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Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

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New Year, 1961.

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RH-62

ROSH HASHANA SERMON
DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER
September - 1962

My dear Friends:
present

OUR AGE HAS FOCUSED ITS ATTENTION ON DISTANT SPACES
AND ON FAR-AWAY THINGS. PEOPLE ARE ^{excited} ~~DEEPLY INTERESTED~~ TO
FIND OUT HOW FAR MAN CAN GET AWAY FROM THE EARTH, AND HOW
^{and how often} SPEEDILY HE CAN ORBIT AROUND IT. THE HEROES OF OUR DAY ARE
THE ASTRONAUTS, THOSE CAPSULED NAVIGATORS OF OUTER SPACE.
WE HAVE BECOME ^{in truth} WATCHERS OF THE SKIES! GREAT NATIONS ARE IN
FEVERISH COMPETITION TO REACH THE MOON, AND TO SEND ROCKETS
TO PLANETS MILLIONS OF MILES AWAY.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY HAS ^{inaugurated} ~~GIVEN US~~ WHAT MIGHT BE CALLED
"THE AGE OF THE TELE". TELE, ^(TAYE), IS A GREEK WORD WHICH MEANS
FAR, FAR OFF. THIS CENTURY HAS GIVEN US THE TELE^{phone}GRAM AND THE
TELEGRAPH, THE TELESCOPE AND TELEVISION. NOW WE HAVE THE
TELSTAR.

THE EXPLORATION OF OUTER SPACE ^{is} ~~HAS NOT BEEN~~ ^{the} ~~AN~~ IDLE
PAST-TIME OF A FEW GEO-PHYSICISTS AND ENGINEERS. IT IS IN-
CREASINGLY ENGROSSING THE THOUGHT, LABOR AND WEALTH OF
NATIONS. ~~WE HAVE BECOME VERY EARNESTLY CONCERNED ABOUT IT.~~
^{own} OUR NATIONAL BUDGET HAS COME UNDER A DISTURBING, SOME SAY
A BALEFUL PLANETARY INFLUENCE. THERE ARE THOSE WHO HAVE
EXPRESSED THE FEAR THAT THE COST INVOLVED IN OUR SPACE

EXPLORATION IS SUCH THAT WE MAY BE OVER-REACHING OURSELVES. ADDED TO THE STUPENDOUS OUTLAYS FOR ARMAMENT, AND OUR FOREIGN AID, WE MAY BE SPENDING OURSELVES INTO BANKRUPTCY AND COLLAPSE. SUCH OVER-REACHING HAS HAPPENED TO PEACEFUL NATIONS IN THE PAST.

I AM SURE ^{however} THAT THIS COSTLY ADVENTURE INTO SPACE WILL NOT BE ABANDONED, ESPECIALLY NOW THAT THE UNDERTAKING HAS COME TO HAVE A POLITICAL, EVEN MORE THAN A SCIENTIFIC OBJECTIVE. ~~BUT~~ EVEN APART FROM THE COMPETITIVE AND PRESTIGE FEATURES INVOLVED WHICH HAVE GIVEN UNDUE PRESS TO SPACE EXPLORATION, ^{as well as value} HASTE AND WASTE, MAN'S ⁱⁿ ERADICABLE CURIOSITY ^{would} ~~WILL~~ INSURE ITS CONTINUATION. WHAT IS UNKNOWN WILL ALWAYS INTRIGUE AND CHALLENGE THE QUESTING SPIRIT OF MAN.

BUT IN ALL THIS COMMENDABLE AND INEVITABLE, EVEN IF COSTLY EFFORT, ONE FACT MUST NOT BE OVER-LOOKED! HOWEVER FAR WE ^{travel} ~~GO~~ IN SPACE, ^{however far we move along the asphal ways.} WE CAN NEVER ~~GO~~ BEYOND OURSELVES. WHEREVER WE GO WE CARRY OURSELVES ALONG, WE ARE BOUND TO ^{remain} ~~LIVE~~ IN OUR OWN ^{private} ~~PERSONAL~~ WORLD, OUR WORK, OUR FAMILIES, OUR CIRCLE OF FRIENDS, OUR COMMUNITY. WE MUST INESCAPABLY LIVE WITH OURSELVES!

WE MIGHT PARAPHRASE PSALM 139: "WHITHER SHALL I GO FROM MY SPIRIT?, IF I ASCEND UP INTO HEAVEN, I AM THERE; IF I

TAKE THE WINGS OF THE MORNING, AND DWELL IN THE UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE SEA, EVEN THERE WOULD MY HAND LEAD ME AND MY RIGHT HAND WOULD HOLD ME. "

PLANES MAY SPEED US TO THE MOST DISTANT LANDS AND, FROM LAUNCHING PADS, WE MAY BE HURTTLED FAR ~~OUT~~ INTO THE OUTER REACHES OF THE UNIVERSE. BUT WHEREVER WE GO OR LAND AND HOWEVER FAST WE TRAVEL, OUR BODIES AND OUR SOULS, OUR INSTINCTS AND OUR PASSIONS, OUR VIRTUES AND OUR VICES ^{will} GO WITH US.

WE SHOULD ^{also} ALWAYS BEAR IN MIND THAT ALL OUR TELE- COMMUNICATIONS AND OUR TELE-TRANSPORTATIONS HAVE NOT GIVEN US A HAPPIER OR A MORE PEACEFUL WORLD; AND THAT WE ^{cannot and} SHALL NOT BE BUILDING JUSTER AND NOBLER COMMUNITIES ON EARTH BY DESPATCHING AND LANDING A FEW ASTRONAUTS ON THE MOON. ALWAYS AND EVERYWHERE MAN REMAINS MAN, AND HIS BASIC NEEDS AND ^{fears and prejudices} APPETITES REMAIN UNCHANGED.

THIS, TOO, WE SHOULD REMEMBER. HOWEVER FAR WE EXTEND OUR DOMAIN INTO THE SPACIOUS FIRMAMENT, THE REAL KINGDOM OVER WHICH WE ^{can} EXERCISE ^{any} DOMINION, THE TRUE DOMAIN OF OUR SPIRITUAL SOVEREIGNTY ^{will always} ~~CONTINUES TO~~ LIE WITHIN THE FRONTIERS OF OUR OWN HEARTS. FROM IT FLOW ~~ALL WEAL AND WOE~~, ALL GOOD AND EVIL FOR OURSELVES AND FOR OTHERS. HERE AND HERE ALONE

WE HOLD CROWN AND SCEPTRE BY DIVINE RIGHT. ^{Our} ~~THE~~ CREATOR ~~OF~~
~~ALL~~ ^{all} HAS ENDOWED US WITH THE FREEDOM TO EXERCISE WILL AND
CHOICE IN THE LITTLE WORLD WHICH IS OURS. THE RIGHT OF ACTION
AND THE RIGHT TO GIVE EXPRESSION TO OUR WILL AND CHOICE MAY
SOMETIMES BE DENIED TO US BY HOSTILE ^{human} FORCES BEYOND OUR CONTROL;
BUT WE CAN NEVER BE DEPRIVED OF OUR INNER FREEDOM, OUR
THOUGHTS, OUR FEELINGS AND OUR ASPIRATIONS AS FREE MEN. OUR
SOULS CAN NEVER BE BRIBED OR COERCED -- IF WE DO NOT WISH IT.

ON A DAY LIKE ROSH HASHANAH WE ARE ASKED TO TURN OUR
GAZE AWAY FROM THINGS FAR AWAY TO THINGS VERY NEAR TO HOME --
FROM TELESCOPE, AS IT WERE, TO MICROSCOPE. IT IS GOOD ^{of course} FOR THE
SOUL ^{of man} TO CONTEMPLATE THE VAST IMMENSITIES OF THE UNIVERSE AND ^{to}
BE FILLED WITH AWESOME REVERENCE AND MYSTIC ADORATION OF ^{the} GOD
WHO CREATED THEM. "LIFT UP YOUR EYES ON HIGH AND SEE; WHO
HATH CREATED THESE?"

HOWEVER, OUR GREAT TEACHERS ^{have} TAUGHT US THAT EVEN IN OUR
QUEST FOR GOD, WE SHOULD NOT LOOK FOR HIM IN THE ^{far away} ~~DISTANT~~ REGIONS
OF THE SKIES, BUT NEAR AT HAND. "GOD IS NEAR UNTO ALL WHO CALL
UPON HIM", "~~AS FOR ME, THE NEARNESS OF GOD IS MY GREATEST GOOD.~~"
^{They wisely reminded us} ~~MAN SHOULD NEVER FORGET~~ THAT "THE HEAVENS ARE THE HEAVENS
OF THE LORD; BUT THE EARTH HE GAVE TO THE CHILDREN OF MEN."
IT IS HERE UPON EARTH ^{where} ~~THAT~~ WE MUST ^{accomplish} ~~MAKE~~ OUR APPOINTED PILGRIMAGE,

HERE LIVE, HERE DIE, ~~HERE FIND WHATEVER LOFTINESS WE SEEK,~~
~~HERE SOAR, NOT NECESSARILY IN SPACE BUT,~~ ^{by way of projected missiles, by the Atlas, Minuteman, etc.} ON WINGS OF ASPIRATION,
INTO THE CLIMBING ALTITUDES OF OUR SOULS.

ON ROSH HASHANAH WE ARE ASKED TO LOOK INTO OUR SOULS,
CLOSELY. HOW GOES IT WITH US INWARDLY? WAS THE PAST YEAR WELL
SPENT BY US? DID WE USE OUR TALENTS AND OUR OPPORTUNITIES ~~FOR~~
~~PURPOSEFUL LIVING~~, WISELY AND WORTHILY? HOW GOES IT WITH OUR
MINDS? HAVE WE ENRICHED ^{them?} ~~OUR STORE OF KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM?~~

"FOR HE WHO DOES NOT INCREASE HIS KNOWLEDGE, DECREASES IT." HOW ^{peace}
GOES IT WITH OUR FAMILY? IS OUR HOUSE IN ORDER? ^{Does it abound in} ~~IS IT SOUND, HAR-~~
^{or discord?} ~~MONIOUS, HAPPY?~~ WHAT ABOUT OUR CHILDREN? ^{Are we giving} ~~HAVE WE GIVEN THEM~~
~~WHAT THEY NEED OF OUR LOVE AND GUIDANCE?~~ ^{or} ~~ARE THEY FIRMLY~~

^{and the Holy Day days!} ~~LINKED TO US IN PRIDE AND AFFECTION OR ARE THEY DRIFTING AWAY~~ ^{far from}
^{us. Set things right! It is late. It is later than you think!}
ROSH HASHANAH WOULD HAVE US FOCUS A MICROSCOPE UPON

OUR OWN ACTIONS, UPON OUR BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES.
HAS OUR CONDUCT BEEN BEYOND REPROACH? AND UPON OUR SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITIES, OUR CIVIC DUTIES, THE COMMITMENTS OF GOOD
CITIZENSHIP -- HAVE THEY BEEN ALL THAT THEY SHOULD ^{Be} ~~HAVE BEEN~~
OR IS THERE ROOM, MUCH ROOM, FOR IMPROVEMENT?

THIS IS THE WORLD WHICH WE ARE ASKED TO EXAMINE ON ROSH
HASHANAH. (122! 83! 16 1477) "SEARCH ME, O GOD, AND
KNOW MY HEART. TRY ME, AND KNOW MY THOUGHTS, AND SEE IF THERE
BE ANY ^{thing} ~~WAY~~ IN ME THAT IS GRIEVOUS, AND LEAD ME BACK TO THE WAY
THAT IS EVERLASTING. " "GO TO YOUR ^{said the poet,} BOSOM AND KNOCK THERE, AND
ASK YOUR HEART WHAT IT DOTH KNOW. "

My dear Friends!

IF WE WISH TO PRESERVE OUR PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE IN
AN AGE ^{in which} ~~WHEREIN~~ MAN MUST STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE AS AN INDIVIDUAL,
WHEREIN THE ROLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL HAS BEEN STEADILY RECEDING
INTO THE BACKGROUND, IT IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT THAT WE SHOULD
LOOK TO THE SOUNDNESS OF OUR PRIVATE LIVES, ~~TO THE INNER~~
~~SANCTUARY OF OUR SOULS~~, TO OUR PERSONAL INTEGRITY AND RECTITUDE,
OUR ONLY MEANS OF RESISTING THE RELENTLESS MERGER TRENDS OF OUR
DAY, THE CORPORATE, ABSORPTION TENDENCIES, AND THE RUTHLESS
FORMS OF ~~POLITICAL~~ DICTATORSHIP WHICH ARE REDUCING THE STATURE
OF THE INDIVIDUAL TO INSIGNIFICANCE, IS FOR US TO ASSERT OUR
INHERENT MORAL AUTHORITY, THE CLEAN SPIRIT WHICH IS IN US, AND
OUR ^{dedication} ~~LOYALTY~~ TO THE MORAL LIFE ^{which is} DEMANDED OF US BY OUR CREATOR
WHO ENDOWED US WITH ^{the} UNALIENABLE RIGHTS WHICH WE CHERISH, ~~AND~~
^{which we} ~~TREASURE~~ AND REFUSE TO SURRENDER.

PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE HAS ALWAYS BEEN VERY DEAR TO
US JEWS. PROFESSOR ALBERT EINSTEIN ONCE DECLARED THAT "STRIVING
AFTER KNOWLEDGE FOR ITS OWN END, LOVE FOR JUSTICE BORDERING
ON FANATICISM, AND STRIVING AFTER PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE --
THESE ARE THE INCENTIVES OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE'S TRADITION, WHICH
MAKE ME REGARD MY BELONGING TO THEM AS A GIFT FROM FATE."

ROSH HASHANAH WOULD REMIND US THAT THIS PERSONAL IN-
DEPENDENCE GOES HAND IN HAND WITH PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY,

THAT NO ONE IS FREE WHO IS THE WILLING SLAVE OF PASSIONS, VICE AND SIN, AND THAT NO ONE IS A SLAVE WHO IS THE WILLING SERVANT OF GOD.

IN OUR NATIONAL LIFE, TOO, WE HAVE BEEN LIVING, I AM AFRAID, TOO FAR BEYOND OURSELVES, IN DISTANT PLACES. OUR PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ASKED TO CENTER THEIR ATTENTION UPON BERLIN, LAOS, VIETNAM, THE CONGO -- ON FOREIGN LANDS, THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY, AND UPON FOREIGN PEOPLES. AS IF ^{indeed} IT WERE IN THOSE PLACES AND AMONG THOSE PEOPLE THAT OUR REAL DESTINY LAY! MANY OF OUR PEOPLE HAVE BEGUILED THEMSELVES INTO THINKING THAT THE LEADERSHIP OF THE FREE WORLD WHICH WE HAVE ASSUMED MEANS THAT WE ARE COMMITTED TO ESTABLISH OR DEFEND DEMOCRACY, BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS AND RACIAL EQUALITY EVERYWHERE, IN THE MOST DISTANT PARTS OF AFRICA AND ASIA, WHILE IGNORING THESE SAME RIGHTS AND FLAUNTING RACIAL EQUALITY HERE AT HOME.

NO ONE WOULD WISH OUR COUNTRY TO ISOLATE ITSELF FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD -- NOR CAN IT. NO NATION IS AN ISLAND UNTO ITSELF. WE ARE ^{of necessity} PART OF AN INTER-RELATED COMMUNITY OF NATIONS. WE HAVE OBLIGATIONS AND COMMITMENTS ^{as they have.} BUT FOREIGN RELATIONS, HOWEVER EXTENSIVE, WILL NOT GIVE US DOMESTIC TRANQUILITY AND STABILITY. A CONTENTED CITIZENRY, PROFITABLY EMPLOYED, LIVING UNDER FAIR AND EQUITABLE LAWS, WHICH ARE JUSTLY ENFORCED

WITHOUT FAVOR OR DISCRIMINATION, WILL INSURE OUR SURVIVAL AS
A FREE NATION AND WILL INSPIRE EMULATION ALL OVER THE WORLD.
// IT IS NOT COMMUNISM WHICH THREATENS OUR ECONOMIC SYSTEM, BUT
THINGS MUCH CLOSER TO HOME -- CORPORATE CORRUPTION AND GREED
IN HIGH PLACES, PROFITEERING SCANDALS, SECRET CONSPIRACIES ON
THE PART OF RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVES TO CIRCUMVENT AND DEFEAT
THE LAW FOR THE SAKE OF LARGER PROFITS, AND CONSCIENCELESS
LABOR RACKETEERING. IT IS THESE EVILS WHICH EAT AT THE ^{very} HEART
OF OUR SYSTEM OF FREE ENTERPRISE.

SOME OF OUR PEOPLE HAVE COME TO BELIEVE THAT ALL THAT ^{is}
NECESSARY FOR THE PEACE AND SECURITY OF AMERICA IS TO FULMINATE
AGAINST COMMUNISM, AND TO POINT THE FINGER OF ACCUSATION AND
CONDEMNATION ~~at~~ ^{on} OTHER NATIONS. MEA CULPA, IS NOT IN THEIR
VOCABULARY! OUR RABBIS TAUGHT US DIFFERENTLY -- ^{הלא תאמרו}

^{לומר} "DO NOT TAUNT YOUR NEIGHBOR WITH THE BLEMISH
YOU YOURSELF HAVE." AND ^{אדם ראשון} "FIRST
ADORN YOURSELF, AND THEN ADORN OTHERS", THAT IS: ^{to say} "BE JUST
YOURSELF, BEFORE DEMANDING IT OF OTHERS". THE ~~ANCIENT~~ PROPHEETS
OF ISRAEL, WHO WERE ^{certainly} ~~NO~~ ENEMIES OF THEIR ^{own} PEOPLE, ~~BUT WHO LOVED~~ ^{them}
~~WITH A BOUNDLESS LOVE~~, WERE NEVERTHELESS UNSPARING IN
DENOUNCING THEIR ^{own} PEOPLE'S FAILINGS AND SHORT-COMINGS EVEN AS
THEY DENOUNCED THE ~~WRONGS~~ ^{doings} OF OTHER NATIONS. "FOR THREE
TRANSGRESSIONS OF DAMASCUS, YEA FOR FOUR I WILL NOT REVERSE

MY JUDGMENT", DECLARED THE PROPHET AMOS, "NOR FOR THE
TRANSGRESSIONS OF GAZA, AND TYRE, AND EDOM AND AMMON AND
MOAB." "BUT NEITHER WILL I REVERSE MY JUDGMENT FOR THE
TRANSGRESSIONS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL." ON THE CONTRARY, GOD'S ~~JUDGMENT~~
JUDGMENT WILL FALL MORE ^{heavily} ~~SEVERELY~~ UPON JUDAH AND ISRAEL. ~~ON~~
~~THE CONTRARY, GOD'S JUDGMENT WILL FALL MORE SEVERELY UPON~~
~~JUDAH AND ISRAEL~~, BECAUSE THE LORD HAD BESTOWED MANY FAVORS
UPON THEM."

הנחמנו בלילה ונחמנו "LET US SEARCH OUR OWN WAYS -- *as a people*
AND EXAMINE THEM THOROUGHLY."

WHAT OF OUR APPALLING NATIONAL RECORD OF BROKEN HOMES
AND DIVORCES? WHAT OF OUR STAGGERING TOLL OF JUVENILE DE-
LINQUENCY? WHAT OF THE SLUMS IN OUR OWN CITIES? WHAT OF THE
RECURRENT OUTBREAKS OF BIGOTRY AND INTOLERANCE HERE AND
THERE, *what gross madness in Mississippi and Georgia, Alabama and St. Louis?*
AGAINST THIS OR THAT GROUP OF OUR CITIZENS? *whose man is never filled, along with that of others*
HUGE WAR-MACHINE, AND OUR NUCLEAR TESTING, WHICH IS POISONING
THE ATMOSPHERE, AND THE MAD ARMAMENT RACE IN WHICH WE ARE
ENGAGED WHICH IS DRIVING OUR WORLD TO THE BRINK OF ANNIHILATION?

IF WE DO NOT REACH THE MOON IN FIFTY YEARS, NOTHING WILL BE LOST.
BUT, IF WE DO NOT ESTABLISH PEACE ON EARTH IN FIFTY YEARS, OURS
WILL ^{end up in being} ~~BE~~ A BURNT-OUT PLANET, WHOSE INHABITANTS WILL HAVE
DESTROYED THEMSELVES ^{by means of megathon} ~~THROUGH FIERY~~ BOMBS AND THEIR POISONOUS
as a puppet of folly to their insatiable vanity and stupidity.
FALL-OUT. A HOUSE-CLEANING IS CLEARLY IN ORDER! HERE IS MUCH
WORK TO BE DONE. HERE IS A CHALLENGE FOR EVERY MAN AND WOMAN.

FORTUNATELY, ALL THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE CAN BE DONE --
IF WE FRANKLY AND HONESTLY CONFRONT OURSELVES -- IF WE
SWITCH THE ^{heaven-seeking} ~~DISTANT~~ SEARCH-LIGHT ONTO THE SCENE HERE AT HOME,
IF WE REFUSE TO BE DISTRACTED BY WHAT IS OVER THERE. ^{THIS}
COMMAND WHICH I COMMAND YOU THIS DAY IS NOT FAR OFF... IT IS
NOT IN HEAVEN, NEITHER IS IT BEYOND THE SEA. BUT IT IS VERY
NEAR UNTO YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART TO DO IT."

FOR ALL THE AMENDS ^{reversals} AND RECTIFICATIONS IN OUR NATIONAL
AND PRIVATE LIVES FOR WHICH THIS HOLY DAY OF ROSH HASHANAH
CALLS, WE REQUIRE COURAGE AND WISDOM AND, ABOVE ALL,
HUMILITY. IF WE ^{hold} ~~BELIEVE~~ OURSELVES TO BE PERFECT, BEYOND ^{any}
REPROACH, IF THE FAULT IS NEVER OURS, AND THE GUILT IS ALWAYS
THEIRS, THERE IS NO HOPE FOR US.

"STILL STANDS THINE ANCIENT SACRIFICE,

AN HUMBLE AND A CONTRITE HEART."

Our world stands in need of this ancient sacrifice -
ענין 31201 > ל"ח, ב' א/כ"א 3156, 277
"In the way of humility, is reversal of God,
prosperity, honor and life."

In addressing a congregation on this Rosh Hashonah, a Rabbi is tempted to take his text from the newspaper head-lines and ~~comment~~ ^{comment} upon them. ^{World news is} They are so tense and alarming, ^{that} and the thoughts and anxieties of ~~our~~ people are naturally focused on them. The fuse of the cold war which has been spluttering for a decade or more seems to be fast ^{nearing} ~~approaching~~ the point of explosion into atomic fires and destruction. Nuclear testing has now been ^{unerringly} resumed by the great powers and threats like brimstone are being hurled ^{at each other} by the responsible ^{heads} ~~leaders~~ ^{governments,} of ~~nations~~, filling the hearts of men with fear and foreboding.

^{To be sure, this} Any message on Rosh Hashonah cannot, ~~of course,~~ ignore the major events of the hour. It must be relevant to what is deeply concerning ^{people,} ~~them,~~ to the living interest ^{of} of the moment. But Rosh Hashonah is a spiritual holiday, ^{and} ~~and~~ whose ancient message addressed ^{not} ~~itself~~ ^{of} only to the life, the hour, the ^{but to} ~~its~~ continuing and enduring life, the ^{eternal} ~~eternal~~ life, if you will, of man -- the ^{points to wider horizons.} ~~points to wider horizons.~~ Rosh Hashonah ^{summons us to contemplate the} ~~unfolds~~ larger perspectives ^{and} ~~and~~

^{We are reminded by the solemn ritual of this day that} ~~And it is because men so often neglect the eternal life, the inner~~ spiritual values and mandates of the soul and busy themselves ~~with~~ exclusively with the scramble and clutching, the scheming and plotting of the life of the hour that so many evils befall them and ~~their society~~ ^{so much unhappiness.}

Our Rosh Hashanah would have us submit the life of the hour to the test of eternity. What is there, really, ~~positive and~~ enduring in what we are doing? ~~Does it all total up to something significant?~~ What permanent good is being added by what we are doing to our ^{own} ~~life~~ or to the life of our community? ^{Or,} ~~are~~ we merely repeating, in dull reiteration, year after year, the same activities, ^{and we end up the year in the same depressed} ~~which leave us set in the same groove?~~ ^{groove?}

pointers

What permanent good is being added by what we are doing to our own life or to the life of our community? Or, are we merely repeating, in dull re-iteration, year after year, the same activities, ^{so} that we end up the year in the same depressed groove? *where we began?*

Of course, these repeated activities may be very important to us. The life of the hour about us, whether national or international, may loom very large, ~~and~~ may impinge sharply upon our daily lives, and may even cause us much pain and anxiety. But, in so far as these activities add nothing to our own spiritual growth, or to the progress and well-being of mankind, they are transient and ephemeral things. They are the news of the day, but they contribute nothing to the newness of life, whether of the individual or of society.

What was really new in the world last year? Certainly not the feuding around Laos, or Berlin, the Congo or Cuba; or the strife in Algeria or Tunisia. Certainly not the harangues of Kruschchev and the counter-blasts of Western diplomats. These, indeed, were the head-lines. But they will appear strange to readers a generation hence, or even a decade.

What was really new? All that was revealed and achieved ^{during the year} ~~by mankind~~ which heretofore had been unknown and unachieved. That was new! All doors to knowledge which were unlocked, all discoveries in the fields of ^{the} sciences, all that advanced man ~~x~~ on his eternal pilgrimage, all that made life more just and noble, and added to the happiness of men, women and children.

That was new! All the victories which were won by mind and spirit over darkness ^{and} ignorance. Man orbiting around the earth, scientists probing the mysteries of outer space, or through research in medical laboratories,

learning how to alleviate human suffering and prolong life, all new sources of energy which were made available, all that was added to man's power and security, ~~that~~ that was new, to be welcomed and treasured. ~~All that~~ *Whatever* belongs to the infinite tasks of mankind, ~~all~~ the noble works of teachers, artists, painters, sculptors, poets, musicians, ~~all~~ the true words which were fearlessly spoken, ~~all~~ the examples of sacrifice and valor in behalf of the freedom of men, nations and races -- these were the new things which came to us, not the old things in new trappings -- like war, and threats of war, like bombs which, for all their unprecedented destructiveness, are only dread refinements of primitive man's lethal weapons of bow, spear, club and battle-ax.

Sending tanks and planes to backward nations to entice them into the global dance of death was not new, nor of any permanent value to civilization, but the sending of doctors and medicines, technicians and teachers, of food and raiment to help them out of their misery and squalor and enable them to reach a new life -- that was new ~~a~~ ^a positive and lasting good, which justifies the hope that some day the sad image of what Man has made of Man will be set aright and Man will unfold in the image of God. This was what was new in the world last year. ^{TP} And what was new in our national life last year? At the celebration of the opening of Johns Hopkins University in 1876, the eminent guest scientist, Thomas Huxley, declared: "I cannot say that I am in the slightest degree impressed by your bigness (i.e. the bigness of America), or your material resources as such. Size is not grandeur, and territory does not make a nation. The great issue about which hangs a true sublimity, and the terror of over-hanging fate is what are you going to do with all these things? What is to be the end to which ~~these~~ are to be the means?"

If this is ^{the} true criterion of national greatness, the end ^{of} the goal -- ^{met this criterion and} what in our national life, during the past year, [^] tended towards the goal of our true destiny?

Everything that we have done as a nation to foster science and education, and to increase the opportunities of our young people to receive an education and a better education, everything that we have done to improve the health of ~~the~~ ^{our} /~~people~~ /^{us}, nation, to provide ^{more} adequate housing, to make employment more secure, and to care ^{more} ^{fully} for the unemployed, ^{everything that we have done} to provide care and security for the aged, to increase the minimum wage ^{of workers} and to broaden its coverage; every step that was taken to end racial segregation, to combat bigotry and discrimination, to ^{promote} increase brotherhood and cooperation among our people -- all that, ^{the} to whatever degree of success, was ^{brought us nearer to our national goal.} truly new and refreshing and added to the real victories of our country. I am not discounting the importance of our gigantic undertakings, political and economic, on ~~the~~ the international scene, but I am persuaded that our major victories which will redound ^{ultimately} not alone to our own good but to the good of the world, will be scored ^{right} ^{at home and} here on our own shores.

If we can demonstrate to ^{the world} ~~mankind~~ ^{man and women} how peoples of diverse origins, backgrounds, creeds and colors can yet live together amicably and cooperatively in a free ~~secure~~ and democratic society, we shall be giving an inspiring example to all the nations of the earth -- the example of unity which our torn and riven world needs above all else.

There is a ~~strange~~ miracle recorded in the Bible. Moses ^{had} led Israel onward from the Red Sea, and they ^{suddenly found themselves in} ~~went into~~ the wilderness of Shur. When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter. The people ^{then} murmured against Moses, saying: "What shall we drink?" And ^{Moses} he cried to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree, and he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet."

"What shall we drink?" And Moses cried to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree, and he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet."

Commenting on this story, the Rabbis said: "We cannot find any wilderness by the name of Shur." They, therefore, expounded the text homiletically. The word Shur means a row, or rank. *The people had indeed, entered* ~~It was indeed~~ a wilderness, because ~~the people~~ *they* had begun to form themselves Shurot, Shurot -- into separate ranks, casts, or clans, each under its own banner. They became bitterly divided. The waters of life then became bitter for them -- Marah. They blamed Moses for the misfortunes which they brought upon themselves. Moses prayed to God for a way out of their troubles. God showed him a tree. The tree is the symbol of unity. *As every* ~~many~~ branches grow out of the one and same trunk, and all receive their nourishment from one and the same soil. Cast the ideal of unity into the bitter divisions and conflicts of ~~racess and peoples~~ *war* and the waters of life will be sweetened and all will drink and be refreshed.

There are those who would like to see our country a wilderness of Shur -- our people divided into hostile camps, white and black, Christian and Jew, Catholic and Protestant, capital and labor. These people would embitter the life of our nation. *They* ~~These~~ have nothing new to say to America. They would not have us move as a united people to new frontiers, *they have grown weary of the backward* a progressive, democratic way of life. They *are content to* ~~only~~ repeat the croakings of an unreturning past.

And what was new in our personal lives last year? Did we just grow a year older? Some of us, I am sure, acquired during the past year new garments, new cars, new homes. But did we acquire also a new outlook? Did we make ourselves new?

What refreshing new contacts and friendships did we make? What new cultural disciplines and interests did we acquire?

I am sure that many of us, during the past year, sought and found new ^{of one sort or another} excitements to drive away boredom and doldrum. But excitement ^{never brings} ~~never brings~~ ^{achievements} ~~about self-renewal~~; they never stir ^{they} the unawakened music in our souls, never ^{increases} ~~increases~~ our happiness or our self-respect. To be restless is not to be ^{aspiring} ~~striving~~ and to be ^{surfeited} ~~indulged~~ is not to be satisfied.

There is a way in which we can renew ourselves with each advancing year and this is the message ^{which} of Rosh Hashonah ^{would bring to us. Rosh Hashonah, as you know,} ~~which~~ does not celebrate a natural season, like spring or harvest time, ^{but} a spiritual season for self-examination, introspect and stock-taking. Its message may be summed up in the Psalmist's prayer:

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me."
(^{2072 630 1105 PH 1-10-11-12 2 1106 21}). 'Ps. 51.14).

We become new men and free men when we face up to our own weaknesses, assume full responsibility for them and ~~set~~ ^{act} about correcting them.

We become new men and free men when we break the idols at whose ~~exacting~~ feet we ^{had} ~~have~~ been prostrating ourselves -- the idols ^{of} position, status, inordinate ambition, the lust for power, the fear of public opinion, and we ^{come to} ~~render~~ homage to the sole God of Truth.

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Ruth Haharak is an invocation for a new and better life for the individuals, the nation and mankind. And what should our response be? ^{1/2/81 21/2 20/20} "I am glad when they say unto me: Let us go into the House, the land" Not the houses! Not the churches! Not the ~~fall-out~~ shelters! - ~~there~~ But the House, the land - there lies hope and salvation for mankind. If we over

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To be sure, the message on Rosh Hashonah cannot ignore the major events of the hour. It must be relevant to what is deeply concerning people, to the living interests of the moment. But Rosh Hashonah is a spiritual holiday and its ancient message addresses itself not only to the life of the hour, but to the continuing and enduring experiences of human life, the eternal life, if you will, of man -- the (Hebrew). Rosh Hashonah summons us to contemplate the larger perspectives of life and points to wider horizons.

We are reminded by the solemn ritual of this day that it is precisely because men so often neglect the eternal life, the spiritual values and mandates of the sour and busy themselves exclusively with the scramble and clutching, the scheming and plotting of the life of the hour that so many evils befall them and so much unhappiness.

Our Rosh Hashanah would have us submit the life of the hour to the test of eternity. What is there, really, ^{enduring} in what we are doing? What permanent good is being added by what we are doing to our own life or to the life of our community?

Or, are we merely repeating, in dull reiteration, year after year, the same activities, so that we end up the year in the same depressed groove where we began?

Of course, these repeated activities may be very important to us. The life of the hour about us, whether national or international, may loom very large, may impinge sharply upon our daily lives, and may even cause us much pain and anxiety. But, in so far as these activities add nothing to our own spiritual growth, or to the progress and well-being of mankind, they are transient and ephemeral things. They are the news of the day, but they contribute nothing to the newness of life, whether of the individual or of society.

What was really new in the world last year? Certainly not the feuding around Laos, or Berlin, the Congo or Cuba; or the strife in Algeria or Tunisia. Certainly not the harangues of Khrushchev and the counter-blasts of Western diplomats. These, indeed, were the head-lines. But they will appear passing strange to readers a generation hence, or even a decade.

What was really new? All that was revealed and achieved during the year which heretofore had been unknown and unachieved. That was new! All doors to knowledge which were unlocked, all discoveries in the fields of the sciences, all that advanced man on his eternal pilgrimage, all that made life more just and noble, and added to the happiness of men, women and children.

That was new! All the victories which were won by mind and spirit over darkness and ignorance. Man orbiting around the earth, scientists probing the mysteries of outer space, or through research in medical laboratories, learning how to alleviate human suffering and prolong life, all new sources of energy which were made available, all that was added to man's power and security --

that was new, to be welcomed and treasured. Whatever belongs to the infinite tasks of mankind, the noble works of teachers, artists, painters, sculptors, poets, musicians, the true words which were fearlessly spoken, the examples of sacrifice and valor in behalf of the freedom of men, nations and races -- these were the new things which came to us; not the old things in new trappings -- like war, and threats of war, like bombs which, for all their unprecedented destructiveness, are only dread refinements of primitive man's lethal weapons of bow, spear, club and battle-ax.

Sending tanks and planes to backward nations to entice them into the global dance of death was not new, nor of any permanent value to civilization, but the sending of doctors and medicines, technicians and teachers, food and raiment to help them out of their misery and squalor and enable them to reach a new life -- that was new, a positive and lasting good, which justifies the hope that some day the sad image of what Man has made of Man will be set aright and Man will be free to unfold in the image of God. This was what was new in the world last year.

And what was new in our national life last year? At the celebration of the opening of John Hopkins University in 1876, the eminent guest scientist, Thomas Huxley, declared: "I cannot say that I am in the slightest degree impressed by your bigness (i.e. the bigness of America), or your material resources, as such. Size is not grandeur, and territory does not make a nation. The great issue about which hangs a true sublimity, and the terror of over-hanging fate is what are you going to do with all these things? What is to be the end to which these are to be the means?"

If this is the true criterion of national greatness -- the end, the goal -- what in our national life, during the past year met this criterion and tended towards the goal of our true destiny?

Everything that we have done as a nation to foster science and education, to increase the opportunities of our young people to receive an education and a better education, everything that we have done to improve the health of our people, to provide more adequate housing, to make employment more secure, and to care more fully for the unemployed, everything that we have done to provide care and security for the aged, to increase the minimum wage of workers and to combat bigotry and discrimination, to promote brotherhood and co-operation among our people -- all that, whatever the degree of their success, was new and brought us nearer to our national goal. I am not discounting the importance of our gigantic undertakings, political and economic, on the international scene, but I am persuaded that our major victories which will redound ultimately not alone to our own good but to the good of the world, will be scored right here at home and on our own shores.

If we can demonstrate to the world how men and women of diverse origins, back-grounds, creeds and colors can yet live together amicably and cooperatively in a free and democratic society, we shall be giving an inspiring example to all the nations of the earth -- the example of unity which our torn and riven world needs above all else.

There is a miracle recorded in the Bible. Moses had led Israel onward from the Red Sea, and they suddenly found themselves in the wilderness of Shur. When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter. The people then murmured against Moses, saying: "What shall we drink?" And Moses cried to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree and he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet."

Commenting on this story, the Rabbis said: "We cannot find any wilderness by the name of Shur." They, therefore, expounded the text homiletically. The word Shur means a row, or rank. The people had indeed entered a wilderness, because they had begun to form themselves Shurot, -- into separate rows, ranks, casts, or clans, each under its own banner. They became bitterly divided. The waters of life then became bitter for them -- Marah. They blamed Moses for the misfortunes which they brought upon themselves. Moses prayed to God for a way out of their troubles. God showed him a tree. The tree is the symbol of unity. Many branches grow out of the one and same trunk, and all receive their nourishment from one and the same soil. Cast the ideal of unity into the bitter divisions and conflicts of men, and the water of life will be sweetened and all will drink and be refreshed.

There are those who would like to see our country remain or become a wilderness of Shur -- a nation divided into hostile camps, white and black, Christian and Jew, Catholic and Protestant, capital and labor. These people would embitter the life of our nation. They have nothing new to say to America. They have grown weary of the burdens of a progressive, democratic way of life. They are content to repeat the croakings of an un-returning past.

And what was new in our personal lives last year? Did we just grow a year older? Some of us, I am sure, acquired during the past year new garments, new cars, new homes. But did we acquire also a new outlook? Did we make ourselves new?

What of our old selves did we scrap? What old, worn, tiresome notions, prejudices and routines did we discard? What old grudges, bad habits, insincerities and self-deception did we slough off like so many clinging barnacles?

What refreshing new contacts and friendships did we make? What new cultural disciplines and interests did we acquire?

I am sure that many of us, during the past year, sought and found new excitements of one sort or another to drive away boredom and doldrums. But excitements never achieve renewal; they never stir the unawakened music in our souls, they never increase our happiness or our self-respect. To be restless is not to be aspiring, and to be surfeited is not to be satisfied.

There is a way in which we can renew ourselves with each advancing year and this is the message which Rosh Hashonah would bring to us. Rosh Hashonah, as you know, does not celebrate a nature season like spring or harvest time. It inaugurates a spiritual season for self-examination, introspection and stock-taking. Its message may be summed up in the Psalmist's prayer: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me."

We become new men and free men when we face up to our weaknesses, assume full responsibility for them and set about correcting them.

We become new men and free men when we break the idols at whose feet we had been prostrating ourselves -- the idols of position, status, inordinate ambition, the lust for power, the fear of public opinion, and when we come to render homage to the sole God of Truth.

We become new men and free men when we lower the barricades which we erected about ourselves and by means of which we hemmed ourselves in, exclusiveness, false pride, snobbery, prejudice, bigotry and when we come to think of all men as brothers -- richer or poorer, wiser or simpler, more or less refined -- but brothers all. In so doing, we lose our fear of men and we build up our strength through theirs.

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Rosh Hashonah is an invocation for a new and better life for the individual, the nation and mankind. And what should our response be? "I am glad when they say unto Me: Let us go into the House of the Lord". Not the barracks! Not the trenches! Not the fall-out shelters! But the House of the Lord -- there lies hope and salvation for mankind. If we choose it, we choose life.

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

ROSH HASHONAH SERMON

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