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On standing alone - in the spirit of Chanukah, 1954.



ON STANDING ALONE

In the Spirit of Chanukah

December 26, 1954

My dear Friends, the festival of Chanukah which the Jewish world is celebrating this week, is in the truest sense of the word an heroic holiday. I call it an heroic holiday not because it celebrates a military victory; there were many military victories in the annals of Israel and in the annals of other nations which are not being celebrated today, which have, in fact, been forgotten. Unfortunately wars without end have taken place all over the globe since the beginning of time, and, as a rule, these wars ended in victory for one side or the other. But these victories were <sup>of</sup> little or no historic consequence. Undoubtedly, they produced a momentary outburst of exultation of the part of the victorious people and other celebration, triumphal processions, no doubt, and monuments raised to the victorious military leaders or generals, but after a time they were ignored and buried under the sands of time.

But the Jewish people have celebrated this festival of Chanukah for more than 2100 years. What was it that endeared this Maccabean military victory to the people of Israel, and why have they observed it throughout their generations in every age and every part of the world? Why have they been kindling these Chanukah lights for eight days every year?

Chanukah is not a Biblical festival. There is nothing in the Bible about Chanukah as there is about Pesach or Succoth or Shevuoth or Rosh Hashonah or Yom Kippur or Purim. The story of Chanukah is not found in the Bible. It is found in one of the books of the Apocrypha, the Book of the Maccabees, from which a section was read this morning. Those books of the Apocrypha which were not included in the canon of the Bible.



There is no tractate in the Mishnah or in the Talmud about Chanukah as there is, say, about Purim. There are only a few scattered references in the Talmud to the festival of Chanukah, and yet it is this very festival which has become so beloved among our people and its popularity has been growing from generation to generation. Why? I spoke of it as a heroic festival, because it celebrates an heroic fact - that men fought for an heroic idea, an idea indispensable to humanity, basic to man's moral life. Men fought for a specific way of life which is vital to civilization and which was, in their day, being threatened with extinction.

The wars of the Maccabees were among the decisive wars of the human spirit. They fought for a clean and noble way of life, which was represented by the Hebraic tradition of faith and ethics. They fought for a spiritual faith, for decency, for moral sobriety, against decadence, against moral corruption, against licentiousness represented by the Hellenistic, the Greek social culture of the 2nd century before the Common Era.

The Maccabees were not fighting against the intellectual excellencies of the Greeks or against their artistic excellencies. They were fighting against the gross moral corruption which attended them, which threatened to overwhelm the higher moral standards and religious traditions of Israel.

In the "Wisdom of Solomon," one of these Apocalyptic books written in the 1st c. B.C.E. there was a description of this corrupt, Hellenistic way of life which Judaism was waging war upon, and in the book the "Wisdom of Solomon" we read "For the devising of idols was the beginning of the corruption of life - the polytheistic religions of the pagans was the beginning of the corruption of life... They kept neither lives nor marriages any longer undefiled...so that there reigned in all men theft and dissimulation, manslaughter, unfaithfulness, defiling of souls, adultery, and shameless uncleanness." It was this "shameless uncleanness" of life, this vulgarization of life, this brutalization of human life which the spirit of Judaism waged war upon.



The Maccabees and the Chassidim of their day struggled to build dykes against these inundating seas of moral corruption to preserve for mankind the ideals of purity, cleanness, of moral decorum - the sanctity of the family, the dignity of the individual made in the image of God. This was the epochal struggle out of which the Maccabees emerged victors at least for one nation, in one critical area of the world; ~~it~~ <sup>they</sup> preserved the higher standards which were thereafter to continue to challenge all forms of paganism in the world. In this Maccabean struggle a light was held aloft and it was not suffered to be extinguished in the world.

And those who fought for this heroic idea so vital to civilization, not merely vital to the Jewish people, were very few in number, and though few in number they dared to stand out, to stand apart, and to fight for their convictions. These men were of an heroic mold. A hero is one who dares to fight where others flee! Who dares to be alone in his consecration and in his struggle.

The Maccabees did not have to fight. War was not thrust upon them. They were not fighting to save their lives nor their material possessions. They could have gone along with the majority, along the primrose path of conformity. All the other neighboring peoples were eagerly welcoming this glamorous but corrupt civilization of Hellenism of the 2 c. B. C. E. because it was the Hellenism of Plato, Aristotle - this was a decadent type of Oriental Hellenism. They went eagerly along, all these neighboring peoples, with that civilization of the theater, the gymnasium, the hippodrome, the stadium, the easy-going immoralities of the Greek epicurean way of life, and even many Jews within Palestine at that time went along - Jews especially from the wealthier and the more aristocratic sections of the people - the kind who always are inclined to go along and to take the easy way. But Mattathias and his small band refused to go along, and as you heard from the reading this morning of the Book of the Maccabees, Mattathias answered and spake with a loud voice, "Though all the nations that are under the king's dominion obey



him and fall away each one from the religion of his fathers, yet will I and my son and my brethren continue to walk in the covenant of our fathers. God forbid ~~that~~ we should forsake the law, to depart from our faith either to the right hand or to the left." Mattathias and his small band of followers, convinced of the truth of their faith, the sanity and the rightness of their way of life, its indispensability for mankind, stood firm, immovable, stubborn, stiff-necked. Such men are of the heroic mold. Such men are the pathfinders and the saviours of civilization.

Of such a quality, friends, was Jewish life throughout the ages. That is why we have survived. That is why we succeeded in making our contribution to the moral and spiritual life of mankind.

There have always been Jews who fell away, who drifted away, and why finally drifted out of the Jewish fold. Such people always began with rationalizing their indifference to the Jewish disciplines - with being, *o*, so broad-minded, and so tolerant, actually so weak and so lazy - Jews whose chief concern was not how to practice, how to teach, how to transmit the faith of their fathers, but whose chief concern was "Let us be like all the other people, *O* House of Israel." It is not long before such people are submerged among the other peoples and are lost to the Household of Israel.

Those who preserved Judaism - men like the Maccabees - dared to be different, where difference was clearly indicated by the tenets of their faith. There is no particular virtue in just being different - being different for basic and tremendous principles; men who stood out against the pressure of the majority, against the pressure of the environment, against the pressure of everybody's doing it; men whose chief concern was not "let us be like all the other people, *O* House of Israel, but let us walk in the covenant of our fathers." It is these people who were of the heroic mold. Even though few in numbers, such people win through to victory.



There was read to you also this morning out of the same book of the First Maccabees the address of Judah, the lion-hearted Judah unto his followers when they found themselves few in numbers facing the tremendous host of these Syrian Greeks with their chariots and their weapons, their arm of elephants. The people were saying, "How shall we, being so few, be able to fight against so great a multitude?" Whereupon Judah said unto them, "It is no hard matter for many to be shut up in the hands of a few - with the God of Heaven it is all one - to deliver with a great multitude or a small company. The victory of battle," he said, "standeth not in the multitude of a host." I wish people would remember that. The victory in the spiritual battles of mankind standeth not in the multitude of the host. It is not the prestige or the multitude of numbers which ultimately scores the great victories for the progress and the advancement of mankind. But it is the spiritual loyalty and resoluteness and stubbornness of the few who have the vision and the light to insist on remaining true to their life.

Many fail to understand this genius of the Jewish people through the ages to rely upon the saving power of their ideals in spite of the fact that they are always few in number in relation to the population of the world. Its readiness to stand firm, to stand alone, to be different.

Recently a professor of history, Professor Toynbee, completed a massive work called "A Study of History," in which he regards the remarkable devotion, unparalled in all history, of a people to an idea, as "the most notorious example" of what he calls the "idolization of an ephemeral self." He says "The most notorious example of this idolization of an ephemeral self is the error of the Jews...In a period of their history which began in the infancy of the Syriac Civilization and which culminated in the Age of the Prophets of Israel, the people of Israel and Judah raised themselves head and shoulders above the Syriac peoples round about in responding to the challenge of a "Time of Troubles" by rising to a higher conception of Religion.



Keenly conscious, and rightly proud, of their spiritual treasure which they had thus wrested from an ordeal that had broken the spirit of their Aramaean and Phoenician and Philistine neighbours, the Jews allowed themselves to be 'betrayed by what' was 'false within' into an idolization of this notable, yet transitory phase of their own spiritual growth...They persuaded themselves that Israel's discovery of the One True God had revealed Israel itself to be God's Chosen People; and this half-truth inveigled them into the fatal error of looking upon a momentary spiritual eminence, which they had attained by labour and travail, as a privilege conferred upon them by God in a covenant which was everlasting....Brooding over a talent which they had perversely sterilized by hiding it in the earth, they rejected the still greater treasure which God was now offering them...And so it came to pass that the Gospel of a Jewish messiah who was God Himself incarnate was preached by Galilaeans and taken to heart by Gentiles."

This, we fear, is an example of the free-flowing homiletics in which Professor Toynbee's writings abound and which are offered as historical science.

Professor George Foote Moore, who was not an impressionistic historian out on a global tour, in writing of Judaism in the first centuries of the Christian era, gives no indication at all in his great work that the Jews who lived at that time in Palestine had sterilized their talent by hiding it in the earth. On the contrary, he finds that the Jews of that epoch were dynamic, indeed were waging war with great energy upon the polytheism, idolatry and social vices of their day, and carrying on a very active and successful propaganda for proselytes all over the pagan world. This period following the prophets, this period following the Babylonian exile was not at all a sterile period in Jewish history. It was a great creative period of which Professor Toynbee, unfortunately, is terribly ignorant. The creation of the noble post-exilic psalms of exquisite spiritual sensitiveness which are the



tenderest minstrelsy of the human heart in communion with God, or of the book of Job, the profoundest plumbing of human suffering and divine justice, or of the Wisdom literature of the Bible and the Apocrypha, so rich in moral insights and so sagacious, the creation of the synagogue, the most noble, original and democratic religious institution of the ancient world, the establishment of the public school system for the training of all children, rich and poor alike, the first in the history of mankind, the ritual of public worship which was established at that time, devoid of sacrifices unknown in the ancient world, the deepening of the universalistic motif in Judaism, and finally the remarkable development of the Oral Law which provided flexibility to the Torah and new thoroughfares for the creative spiritual life of the people - these achievements of post-exilic Judaism - that is Judaism following the Babylonian exile, long after the period of the prophets - are certainly not evidence of intellectual or spiritual sterility or decay.

Certainly this Maccabean Revolt of which we are speaking of the second century against this Hellenism, which, by the way, was the only successful revolt of its kind in the ancient world, and the life-and-death struggle on the part of the faithful Jews to preserve their faith in that insidious amalgam gives no substance to the charge of spiritual sterility. Of this Professor Toynbee is fully aware, for he says that the Scribes and the Pharisees had then "come to the front by taking the lead in the heroic Jewish revolt against the triumphal progress of Hellenization." But somehow the power and insight and courage deserted them in the time of Jesus! But how, we ask. And where? and why? There is no evidence of any religious black-out following the Maccabean struggle. On the contrary, Judaism gained in power and in confidence with the resurgence of the national pride following the Maccabean victories and moved resolutely forward to convert the heathen world. The period following the Maccabees may well be said to be the "Risorgimento" of the Second Commonwealth. The victory of the Maccabees did for the spirit of the Jewish



people in the second century what the victory of Marathon had done for the Greeks in the fifth. Even centuries later, in the Antonine Age, which, to use Gibbons characterization was "the happiest and most prosperous period in the history of the human race" - but for the Jewish people one of dark disaster and tragedy - even in those desperate times the Jews carried on undismayed a brave and successful missionary activity in the pagan world in behalf of their faith.

How, then, were the Jews "idolizing an ephemeral self"? They were not clinging to a "momentary spiritual eminence." One detects in Toynbee the same note of irritation which Nietzsche found to exist among certain people in relation to the Greeks. "Time after time," writes Nietzsche, "hearty resentment breaks forth against this presumptuous little nation, which for all time dared to designate everything not native as "barbaric." Who are they, one asks, who, though they have nothing to show but an ephemeral historical splendor...(using always the exact words of Toynbee about the Jews) yet lay claim to the dignity and pre-eminence among peoples to which genius is entitled among the masses?"

You know, that the originality and the uniqueness of the people of Israel - that is not frequently understood by the writers of history - the originality and the uniqueness of the people of Israel are to be found not merely in the fact that they rose to a monotheistic conception of religion, head above that of any other people, but that they remained constant to it in their loyalty, defending it with their very lives through long, bitter centuries of opposition and conflict, defying rulers and empires at its behest and enduring frightful persecutions because of it. Fortunately for mankind the spiritual eminence which Israel had attained was not momentary, nor was their constancy to it ephemeral. Else the monotheistic vision of the founders of Judaism would have been a sort of a flash followed by the darkness of superstition and idolatry, just like the monotheistic insight of King Akh-en-Aton. There was no people to carry it along, to defend it, to fight for it, to live by it.



If it is true that Judaism reached the peak of its spiritual evolution with the close of the prophetic era in the 5th-6th century B. C. E., the peak of Israel's effective contribution to the spiritual progress of mankind was still a thing of the future. For everything depended on whether Israel would remain faithful to the prophetic heritage, whether it would safeguard and propagate it in the face of constant opposition, whether it would overcome the many temptations of assimilation and syncretism. The epic of Israel's struggle to preserve and transmit its great ideals to mankind and its unparalleled power of resistance are in their matchless spiritual valor as inspiring and as unique in the world as Judaism itself! And that people frequently forget. The spirit of the Maccabees within Israel is as miraculous a thing in the world as Judaism itself. The spirit of the people is as heroic as the Torah itself.

From the slave-pens of the Pharaohs to the gas-chambers of Hitler, the via dolorosa of this people of the immemorial crucifixion stretched long and desolate through the many centuries. Yet they remained faithful. "Look down from heaven and see," rises the anguished cry from its litany of prayer, "how we have become a scorn and a derision among the nations; we are accounted as sheep, brought to the slaughter, to be slain and destroyed, to be smitten and reproached. Yet, despite all this, we have not forgotten Thy name! ...We beseech Thee, O God, forget us not." ...What a rare diadem of sorrow is here, and how studded with pride, how studded with pride.

And what shall be said of a people which through these long centuries of exile of outrage and indignity could yet chant this refrain of a prayer so triumphant, so defiant, and so overflowing with gratitude as we find in our prayer books: "Happy are we! How goodly is our portion, how pleasant is our lot, how beautiful is our heritage! How happy are we that we are privileged to proclaim at sunrise and at sunset, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One!'"



I think these secular historians failed to catch this mystic grandeur, this heroism of a people which across the broken highways of the world, over many dark centuries, carried its light, undimmed, through the world. Stand alone.

And so, good friends, let us kindle our Chanukah lights in pride, in joy, and in gratitude. Let our people kindle these lights through the unending years to come and live by the light of its truth. It is a light that need never fail. Amen.





1/ An heroic holiday. Not bee. celebrates a military victory - many military victories in annals of Israel and other nations which are not celebrated to-day - which have been forgotten. Wars without end - and as a rule ended with victory for one side or the other. But ~~these victories~~ <sup>these victories</sup> were bitter or no historic consequences. Undoubtedly produced a momentary ~~enthusiasm of exultation~~ <sup>celebration</sup>, a triumphal procession, and then ~~it was~~ <sup>it was</sup> ignored and buried under the sands of time.

- 2/ Jews have celebrated D.D. for > 21 centuries. What rendered this Mos. military victory to the people - observe it throughout their generations. And in every age - in every part, the world - Jews included the D.D. by all for 8 days.
- It is not a Biblical holiday - like Sukkot - or H. H. or even Purim.
  - The story is found in Bible - only in B.S., Mos.
  - not included in Canon -
  - There is no tractate in the S.T. - such as War
  - Only a few scattered references to it in Talmud
  - And yet - beloved - popularly growing from year to year



3/ In heroic holiday - men fought for an heroic idea -  
- an idea indispensable to humanity - basic to man's  
moral life. - <sup>in a critical area</sup> Fight for a way of life - vital to civilization  
which was being threatened with extinction.

(a) In the decisive battles of the human spirit! For  
a clear and noble way of life. - represented by the Helgoland fight  
for decency, moral sobriety, against decadence,  
moral corruption, and licentiousness represented by  
the Helgoland <sup>society</sup> culture of the 20th C.

(b) Not intellectual & artistic excellence - but moral  
corruption which attacked them. & which threatened to  
overwhelm the higher moral standards & moral traditions of the

(c) The "Wiedemann, Tolstoy" (1913) "For the decency, ideals  
was the beginning, the corruption of life... They kept neither  
love nor marriage any longer... so that there  
reigned in all men theft and dissimulation, murder, etc.,  
unfaithfulness, debauchery of souls, adultery and shameful  
vulgarity."

(d) The Wiedemann & the <sup>crisis</sup> - ~~struggle~~ struggled to build  
up against them invading seas of corruption  
to preserve for mankind the ideals of purity, decency,  
moral decency, - the family - the society, the law -  
the dignity of the individual - in image of God.







Many Jews - ~~was~~ went along <sup>any</sup> ~~from~~ the weather, 14  
air to ~~other~~ <sup>other</sup> sectors, the people - the kind who are always  
inclined to go along, ~~to~~ to follow the easy way...

(b) Malthusians did not - <sup>convinced</sup> the further his  
faith - the sandy and <sup>unstable</sup> ~~unstable~~ the way of life defined in  
the 20th - <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>unavoidable</sup> ~~unavoidable~~ for mankind - he stood  
firm, immovable - stubborn - self-willed - (Note)

(c) Such men are, the heroic world. Such men are  
the pathfinders and saviors of civilization -

(d) Of such quality was Jewish life through the ages -  
Responsible for our survival - and for our contributions -

(e) There have always been Jews who fell away, drifted  
away, drifted out of fold. They always began with  
rationalizing their indifference to Jewish disciplines -  
with being, O, so broad-minded and tolerant, actually so  
meant and lazy - whose chief concern was not  
the practice, teaching & transmission of their faith & its  
ethical doctrines. But: "Let us be like all the other people,

(f) "Hence of Israel". It is not long before they or their  
children are melted away from the people - and are  
lost to the House of Israel.

(h) Those who preserve Judaism - does who like  
more - land to be different, where diff. men clash



indicated by the Temple, their faith - who stood  
out against the pressures, the majority, the Emper-  
ment; ~~who~~ <sup>where</sup> chief concern was: It is "to walk in  
the covenant, their fathers" - and

(8) Even tho few in numbers - "How shall we be  
able, being so few, to fight against so great a multitude?"  
"It is no hard matter for many to be shut up in the  
hands of a few - with the God, Heaven it is all one - to  
defence with a great multitude, or a small company,"  
"The victory, battle standeth not in the multitude,  
a host" -

5/. Many fail to understand these services, the J. people  
to stand firm - to stand alone - to be different.

Prof. Toynbee - "A Study of History" - regards the  
remarkable devotion, unparalleled in all history, of a people  
to an idea, "is the most notorious example, what he calls the  
"idealization of an ephemeral self." (Jude)

6/. So let us kindle our eyes right - then the unending  
year to come - long by the light of its truth -

It is a light that will never fail.



"The most notorious historical example of this idolization of an ephemeral self is the error of the Jews.....In a period of their history which began in the infancy of the Syriac Civilization and which culminated in the Age of the Prophets of Israel, the people of Israel and Judah raised themselves head and shoulders above the Syriac peoples round about in responding to the challenge of <sup>a</sup>'Time of Troubles' by rising to a higher conception of Religion. Keenly conscious, and rightly proud, of their spiritual treasure which they had thus wrested from an ordeal that had broken the spirit of their Aramaean and Phoenician and Philistine neighbours, the Jews allowed themselves to be 'betrayed by what' was 'false within' into an idolization of this notable, yet transitory phase of their own spiritual growth.....They persuaded themselves that Israel's discovery of the One True God had revealed Israel itself to be God's Chosen People; and this half-truth inveigled them into the fatal error of looking <sup>upon</sup> a momentary spiritual eminence, which they had attained by labour and travail, as a privilege conferred upon them by God in a covenant which was everlasting. ....Brooding over a talent which they had perversely sterilized by hiding it in the earth, they rejected the still greater treasure which God was now offering them..... And so it came to pass that the Gospel of a Jewish messiah who was God Himself incarnate was preached by Galilaeans and taken to heart by Gentiles." (Arnold J. Toynbee <sup>"A Study of History"</sup> (1939) Vol. IV, p.262-3)

....."In thus deliberately refusing the opportunity that was offered to it of realizing its manifest destiny of flowering into Christianity by opening its heart to the gospel of its Galilaeian step-child (sic!), Judaism not only stultified its spiritual past but forfeited its material future into the bargain. (In declining to recognize its expected Messiah in Jesus, Judaism was renouncing its birthright in two great enterprises which eventually made the respective fortunes of two different daughters of Judaism by whom these enterprises were duly carried out in the fullness of time." (Ibid V, p.658))



Keenly conscious and rightly proud of their spiritual treasure, they allowed themselves to be betrayed into an idolization of this notable but transitory stage in their spiritual growth...They persuaded themselves that Israel's discovery of the one True God had revealed Israel itself to be God's Chosen People; and this half-truth inveigled them into the fatal error of looking upon a momentary spiritual eminence, which they had attained by labour and travail, as a privilege conferred upon them by God in an everlasting covenant. Brooding on a talent which they had previously sterilized by hiding it in the earth, they rejected the still greater treasure which God offered them in the coming of Jesus of Nazareth." (ibid p.310)

This, we fear, is <sup>an</sup> ~~another~~ example of the <sup>her-flowing</sup> ~~orthodox~~ homiletics in which Professor Toynbee's writings abound and which are offered as historical science.

Professor George Foote Moore, who was not an impressionistic historian out on a global tour, in writing of Judaism in the first centuries of the Christian era, gives no indication at all in his "magnum opus" that the Jews who lived at that time in Palestine had perversely sterilized their talent by hiding it in the earth. On the contrary, he finds the Jews of that epoch very dynamic, indeed, waging war with <sup>great</sup> ~~redoubled~~ energy upon the polytheism, idolatry and the social vices of their day, and carrying on a very active and successful propaganda for proselytes all over the pagan world. ("There is no way of estimating statistically," he writes, "the results of Jewish propaganda in the centuries that fall within the limits of our inquiry, but they were indisputably very large, even if only proselytes in the proper sense be taken into account." ("Judaism," (1927) Vol. I, p. 348-9) The Scribes and Pharisees who "traversed sea and land to make a single proselyte" (Matt. 23.15) were certainly not hiding their talent in the earth. "The Jewish community in Rome exhibited from its infancy such an aggressive spirit of proselytism as to determine the government to banish the chief propagandists from the city (139 B.C.E.)" (Vincent M. Scramuzza, "The policy of the Early Roman Emperors



Towards Judaism" Note XXV, in Jackson-Lake's "The Beginning of Christianity"

V, p. 277ff) The creation of the noble post-exilic psalms of exquisite spiritual sensitiveness, the tenderest minstrelsy of the human heart in communion with God, or of the book of Job, the profoundest plumbing of human suffering and divine justice, or of the Wisdom literature of the Bible and the Apocrypha, so rich in moral insights and so sagacious, the creation of the synagogue, the most noble, original and democratic religious institution of the ancient world, <sup>the totalism went</sup> and of the public school for the training of <sup>children</sup> rich and poor alike, <sup>and</sup> ~~or~~ of a ritual of public worship devoid of sacrifices unknown in the ancient world, the deepening of the universalistic motif in Judaism, and finally the remarkable development of the <sup>Oral</sup> ~~Unwritten~~ Law which provided flexibility and adaptability to the Torah and new thoroughfares for the creative spiritual life of the people, <sup>certainly</sup> these achievements of post-exilic Judaism are <sup>not</sup> evidence of any <sup>intellectual or spiritual</sup> ~~decay and spiritual~~ <sup>sterility and decay</sup> unproductiveness.

Certainly the Maccabean Revolt of the second century against Seleucidian Hellenism, the only successful revolt of its kind in the ancient world, and the life-and-death struggle on the part of the faithful Jews to preserve their faith in that insidious amalgam gives no substance to the charge of spiritual sterility. Of this Professor Toynbee is fully aware. The Scribes and Pharisees had then "come to the front by taking the lead in the heroic Jewish revolt against the triumphal progress of Hellenization." (p. 308) But somehow the power and insight and courage deserted them in the time of Jesus! But how, where and why? There is no evidence of any religious "black-out" following the Maccabean struggle. On the contrary, Judaism gained in power and in confidence with the resurgence of national pride following the Maccabean victories and moved resolutely forward to convert the heathen world. The period may well be said to have been the "Risorgimento"



of the Second Commonwealth. The victory of the Maccabees did for the spirit of the Jewish people in the second century what the victory of Marathon had done for the Greeks in the fifth. Even centuries later, in the Antonine Age, which, to use Gibbons characterization was "the happiest and most prosperous period in the history of the human race" - but for the Jewish people one of dark disaster and tragedy - (the insurrections of 115 and the extermination of Jews in Egypt, Cyrene, Cyprus and Mesopotamia and the final agony of rebellion in Palestine under Bar Kochba followed by the prolonged Hadrianic persecutions -) even in those desperate times the Jews carried on undismayed a brave and successful missionary activity in the pagan world in behalf of their faith.

Nor were the Jews "idolizing an ephemeral self," or clinging to "a momentary spiritual eminence."

One detects here in Toynbee the same note of irritation which Nietzsche found to exist among certain people in relation to the Greeks. "Time after time hearty resentment breaks forth against this presumptuous little nation, which for all time dared to designate everything not native as "barbaric." Who are they, one asks, who, though they have nothing to show but an ephemeral historical splendor... yet lay claim to the dignity and pre-eminence among peoples to which genius is entitled among the masses?" (Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Birth of Tragedy" in The Modern Library (1927) p. 1027)

Israel's was not the glory of a short-lived hour but the heavy burden of a lifetime mission. <sup>It</sup> ~~They~~ <sup>Israel</sup> felt ~~themselves~~ committed to a cause whose universal triumph alone would at long last absolve ~~them~~ <sup>it</sup> of the burdens, struggles, sacrifices and martyrdom which that mission entailed.

The originality and uniqueness of the people of Israel are to be found not merely in the fact that they rose to a monotheistic conception of religion, head



above that of any other people, but that they remained constant to it in their loyalty, defending it with their very lives through long, bitter centuries of opposition and conflict, defying rulers and empires at its behest and enduring frightful persecutions because of it. Fortunately for mankind the spiritual eminence which Israel had attained was not momentary, nor was their constancy to it ephemeral. Else the monotheistic vision of the founders of Judaism would have been one with the ~~proximate~~ <sup>private, proximate</sup> monotheism of Akh-en-Aton - a momentary flash to be ~~followed~~ <sup>followed</sup> ~~succeeded again~~ <sup>It is true that</sup> by the darkness of superstition and idolatry. ~~Even if one were to assume that Judaism reached the peak of its spiritual evolution with the close of the prophetic era in the 5th-6th century B.C., which is debatable, the peak of Israel's effective contribution to the spiritual progress of mankind was still a thing of the future. For everything depended on whether Israel would remain faithful to that prophetic heritage, whether it would safeguard and propagate it in the face of constant opposition, whether it would overcome the many temptations of assimilation and syncretism. The epic of Israel's struggle to preserve and transmit its great ideals to mankind is in its matchless spiritual valor as inspiring and unique in the world as the Torah itself!~~ <sup>however</sup> ~~and its unparalleled power of resistance are in this~~ <sup>Judaism</sup>

The proud victories of Israel were seldom of the sword. Their pride was the sort of pride which Milton, the "God-gifted organ-voice of England," experienced when he addressed his nation at one of the crossroads of its history. Believing that England was ushering in a new age for mankind, he declared: "Lords and Commons of England, consider what nation it is whereof ye are and whereof ye are the governors; a nation not slow and dull but of quick ingenuous and piercing spirit, acute to invent, subtle and sinewy to discourse, not beneath reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to...Yet that which is above all this



# MISSING PAGE (S)





than a spiritual treasure which they had come to possess for their own private satisfaction. It was a hard, inescapable challenge to carry their truth to a hostile and intolerant world, and in the process ~~to~~ "be despised and rejected by men and to become acquainted with grief." Their bread was the bread of adversity, their water ~~were~~ the water of affliction.

From the slave-pens of the Pharaohs to the gas-chambers of Hitler, the via dolorosa of this people of the immemorial crucifixion ~~has~~ stretched long and desolate through the weary centuries. Yet they remained faithful. "Look down from heaven and see," rises the anguished cry from its litany of prayer, "how we have become a scorn and a derision among the nations; we are accounted as sheep, brought to the slaughter, to be slain and destroyed, to be smitten and reproached. "Yet, despite all this, we have not forgotten Thy Name! ...We beseech Thee forget us not" ...What a rare diadem of sorrow is here, and how studded with pride and humility!... *amen* ←

Let it be noted, too, that the religious guides of Israel throughout the centuries taught their people to attribute all their national misfortunes to themselves, to their own sins and back-sliding, not to others or to God. "Because of our sins were we exiled from our land and removed far from our country," is an ancient prayer embodied in the 'Amidah of all holy days. "Because of our sins and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are round about us" is another confession of self-recrimination which is recited in prayer on certain weekdays by this proud and stiff-necked people. "Yet Thou hast been just in all that has come upon us, for Thou hast dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly" is the keynote of the preamble of the covenant which was made by the exiles who returned to their shattered land in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. (Neh. 9.33)



(Am.) And what shall be said of a people which through long, dark  
centuries of exile, anarchy and independence could chant these  
refrain of a prayer so. Insuperb, so defiant and so  
overflowing with gratitude: "Happy are we! How goodly is our  
portion, how pleasant our lot, how beautiful our heritage!  
How happy are we that we are privileged to proclaim  
at sunrise and at sunset: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our  
God, the Lord is One.'"





6/ To let us know as 2nd night - then the wedding (12  
years to come - live by the light, it is true -  
It is a light that need never fail.

