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Passover 1932, 1932.

PASSOVER - 1932

BY

RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER  
SUNDAY, APRIL 24th, 1932

It is difficult to say just how many Passovers our people have already celebrated, possibly thirty-five hundred Passovers.

No holiday of mankind has lasted so long and has retained so much of its original significance. It stirs the imagination, I believe, to contemplate the unbroken, millennial continuity of this holiday of Passover and to conjure up the many circumstances, the many epochs which have witnessed the celebration of this Festival. Passover comes down to our own year 1932 trailing clouds of marvelous memories, rich in color, which history has poured into it.

I believe that there is something tranquilizing in contemplating so ancient a festival which has witnessed so many vicissitudes of fortune. Seemingly there are things which



endure. Seemingly there are values which persist. Clearly things beautiful and true have a way of over-coming the disruptive and destructive forces of time.

Between the first Seder which our forefathers celebrated in the land of Egypt on that watch night of the Lord, many, many centuries ago, - that first Seder which they celebrated in haste, their loins girded and their staffs in their hands, waiting for the word which was to set them free, - from that first Seder to the Seder of 1932, celebrated in millions of Jewish homes in thousands of scattered Jewish communities all over the world, - between that Seder and this last Seder many centuries have elapsed, many things have happened, many tides have swept over men and nations. And during that time Israel has been called upon to endure all the fortunes and misfortunes that any people could ever be called upon to endure and yet in spite of this long stretch of time, in 1932, millions of Jews assembled in their homes, around their festive boards, on Seder eve and again the child asks "Why is this night different from all other nights?" (Hebrew) And again the father of the family answers (Hebrew) "We were slaves of Pharoah in the Land of Egypt, etc" and proceeds



to recount the whole story of the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt.

Again as in the olden days, the matzoth, the bitter herbs, the water-cress are still eaten and the festive cup of wine is drunk. Again as in those distant days a cup is set aside for Elijah, ~~XXX~~ the Prophet, and the door is opened to welcome him, - the forerunner of the Messiah. And again in 1932 as in those many centuries which have since passed, young voices join merrily in that charming melody of "Had Gadju," "One Kid, One Kid." That poor kid whose cruel wrong is properly and ultimately avenged by the Almighty, Himself.

It is pleasant to contemplate this ancient Festival and to learn patience and confidence from it. We get a new perspective or recapture the old perspective from a symbolic Festival like Passover. And a perspective is the parent of wisdom.

The modern Jew in 1932, on Passover, sees himself not merely in relation to his immediate time and environment, but he sees himself in relation to three thousand years of history. All his trials and perplexities of the hour, all the problems of the moment which seem insoluble and unprecedented, against this background of centuries, lose much of their urgency and desperateness.



In a mathematical fraction the numerator grows smaller as the denominator grows larger. One divided by three is much, much greater than one divided by three thousand. Passover reminds the Jewish people that its denominator is three thousand years, and more and that all its particular problems of the moment must be taken in relation to that huge span of time and that huge accumulation of experience. (Hebrew)

"Remember the days of old. Consider the years of the many generations." That is a wonderful admonition which our sages gave to our people.

You in 1932 who are very much perturbed and worried about Hitler and the rising tide of anti-semitism in Germany or in this country or in that country, remember the Hitler of thirty-five hundred years ago, the Pharoah of long ago and all the intervening Pharoahs and recall the Red Sea of disaster which finally overtook all of these persecutors of your race. (Hebrew)

We read in the Hagada as we lift the cup of wine in joy. Pharoah was not the only one who arose to destroy us. In every generation men arise to destroy us. (Hebrew) "But God delivers us from their hands."



There is<sup>a</sup>/restitution of justice in history, a law of compensation. And those who believe, will live to see their cause vindicated and their wrongs righted. That's a lesson and a faith which the Jew has derived from his long living and his great experience.

You are depressed my friends, in 1932. All about you men have been impoverished, wealth has vanished, your own, others', your economic fortunes are low and men are today eating the "bread of affliction."

On Seder night the head of the household holds up to this assembly the "bread of affliction" and says: "Hebrew" "This is the bread of affliction which our forefathers ate long, long ago." Eating 'bread of affliction' is no novel experience in our race.

Here is the (Hebrew), here is the bitterness, the bitter herbs which your forefathers were called upon to eat from time to time, and they survived, and they saw better days. Therefore you, friends, be wise, be patient, be strong, for better days are ahead.

The Seder table itself is a marvelous lesson in



life, in the strange mixture and alloy of life, in the uncertainty of life. On the Seder table there jostle one another symbols of riches, affluence, abundance and symbols of poverty. On the one hand rich food, rich wine, rich meats as befit a festive board and along side of them the dry ~~matzo~~ and the bitter herbs.

That's life, a compound of the fat and the lean, of prosperity and adversity, of plenty and want. And the wise man does not become demoralized when destiny places before him at certain moments in his life the "bread of affliction" and summons him to eat of it after he has had years of abundant victuals.

And always in the center of your Seder table is the cup of Elijah. Elijah, the forerunner of the Messiah, therefore the proto-type of hope and redemption, the symbol of the good days ahead.

Passover is a marvelous holiday in many ways. For example two very beautiful songs are associated with the Festival. One is the Song of Meriam, Moses and the children of Israel which they sang after they crossed the Red Sea. It is found in the Book of Exodus. (Hebrew)

"God is my strength and song,  
He is become my salvation."  
This is my God and I will extoll Him,  
The God of my fathers."



It is a song of hope which derives from the miracle of the crossing of the Red Sea, the miracle of redemption from slavery, the miracle of a victory, of triumph, and hope.

The other song is the famous Song of Songs (Hebrew) which Solomon is said to have written which tradition prescribes for reading on the last day of Passover in the Synagogue, a song of life and love and youth. That song is inspired by the miracle of reborn nature - Spring. (Hebrew)

"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-dove  
Is heard in our land."

God's providence and nature's rebirth moved our forefathers to sing and those songs echo through our Festival of Passover and echo also in the hearts of all those who celebrate the Passover joyously.

The Jew, my friends, always believed that God moved in history and that His purposes were unfolding themselves in the world. And having that faith he was able to sing even in his darkest hours. (Hebrew) "By day the Lord will command his loving-



kindness" (Hebrew) "And even in the night-time His song is heard" He sang: "And even in the very winter of his discontent in the season of coldness and desolation."

The Jew never lost faith that winter would go and spring would come and nature would have its resurrection.

In the year 1932, depressed though many of us are, I believe that we as Jews, can still put the spirit of song into our lives. Our political fortunes in the world today are not as bright as they were. Our economic fortunes by and large in the world today, are lower than they were. There are many serious problems facing the Jews of the world and there can be no warrant for relaxation either in alertness or in enterprise on our parts and yet I believe, if we take an historical perspective, even in 1932, it could inspire us to hopefulness and song.

When you consider that it is only since 1917, just fifteen years ago, that half of the Jews of the world were emancipated from their Egypt - Russia. Only fifteen years ago half of our people were enfranchised and made citizens. Up to that time they were gypsies, pariahs, living in ghettos, denied the rights of human beings, - just fifteen years ago. Now they are free. Of course, not without their burden of serious problems, but they are



free politically, economically and socially and they are equals with the one hundred and sixty millions of Russians who live in Russia.

The present regime in Russia is hostile to religion and therefore also to Judaism. The present regime in Russia is hostile to Hebrew culture. And the Jews of Russia, suffering under disabilities, have nevertheless made marvelous strides forward and Stalin has not written the last chapter of Russian Jewish history.

One takes confidence from such a fact. One ought to take confidence when he sees the contributions which the sons of Israel are today making in every field of human endeavor. Ours is an old people, having survived over a period of time which few nations were able to survive. Other peoples have gone down after such a long stretch of time. They have become decrepit. But Israel after a long, checkered career of bloody exile and persecution, in spite of every disability and physical handicap put by man in its path, Israel in 1932 is giving its sons and its daughters to mankind as leaders in every field of human thought. The creative genius of the race is at work in full sweep and high tide, - in the physical sciences, physics, chemistry, in the social sciences, sociology, etc., in the arts, in literature and in music. We are not only



represented in proportion to our numbers but far in excess of our numbers and not merely are we represented but we are writing the text-books, the creative path-finding, pioneering texts for mankind in many departments of human thought.

We ought to derive a great deal of spiritual uplift from the fact that Palestine is another scene which ought to inspire the Jews of 1932 with song, in spite of the difficulties which confront our people there. It is only a few hours ride from Palestine to Egypt, from the land of the Pyramids which our forefathers built, to the Hebrew University on Mt. Scopus, which their descendants built, and yet in between lie three thousand years of history as well as the baffling mysteries of nature and immortality. Why do some nations survive and why do others perish? Egypt is dead. The Pyramids are the tombs of the ancient Egyptian civilization. Why are the sands of the desert covered with the rich ancient civilization of ancient Egypt, of immortality? And why immortality? Why may an old people rejuvenate itself in an old land and be young again with all the energy and enterprize and enthusiasm of this young-old people?

It is one of the most amazing achievements in the career of our amazing people.



And the American Jewish scene is to my mind also a source of hopefulness for the Jew. A hundred years ago when the American Jew set down to celebrate their Passover, there were probably no more than five thousand Jewish souls in the United States, perhaps six thousand Jewish souls. In 1932 there are four and a half million souls. And they are not a mere heterogeneous, unorganized, unproductive mass of human beings. During these decades the Jews of America organized themselves locally and nationally, built their philanthropic institutions, their charitable institutions, their religious institutions, their synagogues, their temples, their religious schools, their academies, their ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ libraries. And when the crisis came in the years of the war the strength of the American Jewish communities manifested itself in the remarkable loyalty which they manifested toward fellow Jews abroad. Millions poured forth from the American Jewish communities for the war-stricken in Eastern Europe. That was a sign of help and the spiritual strength of the American Jewish people. Of course, we are confronted with many problems, of course we will have many problems which a new community in a new land must of necessity be confronted with. But there is no reason for despair. Rather there is a reason for hopefulness.



The challenge of this hour is the same challenge which came to our people when they faced the Red Sea. When they came to the Red Sea there was the Sea before them and the advancing Egyptians behind them. And they at once began to grumble and complain and fear. Then the voice of God came to Moses saying: "Why are you calling upon Me?" (Hebrew) "Speak unto the children of Israel and let them move forward. Let them march."

Courage in facing the tasks of tomorrow, that's the challenge of the hour for the individual Jew and for the Jewish people.

And lastly, my friends, I think that Passover is a very joyous holiday because hovering over it is that unquenchable that inextinguishable personality of Moses.

The name of Moses is associated with three Jewish festivals, Passover, Shabuoth and Succoth. Some other festivals are associated with other names. Chanukah is associated with the Macabees, Purim is associated with Mordecai who was already a leader. Something of the unusual is already found in the leadership of Mordecai.

But with Moses we find the supreme hero of the



the Jewish people. Moses was the first great religious personality to appear on the scene of history. Up to that time all religions were folk-creations. They were anonymous in achievements of outstanding personality.

The religions of India, Greece, Babylonia and Egypt were simply precipitates of impersonal forces. They were the pragmatic adjustments of man to his environment.

With Moses the prophetic personality enters the arena of religious thought and the great one-man, rising above the mass who deliberately takes hold of the religious beliefs, social customs, social usage and mores of a people and revaluates and reinterprets them and gives them a new and definite direction, - Thus marking the beginning of religious progress.

Students of religion have always been impressed with the amazing personality of the God of our Bible. The God of our Bible is not a pale, metaphysical abstraction. The God of our Bible is not a catagorical imperative. The God of our Bible is a very vivid, everlasting, vital, creative presence. Yahweh is Will Power and Personality. "I am that I am."  
(Hebrew)



Now I have no doubt that this marvelous, glowing personality of Moses, that personality which Michaelangelo seems to have caught in his remarkable statue - I have no doubt that this abundant personality of Moses first endowed to the God concept of our people this unique note of masterful personality which Yahweh to this day has had in Israel. He is not to be explained or philosophized or brought into existence through subtle intellectual maneuvering. He is the most dominant fact in existence.

Moses was the first emancipator of the human race, the first revolutionist. All others kindled their sparks at the flame of his spirit. Moses was the greatest of the prophets.

"There never arose" says the Bible "a prophet like unto Moses."

Moses was the great law-giver. Our Torah is the "Torah of Moses." The five books are the "Five Books of Moses," if not actually of his writing, certainly inspired by his spirit. Both the written and the unwritten law trace their authority to Moses.

Moses was the great leader of men. He knew the



agony of leadership. How often did the people refuse to follow him? How often did the hosts of slaves seek to destroy him. How often did they turn upon him in their discontent and complain and murmur against him? But Moses pitied their blindness. He forgave their faith/flessness. But He never yielded to them. He led. They followed. Something of the 'on flamme' of a mighty courage hovers around the head of the leader, Moses.

And he was the builder of the Jewish nation. Abraham was the leader of a tribe; Moses was the founder of the nation. With Moses the history of the Jewish people begins. And fittingly enough this rugged leader, this nation-builder and law giver, this prophet 'whom God knew face to face' was in his ways the humblest of men.

"Now the man Moses was very humble" \* we read in the Bible, "above all the men that were upon the face of the earth." And the heart of the people knowing his humility was never awed by his greatness. Lovingly they turned to him.



"Beloved of God and men was Moses." They called him the "Faithful Shepherd." And Moses would not have asked for any greater reward, Moses the Shepherd of Midyan, would have asked for no greater reward than that, to be called "The Faithful Shepherd."

And this personality, the spirit of this man, to my mind the greatest man that ever lived, is the spirit which hovers over the Festival of Passover. He is with us at our Seder. He listens to our chant and to our song. "The Faithful Shepherd" he is so happy that his sheep have not left the fold. And the faithfulness and loyalty of Moses runs through the many destinies of those whom he led from slavery to freedom, from suffering to happiness. Surely a happy and joyous festival is this Festival of Passover.







to watch, & the both tubes <sup>the water</sup> & the chamber ②  
 as still later, the 1<sup>st</sup> cup, being still down,  
 Elzab's ~~still~~ cup still stands, and  
 his <sup>rupture</sup> ~~pressure~~ is still intact when the  
 deer is opened in volume and very  
 veins bear <sup>short</sup> forth in its charming  
 ready 1137 25 - The on the 1<sup>st</sup> - the  
 1<sup>st</sup> - where <sup>and</sup> ~~the~~ is properly <sup>ultimately</sup> ~~disposed~~  
 by his himself -

On hans pater and caroline from  
such a symbolic festival. On gain Despe  
for a life & perfect is the parent  
& wisdom. Twelve years ago in 1942  
see hurry against a background & 3000  
year - and his first people, the  
born - and his problem, the moment born  
diff. this way to - Security unprecedented  
their urgency desperate need - to a with  
fraction, the numerator becomes grows  
smaller as the denominator grows  
larger - 1 divided by 10 is much more  
than one divided by 3000. P. regards as then  
is 3000 year more history, & our problem  
must be placed in relation to them.



232.7 7/21 32 JUL 1912 - pfr 1111 5'39 (3)  
You are fretting about Hobbes - Thence & Thence  
33 centuries ago - & all the interesting Ph.  
who observed, recorded, & pers. us - & of the  
Red sea, describe which surrounded them  
up -

2316 11/11 -

There is a substitution justice in history -  
a law of compensation. Those who break  
faith will have to see their wrong righted,  
otherwise cannot be retracted.

3. You are Depressed - The world about you  
is unimpaired & wealthy & varied.  
Men are eating & drinking & rejoicing.  
Behold this world - the bread & aff.  
which you father ate in the land of Egypt.  
Behold this world - birth - which  
they were forced to eat, dry, unbarbed  
had washed down with tears - But  
they survived - and better days awaited  
them. To rise - and potent - & strong

4. The Golden table they is a lesson in  
life's uncertainty and its strange mixture  
and alloy. Power & at the requirements  
& persecution & abundance in the face of other



Always misdealing

on the festive board - dry, unbarren bread  
 to the hubs - live, live + cheerful <sup>part of</sup> that  
 this - That is life - a compound of  
 the fat & the bone, of perfect redemption  
 & black ruin. We must not lose  
 our own values, courage + brave  
demoralized when dealing flour before  
 the bread of affliction and ruin,  
 how to eat it - after years of  
blackness abundant victual!

5. And always in the past the cup  
of Eljah for us of God!  
happy days to come - rest to be,  
stop redemption -

WRHS



6. 2 Beautiful Says as associated with  
 P. ① Says of Man - Man is chasing of  
Man ② Says of Salomon - where  
fourteen preaches for reading on the  
last day of P. - Both sign of hope  
faith - no denom its importance from  
the miracle of the cross / the Red  
Sea - the other from the miracle of the Red Sea



157 אטא נב ויב או אילא - 55 אלל  
אלל אלל אלל אלל אלל

Dr. & Mrs.

2.11) כו. תרד. דסג / סג

God's providence and nature's rebirth  
recalled our preference to song - & their  
songs echo joyously thru the peterson  
stadium - & in the hearts, those who  
joyfully celebrate it - The Jew always  
~~believed~~ that for us in history, this  
purpose was unfolding themselves to an  
ultimate salvation. Therefore he sang -  
even in his darkest hour -



Seems true - no warrant for relaxation  
(not enough or action -





5. calm + money & an position - would better  
in any period before -  
① Only since 1917 - 1/2 year & would be  
franchised - new citizens - present  
rules habit to religion, & g. rel. & cultural  
life is suffering - But State has not  
another last chapter in E. Jav. history.

~~Said to~~

② Our sons are first in vanguard  
creation new race at work in  
full swing & high tide -

③ In Palestine - 24 is only 9 per hrs.  
by rail from WRHS. total - from the  
pyramids where are  forgotten lost  
along the Hel. Univ. where  
there is lost as bit Scopus -  
~~But~~ But 300 yes is between  
and the unexplained mystery & nat.  
life death. Eg. is dead - Pyramids  
lost & an ancient arch - Pal. is  
alive - old people representing itself  
in land from which there is death.  
It is now the most amazing achievement  
in the amazing career of an amazing  
people - the cause for joy



④ J. L. in America

100 yrs ago - 5000 souls -

4 1/2 m - needed the ph. artist  
the school - synagogue - academy -  
library - the nat. office -

Loyal - Mulien during wa -

many problems - 7 a camp. new

can. in a new unit - But no  
ground for disappointment or despair

8. The new challenge with him is the same  
which most children, Israel, at the shore  
& the sea - they were afraid. they were not.  
The spirit was free - Behind them not  
approach eg - friendly - 1/10/11 1/2 11 1/2 13

9. Joyan - be. over it became the spirit + unforgotten  
personality of Moses - 3 features are  
evident of his memory - xbo - 11/16 - 102  
other of holidays spent other of character  
21/11 - Maccabees - warm - how  
the sun - 20/10 - 20301 - 6 gates  
base - 1/3 x 2 - but has speaks



Wesley - Central figure, saga & Exodus <sup>18</sup>

① Wesley first great personality to appear  
in scene, history - up to his time all religious  
was folk churches. arrangement as the  
achievement of outstanding individual.

The ancient rel. & Media. Vol. by a person  
were pre-emptive & imperialist theme.  
Sp. power - Early main propagator ad-  
justment to his mind.

With Wesley the prophet personality enters  
the arena pub. that - D. post One. Was  
a man who overcame & with desire.  
re-embodied the social belief structures  
of his day & gave them a new & definite  
direction. Wesley beg. & rel. progress  
for rel. power was in channel  
& personality -

Strand of rel. influence - Amazing  
personality, for, the Bible - Jesus  
is not a poet, with. old. as a category  
recapitulation. It is entire life. All &  
POWER 210 P - Works, then history



as an excellent person - It is not unlikely that abundant Persons of these  
first and foremost for concept gave.  
them with that unique qualities &  
masterful person where you then on  
it person in man, man

① First great emancipator - human race - Reverend

② " Prophet of People - " They hall not and  
a prophet now in Is. like not men "  
not my the - World prophet - and deliberate

③ Law Giver - Total - For the World -  
Both world & our law how change

④ Leader of Men. Known among of Good. How  
often did the slave - vent and discon  
tent - He threw the Unbroken - For the  
the problem - was gilded. He lost it  
about how stream the original of  
mighty change -

⑤ Founder of Justice. He ab. in been  
that is was the the with the  
the of the the the



③ And fittingly enough, this rugged leader, I shall  
but - this weather-beaten man - the  
people whom for three long years we  
in all his ways surrounded with humility  
"Now the man who was very humble, above  
all the men that were upon the face of  
the earth".

The heart, the people, the man, his humility  
we were awed by his presence. Though  
they meant to honor him. Beloved for others  
we were". They called him "The father  
in Shepherd". And the Shepherd  
Midean would have called for us  
back again.

§ It is the news - who speak to us across  
the centuries - <sup>in</sup> our time - and we are  
happy to have such a man and  
such a guide -







5/ 2 beautiful songs associated - Both sang of l'hav-  
 - deserves inspiration -  
 די ארץ 158  
 כהן ה' אלהינו

God's Providence - Nature's Rhythm united - echo -  
 Jew always believed God united - History. ∴ Sang  
 in darkest hour.

106. דבר ה' אלי - / 300 ב' א"י, פ"ח  
 And, even in "winter of discontent" - Cold, dark, dark,  
 never wavered - Spring. He Sang!

- 6/. And why should Jew sing even in 1932!
- ① only since 1917 - 1/2 Jews -
  - ② Our sons -
  - ③ In Palestine - only a few hours ride -  
 but 3000 yrs. live - Ez. is Dead -  
 Oh, the most amazing -
  - ④ J. life in America - A 100 yrs. ago
  - ⑤ The challenge, the hour - פסח 12 ה' 23

- 7/. Joyous, too, we. over it unquestionable  
personality & humor - 3 festivals -
- ① M. was just great rel. Personality - folk-cra
  - Anonymous - his achievement
  - The ancient rel. of India -
  - with humor - On-man. Marking grd.
  - ② Students & rel - amazing pers. of Sod, Bible  
 - quality of masterful personality.