

Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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

Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

Reel Box Folder 169 62 1184

Yom Kippur and memorial sermon, 1949.

The human race frequently employs symbols to express thoughts and feelings. Everywhere and in all ages, objects in nature were used by men to represent their emotions, to serve as signs and emblems of their inner life.

Thus man attached specific meanings to flowers and plants. The lily represented purity, the violet modesty, the laurel fame, the palm leaf victory, the olive branch peace, the asphodel death, the cypress mourning, the amaranth immortality and rosemary remembrance. Flowers speak to man: "To me the meanest flower that blooms can give thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears", sang the poet. But man also speaks through flowers - and through their MAXMAXXX imagery he offers thoughts that do lie too deep for tears.

Precious stones, likewise symbolized qualities and attributes of human life. the ruby spoke of courage, and the diamond of purity, the garnet of friendship, the topaz of honesty, the bloodstone of wisdom, and the emerald of faith and love.

And metals too, were part of the language of man's soul. Gold, silver, brass and iron were metaphors frequently employed by poetry traditions and usage to convey sharply and concretely certain moral and spiritual qualities and ideas. Religion has frequently resorted to this symbolism. They were used to express both good and bad qualities in man, both virtues and vices. For the things in themselves are neither good nor bady but the use of them make them so.

Take gold for example. There was much of it in the holy Temple of Jerusalem. There was an altar of gold, and the golden menorah; the and the breastplate and the crown of the high priest, and the

ark was overlaid with gold and the ark cover and the

Allery.

Gold itself was not only regarded as inherently evil but could be used to adorn the most holy shrine in Israel. The dome of the Temple was covered with gold - so that when the sun shone upon it it could be seen at great distances and men's hearts would be turned to XMM reverent as thoughts MR the radiant message of the sanctuary reached them.

But on Yom Kippur, on the holiest day of the year, when the high priest was to enter the Holy of Holies to pray for forgiveness for hisself, his household and the household of Israel, he divested himself a of his gold robes and in plain white and unadorned garment he stood before the Lord. For Yom Kippur, according to tradition, was the day when the children of Israel were forgiven; for their leader Moses had interceded, for the grave sin of having made and worshipped the golden calf in the wilderness. Gold had betrayed them. They had worshipped gold instead of God. The high priest was accordingly not to wear any embroidered garments reminiscent of the apostasy induced by gold.

There was yet another reason for the plain white garment. It was to remind them high priest of the day of death and of the funeral shroud. It was to make him humble in the thought of life's impermanence and the brevity of man's days upon earth. In the Holy of Holies, God and destiny, what meaning can there be to any show and display of gold and silver, to rank and fortune. Bow your head KNMNXX in humility, oh man of clay, and dirt, and pray for mercy and forgiveness. In the realm of the spirit and of the eternal there is no room for the pride of wealth and parade of gaud and tinsel.

Our religion knew the dangers lurking in gold and silver, in riches and possessions. Either men forget God when they grow rich or

make false gods and worship them. In Deut: "Beware lest thou forget the Lord thy God, lest when thou hast eaten and are satisfied, and hast built goodly houses, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, then thy heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, who led thee through the great and dreadful wild erness - and thou say in thy heart; my power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth".

With wealth comes conceit, self-sufficiency, arrogance, qualities deadly to man's spiritual life. Even kings were admonished not to multiply to themselves silver and gold. It is told of the noble caliph NM Omar that he instructed all the governors whom he appointed over the lawhich he conquered that they must not ride on horseback, nor eat white bread, nor wear fine clothes, nor set up a door between themselves and those who had aught to ask of them. For he knew how power and wealth corrupt, set up door-barriers, turn rulers heartless and ultimately those ruled rebellious. The prophet Hosea complained that the very corn abd wine and oil, and the gold and silver which God XMXXXXX gave unto man, they dedicated to the Baalim, the idols.

Love of gold leads to all forms of idolatry, to avarice and exploitation, to vulgarity and ostentation, to envy and hate, to robbery and oppression - to all the horrible molochs, whose ritual is sin and whose victimes are the soil of the wrecked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah was gold. Our sages did not regard gold, the possession of wealth as intrinsically evil. They did not preach poverty as an ideal, nor advocate it as a spiritual discipline. It is the all-consuming lust of gold that is spiritually devestating, was sacrifice all - friends, family, children community self-culture, books, service.

Ecclesiastes: "Gold hath been the ruin of many. It is a stumbling block unto them that sacrifice unto it. Blessed is the rich, who had been tried by gold and found perfect; then let him glory." Our sages were afraid of gold - afraid of what it does to a man's spiritual integrity.

(flute) fashioned out of reeds, sweet, , covered it with gold, harsh, - gold had consumed its medody. Gold is a child of Zeus, declared the Greek poet . Neither moth nor rust devours it, but the mind of man is devoured by this supreme possession.

Brass, too, was used in the Temple. It had its religious MINX
MIRIMANN symbolism. For the making of the tabernacle Israel was commanded to make of gold and silver and brass. There was the

altar

and its grating of brass;

tal spaces. There was the brazen erpent, which when a man looked upon it having been bitten by a serpent he lived. Brass

meant strength, great prowess.

pipes of brass.

But brass came to represent also hardness of heart, stubbornness, impudence in sin. Isaiah said to Israel: WI know that thou are obstinate..

thy brow is brass".. We speak of brazen effrontery.

Brass came to stand for the hard ruthlessness of man towards his fellow man, this is a great source of evil and sins in human life.

naught of , insolent, impatient, unforgiving, inflexible in their vindictivness. In this hard, flinty ground, in a land of brimstone and salt and , nothing can grow. It is NM in the broken ground that the seeds of XXXX the spiritual life can be sown -

Before honor is humility.

And as for iron - there was no iron in the Temple. No altar in

- see 6.6 8"

ancient Israel could be built with tools of iron.

Thou shalt not lift up an iron tool upon it.

(Keliner Deep 6

altars are dedicated to peace. Iron is used for arms and implements of war. Swords are flashioned out of it; and tyranny and chains, spears, yokes - emblems of slavery - Cain was the first man to forge the cutting instrument of iron - and he was the desecndant of Cain who slew his brother. Iron, which in so many ages has been a boon to man, and is together with coal, the basis of our MNXMXXXX industrial civilization, has come to mean strife, war, conquest, human contentiveness and combativeness, inspired by greed and lust for power, which has brought desolation upon men.

Gold, silver, brass and iron - these symbolize the sins of men. They also symbolize the qualities which can atone for those sins. There is an alchemy which can transmute these metals from baseness to nobility. Our forefathers following the sins of the golden calf were commanded to make an offering of gold and silver to build the danctuary of the true God, so that the gold of the tabernacle shall serve as an expiation for the gold which they employed in the making of the KMIR golden calf. Gold, in MEM terms of sharing, the gifts of the heart of gold, is the way which leads to the golden age. Wealth used in the spirit of stewardship with an eye to the social good, at the behest of the golden rule, is a boon to society and makes of its possessor a benefactor of man. Why was Zion chosen as the place for the Temple to be built - two brothers. Solin doubt as to where to build it. A heavenly voice directed him omon. to a field in Mt. Zion owned jointly by two brothers, I bachelor and poor, the second rich, large family. It was harvest time. Under cover of night the poor brother carried over much of what he had to his brother's share of of

NNX grain: needed it more than he did because of his large family. The

rich brother; in some clandestine way, added to poor brother's store,

thinking that though he had no family to support, he was poor. Such bro
therly love, such sharing of gifts and treasures, was the proper site for

the Temple of the Lord.

Likewise the strength of man can be the source of his great good,
when it means strength of character, firmness of purpose, courage to
stand by your convictions, power to curb your passions and your aff
(Nelvew-Alt profines)
, God promised Jeremiah: "Rehold I have made this day a

fortified city, and brazen walls against the whole land, against the kings
KNINKE, the NAWEKE princes, the priests, the people, and they shall fight against theer but they shall not prevail". Of this kind of unyielding strength there is too little in the world. It is very acceptable to God. It means loyalty, faithfulness, spiritual durability.

And so with iron - to resist evil, to fight wrong and injustice, to combat the forces of darkness, reaction, intolerance, and bigotry, to oppose the tyrant, the dictator, the exploiter, the is a form of combativeness, a from of spiritual aggression, very pleasing to the sight of God. Iron to cut the chains and yokes of iron, bars of iron, of war, iron to break the iron cauldrons of discrimination wherein men suffer.

Of this type of war,

Not to yield to misfortune, defeat, fight hard - use the iron in your soul! Put iron in the character of our children - not pamper or make them soft - kind but not soft. On Yom Kippur-we are using what we have of possessions, of strength, of ambition, interest(?) as virtue or vice, for good or for evil, for glory or

Not content with personal salvation - reconstruct - destroy - militant morality - prophets - wielded scorpion whip PMXX of their fury upon all who sinned

- turned asideway of the humble. Poverty,

They spoke in thunder - like forging fires





1) Human Lace - suchlayed Symbols - Thato & Feelings Everywhen - objects of nature - to represent to sew? as signs and embleues - inches before 2). Thus wan attacked special and specific meacings to Florers and Plants. Lily refreshering; Cypress - Mouring

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Moderk Flowers shoth to Man. To me the menest flaver that leaves can give thoughts that do often his to dup In Tears"- the port savy. But tran also speaks them flowers - and then their imaging he often reveals that that 2. Trecious Stones, likewise symbolized for war certain gratitus o attendentes y human by. Ruby stok Courage Faint - of Friendshift Diamond ... Purity . | Ewerde - 7 Youth + Lake

3) Metals, too, have been part of thetanguage of ween, 9. Sover, men, hon - Thetaphors freg aufleyel in Portey - to convey - certain hard the lates - Kelissian has for vented to this symboline - Involed to describe good + bod gradeter. they, are neither good or land in themelos 4) Tak Jold for example - Temple - alter- 9. 2011-Chembra - Chembra - Chembr gin intog- and only not- whamthy Eul. adom - Dome -5). But ny.10 - holient day - H. Purt - divertil plain, while unadoured parment. For of woman).16- 5-2 Parpare - 7050/20 Gold had behazed then! Warshift Gild- Ed! H. Perest was accordingly ust to war - receive land 217NO sly styly file -accuse. advotate

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Cam to refund an Hardren , Heart = Welfulners (Impudue in Sin Granal: "I Know that then cut obstructe-the brow is brass"- Knazen effecting! prolife Some for Ruthbessuers of man towards Thoughout an often Brustal - instant-win partient - un process in fresh in their wrong-heardown tim their winderturene and sact are fire - from It is in the broken fraud - 2/ 12/15 2/57 /ON CYE 15/2 - 6/11 /CX 12/ lent as for know - no iron in Thugh. no alter - tool, non - 1502 port Puz 11 alter dedirates to Pere - Inon to War Joseph L (14) 737/ 1023/ 5025 / har.

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1). The human now fogwerthy authory mulotion to express that and feelings. Everywher and in all are, objects in watern were used by wer to refrence the emotion.

The secret as signs and enther y with wines by.

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1) Many Thats - stirred - maths us thent - reflect - 149 trames - What have they taken with them? of contity ferring we come supply-handed - trappings - the phinter than engineers.
"a way traveller - wenter sin we seek that 2/ Walk us all equal - "The small and the front on then, But a he good - in so far as the growth of factory of the memories us bang helend. 3/. We all wish to be remembered - Per his thoops, armourant run Ceinte with world we live in bear.

Often Death - lawie with hold we leave. In his - do not will to be frotten - a form y dall In death fugitten to tal come heaten xing pal 4. then write Meurous- anto bringsper - explain - furtiles - continued interest - will recall them to life @ Some hope to relieve - Mornewith, Pyrauds Mainden Blent effective - when it is on numbereds. (1) Luceren, Jeffer on Wahylin - ut hult by this Myll regre Jesulia- Buied el secir

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True love

Ruby

Courage

Diamond

Purity

Pearl

Purity and modesty

Turquoise

Prosperity

Garnet

Friendship

Emerald

Youth, Love, Life

Topaz

Honesty

Bloodstone

Courage, Wisdom

Aquamarine

Good fortune

Lapis Laz'l

Truth, Virtue