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MS-5493: Daniel Jeremy Silver Papers, Series III, 1948-1993, undated.

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Correspondence, regarding publications by Daniel Jeremy Silver,
1990.

אגוד הרבנים המתקדמים

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* * *
Rabbi Paul J. Kipnes
Chair, Convention Program

6 Kislev 5760
November 15, 1999

Mrs. Adele Silver
2841 Weybridge Road
Shaker Heights, OH 44120

Dear Adele:

I was attending a meeting of our Publications Committee this past week, and mention was made of Daniel's wonderful book, *Images of Moses*, which we understand is out of print. Jeffrey Salkin, who chairs the committee, noted that Basic Books had published it in 1982, and he felt that it remains one of the very best books on Moses that has ever been published. It deserves to see the light of day again.

I was therefore asked to explore what it would take to bring this book back to print, and wonder if you have some idea as to where the copyright currently resides, and therefore with whom we should be holding this conversation. If you have any advice on this, I would be most grateful.

I hope that you have been keeping well, and look forward to hearing from you.

With every good wish.

Sincerely,

Elliot L. Stevens
Director of Publications

cc: Rabbi Jeffrey Salkin

11-22-99

Rabbi Stevens: he will begin investigating -
gave him my NY & Cleve phones -

ltrs111299
ELS/v

• Save the date: CCAR Convention - March 26-30, 2000 - Greensboro, NC •

Rabbi Hugo Gryn

West London Synagogue

21st February 1991

Dearest Adele,

I cannot tell you how touched we both were to receive 'The Story of Scripture' and how eagerly I fell upon it. It is truly a fine work and I am very grateful to you for your thoughtfulness and generosity. The photograph on the cover was so touching and I am glad that you chose one that tells so much about Daniel in the time when he laboured on this book. I also find it very moving that his closing sentence should be 'life defined the text'. Nor could I help thinking that Daniel's finest work - and sermon! - was his life.

You are also very much in our thoughts when we were in Israel a few days ago. We were taken to see the SCUD damage in Ramat Gan and Ramat Chen and to find that one of the devastated sections was on Abba Hillel Silver Street! A bitter irony.

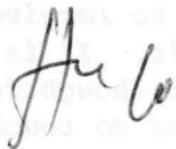
We also met there Mr. Herzl Levy who was the 'hero of the day'. An elderly man whose house was in absolute ruin but who endeared himself

p.t.o.

to the Israeli public by being pictured planting an Israeli flag on top of the rubble. I asked him why he did that and his answer was "I had to do something and I couldn't think of anything else".

Again I thank you and send you loving greetings.

Yours as always,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be the name 'Arieh' written in a cursive, flowing style.



February 15, 1994

Adele Silver
2841 Weybridge Road
Shaker Heights, OH 44120

Dear Adele:

Thank you so much for your note. You are much too kind in your praise. Daniel owed a great deal to you and very little to me. Most of all what remains with me is the memory of his amazing courage. I hope you are well and wish you all the best. Please stay in touch.

With warm regards,

Steve

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Steve", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

BABYLONIAN COLLECTION
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Curator
WILLIAM W. HALLO
Professor of Assyriology

November 4, 1990

Mrs. Daniel J. Silver
2841 Weybridge Road
Cleveland, Ohio 44120

Dear Adele,

Thank you very much for both your letters - that postmarked October 3 and the one of October 20.

As you know, I've now finished reading The Story of Scripture, and I think it is a marvellous piece of work. I say that not just to make you feel good, but because I found it that rarity among books in this field, a truly original work. Where others are content to rehearse and fine-tune familiar arguments, Dan really broke new ground. He did so, however, without the kind of sensationalism that today often enough attracts headlines in the popular press and passes for scholarship, but by quietly reviewing the evidence that was available all along and lining it up to fashion a coherent [^]thesis. In brief (which is to say without doing it justice) it shows how the reverence which the Bible enjoys today (or enjoyed until recently) was the culmination of a process that was slow in coming and that left traces, along the way, of many prior stages when "The Book" was only a book. In the course of his historical survey, he manages generally - and even admirably - to avoid the term canon which is today on everybody's lips and to defend and define the older and less trendy term scripture (not Scripture) instead.

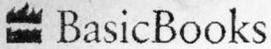
I myself have been dabbling in matters of "the canon" and canonicity, and recently gave a talk on the subject to the Hebrew Bible Seminar at Columbia (which includes most of the Biblicists of the Greater New York area). I introduced my remarks with a tribute to Dan and his book and I hope its ideas will gradually find their way into the scholarly discussion.

I'm glad to know you're joining the National Foundation for Jewish Culture. Let me know when you're meeting and perhaps we can get together.

Meantime with all best wishes, also from Edith,

as ever,

Bill



FAX COVER SHEET

(212) 207-7203

FAX TO: Adale Silver 216-421-0411
216-421-0411
FROM: Lois Flynn
DATE: NOV. 8, 1990
TIME: _____

PAGE 1 OF 4 PP.

COMMENTS: See review, as promised.
Phone numbers + address on ~~letter~~ pp. 2-3
Clear,
Lois

IF YOU HAVE ANY TROUBLE RECEIVING THIS TRANSMISSION,
PLEASE CONTACT TAMONE McEACHERN AT (212)207-7057.

Aug. 24, 1990

August 24, 1990

Bravi Bravi
Messenger 17

Look at Books

By Sol H. Marshall, Written exclusively for The Messenger
Continuous Reading For Constant Study



THERE MAY BE FOUR major movements within Judaism, but there are divisions within these streams of belief. In the same manner, there are varying interpretations of the "written word" of Judaism.

Scholars and teachers exchange ideas and develop new concepts and interpretations. These are disseminated in their sermons, lectures, speeches and finally, in their books.

The vast scope of material published indicates the task of constant reading in order to keep abreast of all the new material on Judaism which comes into the marketplace each month.

The Story of Scripture: From Oral Tradition to the Written Word. By Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver. Basic Books, Inc. \$22.95.

Rabbi Silver challenges the popular conviction that scripture is a sacred text, the literal word of God that may not be tampered with. He argues instead that the truly creative era in each of the three major Western religious traditions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—occurred before they had developed a written scripture. Thus, much of what is now reported to be the word of God originated in oral traditions that were subject to frequent revisions through the ages.

"The Story of Scripture" recounts in detail how the spread of literacy among the upper classes, more than any religious imperative, prompted the community to write down its living oral traditions. The emergence of a scripture helped define a faith's teachings with greater precision but, at the same time, hampered the faith's freedom to adapt to changing circumstances.

A second scripture inevitably arose—the Talmud in the case of Judaism—which was more systematic and pedantic, less evocative and poetic than the original scripture, and which tended to justify and interpret positions adopted by new religious leaders.

The history of scripture, says Rabbi Silver, depended on who controlled the interpretation and what readings they authorized. "The Story of Scripture" provides a corrective to the dangerous dogmatic pronouncements that have marked the recent global explosion of re-

Sol H. Marshall
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 8210 Varma Avenue
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A matter of biblical interpretation; a Vietnam War novel

The Story of Scripture
By Daniel Jeremy Silver
Basic Books, \$22.95, 302 pages

A Time of War
By Michael Peterson
Pocket Books-Simon and Schuster
\$19.95, 580 pages

Our first entry for today, "The Story of Scripture," subtitled "From Oral Tradition to the Written World," is the last book by Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver, who presided at The Temple in Cleveland for more than 30 years until his death in 1989. In an easy, almost conversational, style, Rabbi Silver wrote to express what I would call his dismay at "the resurgence of scriptural innocence in our times."

He is distressed: "Powerful forces are at work in the Jewish, Christian and Islamic worlds: black hat orthodoxy, evangelical churches and the Muslim Brotherhood, each out to coerce its community to organize around rules and practices that each insists its scripture prescribes. . . . As the successful activities of the Ayatollah Khomeini, Rabbi Menachem Schneerson and the Rev. Jerry Falwell have testified, the literal understanding of scripture is very much alive."

As its subtitle hints, the book's central thesis is that the Bible (and most especially, the five books of Moses or Torah) were not penned directly by God, but represented an oral, developing sense of a community of faith. "The historical fact is that for most of what is commonly described as biblical times, there was as yet no Bible. Each tribe had its own oral traditions. Oral traditions use and reuse incident, image and idiom. . . . The tribes had no written literature. There was an oral culture, an amalgam of law, saga, cherished genealogies, sacred hymns and of course a many-sided folk wisdom which was both practical — when to plant and when to harvest — and philosophic — how life had begun and how evil it had come to be."

He makes a clever point (which I had never



JOHN LINSENMAYER

heard before) that because the Hebrews adopted an alphabetic or phonetic system of writing, rather than "pictographs" like Egyptian hieroglyphics or Chinese or Japanese writing, this "may account for their remarkably consistent literary preference for simplicity over complexity. Did Israel's late arrival into the world of the written word have something to do with its ability to conceive of one God over many, of one creation over separate natural forces, of one human family over separate and distinct tribal ancestors?"

I enjoyed Rabbi Silver's book. I share his lack of regard for literalists and fanatics of any persuasion, and enjoyed his deft demonstration that they are not even consistent. What right-wing Jewish fanatic, he asks, takes literally Moses' stipulations "about the sacrificial cult and a dynastic priesthood" or insists "that a witch must be burned and an adulteress stoned." Bottom line: if you have any interest in matters biblical, regardless of your denomination, I think you will enjoy Rabbi Silver.

"A Time of War" is the latest in a growing line of novels about the Vietnam War. It is primarily the story of an upper-crust liberal Democrat and former Kennedy protege, Bradley Marshall, who was chosen by President Lyndon Johnson to be his special ambassador to Vietnam in late 1967, to bring back "the truth" in lieu of what Johnson

correctly suspected to be large amounts of balderdash from the military and the CIA.

As with any good war novel, there are a number of stories going on simultaneously: U.S. Marine Lt. Luke Bishop and his platoon on a hillside near Khe Sanh, Wilson Abbott Lord, CIA fanatic who is willing actually to murder Marshall to prevent him taking home a report that the war is politically unwinnable, U.S. Marine Cpl. Ron Mead, Marshall's heroic bodyguard, and Mead's beautiful Vietnamese girlfriend and a host of bit players, including a sleazy French voluptuary named Lacouture, who earns his living and guarantees his survival as an information broker among all sides, and possible accomplice to murder.

If this sounds like fairly routine stuff, it isn't. "A Time of War" is a first-class novel. The principal characters are three-dimensional and well-drawn rather than stereotypes, and Michael Peterson even went so far as to give the truly sinister spook Wilson Lord some plausible motivation for his behavior. To be sure, some of the characters, like the saintly Teresa Hawthorne, an ex-nun working with Vietnamese children who became the target of the ambassador's ever-roving eye, seemed a bit too good to be true. But I have known people who, like her, did indeed seem too good to be true, yet who are just as real as the rest of us. I particularly admired Peterson's talent for dialogue; rather than the wooden cliches of Robert Ludlum or Eric Van Lustbader, these characters sound authentic.

Peterson not only has impressive writing talents, he also has a good sense of time and place (gathered, no doubt, during his term of service as Marine officer in Vietnam), and has, moreover, a good sense of politics, both American and Vietnamese. If you are rationing yourself to only one Vietnam novel or one war novel this year, you could do a lot worse than "A Time of War."

John Linsenmeyer is a senior litigation partner in the international firm of Morgan, Lewis and Bockius. He lives in Riverside.

101 Park Ave, NY 10171

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Library Journal

5/15/90

Silver, Daniel Jeremy.

The Story of Scripture: From Oral
Tradition to the Written Word.Basic Bks. May 1990. c.320p. bibliog.
index. LC 89-43096. ISBN 0-465-
08205-X. \$22.95.

REL

Silver, author of several works on the history of Judaism, has here written a controversial but interesting and lucid analysis of the development of scripture in Judaism. Pointing out that the truly creative period in each of the major Western religions was in its pre-written scripture period, he argues that "some scriptural material is neither high minded nor significant." Silver analyzes the emergence of scripture in relation to the spread of literate society and describes the importance of the development of the alphabet to this phenomenon. Using archaeology and the history of culture and civilization to buttress his views, he examines the differences between the first scripture, the Bible, and the second, the Talmud—also showing how the scriptures of both Christianity and Islam developed similarly. Recommended to libraries with an interest in Jewish studies and comparative religion.—Maurice S. Tuchman, Hebrew Coll. Lib., Brookline, Mass.