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War - and its Ancient Madness, 1937.

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WAR - AND ITS ANCIENT MADNESS

"Wisdom is better than weapons of war."

By
Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver

At
The Temple



On
Sunday morning, March 21, 1937

4th in series of seven lectures on:
PROBLEMS OF HUMAN LIFE REFLECTED IN THE BIBLE

My Friends: It took a thousand years to write the Bible. The Bible was completed before the beginning of the Common Era. Of necessity the books of such an ancient literature must reflect the ideas, opinions, the levels of civilization of those ancient days on all subjects and also on war and peace.

War is still, in our day, many centuries since the completion of the Bible, the prime feature of civilization. There is no government in the world today that hasn't its department of war, minister of war and its war machine. At the present moment we sit here, a bloody civil war is raging in Spain. Last year, a defenseless nation, Ethiopia, was attacked in a war of aggression, in a war of shameless aggression by another mightier power. Two or three years a tragic war raged in South America. For the last ten or fifteen years wars have been raging almost continuously in the Far East. And who can forget the World War?

So that, it is not at all surprising that in a collection of literature written some two or three thousand years ago, in the record of human history, you will find numerous echoes of war, the soundings of war and the alarms of war. The Bible has its full share of them. The early Hebrews were no less belligerent than their neighbors. They were not pacifists. They were not particularly given to the ways of peace. And so the books of the Bible, particular the historical books, record words of defense and slaughter, cruelty and rebellion.

The important thing, however, is not that we discover in the Biblical books records of belligerency. The important thing is not that we find that wars are sanctions and even commanded, but that we

come across the most amazing ways, sentiments, ideas which indicate that the leaders of thought of ancient history were able to transcend the institution of war, to look beyond the convention and acceptance of war to a better, happier day for mankind. They were able to reach out after the vision of a warless world and it is in this epochal pioneering that the pathfinding/genius of the race is to be discovered.

Among their contemporaries, among the nations who were contemporaries of the ancient Jews - the Babylonians, the Syrians, Greeks, war remained an accepted institution. And their sages and their wise men and their leaders were never able to go beyond it any more than they were able to go beyond idleness, slavery. Their mental horizon was confined within the war confines. They looked upon war as the continued destiny of man.

Not so with the men of Israel. They were able to go beyond it. They were able to project what was in those days a wish world, a dream-world, an idle order of national and international existence from which war would be banished. They were able to hold aloft an ideal of a confederation of all nations under the reign of law, that nations would be ready to disarm physically and spiritually. And so, along with these echoes of war, you find in the Bible records of strife, conflict. You find these expressions of the abhorrence of war, the deprecation of war, the acceptance of war not as national glory but as punishment of national sin.

That is the original revolutionary contribution of the prophets and authors of the Bible to the subject of peace. But they were not pacifists. The doctrine of non-resistance is foreign to the authors

of the Bible as it is foreign to the people of Israel. Pacifism never gained a foothold in the thought of the leaders of Israel. "Resist not evil" is not of the classic continuing documents in Judaism. Here and there occasionally you will find a stray fact, an isolated teacher a fugitive phrase or proverb in the Bible or in the Talmud which seem to suggest an outright pacifistic attitude. But this is not the highway of Jewish thought. I say this not in praise or in blame of Judaism. I say this just as record.

The Jewish approach to all these problems is a very realistic one, a very practical one. It never expected from its followers or disciples that which is super-human or that which is beyond the reach of the average human being. The Torah of our people is not intended for saints but for the average person. The ten commandments are not very distant - they are very near to you, to your heart. So that Judaism does not expect, does not ask of the individual to return good for evil. Nowhere do we find injunctions to love our enemies. We are not called upon to turn the other cheek when one cheek is smitten. We are not asked to give the outer garment when the cloak is taken. But Judaism does counsel men to resist evil, to fight evil and injustice, to remove the causes which contribute to sin and crime in the world, to conduct yourself so as to make friends, to avoid strife and contention, not to harbor a grudge, to seek peace and to pursue it.

These qualities while they do require exercise of will are nevertheless within the reach of the average normal human being.

So the attitude of the Bible toward war and peace may be illustrated by another story which we find in the Book of Genesis, in connection with the story of Abraham. Abraham was a man of

peace but he was not a man who wanted peace at all costs. He realized that there were sanctities for which man would fight in spite of hatred of war. He himself led a small army of men in pursuit of the soldier who captured his nephew and who robbed his household of its possessions. He smote those men and rescued his friends and relative. Nevertheless Abraham was a man who sought peace. He was ready to make every concession for the sake of keeping peace when no moral principles were involved.

And so we are told the story of how the shepherds of Abraham and Lot met in strife. Both Abraham and Lot had large herds and flocks, so large that the land was not able to bear them all. The land was seemingly not wide enough, big enough for the flocks of Abraham and Lot and so there was strife between the shepherds of Abraham and Lot. But Abraham, the older man, went to Lot and said to him: "Let there be no strife between your herdmen and mine for we are brothers." That is the premise for all peacefulness. You start out with the idea not that we are natural born enemies, not that there are inferior and superior races, that one must dominate. there "Let/not be strife between your herdmen and mine for we are brothers." There is room for all of us. The world is big enough and large enough to support in comfort all its inhabitants. There are continents uninhabited which can amply maintain in comfort the whole population. Is not the whole land before us? "Separate thyself from me, I pray thee; if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou take the right hand, then I will go to the left."

That is a different kind of attitude than the one which pervades the League of Nations of the present day. Abraham did not say to Lot: You can't go there because that land is mine. I will not give you access to the raw materials. I will monopolize all the earth myself. That leads to explosion. Abraham was willing justly to divide the available land and even to give his brother first choice of the land available.

This simply story, my friends, illustrates first, the economic secondly, basis of war and how to avoid war. There are nations in the world today whose legitimate needs are not being satisfied. There are nations today which are over-populated and must have access to the uninhabited lands of the earth or to sources of raw material. There are nations in the world today whose standard of living depends upon the capacity of the people to sell in the open markets of the world. If markets are shut against them through high tariff, their standard of living must sink. It is only through a redistribution of the wealth of the earth, that is, the accessibility of the wealth of the earth to all the peoples of the earth that will insure ultimately peace in the world.

This is fundamental - before peace there must be justice. "The work of righteousness shall be peace and the result of Righteousness quietness and confidence forever." "The work of Righteousness shall be peace." Now of course it is impossible at this late date to set about rectifying every historic wrong in the world. It is quite impossible to postpone the consummation of peace until all such wrongs are requited. Nevertheless the beginnings of such rectification must be made through the progressive re-adjustment of all the mal-adjusted in the world. And Judaism has a definite message to give to nations

as well as to individuals. The prophets of the Bible were not concerned merely with the salvation of the individual. They were also profoundly concerned with national morality and national salvation as well. The Bible deals with international morality just as it deals with personal morality because it realizes that only within the framework of fullest international order can the individual man or woman achieve the fullest development of his own personal moral life. So the prophets addressed themselves to the people of Israel, to the people of Tyre, Egypt, etc., collectively, and tried to impress upon them that they too were subject to all moral law, the observance of which alone would insure for them peace. All nations are subject to the sovereign law of God just as individuals. "The wicked will go down to the Hell of all nations who forget God."

And so we find, for example in the Bible that the people of Israel committed a grievous sin. The kings and nobles had promised to liberate the slaves. This was in the days of .

had promised to liberate the slaves if they would give their loyalty to him in a battle. After the battle the slaves were re-enslaved. And the voice of God came to the prophet and say unto them: "I have proclaimed for you a liberty unto the sword, unto the Pestilence and unto the Famine and I will make you a horror unto all the Kingdom of the earth."

The prophet Amos, great prophet of Justice said: "For three transgressions of Tyre, for four, I will not reverse it because they delivered up a whole captivity of Edom and remembered not the brotherly Covenant." Here was a nation that had betrayed another and because of that the prophet said: "Because of their sins God will not forgive them and remember not the brotherly covenant."

Think of Ethiopia. Think of Italy. Italy was the nation that sponsored that nation in the League of Nations. Italy had broken her brotherly covenant as other nations have done and do. "For three transgressions or four I will not reverse it because he did pursue his brother with the sword and did cast off all pity." And for four I will not reverse it because they ripped up the women with child in Gilead that they might enlarge their border, leading to other wars of conquest and th ghastly brutality."

And throughout the Bible you find these acts of exploitation, lust of power and wealth, national pride, deprecated, denounced because injustice leads to war.

It might be interesting to ask ourselves what was the ultimate vision which the writers of the Bible hold up for the people of Israel? Is it the sort of a vision, let us say, that Hitler, Goebbels, Goering, or others of the Nazi Party hold up for their people, a career of war, of conquest, the ideal of war as the military destiny - is that the ideal which the writers of the Bible hold up for our people? Let us see. "And and war will I destroy on the earth and I will cause them to dwell in security, in peace."

When the lyric poet of the Psalms wishes to express all the good things that he wishes for his people, what does he say? "The Lord will give strength unto his people". What kind of strength? The strength of armies? The strength of navies? The strength of military airships? "The Lord will bless his people in peace." "What is God's most marvelous achievement on earth?" asks the Psalmist. "What is the most marvelous thing that God achieves in the world?" Is it that he gives victory to one nation against another? That he blesses the men on this side of the trenches as against those on

the other? Oh, No! "Come, behold the works of the Lord..
"He maketh wars to cease in the whole earth
"He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder,
"He burneth the chariots in the fire."

This is the most marvelous evidence of God in the world. The supreme Theophany, the supreme revelation of God to man will come when men will pile high all their instruments of destruction - their guns, their machine guns, their military airplanes, swords and all the horrors of destruction - when men will pile them high and set fire to them all. Out of that fire will come supreme reverence of God and man.

Religion and war, the writers of the Bible finally came to realize, had nothing in common. The Temple and the armies - they simply don't go together. King David, we are told in the Book of Chronicles, called his son to him and said: My son, I want to build a Temple in Jerusalem to God. I have accumulated great wealth. I wanted to build a Temple to God. But God appeared to me in a vision and said: "You, David, have spilled much blood. And great wars didst thou wage. You will not build a House dedicated to My name. You will have a son () - what a beautiful phrase that is - You, David, will have a son, a man of quiet, peace. His name will be () derived from the Hebrew word "peace". And peace and quietness will I grant to Israel ~~and~~ in his day. Peace, Shalom. A man of peace will build my House and he will be My son and I will be his Father."

The Bible ordains that the altar in the Temple - the holiest fixtures in The Temple - contain no iron. No iron shall be used in its construction for iron is the symbol of the sword. And the altar is the symbol of peace.

The writers of the Bible, my friends, - what kind of a vision did they have for the rest of mankind - those that were not concerned with Israel only. They were not deluded that Israel could enjoy peace when the rest of the world was in strife. We have that vision expressed in the most perfect terms in the Bible; Twice repeated - once in the Book of Isaiah and once in the Book of Micah you have one of the most exalted programs for world peace:

"And it shall come to pass in the end of
days,
That the mountain of the Lord's
house shall be established as the
top of the mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills;
And all nations shall flow unto it.
And many peoples shall go and say:
"Come ye, and let us go up to the
mountain of the Lord,
To the house of the God of Jacob;
And we will walk in His paths."
For out of Zion shall go forth the
law,
And the word of the Lord from
Jerusalem.
And He shall judge between the
nations,
And shall decide for many peoples;
And they shall beat their swords
into plowshares,
And their spears into pruning-hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword
against nation,
Neither shall they learn war any more."

My friends, there are three ideas incorporated in the program which is projected for mankind 28 or 29 centuries ago. First, that nations will come to seek a reign of law, that nations will not be content to abide each by its own moral self-sufficiency, each a law unto itself. But that they will willingly submit themselves to international law, the supreme law of God. "He will teach us His way. We will walk in His path."

My Friends, there are three ideas incorporated in this program which was projected for mankind twenty-eight or twenty-nine centuries ago. First that nations will come to seek a reign of law. That nations will not be content to abide each by its own moral self-sufficiency, each a law unto itself but that they will willingly submit themselves to international law - the supreme law of God. "He will teach us His way. We will walk in His path." This first great idea, the reign of international law.

Secondly, as a result of this international law which will give all nations a sense of collective security will come disarmament, beating swords into plowshares and the construction and building for the creating of substance and food for human beings.

In 1932 the nations of the world spent three billion, eight hundred million dollars; in 1934, five billion dollars; in 1935, eight billion, eight hundred million dollars and in 1936, ten billion, seven hundred million dollars on the spears and on the swords of destruction and devastation. How far mankind still has to go to approximate this vision of the prophets of the Bible.

The third idea incorporated in this vision is that Israel is the leader, the pathfinder of world peace. "For out of Zion shall come forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Israel, throughout the ages has hoped for peace and longed for peace and prayed for peace. The God of Israel is called a God of peace. The Messiah is called the Prince of peace. The people of Israel are called the seed of peace.

The Jews have not taken part in all the movements for world peace. They are afraid that they will be charged with being unpatriotic. They are afraid of being called pacifists. The Jew, in self-defense, has had

to mute, to tone down this passion for peace, this craving for peace.

That is a great mistake. We ought not to lack courage of action because of the fear of what our enemies will say about us. We ought not to fight this creative will for peace which is ours. "God is Peace." Particularly in this age, when the world has gone mad with a primitive Aryan madness it is the particular of the children of Israel who have this marvelous tradition of 3000 years of peace, whose sages and prophets were pathfinders of peace, to stand up and join up with all movements whose purpose is to make war less likely in the world, to establish collective security, to build up machinery for peace, for the establishment of international law.

The twentieth century is the generation, to my humble judgment, that will cast the deciding vote on this vital issue of war, and the destruction of civilization, of peace and the promise of peace. We of the twentieth century owe a solemn obligation to see that we make a correct decision in this fateful issue. And as a guide, the books of the Bible will serve as an inspiration.

1/ 1000 - Completed before - Of necessity - War is still
At present -

Not surprising ∴ collection 2-3000 - echoes - battles etc

Bible has full share - Early Hebrews - no less warlike

Not pacifists nor - No unqualified opposition

It is clear that in a later - 1000 - not one attitude
from jungle - tooth & claw -

The important thing - war sanctioned, commanded -

brutal in extreme - Violence - transcend acceptance

reach out - war-bers -

Here in - epochal pioneering - path finding genius

2/ With the contemporaries - war remained -

Did not transcend it intel. or theoretically - Idolatry

The leaders of Israel did! Went beyond it!

Projected wish-world -

Came to abhor war - defeated it - punishment

Phased - justice -

Projected ideal of Confederation - sign - disarm

3) Not Pacifists - Doctrine of Non-Resist-foreign -

Never gained a permanent

"Resist not evil" - not a doctrine - continuing

Occasionally - not highway

Said neither - historical record

Jew. Approach to all - limitations -

Its demands - applied - to 1300 AD -

It did not expect man to return "Good for Evil"

Love Enemies - Check - cloak

But it did counsel - (1) to fight Evil + unjust

(2) Remove causes (3) Make friends (4) Avoid Abuse

(5) Quid pro quo - hate - revenge - (6) Seek Peace & Union

Qualities within reach - Effort - super human

high-pitched

4) Abraham - not for Peace at all costs - Sacrifices

He himself - not - swore them

But for Peace - Unnecessary - Justice

Shepherds - "Land not able to bear them" (Need for

Expansion - Colonies - in increasing population) Stop!

"Let there be no strife bet... for we are brethren" (Premise)

"Is not whole land before us" (World large enough)

"Separate thyself... left hand (Access to raw material - wants)

Story illustrates Economic basis - avoid.

5). Before Peace - Justice: "The work of R. shall be Peace"

Of course impossible - rectify - wait - Beginnings - Machines

Judaism addressed - Nations - Not Excl. concerned - Saboteur

It dealt - Int. Morality - Only in frame work -

And so Prophets - addressed to Israel Collectively

and to all - No Antisemy!

No moral self sufficiency for Nations - Race - Class

State not suffice - God! על כל דבר

על כל דבר על כל דבר על כל דבר על כל דבר

9/ Israeli difficulties in expansion of Peace.

1. Gd is called Peace-
2. Defense
3. Israel

Our Merriman's hps.

colle 5
colle 2 1/2
colle 1 1/2

(Indle)

10/ To-day - "Wehgeit" - was extolled - education of youth -
with art Fran - Machinery for Peace -

✓
1932 - 3800
1934 - 5.000
1935 - 8.800
1936. 10.700



1. 1000 yrs. Completed before Common Era began - will, of necessity, reflect the ideas, attitudes & habits of civilization of those distant ages. War is still a constant ^{or prominent} feature of our civilization - the 2 mill. years B.C. has not much war less frequent in world - than not changed much attitude towards it. ~~Nations are warring~~ ~~as we remember~~ at present a bloody civil war is raging in Spain - last year, Ethiopia, was involved & engaged in a war of shameful oppression - wars have been raging more or less ~~age~~ continuously in Far East - A few years ago - a 3rd great bloody war raged in Japan - We shall, I guess, never forget the World War. with it 100m. dead - Nations ~~are warring~~

So that it is not surprising that in a collection of great literature found from 2 to 3000 yrs ago - one finds the report of wars & the alarm, war - battle - conquest - vicissitudes - death - destruction - ~~the~~ ~~esp.~~ ~~best~~ ~~books~~ - has its full share of them. The early Hebrews were no less warlike than the nations around about them. They engaged in conquest. They suffered war victims & suffered defeats. They engaged in cruel war - in wars of aggression & in wars of defense. They were not peaceful, no conquerors, peace-seekers or promoters. There is no question of their going to war in B.C. 1000 yrs. or from then on.

It is clear that in a later century, or 1000 yrs. or more we are not so much interested in the Bible - from the new perspective - The people are living in a new world - to the most exact, the realization, which is that beyond the reach of mankind.

The important thing to us & is not that in certain books, the B. wars are seemingly sanctioned or even commended, not that frequently such wars were fought in the extreme, but that the vision of the world was ^{always} in these distant

dogs - Washington's early youth able to transcend the ^{acceptance} ~~war~~
or conventional restrictions, and reach out after the ideal of
a war-less world - of peace and inter. comity. Therein
as in all things else, lies the special promise of the
B. the path finding genius, the race.

With the conformance, ancient &c. - was remained
an accepted and accepted institution, & mankind - part
of the plan of destroying each nation. They did not
transcend it, ^{even intellectually & spiritually} even as they failed to transcend idolatry
(a slavery). The border, moral, ~~did~~, amazingly enough,
did transcend it. They went beyond it - They projected
a new - world, as a dream ^{in reality} ~~wherein~~ ~~was~~ free from
war & violence. Hope. They came to allow war - to de-
cide it - to regard it as punishment for nat. sins. - They
refused to extol the heroes of war. They pleaded for an
order, better justice, which will make war - unnecessary.
They projected the ideal of a confederation of all nations
under the reign of law - which will lead them to
disarm phys. & spiritually -

2. They were not fair facts. The doctrine of non-resistance is foreign to the B. It never provided a permanent footing in Judaism or in J. tho't. "Resist not evil" is not of the classic or contemporary teaching of the sages of Israel - occasionally we find a sage sect, without an isolated teacher, a positive proverb or maxim, which is a law to be explained as prophetic. But it is not a highway in J. tho't. There is said nothing in frases nor in plans but simply as hist. record. The J. ^{attitude} ~~attitude~~, as we have seen, ^{is all beyond the} ~~has~~ always been both

practical & realistic. It recognized the limitations of human nature, ~~and~~ the inevitable imperfections of ~~all~~ all social organisms. Its demands upon man or society were never so extreme or so unrealizable. It did not expect men to return good for evil. It did not ask men to love their enemies. It did not counsel them to turn the other cheek ^{also} when the sun shined, and to give the coat also to the thief who stole the outer garment.

But it did counsel men to fight evil & injustice, to remove the causes of sin & wrong-doing away from to conduct oneself in such a way as to make friends ^{to avoid high tempering} ~~all~~ men - to be forgiving - not to harbor a grudge, ^{not to take revenge} ~~and to hate~~ to seek peace & preserve it - to be just and merciful & humble - This quality is within reach of all men - & while they, & even, call for the effort of the excellent given moral & sp. powers, they are not superhuman qualities, so high pitched as to be beyond range, war.

3.- A h. may gain more, as example of J. attribute to him these. He was not for peace at all costs. He was not opposed to war on any very that ~~that~~ there are sanctities for which men will fight - repables, honor abhorrent war is to them - He himself led a small army of men in pursuit of the soldiers who had captured his nephew ^{son} and his household, and made them and returned his nephew & his household & all his possessions. But he was a man who sought peace - who preferred concessions, when he must pursue an invasion - to contentions or warfare. He placed his reliance not in the power of arms - but in the power of justice, truth and good-will.

Stephen - land was not able to bear them - substance, too great. (need for expansion - for colonies - increasing population - etc.) Scripture had heard men - "And the Canaanites the Hittites dwell there in the land"

"Let there be no strife, I pray the hit. on & the. & hit. my hardness & thy hardness, for we are brethren" [This is the premise! Not nat-born enemies - forever destined to hate & struggle & conquer - superior & inferior races - Right & duty & wars & conquest] "I stand the whole land before thee" [World is big! - room enough!] "Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me; if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou take the right hand, then I will go to the left!"

[Access to raw material - free markets - most perhaps source of modern war. No peace until the right is established in agreement and collaboration - to buy without disadvantage, & sell without restriction]

This story illustrates the econ. basis of war - & the way of averting such war!

- "The Work of Righteousness shall be peace - and the result of R-
justice and confidence forever"
4. Bk. Inter. Peace must come int. justice. It is impossible, at this late date, to rectify all ancient wrongs or to postpone the consummation of peace until all such wrongs are righted. But the new wrong must be made - and int. machinery estab. for the future for peaceful readjustments & reparation. (Jordanus addressed itself to nations as well as to ind. - It was not exclusively concerned, as some of the speakers, with the nation, the individ. - It dealt with nat. morality & nat. salvation as well. It realized that it is all within framework of high nat. truth. Morality that ind. men & women can reach their fullest moral develop - And in the teacher, the B. addresser to the people, Israel - calling - a call as to all the other nations

[illegible]

"I walk in a liberty unto the world, unto the
Persians and unto the Farcians and I will walk in
a house unto all the Kingdom, the earth

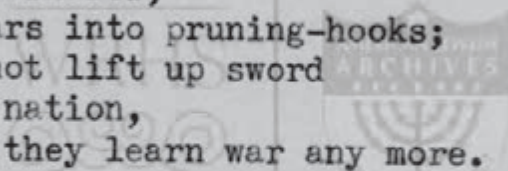
(c) Ans 20 Tyv, Idon, Egypt, Bahylon, Amoria —

~~(R) 216 - frustro bene~~

(h) "For 3 transgressions, Tyre, you for 4. I will not reverse it - because they delivered up a whole captivity of E dom - and remembered not the brotherly Covenant" (Italy - Ethiopia) -

(c) For 3 - Edson - because he did pursue his brother with the sword and did cast off all pity

And it shall come to pass in the end
of days,
That the mountain of the Lord's
house shall be established as the
top of the mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills;
And all nations shall flow unto it.
And many peoples shall go and say:
"Come ye, and let us go up to the
mountain of the Lord,
To the house of the God of Jacob;
And He will teach us of His ways,
And we will walk in His paths.'
For out of Zion shall go forth the
law,
And the word of the Lord from
Jerusalem.
And He shall judge between the
nations,
And shall decide for many peoples;
And they shall beat their swords
into plowshares,
And their spears into pruning-hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword
against nation,
Neither shall they learn war any more.



"He maketh war to cease in the whole earth
 He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder,
 He burneth the chariots in the fire."

The supreme Theophany will take place, when nations
 will lay up all their instruments, war, their
 - cannons, machine guns, their swords & their bayonets
 and all their death-dealing armament and set them
 on fire - and burn them. Out of that flame
 will come the vision of rest to man -

(4) God and the business / war - don't go together.
 The church & the war kept have nothing in common.

King David - Build Temple - אבדל ז'י' ע' ז'
 - אבדל א' ז' א' א' - אבדל א' א' א' א'
You will have a son - אבדל א' א' א' א' - This
 name will be אבדל - אבדל א' א' א' א' א' א' א' א' א' א'
He will build my Temple - אבדל א' א' א' א' א' א' א' א' א' א'

(4b) how - altar -

8) And what is the ultimate vision for rest & thankful
 For they were not interested in Israel alone.

There is the vision repeated - Is - Uncal

אבדל א' א' א' א' -

① Inter. Law - Ways - Then

② Disarmament -

③ Israel as leader - Is. 2. 2

ASBTRACT OF ADDRESS DELIVERED BY RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER AT THE TEMPLE
ANSEL ROAD AND EAST 105TH STREET ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 21, 1937

WAR - AND ITS ANCIENT MADNESS

It took a thousand years to write the Bible and it was completed before the beginning of the Common Era. Of necessity it reflects the levels of civilization of those distant ages. When one realizes that war is still, in the twentieth century, the chief feature of civilization, one will not be surprised to find in the books of the Bible so many ~~the~~ echoes and alarms of war. The early Hebrews were no less war-like than their neighbors and their literature reflects it.

The important thing about the Bible, however, is not that certain of its books record war in all its ferocity and at times even sanction it, but that other of its books transcend war and reach out after the ideal of a war-less society. Herein lies the epochal pioneering of the Bible.

With the contemporaries of ancient Israel, war remained an accredited and accepted institution, regarded as the ultimate destiny of nations of nations. They did not transcend war, even theoretically, just as they failed to transcend idolatry. But the teachers of ~~the~~ Israel did transcend it. They were able to think beyond war. They projected the ideal of a confederation of nations, under the sovereign rule of international law, beating their swords into ploughshares.

The Prophets were not pacifists. The doctrine of non-resistance is foreign to them. But they taught men to resist evil, to remove the causes which lead to strife, to forego hate and vengeance and to seek peace and to pursue it. They realized that before peace there must be justice. "The work of righteousness shall be peace". They, therefore, called for a high level of national and international morality. They were not concerned merely with the salvation of the individual. They conceded no moral autarky to the state. They demanded of all nations subjection to the mandates of international law.

They came to ~~recognize~~ recognize that religion and the business of war have nothing in common. King David was denied the privilege of building the

Temple of God because his hands had spilled much human blood. No weapon of iron was to be used in the erection of the Altar of the Temple because iron ~~xxx~~ is the symbol of war whereas the Altar is the symbol of peace. The Psalmist asks: What are God's most marvelous achievements on earth? He replies: "He maketh wars to cease in the whole earth; He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the charriots in the fire." The supreme theophany will be vouchsafed to men when they will pile high all their instruments of war and their death-dealing armaments and set fire to them. Out of ~~xxx~~ that flame will come the supreme vision of God to men.

The complete program for world peace is outlined by the prophets Isaiah and Micah in their famous vision of the "End of Days". In that vision three mighty ideas are incorporated: First, that nations must learn to subject themselves voluntarily to the reign of law; secondly, that as a result of a compelling and implemented international law, the nations of the earth will feel secure and will then begin to disarm; and thirdly, that the inspiration for it all must come for a return to spiritual values - a return to Zion - the spiritual reservoir of mankind - "For out of Zion shall go forth the Law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."