



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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

Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

Reel
173

Box
63

Folder
168

Christmas, 1927.

The Day 12-27
FROM

RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER

The Temple, Cleveland, Ohio

In reply to your kind letter of December 9th, permit me to say that it is my belief that the Jews have enough holidays of their own and that they need not borrow any from other peoples and other religions.

Christmas is an essentially Christian holiday as much as Yom Kippur is essentially a Jewish holiday. The fact that Christmas is the religious holiday of the vast majority of the American people and that Jews are brought in close contact with the occasion through social intercourse or business, does not in the least alter the fact that it is the supreme and most significant festival of Christianity and that therefore Judaism has no share whatever in it.

I see no reason in the world, why a Jew cannot extend felicitations to a non-Jew on the occasion of a Christian festival or receive felicitations from him on the occasion of his own festivals.

I do believe, however, that it is preposterous and rather humiliating for Jews to exchange Christmas gifts or for Jewish children to sing Christmas carols as they are asked to do in many public schools. An act which does not emanate from real conviction and does not derive from the historical or cultural experiences of a people, is at best worthless and at worst a mockery.