

THE JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF AMERICA

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OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

CABLE ADDRESS: SEMINARY, NEW YORK

November 19, 1980

Professor David Roskies
Jewish Theological Seminary
3080 Broadway
New York, N.Y. 10027

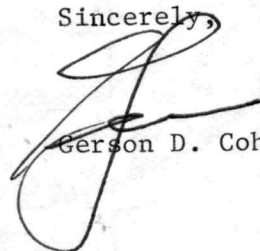
Dear David,

For some time now I have been convinced that it is the responsibility of the Seminary to focus in a more direct way on the ways in which the ideology of Conservative Judaism is being conveyed to congregants who worship and study in Conservative Synagogues and identify themselves as Conservative Jews. This new focus of interest has been encouraged in part by a grant we have received from the Lilly Foundation which is to be used for a thorough study of the future of synagogue life in America during the coming decades.

As part of this study and in preparation for a major conference which will be held next year I'm convening a series of mini-conferences which will bring together members of our faculty and selected rabbinic alumni to share experiences, impressions and recommendations. I am inviting you to participate in one of these conferences which will be held here in the Seminary on Wednesday and Thursday December 17 and 18. The focus for this particular conference will be the congregational rabbi as homiletician and liturgist. I know you share my conviction that no responsibility is more central to the future of synagogue life in this country than these. It is precisely as darshan that the congregational rabbi mediates our tradition to a new generation of Jews in a new conceptual framework. How we are in fact doing this, how we should be doing it and how we might be training rabbis to do it more effectively will be the theme of our discussions.

We will be a small group of approximately 15 colleagues. The discussions will be off the record and, most immediately, for our own personal benefit though ultimately our recommendations may well be far-reaching. I would like you to come prepared to talk briefly on how you understand your role as darshan and liturgist, what techniques you have evolved to perform these functions creatively and how it might be possible to re-evaluate our Rabbinical School curriculum to train other rabbis to do the same.

Sincerely,



Gerson D. Cohen