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The ten greatest Jews of all time, 1930.

THE TEN GREATEST JEWS OF ALL TIMES

BY

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AT THE TEMPLE, SUNDAY
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It is very difficult my friends to draft a list of a specified number of people whom one may call the greatest of their particular race in a country, especially of a people like Israel who have lived so long and have produced many men of preeminence.

Then too, it is difficult to decide upon a yard stick by which to measure greatness. I drafted four or five lists of the ten greatest in Israel, from four or five different angles of approach, then I tried to combine the lists and to reduce the number to the number which we set for ourselves arbitrarily - the number of ten. And I will give you my list this morning, hoping that you will keep in mind that there is no finality to this list and there is no particular value to it except the personal judgment of one man. No Sanhedrin has ever voted upon this list and your choice of men is probably as good as mine.

You will undoubtedly ask yourself why did I omit this person or that person. My one answer will then be that I could only name ten; that some had to be omitted.

I should like to have you bear in mind, while I am speaking of these ten, the types of people whom I chose.

The first name which I would place at the very head of my list, of any list, as of the greatest among our people, of course, we know him as one of the Titans of the earth, mankind's law-giver. The Torah of Israel is named after him, (Hebrew quote "Torah of Moses."

He is the author and framer of the Ten Commandments, the seed-thought of all morality, the ten digits of civilization. He was the great emancipator of a race; the first mighty revolutionist of history. He set free a people from bondage and sent that people on its way to a heroic and marvelous career. He was the great leader and a nation builder. For forty years he led a host, a gob, of erstwhile slaves through the trials and tribulations of the wilderness; a difficult horde of people who had not shaken off the slave psychology. He guided them and taught them, chastized them and battled for them, shielded them, - died for them.

If you would add to Michaelangelo's magnificent statue of Moses, Moses the majestic figure, prophet, leader, - if you could add to that, that quality of humility, for the Bible says that Moses was the most humble of men, - and if you add too that quality of kindness, love and passion which was in the man; the man who died with God's kiss upon his lips, you will then have the first of the ten greatest Jews in history.

My second choice would be Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, Priest of Anathoth, perhaps the greatest of the prophets, next to Moses;

the man who embodied within his teachings and within his life the noblest of providence; the man who taught mankind the purest conceptions of spiritual religion, of ethical monotheism; the man who more than any other teacher of the world, taught that religion is not a matter of rites or Temples or formations of cults; that it is a matter of the inner covenant of the soul attitude, of reverence, of spirituality; the man who warred bitterly against every sham, insincerity, hypocrisy of government, in social life as well as in religious life; the man who championed more than any other prophet, the cause of the dispossessed, the denied, the unhappy of the earth; the man who pleaded for justice, charity among the children of men, and the man who suffered for his ideals as few of the great men of mankind suffered; cast into a pit to perish, sentenced to death, discouraged in exile, a man of loneliness, foresaken even by his own family, and finally stoned to death in exile - Jeremiah is the second of Israel's princely sons and princely gifts to mankind.

My third name would be that of Hillel - Hillel the gentle sage, the flower of Pharisaic Judaism, who stands at the headwaters of the great rabbinic tradition, who contributed so much to the whole technique of rabbinic Judaism; - Hillel who embodies the soul of what we call Talmudic Judaism.

Hillel was the framer of the Golden Rule: "What is hateful unto thyself do not do unto others." And he gave so many other magnificent maxims for the guidance of men. Hillel taught people

how to combine law with love and broad humanity. Hillel, the prince, Hillel, the sage, Hillel, the gentle, - his is the third name that I would offer.

And the fourth would be that of Jesus, - the mystic whom one third of mankind reveres as its master and whom millions worship as their God. Jesus, who saw the world coming to an end and tried to save men from the calamity impending by an extreme ethical discipline; whose homilies and teachings echoed the noblest moral traditions of his race; whose personality fascinated the whole of mankind; whose gentleness, love of his fellow-men, particularly his concern for the poor and the denied of the earth, and above all the dramatic epic of his sorrowful road through life, culminating in his death upon the cross. Jesus through whom Judaism branched out into another great historic religion which has influenced the life of generations, of millions, of men; - his would be my fourth name in the list of Israel's greatest.

The fifth would be Moses Maimonides, the philosopher, the guide to the perplexed, of whom it was said "from Moses unto Moses there arose none like unto Moses." It was from Moses Ben to Moses Mendelssohn there arose none in Israel like unto Moses Maimonides. He was undoubtedly the most important Jewish figure of the Middle Ages, the man who tried to reconcile faith with reason and theology with philosophy; the man who in an age of darkness and superstition, enthroned reason and the intellect and taught men to realize that knowledge and

logical thought are the surest ways of arriving at truth; a man whose philosophic writings influenced not only Jewish, but Christian thought through the Middle Ages; a man who codified the whole Biblical and Rabbinic law and illumined and organized that vast, rather chaotic, treasure trove of Jewish literature up to his day; a man who was a light unto his people in exile, - Moses Maimonides, he would be my fifth name on the list of Israel's greatest.

My sixth would be Judah Halevi, the greatest Jewish poet since the Bible; one of the most inspiring of our Jewish philosophers, - Judah Halevi of whom Henrich Heine said that he was "a wondrous fiery pillar of song." Not since Biblical days did any man in Israel sing with such superb diction and imagery, fervor, artistry, light of God and Israel in mankind as did Jehuda Halevi. those passionate outbursts, His songs of Zion/remain the immortal expression of Israel's undieing hope of restoration.

Judah Halevi, who was the greatest Zionist of all times but whose Zionism was blended, whose strong Jewish national loyalty was blended with remarkable mystic values; the man who wrote the most consistent and the most heroic and the most challenging philosophy of Jewish history and the most perfect defense of Jewish survival; the man who before the advent of Liberal Judaism, defined the unique and messianic mission of Israel as no one has ever done in Israel since the days of the second Isaiah.

Jehuda Halevi, then, philosopher, mystic, is the sixth in my list of Israel's greatest.

And the seventh is Baruch Spinoza, of whom it was said: "The truest vision ever had of God came perhaps here," referring to the place where a monument was erected for Baruch Spinoza; the man of whom Lessing said: "there is no possible view of life but Spinoza's;" the man who influenced the thought of Europe for the last two hundred and fifty years, more than any other man; of whom said: "before one can be a philosopher, one must first be a Spinozist;" a man who was the fore-runner of modern Biblical criticism; who was the first of the real modernist interpreters of the Bible, who stripped the Bible of all the mechanical, super secretions of the ages, revealed its composition, its human origin and at the same time its superb . He taught the men of his day and the men since his day that the essence of the Torah was not the organization of cults or the miracle, but as Spinoza said: "the essence of the Bible is 'Thou shalt love thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might'; the man who developed a most profound and reverent pantheistic conception of the universe, a conception of the universe in which all is God and God is all; a conception of the universe which is not mechanistic at all, not materialistic at all, but in which mind and substance blend into one inseparable and unavoidable unity: the man who developed a great system of ethics based upon reason, logic and system, in which the good, not the usable and not the pleasurable, but the good was the ultimate

goal as well as the ultimate reward; the man whose voice was the most courageous in his day, raised in behalf of the restoration of man in human rights; the man who was so in advance of his day that he was ex-communicated by his own people who misunderstood him. - Baruch Spinoza, the giant intellect of all the ages, he is the seventh in the list of Israel's greatest.

And the eighth would be Moses Mendelssohn, humanist and intellectual leader; the man who marks the beginning of the cultural renaissance of modern Jewry; the man whose life and career definitely closed the ghetto era in Jewish history; the man who tried to lead his people from a role of medievalism and adjustment to the intellectual life of Western Europe; the man who was one of the noblest figures of his day and one of the greatest humanitarians of all times; a man who though himself an orthodox in practice, paved the way for the great movement of enlightenment and Haskalah, both in Western and Eastern Europe and indirectly paved the way for Reform Judaism; the man without whom the whole history of Judaism in the last hundred years, is incomprehensible - Moses Mendelssohn, the friend of Lessing, the prototype of "Nathan the Wise" is the eighth of Israel's princely sons.

And my ninth choice would be Karl Marx, the father of modern socialism; the man whose doctrines every country in the world will have to reckon with in the next few centuries; the man who is worshipped today by a nation of one hundred and forty million souls - Soviet Russia; the man whose disciples are today ruling the British

Empire through the British Labor Party; whose disciples are in control of many of the parliaments and chancelleries of the world today; Karl Marx who hewed a new philosophy of history based upon the laws of economic determinism; the man who gave the ideological Bible to international socialism; the man who called for class struggle but who himself was the kindest and humblest of men, a man who lived in poverty most all of his life and who championed the cause of the toiling masses of the earth. - Karl Marx because of his tremendous influence upon human thought since his day, I would name ninth in this list of Israel's greatest.

And the tenth and last, because I can only name ten, I should mention Albert Einstein, physicist, builder of a universe; the man who is called "the greatest of our contemporaries;" a man who projected a new law of relativity into astral physics and revolutionized the science of physics more than any man since the days of Newton; the man who besides being a great scientist is also a great humanitarian, a lover of men, champion of peace, the spokesman of social righteousness; a loyal Jew. - Albert Einstein I would name tenth.

I could have mentioned many more. I could have mentioned, in earlier times, Abraham, David, Amos, Isaiah. I could have mentioned in Medieval Times, Solomon Ibn Gabirol, Heinrich Heine. I could have mentioned Benjamin Disraeli. I could have mentioned Sigmund Freud, Andre Bergson, - great men, great intellectual and spiritual giants, - for Israel's galaxy of great men is rich in abundance, - but I could only name ten.

These ten suffice, my friends to indicate what Israel's contribution to civilization has been and to prove that the old charge which was given to our people back in the days of Abraham has not remained unfulfilled (quote Hebrew)

"May all the nations of the earth be blessed through the people."



1. Moses. - One of the Titan's of the Earth. -

- (a) Mankind's Law giver.
- (b) The Torah of Israel is named after himself in 157.
- (c) The Fraser of 10 Com - holds seat of all morality
- (d) The Emancipator of a Race. The first great Revolutionist of history.
- (e) The Greatest Leader - ~~40 yrs~~ and Nation Builder -
 - 40 yrs - rebellious, recalcitrant, patient, enemy -
 - chastised, justified for them, shielded them - died for them.

(f) If you had to the statues of Moses, Michael, David, John, the Humility (11.50), the Knower, the faithful shepherd; the men who died with this spirit when he was - you have first of the 10 greatest gens, History.

son of Hilkiah, priest of Anathoth - 7-6c
2. - Jeremiah → The Greatest of the Prophets - (next to him.)

- ① The Supreme Embodiment of Hebrew prophecy.
- ② Who taught mankind the purest conceptions of ~~ethics~~ sp. rel. & ethical monotheism.
by his new Covenant - written heart to heart
- ③ Who preached a rel. not of rites or temples, or formalism ^{of acts} but of profound faith, piety and uprightness.
- ④ Who warned against slavery, usury, hypocrisy in government, in social life as well as in rel. life.
- ⑤ Who castigated wrong doers - oppressors & poor, weak - Pleaded for justice & charity.
- ⑥ Who Suffered for his ideals & for mankind - ~~that after three years he put to death~~
Long long Struggle Scorned, persecuted to death, escape, exile, = a lonely, room-lodger man for his visions & words - persecuted by his family - Finally stood to death - This is second

3. Hillel - The Gentle Sage, of the First C.

- ① The figest flower of the ^{Pharisei} ~~Rabbinic~~ Tradition.
- who stands at headwaters of Rabh. Judaism -
② Who ^{the Supreme Teacher} ~~embodied~~ the ~~spirit~~ ^{spirit} of ~~the~~ ^{Pharisei} Judaism. who carved a
high-way for the progressive devel. of
post-Bab. Judaism.
- ③ The author of the Golden Rule NO 3 21
and of many other superb ethical maxims.
- ④ who bleaded law with love and
humanitarianism, and was ^{our} ~~the~~ ^{guided} sp.
guide of his people in subsequent ages



4- Jesus. The Mystic, Thou 1/3 mankind
claims as its own master, & millions re-
van as for -

① who saw the world coming to an end
and set out to save it by a supreme
ethical discipline.

② whose honorable and ~~teachings~~ ^{teachings} echo the
noblest ~~traditions~~ ^{traditions} of his race.

③ whose personality was fascinated
mankind - his gentleness, his love
for his followers, his tender regard for
the disinherited of the earth - above
all ~~his~~ the spirit of his sorrowful
road thru life and his ultimate
death upon the cross.

④ Thru him, God branched out with
another great reb. which has inspired
generations & men & nations, 19th.

This is Jesus 4th name
upon the roster of the great

5 ^{Yves} Maimonides. The Philosopher + Jew, the Prophet.

- ① of whom it was said "From Moses to Moses there arose none like unto Moses."
- ② Most important I think of his 13 principles.
- ③ Who sought to reconcile faith with reason - ~~judaeism~~ theology with philosophy.
- ④ Who in an age of superstition set forth reason & the intellect as the supreme arbiter, faith, who fought ~~superstition~~.
- ⑤ Who codified the whole Bib. + Rabbl. law, and illumined + org. the whole vast treasury - ~~law~~ legislation -
- ⑥ Who phil. influenced not only Jew, & also Christian that thought Middle Ages
- ⑦ Who was a light unto his people in Exile - a guide & comforter.

- Fifth

6. Judah Halevi: - The poet & our poets - and
one of our most inspiring philosophers,
^{as when Heine said}

① "A voracious fiery pillar of song"

not since Bab. days, was such song sung
in such superb imagery & diction. Poet
of a most profound ^{religious} quality. - His
songs & Zim remain the immortal expression
of Israel's yearning hope & restoration. - He
was the prophet of Zion & Hebrew - and Hebrew religion.

② Whose deep nat. loyalty is blended
with the richest mystic tones.

③ Who embodied the most consistent
and heroic philosophy of Jewish history
and its most perfect defender -
- who more than any modern champion of
Judaism proclaimed the unique & blessed
mission of Israel.

- 214th

7. Baruch Spinoza.

- ① of whom it was said: "The truest vision ever had of God came perhaps here".
- ② The philosopher of whom Tenny said "There is no possible view of life but Spinoza's".
- ③ Who influenced the thought of Europe in last 250 yrs. as well as the war has -
- ④ Who was the far more modern criticism - the first of the real modernist intellectuals, the Hobbes who redefined science, politics and in it made, but not not
- ⑤ Who developed a profound, relevant pantheistic conception of the universe - a universe which is not Whitaker, but which is both and both
- ⑥ Who developed an ethical system based on knowledge + reason - in which God is the supreme goal & the supreme reward - Chas. Taylor Frederick
- ⑦ Who was so far in advance excommunicated - Scruton

perhaps
not -

8. Moses Mendelssohn - Humanist & Intel. Leader.

① Who marks the cultural renaissance
of modern Jewry

② Whose career ends the Ghetto Era
Jews. West. world to J. Mind.

③ Who led his brethren toward participation
in intell. life of Europe.

④ The parent of Humanism, lost 200
yrs. - who, the ^{orthodoxy} humanity
passed way for Haskalah & Reform.

- Eighth

9. Karl Marx - Father of Modern Socialism -

- ① With whom every country will have to reckon in the next few centuries.
- ② Who is unshipt by a nation of 140 m. souls - Soviet Russia.
- ③ Whom draggles as ^{to day} running the Rn. Empire & controlling nearly a Parliament in Europe.
- ④ Who ferwed out a new phil. & hist. based on ^{the laws of} Economic ~~laws~~ determinism.
- ⑤ Who called for the class struggle but was himself the kindest & humblest of men - who lived in poverty and gave his life to the working masses, the earth.

Worth

10 - Albert Einstein - Physicist - Shredder of
a Universe

- (1) Shaw - "The greatest of our contemporaries"
 - (2) Who propounded a new Law of relativity with special physics which is the most adv. doctrine since Isaac Newton.
 - (3) Who is a lunar man - ^{of the moon} ~~ghost~~ -
like prophet of the depressed &
oppressed - champion of peace
and righteousness -
- Tenth

A. Israel gives these 10 names to
mankind - It has other many others -
~~important mentioned to~~ Abraham, Isaac,
Jacob, ~~and~~ Joseph, Heine, Freud, Bergson,
Sophie to indicate vast contribution to
mankind - אברהם יצחק יעקב יוסף