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Could Lincoln Be Elected Today?, 1959.



# COULD LINCOLN BE ELECTED PRESIDENT TODAY?

## THE TEMPLE

February 8, 1959

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver

Thursday of this week America will commemorate the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the birth of its sixteenth president. Well over a thousand eucmiums will be spoken at Lincoln Day luncheons and dinners in honor of a man who has been called the Patron Saint of American Democracy. Were Lincoln to hear himself described as a saint I am sure a wry smile would come to his face, for how often in the heat of political campaigning he was damned for his unwillingness to join any individual church, and branded a heretic and an atheist. And yet Mr. Lincoln was a deeply religious man, and historically I think it is not at all inapt to consider Lincoln as the Patron Saint of our democracy.

We have been blessed in American political life with many great Presidents, men whom we applaud and whom we respect. We respect Washington, who brought to the Revolution the courtly manners and the conservative spirit of a true aristocrat. We bless and we respect a Jefferson, who though brought up in the genteel tradition of another age, developed the philosophy of a democratic way of life, a philosophy which we still find enlightening and ennobling today. We respect and we applaud a Wilson, who left the academic world to give to the larger world a vision of nations united in one world organisation, and willing through that organisation to settle their differences around a table rather than in a battlefield. We bless and respect a Roosevelt, who overcame physical debility and found an immense reservoir of spiritual strength which enabled him to cure our nation's economic ills and to limit the spread of the cancer of tyranny which was threatening to engulf the world.



We respect, these men, and we respect Mr. Lincoln. We respect him for having prosecuted successfully a terribly miserable civil war and for having been able to bind our nation back together as one whole. We respect him for having uprooted the weed of slavery, that pernicious weed, for having destroyed human bondage once and for all in this continent. There is respect in our minds for Mr. Lincoln, but there is also love in our hearts, and it is that love which distinguishes, I think, our relationship to Lincoln from <sup>our relationship to that</sup> ~~that~~ of any other of our Presidents. For it is not only what Lincoln achieved, but the man that he was which endears him to us. He was a man of rare qualities of spirit, a man of definite moral purpose in life, because moral purpose was wedded to an infinitely deep reservoir of human sympathy. He spoke with the tongue of a prophet. He wrote with the pen of a philosopher and a statesman. He lived by the highest of the codes of self-restraint and of human conduct. Truly this man we love and revere as well as respect and venerate. So much so that over twenty thousand volumes of biography and of research study have been written on the life of Mr. Lincoln. So much so that one of our ablest of modern poets, Mr. Carl Sandberg, has spent over three decades of his life preparing a monumental biography of Lincoln's life and his person and his philosophy and his purpose. And sometimes our veneration of Mr. Lincoln has led us into excess, for surely there are today two Lincolns -- a Lincoln of history and a Lincoln of legend. The Lincoln of legend sees greatness already in the tattered urchin playing in the sandy bottom of Knob Creek in Kentucky. The Lincoln of history sees a politician become statesman, and finds greatness in the man who could preach mercy in an age of anger, self-control in an age of high passion. I prefer, and I think you do, the Lincoln of history. For man is after all a frail and fallible being. Perfection, if there is such in this world, belongs to some higher order of species, not to us. It is not so much that men make mistakes that fault them in our eyes, but we judge a man harshly only if he fails to pay attention to correcting and rectifying these mistakes and improving on his character. And surely there is hardly any connection between the Lincoln who had to win the



acclaim of his townsmen in New Salem by out-wrestling the biggest bully of the community to the Lincoln who won the acclaim of his fellow-countrymen throughout this nation by preaching a doctrine of charity to all and anger towards none. This is the Lincoln whom we revere, the Lincoln whom we respect, the Lincoln whom we love.

Lincoln was six foot, four inches in height, his biographers tell us, yet we measure the height of his character by quite another standard -- the distance between the door of the cabin in which he was raised as a stepchild, the distance which brought him to the door of the White House, where he raised the American flag in pride and with honor. I am proud of this Lincoln of history, and I find that knowing that in his early life he pamphleteered with more ~~than~~ concern to defame the personality of his opponent than to prosecute the ideals of his platform, or that in his early business activities he prosecuted these business ventures with more slipshodness and a bit more haphazard than we might expect, or that in his early political life he was more concerned with winning for his constituents some pork-barrel type of legislative privilege than he was with achieving for his whole state, for the whole community programs necessary to them -- I find that knowing these facts not to one whit lowers in my mind the estimation of Mr. Lincoln. It only raises in my heart an amazing awareness of the distance which Lincoln managed to cover, the distance which brought a boy raised in a home quite ordinary and quite common, to a pitch of extraordinary nobility and to a standard of life and of conduct of extraordinary capacity.

Arthur Schlesinger, Sr., one of our better professors of American history, made some years ago what I consider to be a cryptic comment on the nature of Lincoln and of his relationships to Lincoln research. He said that he found any rehearsal of the story of Lincoln to be ennobling, but to be at the same time quite disturbing. I think I understand now something of what he meant, for Lincoln's life is disturbing. Lincoln's father was one of these vagabond, never-do-well types who could never set down roots in any community. He was never able to achieve any



measure of status in his various occupations, nor any measure of financial success at farming or any other venture. Lincoln's mother was an ordinary woman. Her past was not above reproach, and Lincoln's step-mother, who raised him throughout most of his life, was much in the same mold and pattern. If one added up all of the education achieved by the three generations of grandparents and great-grandparents of Lincoln, one would find that they could not qualify for a single high school diploma. There was little of culture and of cultivation in the Lincoln home. The children and step-children of the mother and father lived in a single room or a single lean-to. The floor was dirt-covered. There were no books. There was little of what we call gentility, little of what we call manners. Lincoln throughout the first fourteen years of his life was in school for one school semester, and after his fourteenth year he never entered a classroom again. And as one reads this record of the early Lincoln, one wonders if we had been parents in New Salem in the 1820's whether we would have encouraged our children to become friendly with the young Lincoln. After all, today we seek to win for our children the friendship of the young boys and girls from the so-called better homes. We flee the areas of a community in which the ordinary people live -- the Thomas Lincolns and their families. And yet what a rare privilege it would have been had any of our children been able to have a childhood and life-long friendship with our future greatest President.

Lincoln's biography is disturbing. In the 1830's Lincoln was a young man determined to achieve something for himself, to make something of his life. He was busy at night studying law, reading after fourteen hours of odd jobs, for the Lincoln in his middle twenties was not able to hold down any single financially secure vocation. He was a boatsman, a woodsman. He chopped rails for the local farmers. He bundled bales in a local store. He had made the friendship of the village lawyer and of the village school teacher, he had joined the New Salem Debating Society. But his prospects were not bright, and one cannot help but wonder, if we lived in Springfield or in New Salem in the 1830's whether if our



daughter had brought to our door as a suitor the young Lincoln, we might not have suggested to her that she look for a more suitable match, for surely his prospects were not that bright, and surely there must be other, more financially established young men in the community who could provide for her a better home and a more glorious future.

Lincoln's life is disturbing. As Lincoln grew he became a pretty fair country lawyer. His practice gave him a measure of financial success. But Lincoln was never an outgoing, free and easy personality. We have heard much of his ability to tell a tale, but we forget that he was introspective, he was given to moodiness. His manners were not what they should have been, he was not courtly or genteel in any way. A biographer of Mr. Lincoln quotes a contemporary account, a description of this man which I should like to read to you:

To say that he is ugly is nothing. To add that his figure is grotesque is to convey no adequate impression. Fancy a man six foot high, and then out of proportion, with long, bony arms and legs which somehow seem to be always in the way, with large, rugged hands which grasp you like a vise when shaking yours, with a long, scraggly neck and a chest too narrow for the great arms by its side. Add to this figure a head cocoanut-shaped and somewhat too small for such a stature. Cover it with rough, un-combed and uncombable, lank, dark hair, hair that stands out in every direction at once, a face furrowed, wrinkled and indented as though it had been scarred by vitriol, a high, narrow forehead, and sunk deep beneath bush eyebrows two bright, somewhat dreamy eyes that seem to gaze through you without looking at you, a few irregular blotches of black, bristly hair in the place where beard and whiskers ought to grow, a close-set, thin-lipped, stern mouth with two rows of large, white teeth, and a nose and ears which have been taken by mistake from a head of twice the size. Clothe this figure then in a long, tight, badly fitting suit of black, creased, soiled, and puckered up at every salient point of the figure - and every point of this figure is salient - put on large, ill-fitting boots, gloves too long for the long, bony fingers, and a fluffy hat, covered to the top with dusty, puffy crepe, and then add to all this an air of strength physical as well as moral and a strange look of dignity coupled with all this grotesqueness, and you will have the impression left upon me by Abraham Lincoln.

One wonders, if we had been members of Washington or Springfield society in the 1840's, whether we would have gone out of our way to make friends with the representative to the Thirtieth Congress from Springfield, Illinois or with the circuit lawyer who followed the circuit seeking his clients. Lincoln was moody,



he was hard to draw out, and somehow most of us make free and easy friendships. We accept a somewhat superficial standard of companionability. And when someone does not seem to go easily into our crowd -- to be a good mixer, we call it -- we push them aside. We forget them, forgetting that the battered cover of a book does not in one whit mean that the text may not be brilliant and glorious.

There are reasons then to wonder and to be disturbed as we rehearse the biography of Mr. Lincoln, for perhaps the question which disturbs us the most is whether we today would elect Lincoln as our President. If Lincoln had been in Washington during the past ten years it is doubtful that he would still command a large measure of popularity. Lincoln did not believe in diplomacy by sword-rattling. After all, it was a young Lincoln who in the years of 1847 and 48 had won a tour of duty as a member of the House of Representatives. It was this young Whig, Abraham Lincoln, who stood up in the House and who voiced his feelings that the American invasion of Mexico, the so-called Mexican War, was unjust and immoral, and where others were making the American eagle scream loudly Lincoln was concerned whether or not America had not violated the basic principles of international relationships, and whether we had not sought out and found a pretext to gobble up and grab some territory which our nationalists, the preachers who manifest destiny were eager to add to the American nation. Lincoln lost his seat on the basis of that speech and these actions. But the young Lincoln was not one who felt that when morality was at stake it was the duty of a politician to set possibility of re-election above the necessity of speaking his piece.

Lincoln did not enjoy the fact that increasingly, even in his day, there was an attempt to raise the so-called difficult issues of political life out of the arena of politics. Today we call it bi-partisanship, which is an assumption that there are certain areas of political life which are better settled in committee than on the public forum and in public debate. Lincoln did not believe in this. Lincoln claimed that there ought to be free discussion of all areas of our national interests, and what Americans had to fear was not so much the inability



of the electorate to make up its mind intelligently, but the unwillingness of those in power to give to the electorate the facts which would permit them to make up their minds intelligently. Lincoln I don't think would have enjoyed and would have spoken out against the vitriol and the vituperation which has featured so much of American policy. He was fond of telling a story of a traveler who was on a long journey, and during this journey he was surrounded by an intense, black storm. It thundered, and there was lightning. He lost his way. Occasionally, when the lightning would break through, he would get an instantaneous vision of the surrounding countryside and would be able to see ten or twenty feet ahead and go a little bit further. But the thunder itself shattered his very soul, drove him to his knees and, according to Mr. Lincoln, when he was on his knees he uttered this prayer to God: "O Lord, if it's all right with You, let's have more light and less noise." Lincoln was always for "more light and less noise", more public discussion and less public vituperation, more debate and less diatribe.

Mr. Max Lerner has completed a monumental study of our American civilization. In this study he made certain observations on our current practice of election. He said in part:

Elections have tended to become more and more like a business sales campaign, with the voter playing the role of a potential buyer to whom a commodity must be "sold". At this point, politics merges with the larger arts of salesmanship, packaging, and publicity. The history of American presidential elections can be partly written as the history of slogans which expressed the felt needs of the time and jibed exactly with the mood of a particular moment. It is not that the slogans themselves, in their repetition, won or lost the elections, but that they were symbols for the interests and emotions which did. The campaign planners chart out their strategy much as they might chart a national sales campaign for their commodity. In both cases they call in the aid of the crack advertising agencies and the public-relations firms. And as they test the effects of each tactic on the fever chart of the poll samplings, they shift emphasis and slogan, thus fingering new wrappers in which to package the commodity they are seeking to sell to the voter.

What is most dangerous about this mechanization of politics is that it threatens to dehumanize the political process itself, which is at heart a human process. When the American corporation sells its product to a mass audience, using radio and television to capture their attention, its great fear is that the program may



alienate potential buyers in certain ethnic, religious, or sectional groups. Something of that sort happens in a political campaign. A smart candidate will evade any issue which might bring him into head-on conflict with a sizable organized group of voters. Since there are few issues that are "safe" in this sense, the trend is for the campaigner to speak in blurred generalities, except when he is appealing to a specific voting bloc or interest group and bidding for their support against his rival. The mechanization of the voter ends up in the dehydration of the candidate and of the issues.

Perhaps Mr. Lerner has overstated the mechanization of our electoral process. But certainly Mr. Lincoln would <sup>today</sup> not be ~~today~~ a safe candidate. - a man given to speaking in generalizations about the crucial issues of the time. One of our issues today is the issue of anti-Semitism, of anti-Negro feelings, of bombings, the riots, and so on. One of the issues in Mr. Lincoln's time was the growth of the "Know-Nothing" party, a party of native racists and chauvinists who became very strong in America in the 1840's and 1850's seeking the policy which the America First groups spoke before the Second World War. Their target was not the Jew or the Negro in those days but the Catholic, who for the first time was coming in in large immigrant groups. It might have been politic not to alienate these people, for many of the Know-Nothings were members technically of the Democrat or the Republican party. But Lincoln spoke out in terms which we can still admire and with a courage which we certainly still admire:

I am not a Know-Nothing. That is certain. How could I be? How can any one who abhors the oppression of negroes, be in favor of degrading classes of white people? Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation, we began by declaring that (quote) "all men are created equal". We now practically read it "all men are created equal, except negroes". If the Know-Nothings get control, it will read "all men are created equal, except negroes and foreigners and Catholics." When it comes to this, I should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty -- to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of such hypocrisy.

Lincoln would not have been a candidate given to speaking in generalized terms. He would not have been a candidate who would not meet head-on the crucial issues of political life in his day. We do not know what stand he would take on our problems, but his problems were the problems of the Union, the problems of slavery, the problems of the extension of slavery to the so-called free territories. And Lincoln



met these problems with a clarity of logic and a sincerity of thought which we can only admire.

The doctrine of self-government is right, (he said) absolutely and eternally right -- but it has no just application, as here attempted (in the extension of slavery into Kansas and Nebraska). Or perhaps I should rather say that whether it has such just application depends upon whether a negro is not or is a man. If he is not a man, why in that case he who is a man may, as a matter of self-government, do just as he pleases with him. But if the negro is a man, is it not to that extent, a total destruction of self-government, to say that he too shall not govern himself. When the white man governs himself, that is self-government; but when he governs himself, and also governs another man, that is more than self-government -- that is despotism. If the negro is a man, why then my ancient faith teaches me that 'all men are created equal', and that there can be no moral right in connection with one man's making another his slave.

Lincoln came from the near South. The southern influence was dominant in that part of the State of Illinois which was his home. Lincoln's family had their roots in Kentucky. But Lincoln certainly would not have taken the way of equivocation which has been the way of many of the Senators and leaders of gentleman of Congress from the border States and tried to ride both sides of a moral issue. He would have spoken clearly and dramatically on the issue of the rights of education and of election and of voting equality to all men. The candidate who is safe speaks in generalized terms. The candidate who is a safe candidate makes a country feel that they are on the way to an ever grander and more glorious future. Lincoln was prepared to remind America that the future may not be as glorious as others had painted it to be, that a grand, glorious American democratic future demanded certain commitments as to ideals and as to principles, and that unless these commitments were made, the American dream might turn into the American nightmare.

Listen to this man:

You have succeeded in dehumanizing the Negro; when you have put him down and made it impossible for him to be but as the beasts of the field; when you have extinguished his soul in this world and placed him where the ray of hope is blown out as in the darkness of the damned, are you quite sure that the demon you have roused will not turn and rend you? What constitutes the bulwark of our own liberty and independence? It is not our frowning battlements, our bristling sea coasts, our Army and Navy. These are not our reliance against tyranny. All of these may be turned against us without making us weaker for the struggle. Our



reliance is in the love of liberty which God has planted in us. Our defence is in the spirit which prized liberty as the heritage of all men, in all lands everywhere. Destroy this spirit and you have planted the seeds of despotism at your own doors. Familiarize yourselves with the chains of bondage and you prepare your own limbs to wear them. Accustomed to trample on the rights of others, you have lost the genius of your own independence and become the fit subject of the first cunning tyrant who rises among you.

Not only the slave, but the enslaver is damned by a policy of tyranny.

Would Mr. Lincoln be elected a President today? We can only conjecture. Would we as a people rally again to a man who is willing to take the dangerous path to election -- the path of commitment, the path of principle, the path ~~with~~ which will permit him to speak not the gobbledygook of politics but the language of moral principle. I think we can, and I think when such men rise again amongst us, Americans will, as they did in the age of Lincoln, elect them to the office that they deserve.

But certainly a period of commemoration such as this, the annual birth date of Mr. Lincoln, is a healthy period of self-judgment for our American people. For Lincoln stands as a symbol of the American dream. He is proof of the validity of the American principle that out of the commonest earth can grow the most extraordinary man. It is not only the dream that from poverty man can achieve success, but it is the principle that out of ordinary character a man can mold, through self-discipline and self-mask, the most extraordinary character and self-controlled personality. Lincoln stands as a symbol of the potential of achievement in American life, and he verbalized for the American people the outline of the dream which the fathers had created in the Constitution and in the Bill of Rights. He brought freedom to the slave. He brought union to a disunited nation. He verbalized in his speeches the dreams and the aspirations of a people truly in their hearts dedicated to the principles of liberty and equality. His birthday calls each of us to re-examine our personal lives and our political lives in the light of these, the basic cardinal dogmas of faith of Mr. Lincoln and of his people.

Amen.

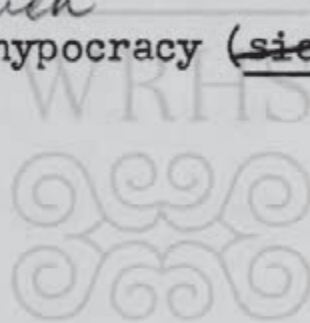


You have succeeded in dehumanizing the Negro; when you have put him down and made it impossible for him to be but as the beasts of the field; when you have extinguished his soul in this world and placed him where the ray of hope is blown out as in the darkness of the damned, are you quite sure that the demon you have roused will not turn and rend you? What constitutes the bulwark of our own liberty and independence? It is not our frowning battlements, our bristling sea coasts, our Army and Navy. These are not our reliance against tyranny. All of these may be turned against us without making us weaker for the struggle. Our reliance is in the love of liberty which God has planted in us. Our defence is in the spirit which prized liberty as the heritage of all men, in all lands everywhere. Destroy this spirit and you have planted the seeds of despotism at your own doors. Familiarize yourselves with the chains of bondage and you prepare your own limbs to wear them. Accustomed to trample on the rights of others, you have lost the genius of your own independence and become the fit subject of the first cunning tyrant who rises among you.



*Br*

I think I am a whig, but others say there are no whigs, and that I am an abolitionist. When I was at Washington I voted for the Wilmot Proviso as good as forty times and I never heard of any one attempting to unwhig me for that. I now do no more than oppose the extension of slavery. [I am not a Know-nothing. That is certain. How could I be? How can any one who abhors the oppression of negroes, be in favor of degrading classes of white people? Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation, we began by declaring that "all men are created equal". We now practically read it "all men are created equal, except negroes". <sup>54</sup> When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read "all men are created equal, except negroes, and foreigners and Catholics." When it comes to this I should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty -- to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of <sup>such</sup> hypocrisy (sic).





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The doctrine of self government is right, Lincoln agreed, absolutely and eternally right -- but it has no just application, as here attempted. Or perhaps I should rather say that whether it has such just application depends upon whether a negro is not or is a man. If he is not a man, why in that case he who is a man may, as a matter of self-government, do just as he pleases with him. But if the negro is a man, is it not to that extent, a total destruction of self-government, to say that he too shall not govern himself? When the white man governs himself, that is self-government; but when he governs himself, and also governs another man, that is more than self-government -- that is despotism. If the negro is a man, why then my ancient faith teaches me that 'all men are created equal', and that there can be no moral right in connection with one man's making ~~a slave of another.~~  
*another his slave.*





Thursday next America will celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of our 6<sup>th</sup> President. A thousand comments could be written of Abraham Lincoln by historians & writers about that man who had few peers in the management of the office of president and who has no peer in the <sup>heart</sup> ~~management~~ of his countrymen.

Lincoln was once called the Father of American Democracy. To be justified and established as a saint would have brought every saint to the grave to see man who dared to stand in God's light who could never bring himself to join any political church and who had therefore been himself crucified as heretic and atheist during many a political campaign. Yet Lincoln's theological misgivings notwithstanding he called "Father of American Democracy" his most precious legacy.

America respects and admires many of the men who have worn the Presidential mantle. We admire the clarity and insight for person and people which Washington brought to the role of revolutionary. We admire the clarity of Lincoln's thought which <sup>with</sup> ~~brings~~ <sup>differs</sup> from a general intuition of our destiny and mankind to our national destiny. We respect the intellectual precision which Andrew Wilson formulated his vision of a world of our own of titles as the sole solution to the recurring problems of men. We respect the moral vision of Roosevelt which enabled him to conquer the physical will of the men who had the economic will of the body politic and plague of tyranny which in his day and ours threatened to destroy the world.

Lincoln earned our respect and admiration for representing the <sup>American</sup> ~~the~~ need of slavery from an ideal and for recognizing our land as a land of freedom with murderers and men. There is <sup>business</sup> ~~nothing~~ <sup>nothing</sup> more than <sup>1</sup> ~~nothing~~ in our admiration of Lincoln, the common sense and the noble heart - our respect and our love. In Lincoln we see first not our greatness - but goodness and gentleness - dedication of purpose wedded to true sympathy and compassion. We love him as not only for what he did but for what he was - as man



himself built, and ordinary to all who understood as he left extraordinary  
understand and an inner nobility

Turning down, at intervals of days, have been written of them men  
One of our first silent leaving past Carl Lindberg has devoted 30  
years of his life to describing <sup>for us</sup> incidents, places and his  
achievements.

Sometimes our long and our observations have led us to exchange, There  
are by now two Lividors - a kind of history and a kind of  
legend. The Lividors of legend is perfect in all his past while still  
a talented, beautiful and the player in the way of William Knab Creek -  
the ~~names~~ <sup>names</sup> ~~names~~ <sup>names</sup> matches. The names of the guides and  
suggestions and puts are always found. The Lividors of history find  
guides as the Lividors who guided in nature through the Lividors  
of a Creek - a man at the heart of nature, speaks neither  
necessarily nor necessarily but "will make sense none of  
will be found all".

It is the Lividors of history - will all his imperfections, this guide

man is full of pride. Perfection belongs to God - not to me - not  
even to the most easily of me. Man can not be perfect for his  
mistake and for indifference to the correction. Let us be one  
no less our national has become his very business deal,  
more somewhat shaped and a bit his play; or because  
his his early published adventures he entered a narrow  
particulars and a self serving <sup>pre-occupation</sup> ~~pre-occupation~~ <sup>which set the meeting</sup> ~~meeting~~ <sup>meeting</sup>  
~~and~~ <sup>concerned they</sup> his considered <sup>concerned they</sup> ~~concerned they~~  
as because his earliest published <sup>concerned they</sup> ~~concerned they~~  
more subtle, unhidden great splendours uttered in his  
opponents then will be principles and errors of state in the  
campaign; or even because the even now himself than  
deeming, ended in his own own pride.



Had been never progressed beyond the jeune homme and the  
understand of the self interest of his only children as judged  
might indeed be much. What matters it that Lincoln at 50 had  
mastered the mechanism of law and power of truth over 30 and  
had become an all rounder in all quite another man. Indeed,  
one can hardly imagine how Lincoln would preached a gospel of  
principles as an act of compromise and a gospel of compromise as  
an act of principle. In the Lincoln who had no other way to see the  
respect of the <sup>values</sup> ~~principles~~ of New Salem than to outgrow them  
as the of the revolution or in the Lincoln who was an idealist  
to move the <sup>he wanted to</sup> Capital to Springfield and he <sup>compromised or melted the</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~improvement~~  
legislation which he knew could only bring his state to the verge  
of bankruptcy.

Lincoln grows to be a big man - ("4" the proportion of the man his  
~~height~~ <sup>height</sup> - Lincoln never stopped growing as a man - there is at once the  
first turbulence in spirit to his greatness and the key to the even  
first aspect of his life - for he lives with us as a symbol of the  
<sup>for freedom</sup> ~~potential~~ but is an end of us

Professor Arthur Schlesinger Jr. once observed aptly "Despite his  
greatness Lincoln is a disturbing figure." One I was much puzzled by  
the remark. I think a new understanding of what that capsule  
betokens meant. To succeed, Lincoln's biography is to serve as  
a way of dealing with personal dissatisfaction. To read Lincoln's biography  
is to find that he was not as noble as we need. He was not  
engaged in war, his opportunities more limited than most. He  
built more humble than most. You can not help but see yourself as  
you read of Lincoln's work and what have I done with the blessing  
of mind and power and help - all built out of modest means and  
have been blessed. He went so far - could not I have <sup>more</sup> ~~just~~  
~~more~~ of myself.

Lincoln is a disturbing figure in many ways. He came from  
humble birth. His father was a somewhat vulgar type of person  
who could never hold down a job for any length of time and could never



set down with it at any one place. Lincolns' notes were an order of  
sort of mosaic - one million parts were fitting and almost question-  
upset. There were bits of culture or cultivation - or even of <sup>some</sup> purity  
in Lincoln's work. If one were to run to - dwelling on the of his work  
for this purpose ~~it~~ would not equal one half of David Chaplins  
Lincoln's home was either a crude color or simple events - a night  
room which he - he himself his full and also notes and his  
his step brother and sister. By 14 Lincoln had succeeded in  
acquiring one form of general education and he never  
reluctantly put forth in 1850.

For volume this and beginning - year - which for the himself later  
as, under - "the - last and most annual of the paper" long into  
question and may disturb your view.

Had we been given a new ruler - as Aug 1928 - would we  
have allowed our child to be freely and so very early made to  
become a mere grunted word? To-day we more women and  
want to sell it as a "good community" <sup>as for any or possible</sup> away from such families  
a lot of Thomas' Lincolns. We encourage our children to play with  
the song & laughter of ~~words~~ which we deliberately call bella now.  
Concerning the child of that home our "bella" child <sup>Yes</sup> ~~is~~  
~~that child and child~~ which bella played and singing  
find for our child then the service would we ever find?

Lincoln in his early 20's began the hard work of self improvement. He began to read late at night after Capt. 14 hours of work in the morning on military duties or reading books for the general public. He joined the new Salem Debating Society. He began to attack himself on local politics. He sought out the company of the religious leaders and the middle class. Despite his common upbringing, he seemed a determined and well intentioned young man.

Had me been depressed & angry & sprayed in the middle 1936's  
which would not have said to our daughter if she had been then that



to young Lin who? Would keep home but her grandfather's visit  
of purpose? Would she have attended his ambitions and advised  
her to send a more suitable note? How many of us to-day judge  
an children's suitors by what their parents see, by the advantages they  
have enjoyed in life and not by what ability and strength of mind  
they already make them be. These of course are the great steps and  
chief as form of security and power - yet what better than but could  
any daughter find one to whom she was one day to lead her mother  
through even greater ones.

Lin who is in his 30's was an ambitious, energetic man. His special  
nature pleased me during the first a certain ability and taste of  
life. His dress was excellent. His manner hardly did him  
credit. In company he was often silent - somewhat morose. In  
private he was given to long periods of melancholy and self  
reproach. A contemporary has given the picture.

Fang is a man six feet high, as thin and of proportion, with  
long legs and small body, intelligent, somewhat, seems to  
be in the way, well dressed. Myself here, and  
group you like to see under the sky,...



[illegible]

And we have had in most districts when much business has been done we should be able to do.

It all seems to be in Wandering Year past decade, he seemed not have  
 those terrible periods. He believed in the surgery place and in  
 the necessity of the sword. We understand that he purchased the sword  
 when, his father he ~~supposed~~ <sup>hoped</sup> after he would be a better man. It  
 is in the form of a sword and the sword of the sword and the sword  
 of the sword.

that I have been - wondering to find out, I would not have  
been little wonder. The English had been very no government  
decision no no wonder that it did not stand open discussion. The  
would have spoken out against that of <sup>policy of</sup> <sup>plutocracy</sup> by which  
the two major parties have increased at double material and  
on many words of personal interest. I am not for men. I will  
prepare to go for us to social committee.

[illegible]

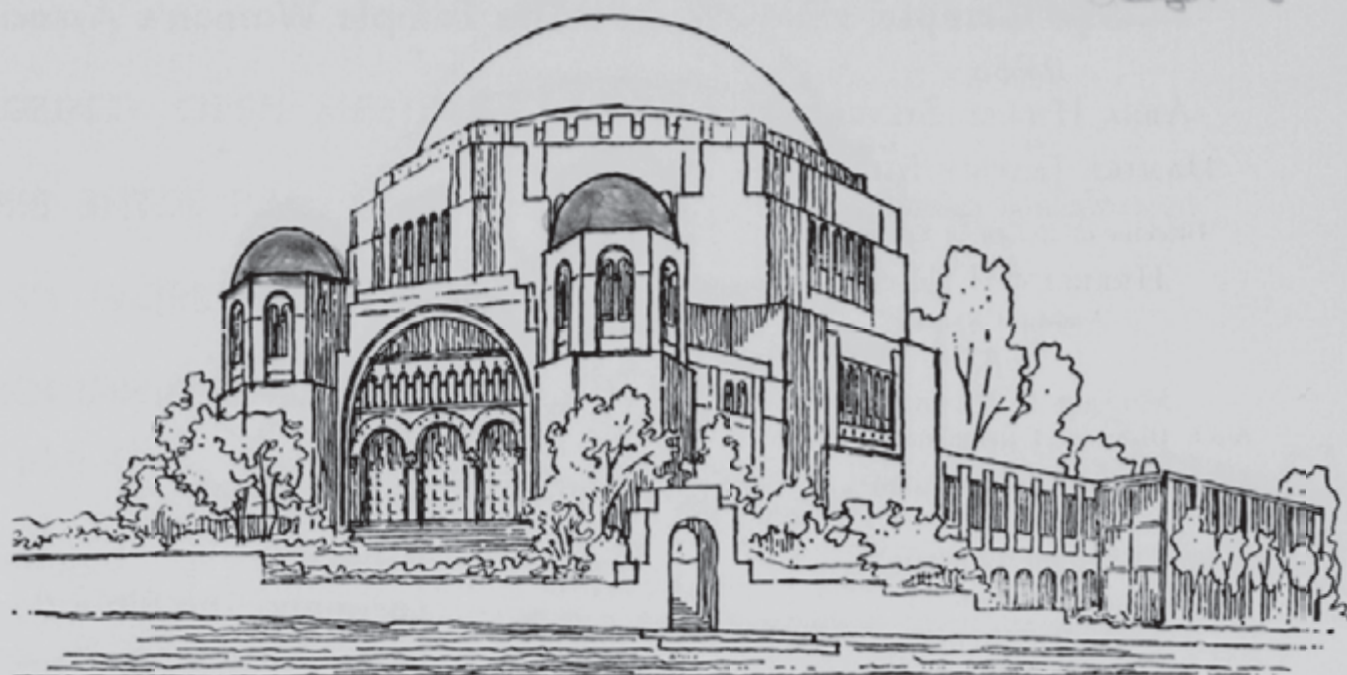


## THE TEMPLE

CLEVELAND, OHIO

February 8, 1959

Vol. XLV No. 17



### SOME THOUGHTS ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT—FROM THE RABBIS' DESK

One of our newspapers is surveying the views of many Clevelanders on the subject of capital punishment. The Governor has come out in opposition to any continuation of the death penalty. A bill to that effect has been entered before the State legislature. I have been asked concerning Judaism's and my own views on this subject.

The Bible prescribes capital punishment for certain types of social crimes. As a matter of fact four different methods of death are detailed. Murder, adultery, and the encouragement of mass apostasy were punishable by death.

The Bible is not, however, satisfied that capital punishment was either a deterrent to crime or a satisfactory punishment for evil doing. The death penalty was prescribed but trial regulations were so tightly written that the capital sentence could but rarely be pronounced. Answering a question on the advisability of continuing capital punishment, a Rabbi two thousand years ago stated that the death sentence is permitted, but that a court which sentenced one man to death every seventy years was considered to be a murderous court.

The State of Israel has no provision for capital punishment in its present penal code. Jewish thinkers have been among the leaders emphasizing penal rehabilitation as well as punishment. The experience of Western Europe during the Middle Ages, when the death penalty was exacted for seemingly minor crimes, shows that capital punishment of itself does not deter crime. The modern emphasis in penology goes beyond punishment to psychological and educational rehabilitation and moral reform. The tragedy of

our penal system is that theory and practice are widely separate. In point of fact we seldom succeed in developing actual prison programs of a constructive nature. I do not think that the State of Ohio would find any startling rise in crime were we to abolish capital punishment. Imprisonment for life is in some ways a more deterring punishment than the loss of one's life. Those who are concerned with the disconcerting rise of crime in our country and in our state ought to be concentrating their social energy on developing programs designed to destroy those social ills which breed crime. If we succeed in stabilizing our world, perhaps we will find the courage to spend the necessary funds and energy in stabilizing our own communal world. A society which even minimally condones racial tension and permits festering slum areas and fails to provide adequate recreational and leisure time guidance takes the life of

those who suffer from such debilities long before it must take a life from men who have graduated from these conditions as veteran criminals and desperate anti-social men.

*Daniel Jeremy Silver*

#### MUSIC FOR SUNDAY

Organ	
Prelude and Fugue in E minor	Bach
The Seraph's Strain	Wolstenholme
Solitude	Lemare
Opening Psalm—I Was Glad	Moses
Bor'chu (Congregational)	Sulzer
Sh'ma-Boruch (Congregational)	Traditional
Mi Chomocho (Congregational)	Sulzer
Kedusha	Federlein
Silent Devotion—May the Words	Matthews
Mrs. Strasser, Mr. Hakola	
Before the Address:	
Hear, O My People (Psalm 131)	Stevenson
Miss Wischmeyer and Choir	
Olelu-Vaanachnu	Lewandowski

#### SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE

February 8, 1959

10:30 o'clock

**RABBI DANIEL JEREMY SILVER**

will speak on

**COULD LINCOLN BE ELECTED PRESIDENT TODAY?**

FRIDAY EVENING SERVICES

5:30 to 6:10

SATURDAY MORNING SERVICES

11:00 to 12:00



## The Temple

*Rabbis:*

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

DANIEL JEREMY SILVER

Associate Rabbi  
Director of Religious Education

HERBERT H. ROSE

Assistant Rabbi

*Staff:*

MILDRED B. EISENBERG

Ass't. Director of Religious Education

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MIRIAM LEIKIND

Librarian

A. R. WILLARD

Organist and Choir Director

A. M. LUNTZ ..... *President*

LEO W. NEUMARK ..... *Vice-President*

ELI GOLDSTON ..... *Vice-President*

MAX EISNER ..... *Treasurer*

EDWARD D. FRIEDMAN ..... *Associate Treasurer*

## HIGH SCHOOL BROTHERHOOD SERVICE AND LUNCHEON

In observance of Brotherhood Week, The Temple High School Department has invited the High School of the Epworth-Methodist Church to join them on Sunday, February 15th. The Epworth Church young people will attend regular High School worship in Gries Memorial Chapel. A sermon on the theme of: "Youth Looks at Brotherhood in Modern America" will be delivered by one of the Church students.

Following the service, the group will be the guests of The Temple High School at a luncheon in the Social Hall. After lunch Rabbi Herbert H. Rose will conduct a tour of The Temple.

## ALTAR FLOWERS

The flowers which graced the altar on Sunday morning, February 1st, were contributed in memory of son, Roger Lynn Strauss, and mother, Mrs. Sarah Lynn, by Mr. and Mrs. Samuel S. Strauss.

The flowers which will grace the altar on Sunday morning, February 8th, are contributed in memory of beloved mother, Rae Synenberg Cohen, on her birthday, by Mr. J. Harmon Cohen.

## In Memoriam

The Temple notes with deep sorrow the passing of

JACK H. FREEMAN

DR. DAVID B. STEUER

and extends heartfelt sympathy to the members of their bereaved families.

## The Temple Women's Association

## The Temple Men's Club

### 1959 ADULT SEMINAR

### THE BIBLE AS HISTORY—II

Friday, February 13th

8:30 P.M.

Luntz Auditorium

### ISRAEL'S BEGINNINGS — A STUDY IN FACT AND MYTH

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver

Israel's earliest beginnings are shrouded in myth and uncertainty. The Bible document contains some valuable historical information. Its earliest chapters will be discussed as chronicles of history and as documents of religion.

Sabbath Lights will be kindled

Social Hour

Registration: \$1.00 the course.

In Honor of Brotherhood Week

## THE TEMPLE MEN'S CLUB

Proudly presents its

### FOURTEENTH ANNUAL FELLOWSHIP DINNER

Thursday Evening, February 19th 6:00 P.M.

Social Hall

Panel Discussion

"WILL THE SPACE AGE BE A BETTER AGE FOR MAN?"

Moderator:

MR. LOUIS B. SELTZER

Editor, The Cleveland Press

National Chairman, Brotherhood Week

Panel Members:

DR. ALFRED B. BONDS, JR.

President, Baldwin-Wallace College

DR. JASON J. NASSAU

Professor and Head of Department of Astronomy,  
Case Institute of Technology

MR. THOMAS F. PATTON

President, Republic Steel Corporation

Summary:

RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER

Entertainment

Cleveland Heights High School A Capella Chorus  
Under the Direction of Mr. George F. Strickling

Members are urged to bring a non-Jewish guest.

Full Course Dinner at \$3.25 per plate

Make reservations with Mr. Leo Bamberger at The Temple Office

Table for 8 or 10 available

Reservations limited to 500



THE TEMPLE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

FEBRUARY OPEN MEETING

Wednesday, February 11, 1959

1:00 P.M.

Luntz Auditorium

"WOMEN'S WORK IS NEVER DONE"

A Panel Discussion

Tea will be served in the Social Hall before the meeting

Do you feel like a bundle of repetitious words — a mother of young children; does your house rock and roll with hit tunes — a mother of adolescent children; or are you about to relax when you hear those famous words, "Mother, would you mind if —" — a mother of adult children and grandmother? If so — don't miss The Temple Women's Association panel discussion, "Women's Work is Never Done".

Four Sisterhood members will discuss the challenges facing womanhood in today's world in relation to their families, their community and themselves.

Mrs. Eli Goldston — PANEL MODERATOR

Medical social worker, member of the Shaker Heights P.T.A. Council. Mother of two children.

Mrs. Alan H. Englander — "MOTHER OF YOUNG CHILDREN"

Active in the Brandeis Women's Committee, Temple Women's Association. Mother of two young children.

Mrs. Eugene H. Goodman — "MOTHER OF ADOLESCENT CHILDREN"

Active in Welfare Federation and Temple Women's Association. Mother of three children.

Mrs. Leo W. Neumark — "MOTHER, MOTHER-IN-LAW, AND GRANDMOTHER"

Past President of The Temple Women's Association and member of the Board of Trustees of the Montefiore Home. President of Women's Auxiliary of Montefiore Home. Mother of two children, and grandmother.

Mrs. Carl Ablon and Mrs. Lawrence Rubin, assisting the Hospitality Committee, have planned the decorative centerpieces to revolve around the modern woman and her numerous activities.

Mrs. William Slavin and Mrs. Elmer Brown, Co-chairmen of the Floral Committee, have invited members who have, or who will, deliver altar flowers to serve as hostesses, along with the standing Hostess Committee.

I hope you are as thrilled as I with this month's Open Meeting and that you will join me there.  
Gift Shops will be open.

Nursery care is available if reservations are made at The Temple Office by Friday, February 6th.

*Lois U. Horvitz*

Chairman, T.W.A. Bulletin Publicity

MR. AND MRS. CLUB

ANNUAL BREAKFAST AND SERVICE

Sunday, February 22, 1959

The Temple

Breakfast — 9:00 A.M. — Social Hall

Service — 10:30 A.M. — The Temple

Reservations: Larry and Judy Litchig, EV 1-9298 before February 15  
Adults \$1.00 — Children 75¢



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THE TEMPLE  
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Cleveland, Ohio

#### **DATES TO REMEMBER**

Sunday, February 8 — Sunday Morning Services  
Monday, February 9 — Adult Hebrew Classes  
Tuesday, February 10 — Temple Women's Association Tuesday Sewing  
Wednesday, February 11 — Temple Women's Association Open Meeting  
Temple Chorus  
Friday, February 13 — Adult Institute — Second Session  
Sunday, February 15 — Sunday Morning Services

**THE TEMPLE LIBRARY** is open Tuesday through Friday 9:00 A.M. to 5:30 P.M., Saturday and Sunday 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 noon.

**THE TEMPLE MUSEUM** will be open at the close of Sunday morning services in addition to all occasions of organization meetings. Arrangements to view the Museum by special appointment may be made through The Temple Office.

**THE ISRAELI GIFT SHOP** is open during all Tuesday Sewing sessions. Selections may be made at all times from the display case in the Ansel Road Lobby.



"I like more light & less darkness" - more information - less  
generalization - Debate on principle not details & incidents  
One would have been for this guide - Words and phrases  
have more meaning of our day countrymen?

Been surprised that above by the would have nothing to do with  
Mr. L. in idea. In politics it is prudent to be silent, unless  
a point comes up which you are sure based on evidence of truth and  
tolerance Mr. L. would never move to be silent. Because  
not above being in fellow countrymen hand things about themselves  
in 1850's & more of American nationalism current the  
country - opposing the doctrine of racism and violence for it  
spoke well have more

③

He would speak not only of himself but of all men -

①

He reminded his countrymen that slavery and other things were  
done but justified to freedom

4



Could this then be related to - O, - 2 do not know - may learn  
much recently

Then when we would not have had a "safe" candidate - Perhaps  
what our nation needs is not a man for office and and  
platform.





~~As part of the same process~~, elections have tended to become more and more like a business sales campaign, with the voter playing the role of a potential buyer to whom a commodity must be "sold". At this point, politics merges with the larger arts of salesmanship, packaging, and publicity. The history of American Presidential elections can be partly written as the history of slogans which expressed the felt needs of the time and jibed exactly with the mood of a particular moment. It is not that the slogans themselves, in their repetition, won or lost the elections, but that they were symbols for the interests and emotions which did. The campaign planners chart out their strategy much as they might chart a national sales campaign for their commodity. In both cases they call in the aid of the crack advertising agencies and public-relations firms. And as they test the effects of each tactic on the fever chart of the poll samplings, they shift emphasis and slogans, thus finding new wrappers in which to package the commodity they are seeking to sell to the voter.

What is most dangerous about this mechanization of politics is that it threatens to dehumanize the political process itself, which is at heart a human process. When the American corporation sells its product to a mass audience, using radio and television to capture <sup>their</sup> attention, its great fear is that the program may alienate potential buyers in <sup>certain</sup> ~~some~~ ethnic, religious, or sectional group. Something of that sort happens in <sup>a</sup> political campaigns. A smart candidate will evade any issue which might bring him into head-on conflict with a sizable organized group of voters. Since there are few issues that are "safe" in this sense, the trend is for the campaigner to speak in blurred generalities, except when he is appealing to a specific voting bloc or interest group and bidding for their support against his rival. The mechanization of the voter ends up in the dehydration of the candidate and of the issues.