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Rosh Hashonah, 1932.

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY RABBI SILVER ON NEW YEAR'S EVE IN THE TEMPLE
September 16, 1936

Our Jewish people assemble on this New Year's Day in their various places of worship throughout the world in a rather depressed and somber mood. Heavy hearted they face the new year. The past year brought very little of joy and comfort to them. It was a year of continued persecution in Germany, of bitter strife in Palestine, of anti-Jewish riots and excesses in Eastern Europe and of growing hostility towards our people in many other parts of the world. Seldom has the Jewish people been attacked on so many fronts at one and the same time.

On the very eve of our Holy Day season, the air about us has been filled with vile vituperations and the coarse, brutal attacks of the shameless Nazis at their party conclave in Nuremberg. From their lying throats there has poured forth a stream of calumny and falsehood calculated to defame our people in the eyes of the world and to arouse mankind against us. No scene in the darkest of the dark middle ages can be conjured up to compare with this unbelievably ghastly scene of 1936, ^{when} within sight and hearing of the whole world the rulers of a nation of sixty-five million souls - a supposedly civilized nation - shrieked forth their hard defiance and hatred of the Jews and hysterically summoned the whole world to destroy them.

It has also been a sad and dreary year for the millions of our people in Poland and Roumania, and a year of fear and dread uncertainty for our people in Austria. In these countries there was constant agitation, at times leading to physical attacks and small scale pogroms to drive the Jews from trade, industry and politics, to isolate and impoverish them and, if possible, to force them out of the country entirely.

In England, France and the United States anti-Semitism has ceased to be a negligible factor. Powerful interests are capitalizing on it; although

as yet it has not gone much beyond the whispering stage and occasional scurrilous pamphleteering.

In Palestine our work of upbuilding and redemption, of peaceful pioneering labor which has proved a blessing to the entire population and which has received universal acclaim has been brutally interrupted by widespread acts of terrorism, vandalism and murder on the part of misled and politically inflamed Arabs. Thus, even in Palestine, where we had hoped to build a refuge of peace for the weary and the homeless of our people - even there has the sword of discord, hate and envy entered. Verily, the year 5696 "was winged with red lightening and tempestuous rage." It was a stormy year for Israel and for humanity, and the year is now setting in the midst of ominous storms and darkness.

How, then, shall we Jews face the coming year - the year 5697? In fear? In despair? No, not at all! That is not our traditional way - the traditional Jewish way. Our way has always been the way of hope, of undefeated optimism, of undaunted courage. The Jewish way has always been to scan the record of any dark unhappy experience which may ^{have} ^{our people} befallen / to distill out of it its essential truth and lesson, and to say: *אולי בפר* "This, too, will lead to something good." Our way has always been to turn our backs upon a dark unhappy year, upon all of its sorrows and failures and oppressions, and on New Year's Day to enter the sacred precincts of our synagogues, to drink deep of the rich consolations of our faith, and facing the New Year with eagerness and rekindled hope to say: *אולי בפר - אולי בפר* "A good year - a good and better year is coming!"

The year 5697! The very figure 5697 might well ^{serve as} a draught of

confidence to us, a message of reassurance. 5697 - why that is practically the whole span of recorded human history and our own history is practically co-extensive with that. We count our year in the thousands! Our history begins at the very dawn of civilization. We have lived long. We have outlived much. We have survived many and seemingly mightier nations. We have successfully defied death in numerous epochs and countless places. There is nothing new in our national experience whereof it can be said: "See, this is new." It has already been over and over again. No persecution is new to us. No device to undo us is quite novel - no calumny, no mad Jew-baiting that we have not heard before. Our blood has been spilled in many a land. Our tears have been shed in many a place. Our martyrs have died under many a strange unfriendly sky. Nevertheless we have continued our march through the centuries undefeated and unbroken. And now it is the year 5697. ^{again,} And while our enemies rage without and take counsel together "against the Lord and His anointed" we assemble again, by the millions, in our synagogues throughout the world and we raise our voices again in a mighty chant of life and hope and faith. We sound the shofar and exaltingly proclaim the words of that divine promise given to our forefathers long ago: "For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall My covenant of peace be removed", saith the Lord.

How shall a race like ours, mindful of such a past, face its immediate future when such a future seems dark and menacing? The great English bard, Tennyson, somewhere wrote:

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self control
These three alone lead life to sovereign power."

Our forefathers of old knew these three mighty attributes of sovereign power. Hence they lived victoriously, regardless of chance or circumstances; and, we suggest that these three qualities should recommend themselves ^{also} to us, their descendants today.

Self-reverence is the one strong shield left to a man whom other men seek to belittle and to degrade. It is more than a shield. It is a coat of mail that none can pierce. To be safe from others, one must be safe within oneself. To use a phrase of Abraham Lincoln: "One must have a friend inside oneself when one has lost all other friends." That friend inside oneself is self-esteem.

Our enemies are everywhere today seeking to destroy our pride and our self-respect. Just as in Germany they would deprive us not only of our civil rights but of our human dignity as well. They would defile our honor, besmirch our race, mock our faith and belittle our contributions to mankind. Many of our enemies suffer from a terrible inferiority complex which has contorted their hearts and their minds and has made of them sadists and tormentors who wallow in insults and defilements and in the sufferings of other men. Through the million-tongued mouth of propaganda, they now shout to the world that we Jews are materialists, egoists, cultural parasites, exploiters, enemies of law and order, fomentors of civic disorder and revolution - in a word the arch criminals of the world. Our only answer to such mendacious falsification has always been in the past and must be now an impervious and impenetrable self-respect, the massive, sculptured stateliness of our own pride, based upon that other mighty attribute of power - self-knowledge.

Our self-respect tells us that we are not dependant upon the world's character references and recommendations.

We know our own worth. And when a group or a section of society turns bitter and venomous against us, we will not be discomfited or demoralized. We know our own strength. And even in the midst of our bitterest persecutions we can despise and pity our persecutors for they can bruise our bodies but cannot scar our souls.

How often during the long centuries, ~~and~~^{of} the dark ages, did the Jew have to humble himself before his oppressors, to flatter, to crave favors, to beg? But in his heart he despised them when he did not pity them. Life forced him to be physically subservient to them but not intellectually nor spiritually. He knew how to preserve his inner pride through self-knowledge. His mind and heart remained intact. And when the era of emancipation/^{finally}dawned for our people at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when physical and political subservience was finally lifted, Israel's heart and mind poured out its living treasures of undefiled, spiritual and intellectual genius, and Europe was astounded at the sight of the number of great scholars, scientists, artists, statesmen, philosophers and leaders of men generally, which this people, seemingly so beaten and broken, suddenly produced.

Self-respect derives from self-knowledge. One of the three maxims which were inscribed on the great Temple of Apollo at Delphi was: "Know thyself!" To know ourselves, our history, our achievements, our contributions to civilization is to drink the tonic of a wholesome pride. We can then listen to the ranting of intellectual starvelings and cripples like Hitler, Goebbels and Rosenberg with contempt and disdain. We know them for the dogs which bark at every caravan. But the caravan moves on...

At the time that Tacitus, the great Roman historian of two thousand years ago, ^{wrote the story of} ~~found~~ the German ancestors of the ranting Nazi dervishes of our

he found them
day/ coarse barbarians in their northern forests, gluttons, idlers, gamblers and drunkards when they were not fighting. Israel had already completed its Bible, had already given a God and a moral law to the whole of mankind, broken the back of idolatry and let loose in the world the dynamics of ethical concepts and ideals which have molded Western European civilization to this day. This same Tacitus wrote of the Germans of his day: "The object they specially seek is a certain volume of hoarseness, a crashing roar, their shields being brought up to their lips, that the voice may swell to a fuller and deeper note by means of the echo." Their descendants today still excel ^{that} in a certain volume of hoarseness and a crashing roar which have however failed to impress the world. Apoplectic screaming is no adequate substitute for calm reason, cold logic and objective truth.

All this is part of our self-knowledge. And all this helps to give us a proper perspective on our enemies and on ourselves.

When our enemies charge us with being destroyers of nations and civilizations, our knowledge of our history enables us to dissociate the kernel of truth from the shell of falsehood lodged in this accusation. Then we discover that what they charge us with, far from being a curse to mankind, has been a supreme blessing.

To be sure we destroyed cultures and civilizations. We destroyed, for example, the religious culture of the ancient world. We flaunted the religious sanctities of paganism. We denied and defied its polytheism and its idolatry. We ridiculed its deities. We denounced its bloody and immoral rituals - the worship of Moloch which demanded the sacrifice of children, and the worship of Astarte which demanded sacred prostitution. We warred upon the false priests and prophets of these cults for a thousand years. We were hated and extremely unpopular. But we destroyed that culture nevertheless. And

in its place we gave mankind the purified and exalted vision of a God, One, Spiritual, the Source of all goodness, the Father of all men. Yes, we destroyed only to build.

Israel has always been spiritually aggressive^{non-conformist} and defiant. This always antagonizes ^{it} but, also always saves, and liberates.

Christianity, too, was a Jewish spiritual movement which destroyed ancient cultures and civilizations but which erected other and nobler ones upon their ruins. That is why the early Christians, too, who were mostly Jews, were maligned, defamed and persecuted. They were charged with every conceivable crime in the calendar. They were regarded as the enemies of the State, conspirators against the emperor. Julian the Apostate who sought to restore paganism in the Roman Empire just as the Nazis are endeavoring to restore Teutonic paganism today, attacked the Christians of his day almost in the same language and charged them with the identical crimes^{with} which spokesmen of Nazism are charging the ^{Jews} today, and the Christians were crucified and burned at the stake by the Hitlers and the Goebbels of those days.

In the 19th and 20th centuries the Jews were leaders in all the political and social movements of Europe which had for their objectives democracy, liberalism and greater justice and equality among men. The Jews helped and are helping today to destroy cultures and societies which are based on feudal privileges, autocracy in government, superstition in thought and economic exploitation of the masses. Destroyers? No! Rather emancipators and redeemers. Those who are the enemies of freedom and justice and human progress are also our enemies. Hitler always combines a vicious attack upon democracy with an equally vicious attack upon the Jew. The two are seemingly inseparable.

This is part of our inspiring self-knowledge; and if our children would be taught all this - if the rising generation would be properly informed concerning the character of their people and the amazingly significant and decisive role which it has played in the world, they would be shielded against the slings and arrows of a mad and hostile world in which they are growing up.

Self-respect and self-knowledge point to self-control. Self-control is mastery over all that is weak and unworthy in ourselves.

The first mandate of self-control is that we should always act with self-possession in the face of attack. Manifestations of anti-Semitism must not be permitted to stampede us into rash, desperate and unavailing acts, into self-denial or self-accusation. To make ourselves small and insignificant in the hope that our enemies will overlook us, to do less than what we are capable of in the arts, the sciences, the professions, in government or in any other field of human endeavor, out of fear that our pre-eminence may incite the envy of our enemies, is to suffer a major defeat and to give up the struggle without a fight.

Self-control also means that we must not become obsessed with fear and imagine a big, bad wolf lurking behind every bush:

"And you will run even when there is none pursuing you," is a terrible malediction.

"And the sound of a ^{scurrying} ~~crumbled~~ leaf will cause them to fly," is another. We must ^{also} not imagine that we are alone in the world without friends, champions and comrades in arms. On the contrary, all who are friends of human progress are our friends.

Self-control! We must master too the tendency, strong among us, towards sectionalism, divisiveness, ~~xxx~~ rivalries and lack of discipline. Each Jew must

not presume to be an authority on all Jewish questions. We must acknowledge tried and dependable leadership and must faithfully follow that leadership.

We must also control the impulse to run away from our destiny even if it is hard. The wise man remembers that life itself is never a gay and care-free adventure either for men or for nations. There is not a single great nation in the world that has not had its great tragedies, its bloody revolutions and civil wars, its military and economic disasters, its bitter epochs of degradation and humiliation brought on by defeat and servitude.

Suffering is of the very warp and woof of existence - certainly of heroic existence.

Certainly our people has known - suffering. But it has grown strong through that very suffering.

It is ^{always} not only a base and ignoble thing to try to run away from the field of battle. ^{for} It is no longer possible. Escape from Jewish life is no longer possible for the Jew. The choice is now between dragging our banners low in the dust of self-pity and self-recrimination, of melancholy brooding over our sad fate, or the lifting of our banners high to the winds and with the song of the strong and undefeated on our lips, ^{to} march on. The choice today is between being Jews who are builders, who build and maintain Jewish synagogues and schools, Jewish communal institutions, Jewish academies of learning, Jewish efforts for self-defense or being Jews who have no part or portion in Jewish life, who will not bear their share of the burden of Jewish destiny but who content themselves with lamenting from time to time ~~upon~~ the hard lot of being a Jew in the world, ^{reminding} ~~upon~~ the spread of anti-Semitism and ~~upon~~ how the thought of it interferes with their peace of mind.

How shall we face the year 5697? Why in the ^{self} same manner as our forefathers faced the year 4697, the year 3697 and the year 2697... They knew that God spoke to them then.

"Be strong and of good courage, and do it. Fear not, nor be dismayed, for the Lord God will be with thee - He will not fail thee nor forsake thee - until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord."

God speaks to us of this generation in the self-same words of strength and confidence.



ABSTRACT OF ADDRESS DELIVERED BY DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER AT THE TEMPLE, ANSEL ROAD
AND EAST 105TH STREET ON NEW YEAR'S EVE, SEPTEMBER 16, 1936

There are enemies in Israel today who are seeking to destroy our pride and our self-respect. Just as in Germany, they would deprive us not only of our civil rights but of our human dignity as well. They would defile our honor besmirch our race, mock our faith and belittle our contributions to mankind. Many of our enemies suffer from a terrible inferiority complex which has contorted their hearts and their minds and has made of them sadists and tormentors who wallow in insults and defilements and in the sufferings of other men. Through the million-tongued mouth of propaganda, they now ~~say~~ ^{shout} to the world that we Jews are materialists, egoists, cultural parasites, exploiters, enemies of law and order, fomenters of civic disorder and revolution - in a word the arch criminals of the world. Our only answer to such mendacious falsification has always been in the past and must be now an impervious and impenetrable self-respect, the massive, sculptured stateliness of our own pride, based upon that other mighty attribute of power - self-knowledge.

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1. Our Jewish people assemble - *Heavy hearted*
2. On the very eve --- throats --- no scene
3. It has also been a sad --- in these countries
4. In England
5. In Palestine - *Winged*
6. How then shall we Jews --- 5697
7. In Fear?
8. The year 5697! The very figure
9. How then shall a race like ours? --- Tennyson ---
Our fore-fathers
10. Self-reverence --- strong shield --- to be safe --
Lincoln
11. Our enemies are everywhere --- just as in Germany ---
through the million tongued -- our only answer
12. Our self-respect tells us not dependent
13. How often during the long centuries
14. Self-respect derives from self-knowledge --- *3*
three maxims --- we can then listen
15. At the time *that* Tacitus
16. All this is part of our self-knowledge --- helps --
when our enemies charge us destroyers ---
kernel
17. To be sure we destroyed
NAKUL B B N Foul
18. Christianity too was a Jewish spiritual

19. In 19th and 20th centuries the Jews were leaders --
destroyers? --- Hitler always

20. This is part of our inspiring self-knowledge and if
our children

21. Self-respect and self-knowledge point to self-control.
Mastery

22. The first mandate --- act with self-possession ---
manifestations

23. Self-control also means -- not become obsessed

24. Master tendency towards sectionalism ⁽²⁴⁹⁾ control
impulse to run away

25. It is always ignoble

26. How shall we face the year 5697?

WRHS



That same voice

"Winged with red lightening and tempestuous rage."

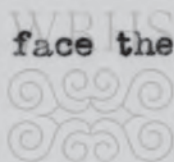
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"The object they specially seek is a certain volume of hoarseness, a crashing roar, their shields being brought up to their lips, that the voice may swell to a fuller and deeper note by means of the echo."

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THE BREAD AND WINE OF SPIRITUAL COMFORT

To the Jews of Cleveland I send my warmest greetings for the New Year. I join with all of our people everywhere in a fervent prayer that the coming year may bring to our people peace and tranquility and unto those of our brethren who live under persecution and in the midst of danger respite from their troubles and surcease from their sorrows.

In a world of moral chaos such as we live in today, one needs the strengthening and the spiritual undergirding of an ancient faith such as ours and of mighty traditions. The profound memory-laden festivals of this season bring to us the boon of a great historic perspective. They speak to us of many trials courageously endured, of victory wrested from the very heart of defeat and of the vanquishing of mighty dark forces which in the past threatened to destroy us and succeeded only in destroying themselves. Thus our forthcoming Holy Days speak to us of courage, confidence and indefeasible faith. We will be wise if we hearken diligently to their message and partake with eagerness of the bread and wine of their spiritual comfort.

Abba Hillel Silver.