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Voices I love to hear, 1942.



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VOICES I LOVE TO HEAR

The voices which linger in the memory

WRHS

By  
Abba Hillel Silver

At  
The Temple



On  
Sunday morning, December 13, 1942



There are many voices, my friends, we love to hear -- the voice of children, the voice of love, the voice of praise, the voice of music. The earth is filled with thousands of voices. There are many voices which we do not like to hear -- the voice of rebuke, the voice of hate, the voice of deceit, the voice of doom. There are many people who have ears to hear voices, but who hear not. They are deaf to the sounds and meanings of most of the things they should hear. The world about them is full of voices. They are simply not tuned in. They have not turned on the reception switch to hear voices all around them. Sometimes when they do yearn them, they are deceived by them, for voices can be very sudden and very beguiling.

The spoken word is frequently the tool, the dangerous tool or weapon of the demagogue, the adventurer, the conspirator. The radio has made the voice more powerful in our day. At no time had the voice of man travelled so rapidly and reached so many people simultaneously as today.

A malicious falsehood is far more dangerous today as it has access to the mouth-piece of broad-casting apparatus. One can create panic on a world scale today by the sound of a voice. In the past a voice was not so all-powerful. It had to move much more slowly and there was far more time to expose falsehood before its mischief was fully discovered.

Our Bible is a veritable symphony of voices. We begin with the voice of God ( *וַיֹּאמֶר* ) - Let there be light. And God's voice reverberates throughout the Bible. The voice of God is over the water, heweth out flames of fire. The voice of God thundereth. There is the still small voice of -- the voice of prophets, sages and singers in the Bible; the voices of them that cry in the wilderness. There are the voices of kings, wise men -- sweet voices, heart-breaking; there are the voices of the crowd, the angry voices, voices in fear and in ~~ex~~ ecstasy. There is the voice of death and desolation; and also the voice of youth, the voice of the Psalms.



That is why I suppose men through the ages have turned to the Bible to listen in on their superb voices -- that amazing medley of a struggling, suffering and aspiring mankind.

I should like you to listen, this morning with me to the story of one man of the Bible -- a story which is related in great detail and out of which story there come voices which have reverberated throughout the ages. There are many dramatic episodes in the life of this man. Each episode epitomizes in a voice, a phrase, a sentence which has abided and lingered in the mind of men these many generations. This man was the shepherd, warrior, rebel and king. He was greatly loved and greatly hated. He loved greatly and he hated ~~enthusiastically~~ <sup>vehemently</sup>. He was sorely tempted and he sinned and he suffered and he rebelled. He experienced great sorrow in the loss of such as are dearer to one than his own life. He knew treason, betrayal at the hands of his own son. I refer, of course, to David, King of Israel to whom at least two books in the Bible are devoted, who founded a dynasty which was to last forever and to whom Christianity traces the lineage of the Jews. <sup>Jesus</sup>

When one listens to the story of King David, one realizes how immortal his voice was, how powerfully his voice spoke to us today across the ages.

You first come upon this David as a little lad, a shepherd, a Jew who had been brave enough to meet a powerful enemy. There arise a powerful leader among the Philistines. The Jews fled because of him. The country lay prostrate. The people lay beaten before this all powerful person. There was no one to challenge the might of Goliath -- no one. Then this little shepherd, David, announced that he single-handed would attack the rival. The people scoffed and laughed. Finally the king was persuaded to give this little lad a chance. They gave him heavy armor. David could not wear the armor. It was too heavy to walk in. All he needed was a sling and a stone. And David confronted Goliath -- the terror of the Jews -- this invincible foe.



He said to him: "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast taunted. This day will the Lord deliver thee into my hand..that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's." I love that voice -- that voice of courage and faith in the midst of catastrophe and disaster, a voice undaunted. And men have loved such voices throughout the ages for they have saved them from utter collapse. They revive the spirit and send them back into the fray, to win, when seemingly everything seems lost. I caught the same voice in the voice of Churchill after the fall of France when England lay prostrate, broken and defeated. It was the darkest hour for England, when England was as defenseless before the might of Hitler as little David was defenseless before the might of Goliath. On that day Churchill spoke up and that voice was an echo of the voice spoken in the Hills of Judea three thousand years ago. This is what he said:

"Therefore in casting up this dread balance sheet and contemplating our dangers with a disillusioned eye, I see great reasons for intense exertion and vigilance, but none whatever for panic or despair...Upon the Battle of Britain depends our own British life and the long continuity of our institutions and our empire. The whole fury and might of the enemy may very soon be turned upon us...Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duty and so bear ourselves that if the British Commonwealth and Empire last for a thousand years, men will still say: "This was their finest hour."" The same voice -- the voice men love to hear.

And our own President Roosevelt, in the darkest hour of our country when our fleet for a time was broken in the Pacific, The day after Pearl Harbor President Roosevelt spoke in a voice reminiscent of that voice of the ancient



King of Israel. "So far the news seems to be all bad...We must be set to face a long war against crafty and powerful bandits...It will not only be a long war, it will be a hard war...We are going to win the war and we are going to win the peace that follows! The same voice men love to hear.

In that story of David we come upon another voice -- the voice of friendship. David and Jonathan -- those two have become synonymous in literature of the world for a noble and binding sort of friendship. The Prince and the shepherd, friendship as an eternal covenant. Jonathan loved David with his whole heart. David loved Jonathan. Jonathan loved David so much he wanted him to succeed him to the throne of his father, Saul. Saul became jealous of David. He was urged by his son to do no harm to David, his friend. Jonathan was endangering his life at the hand of his father Saul because he interceded in David's behalf so much. Finally the break proved inevitable. Saul was determined to enslave him. Jonathan and David met for the last time. And here you hear the voice of two friends who will never again meet. "And they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded. And Jonathan said to David: "Go in peace, for as much as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord saying: "The Lord shall be between me and thee and between any seed and thy seed for ever." I live that voice. That voice men have loved -- the voice that is the voice of friendship.

When David heard of the death of his friend, Jonathan, slain on the battlefield, one hears another voice, the voice of tribute paid by one friend to another: "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; Very pleasant hast thou been unto me; Wonderful was thy love to me, Passing the love of women, How are the mighty fallen!"

When you read on in the story of David, you hear another voice -- the voice of truth. David is now King. He is now powerful. He has the power to do



whatever he wants, and power corrupts him. Power leads to temptations, leads him to trample over other men's lives in order to get what he wants. Bathsheba was a beautiful woman, the wife of Uriah, his brave servant who was fighting in battle. And David lusted after Bathsheba. Being king and all-powerful, he resolved to dispose of his friend by putting an end to Uriah. He sent a letter to Joab to put Uria in the forefront of the hottest battle and return ye from him that he may be smitten and die". Then you hear the voice which has reverberated throughout the ages -- the voice of the prophet Nathan who comes to the King and who tells him that he has done wrong. He tells him the parable of the rich man and the poor man -- taking the one lamb of the poor man rather than taking lamb of rich man's flock. David heard the story and said: Who is this man? And Nathan points the accusing finger at David and said: "You are the man!" I like that voice because it vindicates the divine in man. Such voices -- the voice of conscience, pity and of truth have saved humanity over and over again. Such voices are frequently hated. David did not kill the prophet. He said: "I have sinned against the Lord."

"Truth, from her first appearance is our enemy", said a wise man. We don't like to hear the voice of truth. Today our world tortures those people who speak the truth. In most countries of the world, truth-speakers have been killed and sent to concentration camps. Think what would have happened to Nathan if he had said what he said to David, to Mussolini and Hitler?

You read on in the story of King David/<sup>of</sup>another voice -- the voice of resignation and suffering. The child that Bathsheba bore to David was very sick and David besought God for the child. David fasted, and lay all night upon the earth. None could comfort him. And on the 7th day, the child died. And the servants feared to tell David lest ye would do himself some harm because of his love for the child. David heard them whispering and he said: "Is the child dead?" They said, "Yes!" "Then David arose from the earth, and washed and anointed himself,



and changed his apparel, and he came into the house of the Lord and worshipped, then he came to his own house and when he requested, they set bread before him, and he did eat." And his servants said to him: "thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive, but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread." And David replied: "While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept, for I said: Who knoweth whether the Lord will not be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me."

That is the voice one loves to hear -- the voice of sorrow that has been modulated by wisdom. It is a proud way to face bereavement.

I have heard other voices -- the voices of those for whom sorrow proved unceasing, who refused to be comforted, who refused to be divorced from sorrow, who keep open the wound. Religion does not countenance such sorrow. It is an implied criticism of the justice and mercy of God.

When you read on, in the same story of David, you come upon another voice -- the voice of paternal love which suffers all and forgives all. You come upon the cry of griefs wrung from the heart of a king. The King now an old man, quite content to let his estate fall from his shoulders, to spend the final years in peace -- amidst the peace of his family and friends. But his beautiful son, Absalom, whom he loved so much tries to take the kingdom away from his father. The King is of course compelled to muster his forces to meet the invading troops of his son. So he sends Joab, his commander out to meet the forces of Absalom. He calls him aside and says to him: "Joab, deal gently for my sake with the young man for this is the only son I have." All through the day of the battle, the king paced the chamber waiting to hear the outcome of battle -- waiting to hear about Absalom. He sends his watchman out to see if any messages have come



from the battlefields. "All is well! Blessed be the Lord God who hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my Lord, the King." The first think David asks the messenger is: "Is it well with the young man, Absalom?" And when he is told the truth -- Absalom is slain in battle, the king was much moved and went up to the chamber of David and wept, and as he went, thus he said: "O my son Abasalom, my son, my son, Absalom! Would that I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Another voice -- the grief-stricken voice of the broken old king, the voice of love who suffers all, the voice which reveals that it all comes down to this: "All your battles and triumphs and power ambition and ghlyry are now reflected in the old fathe weeping his heart out over the gates for a beautiful and beloved son who caused you so much sorrow in his life and so much more in his death. This is all of it David. When you make up the balance sheet of life, the few people whom you loved and cared for -- that is all that matters. All else is nothing.

Finally you read on in the story -- you come upon the voice of denunciation, self-denial. David in one of his last battles is in the Cave of Adullam and he is very thirsty and tired. And he knows that not far away by the gate in the City of Bethlehem, now in the hands of the Philistines, is fresh water, and he wants it. And he tells three of his bravest men to go and fetch him some water. And the three ~~lx~~ brave men go out and bring the water back to the king. But the king suddenly realizes what he has done. He takes the pitcher of water and throws it to the ground: "Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should<sup>do</sup>/this: shall I drink the blood of the men that want in jeopardy of their lives?" Even a king dare not quench his thirst with the blood of other men. Of course the king could command, but the voice, the old love for his people -- to make sacrifices for them. Men should not ask other men to make sacrifices for them or to restrain themselves. Everyone has his own life to lead. But he should not ask of others to sacrifices, and kill their chances of happiness for them.



And so, there are myriads of voices in the Bible, in this one story of the Bible and out of it come so many stories, voices -- voices of courage, truth, fortitude and resignation, the voice of love and of denunciation. There are many other voices in the Bible and outside of the Bible. Blessed are those who listen to the sound of these voices.





- 1/ Many voices we love to hear - Children - Love - Praise - Music  
earth with her 1000 voices.
- Many voices we do not love to hear - <sup>Rebuke</sup> accusations - hate - Deceit - Joan
- 2/ Ears but hear not! - Deaf to the meaning & <sup>the very sound of</sup> the voices about them. World full of Vo. - Have not <sup>tuned in</sup> on the Reception
- Some-times deceived by voices - Voice can be very subtle & beguiling -  
Spoken word tool of demagogue; conspirator; adventurer.
- Roulet has made V. all-powerful in our day - at no time could  
the word of a man reach so many people - so instantly.
- A malicious lie is far more dangerous - if it has access to  
mouth-piece of a broadcast apparatus. Can create panic  
on a world-scale. It has to work much slower in past  
& there was no time to express it, before its mischief  
was <sup>being</sup> accomplished.
- 3/ Bible is a veritable symphony of V. V. of God. <sup>Still small</sup> still small V.  
V - we, the water - ~~and~~ beneath our flowers, fire - <sup>Still small V</sup>  
~~the~~ Psalm, Songs, Prophets - V. of him that crieth in the wilderness  
Men, Women, Children - Knave, beggar, hiss, men, fools -  
Sweet Voices - Cruel Voices - V. of the Crowd - in anger, in pleasure, in  
ecstasy - the V. of desolation & death - V. of <sup>with repetition, of song & dance</sup> lamentation -  
that is why men turn to the Bible. to listen in on this  
superb chorus of Voices - this medley of a stunning, happening  
and ordering humanity.
- 4/ I should like you to listen in <sup>this morning</sup> to the story of one man whose  
harshness in great detail in B. - and to the voices which  
have risen from it - have unhindered down the ages -



many dramatic episodes in his life, this man - each episode <sup>labeled</sup>  
in a voice - a phrase - a sentence which has abided through  
the years, even those many generations.

He was a shepherd - a warrior - a rebel - a king.

He was greatly loved and he loved greatly.

He was truly tempted and pained & <sup>loved</sup> & <sup>loved</sup> & <sup>loved</sup>

He experienced <sup>betrayal</sup> <sup>at the hands of his own</sup> <sup>beloved</sup> <sup>sons</sup>

He knew sorrow, and the loss of <sup>the</sup> such as one dearer to one than his own life

David - King of Israel - to whom <sup>the</sup> the words, the B. are devoted -  
who founded a dynasty which was to last forever - & to whom  
the towers the towers of years.

5. How human are the voices which rise from that story, & how  
unmortal - and how greatly helped they are to those who listen  
to them - to this day. These voices speak across the prof  
centuries -

6. Behold. scourge of years - Fled - <sup>Disaster</sup> - Could not wear armor - <sup>slings</sup> - <sup>stones</sup>

"Then comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a  
javelin; but I come to thee in the name, the Lord of hosts, the God  
of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast taunted. This day will the  
Lord deliver thee into my hand.. that all the earth may know that  
there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that  
the Lord saveth not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's!"

I love that Voice - of Courage and Faith - undimmed in midst  
of defeat and catastrophe -

then love such voices - save them from utter collapse - & -  
vive their spirit - send them back into prayer.

Churchill - After Fall of France - desert home for England - <sup>external military</sup> <sup>disorder</sup>  
- <sup>few weathers</sup> <sup>like David</sup> June 18-1940. - House of Commons -



(3)

"Therefore in casting up this dread balance sheet and contemplating our dangers with a disillusioned eye, I see great reasons for intense exertion and vigilance, but none whatever for panic or despair. Upon the battle, Britain depends our own lives, and the long continuity of our institutions and our empire. The whole day and night, the enemy may very soon be turned upon us... Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duty and so bear ourselves that if the British Commonwealth and Empire last for a 1000 years, men will still say: 'This was their finest hour'"

Sam Voice  
Revered. - Day after Pearl Harbor - our darkest day - Night of  
our fleet, for sure, broken...

"And in the dark hours, this day - and through dark days that may be yet to come - we will know that the vast majority, the members, the human race are on our side. Many, then are fighting with us. All others are praying for us. For, in representing our cause, we represent theirs as well - our hope and their hope for liberty under God."

"So far the news has been all bad... ~~It~~ We must be set to face a long war against crafty and powerful bandits... It will not only be a long war, it will be a hard war... We are going to win the war and we are going to win the peace that follows!"

Sam Voice

7. Voice of Friendship - David & Jonathan - renewer for noble relations Fr.  
F. as an eternal covenant - J. loved David - promised him to himself  
as successor to throne of his Father - Saul -  
Saul - jealousy - pleads - Jon. denounced by his Father - warms



(1)

"And they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David  
exceeded. And J. said to David: "So in peace, for as much as we have  
sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying: 'The Lord shall be between  
me and thee and between any seed and thy seed for ever'"  
I like that Voice - men have loved it - Disinterested Fr.!

Tribute paid - J. slain in battle

"I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan:  
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me;  
Wonderful was thy love to me,  
Passing the love of women.  
How are the mighty fallen!"

8. Voice of Truth - D. is King now! He has power to do whatever  
he wishes. Power corrupts. Leads to Temptations - Transfer  
over others how to get what you want.

Uriah - Bath-sheba - Lusted after her & took her - Displeased  
her husband - faithful soldier fighting for David - Letter to Joab by  
hand of Uriah - "set U. in forefront of the hottest battle - & strike  
him from him - that he may be smitten & die"

Nathan - one rich - one poor - Many flocks & herds - one  
little son David - Travelled - spared to take his own flock to  
care for the wearying man - poor man's lamb -

Deserves to die - like a dog.

I like that Voice - Understands the divine in man!

Such voices - conscience, duty, truth - save humanity.

Hated - As it said for D - "I have sworn against the Lord" &  
lowered his head before the prophets - unbelievers



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of he confronted Hitler - Muss. - & saved a top. =  
~~ports should~~  
~~churches~~ are not confronting them.

9). Voice of Respiration in form.

Child that ~~was~~ born Bath-shels her with D. was stret and was  
very sick. D. brought her to the child. Fasted, and to by all  
might upon the death.. none could comfort him. on the 7<sup>th</sup> day the  
child died. Heard to kill D. - he would do himself some harm.  
Heard their whispering - "Is the child dead?" "He is dead!"

Then D. arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and he came into the house, the Lord and ~~his~~ worshippers, then he came to his own house and ~~they~~ when he returned, they set bread before him, and he did eat."

Servants: "thou dost fast and weep for the child, while thou dost  
but when the child was dead, thou dost rise and eat bread."

David.. When the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said: Who knoweth whether the Lord will not be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.

I love that V. - the V. of sorrow that makes one wise -  
It is a proud way to face bereavement. Some sorrow for the  
dead unconsciously! Refuse to be comforted, a divorce from their  
grief. Keeps open the wound. I have heard these voices, too -



~~that~~ like their <sup>own</sup> lives in the death, their dear one. Remember do not  
countenance such undersupplied sorrow. It is an unfitted  
entertainment, the justice / God.

10) Down the ages come yet another <sup>(Voice of Patient love - suffers all. Forgive all)</sup> cry / grief / <sup>weep</sup> from the  
heart / the King. His beautiful son Abraham - ~~Said Tidings~~ -  
"Deal gently for my sake with the young man, with Abraham" ~~there he is - Sooth. clants~~  
D. sat waiting for the news of battle - watchman - "All is  
well! Blessed be the Lord God who hath delivered up the men that  
lifted up their hand against my lord, the King" -  
David = "Is it well with the young man Abraham?" Told truth!

"And the King was much moved, and went up to the chamber  
over the gate, and wept; and as he went, thus he said: "O my  
son Abraham, my son, my son, Abraham! would that I had died  
for thee, O Abraham, my son, my son!"

It <sup>moves</sup> ~~shows~~ us - that <sup>grief / sorrow</sup> ~~voice~~ the broken old King - <sup>weeping</sup> us  
across the abyss / <sup>darkness</sup> ~~darkness~~ - <sup>all comes down to this: all your</sup>  
battles + triumphs + power, + glory - a broken old father weeping his  
heart out, <sup>all</sup> alone in a barren room, over the gate, for a beautiful  
+ beloved son who carried <sup>you</sup> ~~him~~ so much sorrow in his life  
+ so much ~~was~~ in his death - ~~then~~ <sup>remember</sup> ~~that~~ This is ~~the~~ all, it  
David - when you <sup>marked</sup> ~~start~~ the balance sheet of life - the few  
people whom you loved & loved for - did they return your love -  
that's all that matters in life - all else is as nothing when the  
dread <sup>ponder</sup> ~~thought~~ has come upon you.

11) Voice of Renunciation: Cave of Adullam - Wells of Bethlehem - by the gate  
"Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this: shall I drink  
the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?  
He was King's adviser - One does not slake thirst with other men's blood"



14. Of the myriad voices <sup>in 13</sup> I hear them - are a few - <sup>all made eternally audible</sup> in story & D.  
Courage - Friendship - Truth - <sup>Fortitude</sup> Resignation - Love - <sup>+ Self-Sacrifice</sup> Renunciation  
There are many others - Blend are they who listen to the sound  
of these voices & take their meaning to heart.

