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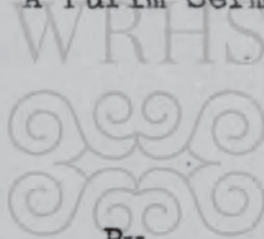
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The sources of our strength, 1945.

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THE SOURCES OF OUR STRENGTH

A Purim Sermon



By

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver



At
The Temple

On
Sunday morning, February 25, 1945

There is so much to learn, my friends, from the story of Purim. So many elements of our present day Jewish experience are foreshadowed in this story...

All the motifs in Jewish experience to day are. All the Jewish experiences which you see all about us in the Jewish world today are here in this Megillah. The hatred of our people, the trumped up charges to justify this hatred, the conspiracies against our people, the threat^{of}/annihilation, the terror of the Jews, how they rallied to defend themselves. How modern it all sounds. Only a few short years ago we believed the story was all one of the distant past, just a memory. Such things we were confident would not happen, certainly cannot happen in an enlightened age, that one man should arise and out of personal hatred seek the destruction of a whole people and actually succeed in getting his government to issue a decree to destroy an entire people.

I am afraid that we forget too soon and too easily. We wish people to forget experiences...

The only difference between then and now, between distant Persia and modern Europe is that Haman failed in his desire to destroy the people. Hitler almost succeeded and did succeed in a large measure. In distant Persia, the city of Shushan was to have been converted into a shambles. The Jewish people were to be put to death instead of which Shushan was on the 14th day of Adar, converted into a city of liberation and deliverance for the Jewish people. But not so modern Warsaw, Berlin, Vienna and other cities in Central and Eastern Europe. Ancient Persia had no record of Maidonek, Iswiescism, mass graves, of human abattoirs.

There are many things to learn, many things we should learn from the Megillah and never forget.

Here is one lesson we ought to learn. The hatred of our people, and the persecution of our people are not necessarily a product of the Dark Ages, only of distant past. That is simply not so. Logic dictates that it should be so, but history, unfortunately, does not follow the lines of logic. When the Jews were exiled

from Spain in 1492, Portugal and the whole Mediterranean world were at the height of the Renaissance, enjoying one of the most glorious periods mankind had ever seen. It was a period of great scholarship, the human mind was reaching out to new continents physically and intellectually. It was in that glorious age of great and new beginnings, it was at that very time that the whole Jewish community of Spain which reached such heights of prosperity and culture was uprooted, torn and broken. And it remained for 20th century Germany, Germany the most advanced people, scientifically at least of Europe, for 20th century Germany to do in this century that which no country in the darkest of the dark ages ever perpetrated. It remained for this country and this century of ours, of progress and enlightenment, to witness the brutal premeditated deliberate assassination of over four million Jews in the world. That is one of those sad facts of our history which we should bear in mind.

Why were the Jews of Persia threatened with extermination? What reason did Haman give to the King for wishing to do away with the people? Haman told the King: "There are a people here in your vast empire, a scattered people, a homeless people, a people which differs from the rest of the peoples of your country." The reason that Haman gave was the national homelessness of the Jews in the Empire of Persia. This anonymous fact, was pointed out as adequate reason for seeking to exterminate the Jews of Persia. There were other peoples in the Empire -- over 127 provinces. The Jews alone in that Empire were nationally homeless, and it was against them that this conspirator, Haman succeeded in winning the approval of the King to do away with them. That condition of national homelessness persists, as far as the Jewish people is concerned, and to this day it is the principal source of most of the evils which are visited upon our people. And it is a problem which enlightenment and human progress do not solve. National homelessness can be solved only by a national home. Homelessness is the problem. The home is the solution and no other solution has been very adequate to the problem. The Jews might wish to ~~em~~ circumvent that problem, might beguile themselves into seeking another solution for it, but there are no other solutions for it.

2000 years of diaspora under various conditions, among many peoples, good, bad and indifferent, under conditions of intellectual darkness and advancement have demonstrated conclusively that there is no other solution to that problem.

I am particularly interested in reading the Megillah to find out how the Jews of those days reacted to the threat. How ~~it~~ did they react? Did they succumb to the menace? What saved the Jews of Persia? Haman was against them. The King turned against them. Their doom was sealed and the day was fixed for their annihilation.

There was man, a Jew, a leader, by the name of Mordecai, a man who matched his hour. The Jews of Persia were fortunate in having in that critical hour the right kind of leadership. Mordecai had courage. He knew the power of Haman. He knew what all the Hamans stood for. He maintained his dignity and his self-respect in the face of overwhelming odds. He had courage. He was a man of action.

As soon as he learned of this decree to exterminate the Jews, the Megillah said that Mordecai went about the city of Shushan crying out and arousing the people. He went to the court. He went to Esther who had become Queen and commanded her immediately to go to the King and intercede for her people. Esther at first didn't want to. She was afraid. No one must appear before the King unless summoned. Mordecai flared up against her: What sham and excuses are these. Is this the time to think of saving your own skin? Is this the time to think of yourself? Esther quickly understood that the hour called for a different kind of attitude towards one's life, towards one's destiny. Quickly she understood what her duty was. She agreed to go to the King without being invited. "If I am lost, then I am lost." And quickly she understood ^{at} that/a time such as that, when danger faced an entire people, every member of that people must respond to the challenge of the hour at the cost of life, if necessary, that the hour calls for solidarity. She says to Mordecai: "go gather all the Jews in Shushan. Let them unite with me in prayer." Mordecai had courage. He was a man of action. He said to Esther: "Deliverance is bound to come to our people. Even if you do fail one must have faith. It was this courage, and this faith and this sense of solidarity, this capacity for action which saved them, the Jewish people.

We survived because we did not lose our morale. Sometimes Jews do lose morale. Sometimes Jewish leaders lose their morale.

You and I read the other day of the Rabbi of Rome, a man by the name of Israeli Zolly, who left the Jewish fold, who was converted to Catholicism, he and his wife and his daughter. Zolly lacked both the stamina and the character to endure, to persist. He broke under the strain. When the Nazis invaded Rome, Zolly went into hiding instead of remaining with his congregation and sharing its fate. He gave as his excuse, after his conversion, his deep gratitude to the Pope for his personal intercession in behalf of the Jews of Italy during the Nazi occupation. That, I must say, is quite inadequate an excuse for conversion - out of gratitude to a good man. One does not change one's life-time faith. One thanks his God who helps men in time of great crisis.

We have from time time in eras of persecution had leaders who were put to the test of leadership. In Spain for example, during that terrible era in the 14th and 15th centuries which began with ~~the~~ wholesale persecution and slaughter. We have the story of "Paul de Santa Maria, a Rabbi whose name was Solomon Levi, a scholar and a Rabbi, a man of wealth who had access to the highest circles of the Spanish aristocracy. When the persecutions of 1391 took place, the morale of many Spanish Jews broke. There set in a whole conversion including the flower of the Rabbinate. Solomon Levi and his children were converted. He became a priest and then a Bishop and finally the Archbishop of Burgos. His children became high church dignitaries. Unfortunately what happens frequently to converts he began to hate his own people. He became the most vicious persecutor of his people. He became the terror of King Henry's sons and he became a member of the Regency and in that capacity he was instrumental in ~~the~~ bringing about the Edict of 1412 by which the Jews of Spain were impoverished and degraded to the lowest possible scale. This same man wrote the most vicious attacks upon his former co-religionists.

There is a story of Joshua Lorki, a disciple of Paul de Santa Maria who was

converted and who became an enemy of his people and forced the Jewish Rabbis into public disputes. And as a result of these disputations, the conditions of the Jews of Aragon were restricted and they became as degraded as the condition of the Jews of Castile....

When in 1492 the Jews of Spain were given the choice of conversion or exile, the overwhelming number of Jews chose exile rather than the surrender of their faith. But some of their leaders broke. There is the story of the famous Abraham Senior of Wegonia, a Rabbi who was also the Treasurer of Castile, a man who succeeded in bringing about the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella. He was a friend of Isaac Ababanel. He was active in behalf of his people until the eve of the expulsion when he said to the Jews that he did not have the courage and strength to choose exile. He ~~xxx~~ preferred the fleshpots. He had himself baptised. The King and Queen were his sponsors.

They were not the characteristic leaders of Israel. If they had been, the Jewish people would never have survived. Because of the Mordecais the Ababanel's who had the courage and the faith not to go into hiding -- it is out of their strength that the survival of our people was made possible.

William Leckie, the famous historian in one of his essays writes this about the Jews and the persecution of the Jews.

"Certainly, the heroism of the defenders of every other creed fades into insignificance before this martyr people, who for thirteen centuries confronted all the evils that the fiercest fanaticism could devise, enduring obloquy and spoliation and violation of the dearest ties, and the infliction of the most hideous sufferings, rather than to abandon their faith. For these were no ascetic monks, dead to all the hopes and passions of life, but were men who appreciated intensely the worldly advantages they relinquished and whose affections had become all the more lively on account of the narrow circle in which they were confined....Persecution came to the Jewish nation in its most horrible forms, yet surrounded by every circumstance

of petty annoyance that could destroy its grandeur; and it continued for centuries their abiding portion. But above all this the genius of that wonderful people rose supreme. While those around them were grovelling in the darkness of besotted ignorance; while juggling miracles and lying relics were the themes on which almost all Europe was expatiating; while the intellect of Christendom, enthralled by countless superstitions had sunk into a deadly torpor, in which all love of enquiry and all search for truth ~~was~~ was abandoned, the Jews were still pursuing the path of knowledge, amassing learning and stimulating progress with the same unflinching constancy that they manifested in their faith. They were the most skillful physicians, the ablest financiers and among the most profound philosophers, while they were only second to the Moors in the cultivation of natural science. They were also the chief interpreters to Western Europe of Arabian learning."

All these thoughts come to us, good friends, on the eve of Purim as we read the Megillah, the story of ~~the~~ Mordecai, the story of a people which is infused with with great destiny and which refuses to succumb to the terror of the hour and who by the Waters of Babylon sat exiled, broken, crushed seemingly in the most desperate and hopeless circumstances. They were Aryans in an Aryan land. "By the waters of Babylon they sat down and wept." Nevertheless, when they were through weeping they arose and took a vow: "If I forget Thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its cunning." They meant to rehabilitate themselves, to restore. Theirs was the faith and courage and invincibility which is manifested time and time again in Jewish life.

With Jewish communities in the last decade going down in fire and ruin sounding the death of whole centers of Jewish life, with millions slain, with hundreds and thousands more helpless refugees -- how do the Jews ~~to~~ react to the challenge of their day? We weep. But when we are through weeping, we build. While one center of Jewish life is being laid in ruins, the national life of our people is being rebuilt, in Palestine. Centers of Jewish life are growing up in other parts of the world. Courage, faith, a sense of solidarity.

The Rabbis say that Israel is likened unto the harp strings. When you strike a string, the whole harp vibrates. That is the secret of our survival. Whatever befalls a group of our people in whatever part of the world, even five thousand miles away, the whole string vibrates in fraternal sympathy.

The same Rabbis said that Jewish life is likened to a ship. One side of ship on fire the whole ship is concerned. Every other part of the ship is affected. Whatever happens on that one side endangers the whole.

That is how the Jewish people have felt throughout the ages. All Jews are accountable one to the other. All Jews are brothers. "Go gather in all the Jews!" was the cry in the hour of tribulation in ancient Persia. So it is today.

So, good friends, we retain these qualities which were so apparent in the day of Mordecai.

We will live to see a new day when our people will be delivered. We are on the eve of another day. It may be called Purim-Berlin or Purim-Germania. The hand of destiny is already knocking on the gates of Berlin and the hour of deliverance from this, the deadliest, most horrible of all our foes, is at hand. We rejoice in the Festival of Purim. Let us bear in mind the profound blessing of this day. The Megillah is the most modern, most relevant book as far as Jewish experience is concerned, of all the books of the Bible. Amen.

1) So much to learn -

~~So~~ So many elements of our present-day J. experience foreshadowed -
No wonder - writer so confident -

see motifs on line!

see motifs on line
The Hatred of our People - The ~~the~~ cramped-up charges to justify it.

The conspiracy against ~~it~~^{our people} - The threat of annihilation -

The terror of the Jews - How they rally to defend us --

How modern it all sounds— when only a few short years ago we

believed that it was all a thing, the post - just a memory

of a distant age — Such things don't happen any more —
certainly not in our enlightened age —

The only diff. bet these two - Hannan failed! Hitler Succeeded!

Shubert - Warsaw - Mandell - Sussman - in full names

2). Amory things to know - Persecution + Jen. Harbnd - not a product
 Issues - Glenn + EX a key author - Family
 Ex. Persecution

Dart Ages only - Spain - 20 C January - February - March - April - May - June - July - August - September - October - November - December

Jews & Persian Empire were threatened - Re. in Syria - Hatikvah
homelands - מדינת ישראל 1948

there were other people - 127 previous. only people which was
enough a minority - not voters - no Base.

3/ What I am part. interested is how Jews reacted? What
saved the Jews? - Haman was ap. there - King - Door sealed -

א.ל. ובלוי הוב זלואן הייכה וואס אביא

A man! A Jew! A leader! ~~Egypt~~ to who watched his hour

The Right Kind of Leadership! He had charge - would not have

He had faith. He was a man of actions.

put ~~a small dot~~ ^{cried loud in thy city - hope -} goes to Esther To Court unrest so (2)
to King! death unless first were moved!

Anger flows up! What vain excuses! Are you trying to save
you our skin - Is this a time - to be covered with
our own safety? Elder יְהוָה בְּחַסְדּוֹ וּבְרַחוּמָיו יִשְׁלַם לָנוּ כָּל חַטּוֹתֵינוּ - אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׂלוֹמוֹ -
Solidarity - וְעַתָּה הִנֵּנוּ מִפְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ לָנוּ - וְעַתָּה הִנֵּנוּ מִפְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ לָנוּ -
We had faith - וְעַתָּה הִנֵּנוּ מִפְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ לָנוּ - וְעַתָּה הִנֵּנוּ מִפְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ לָנוּ -

4/ Courage - Faith - Action - Solidarity - always saved us!

We survived bc. we did not lose morale -

We merged the. we did not lose integrity -
Some things - some 7 or 8 people even honesty - lost moral val.
der final - to want to pieces -

Rabbi of Rome - converted to Catholicism (Israeli Zoller)
he, his wife & daughters - He loathed both the Spaniards
and the character to endure, to persist -

He went into hiding, where Nazis entered Rome, instead
of remaining with his organization & sharing its fate.

He showed out 7 patches to the Pope for his personal
intercession on behalf of Italy's Jews.

out of gratitude to a good man who does his duty - one
does not change one's life - long faith - One thanks his God

- Great Crises test the caliber of men & leaders, men. -

During the large Presentation in Paris - 14-15 articles

1/ Abner of Burgos - (Alfonso of Valladolid) ^{14C} d. 1350 - ³Physician
miscarriage of Mess. hopes of 2 f. prophets from Avila +
Ayllon (W.W. of Madrid) 1295 - In old age -

(a) Wrote polemic ag. Judaism.
in Sp. and p 33 1295 -

" 1300 - late

(b) Held disputations with Jews.

2/ Pablo Christiani - So. France - 13C - Dominican Order
to convert Jews of So. Fr.

Forced a disputation - Barcelona - July 1263 - Markwardes
(fear of offending Christians), Forced his exile.
Ag. asked for law regarding Jews, Fr. to wear Yellow Badges.

XIX
3/ ~~Paul of Burgos~~ - "Paul de Santa Maria" - most harmful
1341 - Rabbi - d. 1435
Scholar - man of wealth - Could advance
much further - more broke down - wholesale conversions - including Jews
No children because Christian - Wife did not

Became a priest. Bishop & finally Archbishop of Burgos -
His 2 sons - high church dignitaries
Began to hate f. - became persecutor of his former co-religionists

Became tutor of King Henry's son - John II + a member of
Regency - → dict of 27 articles (1412) in favor of

dep. on Jews to lowest scale - in purpose, converting them
Wrote to calumniate Jews - Instigated Dominican Friars
Unjust Fears - work at his heel

4/ Gerónimo de Santa Fe (John Lorki) - Syn. with 1391
disciple of Paul de Santa Maria - Physician to Pope Benedict

XIII

Disputations of Tortosa - Feb. 1413 to Nov. 1414 - 21 months

Jews forbidden Shul & Talmud

Aragon Jews restricted - with Castile

Slandered Jews - intense hostility towards them.

1492
5) Abraham Senior of Legoria, Treas. of Castile (in 1492) Count Robli & Castile
succeeded in buying out all Jews & landowners & farmers
Edict of Expulsion. Sons convinced & King & Queen
stood by his side at the baptismal font & soaked as his
acted as their god parents in conversion.

Friend of Isaac Abravanel -

Active in behalf of his people.

He wrote

5) The Marranos - the Abravanel - do not desert - do
not go into hiding - Martyrs - with Lecky
They have the same cause - which increases with
persecution. 1st obj. - Inevitable destruction
22 x 1000
3rd obj. -

6) Faith - 1000 hr -

7) Solidarity - 51 to 1000 hr - accountable for
Harb - Hung - vibrates thruout - regards where it is thus
Ships -

Certainly, the heroism of the defenders of every other creed fades into insignificance before this martyr people, who for thirteen centuries confronted all the evils that the fiercest fanaticism could devise, enduring obloquy and spoliation and violation of the dearest ties, and the infliction of the most hideous sufferings, rather than to abandon their faith. For these were no ascetic monks, dead to all the hopes and passions of life, but were men who appreciated intensely the worldly advantages they relinquished and whose affections had become all the more lively on account of the narrow circle in which they were confined... Persecution came to the Jewish nation in its most horrible forms, yet surrounded by every circumstance of petty annoyance that could destroy its grandeur; and it continued for centuries their abiding portion. But above all this the genius of that wonderful people rose supreme. While those around them were grovelling in the darkness of besotted ignorance; while juggling miracles and lying relics were the themes on which almost all Europe was expatiating; while the intellect of Christendom, enthralled by countless superstitions had sunk into a deadly torpor, in which all love of enquiry and all search for truth was abandoned, the Jews were still pursuing the path of knowledge, amassing learning and stimulating progress with the same unflinching constancy that they manifested in their faith. They were the most skillful physicians, the ablest financiers and among the most profound philosophers, while they were only second to the Moors in the cultivation of natural science. They were also the chief interpreters to Western Europe of Arabian learning.

By William Edward Hartpole Lecky
From Stars and Sand

Esther 9870
(76)

The TEMPLE BULLETIN

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Abba Hillel Silver, DD.
RABBI

Wm. Mordecai Kramer
ASSISTANT RABBI



Vol. XXXI

February 25, 1945

No. 19

Purim Greetings

SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE

10:30 o'clock

DR. SILVER

will speak on

"THE SOURCES OF OUR STRENGTH"

A PURIM SERMON

Ben Silverberg, First Violinist of the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra,
will play during the service

Friday Evening Service
5:30 to 6:00

Saturday Morning Service
11:15 to 12:00

Father - Sons - Mother - Daughters
Carter Hotel - 1 Mo.

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LAST CALL . . .

*Reservations May Be Made Until
Noon Saturday for:*

The Event of the Year . . .

For the Whole Family

Fathers and Sons

Mothers and Daughters

PURIM DINNER AND PARTY

Sunday, February 25, 1945

HOTEL CARTER 1:00 P.M.

* Families will be seated together

Tickets \$1.75 per plate

Reservations at The Temple office

The Temple Men's Club

presents

RAY JOSEPHS

Author of "Argentine Diary"

Thursday Eve., Mar. 8—8:30 P. M.
in Mahler Hall

Mr. Josephs, returned after four years in South America, promises a real insight into the affairs of our neighbors to the South.

The meeting is a stag, open to members of the club only.

TEMPLE TEAMS ARE BEING ORGANIZED FOR WELFARE DRIVE

Temple teams are now being organized for the Jewish Welfare Fund Drive. This year's chairmen for the Temple are Mesdames Sidney Weisman, Leo Oppenheimer and Leonard Bialosky. More workers are needed for the drive which opens formally on May 7.

Twelve hundred prospect cards will be divided among the three Temple teams. Those who can offer their services as team members are urged to contact one of the chairmen.

MISS IDA E. SCHOTT HONORED BY TEMPLE FACULTY RECEPTION

Miss Ida E. Schott was honored by a tea sponsored by the faculty of The Temple Religious School, Sunday Feb. 11. The tea marked the appreciation of The Temple and the faculty for her many years of loyal service on the teaching staff of the Religious School.

Dr. Levenson opened the program in the name of the Religious School Faculty, then called on Mr. Sidney Weitz, chairman of the afternoon. Mr. Weitz paid tribute to Miss Schott and introduced Rabbi Melbourne R. Harris, our former Assistant Rabbi, who spoke. Miss Martha Markowitz was then called upon and presented Miss Schott with a lovely lapel watch as a gift after which Miss Schott responded and delighted the guests with reminiscences of her experiences at The Temple. Dr. Silver then spoke and a reception in the Sisterhood Parlor followed.

Members of The Temple Board and the Religious School Committee attended, as well as members of the Religious School faculty. The sponsoring committee included: Mrs. Clarence Weidenthal, Dr. Wm. Levenson, Miss Martha Markowitz, Miss Eva Gup, Mrs. Charles Auerbach and Miss Lillian Berman.