



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

Featuring collections from the Western Reserve Historical Society and
The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives

MS-4787: Abba Hillel Silver Papers, 1902-1989.

Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

Reel
168

Box
61

Folder
1111

New Year's Sermon, 1943.

The Jewish people is in danger of coming out of this war the most ravaged of peoples and the last healed and restored.

The stark tragedy of our ravage has been abundantly told. It is tragic, ghastly, unredeemed. To rehearse it again is only to flagellate one's self and to gash our souls again and again. But what of the healing? What is beyond the rim of blood and tears? Frankly, to some of us, nothing. We are being comforted at the moment with the hope that the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms and victory will bring the healing of our people.

I am afraid that we are again sacrificing cool, albeit, bitter reasoning and logic, to hopeful beguiling romancing in the void. We are again turning away from history to dreams and to Apocalyses which some of us amazingly enough choose to call realism and statesmanship.

The last World War made the world safe for democracy and granted the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe not only the rights of citizenship, but even minority rights. But it brought also in its wake the most thorough-going, brutal and annihilationist anti-Semitism that our people has ever experienced.

~~Have we forgotten the story? Dare we forget it?~~ And now again, in the second World War, many Jews are hoping to achieve through another Allied victory what an Allied Victory failed to give them after the last war, what a whole century of enlightenment, liberalism and progress failed to give them, peace and security.

They again confuse formal political equality with immunity from economic and social pressures. *They confuse the freedom of individual Jews with the freedom, the Jewish people as such.* The immemorial problem of our national homelessness, which is the principal source of our millennial tragedy remains as stark and as menacing today as it ever was. Yet some Jews are again trying to circumvent it with wishful thinking.

There is a tragic fact which seems to escape so many students of anti-Semitism. The story of Jewish emancipation in Europe from the day after the French Revolution to the day before the Nazi Revolution is the story of political positions captured

in the face of stubborn and sullen opposition which left our emancipated minority in each country encamped within an unbeaten and unreconciled opposition. At the slightest provocation, and as soon as things got out of order, the opposition returned to the attack and inflicted grievous wounds.

And in our day, stirred by the political and economic struggles which have torn nations apart, this never-failing, never-reconciled opposition swept over the Jewish political and economic positions in Europe and completely demolished them. There is a stout block cord which connects the era of Fichte in Germany with its cry of "Jude Verrecke." And so for the rest of Europe.

The Damascus Affair of 1840 links up with the widespread reaction after the Revolution of 1848; the Mortara Affair of Italy; the Christian Socialist Movement in the era of Bismarck; the Tisza-Ezlar Affair in Hungary; the revival of blood accusations in Bohemia; the pogroms in the 80's in Russia; La France Juive and the Dreyfus Affair in France; the pogroms of 1903; the Ukrainian blood baths after the last war and the human slaughter houses of Poland in this war.

a national home. This, my friends, is our persistent ^{national} ~~problem~~ *everywhere a minority - nowhere*

What we are confronted with today is ^{only} the frightful aggravation of a situation which has continuously darkened the pages of our history since the beginning of our dispersion *to this day.*

Now, what is the solution of this persistent emergency in Jewish life? There is but one solution for national homelessness, which is the source, I repeat, of our millennial tragedy. There is but one solution for national homelessness. That is a national home; not new immigration opportunities to other countries for fleeing refugees, nor new colonization schemes in other parts of the world, many of which were so hopefully attempted in the last few decades, down to our very own day, and with such little success.

The only solution is to normalize the political status of the Jewish people in the world by giving it a national basis in its national and historic home. *like*

every other people. No more - no less! It does not mean - all Jews go back to P - Any war - anywhere - back to Europe - that there are Jews everywhere - the Jews are everywhere.

The world finally came to acknowledge the validity of this solution. In 1917 Great Britain issued the Balfour Declaration. This Declaration was not intended to be an immigrant aid scheme, an effort to open up a new avenue for Jewish immigration. Shortly before its issuance, and for many years prior thereto, Jews in very large numbers were finding opportunities for immigration in many parts of the world, especially in the Western Hemisphere.

The Balfour Declaration was a political, national act designed to rebuild the national life of the Jewish people in its homeland.

~~Now, is this my interpretation or is that the interpretation of the Zionists only? Not at all.~~ ^{this} was the universally-accepted interpretation ^{by} of the ^{states men} ~~statements~~ of the world, and of those who were responsible, in the first place, for the issuance of this Declaration. They were thinking in terms of a Jewish Commonwealth, ~~the Jewish Commonwealth, or, as many of them called it, the Jewish state, was to be the natural outgrowth and evolution of the National Jewish Homeland.~~

Mr. Lloyd George was Prime Minister at the time the Declaration was issued. He spoke of a Jewish Commonwealth. President Wilson in 1919 stated:

"I am persuaded that the Allied Nations, with the fullest concurrence of our government and people, are agreed that in Palestine shall be laid the foundations of a Jewish Commonwealth.

General Smuts, who had been a member of the Imperial War Cabinet when the Declaration was published, declared in 1919 that he envisaged an increasing stream of Jewish immigration into Palestine and in generations to come a great Jewish state rising there once more.

The great Winston Churchill, when he was Secretary of State in 1920, declared -- and these are beautiful words --

"If, as may well happen, there should be created in our lifetime by the banks of the Jordan a Jewish State under the protection of the British Crown, which might comprise three million or four million Jews, an event will have occurred in the history of the world which would from every point of view be beneficial and

would be especially in harmony with the truest interests of the British Empire."

This is the immortal life of Israel.

This what the Jewish people are asking for today. We are ~~insisting~~ *asking for* on the faithful fulfillment of obligations internationally assumed towards our people and on the honoring of covenants made with us. We ask for nothing new.

~~No, my good friends, we are not concerned here with ideologies.~~ The reconstitution of the Jewish people as a nation in its homeland is not a playful political conceit ~~of ours, a sort of intellectual thing calculated~~ to satisfy some national vanity of ours. It is the cry of despair of a people driven to the *time and again* wall, fighting for its very life. It is the pressing urgency of instant and current suffering and of the besetting dangers and disabilities today and, I am *also* afraid, tomorrow.

From the infested typhus-ridden Ghettos of Warsaw. From the death block of Nazi-occupied lands where myriads of our people are awaiting execution by the slow or the quick method, from a hundred concentration camps which befoul the map of Europe, from the pitiful ranks of our wandering hosts over the entire face of the earth, comes the cry: "Enough; there must be a final end to all this, a sure and certain end."

How long is the crucifixion of Israel to last? Time and again we have been stretched upon the rack for other peoples' sins. Time and again we have been made the whipping boy for blundering governments, the scapegoat for defeat in war, for misery and depressions, for conflict among classes.

How long is it to last, Are we forever to live *as* a homeless people on the world's crumbs of sympathy, forever in need of defenders, forever doomed to thoughts of refugees and relief? Should not, ~~I ask you fellow-Jews,~~ ought not, the incalculable and unspeakable suffering of our people and the oceans of blood which we have shed in this war and in all the wars of the centuries, the myriad martyrs of our people, as well as the magnificent heroism and the vast sacrifices of our brave soldier sons who are today fighting on all the battle fronts of the world -- should not all this be compensated for finally and at long last

with re-establishment of a free Jewish commonwealth *in P.?*

Is not this historic justice and is this world today not reaching out so desperately ~~and so pathetically~~ for a new world order of justice? Should we not be included in that world order of justice? Are we not deserving of it?

Myriad Jews after this war will have to find new homes. #
We can not truly rescue the Jews of Europe unless we have free immigration

into Palestine. We can not have free immigration into Palestine unless our political rights are recognized there. Our political rights cannot be recognized there unless our historic connection with ~~that~~ country is acknowledged and our right to rebuild our national home is reaffirmed. These are inseparable links in

the chain. The whole chain breaks if one of the links is missing. Do not beguile yourselves. Do not let anyone beguile you with the thought that the Arabs in Palestine or the colonial office, for that matter, which at the moment seems to be synonymous -- that the Arabs in Palestine will consent to large scale immigration into Palestine as soon as we give up our idea of a Jewish commonwealth. They are not that naive, they are opposed both to a Jewish commonwealth and to Jewish immigration.

acknowledged in Mandate - 52 - copies
If we surrender our national and historic claims to Palestine and rely solely on the refugee philanthropic appeal, we shall lose our case as well as do violence to the historic hopes of our people. On the basis of sheer philanthropy, of satisfying pressing immigration needs, Palestine has already done its full share for Jewish refugees. It has taken in more than one-half of the total Jewish refugees of the world, and the Palestine Arabs and their sympathizers in England and here have been quick to point out that Palestine has already done all that can be expected from small country and far more than most of the larger countries have done. It is because Palestine is the Jewish homeland that we have the right to insist upon unrestricted immigration. It is because of the historic connection of the Jewish people with that land ~~of~~ *that* the mandatory government in the first place undertook to reconstitute it as a national home and pledged itself to facilitate Jewish immigration and the close settlement of the Jews upon the land; in other words, it is on the national idea that the upbuilding of Palestine as a place of

*Have we not
built it?
Those who
are concerned
with post-
war*

large scale Jewish immigration has always rested and can alone continue to rest.

Our right to immigration in the last analysis is predicated upon the right to build the Jewish commonwealth in Palestine. ~~They are interlinked and inseparable.~~

Fourth - Nat. Rehabilitation - .היהל, נחלה, פל"מ, פ"י, נ"א



New Year 1943
RH-43

I send my warmest New Years greetings to all the members of our Jewish community of Cleveland.

I pray that the coming year will be the victory year for our country and for all the free peoples of the world. We are encouraged to look forward to an early termination of this war by the magnificent and decisive victories which our country and our brave Allies have scored during the past year. The clouds seem to be lifting and our hearts are filled with high hope and confidence.

We are looking forward humbly and prayerfully to the day when our shaken and shattered world will find respite again from strife and hate and when man's broken brotherhood will at last be restored. Men are everywhere longing for a chance to live again in peace and freedom with none to make them afraid.

But should victory over our foes and the foes of mankind not be granted unto us during the coming year, we pray for strength and perseverance to carry our burdens and our sacrifices unfalteringly until the battle task is completely and triumphantly accomplished.

At this season of the year we pray also for our valiant sons in the armed services of our beloved country who by their heroic struggle are preparing the way for the better day to come, and for a juster and kindler world. May our Heavenly Father guard and shelter them!

Abba Hillel Silver

9-16-43

1/ I welcome - 5704 - and I Pray - Year of Victory & Peace.

The Year now ending has been - a Year of War & Sacrifices
and for our people - the most tragic year in its history.

But it has also witnessed the Turning, the Tide, Battle -

Not the End, the Reprieve - But quite def. the Beg., the End

The Solid Axis Front is Broken - The invincible Wehrmacht is
in disastrous retreat - in its 4th year, war.

The Heart of Germany is being burnt out - its cities reduced
to cinders and rubble.

2/ We celebrate N.Y. with lighter hearts - at any time in recent years
Even the Exactions & ~~Penalties~~, war are still with us. Its heavy
Taxes - Its shortages & scarcities.

Above all - the absence of our boys - away at war - facing the
real hardships - and danger.

We are inordinately Proud of them - country - good account
Nevertheless, Our hearts are lighter ^{on this N.Y.} the brighter prospect of an early

3/ But the more solemn & sobering Message, the Day should
not. escape us.

R.H. is not / ~~just~~ / 115 - It is / ~~just~~ / 115 - The Day of Remembrance

The ~~day~~ / 115 - The day of alarm!

Outstanding Ceremony - - 20th. -

Not a sweet, cultivated sound, pleasing to the ear

But a wild, rude, ~~challenging~~, in penous sound.

As if it summoned, ^{challenged} ~~urged~~, admonished -

~~to be~~

4) What is it that it wishes to tell us? This the only instrument
It played great role on high occasions - Its message was
regarded as profound - 1911/12 1931, 1945, 1948

Why Blessed? And what is there to understand?

The historical moments on which will appeared may
give us the clue.

5) Its ~~message~~ origin as a religious symbol is traced
to father of our Race - Abraham - 2000/1700 -

This act took place of R.H. - Hence will - to remind.

X^① Here there is First Message will - 14-15 = Sacrifice

- Ideals are tested by Sacrifices.

- All truly good & desirable things in life are established &
conserved thru S!

- Love and Friendship thrive upon it. Honor & integrity cannot
exist without them

- Our Freedom and Liberty were won thru S - and are
cemented in blood & tears

- When men & nations no longer care enough about them
to fight for them & die for them - they lose them.

- When powerful nations stood by - and witnessed - and
refused to intervene - ^{independence - isolation} human race was doomed
to slavery & Dictatorship -

- And how was to doom we were!

- Just a moment before it was too late - we caught ourselves
on 50 battle fronts - To preserve Freedom - You
must eschew ^{all} considerations of self-interest - Ease
and Sacrifice for it.

It does not require Martin Luther + Saenger to prove that ⁽³⁾
2x2 are 4. Logic is Scientific observation - an experiment

- But Love. Honor. Faith. Freedom are true & valid only for men if they ~~test~~ ^{demonstrate} them by their S.
- Unless they do - they simply vanish from their habitations and Hate - Jealousy - Envy - Greed - take their place.

First - 12th

6/2 12th sounded also at Sinai - 10 laws - 12th

- What was proclaimed at Sinai? Law!
- Just as Phys. Universe - governed - invariable - irrefragable
- So Moral & Sp. " "
- And just as ~~the~~ disregard - disaster
- Society must be governed by Law - not men!
- No man - no class - no leader above Law -
- And it is one Law - not 12 - for Jew & Gentile
- Rich & Poor - Whites & Negroes - White & Black
- All races - creeds - colors come with in Sanctuary & Protection of God's uniform Moral Law.
- Our Ages planted Law. It set with 7 Tables
- Slavery war - planted the Law - not the Law not the Law

Second - 12th

7/1 12th sounded on 7th and the occasion - Jubilee Year.
on each 50th year - 12th.

③ Object is clear - To save men from irredeemable Slavery
landlessness & Poverty.

Part of Great Social Justice Program, Proph. Judaism

"Do not oppress thy brother"

"If thy brother was poor - surely help him!"

- וְאַתָּה יָדָעְתָּ -

- Unless there is Social Justice - there is Civil Strife!

- There is Revolt + Political Violence.

A Reign of Injustice is always followed by a Reign of Terror

- Justice, being destroyed, will in turn destroy"

- Our age has given abundant evidence of it.

- Fundamentally - the frightful social upheavals of our day
- Violent bitterness, Communism + Terrorism - are
due to the struggle, the masses for greater sharing,
econ. security - aq. econ. degradation + misery.

- Outreaching of yearning spirit, man - 1937 and on.

+ We Lend - lease to other nations - to fight for us
Why not Lend. Lease to our Fellow-citizens - domestic
poor - Poverty - Shames - Unemployment - Dependence
Insecurity?

- Think - Econ. Justice - .26/1

8). On this another occasion will - to be recorded
on the day of national redemption from Exile - B'nai B'rith
the immortal life of Israel!
Read - always prayed for it - never relaxed its efforts.