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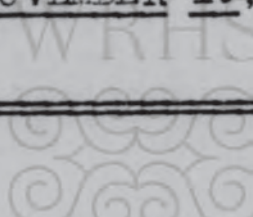
The Need of Hope, 1922.

LECTURE BY RABBI ABBA H. SILVER

SUBJECT: THE NEED OF HOPE.

AT THE TEMPLE, SUNDAY MORNING,

NOVEMBER 19, 1922, CLEVELAND, O.



JOSEPH T. KRAUS
Shorthand
Reporter
CLEVELAND

Last week I spoke of man's need of God, and I said that man needs God in order to give to him a sense of aloneness in the universe, in order to give to him a sense of permanence in the world, a sense of dignity and a hope. This morning I shall speak on the need of hope, which is, after all, but another phase of the need of God, for God is hope.

I called the subject the need of hope and not the need of ideals because, as we shall see in a moment, there can be no ideals without hope, and because, in the second place, there are some religions that do not believe in hope; there are some religions that are frankly fatalistic; the world is fixed, predetermined; the laws are immutable and set for all time, and man's efforts are of no avail in turning the predetermined purpose one iota; God is transcendent, God lives above; after He completed the world the world was complete, finished; and man's hopes and efforts and struggles are of no avail; there is hope for man but not in this world but in the next world.

I suppose that is what the gentle cynic of the Bible--Kohелеth--had in mind when he said, "What avail is there for man in all his labors under the sun? There is none." And then there are some religions that believe that hope is not only futile but highly undesirable; there are some religions that are dominated with a spirit of what has

come to be known as oriental annihilism, who believe that all effort is evil, that life itself and existence itself is evil, that the ideal is to become annihilated, to lose ourselves, our individuality, our personality in the great Over-Soul, the All-Soul of the universe; that the ideal of life is to be the ideal of a little drop of water that wants to return to the great sea and lose itself in the great sea; that the freedom of the will and the exercise of one's initiative are positive evils.

Our religion is neither fatalistic religion nor is it dominated by oriental annihilism; our religion is a messianic religion, a religion of the peoples in a golden age yet to come; our religion is conceived in faith and in hope, and is stirred and urged on by a vision of ultimate perfection. We believe that God is not only transcendent but imminent, resident in the lives and in the souls of men, working there; and we believe, as far as the moral life of man is concerned, there are vast spheres there for the exercise of free will and our own initiative; that there are spheres and realms where the immutable laws of nature do not apply, where man is free, where man is the creator of and by himself, and these spheres are the spheres of human ideals.

It is in our ideals that we are free and in our ideals that we are really creators. The difference between an idea and an ideal is just this: our ideas are given to us; our ideals we originate. Our ideas of space and time,

all the information that our five senses bring unto us, are given to us by the outside world, by our physical environment; we learn of them by contact with external objective realities. We know of heat because we touch some hot object. These things come to us from without. But our ideals of truth and goodness and beauty, our aspirations, our out-reachings for higher qualities and higher values,--these things do not come to us from without at all: they come from those deepest, inner springs of our spirit, those silent, unplumbed depths of our souls. These things, somehow, we ourselves create.

And we create ideals only as we have hope. If you believe that the world is controlled by blind, unchanging forces and you are a plaything in this scheme of things, then your ideals, even if you have them, will have no value, because the sense of futility will paralyze all your efforts. To have an ideal you must have hope--hope in the world, hope in life, hope in the continuous evolution and perfection of mankind, hope that things are growing better and better, and that you, through your ideals, are helping to make things better and better.

One of the greatest loyalties which a man can have is loyalty to hope. We must hope even when our experiences tell us not to. It may very well be that the experiences of your life and my life will tell us that there is no such thing as progress, that things never progress, that things only change, that we are merely growing different and not

better. It may be that Koheleth was right when he said, "The sphere, the cycle, moves round and round and round, always returning to the point whence we start." That there is no progressive movement in the world, that there is no far off ^{mine} definite event to which the whole creation moves.

I say even if our experiences should tell us that, we, out of loyalty to hope, out of loyalty to man's great capacities, must discount our experience. We must say to ourselves that our experiences are too inadequate and too limited to justify such a generalization and such a vast conclusion, and we must, in spite of ourselves, continue to hope, for that is the breath of life. There are many depths in the world but there is none so deep, so hopeless, so awful, so crushing as the depth of despondency, of hopelessness.

Man, my friends, is by nature a creature of ideals and a creator of ideals. That is what makes us men, that is what makes us different from the beasts of the field--the leaven that is within us, the restlessness that agitates our mortal frame. What man is there, my friends, who at some time or other in his life, however prosperous he may be, however full his life may be, but who does not experience a certain inarticulate, vague, unaccountable sorrowing and yearning for realms unknown to his conscience or experience, but anticipated by the affections of his heart.

Somehow we hunger for things which are not visible to our naked eye at the moment; somehow our soul seems to

divine that there is much more of beauty and much more of freedom in life than we are at the given moment in possession of; somehow there is in our souls an insatiable desire for the limitless horizons, for the endless fields of splendor for which there seems to be no warrant at all in our past or present experiences. There is a propulsion of the soul for something vague, intangible, but somehow tremendously real to it.

You recall that verse of the poet who said,
"Like the tide on a crescent sea beach,
when the moon is narrow and thin;

Into our hearts high yearnings come
welling and surging in.

Come from the mighty ocean, whose
brim no man has trod;

Some of us call it longing, others call it God."

And not only do we experience these longings but we set out to reach them, to realize them. We say that necessity is the mother of invention; and that is true. But it is not physical necessity alone that is the mother of invention; there is a stronger, more imperious necessity in the human soul--an inner urge, an inner compulsion which makes us invent that which will satisfy the hunger and thirst of our soul. There is an inner necessity in the human soul for mastery; we want to master life, we want to dispel all darkness, we want to enter, we want to conquer, we want to surmount every obstacle, we want to rise.

That is the restlessness, that is man's precious legacy from the beginning of time. We fly today. And why? Man can get along very well without flying; he has for thousands of years. But we fly today not because there was an actual, physical necessity,---Man could have existed upon this earth without it---but because he wanted to master a realm which baffled him. There was nothing in the past history of man to justify him in his desire to fly. Only the birds fly; and he wanted to be, as far as flight is concerned, like unto the bird. And that is what distinguishes man from the bird. The birds have been with man as long as man has been with the birds, and yet man tries to imitate the bird in its flight, while the bird does not imitate man, say in his tool making gifts, or in his fire using gifts; because man is not content with the limitations which nature somehow has imposed upon him, he wants to break through every confining wall, he wants expansion of spirit, he wants mastery.

And that is where his ideals originate--in the very nature of his being. We have a vision of perfection; and that is the difference between us and animals. We know that we are incomplete; the animal does not know that it is incomplete. We want to be complete; and that is the source of all our ideals. You take the artist, the painter, the musician, the sculptor, the poet, when they create they try to do something that will be not only as good as the best that is already in existence in their particular art, but they try to go far beyond it, to excel it; they try to reach

out and create a new value and a new quality. And what ideal do they feel, what model do they use, what standards do they have? Why, they have none. The only standards which they have are the standards that apply to them by their own vision, the vision that is resident in their soul, the vision of perfection and completion which they try to approximate. That is where their ideals originate.

And we live only, friends, as we give this yearning of our souls scope and play. William James wrote a very interesting lecture on "What Makes Life Significant"--a lecture he delivered before a body of students. And he asked this question: "Why is it that an ordinary man who digs a ditch is without honor, without praise, without eulogy? In fact, he is often looked down upon--an unskilled laborer. And a soldier who may dig the same ditch is honored and praised and eulogized." Why is it that a beggar, an ordinary beggar, will often be looked upon with contempt and derision--whenever we do not look upon him with pity? While St. Francis, who voluntarily assumes poverty, who gave up home and position and wealth and luxury and becomes poor, is immortalized and who becomes an inspiration to the world?

What is the difference? Why just this: it is the difference between an ideal and the absence of one. In the one case you have a man doing a menial task, unconsecrated by any high motive or any high purpose or any high ideal; in the other case presumably and supposedly they are doing these menial tasks for the sake of some high ideal--of patriotism,

or the salvation of the world, or God. Their work is ennobled and exalted by an ideal.

It is not the condition or the fact that determines the worth of the thing; it is the cause of the condition and the cause of the fact that ultimately determines its value. You take the Jew and his suffering. There have been other peoples who have suffered. Why does the Jew stand today as the supreme and superb example of courage and valor and idealism? Why, it is not the fact of his suffering, it is not the condition of his suffering: it is what prompted and brought about his suffering, it is that his suffering and his sorrow of centuries is vicarious, is sacrificial, it is that he permitted himself to be torn upon the rack of universal hate for the sake of an ideal, it is that he gave the blood and the sweat of his soul and his body to serve some holy, ultimate, magnificent purpose of humanity, that his condition becomes transfigured and exalted.

And it is so with every fact of life. We may be poor and we may be doing the most menial things--drudgery, and yet if we are doing these things for the sake of something greater and finer and nobler, if we are doing these things in order to increase the good of the human soul, the domain of the human spirit, then our tasks assume the cloak of sublimity.

That is the value of ideals, my friends, and that is why we need ideals. Ideals give significance to life; but they give much more: they give zest and relish and pictur-

esqueness and grace to life. I am sometimes tempted to compare this community--and for that matter any other community--during the days of the war and today. The same men and women, the same citizens, and yet do you recall your community during the days of the war? Why, it seems as though the citizens of our city had been lifted bodily out of themselves; they seemed to have been exalted and transformed by some great purpose, some noble ideal; life was intense, life was eager, life was full of purpose and curiosity; there was zest in life, there was worth in it--even though we had to pay the tragic price which we paid in sacrifice and in blood.

But today life has become very much drab and gray and ordinary and monotonous. I speak now of the community and of all communities. We have settled down to the slow, dragging existence. Why? Because there seems to have departed from us the thrilling, pulsating, vitalizing, stimulating ideal; the gravity, the pull, the downward pull has claimed us, and the lift is no longer there.

It is only ideals, my friends, that save us from the low stagnation level. Those of you who have followed American literature lately, and the American novel especially, know exactly what I mean. There seems to be a revolt on the part of the young American school of writers against just this sort of thing--the dreariness and the emptiness and the sordidness, and with it the self-complacency and the stupid self-contentment of the American people. You read "Brass"

and you read "Cytheria," and you read "Main Street," and you read "Dust," and you read "Babbitt," and you read "The Beautiful and the Damned," and you read "The Spoon River Anthology," and you read "Dawn,"--and what is the note that they all strike? Why, it is just this: the heart-breaking, soul-crushing, monotonous life of the American people in the village and in the city. It is a life that is untouched by the burning fingers of some unknown splendor; it is a life that has no hazard and no daring and no curiosity and no purpose; there is no outreaching for the finer things of life. It is tame, and with the tameness goes even the absence of a sense of incompleteness, which is the real tragedy.

If we were incomplete, as we are, and knew it, if we were conscious of our defects, there would be some saving grace in our lives; but we are content to be what we are because we are smugly satisfied with ourselves; because, forsooth, we have prosperity, an abundance of corn, an abundance of crops, an abundance of coal, and we are content with our culture and our civilization.

I don't know of any more tragic figure in the world--and I know that you don't--than a well fed, satiated, round-bellied, contented, weary, prosperous American business man--one who does not possess even the saving grace of wanting something beyond his reach. And if there is any one thing that gives charm to our life it is just this: that we want something beyond our reach, and we exert ourselves, our mind and our soul, to reach that will'-e-the-wisp--that something.

It is not enough, my friends, to be proper and to be conventional. It is not even enough to be what we sometimes call refined. We need the significance and the zest of ideals, we need the glory and the pain of supreme loyalties. Life is beautiful when it is on the rack--as William James says, when it is in extremis--when it is stirring, when it is pulsating with some magnificent purpose.

Now, there is need for such ideals in our lives today. Do not for a moment think that our civilization is perfect; we are at the very beginning of things; we are just disentangling ourselves from chaos; as Metternich says, we are still in the hunting stage, we are still in the killing stage, we are still in the competitive stage, we are still in a stage of vast illiteracy and ignorance, we are still in the stage of being disease-laden, we are still in the stage of poverty and misery and want, we are still in the stage of unadjustment or lack of adjustment, we are still in a frightful stage of incompleteness; we are at the very beginning of things.

And what civilization needs today in everyone of its departments--political, economic, social, religious, cultural--is loyalty to high ideals, zeal, enthusiasm, eagerness, curiosity, the spirit of adventure, the spirit of high enterprise, the love of travel, the high places of the world, to surmount the insurmountable heights, a ceaseless aspiring.

What civilization needs today, what you and I need

in our lives to make us feel life in the real sense of the word, athrob with life, drinking deep of the eternity of every minute, crowding the hours of our days with all the beauty we can crowd into them,--what we need is hope, and what we need is faith, and what we need are ideals--"to perfect the world according to the vision of the kingdom of God which is within us."

That is why we need ideals, and that is my message, more especially to the young men and the young women, who somehow seem to be following in the footsteps of their elders, whose lives are uninteresting, whose lives are dull, who have very little in their lives outside of the concerns of their business or professional life. These young men and women, on the thresholds of life's supreme adventure, ought to remember that there is but one thing that gives significance and zest and worthwhileness to life, one thing that unifies our lives, that draws together the scattered bits of our fragmentary existence, and that is a supreme loyalty to some great transcendent ideal, whatever it be--an ideal which you can find in your own sphere, in your own home, in your own profession, in your own shop--some ideal which will draw you to the great eternal spirit which moves and works through the race of men.

"Seek me and live." Seek God through the longings and the yearnings and the promptings of your God-given souls!"

ABBA HILLEL SILVER, RABBI
THE TEMPLE

The Temple, Cleveland

EAST 55TH STREET AND CENTRAL
OFFICE HOURS: 9:00 TO 5:00
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BENJ. LOWENSTEIN, PRESIDENT
1323 WEST NINTH STREET

1. Last WEEK. Need of God. - God needed to give
.... Hope.
2. To-day. Need of Hope - One with need of God.
God is Hope - See
 - ① Some religions fatalistic. Transcendent. His
hope was in Heaven. *Heb 6: 13/11/12/13/14*
 - ② Others no value to Hope - progress. Free
will - ^{Existence is evil} Nirvana, Whirl of Waters.
3. True Rel. is neither fatalistic, no nihilistic but
Messianic. God immanent, Man-free.
Sphere where man is Creator!
4. Center in his Ideals! ^{As he} Ideals vs. Ideals.
-supra-rational intuitions. In his ideals man
unhappy man is ill / ill
5. I said ideals based on Hope. No ideal with-
out Hope. If you do not hope that life is ending
paralyzing.
 - ① Loyalty to Hope!
 - ② Experiences of life may tell you that
we are not progressing - *Heb 12: 1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/12*
need of life -

6. Man is by nature a creature and creator of
ideals. He not only collects data, he originates.

1. Heaven. As this man ^{there is no man} ~~Golden~~ cloud.

showing, a yearning for values. Somehow we hunger
— Our hearts divine, insatiable desire

① Intro "...."

7. We set out to find them!

① Necessity is mother of invention! True.
4 times necessity.

② Flying. Man, can't get along without it.
Bird!

③ We have vision of perfection. We know
our unrealizability. We try to be capable!

④ We try to approximate this ideal!

① Artist.

8. We are really alive as we give shape to things.

1. Wm. James. "What makes life significant?"

2. Witcher, Folmer, Beyer, St. Francis.

not mere conditions — but cause. It's related
to some ideal.

9. Jew. Suffering. Other nations have.

10. Not only spirit man. But best

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Human nature "in Extremis". Cleveland
Citizens in War —

11. Most pitiful creature is well-fed, zahak
prosperous.

1. Am. Literature.

12. To be "proper" and get enough of splendor
and pain & great loyalty

① Americans have little in their
lives after business hours —

13. There is need for ideal in world. La politique
etc.

1. get at beginning of real. Out.
Mastermind.

2. Still in killing, hunting, etc.

3. We need struggle between eyes-
ness - cunning. (The, I think,

136 x 1/2 p 16 p 1
according to vision & R. 1 for which we.

1. I spoke last week —
2. I speak to speak this morning — Age of Reason —
to it Utopia —
3. In times of great distress — unless we lead, then
to Utopia — ^{refuge in dream —} ~~imagine~~ —
① Alamo — St. Augustine —
② Mare — 16 C. — and other — Constant —
③ To day — walls —
4. Utopia as the most perfect, the best heaven.
Andrius imag — not guides — Prophet, Reck
Garden, Eden —
5. But without some guiding, deal — See & Chang
① In the very nature — we must project with —
① God — Tad — will
② plu
③ In the beginning on the road — later —
6. Our ideal for to-morrow is Age of Reason
① Tantayana — seat of all ult. value.
② Plotinus — (Quote)
③ Our advancing life is to free from
men's inherent of material, primitive
① It is to rise from contraction to at.
② To estab. a cerd. real unreal — fact-fiction

7. Our Age has overestimated itself - already
in Age of Reason & War - Science

- ① Had our Ant been org. on lines of Reason.
- ② War, & Crime, is a jump to catastrophe.

8. Overestimated Role Reason played in
our lives at long & short -

① Prof. Elliot. Berk. Fed. & Her. Cha.

② Below surface -

③ Our past is along with us - dark
memory -

9. And yet we must struggle on to try, Reason.

① No fairy land -

② We know Prigyan. "There has been told -

③ Enmeshed - mentally, absolutely.

④ In Age of Reason - our hand will be free.

10. Every institution turns to the world.

1- Education - privilege - Secular -
Heavy Endow. - A University in Ch.
W. H. Kellogg

2. Religion. Privilege, dogma -

3. Science. Evolution

4. Economics -

5. Patriotism, Nationalism -

11. Age 9 Room will restore Center.

It will say to us - Explain
life! etc -

12. Well! - Well. Religion

Faith in Age 9 R - Main Alt
- secondary -

"He who yields to the charms of love and family affection,
or seeks political power or any other else than Truth and
true beauty, or even he who searches for beauty in
inferior things; he who is deceived by appearances,
he who follows irrational inclinations, is as truly
bewitched as if he were the victim of magic."

WRHS



Like the tide on a crescent sea-beach
When the moon is narrow and thin;
Into our hearts high yearnings
Come welling and surging in;
Come from the unglazed ocean
Whose rim no man has trod,
Some of us call it longing,
And others call it God

I hope - God: See Concordance
Bible -

ch. 22
Ex. 37.