



## Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

Featuring collections from the Western Reserve Historical Society and  
The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives

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

Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

---

Reel  
187

Box  
71

Folder  
1036

Bar-Ilan University, 1962.



62-10 American ~~2000~~ Committee  
for Bar-Ilan University  
for Rabbi Porath  
Tuesday - Dec. 18 - 1962  
(Cleveland)

RABBI JUDAH HANASI, THE FAMED REDACTOR OF THE MISHNA, LISTED THE EXCELLENCIES OF SEVERAL OF THE GREAT MASTERS WHO PRECEDED HIM. AMONG THEM WAS ELAZAR B. AZARIAH. HE CALLED 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 FINE 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 TORAH, 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.

RABBI PORATH, TOO, IS AT HOME IN ALL BRANCHES OF JEWISH LEARNING. ON HALACHA, ON JEWISH LAW, ON ITS HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT HE HAS WRITTEN EXTENSIVELY. IN HIS MAVO HA-TALMUD HE HAS REVEALED NOT ONLY BROAD SCHOLARSHIP IN THE VAST RABBINIC FIELD, BUT ALSO A RARE SKILL IN EXPOSITION, CHRONEOLOGICAL ARRANGEMENT, SYSTEMATIZATION 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 -- RABBI PORATH IS GIFTED WITH THAT KIND OF MIND.



RABBI PORATH HAS BEEN A LEADER IN AMERICAN ORTHODOX JUDAISM. YET HIS EMPHASIS HAS BEEN NOT SO MUCH ON ORTHODOXY, AS ON JUDAISM -- THE BASIC AND UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES AND DOCTRINES OF OUR FAITH WHICH ARE COMMON TO ALL BRANCHES -- REFORM, CONSERVATIVE, ORTHODOX ALIKE. WHILE A STAUNCH DEFENDER OF HIS OWN INTERPRETATION OF JUDAISM, HE HAS NOT BEEN PAROCHIAL IN HIS OUTLOOK OR A NARROW SECTARIAN, OR A ZEALOT CLINGING TO HIS PARTICULAR VERSION OF JUDAISM. UNLIKE SOME OTHER OF HIS COLLEAGUES, HE HAS AVOIDED UNAVAILING INTRACOMMUNAL 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." BY HIS PERSONAL LIFE HE HAS DEMONSTRATED THE TRUTH OF THE RABBINIC DICTUM: " -- ~~SCHOLARS~~ ENHANCE THE PEACE OF THE WORLD. "

HE HAS GRACED OUR COMMUNITY FOR MANY YEARS, AND IN A QUIET BUT EFFECTIVE WAY, HE HAS MADE A DEFINITE IMPACT UPON ITS LIFE, AND INSTITUTIONS, ESPECIALLY UPON ITS INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING AND STUDY.

WE ARE GRATIFIED THAT BAR ELAN UNIVERSITY OF ISRAEL WHICH IS DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF AND RESEARCH



IN MANY FIELDS OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE AS WELL AS IN BRANCHES OF JUDAICA, HAS DECIDED TO BESTOW THE SIGNAL HONOR UPON RABBI ISRAEL PORATH BY DESIGNATING HIM AS AN HONORARY FELLOW, AND I AM PROUD TO PRESENT RABBI PORATH TO DR. TUVIA BAR-ELAN, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE UNIVERSITY FOR THE ROBINING CEREMONY.

