

Daniel Jeremy Silver Collection Digitization Project

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

Series III: The Temple Tifereth-Israel, 1946-1993, undated. Sub-series B: Sermons, 1950-1989, undated.

Reel	Box	Folder
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Crisis of Leadership, 1979.

Western Reserve Historical Society 10825 East Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44106 (216) 721-5722 wrhs.org American Jewish Archives 3101 Clifton Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45220 (513) 487-3000 AmericanJewishArchives.org Crisis of Leadership Daniel Jeremy Silver May 13, 1979

Some of you may remember Rally Day since we are in the mood of recollection, but Rally Day disappeared about the time we made the transition from the main building here with our school, but we do have a closing day and the Sunday closing next week will feature the Temple's own special troop of chorusters and dancers prcducing our own special version of Fiddler on the Roof. And then we hope to take this little musicale out and to present it to whatever homes or groups in town would like to have bright young people come in and sing for them. We thought today we would give you a little bit of a foreshpice.

We live in a very self-conscious town which is to say we live in a troubled town. The finances of the city are in default. The school system does not know whether to meet its weekly payroll nor does it know how to fulfill the mandates of a Federal Court desegregation decision. The community is losing plants, corporate headquarters and people. And sometimes as I drive from downtown to some meeting I almost find myself believing that those who argue that the deserted lots and deserted homes of Hough and Central could well be turned into a national park are not so wrong. And, of course, the activities of our city government have provided the grist for a great deal of black humor which has been heard throughout the country.

Now, it is not my purpose this morning to talk about any specific problems of our city. I have done that often enough this year, but what I would like to do is

to talk about the way in which we go about talking about the problems of our city. I

have had literally a hundred or more conversations and I find almost inevitably that

after the first minute or two when we try to focus in on the finance problem, on the

housing problem and the racial problem and the school problem and whatever problem

it be, the conversation almost invariably veers off to what might be called the crisis

of leadership problem. And that discussion takes one of two directions: What did we

do to deserve the leaders that we have or what happened to the leaders that we once had? And so I hear, sometimes participate, in a long chronicle of the sins of Kucinich and Weismann and Forbes and the City Council, the Growth Association and Brock Weir, Karl Rudolph and so on and so on; or I find that we are involved in a kind of historical musing which begins, usually, with the fact that we had great mayors once and somebody remembers Tom Johnson's name, and I usually, at that point, throw in the fact that Tom Johnson was mayor of Cleveland more than sixty years ago, and so we get to discussing the long, sly, downhill from the time that Cleveland was led by a reformed robber baron who knew exactly who was trying to pick whose pockets because he tried to pick those pockets in the first place. And that discussion was interesting. It tends to focus in on people of wealth who made their wealth in Cleveland and invested it elsewhere. It tends to focus in on the banks who counsel them to invest their wealth elsewhere and who were unwilling to risk their capital on bright young business people in Cleveland who did not come from the Establishment and the consequences drove many of these bright young people with their energy and their ideas out of Cleveland. It tends to focus in on a unique Cleveland phenomenon which is that we developed here to a very high degree an alternate way of achieving civic responsibility and honor without personal exposure, political exposure, and that is that charity, the Community Chest, United Torch, became a dominant element in the town and a person of wealth or of the Establishment or of power could work in one or another of these secure agen-

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cies at very little expense of time or of self and gain public honor and acclaim as a person of responsibility. We will talk about what I call the two river problem, the problem of the Cuyahoga River west of which the middle-class whites of Cleveland hid themselves against racial pluralism, and the Chagrin River east of which the wealth of Cleveland hid itself from rubbing shoulders with the rest of us, and exurbia drew inevitably suburbia with the result that four out of five Clevelanders are not within the gerrymandered city limit. Energy, ability, professional talent, all are outside of Cleveland.

When discussing Cleveland I am often reminded of the comment that our historians made about the Jewish community in Europe in the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries, that they were in Europe but not of Europe and, of course, the sense that they were not of Europe was enforced, they were ghettoized, that we are of Cleveland but not in Cleveland, and we have voluntarily ghettoized ourselves. And there are many other reasons, and these reasons have a certain cogency if we were to write a history of Cleveland, but, interestingly, I suspect that there is this very special reason that we tend to focus on the crisis of leadership and that it avoids suggesting perhaps we are part of the problem. Indeed, I have begun to hear resonances in these conversations of the kind of conversations I sometimes hear in the school halls of our school when a group of youngsters will be talking about their C's when they should have been getting A's and they will list the problems of the teacher as if that is the cause of their grade inadequacy.

In point of fact, in any analysis of the city and its problems, the truth is this. We must see the problem and it is us. Leadership is a fascinating subject, and in recent years the social scientists have begun to research this whole question of leadership. They have begun to get us beyond the simplistic romantic notion that leaders are

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born and not made. Charisma is a Greek word, it means a talent, a divine endowment, a gift of the gods. And Greek philosophy and modern romantic novels tend to assume that there is this very special grace that touches a very few individuals in any time and that once one is touched by the good witch of the north one inevitably emerges to leadership because the society recognizes this very special quality. Leadership is an endowment, charisma. Christian thought which depended so

much upon Greek philosophy and Greek psychology continued the popularity of this old word by speaking of the power which endures to a very special kind of religious leader who is divinely endowed, gifted by God with the power of healing or the gift of prophecy. And even in our sophisticated modern society our reporters and our columnists speak of a Jack Kennedy or a Martin Luther King as endowed with this charisma, this very special grace, as men who would rise to authority in any society because they are unusually endowed. And because we had great respect for these men and, to a very large degree, some of us shared their dreams, were caught up in the magic which their leadership exuded, we tend to take this idea of charisma at face value. But how many votes do you think that Martin Luther King or Jack Kennedy would receive in a Chinese commune or Indian village? And the truth is that just as beauty is in the eye of the beholder so charisma is in the eye of the beholder; or put another way, that it is the followship which makes for the leadership, that what we need, that what you need, is what you demand of your leader, it is the mark by which you will judge the person whom you will appoint as leader. The congregation gets the rabbi that it deserves. The city gets the mayor that it deserves. You deserve well. Our city deserves better.

Leadership is determined by the quality of the community. Leadership is not born. It is not some kind of very special endowment. We can see this if we look carefully at our own city, at the phenomenon of Dennis Kucinich. Those of us who are not under his magic see him as a little fellow with a very high voice who stands on

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tiptoe when he speaks, who speaks rather awkwardly, rather unsure of himself.

He reminds me most of a kind of elderly peacock hen trying to puff himself up in order

to seemilarger and grander than in facd they are. Make no mistake about it. He is a

leader because there are followers who need such a man to be a leader. And he under-

stands that. He understood early the very peculiar nature of our urban environment,

that since the 1920's politicians have been busy carving out their little sub-divisions, restricting the city limits to what they were when the horse and buggy determined the extent that a city should be; that during the last thirty or forty years almost every group of substance has opted out of the city until the city is left with the castoffs and the castaways, with people who are embittered by their lives, who blame the impersonal institutions of power for what has happened to them - the little people as he calls them, the people who are filled with gut anger - his words - anger at the concentrated corporate greed, anger at the manipulative nature of the corporate society, angered at the difference and the corporate marriage of City Hall and big business again, these are all his terms. People who are eager for a militant struggle - again, his words - a militant struggle for the basic rightsof citizens to have the government that they can call their own, not the government of the big interests. The phrases are all his. There is a followship and that followship found its leader, a man who projected their needs; a man who spoke their anger; a man who could be their David against the corporate Goliath; a man who promised them salvation, and who proved that he could deliver salvation because he could make those who are in control of the institutions of power, the banks the and the corporations and the big parties, squeal in anger.

And if you have been watching Mr. Kucinich's activities these last few months you will recognize that he has spent more time out of the city of Cleveland than in the

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City of Cleveland because, like many who are suddenly projected up as leaders, he has found it a very heady place and he has been busy finding the little people all around the country trying to project himself as their champion. What he has done in Cleveland he can do for them. Now, if you ask realistically what has he done for them the answer is precious little, but psychologically and emotionally and spiritually, he has given them a leader. He has become their cause. Their lives are not the forgotten lives of little people who will not be noticed in death as in life.

And that is the nature of leadership. It has very little to do with charisma, with natural endowment. What it has to do with is human need. The community gets the leaders it deserves. And if we ask ourselves why have there been no great leaders in Cleveland in the last years the answer is we did not want them. I have always suspected that if a Martian would have landed here ten, fifteen years ago and it said, take me to your leader, none of us would know where to take him.

Now, there are those who say, it's a shame for all the problems are a result of the fact that the first families were not leaders, but I ask you, is Detroit a healthier place to live in? A more pleasant place to live in? Financially a more sound place to live in because the Fords have lived there and invested time and energy there? I think not. But I ask you if Pittsburgh is a pleasanter place to live in or a healthier place to live in or a more financially sound place to live in than Cleveland because the Mellons have lived there? And I think the answer is no. Great families can endow symphony orchestras. Great families can elp build a Golden Triangle, but great families cannot themselves regenerate the industrial base of an aging city. And because cities tend to depend upon the municence of some of the great families many of the cultural and social institutions of these towns become distorted by the prejudices and idiosyncracies and the privileges accorded to the mycenus. Ideally,

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democracy will develop much more soundly in a much more healthy way where there are no great families.

And converseley, were we a better city when we had a Ralph Locher or Tony Celebrezze as mayor, decent, decent folk, who didn't make waves, who were honest, whom we liked? I think not. All of the present problems were in being then and there were no solutions. The problem is not simply that we now have a Dennis Kucinich.

The problem is us, that over the years the two million people of this area have really not wanted to be politically active, politically involved. And that is the truth of it, isn't it? You didn't have to bother about City Hall unless you were a builder and needed a zoning permit or something of the sort. All you really wanted of government was that government keep your body and your home secure, pick up the trash, clean the streets and leave you alone to pay the least possible tax that could be achieved. And our tax rate remained low and there were no major civic projects undertaken, and none of the sons and daughters of wealth and privilege went into public service on a local or community or county level and the one or two who did were not energetically They wanted to be left alone, so we said we don't want leaders and we won't supported. lead. And there were always politicians who were happy to sit in the places of privilege, and it was very easy for the leaders of our large corporations and of our large institutions to go about their daily business without really bothering themselves about the social costs of bringing large numbers of laborers into Cleveland in good times and putting these people out of work in bad times.

We assumed almost, I think, that we could get away without government, without leadership and followship, without community. And we were somewhat shocked about fifteen years ago when suddenly Carl Stokes emerged. We realized that there was a whole group of people who needed a leader to verbalize, to symbolize, to activate their needs. Suddenly political life began to quicken. We didn't like it. That's

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not the way it's always been. It had been let's go along, let's not make waves, everybody's getting his share. We had forgotten those who were not getting their share. And almost inevitably after the black vote was mobilized by black leaders it was inevitable that the poor vote should be mobilized by poor leaders. Carl Stokes and Dennis Kucinich represent, each in his own way, need and a community in need. And the well-to-do and the well-off and the almost well-off in our city were shocked and surprised and so they mumbled something about the crisis of leadership which is really no more or less than the crisis of forty or fifty years of civic indifference by most of us.

What's for it then? The problem is us. The answer is activity, awareness, commitment of self, exposure of self. I have been fascinated by the fact that it is only in the year 1979 that, under terrific pressure and attack, one or two of the business leaders of the town have come out from behind the anonymity of something called the Growth Association which is their organization to protect their privileges, to speak out in their own personal name and to accept the barbs which always come with political debate. Now, accept their positions or reject their positions, that's not the issue. The point is that they have been pushed to the wall by a little man representing little people and their having to leave their comfortable, convenient defenses, security, and become active in the political arena.

And if you are one of those who do not like the way the city is going and are disturbed that there should be the kind of leadership that there is now, both corporate and populist, the only way the large middle group of a community can be heard is if it makes itself heard. Somebody will become the spokesman. Somebody will have a name, a title, will occupy the podium, but only when those of us who have been remarkably satisfied over the last thirty years admit that we are now radically dis-

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satisfied and begin to formulate our needs, our expectations for the community. A week ago there was a meeting -called by Seth Taft, the former County Commissioner, and others about formulating a charter for county government. Now, whether or not a charter for county government is the way to proceed, it is a way to proceed. And everybody who came to that meeting came with doubts and reasons not to do, and that's been typical of hundreds of meetings I have attended in the last decade

or so. We always know what not to do because we really don't want to do, and that is the issue to which I am speaking. The crisis of leadership is us, not simply those of us who are here, but all like us, and everyone of the middle-class and upper middle-class of suburbs and exurbs from the city who have been comfortable and have wanted to be left alone, who have been suspicious of leaders because we had no place to go. Why did Jack Kennedy become a leader? Why did people invest in him charisma? Because he was young; because he was Roman Catholic; because he came from a family of wealth. And the country which turned to him for leadership was a country filled with young men and young women who had grown through the war years and matured through those years and were unwilling to settle for the 1930's and 20's. They wanted something new and something different, a more youthful, a more dynamic society because some sizable percentage of the country which is Roman Catholic was unhappy with the fact that they had been systematically locked out of the ultimate seats of power by the traditional Protestant establishment and because wealth is glamorous and everybody was busy at that time getting wealthy.

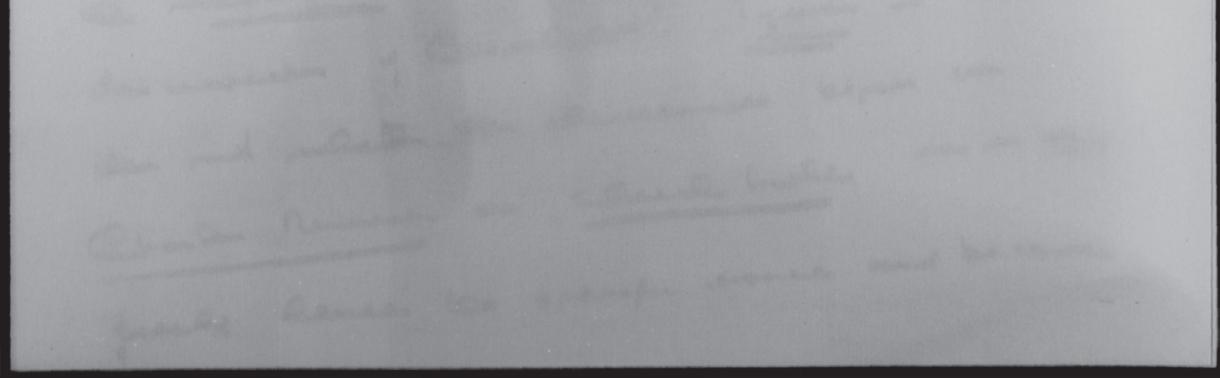
We projected Camelot, not Jack Kennedy. Jack Kennedy simply found the words for the image. We had needs, and I suggest that there are needs today, needs which if we can verbalize them might transcend the purely institutional interests and the purely class interests, which are being verbalized by those who are leading the special interest groups. We need an open society which means democratic institutions.

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We need an educated society which means concern for the schools. We need a society which lives with a certain degree of amenity which means concern for culture, concern for all those things which make for awareness and sensitivity. We need a society where there is opportunity which means a concern for the issues of race. We need a society where there is employment and where there is opportunity for all to be employed which means that there must be a concern for productivity. There must be a concern for profitability and there must also be a concern for managerial responsibility. We need a society whose vision of itself is of an unfolding and hopeful future and not the vision of each group in the society grasping for its share of the pie and gobbling it down, leaving nothing for the community as a whole.

That's a vision, a need, but do we really really, deep down, feel that need, or is it only talk? That question you will have to resolve. The next time you find yourself bemoaning Cleveland's civic source and talking about the sins of the leaders, see if you can put up a mirror. You are all qualified to be leaders. You are the leaders.





Kaddish

Friday

Sunday MAY 13

Those who passed away this week

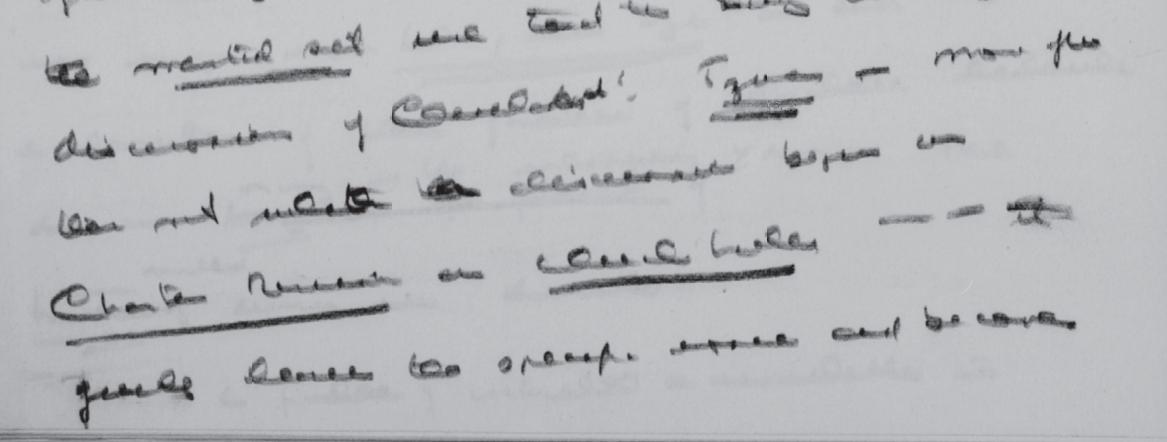
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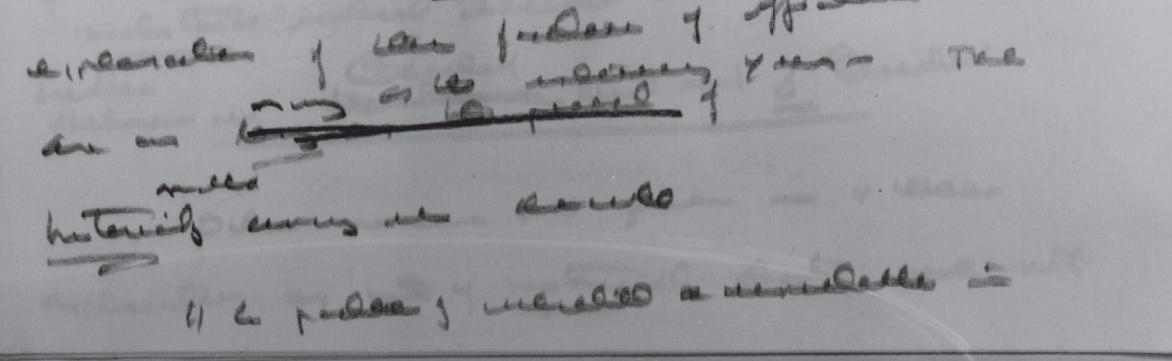
BENJAMIN HART

ABRAHAM KROHN DOROTHY FRANKEL SIDNEY S. ROBERTS WILLIAM H. LOVEMAN HYLDA STERN LEVIN (LEVN) MORT A UNGER LUCY JOSEPH BING WILLIAM J. BIALOSKY SADYE R. MANDEL KAL B. SMITH EDWARD J. MEISEL RACHEL S. GROSS LLOYD H. FEDER JOSEPH AMSTER SAMUEL ALBERT LEVIN (LEVN) GERTRUDE SHERBY RAND KITTY GUREN CLARK ANNA GOLDMAN SAMUEL W. RICHMAN MAX S. BERGMAN DR. JESSE M. BELBER LOYAL FRIED PLOSCOWE

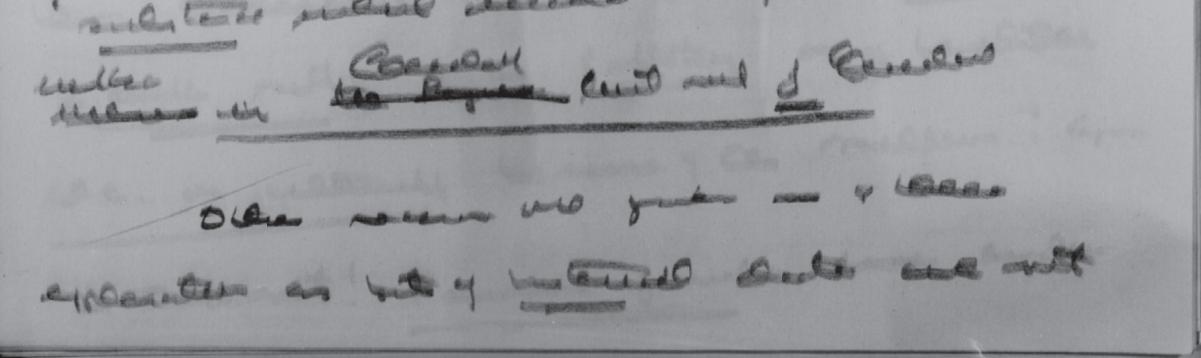
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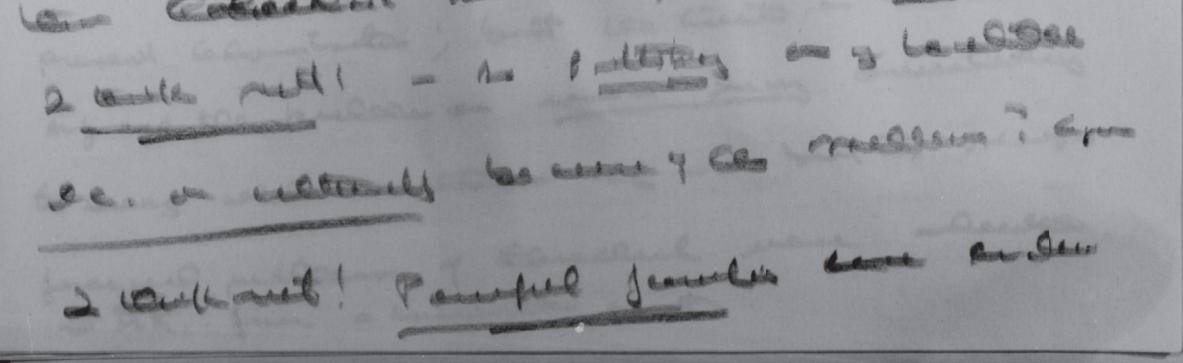
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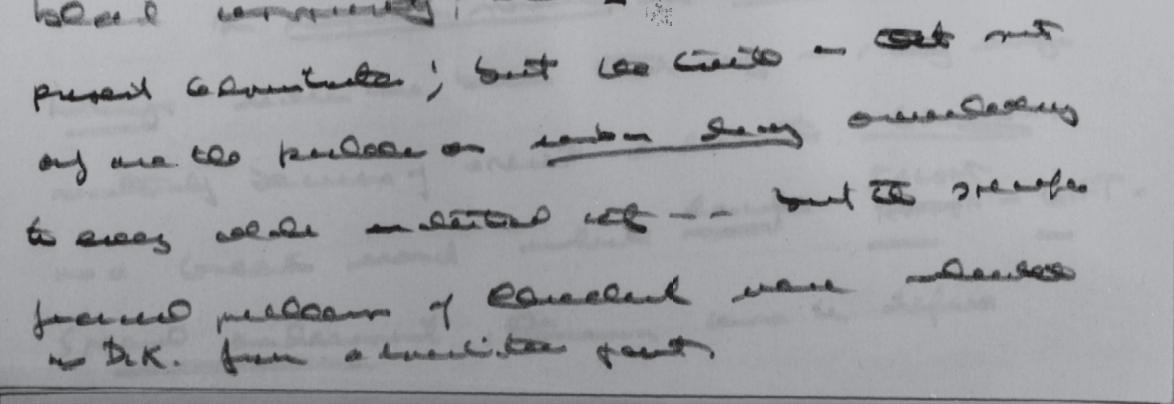
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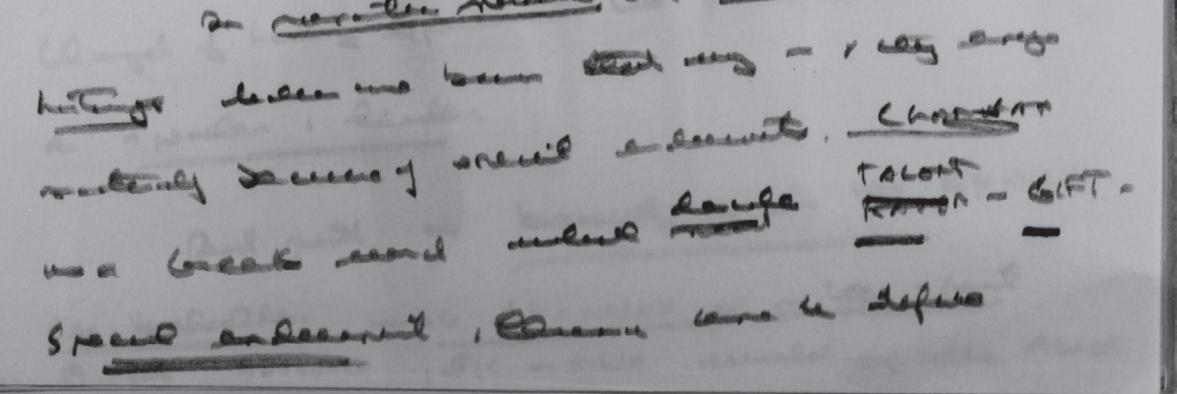
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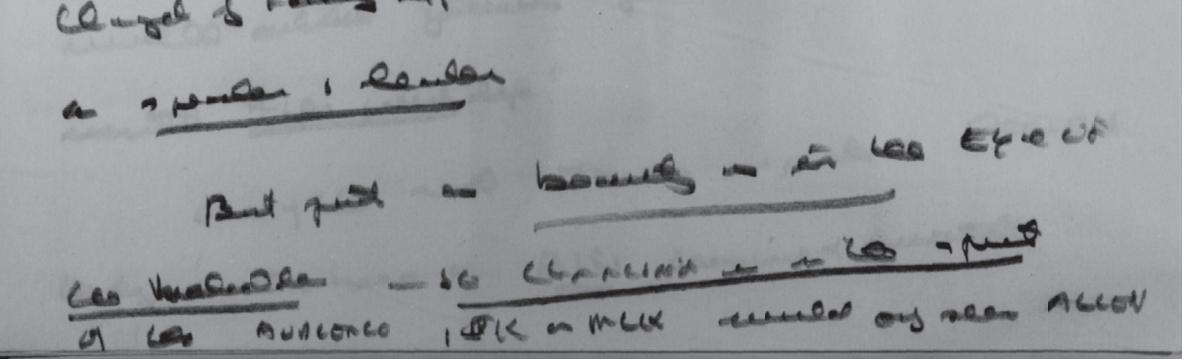
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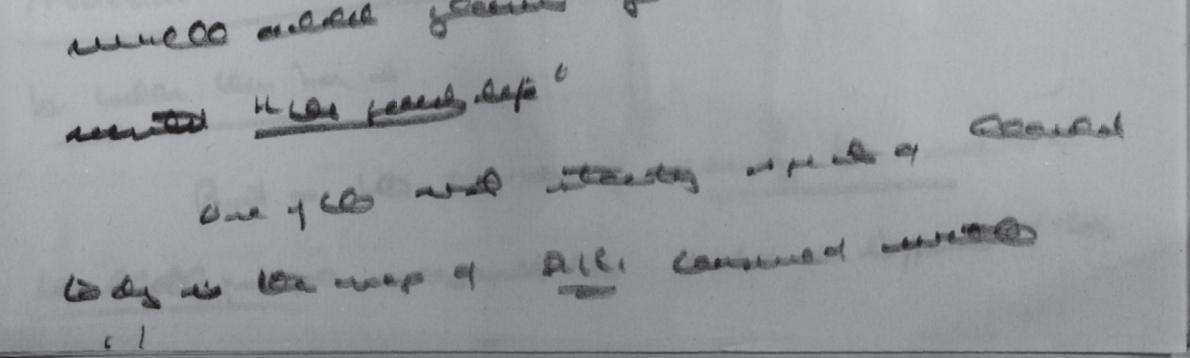
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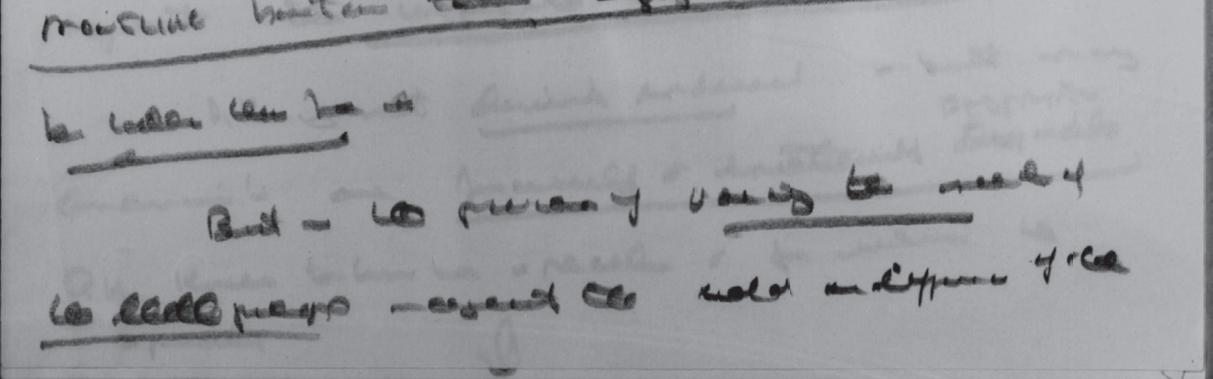


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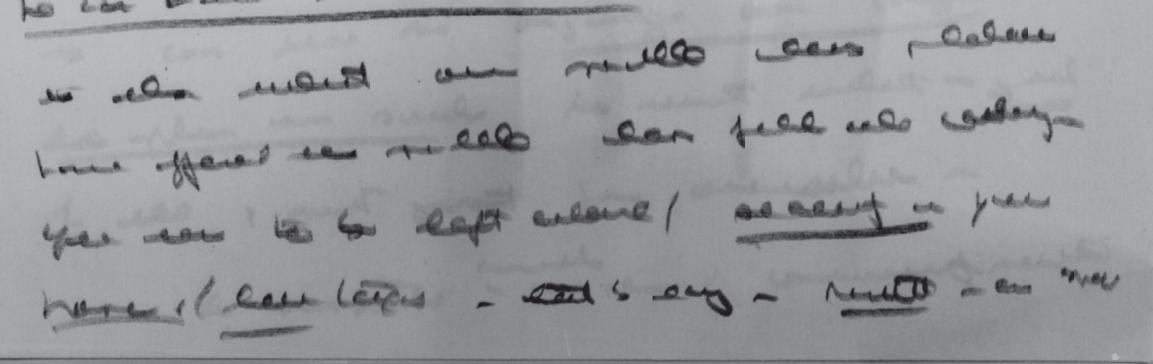
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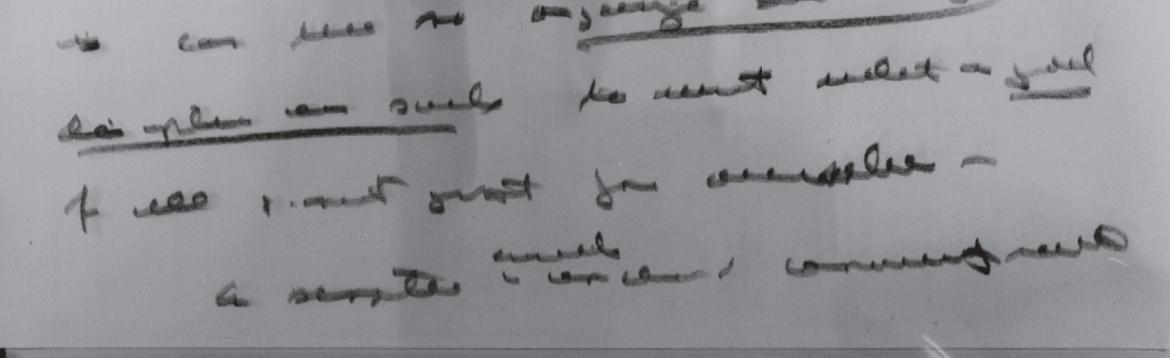




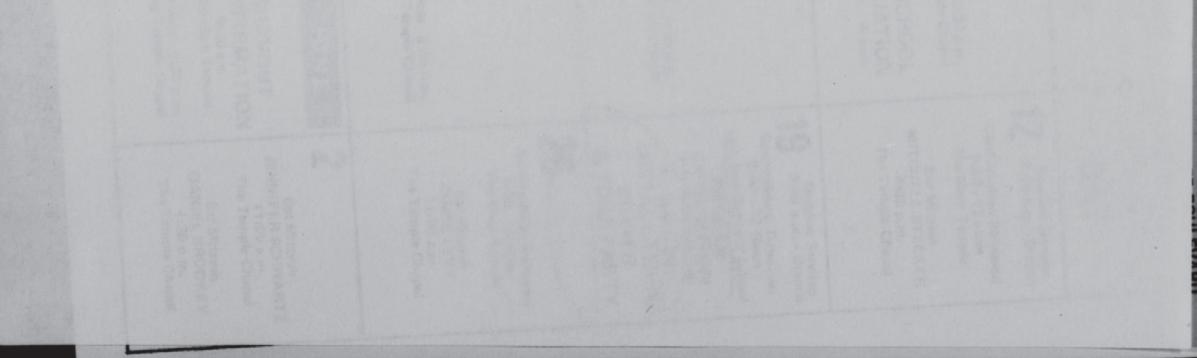
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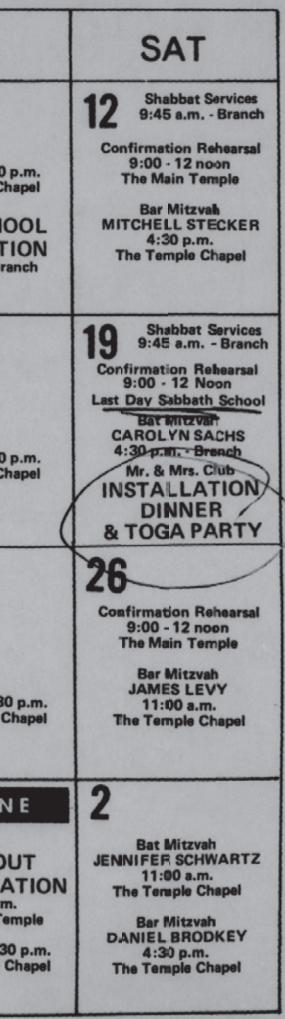
UNIVERSITY CIRCLE at SILVER PARK 791-7755

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Your TEMPLE Calendar - Clip and Save

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
6 MAY SERVICES 10:30 a.m. The Temple Branch SYNAGOGUE SONGS YOU HAVEN'T HEARD BEFORE Confirmation Party 4:00 p.m.	7	8 TWA Activities 10:00 a.m Branch Fellowship & Study Group Rabbi Stephen Klein 10:45 a.m Branch Temple Board Meeting 8:00 p.m Branch	9 Confirmation Rehearsal 4:15 - 6:00 p.m. The Main Temple	10	11 Services - 5:30 p The Temple Ch HIGH SCHO GRADUATI 7:45 p.m Bra
13 SERVICES 10:30 a.m. The Temple Branch Rabbi Silver will speak on CRISIS OF LEADERGHIP (Last Ganday Services) TWA Honors Mothers Begin "A WALK INTO OUR PAST	14	15 Lag Ba'omer TWA Activities 10:00 a.m Branch Fellowship & Sudy Group Rabbi Stephen Klein 10:45 a.m Branch Religious School Board Meeting 8:15 p.m Branch	16 TWA ANNUAL LUNCHEON Oakwood Country Club 12:00 noon Confirmation Rehearsal 4:15 - 6:00 p.m.	HICAN JEWISH CCHIVES	18 Services - 5:30 p The Temple Ch
20 Last Day Sunday School	21	22 Final Day TWA Activities Fellowship & Study Group Rabbi Stephen Klein 10:45 a.m Branch	23 Confirmation Rehearsal 4:15 - 6:00 p.m. The Main Temple TMC ANNUAL MEETING 8:00 p.m Branch	24	25 Services - 5:30 The Temple Cl
27	28	29 Fellowship & Study Group Rabbi Stephen Klein 10:45 a.m Branch	30 AST DAYS MIDWEEK CLAS Confirmation Rehearsal 4:15 - 6:00 p.m. The Main Temple	31 SES	1 JUN SHAVOU CONFIRMA 9:30 a.m The Main Ten Services - 5:30 The Temple C

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Where is holiness?

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our prophet:

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Amen.

V

There is holiness when we strive to be true to the best we know.

There is holiness when we are kind to someone who cannot possibly be of service to us.

There is holiness when we promote family harmony.

There is holiness when we forget what divides us and remember what unites us.

There is holiness when we are willing to be laughed at for what we believe in.

There is holiness when we love-truly, honestly, and unselfishly.

There is holiness when we remember the lonely and bring cheer into a dark corner.

There is holiness when we share-our bread, our ideas, our enthusiasms.

There is holiness when we gather to pray to Him who gave us the power to pray.

Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; All of life can be filled with His glory.

