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

Series VII: Personal Miscellaneous, 1908-1989, undated.

Sub-series D: Writings, 1915-1963, undated.

Reel
216

Box
80

Folder
53

Therefore Choose Life, Volume I, reviews, 1957-1959.

הסוכנות היהודית — אגף אמריקאי
THE JEWISH AGENCY-AMERICAN SECTION, Inc.
515 PARK AVENUE, NEW YORK 22, N. Y.

PLAZA 2-0600

CABLE ADDRESS: JEVAGENCY

April 13, 1967

Rabbi Daniel Silver
The Temple
University Circle at Silver Park
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

Dear Danny:

Forgive me for not replying earlier to your recent letter. I was simply overwhelmed with urgent matters requiring attention and fell behind in my correspondence.

The proof-sheets of the first volume of your father's sermons came duly to my hand and I am trying to arrange for reviews, both in the American Zionist and Midstream.

So far as the American Zionist is concerned, it is likely that we will get Rabbi Charles Shulman to do the job. In the case of Midstream, I don't know as yet. Have you any good suggestion? I would have suggested Herbert Weiner, were it not for the fact that he has been doing the editorial work on the book. He happens to be a contributor to Midstream from time to time, including the current issue.

As for pictures, I am sure we have a number which might possibly be used.

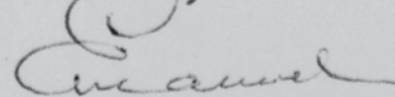
Finally, let me say that I have read some of the sermons and found them very stimulating and surprisingly relevant, after the passage of so many years. It is a wonderful thing that a complete job is being planned and carried out, volume after volume.

While I am at it, may I ask whether any progress has been made with regard to preparing a decent, full-length biography? It is time this were done by a really competent person. He should be both a good researcher and a good writer, else two people would have to work on it.

With warmest regards to all the family,

As ever

Yours,



Emanuel Neumann

EN:BW

April 18, 1967

Dr. Emanuel Neumann
The Jewish Agency - American Section, Inc.
515 Park Avenue
New York 22, N. Y.

Dear Emanuel :

I am grateful that you will be Godfather to the two reviews in the American Zionist and Midstream. I should like them to appear as soon as possible. The publication date of the book will be the middle of May.

We have not, as yet, asked anyone to write a biography of Dad - indeed I do not propose to do so. I believe that this is best done dispassionately and not as a commissioned biography a la Manchester.

Mother is well, and my family is in good health. With all good wishes, I remain

Sincerely yours,

DANIEL JEREMY SILVER

DJS:rvf

EMANUEL NEUMANN

515 PARK AVENUE

NEW YORK 22, N. Y.

April 18, 1967

Rabbi Daniel Silver
The Temple
University Circle at Silver Park
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

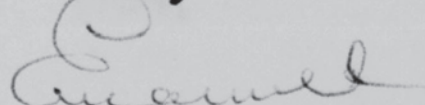
Dear Danny:

Further with regard to reviews of the forthcoming book: Torczyner invited Feuer to do the review for the AMERICAN ZIONIST, but he replied that he had already done a review for some other publication and recommended Rabbi Julius J. Nodel of St. Louis who has consented to do the review for the AMERICAN ZIONIST. We have requested Arthur Hertzberg to do the review for MIDSTREAM. He said he would be glad to do it, but that he had been approached on the same matter some months ago by COMMENTARY. We will have to resolve this question of COMMENTARY vs. MIDSTREAM within the next few days.

Best wishes for a happy Pesach!

As ever

Yours,



Emanuel Neumann

EN:jf



The World Publishing Company

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NEW YORK, N.Y. 10019

April 21, 1967

Rabbi Daniel Silver
The Temple
University Circle & Silver Park
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Dan:

You will be interested in the enclosed advance review from the latest Virginia Kirkus Bulletin, a service subscribed to by almost all bookstores and libraries in the country.

I hope you also received a copy of the finished book-jacket. If you feel--as I do--that it turned out well and has good display value, perhaps you could make use of some copies at The Temple or elsewhere. We have some extra copies for promotional use.

Cordially,

Frank Elliott
Religious Books Department

FE:ak
Enclosure

1st Volume of Abba Hillel Silver's Work Off the Press

(Continued from Page 1)

moments of the religious and civic calendar will follow. A final volume will present his statements and addresses as spokesman and leader in the broader community--as citizen, statesman, and Zionist.

Abba Hillel Silver was born in Lithuania in 1893. From 1917 until his death in 1963, he was rabbi of The Temple. He served the Jewish community in the capacities of president of the

Central Conference of American Rabbis, president of the Zionist Organization of America, chairman of the American Section of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, and as a board member of Hebrew Union College (of which he was a graduate), the Jewish Community Federation, and many civic organizations.

He is credited with contributing more than any other American Jew to the establishment of the independent state of Israel.

Dr. Silver's many published works include: "Religion in a Changing World," "The World Crisis and Jewish Survival," "Messianic Speculation in Israel," "Vision and Victory," "Where Judaism Differed," and

"Moses and the Original Torch."

In an introductory reminiscence, Solomon B. Freehof, rabbi emeritus of Rodeph Sholem Temple, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, gives a personal impression of this remarkable man who was his classmate at Hebrew Union College and a lifelong friend. "He was an original," Dr. Freehof writes. "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 hearten us all."

THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE'

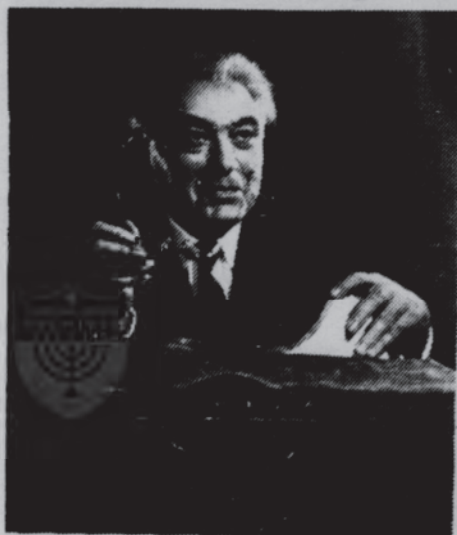
1st Volume of Abba Hillel Silver's Treasury of Sermons and Speeches Comes Off the Press

The eloquent wisdom of the late Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver inspired and guided the American Jewish community during a half century of great challenge and crisis. A respected scholar, a world-renowned spiritual leader, and a major force in the Zionist movement, Dr. Silver left an intellectual and spiritual legacy preserved in "Therefore Choose Life," a collection of his sermons, public speeches, and writings.

This first in a series of four proposed volumes of Dr. Silver's oral and written works was issued this week by The World Publishing Company. The series is under the general editorship of Herbert Weiner, rabbi of Temple Israel of the Oranges and Maplewood, N.J.

"Therefore Choose Life" is comprised of the words which Abba Hillel Silver addressed chiefly to the individual as an individual. The sermons and addresses are concerned with the basic hungers of a human being for life, comfort, courage, and meaning.

The reader finds that the points of view expressed have direct relevance for his own life. Whether he spoke about "Opening Windows on Life," "Our Responsibility for Evil," "The Democratic Society," "What Are You Afraid Of?," "Man and His Loves



Abba Hillel Silver

and Hates," or "religion in Present-Day Jewish Life"--to name just a few topics--Dr. Silver expressed an abiding faith in man's nature, endowments, and achievements.

The full scope of Abba Hillel Silver's words will be published in three subsequent volumes over the next few years. Rabbi Silver's gift for illuminating biblical themes and characters will be the focus of the next book in the series. A collection of addresses delivered on the high

(Continued on Page 12)



INDIANAPOLIS, IND.
NEWS

— D. 173,170 —

INDIANAPOLIS METROPOLITAN AREA

JUL 8 1967

Rabbi Sees Hope For Man's Future

"THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE." By Herbert Weiner. Cleveland: World Publishing Co. \$10.

"To be a pathfinder, to blaze a trail through life" was the goal of Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver.

As a scholar, champion of human rights, speaker and writer, Rabbi Silver did just that. A leader of the Zionist movement, he used his eloquence to sway the United Nations in favor of a Jewish homeland.

"Therefore Choose Life," edited by Rabbi Herbert Weiner of Temple Israel of the Oranges and Maplewood, N.J., is the first of a planned

series of volumes on the intellectual and spiritual, spoken and written words of Rabbi Silver.

The selections in this volume show the rabbi's deep roots in a biblical and Judaic heritage always overshadowed by a clear hope for the future of men.

In a baccalaureate address given at the University of Virginia in 1959 titled "Man's hopes in the atomic age," he said, "I am persuaded that ours is truly a great age. More is being done in our day for the improvement of the conditions of the life of the common man, for the raising of his standard of living, his health, his education, and old age

than in any other five generations in the past."

His philosophy hit at the very core of every man's heart, Jewish or not. "There is one fundamental difference between love and hate. Love is a refuge. Hate is never a refuge. Love is the enduring sanctuary of life. Life may rob you of many things. It often does. But it can never bereave us of love itself," he said in a sermon called "Man and His Loves and Hates."

This collection of 53 selections by Rabbi Silver will be a valuable asset to every Jewish library, and a fascinating presentation of Hebrew and universal wisdom to the non-Jew.—R.L.H.

land in a Russian slave labor

Columbus Dispatch

7/16/67 **In Brief**

THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE:

Selected Sermons, Addresses and Writings of Abba Hillel Silver; World; \$10.

Rabbi Silver, who died in 1963, was for more than 50 years a Jewish scholar, speaker and leader of national stature. This collection of his papers and utterances is edited by Herbert Weiner and includes a memoir by Solomon B. Freehof.

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How did this trap? tory part of author's r question. T the "decisi Yalta." Bu would like about the r Roosevelt, V er and Mars wartime m lin's fate w — Henry C.

(Mr. Wol "The Germ "The Imper

Jewish Aspiration

Therefore Choose Life: Selected Sermons, Addresses, and Writings of Abba Hillel Silver, Volume One, edited by Herbert Weiner, with a memoir by Solomon B. Freehof, The World Publishing Co., 443 pp., \$10.

Someone remarked that sermons are to be solemnly heard and then gently discarded.

Perhaps for this reason compilations of clergymen's addresses have attained a currency no greater than their own respective congregations who feel "duty bound" to purchase their pastor's new book.

A felicitous exception is the selected sermons, addresses, and writings of the late Abba Hillel Silver in a large volume entitled, "Therefore Choose Life." Dr. Silver of Cleveland not only wrote about history; indeed, he helped to shape it as a beloved rabbi, a noted scholar, and an eloquent pioneer and leader of the Zionist movement.

The emphasis of this first volume is upon the great insights of the Jewish spirit and their relevance to our times. The material contains

many inspiring and thought-provoking ideas: suffering and death, the challenge of nationalism, the role of mysticism in religion, and a Jewish view of Jesus. "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge" and as a Jew, nothing Jewish or human is alien to him. Rabbi Silver invoked modern thought and literature as well as ancient teaching and fused them in a seamless unity of impressive instruction.

His was not a way of convenience or of outer respectability, but of responsibility, understanding, and dedication. He challenges, he guides, he expounds and, above all, he makes demands of his auditor even as he did upon himself in his almost fifty years of faithful ministering to the needs of a large congregation.

Above all, "Therefore Choose Life," reflects the greatness of Jewish tradition at its best, in its blending of realistic understanding and idealistic aspiration.

EARL A. GROLLMAN

(Rabbi Grollman of Beth El Temple Center, Belmont, is author of "Judaism in Sigmund Freud's World" and "Rabbinical Counseling.")

Boston Globe
July 30, 1967

wbcb - Stereo FM 104.1

Executive Offices 171 NEWBURY STREET, BOSTON, MASS. 02116 • 617-267-6020

August 1, 1967

Lois E. Shapiro
The World Publishing Company
119 West 57th Street
New York 19, New York

My dear Miss Shapiro:

Your fine release of April 26 was of inordinate help to us in doing justice to Rabbi Silver's book when we put material on the air on our nightly radio program, POTPOURRI FOR CONNOISSEURS, on several occasions in the past week. It amazed us to learn through our telephones how many friends he had in this area. And we thought it would please you all who have done this fine piece of work about him and his work. "He was an original and his memory does hearten us."

Believe me,

Sincerely,

Patricia Kurland

Patricia Kurland, Executive Producer

PBK:jc

"POTPOURRI FOR CONNOISSEURS....."

'Therefore Choose Life'

Selected Sermons, Addresses, and Writings of Abba Hillel Silver

Compiled by Rabbi Herbert Weiner

(World Publishing Co.), \$10.00, 442 pages

One of the most unusual men of our generation or of any generation was the brilliant Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver.

At the beginning of his career he set for himself the goal: "To be a pathfinder, to blaze a trail through life." In truth, Abba Hillel Silver met his own challenge during 50 years of service to his congregation, his country and the world Jewish community.

His forceful leadership of the Zionist movement called forth the support of all who understood the need for a Jewish homeland. His

Reviewed by

Dr. William

B.

Silverman

SENIOR RABBI,
TEMPLE B'NAI
JEHUDAH



voice was the voice that carried the day for Israel before the United Nations. His eloquence, courage, and unshakable belief in divine justice and human rights made him a commanding spokesman for righteousness. His spiritual commitment and intellectual wisdom established him as a respected scholar and inspired the personal loyalty of countless individuals.

THE REVIEW OF A TREASURY of the finest of Abba Hillel Silver's spoken and written words, "Therefore Choose Life," cannot for me be without deep personal feeling and nostalgia. For I remember Rabbi Silver when I was a child, an adolescent, a high school student, as I heard him speak from his pulpit at the Temple in Cleveland.

As a university student, I heard the orator and saw the commanding presence of a man of deep conviction and was stirred by his words. Abba Hillel Silver sent me to the Hebrew Union College, and I remember the hours we spent discussing the rabbinate and our hopes for the future of Jewry.

He made a profound impact on my life, as he made upon so many during a career that sky-rocketed him on high as a luminary, showing the way to a renaissance of faith and determination to see Judaism as a living reality, and the people of Israel as destined for sacred purpose. Rabbi Silver's message was always deeply rooted in the biblical and Judaic heritage,



RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER

1893-1963

informed by a profound respect for human dignity, and filled with a determined hope for the future of man.

We should be grateful to Rabbi Herbert Weiner for compiling this volume of sermons and addresses with the help of Rabbi Silver's son, Daniel Jeremy Silver, who succeeded him in his pulpit. "Therefore Choose Life" is the first of a series of volumes which will comprise the spiritual and intellectual legacy of Rabbi Silver.

THE EMPHASIS OF THIS VOLUME is on his interpretation of the Jewish faith, the meaning of its traditions, and its application in life. Forthcoming selections in the series will center around his understanding of the Bible and Jewish thought, his concern with social issues of the day, and his struggle to create a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

An imposing and inspiring figure with a deep, resonant and compelling voice, Abba Hillel Silver was not interested in the way he presented his sermon. His main concern was with the content, the meaning and the purpose of the message.

RABBI SILVER gave an affirmation, a full-hearted "Yes" to the possibilities of life. Wherever he looked, he saw the "irresistible upsurge" of creation. All nations on earth should participate in this upward thrust. America must continue to be "the land of the rainbow promise." Judaism must ever renew its dream of a new heaven and a new earth. Jewish communities in all lands must have faith in their ability to build a vibrant and creative existence. The

ancient land of Zion was destined for a new birth of body and soul.

Silver rejected morbidity and despair. He called again and again for the "lift" which goes with youth. He fought old age wherever it appeared, whether in the tendency of an individual to surrender dreams or in the inclination of a religion to settle in "deep grooves of habit." Abba Hillel Silver made his covenant with life.

THE VOLUME STARTS with "Man's Hopes in the Atomic Age," in which he believes that "Ours is the rare opportunity of functioning as active agents in a creative Judaism, of reforming, developing and enriching our heritage. We enter our new lives inspired by the same vision which led our forefathers out of the mists of history, through the wide stretches of spiritual experience onto the mountain heights of moral achievement. We wish to be true to this vision of our fathers by dedicating ourselves to a Judaism which shall ever echo the highest ideals of the human soul, the loftiest truths of the human mind; a Judaism which shall be the implacable foe of all reaction, the friend of all progress."

In the next message, "The Undeclared Optimism of our Faith," Silver writes about the Jewish concept of suffering: "This concept of suffering for the sins of the world — that is, for an ideal — gave a note of grandeur to Jewish life in its darkest hours. A great cosmic drama was being enacted and they were the central figures. They were helping to fashion a new world, as God willed those new worlds. Being the leaders, the pioneers and the spiritual workers, theirs was a crown of thorns. Suffering for a cause was a badge of honor. Therefore the prophet was able to say to his people: 'The people who walk in darkness see a great light'."

This is one of the finest volumes to be published in our era. This reviewer urges the members of the Jewish community to obtain a copy, and to read it for edification and inspiration, to nurture a hope in the future and to see the people of Israel as witnesses of God, descendants of the prophet of Israel, igniting sparks of holiness, thundering and demanding social justice, and summoning man to the new Sinai of tomorrow.

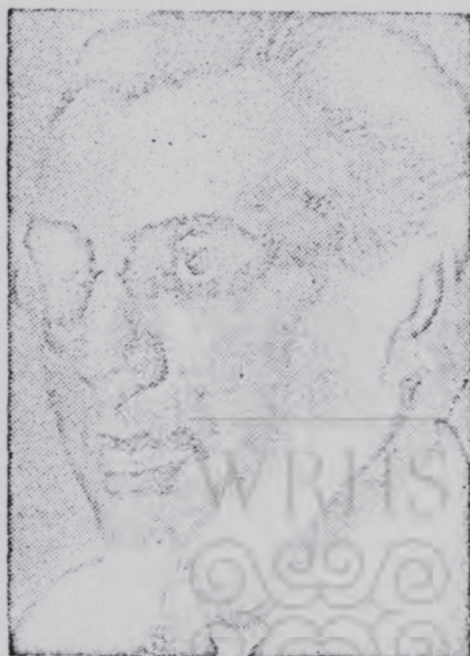
Frank Elliott
Cleveland

DETROIT, Mich., Jewish News 5/15/67

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver's Powerful Role Shown in Volume of Chosen Writings

"Therefore Choose Life"—what a glorious and well selected title for a series of books which will contain the writings of the late Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, his addresses and sermons!

The first volume in the series has been issued by World Publishing Co. It will serve as an incomparable guide and even as a text



DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

book for rabbis. There were few orators who matched the forcefulness of Rabbi Silver, and there were not many who equalled him as a scholar, as a great Hebraist, as an author, as teacher and man of great learning. Therefore his approaches to the art of sermonizing are well worth studying.

Primarily, the collected works should serve as an inspiration to laymen. There are new ideas to be found in every one of his utterances. There are inspired factors in his appeals to justice and his pleadings for his people's honor. Young and old will find messages of great value in his reconstructed works.

An able man, Rabbi Herbert Weiner, has been chosen to do the editing of these collected essays, and another brilliant rabbi, Dr. Solomon B. Freehof, has written a memoir appended to the first volume in the series.

Dr. Silver's powerful role as a Zionist, as a Jewish leader, is

mirrored in this volume and in his selected writings.

Rabbi Weiner, prefacing "Therefore Choose Life" by introducing it as Rabbi Silver's "intellectual and spiritual legacy," emphasizes that Rabbi Silver's ministry of nearly 50 years at The Temple, Cleveland, was never allowed to be blurred by his leadership of men and movements, that he always "spoke as a rabbi;" that "he consciously tried to confront the issue at hand not only in terms of his own personal analysis or the context of the moment, but also from the perspective of a moral tradition which had been tested in the crucible of Jewish history."

Dr. Freehof's recollections of Dr. Silver are written from the viewpoint of a classmate and a colleague at Hebrew Union College and the eminent Pittsburgh rabbi states about Dr. Silver: "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 unearthen and to bless."

Recalling the debates at Reform congregational conferences over the Zionist ideal, Dr. Freehof pays honor to Dr. Silver as the guide of the younger rabbis, as the genius of the Jewish national movement. He states about him: "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 . . ."

The selections for this volume were wisely made. Sections are subtitled The Vision, The Way, The People and The Rabbi. They deal with science and religion, with the home and the nation, with the environment and social influences.

Rabbis will find special merit in the section dealing with spir-

itual guides of the religious communities, and the concluding sermon in the final section, "There Is Yet Room for Vision," the text of a commencement address at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, is a lasting inspiration to young men aspiring for the rabbinate.

It is interesting to note that "The People" section concerns itself with matters related to "Where Judaism Differs"—a subject that later became the title of one of the great books written by Dr. Silver.

In "The People" collection there are essays and sermons on the Baal Shem, "The Jew to Jesus," personalities like Max Nordau and Sholem Aleichem, and a prophetic sermon delivered in 1926 on the subject "Nationalism—the Struggle for Survival," in which Dr. Silver dealt in part with Zionism and miracles and commented that "Israel's life has been so full of miracles, its existence and survival has been such a marvelous miracle that I am ready to take a chance upon this miracle."

Numerous of the republished essays are prefaced by commentative statements which point to Dr. Silver's attitudes on many subjects, his way of life, his idealism. For instance, the sermon delivered in 1936 on the subject "The Seven Pillars of the Home" is preceded by a deeply moving reference to Rabbi Silver's deep interest in his home and his family. Under the title "If I Am Only for Myself, What Am I?" this one-page statement is a gem. It is in itself a great mark of honor in Dr. Silver's memory.

In its totality, "Therefore Choose Life" is one of the great collections of sermons and of addresses by one of the most eminent and most inspired leaders of our time. Those who read this volume, those possessing it, will look forward anxiously to the appearance of the follow-up books in the series. His great Zionist appeals should form the substance of forthcoming volumes. The complete collected works are certain to be among the most treasured literary works in all libraries, on all bookshelves.

WRHS
These are uncorrected advance reviews from
the Aug issue of LIBRARY JOURNAL.
Advertising reservations for the next issue,
9/1 close 8/4

No part of these reviews may be quoted for
any purpose in advance of publication date.

SILVER, Abba Hillel. *Therefore Choose Life: Selected Sermons, Addresses, and Writings*. Vol. 1. Herbert Weiner, ed. memoir by Solomon B. Freehof. 442p. illus. World 1967. \$10. 66-25890. REL
Abba Hillel Silver, the first Zionist Reform Rabbi, was one of the outstanding Jewish leaders of the 20th Century. In this first volume of his work, the title of which is taken from Deuteronomy 30: 19, Rabbi Weiner has chosen those selections which deal mainly with the meaning of life and by so doing has presented Rabbi Silver's faith in Judaism and humanity. Rabbi Silver here explores the meaning of justice and love, the impact of scientific discovery, the development of democracy among nations, and the differences among the major religions of the Western world. These are just a few of the many subjects treated. His sermons are rich in historical content and provide a living testament to a faith in the future of man. There is mysticism that prevades these writings. Rabbi Silver fought diligently for the creation of the Jewish state, yet he firmly believed that Judaism outside the state should and can exist as well. He believed that there are basic truths in Judaism which cannot be extinguished despite the pogroms, mass murders and assimilation. These truths keep the faith alive. The inspiration and strength derived from these writings should be read by all Jews regardless of their convictions, for the content is not only spiritual but also intellectual. — Miriam K. Margoshes, formerly Assistant Librarian, Wheelock College, Boston

BOOKS

"THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE,"
Sermons, Addresses and Writings of Abba Hillel Silver. Edited by Herbert Weiner, The World Publishing Company.

Reviewed by

RABBI JULIUS J. NODEL

[Rabbi Nodel, of Temple Shaare Emeth, St. Louis, is active in causes crossing sectarian differences and has lectured extensively. He is author of *The Ties Between* and many articles.]

THE GREATEST CREATIVE WRITERS have never been preachers; and some of the greatest sermons and addresses ever delivered have lost their impact as they were transmitted from the pulpit or platform to the printed page. Not so, however, in this first of a four volume anthology of Dr. Abba Hillel Silver's speeches. In fact, *Therefore Choose Life* contains masterpieces of writing that can only be equaled by the masterful way in which they were first spoken by one of the few Jewish "literary prophets" of contemporary times.

This reviewer, who had the privilege of rabbinical association with Dr. Abba Hillel Silver in The Temple, Cleveland, Ohio for four years (1946-50) can hear the timber of voice, the gradations of fervor, the perfect diction, and the subtle nuances of timing and expression as they seem to echo from the printed pages of familiar sermons and addresses.

Any reader of this collection will detect the preacher's almost unreasonable love for the mystery and magic of words and his fascination with the myriad combinations of sound and alliterative parallelisms that are achievable within the scope of human utterance. But this fascination for language does not detract from still another absorbing passion of Abba Hillel Silver: profound thoughts delicately shaded, subtly felt and imagined—in short, those divined emanations of the human spirit which we call ideas. His words and thoughts are one illuminating flash. Since his individuality is stamped on his every sentence, everything that came from his mind was fresh—he had the power of breathing the

breath of life even into a dead truism.

When I was his assistant at The Temple in Cleveland, I found it unnerving, to say the least, to have the greatest living Jewish preacher sitting on the pulpit while I, with his generous assignment of a preaching schedule to me, attempted to edify a congregation which was used to hearing the best.

Rabbi Silver was a demanding and severe critic, but always kindly in his instructions. When he commended his younger colleagues with the word "good"—the novice could rest assured that in any other Temple his efforts would be rated excellent. If Rabbi Silver said "fair" it might be considered good elsewhere. If Rabbi Silver said nothing, it meant that "fair" was the true evaluation, but did not merit his respect. If it was really poor, then he said something which left no question.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to select at random one or two sermons and addresses, or call attention to a passage here or there in any review of this book. The collection touches upon theology, personal guidelines of living, contemporary events, pronouncements which have become historical documents, commentaries on Jewish thought, life and practices, social conflict, observations of personalities, literary criticisms, evaluations of the Jewish ministry, and of course Zionist addresses which have become classic calls to the cause and the needs of the re-establishment of the State of Israel.

To point out a choice morsel here or there in this panorama of religious, intellectual and social thought would be like cutting a hole in a piece of paper, placing it over a Rembrandt painting and judging the entire masterpiece by a few square inches that were visible. It would give the impression that the painting concentrated either on one color or one detail, and would be completely misleading.

Since Rabbi Silver never delivered a message that was not prepared and written drop by drop, the editor of this anthology is to be commended for avoiding in this book distillations of the original ferments; for such concentrates can be hydrated again beyond the proportions

of the original formula.

It is hoped that this book will have an effect upon the unfortunate tendency among some rabbis in recent years to consider eloquence and fervor unsophisticated, preferring to emulate the voice of a news commentator or the college classroom lecturer, the style of the journalist or the approach of a panel discussant. Such deliberate attempt to go out of their way to make their sermons a pretentiously insignificant part of the worship service is inimical to the historical development of the Synagogue. Emotion and color diluted beyond a certain point is the parent of platitude. Rabbi Silver was never guilty of making his preaching a by-word for dull monologue. He carefully avoided the sameness of choice of subject; and the choice of bad titles for good subjects. He was primarily a teacher but did not allow his knowledge alone, vast and profound as it was, to be an excuse for inept transmission of his knowledge. He looked upon the spoken word as an instrument of admirable contrivance and utility, and he felt responsible enough as a rabbi to keep this instrument bright and sharp. He made every subject a Jewish subject from the point of view of Jewish erudition, and his use of qualifying Biblical texts, Talmudic references or Midrashic explanations were not artificial crutches which many other preachers use only to support their scholarly stature rather than maintain interest.

This collection denies the distorted and general feeling that religion is alien to the practical needs of life. The reading of this book will produce the powerful effect of holding the reader captive behind the wheel of Dr. Silver's enthusiasm many decades after his voice has become silent. He never did his "homework" in the pulpit. He always felt a responsibility of serving his listeners wheat which had been separated previously from the chaff. He demanded precision from himself in order to be a carrier of all that he considered significant. He followed the advice of Quintillian, a first century (C.E.) Roman rhetorician who set a standard for precision of language when he declared: "One should not aim at being possible to understand, but at being impossible to misunderstand."

It is with anticipation that this reviewer looks forward to the next three volumes of selected sermons and addresses of Abba Hillel Silver. It is a book that every Zionist ought to own, read and treasure for personal edification and inspiration as well as a tribute to one of the greatest Zionist leaders of all times. ☆

THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE, selected sermons, addresses, and writings of Abba Hillel Silver, edited by Herbert Weiner, World Pub. Co., New York and Cleveland, 1967, 442 pages, \$10.00.

Reviewed by Rabbi Jack Riemer

for Dayton Ohio Jewish Chronicle

"I believe in myself. I believe in the dignity and the nobility of the soul which God has planted within me.

Even as I believe in myself I believe in my fellowmen, for they are like me in gifts and capacities.

I believe in work.

I believe in the adventure of life.

I believe in saving my soul from wealth and from poverty, and from all the physical circumstances of life. They must not touch my soul.

I believe in never growing old.

I believe in disciplining myself to hunger for things.

I believe that I owe a debt to my God and my fellowmen, for the soul which God has given me and for the education that society has afforded me.

I believe in service, first as a payment of a just debt, and second, as the only avenue by which men and women can ever find or ever have found real contentment and happiness.

I do not believe in being ordinary and average and commonplace. The one ambition of my mortal days would be to break through all the confining circumstances of my world, to rise above the dead level of mediocrity, and to raise others; to lead, even as I first am content to follow, to be a pathfinder, to blaze a trail through life."

With this stirring Ani Maamin Abba Hillel Silver began his distinguished career as the spiritual leader of The Temple in Cleveland, Ohio. From that pulpit he spoke for over half a century and his influence reached out far beyond the confines of his city.

Abba Hillel Silver was an anomaly within the Reform movement when he began. The product of a Hebrew speaking intensively Jewish home, he came to the Hebrew Union College, which was the capital of classical Reform Judaism, as a deeply convinced militant Zionist. The great achievement of his life was to wed Reform Judaism's universalism with the spirit of Jewish nationalism. Today it is no longer news for a Reform Rabbi to speak favorably and lovingly about Jewish peoplehood and to say that "nation, land and language were and are indispensable elements of Jewish life," but fifty years ago it was. Hitler had something to do with bringing about the change in Reform Judaism, and so did the establishment of the State of Israel -- and so did Abba Hillel Silver.

Rabbi Silver is best remembered today as one of the leaders of the Zionist organization, as the American Jew perhaps most responsible for winning popular support in this country for the idea of the state. But he was more than a Zionist spokesman or a political leader. He was first of all a Rabbi, and undergirding all of his many activities was a deep religious concern and conviction. His editors have therefore chosen wisely by beginning the publication of his literary legacy, not with the political speeches, but with his religious statements. The essays and sermons in this volume are concerned with the basic needs and the eternal hungers of human beings: for life, for comfort, for courage, and for meaning.

Abba Hillel Silver believed, ^{firmly} in God, in man, in the Jewish people, in America, and in the coming of a better tomorrow. Each of these beliefs has been battered and challenged in our time. God's death has been announced -- and man's death seems imminent to many. Fervent admiration of America seems passe nowadays and contemporary theology stresses man's sinfulness and his limitations more than his possibilities and his potential. Silver's faith was healthy-minded, optimistic, confident, and meliorist, and each of these terms has become a criticism in our time. Yet he was not a naive nineteenth century rationalist, but a man who lived through and reacted to the depression, the holocaust, and the beginning of the nuclear age. An optimism that could survive such shocks had to be based on deep convictions.

Rabbi Silver's theology may seem dated to the contemporary reader, but if we wish to avoid becoming what Whitehead called "parochials in time instead of space" then we must open ourselves to other moods and other views besides those that are in vogue in our time. We are therefore very grateful that we have this testament of a believing Jew to study and to live with. A Reform Rabbi who ~~loved~~ ^{loved Zion.} Israel, a liberal who studied mysticism, a rationalist who lived with the mystery of evil and suffering, his life is a warning against glib oversimple compartmentalization and categorizing and his writings are a part of the continuing chain that is the tradition.



THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE

Abba Hillel Silver

Cleveland 1967 World Publishing Co. 442 P.P. 10.00

Review by CHARLES E. SHULMAN
Rabbi, Riverdale Temple, New York

This large volume, ably edited by Rabbi Herbert Weiner, is a collection of the late Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver's sermons, addresses and writings. The emphasis in this volume is on his interpretation of the Jewish Religion and tradition and their application to contemporary life. It reveals the thinking of one of the giants of the American Rabbinate who played a decisive role in the development of the American and the World Zionist Movement and the establishment of the reborn State of Israel. In it is found the evidence that established his reputation as a respected scholar whose painstaking care in the preparation of his sermons and addresses gave the stamp of authority to his public declarations. Among the sermons published in this volume is one called "Where Judaism Differed" which, expanded in his book by that title, offers the most lucid interpretation of the Jewish philosophy of religion to be found in the English language. The book is very likely to remain as a standard reference work for those seeking an understanding of the essential differences between Judaism and Christian, Greek, Islamic and Buddhist thinking on theological questions.

"Therefore Choose Life" is the first of a projected series dealing with the intellectual and spiritual legacy of Rabbi Silver. Forthcoming volumes will center upon his interpretation of the Bible and Jewish thought, his concern with the social issues of his day and

of his long involvement with Zionism and the struggle to create a Jewish homeland in Palestine. What is so interesting about his writings is the fact that they stand the test of time. They are not dated. This is due primarily to the fact that the author dealt with timeless values. His work is distinguished by its delineation of the rich Jewish tradition by a Jewish scholar grounded in his source material. As the editor says in his preface: "Silver always saw contemporary issues in the moral tradition of his people which had been tested in the crucible of history. He spoke and wrote not so much in terms of his own personal opinion as in the opinion of the Bible and Rabbinic tradition." Dr. Solomon B. Freehof, his colleague and close friend over the years, similarly described the unusual character of Silver's utterances in a memoir contained in this volume, saying: "Innumerable men know the Bible well and can quote it but it might well be said that he actually never 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 more original, and to those who knew the Bible, a stirring effect."

Rabbi Silver's writing is characterized by a graceful style and felicity of expression. His papers and lectures before his colleagues at the central conference of American Rabbis meetings were generally challenges to those who lacked sufficient appreciation of the power of the Jewish heritage to aid in solving contemporary problems. He was an important factor in changing the earlier attitude of Reform Judaism from the anti-Zionist Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 to the Columbus Platform of 1937 which found no incompatibility between Reform

Judaism and Zionism. He was a staunch defender of the Jewish faith and in his Polemical Essay "Why Do The Heathen Rage?" (P.364) showed his skill in answering the secularists of the day who were highly critical of the state of American Judaism. It was not that Rabbi Silver was unaware of its deficiencies. It was rather his refusal to accept the idea that it was devoid of spirituality that stirred him to write this piece in answer to attacks in the Menorah Journal in the 1920's questioning the survival of Judaism in America. What he said four decades ago in answering the alienated Jewish intellectual is applicable to our own time:

"The alienation from Jewry and Judaism resulting from the deprivations inherent in the lot of a disfavored minority is particularly in evidence in the case of that smaller group of Jewish intellectuals to whom the writers may be referring--the authors, journalists, writers, philosophers, professors, etc. Many of these have eschewed Judaism and the Jews not because they do not know their people (for a goodly number of them hail from good old-fashioned Jewish homes, from distinctly Jewish environments, and some of them actually received Orthodox Jewish training) but because they do not wish to know. There are richer pastures elsewhere, higher rewards both social and monetary. It is only after these intellectuals are disillusioned, after they discover that the anticipated rewards are not forthcoming that they return to the welcoming fold of Israel, a bit saddened and embittered and a bit overzealous."

One cannot but be impressed by the comprehension, the thoughtfulness and the clarity of the writing contained in this volume. It is the product of a mature mind steeped in the Jewish tradition bringing its wisdom to bear on the problems of the contemporary world. It is testimony to the remarkable capacity of a Rabbinic leader to battle in the arena of social struggle on behalf of his people and yet leave his indelible influence on his generation by his learning.

Rabbi Silver's Works to Be Published Here

By JULIAN KRAWCHECK

The massive intellect and eloquence of Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver will come alive again in a 500-page volume set for publication here May 2 by World Publishing Co.

The book, first of a Silver series of four to be published at intervals of approximately a year, is a collection of sermons and lectures reflecting the rabbi's general philosophy of life and basic Jewish and religious principles.

IT IS ENTITLED "Therefore Choose Life" and is edited by Rabbi Herbert Weiner, of South Orange, N. J., an author and a Judaic scholar. Material was furnished by the Silver family and the Temple, which Rabbi Silver served as spiritual leader for 46 years prior to his death in 1963.

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver, son of the rabbi and his successor in the Temple pulpit, said the publishing project was inspired by the con-



Rabbi Silver

gregation's desire to memorialize its leader for so many years. A memorial archive has already been established at the Temple.

"It was fortunate," Rabbi Daniel commented, "that my father was so meticulous in preparing and preserving his manuscripts. There is a wide variety of material."

A SPOKESMAN for World described the volume as "good literature—a marvelous collection of interest to people of all religious faiths.

The second volume will be historical, Biblical and rabbinic in content, the spokesman said. Social and political issues will be covered in sermons and lectures comprising Volume 3. The final book will be concerned with the struggle for the establishment of the state of Israel. Rabbi Silver, as a world-famous Zionist, was a prime mover in that struggle.

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver's Powerful Role Shown in Volume of Chosen Writings

"Therefore Choose Life"—what a glorious and well selected title for a series of books which will contain the writings of the late Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, his addresses and sermons!

The first volume in the series has been issued by World Publishing Co. It will serve as an incomparable guide and even as a text



DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

book for rabbis. There were few orators who matched the forcefulness of Rabbi Silver, and there were not many who equalled him as a scholar, as a great Hebraist, as an author, as teacher and man of great learning. Therefore his approaches to the art of sermonizing are well worth studying.

Primarily, the collected works should serve as an inspiration to laymen. There are new ideas to be found in every one of his utterances. There are inspired factors in his appeals to justice and his pleadings for his people's honor. Young and old will find messages of great value in his reconstructed works.

An able man, Rabbi Herbert Weiner, has been chosen to do the editing of these collected essays, and another brilliant rabbi, Dr. Solomon B. Freehof, has written a memoir appended to the first volume in the series.

Dr. Silver's powerful role as a Zionist, as a Jewish leader, is

mirrored in this volume and in his selected writings.

Rabbi Weiner, pre-facing "Therefore Choose Life" by introducing it as Rabbi Silver's "intellectual and spiritual legacy," emphasizes that Rabbi Silver's ministry of nearly 50 years at The Temple, Cleveland, was never allowed to be blurred by his leadership of men and movements, that he always "spoke as a rabbi;" that "he consciously tried to confront the issue at hand not only in terms of his own personal analysis or the context of the moment, but also from the perspective of a moral tradition which had been tested in the crucible of Jewish history."

Dr. Freehof's recollections of Dr. Silver are written from the viewpoint of a classmate and a colleague at Hebrew Union College and the eminent Pittsburgh rabbi states about Dr. Silver: "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 unearthen and to bless."

Recalling the debates at Reform congregational conferences over the Zionist ideal, Dr. Freehof pays honor to Dr. Silver as the guide of the younger rabbis, as the genius of the Jewish national movement. He states about him: "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 . . ."

The selections for this volume were wisely made. Sections are subtitled The Vision, The Way, The People and The Rabbi. They deal with science and religion, with the home and the nation, with the environment and social influences.

Rabbis will find special merit in the section dealing with spir-

itual guides of the religious communities, and the concluding sermon in the final section, "There Is Yet Room for Vision," the text of a commencement address at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, is a lasting inspiration to young men aspiring for the rabbinate.

It is interesting to note that "The People" section concerns itself with matters related to "Where Judaism Differs"—a subject that later became the title of one of the great books written by Dr. Silver.

In "The People" collection there are essays and sermons on the Baal Shem, "The Jew to Jesus," personalities like Max Nordau and Sholem Aleichem, and a prophetic sermon delivered in 1926 on the subject "Nationalism—the Struggle for Survival," in which Dr. Silver dealt in part with Zionism and miracles and commented that "Israel's life has been so full of miracles, its existence and survival has been such a marvelous miracle that I am ready to take a chance upon this miracle."

Numerous of the republished essays are prefaced by commentative statements which point to Dr. Silver's attitudes on many subjects, his way of life, his idealism. For instance, the sermon delivered in 1936 on the subject "The Seven Pillars of the Home" is preceded by a deeply moving reference to Rabbi Silver's deep interest in his home and his family. Under the title "If I Am Only for Myself, What Am I?" this one-page statement is a gem. It is in itself a great mark of honor in Dr. Silver's memory.

In its totality, "Therefore Choose Life" is one of the great collections of sermons and of addresses by one of the most eminent and most inspired leaders of our time. Those who read this volume, those possessing it, will look forward anxiously to the appearance of the follow-up books in the series. His great Zionist appeals should form the substance of forthcoming volumes. The complete collected works are certain to be among the most treasured literary works in all libraries, on all bookshelves.

Rabbi Jack Riemer

Oct. 28, 1969

Rabbi Daniel Silver
The Temple
University Circle at Silver Park
Cleveland 6, Ohio

Dear Colleague:

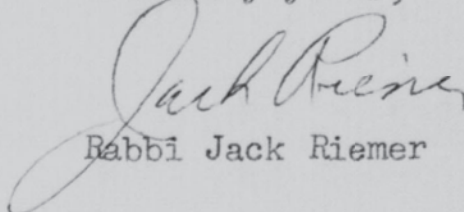
I am now in the process of preparing a booklet of supplementary readings and prayers for the High Holydays to be used in our Synagogue and perhaps in others as well.

I would like to include a responsive reading that I have done which is based upon the address by your father that is found on page 197-198 of "Therefore Choose Life." I have arranged his prose in a form suitable for responsive reading and added a few lines to bring it up to date.

May we please have your permission to include this reading in the booklet. I think that it would be a fitting tribute to your dear father's memory to have his words included in a prayer service for the High Holydays and I hope that you will agree.

With all good wishes, I am,

Sincerely yours,


Rabbi Jack Riemer

JR:MK

Archives

October 30, 1969

Rabbi Jack Riemer
Beth Abraham Synagogue
1306 Salem Avenue
Dayton, Ohio 45406

Dear Rabbi Riemer:

In response to your letter of October 28, 1969, I should like to see the responsive reading you suggest. I would have no compunctions about asking MacMillan & Company to grant you reprint rights for a direct quotation. However, I would want to see how the inserts fit and whether they are congruent. Of course, some proper identification of the source would have to be included.

Sincerely,

DANIEL JEREMY SILVER

DJS:rvf