



## Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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### **MS-4787: Abba Hillel Silver Papers, 1902-1989.**

Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

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What builds a home and what destroys it, 1933.



1. The building of a home is an art. Some ~~by~~ are by nature artists. Others acquire a passable technique. Still others never learn it and so wreck the home.
2. The number of broken homes is increasing in our land, but the necessity for social need for home-building and home preservation is because, that very fact, increasing. There is no substitute in social life for the home. Community living, dormitory existence for adults with the care & rearing of children turned over to State institutions and to professional foster homes has been a dismal failure wherever tried. For the home is a small, intimate social unit, knit very closely together, ~~by~~ and possessed of character & personality, and men & women in this mass-age, dominated by institutionalism and collective activities, need for soul refreshment, an "oasis of personality" a little private world, their own island <sup>spiritual</sup> refuge where they themselves ~~are~~ and no others are the principles, the self-makers, the leading figures, the centres of interest and the source of authority. The professional State farms for children, and shall bed-rooms for parents will never may presumably come to take the place, the home in our future Communitarian society. Many things happen in this thorny world. But they will be ~~so~~ a social throw-back rather than an advance, just as so many things which we have with us to-day represent not an advance over past civilization but a decided regression.
3. Why are there so many broken homes? Why do so many courtships lead to the court-room? What are those areas of tension and irritation in the home which lead to their final collapse? Or to put it positively—



What are the qualities which build a home and sustain it? Out, what durable material must the peaceful, happy home be built? I can point to only a few this morning. They are by no means the complete catalogue.

4. Social, & economic, could do a great deal in protecting the home from some, the forces which desire to disintegrate it.

Sec. should train young people for their careers & husbands  
work, & fathers must do this quite as deliberately & thoroughly as  
they train them for trades or professional careers. It is  
generally assumed that young people in reaching a  
certain age are ready for married life. ~~Not so~~ <sup>Physically</sup> yes!  
But much more is required in preparation for  
the art, married life, & home building. Biological  
knowledge, economic planning, problems of adjustment,  
problems involved in parenthood, ~~these too~~ still  
in home management, there & many other subjects  
& fundamental human knowledge which are so indispens-  
able to a successful home should be taught systematically  
in the schools (and in the churches). Ignorance, more  
all, these subjects, lack of preparedness, ~~for~~ <sup>of</sup> intelligent  
auto-criticism, have in so many cases been respon-  
sible for disastrous experience <sup>in</sup> many ~~young~~ <sup>married</sup>  
couples.

(4) In. tw, may help to reverse some of the tension in the home caused by poverty, by <sup>prolonged</sup> unemployment, by factors over which the individual has no control. A prolonged mood of harassment, strain, and frustration caused by want and worry, by insufficient means to maintain a tolerable standard of living, is not conducive to a happy home.







and begins to rob them of their estates. They will work his life in grinding out profits for themselves. And when he cannot supply them with the things they want, they will harass and humiliate him.

There are men who are exploiters. They live off the women and their children and make scant effort to do their share. Or even when they do not exploit in a material sense, they do so in a spiritual sense. They are domineering, tyrannical, self-centered, headstrong and bossy. They fill the house with the noise and clatter, their vehement and intolerant personalities.

All these people are in one way or another cheats and parasites. They are not playing the game of family life squarely and honorably. ~~They do~~ Sometimes this home will survive in spite of them. But what a home it is! And what tragedies it contains!

7. Any human <sup>any social unit</sup> organization, however large, however small, a club, a society, a city, a state, a nation - is possible only if the members thereof are willing to make some substantial sacrifice for it. If men want to live in society - and man must live in society for he is a social animal - he cannot be absolutely free. There is no such thing as absolute freedom or independence in the world. There is no freedom unless it is within the framework of restraint, discipline and self-sacrifice, self-abnegation. In every org. men must consent to an arrangement of give and take, of just sharing of responsibilities, of necessary sacrifices. The home, also, is built on this principle. Whatever burdens there are, all must share in them. Whatever



joy, sorrow, success, failure, there are, all must willingly partake, them. Parents who allow themselves to be exploited by their children as foolish weak needlers sacrifice for their children are foolish. Children who allow themselves to be exploited by their parents are like weak polio. A home must have its moral constitution, grows like a state. And the first article in it - is that all members, the home possess inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

8. Another element in the successful home-building is respect for individuality. Husband and wife and children have common interests. But they also have separate interests. Men are social beings but they are also individuals. Each one has an inner - his own spiritual sanctuary - to which he may wish to retire. This private world should not be trespassed upon. Family unity does not require the rejection of all personalities to one personality.

In fact, ~~each~~ <sup>all</sup> members, the family, should be encouraged to express themselves, to pursue their interests, to fulfil themselves.

→ The child should be guided, advised, helped but not coerced in the choice, his life's way or interest or career. The temptation is great with parents to determine the future of their children. It is prompted by love and solicitude - but not by wisdom. A child is not clay to be molded, but a bulb to be saved for and allowed to unfold safely and truly.

→ It is better, by far, for children to make their own mistakes and receive their own suffering from life, than for







ideas, the new movements, the new institutions. They become  
intell. antiquated without suspecting it. And one day they  
are startled and chagrined to realize that their children  
no longer defer to their judgments & opinions on things  
and regard them as ~~out~~ old-fashioned. They blame the  
irresolution, & with, not the indolence & weariness of age.

8. Blessed is the man and the woman whose mines and souls  
keep on maturing through all their years; Blessed, indeed,  
is he who is able to say to his life-mate: "Grow old  
along with me - The best is yet to be - The last, best, for  
which the first was made."

9. What builds a home?

Fine, deep, enduring interests root into the home.

The charm, friendliness, the warmth, welcome  
love, light and laughter.

Precious memories, joys, fears, heart-aches and ecstasies  
Not wealth, or costly appointments or many servants

~~But~~ Burdens shared, and precious sacrifices, and  
free, boundless, generous love.

But True values, - character, honor, spirituality,  
~~manly~~

—  
Travelling home



1. Art- Some are by nature

2. Number of broken homes - social need - no substitute -

Community living - state institutions -

Home = small, intimate social unit - unit - personal & character

Men + women in this mass-age - need for their soul refresh-

"oasis of personality" - a little private world - island of refuge  
principles -

The professional State Farm may presumably - all things  
thrown-back -

3- Why are there so many broken homes - Why do so many  
commitments end in the court room? - What are Areas

or to put it positively - What are qualities -

out & what character material - Point to only  
a few -

3. Society - Could do a great deal in protecting

should train for career

generally assumed that young people are reaching.

Physiologically, yes! But much more - but, knowledge -

Ignorance of one or all, lack of preparation, intell. ability

exp. for disastrous experiences

B - Soc. too - remove some tension caused by poverty  
prolonged unemployment - by factors

A prolonged need of strain - many - caused by unaff. income  
to maintain a tolerable



4. But when all is said - personal equation - The school may educate - bear major responsibility - without the exercise - gifts and capacities - cannot lay escape

5. There can be no home - all-permeating willingness on part, all to cooperate.

Home supreme coops venture

If either father - fail

It is amazing

(a) Children - exploit - shameful manner.

Demanding as if right things

They will unceremoniously reach out - drain the lives

They regard parents not as persons - ready to hand

The greater the love

And in return - they give - Nothing!

(b) There are wives who similarly drain & sap & exploit

Marriage, for them, is an estate - frozen, so-called

The fact, that they are legally married to a man

They will waste his life in grinding out ~~for~~ <sup>fine</sup> flour

And when he cannot - harass, humiliate

(c) There are men who are exploiters - hit off - scant effort

Or even when they do not exploit in material

Dominance - tyrannical - self-centered, headstrong



They fill the home with noise - vehement, ruthless. persons

(d) All these - are in no way or another - cheats & parasites.  
Not playing - Sometimes home will survive

6. Any human org - is possible only - some substantial sacrifice  
If men want to live in a society - cannot be absolute  
free -

There is no such thing

There is no freedom - frame-work

In every org - men must consent - arrangement  
of jobs and tasks - just sharing - weavers. Messengers

(e) The Home also is built on this principle

Whatever burdens = Whatever joys

→ Parents who ~~also~~ make needless - Children

→ "Moral Crushers" - all members possessed  
of certain inalienable