



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE  
**AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES**

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**A Finding Aid to the  
Israel Bettan Papers**

**Manuscript Collection No. 618**



## Collection Summary

<b>Title</b>	Israel Bettan Papers
<b>Dates</b>	1907-1976
<b>Collection Number</b>	MS-618
<b>Repository</b>	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
<b>Creator</b>	Bettan, Israel, 1889-1957
<b>Extent</b>	2.8 linear feet (7 Hollinger boxes)
<b>Language of the Material</b>	English

## Administrative Information

### Biographical Sketch

Israel Bettan was born January 16, 1889, in Kovno, Lithuania. Young Bettan was educated in yeshivas in Lithuania until he immigrated to the United States with his parents in 1907. He studied at the University of Cincinnati, graduating in 1910 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. Bettan was ordained Rabbi in 1912 from Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati and received a Doctor of Divinity degree in 1915 from the same institution.

After ordination, Bettan accepted the pulpit at Temple B'nai Israel (Virginia Street Temple), in Charleston, West Virginia, and ministered to the congregation from 1912 to 1922. During his stay in Charleston, Bettan expanded his interests to include local civic, philanthropic, and educational activities. He served as a founder of the local Rotary Club, chairman of the Charleston City Survey Committee (1915-1917), chairman of the city's Federated Charities (1916-1918), and member of the Child Welfare Committee of West Virginia (1921-1922).

After the United States entered World War I in 1917, Bettan voiced his support as a speaker at Liberty Bond rallies held in West Virginia. At the rallies he often spoke alongside Catholic and Protestant clergymen. In September, 1918, Bettan was appointed as a chaplain and First Lieutenant in the United States Army. He was assigned to the American Expeditionary Forces in France from October, 1918-July, 1919. In February 1919, Bettan attended a conference of Jewish chaplains in Paris, during which cooperation between Jewish chaplains and the Jewish Welfare Board was approved and the formation of the Jewish Veterans of America was proposed. In May and June of 1919, shortly before he received orders to return home, Bettan took a leave of absence to travel in Europe and Great Britain.

In 1922 Bettan was invited to join the faculty of HUC as Professor of Homiletics and Midrash (rabbinic literature). He taught at HUC for 35 years, influencing an estimated 400 rabbis. He was to have retired in September, 1957, but died a month earlier. In a biographical sketch in the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Bulletin (February, 1956), Bettan was described as follows:

"Dr. Bettan has been exploding verbal fireworks in HUC classrooms for 34 years as professor of homiletics. Sharp humor, blunt, home-spun admonitions and constant allusions to current and classical literature sparkle through the sessions in which he teaches student rabbis to extract the essentials from Jewish classics and impart their meaning to others."

In addition to his teaching activities, Bettan was active in the Cincinnati community, on the lecture circuit and in the Reform rabbinical community. Bettan was a member of Rockdale Avenue Temple, Isaac Mayer Wise Temple, the Order of B'nai B'rith, and the Cincinnati Club. He was often called to lecture or employ his unusual ability as a master of ceremonies throughout the United States, as well as in Canada. As an active member of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) he served as member of several committees, notably the Committee on Responsa. Bettan was elected vice-president of the CCAR in 1955 and president in 1956. He was reelected as president in June, 1957, two months before his death.

Bettan was also the author of several books and a number of articles and pamphlets. The majority of his writings were sermons, dealt with preaching or were commentaries on the Hebrew scriptures or on the sermons of other rabbis. His works included: *Studies in Jewish Preaching* (1939), a scholarly study of sermons from the 13th to 18th Centuries; sermons and a study of post-biblical Judaism published by the Tract Commission of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and numerous sermons published as articles or pamphlets.

Bettan received many honors for his service, including an honorary Doctor of Hebrew Letters degree from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, in 1957.

On April 7, 1927, Bettan married Ida Goldstein of Cincinnati, Ohio. They had one daughter, Anita Esther Bettan (1928-1992). Israel Bettan died in Cincinnati, Ohio, on August 5, 1957.

<b>Scope and Content</b>	<p>Sermons, writings, correspondence, notes, diaries, military records, new articles, awards and personal items pertaining to Rabbi Bettan's career as rabbi, chaplain and educator of rabbis.</p> <p>Two oversize posters from this collection are located in the AJA Flat File (Cabinet 5, Drawer 15) and 1 sound recording of Rabbi Bettan's funeral service is located in the AJA Sound Disc collection and AJA Tape Recording No. 78.</p>
<b>Arrangement</b>	The collection is arranged in three (3) series: A. Writings, Sermons and Addresses; B. Correspondence; C. Personal Materials.
<b>Terms of Access</b>	The collection is open for use; no restrictions apply.
<b>Preferred Citation</b>	<p>Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Israel Bettan Papers and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:</p> <p>[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-618. Israel Bettan Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.</p>
<b>Provenance</b>	Received from the Estate of Anita E. Bettan, Cincinnati, Ohio, May 1992.
<b>Processing Information</b>	Processed by Kathleen L. Spray, October 1997.

## Index Terms

<b>Subjects</b>	Military chaplains / Rabbis / World War, 1914-1918
<b>Corporate Names</b>	Central Conference of American Rabbis / Hebrew Union College / Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion / Temple B'nai Israel (Charleston, W.Va.)
<b>Media</b>	Sermons

### Series A. Writings, Sermons and Addresses, 1910-1957

**Extent** 1.6 linear feet (4 Hollinger boxes)

**Scope and Content Note** Series A consists of sermons, speeches, lectures, notes, writings and diaries.

**Arrangement** The series is divided into four (4) subseries: 1. General Writings, Sermons and Addresses; 2. UAHC Tract Commission Publications; 3. Class Lectures; 4. Miscellaneous Writings.

#### Subseries 1. General Writings, Sermons and Addresses, 1910-1957

**Extent** 1 linear foot (2.5 Hollinger boxes)

**Scope and Content Note** Most titles reflect the topic of the sermons, articles or addresses in the folders. Some titles refer to where or when (a date, holiday or special occasion) the sermon or speech was given, such as Hanukkah, Mother's Day, or a CCAR presidential address.

**Arrangement** The subseries is arranged in alphabetical order by folder title.

#### Box and Folder Listing

Box 1. Folder 1. Alumni convocation (HUC), Address for [Our Threefold Loyalty], 1956

Box 1. Folder 22. American Judaism, The making of an, (HUC opening exercises), 1956 September 22

Box 1. Folder 3. Anniversary (of Rabbi Reichert) address, 1946

Box 1. Folder 4. Assimilation and Conservation, undated

Box 1. Folder 5. Awakening the Dawn, a Founder's Day sermon, 1938

Box 1. Folder 6. Bible...; and Bearing Upon the Shoulders, undated

Box 1. Folder 7. Building for Tomorrow [sermon given at Washington Hebrew Congregation, Washington, D.C.], 1954 November 14

Box 1. Folder 8. Call to Reality; and Expensive Bargains (Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur), undated

Box 1. Folder 9. CCAR presidential address, 68th convention, 1957 June 24

Box 1. Folder 10. Confirmation sermon, undated

Box 1. Folder 11. Conviction; and The Call to Repentance (Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur), undated

Box 1. Folder 12. Decoration Day, undated

Box 1. Folder 13. Denial, The Case Against, undated

Box 1. Folder 14. Discontent, Value of, 1913 November 12

Box 1. Folder 15. Dubno Maggid, 1950

Box 1. Folder 16. Early Reform in Contemporary Responsa, 1925

Box 1. Folder 17. Escaping from the Commonplace, undated

Box 1. Folder 18. Faith Sermons; and a letter to Dr. G. Paul Butler, undated

Box 1. Folder 19. Farewell address upon retirement from HUC-JIR, 1957

Box 1. Folder 20. Farewell sermon and address [Charleston, W. Va.], 1922

Box 1. Folder 21. Funeral Rites of Fraternal Orders, A Responsum on, undated

Box 1. Folder 22. Going Forward, 1911 April 16

Box 1. Folder 23. Hanukkah sermons, undated

Box 1. Folder 24. Happiness sermons, undated

Box 1. Folder 25. Has God Been Forsaken? A Symposium, 1947 January

Box 1. Folder 26. Healing of Humanity, undated

Box 1. Folder 27. Hebrew Union College and Liberal Thought, 1946

Box 1. Folder 28. Ideal, The [Power of the], undated

Box 1. Folder 29. Immigrant, The, [ an address for the Charleston Woman's Club], undated

Box 1. Folder 30. Israel and the Synagogue, 1933

Box 1. Folder 31. Jewish Interpreter, 1923 April

Box 1. Folder 32. Judaism sermons, undated

Box 1. Folder 33. Judaism and the Ideals of Democracy sermons, undated

Box 1. Folder 34. Liberty and Service; and Freedom through Discipline, undated

Box 1. Folder 35. Man's True Mission in Life, 1911 January 8

Box 1. Folder 36. Memorial sermons, undated

Box 1. Folder 37. Mother's Day, 1913-1914, undated

Box 1. Folder 38. New Year's/Yom Kippur sermons, undated

Box 1. Folder 39. Past and Present in Religion, 1911 January 23

Box 1. Folder 40. Paths of Peace, The [New Year's], 1915

Box 1. Folder 41. Pathways to a Broader Life, [Congregation Shaare Emeth, St. Louis], 1956 September 5

Box 1. Folder 42. Patriotic addresses, undated

Box 1. Folder 43. Peace sermons, undated

Box 1. Folder 44. Permanent and The Transient, The, undated

Box 2. Folder 1. Poetry class term papers, 1910 January-May

Box 2. Folder 2. Practical Religion, undated

Box 2. Folder 3. Prayer...[Sermons regarding], 1911 July 24, undated

Box 2. Folder 4. Preaching Techniques, Six Statements on (CCAR), 1951

Box 2. Folder 5. Progress, Evolution, and miscellaneous sermons, undated

Box 2. Folder 6. Promised Land - review of Mary Antin's book, undated

Box 2. Folder 7. Rabbi of Richmond, 1945 June

Box 2. Folder 8. Rabbinic Judaism, undated

Box 2. Folder 9. Religion, 1911 November 18, undated

Box 2. Folder 10. Repentance, undated

Box 2. Folder 11. Resolutions, undated

Box 2. Folder 12. Responsa: Bas Mitzvah has no place in Reform Jewish Practice, 1954 June

Box 2. Folder 13. Revelation of the Depths of Life, 1911 July 10

Box 2. Folder 14. Review of Yahuda's Bachja, 1914

Box 2. Folder 15. Right to Differ and Be Different [Purim], undated

Box 2. Folder 16. Rock of the Past [and Merits of the Fathers - Rosh Hashanah], undated

Box 2. Folder 17. Rotary [Charleston, W.Va.], 1940, undated

Box 2. Folder 18. Sacredness of Work, 1911 February 28

Box 2. Folder 19. Salvation by Organization (Charleston Community Bulletin, vol. 1:1), undated

Box 2. Folder 20. Sanitary Survey of Charleston West Virginia (chairman's introduction), 1918 January

Box 2. Folder 21. Secret Springs, undated

Box 2. Folder 22. Sermons of Ephraim Luntshitz [includes a review], 1933

Box 2. Folder 23. Sermons of... [series of articles in The Hebrew Union College Annual], 1929-1938

Box 2. Folder 24. Service, undated

Box 2. Folder 25. Shofar, The Message of the, undated

Box 2. Folder 26. Sincerity, undated

Box 2. Folder 27. Social Question, undated

Box 2. Folder 28. Solitary Soul [Yom Kippur morning], 1929

Box 2. Folder 29. Sources of Character [Yom Kippur], undated

Box 2. Folder 30. Sowing in Tears and Reaping in Joy [Rosh Hashanah], undated

Box 2. Folder 31. Spiritual Stagnation [or Motion and Growth], undated

Box 2. Folder 32. Success, 1915, undated

Box 2. Folder 33. Succoth, undated

Box 3. Folder 1. Tendency of the Age and the Task of the Pulpit; CCAR conference, 1926

Box 3. Folder 2. Thanksgiving sermons, 1913 November 21, undated

Box 3. Folder 3. Thesis, "Opposition of Orthodoxy to Early Reform...", 1914

Box 3. Folder 4. Things Worth While, undated

Box 3. Folder 5. Thought and Solitude, 1913 October 29, undated

Box 3. Folder 6. Time, undated

Box 3. Folder 7. Truth Seeker, 1924 January 5

Box 3. Folder 8. Understanding Heart, undated

Box 3. Folder 9. Union Prayer Book: A Symposium (CCAR), 1930

Box 3. Folder 10. Unsettled Soul, undated

Box 3. Folder 11. Unveiling [dedication of monuments], undated

Box 3. Folder 12. What is Religious Freedom?, 1943

Box 3. Folder 13. What to do about Inter-marriage?, 1952 May

Box 3. Folder 14. Wisdom for the Heart [memorial meditation], undated

Box 3. Folder 15. World Crisis, undated

## **Subseries 2. UAHC Tract Commission Publications, 1929-1939**

**Extent** 0.2 linear feet (0.5 Hollinger box)

**Scope and Content Note** The subseries consists of pamphlets and sermon collections published by the Tract Commission of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Bettan wrote or contributed sermons to the publications and was a member of the Tract Commission.

**Arrangement** The subseries is arranged chronologically.

### **Box and Folder Listing**

Box 3. Folder 16. UAHC Tracts by Israel Bettan, undated

Box 3. Folder 17. A set of holiday sermons, 1929

Box 3. Folder 18. Sabbath sermons, 1937

Box 3. Folder 19. Sabbath sermons, 1938

Box 3. Folder 20. Sabbath sermons, 1939

## **Subseries 3. Class Lectures, 1951-1952**

**Extent** 0.1 linear feet (1/4 Hollinger box)

**Scope and Content Note** The subseries consists of lecture notes for an HUC Homiletics class and other lectures concerning preaching and becoming a rabbi.

### **Box and Folder Listing**

Box 4. Folder 1. Classroom lecture notes - Homiletics I, undated

Box 4. Folder 2. Preaching, 1952, undated

Box 4. Folder 3. Preparing for the Ministry, undated

Box 4. Folder 4. Midrash, undated

Box 4. Folder 5. Reform Practices, 1951, undated

### **Subseries 4. Miscellaneous Writings, 1942-1957**

**Extent** 0.3 linear feet (3/4 Hollinger box)

**Scope and Content Note** The subseries consists of prayers; a list of Bettan's writings; book reviews; notes and diaries containing drafts of letters, sermons, writings, and notes.

### **Box and Folder Listing**

Box 4. Folder 6. Benedictions and prayers, undated

Box 4. Folder 7. Published items [List of Bettan's published works for 1914-1935], undated

Box 4. Folder 8. Reviews of Bettan's book, The Five Scrolls, 1951

Box 4. Folder 9. Notes, undated

Box 4. Folder 10. Diaries containing drafts of letters, sermons, writings and notes, 1942-1949

Box 4. Folder 11. Diaries containing drafts of letters, sermons, writings and notes, 1950-1952

Box 4. Folder 12. Diaries containing drafts of letters, sermons, writings and notes, 1953-1957

### **Series B. Correspondence, 1916-1960**

**Extent** 0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)

#### **Arrangement**

The series is divided into two (2) subseries: 1. General Correspondence and Miscellaneous; 2. CCAR Correspondence and Miscellaneous.

### **Series 1. General Correspondence and Miscellaneous, 1916-1960**

**Extent** 0.2 linear feet (0.5 Hollinger box)

**Scope and Content Note** Consists of correspondence and miscellaneous materials, including material pertaining to his rabbinate in Charleston, West Virginia, and his teaching career at HUC.

### **Box and Folder Listing**

Box 5. Folder 1. Charleston, W.Va. - Temple B'nai Israel (Virginia Street Temple),

1916-1960

Box 5. Folder 2. Charleston, W.Va. - General correspondence, programs and certificate, 1916-1921

Box 5. Folder 3. World War I - correspondence to and from France, 1919

Box 5. Folder 4. Hebrew Union College/Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion - correspondence and reports, 1945-1957

Box 5. Folder 5. Miscellaneous correspondence, 1926-1956

Box 5. Folder 6. Congratulatory messages and replies for retirement and honors received, 1956-1957

Box 5. Folder 7. Professional correspondence received post-mortem, 1957 July-December

## **Series 2. CCAR Correspondence and Miscellaneous, 1916-1957**

**Extent** 0.2 linear feet (0.5 Hollinger box)

**Scope and Content Note** Consists of correspondence, minutes, reports and miscellaneous pertaining to Bettan's work with the CCAR, notably as a member of the Committee on Responsa and as President of the organization.

### **Box and Folder Listing**

Box 5. Folder 8. Miscellaneous committees, 1916-1951

Box 5. Folder 9. Committee on Responsa, 1945-1956

Box 5. Folder 10. Executive Board minutes, 1956

Box 5. Folder 11. Pre-conference reports and miscellaneous, 1957 June

Box 5. Folder 12. Correspondence with rabbis (mostly regarding CCAR), 1956

Box 5. Folder 13. Presidential correspondence and miscellaneous, 1956

Box 5. Folder 14. Werner, Eric. Correspondence and sheet music, 1956-1957

Box 5. Folder 15. Congratulatory messages to other rabbis, 1957, undated

Box 6. Folder 1. Correspondence with rabbis (mostly regarding CCAR), 1957

Box 6. Folder 2. Presidential correspondence and miscellaneous, 1957

## **Series C. Personal Materials, 1907-1976**

**Extent** 0.8 linear feet (2 Hollinger boxes)

### **Arrangement**

The series is divided into four (4) subseries: 1. Biographical Materials; 2. World War I Mementos; 3. Memorial Services and Condolences; 4. Diplomas.

### **Subseries 1. Biographical Materials, 1907-1976**

**Extent** 0.2 linear feet (0.5 Hollinger box)

**Scope and Content Note** Consists of biographical sketches and news articles, obituaries, biographical materials concerning Anita E. Bettan (Israel Bettan's daughter) and other members of the Bettan family and honors received at the time of his retirement.



## **Subseries 2. World War I Mementos, 1916-1919**

**Extent** 0.2 linear feet (0.5 Hollinger box)

**Scope and Content Note** Consists of military duty records from his career as a Chaplain in the U.S. Army during World War I, guidebooks and postcards from European cities and ephemera from the Chaplaincy and from his work for Liberty Loans.

### **Box and Folder Listing**

Box 6. Folder 10. Chaplain Bettan's military records, 1918 October-1919 July

Box 6. Folder 11. Roster of Company "H", Federal Training Camp, Plattsburg, N.Y., 1916 July-August

Box 6. Folder 12. Guidebooks, maps and postcards from cities in Europe and Great Britain, 1918-1919, undated

Box 6. Folder 13. Ephemera - Identification tags (dog tags), buttons, medals and pendants, 1916, undated

## **Subseries 3. Memorial Services and Condolences, 1957-1963**

**Extent** 0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)

**Scope and Content Note** Consists of programs, correspondence, resolutions, list of condolences received, condolences and miscellaneous correspondence sent to his family.

### **Box and Folder Listing**

Box 7. Folder 1. Memorial services and resolutions - correspondence and programs, 1957-1958

Box 7. Folder 2. CCAR memorial services, resolutions and memorial volume - correspondence and programs, 1957-1963

Box 7. Folder 3. Condolences, New Year's greetings, and miscellaneous correspondence of Mrs. Bettan, 1957-1958

Box 7. Folder 4. List of condolences, telegrams and contributions, 1957

Box 7. Folder 5. Telegram condolences, 1957 August

Box 7. Folder 6. Condolences from Charleston, W.Va. and Portsmouth, Ohio, 1957 August-November

Box 7. Folder 7. Condolences, 1957 August

Box 7. Folder 8. Condolences, 1957 August-September

Box 7. Folder 9. Condolences, 1957 August-1958 February

Box 7. Folder 10. Condolences, 1957 August-1958 May

## **Subseries 4. Diplomas, 1912-1957**

**Scope and Content Note** Consists of two diplomas Bettan earned for rabbinical degrees from HUC in 1912 and 1915 and one diploma for an honorary doctorate received from HUC-JIR in 1957. The diplomas are not filed with the Israel Bettan Papers, but in the AJA Flat Files.

### **Box and Folder Listing**

Box FF. Item C2/D7. Rabbinical degree from HUC, 1912

Box FF. Item C2/D7. Doctor of Divinity degree from HUC, 1915

Box FF. Item C2/D7. Diploma for honorary degree from HUC-JIR, 1957