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People I should like to meet in 1938, 1938.

PEOPLE I SHOULD LIKE TO MEET IN 1938

By
Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver

At
The Temple

On
Sunday morning, January 2, 1938.



My first thought considering the subject, "People I Should Like to Meet During the Coming Year", was to get up a list of all the great and powerful people of the earth, people who control the destiny of the nation, the people who are playing the stellar roles in contemporary history and then, alongside of each name, write down what I would like to say to that individual when and if I met him. The question of their accessibility to such an interview didn't enter in to it. I assumed that that could be arranged.

The more I thought of this scheme, the less attractive it appeared to me. Suppose I went through all the formalities and all the preliminaries required and finally came face to face with one of these people - what would I say to him? Suppose I met one of them? what would I say to him? Could I really tell him what I thought of him? Could I say to him, "I think you are a 'chomer'." Supposing I met Mr. Mussolini. Could I say to him, "I think you are a braggart." Or if I met Mr. Stalin, could I say to him, "I think you are a bloody assassin." Would ^{they}/then invite me to stay for tea?

Or suppose I restrained myself and spoke with all the refinement and direction and diplomacy but tried to bring home to them how much their programs, and their tactics and their ambitions were contributing to the chaos of the world, to its present moral anarchy, its terror, suffering and strife? Would they listen to me? And for how long?

Or, suppose they spoke to me in this imaginary interview? What could they tell me? Would they speak to me quite frankly and simply as one man to another, revealing their innermost and most sincere thought? Or would they they give me many stereotyped phrases such as they give to all interviewers - previewed, pre-digested, squeezed dry of any vital meaning by the propaganda department and the foreign office.

I should like to meet these people. Who wouldn't? But I should like to talk to them about things they would not like to talk to me about. To Stalin I should like to talk to him about the assassination of Trotsky, about the bloody purges, about the trials. I should like to talk to Mussolini about Ethiopia and about his intrigues in the Mediterranean. I should like to talk to the Mikado about China and the unaccountable presence of hundreds and thousands of Japanese troops in China that don't belong there. I should like to talk to Franco about the destruction of Guernica and the raiding of Spain.

There are also some important Americans/^{with}whom I should like to speak. I should like to meet up with Mr. Ford and talk to him about his attitude towards organized labor. I should like to meet with Mr. John L. Lewis and talk to him about the American Federation of Labor and the unfortunate rift in the ranks of labor. I should like to meet up with all or some of the Sixty American Families and talk to them about the distribution of wealth. I should like to meet up with Tom Girdler and his friends and talk to them about industrial democracy.

But would they listen? Would they talk with me quite calmly and simply, eager to learn, eager to be informed like men seeking solutions for difficult problems? Or would they storm, rage, denounce and buster with threats and din my ears full of all sorts of catchwords, slogans and all kinds of comments on all sorts of "isms"? I am afraid they would do just that because they have been doing just that. So I have come to the conclusion that these people are not the important and interesting people to meet in 1938 because they are not people at all. They are just figures, important people some of them, self-important many of them, ruthless, figures, but figures none the less.

There are great people - there are surely great people in the world at whose feet one would like to sit, to contact with, with whom it would be an unforgettable experience - with an Einstein, a Ghandi, a Bradeis, a Freud, a Thomas Mann, a Carl Von Ossietsky. Meeting with them, and watching them, listening to them, one gets a sense of something cosmic, something mysteriously brave. But these other people whose names I have mentioned - I am afraid that a meeting with them would be rather unrewarding.

I think that perhaps I would have a much better and a much more profitable time if I would meet up with all sorts of people - people not in the limelight, not in the headlines, people not on parade, people who, as far as fame is concerned, are rather anonymous, people whom I have probably never met before, but people with whom it is of mutual benefit, a bilateral stimulation to meet. And it is good to meet people, many people, new people all the time.

People grow old in their ideas, get set in their reactions when their human environment, when their human milieu becomes fixed

and unchanged, when there are no new faces swinging into the orbit of their lives and no new ideas and new points of view coming to them, no new personalities, new voices. Why do aristocrats die of dry rot? Because their circles are so circumscribed, because they do not allow new sap is not permitted to surge into their veins.

There are circles I meet up with from time to time, circles of good people, not at all inferior people, but who are nevertheless, tale and insipid because of monotony of the same faces, the same identical faces all the time, the same repetitious conversation revolving around the same trite and worn themes and because of the weariness and the flabby and relaxed minds and spirits within that identical group. What such circles require, is air-conditioning. What they require is ventilation, the fresh air of a few new vibrant spirits from the outside who will bring about a new stirring among the dry bones.

Meeting new people, my friends, is one of the highways of destiny. Abraham rushed out to meet strangers. And from their lips he learned the happiest and most gladsome news of his entire life. Jacob met up with a stranger on the lonely bank of the Yabbok and wrestles with him until he wrests a blessing from him which changed the course of his entire life even as it changed his very name from Jacob to Israel.

Joseph wandering in the fields meets a stranger who directs him to his brethren and his very destiny on the throne of Egypt.

Moses fled to Midian. He was a stranger in a strange land. But it was in that land that he meets God in the flame of revelation which burns in the inextinguishable bush.

And Ruth left her own home and came to a strange land - "people

whom she did not know at all and became the ancestress of kings."

The Rabbis gave a good piece of advice to human beings. Let your house be wide open. Let your doors be open to the four corners of the earth. Don't isolate yourself within your family circle or among your own business associates or in your own social set. Let travelers from foreign parts, let pilgrims from distant lands and other states and other environments - let them come into your conscious world awaredly, stretch the horizon of your mind and sympathies. Blessed is the man who understands the need of a world of men.

And I should like to meet a lot of those people in 1938 interesting people who are doing interesting word, whose minds are alert, whose hearts are young, who are bubbling with enthusiasm of their work, people who love life, its richness, its color its boundless adventures. I don't care so much for pompous folks, for people who have a lordly and imposing front behind which is an empty vacuum. I don't care to meet so many well labelled folks who are carrying on the momentum of a father or a grandfather. I don't care to meet up with so many people who are shoddy and affected, hollow or scheming because I have met so many of them already.

I should like to meet people who are interested in interesting work and who are realizing themselves quietly, day by day through spirit of a their work, people in whose eyes you will discover the/dream and upon whose lips you will always year words of authentic sincerity, folks who come from all walks of life, from the office, from the laboratory, from the clinic, studio, from the mill, the mine, from the high seas, from the air. Such people it would be good to meet, to know, to exchange with them strong and simple truths of life. For in meeting

them, one comes to learn the glory of human effort and the mystery of human pride and dignity. And I would like to meet them, not in crowds. We meet each other too often in crowds. In fact, when we don't know what to do, we huddle together in crowds. When we can't make up our minds we call a meeting and another meeting. Life moves in crowds.

I should like to meet up, in 1938, with men who smile in defeat, women who bear their crosses bravely, old men who grow old nobly and graciously, men who forego the security of ease and choose the danger of the glory of a fine and noble ideal. As I grow older, I become less and less interested in people who are just successful. My interest is rather with the people who are still aspiring, still preparing and in people whom the world calls failures because they reach after that which is beyond the grasp of any human being. I have learned from successful people the hollowness of success and from defeated people, I have learned the glory of defeat. For example, I should like to meet, in the coming year, the men and the women who have come through the last hard, bitter years of depression, battered but unbowed in spirit, the men and women who were able to make the psychological adjustments, without fuss or friction to loss and impoverishment, the husband and the wife and the children who were drawn together more closely, more intimately in love and devotion because of the hard years of misfortune. Those are the people I should like to meet because they are the salt of the earth. They give one a sense of reality, a pride in our fellow beings.

I should like to meet, during the coming year, a great number of young people who are rather uncertain and fearful of their

future, those young people who, because conditions are what they are, seem to see nothing ahead of them. They see no clear open road before them. They feel that our generation has fallen on evil days, that the America of great opportunity and of infinite promise is no longer our America. I should like to meet up with them and tell them not to lose their faith and courage, the faith in America the courage of their own hearts. America tomorrow will be a fairer and lovelier land to live in than it ever was in the past. Our resources are nigh endless and our human material is excellent. Our traditions are inspiring. Our system of government is the best that humans ever evolved. New research and new inventions will create new opportunities and open up new worlds of enterprise.

I should like to tell them that we have been passing through, in the last few years through one of those periodic stages of economic disorganization in American life for which we have not yet found an adequate answer, an adequate solution. I should like to tell them that the American people, have not yet found an adequate preventative for these problems of depression and disorganization but that with high resolve, with a strong pioneering sense of initiative, they will proceed to experiment with possible solutions. I would call their attention to the fact that there are unfortunately many people who are near sighted, who resent these experiments, who resist it. But I should like to assure them that they are going on, that America will continue to experiment until there is economic security for the American people. American youth should face the future with confidence. Recently, I came upon a statement by a very competent industrialist and a director of research in one of the great industrial organizations of America which said:

I should like to meet up, in 1938, with fellow Jews, particularly with young Jewish parents who are afraid of the future, who are afraid of the future of their children. First it was Germany, they say; then it was Poland; now it is Roumania. Where is this thing going to stop? And a panic, a mood of panic seems to have invaded the hearts of many of our people. I can understand it. But I should like to sit down with these people and reason with them, reason them out of this fear complex. This is a time of affliction for our people, no doubt. But because it is that, it is also a time of affliction for the whole of mankind. Now, unless you believe that the aberrations of our day are lasting - that is to say - unless you believe that dictatorship, and might is right, and economic isolationism, and narrow nationalism, and intolerant racialism, and international suspicion are the permanent facts in human life, unless you believe that the year 1937 will be symptomatic of all the years in God's calendar to come, then you must believe that sooner or later they will lead to the grave, that a better day is coming when the classic ideals of humanity - justice, brotherhood, tolerance, good will - will return to the harassed troubled remaining places of mankind. And when that happens, when the afflictions of mankind will be lessened, then our affliction simultaneously will be lessened. And I am inclined to believe that that day is not far off. This is the darkest hour before the dawn.

I am inclined to think that movements of despair, impatience which go by various names but which have in two-thirds of the Western World destroyed democracy and liberalism will disappear. That movement which began with the World War has run its course.

It has not been successful. It has not brought that which it promised to bring to its own people. Sooner or later, that movement will collapse and the rights which our people lost in Germany and are losing in Poland Roumania will be restored to them. Sooner or later nations are bound to realize that no people becomes wealthy by destroying the wealth of one section of its population. The impoverishment of the Jews of Germany has not enriched Germany. Poland cannot gain economic well-being through undermining an active and creative element of its people. - Roumania impoverishing nation by destroying million and a half people. These things are bound to come and they do come and I believe that they will come sooner than we expect.

The virulence of anti-Semitism will disappear. And I would say to these Jews - surely we Jews who have lived so long, experienced so much and who have distilled so much wisdom out of bitter experiences in the past have no reason to assume that this experience is in any way different from similar experiences in our long history. I would like to tell young parents that they should not be so much concerned about the future and particularly because of the spread of anti-Semitism.

I should like to meet up, in 1938, with Rabbis , Jewish lay-leaders and tell them not to ~~xxxxx~~ paint the picture darker than it is and not to keep on dinning messages of doom into the souls of their people. What good does it do? Prophets of old wise - when people of Israel were prosperous, when they were in danger of sinking into obesity of prosperity, became flabby and weak, then the prophets raged and scolded and when the people lay crushed, broken, then the prophets came to them with words of comfort. They told their people of God's eternal

love of Israel, of his guardianship over them. This is the message which I should like to have leaders in Israel, laymen, bring to our people in these trying years.

And finally, my friends, in 1938 I should like to meet up with all people of good will and there are many of them. I should not like to meet up with the sons of darkness, nor the cruel ^{and}/sadistic the prejudiced bigots who are filling the world today with fear and terror and horror and hate. But I should like to meet up with men and women of good will, those who love neighborliness, those who believe in human friendliness, those who believe in live and let live, those who cherish the ideals of freedom, tolerance, those whose coming is like light and music and whose presence is like a benediction. I should like to meet up with them and talk to them shoulder to shoulder to march with them to the uncertainty of the coming year. I should like to help them ^{en}/visage the immortal dream of man, the dream which some day will come to pass - the dream which we, with our own hands however weak, may help to plan - the dream of a beautiful world where man can live in the love of his fellow men and in the light of God.

There are many people whom I should like to meet during the coming year.

~~Some - ^{page} knowers - blunders with invective + threat - and are you can
full of with clichés - ^{new antiquated slogans} catch words & high talk about ^(all sorts) flatness -
- issues - What would ~~the~~ such meeting with the great yield me?
They are really not very interesting people to meet - their great
^{was sym.} ^{for them} they are no longer people - They are just "figures".
~~The figure~~ Unpoetic figures - ^{same as these} mechanical figures - but
to me - never there!~~

2/ I think that I would have a little time & a more profitable time
meeting other sorts / people - people not in the line-sight; not in
the head-lines - ^{people} - not on parade.

Peple-contact with whom is mutual benefit - ^a bilateral stimulation
Peple, who as for as ~~love~~ is concerned are really anonymous - Peple
who ~~are~~ ^{are} not even I have ~~known~~ ^{met} at all.
It is good to meet new peple - new, ~~unknown~~ ^{unknown} -
Peple grow old in ~~their~~ ^{their} and ~~set~~ ^{set} in their rackets when their
human vision becomes fixed and unchanging - when ~~the~~ ^{the} us new
faces swing into their orbit - and us new ideas, or attitudes
or points of view invade their world on the wing of fresh
new voices. Anticriats die of dry rot, because the
fresh sap of new human contact - the impact of new
penetration - is not permitted to seep into their lives.

There are ^{to which} ~~come~~ ^{to} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~same~~ ^{same} ~~faces~~ ^{faces} that are
stale and uninspired with ^{the} monotony of the same faces, the
draw of the same repetitious conversations revolving ~~the~~
around the same little and worn themes, ^{and} the weariness of
flabby & relaxed minds and spirits. These cracks need
a ~~ventilation~~ ^{ventilation} - a new the fresh air of a few new, vibrant

There are truly great men at whose feet one would
like to sit. ~~A day with A. Einstein would be~~
~~a memorable event - to know them by~~ a
Shauli - a friend - ^{a murderer} a Carl van Ossenberg -
~~men of their stamp -~~ a Thomas Mann
- contact - the mind - Herod, the human spirit -
- But as for these - they are a meeting with
them - I am afraid would prove very unrewarding -



spirit from outside - who will bring about a new turning
and a new away the dry bones.

Meeting new people - that is on the high-roads of destiny.
Abraham ^{meets} Isaac - on the lonely bank, the
Isaac - and Isaac with him until the break, dawn -
But he wants a blessing from him - which changes
the course, his life - even as it changed his very name
from Isaac to Israel.

Joseph ^{wandering, as the people} meets a stranger in the Isaac who
draws him to his brethren - and to his ^{strange} destiny in
the throne of Egypt.

Ruth leaves her native land and goes ^{11/10/11} to the
land of Moses ^{11/10/11} - and becomes the ancestor of kings
Moses ^{11/10/11} pleads to Moses ^{11/10/11}
and then meets Moses in the flame, revelation
where burn in the unextinguishable bush

3. וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁמַע יְהוָה בְּקוֹל יִשְׂרָאֵל - Do not isolate yourself
in your narrow family circle - a small group of cronies
- a business associates - ^{or social set} Let travellers from distant parts -
let pilgrims from other lands - let people from other
circles, from other classes, the fellow-human beings who also
live within this constellation and whose path may
cross yours ^{centrally} - let them come ^{to be welcome} into
your career world - awardedly - greet them - and
expand your horizons. Blessed is the man who
understands the need of a world, then

4. I should like to meet interesting people who are doing
interesting work in the world - who are bubbling over with the joy
and eagerness of their work. People whose hearts are young,
and whose minds are alert, who love life, its richness,
its color, its boundless adventures. Pompous ^{but vainglorious} people
who sport a lordly and imposing ^{front behind a vast inner vacuum}
~~vacuity~~, who want
people to be interested in them because birth or wealth
or money or success - well labelled & pedigreed people
- who carry on ^{soberly} the momentum of father & grandfather -
the sham - the shoddy - the hollow - the affected, the charming
these I would not care ~~to~~ to meet. I have met so
many of them already.

many / them already.
People interested in their
their work - with the spirit
- with ~~any~~ in their life - the ~~word~~ ^{word} mystery - many in their
eyes - the such people from all walks of life - the artist
and the artisan - further opening to the laboratory - ^{choice} in the
studio - in the classroom - in the ^{project} -
studio - in the mill - in the mine - on the seas -
in the air - ~~they~~ it is well to meet - to get to know -
and understand - to exchange story - ^{simple} ~~simple~~ ^{facts} ~~facts~~ with
them - and learn the ^{story of} ~~story of~~ ^{human effort and the} ~~mystery~~ ^{mystery} of human pride and
dignity.
(a) Not in crowds - Too much - ~~Just~~ -

5/ Let me continue to meet in the year & year to come
men who can smile in defeat - women who bear their
crosses bravely - old men who grow old nobly and
paciably - young men who scorn the security

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of ease, for the danger and the glory of an unpopulated cause
a career.

I am not interested so much in successful people.
I am interested for more in aspiring people - in
people still clenching lemons - and ~~other~~ people - whose
men called failure because they reached heroically
beyond ~~the~~ all human grasp - I have learned
from successful men - the hollows / success -
and from defeated men - the nobility of defeat.

6/7 They men & women who have come thru the
hard, searching year, the last depression - battered
but unbowed in spirit - who knew how to
make the psych. adjustments, without fuss or friction, to
loss and impoverishment, - who were a husband & wife &
children who were drawn closer together in comradeship
and understanding thru the testing year of misfortune -
there are the salt of the earth - and I'd like to meet them

7. I'd like to meet young men & women - who face the coming year -
~~fearful of the future.~~ with peace and uncertainty. Many young
people are fearful of the future. They see nothing ahead of them -
no clear, open road. They feel that their generation has
fallen on evil days. No days of opportunity & promise
in Amer. life are left. I should like to meet them
and tell them - not to lose courage & faith. Amer.

[illegible]

of tomorrow will be a finer and braver land to live in
than ever before. Our resources are vast, our human material
excellent. Research and invention will produce new
opportunities and open up new worlds of enterprise.

We are in one of the recurrent stages of disorganization
~~and~~ for which our econ. system has as yet not found
an adequate prevention. We are experimenting with
such solutions now. There are many war-sighted
people who resent & resist this necessity. Experience
but it will carry on - and until then will be
a fair distribution of wealth and a wake measure
of econ. security in the home of Amer. citizens people.

Amer. youth - should face the future with confidence
and courage. (Quote)

8/ It all to meet Jews - young Jewish parents - afraid
of future - the future of their children.

First it was fear - Then - Poland - Now Rumania - When
will it stop? They are panicking.

I should like to meet them and tell them: Not to despair!

Dark hours before Dawn!

Our problem is part of world problem - 573 is -

Not last year in the calendar of 574!

When Dictator. collapse - and deliver, and life returns

When corrupt values cannot become prosperous
by breaking & transforming a part of their citizens -

Prophets -

In midst of battle - demoralized.

10/ I'd like to meet men & Ford will - sonat hate
 - sadistic + cruel
 black hearted - man - prejudiced - bigots - arrogant
cruelly violent - who ignore the cruelty and tragedy of life
as a sign - but the kindly folks - and they
who love righteousness - live and let live - who
cherish freedom - justice - brotherhood - whose coming
is as by lit and music and whose presence is a benediction
 then - with them I should like to mark with
the uncertain days ahead - and shoulder to shoulder
 with them fight the good fight - together
strive to give shape to the imminent dream
of man -

9/ In example - the men & the women who came thus - Deformation -
battered but unbroken -
Psych. adjustment - without fuss or friction -
Husband, his f, children drawn together
Salt, the earth - I love to meet them

10/ Young men & women - face the coming seas - fear-uncertainty

~~fearful~~ of future -
They see nothing ahead, then -
No clear, open road -
Fear their generation fallen on evil days -
Dogs, opportunities - prayer - run!
I should like to meet them - not less faith. Courage

Amer. & to-morrow a fairer & lovelier land

Our resources

Research & new invention will produce new opportunities

We are in midst of very recurrent stages of disorganization
for which we have not yet found solution.

We are experimenting -

There are many war-rigged

But America will carry on! until a fairer distrib.

Amer. youth should face future with confidence. (Inds)

Blessed - "the need of a world of men for me"

- 6) I should like to meet - interesting people - doing - bubbling
where hearts are young - minds alert - for richness
Pompous - who sport a lordly -
well-labelled and pedigreed people - momentum
the shoddy - hollow - affected - do not care to meet - Hans
- People interested in their work - realizing as quietly
with the silent - word of authentic sincerity -
Coming from all walks of life - the laboratory - studies -
class-room - professors - will - now - Seas - air
Such people it is good to meet - to get to know -
to exchange thoughts, simple truths - and bear the story
of human effort - Mystery of human Power & Dignity

7. Not in crowds - Too much - 2. 2.

8. Men who swirl in defeat
Women who bear their crosses bravely
Old men who face old world travelling
Young men who score the secrets score - deeper pride
- I am not interested so much in successful people
I am interested far more - aspiring - still clanking hacks and
and in people whom men called failures - reached out -
I have learned from successful men - the hollow success
" " " " defeated men - " holistic effort

2/ I think - better times - more profitable times - other sorts -
lime light - head lines - on Parade
Anonymous - as far as fame is concerned
perhaps - unknown to me although the
To meet them - mutual benefit - bilateral & stimulating

3/ It is good to meet people - new people -
People grow old in ideas - set in their reactions - when human
nature becomes fixed and unchanging.
No new faces swing into their orbit & their lives
No new ideas, attitudes, points of view - invade - bring new voices
Aristocrats die & dry rot - fresh sap of new human contacts
climb into their lives
There are circles - stale and infused with the monotony
drowse - weariness of flabbiness & relaxed spirits -
Such circles need air-conditioning - or ventilation -
new, vibrant

4/ Meeting new people is on the highways of destiny
Abraham - Isaac wrestled - Joseph -
Moses - met God in the flames
Ruth - another king

5/ Do not isolate - family circle - small group of cronies
bus. associates - social set -
Let travellers - pilgrims - people from other circles - fellow
human beings - Constellation - welcome - aware - Expand horizons

1. My first thought - was to get up list - Great - Control - Stellar roles
Along side - The question of accountability -

But the more I thought - less intriguing -

Suppose I went through all formalities + preliminaries - face to face -
what could I say to them?

Not really what I thought!

Could I tell Hitler - + I should like - Stalin - Muss - Stalin

would they then invite me to stay to Tea

Or, if I restrained myself - would they listen to me? and
for how long?

And if they spoke to me - reversing - Stereotyped -
boiler-plate - pre-views - pressed dry -

I should like to talk to Stalin - about { Ford -
Mussol - " Levi -
Hitler - " Go families -
Mikado - " Tom Girdler this -
France - " Heads of Power - Corpor

would they listen - would they talk about calmly - easy -

Storm - denouement - bluster with threat + invective -

Die my ears - Slogans - high talk about "issues" -

They are really not interesting people to meet - "figures"

There are truly great - at whose feet - an Einstein

of hands

Friend

Carl Van Ossick

Branderis

Thomas Mann

men of that stamp - Titans - Heroes

Contact - an unforgettable experience

But as for the others - unrewarding!