who has to satisfy his constituents who constantly want to know "why don't you get an article from SILVER some time?"

Anticipating the rejection of one request, I would very humbly like to make three, hoping that at least one of them will be granted:

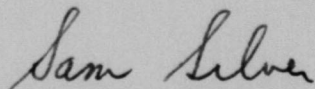
ONE: A reply to Rabbi Lazon's blast at Zionism in The Christian Century.

TWO: A brief explanation for Reform Jews, who read The Monthly, of the significance of the recent Congress.

THREE: A copy of your high holyday sermon that you liked best for inclusion in a batch of excerpts in our first issue. We want to know what the leading rabbis of the country told their congregations in these parlous times. (This one should be easy).

With profuse apologies for intruding upon you, with kindest regards, and best wishes for a Happy New Year, I am

Respectfully yours,



Sam Silver  
Hebrew Union College