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Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

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New Year's Sermon, 1950.

ABSTRACT OF SERMON PREACHED BY
RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER AT THE NEW YEAR'S SERVICE
OF THE TEMPLE, EAST 105 STREET AND ANSEL
MONDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 11, 1950

On the surface of things it looks as though our times are not propitious for moral optimism or idealism. There is a danger of a defeatist mood sweeping over our people, especially our young people, a mood of "Oh, what's the use." Just five short years ago we were at war, and now we are at war again! We defeated one dictatorship and we are now confronted with another. Again our lives are to be dislocated. Again we are to be separated from our homes and our careers. Again the draft, the camps, the uniforms and the casualty lists! What have we experienced since 1914 but wars and revolutions, the ruin of cities and countries, class struggles, the extermination of millions, violence, hate, plotting and propaganda. All about us one hears nothing but the talk of cold wars, shooting wars, preventive wars! Our generation has shed its blood to win two wars for freedom and peace, and what did we achieve but new dictatorships and new wars! We are today re-arming our former enemies and mobilising against our former allies. In the name of democracy we are extending economic aid to notorious dictators on the right and on the left. What hopeless, disastrous confusion! Why speak of building a better world and why challenge men and women to clean up such a cloaca maxima - such a dreggy, slimy world!

We shall be utterly lost if we give way to such despair and cynicism. Our age is not the worst of all ages. In many ways it is a great age - one of the greatest. The mind of man is scoring epochal triumphs, revolutionary advances. It is his spirit which is lagging. Hence, the pulling apart, the tensions, the discords, the pessimism. There were darker ages than ours, and from them mankind nevertheless emerged to clearer days and brighter prospects. It is important for us to raise our sights and look far ahead.

Ours may well be the dread, dark hour of uncertainty and hesitation before the dawn of a new and happier age, an age of greater peace, security and well-being for the whole of mankind. Long and cruel centuries of human greed and oppression, of exploitation, imperialism, and the enslavement of nations and races do not end peacefully and do not pass over into a new age of freedom, justice and peace without a terrible and painful wrench. Such times are times of trouble and upheaval, of the clashing and confounding chaos of ideas. The foundations of the earth tremble. Storms rage. Terror and death stalk across the face of the world until all the detestable things are removed and pass away.

But the Herculean labors of mankind are nevertheless going on in spite of the confusion and strife. Many oppressed peoples which have long been denied their freedom, have achieved or are in the process of achieving their independence. They are on the road to a new and better life. They long-exploited working masses of the earth have gained and are gaining in our day greater competence, security, dignity, and a higher standard of living. Knowledge is increasing and so is the wealth of the race. Earnest and determined efforts are being made by brave and undiscouraged men everywhere and by nations to find the way which will lead both to freedom and social stability, both to the sovereignty of nations and to their dynamic organization and action for the preservation of peace. Long and hard is the way and many are the pitfalls, but there is a way, there is a goal, and the faithful sons of light do follow it unswervingly.

We cannot always wait to do the thing which needs to be done until we see the road clearly ahead of us. Sometimes we must act in faith and in courage, even when we do not know what lies ahead. Sometimes we must move forward through mist and fog. "If we could know where we are," declared Abraham Lincoln, "and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do and how to do it." And yet, Lincoln was not deterred from action by the doubts and bewilderments which beset him. He did what had to be

done with the material and the opportunities which lay at hand, trusting that what he was honestly striving to do was within the pattern of the true and abiding design of human progress.

Regardless of how vast our world is, how rigidly organized, how ruthlessly coordinated, the individual man and woman is still its moral nucleus. In the long run society will reflect the fundamental moral aspirations of the individual men and women who compose it; that is to say, of those men and women who are determined enough and willing enough to make their moral wishes felt regardless of the cost to themselves. This nuclear moral energy which is released by the individual can disrupt seemingly immovable worlds of hardened tyranny and injustice. There is always room for the pioneer! There is always need for the dreamer of great dreams!

Rosh Hashanah reminds us not to despair of the future, nor of our own strength, nor of mankind's inexhaustible spiritual resources nor of God's cooperation. If we have reverence and love for the human spirit and faith in its unfailing resurgence, we shall succeed in the end. This may be called mystical, but men do not live by the logical, but by the mystical. They do not die for the fact, but for the faith.

To: William Dinwoodie, Cleveland News
Louis Gale, Cleveland Plain Dealer

September 7, 1950

Mr. Frank Stewart
Cleveland Press
Cleveland, Ohio

My dear Mr. Stewart:

I thought you would be interested in receiving an abstract
of the address which I am to deliver on New Year's evening,
Monday, September 11th, at The Temple.

With all good wishes, I remain

Most cordially yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

AHS:er
Enc,

1) heart-marks - to the pl - Recurrent View - 19
abandon - God's will - moral order - Repentance - Inspiring
(Quote)

2) God Waits - Heathen Woman - Insider - From Within -
co-creator Dignity to honor

3) 216 216 - Scale -

4) Not easy-going - confession - No Physical Birth - Not easy
reconstructed - But no one is alone - Must make the effort

5) Judaism not an easy Religion - Summery - 1134 - Even if
momentarily - Not Peace, Mind Pitiful - "All Southern
the truly good and great - Suspicious Truth
The Bible - as an heroic adventure - Persecution
"To the Stars by hard way" - Soul is stirred Truth

6) Let no man say - futile - Mass age dream The great days
111111 - Orphaned - Repects 1111 111111
God has established - Eternal plans - affected - Turbulent
man should strive - 111111 - Quote

7) None of us can see - But Jud - hey and all honzars
the stars - seed - certain - justified - total presence

8) Our Sages can travel us - depreats - 111111 - "Say not thou
Each age moves - In every age - inclined - 111111
leader - matches

9) Things may not look promising - material -
Reparations how vast - moral unclear - In long run -
Unclear every - if released - Pioneer

10) On surface - not promising - defendant word - Just
1914 - 1111 Wars - Rearming - aid What happens
Why speak - closeda Maxima

11) Utterly lost - not want - great - Darker Raise sights
(Quote) - may well be long & cruel Herndon caution
111111 1111 111111 - Reverence - 1111