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High holiday radio broadcast. 14 August 1944.

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Tonight, Jewish men and women scattered over the face of the entire globe are busy with their preparations for the coming High Holydays. This Sunday night, September 17, is the eve of the New Year - and during the next ten days after the New Year there is a period of penitence culminating in the solemn and sacred Day of Atonement.

These two days and the period of repentance between them represent the high point - the peak of the Jewish year - and on these days every person of the Jewish faith crowds into the synagogues and temples to worship. Many places on this earth no longer have any synagogues left - they have been destroyed - but that will make no difference.

The hunted and beaten and broken figures of the pitifully few Jews alive in Europe will gather slowly and secretly in a dark cave somewhere in the depths of a marshy forest, and there, around the flickering embers of a fire which will hardly take the chill out of the cold September air, these old and tortured people will murmur the prayers of their fathers of ancient days, and will yearn for a New Year which will give birth to a new world.

Or if not in the wasteland of Poland, then some Jews will be found this New Year in concentration camps in Shanghai, where they will worship, huddled close to the barbed wire; or on the stony island of Madagascar to which many were exiled by the barbarians - or here - or there - or any place where Jews are found, no matter how hard or bitter is their fate, so long as there is life in their bodies they will whisper the ancient rituals of their people.

We here in this great and beautiful land will have our synagogues, and we will gather for the New Year amid the peaceful circumstances of an America whose proud tradition helps to build, rather than to destroy houses of worship.

The Year to be born just a few nights hence is number 5705, supposedly corresponding to the time when the world was created - five thousand, seven hundred and five years ago. This date itself is unimportant, except insofar as it teaches us a fundamental fact about the meaning of the New Year.

According to the traditions of our Rabbis, New Year's Day is the birthday of the world--the birthday of the world. On this day the world was born a long time ago, and every year, on

this day, the world is born all over again. Such a concept is very exciting. What it suggests, actually, is that every year human beings are given another chance to remake and refashion the world into something better. Every year, when the world is about to be symbolically reborn, we people have the opportunity to take the infant and mold him into whatever pattern we wish.

Well, how successful have we been over the thousands of years of recorded history in this job? We all have the feeling that some progress toward a better life has been made, and yet down deep in our hearts, we know perfectly well that we haven't molded the world into a very wonderful place. We haven't really solved very many of the basic problems of society. We haven't eliminated poverty and we haven't avoided war. Why?

Perhaps the reason is that as people we haven't overcome our individual faults. The message of the New Year reminds us to take stock of our own characters, to meditate on the nature of human lacks. If we cannot eliminate poverty from the world, the reason probably is that too many of us are greedy - and if we cannot seem to avoid recurrent wars, the reason probably is that

too many of us are quarrelsome and suspicious and distrustful. The world cannot and will not become better until we as individuals show some improvement. In these days, when we talk about material reconversion of our manufacturing resources, we should also pay some attention to spiritual reconversion of our characters and our natures.

That is the meaning of the Jewish New Year - an opportunity to remake the world, on the basis of personal spiritual growth. The words of a famous Chasidic Rabbi best sum up this message: "Declare at all times, 'the world was created for my sake'. Do not declare, 'of what concern is this to me?' But do your share to add some improvement, to supply something that is missing, and to leave the world a little better for your sojourn in it."

In the coming year of 5705, we will have a real, not merely a symbolic chance at remaking our earth. With the fall of Germany sometime during the year ahead, and the fall of Japan we hope not more than a year later, we will have reached a cross-roads in history. Our future destiny will depend on our foresight and our understanding of political and economic

trends. Will we have peace in the future or World War III? Will we have prosperity or depression? We know what we want - are we mature enough, civilized enough, intelligent enough to choose ways and means which will lead us to peace and plenty, or are we going to lose this opportunity too, and achieve but a hollow victory?

These are questions for every man - Christian and Jew alike - to answer in his own soul. As we hear the clarion sound of the Shofar blown in the open synagogues and temples of the free lands, and in the secret hiding-places in the lands of oppression - we are thrilled and inspired by its challenging notes to go forth once again to the task of building a new world.

May the year 5705 bring understanding to our hearts, bring peace to this earth, and bring fulfillment to our hopes that a better society will emerge upon earth.