



Daniel Jeremy Silver Collection Digitization Project

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MS-4850: Daniel Jeremy Silver Papers, 1972-1993.

Series II: Subject Files, 1956-1993, undated.

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Folder
154a

Central Conference of American Rabbis, Committee on
Particularism, correspondence and reports, 1974-1975.

October 30, 1974

Rabbi Robert I. Kahn
Congregation Emanu El
1500 Sunset Boulevard
Houston, Texas 77005

Dear Bob:

Here is my understanding of the conclusions of Tuesday's meeting.

It was agreed that there ought to be a Task Force or committee on Jewish Survival. Its immediate purpose would be to encourage reflection and discussion of the various theological issues implicit in Jewish survival. The Task Force was to organize a symposium, or symposia, where elements of this theme could be raised. Such meetings and the papers presented would be a first step towards our purpose of encouraging thought and discussion of the theme of Jewish particularism (which liberal Jewish theology has tended to sidestep). We will examine such themes as the reality of the Judeo-Christian tradition, assumptions about the melting pot, chosen people concept, particularism in a messianic age, particularism in a tragic age, etc.

The symposium would be held at the New York school and, hopefully, in conjunction with it. Papers would be distributed through the Conference Journal or other mailings. During the calendar year 1975-76 regional meetings of the Conference would be encouraged to deal with this theme. A list of men prepared to discuss the issue and of background readiness will be prepared.

The Task Force will monitor ongoing research in the area of contemporary attitudes towards Jewish survival by the Institute of Jewish Policy Planning and Research etc. and make such material available. If possible it would suggest to colleagues language and approach which may be helpful in tying our youth more closely to our future.

A second step would be to work with the Program Committee for the '76 or '77 Conference so that this theme in all its breadth (practical, sociological and theological) could be debated.

Rabbi Robert I. Kahn

October 30, 1974

Our purpose is rabbinic: to grow in understanding and awareness so that our teaching, preaching and educational administration will reflect a more consistent understanding on our parts to the issues of survival - so that we can chart our special way between the poles of an extreme universalism and an extreme particularism.

On a practical level you will want to appoint this Task Force and give it a budget. If I am to be its chairman permit me to suggest a small working group so that meetings are not too time-consuming or expensive. We are after consequence not concensus. As I indicated in my presentation I would not want Reines, Petuchowsky, Mihaly, Borowitz or Brichto on the Task Force or the same folk who did not produce a new platform. They have made their impact. On the other hand Michael Myer or Larry Hoffman might be useful. If possible the Task Force should include some of the more thoughtful, theologically oriented younger men.

It is already late to plan a symposium this academic year, but ~~certainly~~ ~~ought to~~ ~~certainly~~ to meet in planning session in order to organize a conference for next fall.

It was good seeing you yesterday.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

cc: Joseph Glaser

אגוד הרבנים המתקדמים

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

790 MADISON AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 • (212) AG 9-2811

Office of the President
Rabbi Robert I. Kahn
1500 Sunset Blvd., Houston, Tex. 77005

November 19, 1974

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

Dear Dan:

Thanks very much for your full and detailed letter. I think we are on the same wave length.

You mention Mike Meyer or Larry Hoffman. Previous notes included men like Norbert Samuelson, Abe Kaplan, Dick Israel. I do not know if Saul Besser is theologically oriented, he does have ideas.

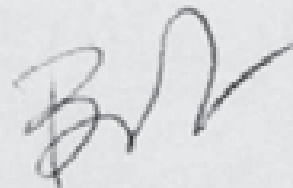
I would be inclined to let you choose your own group, say four or five and yourself, and go to work.

As to budget, Joe and I put our heads together and came up with \$2,000. Will this get you started?

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Best personal wishes.

Sincerely,



Rabbi Robert I. Kahn

RIK/sss

*Good MSH gm!
Bernie Martin said yes*

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*Ex-officio



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40 WEST 68th STREET • NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10023
(212) 873-0200

November 21, 1974

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

Dear Rabbi Silver:

I enjoyed meeting you at the recent CCAR Board meeting, and was excited to hear of your projected seminar on the Theology of Jewish Identity.

As I mentioned to you, in passing, we at the New York School have been discussing a similar project. Our title was going to be the Philosophy of Jewish Peoplehood, and our plans included inviting a variety of noted scholars to deliver papers and elicit responses.

You mentioned that you hoped to utilize our facilities here, and indeed, we would be most happy to accommodate you. Since our projects apparently overlap, it would seem advisable for us to know more precisely what you envision, so that we may avoid duplication.

Please let me know what your plans include and how we might be of help to you. I personally am very interested in what you have to say, and would like to do what I can to assure your success.

Sincerely,

Lawrence A. Hoffman, Rabbi
Professor of Liturgy and
Related Literature

LH: jk

December 4, 1974

Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman
Hebrew Union College - JIR
40 West 68th Street
New York, N. Y. 10023

Dear Rabbi Hoffman:

Item one, let's get over the formality. I'll be Daniel and you will be either Lawrence or Larry. Which?

I am grateful for your letter of November 21. I have the option of appointing the committee on particularism and I would like to have you serve with me. This will give us a chance to coordinate our seminars, perhaps to amalgamate them.

I am leary of talking about papers and authors now because I do not want to seem as if these issues have been foreclosed. What I would rather do is to hold a committee meeting in New York in February. Our committee will be a small one and we should be able to work with dispatch. I hope you will join us and on that assumption are you available for a meeting on Monday February 3, Monday February 17 or Tuesday February 11?

Send me a note as to membership and preference of dates. As soon as a date is confirmed I will remind everyone as to time and place and we can begin circulating suggestions.

Happy Chanukah!

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

cc: Chas Thompson

December 6, 1974

Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman
Central Synagogue
123 E. 55th St.
New York, N. Y. 10022

Dear Shelly:

I have been asked by Bob Kahn to chair a CCAR committee whose purpose is to encourage thought and discussion on the "why's" of Jewish survival. We still have no name, but essentially we are mandated to organize a symposium or two on the theology of particularism and to stimulate colleagues to do some hard thinking about the rationale and mandate of Jewish survival.

We have no particular ideological axe to grind and no platform to write. The committee emerges out of feelings shared by a large number of colleagues that liberal Judaism historically has come down too heavily on the side of universalism with the result that in our preaching, teaching, liturgy, schools, we emit a message which validates humanity but not necessarily Jewish survival.

I am writing this letter in the hope that you will join our small working group. Our immediate purpose is to plan a seminar at the New York School during the academic year of 1975-76 and followup programs, papers and speakers for regional meetings of the CCAR during 1976. In principle the Conference has agreed to devote the 1976 or 1977 Conference to this theme.

I think we can make a significant contribution to our movement. We are not mandated to develop a denominational position paper, but simply to get thinking started. We are not going to take surveys or solve sociological problems, but to act on the assumption that rabbis read and think and that we do have some consequence.

(Dec 6, 1974)

Would you indicate to me your willingness to join this committee?
We plan an organizing meeting in New York in February. Are the
following available: February 3, February 11 or February 17? Do
you have any preference among them? I will try to work out what
is best for everyone.

With best personal wishes and a Happy Chanukkah I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp



December 6, 1974

Rabbi Peter J. Rubinstein
Woodlands Community Temple
45 E. Hartsdale Ave.
Hartsdale, N. Y. 10530

Dear Peter:

I have been asked by Bob Kahn to chair a CCAR committee whose purpose is to encourage thought and discussion on the "why's" of Jewish survival. We still have no name, but essentially we are mandated to organize a symposium or two on the theology of particularism and to stimulate colleagues to do some hard thinking about the rationale and mandate of Jewish survival.

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With best personal wishes and a Happy Chanukkah I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp



December 6, 1974

Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Washington Hebrew Congregation
3935 Macomb St., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20016

Dear Josh:

I have been asked by Bob Kahn to chair a CCAR committee whose purpose is to encourage thought and discussion on the "why's" of Jewish survival. We still have no name, but essentially we are mandated to organize a symposium or two on the theology of particularism and to stimulate colleagues to do some hard thinking about the rationale and mandate of Jewish survival.

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Would you indicate to me your willingness to join this committee? We plan an organizing meeting in New York in February. Are the following available: February 3, February 11 or February 17? Do you have any preference among them? I will try to work out what is best for everyone.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp



December 6, 1974

Rabbi Bruce Warshal
Temple Beth Emeth
2420 Mershon Drive
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103

Dear Bruce:

I have been asked by Bob Kahn to chair a CCAR committee whose purpose is to encourage thought and discussion on the "why's" of Jewish survival. We still have no name, but essentially we are mandated to organize a symposium or two on the theology of particularism and to stimulate colleagues to do some hard thinking about the rationale and mandate of Jewish survival.

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Would you indicate to me your willingness to join this committee? We plan an organizing meeting in New York in February. Are the following available: February 3, February 11 or February 17? Do you have any preference among them? I will try to work out what is best for everyone.

With best personal wishes and a Happy Chanukkah I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp



WASHINGTON HEBREW CONGREGATION

Massachusetts Avenue and Macomb Street, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20016

JOSHUA O. HABERMAN, D. H. L.
Senior Rabbi

December 11, 1974

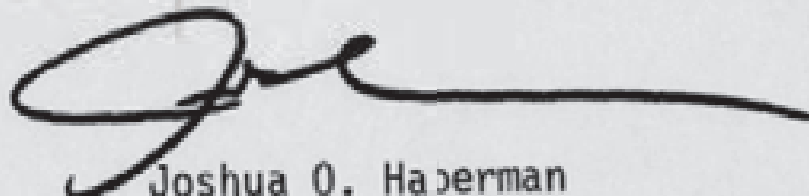
Dear Danny,

I accept your invitation to work with you on the CCAR committee on the "Why's of Jewish Survival." I believe the kind of ideological and theological repair work which this committee's task would involve is greatly needed and I would be challenged by it.

Of the three dates you have mentioned, the only open date for me would be Tuesday, February 11th. In fact, it is an excellent date and I hope we can all agree on it.

Best Hanukkah greetings and all that is good.

As ever,



Joshua O. Haberman

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



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(212) 873-0200

December 12, 1974

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

Dear Daniel:

First, thank you for your suggestion to get over the formality. Please call me Larry. Frankly, I would have assumed that you would feel free to use my first name. I, however, raised in a "traditionalist school" which advocates showing respect for those I consider my teachers, just naturally addressed you more formally.

I appreciated your quick response. As it happens the committee in charge of our Colloquium seems to be moving away from the original topic and is now tentatively planning seminars on topics which have no direct bearing on that which you are investigating. If these tentative plans are formalized there will be no fear of overlapping our two projects. This, in no way, however, alters either my personal interest in your project nor the College's willingness to host it or help it along in any way you see fit. I would hope therefore that the final seminars at which your committee arrives will be held here in any event; hopefully in the academic year 1975-76 during our Centennial celebrations.

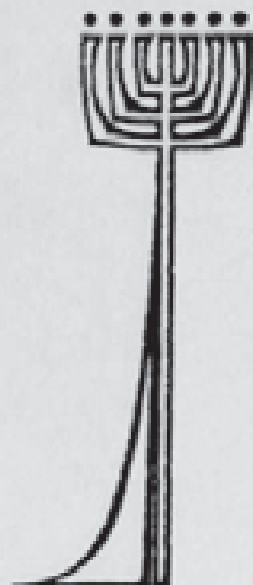
I should be delighted to join your committee and I thank you for the invitation. I am available on both Monday, February 3 and Tuesday, February 11. Please let me know which date you select.

Happy Chanukkah! I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Lawrence A. Hoffman

LH:jk



RABBI SHELDON ZIMMERMAN

CENTRAL SYNAGOGUE
123 EAST 55TH STREET
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10022

December 16, 1974
2 Tevet 5735

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

Dear Dan,

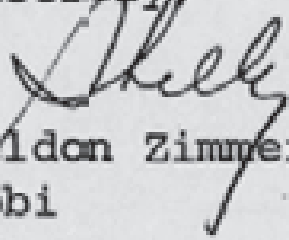
I will be delighted to join the Committee.

Best day for me is February 17th; next best
February 11th and February 3rd is impossible.

Many thanks.

SZ:ld

Sincerely,


Sheldon Zimmerman
Rabbi

קהל בית אמת

TEMPLE BETH EMETH

2309 PACKARD ROAD

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48104

TELEPHONE (313) 665-4744

BRUCE S. WARSHAL, RABBI

2430 MERSHON DRIVE

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48103

TELEPHONE 665-0065

STEPHEN R. YOUNG, PRESIDENT

2630 PEBBLE CREEK ROAD

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48104

TELEPHONE 971-1365

December 17, 1974

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

Dear Daniel,

I am more than delighted to serve on the CCAR committee
mandated to encourage discussion on the "why's" of
Jewish survival.

February 17 is my best date. February 3 is not bad.
February 11 is an atrocious date for me, but I will
rearrange my schedule if that is the best date for the
others involved.

Sincerely,



Bruce S. Warshal

BSW:ss

woodlands community temple

50 Worthington Road
White Plains, New York 10607
(914) LY 2-7070

RABBI PETER RUBINSTEIN

December 20, 1974

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

Dear Daniel:

Thanks very much for your note of December 6th.
I would be very glad to serve on your committee. The
two Monday dates would be my preference for a meeting.
I would appreciate it if you could confirm the time as
soon as possible so that I might be able to prevent
a schedule conflict.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Cordially,



Peter J. Rubinstein, Rabbi

PJR/jm

December 26, 1974

Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman
Hebrew Union College
40 West 68th Street
New York, N. Y. 10023

Dear Larry:

The problem of arranging the dates with our pock-marked rabbinic calendars turned out to be an incredibly difficult one. Four of the five on the Committee indicated that Monday, February 17, is an acceptable date. We will meet in the offices of the Conference at one o'clock. Our business should be finished by the late afternoon.

The major item on the agenda is to plan for a series of papers on the issue of a theology of particularism. I would like you to do some preliminary thinking as to specific topics which ought to be covered. These might include analysis of various modern thinkers from this perspective, an historical study of particularism and survival themes in our preaching and curriculum etc. We will build on these ideas.

With all good wishes for the new year I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

December 26, 1974

Rabbi Bruce S. Warshal
Temple Beth Emeth
2909 Packard Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

Dear Bruce:

The problem of arranging the dates with our pock-marked rabbinic calendars turned out to be an incredibly difficult one. Four of the five on the Committee indicated that Monday, February 17, is an acceptable date. We will meet in the offices of the Conference at one o'clock. Our business should be finished by the late afternoon.

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

December 26, 1974

Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Massachusetts Ave. and Macomb St., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20016

Dear Josh:

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Josh, you are the only exception. I hope you can rearrange your calendar and be with us. In any case, in scheduling the next meeting you get preference.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

December 26, 1974

Rabbi Peter J. Rubinstein
Woodlands Community Temple
50 Worthington Road
White Plains, New York 10607

Dear Peter:

The problem of arranging the dates with our pock-marked rabbinic calendars turned out to be an incredibly difficult one. Four of the five on the Committee indicated that Monday, February 17, is an acceptable date. We will meet in the offices of the Conference at one o'clock. Our business should be finished by the late afternoon.

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With all good wishes for the new year I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

December 26, 1974

Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman
Central Synagogue
123 East 55th Street
New York, N. Y. 10022

Dear Shelly:

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With all good wishes for the new year I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

December 26, 1974

Rabbi Joseph Glaser
Central Conference of American Rabbis
790 Madison Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10021

Dear Joe:

In the hope that you can be with us I am scheduling the meeting of the CCAR committee on particularism for Monday, February 17 at one o'clock, hopefully in your office. Is that okay? Can you be with us?

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

אגוד הרבנים המתקדמים

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

790 MADISON AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 • (212) AG 9-2811

Office of the Executive Vice President

December 30, 1974

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

Dear Daniel:

This office will be closed on February 17 - it's Washington's Birth-day. Try another day.

Best wishes for a healthy, happy and prosperous 1975.

Shalom,

Joseph B. Glaser

JBG/ssss

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New York, N.Y.

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*ex-officio

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Triumphalism

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For American Jew

What is a Jewish community

is what can it does it

provide a meaningful identity,

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Jewish education

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show corporate value
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1) Address to rabbis

2) History \longleftrightarrow Theology

"Judaism with wings"

Pattern
Ego

INSTITUTIONS — PATTERN FIGURES

Bernard Baruch —

When he sees evidence
here —

CCAR for Revolution



I Where Are We

Concedo

~~Reading~~ Compex - Hummel *

Johns KK

Secura UKH

1975

II What needs to occur in preserving a specific forest
 peoples [not ideas but forest]
 conservation?

IV I want some idea about your current plans
a meaningful identity

The Thailand Bureau - Form to Giza / Beirut
Kipke / Fodor's Joshua Hobbano

~~It must be needed?~~

Fulton

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they body

Source

1) Theologues

Church -

Revelation -

Ethical - Value -

mission - []

Mission -

2) - Structures - Institutions

Religious Beliefs - Caring

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meaningful identity

Conscience - Social

Stress - SCC's - Harvest

3) Sociological



Where will (break) -

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Model Role

Concerns

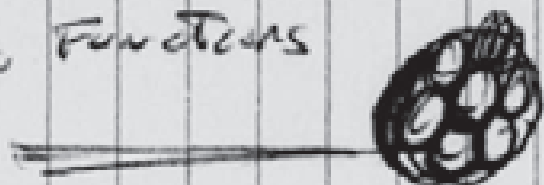
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What need - see -
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Academic focus

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Core Functions



Theological D.F.T.

Ethical distinctiveness

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Covenant Theology



Towards a Theory of Survival

1) Ref and the post
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2) The framework of

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3) The things we say

4) ~~the~~ rituals and liturgy
of universities

5) Time 11/02/11/16 book

6) What God differs

WASHINGTON HEBREW CONGREGATION

Massachusetts Avenue and Macomb Street, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20016

JOSHUA O. HABERMAN, D. H. L.
Senior Rabbi

January 2, 1975

Dear Danny,

In spite of schedule problems, I shall do all I can to attend the meeting which you have called for Monday, February 17th, at the CCAR office in New York at one o'clock. In any event, you can count on my very interested participation even if I should be unable to be there.

Best greetings from house to house.

As ever,



A handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read "Josh", is written over a faint circular stamp. The signature is fluid and extends to the right.

Joshua O. Haberman

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

January 7, 1975

Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman
Central Synagogue
123 East 55th Street
New York, N. Y. 10022

Dear Shelly:

Our meeting is scheduled for 1 P.M. Monday, February 17, in the offices of the National Foundation For Jewish Culture which is on the fourth floor of the Chanin Building at 42nd and Lexington. In case you need the telephone number it is 490-2280. The CCAR office will be closed that day so we have made this move.

In preparation for this meeting I am enclosing a letter which I sent to Bob Kahn that served as the basis of approval by the Conference Board. In order to wrap your mind about some of the issues I would suggest the following readings:

W. Gunther Plaut, The Growth of Reform Judaism, p. 144-152, 165-177

J. L. Talmon, The Unique and the Universal, p. 64-90

Arthur Cohen, Arguments and Doctrines, p. 252-286

Jacob Neusner, Understanding Jewish Theology, p. 240-248

and

the April 17, 1967 issue of the Congress Bi-Weekly which is devoted entirely to the theme of "The Nature of Jewish Distinctiveness."

Obviously we will be involved in the issues of messianism, election, covenant and mission and in their various ways these articles deal with these themes. Rereading Kaplan with his emphasis on the unique quality of Jewish civilization may also be helpful.

With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp Encl.

January 7, 1975

Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman
Hebrew Union College
40 West 68th Street
New York, N. Y. 10023

Dear Larry:

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Daniel Jeremy Silver

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January 7, 1975

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Woodlands Community Temple
50 Worthington Road
White Plains, New York 10607

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp
Encl.

January 7, 1974

Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Massachusetts Ave. & Macomb St. , N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20016

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With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp Encl.

January 7, 1975

Rabbi Bruce S. Warshal
Temple Beth Emeth
2909 Packard Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

Dear Bruce:

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp Encl.



HEBREW UNION COLLEGE—JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
Cincinnati • New York • Los Angeles • Jerusalem

40 WEST 68th STREET • NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10023
(212) 873-0200

January 16, 1975

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

Dear Daniel:

I tried phoning you today, but you were out of town. This letter should reach you, therefore, as fast as a phone call.

I am sorry to say that I will now have to decline membership on your committee. I have been "saddled" with the chairmanship of the Faculty Centennial Committee for the New York School; though Dr. Orlinsky is my Associate Chairman, he will be on Sabbatical, thus leaving the bulk of many details to my care. I am afraid I simply will not have the time to devote to serious discussions on Jewish Particularism. I do hope you can understand my dilemma. The Centennial Committee Chairmanship is not really optional. On the other hand, I am anxious to have the New York Symposium take place some time next year, perhaps in early Spring, during our Centennial Year. I should appreciate your determining a few alternative dates, so that we can clear our calendar for you.

I have just returned from the California School, where I spoke with Mike Signer. Mike is a brilliant guy, about to receive his Ph.D. in Medieval Studies from the University of Toronto and recently appointed as a faculty member at HUC. He expressed some interest in your committee and I told him

[Jan 16, 1975]

I would pass his name on to you without reservation.
Perhaps he can take my place.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding symposium
dates.

Sincerely,

Lawry

Lawrence A. Hoffman

LH: jk



January 20, 1975

Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman
Hebrew Union College
40 West 68th Street
New York, N. Y. 10023

Dear Larry:

Some word of our work has gotten out and I have been receiving material which men feel might be of interest.

From time to time I will make a selection which seems to me to be representative and may be useful. Enclosed please find two such pieces.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

January 20, 1975

Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman
Central Synagogue
123 East 55th Street
New York, N. Y. 10022

Dear Shelly:

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Encl.

January 20, 1975

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Woodlands Community Temple
50 Worthington Road
White Plains, New York 10607

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mj

Encl.

January 20, 1975

Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Massachusetts Ave. & Macomb St., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20016

Dear Josh:

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DJS:mp

Encl.

January 20, 1975

Rabbi Bruce S. Warshal

~~Temple Beth Emeth~~

~~2909 Packard Road~~ 2420 Huron Rd

Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104 3

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

January 21, 1975

Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman
Hebrew Union College
40 West 68th Street
New York, N. Y. 10023

Dear Larry:

I received your letter of January 16 and would like to try and talk you out of retiring from the committee before we get going. It is a matter of organization and one or two meetings and I think your advice will be invaluable. Please see if you won't reconsider.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

February 18, 1975

Rabbi Joseph Glaser
Central Conference of American Rabbis
790 Madison Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10021

Dear Joe:

Enclosed please find my expenses for the first meeting of our new committee.

It was a good meeting. I will send you a copy of the follow-up letter I sent to each member for your file. This ought to keep you abreast.

Incidentally, please delete Lawrence Hoffman from the committee. He finds that he cannot work with us due to the press of the college centennial.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

February 18, 1975

Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Massachusetts Ave. & Macomb St., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20036

Dear Josh:

I think we accomplished a good bit yesterday. I particularly appreciated that you came having read much of the suggested bibliography and with notes. We got to know each other and to reveal enough of our personal biases so that we will know what each is really saying and why. It was our decision to delay planning a symposium until after we meet again during the CCAR Conference this June. To make that meeting useful each of us has agreed to do a specific paper which will line out one area in the state of affairs in re "Jewish Survival."

Sheldon Zimmerman and I will review the stated positions and actual practice of our movement. I will deal with liturgy and the pulpit; he, school curriculum, youth work and the camps. We want to know what has been done and what kind of signals have been given out. Peter Rubinstein will deal with the American Jewish community; how it looks at itself and what kind of meaningful Jewish identity it encourages. Hopefully, he will raise the question of the existence and quality of modern Jewish pattern figures. Who are the people who "Jew" visibly and effectively? Joshua Haberman will review the major theologians of the modern period insofar as their thought dealt with Jewish uniqueness, the essence of Judaism, where Judaism differs etc. Bruce Warshal will look at his congregation and at himself and frame as accurately as he can the questions that are being asked and the kinds of answers which are being listened to.

As soon as the Conference is scheduled I will ask Joe Glaser for a time and a room. I will keep in mind that most of you prefer to meet early in the week.

Three conclusions seemed to emerge. We want to inform ourselves better as to the state of the art before we plunge ahead. Most of us feel that our congregations have accepted the priority of Jewish survival more readily than some of our colleagues. Finally, we felt that the materials we commission should be appropriate for intelligent laymen as well as our colleagues.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Joe Glaser and Bob Kahn so that they can keep abreast. Thanks again.

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Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp



February 18, 1975

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Woodlands Community Temple
50 Worthington Road
White Plains, New York 10607

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I am sending a copy of this letter to Joe Glaser and Bob Kahn so that they can keep abreast. Thanks again.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp



February 10, 1975

Rabbi Bruce S. Warshal
2420 Mershon Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103

Dear Bruce:

I think we accomplished a good bit yesterday. I particularly appreciated that you came having read much of the suggested bibliography and with notes. We got to know each other and to reveal enough of our personal biases so that we will know what each is really saying and why. It was our decision to delay planning a symposium until after we meet again during the CCAR Conference this June. To make that meeting useful each of us has agreed to do a specific paper which will line out one area in the state of affairs in re "Jewish Survival."

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(Feb 19, 1975)

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I am sending a copy of this letter to Joe Glaser and Bob Kahn so that they can keep abreast. Thanks again.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp



קהילת בית אמת
TEMPLE BETH EMETH

2309 PACKARD ROAD
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48104
TELEPHONE (313) 665-4744

BRUCE S. WARSHAL, RABBI
2420 MERSHON DRIVE
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48103
TELEPHONE 665-0065

STEPHEN R. YOUNG, PRESIDENT
2930 PEBBLE CREEK ROAD
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48104
TELEPHONE 971-1368

May 23, 1975

The Theological Task Force
Daniel Jeremy Silver, Chairman
Joshua Haberman
Sheldon Zimmerman
Peter Rubinstein
Joseph Glaser, CCAR, Exec. V.P.

Gentlemen:

My personal charge emanating from our last meeting was to look at my congregation and myself and frame as accurately as I could the questions that are being asked and the kinds of answers that are being listened to. This is relevant to Jewish survival for I believe that Temple Beth Emeth in Ann Arbor, Michigan, is one of those seminal congregations that should be studied to show us where we can expect to be in the next generation for better or worse. I say this because the congregation reflects the trends and in many cases the insoluble problems of American society. It is located in a college town amidst a highly marginal Jewish community (only 400 of 1000 families affiliated). It is interested in religion not only on a cultural level, but insists upon intellectual reflection as to the meaning of Judaism and how this relates to the congregation and to personal belief.

Three questions, or more broadly stated, three areas of interest, are of paramount importance to my congregation:

1. Can we believe in revelation as expressed in the Sinaitic tradition?
2. What do we do with the Chosen People concept? If I had a nickel every time this question was asked of me, I would not be a millionaire, but for sure I would be able to afford a good meal at the Maisonette during the conference.
3. How does Judaism accept converts? Are they equal to natural-born Jews? Does Judaism have a philosophy concerning conversion?

The Theological Task Force
Daniel Jeremy Silver, Chairman
Joshua Haberman
Sheldon Zimmerman
Peter Rubinstein
Joseph Glaser, CCAR, Exec. V.P.
May 23, 1975
Page 2

I had intended to write the "king of answers which are being listened to" for these three areas. I do admit that this was ambitious; but due to the pressures of time, especially involved in my move to New Orleans, I have written a paper on question number two only. Enclosed please find a copy of that paper for your perusal before our meeting in Cincinnati.

I look forward to reading your papers and to the ensuing discussion.

Sincerely



Bruce S. Warshal

THE COVENANT--THE LEAP OF HUTZPAH

Bruce S. Warshal

I

Jewish tradition has recognized two covenants between man and God. The first covenant in time, in the sense of biblical chronology, was God's covenant with Noah (Gen. 9). Upon this foundation Talmudic Judaism enunciated the seven Noachide laws expressing God's basic relationship to all mankind. The second covenant recognized by the tradition is God's special relationship to the Jewish people through his promises to the patriarchs, culminating in the Sinaitic revelation. However, the tradition fails to distinguish yet a third covenant, one which clearly emerges from the second, proclaiming a different relationship between God and the Jewish people; in fact, a covenant which is not a factual covenant but uses covenant language to establish a new theology. This third covenant will be discussed herein in Part III; but to fully understand the radical approach of this third covenant, the nature of the concept of covenant must be reviewed (Part II). Finally in Part IV, we will discuss the kind of covenant that we as progressive Jews must choose, which entails the basic question of the value of the covenant in contemporary Jewish theology.

II

We have so emphasized the lofty word covenant that we forget that it means merely contract. It is a word that is still found in standard contract forms: "the party of the first part and the party of the second part do hereby covenant, contract and agree, to wit:" After this introduction the lawyer inserts the price to be paid and/or the service to be rendered. What we forget is that God was the party of the first part rendering a service to the Jewish people and demanding payment in return, in that particular contract, payment in kind, i.e. payment in services. Our covenant was not a lofty concept, but rather it was a practical business arrangement. To understand this, three points of

law that are common to all legal systems must be discussed.

First, to have a valid contract or covenant you must have a quid pro quo, a this for that. There must be consideration, which is a legal term indicating that each party must provide a service or money in return for the other party's service or money. If there is no consideration, if one party is offering while the other is not offering in return, but is merely receiving, then we have not a contract, but a gift. If A promises a gift to B and then changes his mind, B cannot hold A to his promise, for B promised nothing in return. He does not have a contract on which to sue. In the case of God and the Jews there was a valid contract, a covenant, which clearly spelled out obligations to both parties. The Torah is replete with this contract. God as the party of the first part will cause the Jewish people to prosper, will give it a land of milk and honey, will make it a father of a multitude of nations and will protect it from its enemies. The people of Israel, as the party of the second part, will repay God by acting as a nation of priests, by following God's laws, by not killing, by honoring father and mother, by adhering to the 613 commandments incumbent upon the people. There is no gift here. The contract is evident. Both sides understand their obligations.

Legal point number two: To have a valid contract there must be equality of bargaining. If A holds a gun to B's head and forces him to sign a contract, such contract will not be enforced by the courts, for B was under duress, and surely did not have equal bargaining power to formulate the terms and obligations of such contract. Another more common example may illustrate this point. The courts will not hold a minor to his contract. It is felt that a minor, because of his tender age, by definition does not have equal bargaining power with an adult. It takes an adult to contract with an adult.

But what does it take to contract with God? Where is, or how can there be, equal bargaining power with God? Do we then have a valid covenant or contract? We have all heard of the

leap of faith (if I may borrow a Protestant phrase), but such leap was always present in Judaism. Few people realized that inherent in the covenant or contract, is another leap. I call it the leap of hutzpah, and this concept is a Jewish gift to the world.

The hutzpah is inherent in a contract with God, not a gift from God, mind you, but a contract with obligations on both sides. With heart and mind full of hutzpah, the people who wrote the Torah pulled themselves up to confront God as equals, to strike a bargain, to write a contract, to put God and his obligations down on paper as well as putting the people Israel and its obligations on the printed line.

It may be protested that a reading of the Torah clearly indicates that those who wrote it understood that man was subservient to and not the equal of God. This is absolutely true, but more important, throwing Aristotelian logic aside (after all, this precedes Aristotle by 600 years), by ignoring the contradiction, or by merely not seeing such contradiction, the writers also proclaimed the worth of the people to confront God as equal, to strike a bargain with the Almighty.

This leap of hutzpah tells us something about the ancient Jewish concept of the worth of man. An inherently evil man in no way could gain the stature needed to write the contract with God. Although the word contract is less lofty than covenant, the idea inherent in contract, the equality of bargaining with equal contractual obligations, raises mankind to a truly lofty position. Likewise, man's self-image inherent in the leap, requires of him to act with Godly attributes, to meet his contractual obligations. How much more rewarding is this concept of man and his responsibilities than assuming that all is a gift of God, leaving mankind to receive, even to emulate, but without the dignity of knowing that it is an equal party to mutual obligation.

Legal point number three: A covenant or contract by its

nature is capable of being broken or cancelled by either party to such contract. It can be mutually dissolved, or more important to our discussion, if one party does not meet its obligations, does not render its service to the other party, the second party in turn is not obliged to fulfill its promise, its obligations to the contract. This was eminently clear to the ancient Jews, to the writers of the Torah. If you follow my laws, God proclaims, then I meet my obligations to you, but if the people Israel does not meet its contractual obligations, does "not observe all these commandments...If you break my covenant" (Lev. 26:14,15) then "I will spurn you." (Lev. 26:30). God will no longer feel the need to fulfill his obligations under the contract.

This is precisely what the pre-exilic literary prophets, what First Isaiah, Micah, Amos, and Hosea were saying. You, the people Israel, are sinning. You are oppressing the poor. You are distorting justice. You are not meeting ritual obligations under the covenant. The result of this breach of contract could only be that God would forsake the Jewish people. The prophets did not take for granted God's largesse. They understood the conditional nature of the relationship. They predicted that God would destroy the people, for it was clear to them that the people had defaulted on the contract.

The test of true prophecy was met. The destruction came. The northern empire (Israel) fell in 621 B.C.E. and the southern nation (Judah) collapsed in 586 B.C.E., the Temple in ruins and the people in Babylonian exile. It would appear that the file was closed, the contract negated, the chosen people were no longer chosen.

III

Enters a new historical concept promulgated by the post-exilic prophets. They proclaim that Israel still possesses a covenant with God, that such contract is a brit olam, an eternal covenant, and Israel's obligations under such covenant or contract

is to spread monotheism, to be an Or Le-goyim--a light unto the nations, to use Second Isaiah's terminology.

The very words brit olam, an eternal, never-ending contract or covenant, is a contradiction in terms. A contract by its nature must be conditional on the two parties fulfilling their obligations. A brit to be a brit, a covenant to be covenant or contract can never be never-ending, incapable of being cancelled. An eternal covenant is a logical impossibility. It becomes in its nature a gift, an irreversible gift.

It is true, as mentioned above, that the ancient Jew did not necessarily follow logical constructs; but if we as modern Jews are to relate to our heritage we must confront this impossibility. This is not to say that logical constructs should necessarily govern religion. There must be room for a healthy belief in the irrational, in the sense of faith predominating over reason. There must also be recognition that two irreconcilable religious thoughts can be holistically internalized within one human being. But the distinction in the brit olam, the eternal contract, is that we have a contradiction within one religious concept, that the concept itself stands confused. It is one thing to profess a faith in a whole ideatum even if unprovable by rational thought or to internalize two irreconcilable positions, but it is quite another thing to profess a faith in a concept that is not whole, that carries internal confusion.

The notion of the brit olam as a new covenant, as changing God's relationship to the Jewish people, is not manifest because the post-exilic prophets did their work so well. Rather than inventing new terminology, they borrowed the very words brit olam from Torah, while changing the basic meaning of that phrase.¹

¹To say that the post-exilic prophets "borrowed" the terminology of Torah may connote that Leviticus and Numbers predate the post-exilic prophets, which is not my intent. The dating of these books is not within the scope of this paper. (See The Shaping of Jewish History, Ellis Rivkin, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971, Chapter II). The important point is that the post-exilic prophets built upon an existing Torah tradition, which at their time is at least firmly rooted in Genesis and Deuteronomy.

It is exceedingly significant that the confusing phrase brit olam should be noted for its absence in Torah. If Numbers and Leviticus are contemporaneous with the post-exilic prophets (see Footnote 1) we are left with only five references to that phrase, four in Genesis and one in Exodus. Leviticus and Numbers contribute three more references. All of these must be discussed in order to appreciate the fine craftsmanship of the post-exilic prophets.

The context of Leviticus 24:8 is the establishment of Aaronide priestly power: "With each row you shall place pure frankincense, which is to be a token offering for the bread, as an offering by fire to the Lord. He [Aaron in the Tent of Meeting] shall arrange them before the Lord regularly every Sabbath day--it is a commitment for all time [brit olam] on the part of the Israelites." Here we have the establishment of the obligations and, of course, the power of Aaron and his sons, emanating from their functions in the Temple ritual. The brit olam that is present is not the concept of an eternal covenant as expressed by the post-exilic prophets (later to be discussed in this paper) but is in its most crass expression a declaration of inherited power to continue generation after generation. To be sure, in some sense there is an eternal, never-ending, not-capable-of-being-broken, nature to this arrangement; but the focus is not on the covenant, on the relationship between God and the people Israel. There are two other Aaronide cultic references using the term brit olam. Numbers 18:19 refers to an everlasting salt offering, which has reference to Leviticus 2:13, prescribing that salt must be mixed with all meal offerings. Numbers 25:13 refers to a brit kehunot olam--a pact of priesthood forever, again referring to priestly empire building.

Exodus 31:16 states: "The Israelite people shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout the generations as a covenant for all time" (brit olam). The context is clear that there is the hope that Israel's fidelity to God would never end. What is not stated here is the reverse, that God would be bound forever to the people. A hope of fidelity cannot be construed

into an eternal covenant, no matter the terminology brit olam.

This brings us to the four remaining references that can not be dismissed so easily. Clearly in Genesis 9:16 there is an eternal promise binding God's actions forever. God promises to Noah and his sons that never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth. God sets the rainbow in the clouds as a visual reminder of his "everlasting covenant" (brit olam). Whether it was wise to use such a confusing phrase at this point is open to question. Whether this and the remaining three references are later inserts is also open to question; but what cannot be questioned is that there is an eternal promise by God, whether that promise constitutes a contract or no. But note that the promise is made to mankind, not to Jews; that this particular promise forms the basis of the Noachide laws, not the Sinaitic covenant. It was always disjunctive and never conjunctive with the establishment of the brit, of the concept of the chosen people.

The final three references are in Genesis, Chapter 17, verses 7, 13 and 19. It can be argued that even though the phrase brit olam is used here, there is actual consideration on behalf of the people, that consideration being the requirement to express the covenant through the ritual of circumcision; yet that is certainly far less than the requirements of the contract as generally understood, binding the Jewish people to a voluminous set of obligations. The very fact that these three references are clustered within twelve verses of one another, while the phrase brit olam nowhere else appears in Genesis except for the Noah reference and appears not once in Deuteronomy, opens us to speculation as to how they found their way into the text. Another curiosity is that the entire seventeenth chapter of Genesis, which encompasses only the circumcision requirements and stories, could be dropped with the narrative text of the book proceeding smoothly from chapter sixteen to chapter eighteen. We can speculate on this cluster of three references, but this also would be out of the scope of this paper.

Without speculation we can conclude that although the phrase brit olam is occasionally used in Torah, there is nowhere in evidence the kind of full-blown concept of eternal covenant, later expressed in terms of Or Le-goyim or Israel's mission. Before the post-exilic prophets, when the term brit is used, the tradition referred to a conditional contract with God, inherent within it all of the conditions of contract law discussed previously in Part II. If this were not the case, the pre-exilic prophets would be unintelligible. Their forecasts of doom and destruction, their admonitions to the Jews, their reminders of obligations unmet, all foreclose on the possibility of any continued, let alone any unbreakable or eternal, contract with God. The genius of the post-exilic prophets is that they were able to breathe just such a concept into Judaism so smoothly that to this very day biblical scholars see the distinction between a quid pro quo contract and an eternally binding relationship, but they do not see this as the specific contribution of the post-exilic prophets.

Moshe Weinfeld in an otherwise outstanding article in the Encyclopedia Judaica (Vol. 5, pp. 1011-1022) exemplifies the conventional wisdom. He makes the distinction between obligatory and promissory covenants, the latter obligating God but not man. He continues, "Even when Israel sins and is to be severely punished, God intervenes to help because He 'will not break his covenant' (Lev. 26:44)." If we read Leviticus 26 (Parashah Bechukotai) this is not the sense of the passage. Very clearly God spells out the rewards if Israel follows his commandments and the dire punishment that almost destroys the people if it does not follow the commandments. Then twice, in verses 40 and 43 the text speaks of the people atoning--then and only then does it say that God will not break His covenant. In essence we have a chastised people committing itself anew to a true bi-lateral contract. Weinfeld makes reference to Abraham (Gen. 17, 19) and to David (II Sam. 7) as further examples of one-way "promissory" contracts. The Abraham promises were culminated in the true Sinaitic brit and

become subsumed in the obligations thereunto, while the David promises were analogous to the Aaronide priestly material previously discussed. They do not reflect the relationship of the people Israel to God.

Why do highly competent biblical scholars insist upon reading a post-exilic phenomenon into a pre-exilic environment, thereby practically destroying the efficacy of the message of the pre-exilic prophets? The reason is obvious: Jewish tradition did its job too well. The post-exilic prophets had to save a raison d'être for the people. Afterwards the tradition could not admit to the "contribution" of these prophets without putting their entire construct in jeopardy. The tradition had to proclaim that the mission of Israel to act as a light to the nations (to speed monotheism), that the brit olam, the eternal covenant, expressed God's will in its earliest manifestation. This new mission itself is explicable, in the process of being written into a pre-existing contract we arrive at the inexplicable concept of the eternal contract.²

We should not assume that the eternal contract sprang full-blown out of the rubble of the exile. Rather it took time to develop, wending its way through time from Jeremiah to Ezekiel to its complete formulation in Second Isaiah.

The brit olam is referred to in Jeremiah 50:5, 32:40, and 31:31. This last reference is set immediately before the fall of King Zedekiah when Jeremiah clearly saw the destruction of Judah:

²Weinfeld does reinforce the contract analysis in Section II as applied to our covenant with God when, relying on work of G. Mendenhall, he shows that the brit with God is patterned after Hittite treaties and commercial pacts. He also shows that the golden calf incident signified the breaking of a contract: "Indeed, the term for cancelling a contract in Babylonian legal literature is 'to break the tablet' (tuppan heṭū)." Of course, the contract was made a second time. The Jewish genius was applying these existing contract formulas between man and God, what I call the leap of hutzpah. Weinfeld comments: "The idea of a covenant between a deity and a people is unknown from other religions and cultures."

"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Clearly Jeremiah's new covenant goes beyond the traditional commentators' belief that he is signifying that God can be worshipped even in Babylonia, that the Lord is not tied only to the land of Israel. Jeremiah understands the original contract to be broken because Judah did not keep its side of the contract. This must be the interpretation in light of the earlier chapters of Jeremiah where he shares the tenor of the pre-exilic prophetic tradition. Jeremiah understood his contract law. He hedges by putting God's word within their hearts, implying that it will not be a one-way relationship, that the people Israel will meet their obligations. Finally it is significant that Jeremiah proclaims this brit chadeshah, this new testament, echoing the classic words of the original brit, "you will be my people and I will be your God" (Lev. 26:12, Deut. 29:12).

Ezekiel finds it equally difficult to enunciate a theological rationale for the continued interest by God in the people, that crucial concern that Ezekiel knows must be manifest for the sake of the very existence of Israel. Throughout chapter 16, God compares Israel to Sodom and Samaria and then inexplicably in verse 60 promises an eternal covenant. In chapter 37 Ezekiel has the famous vision of the dry bones regathered and twice in that chapter (verses 23 and 27) echoes the original covenant-- and they shall be my people and I will be their God. Ezekiel

tries hard to maintain the old covenant. He makes no explicit reference, as does Jeremiah, to a new contract. He also presents no philosophical rationale for this covenant, new or old. Although writing after Jeremiah, philosophically he does not progress even to Jeremiah's position, let alone beyond that point. We must wait approximately 40 more years for Second Isaiah to enunciate this new concept with thorough philosophical underpinnings. Second Isaiah becomes the theologian of the eternal covenant.

Second Isaiah 66:19 explains why the people Israel are in exile: "They shall declare my glory among the nations." Here we have a definite break with the pre-exilic prophecy that exile shall come as an inexorable outgrowth of the sins of the people. In 42:6 Second Isaiah continues this theme by proclaiming that the people Israel shall act as a light to the nations. He then weds his new concept linguistically with the pre-existing brit by a peculiar formulation: Vetencha L'brit Am--I have set you for a covenant of the people, or as the Revised Standard Version translates it: I have given you as a covenant to the people. The change of the preposition of to to in context can be justified, but most important for our consideration, it highlights the difficulty of making sense of the whole phrase. Once again, dropping the fancy word covenant and replacing it with its synonym contract, we can see the difficulty: I have given you as a contract (of or to) the people. What is a contract of or to the people? It is relatively meaningless. Isaiah solves this problem elsewhere by expressing the joining of these two concepts (the brit and the mission of Israel) by utilizing the phrase brit olam, an eternal contract.³ Thus we have the complete expression of what can only be classified as a third

³Isaiah 55:3, 61:8. There is one reference in First Isaiah (24:5) of the people breaking the everlasting covenant, which is of little importance. There is little chance that it is authentically First Isaiah. Never does a pre-exilic prophet use this phrase. One can argue that here we have a commingling of the two books. Another explanation is found in the generally acknowledged fact that chapters 24 through 27 are of a later period and not attributable to First Isaiah.

covenant in Jewish tradition.

IV

It is important for us to recognize the eternal covenant as a concept distinct from the original tentative contract previously expressed in Jewish history and as a concept that changes Israel's relationship with God. Once this is recognized we can understand the important historical role that this played in literally saving the Jewish people; but then we must return to the needs of contemporary Judaism and ask whether the brit olam can play a constructive role.

One can argue with great plausibility that some form of covenant with God is vital to Jewish survival, be that covenant in a literary form or understood in a literal sense. The question is: Which covenant?

The difficulty with Isaiah's brit olam is that if we have an eternal contract, then the people Israel can never lose its relationship to God, even if it were to renege on its half of the contract, if we can still use that term, "contract". This may be very comforting religion, but is it good religion? The genius of the original contract is that in its leap of hutzpah, it drew mankind if only for a moment up to God's stature and then demanded of it standards of conduct equal to that stature, all the while reinforcing that demand with the clear understanding that Israel's special relationship with God is temporary, requiring each generation to renew it through its conduct. It is this glorious demand upon the people that is lost in Second Isaiah's reconstruction.

It is our challenge today, if we Jews are to see ourselves as unique in any religious sense, not to discard the concept of the chosen people, of having a special covenant with God; but of reaffirming that contract in its original sense before its distortion by Second Isaiah. It is our challenge to become original, basic Jews, with obligations to God, receiving in return a sense of special relationship to Him. By this I do not

mean a return to Orthodoxy, but a return to serious commitment to the covenant. It is not important whether that present relationship rests upon an actual happening, a contract signed and sealed at Sinai at an historical point in time, or whether that contract is a literary construct, the product of genius and of visionaries. We can feel the personal obligations of that contract on us in either case.

The challenge for us today is to spell out in particulars as one would clearly write any contract, on the one side what we expect of God, or alternatively stated, what we expect our belief in God will do for us, and on the other side, what obligations we have, and services we must render, to fulfill our half of the contract.

Out of the inherent insecure and temporary nature of a true covenant must come belief and a definition of moral conduct, for that is the major ingredient of the service that we must render God to fulfill the covenant. It is time that we begin to give some serious attention to our contractual obligations. It is time for a new leap of hutzpah.