

# Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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166	60	1005

Freedom and the Hebraic spirit, 1957.

Western Reserve Historical Society 10825 East Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44106 (216) 721-5722 wrhs.org American Jewish Archives 3101 Clifton Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45220 (513) 487-3000 AmericanJewishArchives.org Sunday Morning Service The Temple Cleveland, Ohio

December 22,1957

#### FREEDOM AND THE HEBRAIC SPIRIT

#### by

### DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

When we kindle our Chanukah lights we are admonished by our sages to bear in mind that Hanneros Hal-Lo-Lu (these candles) sheonu madlikin (which we kindle) k'doshim (are Holy) v'en lonu r'shus (and we are not permitted) l'hishtomesh bohem (to use them for any purpose whatsoever) ello lir'osom bil'vad (only to gaze upon them.

Now this is a very interesting admonition. Clearly, our sages wanted us to think exclusively of the symbolic meaning of these candles. They are not to be used for any other purpose but to be looked upon, just as a flag is to be used for no other purpose but to be displayed and to be seen.

Now what was this symbolism that they were eager to bring to our attention they symbolism of these Chanukah tapers. The Jewish people gave the world three things through its religion — the concepts of unity, of freedom and of compassion. There are two holidays in our calendar which celebrate the second of these three concepts — freedom. One is Pesach and the other is Chanukah. Pesach is freedom from physical slavery. Chanukah spells freedom from spiritual slavery. Moses redeemed our people from the bondage of Egypt and set our people upon a career of nationhood and political independence. Mattathias and Judah the Maccabee and his brave brothers set our people free from the spiritual servitude which the Syrian Greeks sought to impose upon Israel and so set our people upon a career of spiritual independence in the world which in the course of time, through the missionary activities of Jews in the Greco-Roman world and later on through the missionary activities of the daughter religion of Judaism, Christianity, made of Judaism a world religion.

A passion for freedom seems to have been an integral part - an essential element - of the Hebraic spirit from the very beginning. I believe it was Heine who said that "Since the Exodus, Freedom has always spoken with a Hebrew accent." Following the Exodus - during the centuries of Joshua and the Judges and the Kings our people waged many battles; first to establish themselves in Canaan and then to defend their political sovereignty in that country. And from all accounts, they were valiant warriors, strong in victory and unbroken in defeat and they always gave a good account of themselves on the battlefields. But these wars which were fought in the days of the Judges and the Kings were not unlike the wars of their neighbors - of the neighboring peoples of Israel - of all peoples of antiquity for that matter -- they were national wars, secular wars, to defend territory or to defend national political sovereignty.

With Judah the Maccabee, in the Second Century before the Common Era, the Jewish people engaged in a new kind of war - a war, not to defend territory, for their territory was not being attacked - nor to defend their political sovereignty, for they did not possess any political sovereignty, and had not possessed it for some centuries prior to this time of the Maccabæes - but the Jews went to war to defend their spiritual life -- to defend their faith. And the ancient world knew of no such wars. No pagan ever died for his religion. The Jews were the first people in the world to fight for their religion -- the first people in the world to produce martyrs for faith. People were willing to die for the right to worship God as they wanted to worship God -- and to worship God, and no-one else!

Antiochus, the illustrious sought to consolidate his vast empire, which had been carved out of the great Alexandrian Empire, the Empire of Alexander who conquered the ancient world; he sought to consolidate it in order to be able to resist more successfully, the threatening might of the oncoming Roman Empire. And so he bethought

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himself of establishing a sort of a religious dictatorship throughout his entire far-flung Empire. And he issued an edict, as we read in the Book of the Maccabees:

> "To his whole Kingdom that all should be one people - and everyone should abandon his own religious laws and his own faith"

and accept the faith which Antiochus prescribed for them.

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Now the whole Empire of Antiochus readily accepted this Edict. Why not? There was really nothing to distinguish their separate sets of pagan gods from those whom Antiochus ordered them to worship now. And so they readily complied. Little people of Judeah alone, in this vast amalgum of polytheistic beliefs, clung to a religion which was unique, revolutionary, different, challenging, a religion which was ethically centered - not like the pagan religions which were purely formal and ritualistic and sacramental - a religion which spoke of unity and freedom and compassion and brotherhood and universal peace and the dignity of human life. Concepts which were never part of the plytheistic religions of the ancient world. And the Jews were unwilling to abandon their exalted and revolutionary faith and to sink into this vast amalgum of heathen polytheism. And so they alone, among all the peoples of the Empire of Antiochus, resisted and because they resisted they were persecuted and all manner of brutality and indignity and violence were visited upon them, so that they were ultimately driven, not to succumb, but to rebellion and finally to war -- to an amazing, epochal, successful war.

This new militancy in behalf of one's faith - in behalf of spiritual freedom so new to the ancient world is best summed up in those words which I read to you this morning out of the Book of Maccabees. When Mattathias, the Priest of Modin was called upon by the King's officers to step forward as a sacrifice to the idol which was set up, he replied, in a loud voice:

> "Though all the heathen within the bounds of the royal domain obey him, and each one forsake the worship of his fathers, and show preference for his commands, yet will I, my sons and my brothers continue to walk in the covenant of our fathers. Far be it from us to forsake the law and the testaments. We will not listen to the decree of the King by going astray from our worship, either to the right or to the left".

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Those were words and ideas utterly alien to the ancient world.

Now these Maccabees fought for spiritual independence -- and this is most interesting -- and most important for us to bear in mind today -- they fought for it not alone against foreign enemies, enemies from without, but also against native enemies, against Jews, who preferred the way of the life of these Syrian Greeks, who wanted to assimilate themselves to the ways and the customs and the morality of these Greeks, in all things. Jews who were enticed by the allurements of Hellenistic life in which there was much of beauty and much of glamour, but also much that was morally decadent and corrupt, much of depravity, much of licentiousness and in their desire to be like these world-conquering Greeks in all things (not merely in externals but in culture and in faith and in the looseness of their moral lives) they were prepared to abandon, and did, in fact abandon, the high moral disciplines of Jewish life, the noble ideals of the Torah. And Judaism was menaced, not only by the forces from without, but even perhaps more so, by these corrupting forces from within, these disintegrating froces from within. And these Maccabees rose and fought to drive these assimilationists out of position of authority and control of Jewish life. They fought to preserve the Jewish way of life - the clean way - of the life of a covenanted people - a dedicated and a holy people.

And this Hebraic spirit triumphed. There was always something indefeasible about this Hebraic Spirit. It always fought against the greatest odds and it always triumphed. I read you this morning from this First Maccabees. The hosts of the enemy were encamped around the ill-equipped forces of Judah the Maccabee, few in number and as Judah prepared to order them into battle they said to him:

> "How can we, being so few in number, march against such vast multitudes of the enemy, so powerfully equipped, with weapons of all kinds and with their chariots and their elephants of war? And Judah replied, With God it is all one to save by many or by few."

And they fought. And the enemy was discomfited and the few triumphed over the many - the weak over the strong. The weak fought for eternal ideals, for freedom, for a new way of life for mankind. And the interesting thing to remember is that

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this is not an isolated incident in Jewish history, this war of the Maccabees. Whenever Jews were challenged to abandon their way of life, even when they could no longer fight with physical weapons, not being allowed or permitted so to do, they nevertheless resisted with non-physical weapons. They developed a marvelous technique of resistence and survival based upon steadfastness, upon the inflexible will, upon constancy and tenacity. They entrenched themselves within the citadel of their Torah, their spiritual fortress, and they defied the world. They were always a minority. For two thousand years they were not only a minority, but a homeless and scattered minority, hounded and driven, rightless and defenseless. And nevertheless they took all the world's buffeting from expulsions and massacres and inquisitions to the twentieth century gas chambers of Dachau and Maidenik and all the ghettos and all the infamous yellow badges of shame, and they stood firm, FIRM and undefeated.

How glorious and triumphant ring the proud words of our prayer book:

"Look down from heaven, 0 Lord, and see, how we have become a scorn and a derision among the nations

(this is a prayer of the Middle Ages, the dark Middle Ages)

Look down from heaven and see how we have become a scorn and a derision among the nations; we are accounted as sheep led to the slaughter, yet despite all this we have not forsaken Thy name."

If the Lights of Chanukah which the Maccabees kindled in the darkened Temple in Jerusalem, after they cleansed it of its defilement, if these Lights continued have continued to shine for twenty one hundred years through the world -- it is due to the fact that this little cruse of oil of theirs which they found in the Temple has, figuratively speaking, been replenished constantly with the loyalty and the sacrifices and the blood and the tears of their descendants through all the subsequent generations; generations of Jews who knew, as the Maccabees knew, that they had a unique and precious faith to preserve for themselves and for mankind, that they had been singled out by God to the role of religious leadership in mankind and that no price is too high to pay for the privilege of the freedom of the human soul; for being free in the service of God than which there is no nobler and more satisfying freedom in the world.

The Hebrew Spirit has always struggled for freedom. Every page of our sacred literature contains the story of a relentless struggle to emancipate man to emancipate man from physical slavery, from being enslaved by his fellow-man, to emancipate man from being exploited by his neighbors, from all forms of tyranny, from all forms of superstition and fear, from all subjugation to prejudice and passion and hate and ill will — always freedom! Of the Ten Commandments inscribed upon the tablets of stone, the rabbis say \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(do not speak of these words of the Ten Commandments as being engraved upon stone) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(speak of them as FREEDOM) for every one of these Commandments is intended to free man from the shackles of some servitude - physical, spiritual, intellectual. And Chanukah symbolizes this freedom.

One of the sages of our people said

(every one who gazes intently and meditatively upon the candles of Chanukah will become wise - he will learn much). He will learn, first of all, what freedom is and how freedom must be won by struggle and preserved by struggle and perseverence and how easily freedom can be lost -- lost by a soft way of life - lost by the desire to follow the line of least resistence, to be like others, to do like others in all things, just as some Jews are doing today, to imitate, to copy, to assimilate, NOT TO RESIST, NOT TO FLOW AGAINST THE TIDE WHEN IT IS NECESSARY. And every one who studies the Lights of Chanukah closely will become wise. Our survival depends upon thr studying the symbol of the Chanukah Lights and interpreting them for ourselves in our lives and in the lives of our children. There is a certain dignity in independence in spiritual integrity, in not doing what our neighbors do, which many Jews have forgotten.

The Maccabean struggle, my dear friends is far from being over. And that is why Chanukah is growing in such great appeal to our people. There was a time

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when Chanukah was regarded as a small holiday, not at all comparable to the great holidays of our calendar, but in the last few generations, as our people began to struggle for freedom and for independence, Chanukah has assumed a greater and greater and more welcome role in the life of our people. And in the world which is struggling today for freedom - a world of growing dictatorship and the imposition of chains and shackles upon the minds and the spirit and the freedom of man, the message of Chanukah becomes even more relevant and more challenging.

Blessed are those who take to heart the meaning and the message of these little tapers which have illumined the centuries of our people's lives and which I pray will continue to bring light and pride and hope and challenge to our people in the oncoming years.

### Amen.

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10:30 o'clock

# RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER

will speak on

## FREEDOM AND THE HEBRAIC SPIRIT

A special Chanukah musical program has been prepared by the Choir. Mr. Ben Silverberg and Mr. Charles Schiller, violinists; Mr. Edward Crevoi, violist; and Mr. Zolton Toth, cellist, will be guest artists.

FRIDAY EVENING SERVICES 5:30 to 6:10 SATURDAY MORNING SERVICES 11:15 to 12:00

## The Temple

 Rabbis:

 ABBA HILLEL SILVER

 DANIEL JEREMY SILVER

 Associate Rabbi

 Director of Religious Education

 HERBERT H. ROSE

 Assistant Rabbi

 Staff:

 MILDRED B. EISENBERG

 Ass't. Director of Religious Education

 Leo S. BAMBERGER

 Executive Secretary

 MIRIAM LEIKIND

 Librarian

 A. R. WILLARD

 Organist and Choir Director

 A. M. LUNTZ

 President

### MUSIC FOR SUNDAY

Organ	
And the Heavens Were Created	Einstein
Chassidic Dance of the Feast	Trad. Melody
Invocation (Shema Yisroel)	Castelnuovo-Tedesco
Opening Psalm-I Was Glad	Moses
Bor'chu (Congregational)	Sulzer
Sh'ma-Boruch (Congregational)	Traditional
Mi Chomocho (Congregational)	Sulzer
Kedusha	Federlein
Silent Devotion-May the Words	Rubinstein
Mrs. Strasser and	Choir
Before the Address: The Quartet	te:
Ben Silverberg - Charles Sch	niller, violins;
Edward Crevoi, viola; Zolto	
Havdola	Zilberts
Hebrew Fantasy	Sholom Secunda
	Melody, arr. Crevoi
Canzonetta	
	Mendelssohn
After the Address: Three Chanuk	
Haneros Halelos	Adler
In the Days of the Maccabees	Idelssohn
Mr. Hakola	
	lk Song-arr. Binder
Olenu-vaanachnu	Goldstein
Olenu-vaanaennu	Goldstein

This Sunday morning, December 22, in celebration of Chanukah, the music for the services will be of special holiday character. The choir will sing Chanukah music, and a string quartet composed of Mr. Ben Silverberg, Mr. Charles Schiller, Mr. Edward Crevoi and Mr. Zolton Toth, will play.

A fifteen minute organ recital precedes the service which begins at 10:30 A.M.

### CHANUKAH MENORAH

The beautiful Chanukah Menorah which is reproduced on the front page of The Temple Bulletin was acquired by The Temple Museum this summer in London, England.

The Victoria and Albert Museum have identified the Menorah as Middle 19th Century, Eastern Europe, possibly Poland. It was brought to London by a Hungarian refugee. It is quite possible that it belonged to some synagogue in Eastern Europe.

The purchase of this Menorah was made possible by a contribution made by Mrs. I. R. Levy, in memory of her husband.

## FROM THE RABBIS' DESK

One of the questions being widely discussed in and out of Congress is the possibility of ordering the 1960 general census to include a census of religious affiliation. Since 1790 the census has not contained any such request for information because it was felt that such questions infringed upon the privacy of the individual. Recently various church groups have been pressing for such a census, apparently in the hope that it would aid them in church planning and help them to demand an even larger voice in American life.

Recently many Jewish and community organizations have discussed this matter. Most of these groups feel that there are strong reasons for opposing the inclusion of such a religious question in the 1960 census. I thought that you might be interested in some of their reasoning:

(1) It would violate the Constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion. Persons questioned by census takers are subject to legislation if they refuse to answer, yet the United States Supreme Court has expressly held that under the freedom of religion provision of the Bill of Rights no person may be compelled to profess belief or disbelief in any religion.

(2) It would violate the Constitutional guarantee of the separation of church and state for it would employ government instrumentalities for church purposes.

(3) It would unnecessarily divide the American people into "believers" and "non-believers" and would create tension between individuals who should and can be united in community service.

(4) It would constitute an unwarranted infringement upon the privacy of Americans. A democracy is predicated upon the assumption that the state has only such powers and jurisdiction as are freely granted to it by the people, that certain areas of the people's lives are too sacred to be assigned to the state and that chief of these is the matter of faith. In a democracy committed to the separation of church and state the religion of the people is not a proper concern for government inquiry.

(5) It would create a dangerous precedent. For 170 years our Government has refrained, despite recurrent pressures, from including questions concerning religion in the census. Abandonment of this tradition would take away one more safeguard to the liberties of Americans.

Daniel Jeremy Silver

## TEMPLE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION COLLEGIATE HOMECOMING

The Temple Alumni Association will hold its annual Homecoming affair on Sunday, December 29th. Members of the Alumni will participate in the Services at The Temple at 10:30; after services there will be a Brunch at the Wade Park Manor from 12:15 to 2:30 P.M. Music and entertainment are planned.

The Committee in charge of the Reunion are: Harlan Hertz, Chairman, Harlene Henry, Marvin Kazmin, Carol Schoenberger, Mark Yanover, Jean Bloomenthal and Tom Hornsten.

### UNIONGRAMS

The world grows smaller, the problems bigger, the issues hotter. The issue we are appraising today is not too hot nor too big, but it is important for your convenience. It should catch on quickly. The question is: Have you made your deposit in the Uniongram Bank?

Mrs. Irving Konigsberg, Chairman, explains how the Bank Plan works. You buy a pack of eight Uniongrams for \$2.25. These are deposited to your credit. You are then called each month and given a list of sad and happy events in our Temple family. You indicate which events you wish to remember. An appropriate message is then sent out over your name on one of the Uniongrams deposited to your account. It is as simple as that.

Uniongrams may at all times replace commercial greeting cards. The funds raised from their sale contributes to youth activities, education, and scholarships to rabbinical schools. With your support this good work goes on week by week throughout the year. When your pack of eight Uniongrams is used up you may, upon request, be billed for an additional package.

Uniongrams are sold every week at Tuesday Sewing. Mrs. S. Jacobson is in charge of the Tuesday sales. Miss Martha Markowitz writes the personalized messages for Tuesday purchasers.

Please phone in news of high birthdays, anniversaries, marriages, births in fact all happy or sad occasions—to Mrs. Harry Cohn, FA 1-4301, Mrs. S. Jacobson, SK 2-2744, or Mrs. Irving Konigsberg, FA 1-7835. This information will then be passed on to the Sisterhood membership.

Mrs. Harold Firestone is Telephone Chairman; Mrs. M. S. Miller, Book-keeper; Mrs. Abe Nebel and Mrs. Sabina Reich, in charge of message writers. Mrs. Sylvan Rosenfield and Mrs. Arthur E. Friedman head the committee for enrolling Sisterhood members in the Uniongram Bank. Committee members are Mesdames Roger Bercu, William Beechler, Myron Eckstein, Saul Kammen, Sam Pressman, Lawrence Rubin, Harvey Saks, Harold Schobel and Jerome Weinberger. Mrs. Alvin Friedman assists with art work on the Uniongram scrolls. Uniongrams will be sold at all major meetings by a bevy of attractive young matrons whose dresses will be accessorized by purple and white, the Uniongram colors.

### THE TEMPLE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

presents

DANIEL SCHORR Moscow Correspondent

for the Columbia Broadcasting System

in

"A REPORTER'S EYE VIEW OF THE SOVIET UNION"

Wednesday, January 8, 1957

1:15 P.M.

Guests \$1.00

membership card

Admission by

### TAX STAMPS

Every Tuesday morning Miss Kathryn Fox, Miss Sadie Lederer and Miss Sadie Rosenzweig sort, count and arrange tax stamps in stacks of 100. These are then turned over to the Tax Stamp Chairman, Mrs. Nicholas Goodman and Co-chairman, Mrs. Carol Levison for a final check, calculation of the money value and mailing to Columbus. After a long session these ladies feel as if they have numbers circulating in their blood streams instead of corpuscles.

The tax stamps add up to Bibles for our confirmands, silver Kiddush cups for High School students and two camperships every summer for students in the Religious School. Through contributions to the Sophie. Auerbach Fund, the stamps help to provide an annual scholarship to Hebrew Union College.

The receipt of tax stamps has been generous this year. The chairmen wish to thank you for your co-operation. They hope you will continue to bring stamps with you to Tuesday Sewing, Open Meetings and Committee Meetings. You may leave them at The Temple Office or mail them to The Temple Women's Association, c/o The Temple.

### PAPER PRODUCTS

The Gadget Shop is showing an interesting and varied line of stationery, including "briefs" and larger informals, all personalized with monograms. They have a new stock of attractive matchbooks and playing cards.

### HIGH SCHOOL DEBATING TEAM

The Temple High School Debating Team, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Broh-Kahn, journeyed to Columbus on the weekend of December 7, to joust with the debaters of Temple Israel. Our team comprised Richard Horwood, Marilyn Rosenberg, and Bruce Friedman, who also rebutted for our team.

The debate was held in the Temple Israel Annex, and began promptly at eight o'clock as scheduled. A fine audience of parents and young folks was present. The subject debated was: "Resolved, that Jewish Parochial Schools be Established." As is customary, the home team upheld the affirmative of the resolution; and we argued against the establishment of Jewish Parochial Schools. The judges rendered a unanimous decision for the Cleveland team.

Of particular interest—and pride—to The Temple, should be the remark made by Mr. Barkan during the intermission while the judges were considering their decision. He spoke of the fact that at the beginning of last year Temple Israel did not have a high school department. When they came here to debate with us last year, he brought the entire high school of six members! Now, he said, Temple Israel has a real high school department, and this is due largely to the inspiration of The Temple, and the interest stimulated by the debating activity.

The Temple Israel team will visit us for a return engagement in the Spring.

Published weekly except during the summer vacation. Fifty cents per annum.

The Temple Bulletin EAST 105TH ST. & AUSEL ROAD THE TEMPLE EAST 105TH ST. & AUSEL ROAD CLEVELAUD 6, OHIO SW 1-7755 SW 1-77555 SW 1-775555 SW 1-775555 SW 1-775555 SW 1-7755555 SW 1-775555 SW 1-77555555555 SW 1-77555555

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## DATES TO REMEMBER

 Sunday, December 22 – Sunday Morning Services Temple High School Chanukah Party
 Monday, December 23 – Adult Hebrew Classes
 Tuesday, December 24 – Temple Women's Association Tuesday Sewing
 Sunday, December 29 – Temple Alumni Association Homecoming Service and Brunch

THE TEMPLE LIBRARY is open Tuesday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. The Library will be closed on Sunday mornings until the conclusion of services.

THE TEMPLE MUSEUM will be open at the close of Sunday Morning Services and during all major organization meetings. Arrangements may be made to view the Museum by special appointment at The Temple Office.

THE ISRAELI GIFT SHOP is open during Tuesday sewing sessions. Selections can be made at all times from the display case in the Ansel Road Lobby through The Temple Office.

### CALENDAR - TEMPLE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Weekend classes will meet as usual during the winter vacation. The following is a schedule for midweek classes:

Monday, December 23 – 9:30 A.M. to 11 A.M. – WEDNESDAY Pre-Confirmation Tuesday, December 24 – 9:30 A.M. to 11 A.M. – TUESDAY Pre-Confirmation and Special Hebrew Thursday, December 26 – 9:30 A.M. to 11 A.M. – THURSDAY Confirmation and Special Hebrew Friday, December 27 – 9:30 A.M. to 11 A.M. – FRIDAY Confirmation

Above scheduled classes will count for two sessions. Limousine service will be available as usual. There will be no classes on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, December 31, January 1, 2, and 3rd.