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Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

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Assimilation, 1917.

ASSIMILATION

When we discussed the problem of anti-Semitism and its possible solution, we said that assimilation is not a solution for the problem of anti-Semitism because assimilation destroys the problem, it nullifies it. To answer the question by denying it is what assimilation would mean. It is as if someone would suggest to cure a patient by killing him, but this morning we shall frankly and honestly ask ourselves, "Is it not better perhaps that the patient be put out of his misery and suffering? Is it not perhaps more desirable that the Jew should assimilate? Why should the Jew not assimilate? Why should the Jew struggle to check the workings of a natural law? Is it not the law of nature that a minority should ultimately be absorbed by a majority? Why should the Jew in this age of great universalism insist upon his social and religious particularisms? Has not the Jew given to the world all that he may possibly hope to give? Is the time ripe for the Jew to leave the world into a general fusing and merging of all peoples, of all faiths, of all groups?" Why should the Jew assimilate. Now this is not purely an academic question. It is not an interesting bit of scholasticism. It is not as if, thoroughly secure in our own position, we were ruminating upon this problem as an interesting ~~XXXXX~~ scrap of mental speculation. Thousands of Jews are facing this problem every year and are solving this problem according to the dictates of their minds or hearts or environment. Thousands of Jews are yearly either assimilated outright or through intermarriage, paving the way for ultimate assimilation. Jewish history, my friends, knows of two types of assimilation - one is conversion practiced by the few and perhaps I might say, by the lowest, It is not prejudicial to our sister faith to say that very few of ~~XXXXX~~ our people become converts through conviction. Jews become converts for two reasons - first, because of persecution. They are too weak to endure the discriminations that people have hemmed into them round with. They want to escape the narrow sphere, the cramped life which Judaism of necessity puts them, hence they seek freedom, expansion, growth and conversion. Another group submits to conversion because of social or political

ambitions. In many lands the Jew is discriminated against, social barriers, political barriers, are in his way for advancement. The individual who feels his life is paramount, that his interests are more important than the interests of the group, decides to renounce his allegiance to a people, who at all times hampered his growth, and join in the great, fast world about him, where he can achieve his social, his political ambitions, but all in all, the number of Jews that actually submit to baptism is a negligible quantity. By far the greater number lost to us, is through intermarriage, for it is established beyond the shadow of a doubt that in most cases, though not in all cases, in most cases, the second or third generation, offspring of mixed marriages, are entirely lost to the community of Israel. Now whatever I shall say about the subject of intermarriage, I shall say purely and simply from the point of view of the Jewish group. I shall not discuss its advisability, I shall not discuss the felicity or infelicity that follows it. That is ^a purely individual affair. It does not at all come within the scope of our (x x x x) I shall speak of it solely from its effects upon the problem of preservation, self preservation. Intermarriage became a very pressing problem, since the emancipation of the Jews. In the olden days, three factors were operating against the spread of intermarriage. First - there was the strong community sense, there was an intense solidification among Jews. There was a strong bond of union that drew one Jew to another. The Jew felt a certain spiritual superiority, his religious ideals were more exalted.. It was a matter of his pride within him, not to merge with the people about him. There was an intense solidification of interests, of life, that worked against any possible tendency toward intermarriage. Then, the authority of the ceremonial religion was strong. Jewish life was dominated by a religious sense, a religion that was inevitably bound up with the social life of the people, a religion which prohibited intermarriage and whose prohibition was final as a guide of conduct for the Jews. Then, of course, the political, & the economical disabilities under which the Jew lived, the forcing of the Jew into close quarters, as it were, into a ghetto life. Even the church prohibited the marriage

of the non-Jew with the Jew, so that these three factors, strong communal spirit, authority of ~~XXX~~ religion, of law, and political, ~~XXX~~ economic and social disabilities made for an intense group life and made intermarriage almost impossible, but with the emancipation of the Jews that began with the French revolution, these three factors weakened; first of all, political and social barriers were removed, the ghetto walls tumbled, ~~XXX~~ the Jew spread through the world. He came into more intimate contact with his neighbors, he grew to know them better, and then again, the authority of the ceremonial religion was weakened. People came to look upon it as not closely identified with the group, and thirdly and perhaps as a result of the weakening of these two forces, the sense of communal solidification

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have contended that the fusing of races or peoples makes for a lower type, that the strong races are comparatively pure races. The ethnologists point to Italy, India, etc., as illustrations of groups whose intellectual and moral level has been lowered because of the fusing of various races and groups, and so they hold that the Jew because he represents (x x x) but on the contrary will make for a lowering, a degradation of the people because interbreeding or cross-breeding, so claim these ethnologists, make for a lowering of type.

Well, I shall not base my argument upon this theory. I am very distrustful of all ethnologists. This science is so much in its infancy that it is unfair to base the solution of any problem on their deductions. We shall await further developments.

I shall approach the problem from three angles, culturally, religiously and from the specifically Jewish, and we shall ~~XXX~~ endeavor to find out whether the Jew will contribute to the world culturally, whether he will contribute anything to the world religiously, and whether he will contribute anything to himself, through assimilation. If it is established that the Jew will benefit the world, culturally and religiously by assimilation, if the Jew will profit himself ~~XX~~ through merging, then we must be ready to acknowledge that

assimilation is the great, desirable thing and we should throw ourselves back of the movement, and facilitate and accelerate it. Cultures are products of history, a people cannot say to itself, "Go to, I shall now create a culture". A people that has lived much, and lived intellectually, a people that has experienced much and has profited by its experience, a people that has passed through grave crises and has enriched its soul by these crises and such a people will ultimately give expression to its own unique point of view in art, in literature, in what we call culture and culture is the embodiment of a soul, of a people, of a people's spiritual and moral expression. It is a spirit, of a people budded forth in music, literature, art, etc, in the things that make life beautiful. The older a people is, the more it has lived and experienced, the richer will its culture be. Now Israel has evolved such a culture. Three thousand years of history, manifold, variegated, experiences that cover all possible vicissitudes of life, lights and shadows, the (x x x) of victory and the darkness of defeat, and running through it all, like a golden thread, like a silver link uniting them all, (x xx) are the wonderful memories of sacrifices and martyrdom, all this glorious experience of three thousand years is now expressed in what we call a "Jewish culture" whose dominant note is moral and religious. The Jew will retain this culture, will enrich this culture as long as he remains (x x x) but this culture will die with the death of the Jew. The world needs ~~XXX~~ culture of all people. It is folly to believe that the ultimate goal of civilization is one culture of people, that we should be merged into one culture, that a sameness, a uniformity is desired, that one vast melting pot is the goal and ideal of civilization. A medley, a hodge-podge of culture and civilization is the thing most desirable. The melting pot theory is a lie. It is absurd. The world is made up of a beautiful garden of flowers. It is like a bright sky made up of many stars. It is like a prism radiating many colors. It is the actual spice of civilization. Sameness, monotony, never makes for progress in civilization. It is only through a crash of opinions, of life, that it is produced, it is only when rock strikes rock ~~X~~ that fire is produced, when flint strikes stone that a spark is produced. To enrich American life we must ask not for self-annihilation of all

with
the cultural units which American life has been blessed. No, we must rather ask for an intensification of all that exist in America. The world has too many (x x x) endeavors to make people of the same mold, shape and type. We are too burdened with them. What the world needs are men of originality, men who possess a peculiar type so that they can make a peculiar addition to the sum total of civilization. It needs more personalities, and the Jew, as a group, represents a culture and personality and the greatest contribution that he can make to the world is to retain his cultural life. A few days ago, in reading an article, by one whom I consider the greatest philosopher in the United States, Prof. John Dewey, I came across this thought-provoking statement, "The theory of the melting-pot," says professor Dewey, "always gave me, etc." The Jew will give nothing to the world culturally by destroying himself, but ^{he} will give much to the world by retaining his unique identity, and thereby the power of his three thousand years(xxxx)

From the viewpoint of religion, what will the Jew give to the world by assimilation - nothing. As long as Judaism remains in the arena, as a religion produced by millions of men, people must recognize (x x x) People may accept in the light (x x x) but they must reckon with it, they must guide themselves by it. It is a force in the world and it is a challenge to all faiths, to all religions. Judaism dead, has lost its power to challenge the minds of men, to make them justify their own faith by it, to make them reveal the strength of their own religion as contrasted with the weakness or strength of Judaism. It is (x x x) to the great Protestant element of the world. People need not accept it, but just because it lives, because it is a powerful influence in the world (x x x). With the Jew assimilated Judaism must pass into the realm of abstraction, as a relic with its great driving influence gone, and morally, think what the Jew has meant to the world. (x x x x) He was our inspiration, he was an example of the ideal over the real. He was a glorious evidence of the spirit of mind over matter.

Minority inspired by the ideal will never submit to the majority. ^aHe was living proof (xxxx) that truth crushed to earth will rise again. I am not speaking of it in eulogy (x x x) in a sane point of view (x x x) because the Jew lived and as long as the Jew lived, a drop in the great ocean, so long as the Jew lived he was an inspiration to all builders of castles of humanity, because every dreamer, who felt (x x x x) of the world in his body, would just look to Israel, victorious in its defeat, would just look to Israel, bleeding but triumphant, hurled from one place to another, but strong, resolute, determined to live, to fight, why Israel was an inspiration to every idealist in the world. With Israel gone, what a confession of weakness. (x x x x)

The Jew can give nothing to the world by assimilation, and what can the world give to the Jew through assimilation - nothing. What can ~~XXXXXX~~ the world give me, if I should this day sever my affiliation with the great past - nothing. I shall be cutting the arteries through which the life blood of 3000 years, the life blood of strength and inspiration (xxx).

I shall cut myself ~~XXX~~ from the past, I shall ^{be} wandering through the great world, a lost soul, a man without a past and without a future. What can the world give to the Jew - nothing, except material things (x x x x) so much ease, so much more comfort. But it is only the Esau that sells his birthright for a pot of lentils. It is only the cowardly and low, who will sell the heritage of 3000 years (x x x x) records of men who fought upon every people, just for the sake of personal and individual and material comforts. The world can give the Jew nothing by assimilation. The Jew can give the world much by remaining a Jew, culturally, religiously, morally, in every way. No, assimilation is not a desirable thing. The world does not want us to assimilate. The Jew himself does not want to assimilate. We have always lost numbers. Why, we lost ^{one of} half our ~~XXXXXXXX~~ people with the disappearance of the ten tribes, we lost perhaps 100,000 in Alexandria during the first ~~XXX~~ century of the Common Era. The rotten apple falls from the tree, it does not corrupt the tree. They fall from us, but Israel lives on. I believe we have the will to live, I believe that the great

masses of Israel are agitated by the desire to continue with the world. I believe that the great mountain of Israel which had withstood the suns and tempests of the ages, during ages of suffering and pers^ecution, will now that the sun of a bright day is shedding its rays upon us, not disintegrate. They are merely individuals in the coming spring and summer, but the mountain~~X~~ remains eternal, as God is eternal. We have the will~~X~~ to live. Why should I destroy myself. I am proud of my life, I want to live. That is, I believe, the dominant note of Jewish life today. It is only those who have drifted that ask themselves this question, "Should we lose ourselves?" A man who is in full possession of his health, his strength, never asks himself, "Should I kill myself?" It is only one who has suffered and is morbid, it is only ~~one~~ who is doubtful of the value of his life that asks him~~self~~ this question. The Jew who throws himself heart and soul into the (x x x) of Israel, never stops to ask himself this question, "Should I live or should I cease to live?" When Israel stood at Mt. Sinai and said all that the Lord had said (x x x) 6000 angels descended and placed weapons in the hands of Israel. As long as the Jew feels the inspiration of a great (x x x x)

It is only when the fires of Jewish inspiration are cold and dead (x x) that we succumb to the first onslaught of ~~XXXXX~~ life. We want to live. We want to give unto the world, the purity of our life, we want to live our own life because we~~X~~ feel we can be better and nobler, by living our own life. How to best to live (x x x x) growing menace, that perhaps we shall consider it some future time. The burden of ~~XXX~~ my message this morning, men and women, is this: "The Jew can give much to the world in remaining a Jew. He can give nothing to it in ceasing to be a Jew. " It is ~~XXX~~ as a drop of perfume. When the drop of perfume is kept by it~~self~~ it can send forth a beautiful aroma through the world. When the drop of perfume is cast into the ^{vast} ocean, it is gone, it is lost. Assimilation is a menace not to the Jew but to the world.

"assimilation"

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When we discussed the problem of anti-Semitism and its possible solution, we said that assimilation is not a solution for the problem of anti-Semitism because assimilation destroys the problem, it nullifies it. To answer the question by denying it  has assimilation would mean  as if someone would suggest to cure a patient by killing him, but this morning we shall frankly and honestly ask ourselves "Is it not better perhaps that the patient be put out of his

misery and suffering? Is it not
 perhaps more desirable that
 the Jew should assimilate?
 Why should the Jew ^{not} assimilate?
 Why should the Jew struggle
 to check the workings of a
 natural law? Is it not the
 law of nature that a
 minority should ultimately
 be absorbed by a majority?
 Why should the Jew in
 this age of great universalism
 insist upon his social and
 religious particularisms? Has
 not the Jew given to the world
 all that he may possibly
 have to give? Is the time not
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the world into a general
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 It is not as if, thoroughly
 secure in our own position,
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Thousands of Jews are facing
 this problem every year and
 are solving this problem
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(4)

of Jews are yearly either assimilated outright or through inter-marriage, paving the way for ultimate assimilation x Jewish history, my friends, knows of two types or two methods of Assimilation, - one is conversion practised by the few and perhaps I might say, by the lowest x It is not prejudicial to our sister faith to say that very few of our people become converts thru conviction x Jews become converts for two reasons - - first, because of persecution x They are too weak to endure the discrimina-

(5)

tions that people have hemmed
them round with x They
want to escape the narrow
sphere, the cramped life, into
which Judaism of necessity
puts them, hence, they
seek freedom, expansion,
growth and conversion.
Another group submits to
conversion because of social
or political ambitions x

In many lands the Jew is
discriminated against, social
barriers, political barriers,
are in his way for advance-
ment, - the individual who feels
his life is paramount, that
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6)

group, decide to renounce
his ~~religion~~ ^{allegiance} to a people,
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all in all the number
of Jews that actually
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far the greater number
lost to us, is thru inter-
marriage, for it is established
beyond the shadow of
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though not in all cases

(7)

in most cases, the second
or third generation, offspring
of mixed marriages, are
entirely lost to the community
of Israel x Now whatever I
shall say about the subject
of inter-marriage, I shall
say purely and simply
from the point of view
of the Jewish group x I
shall not discuss its
advisability, I shall not
discuss the felicity or
infelicity that follows it x
That is a purely individual
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of our problem? * I shall
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* Inter-marriage became
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social solidification among
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bond of union that drew
one Jew to another. * The
Jew felt a certain spiritual
superiority, his religious

ideals were more exalted x It was a matter of pride with him, not to merge with the people about him x

There was an intense solidification of interests of life, that worked against any possible tendency toward inter-marriage x Then, the authority of the ceremonial Religion (was strong) Jewish life was dominated by a religious sense, a religion that was inevitably bound up with the social life of the people, a religion which prohibited inter-marriage and whose prohibition was fatal as a guide of conduct for the Jews x

Then, of course, the political
 the economical disabilities
 under which the Jew lived,
 the forcing of the Jew into
 close quarters as it were,
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 the church prohibited
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 the emancipation of the Jews
 that began with the French
 Revolution, these three factors

(11)
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and social barriers were removed,
the ghetto walls trembled, the
Jew spread ~~out~~ thruout
the world x He came into
more intimate contact
with his neighbors, he grew
to know them better, and
then again the authority
of the Ceremonial Religion
was weakened x People came
to look upon it as not as
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of the group and thirdly, and
perhaps as a result of
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(19)
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Well, I shall not base
 my arguments upon this
 theory & I am very distrustful
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 is so much in its infancy
 that it is unfair to base the
 solution of any problem
 on their deductions & we
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 ments &

I shall approach the
 problem from three angles -
 culturally, religiously and from
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world culturally, whether he
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we must be ready to
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ourselves back of the movement
and facilitate and accelerate
it. Cultures are products
of history. a people cannot

say to itself - "So to I shall
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a people that has lived much,
and lived intellectually, a people
that has experienced much
and has profited by its
experience; a people that
has passed thru grave
crises and has enriched
its soul by these crises
and such people will ultimately
give expression to its own
unique point of view in art, in
literature in what we call
culture and culture is the em-
bodiment of a soul, of a people,
of a people's spiritual and moral
expression. It is a spirit,
of a people budded forth in
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things that make life beautiful.
 The older a people is, the more
 it has lived and experienced,
 the richer will its culture
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 years of history, manifold
 variegated, experiences that
 covered all possible vicissitudes of
 life, lights and shadows, the
 of victory and the darkness
 of defeat, and running thru it
 all; like a golden thread, like
 a silver link uniting them all,
 are the wonderful
 memories of sacrifice and
 martyrdom, all this glorious
 experience of three thousand
 years is now expressed in
 what we call a "Jewish
 Culture" whose dominant
 note is moral and religious.

The Jew will retain this culture,
 will enrich this culture as long
 as he remains
 but this culture will die with
 the death of the Jew x The world
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 It is folly to believe that
 the ultimate goal of civilization
 is ~~one~~ ^{one} culture of people
 all be merged into ^{that we should} one culture,
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 melting pot is the goal and
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 The world is made up of a
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 progress in civilization x
 It is only thru a crash of
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 rock strikes rock, that fire
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 Jew, as a group, represents
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 statement "The theory of the
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The Jew will give nothing
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 will give much to the world
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From the view-point of
 Religion, what will the Jew
 give to the world by
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 As long as Judaism remains
 in the arena, as a Religion

protected by millions of men
people must recognize the
people may accept as the
English but they

must reckon with it, they
must guide themselves by it x
it is a force in the world
and it is a challenge to all

facts, to all religious x
judgments the world has lost
its power to challenge.

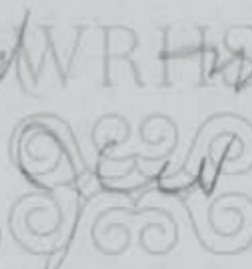
the minds of men, to make
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With the Jew
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was an inspiration, he
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Minority inspired by the ideal
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that truth crushed to earth
 will rise again x I am
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 eulogy in a
 same point of view —
 because the Jew lived, and as
 long as the Jew lived, a drop
 in the great ocean, so long
 as the Jew lived, he was
 an inspiration to all
 builders of castles of
 humanity, because every
 dreamer, who felt the
 shaft of the world
 in his body, would
 just look to Israel,
 victorious in its defeat,
 would just look to Israel
 bleeding but triumphant,
 hurled from one place

to another, but strong, resolute,
determined to live, & to fight,
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in the world, & with Israel
gone, what a confession
of weakness.

The Jew can give
nothing to the world by
assimilation, and what can
the world give to the Jew,
through assimilation, - nothing.

What can the world give
me, if I should this day
sever my affiliation with
the great past - nothing.

I shall be cutting the
arteries through which the
life blood of 3,000 years

the life-blood of strength and
inspiration

I shall cut myself from the
past, I shall be wandering
thru the great world, a lost
soul, a man without a
past and a man without
a future x What can the
world give to the Jew x
nothing, except material
things so much ease,
so much more comfort x
But it is only the Esau,
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is only the cowardly and
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 world can give the Jew nothing
 by assimilation x The Jew
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 culturally, religiously,
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 No, assimilation is not
 a desirable thing x The
 world does not want us
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 always lost members. Why we
 lost one half of our people
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during the first century of
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apple falls from the tree,
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I believe that the great
mountain of Israel which had
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in the coming spring and summer, but the mountain remains Eternal, as God is eternal x We have the will to live x Why should I destroy myself x I am proud of my life, I want to live x That is, I believe, the dominant note of Jewish life today x It is only those who have drifted that ask themselves this question "Should we lose ourselves?" a man who is in full possession of his health, his strength, never asks himself "Should I kill myself" x It is only one who has suffered and is marbled, it is only one who

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doubtful of the value of his
life that asks himself
this question x The Jew who
throws himself heart and
soul into the _____ of
Israel, never stops to ask
himself this question
"Should I live or should
I cease to live?" When
Israel stood at Mt Sinai
and said all that the
Lord has said _____
6,000 angels descended
and placed weapons in the
hands of Israel x As long
as the Jew feels the inspiration
of a great _____

It is only when the fires
of Jewish inspiration are

cold and dead⁽³⁷⁾)

that we succumb to the first
onslaught of life x We want
to live x We want to give unto
the world, the purity of our
life, we want to live our
own life because we feel
we can be better and
nobler, by living our own
life x How to best to live

growing menace, that perhaps
we shall consider it some future
time x The burden of my message
this morning, men and
women, is this The Jew can
give much to the world
in remaining a Jew x He
can give ~~much~~ nothing.
to it in ceasing to be a Jew x

It is as a drop of perfume
x When the drop of perfume
is kept by itself it can send
forth a beautiful aroma thru
the world x When the drop of
perfume is cast ~~up~~ into the
vast ocean, it is gone, it is
lost x Assimilation is a
menace not to the Jew
but to the world x

