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The eternal loveliness of Passover, 1930.

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"THE ETERNAL LOVELINESS OF PASSOVER."

RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER.

THE TEMPLE, SUNDAY MORNING,

APRIL 13, 1930, CLEVELAND, O.
.....



Men somehow think of the Jewish people as of a patriarchal, old people. Artists, when they attempt to portray the symbolic Jew on the stone or on the canvas, depict him as a very old man, long-bearded, bent with years, his face deeply furrowed, his eyes dimmed, lacking luster. Whenever men think of the Jewish religion they think of it in terms of stern duty, of law, of prophecy, of "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not,"--in terms of solemnity, venerability.

Seldom do men think of the Jewish people and of the Jewish religion in terms of youth, hope, and boundless joyousness, in terms of loveliness. Being an old race men naturally assume that the tempo of this race must, by the very nature of things, be retarded, slow. Having lived for nigh onto four thousand years, its step must now be halting, faltering; having wandered over all the rough places of the world, its heart must be old and weary and drained of all hope and of all illusion; and its thoughts must be bitter thoughts, having been embittered by life's defeats, by the cruelty of fortune and the injustice of mankind.

And yet, strange as it may seem, the very fact that this people has been able to rise at this old age is itself proof that this people knew the secret of eternal youth. Other peoples grew old and died. Israel

somehow knew how to renew its days as of old, to replenish its youth; whenever the exhaustion and the decrepitude of old age threatened to overwhelm the people, it drank deep of that strange draft of renewal and became young again, and young with a free, eager, joyous, creative life which astounded the world even as it astounded itself.

Israel was old when Greece and Rome were young. Israel is young when Greece and Rome are dead. Who, for example, standing beside the pyramids thirty-five hundred years ago and watching these Hebrew slaves under the lash of the taskmaster building these pyramids and these cities of Ptolemy and Rameses,--who could have imagined them thousands of years later, when nothing but a memory remained of that resplendent Egyptian civilization, when nothing but the crumbled mummies in hewn sarcophaguses in these very pyramids would tell of the glories of a vanished civilization,--that thousands of years later the descendants of these slaves there under the scorching sun building those monuments to Egyptian pride, would be in the van of every world movement, sending forth new buds, new flowers, new sproutings of mind and soul in every department of human thought, and that thousands of years later, after a most strange and checkered and tragic career, of dispersion all over the world, they would yet set about with stout hearts and with an unspoiled enthusiasm to rebuild their thrice destroyed

national life in the Promised Land, and rebuild it with an eagerness and an enthusiasm as though its peoples were born yesterday.

A strange vitality possesses this people, and those who understand this fact about Jewish history - a fact frequently overlooked - are not at a loss to account for the constantly recurring note of hope, of optimism, of spiritual buoyancy and gladness which we find in Jewish literature and Jewish lore and Jewish customs and ceremonies, and in the deeper layers of the faith of the Jew. Take this very festival of Passover. Why, it fairly rings with the gladness of life. The major themes of this holiday are the triumphant themes of spring, of freedom, of nature reborn, of hope rekindled.

Passover is, first of all, a spring festival. This day do you go forth in the month of spring, --in the month of Pesach. Winter is over, spring is come; death is ended; the miracle of resurrection is again spread over the whole world. Out of the dark caverns of the earth come perceptiveness. Through the dark stages of death and decay the seed of life bursts forth again in the breathless glory of bud and flower, and man, feeling the warm rays of the sun upon him and the throb of new life about him and underneath him, shouts for joy. "Awake, O heart, and salute! I will awake, the dawn!" A song leaps to the lips of man at this season of the year,

and that song is Passover.

The very word Pesach means a skipping and a dancing, and brings to mind the movements of the new born land in this spring season of the year. You see, our folks in ancient days were a shepherd folk and a farming folk. We were not always town dwellers who lived in ghettos, poor or gilded; we were not always an urban people. Our early life was a pastoral life and an agricultural life. Abraham was a shepherd; Moses was a shepherd; David was a shepherd. God is called Shepherd by our people. "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want."

Now to us, habituated to city life, the coming of spring may mean a change of clothing, perhaps. To a nature folk spring, the promise of the increase of the flock and the yield of the soil is the most critical moment, even as it is the most precious gift which God can bestow upon man. And so at this season of the year the heart of man leaps with joy. Man hails this season with gladness, and that gladness is Passover; and it is no wonder that our wise rabbis ordained that sometime during this festival of Passover that beautiful song of nature, that dulcet lilt of life and love and beauty, the Song of Songs, shall be read in the synagogue. "For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, singing is heard, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land."

There is, then, the loveliness of renacent nature in Passover. Passover too is a festival of pilgrimage. Three times a year in ancient Judea our forefathers would make a pilgrimage to the temple in Jerusalem, and bring to that temple the offering of their soil and of their fields and of their orchards. On Pesach and Shebuoth and Succoth, and on holidays such as these, our farming ancestors made their way from their fields and their towns and their villages and climbed the mountains leading to Jerusalem, carrying with them the bountiful yield of their soil, their hearts surcharged with a deep gratitude to Almighty God who vouchsafed that blessing to them. They sang for joy, and our Book of Psalms records many of those songs of ascent, the mounting songs, the songs which the pilgrims sang as they climbed the hills to Jerusalem. Many of these songs are recorded in the Book of Psalms. "Blessed is the man, fortunate is the man, happy is the man who fears the Lord, who walks in His way." "When thou art privileged to eat of the labor of thy hands, blessed art Thou, goodly is thy portion." "Thy wife is like a fruitful vine in the deepest recesses of your home." "Thy children are like fruitful vines around thy table. Thus is a man blessed who feareth the Lord." The soul contentment, the peace of life, which we find in these songs sung by the pilgrims, that too is part of the loveliness of Passover.

And then there is the figure of Moses which lends so much of charm and grace and loveliness to this beautiful holiday of Pesach. We Jews are not in the habit of building holidays around personalities. The Jews have refused to make an idolatry of heroes and to worship them. Men come and go. The ideas alone are eternal. And we build our festivals and our holy days around ideas rather than around people. And yet what is Passover without the majestic, towering figure of Moses? Moses dominates the festival. The personality of Moses envelopes the festival. And here again we always think of Moses as an old man, when we think of him at all. We think of Moses as Michael Angelo thought of him,--a stern law giver, old, venerable, with flowing locks. And yet the Bible knew of another Moses. The Bible knew of the babe Moses whose cradle was on the River Nile; the Bible knew of the prince Moses who lived in the courts of Pharaoh; the Bible knew of that young, passionate, revolutionary Moses who went forth from the gilded halls of the palace of the Pharaohs to where his own brothers were toiling with brick and mortar by the banks of the Nile, and there in righteous wrath slew with his own hands a cruel Egyptian who was beating to death a helpless, aged Jew.

The Bible knew of a shepherd Moses; the Bible knew of Moses the dreamer, who heard voices and saw visions in the burning bush. My, what a rich and beautiful, what

a rare personality Moses is! How strong in defeat, how gracious in victory, how steadfast in purpose! Moses, shepherd of his people, beloved of God, the loveliness of his personality enswathes, enclaves as with an element, this festival of the Passover.

And then Passover is surcharged with all the loveliness of Jewish home life. All the sweetness, all the poetry of Jewish family life are symbolized in the Passover, and more particularly in the Seder. If you want a picture of the nobility, of the dignity of Jewish home life, recall the Seder of your youth. On Seder night the family was reunited. During the year fate and destiny may have scattered the members of the family to the four corners of the land. Somehow on Seder night they drifted back to the parental home, to the family hearth. Cares and anxieties were forgotten; the spirit of an ancient sanctity descended upon the household. Everyone was somehow transformed. The father may have been very poor. On that night of the watching, the watch night of the Lord, he became a king; and the mother, perhaps worn by life, who may have passed through the vast tribulations, on that night became a queen in her own right. Loyalties were strengthened, hearts grew more tender. The Shechina dwelt among them. And how great was the solicitude of everyone for the children. The whole Seder was designed as an object lesson for the children.

"Thou shalt tell to thy son on that day."

And so the child asks a question: "What is it all about? What does it all mean?" And the father, reintoning immemorial accents, tells the child about his people, a people that was once enslaved and became free, a people that was once old and became young again, a people that was once homeless and found a homeland. And thus is the unbroken tradition handed down from father to son, as if the father were saying to the son, "My son, I am old; you are young. Here is thy Torah; here is thy faith; here is thy people's heroic record. Carry on."

And there is light on Seder night, and music and song. What a charm, what a loveliness! And all that is Passover. And there is all the loveliness of the traditional Jewish hospitality to the Passover. At the very beginning of the Seder service the head of the household announces, "All who are hungry come and eat; all who are in need come and join with us in this Passover meal." A cup is set aside for Elijah, the patron saint of the stranger. The door is open during the ceremony to welcome in a possible belated traveler on that night.

We were strangers in the land of Egypt. We know what it is to be alone. We were strangers and sojourners in many Egypts. Therefore we know the heart of the stranger. "Come in, then, and be with us." And

so all the loveliness of Jewish brotherliness and Jewish neighborliness is found in the Passover.

And lastly, all the imperishable and unquenchable hopefulness of our people. "Here is the bread of affliction which our fathers ate in Egypt." Here is the bread of affliction which many of our people must eat to this very day. And yet, "This year we are slaves. Next year, grant God, we shall be free. Do not despair, you who are crushed beneath the burdens of one form of bondage or another,--do not despair. Look at me. I was a slave in the land of Egypt 430 years under the whip of the taskmaster, my children cast in the Nile, my aged folk beaten to death at the walls which they were building with their blood and their sweat. I was a slave, and yet I was free! Do not despair!"

"Egypt was not my only exile. I was again exiled to Babylon, and by the rivers of Babylon I was compelled to hang up my heart, refusing to sing the songs of God upon alien land. I was beaten and I was crushed. And yet I was free again. And again my temple was destroyed, and again my land was laid waste, and again my sons and daughters were sold into slavery, and again I was forced to wander over the face of the earth. And yet today my sons and daughters are more numerous than at any time in the history of my people; more creative of human values, more power in them, more leadership, and

today my sons and daughters are with their hands
rebuilding anew the land of their fathers."

"Do not despair, you idealist, you dreamer,
you, the persecuted one, you the oppressed one, you the
denied, you the dispossessed. Hope in God."

The whole loveliness of faith in human
progress, of faith in life ascendent, in life triumphant,
is in the festival of Passover. Thank God for Passover.
As long as its appeal can reach our hearts, quicken our
pulse, bring a glow to our eyes, so long will we abide,--
a people young and everlasting.



1. ~~the~~ Men some how think of Jew. people. ^{- ancient}
Artists - Solemnity - One seldom -
(a) Men think of religion in terms of law -
- harshness -

2. Being an old race - tempo - weighted
down - tedium vitae - 4000 yrs old!
Surely - steps, its heart - that bitter despair

3. And yet - it is evident - we have
attained to such venerable age! -
Other nations - of remaining young -
Again again - mystic draught -
young with a free - astounded -

4. Who, for example - A strange
vitacity possess - It was old!

5. Those who understood - as we at
a loss to discern constantly recurring
note of age - in life, life -
Talle Festival, Passover! Rejoice!
with gladness - triumphant themes

6. Pass. is first Festival is Spring -
Winter is over - Life is surging warm
 - Out of the dark - Persephone - ~~the~~
Thru dark stages - life seed.
immemorial cycle - And man
feeling warm sun - breaks forth
 וְיָצֵא (25) וְיָצֵא - This song is
is Passover!

7. The very word פֶּסַח - Remember
 that our people - shepherds -
Abraham was a shepherd -
 - Feels changes - very existence
 - soft - hard. comes in
thus loneliness & Spring is in Passover

8. Alpimaze - come out - Hunt
breakfast with father - when we

Jerusalem & Constantinople

9. Freedom. First world's Revolution!

Trump with sound of broken chains.

Battle Hymn. Imperial

Command - at D.R. -

Crescendo - Sing by the Sea -

John 125 - Battle of Nations

Jerusalem's of Liberty is in Paris

10. Moses - We do not build holidays

But what is Paris without Moses
- dominate - excludes it

(a) Her, too, we think of Old Moses!

Young Moses - Cradle - Wile -
passionate defender - Shepherd

dream -

Eternal Jerusalem & a rare, rich, beautiful

11. There is loneliness of J. Home life - Sweetness
& poetry symbolized - Leads - On
Leads my art real beauty - manifest -
Family reunited - Fate, scattered -
Cares - He who was poor - King -
Applauding an ancient sanctity - Heart
from loneliness -

(a) Whispered for children - Part 3381
Child arts - Father in incarnation
accents - Carry on!

(b) And there is by art, & music, song -

12. Loneliness of Hospitality - Part 3381
- Cup for Elphie - Alon Opened -
(a) We were strangers -

13. Hopfulness - Just part to -
3381 3381 -
Went despair - 400 years -

החלף את

14- שיהיה תודה - מן הפעם
על עזרתו



For lo, the winter is past,
 The rain is over and gone;
 The flowers appear on the earth;
 The time of singing is come,
 And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.

WRHS



אלה ט וכלל ה' חלק זכרון - ויום כפר ס חלק זכרון זכרון.
 חלק זכרון פאר זכרון זכרון. חלק זכרון זכרון זכרון.
 חלק זכרון - חלק זכרון זכרון זכרון.

An Abstract
of the address
WHY THE LONDON NAVAL CONFERENCE HAS FAILED
BY
RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER
The Temple, March 30th, 1930.

The three naval conferences which have been held in the last nine years have failed in spite of the fact that during that time the World Court was ratified, the Locarno Treaties were signed and the Kellogg-Briand Pact for the outlawry of war was adopted. It is clear that these peace agencies have not succeeded in dispelling international suspicions and fears. Great powers have solemnly pledged themselves never to use their armies and navies for the settlement of any international dispute and yet they are proceeding to increase their navies rather than decrease them. The five great naval powers are spending over a thousand million dollars annually on the maintenance of their sea armaments.

No naval conference is likely to succeed in the near future. Perhaps after the nations will have lived under the Paris Pact, the World Court and the League for another decade or two and will have been convinced that these agencies actually do settle sharp international controversies and do avert war, they will then be in a more receptive frame of mind to reduce both sea and land armaments.

We committed a vast diplomatic blunder at the Washington Conference in 1922 and that blunder is indirectly responsible for the failure of both the Geneva and the London conferences. We scrapped our capital ships which we had completed or were completing under our 1919 naval program without making sure beforehand that the parity which we hoped thereby to achieve with Great Britain in capital ships, would also be extended to all auxiliary ships.

At that conference we sacrificed naval supremacy without even obtaining naval parity. We were then in a remarkably strong position to compel universal naval reduction. The other great powers were impoverished by the war. We alone were in position to keep on building indefinitely. But our statesmen were outwitted.

England left the Washington Conference, her navy supreme, and her hands free to build at any future time as many cruisers as she was able to build.

The Geneva Conference tried to rectify the Washington blunder but without success. England would not consent to absolute parity in all categories of auxiliary ships.

Our 1928 naval program calling for the construction of fifteen class A cruisers was our answer to the failure at Geneva. The London Conference is the result of this new naval program of America with its implied naval competition with Great Britain.

There are only two ways of obtaining parity. One is for England to scrap a sufficient number of cruisers to reach our cruiser tonnage. The other is for America to build up to the cruiser strength of Great Britain. England of course, will not scrap any of its cruisers. It has no intention of making that generous sacrifice in cruisers which we made in capital ships at Washington. What remains for us then if we wish to do proper obeisance to the Great God Parity is to spend about a billion dollars in the next few years to build up to the British total.

It would of course, pay the United States to reduce England's debt to it by a billion dollars if England would consent to cut down its cruiser strength to our level. But this is not likely to happen.

Parity has now become our fetish and our slogan - our "Fifty-four-forty or fight." The average man in the street does not know just why we need parity, having gotten along without it for so many years or just how parity insures peace or what would happen to parity in case of a war with Great Britain should the latter make an alliance with another naval power.

It now seems likely that as a result of the London Conference Japan, France and Italy will increase their navies rather than decrease them.

France is asking for a consultative agreement with the United States whereby America would agree to confer with France in case the latter is attacked. There is of course, no harm in consulting. But is that all that France really wants? Her diplomacy, as a rule, is of a much more realistic character. She would not have made that the "sine qua non" of the conference if it were all that was involved. France is clearly anxious for the United States in some way to be permanently implicated in her program of national defence. America is not ready for that.

The advocates of peace will not be discouraged by the failure of the London Conference. Many more conferences will fail before substantial disarmament will take place. Our task remains the same: to continue our educational propaganda for peace and to be on the alert against the control of our international relations by economic imperialists whose activities always foster war.



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