



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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

Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

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Day of Atonement, 1927.

Yom Kippur 1927

Yom Kippur is a solemn day - a fast day. From the deep, memory-laden strains of Kol Nidre, to the last wistful notes of *Hebrew sup. of mss*, from sunset to sunset, Yom Kippur is a grave, pensive day. Ten days of penitence lead up to it, a rising crescendo of emotional preparation. Ten days of heartsearching and soul-lustration, and then the great holy day of judgement. Alone we stand before our God. Our tangled lives, our gropings, our heartaches, our frailties, our triumphs, all stand revealed. It is a dread day of rapt solemnity.

Our fathers would kindle tall white candles on Yom Kippur eve which would gutter and flicker through the long tense night. They would wrap themselves in their long white shrouds, as if this was, in truth, their final judgement day, And they were preparing to meet their Maker. We, their children, of a later age, are not as much given to symbolic ritual. Ours is a simpler, perhaps a colder ritual. And yet we too feel in the depths of our being the spell of this day, vast, brooding, awe-inspiring. Even the indifferent among us are drawn by the appeal of this day, and those who have been drifting with the tides, lacking both spiritual compass and anchor, return again home, if only for this one day.

And it is a beautiful day, exquisite in the beauty of holiness. All the spiritual grace and artistry of our race are reflected in it. I never think of Yom Kippur Day but what the sheer spiritual beauty of it overwhelms me. ~~xxx~~ ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Great art is to be described not alone in the perfection of line and form and color and sound; in great sculpture, or painting, or music or letters, but also in the great institutions which a people builds. There are degrees of quality: also these reveal the measure of a people's aesthetic refinement. The Jewish synagogue, not the material structure, of course, but the work of spiritual conception of it, is a rare spiritual beauty. So is our Sabbath. So is our Passover. So is our Atonement Day. What fine spiritual insight and dis-

crimination fashioned such a day! And how finely wrought is its liturgy. The profoundest thoughts of man find expression in what is at once ancient, authentic and tender. The deepest reaches of the heart are explored. The richest chords of memory are touched. A great symphonic poem it is, from the slow, stately movement of the Kol Nidre, through the long passages of solemn meditation and confession, through the tragic depths of the memorial hymn - to the last heroic cry at the finale, the cry ~~XXX~~ rises from defeat to victory- *Hebrew sup 2 of m63*

- accompanied by the challenging and upswinging blast of the shofar; the Yom Kippur ritual is one magnificent work of art, created by a ~~XXXX~~ race which works not in stone or pigment or sound, but in heart-throbs and mind-reveries, in pieties and spiritual sanctities.

And in spite of its vast solemnity, Yom Kippur is a hopeful day, a day of ~~XXXXXXXX~~ comfort and healing. For what ~~XX~~ is the very keynote of the day. Repentance, atonement, forgiveness! To a sin-laden world, wherein there is no man that sinneth not, the message of the day is - no sin is unpardonable! No ~~doomed~~ mistake is fatal! No soul is forever ~~XXXXXX~~! Wide open are the gates of repentance - wide open as the sea. There are no depths so deep but what out of them man can call unto God and be heard! Who knows but what the broken sobs which rise from God's children who are lost in the darkest and filthiest depths of life, reach His ears first. Said a Rabbi to a sinner, You sinned, why have you not repented. "I could not, my sin was ~~XX~~ great". And he replied, Is it not written, *the woman of shame* . Did not God forgive Rabat, Rabat, who lived within the walls ~~XX XX~~ - whose body men for and whose soul was dead - did not God forgive her - and raised from her a generation of prophets and sages? Wide open are the gates of repentance. When sin and crime engulf us and we are in thick darkness, when our pride is broken, our friends departed, our name a by-word, our soul a festering sorrow - reach up a bleeding, yearning hand to God - God will reach down ~~XXX~~ to receive you. God will strike light out

needs
 of your gloom. Man cannot do - so say our rabbis. Man must have light with
 which to kindle a light. But God creates light out of darkness. "And the earth
 was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the
 And God said, let there be light - and there was light!"

Man finds it difficult to understand this face of God - the laws which
 God has ordained to give the ~~the~~ spiritual life of man. Even prophets in their
 stern zeal often fail to understand why the ~~repented~~ sinner stands ~~XXXXXX~~ higher
 in the sight of God than the sinless one - and why God forgives the sinner.
 Jonah was sent to Nineveh - a wicked city - announce its destruction - get three
 days more - that was in keeping with a code of justice which Jonah could not un-
 derstand. The punishment must be commensurate with the crime - "The rod must
 heal them". But they repented - forgave them - outraged - Why, Jonah they are
 poor, groping, blind, helpless children - My children -
 Shall I not have pity?

Herein is the great hopeful message of this day. Man ~~can~~ can rise. Through
 ten thousand bells ~~man~~ can rise. Scarlet red - they may become white as snow! The
 world is not ruled by a vindictive despot, a God of vengeance - but by a

a merciful God, "who doeth not desire the death of the sinner, but that he
 should return and live". Man can rise. On the springs of his own depredation
 he can rise. Long before mankind knew the doctrine of ~~XXXXXX~~ biologic evolution,
 our prophetic race announced the doctrine of moral evolution, for man and for
 mankind. The life of the human race is ~~an~~ a spiritual crescendo, rising ~~XXXXXX~~
 through successive defeats and deferrment to ever higher levels - until it shall
 at last attain perfection, in the far-off beyond, there is a golden age awaiting
 the race of man, an age when men shall beat etc., When every man shall dwell etc.
 An age of truth, justice, peace. And our sins, and blundering and wars, are the
 birthpangs of those distant ~~XXXXXX~~ messianic times.

And what is true for the race is true for the individual. His life, too,
 is a spiritual ~~XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX~~ anabasis. No man is born perfect. No man dies per-

eternal sentences
fect. But the intervening years between the two [^] which surround his earthly days, may, if so he will, cherish numberless heights of moral ascendancy (evolution). He may not reach the highest peak of absolute perfection - for after all he is man and not God - but he may mount to levels just a little lower than the angels.

Some religious and systems of philosophy have stressed the meanness and uselessness of human life - the worthlessness of human personality, the purposelessness of our ascendant efforts. Other religions have stressed the innate ability(?) of fate, the helplessness of man in the face of his preordained destiny. All these attitudes derive from a basic Oriental pessimism and they are an acknowledgement of human defeat in the ^{the} face of [^]overwhelming forces of nature, of heredity, of environment, of chance, of the world's wickedness and evil. Not so the Hebraic system of thought. It acknowledges no defeat. It sounds a call to battle. It dignifies life by regarding each human life as holy, and significant, an end in itself. The world was created for the sake of man - and for the sake of each and every man. Man is created in the image of God. How can he then be mean and worthless? Man is a co-worker of God. How can his life be then useless and purposeless? And in his spiritual life at least man is not helpless and predestined but free! Everything [^] may be foreseen - and yet free will is granted to man to determine his own conduct. Everything is in the hands of God - except the worship of God - the upreaching efforts of man for the good and the true, and the beautiful which are the worship of God.

our faith
Even as ~~XXXXXXXX~~, and this holy day which so completely expresses it, emphasize the dignity and freedom of man so do they also emphasize man's tremendous responsibilities. It is man who must rise [^] himself, by his own struggles and upward gropings. Salvation comes not by the grace of God, ~~xxx~~ or through ~~xxx~~ vicarious atonement, but by the acts and exertions of man himself. You, man must yourself take hold of the pillars of the profaned temple of your life, and pull them down, and then you must rebuild a new and unpolluted shrine to the God of

your better self, you must shoulder the burdens of your own moral freedom. You cannot, you dare not, exculpate yourself by shifting responsibility to your heredity, your environment, your lack of opportunity. These are extenuations in the sight of God. You must not employ Him as exoneration for yourself.

A primitive ceremony was in ancient days connected with the Day of Atonement - on Yom Kippur Day the High Priest would select a goat, place his hands upon its head, confess over it all the sins of the people, have it taken by messenger to a cliff outside the city - and then hurled into the abyss. The shattered body of this scapegoat, fed to the demon Azazel was taken by many to atone for the sins of the people. Men often seek scapegoats for their sins, for their moral sloth, their , their drifting and their inactivity. ~~XXXXXX~~ Not so ago it was the fashion among the moral idlers, who were reinforced by a pseudo-scientific doctrine, to blame all human frailty on ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ heredity. We are what our fathers and grandfathers made us, our shortcomings are theirs. Theirs is the sin and theirs is the responsibility. This is a disastrous doctrine, unmanly, craven, and demoralizing. A more frank and courageous attitude is urged in our liturgy -

More recently it has become the fashion to blame delinquencies upon early training and environment. This attitude, too is being reinforced by a pseudo-scientific doctrine of behaviorism. That too is unbecoming man's high estate. To be sure, both heredity and environment are very powerful factors in a man's life, and a realization of it should make men and women terribly concerned about the hereditary qualities which they transmit to their children, whether they will for be a blessing to them or a curse, and about the physical and spiritual environment within and without the home, with which they surround the children. But they are not the only factors in the formation of a man's life and character. The man

himself has a decisive role to play in his own life - in the upbuilding of his own character. Virtues may be cultivated or neglected. Vices may be eradicated or accentuated. ~~XXXX~~ Tastes may be refined, sympathies may be broadened. And man himself, by dint of self-mastery, by the exercise of his will, by resoluteness and persistency, may remake his life, redirect his purposes and be spiritually reborn.

Man's preeminence over the beast is in the exercise of his moral will. It is when we meet temptations and do not succumb to them, when we encounter ~~XXXXXX~~ obstacles and bravely surmount them, when we are visited by sorrow and bereavement, and courageously carry on, when we suffer for righteousness' sake and do not give in, it is then that we truly indicate our manhood. It is then that we are truly men, in the verisimilitude of God.

Thus, Yom Kippur is not only a solemn day, and a beautiful day, but also a ~~happy~~ hopeful day. It stresses the elements on human life which make for progress and happiness, forgiveness, redemption, freedom, the value of life, the power of the human will, responsibility and self-reliance.

It makes a magnificent appeal to the best in us. Man! Rise from your lowliness and your defeat. Wash you. Make you clean! Great and heroic is your destiny. You are meant to rule the earth. Vast capacities of mind and soul are yours. ~~XXXXXX~~ Undreamt of ~~XXXXXX~~ realms of splendor await your courageous, adventuring spirit. Why remain here, tied down to your mean little vices and your petty, hindering sins. They are betraying you! They are robbing you of your birthright. Knock off their shackles! Arise! Wash you and make you clean! Let not the power that is in you waste and ebb away. Let not the music that is in you die! Behold! Free and open are God's highways before you! Beautiful and fresh are the uplands! Magnificent is the forest! Rich is the garden! Spread out your wings, fill them with the desire of the skies, go forth to meet the sun!

1. YK is a solemn day - a fast day. From the deep, memory-laden strains, the Kol Nidre, ^{to} ~~the~~ the last ~~whispering~~ ^{whispering} notes, the ~~herald~~ ^{herald}, from sunset to sunset, YK is of a grave, serious day. 10 days of penitence lead up to it ^{a rising awareness of emot. preparation!} ~~great solemn day~~ ^{great} 10 days of heart-searching - and soul-lustrations - and then the day of judgment! ^{our naked souls} ~~Alone we stand before our God. Alone we stand before the august solemnities of life - and by them are our actions weighed. our tangled lives, our groping, our failing, our triumphs, our heart-aches...~~ ^{all is laid revealed.} It is a dread day of rapid ^{sp. tension} ~~sp. tension~~. Our fathers would kindle tall white candles on YK eve which would gutter and ^{flicker} ~~burn~~ then the long night, and they would wrap themselves in their ^{long} white shrouds, as if, ~~in very truth~~ ^{in truth} this was their final judgment day - and they were preparing to meet their ^{Maker}. ^{WRHS}  We, their children, of ^a ~~this~~ later age, are not as much given to ^{severe} ~~symbolic~~ ritual. Ours is a simpler perhaps a colder ritual. And yet we too feel the in the depth of our ~~fast~~ being the spell of this day - brooding, vast, awe-inspiring. ^{over}

I never think of YK day, but what the sheer sp. beauty it overwhelms me.

2. And it is a beautiful day - exquisite in the beauty of ^{its} ~~the~~ ^{in it} ~~in this~~ day. All the spiritual grace and artistry of our race is reflected in this day. Great art is to be discerned not alone in the perfection of line and form and color and sound - in great sculpture, in painting or ^{or letters} ~~music~~ ^{great} but also in the institutions which a people ^{builds} ~~creates~~ ^{over} ~~the~~ Jewish Synagogue - not the mat. structure ^{could} ~~but~~ the spirit. concept of it, is a work of rare spiritual beauty. So is our Sabbath. So is our Passover. It is our Anniversary Day. What fine sp. insight and discrimination

Even the indifferent ^{men among us} are drawn by the appeals ^{this day} and those who have
been drifting with the homeless tides, lacking both Sp. Am.
pass and anchor, return again home, if only for this
one day —

There are degrees of quality, and refinement also there which
reveal the ^{measure of a people's} ~~aesthetic~~ sense of a people — refinement.



[illegible]

4. Man finds it so peculiar to understand this
 part - the laws ^{which} God has ~~ordained~~ ^{ordained} for the life of
 man. Even prophets, often fail to understand
 why the repentant sinner stands ^{in light of} ~~right~~ ^{right} then
 the unrepentant one - & why God punishes the sinner - ^{unrepentant}
 Gomah was sent to Nineveh - a wicked city - Ammon

tries. ~~Some~~ ^{TP} And what is true for the race, is true for the ⁵ individual. His life too, is a sp analysis. - No man is born perfect. No man dies perfect. But thru the intervening years bet. the 2 ^{which surround his earthly life} eternal sciences ~~of~~ ^{man} may, if so be will, ~~ascend~~ ^{ascendancy} climb numberless heights of moral ~~growth~~ ^{evolution}. ^{He} ~~He~~ may not reach the highest peak of absolute perfection - for after all ^{he is} ~~we are~~ man and ~~not~~ ^{he} ~~not~~ but ~~he~~ may mount to levels just a little lower than the angels -

6. Some religions, ^{typical philosophy} ~~have~~ ^{WRHS} shunned the mean-ness and uselessness of human life - the worthlessness of human personality, the purposelessness of ^{all human} ~~all human~~ ^{efforts} ~~efforts~~. Other religions ~~have~~ ^{WRHS} stressed the inevitability of fate, the helplessness of man, ^{it is the fate of} ~~the~~ ^{his} ~~the~~ ^{pre-} ~~destined~~ ^{destiny}. All these attitudes ^{arise} ~~arise~~ ^{from a} ~~from a~~ ^{fundamental} ~~fundamental~~ ^{basic} ~~basic~~ ^{oriental} ~~oriental~~ ^{perspective}. They are an acknowledgment of ^{human} ~~defeat~~ ^{in the face of} the overwhelming forces of nature, of heredity, of environment of chance & the world's wickedness and ^{evil} ~~evil~~. Not so the Hebrew system, that ^{which} ~~which~~ ^{of} ~~of~~ ^{acknowledges} ~~acknowledges ^{no} ~~no ^{defeat} ~~defeat~~. It ^{is} ~~is~~ ^a ~~a ^{call to} ~~call to ^{battle}. It depicts life ^{as} ~~as ^{an} ~~an~~ ^{end in itself} ~~end in itself ^{valuable} ~~valuable~~. The world was created for the sake of man - for the sake of each & every man! Man is created in the way of fate. How can he ^{therefore} ~~be~~ ^{man} ~~man~~ ^{useless} ~~useless~~. Man is a creature of fate. How can his life be ^{useless} ~~useless~~ & purposeless? And in his sp life at least man is not helpless & pre-destined.~~~~~~~~~~~~

but free l.

but free. Every thing may be forgiven - and yet free will is
 planted to man to determine his own conduct.
 Every thing is in the hands of God - except the unship
 of God - the upreaching efforts, man for the good, and
 the true, & the beautiful which are the worship of God.

7. Even as our faith, & this holy day which so completely expresses it, emphasize the dignity & freedom of man - they also emphasize ^{man's} tremendous responsibilities. It is man who must rise - himself by his own struggle and upward striving. Salvation comes not by the price paid ^{for them} or by vicarious atonement, but by the acts and struggles of man himself. You, man, must take hold of the pillars of the prepared Temple, your life, and pull them down - and then you must rebuild a new and unshakable shrine to the God ^{& your better self} - you must ~~for the~~ shoulder the burden, your own moral freedom. You cannot, you dare not ~~seek refuge behind~~ in exculpation ~~and~~ yourself by shifting responsibility to your heredity, your environment, your lack of opportunity. There are exonerations in the sight of God. ^{You must not employ their ~~secrets~~ as} ~~be~~ exonerations for ^{yourself} ~~your~~ ~~faults~~.

8. A prominent ceremony was in recent days connected with the D. G. H. - on Y. K. day

the High Priest would select a ~~goat~~ ^{goat}, place
^{his hands upon it, and confess over it}
~~upon its head, and put it upon the horns~~, all the sins of the people,
have it taken by messenger to the precipitous
cliff where it abys - and then hurled into
~~the abyss~~ ^{the shattered body} this scapegoat,
fed to the demon Azazel ^{tasked by many} ~~to~~ ^{then sent} ~~down~~
in the river, the people - ~~then~~ ~~when~~ ~~should not~~
~~seek~~ ~~escape~~ ~~goats~~ ~~in~~ ~~this~~ ~~moral~~ ~~sin~~ ~~and~~ ~~injustice~~
~~a commission~~, their moral sloth, their ~~weak~~ ^{weak}
nerves, their drifting and their inactivity. Not so long
ago it was the fashion among the ^{moral} ^{who were} ^{reinforced by}
a pseudo-scientific doctrine, to blame ^{human frailty} all on heredity.
We are what our fathers made us,
our shortcomings are theirs. This is the sin and
theirs is the responsibility. This ~~was~~ ^{is} a disastrous
doctrine, by which to in many, craven and ^{dynamism} ~~to the~~
a more frank and courageous attitude is urged in
our history -



1911 1912 1913 1914 1915 1916 1917 1918 1919 1920 1921 1922 1923 1924 1925 1926 1927 1928 1929 1930 1931 1932 1933 1934 1935 1936 1937 1938 1939 1940 1941 1942 1943 1944 1945 1946 1947 1948 1949 1950 1951 1952 1953 1954 1955 1956 1957 1958 1959 1960 1961 1962 1963 1964 1965 1966 1967 1968 1969 1970 1971 1972 1973 1974 1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025

More recently it has become the fashion to blame
misdeeds upon ^{the} early training & environment. This
truth too, is being reinforced by a pseudo-scientific
behaviourism. That, too, is unbecomingly man's high
estate. To be sure both hered. & env. are very powerful

factors in ~~the~~ a man's life - and it ~~is~~ ^{greatly when it becomes} ~~should~~ ^{may turn out} make ~~parents~~ ^{scarcely} concerned about the
 hereditary qualities which they transmit to their
 children - whether they will be ⁱⁿ a blessing to them or a
 curse - about the physical & sp. environment within
 & without the home, with which they surround the children.
 - But they are not the only factors in the formation of
 a man's life & character. The man himself has a
 decisive role to play in his own life - in the up-
 building of his own character - Virtues may be
 cultivated or neglected. Vices may be eradicated
 or accented. Tastes may be refined. Sympathies
 may be broadened. And ~~man~~ ^{he} himself, by dint
 of self-wasting, ~~efficiency~~ ^{perseverance}, ~~efficiency~~ ^{resolute} resolute-ness and
 persistence, may ~~sub-~~ ^{transform} ~~transform~~ his life, redirect
 his purposes, and be ~~set~~ ^{reborn} reborn.

9. Man's preeminence over the beast is in the exercise of his
 moral will. It is when ^{we} ~~meeting~~ ^{we} temptations and do not
 succumb to them, when we encounter obstacles and bravely
 surmount them, when we are ~~test~~ ^{tried} ~~with~~ ^{by} sorrow
 and bereavement, and courageously carry on, when we suffer
 for righteousness sake and do not give way - it is then
 that we ^{truly} ~~reach~~ ^{reach} our manhood. It is then that we
 are truly men, in the verisimilitude of God.

10. Thus Y. K. is ~~a call~~ ^{our} to us not only a solemn day - a beautiful
 but also a hopeful day. It stirs those elements in
 human life which make for growth, progress and happiness -

~~Redemption, sacrifice and~~
1 ~~Freedom, self-reliance; progress, redemption, freedom,~~
the ^{value} ~~flow~~ of life, the power of the human will, the
responsibility and self-reliance:

It makes a magnificent appeal to the best in us. Man!
Rise from your lethargies and your defeat. Wash you,
make you clean! ~~remove the evil from you~~ Great is
and heroic is your destiny. You ^{were} ~~so~~ not meant to
you are ~~the~~ ^{meant to rule the earth.} ~~the~~ ^{angels.} God has set no
~~limits to your greatness.~~ Vast are the reaches
of your mind - why vast capacities of mind
and soul are yours. Indignant of realms of splendor
await ~~the~~ ^{your} courageous, adventurous spirit - why
remain here, tied down to your ^{mean} little vices and
your petty, hindering sins. They are betraying you!
They are robbing you of your ^{best sight} ~~power~~ and glory ~~and~~
~~your~~ ^{your} ~~possessions.~~ Knock ^{down} their shackles! Arise, Wash you
make you clean! Let not the power that is in
you, ~~be~~ waste and ~~be~~ away. Let not the music that
is in you die! ^{Behold,} Free and open are God's highways
before you! Beautiful and fresh ~~and~~ ^{clean} are the
uplands! ^{magnificent to the quest. Rich is the freedom.} Spread out your wings, fill them
with the desire of the skies - go forth to
meet the sun!

Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt beautifully
with thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death,
mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will
walk before the Lord in the land of the living. Ps. 16.7-9.

2251 2021 p 15 to 661

Uscipile - 2 gold bangles - on wrist in water.

- to value having a name -
 - to have a good name when lay in water.
 - to do one's work in life as it goes.
 - to fear death which means extinction -
 - Attitude of mind
- ① Part, Nature of the world for which is - all
in wall ② Summ in deeds memory -

1. Men fear fear, when they should fear Extinction
It is not to die but to disappear from memory
which is tragic - This underlies many things,
man's problem - to remind men that they lived -

1. Y. K. is a solemn day - deep, memory-laden -
- 10 days -

2. And it is a beautiful day - exquisite
- great art - The profoundest thoughts
- From the slow, stately movements

3. And it is a hopeful day - of comfort & healing
- Key-note - ~~Sin-laden~~ No depths -
- Said a Rabbi - Rahab - when sin -
- strike light

4. Man finds it ~~difficult~~ to ~~understand~~
God's face - ~~even prophets~~ - ~~Jonah~~

5. Herein is the great, hopeful message - ~~seen~~
Man can rise! - tho his sins scarlet
(God is not) - plus He, Man can rise
- Evolution.

6. Some religions and systems, thought -
- all these attitudes - It dignifies
- free - Everything is preserved

7. Y.K. stresses the dignity and freedom -
but concurrently - responsibility - Man
can rise but it is man who must
- salvation
- You must shoulder - exculpate

8. A primitive ceremony - scape-goat -
p. 150 1st/2nd p. 151.
① more recently - Environ ment

9. Man's pro-emergence - It is when

10. Thus Y.K. is a solemn day, a beautiful
day, and a hopeful day. It stresses

- It makes a magnificent appeal
to the best in us -

And it shall come to pass afterward,
That I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh,
And your sons & your daughters shall prophesy.
Your old men shall dream dreams,
Your young men shall see visions -
In those days I will pour out my spirit
And I will show wonders in the heavens & on the earth.

6. To walk before the Lord -
To see life walk - To do
each days work etc

7. It is not ^{peace} death which
should afflict us - but
fear, extinction - dis-appea

8. Death, our path leads us
to full life and
x)  

9. But extinction is the fear

10. To value having also worth
- under also having.
- To have a first name - first
up life, men -