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

Series D: Education and Rabbinic Career, 1930-1993.

Subseries 3: Rabbinic Career, 1943-1993.

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Schweid, Mark. "The Maccabees of the Warsaw Ghetto." 1953.

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

January 20, 1953

Rabbi Herbert Friedman
Congregation Emanu El Jeshurun
2419 E. Kenwood Boulevard
Milwaukee 11, Wisconsin

Dear Rabbi:

As per your request:

" I have just re-read my manuscript of "The Maccabees of the Warsaw Ghetto". It contains all the freshness of the heroic tragedy, since it was produced at New York's Carnegie Hall in 1943, two months to the day after the great Uprising. The original was done in Yiddish, but I could have it in English if necessary. You do not state in your letter in what language you intend to present it. I regret that I cannot send you the only script that I possess, but am interested in the proposition. As you might know I was born and lived to my twentieth year in Warsaw.

If you should want me to prepare a script, it would greatly help the production if I knew a number of your preferences in the matter. Aside from the language, I should like to know the preferred running time and the possible number of participants."

Mark Schweid
340 East 15 Street
New York 3, N. Y.

Very sincerely,

JM: I

7/21

Rabbi: Remember, O Lord, the decimation of Thy people, be mindful of our woeful bereavement.

Cong: No generation in Israel's long and sorrowful chronicle has known a destruction as immense as we have witnessed in this age.

Rabbi: We have seen the design of the ancient tyrant well nigh accomplished in our day: "to destroy, to slay, and exterminate all Jews, both young and old, little children and women."

Cong: The household of Israel was devastated, its sanctuaries were desecrated, its houses of learning razed, its treasures looted; its elders and sages and guardians and people were slain.

Rabbi: With wanton cruelty and consummate craft, strange lethal devices were wielded against us to destroy us utterly.

Cong: We were accounted as sheep for slaughter. We were crushed into the dust and covered with the shadow of death.

Rabbi: Smitten, impaled and suffocated, burned, poisoned and buried alive, the hosts of Israel, perished in daylight and in darkness, in camps, in sealed box cars, in open fields, in murky forests, in foul tunnels.

Cong: Taken from the pursuit of their labors, from the study of Thy law, from their homes, from their hiding places and while fleeing from the relentless sword.

Rabbi: Remember, O Lord, the decimation of Thy people, be mindful of our vast bereavement.

Cantor:

קום לה אל עיר התהוה ובאת אל העצרות
ובעיניך תראה ובדרךך תמשש על הנדרות
ועל העצים ועל האבנים ועל גבי סייח הכתלים
את הדם הקרוש ואת הפח הנקשה של החללים.

Rabbi: Arise and go to the city of slaughter; walk through its streets and its courtyards. And behold with thine own eyes and touch with thine own hands the spattered blood and dried brains of the murdered.

Rabbi: Not for one "City of Slaughter" do we weep today, but for entire communities of Israel that were erased from the face of the earth. Not "Ten Martyrs of Caesar" do we mourn today, but the countless hosts of Israel who were consumed day after day and month after month in an incessant carnage. We lament the great mother congregations of Israel, that had borne our guardians and guides, our poets and thinkers and fighters and dreamers, which are no more.

Rabbi: From the depth of our anguish we call unto Thee, O Lord.

Cong: Hear our cry.

Rabbi: The voice of our brothers' blood cries unto Thee from our hearts.

Cong: See our anguish.

Rabbi: We relive the agony of our tortured brothers, the shame of our sisters, the scorn of our aged, the terror of our children.

Cong: To Thee, O Lord, we lift our voices in our sorrow and bereavement.

Rabbi: Answer us, O God, in the day we call unto Thee.

Cong: Vindicate our faith.

Rabbi: Tekel, Tekel--like words unseen
The handwriting inscribed upon the wall!
Not only we, the walls of every house,
The stone of every street knew our fate.
The birds and fishes knew, all of us knew,
The people all around us--they knew too:
We would be murdered, each of us was doomed;
No reason given; nothing to be done.
The order has been issued stark and plain:
Slaughter the Jewish people, child and man!

Rabbi: The voice of the Torah was stilled in the houses of learning and the chant of prayer in the houses of worship.

Cong: The lamp was extinguished.

Rabbi: Gone were the teachers and scholars, prudent of yeart and giants of intellect.

Cong: How were the mighty fallen!

Rabbi: Desolate were the theaters and houses of fellowship which had delighted and comforted the hearts of multitudes.

Cong: The hamlets were emptied in Israel, were emptied.

Rabbi: Israel's singers vanished, vanished his poets and artists, who had brought joy and comfort to the people.

Cong: Israel was orphaned.

Rabbi: Physicians ceased in Israel, and toilers, and tradesmen and merchants, and fighters who battled for the rights of men.

Cong: The paths of Israel were deserted.

Rabbi: It came to pass on the day when all the symagogues in the land were set on fire. And guards were ordered to protect adjoining buildings only. And merry crowds assembled before the burning sanctuaries to revile the Jews. Behold a Jew emerged from the midst of the crowd and ran through the guard. The mocking sentries shouted after him: "Whither runnest thou, O Jew?" And he cried: "I desire to pray." And they laughed at him: "Seest thou not that thy shrine is aflame?" But the Jew plunged on, saying: "A burning synagogue is also a house of God." And he vanished into the smoke.

Cantor:

כִּי תַעֲבֹר בְּפָנַי אֲתָהּ אֲנִי וּבְנִהְרֹתַי לֹא יִשְׁטַפּוּנִי .

כִּי תֵלֶךְ בְּמִוּאָשׁ לֹא תִכָּהֵן וּלְהִבָּה לֹא תִבְעֶר בְּךָ :

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Rabbi and Cong. in Unison: When thou passest through the waters, I will be with, and through the rivers, they shall not engulf thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

Rabbi: Remember, O Lord of Mercy, the souls of Thy martyred children, shelter them under the cover of Thy wings.

Cong: Remember, O Lord of Justice, the souls of the martyrs and heroes in Israel who rose up to defend their human honor and to sanctify Thine image imprinted upon the soul of man.

Rabbi: Grant Thine everlasting peace unto the heroes of Warsaw, of Bendin, of Tarnow, of Vilna, of Bialystok, of Treblinka, of the many lonely fighters in ghettos and murder-camps, who died with the last cry of the Martyrs on their lips: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One."

Cong: There is a mystic tie that joins, The children of the martyr race, In bonds of sympathy and love That time and change cannot efface.

For still in rev'rent tones is heard The sacred cry, always the same,
"O, Israel, hear, Our God is one, Blest be for aye His holy name!"

Rabbi and Cong. in Unison: May the Father of Mercies who dwelleth on high, in His abounding compassion, remember the pious and upright and blameless souls, the holy congregations that laid down their lives for the sanctification of His name. Beloved and faithful in life, they were not parted in death. May our God remember them for good with the other righteous souls of the world; as it is written: "For He that avengeth blood remembereth them; He hath not forgotten the cry of the humble."

Cantor:

אב הרחמים שוכן מרומים, ברחמי העצומים הוא יפקד ברחמים החסידים
והישרים והתמימים, קהלות הקדש שמסרו נפשם על קדש השם, הנאחזים
והנעיימים בחייהם ובמותם לא נפרדו. יזכרם אלהינו לטובה עם צדיקי
עולם, שנאמר: כי דורש דמים אותם זכר, לא שבח צעקת ענויים.

Rabbi and Cong: O Heavenly Father, remember the souls of all our brothers of
the House of Israel, who sacrificed their lives for the sanctification of
Thy Holy Name. May their souls be bound up in the bond of life, a living
blessing in our midst forever.

Silent Prayer

O God, our anguish is locked up within us and we are silent. In our
hearts we sanctify the memory of the multitudes who were silenced forever.
May our silence be heard to the end of the earth. May it stir the souls of
men and reach up to Thee, O Merciful Father. May Thy compassion descend and
Thy light shine upon us.

May the memory of all the dear and beloved, the helpless victims, the
holy martyrs and the valiant fighters, be ever enshrined in our hearts, and
never vanish from our thoughts, our will, our actions.

May our devotion to Thy service be rekindled as a lamp of memorial unto
them, a light that shall never be extinguished. Amen.

Cong: May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable
in Thy sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer. Amen.

Cantor:

אל מלא רחמים שוכן במרומים, הקצא מנוחה וכוונה בסתר כנפי השכינה,
במעלות קדושים וטהורים כזוהר הרקיע מזהירים לנשמות הקדושים והנשחטים
בימים האלה על ידי זדים פריצי עם במלכות אשכנז הרשעה, הפה הגוים
שקמו והרגו במחנה ישראל הרג רב, שפכו דם כמים ונגעו דמי אבות ויבנים.
ועתה יי יגדל גא כחה ועל עמך ישראל תרחם מהר, ותביא להם גאולה, ואת
נשמות הקדושים והנחרגים עליה תצור בצרור החיים, אפה הוא נחלתם
ונינוחו בשלום על משכבותם, ונאמר אמן :

Rabbi

O God full of compassion, Thou who dwellest on high, grant perfect rest beneath the sheltering wings of Thy presence, among the holy and the pure who shine as the brightness of the firmament, unto the souls of the martyred, the tortured, the slain of Israel in the dominion of arrogance and cruelty. The wicked tyrant crushed free nations and appointed wanton and ruthless masters over them to enslave and despoil and murder innocent people. They shed like water the blood of our brethren, until the blood of parents mingled with the blood of their children. The sword did bereave, the terror did crush, the famine did destroy the hosts of Israel. O Father of mercy, have compassion upon Thy children, the household of Israel; hasten Thy salvation unto the remnant of Thy people. Bind the souls of the martyrs in the bond of eternal life. Be Thou their possession, and may their repose be peace, till the coming of Thy kingdom. Amen.

Cantor:

1 2
אֲנִי מְאֲמִין, אֲנִי מְאֲמִין, אֲנִי מְאֲמִין בְּאֵמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה בְּבִיטָה
בְּאֵמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה בְּאֵמוּנָה וּבְתוֹרָה, וּבְאֵלֹהֵי הַמָּשִׁיחַ, וְנֹאף עַל פִּי שְׂיִתְחַתֵּמָה, עִם
יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְנֹאף עַל פִּי שְׂיִתְחַתֵּמָה, כֹּל זֶה אֲנִי מְאֲמִין. עִם כָּל זֶה אֲחַכֶּה
בְּמַלְכוּת שְׁמַיִם אֲנִי מְאֲמִין. לֹא בְּכָל יוֹם שְׂיִבּוּא.

Cong:

Ani-Ma-amin

Ani Ma-a-min, I do believe, Ani-ma-a-min
With all my heart and soul
In the God and in the Torah
and in the peoplehood of Yis-ro-el
We shall do and we shall understand,
Until the moral law becomes the law of all!

Responsive Reading

Rabbi:

In my distress, when I am overcome by misery and seized by anguish within the straits, I lift up mine eyes unto Thee, and Thou turnest my pain into hope and mine agony into comfort.

Cong: And Thy light shines upon me as the sun from amidst the clouds.

Rabbi: And Thou openest before me the gate of mercy and makest Thy presence a healing and a recovery to mine ailing soul.

Cong: Turn Thou, O God, our sorrow into solace and the vale of tears into a fountain of salvation.

Rabbi: I called upon Thee, O Lord, out of the lowest dungeon. Thou drewest near in the day that I called unto Thee. Thou saidest: "Fear not."

Cong: Thou, O Lord, hast pleaded the cause of my soul; Thou hast redeemed my life.

Rabbi: Thou hast opened the graves of the dead; Thou hast restored unto life the dry bones; Thou hast revived a doomed people.

Cong: Thou hast wrought a great deliverance unto the remnants of Israel; Thou hast gathered them from their captivity and returned them to the Land of Promise.

Rabbi: Thou hast brought them forth from bondage unto freedom, from darkness unto light, from fear unto safety.

Cong: O never say that you have reached the very end
Thou leaden skies a bitter future may portend
Because the hour for which we yearned will yet arrive
And our marching steps will thunder-WE SURVIVE.

ADORATION

Rabbi and Cong: Let us adore the ever-living God, and render praise unto Him who spread out the heavens and established the earth, whose glory is revealed in the heavens above and whose greatness is manifest throughout the world. He is our God; there is none else.

We bow the head in reverence, and worship the King of kings, the Holy One, praised be He.

וְאֵנִינוּ בְּרָעִים וְשֹׁמְרִים וְעוֹדִים לְפָנֶי מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמַּלְכִּים

הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא:

Rabbi: May the time not be distant, O God, when Thy name shall be worshiped in all the earth, when unbelief shall disappear and error be no more. We fervently pray that the day may come when all men shall invoke Thy name, when corruption and evil shall give way to purity and goodness, when superstition shall no longer enslave the mind, nor idolatry blind the eye, when all who dwell on earth shall know that to Thee alone every knee must bend and every tongue give homage. O may all, created in Thine image, recognize that they are brethren, so that, one in spirit and one in fellowship, they may be forever united before Thee. Then shall Thy kingdom be established on earth and the word of Thine ancient seer be fulfilled: The Lord will reign forever and ever.

Cong: On that day the Lord shall be One and His name shall be One.

BENEDICTION