



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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

Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

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Is civilization outracing man?, 1931.

The Cleveland Community Religious Hour

Little Theatre . . . Public Hall

Sunday afternoons, 3:30 o'clock

October 11, 1931 to April

24, 1932...Cleveland, Ohio



◀ A Community Hour in which men and women of all faiths participate.

◀ Addresses by outstanding leaders of religious thought in America upon vital problems relating to the life of the entire community.

◀ Music.

The Cleveland Community Religious Hour . . .

grew out of an idea, held by a group of citizens of Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant faiths, that our city would be benefited from a community hour of education and fellowship:

*to emphasize the spiritual values of human life,
to emphasize the fatherhood of God as the basis
of mutual understanding and good will,
to promote the moral and religious welfare
of the community.*

In the achievement of these ends twenty-eight leaders of religious thought, Catholics, Jews, and Protestants, have spoken at twenty-eight Sunday afternoon meetings to an audience made up of Catholics, Jews, Protestants, Agnostics, Atheists, Communists, and Socialists. All of which goes to show that in order to have fellowship with those who differ with us it is not necessary for any of us to surrender our cherished convictions.

An attractive feature of the Hour has been the Question Period in which thirty to forty questions have been asked each Sunday. In these trying times people are perplexed. They feel the need of counsel and advice. The interest displayed and the regularity of attendance—one man came from Canton every Sunday, one man drove in from Elyria with his family every Sunday—teaches that beneath the stress and strain of life there is a distinct trend toward moral culture.

The Cleveland Community Religious Hour is sustained entirely by voluntary contributions. It is earnestly desired that all who are interested in the purpose of the "Hour" will assist in supporting the enterprise.

Speakers and Topics for This Season . . .

- OCT. 12 George W. Coleman—"Get Together Or Perish"
19 Rabbi B. R. Brickner—"Is Death the End?"
26 Father John A. Ryan—"Social Justice in the World Today"
- NOV. 2 Dean Shailer Mathews—"The Contribution of Science to Religion"
9 Prof. Thomas S. McWilliams—"Religious Conditions in Russia"
23 Father J. Elliott Ross—"The Affirmations of Catholicism"
30 Rabbi A. H. Silver—"Religion in a World of Change"
- DEC. 7 Dr. Charles E. Jefferson—"Faith as a World Force"
14 Dr. Henry N. Wieman—"Methods of Private Religious Living"
21 Rabbi Abraham Nowak—"Finding Our Common Denominator"
28 Father Jones I. Corrigan—"Character and Character Building"
- JAN. 4 Rabbi Gerson B. Levi—"What Is Judaism?"
11 Dr. A. E. Haydon—"The Quest of the Ages"
18 The Right Rev. Warren Lincoln Rogers—"Man's Quest for God"
25 Father M. J. Ahern—"Tolerance—The Touchstone of American Liberty"
- FEB. 1 Dr. F. Q. Blanchard—"The What and Why of Protestantism"
8 Rabbi Louis Wolsey—"Prayer"
15 Very Rev. Msgr. James A. McFadden—"At the Turn of the Road"
22 Dr. John A. Lapp—"The Way Out of the Present Crisis"
- MAR. 1 Rabbi Nathan Krass—"Do We Need a New Morality?"
8 Dr. Dilworth Lupton—"After Christianity—What?"
15 Dr. Kirtley F. Mather—"Science in Search For God"
22 Father W. A. Bolger—"A National Program of Social Reform"
29 Dr. W. E. B. DuBois—"The Negro in the United States"
- APR. 5 Rabbi Harry S. Davidowitz—"Affirmation Thru Denial"
12 Dr. A. Caswell Ellis—"When and Where Does Our Education End?"
19 Dr. Thomas S. McWilliams—"The Religions of the East"
26 Dean Albert C. Fox—"The Reasonableness of Religion"

Among the out of town speakers who have already been booked for next season are Charles R. Brown, Rollo Walter Brown, John A. Lapp, James Gordon Gilkey, William Pickens, David D. Vaughan, S. L. Joshi, and Louis Wolsey.

RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS TO MAY 1ST, 1931

Offerings -----	967.14	
Subscriptions -----	11,372.44	
TOTAL RECEIPTS -----		12,339.58

FORUM EXPENSE

Speakers -----	2,087.60	
Speakers' Travel and Expense -----	121.82	
Rent of Public Hall -----	963.00	
Music -----	300.00	
	3,472.42	

PUBLICITY

Advertising Agencies -----	728.45	
Misc. Advert. and Postage -----	812.36	
Newspaper Advertising -----	452.71	
Printing -----	1,208.35	
	3,201.87	

OFFICE EXPENSE

Salaries—Director and office -----	4,612.60	
Office Rent -----	650.00	
Misc. Office Expense -----	137.81	
Telephone -----	224.99	
	5,625.40	

TOTAL EXPENSE -----		12,299.69
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Balance on hand -----		\$ 39.89
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Oct 25 1931

AN ABSTRACT OF THE ADDRESS

BY

RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER

ON

"IS CIVILIZATION OUTRACING MAN?" - PUBLIC HALL

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29th, 1931

Recently Dr. Mayo warned our generation that man is falling behind the material civilization which he has created and that the fruit of his lagging ability to adapt himself to the pace is an enormous amount of insanity.

This is not the first warning that medical science has given to the race. From time to time distinguished medical men have called attention to the startling increase in diseases of the heart and in nervous derangements which are ravaging the race today in spite of the remarkable advance which medical science has made in recent years.

They attribute it to the tension and strain of our machine age, to the furious tempo of our permanently acquisitive civilization. Human invention has given us our machine civilization, whose symbol is the huge modern city where millions of men move in herds through canyons of brick and stone and steel, living in cubicles and caves one on top of another, travelling always in crowds on the surface and above and below the surface, suffering from jagged nerves and banished from the soil, the open spaces, the clean skies and the fresh air.

Our scientific age has produced far more wealth but it has not abolished poverty. Physics, chemistry and engineering have increased the world's goods a thousandfold but they have not taught man how to apportion his wealth intelligently, how to control his production and distribution, or how to make men more secure in their possessions and in a means of earning a livelihood. With the result that in the most advanced civilized countries of the world today, England, Germany and the United States, millions are unable to find work or to satisfy their elementary needs out of the abundant wealth which the scientific era has produced all about them.

Seemingly it is not enough to know how to produce wealth. We must learn its intelligent control and distribution.

Again the last war demonstrated how far civilization had out-distanced man. The ape in man reached out and used the science which civilized man produced, to destroy him. The sciences of physics and chemistry and aviation and navigation and the subtlest ingenuity of man were exploited to bring about the ghastliest holocaust in human history. Civilization, too, is at least for the time being victimizing man in its tendency to mechanize and standardize life. The worker today is less of a personality in relation to his work than formerly and more of a robot. And the individuality of man is in danger of being submerged in the tidal waves of collectivisation and conformity which is sweeping over the world.

But the situation is far from hopeless. Technical progress has brought a large measure of good to man. The olden days were not better than these, but worse. Man's Paradise was not in the past but in the future. One should not single out two or three bright moments in the past of the

human race and hold them up as typical of the ages which have gone by. They were filled with slavery and ignorance and pestilence and war and intollerance and squalor. We have conquered some of these afflictions of mankind. We enjoy more knowledge, more freedom, better health, more tolerance and greater equality today. Above all, we are keenly aware today that the evils which do exist are not in the nature of things, necessary and unavoidable, but that they can through organized effort, be annihilated. It is folly to hanker after an imaginary, beatific state of long ago when man lived completely happy in a bucolic paradise. Such a condition never existed in the human race. It is pure eighteenth century romanticism. It is folly also to want to turn back by destroying the machine and by asking for a moratorium on science and invention. The human mind will not relinquish its sovereign right to quest, search, inquire, invent and discover. It has discovered the method of creative experimentation and will not abandon it.

Our salvation lies in turning our attention as deliberately to the social sciences as we have in the past turned it to the physical sciences. We should bring the same unbiased, free, intelligence of man to work in the realm of economics and government and ethics and international relationships as we have in the realm of physics, chemistry and biology. Through courageous economic readjustment we can insure a juster distribution of social goods, freer access to the economic wealth of the earth to all who deserve it and a greater measure of economic security for all who labor.

Through greater leisure and an understanding of the creative uses of leisure the man of the future will not only have a chance to recuperate regularly from the drive and stress of his life but he will also have an opportunity to develop his personality away and independent of the machine.

He will have another world in which to live, a world of books, of play, of comradeship, of adventure, of constant contact with nature.

Through the cultivation of the arts on a wider and more democratic basis the man of the future will have cities which will be more beautiful and which will rival the glories of the magnificent cities of antiquity. Through international cooperation man will banish the spectre of war; the world which is fast becoming economically a unit will also develop a unitary intellectual and spiritual bond and man will know the larger loyalty of international solidarity and good will.



1. Dr. Charles H. Mayo - Rochester - Minn. - Am. College of Surgeons - (Quote)

(1) Not first warning - From time to time - spread certain diseases - attributable - grumbling pace - They point - diseases of heart - rearing - in spite

(2) Attribute it - tension and strain of machines - ferocious noise - speed age.

2. Human inventions gave cities - canyons - cages - ants - travel always in crowds - fagged nerves - banished

(1) Frequently ugly cities - smoke begrimed - Older Civil -

(2) Man is fortunate - know -

(3) Civil. has given man - electricity etc. price His very health - Outraced man.

3. In other regards - Created greater wealth - poverty -

Physics - affection - control - secure -

- With the result - in most civ. countries -

- Filled with misery -

- Seemingly not enough to know how -

- Our mech. civ. has certainly outraced man -

4. Again - the last war demand - has our rapidly dev. Civ.
attack & nerves - sloughed -

- The life in man -

- Could not control forces - Physics - Chem.
navigation - aviation - ghostliest horror

5. Then are other indices

(1) Mechanize life - adjust - "hard" - "fired"
scrapped - In our nat. industry - average
workers - less of "person" ^{artisan} & "Robot" -

(2) Standardization - Produces it - Conformity -
individuality suppressed

(3) Standard & values - magnified -

(4) Not happy - in spite of our 10,000, transportation
(Drive)

6. Situation not hopeful - Tech. progress has not

(1) Older days not halcyon - paradise -

- Cured - Knowledge - Freedom - Health - Equality
Tolerance

- Know them to be conquerable - plagues

(2) It is folly - 18c. remnants - beatific ideal

(3) Cannot turn back - destroy machine - unfortunate
Engineers

(4) We must realize that Tech. Progress and Power are
Natural - not only Consequences - Power is self-
exploiting & immoral - Higher social inst.

(5) We must turn our attention - Social Sc.

7- Through (1) Eugenics - raise -

(2) Econ. Adjustment - rich - rightness

(3) Leisure - chance to recuperate - to be
a personality - another word - books

(4) Art - wider, more dem. basis - to fix plan

(5) Futur. Corps - to banish specks - Foster
int. mind - larger loyalties

8. Not unfeasible - undeniable challenge

(1) It is possible for us to live with it
Others produced -

And our cities, are frequently ^{ill-planned &} ~~empty~~, rustled
begimed, with their ^{congested} ~~thems~~, and their wilderness
of monstrous dwellings and ferments, older
cent^{ies}, which had none, the advantages of our
age, built new beaut cities, ~~and~~



4. Not happy! 10000 rhods - bates, francs - m. the same as - invest.
policy in 9 1000+

Poem . Insto

② It is folly to ask to a return to nature - 18c.
romantics — There never was such a real life
state as they imagined, when man lived nobly
& contentedly in a terrestrial paradise —

(3) Can't ~~return~~ back - working machine - or ask ~~monitors~~! Eng'ners who built it must now use intell. to control it for human betterment & happiness.

④ ^{But} we must realized - that ^{tech. progress} Power or Nature

is not the only condition, human knowledge
the power to realize it is necessary to destroy in another
Other things are independent, - Power over self-
exploitation & inner sp. resources - A
higher social intell. & a fine moral disci-
mination.

⑤ We must turn our attention more delib. to
our social sciences - to Economics, to govt-
to interrelationships - ^{to these} but by some
unbiased, critical intell. to work them as
a realism, philosoph. sciences.

① Then in Eugenics we must raise gen.
& men. who will be mentally & phys. better able to
endure stress, the new civilization. A new
cult's health -

② Then congenious Econ. adjustment we must
~~use~~ see to it that our race shall become,
to use W. H. Wiggams phrase, "not only more rich
but more righteous". A just dist. of social
goods, a free access to all desiring to the Econ.
wealth of the earth, a peace measure (security
& Econ. protection).

③ Then greater legislation, & proper creative
use & control - to give man, the future not

only chance to recuperate from drudgery, the
modern catalyst - but a change to be a pleasure
city - away + need. The Machine - an effort
to have another world in which to live - a
world of books - of play - of contemplation - of
free comradeship, in adventure, of
removed contact with earth & sky, ~~to~~

④ Then cultivation, the arts in a wide
+ many senses. Music, to ^{blow, create & by harmony to} ~~purge~~ the senses
and ^{to} ~~the~~ human, the place of things beautiful.

⑤ Then internat. cooperation, to travel
to spectate, war from the habitations of man.
We must foster, in this world, new econ. a
unit - also a uniting intell. + sp. bond.
We must teach the young, to move the
larger by act of human inter. solidarity
+ just will.

6. There are not uniform tasks - They are undeniably
challenging, an age - beautiful with the happy line

① It is possible for men to live, and men can
be happy, without airplanes, or radios, or electricity
or central heating. It is possible for men to

produce marvellous cordizations - without
them. Athens produced an art, and a phil, and
a mode of life which is our admi. Every-
without any, these apprentices.

(2) But it is not possible to live beautiful-
ly & happily in our 32. ind. age with
all these apprentices. Unless we have
~~more~~ much more, what they need - have
values.

