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The Jewish Impact on Civilization, Part II, 1963.

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THE JEWISH IMPACT ON CIVILIZATION -- Part Two

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

Sunday Morning -- November 17, 1963

influence, of...

WHEN WE REACH THE SEVENTH CENTURY OF THE COMMON ERA, JUDAISM WAS STILL VITAL AND VIGOROUS ENOUGH THAT, COMING IN CONTACT WITH ANOTHER CIVILIZATION, THAT OF THE ARABS, IT WAS AGAIN ABLE TO INFLUENCE IT. IT WAS ABLE TO MOLD ANOTHER RELIGION WHICH IS TODAY ONE OF THE MAJOR RELIGIONS OF MANKIND, *Islam.* MOHAMMEDANISM.

THE ARABS IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY WERE HEATHEN AND IDOL WORSHIPPERS. MOHAMMED APPEARED AMONG THEM AND TAUGHT THEM TO ABANDON THEIR IDOLATRY AND THEIR SUPERSTITIONS, AND TO WORSHIP ONLY ONE SPIRITUAL GOD.

MOHAMMED GAVE THESE PEOPLE A NEW FAITH, STIRRED THEIR RACIAL CONSCIOUSNESS AS IT HAD NEVER BEEN STIRRED BEFORE AND SET THEM UPON A CAREER OF CONQUEST, BOTH RELIGIOUS AND MILITARY, WHICH WITHIN THE SHORT SPACE OF A HUNDRED YEARS BROUGHT THEM TO THE ~~VERY~~ SHORES OF THE ATLANTIC OCEAN AND THE FRONTIERS OF CHINA AND INDIA.

MOHAMMED WAS GREATLY INFLUENCED BY JEWS AND JEWISH TEACHING. THERE WERE JEWS IN ARABIA FROM EARLIEST TIMES. JEWISH TRIBES LIVED IN ARABIA AT THE TIME OF MOHAMMED. JEWISH TRAVELERS BENT ON COMMERCE PASSED THROUGH ARABIA FROM SYRIA,

BABYLON, PALESTINE AND EGYPT. MOHAMMED LEARNED FROM THESE JEWISH TRAVELERS AND FROM HIS JEWISH NEIGHBORS ABOUT JUDAISM; HE LEARNED ABOUT THE HEROES OF THE BIBLE. ON ALMOST EVERY PAGE OF THE KORAN, MOHAMMED'S BOOK OF REVELATIONS WHICH HE GAVE TO HIS PEOPLE, WHICH HAS BECOME THE HOLY BOOK OF ISLAM, ONE FINDS SURE TRACES OF JEWISH THOUGHT AND REFERENCES TO EPISODES IN JEWISH HISTORY -- OFTEN AS DEVELOPED IN THE ^{later} AGADA OF THE RABBIS.

MOHAMMED'S ^{proclamation} ~~CONCEPTION~~ OF THE ONE GOD -- "THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH" -- "LA ILAHA ILLA'ALLAH" -- IS A RESTATEMENT OF THE DECLARATION OF THE FAITH OF ISRAEL -- "HEAR O ISRAEL, THE LORD OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE." THE CONCEPT OF DIVINITY WHICH MOHAMMED GAVE TO HIS PEOPLE -- GOD AS ONE, SPIRITUAL, ALL-POWERFUL, TRANSCENDENT -- IS TAKEN OVER IN TOTO FROM JUDAISM.

MOHAMMED TRACED THE ORIGIN OF THE ARAB PEOPLES TO ABRAHAM, THROUGH ABRAHAM'S SON ISHMAEL. THEREBY HE ESTABLISHED A RACIAL CONTACT BETWEEN HIS PEOPLE AND ISRAEL, JUST AS CHRISTIANITY, THROUGH THE PERSONALITY OF JESUS, LINKED ITSELF WITH ISRAEL.

THE EARLY MOHAMMEDANS WHEN THEY WORSHIPPED USED TO TURN THEIR FACES TO JERUSALEM AND NOT TO MECCA, THEREBY INDICATING THAT THEY LOOKED UPON JERUSALEM AS THE SOURCE OF THEIR OWN FAITH. EVEN AS THEY LOOKED TO ABRAHAM AS THE PROGENITOR OF THEIR RACE.

THUS, ISLAM MAY BE SAID TO BE ANOTHER DAUGHTER RELIGION OF JUDAISM *and*

INsofar AS ISRAEL'S GOD CONCEPT BECAME THE GOD CONCEPT OF MORE THAN TWO HUNDRED MILLIONS OF MOSLEMS TODAY, ISRAEL MAY AGAIN BE CREDITED WITH INFLUENCING ANOTHER VAST SEGMENT OF HUMANITY IN ITS SPIRITUAL LIFE AND THOUGHT.

WHEN ISLAM AROSE IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY, EUROPE WAS ALREADY BEGINNING TO SINK INTO WHAT ARE KNOWN AS THE DARK AGES. ROME FELL BEFORE THE BARBARIAN INVASIONS IN 476. THE ~~WHOLE~~ ~~ENTIRE~~ ROMAN WORLD NOW BECOMES SUBMERGED UNDER THE TIDAL WAVES OF BARBARIAN INVASIONS. THE RICH CULTURE OF THE ANCIENT WORLD WAS SOON FORGOTTEN. IGNORANCE AND SUPERSTITION SET IN. THE GOTH, THE HUN, THE VANDAL AND THE LOMBARD ARE NOW THE MASTERS OF A CHAOTIC EUROPE, STEEPED IN FEAR AND INSECURITY, AND THE NIGHT, THE LONG DARK NIGHT OF THE MIDDLE AGES, WHICH LASTED CLCSE ONTO A THOUSAND YEARS, SETTLES OVER EUROPE.

R BUT WHILE THE SUN OF LEARNING SET IN THE WEST, IT ROSE IN THE EAST WHERE THE PEOPLES UNDER ISLAM LIVED. THE CONQUERING ARABS *loved* ~~WERE FOND OF~~ LEARNING AND THEY FOSTERED IT. THEY TOOK OVER THE LEARNING OF THE ANCIENT GREEKS AND THEY ADDED TO IT; THEY FOSTERED PHILOSOPHY, MATHEMATICS, PHYSICS, MEDICINE, LAW AND ASTRONOMY. FOR FIVE HUNDRED YEARS, FROM 750 to 1250, IT IS THE EAST AND NOT THE WEST WHICH IS THE SEAT OF CIVILIZATION.

During those
~~FOR~~ FIVE CENTURIES, MOST OF THE JEWS OF THE WORLD LIVED
dominated by Islam.
IN LANDS ~~OF ISLAMIC DOMINATION~~, LANDS WHICH THE ARABS HAD
CONQUERED -- BABYLONIA, SYRIA, PALESTINE, NORTHERN AFRICA,
SICILY, SOUTHERN SPAIN. THEY SPOKE AND WROTE ARABIC. THEY EX-
CHANGED IDEAS WITH THE ARABS. AS A RESULT OF THIS CONTACT,
PHILOSOPHIC STUDY WAS STIMULATED AMONG OUR PEOPLE AND THEY
PRODUCED A NUMBER OF REMARKABLE PHILOSOPHERS BEGINNING WITH
SAADIA AND SOLOMON IBN GABIROL, AND CULMINATING IN MAIMONIDES,
PHILOSOPHERS WHO INFLUENCED THE THOUGHT NOT ALONE OF JEWRY
BUT OF THE CHRISTIAN WORLD AS WELL.

For THE JEWS IN THE MIDDLE AGES WERE IN CONTACT NOT ALONE WITH
THE ARABS BUT WITH THE PEOPLES OF ~~LATIN AND~~ CHRISTIAN EUROPE.
JEWS WERE THE GREAT TRAVELERS OF THE MIDDLE AGES. THEY CARRIED
ON THE COMMERCE BETWEEN THE ORIENT AND THE OCCIDENT, BETWEEN
THE MOSLEM EAST AND CHRISTIAN WEST. "IN THE ELEVENTH, TWELFTH,
THIRTEENTH CENTURIES, MOST MEDITERRANEAN SEAPORTS WERE BEE-
HIVES OF JEWISH COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY". QUITE NATURALLY THEY
BECAME THE CHANNELS THROUGH WHICH THE LEARNING OF THE ARABS,
WHICH THEY HAD TAKEN OVER FROM THE HELLENISTIC WORLD, FLOWED
INTO WESTERN EUROPE, *this* ~~AND~~ PREPARED THE DAY FOR *the* ~~AN~~ INTELLECTUAL
RE-AWAKENING OF THE PEOPLES OF EUROPE, FOR THE REVIVAL OF
LEARNING IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

JEWS WHO KNEW ARABIC HELPED IN THE TRANSLATION OF THE WORKS OF ARAB SCHOLARS INTO LATIN. WE ARE IN POSSESSION OF HUNDREDS OF WORKS ON MEDICINE, LOGIC, PHILOSOPHY, MATHEMATICS, WHICH JEWS IN THE MIDDLE AGES TRANSLATED FROM THE ARABIC, FIRST INTO HEBREW AND THEN, BY THEMSELVES OR BY OTHER HANDS, INTO LATIN. IT IS THROUGH THESE TRANSLATED WORKS THAT THE PEOPLES OF EUROPE BECAME AWARE AGAIN OF THE RICH CULTURAL LEGACY OF THE ANCIENT GREEKS. IT IS THROUGH THESE TRANSLATIONS THAT THEY CAME TO KNOW AGAIN ARISTOTLE, PLATO, AND EUCLID, ~~AND~~ THIS QUICKENED THEIR MINDS ~~AGAIN~~ ^{intellectual} AND AROUSED THEM FROM THE LONG CENTURIES OF ~~DARK~~ SLUMBER.

"OF THE ARABIAN AUTHORS WHOSE IDEAS WERE ~~THIS~~ INCORPORATED INTO THE BODY OF CHRISTIAN THOUGHT", WRITES PROFESSOR CHARLES SINGER, "THE MOST IMPORTANT WERE AVERROES, MAIMONIDES, AVICEBRON, AND ALGAZEL. TWO OF THESE, MAIMONIDES AND AVICEBRON, WERE THEMSELVES JEWS. THE OTHER TWO, AVERROES AND ALGAZEL, WERE PERHAPS THE MOST WIDELY DISCUSSED OF ALL PHILOSOPHERS AMONG THE JEWS, AND THEIR PRESENTATION TO THE WEST WAS LARGELY BY JEWISH HANDS. IT IS THEREFORE THE CASE THAT, EVEN APART FROM THEIR ROLE IN THE DIRECT TRANSMISSION OF TEXTS, THE JEWS WERE OF IMPORTANCE IN MOULDING THE WESTERN OUTLOOK IN THE PERIOD OF HIGH SCHOLASTICISM." — the dominant philosophy of the ^{middle} ~~middle~~ Ages

~~THE JEWS OF THE MIDDLE AGES BECAME A LEAVING INFLUENCE~~
And early Renaissance.

THE JEWS OF THE MIDDLE AGES ^{were} ~~BECAME~~ A LEAVENING INFLUENCE IN EUROPEAN THOUGHT BECAUSE THEY WERE THE CARRIERS OF THE ARAB CIVILIZATION AND THE GREEK CIVILIZATION WHICH IT INHERITED, TO THE WESTERN WORLD.

AS FAR AS MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY GENERALLY IS CONCERNED -- INCLUDING SCHOLASTICISM -- IT WAS THROUGHOUT LARGELY UNDER JEWISH INFLUENCE. PROFESSOR HARRY WOLFSON, ~~THE EMINENT PROFESSOR~~ OF HARVARD, AT THE CONCLUSION OF HIS MONUMENTAL WORK ON THE JEWISH PHILOSOPHER OF THE FIRST CENTURY, PHILO, WRITES:

"MEDIAEVAL PHILOSOPHY IS THE HISTORY OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF PHILO. FOR WELL-NIGH SEVENTEEN CENTURIES THIS PHILONIC PHILOSOPHY DOMINATED EUROPEAN THOUGHT. NOTHING REALLY NEW HAPPENED IN THE HISTORY OF EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHY DURING THAT EXTENDED PERIOD. THE LONG SUCCESSION OF PHILOSOPHERS DURING THAT PERIOD, FROM AMONG WHOM VARIOUS FIGURES ARE SELECTED BY VARIOUS HISTORIANS FOR SPECIAL DISTINCTION AS INNOVATORS, HAVE ONLY TRIED TO EXPOUND, EACH IN HIS OWN WAY, THE PRINCIPLES LAID DOWN BY PHILO. TO THE QUESTION, THEN, WHAT IS NEW IN PHILO? THE ANSWER IS THAT IT WAS HE WHO BUILT UP THAT PHILOSOPHY, JUST AS THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION WHAT IS NEW IN SPINOZA? IS THAT IT WAS HE WHO PULLED IT DOWN."

A WORD SHOULD BE SAID ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTION OF ISRAEL TO THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION. THAT MOVEMENT, TOO, FELT THE IMPACT OF THE SPIRIT OF ISRAEL. DURING THE FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURIES THE STUDY OF HEBREW BECAME VERY POPULAR AMONG SCHOLARS IN EUROPE. WE ARE NOW IN THE PERIOD OF THE HUMANIST REVIVAL -- THE CLASSICAL RENAISSANCE. MEN ARE GOING BACK TO THE ORIGINAL SOURCES TO DISCOVER THE TRUTHS WHICH THEY ARE SEEKING. THEY ARE GOING BACK TO THE ORIGINAL GREEK AND LATIN, AND ALSO TO THE ORIGINAL HEBREW -- THE LANGUAGE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE RENAISSANCE IN GERMANY EXPRESSED ITSELF LARGELY IN AN EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE. THE GREAT SCHOLARS OF ^{the} ~~that~~ PERIOD WHICH PRECEDED THE REFORMATION, STUDIED HEBREW. BECAUSE OF THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF HEBREW, THEY WERE ABLE TO CHALLENGE THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE WHICH WAS OFFICIALLY GIVEN BY THE ^{Catholic} CHURCH. ULTIMATELY THEY WERE MOVED TO CHALLENGE THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH ITSELF. PROTESTANTISM, AS YOU KNOW, DENIED THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE CHURCH AND OF ITS SUPREME PONTIFF, THE POPE. IT PLACED, IN THEIR STEAD, THE OVER-RIDING AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE ITSELF.

IT MAY WELL BE SAID THAT THE MOVEMENT BACK TO HEBREW WAS ONE OF THE DETERMINING FACTORS IN THE RADICAL RELIGIOUS REFORM MOVEMENT OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY WHICH WE KNOW AS THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION.

IT IS OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO NOTE THAT IN ONE ^{Protestant} SECT ~~THE~~
~~PROTESTANTISM~~ ^{The Old Testament} THE INFLUENCE OF ~~JUDAISM~~ ¹ WAS ESPECIALLY ~~THE~~ ^{preponderant.}
~~EVIDENCE.~~ I REFER TO THE PURITANS. PURITANISM WAS A REACTION
AGAINST THE MORAL LOOSENESS WHICH PREVAILED IN ENGLAND DURING
AND SUBSEQUENT TO THE TIME OF QUEEN ELIZABETH. IT WAS A MORAL
AS WELL AS A THEOLOGIC REFORMATION. THE PURITANS TURNED TO
THE OLD TESTAMENT FOR THEIR INSPIRATION AND MADE IT THEIR VERY
OWN. IT BECAME ^{dominant in} ~~PART OF~~ THEIR THOUGHT AND ~~PART OF~~ THEIR LIVES.

IN THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL THEY SAW THEIR OWN HISTORY RE-
FLECTED. THE PURITANS GAVE THEIR CHILDREN OLD TESTAMENT NAMES.
THEY ADOPTED THE VERY SPEECH AND IDIOM OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.
THEY ^{became} ~~WERE~~ STEEPED IN ITS THOUGHT, MOOD AND ~~ITS~~ ETHICAL DISCIPLINE.
THE PASSION FOR FREEDOM, ~~FOR EXAMPLE,~~ WHICH THE PURITANS
MANIFESTED AND WHICH LED THEM TO BEHEAD A KING AND TO ESTABLISH
^a ~~THE~~ COMMONWEALTH IN ENGLAND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SEVENTEENTH
CENTURY, THEY DERIVED FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE HISTORIAN LECKY MAKES THIS INCISIVE OBSERVATION:

"IT IS AT LEAST A HISTORICAL FACT THAT IN THE MAJORITY OF
INSTANCES THE EARLY PROTESTANT DEFENDERS OF CIVIL LIBERTY
DERIVED THEIR POLITICAL PRINCIPLES CHIEFLY FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT,
AND THE DEFENDERS OF DESPOTISM FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT. THE
REBELLIONS THAT WERE SO FREQUENT IN JEWISH HISTORY FORMED THE
FAVORITE TOPIC OF THE ONE, THE UNRESERVED SUBMISSION INC ^l ~~INDICATED~~
BY ST. PAUL OF THE OTHER."

WHEN THE PILGRIM FATHERS, WHO WERE HEIRS TO ~~THIS~~ ^{the} SPIRIT OF THE PURITANS, CAME TO THESE SHORES, THEY BROUGHT WITH THEM THIS HEBRAIC LOVE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, EARNESTNESS AND ~~S~~ANCTITY, AND THEY BUILDED THEIR NEW WORLD COMMONWEALTH ON THE MODEL OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

WHEN IN THE LATTER HALF OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY THE AMERICAN COLONIES REVOLTED AGAINST ENGLAND, THEIR SPOKESMEN AND ^{spiritual} LEADERS FOUND THEIR AUTHORITY FOR THE REVOLUTION IN THE PAGES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT -- MOSES LEADING THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL OUT OF EGYPTIAN SLAVERY; SAMUEL ADMONISHING HIS PEOPLE NOT TO ASK FOR A KING; NATHAN DENOUNCING KING DAVID; ELIJAH, KING AHAB AND JEREMIAH, KING ZEDEKIAH. THE FIRST SEAL OF THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES HAD UPON ONE SIDE OF IT THE FIGURE OF MOSES LEADING THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL OUT OF EGYPT. ON THE LIBERTY BELL WHICH IS NOW IN PHILADELPHIA, THEY INSCRIBED THE WORDS FROM THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS: "PROCLAIM LIBERTY THROUGHOUT THE LAND UNTO ALL THE INHABITANTS THEREOF."

SO DOWN TO THE VERY CLOSE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY WE FIND THE SPIRIT OF ISRAEL -- ^{still} ACTIVE, LEAVENING, AND POWERFUL IN THE MOLDING OF THE THOUGHTS OF MEN AND NATIONS.

WHAT ARE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ISRAEL IN THE MODERN WORLD? I SHOULD LIKE TO DWELL A MOMENT UPON THE CONTRIBUTION OF ISRAEL TO THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE PEOPLES OF EUROPE. ISRAEL MADE

ESSENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN PEOPLES. IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN CAPITALISM, ISRAEL PLAYED A DECISIVE ROLE. BECAUSE OF HIS INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS AND BECAUSE OF HIS CONSTANT MIGRATIONS, SOME INVOLUNTARY AS A RESULT OF EXPULSIONS AND SOME VOLUNTARY AT THE BEHEST OF TRADE -- THE JEW IN THE MIDDLE AGES BECAME A LEADER IN COMMERCE AND TRADE. THE FEUDAL SYSTEM CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM AMONG THE JEWS. JEWS WERE EXCLUDED FROM THE THREE ESTATES ^{- the clergy, nobles and commoners -} INTO WHICH FEUDAL SOCIETY WAS ORGANIZED, AND SO THEY CONCENTRATED ON COMMERCE, TRADE AND THE PROFESSIONS. THE JEW WAS FORCED OUT OF MANY ACTIVITIES IN WHICH HE NORMALLY MIGHT HAVE ENGAGED. HE WAS MORE OR LESS RESTRICTED TO THE ONE OCCUPATION OF MONEY-LENDING. AS A RESULT, THE JEW BECAME THE BANKER OF THE MIDDLE AGES AND DEVELOPED NEARLY ALL OF OUR MODERN AGENCIES OF CREDIT AND EXCHANGE UPON WHICH COMMERCIAL LIFE TODAY IS BUILT. HE ORIGINATED THE SYSTEM OF SECURITIES AND THE DISCOUNTING OF BILLS. HE PLAYED A LARGE PART IN THE FOUNDING OF THE STOCK EXCHANGE.

AND JUST AS JEWS PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN CAPITALISM -- BANKING, CREDIT, CORPORATIONS -- SO DID THEY PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIALISM, THE ANTITHESIS OF CAPITALISM. THE CLASSIC TEXT-BOOK OF MODERN SOCIALISM WAS WRITTEN BY A JEW -- KARL MARX. LENINISM OR COMMUNISM WHICH IS TODAY TRIUMPHANT IN HALF THE WORLD IS A DETAILED

copy
OF KARL MARX. HIS WAS THE BLUE-PRINT AND HE WAS THE FATHER OF
THE FAMOUS COMMUNIST MANIFESTO OF 1848. THUS, IN BOTH SPHERES
OF ECONOMIC THOUGHT -- IN CAPITALISM AND IN SOCIALISM, JEWS PLAYED
A MOST DECISIVE ROLE. ~~AND~~ *IN* PASSING, IT MIGHT BE SAID THAT FOR
THE SINS OF BOTH ~~THE~~ *capitalism and communism* THE JEWISH PEOPLE WAS MADE TO PAY A TERRIBLE
PRICE.

IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT OUR PEOPLE WON THEIR POLITICAL
ENFRANCHISEMENT IN MODERN TIMES ONLY WITH THE ~~FRENCH~~ *advent of the* FRENCH REVOLUTION.
~~AND~~ YET, IN SPITE OF THE LEGAL DISABILITIES AND THE RESTRICTION
OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, IN SPITE OF BEING GHETTOTIZED
AND ISOLATED FROM THE SURROUNDING CULTURES OF THE DAY, THE
JEWISH MIND CONTINUED TO FUNCTION CREATIVELY IN ALMOST EVERY
SPHERE OF HUMAN THOUGHT RIGHT THROUGH THE MIDDLE AGES DOWN TO
OUR DAY.

TAKE SPINOZA! IF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO CLAIM
CREDIT FOR HUME AND BERKELEY, AND THE FRENCH FOR DESCARTES,
AND THE GERMANS FOR KANT, THEN THE JEWISH PEOPLE HAS AN EQUAL
RIGHT TO CLAIM CREDIT FOR SPINOZA. SPINOZA WAS A JEW, BORN A
JEW, EDUCATED AS A JEW. HIS FIRST BOOKS WHICH HE STUDIED WERE
HEBREW BOOKS; HIS FIRST CONTACT WITH PHILOSOPHY WAS THROUGH
THE WORKS OF HEBREW PHILOSOPHERS. AND NO MAN INFLUENCED
EUROPEAN THOUGHT ~~MORE~~ IN THE LAST THREE HUNDRED YEARS MORE THAN
BARUCH SPINOZA.

SPINOZA'S THOUGHT WAS ESSENTIALLY JEWISH IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT THE AMSTERDAM JEWISH COMMUNITY EXCOMMUNICATED HIM. THERE WERE POLITICAL REASONS FOR THAT EXCOMMUNICATION. SPINOZA'S THEOCENTRIC THOUGHT, HIS EXALTED ETHICAL IDEALISM, HIS NOBLE FAITH IN THE DIGNITY OF HUMAN LIFE AND IN THE CAPACITY OF MAN TO RISE TO LIMITLESS HEIGHTS OF SELF-DEVELOPMENT -- THESE ARE FUNDAMENTAL JEWISH CONCEPTS IN ^{line} ~~CONSONANCE~~ WITH THE BEST TRADITIONS OF JEWISH THOUGHT.

IT WAS A JEW, DAVID RICARDO, WHO FOUNDED THE SCIENCE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY; IT WAS A JEW, LAZARUS, WHO FOUNDED THE SCIENCE OF RACIAL PSYCHOLOGY; IT WAS A JEW, FREUD, WHO FOUNDED THE SCIENCE OF PSYCHOANALYSIS; IT WAS A JEW, MICHAELSON, WHO PIONEERED IN THE FIELD OF MATHEMATICAL PHYSICS AND DISCOVERED THE SPEED OF LIGHT. IT WAS ANOTHER JEW, ALBERT EINSTEIN WHO USHERED IN THE ATOMIC AGE. WERE ONE TO ATTEMPT TO ENUMERATE THE ROLE WHICH JEWISH PHYSICIANS PLAYED IN THE SCIENCE OF MODERN MEDICINE, ONE WOULD NEED MORE THAN AN HOUR MERELY TO ENUMERATE THE NAMES OF THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTED VITAL DISCOVERIES IN THIS SPHERE -- A SPHERE IN WHICH JEWS HAVE BEEN PRE-EMINENT FROM EARLIEST TIMES.

ONE FINDS JEWS TODAY IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE ARTS --
DECORATIVE ARTS, PICTORIAL ARTS, PLASTIC ARTS, ~~IN~~ MUSIC AND
THE DRAMATIC ARTS. IN SCIENCE THERE IS HARDLY A BRANCH OF PHYSICS,
CHEMISTRY, MATHEMATICS, ASTRONOMY IN WHICH ONE DOES NOT FIND
JEWS IN THE ~~THE~~ VERY FRONT RANKS. THE NUMBER OF JEWISH NOBEL
PRIZE WINNERS EXCEEDS BY FAR THEIR PROPORTION TO THE TOTAL
POPULATION.

IN THE REVOLUTIONARY UPRISINGS IN THE LAST ONE HUNDRED
YEARS, WHEN ~~THE MASSES~~ ^{peoples} FOUGHT FOR THEIR POLITICAL LIBERATION,
IN HUNGARY, AUSTRIA, GERMANY, FRANCE, OR RUSSIA, ONE FINDS ~~THE~~
SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF OUR PEOPLE AMONG THEIR ^{most} HONORED LEADERS,
HEROES AND MARTYRS. OF THEM IT MIGHT BE SAID WHAT THE FORE-
MOST GERMAN LYRIC POET, HEINRICH HEINE, SAID OF HIMSELF:

"WHETHER MY SONGS ARE PRAISED OR BLAMED MATTERS LITTLE
TO ME; BUT ON MY GRAVE LAY A SWORD; FOR I WAS A SOLDIER IN THE
WAR FOR THE LIBERATION OF MAN."

WHEN YOU REALIZE THAT OUR NUMBERS WERE ALWAYS, AND ARE ^{still}
~~TODAY~~ RELATIVELY FEW IN COMPARISON WITH THE VAST POPULATION
OF THE WORLD, AND WHEN YOU REFLECT UPON THE EXTRAORDINARY
CONTRIBUTION^s WHICH JEWS HAVE MADE TO THE SUM TOTAL OF HUMAN
KNOWLEDGE IN MODERN TIMES, YOU ARE FILLED WITH A SENSE OF PRIDE.
UNDOUBTEDLY THE INBRED JEWISH LOVE OF LEARNING, THE PRIORITY
GIVEN AT ALL TIMES TO STUDY AND EDUCATION, THE CENTURIES OF

TRAINING WHICH THE JEWISH MIND RECEIVED IN SCHOOLS AND TALMUDIC ACADEMIES, HELPED TO NURTURE THEIR INTELLECTS AND SHARPEN ^{as well} ~~AND~~ ^{as} SATISFY THEIR INTELLECTUAL ~~APPETITES~~ ^{cravings}.

COLLECTIVELY, ISRAEL'S GREATEST CONTRIBUTION TO MANKIND IS, I BELIEVE, ITS CONSTANCY THROUGH THE AGES TO TWO FUNDAMENTAL IDEAS: GOD AND ~~ETHICAL~~ ^{moral} IDEALISM. IF THERE IS ONE STRAND WHICH RUNS CLEAR AND DISCERNIBLE THROUGH THE ENTIRE TAPESTRY OF OUR PEOPLE'S HISTORY, IT IS THIS: GOD AND MORALITY. IN THE ANCIENT WORLD OF IDOLATRY, SUPERSTITION, SLAVERY AND DESPOTISM, ISRAEL PREACHED GOD AND ~~ETHICAL~~ ^{moral} IDEALISM; IN THE GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD OF DECADENCE, ISRAEL PREACHED GOD AND ~~ETHICAL~~ ^{moral} IDEALISM; IN THE DARK AGES OF CRUELTY, FANATICISM AND IGNORANCE, ISRAEL HELD ALOFT THE TORCH OF GOD AND ~~ETHICAL~~ ^{moral} IDEALISM. AND IN THE MODERN WORLD OF MATERIALISM, OF ^{better} RACIAL AND ECONOMIC STRIFE, ISRAEL STILL HOLDS ALOFT THE IDEALS OF GOD AND ~~ETHICAL~~ ^{moral} IDEALISM. THIS UNBROKEN SPIRITUAL MINISTRY, THIS HEROIC ^{prophetic} PERSISTENCE THROUGH THE AGES, IS PERHAPS ISRAEL'S GREATEST GIFT TO MANKIND.

IT IS MY CONVICTION THAT ONLY AS WE REMAIN TRUE TO THESE TWO SUPERLATIVE IDEAS OF OUR HERITAGE, ~~ONLY AS WE CARRY ON OUR NOBLE TRADITION~~ THAT WE SHALL CONTINUE TO PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN CIVILIZATION.

WHEREVER WRONG IS ENTHRONED, WHEREVER INJUSTICE DEVASTATES LIFE, WHEREVER TYRANNY OPPRESSES MANKIND, WHEREVER

HATE SETS MAN AGAINST MAN, THERE THE SONS AND THE DAUGHTERS OF ISRAEL SHOULD FIND THEIR INSTANT CHALLENGE, WHEREVER MATERIALISM THREATENS TO DOMINATE HUMAN THOUGHT, WHEREVER MORAL LAXITY SETS IN, WHEREVER SELF-INDULGENCE AND VULGARITY BEGIN TO MAKE LIFE UGLY AND DESOLATE, THERE JEWS SHOULD BE FOUND IN THE VERY FRONT-LINE OF ATTACK. IN THIS SENSE, AND IN THIS SENSE ONLY, CAN JEWS CLAIM TO BELONG TO A PEOPLE CHOSEN AND SET APART BY DESTINY -- AN *אלוהים* .

WHEN I BEHOLD JEWS TRYING TO COMPETE WITH NON-JEWS, NOT IN THE FIELDS OF INTELLECTUAL PURSUITS AND THE THINGS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO HUMAN PROGRESS, WHEN I BEHOLD JEWS TRYING TO OUT-DO, OUT-PLAY, OUT-BUILD AND OUT-SHINE THE NON-JEW IN MATERIAL PURSUITS ALONE, I FEEL THAT THEY HAVE SOMEHOW LOST CONTACT WITH THE HEROIC SPIRIT OF THEIR RACE, THAT THEY HAVE DISSOLVED THE TIES OF SPIRITUAL KINSHIP WITH THE GIANTS OF THEIR RACE, WITH THE GENIUS OF THEIR RACE.

EVEN A BRIEF SCANNING OF OUR HISTORY IS SUFFICIENT TO CONVINCE MEN THAT IN SPITE OF TRIBULATIONS, DISPERSIONS AND PERSECUTIONS, OUR PEOPLE HAS EXERCISED A MIGHTY INFLUENCE UPON CIVILIZATION. IN THEM THE ANCIENT PROPHECY HAS BEEN FULFILLED: "AND THE REMNANT OF JACOB SHALL BE IN THE MIDST OF MANY PEOPLES. AS DEW FROM THE LORD, AS SHOWERS UPON THE GRASS, UNLOOKED FOR

AND UNAWAITED BY THE SONS OF MEN." I AM ALSO CONVINCED THAT OUR PEOPLE HAS NOT YET SAID ITS LAST SAY IN THE WORLD, NOR BESTOWED ITS ULTIMATE BLESSING.

ROME IS DEAD; GREECE IS DEAD: BABYLON IS DEAD; EGYPT IS DEAD. THESE PEOPLES WHOM WE KNEW THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO -- MIGHTY AND POWERFUL PEOPLES, -- ARE DEAD. ISRAEL LIVES, LIVES AFFIRMATIVELY AND CREATIVELY IN THE WORLD TO THIS DAY.

AS JEWS WE HAVE TWO THINGS TO DO IN THE WORLD. FIRST, AS INDIVIDUALS WE MUST SEE TO IT THAT WE ARE ALWAYS MARCHING WITH THE BEST AND MOST ADVANCED THOUGHT OF THE WORLD; THAT WE DEVELOP OURSELVES TO THE HIGHEST POINT MENTALLY, SPIRITUALLY, MORALLY, OUR STRENGTH THROUGH THE AGES HAS BEEN THE STRENGTH OF IDEAS. OUR FORTRESS WAS NEVER THE MOATED CASTLE, NEVER THE ARMOR OF STEEL. IT WAS ALWAYS THE FORTRESS OF THE MIND AND THE HEART. THERE NO HOSTILE ARMIES, NO BIGOTRY AND NO INTOLERANCE COULD REACH US. OUR SECURITY IN THE FUTURE MUST LIE IN THE SAME IMPREGNABLE CITADEL -- THE MIND AND THE HEART.

WE MUST NEVER PUT OUR FAITH IN POSSESSIONS, IN WEALTH, IN NUMBERS OR EVEN IN THE GOOD WILL OF OUR NEIGHBORS, BECAUSE THESE ARE SHIFTING AND INCONSTANT. AS IN THE PAST, WE MUST PUT OUR TRUST IN INTELLECTUAL COMMITMENTS AND IN SPIRITUAL DEDICATIONS. THERE WE ARE INDEFEASIBLE, ETERNAL.

SECONDLY, WE MUST EXERT OURSELVES TO THE UTMOST TO ESTABLISH IN THE WORLD AND TO BUILD INTO THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY THE TWO LIFE-MOTIFS WHICH EMANATED FROM THE VERY SOUL OF OUR PEOPLE: GOD AND HUMANITY. WE MUST LIFT THAT TORCH HIGH THROUGH THE DARKNESSES OF THE WORLD, UNDER ALL CONDITIONS AND CIRCUMSTANCES. SOMETIMES THAT IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT AND FRAUGHT WITH DANGER. BUT THAT IS OUR SACRED COVENANT AND THE COMPULSION OF OUR MISSION. THE WORLD NEEDS THESE TRUTHS TODAY AS MUCH AS IT NEEDED THEM IN THE PAGAN WORLD, IN THE GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD, IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

MEN HAVE DRIFTED AWAY FROM GOD. THEY HAVE DRIFTED INTO A NEO-PAGANISM. THEY HAVE PLACED THEIR FAITH IN THE CREATIONS OF THEIR OWN HANDS, IN THE POWER OF SCIENTIFIC MACHINES, IN MISAPPLIED APPLIED SCIENCES. THESE MACHINES ARE NOW TURNING UPON THEM READY TO REND AND DESTROY THEM!

THE WORLD NEEDS GOD TODAY AS IT NEVER NEEDED HIM BEFORE. THE WORLD TODAY NEEDS THE JEWISH IDEALS OF JUSTICE AND BROTHERHOOD AND PEACE MORE THAN IT NEEDED IT AT ANY TIME IN THE PAST. THE STRUGGLE WHICH HAS NOW ENGULFED OUR WORLD AND WHICH IS THREATENING TO DESTROY IT -- THE ECONOMIC STRUGGLE -- THE STRUGGLE OF THE MASSES AGAINST THE CLASSES; OF THE DISPOSSESSED

AGAINST THEIR EXPLOITERS CAN ONLY BE RESOLVED BY APPLYING
COURAGEOUSLY ISRAEL'S ANCIENT CODE OF MORAL SANITY, JUSTICE,
FAIRNESS, FREEDOM AND PEACE FOR ALL MEN.

A MARVELOUS HERITAGE IS OURS, AND A MARVELOUS HISTORY!
AN EQUALLY MARVELOUS FUTURE AWAITS US. IF WE PROVE OURSELVES
WORTHY OF OUR GREAT PAST, WE SHALL BE FOUND WORTHY ALSO OF
A GREAT FUTURE.



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THE JEWISH IMPACT ON CIVILIZATION -- PART TWO

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

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When we reach the seventh century of the Common Era, Judaism was still vital and vigorous enough that, coming in contact with another civilization, that of the Arabs, it was again able to influence it. It was able to mold another religion which is today one of the major religions of mankind, Islam, or Mohammedanism.

The Arabs in the seventh century were heathen and idol worshippers. Mohammed appeared among them and taught them to abandon their idolatry and their superstitions, and to worship only one spiritual God.

Mohammed gave these people a new faith, stirred their racial consciousness as it had never been stirred before and set them upon a career of conquest, both religious and military, which within the short space of a hundred years brought them to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean and the frontiers of China and India.

Mohammed was greatly influenced by Jews and Jewish teaching. There were Jews in Arabia from earliest times. Jewish tribes lived in Arabia at the time of Mohammed. Jewish travelers bent on commerce passed through Arabia from Syria, Babylon, Palestine and Egypt. Mohammed learned from these Jewish travelers and from his Jewish neighbors about Judaism; he learned about the heroes of the Bible. On almost every page of the Koran, Mohammed's Book of Revelations which he gave to his people, which has become

the Holy Book of Islam, one finds sure traces of Jewish thought and references to episodes in Jewish history -- often as developed in the late Agada of the rabbis.

Mohammed's proclamation of The One God -- "There is no God but Allah" -- "La Ilaha Illa'Allah" -- is a re-statement of the declaration of the faith of Israel -- "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one." The concept of divinity which Mohammed gave to his people -- God as one, spiritual, all-powerful, transcendent -- is taken over in toto from Judaism.

Mohammed traced the origin of the Arab peoples to Abraham, through Abraham's son, Ishmael. Thereby he established a racial contact between his people and Israel, just as Christianity, through the personality of Jesus, linked itself with Israel.

The early Mohammedans, when they worshipped, used to turn their faces to Jerusalem and not to Mecca, thereby indicating that they looked upon Jerusalem as the source of their own faith. Even as they looked to Abraham as the progenitor of their race.

Thus, Islam may be said to be another daughter religion of Judaism and insofar as Israel's God concept became the God concept of more than two hundred millions of Moslems today, Israel may again be credited with influencing another vast segment of humanity in its spiritual life and thought.

When Islam arose in the seventh century, Europe was already beginning to sink into what are known as The Dark Ages. Rome fell before the barbarian invasion in 476. The Roman world now becomes submerged under the tidal

waves of Barbarian invasions. The rich culture of the ancient world was soon forgotten. Ignorance and superstition set in. The Goth, the Hun, the Vandal and the Lombard are now the masters of a chaotic Europe, steeped in fear and insecurity; and the night, the long dark night of the Middle Ages, which lasted close onto a thousand years, settles over Europe.

But while the sun of learning set in the West, it rose in the East where the peoples under Islam lived. The conquering Arabs loved learning and they fostered it. They took over the learning of the ancient Greeks and they added to it; they fostered philosophy, mathematics, physics, medicine, law and astronomy. For five hundred years, from 750 to 1250, it is the East and not the West which is the seat of civilization.

During those five centuries, most of the Jews of the world lived in lands dominated by Islam. Lands which the Arabs had conquered -- Babylonia, Syria, Palestine, Northern Africa, Sicily, Southern Spain. They spoke and wrote Arabic. They exchanged ideas with the Arabs. As a result of this contact, philosophic study was stimulated among our people and they produced a number of remarkable philosophers beginning with Saadia and Solomon Ibn Gabirol, and culminating in Maimonides, philosophers who influenced the thought not alone of Jewry but of the Christian World as well.

For the Jews in the Middle Ages were in contact not alone with the Arabs but with the peoples of Christian Europe. Jews were the great travelers of the Middle Ages. They carried on the commerce between the Orient and the Occident, between the Moselm East and Christian West. "In the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth centuries, most Mediterranean seaports were bee-hives of Jewish commercial activity". Quite naturally they became the channels through which the learning of

the Arabs, which they had taken over from the Hellenistic world, flowed into Western Europe. This prepared the day for the intellectual re-awakening of the peoples of Europe, for the revival of learning in the thirteenth century.

Jews who knew Arabic helped in the translation of the works of Arab scholars into Latin. We are in possession of hundreds of works on medicine, logic, philosophy, mathematics, which Jews in the Middle Ages translated from the Arabic, first into Hebrew and then, by themselves or by other hands, into Latin. It is through these translated works that the peoples of Europe became aware again of the rich cultural legacy of the ancient Greeks. It is through these translations that they came to know again Aristotle, Plato, and Euclid. This quickened their minds and aroused them from the long centuries of intellectual slumber.

"Of the Arabian authors whose ideas were incorporated into the body of Christian thought", writes Professor Charles Singer, "the most important were Averroes, Maimonides, Avicbron, and Algazel. Two of these, Maimonides and Avicbron, were themselves Jews. The other two, Averroes and Algazel, were perhaps the most widely discussed of all philosophers among the Jews, and their presentation to the West was largely by Jewish hands. It is, therefore, the case that, even apart from their role in the direct transmission of texts, the Jews were of importance in moulding the Western outlook in the period of high scholasticism" -- the dominant philosophy of the Middle Ages and early Renaissance.

The Jews of the Middle Ages were a leavening influence in European thought because they were the carriers of the Arab civilization and the Greek civilization which it inherited, to the Western world.

As far as medieval philosophy generally is concerned -- including scholasticism -- it was throughout largely under Jewish influence. Professor Harry Wolfson of Harvard, at the conclusion of his monumental work on the Jewish philosopher of the first century, Philo, writes:

"Mediaeval philosophy is the history of the philosophy of Philo. For well-nigh seventeen centuries this Philonic philosophy dominated European thought. Nothing really new happened in the history of European philosophy during that extended period. The long succession of philosophers during that period, from among whom various figures are selected by various historians for special distinction as innovators, have only tried to expound, each in his own way, the principles laid down by Philo. To the question, then, "What is new in Philo?", the answer is that it was he who built up that philosophy, just as the answer to the question, "What is new in Spinoza?" is that it was he who pulled it down."

A word should be said about the contribution of Israel to the Protestant Reformation. That movement, too, felt the impact of the spirit of Israel. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the study of Hebrew became very popular among scholars in Europe. We are now in the period of the humanist revival -- the classical renaissance. Men are going back to the original sources to discover the truths which they are seeking. They are going back to the original Greek and Latin, and also to the original Hebrew -- the language of the Old Testament.

The renaissance in Germany expressed itself largely in an effort to understand the Bible. The great scholars of the period which preceded the Reformation, studied Hebrew. Because of their knowledge of Hebrew, they were able to challenge the interpretation of the Bible which was officially given by the

Catholic Church. Ultimately, they were moved to challenge the authority of the church, itself. Protestantism, as you know, denied the infallibility of the church and of its supreme pontif, the Pope. It placed, in their stead, the over-riding authority of the Bible itself.

It may well be said that the movement back to Hebrew was one of the determining factors in the radical religious reform movement of the sixteenth century which we know as the Protestant Reformation.

It is of special interest to note that in one Protestant sect, the influence of the Old Testament was especially preponderant. I refer to the Puritans. Puritanism was a reaction against the moral looseness which prevailed in England during and subsequent to the time of Queen Elizabeth. It was a moral as well as a theologic reformation. The Puritans turned to the Old Testament for their inspiration and made it their very own. It became dominant in their thought and their lives.

In the history of Israel they saw their own history reflected. The Puritans gave their children Old Testament names. They adopted the very speech and idiom of the Old Testament. They became steeped in its thought, mood and ethical discipline. The passion for freedom, which the Puritans manifested and which led them to behead a king and to establish a commonwealth in England in the Middle of the seventeenth century, they derived from the Old Testament.

The historian, Lecky, makes this incisive observation:

"It is at least a historical fact that in the majority of instances the early Protestant defenders of Civil Liberty derived their political principles chiefly from the Old Testament, and the defenders of despotism from the New Testament.

The rebellions that were so frequent in Jewish history formed the favorite topic of the one, the unreserved submission inculcated by St. Paul of the other."

When the Pilgrim Fathers, who were heirs to the spirit of the Puritans, came to these shores, they brought with them this Hebraic love of righteousness, earnestness and sanctity, and they builded their new world commonwealth on the model of the Old Testament.

When in the latter half of the eighteenth century the American colonies revolted against England, their spokesman and spiritual leaders found their authority for the revolution in the pages of the Old Testament -- Moses leading the children of Israel out of Egyptian slavery; Samuel admonishing his people not to ask for a king; Nathan denouncing King David; Elijah, King Ahab and Jeremiah, King Zedekiah. The first seal of the newly established government of the United States had upon one side of it the figure of Moses leading the Children of Israel out of Egypt. On the Liberty Bell which is now in Philadelphia, they inscribed the words from the Book of Leviticus: "Proclaim Liberty Throughout the Land Unto All the Inhabitants Thereof."

So down to the very close of the eighteenth century we find the spirit of Israel -- still active, leavening, and powerful in the molding of the thoughts of men and nations.

What are the contributions of Israel in the modern world? I should like to dwell a moment upon the contribution of Israel to the economic life of the peoples of Europe. Israel made essential contributions to the economic institutions

of the European peoples. In the development of modern capitalism, Israel played a decisive role. Because of his international connections and because of his constant migrations, some involuntary as a result of expulsions and some voluntary at the behest of trade -- the Jew in the Middle Ages became a leader in commerce and trade. The feudal system contributed to the development of capitalism among the Jews. Jews were excluded from the three estates -- the clergy, nobles and commons -- into which feudal society was organized, and so they concentrated on commerce, trade and the professions. The Jew was forced out of many activities in which he normally might have engaged. He was more or less restricted to the one occupation of money-lending. As a result, the Jew became the banker of the Middle Ages and developed nearly all of our modern agencies of credit and exchange upon which commercial life today is built. He originated the system of securities and the discounting of bills. He played a large part in the founding of the stock exchanges.

And just as Jews played a major role in the development of modern capitalism -- banking, credit, corporations -- so did they play a major role in the development of socialism, the antithesis of capitalism. The classic text-book of modern socialism was written by a Jew -- Karl Marx. Leninism or communism, which is today triumphant in half the world, is a detailed copy of Karl Marx. His was the blueprint and he was the father of the famous communist Manifesto of 1848. Thus, in both spheres of economic thought -- in capitalism and in socialism, Jews played a most decisive role. In passing, it might be said that for the sins of both capitalism and communism the Jewish people was made to pay a terrible price.

It should be remembered that our people won their political enfranchisement in modern times only with the advent of the French Revolution. Yet, in spite of the legal disabilities and the restriction of educational opportunities, in spite of being ghettotized and isolated from the surrounding cultures of the day, the Jewish mind continued to function creatively in almost every sphere of human thought right through the Middle Ages down to our day.

Take Spinoza! If the English people have a right to claim credit for Hume and Berkeley, and the French for Descartes, and the Germans for Kant, then the Jewish people has an equal right to claim credit for Spinoza. Spinoza was a Jew, born a Jew, educated as a Jew. His first books which he studied were Hebrew books; his first contact with philosophy was through the works of Hebrew philosophers. And no man influenced European thought in the last three hundred years more than Baruch Spinoza.

Spinoza's thought was essentially Jewish in spite of the fact that the Amsterdam Jewish community excommunicated him. There were political reasons for that excommunication. Spinoza's theocentric thought, his exalted ethical idealism, his noble faith in the dignity of human life and in the capacity of man to rise to limitless heights of self-development -- these are fundamental Jewish concepts in line with the best traditions of Jewish thought.

It was a Jew, David Ricardo, who founded the science of political economy; it was a Jew, Lazarus, who founded the science of racial psychology; it was a Jew, Freud, who founded the science of psychoanalysis; it was a Jew, Michaelson, who pioneered in the field of mathematical physics and discovered the speed of light. It was another Jew, Albert Einstein, who ushered in the atomic age. Were

one to attempt to enumerate the role which Jewish physicians played in the science of modern medicine, one would need more than an hour merely to enumerate the names of those who contributed vital discoveries in this sphere -- a sphere in which Jews have been preeminent from earliest times.

One finds Jews today in the forefront of the arts -- decorative arts, pictorial arts, plastic arts, music and the dramatic arts. In science there is hardly a branch of physics, chemistry, mathematics, astronomy in which one does not find Jews in the very front ranks. The number of Jewish Nobel Prize winners exceeds by far their proportion to the total population.

In the revolutionary uprisings in the last one hundred years, when peoples fought for their political liberation, in Hungary, Austria, Germany, France, or Russia, one finds sons and daughters of our people among their most honored leaders, heroes and martyrs. Of them it might be said what the foremost German lyric poet, Heinrich Heine, said of himself:

"Whether my songs are praised or blamed matters little to me; but on my grave lay a sword; for I was a soldier in the war for the liberation of man."

When you realize that our numbers were always, and are still relatively few, in comparison with the vast population of the world, and when you reflect upon the extraordinary contributions which Jews have made to the sum total of human knowledge in modern times, you are filled with a sense of pride. Undoubtedly the inbred Jewish love of learning, the priority given at all times to study and education, the centuries of training which the Jewish mind received in schools and Talmudic academies, helped to nurture their intellects and sharpen, as well as satisfy, their intellectual cravings.

Collectively, Israel's greatest contribution to mankind is, I believe, its constancy through the ages to two fundamental ideas: God and moral idealism. If there is one strand which runs clear and discernible through the entire tapestry of our people's history, it is this: God and morality. In the ancient world of idolatry, superstition, slavery and despotism, Israel preached God and moral idealism; in the Graeco-Roman world of decadence, Israel preached God and moral idealism; in the dark ages of cruelty, fanaticism and ignorance, Israel held aloft the torch of God and moral idealism. And in the modern world of materialism, of bitter racial and economic strife, Israel still holds aloft the ideals of God and moral idealism. This unbroken spiritual ministry, this heroic prophetic persistence through the ages, is perhaps Israel's greatest gift to mankind.

It is my conviction that only as we remain true to these two superlative ideas of our heritage, that we shall continue to play a vital role in civilization.

Wherever wrong is enthroned, wherever injustice devastates life, wherever tyranny oppresses mankind, wherever hate sets man against man, there the sons and the daughters of Israel should find their instant challenge. Wherever materialism threatens to dominate human thought, wherever moral laxity sets in, wherever self-indulgence and vulgarity begin to make life ugly and desolate, there Jews should be found in the very front-line of attack. In this sense, and in this sense, only, can Jews claim to belong to a people chosen and set apart by destiny.

When I behold Jews trying to compete with non-Jews, not in the fields of intellectual pursuits and the things which contribute to human progress; when I behold Jews trying to out-do, out-play, out-build and out-shine the non-Jew in material pursuits alone, I feel that they have somehow lost contact with the heroic spirit of their race, that they have dissolved the ties of spiritual kinship with the giants of their race, with the genius of their race.

Even a brief scanning of our history is sufficient to convince men that in spite of tribulations, dispersions and persecutions, our people has exercised a mighty influence upon civilization. In them the ancient prophecy has been fulfilled: "And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples. As dew from the Lord, as showers upon the grass, unlooked for and unawaited by the sons of men." I am also convinced that our people has not yet said its last say in the world, nor bestowed its ultimate blessing.

Rome is dead; Greece is dead; Babylon is dead; Egypt is dead. These peoples whom we knew thousands of years ago -- mighty and powerful peoples -- are dead. Israel lives, lives affirmatively and creatively in the world to this day.

As Jews we have two things to do in the world. First, as individuals we must see to it that we are always marching with the best and most advanced thought of the world; that we develop ourselves to the highest point mentally, spiritually, morally. Our strength through the ages has been the strength of ideas. Our fortress was never the moated castle, never the armor of steel. It was always the fortress of the mind and the heart. There no hostile armies, no bigotry and no intolerance could reach us. Our security in the future must lie in the same impregnable citadel -- the mind and the heart.

We must never put our faith in possessions, in wealth, in numbers or even in the good-will of our neighbors, because these are shifting and inconstant. As in the past, we must put our trust in intellectual commitments and in spiritual dedications. There we are indefeasible, eternal.

Secondly, we must exert ourselves to the utmost to establish in the world and to build into the structure of society the two life-motifs which emanated from the very soul of our people: God and humanity. We must lift that torch high through the darkneses of the world, under all conditions and circumstances. Sometimes that is extremely difficult and fraught with danger. But that is our sacred covenant and the compulsion of our mission. The world needs these truths today as much as it needed them in the pagan world, in the Graeco-Roman world, in the Middle Ages.

Men have drifted away from God. They have drifted into a neo-paganism. They have placed their faith in the creations of their own hands, in the power of scientific machines, in mis-applied applied sciences. These machines are now turning upon them ready to rend and destroy them!

The world needs God today as it never needed him before. The world today needs the Jewish ideals of justice and brotherhood and peace more than it needed it at any time in the past. The struggle which has now engulfed our world and which is threatening to destroy it -- the economic struggle -- the struggle of the masses against the classes; of the dispossessed against their exploiters can only be resolved by applying courageously Israel's ancient code of moral sanity, justice, fairness, freedom and peace for all men.

A marvelous heritage is ours, and a marvelous history! An equally marvelous future awaits us. If we prove ourselves worthy of our great past, we shall be found worthy also of a great future.