

Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

Reel	Box	Folder
178	65	469

Thanksgiving Day, 1938.

Western Reserve Historical Society 10825 East Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44106 (216) 721-5722 wrhs.org American Jewish Archives 3101 Clifton Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45220 (513) 487-3000 AmericanJewishArchives.org ADDRESS DELIVERED BY DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER OF THE TEMPLE, CLEVELAND, OHIO ON THANKSGIVING DAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1938 OVER STATION WHK.

This day calls us to thanksgiving and we have many things to be thankful for- not the least of which is the very gift of life itself. We are thankful or should be thankful for the magnificent adventure of living, for all the glory which comes to us, vividly through our senses and luminously through our minds and hearts; for the myriad of beatitudes which encompass our daily lives and which frequently, because of their very familiarity and plenitude, remain unnoticed and unappreciated. We are grateful, or should be grateful, for the daily companionship of earth, sky and stars, for the sanctuaries of our homes, for the exaltation of our love, for the privilege of friendship, for the dreams of our youth, the labors of our manhood and the memories of our old age - for all the color, music, passion and splendor that suffuse our mortal days.

And it is for the whole of life that we should be grateful - for its shadows as well as for its lights. The rigors and the harsher disciplines of life are not without their purpose. We mount to higher levels on the hard rungs of pain and defeat. The sublimest songs have come from lips which had tasted the bitterest dregs of the cup of life. Eyes washed by tears often see most clearly.

For these gifts of God we are daily indebted and we may repay our indebtedness in some slight measure by putting to their highest uses whatever of talent or resource has been given to us in stewardship, and by translating all of our privileges with compelling obligations.

We are abundantly thankful that the faith and traditions of the pilgrims and of the founding fathers have not forsaken us in our day and that they have kept and are keeping our country free, united and spiritually unshaken, in a world which is fast sinking into moral chaos, despotism and intellectual and spiritual darkness. We have not succumbed - we have had no reason to succumb to that despair and pessimism which have caused one nation after another in the old world to surrender, as ideals no longer serviceable or worth defending,

Station WHK

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their liberty, their democratic forms of government and all those precious rights of man which we have regarded for so long as inalienable and inviolable.

"We go to Europe to be Americanized", said the great Emerson many years ago. Everything that has happened in the last few years, in the last few weeks, in the last few days, powerfully re-enforceSthis saying of Emerson. We need but look to Europe today - and for that matter elsewhere in the world - to a Spain torn and racked by Civil War, to a Czechoslovakia betrayed and dismembered and now a prey to conscienceless neighbors bent upon dividing the spoils, to the spectacle of great democracies stooping low to give official recognition to the savage and criminal conquest of Ethiopia by Fascist Italy, to the looting, beating and robbing of a helpless minority people in Nazi Germany, and the bombing and defiling of their places of worship, in one of the most shameless and privileged pogroms in history, organized and directed by a government insensate to any considerations of human pity or decency, - one need but look to the murderous invasion of China by Japan - surpassing in cruelty anything that we know the horros of Ghengis Khan, Tamurlaine or Attila the Hun, and to all the hates, fear and suspicion rampant in the world today, to realize how favored we, in this country have been and are, in the protection and security of that tradition, culture and way of life which we call American, in our cherished ideals of freedom, # of inalienable human rights, # of tolerance, brotherhood and good-will. We are today one of the few remaining outposts of civilization one of the few countries where men and women can still live and work out their individual destinies free from the restraints of all-dominating, intruding and terrorizing governments, and free also from those obsessions and abovertions of pathological ideologies of state, race, or class which are brutalizing and fragmentizing the lives of individuals and nations abroad.

Thanksgiving Day, 1938, is a Thanksgiving Day indeed for the American people.

Thanksgiving Day Address November 24, 1938

By Dr. A. H. Silver

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