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

Series VI: Speaking Engagements, 1917-1964.

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Paducah, Kentucky, 1923-1941.

RABBI HARRY S. MARGOLIS
PADUCAH, KENTUCKY

November 21, 1923.

Rabbi Abba H. Silver,
The Temple,
Cleveland, Ohio.

Dear Silver:

I am writing you in behalf of the Joint Brotherhood Federation which we have in this city. This is an organization which was formed last year, comprising the members of the church and Temple brotherhoods of this city. It met for the first time last April at a banquet and heard an address by Bishop Woodcock of Louisville. Its purpose is to stimulate a closer spirit of fellowship between Jew and non-Jew. Thus far its efforts have proven very successful in that it has been able to bring together the men of this community in a spirit of brotherhood and fraternization.

We are planning another meeting of this kind to be held sometime in March or April and I would consider it an unusual privilege to have you here with us at that time and address this gathering. It will not only be an inspiration to all but will mean a great deal to the Jew in this city--raising his prestige and dignity.

If it will at all be possible for you to come, I wish you would let me know as soon as convenient, setting your own date. We will try to conform to your convenience. At the same time I wish you would let me know what remuneration you would expect from us in return for your kind services. I know of nothing that would raise the position of our Men's Club in this community more, than your coming here. May we not look forward to the pleasure of having you here in the very near future?

Paducah is near Louisville, Nashville, Memphis and St. Louis and perhaps in your tour to some of these cities you can arrange a visit here.

Looking forward to an early favorable reply and with cordial greetings to you and Mrs. Silver, I am

Faithfully yours,
Harry S. Margolis

November 30th, 1923.

Rabbi Harry S. Margolis,
Paducah, Kentucky.

My dear Margolis,

Permit me to thank you for your kindness in inviting me to address a meeting of the Joint Brotherhood Federation in your city. I wish I were in a position to avail myself of the opportunity. Unfortunately my work here is so heavy and the building of our new Temple is occupying so much of my time that I cannot in justice to myself accept any more engagements. Perhaps at some future time, I may be of service to you.

With kindest regards and trusting that you are well and happy in your work, I beg to remain

Very sincerely yours,

RABBI HARRY S. MARGOLIS
PADUCAH, KENTUCKY

November 5, 1924.

Rabbi Abba H. Silver,
The Temple,
Cleveland, Ohio.

Dear Silver:

You will recall that about a year ago I wrote you to determine if you could arrange to address my congregation sometime at your convenience. In replying, you stated that you could not come here owing to the pressure of duties connected with the building of the Temple but as soon as the Temple was completed you would try to make arrangements to come here. Do you think you could come here in January on your way to the St. Louis convention? You see we are only one hundred and fifty miles away from St. Louis.

Although we are not prepared to offer you the attractive monetary inducements that are forthcoming from larger communities, we are willing to offer you one hundred dollars and expenses if you will consent to address our Temple Forum, which is being sponsored by our Men's Club. Our meeting night is Sunday night but we are willing to set the day and date to meet your convenience as we are doing in the case of Rabbi Simon of Washington, who is our first Forum speaker of the season.

If you find it impossible to come here in January, how about February or March?

Trusting you can see your way clear to come here and assuring you of a most cordial welcome, with best wishes to you and Mrs. Silver, I am

Sincerely,
Harry S. Margolis
(Lake)

December Eighth
1924

Rabbi Harry S. Margolis,
Paducah, Kentucky.

My dear Margolis,

I delayed answering your letter in the hope that I would be able to work out my schedule in such a way as to be able to come to you on my way to the St. Louis Convention. I find, however, that I shall have to be in St. Louis on Monday, January 19th to open the campaign of the Palestine Restoration Fund, and I must get back to Cleveland in time for my Friday Evening Service.

I shall do my utmost to come to you some time in the Spring, perhaps at the same time taking in a few other towns in your neighborhood. I shall let you know later whether I can make it and when.

With kindest regards, I beg to
remain

Very sincerely yours.

Paducah, Ky. ✓ X



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Rabbi Abba Silber,
Cleveland, Ohio.

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PADUCAH, KY.

Dec. 15, 1925.

Dear Rabbi:-

It is an extreme favor I am about to ask, but before so doing will preface same with a bit of detail.

Four years ago when Rabbi Margolis came to our Congregation, he organized a Man's Club and Temple Forum - open both to Jew and Non-Jew.

You probably know that Rabbi Margolis is not officiating with our Congregation, having accepted the pulpit of Temple in St. Paul.

Though we are without a Rabbi spiritual leader, we the Men's Club of Temple Israel are attempting to carry on our Temple religious work (until we can get a Rabbi) and also to continue to conduct a Forum and what I will ask of you is this, we are most anxious to have you as a Forum speaker at a time to suit your convenience during January, February or March. We have a limited fund available for speaker's fee.

We trust you will find it possible to grant us the opportunity of hearing you as our Forum speaker this season. We are

Most sincerely,

Temple Israel Forum Com.

—the Store With a Conscience.

X

December Twenty-third

1925

Mr. H. L. Wallerstein,
Care Wallerstein Bros.,
Paducah, Kentucky.

My dear Mr. Wallerstein,

I wish I could see my way clear to accept the kind invitation contained in your letter of December fifteenth to address your ~~Wallerstein~~ Club Forum, but I find myself very heavily burdened with speaking engagements and cannot accept any additional dates for this season.

Perhaps another season may offer an opportunity for me to serve you.

With kindest regards, permit me to remain

Very sincerely yours,

P.

*



PADUCAH'S LEADING HOTEL
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HOTEL PALMER

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March 1917

Rabbi A. H. Silver

The Temple

Cleveland, O.

My dear Rabbi Silver

Will you, while at Nashville, visit Paducah,

and address the Men's Club of Temple Israel of

Paducah, Ky. Fee \$50.00. You can reach Paducah
either on the way to or from Nashville.

Kindly wire reply.

Sincerely Yours

Harry M. Chasman

Temple Israel

Paducah, Ky.

When in
Memphis or St. Louis
Stop at Hotel Claridge.

Rabbi Harry L. Richmond,
Temple Israel,
Paducah, Ky.

My dear Rabbi Richmond:

Thank you very much for your
kind note of March 15th.

I wish I were free to accept
your invitation to address The Men's
Club. Unfortunately, I must return
to Cleveland immediately after my
Nashville address.

With kindest regards and
trusting that you are well, I beg
to remain

Very sincerely,

AHS:NEB

Temple Israel

BROADWAY AT SEVENTH
PADUCAH, KY.

MORRIS W. GRAFF, RABBI

M. SIMON, PRESIDENT
J. J. GRUENEBAUM, SECRETARY

December 5 1935

Dear Friend,

We are eagerly looking forward to your visit on the seventh of next month. I have never received from you your subject or list of subjects. What are you speaking on in Memphis?

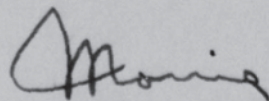
I wonder if you will do me another personal favor? Would you please make a brief talk at a combined luncheon of the Lions and Rotary clubs? Both of these groups have loyally supported the Forum and in appreciation of their aid I like to have the speakers appear before them at a noon meeting. Others on our programs have complied with this request and I hope that you will do likewise.

By way of information, there is a 7:10 P.M. B&O train out of Cincinnati that has a special Paducah sleeper attached at Louisville. This is the best connection between Cincinnati and Paducah.

What did you think of Revusky's book "Jews in Palestine"? Personally, I liked it very much but I would like your opinion.

Ruth joins in sending best personal greetings. Give Mel Harris our regards.

Sincerely yours,



Temple Israel

BROADWAY AT SEVENTH
PADUCAH, KY.

MORRIS W. GRAFF, RABBI

M. SIMON, PRESIDENT
J. J. GRUENBAUM, SECRETARY

December 23 1935

Dear Friend,

*2/3 are non-Jewish
After discussing the subjects, " The Age of Dictators " and " Some Aberrations of our Day " with various forum patrons I find them both very popular. (In the case of the second subject I know a lot of dictionaries would have to be consulted!) Our forum audiences* are composed for the most part of lawyers, doctors, teachers and others who have had a fairly good, liberal education. It's really a pretty intelligent group.

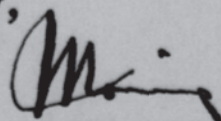
So far this year we have had Senator LaFollette who spoke on the national situation, and David Seabury who spoke on the subject, " How To Worry Successfully." Your address concludes the 1935-6 forum. It will interest you to know that two days after your lecture here Dr. Townsend is scheduled to speak before a large public mass meeting sponsored by the local Townsend club. I dont know how many of the local Townsendites are patrons of the forum. (Perhaps you could discuss the Townsend Plan at the noon-day meeting.)

I've mentioned all this because any subject that you prefer to speak on here is perfectly acceptable with us. The above information might help in making the selection for us. Will you please let me know at a very early date (a) the subject you think best for your engagement here, (b) the definite time of your arrival, and (c) if you will address the Lions and Rotary Clubs at noon?

I am enclosing a letter which I am sending this week to the members of the Temple. I thought you would be interested in seeing it.

With Happy Hanukkah greetings
from both of us,

Sincerely,



Temple Israel

BROADWAY AT SEVENTH
PADUCAH, KY.

MORRIS W. GRAFF, RABBI

M. SIMON, PRESIDENT
J. J. GRUENBAUM, SECRETARY

Dear Member:

I realize very well that most form letters are hastily thrown away. I usually do the same. But for several reasons, I am asking you to make an exception in this case. In the first place, It would be physically impossible for me to type a letter to each member of the congregation. Secondly, this is my initial written contact with the general membership of our Temple. Thirdly, I believe that I have a message deserving of your attention.

If you are a faithful Temple-goer this letter is not particularly applicable. By attending Temple each Friday evening you are already doing what I am suggesting to all of Paducah's Jewry.

It seems to me that most people simply fail to realize that religion is one of the vital needs of existence even as are food, clothing, shelter, light and air. Without these latter, you would certainly perish. You would not, therefore, deliberately go on a "hunger strike" or be hermetically sealed in a dark and airless room. But many of you will deprive yourself of spiritual nourishment and divine light. Physical deterioration is not a swift and immediate process. Scientists estimate that you can live for many days without food. You can exist for many more on a minimum amount. Prisoners live for years in Stygian darkness. And likewise you may apparently live without religion for an indefinite period. But the effects of spiritual malnutrition will be written on your soul, as surely as physical malnutrition is written into the bones and sinews of your body.

Even as a doctor is interested in your physical condition I am concerned with your spiritual development. If I had the power to prescribe for your spiritual health I would merely write: "TEMPLE ATTENDANCE--Take Regularly." Many of you were deeply impressed with David Seabury's recent Forum lecture particularly with his statements regarding the value of the confessional. I quite agree with him that each individual should have an opportunity to unburden himself, for much personal value is derived therefrom. And yet, do you realize that such opportunity is regularly given to you if you will but seize it? What else are our Friday evening services with the Meditations, Silent Devotion, Responsive Readings, and Prayers but moments of communion and confession? Whether you are a business man, professional, or retired, whether you are a housewife, teacher, parent, or child, you need confession periods, confession of the highest and purest type, confession with your people and with your God. You must not look upon our Prayer Book and services as part of a meaningless ritual but as a solemn opportunity to give unto your soul a time for needed meditation, for offering a prayer of thanksgiving for the very

joy of living, of communing with your finer self and with your Divine Maker.

This advice I submit as your Rabbi and counselor. Won't you accept it in the friendly manner in which it is offered and comply with the suggestions? I do not promise any marvelous panaceas, nor do I guarantee a cure-all. But I do say that you can thus help yourself to one of the most useful aids toward a happy and well balanced life.

Please save and show this letter to others in your family and to your friends.

I am,
Faithfully,

P. S. Realizing Israel's traditional "love of learning" and also the past inadequacy of Jewish education I am preparing for next month a series of lectures entitled "A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF JEWISH HISTORY." Like my course of addresses on "Palestine Today" this, too, will be popular in style. I plan to cover the entire field of Jewish history from the humble beginnings of the Hebrew nation through the emancipation of the Jews in the modern world up to January 1936. The series will be divided into five integral lectures, each separate in itself. The materials for these sermons will be based for the most part on a recent book bearing the same title, "A Bird's-Eye View of Jewish History" by Dr. Cecil Roth and published by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. This series will neither conflict with nor duplicate the Discussion Group sponsored by our Men's Club.

LECTURE ONE—FRIDAY, JANUARY 3
ISRAEL 1600-586 B. C. E.

The Birth of the Hebrew People
The Establishment of the Monarchy
The Kingdom of Samaria The Kingdom of Judah
The Prophets of Israel

LECTURE TWO—FRIDAY, JANUARY 10
THE JEW 586 B. C. E.-425 C. E.

The Return from Exile
The Struggle Against Hellenism
The Hasmonaean State The Hegemony of Rome
The Patriarchate The Mesopotamian Center
The Development of the Talmud

LECTURE THREE—FRIDAY, JANUARY 17
DIASPORA 425-1492

The Diaspora in Europe The Triumph of Christianity
The Hegemony of Islam The Northern Centers
The New Learning The Shadow of the Cross
The Social Revolution Expulsions and Persecutions
The Crowning Tragedy

LECTURE FOUR—FRIDAY, JANUARY 24
THE BREAK OF DAWN 1492-1815

Renaissance and Reformation The Levantine Refuge
Poland (to 1648) Life in the Ghetto
The Dawn of Liberty The Fall of the Ghetto

LECTURE FIVE—FRIDAY, JANUARY 31
THE NEW AGE 1815-1935

Revolution and Emancipation
Anti-Semitism and the New Diaspora
A New World

Temple Israel

BROADWAY AT SEVENTH
PADUCAH, KY.

MORRIS W. GRAFF, Rabbi

M. SIMON, PRESIDENT
J. J. GRUENEBAUM, SECRETARY

May 28 1935

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

Dear Friend and Colleague:

Since coming to Paducah five years ago I have always entertained the hope that someday I might be able to invite you to speak here. At last the opportunity has come for me to realize this hope.

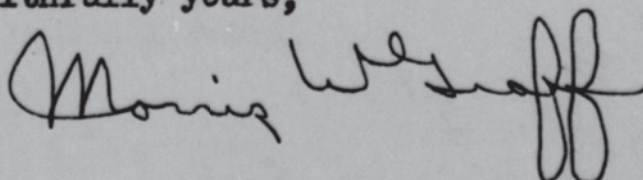
The Men's Club of the Temple is now preparing its annual Forum program. The Forum lectures are sponsored by the Men's Club as a result of my suggestions made a few years back. That the programs have proven to be a success is a source of great joy to me.

Information has reached me that you are to speak in Memphis on January 8, 1936. Therefore, at this time I am asking if you will speak in Paducah on Tuesday, January 7th., the day before your Memphis engagement? The transportation facilities between Paducah and Memphis are excellent. As to a fee- we can offer \$150. I realize that this is not as much as you usually receive but due to a small population our budget is naturally limited. Dr. John Haynes Holmes spoke here last year for \$125 and Bishop Francis J. McConnell the year before for \$150.

I sincerely hope you will do me this personal favor by accepting the invitation. Your presence on our Forum will go far in assuring its continued success. What are your lecture subjects for next season?

With best personal regards
in which Mrs. Graff joins me,

Faithfully yours,



June 3, 1935.

Rabbi Morris W. Graff,
Temple Israel,
Broadway at Seventh,
Paducah, Ky.

My dear Morris:

Let me thank you for your kind letter of May 28.
I shall be very happy to be with you on Tuesday, January 7,
the day before I am scheduled in Memphis. As for the
honorarium - \$150.00. I do not, as yet, know what
my lecture subjects will be next season. I will be happy
to write to you early in the Fall.

Do you plan to attend the Rabbinical Conference?

With all good wishes to you and to your dear
lady, I remain

Very cordially yours,

AHS:BK

December 9, 1935

Rabbi Morris W. Graff,
Temple Israel,
Broadway at Seventh,
Paducah, Ky.

My dear Morris:

Thank you so much for your letter of December 5. As regards subjects - if the audience is Jewish, I would suggest the subject THE CHANGING STATUS OF THE JEW IN THE MODERN WORLD. If the audience is mixed, the following subjects might be of interest:

- (1) THE AGE OF DICTATORS - This is the address which I will deliver at Memphis.
- (2) SOME ABERRATIONS OF OUR DAY - This is the address which I delivered a few weeks ago at the City Club of Cleveland and proved rather attractive.

As regards speaking before the Lions and Rotary Clubs at noon - I must first find out whether I can arrive in Paducah on time.

With all good wishes to you and Ruth, I remain

As ever yours,

AHS:BK

December 27, 1935

Rabbi Morris W. Graff,
Temple Israel,
Broadway at Seventh,
Paducah, Ky.

My dear Morris:

Thank you for your letter of December 23.
Perhaps the subject "Some Aberrations of Our Day"
would be the most appropriate for your Forum audience.
I plan to arrive in Paducah at 7:35 A.M. Tuesday morning.

I would rather not address the Lions and
Rotary Clubs at noon. I find that speaking twice a day
is a good deal of a hardship on me. If, however, you
count on my speaking there to help your attendance in
the evening, I shall go out of my way to say a few words
to them. But I would rather not.

I am looking forward with great pleasure
to seeing you on the 7th. With all good wishes, I remain

Very cordially yours,

AHS:BK

TEMPLE ISRAEL

PADUCAH, KENTUCKY

ALEXANDER FEINSILVER,
RABBI

April 23rd, 1941.

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

Dear Dr. Silver:

Our city is to be host to the forthcoming annual meeting of the Kentucky-Tennessee Association of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Southeastern Conference of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, to be held here on November 8th, 9th and 10th, 1941.

For the sessions on Sunday, November 9th, we are planning a morning religious service, to be held at the Temple, an afternoon symposium, on a subject dealing with some phase of contemporary Jewish life, and a dinner-dance in the evening, to be held at the Hotel Irvin Cobb.

At a recent meeting of the committee in charge of arrangements, the desire was expressed to secure your services as the principal speaker for the Sunday evening session. The local congregation, the bi-state association, and the national organization of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations are cooperating in this undertaking, and will share in meeting whatever expense is entailed.

If the date mentioned is convenient to you, we should very much like to have you with us at that time. Would you be good enough to inform us whether you will be able to arrange it, and what your fee will be? Hoping that you will find it possible to accept this invitation, and that we may soon hear from you,

Mrs. Sterling Berg

Mrs. Sterling Berg,
Program Chairman.

Mr. Mose Simon

Mr. Mose Simon,
President, Temple Israel.

Alexander Feinsilver

Alexander Feinsilver,
Rabbi, Temple Israel.

May 14, 1941

Mr. Mose Simon, President
Temple Israel
Paducah, Kentucky

My dear Mr. Simon:

Permit me to thank you, Rabbi Alexander Feinsilver and Mrs. Sterling Berg for your invitation to address the evening session of the Kentucky-Tennessee Association of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations on Sunday, November 9. I feel highly honored to have received your invitation and I wish I were free to come. Unfortunately I have been constrained in recent years to limit my out of town lecture engagements to the work of the United Jewish Appeal and the United Palestine Appeal whose national chairman I am. I am compelled to do a great deal of traveling in connection with the campaigns even to the extent of neglecting some of my important work here at home. I hope that you will understand. Perhaps at some future time I may be of service to you.

With all good wishes for success, I remain

Very cordially yours,

AHS:BK