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Rosh Hashonah, 1956.

NEW YEAR MESSAGE

DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

1956 - 5717

For the New Year 5717 I send all my good wishes to the Jewish community of Cleveland. May the coming year bring well-being and happiness to all our households and prosperity and peace to our beloved country.

Our New Year has through the long history of our people served as an occasion for self-examination and re-dedication. It is a summons to us to turn our thoughts away from the material to the spiritual pursuits of life, from the temporal to the eternal. It is a call to men and women to restore order and perspective in their personal and family lives. It is a reminder to us to re-examine our relationship to the institutions of religion and human service which make for the perpetuation of our glorious faith.

Many are the needs of our people here and abroad. Grave are the problems of the world. Herein is challenge to every loyal Jew to rise to the needs of the hour and to do his share.

As we pray for a good year for ourselves and our families may we also resolve to help make it a good year for all of our fellowmen by dedicating ourselves to those tasks which help to build the Good Society on earth.

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

NEW YEAR MESSAGE

DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

1956 - 5717

8/6/56 - RH-56 - mailed to Mr. Morris J. Janoff
The Jewish Standard
924 Bergen Avenue
Jersey City 6, New Jersey
for use in their paper and other
publications of the American Association
of English-Jewish Newspapers.

As we enter the New Year 5717, prayerfully and hopefully, the Jewish people are confronted with two compelling responsibilities.

The first is to maintain and strengthen the agencies of Jewish survival, especially schools for the training of our children and academies of Jewish learning. We owe it to ourselves as the heirs of a noble religion which has carved a highway for the civilization of mankind. We owe it to our youth, that their lives might be enriched and guided by the exalted ethical ideals of Judaism. We owe it to America, as our contribution to the spiritual life of this gracious land which has given us, and all other citizens, such rare and precious privileges of freedom, equality and human dignity. Everywhere there seems to be a stirring of new religious interests and a revival of religious loyalties. Our hope is that they will continue with increasing momentum as the years go on.

*letter filed
in "J" for
Jewish Std*

The second major obligation of our people is to continue uninterruptedly their efforts to maintain and strengthen the new State of Israel which has so magnificently performed the heavy tasks which the Jewish people placed upon it. It has ingathered hundreds of thousands of our refugees for whom the world had no room; it has integrated them into the life of the new State; it is providing a home for tens of thousands who are still coming into it annually; it has built many institutions of culture, health and education of which world Jewry can justly be proud; it is rapidly moving towards economic stability.

Israel is, of course, beset today with many serious political problems. It is surrounded by irreconcilable governments who seek its destruction. The Near East generally is seething with political crises. In all this there is additional challenge to the Jews of America to rally to the economic and political defense of Israel.

The proclamation of a new State is in itself an immensely difficult achievement. The maintenance of a new State through its formative years, the normalizing of its economic life and the attainment of political security in a disturbed region of the world are infinitely more difficult and prolonged. I am sure that our people fully realize this fact and will remain mobilized for the long pull ahead.

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

As we enter the New Year 5717, prayerfully and hopefully, the Jewish people ~~are~~ ^{are} ~~in~~ ^{confronted} with two ~~sole~~ ^{compelling} responsibilities.

The first is to maintain and strengthen ~~the~~ the agencies of Jewish survival, especially ~~our~~ schools for the training of our children ~~in the faith of their~~ ~~people~~ and ~~the~~ academies of Jewish learning. We owe it to ourselves as the heirs of ~~the~~ ^a noble religion of mankind which has carved a highway for the civilization of mankind. We owe it to our youth, ~~so~~ ^{that} their lives ~~may~~ ^{might} be enriched by the ~~great teachings~~ and guided by the exalted ethical ideals of Judaism. We owe it to America, as our contribution to the ~~total~~ spiritual life of this gracious land which has given us, ~~as well as~~ ^{and} all other citizens, such rare and precious privileges of freedom, equality and human dignity. Everywhere ~~one senses~~ ^{there seems to be} a stirring of new ~~religious~~ ^{religious} interests and a revival of ~~loyalties to religious commitments~~ ^{loyalties}. Our hope is that ~~they~~ ^{they} ~~this~~ will continue with increasing momentum as the years go on.

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ABBA HILLEL SILVER

RH-56 ①

1/ Men and women - from all walks of life - young and old - pursuing a variety of interests and careers - have come to this one place on this R. H.

Why? What common purpose has drawn them here?
What makes it possible for them - great distances apart in their vocations - professions - positions - to unite here in common worship - to pray in unison - and experience the communion of ~~one close~~ fellowship.

2/ It is the summons of the human spirit - the call of the human soul - whose basic needs are the same for all ~~of us~~ men.

It is ~~the~~ ^{our} inner being, ^{which are essentially alike} ~~of our essential humanity~~ ^{which} must have ~~its~~ ^{their} day for self-examination and self-judgment, if we are to fulfil our destiny as children of God.

This solemn day and this solemn season are an annual rendezvous with our immortal souls.

3/ R. H. and Y. K. are not national holidays - celebrating some important event in the history of our people - ~~as the~~ ^{as the} or a combination of agricultural seasons and historical events like 1703, 1812 or 1860.

R. H. and Y. K. are the holidays of the human soul - dedicated to our inner ~~life~~ ^{personal} worlds, so complex, so tangled and troubled, and so much in need of ^{periodic} assessment and orientation.

4) Man, as such, is the center of these dramatic days, ⁽²⁾
Through the impressive rituals and symbolism
of these days man is summoned to confront his
own conscience -

Called upon to remember grave and momentous
things about himself.

Yom Kippur - Yom Kippur - A day of remembrance
and of the blowing of the trumpets.

5) Trumpets were blown in ancient Israel on the
occasion of each new moon - and R.H. marks
the new moon of the 7th month - regarded as the
most important of all.

Trumpets were also blown when war threatened - or
- at the approach of the Jubilee year - ~~at~~
and they were accompanied by the startling
and challenging blasts of the Shofar - the ram's
horn.

In this way people in ancient Israel were
aroused - alerted and reminded.

6) What does R.H. - the Yom Kippur exaltation, with its
echoing and remembering Shofar sounds - wish
to remind us? What possibly forgotten lessons
does it wish us to recall?

That we are mortal, sinful men, ^{and} not immortal
gods? That our days are swifter than a
weaver's shuttle, and are consumed like smoke?

Such sad reflections are part of all ~~the~~ profound (3)
meditations of the human heart. They are inescapable, and, ~~unless~~ we do not permit them to overwhelm us, ^{they} are salutary correctives ^{to} ~~for~~ ^{preventing} our ^{over-}pride.

However - what this day wishes us to remember is not how lowly but how exalted we are - that we are fashioned in the image of God - that we are co-workers of God in Creation - that we can accomplish wonderful things on earth if we exercise rightly our God-given powers and endowments. (BORN) -

And when we fail to exercise these powers - through wilful neglect or indifference, we sin against God and our own immortal souls.

For this is the true meaning of sin! a self-degradation - a voluntary abandonment of status - a ~~self~~ self-surrender to the lowest in man, instead of an upreaching to the highest.

7/ In each of us there dwells - in ystics called (BORN) 7/16
"a Hidden Light"

Most of us die with only the smallest fraction of ~~the~~ flowing, radiating potency of this inner light revealed and made manifest.

most of us - ^{are} too engrossed elsewhere or too lazy - to
pry open the shutters, and let that precious
light shine forth - and illumine our world.

And so our souls weep in darkness - in the
darkness of frustration and non-fulfillment
of ten in the very midst of our worldly triumphs
and gaiety.

The call of R. H. is to the light - to the light - to the light

8/ the deepest hurt which can inflict upon ourselves
is not to give ourselves the chance to enjoy
true greatness.

I do not mean greatness in terms of wealth,
or power or show.



~~Too~~ We are all-too prone to reach out for that
kind of greatness - and often break our
hearts in the effort.

I refer to greatness as human beings - great
in sympathy; in service; in learning and in
the quest of truth; great-hearted in bearing
burdens that other shoulders ~~may~~ ^{might} be
eased a bit;

Great as parents, as sons and daughters, as
husband and wife; as friend; as citizen.

9) This penitential season offers us an opportunity (5)
to check upon ourselves. Have we been enriching
our lives or constricting them?

Perhaps what we have been doing is not really
worth the strain and tear of our tired hearts -
the friction and waste of our precious years.

Perhaps we have not been ~~following~~ progressing
on a ~~clear path~~ purposeful journey towards
a clear objective, but are frantically moving
on a ^{hopeless} head-wind, going faster and faster to no
purpose.

10) If so - if we have been the victims of a wrong direction
of self-delusions, of attitudes and ambitions and
activities which shrink and degrade us - then
is Return - the possibility of Return! (-, 19, 20, 21)

In Judaism there is always available for man
the wine of a new hope; the song of a new
morning!

The wrong which we have done to ourselves and
to others, should be atoned for by repentance
and restitution.

But what is desirable for man's development is
not "the dark, backward look" - but the vision
of a newer future to which he resolves to
devote himself.

On the base - monument - Leon Gambetta - Paris 6
- "No one can forbid us the Future"
This ^{inspiring} principle is one of Judaism's outstanding contributions
to the religious thought of mankind.
No single wrong - or series of wrongs "forever" dooms
a man or a nation.
There is no "Forever" in the moral consequences of
human conduct. There is always a turn. (bk p. 136)

- 11) Jud. is mankind's religion of Hope and Renewal.
- The most persecuted and hunted of life - most hopeful
and confident of life.
After every natural disaster - spirit recovers - rebuilds
and moves forward again.
First Exile - (Babylon)
Second Exile - 2500 B.C. -
Spanish Expulsion - Isaac Abravanel =
The 1648 - - C 1310 B.C. -
Hitler and the 6 millions - - 2,500 B.C. to 1945 -

12) This, of course, the very meaning of the Messianic Hope -
"There is a better day coming" - a day of light and
not of darkness - justice - peace - brotherhood -
Work for it! Pray for it! It will surely come!

Our people accepted this cruel buffeting - purpose
in it all - for the "making of the nation" -
Israel assigned a role - in shaping of humanity

in the development of human conscience. (7)
Hence its indomitable clinging to life - its capacity to
rise from ruin and slaughter and tragedy - time
and again.

13). But - there can be no such hope - unless there is
~~of course~~ a strong faith in a living God!

• Society cannot rely upon sc. achievements, - ~~perpetuation~~
of tools - mechanization and automation to bring
about the Good Society.

The same stones can build a Palace and a Dwell place -
The same cutting tool can be fashioned into a
sword or into a plow share.

Perfection of means ~~is not the same as~~ do not
exclude confusion of goals.

Our ultimate goals - human freedom, equality -
justice, peace, compassion - are religious
ideals, not scientific theories.

They belong to the "Sanctuary" - not the "Laboratory" -
- the human heart - not the Test tube.

14) We have seen in our own day - how outstanding
progress in sc. fields - hand in hand - with
cruel dictatorships and dark terror, brutality
- war and destruction - // Optimism of 19th cent

15) You listened, I am sure, to the proceedings. Two major -
- esp. utterances - Spokesman and Standard Bearer

In them were heartening peroration addresses - Youth - (8)
touching the future of our country & the world
they were encouraged to dream "of a brave and
shining new world".

"the material things that make life interesting
and pleasant can be available to all"

"There will be leisure and abundant educational
and recreational facilities, so that all will be able
to develop the life of the spirit - of religion, of the
arts"

16/. It is good that our age is again reaching out
for the Utopian dream - on guard against
losing its hopes - primarily as to progress and
technology.

These did not save mankind - 1st + 2nd world wars
on 3rd - Great tragic divisions - Cold War -
- Armaments - Disturbance Racial antagonism


A wide-spread delusion - increased leisure & education
will encourage man to develop the life of the spirit
and of Religion.

Leisure and learning - ^{open} led men and nations - down
the primeval path - VIC - degeneration - decline

and fall
The ^{very} center of the life of a civilization can fall apart
if Religion is banished -

the most delicately wrought fabric, the most advanced (9)
society can be torn to tatters - see Satan
and his cohorts are let loose in the world - and
when there is no God - Satan takes his place.

17/ What must come first at all times, at all
stages of social life - is the conscious
development of the life, the spirit - of Religion
this is the only sure foundation - upon which a
stable society can be built

18/ The electronic brain will not replace the kingdom
of God on earth. The desert heart which will
do justice... 

19/ These - my friends - are the things which we are asked -
wished to remember in R.H.

And when we pray פנינו נכבד - let us also pray
that it be כבודי נכבד
פנינו נכבד

" And they shall build the old wastes,
They shall raise up the former desolations,
And they shall renew the waste cities,
The desolations of many generations. "

Is. 61.8-11

After seventy years are accomplished for Babylon, I will remember you, and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place, for I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

~~And ye shall call upon Me, and find Me, when he shall search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord, and I will turn your captivity, and gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord; and I will bring you back unto the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive. * * *~~

Thus saith the Lord: Yet again there shall be heard in this place, the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that say: Give thanks to the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good, for His mercy endureth forever.

Jer.

(Selections from Jewish Literature)
(IV Jeremiah 19-31-33)
(p. 102)