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

Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

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Questions asked of the Rabbi, 1946.

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QUESTIONS ASKED OF THE RABBI

Lecture devoted to letters sent in as a result of  
three discourses on "Judaism."

By  
Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

At  
The Temple

On  
Sunday morning, April 6, 1946



This series of discourses on "Judaism" which I delivered recently evoked quite a number of interesting questions and inquiries which were sent to me. That is very gratifying because when I planned on giving my three discourses I planned on giving what one might call headlines, chapter headings, the barest outline of the subject. After all the history of a people and of a religion of four thousand years can not be compressed within the compass of three lectures even in outline form. But such lectures serve their purpose if they start people thinking and asking questions, if they encourage further study, reading and closer acquaintance.

I will take up some of these questions which were sent to me. Time will not permit answering all of them. Here is one interesting question which was sent in:

"In connection with your present series of lectures. I wonder if you could incorporate the answer as to why Judaism has made so little progress numerically (about 15 million Pre-Hitler) while its off-spring religions number adherents in the hundreds of millions. Why does Reform Judaism, which seems most attuned to modern life and thinking make such slow progress in numbers?"

"I do not think persecution alone is the answer to the first question because, as I remember, the Early Christians were likewise persecuted but continued to grow and flourish."

During the centuries around the beginning of the Christian Era, starting with the period after the great Maccabean victory, in the Second Century B.C.E., Jews carried on a very active missionary campaign to convert the pagan world, and with considerable success. The gospel of Matthew speaks of the scribes and the Pharisees as "compassing sea and land to make one proselyte."

In the 1st Century, our records show, for example, that the entire royal family of Adiabene, a state on the upper Tigris, converted to Judaism. And so did many from the highest circles of the Roman aristocracy.

Josephus in one of the foremost books on Jewish History <sup>writes</sup> of the 1st Century of the Common Era ~~writes~~: "The masses have long since shown a keen interest to adopt our religious observances, and there is not one city, Greek or barbarian, nor a single



nation, to which our custom of abstaining from work on the seventh day has not spread, and where the fasts and the lighting of lamps and many of our prohibitions in the matter of good are not observed." Roman writers, too, like Seneca and Horace Tacitus refer and not always in a friendly spirit to large number of proselytes in Judaism.

The attitude of the Jews towards proselytism is very cordial, very warm. One of the most famous sayings of the Rabbis is "Every one who converts a man to Judaism is as though he created him."

There were two types of proselytes. There were the complete proselytes known as "Gairai Ha'zedek", the thorough Jews, who accepted the entire discipline of Jewish life and identified themselves completely with the Jewish people, its destiny. Another group of proselytes who were known as "Yirai Hashamayim", the "Fearers of God." They accepted Judaism as a great and beautiful ideal and accepted only part of its prescribed disciplines. They remained Greeks, Romans, Syrians. They were attracted by Jewish Monotheism and the customs -- the Sabbath, rest. They read the Bible not in Hebrew, but in Greek. They didn't know Hebrew. They had departed in many ways from the pagan way of life. They were not complete Jews. Their Judaism was not deeply rooted, nor without admixture. Frequently these Fearers of God, half-way proselytes, did not persevere. They slipped back. They were easily swayed. It was among these Fearer's of God that Paul and the Judaeo-Christian missionaries that followed him found their first and easiest converts to a faith which made light of Law which the Rabbis had developed. They attacked the law under the conviction which was bound up with the messianic faith of Judaeo-Christians -- the world was coming to an end now very soon. There was no more need for rigorous observance of law as defined by the Rabbis.

This made the leaders of Judaism wary about proselytism generally.

With the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D., and more particularly in 135 A.D., and as a result of the frightful social and economic upheaval which ensued



under Hadnan, the urgent problem of the Jewish people was not world conversion to their faith but national self-preservation.

Again the early Christians who were all Jews competed with the Jews who did not accept the messianic faith of Christianity for proselytes. In their eagerness to make proselytes they rejected most of the laws as developed by the Rabbis and came to tolerate some utterly un-Jewish doctrines introduced by these proselytes -- doctrines such as the Trinity. As a result of the encouragement of ~~the~~ proselytism, what began as a Jewish sect developed into a new sect, a new syncretic religion far less Jewish. This caused grave apprehension among the true defenders of pure monotheism and of the Torah. There was danger in Proselytism. It lessened their ardor for Proselytism. By the 4th Century Christianity had become the official religion of the Roman Empire. Jews were prohibited from making proselytes.

Islam made converts by conquest and the sword, a technique which was repugnant to Judaism. Jews were prohibited from making converts in Islamic lands. The result was that this Judaism which in the early centuries before and after the beginning of the Common Era was a very active missionary faith, by force of circumstances and because of the new competition of the Jew ish sect in the pagan world -- much of the defenses which Judaism had set up for integrity, purity..... Judaism ceased to be an active missionary religion though converts were always welcomed to Jewish life. The feeling developed that perhaps Judaism can best serve the purposes of Judaism by remaining true to itself at all times, and like a drop of perfume radiate its fragrance to the world.

Another question which was sent in reads as follows: "It is conceded that religious faith is predicated largely upon emotion and spirituality rather than upon reason and logic, does it not follow that Reform Judaism, with its drastic elimination of ritualism and ceremonialism, factors upon which the appeal and spirituality is based, has weakened that appeal? Does not the strength of the Catholic faith, for example, consist in great part in its emphasis upon outer ~~forms~~ forms?"



It is true that emotion plays a great role in religion and that ceremonies in so far as they stir the emotion are important in religious life. Religion is neither anti-rational nor a-logical. It is supported by the highest reason and on the one side deepest intellectual insight. There is no conflict between religion/and science and reason on the other side.

Religion reaches beyond reason to faith and on the basis of that faith it projects a heroic code of conduct for men. It must move man and inspire him to practice that code, to remind him of that code of ethics. Religion must not only instruct, it must energize the will of man. And symbols and ceremonies and beautiful ritual are powerful aids in the day by day pedagogy of religion, not alone with youth, but with adults because these acts, symbols bring great ideals to mind, surging on the waves of great emotions. We see the flag pass by. We salute it. When we sing the National Anthem we stand at attention. These are ritual acts intended to remind us of great commitments, great historic moments. And so with religion. A seder service is a symbolic act full of color and is intended in that act to remind us of the ideal for which the Festival of Passover stands -- emancipation, gratitude to God, the destiny of man. The kindling of the lights on Chanukah, on the Sabbath, the blowing of the Shofar on New Years -- it is the theme ~~to~~ which they indicate, to which they point, the thoughts which they tend to arouse -- they are of tremendous importance.

Nor Reform Judaism never eliminated all the symbols and ceremonies. It sought to eliminate only those which were no longer meaningful, which were obsolescent, out-butmoded/which went too far, moved forward too fast. Frequently to an extent, Reform Judaism would become a bit too bare, too abstract. Perhaps because of that it has failed to reach the masses of our people. Instead of retaining most of the ritual in the home, it relegated too much to the synagogue. In the last generation some Jews have sought to correct that mistake, to restore some of the more beautiful meaningful ceremonies to Jewish life. That is being done.



I do not wish to commend on the second part which has to do with the Catholic people for I do not wish to speak for the Catholic Church. Undoubtedly they place great emphasis on ritual. It hasn't been afraid to use ancient acts, even ~~with~~ the use of a dead language, Latin. I doubt, however, whether it is these ceremonies, these outer forms which have strengthened the Catholic Church. I think the strength of the Catholic Church has been its schools, its parochial schools. It educates its people from childhood right through life. It maintains its own system of education, its own Catholic schools. It never leaves them. It combines religious and secular education in one. A Catholic child goes to a Catholic school, High School, University. He is always surrounded all the time with Catholic thought and Catholic influence. No wonder he remains <sup>a</sup>loyal Catholic all his life.

Reform Jews are resentful if we send their children to two hours a week -- that is a terrible sacrifice which we make. I once added up the hours which a Jewish child spends in learning Jewish education. And it adds up to about ninety hours a year -- about twelve full school days. That is what we give to our children by way of Jewish education. And if I were tomorrow to send out a letter to the parents of The Temple asking that their children should come an extra hour a week for religious education, I would have my ears burned off. Then we wonder why the Religious School doesn't educate our children adequately. How? Education takes time. You cannot teach four thousand years of Jewish history and of Jewish religion and of Jewish literature in ninety hours a year for a few years. If the child is confirmed, it is almost sacrilegious to ask that child to come back to The Temple High School. We ought to become very realistic with ourselves, frank with ourselves and not look for far fetched excuses when the reason is right at the door.

Another question submitted reads as follows: "Is it true that Reform Judaism rejects the belief in a personal Messiah? And how can it be reconciled with the long-standing faith of Jews as expressed by Maimonides?" Well, the idea of a personal Messiah entered



rather late in Jewish thought, later than the idea of a Golden Age of which the prophets speak. Micah and Isaiah spoke of a time when nations will learn the ways of God, when nations will live together for justices and righteousness, "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." The Golden Age -- that ante-dated by far the concept of a personal Messiah who would by himself miraculously put an end to injustice and bring about a Kingdom of God. And it is to this idea/of the Prophets, the Messianic Age that modern Judaism reverted. This Golden Age would be not the achievement of one man, but of mankind. And everyone who works for the Kingdom of God of that Kingdom of God. And in passing, it should be pointed out that Maimonides himself reduces the personal Messiah to an irreducible minimum. He writes "Let not a man think that in the days of the Messiah the accustomed order of things will be changed...The world will go on as usual...Only Israel will be at peace with nations of the world, and these will accept the true faith...All else written of the Messiah are only by way of parables...At best the sages attempted detached presentations of the subject cannot be regarded as a fundamental principle of our religion." In other words, the Messianic Idea was identified with just two things -- national restoration and acceptance of the monotheistic faith."

The same man asked me this question. He is evidently an ex-service man. He is puzzled. He writes and asks this question. "Are we to cast overboard the Oriental ~~furniture~~ furniture that we've carried into the Diaspora, along with many of the tenets of Rabbinic Judaism?"

All great religions had their origin in the Orient. It is to the Orient, the whole world must turn to discover their great spiritual leaders, whether Moses, Isaiah, Zoroaster, Budhah, Mohammed, Jesus, Confuscius. They are all oriental. It would be meaningless in talking of religion to talk of casting over-board the oriental furniture. All the furniture of religion come from the Orient.

But in the Orient itself, religion changes and develops. If Judaism had never



left Palestine Judaism today in Palestine would be very different than it was in the days of Hillel, as Hillel's Judaism differed from that of Moses and Amos.

Evolution is the law of life. But change must do no violence to essential doctrine. It must be an outgrowth, an adjustment perhaps, an improvement. You must not sacrifice the essential genius of its faith. As long as sufficient outer form is retained to preserve the essentials....It is not so important whether we worship with our heads uncovered, or with hats on, but that we worship. At one time in the Orient, it was a sign of respect to cover the head. In the Western world it is a sign of respect to uncover the head. What is important is that "we love the Lord our God with all our hearts and with all our might."

I turn to another question. It is rather lengthy. This writer says:

"I followed with great interest your last three lectures on the prophetic, rabbinical and reformed Judaism, and have come to certain conclusions which disturb me very much.

"I gathered from these lectures that Judaism made its greatest contribution to the world under the Prophets, that the Rabbis helped to codify and preserve the precepts of the Jewish faith in a world which had not yet accepted its basic teachings, but that the Reformers did not add anything to Judaism in the way of religious values, nor to the Jewish message to the world. At best they adapted outmoded forms to present day requirements.

"Therefore it would appear that if Judaism has had its creative phase under the Prophets, it has spiritually rested on its laurels ever since. While there was still a "raison d'etre" for the Rabbis, because the world had not as yet accepted the fundamental teachings of Judaism, I begin to wonder to what end we should preserve Judaism at a time when, at least theoretically, the main concepts have been accepted by both Christianity and Islam.

"The fact that the people around us have accepted the fundamental tenets of our faith should not be a reason for us, the originators, to give up our religion. But



inasmuch as there is in most countries, including our own, such a strong feeling of dislike for the Jews, I ask myself whether the Jews in the diaspora should not give up their existence as a separate entity and submerge completely in the people that surround them, now that their mission appears to be completed. This is not an easy solution for the first or second generation, but at least the third generation should not know a Jewish problem any longer as there would be no more Jews left as minorities to create a problem.

"It so happens that I am not a believer in assimilation nor do I like the conclusions I just arrived at. But if I should live as a social animal of questionable desirability, I would like to feel that I am keeping up this role for a stronger reason than pride in the fact that 2500 years ago my ancestors were way ahead of their times. If I have to see my brothers become martyrs and bring up my children for a possible similar fate, I want to believe in a cause which can inspire men to be martyrs.

"Judaism and particularly Reformed Judaism is not different enough in its present state of development from some of the better forms of Christianity, it is not far enough ahead of the field of other religions to make it worth while. To be worth while, Judaism must again strike out and advance the scope of ethical, political and sociological teachings to regain its predominant position as a religion and justify the claim of the Jews to be the chosen people. What Judaism needs are new Prophets, men of vision or of visions.

"If I interpret the closing words of your last lecture correctly, you expressed the need of Judaism as that for Rejuvenation rather than for a Reform. Judaism has been static too long, it is time that it become dynamic again.

"You asked during your lectures for questions and comments. My request would be for a sermon on new and outstanding values which Jews, as a people or as a religious community, can contribute to the world, a sermon on "The mission of Judaism today."



There is much truth in this letter - and, I am afraid there is also considerable confusion in thought, which the writer himself senses, and so anticipates the answers to his questions.

He gathered from my lectures that Judaism made its greatest contributions to the world under the Prophets -- the later Rabbis defined ways of preserving it in a world which was pagan, and that Reform Judaism did not add anything to Judaism in the way of religious values. They adapted outmoded forms to present-day requirements. Hence Judaism has rested on its laurels.

An interesting question arises: "What constitutes progress?" I should like to read from my book "Religion in a Changing World" which treats of this very thing.

"Startlingly new discoveries in religion as in art are extremely rare, and progress in these fields can have but a very limited connotation. Peaks of perfection were reached long ago in the realms of art, religion and philosophy and beyond the peaks one cannot climb. We cannot, by taking time and thought, improve upon the perfected works of Phidias or Homer or Euripides. That would be painting the lily. We may have newer types of artistic excellence but not necessarily better types.

We can invent a machine today that will run thirty miles an hour and tomorrow one that will run sixty, and the next day one that will fly in the air instead of running on the ground. Such rhopalic, linear progression in technological skill and efficiency is possible in the material world but not in the artistic or spiritual world. Man began, as it were, but yesterday to investigate critically his physical world. Daily he is stumbling upon some new fact, some new law which hitherto was unknown to him. The modern scientist is like a child who suddenly finds himself in a new and marvelous toy-shop. His eyes are wide open, his heart beats fast and his fingers itch to touch and try each single toy in the shop. But art and religion are very ancient enterprises of the human spirit. They have their cycles of growth and decay as well as their definite organic limits. They arise in the inner world of man, and man has known his inner world intimately for a very long time. Men have lived in societies for many thousands of years and long ago they were forced to face



many of the social problems of organization and adjustment which we face today. A vast amount of social experience has already been accumulated. The best minds among the ancients wrestled with the problems of man's spiritual life as courageously as the best minds among the moderns. They faced as frankly as we do today the challenge of human destiny -- of fate, of pain, of evil and of mortality. We have neither improved upon the manner in which they stated the problems of human existence nor upon the solutions which they offered. Little ~~that~~ is really new can be added to the basic inventory of religion and morality. Little can be added to the racial wisdom which crystallized itself through the ages in 'love thy neighbor as thyself' or 'Justice, justice shalt thou pursue' or 'Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment' or 'Nation shall not lift up sword against nation.'

"We may discover a better technique for the realization of these maximum ideals, but we have nothing and can have nothing to add to their quintessential truth. Progress in this field consists not in discovery but in fulfillment. There can be no new Ten Commandments for no new Ten Commandments are necessary. They remain forever the digits of civilization."

Now, Reform Judaism in trying to make the great prophetic truths of Judaism more easily available and applicable to modern man, <sup>tried</sup> to unwind these truths from stifling sheets, and the dust of ages. That is not resting on its laurels. Every revolution is a rediscovery. When the American Revolution proclaimed freedom throughout the land, they put on the liberty bell a phrase from the Bible: "And ye shall proclaim freedom in the land." The Revolution was a rediscovery of a great truth proclaimed twenty-five hundred years or more ago.

May I say at this point and in this connection, too, that real progress consists not so much in going forward as in going inward.

The question was raised that since the main concepts of Judaism have at least theoretically been accepted by both Christianity and Islam, to what end should we preserve Judaism? Now he answers his own question, but he is not entirely



convinced by his own answer. He says: "The fact that the people around us have accepted the fundamental tenets of our faith should not be a reason for us, the originators, to give up our religion." Certainly not! But then there is anti-Semitism and persecution and wouldn't it be a good idea to give it up?

This raises a host of questions: How courageous would it be to give up because of fear of persecution. Is it best to give up one's religion? Many Jews of Germany thought by giving up their religion they could spare themselves and their children, but actually the Nazis went even beyond the third generation. It is quite questionable whether Jews can assimilate in the world today even by giving up their religion because the world does not look upon us as a people. I endeavored to correct this confusion of thought at the outset of the lectures. I said at that time that Judaism was the religion of the Jewish people. While clearly related, there are not identical. There is a religion called Judaism. There is a people called the Jewish people. the history of the Jewish people /The Jewish people developed Judaism but the two are not synonymous and/which while clearly influenced by its faith, is nevertheless not exclusively that of the faith. The concept of the Jews as exclusively a religious sect or a denomination or community is very recent, quite inadequate and quite unnecessary. There are Jews today who are unreligious and anti-religious. Jews were recognized in Europe as a nationality group, and in Palestine as a people building in its national home. There is a Jewish people. No people has to justify its existence or supply the world a reason for existing.

"Of no other people on earth has anyone ever dared to ask What is it good for? Need a people serve some specific good? A people is its own end and purpose."

Certainly not of an ancient and world-molding people as the Jewish people whose 4000 year record is incomparable right up to 1946. The Jewish people today is as creative in every sphere of human endeavor as it ever was in history, art, science, literature -- in every walk of life. Such a people does not have to justify its existence.

If such a people suffers some grave deficiency, some baleful want, such as a land



of its own, if it has suffered a tragic loss in that it has no land of its own, no homeland of its own -- the answer to that is not suicide, but the rebuilding of a national home, national restoration so that we will become in every regard a people like every other historic people.

I agree heartily with the writer as far as our faith is concerned that we need ~~new~~ rejuvenation, that we must cease being static and become dynamic. How? Not by discovering anything new of spiritual, of religious truth, of ethical ideals but the rediscovery of the eternally true and noble and to work for it, live for it, sacrifice for it. Rededicate yourself to the ideals already there.

If you believe that Judaism is what Micah said it was -- "Only to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly ~~and~~ with Thy God" -- to be scrupulously just, to guard yourself against all forms of exploitation, have a fair attitude toward labor -- that is how to become religiously dynamic. Believe in the practice the ways of charity to support the weak, to help all organizations and societies which work for brotherhood and tolerance and good will. This is how to become renewed in your faith. You don't need new visions. You need new rededication, reconsecration to old visions.

If you believe that religion means walking humbly with God -- teaching youth .. that is how to live the life of a Jew. And all that we have in Jewish life -- the Jewish home, the Jewish School, the synagogue are all intended to nurture these ideals, to develop happiness for these ideals and to proclaim them to the world. I wouldn't spend much time, friends in wondering why I live. Why I should continue to live. It is really out of our hands. What is within our power is to determine how nobly, how significantly we as Jews can live. That we can control....

How to ~~exterminate~~ efface anti-Semitism. That is the question Jews and non-Jews ought to face up to. ~~2~~ And if they come to a positive conclusion that Judaism is a noble concept a wise heritage worthwhile preserving, then we ought to do what is right. We should be prepared to pay the price. And indifference is not the price



for religious education, nor is escapism the way....





L. W. NEUMARK

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CLEVELAND 3, OHIO

I do not think persecution  
alone is the answer to the prior  
question because, as I remember,  
the Early Christians were likewise  
persecuted but continued to grow  
& flourish - ✓

This is in answer to your  
request for questions - the  
answer would be interesting I  
think -

Kind regards -

Leo

March 14/46



L. W. NEUMARK

PRINTZESS SQUARE-1974 EAST 61ST ST.

CLEVELAND 3, OHIO

Dear Rabbi -

In connection  
with your present series of  
lectures, I wonder if you  
could incorporate the answers  
as to why Judaism has made  
so little progress numerically  
(about 15 million Pre-Hitler) while  
its offspring religions number  
adherents in the hundreds of millions -  
& why does Reform Judaism, which  
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3-10-46.

Dear Rabbi Silver,

A "Sheilah," as requested.

If it is conceded that religious faith is predicated largely upon emotion and spirituality, rather than upon reason and logic, does it not follow that Reform Judaism, with its drastic elimination of ritualism and ceremonialism, ~~the~~ factors upon which the appeal to spirituality is based, has weakened that appeal?

Does not the strength of the Catholic faith, for example, consist in great outer forms, part in its emphasis upon "trappings"?

Very sincerely,

AL

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EUGENE HERVEY  
2333 TRAYMORE ROAD  
UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS, OHIO  
March 30, 1946.

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver  
The Temple  
Ansel Road and East 105th Street  
Cleveland, Ohio.

Dear Rabbi,

I followed with great interest your last three lectures on the prophetic, rabbinical and reformed Judaism, and have come to certain conclusions which disturb me very much.

I gathered from these lectures that Judaism made its greatest contribution to the world under the Prophets, that the Rabbis helped to codify and preserve the precepts of the Jewish faith in a world which had not yet accepted its basic teachings, but that the Reformers did not add anything to Judaism in the way of religious values, nor to the Jewish message to the world. At best they adapted outmoded forms to present day requirements.

Therefore it would appear that if Judaism has had its creative phase under the Prophets, it has spiritually rested on its laurels ever since. While there was still a "raison d'être" for the Rabbis, because the world had not as yet accepted the fundamental teachings of Judaism, I begin to wonder to what end we should preserve Judaism at a time when, at least theoretically, the main concepts have been accepted by both Christianity and Islam.

The fact that the people around us have accepted the fundamental tenets of our faith should not be a reason for us, the originators, to give up our religion. But inasmuch as there is in most countries, including our own, such a strong feeling



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of dislike for the Jews, I ask myself whether the Jews in the diaspora should not give up their existence as a separate entity and submerge completely in the people that surround them, now that their mission appears to be completed. This is not an easy solution for the first or second generation, but at least the third generation should not know a Jewish problem any longer as there would be no more Jews left as minorities to create a problem.

It so happens that I am not a believer in assimilation nor do I like the conclusions I just arrived at. But if I should live as a social animal of questionable desirability, I would like to feel that I am keeping up this role for a stronger reason than pride in the fact that 2500 years ago my ancestors were way ahead of their times. If I have to see my brothers become martyrs and bring up my children for a possible similar fate, I want to believe in a cause which can inspire men to be martyrs.

Judaism and particularly Reformed Judaism is not different enough in its present state of development from some of the better forms of Christianity, it is not far enough ahead of the field of other religions to make it worth while. To be worth while, Judaism must again strike out and advance the scope of ethical, political and sociological teachings to regain its predominant position as a religion and justify the claim of the Jews to be the chosen people. What Judaism needs are new Prophets, men of vision or of visions.

If I interpret the closing words of your last lecture correctly, you expressed the need of Judaism as that for Rejuvenation rather than for a Reform. Judaism has been static too long, it is time that it become dynamic again.



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You asked during your lectures for questions and comments. My request would be for a sermon on new and outstanding values with Jews, as a people or as a religious community, can contribute to the world, a sermon on "The mission of Judaism today".

Very truly yours,

*Eugene Hervey*





1) Evoked - Gratifying - What I touched on the hist. of a people and a religion 4000 yrs. old - cannot be compressed in 3 lectures - even in outline form.

But such lectures serve their purpose - if they start people thinking and asking questions - if they en- courage further study <sup>reading</sup> and closer acquaintance.  
I can treat only a few - time will not permit.

2/ Here is an interesting question. (Read Newman's)  
During centuries ~~around~~ <sup>preceding and following</sup> the beg. of the Chr. Era, ~~esp. after the~~ starting with period after the great Mass. victory, the Jews carried on an active missionary campaign to convert the pagan world - and with con- siderable success.

The Gospel of Matthew speaks of the scribes and the Pharisees as "comparing sea and land to make one proselyte".

In the 1<sup>st</sup> c., records show that the entire royal family of Adiabene, a state on the upper Tigris, converted to Judaism.

And so did many from the highest circles of the Roman aristocracy.

Josephus - "The masses have long since shown a keen interest to adopt our religious observances, and there is not one city, Greek or barbarian, nor



- a single nation, to which our customs of abstaining from work on the seventh day has not spread, and where the fasts and the lighting of lamps and many of our prohibitions in the matter of food are not observed."
- Roman writers, too, like Seneca and ~~Horace~~ <sup>Tacitus</sup> refer to <sup>and a large number of</sup> ~~large numbers of Jewish proselytes to food~~ <sup>to a friendly spirit</sup>; of ~~what~~ <sup>which</sup> ~~when~~ <sup>every one is aware.</sup>
- ~~Among Roman cities like Antioch, Damascus, Alexandria, Corinth - many synagogues - Among them early Chr. missionaries had their first audience - & success.~~
- Attitude - very warm. - "Every one who brings a <sup>man to Jnd.</sup> ~~proselyte near it~~ ( ~~Juste p 36~~ ) is as though he created him"

3/ <sup>But</sup> There were 2 types of proselytes. -

- (1) The complete proselytes - <sup>נכרי</sup> ~~who joined Jew. nation and religion~~ - thorough Jews. - <sup>accepted all Jewish law</sup>
- (2) "Fearers of Jnd." - <sup>who accepted Jnd. as a great and beautiful ideal - & accepted only part of its precepts</sup> ~~disappointing~~ <sup>rites</sup> - They remained Greeks, Romans, Syrians - ~~was~~ attracted by J. monotheism - some let beautiful customs - Sabbath rest - ~~and kept them in Jnd.~~

They were not complete Jews but they had departed from pagan way of life. (Their Jnd. not deeply rooted, was many slipped back - did not persevere - <sup>without admixture</sup>)



And they were easily swayed.

It was among these <sup>people</sup> that Paul and the Judaizers <sup>13.</sup>  
messianists that followed him, found their heart and lost  
converts - to a faith - made by <sup>law</sup> - <sup>preserved</sup> people - <sup>under</sup> the <sup>conviction</sup>  
This made the leaders of Jew. wary abt. proselytes generally

4) With the destruction - 70 - 135 - fearful social & economic  
upheavals - which caused - brutal persecutions - Hadrian  
urgent problem of the J. people - self-preservation rather  
world-conversion.

~~The Judaizers - not concerned - nat. survival  
propagation of their mess. faith - took no part in  
nat. struggle. 135 = World was coming to an end, as the  
They were hated for it - by patriotic Jews -  
In as much - as many of them had been <sup>people</sup> 135  
- distrust & suspicious of <sup>people</sup> - Jews~~

5) Early Ch., who were Jews, <sup>competed with Jews in proselytes</sup> eager to make proselytes  
- rejected law - as developed by Rabbis - Bible  
Tolerated some utterly un-Jewish doctrines - Trinity -  
to be introduced by these <sup>1/2</sup> proselytes -  
So that what began as a Jewish sect - a new Synagogue  
faith - less Jewish > Hellenistic

This caused some opposition among the defenders of  
pure monotheism of the <sup>50's</sup> 135. There was danger in Proselytism  
lessened their ardor for proselytism.



By 45-<sup>th</sup> C. Official Religion - Jews prohibited - making proselytes.

(4)

Islamic ~~sanct~~ <sup>sanct</sup> courts by conquest & the sword - a technique repugnant to just. - and in Islamic lands - Jews were also prohibited from walking courts

(c) Drop of perfume -

6). Another question: (Berkeley)

It is true that emotion plays a great role in religion, and that ceremonies in so far as they stir the emotions are important in religious life -

- Rel. is neither anti-rational nor a-logical. It is supported by the highest reason & deepest will. unyield.
- No conflict bet. reason and science. & religion
- But - religion <sup>needs</sup> beyond reason to faith - and on the basis of that faith - projects an <sup>ethical</sup> code of conduct for man.
- It must move man and inspire him to practice that code - admonish and remind him.
- It must energize his will.
- Symbols and ceremonies and beautiful ritual are powerful aids in this day-by-day pedagogy of religion - Esp. with youth but also adults.
- They bring great ideas to mind - surging in the wake of great emotions - Hail - Salute - Anthem
- They recall great historic moments - & their appearance - 730 - 750
- Reform Judaism - too far - Obscure

221  
Lost much  
nothing to  
talk it  
Holi



with the natives, the world, and those will accept the true faith... all else written, the Messiah an only by way of parables.. at best the sages' attempted detailed presentations, the subject cannot be regarded as a fundamental principle of an religion."

(1) Nat. Restrictions + (2) Universal acceptance of minor details of faith.

(a) Same inquirer - an ex-servant man - ~~after~~ puzzled - asks: 'are we to cast overboard the Oriental furniture that we've carried into the Diaspora, along with many, the skulls of Robbers Judahim'."

All great religions had their origin in the Orient.

It is to the Orient - whether it be Moses - Isaiah - a Zoroaster - Gautama - Lao Tze - Jesus - Mohammed.

It would be meaningless, when speaking of Religions, to talk of casting overboard "the Oriental Furniture"

But in the Orient itself, religion changes & develops. (If Judahim had never left Palestine -

it would be far different to-day - than it is in days of old - a Hebrew Judahim differed from <sup>others</sup> Jews,

Evolution is law of life. But change must

do no violence to essential doctrine - must be out-growth - impermeant - adherent - without members - in its forms



Too low - too cold - too abstract - Masses (5)

Relegated too much to synagogue - Home - Go back  
Restore some of these meaningful ceremonies - appeal to eye & heart - as well as to mind

(a) Catholic Church - do not wish  
on ceremonies - ritual - Latin - emphatic

(a) Parochial School - 3 weeks a year  
12 full school days a year - More time and

(b) Supplement in Home -

X  
7. Another question - (Arthur)

"Is it true that Reform Judaism rejects the belief in a  
personal Messiah? how reconcile it with long standing faith  
& just as expressed by Maimonides - 13 principles -

Take the idea of personal mess. entered late in Jud -  
later than the idea of coming of Golden Age - אורח חיים -  
Isaiah -

It is to this idea that modern Jud. worked.  
This age - will be the achievement - not of one man -  
but of mankind.

Every one who works for Kingdom of God -

In passing - Maimonides - reduced the  
concept to its irreducible minimum. In his 31 -

פנחס מנחם -

"Let us men think that in the days, the Messiahs the  
accustomed order, things will be changed ... The world  
will go on as usual... Only Israel will be at peace



Whether on works with a hat - uncrowned head - 61  
Does he wear the hat - Does he lose his hat - 62

8). Finally - (Read).

There is much truth here - and, I am afraid, also considerable confusion in thought, where the writer humors senses, and so anticipates the answers to his questions.

He gathered from my letters that J. made its greatest contributions to the world under the Prophets - the <sup>body</sup> Republic defined ways of preserving it in a world which was pagan, and that Reform J. did not add anything to J. in the way of rel. values. They adopted antiented ~~con~~ forms to present key requirements - Hence it has rested on its laurels! What is progress? Progress in the modern (p. 47) 'Rel. in a changing world'

Reform Jod - is trying to make the great prophetic truths of Jod - more easily <sup>available and</sup> applicable - in unending chains from man, then to play sheets - dust of ages - That is not resting on its laurels! Every Revolution is

~~an~~ a re-discovery. - Amer. Rev. 3/103 1/103/11.

Progress in Rel. going Forward - going Forward!

9). Since main concepts of Jod. have, at best theoretically been accepted by both Ch. & Islam, to what end should we preserve Judaism?

He answers his own question - but is not entirely



convinced by his answer:

"The fact that the people around us have accepted the fundamental tenets of our faith should not be a reason for us, the originators, to pick up our religion, certainly not! But then there is Antisem. & persecutions - and wouldn't it be a good idea, anyhow, to pick it up -

This raises the question (b) whether any minority should pick up its identity - because of persecutions! Not a very honorable a courageous act - I am afraid. Not for our self - not as an example to world - (c) whether it is at all possible to assimilate - Germany - 3-4<sup>th</sup> generation. (c) whether we exist as a people - simply because our rel. is different enough from other religions.

I endeavored to convert this confusion in that at the outset.

Jud. is the rel., the J. people - while the 2 are closely related, they are not identical. There is a rel. called Judaism. There is a people called the J. people. The J. people created & developed the rel. called Jud. The 2 are not synonymous.

The J. people had and has a history, pol., social, econ. & cultural, which while strongly influenced by its faith, is nevertheless not exclusively that, the faith. The concept, the Jews as exclusively a rel. sect or a denom. a community is very recent, quite inside faith & quite unnecessary



There are Jews to-day who are unbelievers, south-separates - [9]  
Jews <sup>new</sup> ~~are~~ <sup>in Israel</sup> ~~surprised~~ <sup>as a nationality group</sup> in Europe <sup>building</sup> ~~as a~~ <sup>its</sup> ~~national home~~. There is a  
people! And in Pal - as a people in its natural home. There is a  
people has to justify its existence, & it is really  
the world a reason for existing.

"Of no other people on earth has anyone ever dared ask:  
What is it good for? Need a people serve some specific  
good? A people is it own end and purpose!"

Certainly not of as ancient, and world-molding people  
as the J. people - whose <sup>4000</sup> record - incomparable - & which  
to-day -

If such a people suffers some grave defacement -  
some terrible want - ~~such~~ <sup>such</sup> as a land, & its men,  
if it has suffered a tragic loss - exile - the answer  
to that is not suicide - but restoration and  
rehabilitation.

10/ I agree heartily - Refugee situation, as far as our  
faith is concerned -

From being static - and become dynamic - How?

Not to discover anything new - Redeem the eternally  
true and noble, and work for it - live for it  
sacrifice for it.

<sup>205000</sup> Justice - human - later - eq. all forms of exploitation -  
Equality of opportunities - Backward people



Love - Charity - Use your strength to support the weak <sup>א/חנך</sup> (10)

Brotherhood - Fight intolerance -

Humbly - Develop personal character - Modesty - Humility - strenuous - deceit - moral ~~restraints~~ restraints

This is to live as the life of a holy man -

The Jewish Home & School mention these ideals - & create

these fine habits of life

The J. Synagogue - voices these ideals - & produces them -  
to the world

Jewish customs & ceremonies - symbolize them and  
the remembrance of their remembrance

