



## Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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

Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

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Solomon B. Freehof, 1962.

In September, 1962, the Congregation Rodef Shalom of Pittsburgh invited my classmate, Abba Hillel Silver, to speak at a celebration which the Congregation organized in honor of my seventieth birthday. A few months later, I went to Cleveland to speak at the celebration held by The Temple for Abba Hillel Silver's seventieth. This exchange of visits had become a sort of tradition; I had been coming to Cleveland and he to Pittsburgh for our respective anniversary celebrations for a number of years.

At this seventieth celebration in Pittsburgh, Abba Silver spent the first part of his address talking of our school days. He spoke of the time when he first met me, of the prize essays for which we competed with each other, the first of which he had won and the second of which I had won. Our student days, so long ago, were brought to living memory by his speech. It was worth discussing those days because the unusual nature of college life of the Hebrew Union College in those years explains much of his career and his relationship to his rabbinical colleagues.

The Hebrew Union College in those days had nine classes. The total student body was between forty and fifty. So most classes had only five or six students. It was an exceptional class that had ten students. It was therefore impossible for a person not to know one's classmates well. It was evident at the very beginning that Abba Hillel Silver was different in temperament from most of us. We were often serious, but we were boys and rather lighthearted. We saw at once he was more mature, or at least much more adult than most of us. There were certain boyish or post-adolescent characteristics



which he seemed to lack entirely or which he had outgrown. As young people, we were capable of sudden new enthusiasms, friendships, quarrels, excitement over matters which soon proved to be trivialities. He seemed already at nineteen to have grown away from the excitability, from the frothiness of youth. He never just babbled for the sake of self-expression. He would express a strong opinion, but would never excitedly snatch at passing ideas. He had, it seemed to us then, a premature reserve. He had the capacity, characteristic of mature leadership, for listening patiently and in silence. He could not or would not make sudden friendships and get into minor quarrels. There seems to have been no triviality about him from the very first time we met him. We were rather boyish and he was already in temperament a man.

That does not mean that he was solemn or dour. He had a hearty sense of humor. He could tell and be delighted by some characteristic anecdote. He was capable of making some brilliant plays on words or to twist a well known sentence or quotation into a new and charming idea. He could laugh heartily, but not giggle. He had humor but very little playfulness.

Much of his quiet maturity, his reserve, may well have been due to basic temperament or to the mood of the life of his family in New York; but certainly a great deal of it was due to the fact that when he came to Cincinnati to attend the College, he already had a serious goal in life, in addition to the rabbinate and his personal career. He was a strong and convinced Zionist. For the last ten and twenty years in American life, being a Zionist represents an almost normal or average attitude. But in those days, fifty-five years ago, it was an exceptional attitude, especially in this new



environment to which he had come to study for the Reform Rabbinate.

The general tradition of Reform Judaism had been anti-Zionist or, more correctly, Reform Judaism, which preceded Zionism by two generations, had a world attitude which was bound to become anti-Zionistic. The Reform movement was an outgrowth of the universalistic hopes of the Enlightenment; it was rooted in the conviction that the future would bring a diminution of the differences between peoples. Therefore the new nationalism that arose in Europe seemed to the leaders of Reform Judaism to be a retrogression. Of all the literature of the Jewish past, they stressed the universalistic dreams of the Prophets. Therefore when Jewish nationalism arose in parallel to the new forces of modern history, it seemed to the leaders of Reform to be a grave error, a backward step, almost a denial of the idealism of the universalist-prophetic dream. Therefore anti-Zionism or anti-nationalism to the earlier generation of Reformers was a matter of principle, an idealism. It then developed into a sort of prejudice, for Jewish nationalism seemed to them to be an anti-cultural movement, an anti-modern movement, a strange ideology springing from the mass of life of oppressed Jewry in eastern Europe.

Into such an environment compounded of ideals and moods, Abba Silver came with his warm and passionate Herzlian Zionism. In this he differed, not only from the opinion of most of the Faculty, but from the average students who came from the Middle West. The boys from the Eastern Seaboard were often sympathetic to Zionism but they were in this regard much less serious than he. If a student became devoted to some practical cause, it would generally be the cause of social service and the social advance, for this was the logical expression of the traditional prophetism of Reform Judaism. He was exceptional as a nationalist devotee, a Zionist activist.



One or two of our schoolmates came from the same group as he did, and also his brother Maxwell came to the College the next year; and we learned then of the background of his strong and convinced Zionism. His father was one of the earliest Hebrew teachers making use of modern Hebrew, who influenced his sons and his pupils in modern Hebrew conversation and Herzlian Zionism. He was a pioneer in this new method of Jewish education which later became almost universal. We learned how these pupils founded the Herzl-Zion Club from which many of the later leaders of the Zionist movement came; how they wrote plays in Hebrew and gave them in a public hall; how Abba went to the meetings of the various lodges and unions to persuade the organizations to buy tickets. All this early pioneer Zionist enthusiasm gave a direction to his life from which he never deviated.

Many of us had come from families which were Zionists or in which there was a member who was interested in Zionism; but Zionism was a minor movement in American Jewish life in those days, so there were none of us whose whole family life was organized in so firm a Zionist devotion as his was. Certainly our Hebrew education at home was then of the Chedar or the Talmud Torah type of those days, without the many changes which the use of conversational Hebrew later brought about.

I think it was in the first year that Abba Silver was at College that a famous Zionist world leader came to Cincinnati and was invited to address the students at the Chapel service. I am no longer sure who the speaker was; it may have been Nachum Sokolow. After he spoke, Abba was asked to give a response and thanks on behalf of the students. To our astonishment, this new student from New York made the response in fluent, modern Hebrew. I know that very few, if any of the other students, could have done that. We recognized at



once that Abba Silver had a new type of Jewish background, different from ours, and that his interest in Zionism was much more single-minded and devoted than ours.

Perhaps this was one additional reason for his quiet thoughtfulness. He had some very strong thinking to do. Those of us whose sympathy with Zionism seemed at variance with the non- or anti-Zionism of most of our teachers had only to adjust a sentiment to a doctrine. But he had two strong doctrines to adjust and to harmonize. He must have spent a great deal of quiet time weighing the two points of view and seeking an inner harmony.

Being reserved in mood and having much to think about, he could easily have kept aloof from his classmates and schoolmates and gone on alone on his chosen road through his life, except for his family and intimate co-workers. But this was the Hebrew Union College, the school in which forty to fifty young men saw each other for hours every day and for many years. We were a family in which temperamental differences were recognized and generally respected, and yet in which all the members knew that they belonged together. So Abba Silver, the devoted Zionist, the serious, reserved, thoughtful man never withdrew or could withdraw from his classmates or his colleagues. He became an intimate part of our college life, participating in the concerns of our student meetings and playing an active part in our college enterprises, except athletics. Baseball or basketball, etc., never interested him at all.

In our meetings, he rarely argued about procedural matters or the trivia of organizational politics. He would therefore not speak frequently but, as might be expected of a man of his temperament, he would wait till a thought was matured in his mind (a patience not easy



for young people) and then when he knew precisely what he wanted to advocate and how to advocate it, he raised his hand for the floor, slowly unfolded his tall, lanky frame, and began to speak. We had never before heard such eloquence at our student meetings. We had plenty of good men, bright men, who could express themselves; but none of us could speak in his particular way. Heaven knows where he learned these secrets of eloquence! He did not throw away emotion by hot, excitable speech; but quietly, with steady march, and in his magnificent clarion voice, expressed his ideas with firm tread, giving weight to every sentence.

Abba had decided that what the College student body needed was a literary magazine. He advocated the idea and we all adopted the enterprise. He became the first editor of the Hebrew Union College Monthly, the magazine which has continued for over fifty years with only occasional interruptions.

The intimacy which kept this reserved and thoughtful man close to our college life and activity continued as it did with all of us in the Central Conference of American Rabbis, for as we mentioned before, when we entered the Conference, almost half of the membership were former schoolmates. He could easily have kept his membership in the Conference down to a nominal, professional affiliation, much as a busy physician might belong to the American Medical Association without taking part in its organizational activities or even attending its conventions. If that had happened with Abba Silver, it would have been understood -- regretted but forgiven -- because very soon, he became deeply involved in significant Jewish work outside the scope of our direct rabbinical professional concerns. He became very quickly the outstanding young man in the Zionist movement in America, soon one of the coming leaders, and after a while, the leader. He contributed more



than any other American Jew to the establishment of the independent State of Israel. All this work of his involved him in endless political battles in the Zionist organization, constant involvement with the raising of money, frequent visits to Washington for discussion with government officials, great rallies and protest meetings all over the country, and participation in the World Zionist Congresses. This could understandably have taken away from our professional organizational contacts. Yet he never permitted it to do so; the rabbinate meant too much to him as a life calling, and the intimacy of our family life at the college put the impress of brotherliness upon him. For very many years, he always managed to come to our Conference, if only for a day or two. He never failed to give a paper or a sermon or a lecture when the Program Committee asked him to do so.

Of course, in his attendance at the Conferences, he could frequently serve the Zionist cause which was so dear to him. Every year we had resolutions which tried somehow to balance the traditional anti-Zionism of the older generation and the growing interest in Zionism of the younger. We constantly had debates on the wording of our resolutions on Palestine and Zionism. All this was important to him, but that was not the reason for his attendance at Conferences. He never regarded the Conference as merely or primarily one more institution which he could use to further the Zionist cause. The Conference itself was precious to him as a professional organization of the Reform rabbinate, his beloved calling, and also because of the boyhood friendship and comradeship which our College life instilled in him and in us all. Therefore he continued in his attendance and his service to the Conference and, when the time came, became our President and served magnificently as the leader of our profession.



Abba Silver entered into a career in which he delivered a new address twice (or at least once) a week. An ordinary lecturer may prepare two or three lectures for a year, and go around the country repeating them in city after city. Of course, in his rabbinical life, from the very beginning, he had to travel around the country to speak for the Zionist cause and for other causes. This experience of nation-wide lecturing came to him earlier than to most because he entered the rabbinate already in command of a grand eloquence. But in addition to the two or three lectures which could be given over and over again in different parts of the country, as all traveling speakers must necessarily do, he was an active Rabbi and had to speak to the same congregation once or twice a week. A man can prepare two or three lectures as an objective task. He has a theme to express and he expresses it. Some of his personality, though not necessarily much, will be revealed in these lectures. But a man who has to speak to the same congregation week after week, cannot possibly be entirely or chiefly objective. Inevitably he will soon begin to reveal his deeper attitudes and his own basic temperament. A good selection of Abba Silver's lectures and addresses, as this book is, is more than an exposition of his ideas, it is a revelation of his personality.

Thus there can be no secret of what Abba Silver believed, thought, and advocated. And when we put together his thoughts from college days with the thoughts in his writings of later years, it is astounding how consistent his personality and his ideas are. There is, of course, growth and broadening with greater knowledge, and deepening with richer understanding which the years bring to a fortunate person. But the basic principles and the basic moods remain the same. It is not that the set of ideas which he brought to the Hebrew Union College



remained fixed all through his life. They were, of course, always there, but were deepened and enriched and were taught, as it were, to stand side by side with certain convictions and life attitudes that came to him at the Hebrew Union College and with others which came to him as he lived and worked in the great city of Cleveland and became a leading force in that great metropolis. He brought from New York a powerful, deep-rooted Jewishness. He added to it in Cincinnati an idealistic Judaism, and expanded it in Cleveland to an active, practical vision of social betterment. All these ideas were interwoven into his personality because he, in his deliberate thinking and meditation, had himself woven them into a consistent unity.

And a unique unity it was! He came, as we have said, to the Hebrew Union College with a powerful sense of Jewish nationalism which was some day to be translated and realized in a Herzlian sense into a Jewish State. In Cincinnati he came into contact with a third generation of leadership of the Reform movement (our President, Mr. Kohler, was a pupil of Geiger) and he saw the world idealism which breathed through it. He always appreciated and never mocked that prophetic idealism. In his own thinking, he made an extraordinary merger of both moods, the one, inward towards Jewish concentration, and the other, outward towards world brotherhood. He achieved it through his re-thinking of the prophetic message. Whereas the early Reformers emphasized only the vision of world unity, he saw in the Prophets their vision of Israel's redemption as an instrument for human brotherhood. Therefore his first constructive thinking was in the realm of Messianism, the redemption of Israel leading to the redemption of the world. His first book was in that field. Herzlian Zionist though he was, and convinced that nationalism was indispensable for the redemption of



the people of Israel, he nevertheless looked forward to the time when the nationalism of each separate nation would outgrow parochial self-worship and become a force towards world unity. What the early Reformers dreamed of for the world, he dreamed of attaining through Jewish nationalism, a redeemed Israel, as a servant and exemplar to the world.

There is a constant danger in eloquence. The ability to move an audience by the pageant of stirring mental pictures can become an intoxicating joy to the speaker, until he begins to rely more and more on the success of a technique. This never happened to him. Perhaps it was his father who trained him first to honest study. At all events, from his college days, he was an earnest and devoted student and remained so all his life. The content of his addresses and sermons was always more important to him than the manner in which they were given. The Jewish content, in addition to the ideas from a general world culture, was rather extraordinary and surprisingly original. From some semi-obscure Cabalistic work, from some medieval Jewish historical chronicle, he would produce an illustration that was enlightening and brilliant. Perhaps more astonishing was his use of Scripture. Innumerable men know the Bible well and can quote it aptly; but it might well be said that he never actually quoted Scriptural verses, or rarely did so. He had absorbed Scripture so completely through constant and thoughtful and receptive reading that Scriptural verses or fragments of verses appeared interwoven into the texture of a sentence, to produce a most original and, to those who knew the Bible, a stirring effect.

The only analogy that comes to mind to illustrate his absorption of Scripture is the way William Shakespeare used the Bible. Shakespeare almost never quotes a verse from Scripture as it is, but Scriptural phrases suddenly loom up in the texture of his language. The Book of



Proverbs speaks of the soul of man being the candle of the Lord. The Psalm speaks of man's life as a moving shadow. Shakespeare had these verses in mind and he also saw before him in his daily experience the footlights of the stage, which in those days were lighted candles casting the shadow of the moving actors onto the stage floor; and he embodied Scripture and experience into the words in Macbeth: "Out, out, brief candle. Life is a passing shadow, a poor actor who frets his hour upon the stage . . ."

In some such way, Abba Silver made Scripture part of the texture of his public speech and turned the letter of the Bible into the living word. All of which indicates that he was a constant student. He believed in the discipline of study, and often when he spoke on education, he referred to the primary duty, almost the moral duty, of teaching students early the discipline of concentrating the mind on a problem and not relaxing until the problem is solved.

It was certainly the Biblical influence which led to his great emphasis on social justice. He was a fearless advocate of the rights of Labor and that, too, in his original way. He did not make his social ideals the reflection of a political or doctrinal radicalism. I do not remember ever hearing from him, even in our student days, any expression of an idea that could properly be called Marxist. Somehow political radicalism did not attract him. It may be because he was a strong "Herzlian Zionist, and in the environment of his boyhood, Socialists in those days were anti-religionists and anti-Zionists and frequently mocked the intense Jewishness of their fellow Jews. This was long before a merger was made between Socialism and Zionism in the Labor Zionist movement. So in his original and independent fashion, he could combine political conservatism with social reform. He believed that religion should never be an apologist for any social system, but should always,



through the terms of its own inner mandate, work to allay the injustices of the world.

So Abba Hillel Silver was his own man. His opinions matured and developed from within; and once they developed, they received the superb advocacy of his magnificent eloquence. Because his opinions developed from within, being the outgrowth of syntheses which he himself created through his thought and study, he was firmly rooted; and when he spoke, he spoke from a firm conviction. This must be considered his most noticeable characteristic. It was noticeable in his boyhood at the College and conspicuous all through the years in his public career. If there was an issue upon which he was not convinced, he would not speak upon it. I do not ever remember him, in any of his speeches, weighing one alternative against the opposite and trying to arrive at a conclusion while he stood upon his feet. When he was not yet convinced, he would either dismiss the subject as one on which he had no opinion, or else he would weigh the matter in silence until he achieved an opinion, and when he achieved it, he believed in it and advocated it with power. I never heard him give a tricial or a shilly-shallying speech. He always gave the impression of strength, of fearless strength.

It is not the purpose of these few words to enumerate Abba Hillel Silver's many achievements -- some of them unforgettable -- or to list his books or to analyze his addresses as to their content, or to try to find the secret of his remarkable eloquence. These lines are meant to convey the impression he made upon a classmate and colleague and to tell what his personality meant to his friends and colleagues in all these years. He was an original. Whatever thoughts he had learned from people or books,



were reworked and remade into new forms and ideas. He was an embodiment of the best of our Jewish literature. He was a man of ideals and powerful conviction. While he lived, he was a tower of strength to us all, and his honored memory will, we pray, remain to enhearten and to bless.





1/ My esteemed and Venerable colleague - <sup>Teacher</sup> Difficult - ① I have to address<sup>62+1</sup>  
a man so much older & I am and must be respectful - <sup>and</sup> not  
were as I feel and stricken in years - and I dread the thought -  
- easier - as old men are want to do - in fire-side retrospect  
But being so much younger - diffident - inhibited  
② no visible faults - I wish I knew - serious deficiencies  
draw his known virtues of background.

The Athenians - Lillian - shaded areas

2/ Tramp - no vices.

3/ And speaking of Lillian - worried abt Sol - 2/1/17  
x'l

4/ If Sol. has no vices - Hobbes - I have.

Carpenter. Book Borden - Samples -  
The Results of his Manual Craftsman's - united - in pieces  
- clearly reveal some mag. infirmities in an otherwise -

5/ For men & 40 yrs - we first met - N.Y. - Bastone - I was  
a litvak - was removed - Burke's Perogé

As soon as we met - sized - realized - disorderly member  
friendly excuses - opponent worthy of his steel  
Other members, of course - F. was the man to watch

And so for 4 yrs - running battle - When Sol - K.I.C.  
Pres - Student Institution - Victorious -

- קטן סופרים אצלך חשב  
[כח] 1522 1522 1522 1522



6/ In subsequent yrs - no longer married - close circle -  
Sol. has been continuously a challenge + an inspiration  
Sol. remarked at College to head budding Rabbis - free himself  
- with a 5<sup>th</sup> class, been  
I went to Wheeling to begin - outlived in Prince Albert  
after 9 yrs - 7 servants Sol. left - went out free for  
no pay - He accumulated - no money - not even a wife  
Then he went to Chicago - 2, 1914 risked  
installed him when sent James ~~hand threat~~ Lillian  
- And in 1934 came to NY



# MISSING PAGE (S)





*But*  
ON HALACHA, ON JEWISH LAW, ON ITS HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT  
~~AND ITS RELEVANCE TO MODERN JEWISH LIFE,~~ HE HAS WRITTEN  
EXTENSIVELY. ~~(IN FACT, AMONG REFORM RABBIS, HE HAS BEEN A~~  
~~PIONEER IN THIS FIELD. HIS VOLUMES ON THE "REFORM LITURGY",~~  
~~AND ON "REFORM JEWISH PRACTICE AND ITS RABBINIC BACKGROUND", and~~  
*And he has* ~~"The Responsa Literature"~~  
REVEAL NOT ONLY BROAD SCHOLARSHIP BUT ALSO A RARE SKILL IN  
EXPOSITION AND CLARIFICATION. ~~†~~ A NOTED BABYLONIAN RABBI OF THE  
FOURTH CENTURY, HIMSELF A METICULOUS STUDENT OF THE HALACHA,  
RABBI NAHMAN BEN ISAAC, DECLARED: "HALACHA - LEGAL STUDY  
AND LEGAL DECISIONS - REQUIRE AS MUCH CLEARNESS OF MIND AS A  
COOL NORTH-WIND DAY -- *120% of the plus* RABBI <sup>*Parath*</sup> FREEHOF IS  
GIFTED WITH THAT KIND OF MIND.

*stop*  
*cont. on*  
*p. 4.*  
ON MIDRASH AND AGADAH-- ON HOMILETICS -- ON THE ART OF  
*as he did in "Modern Jewish Preaching"*  
PREACHING, DR. FREEHOF HAS NOT ONLY WRITTEN WELL, BUT IN  
HIS OWN PULPIT, HE HAS ILLUSTRATED, THROUGH THE YEARS, BY  
THE VERY SUBSTANCE, STYLE AND TECHNIQUE WHICH HE EMPLOYED,  
HIS OWN CONCEPTION OF THE ROLE OF THE PREACHER. IN HIS  
PREACHING, HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE TEACHER, THE EXPOSITOR.  
HIS AIM HAS BEEN TO ENLIGHTEN RATHER THAN EXCITE, TO LEAD  
MEN, ALONG THE QUIET WAYS OF INSTRUCTION, PERSUASION AND  
CONVICTION, TO THE ANCIENT ALTARS OF OUR FAITH. THERE HAS  
ALWAYS BEEN A QUIET DIGNITY TO HIS PREACHING. <sup>↑</sup> HE IS CONTENT

*Rabbi Freehof could really write a book on "how to*  
*succeed in the pulpit without really trying*



TO STIR AND MOVE MEN BY THE POWER OF <sup>h</sup>THOUGHT. HIS HAS NEVER BEEN THE STRIDENT VOICE, NOR YET THE SOFT AND HONEYED PHRASE, BUT THE ~~FIRM AND~~ FAITHFUL WORD OF TRUTH AND ENLIGHTENMENT. A SERMON OF DR. FREEHOF IS ALWAYS A WORK OF HONEST CRAFTSMANSHIP, CLEAN IN DESIGN AND EXPERT IN EXECUTION. HE KNOWS WHAT HE WANTS TO SAY, AND WHAT HE <sup>wants to say</sup> ~~THINKS~~ HE UTTERS IN A STYLE CLEAR, COOL, FLUENT AND EASY. HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN REVERENT OF THIS GREAT AND DIFFICULT ART OF PREACHING. HIS WORDS ARE FITLY SPOKEN -- "APPLES OF GOLD IN SETTINGS OF SILVER".

HE HAS NOT CONCEIVED OF HIS RABBINIC ROLE AS THAT OF A LATTER-DAY PROPHET WHO HAS BEEN SENT TO ROOT OUT AND TO PULL DOWN, TO DESTROY AND TO :OVERTHROW AND THEN HASTILY TO BUILD AND TO PLANT. RATHER, HE CONSCIOUSLY FOLLOWED ANOTHER PROPHETIC ADMONITION:

"IN QUIETNESS AND DELIBERATENESS SHALL YE BE HELPED" AND  
" <sup>11.3-א</sup> <sup>15002</sup> <sup>לל</sup> -- "YE SHALL NOT BE REDEEMED IN HASTE".

DR. FREEHOF'S FUNDAMENTAL EXPOSITORY LABORS HAVE BEEN, OF COURSE, DIRECTED TO THE TORAH, "THE BOOK OF BOOKS", BUT THROUGH THE YEARS HE HAS BEEN FOND OF REVIEWING OTHER BOOKS. HE SEES IN GOOD BOOKS, NOVELS AND PLAYS, THE TRUE



MIRROR AND INDEX OF THE AGE WE LIVE IN, THE PULSE AND TEMPER OF OUR TIME. THROUGH AN ANALYSIS OF THEM HE ~~WISHES TO~~ ALERT HIS LISTENERS TO THE GOOD AND THE EVIL, THE STRENGTH AND THE DANGERS, THE MORAL DEFICIENCIES AND PITFALLS OF OUR TIMES. HERE, TOO, HE IS THE WISE AND PENETRATING COMMENTOR, VIEWING THE PARTICULAR STORY OR THEME OF THE BOOK ~~WHICH IS~~ UNDER DISCUSSION, AGAINST THE ~~LARGER~~ <sup>the larger</sup> BACKGROUND OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE, THE SPECIFIC INCIDENT IN THE WIDER CONTEXT OF THE TREND OF THE TIMES, THE INDIVIDUAL <sup>with</sup> ~~AND~~ HIS PROBLEMS, IN THE SETTING OF DISCONTENTS THE TURMOIL AND OF HIS ENCOMPASSING WORLD. LISTENERS HAVE FOUND IN HIS BOOK-REVIEWS A CREATIVE INVENTIVENESS OF INTERPRETATION WHICH INTRIGUED AND STIMULATED THEM.

DR. FREEHOF HAS WRITTEN BOOKS ON THE SYNAGOGUE, "THE SMALL SANCTUARY", AND ON PRAYER, "IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD". THESE SUBJECTS HAVE BEEN CLOSEST TO HIS HEART. THE LITURGY OF OUR PEOPLE, AND OUR PEOPLE'S SPIRITUAL HOME -- THESE HAVE EVOKED HIS DEEPEST DEVOTION. HERE HE WROTE FOR BOTH YOUNG AND OLD; FOR SYNAGOGUE AND PRAYER ARE THE COMMON HERITAGE OF ALL RANKS AND OF ALL AGES.

*Begin* *Robt. Prall* *Orthodox*  
~~DR. FREEHOF~~ HAS BEEN A LEADER IN AMERICAN ~~REFORM~~ JUDAISM -- HE IS TODAY PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM. YET HIS EMPHASIS HAS BEEN NOT SO MUCH ON ~~REFORM~~ <sup>orthodox</sup> AS



ON JUDAISM -- THE BASIC AND UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES AND

DOCTRINES OF OUR FAITH WHICH ARE COMMON TO ALL BRANCHES -- <sup>while a staunch defender of his own</sup> REFORM, CONSERVATIVE, ORTHODOX. <sup>interpretation</sup> HE HAS NOT BEEN PAROCHIAL <sup>in his</sup>

~~IN~~ IN HIS OUTLOOK, A NARROW SECTARIAN, OR A ZEALOT IN CLINGING

TO HIS PARTICULAR VERSION OF JUDAISM. HE HAS AVOIDED UN- ✓

AVAILING THEOLOGICAL POLEMICS. HE FOUND MANY OPPORTUNITIES

FOR CONTACT AND COOPERATION WITH SINCERE PROPONENTS OF

VIEWS AND OPINIONS OTHER THAN HIS OWN. HE HAS PREFERRED

BRIDGES TO FENCES. HE BELIEVES THAT <sup>אלוהים הוא אלהים אחד</sup>

"THESE AS WELL AS THOSE ARE THE WORDS OF THE LIVING GOD."

WELL, THIS MAN, THIS <sup>הרב משה</sup> IS NOW SEVENTY YEARS

OLD. HE HAS AT LAST FINISHED HIS YEARS OF APPRENTICESHIP. HE

IS NOW QUITE READY AND QUALIFIED TO DO REAL WORK, AND TO MAKE

HIS MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS -- <sup>הוא מוכן לעבוד</sup>

<sup>באופן</sup>

EMERSON SAID: " THE MAN AND WOMAN OF SEVENTY ASSUME

TO KNOW ALL, THEY HAVE OUTLIVED THEIR HOPE, THEY RENOUNCE

ASPIRATION, ACCEPT THE ACTUAL FOR THE NECESSARY, AND TALK

DOWN TO THE YOUNG. "



I GIVE YOU TONIGHT DR. FREEHOF, A MAN WHO DOES NOT ASSUME TO KNOW IT ALL, WHO HAS NOT OUTLIVED HIS HOPE, NOR RENOUNCED ASPIRATION, NOR ACCEPTED THE ACTUAL FOR THE NECESSARY, AND WHO DOES NOT TALK DOWN TO THE YOUNG. HE IS STILL LEARNING AS WELL AS TEACHING. HE IS STILL HOPEFUL AND ASPIRING.

FATHER ABRAHAM, WE ARE TOLD IN THE BIBLE, WAS SEVENTY YEARS OLD WHEN HE LEFT HARAN FOR CANAAN, TO BEGIN, MIND YOU, TO BEGIN HIS CAREER, AS THE FOUNDER OF OUR FAITH AND THE PATRIARCH OF OUR RACE:

*Fin. 12.1.11. 15.18. 15.18. 15.18. 15.18.*

"HAPPY IS THE MAN WHOSE STRENGTH IS IN THEE; SUCH MEN GO FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH.

*many more years - with William, your  
life's companion and helper.*

*And this is a good time to wish you all*

PITTSBURGH, PA.  
SEPTEMBER 23, 1962



Sept 23, 1962  
Pittsburgh

AN ADDRESS ON THE OCCASION OF  
THE 70th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF DR. SOLOMON B. FREEHOF  
BY  
DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

RABBI JUDAH HANASI, THE FAMED REDACTOR OF THE MISHNA,  
LISTED THE EXCELLENCIES OF SEVERAL OF THE GREAT MASTERS  
WHO PRECEDED HIM -- "A SPICE-DEALER'S  
BASKET". WHEN PEOPLE COME TO THE SPICE-DEALER AND SAY TO  
HIM: "HAVE YOU GOOD OIL WITH YOU? HAVE YOU FIND OINTMENT?  
HAVE YOU BALSAM? HE REPLIES: " YES, I HAVE." THEY FIND THAT  
HE HAS EVERYTHING. SO IT IS WITH ELAZAR B. AZARIAH. WHEN  
SCHOLARS COME TO HIM AND QUESTION HIM ON MATTERS OF SCRIPTURE,  
HE CAN ANSWER. ON MISHNA HE CAN ANSWER, AND SO ON MIDRASH,  
HALACHA AND AGADA. THE SCHOLARS FIND THAT HE HAS EVERYTHING  
AND WHEN THEY DEPART FROM HIM THEY ARE SATISFIED AND ENRICHED.

DR. FREEHOF, TOO, IS AT HOME IN ALL BRANCHES OF JEWISH  
LEARNING. THE RANGE AND SCOPE OF HIS INTELLECTUAL INTERESTS  
AND RESOURCES ARE WIDE AND VARIED. TO THE BIBLE, HE HAS  
WRITTEN A THOUGHTFUL AND ILLUMINATING PREFACE; TO TWO  
BOOKS OF THE BIBLE, THE "PSALMS" AND "JOB", HE HAS WRITTEN  
FINE COMMENTARIES AND ADDED TO WHAT HAS BEEN GARNERED  
THROUGH THE AGES FROM HIS OWN FINE INSIGHTS.



ON HALACHA, ON JEWISH LAW, ON ITS HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT AND ITS RELEVANCE TO MODERN JEWISH LIFE, HE HAS WRITTEN EXTENSIVELY. IN FACT, AMONG REFORM RABBIS, HE HAS BEEN A PIONEER IN THIS FIELD. HIS VOLUMES ON THE "REFORM LITURGY", AND ON "REFORM JEWISH PRACTICE AND ITS RABBINIC BACKGROUND", REVEAL NOT ONLY BROAD SCHOLARSHIP BUT ALSO A RARE SKILL IN EXPOSITION AND CLARIFICATION. A NOTED BABYLONIAN RABBI OF THE FOURTH CENTURY, HIMSELF A METICULOUS STUDENT OF THE HALACHA, RABBI ~~NEHMAN~~ BEN ISAAC, DECLARED: "HALACHA - LEGAL STUDY AND LEGAL DECISIONS - REQUIRE AS MUCH CLEARNESS OF MIND AS A COOL NORTH-WIND DAY -- -- RABBI FREEHOF IS GIFTED WITH THAT KIND OF MIND.

ON MIDRASH AND AGADAH-- ON ~~MEM~~ILETICS -- ON THE ART OF PREACHING, DR. FREEHOF HAS NOT ONLY WRITTEN WELL, BUT IN HIS OWN PULPIT, HE HAS ILLUSTRATED, THROUGH THE YEARS, BY THE VERY SUBSTANCE, STYLE AND TECHNIQUE WHICH HE EMPLOYED, HIS OWN CONCEPTION OF THE ROLE OF THE PREACHER. IN HIS PREACHING, HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE TEACHER, THE EXPOSITOR. HIS AIM HAS BEEN TO ENLIGHTEN RATHER THAN EXCITE, TO LEAD MEN, ALONG THE QUIET WAYS OF INSTRUCTION, PERSUASION AND CONVICTION, TO THE ANCIENT ALTARS OF OUR FAITH. THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A QUIET DIGNITY TO HIS PREACHING. HE IS CONTENT



TO STIR AND MOVE MEN BY THE POWER OF THOUGHT. HIS HAS NEVER BEEN THE STRIDENT VOICE, NOR YET THE SOFT AND HONEYED PHRASE, BUT THE FIRM AND FAITHFUL WORD OF TRUTH AND ENLIGHTENMENT. A SERMON OF DR. FREEHOF IS ALWAYS A WORK OF HONEST CRAFTSMANSHIP, CLEAN IN DESIGN AND EXPERT IN EXECUTION. HE KNOWS WHAT HE WANTS TO SAY, AND WHAT HE THINKS HE UTTERS IN A STYLE CLEAR, COOL, FLUENT AND EASY. HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN REVERENT OF THIS GREAT AND DIFFICULT ART OF PREACHING. HIS WORDS ARE FITLY SPOKEN -- " APPLES OF GOLD IN SETTINGS OF SILVER".

HE HAS NOT CONCEIVED OF HIS RABBINIC ROLE AS THAT OF A LATTER-DAY PROPHET WHO HAS BEEN SENT TO ROOT OUT AND TO PULL DOWN, TO DESTROY AND TO :OVERTHROW AND THEN HASTILY TO BUILD AND TO PLANT. RATHER, HE CONSCIOUSLY FOLLOWED ANOTHER PROPHETIC ADMONITION: --

" IN QUIETNESS AND DELIBERATION ~~THE~~NESS SHALL YE BE HELPED" AND  
" -- "YE SHALL NOT BE REDEEMED IN  
HASTE".

DR. FREEHOF'S FUNDAMENTAL EXPOSITORY LABORS HAVE BEEN, OF COURSE, DIRECTED TO THE TORAH, " THE BOOK OF BOOKS", BUT THROUGH THE YEARS HE HAS BEEN FOND OF REVIEWING OTHER BOOKS. HE SEES IN GOOD BOOKS, NOVELS AND PLAYS, THE TRUE



MIRROR AND INDEX OF THE AGE WE LIVE IN, THE PULSE AND TEMPER OF OUR TIME. THROUGH AN ANALYSIS OF THEM HE WISHES TO ALERT HIS LISTENERS TO THE GOOD AND THE EVIL, THE STRENGTH AND THE DANGERS, THE MORAL DEFICIENCIES AND PITFALLS OF OUR TIMES. HERE, TOO, HE IS THE WISE AND PENETRATING COMMENTOR, VIEWING THE PARTICULAR STORY OR THEME OF THE BOOK WHICH IS UNDER DISCUSSION AGAINST THE LARGER BACKGROUND OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE, THE SPECIFIC INCIDENT IN THE WIDER CONTEXT OF THE TREND OF THE TIMES, THE INDIVIDUAL AND HIS PROBLEMS, IN THE SETTING OF DISCONTENTS THE TURMOIL AND OF HIS ENCOMPASSING WORLD. LISTENERS HAVE FOUND IN HIS BOOK REVIEWS A CREATIVE INVENTIVENESS OF INTERPRETATION WHICH INTRIGUED AND STIMULATED THEM.


DR. FREEHOF HAS WRITTEN BOOKS ON THE SYNAGOGUE, "THE SMALL SANCTUARY", AND ON PRAYER, "IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD". THESE SUBJECTS HAVE BEEN CLOSEST TO HIS HEART. THE LITURGY OF OUR PEOPLE, AND OUR PEOPLE'S SPIRITUAL HOME -- THESE HAVE EVOKED HIS DEEPEST DEVOTION. HERE HE WROTE FOR BOTH YOUNG AND OLD; FOR SYNAGOGUE AND PRAYER ARE THE COMMON HERITAGE OF ALL RANKS AND OF ALL AGES.

DR. FREEHOF HAS BEEN A LEADER IN AMERICAN REFORM JUDAISM -- HE IS TODAY PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM. YET HIS EMPHASIS HAS BEEN NOT SO MUCH ON REFORM AS ON JUDAISM -- ~~FREEBASIS~~



ON JUDAISM -- THE BASIC AND UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES AND DOCTRINES OF OUR FAITH WHICH ARE COMMON TO ALL BRANCHES -- REFORM, CONSERVATIVE, ORTHODOX. HE HAS NOT BEEN PAROCHIAL IN HIS OUTLOOK, A NARROW SECTARIAN, OR A ZEALOT IN CLINGING TO HIS PARTICULAR VERSION OF JUDAISM. HE HAS AVOIDED UN- AVAILING THEOLOGICAL POLEMICS. HE FOUND MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONTACT AND COOPERATION WITH SINCERE PROPONENTS OF VIEWS AND OPINIONS OTHER THAN HIS OWN. HE HAS PREFERRED BRIDGES TO FENCES. HE BELIEVES THAT

"THESE AS WELL AS THOSE ARE THE WORDS OF THE LIVING GOD."

WELL, THIS MAN, THIS  , IS NOW SEVENTY YEARS OLD. HE HAS AT LAST FINISHED HIS YEARS OF APPRENTICESHIP. HE IS NOW QUITE READY AND QUALIFIED TO DO REAL WORK, AND TO MAKE HIS MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS --

EMERSON SAID: " THE MAN AND WOMAN OF SEVENTY ASSUME TO KNOW ALL, THEY HAV OUTLIVED THEIR HOPE, THEY RENOUNCE ASPIRATION, ACCEPT THE ACTUAL FOR THE NECESSARY, AND TALK DOWN TO THE YOUNG. "



I GIVE YOU TONIGHT DR. FREEHOF, A MAN WHO DOES NOT ASSUME TO KNOW IT ALL, WHO HAS NOT OUTLIVED HIS HOPE, NOR RENOUNCED ASPIRATION, NOR ACCEPTED THE ACTUAL FOR THE NECESSARY, AND WHO DOES NOT TALK DOWN TO THE YOUNG. HE IS STILL LEARNING AS WELL AS TEACHING. HE IS STILL HOPEFUL AND ASPIRING.

FATHER ABRAHAM, WE ARE TOLD IN THE BIBLE, WAS SEVENTY YEARS OLD WHEN HE LEFT HARAN FOR CANAAN, TO BEGIN, MIND Y( U, TO BEGIN HIS CAREER, AS THE FOUNDER OF OUR FAITH AND THE PATRIARCH OF OUR RACE:

"HAPPY IS THE MAN WHOSE STRENGTH IS IN THEE; SUCH MEN GO FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH.

PIETTSBURGH, PA.  
SEPTEMBER 27, 1962





62-1

# 70

Seventieth Birthday Dinner  
Dr. Solomon B. Freehof

WRHS



*Rodef Shalom Congregation  
Solomon B. Freehof Hall  
Sunday, September 23, 1962  
6:30 P.M.*







# PROGRAM

Invocation.....DR. FREDERICK C. SCHWARTZ

Chairman.....EUGENE B. STRASSBURGER

Address.....DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

Birthday Greetings from

Rodef Shalom Congregation.....M. L. AARON

Response.....DR. SOLOMON B. FREEHOF

Benediction.....DR. WALTER JACOB



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