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Organizing for Service, 1920.

LECTURE BY RABBI ABBA H. SILVER, ON
"ORGANIZING FOR SERVICE," AT THE TEMPLE
EAST 55th STREET AND CENTRAL AVENUE,
CLEVELAND, OHIO, SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY
11, 1920.

Mr. Roger W. Babson, in "Babson's Barometer Letter to Merchants, Bankers and Investors," writes as follows: "The need of the hour is not more legislation, the need of the hour is more religion. More religion is needed everywhere, *f* from the halls of congress to the factories, mines and forests. *It* is one thing to talk about plans and policies, but a plan and policy without a religious motive is like a watch without a spring or a body without the breath of life."

Now, Mr. Roger W. Babson is not addicted to the indicting of sermons, and one wonders why Mr. Babson writes to his clients that the greatest need of this great hour is religion. *The cure: Devil was with*

The Wall Street Journal editorially wrote as follows: "What America needs more than the railway extensions, and western irrigation, and a low tariff, and a bigger wheat crop, and a merchant marine and a new navy is a revival of piety--the kind mother and father used to have; piety that counted--to stop for daily prayer before breakfast and right in the middle of the harvest. Religion--

that is what we need now to clean this country of the filth of graft and of greed, petty and big, of the worship of fine houses, and big lands, and high office and grand social functions."

Now, the Wall Street Journal is not, ^{a religious journal} as a rule, a journal for religious preaching. One wonders why a newspaper devoted almost exclusively to financial and industrial concerns pauses, if but for a moment, to remind its clients and readers that the greatest need of the hour is not extension and accumulation and increase of wealth, but that the greatest need of the hour is piety and religion.

fact ~~I believe the reason is a very simple one.~~ The big men of business in America, as well as the big industrial leaders of the world, have come to realize that the thing that is wrong with our industrial organization is not this injustice or that injustice, not this piece of inequality or that piece of inequality, not this bad law or that bad law, but that the thing that is wrong with our industrial organization is ~~(its heart, its soul)~~ its propelling motive. They have come to realize what religious teachers have proclaimed for decades--that the inspiring principle of our economic life has been and is, not service but profit, not men but money, not God but mammon.

Now, I do not wish to indulge in futile cavil or criticism. I do not desire to fall prey to the easy-

going pastime of reformers in decrying and denouncing the commercialism or materialism of our age. That leads nowhere. Commerce and industry and business are not to be denounced. They are essentially in our life. The old saying of our rabbis comes back to us--"Where there is no bread there can be no scholarly pursuits, no arts and no sciences."

Nor are we inspired to speak perhaps a bit in criticism of some teachers of our commercial or economic organization because we are tantalized by the vision of absolute perfection. We are not blind to the fact that perfection is impossible in this all too imperfect world. We are all too aware of the fact that what the world needs today is not a tantalizing will-o'-the-wisp, a vision of absolute perfection of justice and righteousness. What the world needs today is to be shown what the next step is, what the best thing to do is, not what the ultimate perfect ideal is.

I recall, too, that wise saying of the rabbis--"The children of Israel do not need the teachings of the Messiah." It is not the Messianic doctrines and teachings and ideals that can help us. It is the more immediate, the more direct, the less perfect, the more feasible and practical helps for amelioration and improvement that society stands in need of today. And let me remind you also that it is not because we are a disciple of this economic theory or that, that we indulge in an occasional

analysis or criticism; it is not that we are a follower of another economic philosophy or institution. We have little faith in theories and philosophies and institutions altogether. Institutions are not divined in and by themselves. It is life and human needs and the compelling necessities of social life that bring into existence institutions, and that destroy these very institutions when they have served their purposes. They become like outworn shells on life's tempestuous shores.

I have said more than once, and I cannot help repeating, that there is not anything inherently sacred or divine in private property or capitalism or democracy or trade unionism or the soviet. They are all blind gropings, experiments of an on-rushing human need. They are attempts to embody in concrete form an undying hunger of the human soul for greater freedom and wider vistas of life.

Institutions are of little consequence. What we are concerned with is human advancement. That is our holy cause that challenges our initiative, our emotions, our loyalty. Anything that thwarts the advancement of human life, we are sworn enemies of, even if that particular institution may be ~~old~~ and respectable and long established. And anything that advances and enhances human life and adds to it a new beauty and a new charm and a new grace, we are the plighted friends of, even if that particular institution may be new and terribly shocking.

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~~shocking.~~

Our present organization has been challenged on the ground that it has failed to serve; and we who believe in the present economic organization must either justify it, or reform it, or give way for a new experiment.

You will agree with me, I am quite sure, when I say that every social institution must serve the needs of society, and that the true standard of evaluation is service. You will agree with me, I am quite sure, when I say that art must beautify life, that science must explain life, that literature must interpret life, that medicine must protect life, that religion must elevate life. Every institution, every department of our social organization is a means and not an end in itself, a means to serve life. And industry and business, inasmuch as they, too, are a department of human life, must serve life, must create the wherewithal of life, must be subservient to the higher needs of life.

You will agree with me, I am quite sure when I say that our standard of evaluation for all other departments of society is service. The great artist, we say, is not a man who has succeeded in turning out a great number of pictures and selling them, but the great artist is the man who has succeeded in creating a great picture and is bestowing the gift of a newfound beauty upon humanity. The great scientist is not the man who has

succeeded in commercializing some little invention, but the man who has succeeded in giving some great discovery to humanity. The great physician is not the man who has treated the largest number of patients and accumulated the greatest amount of remuneration. The great physician is the man who has brought a new healing doctrine or principle into society. And the great minister is not one who has succeeded in amassing a fortune in his ministry, but one who has succeeded in touching some souls with the burning fingers of his life's inspiration.

But the great business man, as we commonly take it, is simply the man who has succeeded in making a lot of money, irrespective of the amount of production he has contributed to society, irrespective of the means employed in the acquisition of the wealth. He may have amassed a fortune simply by financial juggling, not having created one ounce of real productive value and bestowed it upon society.

What does that mean? It means that the standards we apply to all else are not standards that we apply as yet to industry, and we maintain the same standard of service must be applied to business and commerce and industry as is applied to art, to science, to medicine, to law, to the ministry. There is but one law for life. Business is not a law unto itself. Business ^{is Business} is a damnable doctrine. If it is wrong for an artist to create cheap pictures in order to sell them broadcast, it is wrong

for a manufacturer to create dishonest and cheap goods. If it is wrong for a physician to limit the number of cases that he attends, in order to charge more for his services, it is wrong for an operator artificially to limit the output of his industry in order to stimulate prices. And if it is wrong for a minister to devote his life and his profession to the accumulation of wealth only, it is wrong for a merchant and a business man to devote his profession, his energies, his talents, his ingenuity to the acquisition of money only. There can be but one law for life.

Now, what is basically wrong with our industrial organization? Just simply a wrong attitude, a wrong point of view, a false direction. That's all. The motive of industry is profit. The motive of industry should be service. Big business came into existence because of service. Great corporations developed in our land because they were able to serve better, cheaper, more efficiently. The motive that called them into existence was a laudable one, but big business soon lost its vision and its purpose, and, drunk by the great power which it won through intensive organization and the monopoly of industry, it forgot its ^{raison d'être,} its cause for existence, and substituted profits for service, and the public be damned.

Big business first victimized the public by artificial prices, and then victimized the government

and legislatures and courts and made life and society subservient to business instead of making business subservient to society. And then it victimized the working man. Big business, of necessity, brought about a frightful impersonality in industry, an abstractness. The responsible owner seldom knew not alone the men that worked for him, but the conditions under which they worked. The responsible owner, in many instances, was not merely a producer, but merely a financier. And the working man became a cog in a great machine, a tool; the human element of him was not only relegated to the background, but, by a successful introduction of machinery, the human element was eliminated as far as possible. Industry began to demand a type of laborer that was blind and plastic and yielding and dull, one that could be made an adjunct of a machine.

In 1909 the United States Steel Corporation advertised as follows: "Wanted, tanners, catchers and helpers to work in open shops. Syrians, Poles and Roumanians preferred." And why? Because these were better workmen, more skilled? No. Because these were the type of working men that could be made most easily to serve as automatons in industry. They are the most yielding, the most uncomplaining; they are closest to tools. And now the same corporation, with these dull, stunted, half-human brutes, began to see the light of day and began to demand certain rights and privileges, --

the same corporation that scoured Europe for these Poles, Syrians and Roumanians, turned upon them and said, "The damn foreigners are causing all the trouble."

What is wrong with our industrial organization? The point of view. Profit. Every concession that big business made to the advancement of human life up to the last few years was wrested, forced against its will, from it. That would not have been the case if the motive back of big business was service and social utility.

Now, we believe that our industrial organization has not yet said its last say. We believe that it has not proved a failure, and we are ^{not} ready to sacrifice it blindly for some wild theory that is still in the precarious period of experiment. We believe that our economic organization of private ownership and competition may become productive of the highest good and may serve the highest needs of society, if the new motive that has dawned upon thousands of progressive American business men becomes universal throughout our land. And the new motive must be--service; and it must be based upon the following principles: first of all, ☒ that life and happiness were meant for all. That is one of those tremendous and terrific ^{but} simplicities that ~~is~~ ^{are} frequently overlooked. There are no privileged children in the eyes of God. The avenues which lead to the higher life and to the greater happiness must not be closed by

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ignorance, by disability against anyone who toils honestly. And, secondly, that industry must make for life and for happiness or it is an abomination in the sight of God and of men. Industry must make for happy homes, for healthy children, for independent and self-respecting men and women.

If industry does not make for life and happiness, if it dooms millions to dull, deadening slavery; if it brutalizes millions through a frightful monotony; if it surrounds God's children with squalor and dirt and filth, it is an enemy of society. Industry must make possible life and happiness.

And the third principle which is requisite for the new organization for service is this: that every business man and every employer of labor and every large corporation must realize this fundamental truth-- that life, the life of anyone who works is immeasurably and tremendously important and primary; that one life is more important than the whole of one's industry; that the concern of society is man and not money, and that the aim of society is not to create wealth but to create high types of men and women, to build character. Industry, which, after all, consumes the greatest energy of every human being, must mold character and develop personalities and refine the souls of the working men, for, after all, the shop and the factory are the workingman's school.

~~Industry must give the man a chance to develop that which~~

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Industry must give ~~the~~ ^{man} ~~man~~ a chance to develop
is best in him, to bring out his latent gifts and talents.

✓
to give a chance to the adventurous spirit of the human being. It must not, through an intensive subdivision of labor, concentrate man's energy and ingenuity upon one petty detail in production, so that the man is dull and stupified and his usefulness as an intelligent social agent in a democracy is gone.

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Industry must grant opportunity to men for self culture. The workingman must be given the opportunity and the inspiration to cultivate the finer instincts and sentiments and emotions within him. And he must be given time to play. As a nation we have forgotten how to play. That applies to businessmen and to working men, to rich man and to poor man. Even our pleasures are strenuous and hectic and feverish. We have forgotten how to enjoy our lives. We rush and scramble and tear on feverishly, blindly. But whither? Nowhere. We have lost the gift of enjoying life.

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Industry, furthermore, must not create wealth in order to alleviate poverty, but industry must destroy poverty by making exploitation impossible, by training the inefficient and rehabilitating the broken lives. And, finally, industry must be rewarded for service and service only. Whether it be capital or labor, the amount of reward one receives must depend entirely and exclusively upon the honest service rendered.

It has been truly said that every dollar which

capital takes and does not earn is a dollar taken from a workingman who earned it but did not get it. ~~And~~ a high wage for a big day's work. In that respect, labor, too, must realize this fact, that you cannot shorten hours indefinitely, and decrease production indefinitely, and expect wages to rise indefinitely. Reward must depend upon service--opportunity for all and privilege for none. We are destroying privilege in our political life; we must destroy it also in our industrial life.

What we need, then, is a simple, honest, wholesome revival of religious sentiments, and inject these sentiments into our business organization. We must make industry missionary. We must give it a purpose and a mission in life higher than mere selfishness and greed and acquisitiveness and profit.

Now, am I preaching altruism? Am I preaching ideals that have no local habitation ~~or~~ ^{and} a name? I hope not. I am preaching something that is practical and that pays in the long run. It is one thing that will not only add dignity, grace and beauty to our industrial life, but it is the one thing that will save it.

I read in an article: "In reality all labor, whether of head or hands, is simply service, and it is a dishonest service if you exact more than you give, whether in service returned or money paid, for money is only a documentary claim on the labor of others. After our essential wants are provided for, there is no greater

satisfaction in life than reverence; and there is no human faculty that has a wider field in the world around us than the heaven above us and in the hearts and arts of our fellow men and women. Teach all men to serve rightly real art, real literature, real science, real labor, and share all these with them, and you need not fear that they will tear your tapestries, loot your libraries, or fling sand into the wheels of your machinery, industrially or socially, much less crush human life. Society must stop sending its children into the anarchists for instruction. She must teach them herself. Men have been taught to hate, to kill, to destroy. It is time that they were taught to love, to cherish, to construct. Destruction is a closed curve, and only leads back to the ruin it has wrought. Construction is an infinite spire that attains heaven at last and vanishes among the stars."

Yes, Mr. Babson and the Wall Street Journal are correct in their conclusion. What we need today more than anything else is God. We must throw open the doors of our shops and factories and stores so that God Himself can enter in. What we need is an elevating motive, a new impulse, a transcending ideal, a purifying passion, a new heart and a new soul. Everything else will come, if the will is there.

Our rabbis truly said, "when the children of Israel stood around Mt. Sinai," All that the Lord hath

spoken we shall do." As we have heard, six hundred thousand angels descended and placed weapons in their hands. All that we need is a holy conviction and a sacred determination to do the thing that is right, and make of ourselves, in whatever department of life we may be, whether our job be great^{or}/small, significant or insignificant--to make of that a service consecrated and noble to the cause of humanity.



1. Anyb - Rat - Mistle - You tell him Every thing
- 2000 3 times. P. - 500 - 1000 -

2. no cavil - no civil without propriety.
no Perfection - ~~Pro~~

- (1) Rome
- (2) Life is imperfect - Evolution
- (3) Cannot be made perfect in a day.
a. crawls b. dance c. patience

Handwritten: *Handwritten*

Synonyms.

Nothing divine in systems or institutions.
cannot have system.

Successive experiments in
details.

Test. whatever advances life
- however new -

3. Present Ag. challenged. Justify it.
① We must become critical of ourselves —

② Reactionary is Bolshevik.

② ~~There was a lot of soul-searching~~
~~2-2-70 - 7-10-70 - 1-1-71~~

②. Same point went 50 on -
now in period of depression

4. Remember - I have no Care - all.

5. All workers must serve.

- ① Great Scientist -
- ② Business 2 juggling?

Double Standard - If it is War

6. Motives of Industry - Profit
- ① Corporations - Public - Govt -
 - ② ^{workers} Expatriation - Immigration
 - ③ Improvements in labor - washed

7. Our system not, as said last day.

- ① New Note - already stuck.

-
- ① Happiness meant for All.
 - ② Industry must make for the people not down
 - ③ Life is primary and sacred
 - ④ War - one life is more important
 - ⑤ concern of society -
 - ⑥ Ind. must make for self-culture
 - ⑦ Make workman proud of his job.
 - ⑧ Stone-cutters
 - ⑨ ~~to make a name for himself~~

7- Americans first.

- ① Reach of old world
- ② Plenty here -
- ③ One spent.

1. No civil - Perfect System.
2. Org. has been challenged. Justify.
3. All institutions must serve.
great scientist - Univ. Wars
4. Nation & Ind. is profit - Corporation
 1. Syrians prepared.
 2. Every concession on works
5. Our system not yet said Cal. say.
 1. Happiness meant for all.
1. Gradually must relate to happiness
and only through war
 2. Life sacred - war -
 3. Ind. must make for self - cast.
 4. Wealth reward for service
6. American part - Relg, or