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Hotel Cleveland - Tenth anniversary of Rabbi Silver Testimonial
dinner, 1927.

"BLAZING NEW TRAILS."

RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER.

THE TEMPLE, SUNDAY MORNING,

JUNE 5, 1927, CLEVELAND, O.

WRHS



JOSEPH T. KRAUS
Shorthand
Reporter
CLEVELAND

A blazing comet sweeping across our skies could not have given us the same thrill as that lone aviator who some two weeks ago spanned two continents in one magnificent flight of 3600 miles across land and sea. The whole world was shaken by that achievement, emotionally shaken, stirred to its very soul, and it poured out a veritable ecstasy of adulations on this young aviator which has continued to this day. No king was ever received with greater acclaim or with greater honor than this man. Nations vied with one another to do him honor. Today this conquering hero is on an American warship especially designated for him on his way home, to receive the bountiful shower of praise which his own native land is prepared to bestow upon him.

Now, what has actually happened? Why has this old, cold, cynical world of ours been so profoundly stirred to such a high pitch of ecstasy? Who is this Captain Lindbergh? Is he a warrior returning in triumph from the fields of battle? No. Is he a victorious general whose strategy has helped to shift the boundaries of empire over the corpses of the dead? No. Just a young man twenty-six years old, who a few days ago stepped into his monoplane just outside the city of New York, and with a simple, "We are off," sailed into the skies, and who thirty-three and a half hours later descended just outside

of Paris, and with a simple, "Well, here we are," got out of his plane. Just that and nothing more.

He was amazed to find an ambassador waiting for him; he was amazed to find ten thousand people screaming and shouting and rushing to get near to him to give evidence of their adoration. He took letters of introduction along with him to make sure they would know who he is when he got there. It all seemed to him such a simple and commonplace performance; and yet to the whole world, which sometimes evaluates human achievements properly, although not always, which sometimes appraises acts correctly, this achievement of Captain Lindbergh seemed epochal, of historical quality, a momentous and an immortal act.

What was this act which seemed so momentous and so immortal? Captain Lindbergh was not the inventor of the machine which carried him across the Atlantic; he was not the inventor of the instruments of aeronautics which enabled him to make that remarkable flight. I don't suppose that one man out of a thousand knows the name of the actual inventor of that machine, nor the names of those who are actually responsible for the development of the science of aeronautics, of the heavier-than-air flying machine. So that in praising and in extolling Captain Lindbergh the world was not paying tribute to a scientific discovery. It was paying tribute to certain spiritual qualities which the world intuitively divined as being at the very heart and core of our civilization.

And what are these qualities, the spiritual qualities which the world reveres when it perceives them to exist in any individual? In the first place, it worships the man because he dared to do something which had not been done before. He dared to do something which had never been done before, and the whole capital stock of civilization is made up of those acts of individuals which had never been done before. Others have flown long distances, others have crossed the Atlantic in flying machines, and invariably these men added to the capital stock of human achievement. Lindbergh excelled them; Lindbergh went a step beyond. No one has flown continuously over such a long distance since the beginning of time as Captain Lindbergh. He dared to do something which had not been done before; and the world knows that those who dare to do that little something which had not been done before are the real leaders and pathfinders in civilization.

Before very long Captain Lindbergh's achievement will have been eclipsed. It may be that by tonight his achievement will have been excelled. Within a generation ships will fly across the Atlantic and the Pacific and all the seas, which will make the little "Spirit of St. Louis" look small and pathetic and insignificant, just as the ships of Columbus look puny and insignificant along with the leviathans which plow the seas today. And yet whatever may happen from now on until the end of time, Captain Lindbergh's achievement will serve as a basis for all future progress.

His work is there for the inevitable link of human civilization, that link which makes possible the next link and the next, and it is that quality of newness, of freshness, of revelation which the world senses in this act of this young man.

I suppose that the pioneers who crossed this great continent a few generations ago would look very small and clumsy in their covered wagons, in their rude equipment, alongside of the palatial trains which now thunder their course across the very territory which these men so laborously traversed a few generations ago, and yet it is these men in their covered wagons who, winding their way across prairie and across stream and through forest, paved the way, who blazed the trail for empire. Whatever was built and achieved afterwards owed its success to the labors of these men. They were the pioneers; they brought ^{the} something new which had not been since the beginning of time.

That, I believe, is the first quality which the world exalts in in the case of Captain Lindbergh's achievement. And the second quality, I dare say, is this: the spirit of romance, of youth, the world will always revere. It loves youth and loves romance, and the hope of the world will never be frustrated, and the ideals of the world will remain invincible as long as the world continues to love romance and youth. This young man had all the glamour of some medieval knight. Like Lochinvar this young man came out of the West and his armour was the shining

blade of his engine, and he set forth like his ancient kinsman to meet ~~not~~ another knight, man to man in mortal combat, but to meet something desperately more formidable than a man--to meet the unknown, the elements, the wind, rain, storm, sleet, fog, weariness, the uncertainty of the accumulated forces of the physical world,--against all that he pitted himself, his will, his determination, his hope, his efforts, he staked all the rich promise of his life upon the one chance in ten thousand of winning through to success. And he won!

This spirit of useful adventure, this spirit of creative adventure--not merely an undirected spirit of recklessness which so many people possess, but a directed and purposeful, creative spirit of adventure which has taken mankind through so many dark jungles,--that, the world has stopped to admire in this man and in his achievement; the spirit of youth which refuses to be intimidated, which refuses to be frustrated, which dares to penetrate every dark veil and to probe into every secret and to plumb to every depth; this spirit of undefeated youth which has made possible the discoveries in the scientific laboratories, in the quiet halls of study, which has sent men to the furthestmost outposts of civilization to discover new continents and new worlds, this flaming spirit of youth, unquenchable, irresistible. It is this which the world again pauses to pay tribute to in the case of this young man, who plunged into a new experience for the sake of discovering new truth.

And lastly, I think what we instinctively admire in the case of Captain Lindbergh is that courage, that physical courage which is very much akin to spiritual fortitude. I remember the day I spent with an American high official during the war near the battlefront, and among other things we discussed, we commented upon with pride, was the number of Americans who had received decorations for bravery in battle, to have been singled out for heroic acts, and the gentleman with me remarked, he said, "Rabbi, one of the most commonplace things at the front is heroism, bravery. It is not at all an unusual thing." And I think I understood him. When a man is faced with death, when a man is confronted with an enemy, he must either be slain or he will slay you. Nature instinctively prods most of us on to the extreme of our daring and our courage. We have to be brave in self-defense.

Again, in wartime, in battle, a mass movement, a mass emotion carries us along. Everyone is fighting on all sides of us, and we lose ourselves in that passion and fury and madness of the moment, and on the wave of mass emotion we do what we have to do. We find sustenance and support in the fact that there are those about us doing the same thing. It is courage, and yet there is a higher kind of courage. To sail into the air hundreds of miles away from anyone, unnoticed; to feel every moment that there is the possibility of something going wrong in that bit of machinery which is carrying me across the way, something

going wrong which might plunge me any moment into a watery grave, or dash me upon rocks; to have no one to speak to, no one from whom to derive courage, sustenance; to stay there hour after hour carrying on, facing enemies invisible, impalpable, and yet menacing all around you all the time,-- that requires a type of courage which is almost spiritual in its quality. But it is this type of courage so eloquently evidenced in the case of this young man which the world admires, because the world depends upon it to carry it through its jungle lands, its dark continents, on to the promised land of light and truth.

So that if I would try to analyze this remarkable outpouring of tribute which has greeted this lowly aviator who a few weeks ago was unknown and unnoticed, I would say that it is due to three things, spiritual qualities involved in the situation. First, the spirit of adventure, creative adventure; going where others have not gone before, doing what others have not done before, reaching out into the unknown, going beyond the greatest excellence of the moment and creating something new.

Secondly, the spirit of youth--vision; youth which takes a chance, which in one superb gesture of abandon flings its life into the stake of one chance in ten thousand of winning through; and, lastly, courage, superb courage. Courage not against the point of steel or the mouth of a cannon or the barbed wire, but courage in the face of the invisible forces of nature, which one must either harness

or be crushed by them.

Now, the point which I aim to make this morning is this: while the world is already at the point where it is eager to pay tribute to these three qualities of adventure and youth and courage, when they manifest themselves in some physical achievement, such as flying or swimming the channel, it is not yet ready to admire these qualities in our spiritual life. There the world fears, dreads the spirit of youth and adventure and courage. Think what would happen if these three qualities were let loose, these dynamic qualities which are capable of revolutionizing life,--if these qualities were let loose in our spiritual life, in our political life, in our social life, in our economic life, in our religious life. Think what transformations they would accomplish for mankind if we would but permit them.

Take war, the desolation of civilization, the curse of mankind, acknowledged by all to be the greatest curse which the Old World and antiquity have bequeathed to us; yet when adventure and youth and courage come to us and say, "Let us abolish war. Let us do that which has not been done before. Let us have the courage and the vision and the daring to scrap our armies and our navies and our submarines and our poison gas and start anew, start afresh," we hear those ancient voices, the practical men of the world, the wise and the experienced men, who can draw upon all the wisdom of the ancients, who say to us, "Why, no; war has

always been, and therefore war will always be. Nations have always made war; therefore nations always will make war."

It is the old, old story. Age and cowardice and fear reign in our political and in our international relationships, and whenever men appear, young men or old men, who speak for peace, for disarmament, for the abolition of war, for international comity, we damn them, we crush them, we mock and taunt them as pacifists, as enemies of society, as lacking patriotism. We crucify them. That self-same spirit which we admire and revere in a man who does something new in the physical world, we brand as shameful when it manifests itself in our social life, in our spiritual life.

When men appear in our religious life, for example, and say, "Why, we are carrying a heavy load of yesterday, of fetishes, antiquated notions and superstitions, creeds and dogmas which have long ago served their object and cease to be of value to us. Let us start anew, with a new truth which is ours and the new discoveries which are in our possession. Let us evolve a religion which will be spiritual and fine and healing and uniting around us, not divisible and separating as the religions of yesterday,"--when that spirit of adventure and youth and courage appears in our midst today, in our religious life, do we hail it in triumph? We denounce it; we call it atheism; we call it disruptive, agnosticism; we invent all kinds of names with

which to make it obnoxious and unsavory to people, and we fall back upon the ancient slogans and worn-out phrases of yesterday.

When men appear in our midst and say to us, "There is so much of poverty and want and misery in the world, so many of God's beautiful children are being broken upon the wheels of industry, so many of them are being ruthlessly exploited and drained, mentally and spiritually drained," and when they say unto us, "Let us try to reconstruct an economic order which will give God's children a fairer chance to life's happiness, which will bring a greater security into their lives, which will bring a little more of beauty and charm into their lives, which will make poverty less and misery less in the world," do we greet that spirit with hosannas and with songs of acclaim? Why, no. We take these prophets who have the soul of adventure and youth and courage and we crush them with our fury and our hate. We persecute them and we crucify them.

Some day the world will learn to pay tribute to these three qualities, when they appear, in every department of human life; and some day the world will train its youth not to follow cautiously and timidly in the footprints of yesterday, but to follow the gleam, the light that never was on land or sea, the new, the fresh. "The new heavens and the earth,"--that is what mankind has prayed for right through the ages. That is what mankind has groped for on bleeding hands and torn feet,--the new heavens and

the new earth. And some day we shall inspire our young men, even as this youth Lindbergh was inspired, to go forth in a spirit of high creative adventure, but to seek for the new truth and the new beauty and the new revelation not merely in physical discoveries, not merely in sweeping through space, but in those realms of human life which are equally as real and as important,--in our political life, in our social life, in our economic life, in our religious life, in our esthetic life, in our personal and individual lives,--to seek the new.

I have occasion to speak to young people very often, young people who are either about to go to college or a university, or having completed their college studies come and ask for advice what to do. I find in these young people very often beautiful souls who are possessed of just that which we love in Lindbergh. There is youth there, and romance; and they love to soar, and a courage to follow their light. And yet I find cautious parents and friends putting shackles on them by their weighty counsel or prudence and practicality. "Do not do this; that is fantastic." "Do not do this; there is no money in it." "Do not do that, a career of an artist is a difficult career. Rather go into the business which your father has established for you." And nine times out of ten the young men do exactly that, and after a few years I find them stodgy and dull and weighted down, with all the spring and lift and enthusiasm and romance of life drained out of them.

They become successful, dull, commonplace, stupified individuals. And that is particularly true in the case of the children of the well-to-do, where the investments act as shackles upon the youth. Give your children a chance to real life. These are the things that count in life and nothing else. Comfort and the things which we think are so important, these are not the things which bring the glow to the soul and lay up for us memories which sustain us right to the very last hour of our life.

It is these things: youthful adventure, courageous pilgrimage to distant shrines, which bring all the romance and the zest of imperishable youth to our day. Let us not deny our young people their sacred heritage of finding their own way, of meeting their own God out in the great spaces of life.

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1. A ~~blazing~~ comet sweeping across the face, the sky could not have been more a greater thrill than the low aviator who 2 weeks ago spanned 2 continents in one magnificent flight ~~thing~~ ^{over} four miles of space land and sea. The world was shaken out of its mundane existence as if by an ~~earthquake~~ ^{earthquake}. It was stirred to its very ~~core~~ ^{utmost} and it poured out its ecstasy in an ~~unrestrained~~ ^{unrestrained} ~~adulation~~ ^{adulation} which has continued to this day. No king was ~~reared~~ ^{reared} with great acclaim and with higher honors than this youth, who 4 weeks ago was unknown and unnamed. Nations ~~used~~ ^{used} with an awe to do him homage. Today the Congress here is ~~on~~ his way home, on an Am. Warship especially prepared for him, returning home to receive the beautiful honors which his own motherland is prepared to shower upon him.

2. What has happened? What has ~~made~~ ^{thru} this old ~~ford~~ ^{ford} ~~general~~ ^{general} would you like a photo? ~~who~~ ^{who} ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~war~~ ^{war} returning victorious from the field of battle? Is he a general whose great strategy shaped the boundaries of Europe was the corpses & the slain? Not at all!

Left his ancient pursues of the North - he set
forth to his battle not with some Egyptian
Bright, ^{like himself} (man to man,) but with ^{the most} all the ^{will}
for unyielded power, ^{and the ~~the~~ dangers lurking in the elements} with wind and
storm, and rain, and sleet, and with fatigue,
and ^{whenever and} uncertainty - He confronted them all
~~with~~ ^{just with} the will & the faith and the determination
of youth. He staked his all - upon that one
chance in 10,000 of victory. And he won!

1. This flaming spirit of adventure - creative ad-
venture, adventure devoted towards achievement of
ideal worth - not just purposes, undirected reck-
lessness - has carried mankind through the many
dark continents of ignorance and -
where it has had to tread in its age-old
march from the jungle to the ^{purifying} place of
light and peace - The brave ^{adventurers} ^{with the play aspects} ^{settling upon}
^{expectations} ^{decisions} ^{high seas} - ~~not~~ in the depths of ^{young in heart} ^{in the}
study, the laboratory, or the classroom, the prophet
the scientist, the seeker after beauty - these men who
dared to go where others had feared to go - to
penetrate dark veils - to plumb depths -
these have given our race its beckoning
visions and its high hope -

Just a young man 126^x who stepped into a small monoplane one morning just outside N.Y. and with a simple "wing" added into the air and who carried 33 1/2 lbs. letters just outside Paris, and stepped out of his little monoplane with a simple "Well, here we are!" the good looking man. The young man was amazed to find an enormous waiting for him - and 10,000 people, shouting, screaming, cheering in their adoration of him - He had taken a few letters along with him - He had with him to make sure that people asked them who he was - when he got there. So simple + quiet - ~~consummation~~ ^{consummation} as everything it all seemed to him -

3. But the world which sometimes evaluates achievements at their true worth instinctively saw in this flight of the young man ~~from~~ ^{for} something epochal - an historical event, a monumental and immortal act. What was it that ~~the world~~ so enraptured the world, and prompted it to lay ^{such} its wealth of tribute at his feet.

4. Capt. Lindbergh was not ~~an inventor~~ ^{an inventor}. He did not ~~invent~~ ^{invent} the airplane. He did not build the

machine on the instrument of accoutrements with
which it was equipped. He described its new
scientific principle, but we in a room know
the name, the man who built ~~the~~ machine -
and we such tribute was ever paid to the
man ^{or men} who actually invented the power saw
plying machine - In its advertisement & the
world was paying tribute not to its invention
but to specific qualities which it correctly
deserves to be at the very heart of all that
is present and robust in our civilization.

5. Here was a man who dared to do something
which had never been done before - And the
entire capital of our country is made up of those single
acts of individuals which have never been done before.
Others had plowed, others had sown the Atlantic. They
had added to the capital of our civilization. But he
~~had~~ advanced a step ~~farther~~ beyond them. He plowed the
largest distance in a ~~single~~ ^{single} man's life.
He did something which
had never been done before. He, thereby, impelled
mankind and the stadium along its immortal
anatomical fears the wilderness of yesterday to the
promised land of tomorrow. He blazed a new
trail - others will excel him. To ~~no man~~ In a
decade his achievement will be ~~exceeded~~ ^{excelled} by
others, greater and new starting. ^{Imagination} ~~Others~~ will

fly the Atlantic which will make his little "Spirit
of St. Louis" seem as antiquated ~~as~~ as Columbus
Santa Maria etc — But it is in the train of his
path-finding expedition that this supremacy will be
met — He has become part of all the future
progress which will be made — He has become
the main link in the chain of human progress.

a) The ~~new~~ pioneers who blazed a trail across the
continent a generation or so ago ~~but~~ I would look
very small and unimpressive in their covered wagons
and ~~their~~ ^{their} equipment along side of the palatial
train which now thunders their way across
the territory which they had so laboriously tra-
versed — but they blazed the trail — Their pioneers
and first and ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~new~~ they mapped the
course of empire.

b.) It is this achievement which he would celebrate.
Lynch added something new to the assets of
the race — And it's the new set, the new faith,
the new note, which constituted progress —

c. And ~~with~~ along with this new achievement went
that quality which mankind associates with the
new. I mean the romance of youth and of
adventure. He would will always look forth and
adventure — ~~at~~ like ~~a~~ young Indian, this youth
came out of the West — his arms the ~~blades~~
of his eyes — and with superb ~~ambition~~

7. Courage - Not mere physical - Courage in face
of unknown and infernal forces is higher -
General at front - You face a enemy -
prepared to destroy you - In self-defense, in
desperation you are often driven to exert
all your strength & all your power. In war, too
you work with masses - You are upheld
by mass psych - You do what others do -
- But when you are alone - you feel the power of
might & are in - facing the possibility of annihilation -
they go along at any moment which
would bring you out a weary people - &
behold to press on north - this is a canopy
of a spiritual quality which best expresses the
true being - The world knows that -

8. Think what would happen if that spirit
of adventure, youth & courage could be
applied in the realm of humanity
① Man - Current voice - We can't
bear pain - We can't endure - It was
never done - We have always brought

② Religion - scrap its fetters - antiquated
notions - its burden - & start out along
a new path -

③ Prudence - the fear that always be with
you - reorganize society upon a new
set of principles -

In every dept of human life - we need it -
but in others - whereby injured - we
know that who buy Adm. rights &
money - Radicals - Resist - every
of law order & authority -

To the dream of men - a better world -
And let us inspire our youth with that
flaming faith - to set out in quest
of the seemingly unattainable - to create the
new world & the new earth

6/2/27

- 5 -

disintegration of the central authority of the Roman Empire. Life was then uncertain, travel precarious. Cities were at the mercy of marauding bands. Instinctively men grouped themselves around their strongest leaders for mutual protection. Feudalism appeared - islands of safety in a sea of turbulence and anarchy. Order and discipline were maintained. For generations Feudalism served well the economic and political needs of the peoples of Europe. After a time the need for it disappeared, but Feudalism continued. Like all institutions unrelated to life, it soon degenerated into an agency of oppression and exploitation.

stet! ~~The nobles ceased to be protectors and became plunderers, and the masses ceased to be vassals and became serfs. But so dominated is mankind by custom and tradition, that it endured Feudalism for centuries after it had ceased to function. For centuries Europe remained tied to this dead and decaying body, until the French Revolution severed them asunder forever.~~ *STET*

Nationalism took is a case in point. In response to a legitimate urge towards self-expression, nations ~~have sought~~ since the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire, their independence. ~~National cultures, once utterly disregarded by rulers who added country to country as if they were mere stretches of territory, asserted themselves.~~ Nations set about rediscovering their pasts, developing their national speech and literature and integrating their group personality. This process, ~~was~~ particularly strong during the last century, ~~which~~ was utterly commendable and desirable.

But the tradition of nationalism soon became inadequate. New conditions arose, requiring ~~an~~ ^{re} adjustment. It was found that uncoordinated national self-determination leads to rivalry and hostilities among peoples. The world soon needed a new conception of international interdependence - and a more lively sense of international solidarity. But so enamored are we of the past, of past shibboleths and past fetishes, that the nations cannot take this new and unavoidable step without the compulsion of universal war and horror. The shadow of the past has settled upon the nations of the earth.

On the other hand, there are moments in history where peoples break with their

disintegration of the central authority of the Roman Empire. Life was then uncertain, travel precarious. Cities were at the mercy of marauding bands. Instinctively men grouped themselves around their strongest leaders for mutual protection. Feudalism appeared--islands of safety in a sea of turbulence and anarchy. Order and discipline were maintained. For generations Feudalism served well the economic and political needs of the peoples of Europe. After a time the need for it disappeared, but Feudalism continued. Like all institutions unrelated to life, it soon degenerated into an agency of oppression and exploitation. The nobles ceased to be protectors and became plunderers, and the masses ceased to be vassals and became serfs. But so dominated is mankind by custom and tradition, that it endured Feudalism for centuries after it had ceased to function. For centuries Europe remained tied to this dead and decaying body, until the French Revolution severed them asunder forever.

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scope and comprehensiveness. ~~A well-rounded, colorful human personality cannot be developed within the hard routine of a job, however remunerative and estimable it may be.~~

Man must have more than one world in which to live; for ^{if that one} ~~his one~~ world ^{may} collapse, ^{man} ~~and then he~~ is totally bereft. Along side of his ^{workaday} ~~job-world~~ he must construct for himself a leisure-world wherein he can live freely and joyously in the role of a creative amateur, pursuing objectives not out of economic necessity but because of ^{sheer} ~~his~~ love. ~~for them.~~ This will enable him to remain young ^{despite} ~~amidst~~ the ^{taken by} ~~aging~~ toll of the relentless years.

Faust grew old. He sought to regain his youth by re-kindling the burnt-out passions of youth - wealth and love and life and laughter. He sold his soul for one great hour of renewal. He failed. But in the end, writes Goethe, Faust found happiness and refreshment of soul and a new meaning and interest in life, by engaging in some great social task of reclamation, an enterprise which quickened his mind, warmed his heart and put eagerness into his tired nerves. It made him master of old age by making him servant of that which is ageless.

scope and comprehensiveness.

Man must have more than one world in which to live; for if that one world collapse, man is totally bereft. Along side of his work day he must construct for himself a leisure-world wherein he can live freely and joyously in the role of a creative amateur, pursuing objectives not out of economic necessity but because of sheer love. This will enable him to remain young despite the toll taken by the relentless years.

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