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MS-763: Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman Collection, 1930-2004.

Series H: United Jewish Appeal, 1945-1995.

Subseries 1: Sermons, Speeches and Writings, 1949-1982.

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Television appeal. 27 April 1957.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the
American Jewish Archives website.

Well -- you just have seen and heard the whole drama -- or at least flashes of it. Actually what you saw was a slice of the millennial history of the Jewish people, in all its tragedy and grandeur, its pathos and heroism. The Egyptian Jew of 1957 could have been his ancestor in 1257 BCE. The Isfaeli general could have been his forebear in the time of the Maccabees. The Polish Jew of 1957 might have been his own forefather in 1648. The American or Irish Jew of the democratic world might have been his own predecessor in any free land who was in position to help the others. There have always been those in flight, in need, driven, harassed -- as our people was shifted and shunted from east to west, from Babylonia to Spain to Germany to Turkey. And there have happily always been those who found haven and were able to rally and support the Holy Land and the Holy People less fortunate. The ebb and flow of Jewish history has matched the tides, with no one quite sure where the tidal wave would hit next -- but with one thing certain, that the whole people was indestructible because of its will to survive. In the 20th century it is clear that the challenge to our survival is one of the severest we have ever faced, because the wounds still being inflicted upon us are among the most grievous. But it is also clear that our response to this challenge is of the strongest -- because we have created Israel and are determined it shall be a clean and shining place where all may come who are hurt and where also those shall come who are not in pain but

who seek the wholesome safety of a rich and full Jewish destiny. If the challenge is severe, our response is even clearer. The wanderers shall wander no longer -- but all in flight shall come home.

This safety is bought with blood and treasure -- our people being called upon to lavish both upon the rocky soil to redeem it and rededicate it to use. We are one Jewish people -- and each of our segments gives in full measure what is called for -- either blood or treasure. We shall continue to do this until we conquer the 20th century, which will be accomplished, according to my reading of Jewish history, when the memory of Hitler fades as the splendor of Israel grows, and when the upheavals of great population transfers are completed. The convulsions in Eastern Europe will come to an end when the Jews there have successfully reached Israel -- the insecurity in the Moslem lands will come to an end when the Jews there have migrated or have been upgraded to full equality -- the emergency quality of life in Israel will come to an end when all the Jews there are fully absorbed and independent. Then our task will have come to an end -- and there will be a new balance of free and flourishing Jewries in Israel, America, Western Europe, other places. Ours in America is the duty to do this, for we have the means -- and our century has been assigned the task for this historic re-alignment of Jewish forces.

Some say that we in America will not have the endurance to stick

with this historic task. I do not believe it.

Some say that high qualities of generosity, sacrifice, patience, understanding cannot be sustained over long periods -- that these virtues are subject to fluctuations and their expression in concrete acts varies depending upon the state of tension in the environment. My own theory is that these virtues and qualities are constants, not variables, in the make up of the Jew. There is some variation in degree, but not in quality. At times, Jews are more generous, very patient, exceedingly understanding of a particular problem. At other times, they appear to be less so -- but this is only appearance. Underneath it all, there is a steady unflinching devotion manifesting itself in undiminished zeal. For many long years now, the Jews of America have managed to maintain themselves in a state of tension which has resulted in an annual concern over the financial needs of other segments of the Jewish people. Each year, sometimes with more enthusiasm, sometimes with less, but always with a highly developed sense of duty, our people has faced the recurring need of again mounting a campaign in large dimensions to alleviate suffering, strengthen Israel, save Jews. This is our covenant with destiny and I believe we shall fulfill it.

I believe we shall find the strength this year to be more generous/ even than we have been in the past. Sympathy is not enough. To cry over Hungarian Jews who fell into icy rivers seeking freedom is not enough. To weep over Egyptian Jews who were hounded penniless onto deportation boats, is not enough. To lament over Polish Jews once again on the march, is not enough. To anguish over North African Jews making the long trek out of centuries of backwardness is not enough. To thrill at Israel's Jews who are building and preparing and fighting so that the weary travellers may find that the Promised Land has at least some milk and honey is not enough. More than our sympathy and mood and emotion is needed. Our money is indispensable. Our pledges and our cash are the only tangible symbols of the feelings we profess. The Passover Exodus story is being rewritten in our day and must be paid for with a mountain of gold.

It is also not enough to expect that a few men in each community, no matter how noble or generous, will be able to provide the means to rescue people and build a land. There must be leaders and thank God there are in every community, so that we may all draw strength and inspiration from them. But this tremendous mission of reshaping 20th century history must find support among the millions of Jews in this land. Every man must play his role to the hilt.

I am speaking directly to the thousands of you in every city who may not be among the wealthiest and who may have thought that the size of your modest contribution did not really matter very much in the total magnitude of the campaign.

That is simply not so. If every one of you would have the feeling of how important your every last dollar was, I am certain more money would be raised. Believe me, if every person who gave 500 would give 1,000 -- if every person who gave 100 would give 500 -- if every person who gave 10 dollars would give 100 -- there would be millions and millions of extra dollars available to save lives and build Israel. I appeal to you to re-assess your gift, to re-think your contribution, to re-evaluate the good you can do. Thank God, there are men who can and do give in the tens and hundreds of thousands -- but if more men in the tens gave hundreds and more hundreds gave thousands, the more quickly would our heavy burdens be solved.

And while I am speaking of money, let me remind you of the promise Mr. Rosenwald made to Ambassador Eban a few moments ago. He said, of course, that the promise would not be carried out without your support. Won't you please give it? It is fine and wonderful for you to pledge -- to make the largest possible total pledge to the regular campaign and the rescue fund -- but we are desperately short of cash. We are faced with this mounting flood of

bills to pay for ships, planes, camps, housing -- and we need your help.

In all the communities, from now until the cash conference six weeks hence,

let there be a most intensive effort for the gathering in of the harvest of

money so that all may be nourished who need it. All of us must work our

hardest in the weeks ahead to see this cash goal realized. A great great

push is the order of the day.

Last Saturday in every synagogue around the world was read one of the most stirring passages in the literature of the human race. The thundering and awesome chapter of Kedoshim, Holiness, came forth from the Torah.

Let me render it in free translation:

"Thou shalt be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy..... thou shalt not stand idly by while the blood of thy neighbor is endangered --v.... but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself I am the Lord."

We do not stand idly by while our brothers are in trouble.

We know that our brothers are as ourselves, and we love them as we love ourselves.

We Jews of America know that the mantle of leadership has been placed upon our

shoulders, and we will not let it slip from us, else we will stand naked before

God and man. Ours is the charge to be holy and to be heroes -- we shall try with

all our might and main to be true to this destiny.