

# Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

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Sound investments in life and sounder risks, 1955.

# SOUND INVESTMENTS IN LIFE AND SOUNDER RISKS December 25, 1955

(This beautiful music to which we have been privileged to listen is from the hand and the heart of a young lad of sixteen, Jerome Rosen, who is home on his vacation from the Curtis Music Institute, and such music, you will agree with me, is a 'sound investment' that one can make in life.)

There are, as you will know, investment counsellors who tell people how to invest their money soundly and profitably -- who advise people as to which investments are conservative and which are speculative -- which are likely to yield a quick return and which are good or long term investments, with a larger measure of security.

If one is a wise investor he will want to know about the financial condition of the operation in whose stock he plans to invest. He will want to know as much as he can about its assets and its liabilities - its financial history - the record of its dividend payments over a period of years -- and he will base his investments, as far as possible, on sound advice or on a close personal evaluation of all the facts before him. He will not gamble blindly with his money.

Now there are spiritual investment counsellors, who tell us not how to invest our money, but how to invest the most valuable things which we possess in life -- life itself. Money may be lost and may be regained - but a life which is squandered and lost is irreplaceable.

Religion, on the basis of the vast data accumulated by

mankind over long reaches of time -- on the basis of much observation and experience -- advises us how best to invest our relatively limited time and our energies (the time and energies which are allotted to all men and women on earth) how to invest our life most advantageously. Some gamble with life. Some are timid about their investments in life. And some invest in lesser things when they should be investing in greater things. Some invest in shrewdness and in cunning and in playing it smart. Others invest in lesser worldliness and in greater nobility. Some invest only in tangible things, and others also in intangible things. Some invest for wealth and others for power and still others for prestige. Some never really never know the nature of the dividends which they should expect from life. Many people, unfortunately, get very little return on their investments. Many get very little besides disappointments and emptiness or boredom.

If you were to consult your religion on what really constitutes sound investments in life -- investments that a man should make -- what would it say to you? What kind of advice would it give you? Well, in the first place, I believe that your religion would advise you to invest in yourself. You will have to live with yourself until the day of your death. In the last analysis you will make your own evaluation of yourself - regardless of what estimate other people place upon you. Your real wealth and your real poverty - your true assets and liabilities - will always be inside of you. If you have real reason for inner strength, for confidence and self-respect - no one will be able to sell you short. The market fundamentally never crashes when the economy is/sound -- or when the real assets are there. I say religion will advise you to invest in yourself, but it is good, of course, and necessary, to invest also in other lives.

Its the finest and soundest and safest and noblest investment to make.

you will come to have in the storehouse of your mind and your heart.

more important than what you will have in any strong box is what

"None but one can harm you
None but yourself who is your greatest foe
wrote a poet,

"He that respects himself is safe from others
He wears a coat of mail that none can pierce."

But you must have good reason for respecting yourself. A shallow
mind never respects itself. A cruel heart never admires itself.

A person must build for self-respect. We build with knowledge and
service and selfless loyalty and worthy achievements. These are
the foundation stones of a man's self-esteem and there is no contentment in life whatsoever without self-esteem.

That's what the great Hillel - the sage of our people meant when he said \* \* \* \* \* if I am not for myself who will be fore me.

Who can build my life - who can live my life - if I do not do it?

But it is important to remember that one's real self, if it is to be a creative, developing and aspiring self, includes many other selves within its circumference. Parents - and family - and husband - and wife - and children - friends - neighbors - the larger community in which one lives and has his being. Hillel also said \* \* \* \* \* if I am for myself only, exclusively, narrowly, \* \* \* what am I? Being for one's self, in the profoundest sense of the word, is not being selfish. Self and selfishness are not synonimous.

And I believe, that if you consulted your religion, it would

also advise you to invest, as part of this over-all investment in yourself, to invest in learning. Learning all things worthy of learning. Learning will keep you young until your dieing day.

Or

It will give you worlds to live in when one/another of your worlds collapses. And there are few lives indeed, in which one or anther world does not, sooner or later, collapse. The Rabbis tell of men sailing on a ship, each one carrying his possessions with him; and a storm arose and the ship was in danger of being wrecked, and all the men aboard wept and wailed because they had to cast their belongings over-board to lighten the ship. Only one of them stood unperturbed. When he was asked why he said I have all my possessions here. If we survive I will be no poorer, than I am now or will ever be. My wealth is with me.

Learning is a hidden and an incorruptible treasure. times sorrow comes with learning, with knowledge -- a measure of sorrow is an ingredient of our maturity. Sometimes sorrow comes with knowledge, but it is a superb investment nevertheless. read books, to read men, to read events -- that is an exciting and rewarding enterprise, throughout life for any man or woman. And such a man or woman will never grow stale, will never become bored and will never become like a broken record -- endlessly repeating its inane story, to himself or to others. There will always be a newness and a freshness about him. One must learn to grow wise. And when I speak, invest in learning, I do not mean just investing in book learning. Our Rabbis speak of a \* \* \* \* a donkey who carries books. Carrying many books on one's self or in one's self, is not a test of a learned man. In Poor Richard's Almanac, there is a sentence about Kim. Kim was so learned that he could name a horse in nine languages. Kim was so ignorant that

he bought a cow to ride on. Learning, inviting the world into our minds, and in our hearts, being eager, inquisitive, searching, questing, seeking to understand this marvelous world of ours -- so full of mystery -- so full of grandeur. Learning is a sound investment. It pays dividends and stock dividends - all through life.

And I believe too, that if you were to consult your religion, it would advise you to invest in good health, through moderation and temperance, in all things. Of course we cannot always command good health as one can learning, or other desirable things in life. Some are born handicapped, physically handicapped. But here, too, one can lessen the handicaps by hardihood of spirit, by one's attitude towards one's mishaps or impediments. And there are such who rise to great heights on the rungs of handicaps and pluck rare fruit from the Tree of Life.

Normal people make a good investment in life if they learn early and continue through life to avoid indulgence and excess in all things. If they moderate their desires and their acquisitiveness. This holds true for physical health and emotional health as well.

Your religion, too, will advise you I believe, and the Bible frequently does, to invest in Friendship - in Neighborliness - in good will. No one is so sad and so bereft in life as the Friendless Man -- the man who has made himself friendless. There are friends who stick closer than a brother, says Scriptures.

"A faithful friend is a strong defence; and he that hath found such a one hath found a Treasure" we read in the Book of Ecclesiasticus written by that wise physician, who lived in the third century before the Common Era. But friendship is not a gift bestowed -- one must work at friendship -- one must earn it and deserve it.

And as is the common proverb, one must be a friend to have a friend.

And many people haven't the capacity. But even when a person is temperamentally unable to invest wholeheartedly in friendship, which claims much, even as it gives much, one can invest -everybody can invest -- in neighborliness - in good will - in a general attitude of friendliness. By so doing you create a warm atmosphere around yourself of cordiality and welcome, of sociability and fellowship, It is not good for the spirit of man to live in inhospitable surroundings - estranged in a dold and ungracious environment, which he himself creates. Now some people think that they can afford, especially if they feel that their pockets are filled, that they can afford to be unsocial, to be surly, ill-tempered, ill-mannered, and to tell the world, "Go Hang". But the world doesn't 'go hang'. It is the individual who remains suspended in lonliness and isolation - alone with his spleen and his scowl and his petulance. Neighborliness! Mutual helpfulness in small things and in great things! Godd will! That's a tremendous social investment which pays off in rich dividends.

And I think that your religion will also advise you to invest in a spirit of gratitude. There are not many people who invest in gratitude. Most of us invest in wanting things and demanding, and expecting, in claiming things which we believe are our due. Its a general attitude which we have towards life. Few spend much time in being grateful for what they have or for what they are. Few people invest in thankfulness! Now one should of course, be ambitions to have more, to be more -- but at every stage of our progress through life, one should feel beholden enot to men, but to life - to the God of life. Beholden! and should exercise the grace of thankfulness. Gratitude makes life less hectic -- less headlong -- sweeter - more relaxed.

I cam across, the other day, a poem that was written by a man when he reached the age of eighty-three. Not a great work of art as a poem, but a great work of art as expressing the attitude of which I am speaking - which is such a wonderful investment in life, and which one can cultivate. Most of the things I speak about are things within the reach of men if they desire to reach out for them - cultivate them - train themselves into it. This man at eighty-three, wrote:

"Thank God for life, with all its endless store
Of great experiences, of hill and dale,
Of cloud and sunshine, tempest, snow and hail.
Thank God for straining sinews, panting breast,
No less for weary slumber, peaceful rest:
Thank God for home and parents, children, friends,
For sweet companionship that never ends:
Thank God for all the splendor of the earth,
For nature teeming with prolific birth:
Thank God for sea and sky, for changing hours,
For trees and singing birds and fragrant flowers.
And so in looking back at eighty-three
My final word to you, my friends, shall be:
Thank God for life: and when the gift's withdrawn,
Thank God for twilight bell, and coming dawn.

(Thomas Durley Landels, 1862--)
The sp irit brim-full of thankfullness is a wonderful companion
to take along with one through life.

It is good to invest in Faith and in Hope. It is easy, especially in troubled and confused times such as we live in, to invest in pessimism and despair: - it is easy, especially when we behold great civic or political corruption, about us, or other forms of injustices, to invest in cynacism and in radical skepticism. It even gives one, for a time, a sense of superiority to entertain such harsh and bitter judgments, and to feel one's self removed and detached from it all. But the good life, my friends, is never one of cynacism or despair, of in mocking or of detachment. These pay no dividends, except/bitterness and anguish and loneliness. The life of the human race, which ultimately triumphs over all abstacles, is the life of

affirmation - of undefeated hope. The prophetic spirit of the race can look over the Valley of Dried Bones

"our lives are dried up, our hope is lost, we are clear cut off"

and prophecy over these Dried Bones and say, "these bones shall live! and behold - they do come to life!" That's been the history of the human race, from the beginning of time.

And finally, I believe if you consulted your religion, it would advise you to invest in ideals. A man should invest in yesterday, in today and in tomorrow. Learning is an investment in the past - in all the accumulated treasures of science and of art, of literature and of music, which mankind created and accumulated, in a long past. The past is not a dead book my dear friends. It is dead only for him who does not read it. The past is alive. And to build soundly for the present and for the future one must constantly consult the past. Use it! The present, and all that we do in the present is a fraction of a fraction of what has been done and achieved and built in the great past of the human race. Learing is an investment in the present. Ideals and aspirations are investments in

the future. And a man should live in all three dimensions of time. Men should not live in the past alone, or in the present alone, or in the future alone. A man should give himself wings - wings for life - wings with which to soar. A man should take risks for worthy objectives. A risk is sometimes the soundest investment in life. A life which is unstirred by higher impulses, by a measure of spiritual unrest and discontent with the insufficiencies and inequalities, the injustices of this world - social life - is a life without lift - without drama - without grandeur. Society is not a fixed thing. Society is not a perfect thing. It is in the making - always in the making - in the becoming. And it is idealists and dreamers and pioneers and non-conformists who help to fashion it better after a nobler pattern. A true idealist will take a risk. He will take a risk on his dream and on his vision. He will court insecurity because he is secure in his vision. He will dare to stand alone because inwardly he will never be alone. He will be in the glorious companionship of the great and the chivalrous of all ages who carved new highways for the advancing spirit of man, with their faith, with their daring, with their tears, with their suffering. And by investing in his aspirations a man bares witness to the glory and the sacredness of the spirit of man and of human life. He may be defeated - he may be misunderstood - he may be condemned and despised by many people, but his defeat will never be an inner defeat, and he will know what all the servants of God and man have known, that it is better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all.

Sound investments in life and sounder risks. This is what our religion could teach us if we paid heed to its teachings. In fact, that is its principal task - to help us use the few years which are allotted to us, and even when we are fortunate enough to reach three-score years, and if by strenght four-score years, our years are limited -- we have just so much to invest - so many days, so many years. Our religions teach us how to invest that limited time - and the energies of our lives - most advantageously, to yield us the real, the fully satisfying contentments of life.

Amen.

(asteriles indicate ominisceron of the Hebrew)

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#### FROM AT EIGHTY-THREE

THANK GOD FOR LIFE, WITH ALL ITS ENDLESS STORE

OF GREAT EXPERIENCES, OF HILL AND DALE,

OF CLOUD AND SUNSHINE, TEMPEST, SNOW AND HAIL.

THANK GOD FOR STRAINING SINEWS, PANTING BREAST,

NO LESS FOR WEARY SLUMBER, PEACEFUL REST:

THANK GOD FOR HOME AND PARENTS, CHILDREN, FRIENDS,

FOR SWEET COMPANIONSHIP THAT NEVER ENDS:

THANK GOD FOR ALL THE SPLENDOR OF THE EARTH,

FOR NATURE TEEMING WITH PROLIFIC BIRTH:

THANK GOD FOR SEA AND SKY, FOR CHANGING HOURS,

FOR TREES AND SINGING BIRDS AND FRAGRANT FLOWERS.

AND SO IN LOOKING BACK AT EIGHTY-THREE

MY FINAL WORD TO YOU, MY FRIENDS, SHALL BE:

THANK GOD FOR LIFE: AND WHEN THE GIFT'S WITHDRAWN,

THANK GOD FOR TWILIGHT BELL, AND COMING DAWN.

(THOMAS DURLEY LANDELS, 1862-)

# Sunday Morning Service

10:30 o'clock

# RABBI SILVER



# Sound Investments In Life and Sounder Risks

Mr. Jerome Rosen violinist will be guest soloist

Friday Evening Services 5:30 to 6:10

Saturday Morning Services 11:15 to 12:00

### MIRIAM LEIKIND

Organist and Choir Director A. R. WILLARD

# SOPHIA LEVINE

A.	M.	LuntzPresident
L.	W.	NeumarkVice-President
A.	J.	KaneTreasurer

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Ansel Road and East 105th Street SWeetbriar 1-7755

#### **MUSIC FOR SUNDAY**

Organ Festival Toccata Andante Third Sonata, III Cantabile	Fletcher Dubois Rogers
Opening Psalm - Tov l'hodos Bor'chu (Congregational) Sh'ma - Boruch (Congregational) Mi Chomocho (Congregational) Kedusha	Rogers Sulzer Traditional Sulzer Moses
Silent Devotion—May the Words Mrs. Strasser and Choir	Rubinstein

Before the Adoration Concerto for Violin	Mendelsohn	
II Andante		

Olenu - Va-anachnu Goldstein

### SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE

This Sunday morning Rabbi Silver will speak on the subject, "Sound Investments in Life and Sounder Risks."

Mr. Jerome Rosen, violinist will be guest soloist with The Temple this week-end, offering selections for the children on Saturday morning as well as participating in the Sunday morning musical portion of the service. Mr. Rosen is a talented pupil of Mr. Josef Gingold, home on vacation from Curtis Institute in Philadelphia.

musical program with Jerry Goodman as entertainer.

This year's Homecoming Day will be climaxed with the annual Homecoming Dance at the Manger Hotel with Chick Chaiken's Orchestra.

Chairmen of these affairs are Howie Vactor and Barb Leiner.

#### CONGRATULATIONS

At its last meeting, the Board of Trustees of The Temple extended the greetings of The Temple to Mr. and Mrs. Louis A. Unger on the occasion of their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

The Ungers have been honored members of the congregation for many years and Mr. Unger has been a member of The Board of Trustees of The Temple and has rendered outstanding service to it.

Congratulations are also extended to Mr. and Mrs. Alex Aurbach who recently celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

Many Happy Returns!

## Temple Memorial Book

The name of

#### KATIE MANDELKORN

has been lovingly inscribed in The Temple Memorial Book by her son, Noah C. and her daughters, Mrs. Helen M. Silberbach, and Rose and Jeannette Mandelkorn.

ROBERT R. RISMAN ADELE R. SUTTZ JERRY D. WACHS JULIUS WEINGART

### Temple Memorial Book

The name of

#### JACK B. DWORKEN

has been lovingly inscribed in The Temple Memorial Book by his wife, Esther A. Dworken, and his sons, Morton R. Dworken and Dr. Harvey J. Dworken.

#### Temple Memorial Book

The name of

#### BESS MANDELKORN FULDAUER

has been lovingly inscribed in The Temple Memorial Book by her brother, Noah C., and her sisters, Mrs. Helen M. Silberbach, and Rose and Jeannette Mandelkorn.

## Temple Memorial Book

The name of

#### CONNE H. MANDELKORN

has been lovingly inscribed in The Temple Memorial Book by his son, Noah C., and his daughters, Mrs. Helen M. Silberbach, and Rose and Jeannette Mandelkorn.

# NOTICE! RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Sessions of The Temple Religious School will not be held Sunday morning, January 1, 1956.

However, pupils of the Junior High and High School Departments who will attend services in The Temple on Sunday, January 1st at 10:30 A.M., and will sign up immediately after the services, in the School Office, will receive credit for one absence incurred during the semester.