



Daniel Jeremy Silver Collection Digitization Project

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Shaker Heights High School, correspondence and notes,
1965, 1968.

SHAKER HEIGHTS SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
SHAKER HEIGHTS CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
15911 ALDERSYDE DRIVE
SHAKER HEIGHTS, OHIO 44120

JOHN A. STANAVAGE, ED.D.
PRINCIPAL

October 10, 1965

Rabbi Daniel Silver
The Temple
Cleveland 6, Ohio

Dear Rabbi Silver:

I am writing to ask if you would be willing to take some time out of your busy schedule to come out to Shaker Heights High School to talk to a group of students about Judaism.

Let me explain what we are up to. We have started a new Humanities course this year, the first two months of which are devoted to Greek thought and artistic expression. I plan to devote about two weeks between the Greek and Roman periods to the Jewish contribution and to Christianity. I will conclude the Greek section with a discussion of the Greek religion and some of the inadequacies of the Olympian system, which will, I think, lead into the Hebrew tradition quite well. The class will be familiar with some of Plato's religious ideas (through the Symposium and one or two other dialogues) and Mr. Terence Pollack of our own faculty will be talking to the students on "The Archaeology of the Old Testament" on the 4th of November.

I would like to have you come for two sessions, preferably on Nov. 8 and Nov. 10 (Mon. and Wed.) but would leave the dates to your conveniences. You would have the challenge of giving the students as much of the Hebrew heritage as possible in two meetings.

I should leave it to you as to what material should be stressed. But, if it is any help at all, here are several topics which come to mind: A very brief historical account, the Jewish sense of uniqueness, the development of the idea of one God, their ethical beliefs, and the Jewish world view. I know each of these is a massive subject but I am sure you would be able to put them into proper perspective.

Two classes would meet together and you would be speaking to about 50 students plus a few other students and interested faculty. They are an alert and responsive group and I know they would be most appreciative if you can come. The class starts at 12:40 in the afternoon.

I shall telephone within a very few days to talk with you personally.

Sincerely yours,

Kenyon C. Cramer

Kenyon C. Cramer
Social Studies Department

P.S. I can be reached at the Shaker Heights High School during the day. My home phone is Ev 2-0352.

October 12, 1965

Mr. Kenyon C. Cramer
Shaker Heights Senior High School
15911 Aldersyde Drive
Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120

Dear Mr. Cramer:

I should be happy to help you out on your "hot-rod tour" of Biblical Judaism. Unfortunately, on the dates you suggest, November 8 - 10, I will be in San Francisco. The best dates for me would be November 4 and 5. I am leaving on the 8th and will be gone for ten days.

In order to define the categories of Biblical thinking I would expect your class to have read Genesis, Chapters 1 and 2, Leviticus 19, Isaiah 1, Psalms 19, 23 and 139, Job 1 and 2, Ecclesiastes 1 and 12 and Song of Songs 2. I would like to presume that this material has been read before the first session.

I also presume that your class will have some basic chronological information about the Ancient Near East and realize the degree to which this thought precedes the flowering of the Green civilization. I trust that these dates are satisfactory to you. If they are, I should be pleased to be with you at 12:40 on November 4 & 5. By the way, how long does a class last?

If I understand correctly, these are not lectures on Judaism but on Biblical culture and ideas. I emphasize this because so many make the mistake of believing that Judaism begins and ends in Biblical thinking. There is a lively stream of intellectual

development from those days to ours. I don't want your students to believe that I am presenting the modern Jewish frame of thought to them. Perhaps there will be another occasion for this for them at the end of the year.

Sincerely,

DANIEL JEREMY SILVER

DJS:mgm



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[1965, p6]

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[1965 P7]

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[1965, p8]

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SHAKER HEIGHTS, OHIO 44120

JOHN A. STANAVAGE
PRINCIPAL

921-1400

February 6, 1968

KENNETH R. CALDWELL
MARTIN W. MESHENBERG
ALBERT SENFT
ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

Rabbi Daniel J. Silver
2841 Weybridge Road
Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120

Dear Rabbi Silver:

Mr. Senft happily assures me you have agreed to serve as our featured speaker for our 1968 Scholarship Key Assembly. I need scarcely add that I share Mr. Senft's pleasure in this matter. It will be good to have you with us that day, giving recognition to the academic prowess of our best students. Indeed, your words will add much to the significance of the occasion. The day should mark a conspicuous milestone on the road to ultimate scholarship for these keen young students of ours.

Here are the vital details of the affair in brief summary:

Date: Monday, March 4, 1968

Time: 8:50 a.m. If possible, however, it is hoped all those involved in the program will meet in my office not later than 8:35, just to compare signals and to agree on final details.

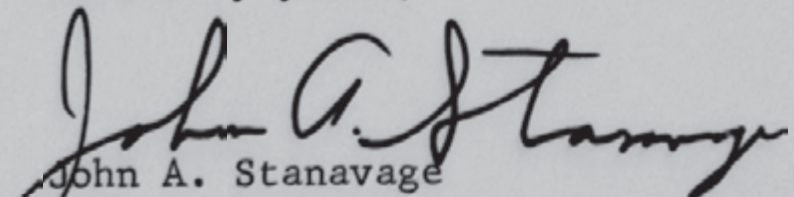
Your address: Twenty to thirty minutes in length, albeit you are free to overlap at either margin. The subject is to be entirely of your own choosing.

Practically all the 1200 students in the audience will be juniors or seniors. On stage there will be those 74 seniors who are being honored for their signal accomplishment in compiling a 4.5 or better average for the seven semesters. The words of encouragement you give them will be matched only by the scholarship key each will receive as well.

Aftermath: A reception for our keyed students and their parents will follow the assembly. This is to be held in the Social Room, probably extending from about 10:00 a.m. (the anticipated close of the assembly) to 11:00 a.m. I cordially invite you to attend this reception, although I shall understand if pressing commitments elsewhere compel you to be off and flying at the close of the assembly.

Again, let me say how generous it is of you to give up a busy morning in your crowded schedule to share some of your own garnered insights with our young people. Your words will not go unmarked, I can assure you.

Sincerely yours,


John A. Stanavage
Principal

February 9, 1968

Mr. John A. Stanavage, Principal
Shaker Heights Senior High School
15911 Aldersyde Drive
Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120

Dear Mr. Stanavage:

I shall be pleased to be at Shaker Heights shortly after 8:30 a. m. on Monday, March 4th to speak to the honors assembly. You are most kind to invite me to the subsequent reception but will have to be off rather quickly.

With all good wishes, I remain

Sincerely,

DANIEL JEREMY SILVER

DJS:rvf

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JOHN A. STANAVAGE
PRINCIPAL

KENNETH R. CALDWELL
MARTIN W. MESHENBERG
ALBERT SENFT
ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

March 4, 1968

Rabbi Daniel J. Silver
2841 Weybridge Road
Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120

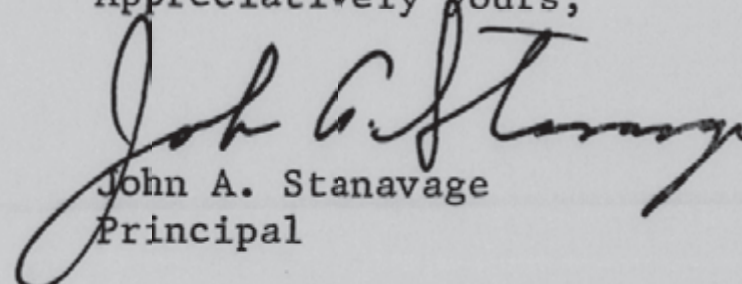
Dear Rabbi Silver:

Any words of mine, eloquent or slew-footed, of appreciation would be completely superfluous, would they not? (Though hopefully not posthumous, except as regards my new lame-duck status.) The sincere, genuine, and surging applause that followed your remarks is testimony enough to the impact you made on your young people. Furthermore, your quick and certain rapport with the teenager is too established a fact to require any verification on my part.

Professionally, as principal of Shaker High, I do thank you for helping to make this affair of ours one of the finest in the history of the school. And personally, as a deeply concerned, struggling educator and human being, I thank you for affording me a few deeper insights into the turmoil of our times.

It was a pleasure sharing the stage with you.

Appreciatively yours,


John A. Stanavage
Principal

JAS:hc

March 6, 1968

Dr. John A. Stanavage
Principal
Shaker Heights Senior High School
15911 Aldersyde Drive
Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120

Dear Dr. Stanavage:

Thank you for your most kind note. It was a great pleasure to be with you at the Honors Convocation.

By the way, congratulations on your exciting new assignment and appointment. I wish you all manner of good luck at John Carroll.

Sincerely,

DJS:mgm

Daniel Jeremy Silver

Every success which I would achieve is necessary to ensure
the fulfillment of every promise and reflection of things yet to be.
And of you whose kindness ~~will~~ ^{shall} not be lost to me now
regret - so I should like to concentrate on what has been done



IS THERE A PROMISED LAND?

The Temple
April 18, 1965

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver

Dear Friends:

2- Carl, and I are often asked what we think of life to be something of a rough ride.
I ~~am~~ ^{am} ~~convinced~~ ^{convinced} that the most that can be said of life is that it is a rude and uncertain enterprise. ~~And so, it is not surprising that men are forever~~ ^{perhaps because of life's uncertainties & uncertainties} imagining more stately mansions for their dwelling. ~~To live is to dream.~~

From Plato's philosopher's Republic, to the Utopian islands of Sir Thomas Moore, to our contemporary vision of a more abundant community capsuled in the President's image of the Great Society - the literature of the world, our political thought and our philosophy have been enriched by many a vision splendid.

Is there any basis in fact for these happy hopes or are they sheer fantasy? Do they testify to our ability to ^{SPIN OUT} ~~fabricate~~ ingenious illusion, or are they a tribute to the reach and range of our vision? By way of answer, I would place before you this morning the two Utopian visions presented to us in our Bible: that of Paradise and that of the Promised Land.

I would ask you to notice how differently the Bible treats each. In the beginning there was the Garden of Eden - a Utopia. It was a green place of many pleasures. It was a Paradise where every want and need was amply and effortlessly satisfied. And then, the serpent beguiled Eve, and Eve coaxed Adam, and they ate of the forbidden fruit and they were exiled from Paradise. Not only were they banished from their garden, ^{of Aylah} but the verdict was irrevocable. The Bible tells us that God placed an angelic

sentry with a brandished sword at the gate that none might re-enter. The gates of Paradise were locked shut. It is as if the garden had never been. Now, of course, there was no Garden of Eden. The story is ^{pure myth} ~~constructed out~~ of ~~the language of myth~~. Yet it is drawn out of man's experience. What is Eden but the dimly remembered, secure delights of childhood? What is Eden but innocence outgrown that can never be recaptured. ~~Eden is all that is implicit in the sigh with which we repeat Mr. Shaw's wellknown phrase, that youth is too good to be wasted on the young.~~

We are all born into Eden or so it seems, in retrospect. We grow up, inevitably so. As we grow we eat, as did Adam and Eve, of the tree of knowledge. Our eyes are opened. We see death. We notice pain. We note the mysterious mathematics of life - how some die young, that the good are not always rewarded. We are tormented and we exile ourselves from Eden. The older and more experienced we become the less snugly and comfortably life fits. We see the child pulling the wings from the living butterfly and we see the child man tormenting his weaker neighbor. ^{IN HAVEL AND VIET NAM}

We cannot stop growth. We cannot prevent being banished from the nursery, and so inevitably we are pushed out into the real world and the gates of Paradise are locked tight. We can never return. Paradise is a place of no return except in the hallucinations of madness. We must live in the world as it is. The nursery world where everyone lives happily ever after is a world based solely on innocence or illusion.

~~There never was such a life.~~

^{506687 Through}
What does the Bible ~~mean to teach us by~~ this image of a Paradise locked? Simply this, that there is no fairy godfather and that there is no good witch of the East. All of our Cinderella stories are nothing more than projections

of urgent longings - insubstantial - unreal. Do not depend in your lives on some bolt of lightning out of the blue - on a miracle. Life must be lived within the terms of the possible. We cannot change our skin. We cannot exchange our sex. We cannot change the facts of our birth. We cannot multiply the reach of our talent. ^{WE CAN NOT BE BORN AGAIN IN A COMBLES} We must learn to live with the world as it is. We must learn to live with ourselves as we are.

^{OF COURSE} Now, it is natural to dream. Every ^{ONE} man daydreams of a ~~new world~~, yet it is not wise to linger ^{Too Long} high in a fairytale heaven. If we do each day becomes a prolonged despair. Each experience plunges us deeper into remorse. There are no streets that are paved with gold. Our streets are littered and refuse-laden. In the real world all people are not like our parents - sweet and loving and reasonable. People are quixotic. Each has his own disposition and each has his own ambition. The real world is our world. We ought not spin for ourselves a world of such fine fancy that it destroys our ability to enjoy that which we really have. For there is color and excitement, love and tenderness which can be ours in the here and now.

^{SUGGESTED THAT} A Rabbi ~~has expounded this wisdom in this phrase:~~

the secret of happiness is our ability to accept circumstance. You do not need to be a Nobel laureate to make a contribution to the on-going progress or the race. You do so daily ~~in your business~~ as you conduct yourself with

honor. You do so daily in your ~~home~~ ^{STUDIES AS YOU PREPARE YOURSELF FOR} as your love and teaching ~~raise children,~~ ^{NEEDED SERVICE AND USEFUL CITIZENSHIP. YOU DO SO WHEN YOU TUTOR} straight and sturdy. You do so in your civic undertakings ~~as your time and~~ ^{THE DISADVANTAGED AND EFFECTIVELY REMEDY INJUSTICE.} effort lends strength to the day.

^{EVENING} Now, ~~we~~ all listen to what Dr. Freud once called the lullabies of heaven, those wonderful ethereal melodies which come to us from a never-never land of many delights, where all the loneliness of this life is somehow forgotten in thunderous applause and where all frustrations of this life

turn into golden success. We all dream - to live is to dream. But, we cannot live in our dreams. Dreaming, we destroy such happiness as can be ours. For our dreams place our ambitions too high. Our dreams cause us to live by a standard which we cannot achieve. Our dreams drain from us the joy in everyday things. You do not have to sit in a seat of power in order to live usefully. You do not need to have amassed^{VAIT} wealth or be president of a giant corporation in order to be secure. Yet, if you are nagged by such a fantasy, if it gives you no peace - there is no peace. Enough is never enough. You do not need the beauty of a Venus in order to be loved and to know love. Beauty is an inner grace of a human being at peace with himself. And yet, if you are caught up with some adolescent conjuration of beauty what peace can be yours? What love can be yours? Whatever grace is yours by birth will never be enough. We must learn to live with the world that is ours.

The beginning of wisdom, ~~the beginning of maturity~~, is to accept the ~~QUN~~ ~~verdict~~ banishment from Paradise. The beginning of wisdom is a willingness to live, unprotestingly in the world of death and of pain, in the world in which men are less than angels. The beginning of wisdom is a willingness to live in this world without regret, to accept it for what it is and to seek to make it an even better place.

The gates of Paradise are locked. The Greek word "utopia" means "no place." There is no Paradise.

Paradise is locked tight, but the gates of the Promised Land are open. At the beginning of ^{Riblical} our history God covenanted with Abraham, "Lift up your eyes and look about this place for all the land which thou seest to thee I will give it and to thy seed after thee as an eternal inheritance." The ^{PE A. P. H. H. A. L.} focus of our long history is the desire to be on the land, to possess the

land and to build upon it a promise equal to the blessing. Patriarchs came to the Holy Land and they pastured their flocks there and camped there. They left the land only when they had been driven off by drought ^{AND} ~~or by~~ famine ^{The Hebrews} and ~~the need to seek pasture elsewhere~~; but always they returned. We were forceably restrained from the land by ^{their} ~~our~~ enslavement in Egypt. ^{They} ~~We~~ were deprived of the land for many centuries. ~~Then came the Passover and God's deliverance.~~ Then came Moses who led the people back to the ^{The Hebrews} ~~very~~ ^{gates} of promise. It has often been in ^{Jewish} ~~our~~ history, as it was under Joshua. ~~again~~ and ~~again we have pioneered the land~~ ~~as it was under the Judges and under Kings,~~ ^{when the land was pioneered and its cities built high} ~~again and again we have built high its cities. We have tilled its farms and its vineyards. We have cared for its wealth. There were times when we were driven off the land, but always we kept close the dream, always the land beckoned. As in our own generation the land reached out to us and drew us back. We renewed the land. We rebuilt it.~~

There are some cynics who say that the phrase "Abandon Hope, All Ye Who Enter Here" is inscribed over the archway of birth. Through this vision of the Promised Land ^{The} our Bible argues that life is something more than a barren, difficult enterprise. There are hopes that do come true. There are dreams that can be realized. It may take forty years of wilderness wandering to come to the Promised Land. It may take centuries of human undertaking to build a high civilization, but the land is there, civilization can be built, the promise can be established.

~~However~~ our hope for a promised land is ~~a fact of geography~~ ^{it} is within time and place. We dream of Paradise when we dream of immortality, something impossible to man. We dream of the Promised Land when we devote ourselves to the healing sciences and seek within the terms of our mortality to increase man's enjoyment of the years which are by God's decision ours. We dream of Paradise when we dream of a world of saintly people, a world where

everyone is created after our imagined image. We dream of the Promised Land when we dream of building the welfare of the home, when we establish justice within the social life. Paradise is an ethereal place. The Promised Land is this place.

^{You} We wish, ^{we} we pray, ^{we} we dream of a certain scope of our skills. ^{You} We wish, ^{we} we pray, ^{we} we dream for a ~~certain~~ place of respect in ~~our~~ ^{your} community. It is good to dream - if we rein in these dreams within the realm of the possible. We are meant to have a vision splendid toward which we guide and focus our energies. A grand dream ennobles, but too grand a dream enfeebles. Too grand a dream becomes an illness, a mania. It destroys life. It dooms our efforts before we undertake them. We become like Icarus of Greek legend. You remember the man who built himself crude wings of wax in order to fly to the sun. He rose a few miles and then the heat of the atmosphere burned the wax and he plunged headlong into the Aegean Sea. Our dreams need to be constructed of the stuff of life. They need to be within the reach of our talents, and within the facts of our circumstances. We cannot change what we are. We cannot endow ourselves with talents we did not inherit. But we can hone the skills that our ours. We can use the powers which are ours efficiently and these powers are largely sufficient.

To lead a good life, to contribute to our world, to know love, to know responsibility is to live significantly. The Promised Land is fact not fancy. ~~But~~ the Promised Land was theirs. They lived in cities. They built high its palaces. They leveled its roads. They farmed its hillsides. Canaan was theirs but despite their hopes it was not the Promised Land. The finest ~~spirits among our ancestors~~, the prophets, came among them and said, "You have spoiled your dream. How did you fail to understand that you had ~~not~~ must not only to own the land, cultivate it and mine its wealth; but to build

upon it a society which ^{is} was etched in decency and full of justice and of freedom. Canaan is just another land until you make it a holy land - a land which reflects in its institutions and its citizens God's law, a divine way, a goodly life. You have been too busy being busy. You have been too busy mining the wealth of the earth, taking in taxes and tolls, enjoying the profit of your crafts, eating the harvest of your fields. This is not the full promise of this land. This land was given to you for holy purpose; to love the good, to establish justice in the gates, to erradicate the injustice of class and of cast; and what did you do? You became indulgent. Luxury turned some of you into vultures. Indolence made grasshoppers of others of you. Prosperity perverted you. This land became just another place.

The Promised Land is geography set firmly on spiritual foundations. No man comes to his Promised Land directly by setting a material goal and achieving it. For what is success? What success is ours if we have what the world calls success, the tinsel, but in the process we ~~have~~ tarnished our good name, or ~~we have~~ exhausted and ~~broken~~ ^{broken} our health and ~~want~~ have so drawn away from our families that they are alien to us. What is the virtue of the Promised Land if it is not established in freedom? What is the virtue of all of our undertakings if they do not bring goodness into life?

~~Let me apply these thoughts for a moment to our present vision of the Promised Land. Most of us agree that President Johnson's image of the Great Society is a good image. Indeed, what is this image but a contemporary version of the Biblical vision. And it is a realistic vision. Thank God, our land is sufficiently abundant to provide for all. Thank God, our land is sufficiently abundant to provide for all. Thank God, our machine is sufficiently great to provide the education and the training, the leisure,~~

person of another color into responsibility. There are the careless men.

A generation which has gone to seed in the search of new thrills and excitement - which seeks only indulgence, leisure, an opportunity to live off the fatness of the land, which will not return to the land which has given them so much, a single repayment of their strength and wisdom. I see all these people now - now before the battle has been won, even before it has been joined, and I ask myself if we have the moral stuff to create decency within the Great Society. "Woe unto them who are at ease in Zion." What the prophet Amos told ancient Israel I repeat this morning. Amos warned that they were in the Promised Land, but that the promise could slip easily from their grasp. "Lamentation will yet be heard in the streets of Jerusalem" unless you learn to hate the evil, unless you learn to love the good, unless you learn to establish justice in your gates, unless you are prepared to undertake the responsibilities of community and dignity and show yourselves willing to share and to sacrifice.

Paradise, there is no paradise. The Promised Land - we are almost there. It is just around the corner - a land flowing with milk and honey, a land whose cities reach to the heavens, a land whose institutions are more generous and more gracious than hertofore conceived by man. Ancient Utopian writing did not begin to approximate today's reality. Have we the stuff here to live in and on the Promised Land? Can we found it securely? Can we reject its excess? I pray we may.