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Central Conference of American Rabbis, Task Force on Jewish
Identity, correspondence and programs, 1977-1980.

February 23, 1977

Rabbi Arthur Lelyveld
Fairmount Temple
23737 Fairmount Blvd.
Cleveland, Ohio 44121

Dear Arthur:

As you know, the Task Force on Jewish Identity held a seminar on Universalism and Particularism on November 8-9, 1976. Nine papers were presented to a sizeable audience of students and rabbis. The papers will be published in a forthcoming issue of the Journal.

We would like to convene the second seminar under the same general rubric as the first. The first time around necessarily we had to devote a good bit of time to determine where we are. We needed to position our movement in this general area and, I think, we succeeded in doing so. Now it is important to raise the implied and implicit theological issue.

We envision another two day meeting. One set of presentations would focus on what has been said about the legitimacy of Jewish identity by our thinkers. The theologians of the classical period were eager to break out of parochial bounds rather than to turn inward. We need to know what they said and why. The larger group of papers would tackle various theological themes which impinge on our attitudes towards particularistic involvement (i. e. the mission of Israel, messianism, the nature of the K'lal, and prophetic Judaism in an unredeemed world). A third set of papers would examine the question of Jewish identity as it emerges in a non-American environments (Europe, Israel).

We managed the first seminar on a budget of \$1,000. We held our Task Force meeting in conjunction with the Conference. No honorariums were paid. We would pay only expenses. We believe that \$1200-1300 would take care of everything. Bernie Martin has expressed interest in publishing the second set of these papers. It might even

[Feb 23, 1977
Lelyveld]

be possible for the Conference to publish an important book of essays derived from both conferences.

I hope the Conference will make this money available so that we can continue the work which we have been asked to do.

With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

cc Joe Glavin

February 23, 1977

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

Dear Joe:

When we visited in New York we spoke of the Task Force's concern that the subject of "Jewish Identity" be raised in the regions. Our original mandate from the CCAR Board was to stimulate Board discussion and concern for this theme. We believe we now have the basis for an intelligent and interesting presentation.

To review briefly, we held a two-day public conference in New York. The nine papers will be published in the summer issue of the Journal. We are proposing a second conference for the spring of 1978. If we get a provisional go-ahead, a good bit of work will be under way beside the published material. We would like to share our findings, concerns and ongoing interests with colleagues. One way to do this would be to have members of the Task Force make presentations at regional conferences. I have spoken of this to our Task Force and the men have indicated that if the burden is not too great they would be willing to devote the necessary time. We understand that there would be no fee for these presentations, simply expenses.

Probably the best way to present this material would be to do it in three sessions. I envision the first a descriptive and sociological presentation. We have extensive tapes of congregational attitudes and have done a good bit of research into congregational feelings and practices as illustrated at such critical times as Rosh Hashanah and Confirmation, and in such critical places as the classroom. Inevitably, what is being done raises questions of why.

The second presentation should be historical. Our theologians have necessarily written on the universalist-particularist theme. It is

[Feb 23, 1977
Cotter]

It is interesting how frequently they assumed the legitimacy of a survival agenda without defining that legitimacy. They were more concerned with joining the larger world and the assumptions led to their definition of the mission of Israel and prophetic Judaism as well as to their distance from Zionism. We could illustrate their positions systematically or by concrete example in much the way Larry Hoffman did in his excellent paper on The Language of Survival: Prayerbook and Liturgy.

The last paper would take a crack at defining a liberal theological position on Jewish identity. Hopefully, this presentation would lead to a discussion of the relevant themes: our messianic attitudes, the mission of Israel doctrine, assumptions about a Judeo-Christian tradition, our need to place ourselves within the Jewish religious continuum and the K'lal etc.

It would be best for these programs to be presented by two members of our Task Force. This would avoid the possibility of the idiosyncratic attitudes of any one person becoming the focus of discussion and would guarantee that the Task Force would have critical feedback from the participants. It would be our hope that we could tape these sessions in the various regions to discover whether there are discernible sectional theological differences within the rabbinate - a subject which has not been sufficiently studied.

We would be prepared to present one or two such regional programs during the 1977-78 season. I would suggest that Larry Hoffman and I might be an appropriate duo for the first presentation. Larry and I share an historical attitude and that critical dispassion which I think is important for the kind of presentation we would like to make.

It is my understanding that you will present this suggestion at the Conference to the presidents of the various regions. I would like your thinking on this paper ahead of time so that it is as clear as it can be.

I hope to hear from you soon. With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

cc A. Seligson
E. Pilechik

**UNIVERSALISM
and
PARTICULARISM**

A Seminar



November 8-9, 1976

at the

Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion

40 W. 68th St., New York City

sponsored by the

Task Force on Jewish Identity

of the

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

790 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10021

UNIVERSALISM AND PARTICULARISM: A SEMINAR

The historic forces which brought about the creation of Reform Judaism inevitably tilted the movement's political and theological concerns towards universalist theologies and social programs which emphasized citizenship and belonging. We had been outcasts and wanted to be included. We had a special learning and wanted to participate in "civilization." We had been a state within a state and wanted equal rights.

These needs were desperately felt. For a century our thinkers continued to explore the tradition for those themes and emphases which validated these needs. But this is another age and other historic forces are at work. This is a time of disappointment, a tragic era: no fellowship of men of good will has emerged.

Fackenheim's eleventh commandment: "Do not give Hitler a posthumous victory" has suggested the ground on which a new thinking would begin. Our liberal movement has never held a conference directed solely by concerns of distinctiveness and particularism, and although some will see this as part of a "return" to tradition, we are not returning so much as turning, to the non-Jew and uncommitted Jew alike. The high-sounding pronouncements of prophetic Judaism, once so compelling, now seem pale, incredibly vague and naive, to a people who have endured the Holocaust, a century of Russian anti-semitism and a half-century of *jihad* .

It is not a question of either/or: either universalism or orthodoxy; either particularism or ethical culture; but of a sharper awareness of where we are and what needs to be said, which provides the focus of this conference.

Discussants were not chosen as representatives of a particular ideology. What they share is a concern for the development of a language which will effectively express Judaism's right to survive and reason for being, as well as the familiar prophetic concerns of Judaism.

Registration fee: \$10.00, which includes lunch on both days.

There will be a brief opportunity for questions after each presentation.

PROGRAM

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 8

10:00 a.m. "Congregational Perceptions: The Tale of the Tapes"

Rabbi Peter J. Rubinstein
Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman

11:15 a.m. "The Language of Survival: Social Action"

Rabbi Simeon J. Maslin

12:30 Lunch

1:30 p.m. "The Language of Survival: Curriculum and Text Book"

Rabbi Stuart A. Gertman

2:30 p.m. "The Language of Survival: Adult Education and Congregational Programs"

Rabbi Bruce Warshal

3:45 p.m. "Universalism and Particularism in Interreligious Dialogue"

Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9

10:00 a.m. "Contra Intermarriage: The Theological Position"

Rabbi Bernard Martin

11:15 a.m. "The Language of Survival: Prayerbook and Liturgy"

Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman

12:30 p.m. Lunch

1:30 p.m. "The Language of Survival in Midrashic Sources"

Rabbi Lou Silberman

2:45 p.m. "Do We Mean What We Say? Do We Say What We Mean?"

Rabbi Daniel J. Silver

ABOUT THE DISCUSSANTS

PETER J. RUBINSTEIN is Rabbi of Woodlands Community Temple in White Plains, New York and a member of the CCAR Task Force on Jewish Identity. He has served on the Executive Board of the Jewish Peace Fellowship and the Advisory Board of the UDC.

SHELDON ZIMMERMAN is Rabbi of Central Synagogue in New York City and on the Task Force on Jewish Identity. He is also Chairman of the CCAR Subcommittee on Alcoholism and represents the Conference on the Synagogue Council of America.

SIMEON J. MASLIN is Rabbi of K.A.M. Isaiah-Israel in Chicago and Editor of "A Guide For The Sanctification of Life" being prepared for the Conference by its Committee on Reform Jewish Practice.

STUART A. GERTMAN is Associate Rabbi of Westchester Reform Temple in Scarsdale, New York, and has edited "What Is The Answer: A Guide for Parents and Teachers to Difficult Questions" for the UAHC.

BRUCE WARSHAL is Rabbi of Touro Synagogue in New Orleans and a member of the Task Force on Jewish Identity. He has served on the Committee on Tenure and Security of the Conference and the Commission on Jewish Education.

JOSHUA O. HABERMAN is Rabbi of Washington Hebrew Congregation in Washington, D.C. and a member of the Task Force on Jewish Identity. He is Chairman of the North American Board of the World Union for Progressive Judaism.

BERNARD MARTIN is Professor of Jewish Thought at Case Western Reserve University and Editor of the *CCAR Journal*. He is co-author, with Daniel J. Silver, of *A History of the Jewish People*.

LAWRENCE A. HOFFMAN is Professor of Liturgy and Related Literature at the New York School of the Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion and serves on the Liturgy Committee of the Conference.

LOU SILBERMAN is Chairman of the Department of Religious Studies at Vanderbilt University.

DANIEL J. SILVER is Rabbi of The Temple in Cleveland and Chairman of the Task Force on Jewish Identity. He is co-author with Bernard Martin of *A History of the Jewish People*.

The Task Force on Jewish Identity was created to undertake an investigation of the question, "Why should Judaism survive?" The Task Force envisions a two or three year dialogue concerned with study of Jewish distinctiveness and singularity as it is reflected in the Religious School, youth work and pulpit.

אגוד הרבנים המתקדמים

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

790 MADISON AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 • (212) 734-7166

Office of the Executive Vice President

April 22, 1977

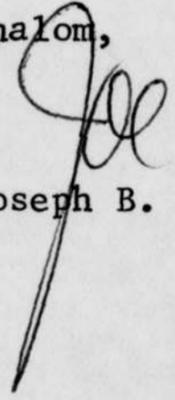
Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
University Circle at Silver Park
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

Dear Dan:

I know you will be pleased to know that your request for \$1,000 to continue the work of your Identity project was approved by the Executive Board.

Warm good wishes.

Shalom,


Joseph B. Glaser

JBG/s

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Cleveland, Ohio
Joseph B. Glaser, *Executive Vice President*
New York, N.Y.

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*Ex-officio

April 29, 1977

Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman
19 Hillcrest Lane
Rye, New York 10580

Dear Larry:

The material from our Conference is now in the works and will be published in the summer issue of the Journal. I was pleased to hear from Joe Glaser that we have been granted enough money to hold a second conference. I would like to plan the conference at a Task Force meeting at the Conference. Would you indicate by return mail your availability at 8 A. M. on Wednesday, June 22, Thursday, June 23 or at noon on Wednesday, June 22?

I have been asked to make a presentation to the presidents of our regions in the hope that they will hold mini-conferences on Jewish identity at their annual sectional meetings. I am to make this presentation Thursday at noon and would like to talk over its substance with you before that.

With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

April 29, 1977

Rabbi Peter J. Rubinstein
Woodlands Community Temple
50 Worthington Rd.
White Plains, N. Y. 10607

Dear Peter:

The material from our Conference is now in the works and will be published in the summer issue of the Journal. I was pleased to hear from Joe Glaser that we have been granted enough money to hold a second conference. I would like to plan the conference at a Task Force meeting at the Conference. Would you indicate by return mail your availability at 8 A. M. on Wednesday, June 22, Thursday, June 23 or at noon on Wednesday, June 22?

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With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

April 29, 1977

Rabbi Bruce Warshal
Touro Synagogue
P. O. Box 15186
New Orleans, La. 70175

Dear Bruce:

The material from our Conference is now in the works and will be published in the summer issue of the Journal. I was pleased to hear from Joe Glaser that we have been granted enough money to hold a second conference. I would like to plan the conference at a Task Force meeting at the Conference. Would you indicate by return mail your availability at 8 A. M. on Wednesday, June 22, Thursday, June 23 or at noon on Wednesday, June 22?

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

April 29, 1977

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

Dear Shelly:

The material from our Conference is now in the works and will be published in the summer issue of the Journal. I was pleased to hear from Joe Glaser that we have been granted enough money to hold a second conference. I would like to plan the conference at a Task Force meeting at the Conference. Would you indicate by return mail your availability at 8 A. M. on Wednesday, June 22, Thursday, June 23 or at noon on Wednesday, June 22?

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With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

April 29, 1977

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

Dear Josh:

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With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Woodlands Community Temple

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

RABBI PETER RUBINSTEIN

May 6, 1977

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

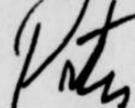
Dear Danny:

Thanks for your note. Any of the times you mentioned are available to me as long as you let me know in advance.

I see from the Conference schedule that there will be a session on the issue.

I hope everything is well with you and I look forward to seeing you soon.

Cordially,



Peter J. Rubinstein, Rabbi

PJR/jm

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

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

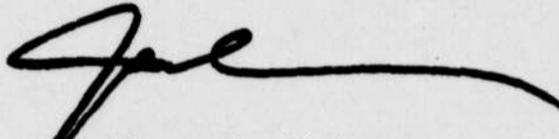
May 6, 1977

Dear Dan,

I see no problem at all with a breakfast meeting of the Task Force on either Wednesday or Thursday at 8:00 A.M. I have a hunch that a Wednesday noon meeting might be in conflict with other Conference events.

Looking forward to seeing you at the Conference and with best regards,

As ever,



Joshua O. Haberman

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



RABBI SHELDON ZIMMERMAN

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

May 9, 1977
21 Iyar 5737

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

Dear Dan,

Best times for me would be-

Wednesday, 8 a.m. June 22
or

Thursday, June 23 - 8 a.m.

Best regards,

Shelby

Touro Synagogue

FOUNDED 1828

St. Charles Avenue at General Pershing

POST OFFICE BOX 15186

New Orleans, Louisiana 70175

BRUCE S. WARSHAL, RABBI

May 11, 1977

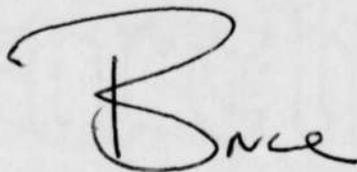
Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
University Circle at Silver Park
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

Dear Dan:

Enclosed is a copy of an article that I published in the current issue of Judaism. You will note that it grew out of our committee.

I am leaving Touro at the end of May, and thus my personal schedule is slightly askew. Please do not schedule any committee meetings around me. At present, I expect to be at the conference and I assure you that I will be present at the committee meeting at any time that you set it.

With best regards,



Rabbi Bruce S. Warshal

BSW/sbl

Enclosure

May 17, 1977

Rabbi Peter J. Rubinstein
Woodlands Community Temple
50 Worthington Road
White Plains, N. Y. 10607

Dear Peter:

Let's plan on meeting on Wednesday, June 22 at 8 A. M.
I will arrange a table for breakfast once we get there.
Please have a few ideas as to the themes you would like
to see covered at our second Particularism and Univer-
salism Conference.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

May 17, 1977

Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman
19 Hillcrest Lane
Rye, N. Y. 10580

Dear Larry:

Let's plan on meeting on Wednesday, June 22 at 8 A. M.
I will arrange a table for breakfast once we get there.
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May 17, 1977

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Touro Synagogue
P. O. Box 15186
New Orleans, La. 70175

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I will arrange a table for breakfast once we get there.
Please have a few ideas as to the themes you would like
to see covered at our second Particularism and Univer-
salism Conference.

I have seen the Judaism piece. You have rewritten it a good
bit and it is improved. Congratulations on it. And not inci-
dentally, best wishes in your search.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

May 17, 1977

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

Dear Shelly:

Let's plan on meeting on Wednesday, June 22 at 8 A. M.
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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

May 17, 1977

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

Dear Josh:

Let's plan on meeting on Wednesday, June 22 at 8 A. M.
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Please have a few ideas as to the themes you would like
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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים

THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM



INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY JEWRY

המכון ליהדות ומנו

May 19, 1977

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

Dear Daniel:

Thank you very much indeed for your letter of April 26 and for the materials enclosed. I remember with pleasure our meetings in Israel and in Cleveland, and was delighted to hear from you again.

I read the papers you sent with very great interest and look forward to the material which you will send me on Jewish identity after your conference in June. When I read your paper "Zionism: A Response to the United Nations" I was reminded of the deep impression created by the appearance of your father three decades ago -- before a very different sort of United Nations.

I am interested to learn about the attention you are giving to questions related to Jewish identity. As you probably know, this is a central theme in my own research at the Hebrew University. I recently completed a comprehensive study of Jewish identity in Israel and in the Diaspora which will be published under the title Jewish Identity: A Social Psychological Perspective this coming summer by Sage Publications of Beverly Hills.

My heartiest congratulations on the important contribution to Jewish scholarship which your two-volume A History of Judaism constitutes.

I look forward very much to meeting you again when next you come to Jerusalem.

With warmest greetings,

Yours sincerely,

Simon N. Herman

P.S. I am sending you under separate cover a reprint of a paper on "Zionism and Pro-Israelism."

WASHINGTON HEBREW CONGREGATION

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

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

May 25, 1977

Dear Colleague,

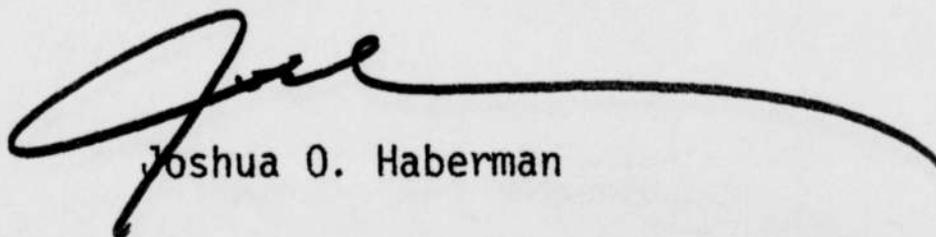
Don,

We have had an amazing response to the suggested breakfast meeting for rabbis of very large congregations. Of the 25 men who were invited, 23 plan to attend. The other two will not be at the conference. This makes it 100% of all those who will be at Grossinger's.

The general preference is for Tuesday morning, June 21, from 8:00 to 9:30 A.M. This is now our meeting date. If there is a change in your plans, please advise me immediately. Kindly join us promptly at 8:00 A.M. so that we might have enough time to hear from all our colleagues who wish to express themselves on some of our topics.

Enclosed is the agenda which has been somewhat revised in the light of suggestions by our colleagues.

As ever,



Joshua O. Haberman

P.S. Would you please be prepared, as a discussion starter, to present, within 2 to 3 minutes maximum, your answer to the question listed in item No. 4 on our agenda?

[with May 25, 1977]

AGENDA SUGGESTIONS FOR PRIVATE MEETING OF
RABBIS OF VERY LARGE CONGREGATIONS

Tuesday, June 21, 8:00 A.M. to 9:30 A.M.
at Grossinger's In a Separate Seating Area
of the Main Dining Room

1. New ways of involving the individual and "personalizing" membership in a very large Congregation. Also reactions to:
 - a. Advisability of creating sub-congregations within the congregation such as a Young Peoples Congregation, etc.
 - b. Are Chavurot the answer?
 - c. Encounter Groups, life crisis seminars
 - d. Experiential religious workshops, retreats, family camping, family trips to Israel, etc.
 - e. New forms of Adult Education, such as parallel classes for parents of Religious School, lunch and learn groups
2. The Senior Rabbi's dilemma:
 - a. Maintain personal control or delegate?
 - b. What to share and what not to share with junior colleagues.
3. The senior rabbi's wisdom or unwisdom of fixing a retirement date and designating a successor.
4. How could the CCAR and/or UAHC better serve very large congregations?

[June 23, 1977]

Jewish Identity, Jewish Survival and Israel

Jewish identity is a misleading term. It suggests concern with a set of cultural mannerisms - a concern which is clearly not at issue. As we use the term, Jewish identity is a shorthand phrase which asks the question: will there be another generation of Jews coming behind?

Jewish identity became a popular theme about a decade ago. When our fathers discussed Jewish survival they discussed assimilation. Assimilation describes a problem. Jewish identity defines a desired result. This change of terms suggests a change of attitude. Our fathers accepted assimilation as a fact of life. We have ceased to be passive about our losses.

Pre-Holocaust conference papers treated assimilation as a widespread infection for which there was no prescribed remedy, though it was believed that the contagion could be contained by effective inoculation with the antibodies of Jewish education, home ritual and youth programs. Assimilation was assumed to be the price the Jewish community had to pay for political and economic emancipation and social acceptance.

In the past years attitudes have hardened. These have been difficult times for the Jewish people. It is no longer simply a matter of religious affiliation. The person who sheds his Jewish identity sheds, at the same time, his responsibility to a beleaguered people. The wanderer is not home when the Federation or the UJA solicits monies. He is not available when petitions must be signed or congressmen visited. He is not to be counted at rallies for Soviet prisoners of conscience or to protest Arab terrorism. We know who is in and who is out; and the sense of emotional distance widens each year that our world remains unredeemed.

The intellectual environment also has changed. The Holocaust made us recognize that the end of the Jewish people was conceivable. Demographic studies report

the rising rate of outmarriage and the fall in live births. There is no longer a Jewish mass in eastern Europe whose numerous progeny will make up for those who walk off.

The social environment has changed. A generation ago disaffected young Jews tended to remain disaffected, but near or within the Jewish community. Today the disinterested go far and put down their roots in other social enclaves, not to mention Buddhist monasteries, Maoist cells and Youth for Christ communes.

Jews tend to approach the question of Jewish identity according to individual need. For some the question is: how can I make sure that my child marries a Jew? For others the question is: how can the Jewish people be strengthened for the urgent political struggles which are ahead of us? Others ask: how can we build spiritually fulfilling activity into Jewish life? How do we help clarify the goals of the Jewish community? There are no simple answers. Indeed, to some of these questions there are no answers at all. As every educator knows, you cannot reason another into a commitment; commitment emerges out of experience.

Question: Has reform Judaism contributed clarity or confusion on the issue of Jewish identity? Answer: Reform Judaism has contributed clarity and confusion. Our synagogues, schools and camps have provided the experiences through which Jewish commitment is strengthened. Our theological postures have accentuated the conventional liberal disdain of labels and strengthened the Enlightenment's prejudice that group concerns are necessarily parochial and narrow. Most congregations include a minority whose roots in reform go back four or five generations. At the same time those of us who know such folk recognize that many are deeply troubled by what they see as a return to Jewish ethnicity: the kippah, Yiddishisms, day schools, the Hebraisms of Gates of Prayer.

Reform began among those who wanted to join the larger society. She-lo asanu was eliminated from the liturgy. Parochial schools were discouraged. Zionism was attacked. The common bond was defined as congregational rather than national. There was little talk of mitzvot and much talk of civic duty. Our Geigers schematized history so as to associate the particular and the national with an earlier, more primitive period in our religious development.

Suspicion of the particular and the national did not end with the Columbus Platform. The Declaration of Principles of the Social Action Commission the UAHC adopted in 1952 proclaimed a holy crusade against a variety of social ills - not one of which related specifically to Jewish needs. The Conference on Universalism and Particularism, sponsored last November by your Task Force on Jewish Identity, was the first meeting sponsored by our rabbinic union ever to concern itself directly with formulating a theology of particularism and survival.

Incidentally, much of the information in my paper and in the presentations rests in the research presented at that Conference.

In recent years much has changed. Auschwitz, 1948 and four Arab wars have brought into being an "If I am not for myself who will be for me" Jew - a type which troubles many in our conference, for many among us cannot put aside their ambivalence about being caught up in prudential concerns. Our rabbinic forebearers took for granted that Jewish interests and a Jewish way of life can be legitimate ends in themselves; yet, many of us are hung up on the idea that our mission is somehow more to the Arab poor of Israel than to the poor in Israel from Arab lands.

Studies presented at our Conference suggest that perhaps ten to fifteen percent of our colleagues operate from an emotional or theological stance which accepts "Jewish" forms, texts and experiences not as valid in themselves, but only as effective

techniques which can sensitize Jews toward transcending values and loyalties. Such men use cantorial music, Sabbath ritual and Torah readings as symbols which point the way to much praised universal concerns. The value is not the Jewishness of the experience itself - the knitting of the bonds of amcha - but the power of that experience to lift up the larger good and encourage Jews towards the larger goal. Incidentally, the "Larger goal" is never clearly defined. I confess that I find it difficult to distinguish such use of symbols from the clearly manipulative activities of the Jewish Missionary Alliance who also use cantors, the Seder and Sabbath ritual to promote their messianic truth.

Our studies make clear that the vast majority of our colleagues delight in "Jewish" forms and experiences for their own sake and actively defend the rights of the Jewish people as well as of the common needs of mankind, but, also, that we are not particularly successful in explaining this many-sided position to congregants. Many reasons suggest themselves; on the congregation's part; a cultural penchant for instant definitions; on our part; a predilection for what I have called "golden words. We cannot resist adding the big words: righteousness, justice, freedom and peace to our perorations. 'Argument weak, add Amos here.' We know everyone will respond and that's precisely the problem. The golden words mean everything, anything and nothing.

Our commitment to social action must not blind us to the conceptual fallacy implicit in Reform's consecration of a set of abstract ideas as the essence of Judaism with the corollary that all else is tangential. Judaism defined as prophetic commitment or as ethical theism, represented an abject surrender to the dominant positivist constructs of the 19th century. The Enlightenment limited reason to a process of conceptualization which sought to discover the unity within apparent diversity. The success of this approach

was apparent in the flood of technical miracles which freed society from drudge labor. The social value of this approach lay in the fact that it gave the lie to all class or racial pretensions. Positivism dissolved each religion's claim to a monopoly of truth. There was no "true" religion, only complementary ways of achieving grace and redemption. Given the social value of such a universalist perspective, particularist concerns came to be seen as quixotic and regressive. For all its value there was a basic flaw in this conceptual process. Concepts appropriate to the laboratory are not appropriate to the study of man. Each individual is unique and each people has a special identity. The universal has value as a dream. The particular defines responsibility in an unredeemed world. My paper quoted a paragraph from those ^{hasidei umot ha-olam} ~~Hasidic~~ ~~uret ha-dam~~, Alice ^{AND Roy} ~~Grey~~ and Eckard, which Josh Haberman brought to our attention; ~~that I would like to repeat here:~~

The very essence of Israel lies in her relating of the great heritage of the Jewish people and Judaism to normal political and social life. Without universal demands and responsibilities, particular human communities become self-centered, exclusivist, and subject to the corruption of power. But without any application to concrete human problems, universal principles remain empty dreams.

Particularity is the home that keeps universality from flying away into abstract ideals; universality is the adventure that judges particularity and lures it away from self-concentration.

Religions are born, preserved and perpetuated by communities. Attempts to abstract the teachings or essence of a faith from the living community always and necessarily fail to reflect the scope and depth of the real thing. Yet, that was our way of doing theology. We consistently rejected the particular in favor of theological and ethical abstractions. We preferred to talk about ~~the~~ abstract and universal values, ^{about} ~~of~~ a pristine prophetic Judaism rather than explore the complex and variegated faith of the Jewish people. Why? Because we desperately wanted to belong, to be accepted as the

same, because we were not satisfied with the Judaism we saw about us: a few dietary compromises, a mumbled Seder, an uninspired Yom Kippur service, because we wanted Judaism to touch the vision, to inspire, to command noble deeds, and the abstractions are nothing, if not high-minded. But on the heights, the air is too thin to sustain the life of a people.

Is there a compelling logic around which a theology of Jewish survival can be organized? Three themes do satisfy many of us.

1. Fackenheim's 11th commandment: not to give Hitler a posthumous victory.

My generation grew up during the Holocaust, came of age during the late 40's and responds instinctively to this imperative. Aushwitz seems to justify anything we can do to strengthen Jewish life; but in our more reflective moments we recognize that the specifics of this mitzvah remain unstated. A recent bulletin announced a sermon advocating ZPG and a decision of the congregational Board to make Yom ha-Shoah an annual memorial. Those who identify with this mitzvah want the Jewish people to survive, but are hard put to say specifically why and what for.

3. The famous mission theme, all that our reform fathers meant by prophetic Judaism; that the Jewish peoples are to be a light to the nations. Noble words, but vague words, a bracing theme without implicit meaning. Nobility of expression must never be confused with profundity of thought. Mission talk has no specific point of reference. I have heard both the middle-class father who is satisfied with charity, law and order, and the young radical who is doing his all for the revolution, claim to be acting out their devotion to prophetic Judaism.

Moreover, mission rhetoric suggested to many that the business of the Jewish community was parochial, essentially insignificant, and sometimes an obstacle to the

solution of the "big" issues and, therefore, illegitimate. The rights and needs of small groups often stand in the way of those who have seen redemption's grand design and who are determined to lead humanity on a forced march towards its fulfillment. Vide - Czechoslovakia. Yesterday it was Zionism that delayed the grand design of some missionaries. Today it is the political interests of Israel. Am I wrong to sense in some mission ideologues the desire to put a good bit of psychic distance between themselves and the rest of the Jewish community - a feat they accomplish by banding together to dramatize their role as critics? It is as if they were saying to themselves: 'How can the Jewish people (Read - I) be "the conscience of the world, if the world sees us as pre-occupied with prudential concerns? In every aspect of our private lives each of us recognizes the compulsions of necessity. Yet, when it is not us but Israel there are those who demand of the Jewish state a moral discipline few, if any, have achieved. I sometimes wonder how much of the current push to lecture Israel arises out of the critics' personal need to stay tight with brothers ⁱⁿ for the Peace Movement, - ^{brothers who often} ~~who~~, unfortunately, care more for an abstract ideology than for the Jews of Israel or the ^{Christians} ~~conditions~~ of Lebanon.

I had a meeting the other morning with half a dozen folk with whom I have worked for years in causes relating to Israel. They were troubled. "We want to talk about Israel's policies on the West Bank and Geneva." We talked, but they were not relieved. Their problem was emotional, not political. Finally, someone said: "It is not the same any more. I used to get such a warm feeling when our work was with Russian refugees and desalination projects and access to holy places. I still get that feeling when I hear about Open Fences, but now so much of the time we are campaigning

for military aid or defending some complex point about who should sit with whom at Geneva. I'm more politician than Jew." That is the problem: rabbis who must talk about ground-to-ground missiles and Dimona. We can no longer be holier than thou - wrap ourselves up in mission rhetoric and judge all lesser mortals severely for their parochial concerns. Israel is caught up in the maelstrom of competing powers; yet, Israel must survive and we have some responsibility for her strength. Somehow, we must learn not to lay off our emotional and ideological needs on those of our brothers who have enough to carry without having to bear our need to appear righteous.

Just as Israel is caught up in the world, so the Jews of America are caught up in our nation's economic and political life. We are no longer simply victims, outsiders wanting in. The simplicities of the mission theme tell us to be active in civil rights, the war on poverty and political reform; but so does the far more complex ethic which has been taught by our people ^{our} ~~that~~ older wisdom had the sense to couple "righteous shalt thou pursue" with "do not be righteous overmuch." Our push for equal rights must include a special concern for the rights of the Jewish poor. The tribunes of other minorities unabashedly demand special advantages and protections for their own. Can we not demand, at least, equality of treatment for our own?

I spoke of the broad appeal of three "theologies." Let us recognize that each of these justifications is a gut reaction to the existential realities of Jewish life, not a theology. They should be seen for what they are, open and honest emotional responses. They reveal the soul of the committed Jew, but cannot be verbally conveyed to those who are not caught up in amcha. In many ways these responses are more immediate than any theology could possibly be, but we need to be self-conscious about our feelings - emotions must always be checked by reason for we can be captivated by ~~many unworthy~~ ^{EXCESSIVE AND}

misdirected
passions.

On the level of reason all we can say is: I am. Life is its own justification. The Jewish people is; therefore, the Jewish people has a right to be. Particularity is of the essence of being. On the level of theology all we can say is God gave us our theology of survival when ~~He~~ entered into covenant with Abraham our father. God wishes us to be. I do not know what God's purposes are, but I affirm that He has a purpose for me, my people and all peoples; and that purpose is somehow tied up with my/our identity as Jews. Gene Borowitz cannot come up with an adequate theological scheme - no matter. In a quarter of a century of service I have never been asked for an adequate theological statement. I have been asked what being Jewish entails and how being Jewish can enhance my life. By way of answer, ~~and~~ I suggest that our people's career has not been inconsequential. ^{And} I describe what I have gained by being a Jew.

The value of Israel's survival for the Jew, for you and for me, can only be stated confessionally. Identity is never given, identity is achieved. Each of us is what he is because of the home in which he was born, the community in which he was raised, the peer group of which he was a part, the attitudes of the school in which he was enrolled, the television programs which he watched and so on.

If we want to think seriously about the question of Jewish identity, let us put aside that favorite Jewish ego trip which relates everything Jewish to categories of ultimate significance and cosmic purpose. Let us put ^T aside all pretensions of our being indispensable to civilization. Let us talk intimately about what has happened and can happen to us because of our involvement in Jewish life.

Jewish identity begins in Jewish experience. We are committed Jews because of our personal experiences ^{BECAUSE we were} raised in rabbinic or devoted homes; ^{because} Our guts were churned by the Holocaust. We thrilled to our year in Israel. We moved through an identity crisis

in a NFTY camp. We got involved in demonstrating against Soviet repression. It is the experience that moves.

Do we provide such experiences in the synagogue? I put to you that the liberal synagogue is long on golden words and short on gripping experiences. Listen to a report on congregational activities made to our Conference on particularity.

They include karate self-defense classes, disco parties, theatre parties, quilting classes, tennis parties, dinner dances, diet workshops, landscaping classes, advanced Chinese cooking classes, bowling, bridge and Mah Jongg leagues, square dances, sports outings, art auctions, rummage sales, night at the races, progressive dinners, Monte Carlo nights and craft shows. Unfortunately, for a few congregations these activities comprised essentially the total programming available to a member (italics mine).

The conventional condemnation of our synagogues as superficial, irrelevant and crass has some basis in fact. Can we honestly say that in our synagogues an individual might sense the palpable reality of Jewish living, the beauty of Kedushah, the charisma of hasidut, the unique insights of Torah, the encouragement that confirms hope. Fortunately, this is not the whole story. We talked to some who found comfort and encouragement - the spirit - in their synagogue. We talked to some who found wisdom in the library, if not in the rabbi, the simcha shel mitzvah in celebration and common purpose in the congregational family.

In our world of massive convulsions it seems almost trivial to focus a discussion of Jewish survival in the synagogue, but we should concentrate on our place because the synagogue is a place where Jews are (because it is an institution we can affect) and because the synagogue uniquely can transform gut feelings into insightful responses. Ideally, the synagogue will raise up not only the will to live, but a wisdom worth living by.

Unfortunately, many of our synagogues are long on the golden words and short on meaningful celebration. Unfortunately, expressions of hitlahavut are restrained by middle-class notions of decorum. Unfortunately, the sacredness of Jewish experience is often sacrificed to showmanship. "You have to bring them in first, rabbi." Unfortunately, we use the tired language of the middle-aged and the middle-brow rather than the compelling language of the young and the imaginative.

Many complain that today's active synagogue depends too much in our youth work on Israel trips and friendship circles. Why not? Many say the Jewish Catalog is only busy work with a Jewish fragrance. I agree. So what. Our schools need a curriculum which permits cumulative learning, but first the schools must reach our children in their childhood. Our congregations need a prayer book which expresses the heights of Jewish feeling, but first we need a prayer book which expresses Jewish feeling. Before we can meet the adult with Jewish insights we must meet him in his Jewish innocence. An earlier generation tried to make the synagogue coherent, high-toned and disciplined. I plead for incoherence and diversity - for life.

David Jeremy Silver

June 23, 1977
CCAR Conference

June 27, 1977

To: CCAR Task Force on Jewish Identity, Rabbis Stuart Gertman, Joshua Haberman, Lawrence Hoffman, Peter J. Rubinstein, Bruce Warshal, Sheldon Zimmerman

From: Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver

As promised, a brief recap of our luncheon discussion.

I. We will hold a second conference in the spring.

II. The conference will center on effective approaches to involvement in Jewish identity.

(On reflection, I feel that at least one morning or afternoon should be devoted to the theoretical question raised by Shelly's response to my paper: intellectual hindrances to particularist approaches and congregational perceptions. Besides his emphasis on privatism, we might locate other cultural assumptions which make our people deaf to our teachings i. e. the current interest in the contradictory values of community and doing one's thing. Do you have other suggestions?)

Six or seven areas can be explored: 1) the State of Israel; 2) the Holocaust, the end of the Jewish people; 3) havurot and community; 4) schools and camps; 5) the arts; 6) the rabbi; 7) the synagogue.

1. We might begin with a paper analyzing the current renaissance of synagogue membership and a paper analyzing the special qualities of the new membership (single person families, Josh's "Jewishness without Judaism"). David Ellenson was mentioned for the first paper. Do you have any other suggestions? Could one man approach both questions?

2. A paper dealing with current blind spots, cf. above. I think Shelly ought to work out his privatism theme more completely. This would get it into print and ready for broad distribution. Who could do a paper on our schizoid approach to community and liberation?

3. Various analyses of the groups listed above and how their activities might contribute towards Jewish identity etc.

a) Analysis of the community as an agency of survival. Brian Lurie and Earl Jordan were mentioned. There must be other men who have worked within Federation structures.

b) Analysis of Israel as an agency of survival. Michael Klein was suggested, Henry Skirball, Bob Samuels, Alan Levine would be interesting if they will be in this country.

[June 27, 1977]

- c) Analysis of new and old patterns of community. The name of David Ellenson came up again. One of our Hillel people might be interesting, Richard Levy, Hirsh Cohen, Richard Israel, or we might ask a layman to talk, somebody who comes out of the social work or human relations world. Any ideas? Is this an area Norman Cohen might tackle?
- d) Analysis of the Jewish people and the Holocaust as an argument for survival, Albert Friedlander, Elie Wiesel, Steven Schwarschild.
- e) The school and camps - Stuart Gertman should deal with the problem which troubles him and us: can one offer an intellectual as well as experiential answer to the "why" of Jewish survival? Bill Cutter was mentioned as a man who could deal with confluential education, but he might not be willing to wrestle with the other part of the problem. Any other suggestions?
- f) The rabbi and his role - we have never had a good analysis of what the rabbi stands for within the symbolic concept of his work and worship. How is he perceived? What he sees himself as? How does what he does there affect this context? Larry, how about it?
- g) The synagogue as an agency of Jewish survival. Someone should take up where my paper left off. Who?

In the process of matching themes and men, a few other names were thrown out which I could not immediately fit in: John Malino, Michael Morgan, Mitchell Chafitz. The name of Ira Silverman (AJC) was also mentioned. He is a fine researcher and might be useful in the analysis of synagogue membership.

It will be most useful if you would draw up a possible schedule for our conference with topics and names. I will try to put it all together.

III I spoke with the presidents of various regions at lunch about our offer to take a program about our concerns to them. We should be hearing from some of them as the year progresses.

It was too bad that our session came at the tail end of the Conference, but between the printed paper and Josh's and Shelly's fine additions I think we got our concerns across. The Journal will be out this summer with the papers of Conference. Clearly, we have begun raising up the issue of particularism. As always, I am grateful to you. You are a stimulating group to work with.

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

תאגיד הרבנים המרכזי
CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS
190 MADISON AVENUE * NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 * (212) 724-1100

June 27, 1977

June 28, 1977

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

Dear Joe:

I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak with the presidents of the regions. Between the printed paper, the morning session, the publication of the Conference papers in the next issue of the Journal, next spring's conference and presentation at several regional meetings, we have the pot boiling nicely.

If there are extra copies of my lecture lying around I would appreciate a few of them. I want to send them to several laymen whom I respect for their comments. I have been invited to prepare one Saturday afternoon session at the UAHC Biennial and I want to focus on the congregation side of this.

Incidentally, I would appreciate it if Stuart Gertman could be added to our task force. He has been at our meetings and is a helpful tie to our educational establishment.

You ran a good conference. Thanks.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

אגוד הרבנים המתקדמים

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

790 MADISON AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 • (212) 734-7166

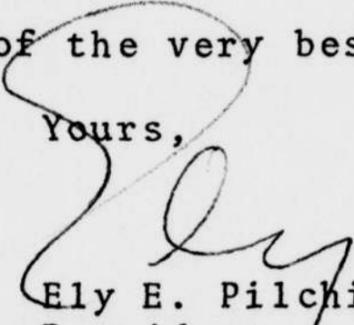
June 28, 1977

Dear Danny:

I and all the Conference are profoundly grateful to you for the superb paper.

I wish you all of the very best,

Yours,


Ely E. Pilchik,
President

eep/ep

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

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Office of the Executive Vice President

June 28, 1977

TO: REGIONAL PRESIDENTS

That was a good meeting we had at lunch on Thursday at Grossinger's. I am following up on my promise to provide you with the list of available scholars, although most of you have picked your scholars, and their subjects.

The way the schedule for kallot looks now is as follows:

Canada - Week after Pesach in April
Northeast - March 13-16
Greater New York - March
Mid-Atlantic - April 30-May 3
Southeast - April 9-12
Ohio Valley - April 30-May 3
Mid-West - January 8-10
Southwest - January 30-February 1
Pacific - January 2-5

We are lacking only Chicago and eastern Pennsylvania.

Please remember that the invitation is to go to the scholar from the CCAR office. After the CCAR office confirms to the president of the region that the scholar is available, the region contacts the scholar and makes specific arrangements.

The CCAR pays the honorarium and the travel expense to and from the kallah. The region pays the local expenses for the scholar.

At the meeting of the regional presidents at Grossinger's, Dan Silver explained the CCAR Identity Project. We have asked Dan to prepare a brief, written description of how this project would work at regional kallot, either instead of or alongside the usual scholar guest and it is enclosed. I recommend that you consider utilizing this as it is a fine way of providing input from all around the CCAR to a very important project, and also gives Dan's task force an opportunity to extend its experience. It is a most worthwhile project and certainly one in which we are all vitally interested.

In October, we will be trying out a pilot project on Communications in the Ohio Valley. We will report the results of that workshop to you, and if they are salutary, you may very well want to program that into your kallah as well, or schedule a separate seminar such as the Ohio Valley is doing.

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June 28, 1977

In planning your kallah, please arrange for time for a representative of the Rabbinical Pension Board to speak early in the program, and at a time when there will be optimum attendance. We cannot underestimate the vast importance of the Pension Plan, but unfortunately, we often do. And then it is too late....

We also took up the question of having women rabbis or women rabbinical students at the kallah. Three of the regions have already arranged for this and three others agreed to do so. It is important to try to do this for the purpose of consciousness-raising amongst our colleagues, which will be an important factor in the success or failure of the female rabbinite. If you preside over one of the four regions which was not represented at the meeting by its president, you might want to contact me individually about this. Unfortunately, the Conference has no money for transportation but the regional presidents meeting decided that it would not be inappropriate to ask the College-Institute to take care of such expenses.

Complaints were registered about professors who come as kallah lecturers and try to jam their three lectures into a day or a day and a half. Although I will certainly, in communicating with them, stress the importance of spaced lectures and their being at the kallah for its entire duration, ultimately it depends on you to firm this up with your scholar.

Let us stay in touch regularly, and if you have any questions about the above or the attached materials, please contact me right away. We will save a lot of confusion and grief later on if we can achieve full cooperation.

Best wishes for a pleasant summer. Shalom.

Joseph B. Glaser

JBG:sk

June 1977

A PROPOSAL OF THE CCAR IDENTITY PROJECT
by the
CCAR Task Force on Jewish Identity

The Task Force on Jewish Identity was created to encourage thinking in the area of theology of particularity. The Task Force has sponsored a two-day conference in New York and a morning session at the recent convention. It has examined current curriculum, preaching, worship and congregational life generally, in order to ask whether Reform Judaism has effectively transmitted the sense of joy of peoplehood as well as our prophetic concerns.

To further carry out its mission, the Task Force will sponsor another conference in 1978, publish the results of the first conference in the CCAR Journal, and proposes to report some of its findings at regional conferences of our colleagues. It is assumed that such a regional program would include a resume of findings to date, a statement of concern and a presentation dealing with a theology of Jewish survival or Jewish identity. The purpose of these meetings is to stimulate discussion and reflection. One session might deal with practical findings, another with the question of particularity within Reform thinking, and a final session would suggest areas of programming in which we could encourage wider and easier involvement in amcha.

Members of the Task Force on Jewish Identity are Rabbis Stuart Gertman, Joshua Haberman, Lawrence Hoffman, Peter Rubinstein, Bruce Warshal, Sheldon Zimmerman, and Daniel J. Silver, chairman.

Sylvia Kay CCAR office N. Y. 212-734-7166

6/29/77

Joe Glaser has sent out a letter to regional presidents and in it he says I have asked Dan to prepare a brief written description about the CCAR identity project. She would like you to call her today and dictate a paragraph or two on it so that they don't lose any more time.

m/o ad,

m

CCAR

The Task Force on Jewish Identity was created to encourage thinking in the area of a theology of particularity. The Task Force has sponsored a two-day conference in New York and a morning session at the recent ^{Convention} ~~biennial~~. It has examined current curriculum, preaching, worship and congregational life generally in order to ask whether Reform Judaism has effectively transmitted the sense and joy of peoplehood as well as our prophetic and universal concerns.

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Members of the Task Force are Rabbis Stuart Gertman, Joshua Haberman, Lawrence Hoffman, Peter J. Rubinstein, Bruce Warshal, Sheldon Zimmerman and Daniel J. Silver, Chairman.

Given to Sarah Siegel
6/30/77



איחוד
ליהדות
מתקדמת
באמריקה

Union of American Hebrew Congregations

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838 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100 CABLES: UNIONUAHC

DEPARTMENT OF
INTERRELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

June 30, 1977

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

Dear Dan:

Let me begin by telling you how much I enjoyed seeing you at the Conference and how stimulating I felt your paper to be. It is that very stimulation that prompts me to take up your suggestion with this letter.

I am very disturbed by what I perceive to be a philosophy of Jewish survival for its own sake. It seems to me that survival is the right of an individual, but that a group's survival must be justified. For me, the survival of Judaism must be predicated on its ability to make a contribution to the world, and not simply the fact that it has existed for thousands of years.

Thus, to talk about strategies for promoting Jewish identity, whether they rely on Israel, ethnicity, the arts or even anti-Semitism, seems to fall into the "survival for its own sake" trap. We can only avoid this trap if we discuss the values and ideals upon which our survival depends at the same time that we discuss the strategies. (It occurs to me that the strategies themselves may evolve from the ideals.) This becomes even more crucial when we remember that we are dealing not only with children for whom strategies alone might suffice, but with adults as well.

That is the basis upon which I have suggested the development of a set of survival theologies that are internally consistent. To this end I think that the next conference should deal with this subject as well as the others that have been suggested. I suggest to you that Jack Stern would be a marvelous presenter in this area. He is not only a thoughtful rabbi, but I know that he shares my feelings on this matter and has developed a theology of survival for himself. He also operates from the vantage point of a congregational rabbi who must work in a practical, as well as a theoretical, framework. I am certain that his presentation would be not only of high quality, but also thought provoking. Though he is not a philosopher, he has the ability to synthesize that this topic requires.

Rabbi D. Silver

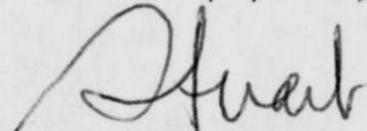
-2-

June 30, 1977

I know that you will consider this suggestion seriously. I look forward to knowing the final plans for the program. I would simply caution that consideration be given to the occurrence of the UAHC Biennial in San Francisco in November. I would strongly recommend that our conference be held after the Biennial to avoid conflicting with it.

Hoping you have a pleasant summer, and looking forward to seeing you soon, I am

Cordially yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Stuart".

Rabbi Stuart A. Gertman
Director

[June 1977]



HEBREW UNION COLLEGE—JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION

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(212) 873-0200

Dear Daniel,

Thanks for the minutes and thoughtful suggestions. What follows is my reaction, at least in part.

1. Thanks for the invitation, but I cannot see myself taking on another assignment now, not if I want to do it justice, and, at any rate, the proposed topic is one which I have never really investigated at all. It lies outside of my field as far as scholarly consensus is concerned. I would gladly include it within my field, but to do so would require the will and the time to launch a new full-scale research project, including novel methodology. The will I have--but not the time.

2. I don't think Norman Cohen will do anything that is not in his field of midrash. But you can always ask him. He will not accept anything he does not want to do, and will not do anything poorly.

3. I suggest the name of George Johnson, the man who puts out the Analysis brochures, from Washington. He is really an expert in community, a proven researcher, a dedicated Jew. I know him to be a brilliant mind. He was once an assimilated Jew with no Jewish concern, but he returned to the fold after serving in Vietnam. About the same time he gave up law -- though he could have followed the usual paths along Wall St. easily. He started learning Hebrew and studying things Jewish, found a job doing Jewish research, has gone back and forth to Israel, recently married an Israeli, and is a relatively Orthodox Jew. You cannot find a better expert on chavurot, since he has been a member of one for years. And he has already researched patterns of Jewish mobility, new forms of belonging to synagogues, etc, for his Analysis reports.

4. Skirball sounds good to me based on what students have said. Apparently he has had considerable influence on their Jewish identity.

5. Ellenson can do any of the things you mention. He has Ph.D. training from Columbia in sociology, and is a dedicated and insightful Jew.

6. A graduate this year might be considered: Paul Joseph, now in Monterey. He is a mature person, about my age -- so older than his colleagues just out of school -- with a fascinating past. I can vouch for his sound mind and ability to analyse problems. He worked for Gunter Hirschberg for 3 years here, and did a masterful job, while learning about synagogue life in N.Y. Before becoming a rabbi, he studied anthropology and did group work with drug addicts. He is a convert to Judaism, a man who truly cares. Whatever he does, he does well.

If I think of anyone else, I will let you know. Meanwhile, have a good summer.

Sincerely,

Larry
Larry Hoffman

July 7, 1977

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

Dear Joe:

I do not know what response you will have to the possibility of sessions at regional regions, but if these do occur it would be nice to have available copies of the next Journal which will print the papers of our Conference. Could the Conference afford to run several hundred offprints of this series? I know men will receive copies, but I also know that they are not fully read and often misplaced.

Let me try out another idea. When I edited the Journal we ran two conferences on ethics. I culled the best of this material and it was published by Ktav under the title Judaism and Ethics. The Conference owned the copyright and received whatever royalties were involved. Would you be interested in my exploring some such arrangement based on last year's Conference and the upcoming one?

With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

From the Desk Of

Rabbi Elliot L. Stevens

(212) 734-7166

July 20, 1977

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Dan,

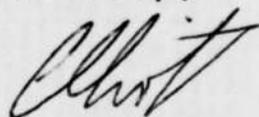
I broached the idea of a new publication, consisting of the papers of last November's colloquium and the one now being planned, to Bernie Scharfstein of the KTAV Publishing Company.

Bernie's immediate reaction was that there would not be much of a market, inasmuch as half of the book is being circulated free to the primary market for this material, namely, to the entire membership of the CCAR in the Summer Journal.

Nevertheless, he asked you to send him copies of the papers soon to be published in the Summer Journal, and he'll let us know whether he thinks a popularly-priced paperback might be possible. If you would send these papers here, we would forward them, or you can send them directly to Bernie at KTAV, 75 Varick Street, New York, NY 10013.

Best wishes for the rest of the summer.

Sincerely,



CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS
790 Madison Avenue • New York, N. Y. 10021

August 17, 1977

Rabbi William Cutter
HUC-JIR
3077 University Mall
Los Angeles, California 90007

Dear Bill:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Conference's Task Force on Jewish Identity. We have been authorized by the Executive Board to hold a second conference on Universalism and Particularism which we have scheduled tentatively for the New York school on March 13-14 of 1978. The Task Force has asked me to invite you to present a paper at that conference.

The conference will focus on two general areas: intellectual and cultural impediments to particularist thinking; and effective approaches to involvement in Jewish identity and Jewish survival. We would like you to deal with a topic which bridges both themes. Is it possible, as an educator, to offer our students an intellectual as well as an experiential explanation of Jewish survival? Can the question "why" be answered? If so, what kind of answers have some chance of being listened to? How can the school and camps help our young people conceptualize and shape ideas which will involve them both in the mission of Israel and in the existential urgencies of Jewish survival?

I know of no one who could more effectively and intelligently help us think through this problem area. I hope you will be willing to participate. We will, of course, defray your expenses to New York. We hope to publish the papers presented in the Journal. Incidentally, the record of the first conference will be in the next issue of the Journal.

With all good wishes from house to house, I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

August 17, 1977

Rabbi Irwin Blank
Temple Ohabei Shalom
1187 Beacon St.
Brookline, Mass. 02146

Dear Irv:

As you know, the Conference authorized the Task Force on Jewish Identity to hold a conference on Universalism and Particularism last November. This conference was held and proved of value. The papers will be published in the next issue of the Journal. The Executive Committee has now authorized a second convocation. We plan to hold it at the New York school on March 13-14, 1978. I would like you to take part.

We will focus on three themes: widespread ~~sa~~ cultural assumptions which diminish the impact of particularist concepts (one world, humanity, Judeo-Christian tradition); effective approaches to congregational involvement in Jewish identity; and liberal theologies of Jewish survival. I would like you to address yourself to this last topic. You have identified yourself actively with all of the major "prophetic" causes and been a staunch defender of amcha. You are committed to Jewish survival. Why? What are the basic principles which shape these commitments and how are they adjusted to each other? How do you balance the survival of Israel and the mission of Israel?

This section of our conference will be devoted to the general topic, "Why Survival - A Personal View", and I hope you will present one such reflection.

Everyone is well here. My two boys will be in Cambridge this year so I will be in or around Boston at some time. With all good wishes from house to house, I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

August 17, 1977

Dr. Paul M. Steinberg
HUC-JIR
40 W. 68th St.
New York, N. Y. 10023

Dear Paul:

The Conference has authorized a second seminar on Universalism and Particularism. We would like to hold it again at the College-Institute in New York, preferably on Monday, March 13 and Tuesday, March 14, 1978. As was the case last November, the conference would last two days. We would invite students, faculty, the rabbinate in the New York area as well as anyone else who cared to attend. Would the College again be willing to be our host? We would, of course, defray the expenses of any food which would be served. You were most gracious to us last year and I am deeply grateful.

I trust everything is well. It has been a busy, but pleasant, summer. I did some writing and the Cleveland weather has been better than usual. With all good wishes from house to house I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

August 17, 1977

Rabbi Jack Stern, Jr.
Westchester Reform Temple
255 Mamaroneck Road
Scarsdale, N. Y. 10583

Dear Jack:

As you know, the Conference's Task Force on Jewish Identity sponsored a two-day seminar on the general theme of Universalism and Particularism in New York City last November. At that time we examined a number of aspects of synagogue life (Liturgy, the school, the pulpit) and asked whether any effective message about the ultimate significance of Jewish survival was manifest in these activities. These papers will appear in the Journal. The paper I presented at the Conference was my own reflections on the seminar.

The Conference has authorized a second convocation. We plan to hold it at the New York school on Monday and Tuesday, March 13-14, 1978. I would like for you to take part. This second conference will focus on three themes: widespread cultural assumptions which diminish the impact of particularist concepts (one world, humanity, Judeo-Christian tradition); effective approaches to congregational involvement in significantly Jewish activity; and the development of liberal theologies of Jewish survival. The Committee has asked me to invite you to present a paper in this last area.

You have been active in all the major "prophetic" causes and, at the same time, you have been concerned with the survival of the Jewish community and Israel. What intellectual framework shapes this wide ranging activity? How do you balance the survival of Israel and the mission of Israel? I hesitate to ask you for a strictly theological paper because I believe that our basic commitments are emotional rather than philosophic, but you have shaped your thoughts along philosophic lines. What lines? How do you express these to your congregation and to others?

[Aug 17, 1977
Stern]

Would you be willing to undertake this assignment?

I trust the summer has been a pleasant one. With all good wishes
I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

408-624-5359

408-375-2759 ✓

August 17, 1977

Rabbi Paul Joseph
Temple Beth Israel
P. O. Box 14
Monterey, Calif. 93942

Dear Paul:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Task Force on Jewish Identity. You may recall that we sponsored a conference on Universalism and Particularism at the New York school in November of last year. The Conference has now given us authorization to hold a follow-up convocation which we plan to do in New York on March 13 and 14 of 1978.

We plan to devote this conference to three themes: the intellectual impediments to particularist thinking; examples of effective and stimulating involvement in Jewish life; and personal statements of theology. The committee would like you to take part in this conference with a paper which would bridge two of these themes.

Despite Arthur Cohen's deriding of the myth of the Judeo-Christian tradition, there is a wide-spread assumption of its existence. If there is a common core western monotheism and its values are generally acceptable, there is little reason to maintain the distinctiveness of the two traditions or to position one's family carefully in a limited world. This is the argument of many Christian and Jewish humanists, or the Jews for Jesus and others. We would like you to examine the reality or lack of reality of this concept. Speak as personally as you can of the perceived differences. Our hope is that you can suggest the changed stance which Jewish identity involves.

I am not eager for you to hang things out. We want you to examine specifically the myth/reality of the concept of Judeo-Christian tradition and to relate that analysis to the concepts of Jewish identity and Jewish survival.

[Aug 17, 1977
Joseph]

I hope you can be part of this experience. The Task Force will, of course, defray your expenses to New York and we hope to arrange for the publication of these papers in the Journal.

With all good wishes for the New Year I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

August 18, 1977

Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut
Holy Blossom Temple
1950 Bathurst St.
Toronto, Ontario M5P 3K9
Canada

Dear ~~Gunther~~:

WALTER JACOBS —

As you know, the Task Force on Jewish Identity sponsored a conference on Universalism and Particularism in November of last year. The papers were of a high order and will be published in the forthcoming Journal.

The Executive Committee has authorized a second conference which we plan to hold at the New York school on March 13-14, 1978. Now that you are a bit freer, I hope you will be willing to take part and accept an assignment.

Our conference will focus on three themes: liberal theologies of Jewish survival; cultural impediments to particularist thinking; and effective approaches to involvement in Jewish identity. We would particularly like to have you deal with an aspect of the first theme - cultural impediments to the meaningful discussion of particularist concepts. We are particularly interested in Reform's self-identification as prophetic Judaism. As far as I know, no one has studied the etiology of this identification. I believe it goes back to Geiger, but I am not sure. Though a potentially positive theme, "prophetic Judaism" has provided a rallying cry to those who are uneasy with Torah and Avodah. Are the Goldenson lectures on prophecy a scholarly contribution to Biblical understanding or a coded justification of a certain type of reform theology, reform defined as ethical theism (Kohler)? I know of no one better equipped to examine the history of this label and its present usefulness, or lack of same, for a contemporary liberal Jewish posture.

[Aug 18, 1977
Jacob]

What I am looking for is a contribution which draws on your competence as an intellectual historian ~~and as a~~ ~~historian~~. You will help many clarify their thinking.

It has been a good summer for me and for mine. With all good wishes from house to house, I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

August 18, 1977

Dr. Joseph Blau
3636 Greystone Ave.
Bronx, New York 10463

Dear Dr. Blau:

Two years ago the Central Conference of American Rabbis brought into being a Task Force on Jewish Identity which they invited me to chair. There was a general feeling that the cultural mood made conceptual discussion of Jewish survival and Jewish identity quite difficult, but that such thought was imperative. Liberal Judaism seemed to have some success sensitizing people to social issues, but not as much success in helping shape a compelling reason to value their Jewish identity and the survival of the Jewish people. A conference was sponsored at the College Institute in New York City in November of 1976. The papers of this conference will be published in the forthcoming Journal. I was asked to reflect on our conference at the CCAR's convention and I am enclosing a copy of that presentation.

We have been authorized by the Executive Board to hold a second conclave. We have scheduled it for Monday and Tuesday, March 13-14, 1978. In the course of these two days we plan to lift up three areas of concern: effective approaches to involvement in Jewish identity; reflections on possible theologies of Jewish survival; and impediments to particularist thinking.

It is in this last area that we seek your participation as a philosopher and intellectual historian. There are abroad a raft of conventional assumptions which make particularist thinking a difficult enterprise for many of us. What are they? As the committee discussed this invitation we quickly ticked off a few of these: the fear of militant nationalism which leads to an emotional emphasis on one-worldism; reaction to ^{various} mythologies which make us leary of all concepts of closeness or group identity; conventional assumptions about a Judeo-Christian tradition (if we are basically the same, why remain apart); doing one's own thing talk (group identity seems to stand in the way of individual autonomy); etc.

[Aug 18, 1977
Blau]

All of this is very awkward and amateurish. We hope that you would examine with us the development of the universalist tilt in our thinking and suggest how these assumptions shape or misshape current discussions of Jewish identity and Jewish survival. It is a large task. I know of no one better equipped to handle it.

We can offer only a modest honorarium - \$100 - and more than a few mitzvah points. The paper will be published in the CCAR Journal. I can guarantee a large and quite selective audience. Students, faculty and the New York area rabbinate attend. At this point you could choose either day and either morning or afternoon.

I trust this finds you in good health. With all good wishes for the coming year, I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

August 18, 1977

Dr. David Sidorsky
Department of Philosophy
Columbia University
116th and Broadway
New York, N. Y. 10027

Dear David:

Jonathan is home from an eight-week trip around the country, girding up his loins for another year. I gather the room is staying together and I am delighted.

This note is an invitation to participate in a conference on Universalism and Particularism which I am organizing for the Central Conference of American Rabbis for March 13-14, 1978. Two years ago the CCAR created a Task Force on Jewish Identity and asked me to chair it. Their concerns were both practical and intellectual. There was a widespread feeling that current cultural assumptions made effective discussion of Jewish survival and Jewish identity difficult. It was felt that while reform attitudes had sensitized many Jews to social concerns, we had not been particularly successful in convincing our membership about the quintessential importance of the survival of the Jewish community and their responsibility toward that goal.

In November of last year the Task Force organized a conference on Universalism and Particularism at the College-Institute in New York City. I am enclosing a copy of our program. The papers will be published in our Journal. I spoke on the conference at the CCAR's Annual Conference. A copy of my comments is enclosed.

The Executive Committee has authorized a followup conference. We plan to deal with two themes: those elements of modern life which diminish the appeal of particularist concepts or cause them to be dismissed almost without reflection, and the various theologies of Jewish survival which are possible within a liberal Jewish stance. We have

[Aug 18, 1977]
J. Sidorov

asked a number of men to explain how they balance their thinking on the mission of Israel and the mandate of Jewish survival.

We would like you to help us with the first theme. Would you be willing to lay out for us the humanistic and positivist assumptions which have produced the conventional attitudes of western liberalism which make serious considerations of particularist notions difficult? That is stated awkwardly. When the committee discussed this paper we named a grab bag of disparate elements which seem to be involved; the urgency to get beyond militant nationalism to a world security system - peace; the assumption of a Judeo-Christian entity and identity which blurs the legitimacy of special loyalty; the bitter reaction to a century of racist ideology which has made us impatient with all assumptions of uniqueness, chosenness or superiority; the "doing my own thing" passion which weakens any sense of commonweal; etc. There are many more.

Logic suggests that reasonable people must balance the demands of self and community, of Jewish identity and humanity; that it is a question of both/and, not either/or; but to many universalist language always seems to be the high road and to offer the more compelling argument. You would render all of us a service if you would help us understand those cultural presuppositions which consciously or unconsciously affect our thinking.

The Conference will take place at our New York school. You could present your paper either on Monday or Tuesday. From the point of view of organization of the Conference, Monday would be preferable. We can offer an honorarium of only one hundred dollars, but many mitzvah points. Last year we had a fine and select audience of students, faculty, the New York area rabbinate and others. We hope to publish the papers of this conference as we did those of the first convocation.

With all good wishes for the New Year from house to house, I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

August 18, 1977

Rabbi David Ellenson
150 Middle Neck Road
Port Washington, N. Y. 11050

Dear David:

I am writing to you on behalf of the CCAR Task Force on Jewish Identity. As you know, we held a conference on Universalism and Particularism at the New York school last November. The Conference has authorized a second convocation which we plan to hold at the New York school on March 13-14, 1978. The committee has asked me to invite you to take part in that conference.

Last year Peter Rubinstein and Shelly Zimmerman did a series of interviews with synagogue members in Richmond, Cleveland and New York to analyze attitudes towards the synagogue, rabbi, Israel etc. We feel that this investigation should be pursued. Specifically, are those now joining the synagogue doing so as an act of affiliation with the Jewish people or simply to provide themselves with familiar life cycle ceremonies? At the conference Josh Haberman described what he called "Jewishness Without Judaism", belonging without becoming. How much of that is there? Can the contemporary synagogue hope to be a place where both particularist and universalist values are espoused? How? What patterns of program and structure need to be explored if we are to be at all effective in the transmission of a sense of peoplehood?

Among our colleagues one of the impediments to effectiveness is the assumption that our synagogues as polities are much the same as they were a generation or two ago. This is manifestly not the case. They recognize certain gross sociological changes: suburbia; eastern European families; Fiddler nostalgia; the impact of the Holocaust on the generation onw in its fifties; but no one has described the third and fourth generation American Jew who grew up in suburbia in the 50's and 60's and who brings to the synagogue all the confusions of those

(Aug 18, 1977)
Ellenson

times. What's he like inside? How much of a "Jew" is he? Would you be willing to tackle these tough problems? If so, it is our hope that you would make your presentation on Tuesday, the 14th.

With all good wishes for the New Year I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

RABBI IRWIN M. BLANK
TEMPLE OHABEI SHALOM
1187 BEACON STREET
BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS 02146

August 23, 1977

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

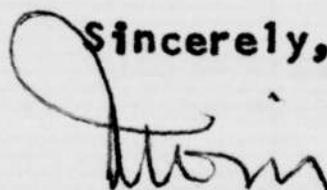
Dear Dan:

Thank you for your gracious invitation to participate in the Conference on Universalism and Particularism to be held at the New York school on March 13th and 14th. I will be pleased to present a paper on the theme of Liberal Theologies of Jewish Survival with particular emphasis on "Why Survival-A Personal View."

If there is anything that we can do to extend hospitality to your sons, Ellie and I would love to do that. We would also like to visit with you whenever you are in the Cambridge area. Please let us know. Would you be good enough to give me your sons' addresses so that I can be in touch with them.

Fond regards.

Sincerely,



Irwin M. Blank
Rabbi

IMB/fd



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(213) 749-3424

August 24, 1977

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

Dear Dan:

I am flattered by the invitation to such an intriguing forum, and should be able to take part. However Lewis Barth, our dean, is out of the country and all such invitations have to be cleared with him.

I will let you know right around Rosh Hashanah, and until then best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "William Cutter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "W" and "C".

William Cutter

WC:db

cc: Dean Barth

P.S. I read your recent paper - and assume that some of the issues you raise there are relevant to the upcoming meetings.

RABBI DAVID ELLENSON
THE COMMUNITY SYNAGOGUE
150 Middle Neck Road
Port Washington, New York 11050

Temple: (516) 883-3144

August 24, 1977
10 Elul, 5737

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

Dear Rabbi Silver:

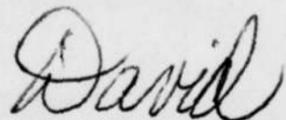
Thank you very much for your letter of August 18, and for your kind invitation to participate in the CCAR Task Force on Jewish Study Convocation to be held at the New York School of HUC-JIR, on March 13-14, 1978. I will be glad to offer a presentation at the Convocation on the morning of March 14 and will attempt to describe the type of third and fourth generation American Jew who grew up in suburbia in the 50's and 60's and now populates our congregations.

I would appreciate it if you would send me a more exact title for my presentation, as well as an idea as to how long the presentation should be. Once more, thank you.

Please give my regards to Stu Geller and his family.

May you be written and inscribed for a good and sweet year.

Cordially,



Rabbi David Ellenson

DE:fj



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OFFICE OF THE DEAN

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

August 25, 1977

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

Dear Rabbi Silver:

Dean Steinberg is away from his desk at present and in his absence I want to acknowledge your letter of August 17th. Your letter will be brought to his attention upon his return in September.

Sincerely,

Helen R. Farber
Secretary to the Dean

September 2, 1977

Rabbi William Cutter
HUC - JIR
3077 University Mall
Los Angeles, California 90007

Dear Bill:

I am delighted that you ~~will~~ willing to take part in our institute. You bring to it a special and very important focus. As you suggest, the issues that I raise in my Conference paper are germane.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

September 2, 1977

Rabbi Irwin M. Blank
Temple Ohabei Shalom
1187 Beacon Street
Brookline, Mass. 02146

Dear Irv:

I am delighted that you will be with us at the Conference on Universalism and Particularism. I am looking forward to your paper. I will get back to you soon with a full schedule of the two days.

In the meantime, a happy and healthy New Year to you and yours.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

September 2, 1977

Rabbi David Ellenson
The Community Synagogue
150 Middle Neck Road
Port Washington, N. Y. 11050

Dear David:

I am delighted you will be part of our convocation of March 13-14 and that you will present your paper on the morning of the 14th. You will be able to gauge the length of the papers presented at the last institute from the summer issue of the Journal, when it finally gets published.

I have no more exact title for your presentation. I have discovered that each decade brings into our congregation people with another set of attitudes. In the 50's we got members who were politically Jewish, but not religiously so. I have a feeling that the balance has shifted and that the new generation is willing to be Jewish only if religious answers are offered and religious needs met; but I am not sure. Obviously, any strategy to present a defense/theology of Jewish survival requires that we answer/deal with the questions that are actually being asked. To do so we must understand the "thou" with whom we are in dialogue.

With all good wishes for the New Year I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Columbia University in the City of New York | New York, N.Y. 10027

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION

619 KENT HALL

September 6, 1977

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

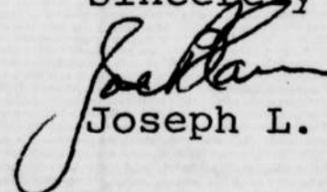
Dear Rabbi Silver:

Your letter of August 18 reached me on my return to the city, and was a most welcome greeting. Your Task Force has certainly hit upon a most critical issue in post-Emancipation Jewish life. I am delighted with the invitation to participate, though I shall feel somewhat like a lion among Daniels.

Of the dates (March 13 and 14, 1978) you plan, I should prefer, if at all feasible, to be programmed for the Tuesday session, either morning or afternoon. Although I am now emeritus (i.e., fresh out of merit), I shall still do some part-time teaching at Columbia on Mondays and Wednesdays.

With warm personal regards and greetings for the New Year,

Sincerely yours,


Joseph L. Blau

JLB:lg



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Office of the Dean

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

September 7, 1977

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

Dear Dan:

It was great hearing from you.

We shall be pleased to be host to the Conference on
March 13th and 14th for the second seminar on Uni-
versalism and Particularism.

With warm personal regards and all good wishes for
the New Year.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul".

Paul M. Steinberg
Dean

PMS:hf

WESTCHESTER REFORM TEMPLE

255 MAMARONECK ROAD • SCARSDALE, N. Y. 10583

Jack Stern, Jr.
Rabbi

September 7, 1977

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

Dear Danny:

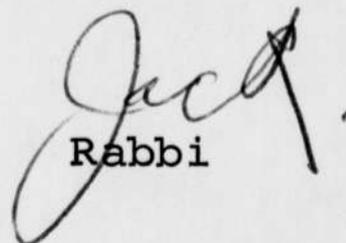
Many thanks for your letter of August 17. I was delighted with the invitation, and the topic is one that interests me.

I do have one conflict, however, I am scheduled to teach a Bible class here at the Temple on that Tuesday morning, March 14, and I would be unable to arrive at the New York School much before 12:00 noon.

There is an outside possibility that I might be able to switch the class, but I cannot count on it at this time. Do you still want me to participate?

Best for the New Year.

Sincerely,


Rabbi

JS:es

September 9, 1977

Dr. Joseph L. Blau
Columbia University
Department of Religion
~~New~~Kent Hall
New York, N. Y. 10027

Dear Dr. Blau:

I was delighted to receive your letter of September 6 and to know that you have accepted our invitation. I will see that you are scheduled for Tuesday, March 14. The program is not completely shaped so as yet I do not know whether it will be in the morning or afternoon.

With all good wishes for a happy and healthy New Year
I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

September 14, 1977

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

Dear Joe:

I have confirmed with Paul Steinberg the dates of March 13-14, 1978 for our second conference on Universalism and Particularism at the New York School. The program is three-quarters complete and I will have the whole outline to your office within a month. It shapes up to be an exciting two days.

With all good wishes for the New Year I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

September 14, 1977

Dr. Paul M. Steinberg
HUC-JIR
40 West 68th St.
New York, N. Y. 10023

Dear Paul:

I am delighted that the school is available to us on March 13-14, 1978 for our second conference on Universalism and Particularism. Our program is already well under way and I will be back to you with a full lineup within a few weeks.

With all good wishes from house to house for the New Year
I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

September 14, 1977

Rabbi Jack Stern
Westchester Reform Temple
255 Mamaroneck Road
Scarsdale, N. Y. 10583

Dear Jack:

I am delighted with your interest in our conclave. The conflict with your class at Temple can be solved easily by scheduling you on Monday. However much you plan one of these conferences the material never quite progresses in what you think would be the most natural way and mixing the themes produces some interesting reactions.

I will be back to you as soon as the whole schedule is settled. It is going to be an interesting two days and I am delighted you will be part of it.

With all good wishes for the New Year from house to house
I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

אגוד הרבנים המתקדמים

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

790 MADISON AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 • (212) 734-7166

Office of the Executive Vice President

September 15, 1977

Rabbi Daniel J. Silver, Chairman
CCAR Identity Task Force
University Circle & Silver Park
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

Dear Dan:

You have been wonderful about sharing with me at every stage the substantive work and plans of your Task Force. But I do wish you would also keep me informed of the procedural matters which, I know seem minor to you, but which are a major concern of mine. Fortunately Paul Steinberg happened to inform me about the March 13th and 14th dates. Luckily there is no conflict but there could have been.

Are you going to have a meeting of your group prior to the March event? I would like very much to be at it so please, again, confer with me on possible dates. I think we are beginning to get down to pay dirt, and as you know, I consider this to be a subject of the highest priority.

The issue of the CCAR Journal looks good. I have already heard some very fine comments on it.

A happy and a healthy New Year to you and yours.

Shalom,

Rabbi Joseph B. Glaser

JBG:sk

*Thanks for your
call*

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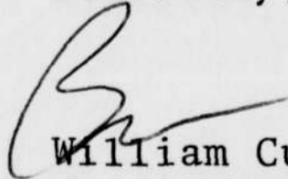
September 28, 1977

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

Dear Dan:

Dr. Lewis Barth has formally approved my participation in the March 13 Forum. I am eagerly reading appropriate materials. On the basis of the various papers that I read, it seems to me that the issue of universalism and particularism can be related to different logics of instruction, as well as different psychological needs of the children. For example, a particularistic behavior is more congruent with what we know about learning than universalistic behavior. I am looking forward to developing the idea and only need to know time frame, nature of the Forum, and who the other participants will be, and more topics.

Sincerely,


William Cutter

October 4, 1977

Rabbi William Cutter
HUC-JIR
3077 University Avenue
Los Angeles, Calif. 90007

Dear Bill:

Delighted and I look forward to your paper.

Our Conference will present eight papers, two each morning and two each afternoon. I am enclosing a copy of last year's program so you can see the time frame and the schedule. So far the participants include Joseph Blau, David Sidorsky, Irwin Blank, Jack Stern, David Ellenson, besides yourself. Gunther Plaut has been invited to give a paper on the implications of the term prophetic Judaism and I am to hear from him this week. Blau and Sidorsky will speak on cultural impediments to particularist thinking. Ellenson will present a sociological analysis of interests of young congregants. Stern and Blank will discuss their personal theologies of survival and identity. Yours is the only paper in the field of education. We had Certman's descriptive paper last year and I am delighted you will look behind product to philosophy and purpose. Would you like to suggest a short title?

With all good wishes for the New Year I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

The Temple

UNIVERSITY CIRCLE AT SILVER PARK • CLEVELAND, OHIO 44106 • 791-7755
BRANCH: 26000 SHAKER BLVD. • BEACHWOOD, OHIO 44122 • 831-3233

DANIEL JEREMY SILVER - RABBI

STUART GELLER
Associate Rabbi

STEPHEN A. KLEIN
Assistant Rabbi

LEO S. BAMBERGER
Executive Secretary

October 19, 1977

Dr. David Sidorsky
~~65-61 Saunders St.~~
~~Rego Park, N. Y. 11374~~

*448 Riverside Drive
New York, NY 10027*

Dear David:

Please write on this letter the day you prefer for our spring conference. I am enclosing my original letter as a reminder of details. We would be delighted to have you either day.

I talked to Jonathan last night and everything seemed well with the boys. The year is beginning to get to them, but a little hard work will not hurt anyone.

Sincerely,


Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

Nov 3/

Dear Dan:
I received this today and am sorry that I had forgotten after our phone conversation that we had not fixed the date. - I can do it on Monday, Mesh 13 but not on Tuesday. - Best to you and hope we'll see the boys soon - *with apologies, David*

October 25, 1977

Rabbi Walter Jacob
Rodef Shalom Temple
4905 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15213

Dear Walter:

As you know, the Task Force on Jewish Identity sponsored a conference on Universalism and Particularism in November of last year. The papers were of a high order and will be published in the forthcoming Journal.

The Executive Committee has authorized a second conference which we plan to hold at the New York school on March 13-14, 1978. Now that you are a bit freer, I hope you will be willing to take part and accept an assignment.

Our conference will focus on three themes: liberal theologies of Jewish survival; cultural impediments to particularist thinking; and effective approaches to involvement in Jewish identity. We would particularly like to have you deal with an aspect of the first theme - cultural impediments to the meaningful discussion of particularist concepts. We are particularly interested in Reform's self-identification as prophetic Judaism. As far as I know, no one has studied the etiology of this identification. I believe it goes back to Geiger, but I am not sure. Though a potentially positive theme, "prophetic Judaism" has provided a rallying cry to those who are uneasy with Torah and Avodah. Are the Goldenson lectures on prophecy a scholarly contribution to Biblical understanding or a coded justification of a certain type of reform theology, reform defined as ethical theism (Kohler)? I know of no one better equipped to examine the history of this label and its present usefulness, or lack of same, for a contemporary liberal Jewish posture.

[0425, 1977]

What I am looking for is a contribution which draws on your competence as an intellectual historian. You will help many clarify their thinking.

This has been a good summer. It was good seeing you yesterday. I am sorry I did not have a chance to talk this over with you then. With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Temple Beth-El

825 WEST ST. FRANCIS STREET
BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS 78520

RABBI

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November 1, 1977

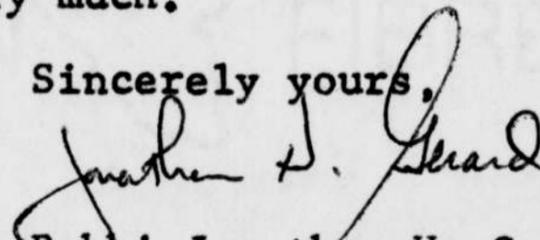
Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
University Circle at Silver Park
Cleveland, OH 44106

Dear Rabbi Silver:

I am very interested in attending the Conference on Universalism Particularism scheduled for March 13-14, 1978 in New York. Please keep me informed of developments I should know about.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,



Rabbi Jonathan H. Gerard

JG/og

Ben Zoma said, "Who is wise?
He who learns from every one, as it is said,
from all my teachers I have gotten understanding!"

DR. WALTER JACOB
RABBI
RODEF SHALOM TEMPLE
FIFTH AND MOREWOOD AVENUES
PITTSBURGH, PA. 15213

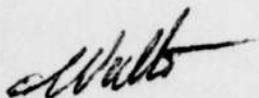
November 7, 1977

Dear Daniel:

Many thanks for your invitation to join you at the second conference of the "Task Force on Jewish Identity" which is to be held March 13 and 14 in New York. I will be glad to participate and to work on a paper on the general theme that you suggested. I think it will be interesting. However, it will probably have to be broadened somewhat. I have done some initial investigation and will do more when I have access to the Hebrew Union College library in Los Angeles next week. It will be a pleasure to work on this and I look forward to the meetings.

I am sure that we will see each other in San Francisco. Until then, with kindest regards,

Sincerely,



Walter Jacob

WJ:ldm

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

אגוד הרבנים המתקדמים

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

790 MADISON AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 • (212) 734-7166

Office of the Executive Vice President

November 10, 1977

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

Dear Dan:

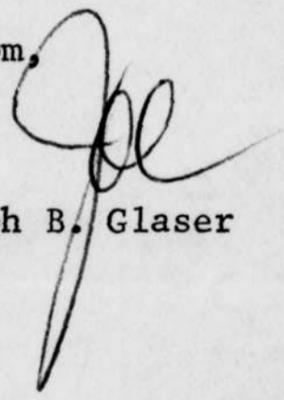
You got NER so excited about the identity project that when they learned that your March program was going to be on the same dates as their Kallah, they rebelled. They, and I, wonder if you could switch the dates. March is a difficult month with a lot of regional Kallah but I think that I could get the New York Association to switch its dates from March 26 through the 28th over to March 13th to the 16th if your crew and the New York School could make the switch too. What do you think?

to March 26-8.

I look forward to seeing you in San Francisco and maybe you can have an answer for me by then.

Warm good wishes.

Shalom,


Joseph B. Glaser

JBG/s

cc: Rabbi Bernard Bloom

OFFICERS:

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Toronto, Canada

Sidney L. Regner, *Executive Vice President Emeritus*
New York, N.Y.

Elliot L. Stevens, *Administrative Secretary*
New York, N.Y.

November 11, 1977

Rabbi Irwin M. Blank
Temple Ohabei Shalom
1187 Beacon Street
Brookline, Mass. 02146

Dear Irwin:

I am putting together our program for our March 13-14 session. It will have the general title "Universalism and Particularism: The Second Seminar." I have scheduled you for 1:30 on Tuesday, March 14. Is that alright? I have given your paper the tentative title "Why Survival? A Personal View." Have you a better heading? I would be happy to change it.

Would you give me a two or three line bio for the program? I will list you as Rabbi of Temple Ohabei Shalom and I want to add a word or two about major books or offices etc.

With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

November 11, 1977

Rabbi David Ellenson
The Community Synagogue
150 Middle Neck Road
Port Washington, N. Y. 11050

Dear David:

I am putting together our program for our March 13-14 session. It will have the general title "Universalism and Particularism: The Second Seminar." I have scheduled you for 10 A. M. on Tuesday, March 14. Is that alright? I have given your paper the tentative title "Our Newest Members: How The 30-Year Olds Feel About Survival and Their Jewish Identity." Have you a better heading? I would be happy to change it.

Would you give me a two or three line bio for the program? I will list you as Rabbi of The Community Synagogue and I want to add a word or two about major books or offices etc.

With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

November 11, 1977

Dr. Joseph L. Blau
Columbia University
Department of Religion
Kent Hall
New York, N. Y. 10027

Dear Dr. Blau:

I am putting together our program for our March 13-14 session. It will have the general title "Universalism and Particularism: The Second Seminar." I have scheduled you for 11:15 A. M. on Tuesday, March 14. Is that alright? I have given your paper the tentative title "Universalism and Modern Thought: The Problem of Particularist Thinking." Would you like to phrase it in any other way? I am sure my suggestion can be improved on.

With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

November 11, 1977

Rabbi Jack Stern
Westchester Reform Temple
255 Mamaroneck Road
Scarsdale, N. Y. 10583

Dear Jack:

I am putting together our program for our March 13-14 session. It will have the general title "Universalism and Particularism: The Second Seminar." I have scheduled you for 1:30 on Monday, March 13. Is that alright? I have given your paper the tentative title "Survival and Social Action: How They Fit Together." Have ~~have~~ a better heading? I would be happy to change it?

Would you give me a two or three line bio for the program? I will list you as Rabbi of Westchester Reform Temple and want to add a word or two about major books or offices etc.

With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

November 11, 1977

Rabbi Jonathan H. Gerard
Temple Beth-El
825 West St. Francis St.
Brownsville, Texas 78520

Dear Rabbi Gerard:

I am replying to your letter of November 1 in Rabbi Silver's absence. You will be receiving material from the Conference on the seminar March 13-14 just as soon as it is ready.

Sincerely,

Marie Pluth
Secretary to Rabbi Daniel Silver

mp

RABBI IRWIN M. BLANK
TEMPLE OHABEI SHALOM
1187 BEACON STREET
BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS 02146

November 15, 1977

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

Dear Daniel:

Tuesday, March 14, at 1:30, is fine. I think I would prefer the title "THE COVENANTAL COMMUNITY AND THE RIGHTEOUS OF ALL NATIONS."

Brief bio:

Rabbi of Temple Ohabei Shalom, Brookline, Massachusetts
Past President of the Synagogue Council of America
Taught on the faculty of the Hebrew Union College,
School of Education, and in the Department of
Theology of Fordham University, member of the
Harvard University Board of Ministry.
Currently Chairman of the CCAR Committee for Justice
and Peace.

Publications:

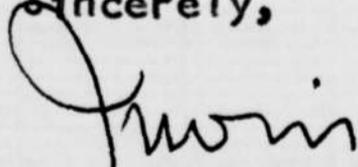
"JUDAISM AND ETHICS," Chapter entitled "Is There a
Common Judaeo-Christian Ethical Tradition?"

"BUT NOT TO LOSE," Chapter entitled "Judaism and
the Experience of Death."

"RABBINICAL COUNSELING," Chapter on "Counseling the
Aged and their Families."

Fond regards.

Sincerely,



Irwin M. Blank
Rabbi

IMB/fd

RABBI DAVID ELLENSON
THE COMMUNITY SYNAGOGUE
150 Middle Neck Road
Port Washington, New York 11050

Temple: (516) 883-3144

November 16, 1977

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

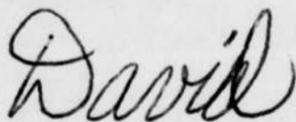
Dear Rabbi Silver:

Thank you for your recent letter in which you confirm March 14, 1978, at 10:00 a.m., as the time I will speak at the CCAR Task Force on Jewish Identity Conference at the N. Y. School of the HUC-JIR. I have begun preparing my paper and, if it meets with your approval, I have entitled it, "The New Ethnicity, Religious Revival, and Jewish Identity: The 'Judaisms' of our Newest Members."

Enclosed you will find my biographical sketch. Use what you wish for my bio in the program.

I look forward to meeting you and wish you a Happy Chanukah. With all best wishes, I am

Sincerely,



Rabbi David Ellenson

DE:fj
enc.

[Nov 16, 1977]

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Name: David Ellenson

Birthplace and Date: Brookline, Massachusetts,
November 21, 1947.

Marital Status: Married Lynn Andrew on August 3, 1969.

Children: One daughter, Ruth, born in Jerusalem,
Israel, on December 19, 1972. Expecting
a second child in December.

Teaching Experience: Instructor, Hebrew Union College-Jewish
Institute of Religion, 1975-present.

Education: A.B., The College of William and Mary,
1969, History.
M.A., University of Virginia, 1972,
Religious Studies.
M.A. in Hebrew Letters, HUC-JIR, 1976.
M. Phil., Columbia University, 1977.
Currently working on doctoral disserta-
tion at Columbia.

Publications: "Ellis Rivkin and the Problems of
Pharisaic History," in the Journal of
the American Academy of Religion
(December, 1975).

"Emil Fackenheim and the Revealed Moral-
ity of Judaism," in Judaism (Fall, 1976).

"Modern Orthodoxy and the Problem of
Religious Pluralism: The Case of Rabbi
Esriel Hildesheimer," scheduled for
publication in Tradition.

Job: I currently serve as a rabbi in The
Community Synagogue, Port Washington,
New York.

November 23, 1977

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

Dear Joe:

Any switch of dates is completely out of the question. I am enclosing the complete brochure for our conference. It has taken three months to put it together and I would not be able to move it to another time frame.

Incidentally, will you ask someone in your office to send a copy of the printed brochure of the conference when it is published to: Mrs. Audrey Marcus, Consultant in Jewish Education, 1110 Holly Oak Circle, San Jose, California 95120.

I saw your back in San Francisco. I hope you enjoyed the town as much as I did.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

Columbia University in the City of New York | New York, N.Y. 10027

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION

619 KENT HALL

November 28, 1977

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

Dear Rabbi Silver:

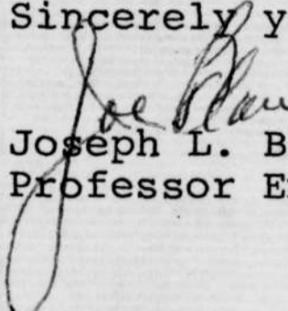
Thank you for your note of November 11. I have noted the time of 11:15 a.m., on Tuesday, March 14, 1978 for the "Universalism and Particularism" seminar.

I am not disposed to argue titles, especially after delaying two weeks in replying to you. If, however, you have not sent the materials to the printer, maybe we could do something like "The Problem of Modern Religious Thought: Tensions between Particularism and Universalism."

My difficulty with your suggestion is that it hints that only particularism is problematic, while I regard universalism as equally so.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely yours,


Joseph L. Blau
Professor Emeritus

JLB:lg

December 5, 1977

Dr. Joseph L. Blau
Columbia University
Department of Religion
619 Kent Hall
New York, N. Y. 10027

Dear Joe:

If the material is not already at the press the change will be made. In any case, it will be so announced at the seminar.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

December 5, 1977

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

Dear Joe:

Would you make one change in the text of the seminar brochure that I mailed to you? Joe Blau has decided he wants to rephrase his title to read "Problems of Modern Religious Thought: Tensions Between Particularism and Universalism". Sorry to bother you with this, but many thanks.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Books by Joseph A. Blau

1. The characteristics of American Jews. 1965 (with Nathan Glazer, H.D. Stein + O + M. Handlin.)
 2. The Christian interpretation of the cabala in the renaissance. 1944 (2d. ed. 1966)
 3. Essays on Jewish life and thought (editor). Presented in honor of Salo Baron. 1959.
 4. The Jews of the U.S., 1790-1840, a documentary history. Edited w/ Salo Baron. 1963.
 5. Judaism: postbiblical and Talmudic period. w/ Salo Baron. 1954.
 6. Judaism in America: ^{from curiosity to third faith.} 1976.
 7. Modern varieties of Judaism. 1966.
 8. Reform Judaism: a historical perspective. (Editor) ^{w/ S. Baron} 1972.
 9. The story of Jewish philosophy. 1962.
 10. Men and movements in Amer. philosophy. 1952.
 11. editor: Social theories of Jacksonian democracy, 1947.
 12. editor ~~with Salo Baron~~: Cornerstones of relig. freedom in America. 2d ed. 1964.
 13. Amer. philosophic addresses 1700-1900 1946 - ed.
 14. Elements of moral science. 1963 jt. ed. w/ Francis Wayland A.B. Columbia, 1931, M.A. 1933 Ph.D. 1945.
- Member of Columbia Univ. faculty 1944 -
Prof. of religion 1962 -
Chmn. of dept. 1966-68.

David Sidorovky

1. The future of the Jewish community in America: essays prepared for a Task Force on the Future of the Jewish Community in Amer. of the Amer. Jew. Comm. (editor) 1973.
2. ed. The Liberal Tradition in European thought. 1971.

BA NYU 1948 MA 1953 BHL, JTSA 1950

PhD Columbia 1962.

Assoc. prof. phil. Columbia Univ. since 1966
Con. faculty since 1959.

Born in Calgary, Canada

RABBI IRWIN M. BLANK
TEMPLE OHABEI SHALOM
1187 BEACON STREET
BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS 02146

February 6, 1978

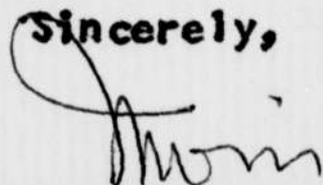
Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
Tifereth Israel
University Circle & Silver Park
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

Dear Daniel,

I hope that all is well with you. Somehow in the printed announcement of the seminar on Universalism and Particularism the word "covenantal" got translated into "conventional." If there are any other announcements of the seminar, I hope this can be corrected. I look forward to seeing you at the seminar.

All good wishes.

Sincerely,



Irwin M. Blank
Rabbi

IMB/fd

February 8, 1978

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

Dear Joe:

I wonder if you would be kind enough to send me a dozen copies of the Universalism-Particularism announcement. I would like to send one to each of the participants.

Thank you for sending me the "I Still Believe, I Do." I agree that "we cannot win the battle of Jewish identity without a dynamic faith in the God of Israel."

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

February 15, 1978

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

Dear Elliott:

I would like to make arrangements for a room at the
HUC-JIR on Monday, the 13th of March for a meeting of
the Task Force. We could bring our plates upstairs.
There are only five or six of us so the room does not
have to be a large one, but we have some business which
we need to attend to.

Thank you for sending the brochures. With all good wishes
I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

February 15, 1978

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

Dear Josh:

I hope you are anticipating our second seminar as much as I am. The Task Force itself will meet during lunch on Monday. I will arrange a separate room for us. I look forward to seeing you.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp
Encl.

February 15, 1978

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

Dear Shelly:

I hope you are anticipating our second seminar as much as I am. The Task Force itself will meet during lunch on Monday. I will arrange a separate room for us. I look forward to seeing you.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp
Encl.

February 15, 1978

Rabbi Bruce Warshal
Touro Synagogue
P. O. Box 15186
New Orleans, La. 70175

Dear Bruce:

I hope you are anticipating our second seminar as much as I am. The Task Force itself will meet during lunch on Monday. I will arrange a separate room for us. I look forward to seeing you.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp
Encl.

February 15, 1978

Rabbi Peter J. Rubinstein
Woodlands Community Temple
50 Worthington Road
White Plains, N. Y. 10607

Dear Peter:

I hope you are anticipating our second seminar as much as I am. The Task Force itself will meet during lunch on Monday. I will arrange a separate room for us. I look forward to seeing you.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp
Encl.

P.S. Peter, just got your note. I have to check with Adele whether she is coming or not. I will get back to you.

February 15, 1978

Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman
19 Hillcrest Lane
Rye, New York 10580

Dear Larry:

I hope you are anticipating our second seminar as much as I am. The Task Force itself will meet during lunch on Monday. I will arrange a separate room for us. I look forward to seeing you.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp
Encl.

February 15, 1978

Rabbi Jack Stern
Westchester Reform Temple
255 Mamaroneck Road
Scarsdale, N. Y. 10583

Dear Jack:

I thought you would want to see the brochure which was sent to the rabbinate and to a selected list of invitees. I am delighted with the shape our program has taken. Please feel free to spend as much of the two days as you wish with us. Needless to say, the registration fee does not apply to speakers.

I look forward to seeing you in New York. With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp
Encl.

February 15, 1978

Dr. David Sidorsky
Department of Philosophy
Columbia University
116th and Broadway
New York, N. Y. 10027

Dear David:

I thought you would want to see the brochure which was sent to the rabbinate and to a selected list of invitees. I am delighted with the shape our program has taken. Please feel free to spend as much of the two days as you wish with us. Needless to say, the registration fee does not apply to speakers.

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp
Encl.

February 15, 1978

Rabbi David Ellenson
The Community Synagogue
150 Middle Neck Road
Port Washington, N. Y. 11050

Dear David:

I thought you would want to see the brochure which was sent to the rabbinate and to a selected list of invitees. I am delighted with the shape our program has taken. Please feel free to spend as much of the two days as you wish with us. Needless to say, the registration fee does not apply to speakers.

I look forward to seeing you in New York. With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp
Encl.

February 15, 1978

Rabbi William Cutter
HUC-JIR
3077 University Ave.
Los Angeles, Calif. 90007

Dear Bill:

I thought you would want to see the brochure which was sent to the rabbinate and to a selected list of invitees. I am delighted with the shape our program has taken. Please feel free to spend as much of the two days as you wish with us. Needless to say, the registration fee does not apply to speakers.

I look forward to seeing you in New York. With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp
Encl.

February 15, 1978

Dr. Joseph L. Blau
Columbia University
Department of Religion
619 Kent Hall
New York, N. Y. 10027

Dear Dr. Blau:

I thought you would want to see the brochure which was sent to the rabbinate and to a selected list of invitees. I am delighted with the shape our program has taken. Please feel free to spend as much of the two days as you wish with us. Needless to say, the registration fee does not apply to speakers.

I look forward to seeing you in New York. With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp
Encl.

February 15, 1978

Rabbi Irwin M. Blank
Temple Ohabei Shalom
1187 Beacon Street
Brookline, Mass. 02146

Dear Irwin:

I thought you would want to see the brochure which was sent to the rabbinate and to a selected list of invitees. I am delighted with the shape our program has taken. Please feel free to spend as much of the two days as you wish with us. Needless to say, the registration fee does not apply to speakers.

I look forward to seeing you in New York. With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp
Encl.

February 15, 1978

Rabbi Walter Jacob
Rodef Shalom Temple
4905 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15213

Dear Walter:

I thought you would want to see the brochure which was sent to the rabbinate and to a selected list of invitees. I am delighted with the shape our program has taken. Please feel free to spend as much of the two days as you wish with us. Needless to say, the registration fee does not apply to speakers.

I look forward to seeing you in New York. With all good wishes I remain

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Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp
Encl.

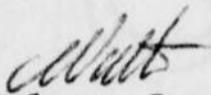
DR. WALTER JACOB
RABBI
RODEF SHALOM TEMPLE
FIFTH AND MOREWOOD AVENUES
PITTSBURGH, PA. 15213

February 20, 1978

Dear Daniel:

Many thanks for your note. The seminar certainly looks good and it will be a pleasure to participate in it. I plan to be there for all the sessions except the Monday morning program as my plane from Pittsburgh will not arrive in time to hear that paper. I am looking forward to seeing you in New York next month. Until then, with best wishes for the rest of the winter and kindest regards,

Sincerely,


Walter Jacob

WJ:ldm

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

February 22, 1978

Rabbi Irwin M. Blank
Temple Ohabei Shalom
1187 Beacon Street
Brookline, Mass. 02146

Dear Irwin:

I am sorry about the slip-up in the CCAR office. If there is any further publication coming out of the program I will see that it is correct.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

February 22, 1978

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

Dear Elliott:

The enclosed is self-explanatory. If there are any more releases or any more copies as handouts for the convocation itself will you please see that the correction is made.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.



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

3077 UNIVERSITY AVENUE • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90007
(213) 749-3424

February 22, 1978

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
University Circle at Silver Park
26000 Shaker Blvd.
Cleveland, OH 44106

Dear Dan:

Thanks for the note. I had already received my invitation from Elliot Stevens. I am planning to spend the entire time at the conference with a possible exception of one item of faculty business on Tuesday.

Are people going to share papers before the conference?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'William Cutter'.

William Cutter

WC:bj

February 27, 1978

Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman
19 Hillcrest Lane
Rye, New York 10580

Dear Larry:

There has been one change in our program. Jack Stern has had to cancel because of an accident. He is laid up with a broken leg, one of the casualties of New York's snow.

We will move up Cutter's speech on Monday afternoon and hold our board meeting after his lecture. It will give us a chance to relax over lunch and have more time to handle our business.

With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

February 27, 1978

Rabbi William Cutter
HUC-JIR
3077 University Ave.
Los Angeles, California 90007

Dear Bill:

Jack Stern has had to cancel his appearance at our seminar. He had the misfortune of breaking a leg in an automobile accident and is at the moment hospitalized. Would you mind if we moved your lecture up to the earlier afternoon time? I would deeply appreciate it.

With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

February 27, 1978

Rabbi Bruce Warshal
Touro Synagogue
P. O. Box 15186
New Orleans, La. 80175

Dear Bruce:

There has been one change in our program. Jack Stern has had to cancel because of an accident. He is laid up with a broken leg, one of the casualties of New York's snow.

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

February 27, 1978

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

Dear Shelly:

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With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeffrey Silver

DJS:mp

February 27, 1978

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

Dear Josh:

There has been one change in our program. Jack Stern has had to cancel because of an accident. He is laid up with a broken leg, one of the casualties of New York's snow.

We will move up Cutter's speech on Monday afternoon and hold our board meeting after his lecture. It will give us a chance to relax over lunch and have more time to handle our business.

With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

February 27, 1978

Rabbi Peter J. Rubinstein
Woodlands Community Temple
50 Worthington Road
White Plains, N. Y. 10607

Dear Peter:

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With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp



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

40 WEST 88th STREET • NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10023
(212) 873-0200

Mar 2, 1978

Dear Dan,

I've just returned home, late, after a long meeting, & found your letter re the change in schedule advertising me. I suddenly discovered how negligent I'd been. I just assumed I'd be here for the ECAR Conference, since I'm almost never away during the week. But I was invited as guest lecturer in the Notre Dame University graduate dept of Liturgy for the week of March 13-17, & some time ago, long before you set your date, I agreed. I feel terrible about the conflict, but I'm committed to Notre Dame. I'm also sorry I neglected to note the conflict & inform you sooner.

But I'll be thinking of you & wish you the success I know you'll have.

Best!
Larry (Hoffman)

UNIVERSALISM
AND
PARTICULARISM

A SECOND SEMINAR



March 13-14, 1978

at the

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
40 W. 68th St., New York City

sponsored by the
TASK FORCE ON JEWISH IDENTITY

of the

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS
790 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10021

UNIVERSALISM AND PARTICULARISM: A SECOND SEMINAR

That Reform Judaism is committed to the survival of Israel and the raising up of the next generation of Jews as Jews need not be argued; but wisdom suggests that we examine now effectively we go about our work.

The papers presented at Conference I investigated various aspects of our work--social action, school curriculum and worship--to discover whether we transmitted our commitments clearly and unequivocally. The results of that research which were published in the CCAR Journal (Spring '77) suggest that we have not been as effective as we would like to be in transmitting our particularist commitments.

During follow-up discussions, several explanations have been suggested for this failure: the original tilt of Reform towards universalism, born from our beginnings at a time when citizenship and belonging were emphasized and the sharp distinctions between faiths deliberately minimized; the appeal of the powerful, but vague, phrases of the prophetic literature which encourage our social commitments, but not necessarily the religious life; and our habit of analysis by abstraction which leads us to seek the broad concept within and behind a particular religious moment or act. Wherever its value as a tool of scientific analysis, positivism suggests that the mitzvot are not sacred in themselves, but point to more significant concerns; yet, when the richness and variety of Jewish life is reduced by analysis to some statement of the essence of Judaism, the fragrance and the color of Jewish life is bleached out and its appeal reduced.

In order to examine these hold-over habits of mind and to increase our capacity to express ourselves effectively, a second conference was suggested which would critically examine our habits of thought and suggest positive and coherent theological positions which embrace all the concerns of the synagogue--the righteous life and the religious life. Speakers were not chosen as representatives of a particular ideology. What they share is a serious concern for the appropriate expression of the language of service and survival.

REGISTRATION FEE \$10.00, WHICH INCLUDES LUNCHEON BOTH DAYS.

There will be a brief opportunity for questions after each presentation.

Program

MONDAY, MARCH 13

10:30 a.m. "Particularism and the Conventions of Western Liberalism," Dr. David Sidorsky

12:15 p.m. Lunch

1:30 p.m. "Survival and Social Action: How They Fit Together," Rabbi Jack Stern

2:45 p.m. "Educational Method vs. Philosophy: Where Particularism and Universalism Collide," Rabbi William Cutter

TUESDAY, MARCH 14

10:00 a.m. "The New Ethnicity, Religious Survival and Jewish Identity," Rabbi David Ellenson

11:15 a.m. "Problems of Modern Religious Thought: Tensions Between Particularism and Universalism," Dr. Joseph L. Blau

12:30 p.m. Lunch

1:30 p.m. "The Conventional Community and the Righteous of All Nations," Rabbi Irwin Blank

2:45 p.m. "Prophetic Judaism, The History of a Label," Rabbi Walter Jacob

TO REGISTER: *Make checks payable to the Central Conference of American Rabbis, 790 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10021*

ABOUT THE DISCUSSANTS

IRWIN M. BLANK is Rabbi of Temple Ohabei Shalom in Brookline, Mass. He is a past president of the Synagogue Council of America and Chairman of the Committee on Justice and Peace of the CCAR.

JOSEPH L. BLAU is Professor Emeritus of Religion at Columbia University and author of Judaism in America, Modern Varieties of Judaism and Reform Judaism: A Historical Perspective.

WILLIAM CUTTER is Professor of Education and Hebrew Literature at HUC-JIR, California and Director, Rhea Hirsch School of Education.

DAVID ELLENSON is Rabbi of the Community Temple in Port Washington, New York and an instructor at HUC-JIR in New York City.

WALTER JACOB is Rabbi of Rodef Shalom Congregation in Pittsburgh, Pa. and author of Christianity Through Jewish Eyes.

DAVID SIDORSKY is Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University and editor of The Future of the Jewish Community in America.

JACK STERN, JR. is Rabbi of the Westchester Reform Temple, Scarsdale, New York.

March 15, 1978

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

Dear Elliott:

The afternoon papers on Tuesday were good which was excellent since it enabled the Conference to begin and end on a high note. I gave Blau his check and am mailing Sidorsky's today. Many thanks for your prompt attention to this.

My expenses were \$265.00 which included the air fare, hotel, food etc.

I want to thank you for all your help in putting this seminar together. Many thanks.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman



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

March 15, 1978
6 Adar II 5738

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

Dear Dan,

Just a quick reflection on the Conference. I unfortunately could not remain for Walter Jacob's presentation and therefore can not comment on his work. I can only say that I was disappointed in most of the other presentations. Aside from David Sidorsky's extraordinary presentation and some of David Ellenson's insights, the level left much to be desired. I hope that we can be very careful in terms of the more intensive experience that we spoke about in committee.

Best wishes for Purim.

DLB EN

Sincerely,

Sheldon Zimmerman
Rabbi

*It was good seeing you in the
Big Apple!*

March 16, 1978

Dr. David Sidorsky
Department of Philosophy
Columbia University
116th and Broadway
New York, N. Y. 10027

Dear David:

Your lecture not only opened our conference brilliantly, but was referred to again and again in the discussions. My only regret is that it cannot be circulated. I hope you will draw it together in some form and publish it or allow us to publish it.

I am enclosing a small token of our gratitude which can hardly begin to repay you for the time, effort and intelligence of your lecture.

It was interesting to learn how our paths have crossed and re-crossed from college days to today and I trust that one of these days our families can sit down and really get to know each other.

With all good wishes and many thanks I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

אגוד הרבנים המתקדמים

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

790 MADISON AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 • (212) 734-7166

Office of the Executive Vice President

March 16, 1978

Rabbi Jerome R. Malino
141 Deer Hill Avenue
Danbury, CT 06810

Dear Jerry:

As you know, we are on a three year program of God, Torah and Israel for our conventions. We will be at the subject of Israel for our 1979 convention, and I am sure that you share my assumption that we are talking about peoplehood, including the State of Israel but not exclusive to it.

As you also know, we have had a Task Force on Jewish Identity under Dan Silver which has been doing some excellent work on the language of particularism as found in all aspects of Reform Judaism. They just finished their second conference (I'm sorry you were unable to get away for it) and have been moving around the regions very productively and ingendering great interest in doing it.

Dan Silver and I were talking about next steps the other day, and it occurred to me that the work of this Task Force, which he heads, could provide the core for the planning of the 1979 program, or at the very least, be a major part thereof.

I told him I would write to you to broach the subject. I know that you wouldn't want to make any commitments until the Fall meeting of the new program committee, but on the other hand, it would be a good idea if you and Dan were to be in touch well prior to that so that discussions could ensue which would help you make up your mind as to whether you wanted to pursue this with the Program Committee, in which case it would probably be a good idea to bring Dan in for that meeting next Fall. I leave it now in your hands.

All good wishes.

Shalom,

Joseph B. Glaser

JBG/s

cc: Rabbis Ely E. Pilchik, Daniel Jeremy Silver

OFFICERS:

Ely E. Pilchik, *President*
Short Hills, N.J.
Joseph B. Glaser, *Executive Vice President*
New York, N.Y.

Jerome R. Malino, *Vice President*
Danbury, Conn.
Alfred Wolf, *Treasurer*
Los Angeles, Cal.

Sidney H. Brooks, *Recording Secretary*
Omaha, Neb.
Jordan Pearlson, *Financial Secretary*
Toronto, Canada

Sidney L. Regner, *Executive Vice President Emeritus*
New York, N.Y.
Elliot L. Stevens, *Administrative Secretary*
New York, N.Y.

March 16, 1978

Rabbi David Ellenson
The Community Synagogue
150 Middle Neck Road
Port Washington, N. Y. 11050

Dear David:

I want to thank you for your paper and for the opportunity it gave me not only to get to know you as a person but to feel something of the quality of your mind. It was a good piece and I was delighted for the opportunity to react to it.

I hope you will not delay too long in getting it in form so that I can submit it to the Journal for possible publication. I appreciate the time that went into preparation and thank you for it.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

March 16, 1978

Rabbi Jack Stern
Westchester Reform Temple
255 Mamaroneck Road
Scarsdale, N. Y. 10583

Dear Jack:

The conference has come and gone and you were missed. The papers were interesting and provided much food for thought. I hope that by now you are home and well on the road to full recovery and that you will not only enjoy your congregational anniversary in good health and good spirits but draw together your paper so that I can at least see to its publication.

My best to your family. With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

March 16, 1978

Rabbi William Cutter
HUG-JIR
3077 University Avenue
Los Angeles, Calif. 90007

Dear Bill:

It was good listening to your paper and getting to spend a little time with you on Tuesday. Some day I hope our paths cross in less arranged circumstances and that we have a chance to really get to know each other. As I said Tuesday, I hope you will find the right terminology for the ideas that you ~~were~~ working with and force all of us to really think about them. It is an important topic.

I told Adele your museum would be in touch with her and she said she looks forward to being helpful in any way that she can. With all good wishes from house to house I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

March 16, 1978

Rabbi Walter Jacob
Rodef Shalom Temple
4905 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15213

Dear Walter:

Your paper helped end the conference on a high note. The usefulness for the papers is not simply that they were heard by the few that were there, but that they are printed; so I hope you will not delay in getting a copy to me so that I can submit it to the Journal. We had some excellent reactions to last year's publications and our colleagues are beginning to focus in on the problem.

I can appreciate the time and effort in the preparation of what was truly a first-rate piece. Many thanks.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

March 16, 1978

Rabbi Irwin M. Blank
Temple Ohabei Shalom
1187 Beacon Street
Brookline, Mass. 02146

Dear Irv:

Your paper helped end the conference on a high note. The usefulness for the papers is not simply that they were heard by the few that were there, but that they are printed; so I hope you will not delay in getting a copy to me so that I can submit it to the Journal. We had some excellent reactions to last year's publications and our colleagues are beginning to focus in on the problem.

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

RABBI IRWIN M. BLANK
TEMPLE OHABEI SHALOM
1187 BEACON STREET
BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS 02146

March 17, 1978

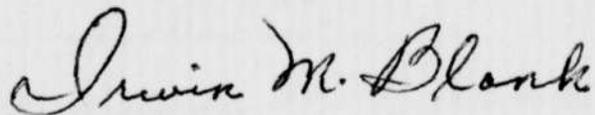
Rabbi Daniel Silver
Tifereth Israel
University Circle & Silver Park
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

Dear Dan,

It was good to see you again and to participate in the seminar. Enclosed please find the manuscript of my paper. My expenses for the seminar came to \$137.00.

Mazal Tov on your 50th! May you continue to have many joys, and may I continue to enjoy your friendship for many years to come.

Sincerely,



Irwin M. Blank
Rabbi

IMB/fd
Enclosures

March 20, 1978

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

Dear Shelly:

Thank you for the note. I agree. Sidorsky was excellent.
I think it is time that we take another tack and I will be
in touch.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

March 22, 1978

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

Dear Elliot:

Here ~~are~~ the statement of Irv Blank's expenses, copy of his letter enclosed. Thanks for taking care of it.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

March 22, 1978

Rabbi Irwin M. Blank
Temple Ohabei Shalom
1187 Beacon Street
Brookline, Mass. 02146

Dear Irv:

I received your paper and forwarded it to the Journal. You will be hearing directly from Bernie Martin. I have sent notification of expenses to Elliot Stevens at the CCAR and you will be hearing from him.

Thanks for the good wishes. Again, my thanks for the paper.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

July 27, 1978

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

Dear Joe:

The arrival of the newsletter reminds me that we have not tied down the role of the Task Force for next year. You discussed with me on several occasions the desirability of relating our Task Force work and next spring's conference. I know that the Program Committee met after Toronto. Is this still something that is desired? If so, what is desired of us? If we are going to be involved I would like to see that new and meaningful work is ready and the time is short.

Outside of whatever you plan for the main session, we might devote some of the work shops to the issues peripheral to the main peoplehood theme, particularly how universalism and particularism work out on a congregational level. We might have one session on the Jewish survival and religious school curriculum, another on adult education, another on the pulpit. It would be interesting to devote some of the study sessions to such themes as the history of reform's theological thinking in this area and to the theological issues themselves.

On another level we are still interested in opening the subject at several regional conferences, particularly those in the northwest and the Pacific Coast. Again, I need to depend upon you to make this possible.

On a new direction, I would like you to think about the publication of an anthology suitable for adult education use by members of the Conference and others dealing on our theme. This study was suggested at our last task force meeting, and I believe it to have merit. I am sure a publisher could be found and there might even be some profit for the Conference. My idea would be to cull the Yearbook, the Journal, and other sources for appropriate materials and to solicit new writing. I envisage a

[July 27, 1978]

2

volume of several hundred pages which would present the history of reform's attitude with the practical and theological issues involved in the survival agenda, comparative materials by thinkers outside our movement (Isaiah Berlin, Buber, Agus. . .) and by some of our own folk, papers on the contradictions of multiple loyalties (that is, the sociology of modern Jewry), papers on what the issue looks like from another perspective (England, Israel. . .) and perhaps an edited transcript of a discussion I would want to hold in which participants would be asked to develop an agenda for synagogue consideration. Can I have your reaction?

I trust this finds you in good health.

As always,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

November 29, 1978

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

Dear Joe:

Pursuant to our conversation of Monday, I would like you to consider the following observations.

A tide of religious traditionalism is flowing in the world. It can be seen clearly in Iran and Egypt. Jimmie Carter signals the emergence of the evangelical and fundamentalist churches in America. One could assimilate most of the cults into this picture. Among our own orthodoxy is increasingly demanding in Israel. In the United States "Torah true" types happily abort any joint activities unless they meet their rigid forms.

The flow in religion parallels the abandonment of the liberal position in politics. Everywhere rigidity is replacing flexibility. Ideology is replacing idealism. People with answers are more attractive than people who encourage others to make up their own minds.

The implications for liberal Judaism and for the liberals of the American Jewish community are serious and deserving of study. From the religious side the question must be asked whether the return of colorful traditions is also a significant shift towards traditionalism. Can a religious posture which encourages individual judgment continue to attract? Is the current attraction of all groups with answers a passing phenomenon or a portend of things to come as future shock vibrates deeper and deeper into the society? Are there strategies for a liberal faith to help us weather this storm? Will our own liberalism become an ideology? If so, what would be the consequences of that phenomenon?

[Nov 29, 1978]

My suggestion is that our Task Force on Jewish Identity be empowered to consult with other organizations, which represent the same "liberal" and "Jewish" polity, about holding an Arden House conference which would involve, besides our own, people from political science, sociology, community organizations etc. to lift up this theme. A reading brochure should be prepared and used as the basis of discussion seminars. The goal is understanding. The consequence would be a book of insightful studies.

This is a quick sketch of what is on my mind. It was good to be with you.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

אגוד הרבנים המתקדמים

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

790 MADISON AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 • (212) 734-7166

February 15, 1979

TO: Chairmen of all CCAR Standing Committees, Commission Delegations, Ad Hoc Committees and Task Forces

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to you with my annual reminder that your annual reports are due for publication in the 1979 Yearbook. As you know, the early convention makes it possible to begin work on the Yearbook earlier than usual. Although some committees will not meet until April or May, those which have met, or plan to meet during the convention, are invited to submit such reports to the CCAR office. Often, these reports take the form of minutes of the most recent meeting, some of which we already have.

In addition to their purpose as the Yearbook report, these reports or minutes also serve to keep the CCAR office fully apprised and up-to-date on the work of our committees, and often generate further lines of inquiry or follow-up of their own accord. Additionally, we do circulate all reports and minutes to the entire committee by mail, including the corresponding members who so hunger to be kept informed on the committee's work. Even if your work is only in progress, or you are indeed between projects, a brief paragraph would be very helpful and very much appreciated.

I look forward to seeing you in Phoenix, and wish you all the best.

Sincerely,



Elliot L. Stevens

ELS:lmn

OFFICERS:

Ely E. Pilchik, *President*
Short Hills, N.J.
Joseph B. Glaser, *Executive Vice President*
New York, N.Y.

Jerome R. Malino, *Vice President*
Danbury, Conn.
Alfred Wolf, *Treasurer*
Los Angeles, Cal.

Sidney H. Brooks, *Recording Secretary*
Omaha, Neb.
Jordan Pearlson, *Financial Secretary*
Toronto, Canada

Sidney L. Regner, *Executive Vice President Emeritus*
New York, N.Y.
Elliot L. Stevens, *Administrative Secretary*
New York, N.Y.

March 8, 1979

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

Dear Joe:

I know that you are preparing for the Conference, but a recent letter from Elliot Stevens asking for material for the Year Book reminds me that I never received an answer to the letter I sent you, at your request, dealing with the Task Force. It is getting close to the time when we must fish or cut bait.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

אגוד הרבנים המתקדמים

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

790 MADISON AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 • (212) 734-7166

Office of the Executive Vice President

March 13, 1979

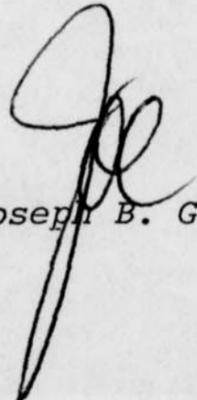
Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
Silver Lake at University Circle
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

Dear Dan:

Jerry Malino and I have had a long discussion about the Identity Task Force, and Jerry has some good ideas as to where it might go. Let's the three of us get together to discuss it. Phoenix may be a little hectic though we can try, or at least you and Jerry can get together. Otherwise, if you are planning to be in New York, please give us as much notice as possible so that we can arrange something.

All good wishes.

Shalom,


Rabbi Joseph B. Glaser

JBG/s

OFFICERS:

Ely E. Pilchik, *President*
Short Hills, N.J.
Joseph B. Glaser, *Executive Vice President*
New York, N.Y.

Jerome R. Malino, *Vice President*
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Toronto, Canada

Sidney L. Regner, *Executive Vice President Emeritus*
New York, N.Y.
Elliot L. Stevens, *Administrative Secretary*
New York, N.Y.

March 19, 1979

Rabbi Jerome Malino
United Jewish Center
141 Deer Hill Ave.
Danbury, CT. 06810

Dear Jerry:

Joe Glaser has written that the two of you have been talking about the future of our Identity Task Force. As you know, I have been concerned with its direction and future activity. Unfortunately, I cannot be in Phoenix, but I do plan to be in New York on Sunday and Monday, April 1 and 2. Could we meet some time on the afternoon of April 2?

I trust you will have a most successful conference and I congratulate the Conference on having chosen you as our President.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

cc: Rabbi Joseph Glaser

From the Desk Of

Rabbi Elliot L. Stevens
(212) 734-7166

April 17, 1979

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
Tifereth Israel
University Circle & Silver Park
Cleveland, OH 44106

Dear Dan,

Although I know that the Task Force on Jewish Identity has not met during the current year, I wonder whether you can give us a paragraph or two for the 1979 Year Book. I believe that I heard Joe say that he has discussed with you the future direction of the Task Force, and something of this nature might be appropriate for publication. I would like to have all of the Committee reports on file by June 1 or so. If you would prefer not to submit a report this year, please let me know.

Warm good wishes.



CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS
790 Madison Avenue • New York, N. Y. 10021

May 2, 1979

Rabbi Elliot L. Stevens
Central Conference of American Rabbis
790 Madison Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10021

Dear Elliot:

Here is the paragraph you asked for on the Task Force on Jewish Identity:

The Task Force on Jewish Identity did not meet during the year under consideration. Attempts to organize discussions of the Universalist-Particularist issues in the regions illicited little interest. A continuing discussion was held by the chairman and leadership of the Conference as to the future of the Task Force and it is hoped that this will lead to proper burial or resurrection.

Daniel Jeremy Silver
Chairman

DJS:mp

אגוד הרבנים המתקדמים

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

790 MADISON AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 • (212) 734-7166

Office of the Executive Vice President

May 4, 1979

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Zucker
Birmingham Progressive Synagogue
4 Sheepcote St.
Birmingham B16 8AA
England

Dear Dan:

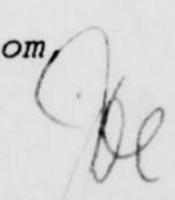
At the specific request of Daniel Jeremy Silver who is Chairman of the CCAR Task Force on Jewish Identity, Jerome Malino is now appointing you to that Task Force. You will be hearing all about the Task Force, its history and objectives from Dan himself in the near future.

Since we have a rule that no one can serve on more than one committee or commission except under the most exceptional circumstances, we are removing you from the Resolutions Committee to which you had just been appointed. I'm sure that your new assignment will give you an even greater opportunity to utilize your talents and capabilities productively.

I hope that your move from Birmingham to Birmingham will not be too inconvenient. Speaking of coincidences, the Chairman of the Committee you are leaving works in the same temple as the Chairman of the Committee to whom you are going and, curiously and curiously, the latter has the same name as you have, by accident I understand.

All good wishes.

Shalom,


Joseph B. Glaser

P.S. I hope that the enclosed literature will answer the question in your recent letter.

JBG/s

cc: ✓ Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver

OFFICERS:

Ely E. Pilchik, President
Short Hills, N.J.
Joseph B. Glaser, Executive Vice President
New York, N.Y.

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Toronto, Canada

Sidney L. Regner, Executive Vice President Emeritus
New York, N.Y.
Elliot L. Stevens, Administrative Secretary
New York, N.Y.

Rabbi Joseph B. Glaser

May 4, 1979

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

Dear Dan:

I just want you to know how helpful our talk was. I believe that you are good 60% right on the "trivia" allegation which was enough to get me thinking and moving immediately into different patterns and attitudes.

You see, the weakness I confess to you about glomming onto catch phrases and jumping to conclusions is also a strength. Fortunately I am an intuitive person, and got the point immediately. While this has induced in me a great deal of relaxation and sense of greater purposefulness, for which I personally thank you profoundly, I hope that it will also show in the work of the Conference.

Thank you doctor.

Shalom,



/s

May 4, 1979

Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman
Congregation Emanuel
5959 N. Sheridan Road
Chicago, Illinois 60660

Dear Herman:

I am sorry I was not in Phoenix to congratulate you personally. I am pleased that the Conference chose so well and will be delighted to cooperate in any way that I can.

This letter is a follow-up on a discussion held Tuesday with Joe Glaser in New York City. Five years ago I was asked to chair a Task Force on Jewish Identity. Conceived during the heated Conference debates on intermarriage and Beraira, our mandate was to help colleagues think beyond liberal Judaism as a vague, denatured universalism. To accomplish our "consciousness-raising" program we organized two Conferences on Universalism-Particularism at the New York School. I am sure you have read the papers, most of which were published in the Journal of Reform Judaism. I also held several consciousness-raising meetings with CCAR regions. In time the debates which had motivated the Conference's original interest subsided and we were not able to take the program any further - which is not to say that the question of affirming a particularist Jewish identity within a liberal context has been resolved.

This past year the Task Force did not meet. Over the months I held a series of desultory conversations with Joe Glaser about its future. Tuesday we came up with an idea which I would like to discuss with you after you have had a chance to talk with Joe, to read the annual reports of the Task Force in the CCAR Year Book and to assimilate this letter.

In recent years the distinguishing mark of our movement has been the fact that we cannot define ourselves. Borowitz's Perspective was an excuse for a platform. The new liturgy is shaped around

[May 4, 1979]

2

various inconsistent theologies. UAHC school materials vary from pietistic and mystical to narrowly rational. My analyses of sermons suggests that few colleagues speak from a philosophically consistent base.

Clearly, a platform for our group cannot be written in 1980. Some put this down to institutional disorganization and intellectual fuzziness. I think the issue is more basic. Platforms assume the rationality of the faith enterprise. Our age, which turns so frequently to Buber and Scholem, has rediscovered the mystical and messianic - the irrational in the faith enterprise. The irrational cannot be reduced to logical first principles, which is not to say that it cannot be discussed meaningfully. We can examine what lies behind our problem of definition. I believe a dialectic historical approach can be taken to the question of identity. We occupy a certain place in the Jewish continuum. The poles between which we operate can be identified.

Borowitz did this, but he described without pressing the dialectic towards synthesis. It is this task which the Task Force would like to pursue. The so-called classic synthesis resolved nineteenth century problems. Perhaps by defining more precisely our problems we can press towards an appropriate synthesis for our liberal condition as Jews.

A first step would be the discussion of this problem with an eye to analyzing clearly the dialectic tension between the rational and irrational, the traditional and the existential, particularism and apologetics, romanticism and rational, unity and diversity, community and individual, as they appear to us. Two avenues of approach suggest themselves as first steps - either an Arden House type conference with twenty to thirty invited guests discussing a series of previously submitted papers, or the use of the morning Torah sessions at the next Conference to raise some elements of this broad spectrum of tensions under the guidance of those who have a particular and informed point of view.

I would add that in either case I would hope that most leaders would be drawn from elsewhere than the College faculty. One of the roadblocks which stands in the way of progress towards self-definition is that so many never get beyond positions staked out by those from whom they learned theology at the College because these are the only voices they have heard.

I do not envisage an attempt at another platform. The end product will not be a paper, but papers; not agreement but appreciation. It would have a heightened degree of historic and theologic sophistication. At

[May 4, 1979]

3

the end I would hope many would be able to give better answers to the so-often asked, and avoided, question: if liberal Judaism is doing my Jewish thing, why do I need to be a liberal Jew?

I will call you sometime next week so we can talk about all of this.

As always,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

cc: Joe Glaser
Jerome Malino

DJZ/RC

9th May, 1979.

Rabbi Joseph B. Glaser,
CCAR,
790, Madison Avenue,
NEW YORK,
N.Y. 10021,
U.S.A.

Dear Joe,

Almost. Almost.

Right family. Wrong pew.

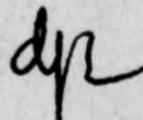
My brother is Daniel Moses. I am David Jeremy.

Yet on coincidences ... Dad (John J.) taught Daniel Jeremy Silver prior to his Bar Mitzvah, and Stuart Geller and I were classmates at Cincinnati ('70).

I am honoured and pleased to serve on the Task Force, yet I wonder if I may not also stay on the Resolutions Committee since that latter committee's work, I presume anyway, is both limited in its number of meetings and when it meets - probably prior to the Convention. In addition the meetings of both committees could conceivably take place in Cleveland, and as you suggest both Dan Silver and Stu Geller serve at The Temple.

Warm regards,

Cordially,



David Jeremy Zucker,

Rabbi.

c.c. Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver ✓
Rabbi Stuart Geller

May 21, 1979

Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman
19 Hillcrest Lane
Rye, New York 10580

Dear Larry:

There will be a meeting of the Task Force on Jewish Identity in New York City on June 18 at 10 A.M. It will probably be at the CCAR office. If necessary I will inform you of any change of venue.

I am enclosing copy of a letter I sent Herb Schaalman which will bring you up-to-date. I hope to devote our meeting to a discussion of specific subject areas which would open up relevant theological issues and to the people who could lead these discussions. The Conference has not agreed to my proposal about the morning study sessions but has asked for our specific suggestions and, I think, would buy a completed program. We ought to be able to finish our business by mid-afternoon.

I trust this finds you in good health. Would you drop me a line indicating your attendance.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

May 21, 1979

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

Dear Shelly:

There will be a meeting of the Task Force on Jewish Identity in New York City on June 18 at 10 A.M. It will probably be at the CCAR office. If necessary I will inform you of any change of venue.

I am enclosing copy of a letter I sent Herb Schaalman which will bring you up-to-date. I hope to devote our meeting to a discussion of specific subject areas which would open up relevant theological issues and to the people who could lead these discussions. The Conference has not agreed to my proposal about the morning study sessions but has asked for our specific suggestions and, I think, would buy a completed program. We ought to be able to finish our business by mid-afternoon.

I trust this finds you in good health. Would you drop me a line indicating your attendance.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

May 21, 1979

Rabbi Peter J. Rubinstein
Woodlands Community Temple
50 Worthington Rd.
White Plains, N.Y. 10607

Dear Peter:

There will be a meeting of the Task Force on Jewish Identity in New York City on June 18 at 10 A.M. It will probably be at the CCAR office. If necessary I will inform you of any change of venue.

I am enclosing copy of a letter I sent Herb Schaalman which will bring you up-to-date. I hope to devote our meeting to a discussion of specific subject areas which would open up relevant theological issues and to the people who could lead these discussions. The Conference has not agreed to my proposal about the morning study sessions but has asked for our specific suggestions and, I think, would buy a completed program. We ought to be able to finish our business by mid-afternoon.

I trust this finds you in good health. Would you drop me a line indicating your attendance.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

May 21, 1979

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

Dear Josh:

There will be a meeting of the Task Force on Jewish Identity in New York City on June 18 at 10 A.M. It will probably be at the CCAR office. If necessary I will inform you of any change of venue.

I am enclosing copy of a letter I sent Herb Schaalman which will bring you up-to-date. I hope to devote our meeting to a discussion of specific subject areas which would open up relevant theological issues and to the people who could lead these discussions. The Conference has not agreed to my proposal about the morning study sessions but has asked for our specific suggestions and, I think, would buy a completed program. We ought to be able to finish our business by mid-afternoon.

I trust this finds you in good health. Would you drop me a line indicating your attendance.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

May 21, 1979

Rabbi David Zucker
Temple Emanu-El
2100 Highland Ave.
Birmingham, Ala. 35205

Dear David:

There will be a meeting of the Task Force on Jewish Identity in New York City on June 18 at 10 A.M. It will probably be at the CCAR office. If necessary I will inform you of any change of venue.

I am enclosing copy of a letter I sent Herb Schaalman which will bring you up-to-date. I hope to devote our meeting to a discussion of specific subject areas which would open up relevant theological issues and to the people who could lead these discussions. The Conference has not agreed to my proposal about the morning study sessions but has asked for our specific suggestions and, I think, would buy a completed program. We ought to be able to finish our business by mid-afternoon.

I trust this finds you in good health. Would you drop me a line indicating your attendance.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

May 21, 1979

Rabbi Stuart Gertman
Federation of Reform Synagogues
UAHC
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Stuart:

There will be a meeting of the Task Force on Jewish Identity in New York City on June 18 at 10 A.M. It will probably be at the CCAR office. If necessary I will inform you of any change of venue.

I am enclosing copy of a letter I sent Herb Schaalman which will bring you up-to-date. I hope to devote our meeting to a discussion of specific subject areas which would open up relevant theological issues and to the people who could lead these discussions. The Conference has not agreed to my proposal about the morning study sessions but has asked for our specific suggestions and, I think, would buy a completed program. We ought to be able to finish our business by mid-afternoon.

I trust this finds you in good health. Would you drop me a line indicating your attendance.

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

May 29, 1979

Dear Dan,

I welcomed your letter of May 21, and heartily endorse the proposal carried in the enclosed letter. It seems to me that the Torah study sessions might well benefit from some direction and common purpose.

I must confess that I am not sure a convincing synthesis is possible, so I might quibble with your description of purpose (page 2, paragraph 3). But a thoughtful discussion of the conflict between polarities would be useful in any case.

I am certainly in agreement regarding the desirability of not limiting discussion roles to HUC-JIR professors. To be sure, I have a higher regard for my colleagues in terms of their ability to break out of intellectual constraints than your letter would indicate, but still, our task requires us to go to the best persons available, and they may or may not be HUC teachers. I am somewhat distrustful of the way invitations are generally sent, however, and would want to be sure that we do not invite 'big name' people who will deliver warmed over old positions; or, alternatively, and equally likely, politically tainted choices. The world of Jewish intellectuals is rife with 'cronyism' and I would hate to get involved with that.

I find, unfortunately that I have engagements almost all day of June 18. Would that you had selected the next day! I shall try to reshuffle appointments, but I doubt whether I will be successful. So I shall probably have to miss your meeting. Chaval! Your idea intrigues me. But I look forward to being a part in the playing out of whatever the task force comes up with.

Sincerely,

Lawrence A. Hoffman

May 31, 1979

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

Dear Larry:

Thank you for your letter. I am sorry you cannot be with us. I hope you can make whatever changes are necessary to at least spend an hour or so.

I would appreciate having you list for me for the meeting some of the names which are obviously in your mind of people who could deal with specific topics. The name and the topic would be appreciated. As a teacher you have had a unique chance to watch the generation pass through the school and perhaps there are one or two who have done some thinking in specific areas.

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

June 6, 1979

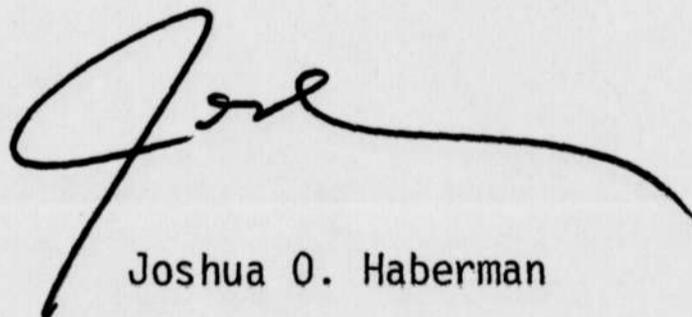
Dear Dan,

Thanks for sharing your letter to Herman Schaalman with me. I agree with you that the time has come to crystalize more clearly the various positions within Reform Judaism regarding Jewish identity. You're quite right in not pressing for definitions but rather in stressing the need to better understand and appreciate the multi-faceted "wonder" we call Reform Judaism — *and, above all, its creator, the Jew.*

Much to my regret, I shall not be able to attend a meeting of your Task Force in New York on June 18th. I'm leaving June 15th for a two-week vacation on Cape Cod. Please keep me posted.

With fond greetings,

As ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joshua', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Joshua O. Haberman

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



RABBI SHELDON ZIMMERMAN

June 8, 1979

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Rabbi Silver,

Rabbi Zimmerman will attend the June 18th
Task Force on Jewish Identity meeting being
held at the CCAR office.

RABBI STUART A. GERTMAN
838 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10021

June 19, 1979

Dear Dan:

I want to thank you for a very stimulating morning - the most intellectually exciting 2 1/2 hrs I've spent in quite awhile. I think we've come up with a good plan, and look forward to seeing it implemented in all its parts.

I also want to thank you for our afternoon conversation as well. You gave me good advice and much to think about. I appreciate your openness and candor. If this all works out, working with you more closely would be a benefit - and a joy.

Hope you have a good summer -
I'm sure we'll be in touch before your
Sabbatical.

Y/3'3'7,
Stuart

June 20, 1979

Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman
Congregation Emanuel
5959 N. Sheridan Road
Chicago, Illinois 60660

Dear Herman:

The Task Force on Jewish Identity met in New York on Monday of this week, June 18. In line with my letter to you of May 4 and our telephone conversation of May 12, the Committee tried to devise a format for the Torah sessions at the Conference which would provide a fresh and useful approach to the language in which theological and philosophic discussions of all the issues involved in Jewish identity must necessarily take place and to do so in a way which would be congruent with our professional experience.

Modern thought has moved away from abstract theory and closed systems towards a process of analysis which recognizes that theory and principle float in the air unless an individual appropriates these ideas and weaves them into his life. On this basis we ruled out the presenting of theoretical papers on identity-related problems.

What process do we use to arrive at "Jewish" positions? Most of us recognize that if we turn to the traditional texts there is generally a gap between the literature and the position we end up taking. On what basis then do we declare a position to be "Jewish"? Obviously, we turn to tradition. We also use a personal feeling about the essence of Judaism. We seek out recent research balancing out the old polarity between reason and revelation. We listen to ~~to~~ read colleagues' work. We look at options. We reflect ourselves. . .

The Conference has rarely examined how the individual rabbi goes about the process of making up his mind on specific matters; yet, it is a case where the process determines the ultimate position and is itself a theological statement.

We were made to understand that the Conference schedules nine or ten concurrent three-session study groups during each Annual Meeting. It would be our suggestion that a number of congregational colleagues be asked to articulate the process through which they make up their minds on a particular issue: immortality, abortion, SALT II. . . Each discussion would focus on process, not the validity of *a* conclusion.

[June 20, 1979]

What theological issues entered into his thinking and when? Did he consult the tradition and with what expectations? What theological principles affected his analysis and how does he use theology? How does he judge between conflicting academic opinions? Did a generalized concept about the nature of Reform Judaism weigh heavily? How did he arrive at this concept? How does he translate broad ethical principles into specific contexts? How much does he consider possible prudential issues, etc.?

We would suggest that colleagues be asked to discuss issues drawn from three distinct areas: theology, ethics and practice. One set of discussions would be titled: How I made up my mind about a particular theological issue (a personal God, free will or revelation; another: How I made up my mind on an ethical issue (euthanasia, nuclear power or settlements on the West Bank); and a third: How I made up my mind on an issue of practice (missions, breaking a glass or creative services).

Each discussion leader would be responsible for a series of three sessions. Each morning he would focus on a separate part of the process: the weighing of tradition; an analysis of his assumption about Reform; self-awareness and personal needs, etc. A specially trained group leader would be assigned to each seminar whose responsibility would be to keep the discussion in focus. This is important. We are not interested in debating the discussion leaders' conclusions but in analyzing how he arrived at them.

We see discussions of this type, which are necessarily revealing, as a step toward theological consciousness-raising and as usefully replicable. If these Torah sessions prove attractive there is no reason why they cannot be duplicated at regional conferences or within the several congregations. Wherever they are held they should aid us to focus on the question which we can no longer avoid for it is central to our integrity and to the future of our movement: On what authority do we speak? What is really involved in making a Jewish statement?

If this program is given a green light we would plan a pre-Conference session with the discussants and the session leaders to reinforce the approach we suggest; and a post-Conference session with the same group to assess what happened and to make plans for the future.

As discussion leaders we suggest colleagues with pulpit experience who are known as thoughtful and reflective teachers. We emphasize the congregational perspective because our focus is existential and normative, not theoretical or historical. The competence of a particular speaker on a specific issue is not as significant as his awareness of the process by which he makes up his mind. Indeed, it would be important not to ask colleagues to use an issue which is a hobby horse of theirs and on which they have lost any sense of distance.

[June 20, 1979]

The following names were suggested:

- Herman J. Blumberg (an issue in social ethics).
- Laura Geller (worship as mitzvah).
- Marc Gellman (medical experimentation or euthanasia).
- Robert J. Marx (immortality, a personal God)
- Bernard Mehlman (welfare legislation or social ethics).
- Sanford Ragins (God, dialogue).
- Jack D. Spiro (a personal God, Providence).
- Donald M. Splansky (Zionism and the Reform movement, aliyah).
- Samuel M. Stahl (the messianic age, prayer).
- Jack Stern, Jr., (personal or social ethics).
- Michael S. Stroh (homosexuality, new morality).

It might be wise for some member of the Task Force to act as a discussion leader so someone on the committee would have had personal experience with this approach.

We have not contacted any of the above. When we do, if we do, a good bit of explanation will be required, so give us time if you want us to go ahead. Should you wish I can sound out a number of these folk, or others you may suggest, before your October meeting. This would be easiest for me since I will be leaving after Yom Kippur for a six-month sabbatical and the phone bills from Oxford would be astronomical.

With all good wishes from house to house, I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp
cc: Joe Glaser and
members of Committee

Emanuel Congregation

5959 Sheridan Road
at Thorndale Avenue
Chicago 60660

July 3, 1979

HERMAN E. SCHAALMAN
Rabbi

Dear Daniel:

Thank you so much for your report on the meeting of your Committee. Joseph Glaser also wrote me and gave me his favorable impression of the work the Committee and you were doing.

I would have no objection if you were to sound out some of our Colleagues as to whether they would be prepared to be part of the type of program of which you wrote. It should be understood, however, that no obligation can be undertaken by me because all of this is, of course, to be submitted to the Committee and to be decided by the Program Committee.

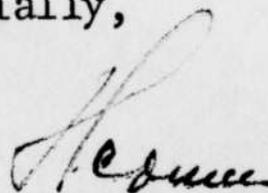
I'm intrigued by the possibility of exploring the question of the process by which we arrive at Jewish decisions and an inquiry into their authenticity. It follows right up with my own sense of the need to delve into the inner meaning, theological, personal, relational of the role of the modern Rabbi. It is in this connection that I could imagine that your Committee's work and proposals would be most helpful. You can therefore rely on me to help to present it in a very positive way to the Program Committee.

When you have gotten some responses back from those whom you feel out, please be in touch with me again.

In the meantime, have a great summer.

Every good wish,

Cordially,



Herman E. Schaalman
Rabbi

HES:sgk

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

July 27, 1979

Rabbi Laura Geller
Hillel Foundation
University of Southern California
3300 S. Hoover
Los Angeles, Calif. 90007

Dear Laura:

This is a strange letter in that I would like you to begin by reading the enclosed correspondence between myself and Harold Schallman. . . Having done so, I would ask whether you would be interested in participating in this kind of Conference program - if the Conference adopts it.

Essentially, we would ask you to take a theme from an area of your interest such as worship as mitzvah. It would be best if the theme be quite specific and one in which you are not so totally engrossed that you might not be able to shed an advocacy role. The purpose of the exercise would be to discuss with a group of colleagues the way you develop your position on a specific issue: what resources, secular and traditional, you consult; the theological or philosophic ~~interest~~ ^{interest} which underlies your original commitment and its basis; whether you change your mind as you do research; etc., etc. The question is how do we arrive at our "Jewish" positions.

The Conference has never attempted a program such as this, but I think it is an exciting and important step forward. Our Task Force on Jewish Identity would meet with you before the Conference and after so that we can reflect together on what should happen and what has happened. I cannot guarantee that the program will go forward, but I have been asked to sound you out and I hope you might be interested. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to write.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

July 27, 1979

Rabbi Bernard Mehlman
Temple Micah
600 "M" St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024

Dear Bernie:

This is a strange letter in that I would like you to begin by reading the enclosed correspondence between myself and Harold Schallman. . . Having done so, I would ask whether you would be interested in participating in this kind of Conference program - if the Conference adopts it.

Essentially, we would ask you to take a theme from an area of your interest such as welfare legislation or social ethics. It would be best if the theme be quite specific and one in which you are not so totally engrossed that you might not be able to shed an advocacy role. The purpose of the exercise would be to discuss with a group of colleagues the way you develop your position on a specific issue: what resources, secular and traditional, you consult; the theological or philosophic mindset which underlies your original commitment and its basis; whether you change your mind as you do research; etc., etc. The question is how do we arrive at our "Jewish" positions.

The Conference has never attempted a program such as this, but I think it is an exciting and important step forward. Our Task Force on Jewish Identity would meet with you before the Conference and after so that we can reflect together on what should happen and what has happened. I cannot guarantee that the program will go forward, but I have been asked to sound you out and I hope you might be interested. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to write.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

July 27, 1979

Rabbi Herman J. Blumberg
Solomon Schechter Day School
46 Pine Ridge Rd.
Waban, MA. 02168

Dear Herman:

This is a strange letter in that I would like you to begin by reading the enclosed correspondence between myself and Harold Schallman. . . Having done so, I would ask whether you would be interested in participating in this kind of Conference program - if the Conference adopts it.

Essentially, we would ask you to take a theme from an area of your interest such as ~~worship~~ ethics. It would be best if the theme be quite specific and one in which you are not so totally engrossed that you might not be able to shed an advocacy role. The purpose of the exercise would be to discuss with a group of colleagues the way you develop your position on a specific issue: what resources, secular and traditional, you consult; the theological or philosophic mindset which underlies your original commitment and its basis; whether you change your mind as you do research; etc., etc. The question is how do we arrive at our "Jewish" positions.

The Conference has never attempted a program such as this, but I think it is an exciting and important step forward. Our Task Force on Jewish Identity would meet with you before the Conference and after so that we can reflect together on what should happen and what has happened. I cannot guarantee that the program will go forward, but I have been asked to sound you out and I hope you might be interested. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to write.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

July 27, 1979

Rabbi Jack Stern, Jr.
Westchester Reform Temple
255 Mamaroneck Road
Scarsdale, N.Y. 10583

Dear Jack:

This is a strange letter in that I would like you to begin by reading the enclosed correspondence between myself and Harold Schaalman. . . . Having done so, I would ask whether you would be interested in participating in this kind of Conference program - if the Conference adopts it.

Essentially, we would ask you to take a theme from an area of your interest such as personal or social ethics. It would be best if the theme be quite specific and one in which you are not so totally engrossed that you might not be able to shed an advocacy role. The purpose of the exercise would be to discuss with a group of colleagues the way you develop your position on a specific issue: what resources, secular and traditional, you consult; the theological or philosophic mindset which underlies your original commitment and its basis; whether you change your mind as you do research; etc., etc. The question is how do we arrive at our "Jewish" positions.

The Conference has never attempted a program such as this, but I think it is an exciting and important step forward. Our Task Force on Jewish Identity would meet with you before the Conference and after so that we can reflect together on what should happen and what has happened. I cannot guarantee that the program will go forward, but I have been asked to sound you out and I hope you might be interested. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to write.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

July 27, 1979

Rabbi Samuel Stahl
Temple Beth-El
211 Belknap Pl.
San Antonio, Texas 78212

Dear Sam:

This is a strange letter in that I would like you to begin by reading the enclosed correspondence between myself and Harold Schaalman. . . . Having done so, I would ask whether you would be interested in participating in this kind of Conference program - if the Conference adopts it.

Essentially, we would ask you to take a theme from an area of your interest such as either worship or the nature of redemption and the messianic age. It would be best if the theme be quite specific and one in which you are not so totally engrossed that you might not be able to shed an advocacy role. The purpose of the exercise would be to discuss with a group of colleagues the way you develop your position on a specific issue: what resources, secular and traditional, you consult; the theological or philosophic mindset which underlies your original commitment and its basis; whether you change your mind as you do research; etc., etc. The question is how do we arrive at our "Jewish" positions.

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

July 27, 1979

Rabbi Robert J. Marx
Temple Solel
Box 838
Highland Park, Ill. 60035

Dear Bob:

This is a strange letter in that I would like you to begin by reading the enclosed correspondence between myself and Harold Schaalman. . . Having done so, I would ask whether you would be interested in participating in this kind of Conference program - if the Conference adopts it.

Essentially, we would ask you to take a theme from an area of your interest such as theology. It would be best if the theme be quite specific and one in which you are not so totally engrossed that you might not be able to shed an advocacy role. The purpose of the exercise would be to discuss with a group of colleagues the way you develop your position on a specific issue: what resources, secular and traditional, you consult; the theological or philosophic mindset which underlies your original commitment and its basis; whether you change your mind as you do research; etc., etc. The question is how do we arrive at our "Jewish" positions.

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

July 27, 1979

Rabbi Jack D. Spiro
Congregation Beth Ahabah
1111 W. Franklin St.
Richmond, Va. 23220

Dear Jack:

This is a strange letter in that I would like you to begin by reading the enclosed correspondence between myself and Harold Schaalman. . . Having done so, I would ask whether you would be interested in participating in this kind of Conference program - if the Conference adopts it.

Essentially, we would ask you to take a theme from an area of your interest such as theology. It would be best if the theme be quite specific and one in which you are not so totally engrossed that you might not be able to shed an advocacy role. The purpose of the exercise would be to discuss with a group of colleagues the way you develop your position on a specific issue: what resources, secular and traditional, you consult; the theological or philosophic mindset which underlies your original commitment and its basis; whether you change your mind as you do research; etc., etc. The question is how do we arrive at our "Jewish" positions.

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.



TEMPLE BETH-EL

211 BELKNAP PLACE • SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78212 • (512) 733-9135

SAMUEL M. STAHL, D.H.L.
Rabbi

August 6, 1979

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
26000 Shaker Blvd.
Beachwood, Ohio 44122

Dear Daniel:

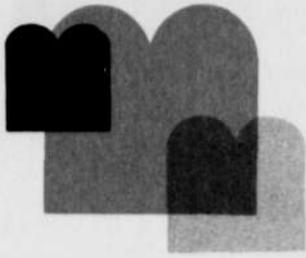
I just returned from vacation and was delighted to find your letter of July 27 awaiting me.

I am very interested in working with you on the CCAR project of determining the process of arriving at a "Jewish" position.

Have a very rewarding sabbatical.

Sincerely,

Samuel M. Stahl



CONGREGATION SOLEL

1301 Clavey Road • Highland Park, Illinois 60035 • (312) 433-3555

Robert J. Marx, Rabbi

August 3, 1979

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

Dear Dan:

Your letter fascinated me -- particularly because I have been examining the roots of my own commitments in an effort to determine where Halakah and Judaism leave off and where Robert Marx, the political liberal begins.

I would be delighted to be part of the program when and if it develops. Please keep me posted and let me know how I can help.

In the meantime, I hope you are having a pleasant and restful summer.

Sincerely yours,

Robert J. Marx
Rabbi

RJM:fae

Congregation Beth Ahabah

- ORGANIZED 1789 -

1111 West Franklin Street
Richmond, Virginia 23220

DR. JACK D. SPIRO
RABBI

7 August 1979

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

Dear Daniel:

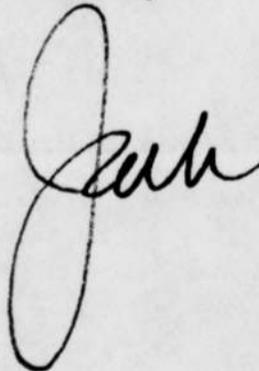
After just returning from a hectic tour of the Orient, my drooping eyes opened wide on reading your letter of July 27th as well as the enclosed correspondence. I think the idea and format of the program for the CCAR are splendid.

I can think of no area which would be more natural for me in terms of discussing the processes whereby I have reached decisions than that of Jewish education. I have been particularly concerned with Jewish epistemology. Why is knowledge so important in Jewish tradition, what are the values of knowing, what does knowledge actually mean in the sources, etc.? I can certainly deal with the processes whereby I have reached conclusions about Jewish education to the various criteria you mention in your letter.

I hope this program becomes a reality. It sounds very promising.

Warmest personal regards and best wishes.

Yours,



JDS:mpg

HILLEL HOUSE

A CENTER FOR JEWISH LIFE AT

USC

August 7, 1979

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

Dear Daniel,

I have several reactions to the kind of Torah session you outline in your letter. First, the idea is really exciting and at the same time rather terrifying. The notion of lifting up the process by which I make "Jewish" decisions and really looking at it leaves open the possibility that in place of process is a mere bumbling through all the competing claims that weigh on my life. That's what's terrifying. But the possibility of really discovering a process is exciting because it would provide a sense of authenticity that I often feel is lacking in my life as a non-traditional rabbi. In other words, it is a wonderful idea, but one that needs very careful planning in order to actualize. I agree that it is important to have a trained group leader in every group and that colleagues should be carefully advised before the Torah session so that they don't expect something different. Since the goal of the session is to help every rabbi understand the process of his or her decision making, perhaps it would be better to use the three sessions a little differently from the way you describe in your letter. Instead of one colleague using three sessions to explore his or her own process, the first two sessions might be shared by several colleagues outlining their own processes on related questions and the final session focusing on the colleagues in the group. Second, I'm not sure why you suggest that colleagues stay away from issues that they are closely connected with. It seems to me that it is precisely in those areas where we really address the important questions you raise. For example, as I read your letter I immediately thought of my own struggle with developing a Jewish way to celebrate Rosh Hodesh, which was important to me because of my involvement with women's issues. If we really focus on process as opposed to advocacy, I think those questions people really feel strongly about might be very appropriate issues for exploration.

In addition to these reactions, I also feel very flattered to be invited to participate in the program. I don't see myself as the kind of discussion leader you describe in the last paragraph of your letter to Rabbi Schaalman - with pulpit experience in the traditional Reform congregation sense or as a thoughtful and reflective teacher. But I'd be willing to participate as a discussion leader in the more modest form I describe above if that seems to you to be appropriate.

RABBI LAURA GELLER - DIRECTOR

DAVID ORDIN, M.A., M.S.W. - ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

3300 SOUTH HOOVER BLVD. / LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90007 / (213) 747-9135 • 747-9136
Sponsored by LOS ANGELES HILLEL COUNCIL • Constituent Agency of JEWISH FEDERATION-COUNCIL of GREATER LOS ANGELES • Affiliated with B'NAI B'RITH HILLEL FOUNDATIONS

[Aug 7, 1979]

HILLEL HOUSE

A CENTER FOR JEWISH LIFE AT

USC

-2-

Again, I feel enormously challenged by the issues you raise and I'm sure other colleagues will as well. I look forward to continuing our conversation - in other letters and at the Conference.

B'shalom,

Laura

Rabbi Laura Geller

RABBI LAURA GELLER - DIRECTOR

DAVID ORDIN, M.A., M.S.W. - ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

3300 SOUTH HOOVER BLVD. / LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90007 / (213) 747-9135 • 747-9136
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August 10, 1979

TEMPLE



EMANU-EL

2100 HIGHLAND AVENUE
BIRMINGHAM, ALA. 35205

SENIOR RABBI
DAVID JEREMY ZUCKER, M.A., Ph.D.

RABBI EMERITUS
MILTON L. GRAFMAN, D.D.

ASSISTANT RABBI
JAMES S. GLAZIER, M.A.H.L.

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

Dear Dan:

Today I received a letter which was posted on May 22nd which invited me to a meeting at the CCAR office on June 18th. The fact of the matter is that I would have been in England at the time. None the less I would have responded to your letter had I received it. I would appreciate any material that came out of the June 18th meeting.

On a more personal note, I have met your mother-in-law, spoken to your father-in-law and established the fact of Dad having a relationship with you, so in a very real sense I have a somewhat convoluted mishpacha here in Birmingham.

Wishing you and your family well for the High Holy Days.

Sincerely,

Rabbi David Jeremy Zucker

DJZ:hb

August 14, 1979 .

Rabbi David Jeremy Zucker
Temple Emanu-El
2100 Highland Avenue
Birmingham, Alabama 35205

Dear David:

Thank you for your kind note of August 10. I am sorry that our letters crossed transatlantically. I am enclosing a copy of the material which was sent out to various prospective seminar leaders which I think will bring you up-to-date on our work. It would be best to read the letter to Herman Schaalman first and then to read my follow-up to the various participants. A quick review of the annual report of the Task Force in the CCAR Journal will give a preview to these letters.

I am glad you met my in-laws. They are lovely people. I look forward to meeting you soon.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp
Encl.



TEMPLE ISRAEL

Longwood Avenue and Plymouth Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02215
Telephone 617-566-3960

RABBI Bernard H. Mehlman

22 August 1979
29 Av 5739

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

Dear Dan:

Your letter of July 27 which was sent to my former congregation in Washington was finally sent to me here in Wisconsin where I am presently on vacation. I have looked through the correspondence as you requested and have my doubts as to whether I can take part in what you are suggesting. I have assumed some responsibility with Alex Schindler's Task Force on Outreach and am also in the midst of working on the Hebrew Language Curriculum for the Commission on Jewish Education. These two extra curricular activities have occupied a great deal of my time lately. At this point in the year, I am reluctant to assume another responsibility for fear that I will not be able to give it my fullest attention.

The idea is most appealing and seems to have promise but I am just unsure at this point that I can assume that responsibility and give it the time that it seems to require.

I appreciate your thinking of me and hope that I will be able to be of service at some future time.

With best personal regards.

Cordially,

Bernard

Rabbi Bernard H. Mehlman

BHM/vmm

WESTCHESTER REFORM TEMPLE

255 MAMARONECK ROAD - SCARSDALE, N. Y. 10583

Jack Stern, Jr.
Rabbi

August 27, 1979

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

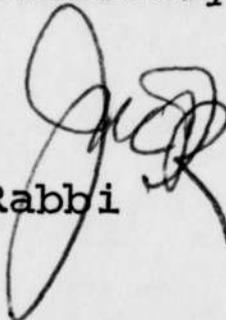
Dear Danny:

Many thanks for your letter of July 27.

Should the program come about, I shall be pleased to take part.

I look forward to hearing from you and, meanwhile, send my best wishes for the New Year.

Sincerely,


Rabbi

JS:es

Congregation Beth Ahabah

- ORGANIZED 1789 -

1111 West Franklin Street
Richmond, Virginia 23220

DR. JACK D. SPIRO
RABBI

27 August 1979

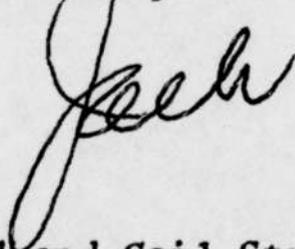
Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
University Circle at Silver Park
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

Dear Daniel:

With regard to your letter of July 27th, I recently replied that the area of Jewish education would be most suitable for me to discuss. I would like to add counseling to this. I have been certified in rational-emotive therapy, and I would be happy to discuss the processes involved, why I find this form of counseling to be consonant with Jewish values, the relationship between "RET" and my Jewish commitments, rabbinic "authority" and the counseling process, etc.

Warmest personal regards and best wishes during the preparatory month of Elul.

Yours,



P.S. Cordial greetings from Harold and Gail Straus.

JDS:mpg

September 5, 1979

Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman
Congregation Emanuel
5959 N. Sheridan Road
Chicago, Illinois 60660

Dear Herman:

Following up on our correspondence concerning the Conference program, I circulated the enclosed letter to a number of colleagues whose names the Task Force had suggested. Their answers are enclosed. As you will see, with one exception, they are intrigued by the idea and more than eager to participate.

I know that you will be meeting in October and I shall be at Oxford on sabbatical. If the Conference desires to go ahead with the program, I will be in regular touch with my office and am quite prepared to do the organizing required. I would presume that this would include correspondence with the chosen discussion leaders to make sure that they are clear on our focus and organizing a meeting before the Conference for everyone who will be involved. We will need to know how many sections you would like to divide the program into.

I trust you and your family are well, that your sermons are in shape and that Chicago is enjoying better political health than Cleveland. A Happy New Year.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp
Encl.

אגוד הרבנים המתקדמים

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

790 MADISON AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 • (212) 734-7166

Office of the Executive Vice President

May 6, 1980

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
University Circle & Silver Park
Cleveland, OH 44106

Dear Dan:

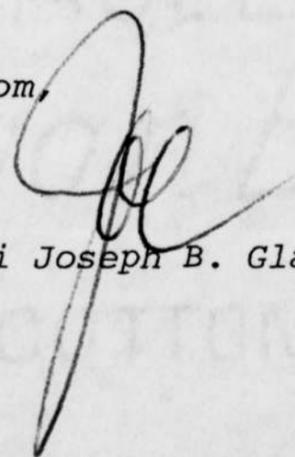
Welcome back from Oxford and the Orient. I am eager to hear first-hand about both.

It's too bad that I was in Philadelphia the day you were in New York. I would have loved to have spent some time with you. Let's try again soon.

I have the feeling that the identity project just isn't catching on. As you know, it is hard to get a handle on it. I suggest that we put it on the back burner at least until Pittsburgh, when you, Herman, Jerome Malino and I might be able to get together to try to determine what the future of the project will be. Maybe it's just that we have so many other things going....

Warmest good wishes.

Shalom,


Rabbi Joseph B. Glaser

JBG/s

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New York, NY
Jacob R. Marcus, *Honorary President*

May 13, 1980

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

Dear Joe:

I will be happy to talk over the identity project in Pittsburgh. My feeling about it is that it really ought to be buried. History is imposing identity on our people without our having to do much about it, if we were ever really effective in that respect.

I am glad you are well. With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Container 6