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Temple Beth El, Detroit, correspondence and speech,
1961, 1965-1966.

Western Reserve Historical Society

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Congregation Beth El
Woodward at Gladstone
Detroit 2, Michigan

Founded 1850

DR. RICHARD C. HERTZ
Rabbi
HAROLD D. HAHN
Assistant Rabbi
IRVING I. KATZ
Executive Secretary
DR. NORMAN DRACHLER
Educational Director
JASON H. TICKTON
Music Director

TRinity 5-8530

February 1, 1961

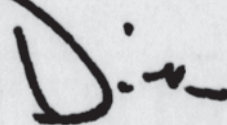
Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
East 105th Street & Silver Park
Cleveland 6, Ohio

Dear Dan:

I have wanted for a long time to invite you to speak at Temple Beth El. Now, I believe, I have a fine occasion to hear a message from you. On Monday, May 8th, our Sisterhood will celebrate its 60th anniversary with a luncheon, and we would like to invite you to be the principal speaker at that occasion. I hope it will be possible for you to accept. Please let me know if this is possible in your busy calendar.

Meanwhile, my warmest greetings and all the best to you.

Most cordially,



Richard C. Hertz
Rabbi

February 13, 1961

Rabbi Richard C. Hertz
Congregation Beth El
Woodward at Gladstone
Detroit 2, Michigan

Dear Dick:

I have just returned to my desk from a bout with the grippe, to find your kind invitation to address the Beth El Sisterhood on Monday, May 8th. I shall be delighted to be with you and look forward to this celebration.

I am also most anxious to discuss with you at that time some long range High School age relationships which I think could profitably be adopted by both congregations.

With warmest personal regards, I remain

Most cordially yours,

DANIEL JEREMY SILVER

DJS:lg

Congregation Beth El
Woodward at Gladstone
Detroit 2, Michigan

Founded 1850

DR. RICHARD C. HERTZ
Rabbi

HAROLD D. HAHN
Assistant Rabbi

IRVING I. KATZ
Executive Secretary

DR. NORMAN DRACHLER
Educational Director

JASON H. TICKTON
Music Director

TRinity 5-8530

February 16, 1961

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
East 105th Street & Silver Park
Cleveland 6, Ohio

Dear Dan:

I am delighted to know that you will address our Sisterhood on Monday, May 8th. Would you kindly send me your subject and some biographical data for publicity purposes, as well as a glossy photograph.

I will be glad to discuss with you the long range High School age relationships which you mention in your letter.

Meanwhile, my warmest greetings and best regards,

Most cordially,

Dir

Richard C. Hertz
Rabbi

SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE

March 19, 1961

RABBI DANIEL JEREMY SILVER

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED FROM YOUR CHILDREN

A Rabbi Listens

Every week-day the last item on my appointment calendar is a teaching hour. This hour with our Confirmation Class or with our pre-Confirmants is one of the most challenging and delightful of the day. It is my guarantee that no day will be one of unrelieved routine. I may find myself, by five o'clock, discussing with the class some intricacy of human behavior only to be brought up short by the statement of ~~one of the members~~ that the modern science of psycho-analysis was founded by a Viennese physician by the name of Sigmund Freud. ^{AFTER A} Or I ~~may be~~ discussing ^{rites and rituals} the history of the Temple and describe to the young people something about synagogue architecture only to find -- when I ask on an examination to name me five of the symbols or objects which are common to all congregations, ~~temples and synagogues~~ -- ^I to find one person listing these five: Ark, Torah, Eternal Light, Prayer Books, ~~and~~ Dr. Silver. Examinations and class recitations are filled with spoonerisms and malapropisms and often with unexpected truths. One of the young people trying to explain to me the commandment "Honor thy father and thy mother" wrote: "This means your parents brought you into this world and that they are raising you to the best of your ability". Another told me that the commandment "Thou shalt not commit adultery" means "Do not do unto others as you would not have them do unto you". Still another told me that the Jewish concept of God was that God is One, the Creator of Man, that all men are brothers and therefore equal in religion, faith and greed. Still another told me that marriage occurred when two people were determined to share together a life-long bondage.

But it is not essentially the humor of ^{the} a class-room situation which makes it a gratifying experience to the Rabbi. Rather, the class forces you to re-think many of the points which have become conventional wisdom with you. When I was at college I always wondered why the Senior professors delighted to teach Freshman courses. After all, the knowledge was the most elementary and surely it could have been handled by a graduate assistant, but now I think I know. Graduate students are trained, skilled and predictable. The under-graduate, who with a fresh mind is grasping and groping his way to some basic understanding of this discipline or that, will often put ~~the values of that discipline~~ together in unexpected combinations and his questions will force you to re-think positions which you have always held to be axiomatic, ~~given~~.

^{IT is told of} ^{That} I ~~think it was~~ Einstein who, when he ~~was once~~ pressed why he spent so much time ~~talking~~ with the neighborhood children, explained: "My students are hobbled by their respect for me and by their knowledge of mathematics. My students absorb; these children ask". And out of this asking the teacher recognizes what must be answered; the lacuna of his own knowledge, ^{and} new dimensions of a given position which must be examined and investigated. ^{The} Young people not only ask but they tell. They reveal a great deal about themselves, their feelings, their hopes, their uncertainties. You and I, when we engage in discussion, often play a complex intellectual masquerade -- especially when we are dealing with such ^{AN INTENSELY PERSONAL} a subject as faith which is ~~intensely~~ personal. We hide from others our true feelings, ^{our anxieties, doubts and} ~~our anxieties, our doubts, our~~ disbeliefs. We are afraid of seeming to be foolish, ~~or simple or naive~~ and so we ~~beat around the bush very learnedly but very irrelevantly~~ ^{we} discuss these issues on a high-theoretical plane, or historically or philosophically but we will very rarely reveal ourselves in the conversation. Not so the children. They lack our pretense. Their egos are not so ~~intimately~~ involved in their ~~search for learning~~, so often ^{that} the children will give us a much clearer perspective on life we would otherwise have, and it is out of their honesty that we

recognize the needs of religious training and religious teaching and religious preaching today. For a child in class is honest above all else.

I prize the little prayer that was handed in last fall by an eight-year-old. He wrote: "Dear God, thank you for all that you have done. Please make my parents better people. They simply do not agree with me. I want them to agree with me. Please God, don't forget". Now we would voice our prayers with ⁱⁿ a more poetic language. We would see to it that the philosophic niceties of prayer were observed, that our requests were not so boldly and baldly made but I wonder if we would have an equal amount of integrity and candor () in our prayer, as did this young child. And out of their honesty with me -- an honesty which I prize, a relationship which I prize, came the subject that I want to discuss with you this morning.

Each year in our Confirmation Class, we spend a great deal of time discussing the essentials of faith -- God, prayer, belief. I explain as much as can be explained of the Jewish concept of God and prayer. I tell the young people how Moses was revolted by the gross sexuality and the morbidity of Egyptian paganism; how the Jewish people came to the inspired vision of the One Universal God, the God of pure spirit; how ^{The prophet} they purged ultimately from the synagogue ^{of} any anthropomorphic representation of the deity -- images, statues and the like; how ^{we provide} they came to realize that having only one God implies the brotherhood of all men, the essential identity of mankind; how they came to realize that God demands far more than ritual in worship -- cease to do evil, learn to do well. This is the heart, the core of religious commitment -- to walk humbly, love mercy, to walk with God.

I tell the young people of some of the medieval philosophizing about God and his attributes -- what we can know about God, what forever remains unknown. I also find that once I have described and defined and historically explained, much remains, for I am a Rabbi, not an historian of religion. I am not concerned so much

with what men once believed but what these children now believe. And so we spend a great deal of time in talking over their philosophies -- not as grand, not as ordered perhaps as those of Philo and Maimonides and Spinoza, but nevertheless their own. ~~And I find that this is~~ extremely important.

Young people always remind me of butterflies beginning to shake off the ^{confining} ~~restrictions~~ of the cocoon. They have brought with them about to the ^{confusion of} ~~thirteenth~~ and ~~fourteenth and fifteenth years~~ the God of the nursery -- Guardian Angel, Avenging Policeman, ^{over} ~~Doting and~~ Generous Grandpa ^{father}. This vision of God has begun to wear thin. Experience, ~~life, school~~ has taught ~~them~~ that this God simply does not conform to life and ~~to learning~~. One child was even able to tell me the exact hour and day in which he began to doubt ~~the existence of~~ God. I still remember that date -- November 12, 1957 at 7:00 P.M. It had to do with a telephone call. ~~But I am getting ahead of the story.~~

This young boy was in Junior High School. ^{after school} He had a paper route ~~after school~~. He was also the captain of an intramural basketball team. This particular late fall day, for some reason or another, ^{but} ~~the game in which he was to play~~ was re-scheduled from the ^{period} Gym hour to an after school hour. It was late in the day, the weather was bad and the young boy was unable to bribe or ~~to~~ cajole any other youngster to carry the route for him, ~~so~~ in his distress he turned to God and he prayed ~~to God~~: "Dear God, please let none of my customers complain to the Circulation Manager -- please God, I must play in this game -- please let me ^{get away with this once} ~~not do my duty~~ this once". ~~And~~ at 7:00 P.M., the telephone rang and it was the Circulation Manager; someone had complained and the child began to lose faith. He lost faith, of course, because he believed in ~~the~~ God ^{who} ~~was~~ magician, ^{a God who answers} the ~~answerer~~ of all prayers, ~~father-image projected onto a giant screen.~~ ~~And it is~~ ^{crucial} important that we teach these young people that this God of the nursery is not the God of Judaism. Our God is one who brings evil as well as good; that we must be prepared to receive of God and have him take away ~~from us~~; that we must be prepared to accept the cruelties of life and its incongruities as ^{necessary} ~~much~~ as we accept its love and ^{its} ~~the~~ sunshine of ~~happiness.~~ ^{MUST be done} ~~Job is important because it teaches to the young people a more mature~~ ^{such as men} dimension of faith and they must recognize that the Rabbi of the adult world does not

~~does not share the nursery image of God which they are themselves rejecting.~~

I asked a class of young people this year to set down for me as honestly as they could what they believed about God. I told them that I was not going to grade these papers. I asked them especially not to write down what they thought I wanted to read. I'd like to share with you three of these paragraphs:

"This grim world really scares me. Every once in a while I realize the cruelty and insensibility of it and that's when I begin to wonder. We can't just be here to disagree, fight and eventually blow ourselves to bits. There must be some purpose of reason behind us. That is when I think of God. This ideal is, in a measure, a crutch to lean on. It gives me some hope for the future. I believe I have outgrown the "old man in the sky watching over me" type of feeling though I can't really describe what has replaced it. Sometimes I can't really accept God, sacrilegious as it may seem, but I might as well be honest about it -- probably because the abstract concept ~~xxxx~~ is over my head. When I look around and see the hatred and ugliness, I don't understand how God could allow it. The closest I can come, from my experience, is conscience as that part of us which is created in God's image."

~~And~~ another: "I'm really not sure what I believe about God. I think that there must be something -- something larger, better than that. It is within each person helping to draw the line between what is right and what is wrong. I cannot admit to myself that there is a Supreme Being Whom we call God. I would like to believe this. I want to believe that when I do something wrong it is all pre-destined and that there is nothing I can do about it but I can't. However, there must be something bigger than science -- guiding light, love, fear in all things. This I do believe. I cannot simply state there lives a God because I just don't know. I don't really feel qualified to give an honest opinion.

2 And again: "I have not yet developed any definite ideas about God and I probably won't for a long time. I feel there is some reason and some kind of logic in life and why men live, but I am not saying it is God yet. To me God is a concept which is simply accepted by many -- by those who actually study it and then accept it. I feel it is accepted only after accepting certain things on faith. I am not ready to say that one divine something created the earth and controls everything in it. There is too much to make this unbelievable -- such as the fact that if God doesn't like blood-shed, why war? If God wants peace, why battle? If God wants unity among men, why segregation? I feel that man as a society is much too complex to push off on something man doesn't even comprehend. I furthermore think that with advancement will come a totally new idea as to what controls us -- and idea which will be able to be expressed in mathematical symbols. I also believe that too many people have looked for an easy out to the whole question of life and death and origin and end and have simply attached the tag of "God" to it all. Something much more complex, in my opinion, is the answer."

Now I prize these papers. I prize them because they reveal ^{an} ~~their~~ capacity for conceptual thinking and for self-analysis which is rare even in the adult. Remember these are fourteen-year-olds, not collegiates. What a tragedy that our school system feeds intellectual pabulum to minds such as these, ~~who are ready to grasp at the basic questions of life.~~ But I prize them even more because these and the papers of which they are symbols represent a questing, a puzzling-out, a grasping for, a ~~weighing of basic issues, of basic problems.~~ They are minds in search -- in search of meaning, in search of values -- and that, after all, is ^{heart of religion} ~~the religious quest.~~

I do not know how men come to God -- ^{each in his own way} ~~all~~ men come to God through individual ways -- but I do know this, that only those ^{who admit} ~~men~~ who ask and who doubt, only those men ^{who} ~~who recognize the many unexpected corners of life.~~ ^{its} difficulty, ^{its} complexity,

^{its vagary} its vagary, ~~its uncertainty~~, yet its purposefulness, the need of man to find meaning -- only such young people and such adults ~~will~~ come to faith. ~~So~~ In the last analysis -- the atheist and the theist, the disbeliever and the believer, are not ~~so far~~ ^{End is} apart. Both are minds in search. The believer knows that he has moments of disbelief; the disbeliever knows that he has moments of belief. Both ~~search for meaning and purpose~~ ^{such uncertainty} and both are at war with ~~those who are complaisant~~ ^{by - The will has many} with those who simply do not care enough to find ethical values in ~~norms~~ ^{only} -- to analyze the ~~life that they are leading~~ ^{life alone}, to be unhappy with the society in which they live, ~~who lack the willingness, the desire, the~~ impetus to rise ~~above their times~~. These young people are people in search and they are a healthy antidote for the religionist who finds himself so often today surrounded by people who have ceased searching.

Now, we Rabbis and Ministers are ~~in a very~~ ^{only could be} paradoxical position. We are surrounded by the symbols of success. This is an era of religious revival. ~~Rows~~ ^{The} of churches and synagogues are ~~swelling~~ ^{growing} at a rate faster than the population. In a rare display of unanimity ~~of opinion~~, our country ~~prides itself on having~~ brought God back into our pledge of allegiance and ~~into having~~ imprinted God ~~solidly~~ on our currency. Even in the ~~iconoclastic campus~~ ^{in the}, religious emphasis weeks are today highlights of collegiate activities, and neo-orthodox and existentialist theologians are packing them in. Not everyone understands them but everyone knows that they ought to be listened to.

Now I do not decry any of this. It is far better for people to be exposed even occasionally to religious influence than not to be exposed at all. But as I look about me ~~at those who swell our synagogues and our churches~~ ^{myself working in}, I find a rotarian spirit of sweet agreeableness pervading. There is a euphoria. Corporations are spending their stockholders' money to give us large bill-boards ~~throughout our country~~ -- full-page advertisements in our newspapers urging us to go to church, to ~~go to~~ synagogues. Everyone is agreed. God is a good thing; faith is good, it's American, it's democratic, it's loyal. And people come. But I do not sense ~~that~~ that they are searching, ~~that~~ they are joining, ^{and} They are conforming, but they are not joining and confirming.

I think it was Tennyson who said: "There is more faith in honest doubt than in half your creeds." I prize this -- the uncertainty of young people -- because this is honest doubt. This is the ^{Testing by} source of young people seeking to become adult, ~~to become mature~~. This is religious search.

A young man who is in college today came to visit the Temple several weeks ago. He spoke to me of an interest in the ministry. I asked him to read these papers. He read them with interest and then he came to me with several of the papers. He said: "How can you confirm these young people? Read this." He showed me this paper 'What is God?':

"Now we are back to the age-old question, but to me, of course, it means something different. I have been brought up on respect for Him through prayer, all the many morals and standards in a religion which greatly affect my life. I believe in living a good moral life as taught by my religion and parents, but I think that religion, not God so much, seems to affect my life at present. To me God is an abstract word to Whom we pray and about Whom I am not sure what I believe, since I haven't spent much time thinking about it up to now and I think I can wait before making any type of decision. I believe in the moral codes as wonderful ways in leading a fine life and religion is a good teacher, as God to me is something apart. I plan to wait so that I can better understand myself before reaching any conclusions about Him."

^{Enclosed}
This zealous ~~young religionist~~ wanted to know how we could confirm such a child. I asked him what he thought the essence of religious belief was ~~and of religious search~~. He said a religionist is one who believes in God. I said: "Are you always certain of your religion -- have you never had any doubts and questions?" "Certainly, but I have come to my faith". I said:

"Were you certain as an adolescent -- always certain?" "No." "Were you confirmed?" "Yes." "Is not this child aware of something which is essential in religious search? Do we have to understand ourselves and our world before we can begin to understand God?" "Yes." "Is not this then a religious paper of high order?" ~~yes.~~

We are never, in Jewish life, commanded to define God, to catechise God, but to search for God. Jewish life has always ~~had an abhorrence of~~ ^{been} ~~the world of dogma and doctrine.~~ We never ask the Confirmand to subscribe his signature to a complicated, theosophic definition of God and man. The convert ~~into our faith~~ is not asked to pledge ~~his~~ allegiance to an elaborate litany of theology. It is enough that men search. If they search they will find, and if they do not find God they will certainly find values ~~worthy of life,~~ worthy of man. ~~I pride myself on the honesty of these young people.~~ I pray ~~that all of us who are adults may be honest in our search -- our search to find meaning, purpose, God, the universe behind which God often obscures Himself, the universe which, in its beauty, its majesty He so often reveals Himself.~~ Amen.

March 27, 1961

Dear Dick:

I am enclosing a biography and a glossy photograph. Unfortunately, the rest of the set is being used at the moment. As a topic I have chosen:

"When A Rabbi Listens"

with the sub-title:

"Our Children and What They Have To Teach".

I am sorry for the inconvenience as to the photographs but I am sure that you can have duplicates made.

With warmest personal regards, I remain

Most cordially yours,

DANIEL JEREMY SILVER

DJS :bfm

Rabbi Richard C. Hertz
Congregation Beth El
Woodward at Gladstone
Detroit 2, Michigan

Enclosures (2)

Congregation Beth El
Woodward at Gladstone
Detroit 2, Michigan

Founded 1850

DR. RICHARD C. HERTZ
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TRinity 5-8530

March 23, 1961

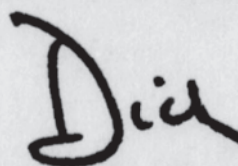
Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
East 105th Street & Silver Park
Cleveland 6, Ohio

Dear Dan:

We are anxious to begin publicizing your forthcoming address to our Sisterhood on Monday, May 8th. Would you kindly send me, by return mail, your topic, biographical data and four glossy photographs. This publicity is for our metropolitan papers as well as our Temple Bulletin, etc.

I look forward to hearing from you. Meanwhile, my warmest greetings and best regards.

Most cordially,



Richard C. Hertz
Rabbi

May 10, 1961

Mrs. Arthur R. Bloom
President, Temple Beth El Sisterhood
Woodward at Gladstone
Detroit 2, Michigan

Dear Mrs. Bloom:

It was a pleasure to be with your ladies Monday last and to hear such fine words of tribute paid to you for your leadership and example. I enjoyed my stay. The Beth El Sisterhood was most gracious.

My expenses for the trip approximated \$65.00.

Most cordially yours,

DANIEL JEREMY SILVER

DJS:lg

RABBI RICHARD C. HERTZ, PH. D.
TEMPLE BETH EL
8801 WOODWARD AVENUE
DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48202

September 14, 1965

Dear Dan:

Our thoughts of each other must have crossed. I was going to write to you the other day to invite you to speak here when your letter came about an article for the Journal. Let me think about this for a little time. I am trying to finish up a book on which I have spent the summer, and I still have a great deal of work on it. The article you envisage ought to be written. I am not sure I am the one to do it, but I certainly will give it a lot of thought.

What I want to invite you for is to occupy the pulpit on Friday, January 14, at the Sisterhood Sabbath Service. I hope you will find this date clear on your calendar, as I am most anxious to have you. Please let me know if you can accept, and in due time send me your topic and biographical material. There will be an honorarium of \$200.00 for you.

Mary Louise joins me in sending you and Adele our warmest greetings and best regards.

Most cordially,

D. H.

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

RABBI RICHARD C. HERTZ, PH. D.
TEMPLE BETH EL
8801 WOODWARD AVENUE
DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48202

December 29, 1965

Dear Dan:

What are your plans for coming to Detroit for January 14? I hope Adele is coming with you. Mary Louise and I want you for dinner that evening at our home.

We have made reservations for a double room at the Park Shelton Hotel, which is near the Temple and across from the Institute of Arts, for Thursday and Friday, January 13 and 14. The hotel will confirm the reservations direct to you. Please let me know when you are planning to come.

Please bring your robe for the pulpit.

With warmest and fondest regards, and all good wishes for the New Year, I remain,

Most cordially,

Dick

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

December 30, 1965

Rabbi Richard C. Hertz
Temple Beth El
8801 Woodward Avenue
Detroit, Michigan 48202

Dear Dick:

I will be coming in to Detroit from Dallas, of all places, and am due to arrive at 1:18 pm on Friday. Because this is a wide-swinging trip Adele, will unfortunately, not be with me. I will hie myself to the Park Shelton Hotel and will be delighted to have dinner with you.

I am still huckstering my book on Maimonides. Do you think there would be any reason why I could not send some books up for your sisterhood book shop ?

With all good wishes,

DANIEL JEREMY SILVER
DJS:mgn

CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a fast message unless its deferred character is indicated by the proper symbol.

WESTERN UNION

TELEGRAM

W. P. MARSHALL
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

R. W. MCFALL
PRESIDENT

SYMBOLS

DL = Day Letter

NL = Night Letter

LT = International
Letter Telegram

The filing time shown in the date line on domestic telegrams is LOCAL TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is LOCAL TIME at point of destination

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RABBI DANIEL JEREMY SILVER, CARE THE TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

RIRCLE AT SILVER PARK CLEVE

PLEASE RUSH FOUR GLOSSIES BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH AND SUBJECT FOR

JANUARY 14 SISTERHOOD SABBATH SERMON BULLETIN GOING TO PRESS

TOMORROW BEST REGARDS

RICHARD G HERTZ

(33).

1965 DEC 23 AM 10 49

January 18, 1966

Rabbi Richard C. Hertz
Temple Beth El
8801 Woodward Avenue
Detroit, Michigan 48202

Dear Dick:

It was a pleasure for me to be at Beth El to speak and most especially to have a few hours with you and Mary Louise. I shall long remember the pleasant Sabbath dinner and the good company.

My expenses amounted to \$65. I know we will see each other soon. With all good wishes,

DANIEL JEREMY SILVER
DJS:mgm

RABBI RICHARD C. HERTZ, PH. D.
TEMPLE BETH EL
8801 WOODWARD AVENUE
DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48202

January 28, 1966

Dear Dan:

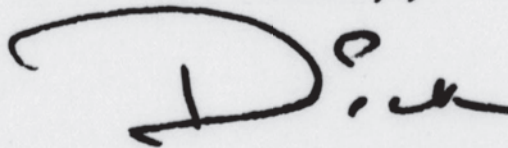
I am pleased to enclose a check for \$265.00, which covers your honorarium and expenses in connection with your recent visit to Detroit.

People are still talking about your wonderful sermon, and how much your being here helped to make our Sisterhood Sabbath an auspicious occasion.

Personally, Mary Louise and I were delighted to have you in our home for dinner, and to have such a nice visit with you.

Again, my deepest appreciation for coming to Detroit, and with warmest and fondest regards, I remain,

Most cordially,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "D. Silver", with a large, stylized initial "D" and a flourish at the end.

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