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Memorial Day, 1925.

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MEMORIAL DAY ADDRESS BY RABBI ABBA H.

SILVER, ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~, MAY 30th,
1920 CLEVELAND, OHIO.

This day has been set aside as a loving tribute to the memory of those men who, in the days of great tribulation, were not found wanting. The American people today lays ^a ~~the~~ wreath of affectionate tribute upon the graves of those ^{who died in the last war in the great Civil War} ~~who died that life might be~~ ^{for the preservation of the Union, and the emancipation of the slave.} ~~come~~ more noble and more secure. The American people honors ~~also~~ on this day the ^{sainted dead and the} last survivors in the thinning ranks of that great host of the Grand Army of the Republic, ^{who} ~~that~~ once heard the call of Father Abraham and answered it. ^{It honors too, its heroic dead} ~~its wars, in land and sea, at home and abroad.~~

I believe that it is a ^{helpful} ~~very~~ good thing to pause ^{in the} ~~in our daily~~ ^{amidst the} rush and bustle of life and think, if but for a brief ^{space} ~~spell~~ of time, of those who loved life so dearly that they sacrificed it in order to make life more beautiful. To think of the departed ones, and more especially of those who died heroically in a great struggle, is to find ourselves chastened and ennobled. We return from the ~~great~~ borderland of memory, ~~show~~, refined and elevated, and all the values of life ~~are~~ ^{some} ~~turn to~~ ^{true} their proper perspectives. ~~We are~~ ^{come} face to face ^{there} ~~not only with reality but with sublimity, and we are~~ ~~face to face with the most exalted manifestations of~~



Again ^{our} Memorial Day bears witness to the fact
that no ^{true} ideal can be permanently denied.
The ideal of Emancipation triumphed in spite
of the insurmountable obstacles which were put
in its way. It was thwarted by legal decisions,
~~it was~~ it was fought with relentless per-
sistency, ^{passionately and bravely} with pen and sword, but at
last it emerged after 4 years of ~~the~~ ^{the} Civil War, triumphant. Such is the
nature of a true ideal - it cannot be
forever suppressed. -

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greatness that the human being is capable of, and we are humbled before such ~~manifestations~~ *greatness*.

Memorial Day, my friends, commemorates not only the deathlessness of the hero^{es}, ~~not only the sacrifice of the martyr~~, but ~~it commemorates~~ also, and perhaps more especially, the deathlessness of the ideals for which these heroes ~~and these martyrs~~ died. ~~Our~~ Memorial Day ~~is~~ reminds us that the ideals which drive men to supreme effort and ~~struggle~~ *sacrifice* are enduring and eternal; (that the great ideal of human freedom, for which tens of thousands of men in this great land died during the great Civil War, triumphed in spite of the fact that it was thwarted and denied and held enthralled by laws and rulings, in spite of all the obstacles that life placed in the way of the ultimate triumph of the ideal, It passed through four dreadful years of fratricidal struggle, but it emerged triumphant, for no great ideal can ever or does ever remain permanently denied.)

its ~~The~~ champions of the ideal, the Garrisons and the Lincolns, may be ~~destroyed~~ *martyred*, ~~the~~ *its* believers ~~in the ideal~~ may for a time be dismayed, but the ideal, if it be true, must ultimately rise from its grave to a new resurrection and a new transfiguration.

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There is a wonderful *sustenance* ~~inspiration~~ and comfort

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in the thought that the thing for which we live and die ^{are} immortal, in spite of ^{our own} the frail mortality, ~~of~~ ~~us who champion the ideal.~~ We may be broken upon the wheel of life, we may be the poor victims of all the tragic accidents of this world, ~~we may be~~ but as the spray upon the restless waves of the ocean, but the things we aspire to do and to achieve, the great motive ^s which prompt us and ~~urge~~ ^{urge} us, -- that is ~~they are~~ eternal as God is eternal. (P. 1 - Back)

The Memorial Day of 1920, has, to my mind, an added significance. We are today recalling not only those who fought in the great war of secession, and who by blood sowed the seed of a new reconciliation and a greater union in this beautiful land of ours, but we are today in reverence and gratitude recalling the men who fought in this last World War, the young lads of our land, whom we knew and loved, and also their comrades in arms of other lands who fought side by side with them. These young boys, but for their loyalty and devotion, would be with us now, breathing the air of God's beautiful world. They are dead, asleep in the silent fields of France, far from their native shores, but deep in the hearts of their countrymen. And a great nation today, in a spirit of exalted pride, thinks of them.

No nation can live or is worthy to live whose children are not ready to die for it. America is

proud of the men who immolated themselves for her sake, that she might be reborn in a new and infinite life. Their graves will be tenderly cared for by the loving hands of beautiful France, but the memory of their deeds and their devotion will remain as a precious heritage in the lives of American men and women.

is no longer tragic when it can thus inspire
 Death, ~~my friends, is infinitely tragic when~~
us. it does not inspire. The death of soldiers who die *for a cause,*
 in the full bloom of life, ~~thrilled with the great~~
~~prospects of life, with all of life before them,~~
compelling to the living.
 is a ~~great~~ inspiration ~~in spite of its sadness. The~~
~~death of men of the battle field inspires the living,~~
~~first by the manner of their death, and then by the~~
~~ideals for which they die.~~

When men give up the rich ^{red} blood of their lives, so that by their blood a new covenant may be written among ~~the children of men~~, when young men who are on the highest point of being, ~~with the~~
~~sunshine of life streaming in gladness upon them,~~
~~a-throbbing~~ ^{life's} with ^{expectancies} ~~the~~ great ~~problems awaiting them,~~ lay
 down their lives for the sake of ^{an} ideal, those who
 remain are ^{challenged and} ~~ennobled by it~~, life assumes an added
 dignity; ~~their death reveals the eternal supremacy~~
~~of the spirit over the body. When men sacrifice the~~
~~body and submit themselves to the torture of the~~

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among you."

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And Abraham Lincoln warns his people against the insidious, slow but sure, invasion of liberty. A people does not lose its liberty suddenly; a people loses its liberty as most men do who lose their eye-sight--slowly, slowly. And oftentimes a people is responsible for its loss of liberty. He says: "If the safeguards of liberty are broken down, as is now attempted, when they have made things of free negroes, how long, think you, before they begin to make things of poor white men? Be not deceived. The founder of the Democratic party declared that all men were created equal. His successor in the office has written the word 'white' before 'men,' making it read 'all white men are created equal.' Pray will or may not the No-Nothings, if they should get into power, add the word 'Protestant,' making it read, 'All Protestant white men are equal?'"

Think of the perspicacity of the man! Think of the gift of prophecy that was his! *There are no No-Nothing but there are other misguided people who wish seemingly* parties in our day ~~seeking~~ to gain power, ~~and seeking to~~ write into the fundamental law of our land that ^{only} all native Protestant white men are created equal; that all others are interpolations, aliens, ~~(foreigners)~~ detrimental to the welfare of this land, ~~to be treated as outcasts, to be isolated and~~ ghettotized ^{Lincoln's planning spirit would devastate} or deported. ~~We have come to that stage which~~ *them all,* Abraham Lincoln, in his power of prophecy, because he knew the heart and the soul of democracy, foresaw.

~~I need not rehearse the events of the past few years;~~

expresses himself so succinctly and concisely on all matters, has this to say on the matter of religious uniformity and religious qualification. Listen to this attentively. These are immortal words spoken by him who framed the Declaration of Independence. / "The legitimate powers of government extend to such acts only as are injurious to others. But it does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods, or no God. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg. Constraint may make him worse by making him a hypocrite, but it will never make him a truer man. It may fix him obstinately in his errors, but will not cure them. It is error alone which needs the support of government. Truth can stand by itself. Subject opinion to coercion: whom will you make your inquisitors? Fallible men; men governed by bad passions, by private as well as public reasons. And why subject it to coercion? To produce uniformity. But is uniformity of opinion desirable? No more than uniformity of face and stature. Introduce the bed of Procrustes then, and as there is danger that the large men may beat the small, make us all of a size, by lopping the former and stretching the latter. Difference of opinion is advantageous in religion. The several sects perform the office of a censor morum over such other. Is uniformity attainable. Millions of innocent men, women and children, since the introduction of Christianity, have been burnt, tortured, fined, imprisoned; yet we have not advanced one inch toward uniformity. What has been the effect of coercion? To make one-half the world fools, and the other half hypocrites. To support roguery and error all over the earth."

4. Memorial Day

1 - ~~This day~~ has been set aside - ^{memorial} - Wreaths
laid in front and honor for the preservation - Honors
last survivors - thousands of Grand Army of the Republic
who are heard - Honor, too, the heroic dead of all -

2. Helpful thing to pause - & think; those who loved
life so dearly - life more beautiful. To think of
the departed men - chartered. We return from battle-
land & memory changed, values, life -

① When men put up the rib, red blood, their
lives - new covenant - young men - rib experiences -
lay down their lives - those who remain are challenged.
Life assumes a new dignity -

3. Men may commemorate not only the death but also
the living - ideals - Ideal which drives men to
supreme sacrifice as Enduring Ideal & Freedom
triumphed in spite of the ^{frightful} ^{perils} ^{and} ^{obstacles} of laws, ^{marked} ^{triumphs}
& dreadful pain. Garrison, Lincoln & ^{marked} ^{triumphs}

① Wonderful message & comfort in that that
things in which we live & survive, we may
be broken & bent - from return of tragic accident
- things as a spirit - eternal as spirit & eternal

4. Important, too, to remember that war does not
solve problems. creates it - Civil War. Economic problems
& slavery - slow, patient labor - Last War -

5. We should remember Lincoln & the message of his life.
The greatest philosopher & visionary. knew the nature of freedom,
its dangers & its mistakes, but also the indispensable quality -
its inevitableness.

① "God's old central ideals" = Human Dignity & Freedom -

(Note). Faith in it & its triumph

② Not cynical - dispiriting - quickly & harshly turned them
back - (Note)

③ His earnest - warned against slow, insidious invasion
of liberty - further it away. conscience - expanding -
- substantiated - (Note)

④ Knew that our greatest forest liberty - is
Religious liberty

6. Let us remember history & our -

"We hold these truths to be self evident. that
all men are created equal" - and "that ~~these~~ ^{they}
are endowed by ~~their~~ ^{their} Creator with
certain unalienable rights, that among these
are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness"

And was not this also the spirit, ~~with~~ ^{Lincoln} Abraham
who vocalized the unpassioned ideals of an Age that took
ideals seriously, and attested their sincerity with their
sweat and blood.

Lincoln refers constantly in his speeches and writings to the "good old central ideals" which are the ideas of human equality and freedom. He believed in their ultimate triumph. ^{Healing & the realization of these ideals} In ~~our~~ place he says ~~that~~ we can do it. The human heart is with us. God is with us. ~~We~~ shall again be able not to declare that all states as states are equal, nor yet that all citizens or citizens are equal, but to renew the broader, better declaration, including them both, and much more - that all men are created equal" /

Whenever he saw his fellow citizens drifting away from their basic ideals of Am. democracy, he quickly & sharply summoned them to return: once he declared:

"We are not what we would have been. When we were the political slaves, King George and wanted to be free, we called the maxim that all men were created equal a self-evident truth, but now, when we have grown fat and have lost all dread of being slaves ourselves, we have become so greedily to be masters that we call the same maxim a self-evident lie. The Fourth of July has not quite yet dwindled away, it is true. It is still a great day—for burning fire crackers!"

And how earnestly, and with what prophetic
vigilance he warned his people against the slow,
unobtrusive invasion of liberty. A people does not lose
its liberty suddenly. It first loses it ^{slightly} away from the small occasional
concessions to expediency, until it finds itself enthralled
in its own ^{noxious} ~~own~~ ^{as hostilities which it itself created.}