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Book of knowledge, 1958.

Statement for inclusion in
The Grolier Society
1959 Encyclopedia Yearbook--The Story of Our Time
symposium on
HOW CAN AMERICAN EDUCATION BE IMPROVED?

by

DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

What has happened since Sputnik may turn out to our advantage in the long run if it contributes to a new climate in American education; if it helps us to raise a new generation of men and women who will be more reverent of learning and more devoted to the exacting disciplines of the mind, not only in the field of the sciences but in the field of the humanities as well.

In my judgment it would be a great loss to our people and to American civilization, if our present discontent should catapult our entire educational system in an all-out scientific and technological direction and depreciate the importance of what we used to call liberal education -- the humanities and the social sciences. Of course civilization needs scientific researchers in all fields. It needs the physicist and the chemist, the mathematician, the engineer and the biologist -- there is no civilization without them--but if it is to be an wholesome civilization, it needs also the artist, the musician, the writer, the poet, the philosopher, the minister, the economist and the sociologist. Above all, it needs the cultured, well-rounded individual human being, whatever his profession may be. It needs men and women trained in the art of living who will contribute to the well-being of their communities

and to the building of the good society. What a progressive civilization needs pre-eminently are wholesome, clean-living, high-thinking, socially-minded human beings. The study of the sciences alone, however advanced, will not produce them.

Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that not all pupils are so gifted as to be able to master abstract sciences or are qualified for theoretic scientific research. We cannot train men for genius.

What is essential is that whatever is taught, whether in the field of the sciences or the humanities, should be well-taught. What is learned should be thoroughly learned. The disciplines of study and instruction must be high and exacting for teacher and pupil alike and adequate facilities and financial support must be made available for the education of all our people, each according to his bent and capacities.

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February 1958

"Whatever is taught should be well taught -- whether in the field of science or in the humanities".

ABBA HILLEL SILVER, Rabbi, The Temple, Cleveland, Ohio:

The discontent with education since Sputnik I may contribute to a new climate in American education. It may help us to raise a new generation of men and women more reverent of learning and more devoted to the exacting disciplines of the mind -- not only in the sciences but in the humanities as well.

In my judgment it would be a great loss to our people and to American civilization if our present discontent should capabult our entire educational system in an all-out scientific and technological direction and depreciate the importance of what we once called liberal education -- the humanities and the social sciences. Of course, civilization needs scientific researchers in all fields. It needs the physicist and the chemist, the mathematician, the engineer and the biologist -- there is no civilization without them. But if it is to be a wholesome civilization, it needs also the artist, the musician, the writer, the poet, the philosopher, the minister, the economist and the sociologist. Above all, it needs the cultured, well-rounded individual, whatever his profession. It needs men and women trained in the art of living who will contribute to the well-being of their communities and to the building of the good society. What a progressive civilization needs pre-eminently are wholesome, clean-living, high-thinking, socially minded human beings. The study of the sciences alone, however advanced, will not produce them.

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ENCYCLOPEDIA YEAR BOOK
1959



Answer to question: If you were given several billion dollars to spend in the field of education, how would you spend it?

For Grolier Society

Certainly additional billions of dollars spent intelligently in various fields of education cannot but yield a rich harvest of social good. I find it difficult to determine priorities. There are so many invaluable agencies in the field - private and public - which are devoting themselves to the cause of education, both at home and in under-developed countries abroad. Each one of these agencies can profitably use vast additional funds in the prosecution of its program and projects.

By way of a vital supplement to all that is presently being carried on, I should like to see a more comprehensive and systematic program of education in human relations developed both here and abroad with a view toward lessening racial and religious tensions and prejudices in the world. To create a climate of trust and good-will wherein many worthy human enterprises may have a chance to succeed, is of supreme importance in our society still so gravely beset with many dark fears and suspicions. In all of our schools, colleges and universities, systematic courses should be introduced with carefully prepared text-books and other media of education which would teach the oncoming generations the organic unity of mankind, the scientific and historic baselessness of all the destructive prejudices, based on race and creed, which have led to so much sorrow, injustice and disaster in the world.


Similar programs might be carried on in shops and factories by organized labor, and among business executives and management, by chambers of commerce, and other agencies. In fact, all adult education groups should be enlisted. Attractive radio and television programs might be financed to carry the same message - the ancient, the indispensable but as yet the unfulfilled message - one Humanity on earth, and one common destiny for all mankind.

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

For Galley Society
Book of Knowledge
Yearbook 1961
9-23-60

Every encouragement should be given to man's attempt to conquer outer space. It is part of man's privilege and destiny to learn all that he possibly can learn about the universe and to penetrate all of its mysteries. There is no reason why man's seeking and probing should be limited to this mundane world.

But when all is said and done, and this includes Sputniks and Echoes and mice, dogs, monkeys and later on, men placed in orbit -- the major problem of our day is not how to match our artificial moons and our intercontinental ballistic missiles with those of the Russians but how to live in the same world with them. The persistent human problem is not how to make intersellar space safe for artificial satellites but how to make this world of ours safe for man! The fundamental human problem is how to do away with the need for ballistic missiles and the A-bombs and the H-bombs altogether. The human situation remains what it was before the Russians launched their satellites and we ours. The human problem still remains how to accommodate ourselves one to another -- nation to nation, system to system, race to race, religion to religion. Surely there must set in, sooner or later, unless we are resigned to catastrophe -- I might almost say to annihilation -- surely there must set in sooner or later, some rapprochement between the East and the West consequent upon the realization -- the simple realization -- that one power bloc cannot destroy the other without destroying itself. Surely the time must come, sooner or later, when the war-obsessed in both camps, the East and the West, and their incessant war-scares and war-cries must be pushed aside, and others who are not war-obsessed, but peace-inspired, must come ~~when the time must come~~ to take their place of leadership in their respective worlds.



Fortieth Anniversary OF The Book of Knowledge

*W*e are as proud and happy as we can be, and we should like to tell you why. This is the Fortieth Anniversary of THE BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE. It is also The Grolier Society's fiftieth year of publishing.

Men and women who have long loved THE BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE have sent congratulations and Happy Birthday messages—very busy men and women, who are serving mankind in many different, important ways.

Yet many of them took time from their work to send special messages to the boys and girls of America. We knew you would like to read their letters. So here they are, on the following pages.

THE EDITORS





*A Message
from
Admiral Byrd
to the
Young People
of America*

OFFICIAL U.S. NAVY PHOTOGRAPH



IT GIVES me great pleasure to wish THE BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE a Happy Birthday. The boys and girls who explore its pages are embarking on two of life's greatest adventures—the winning of knowledge and the winning of wisdom.

I have spent much of my life exploring the unknown areas at the ends of the earth. And I have found that most young people are interested in exploration. But exploration is adventure. So exploration and adventure go hand in hand.

But I have discovered that to explore and enjoy adventure one does not have to go to the far places of the earth. Right in one's own home or wherever one may be one can engage, at least to a degree, in what I consider to be the most interesting of all exploration—exploration into the realms of thought and the human spirit. But, strangely, I had to go to the end of the earth fully to comprehend this fact.

Once upon a time on one of my expeditions to the bottom of the world, I found myself, through a combination of unforeseen circumstances, alone during the long polar night living in the shadow of the South Pole. The inland weather of an area in the clutches of an ice age had never been studied, so I had established a meteorological station for this purpose. And also I was taking observations of the aurora australis. My tiny shack was buried under the snow and there was 800 feet of ice under the shack.





Thus, I was at the world's end near the axis of the earth and cut off by the darkness and the cold and ice from any physical contact with the rest of the world.

There was no dust at the Advance Base, so that the celestial bodies took on a brightness and a beauty—yes, and even a meaning—unknown in civilization. I was living under the aurora australis, which was most brilliant and awe-inspiring when the great spots appeared on the sun 90,000,000 miles away. And every second when it was clear I could see a meteorite flashing brilliantly across the sky. Often there were ice crystals, created by the bitter cold, that scintillated in the light of the celestial bodies until they resembled myriads of diamonds floating through the air. The stars did not rise and set but made a circle of their course in the sky.

I had the strange feeling that somehow I had gotten onto another planet and that I was witnessing the imponderable processes and forces of the cosmos, harmonious and soundless. But out of the silence I felt a gentle rhythm—the music of the spheres, perhaps. The conviction came to me that that rhythm was too orderly, too harmonious, too perfect, to be a product of blind chance. I realized that there must be purpose in the whole and that man was part of that whole and not an accidental offshoot—that therefore in the creation of man there must have been a design. Thus, there at the end of the earth I had found a confirmation of man's faith.

As the weeks of the long night wore on the temperature got lower and lower. The barrier ice contracted and began cracking as if with the sound of cannons. Bottomless crevasses opened up around my shack. My meteorological records began to show that probably I had come upon the world's coldest area.

Suddenly, disaster struck me. In the middle of the polar night I was poisoned by carbon monoxide from the faulty burner of my oil stove. To cut down the poison I had to keep my stove out twelve hours out of the twenty-four. The ice started crawling up the walls of my small shack and then across the ceiling and did not melt. Soon the poison affected my eyes so that the flickering candles no longer afforded enough light to read the books I had on my shelf.

Thus, most of the time I found myself lying in my sleeping-bag in the darkness, with nothing to do but think. I was living, in effect, precariously on the edge of an abyss. My thoughts, naturally enough, were on the gloomy side and they soon began to take charge of me.

And so I found that I must somehow take charge of my thoughts and completely control them. And thus I began to explore my mind to see what I could find there in the realm of imagination and thought that might help me.

The cold, the silence, the darkness, the "evenness of things," were rude and persistent companions. Difficult though they were to ignore, it was either deny their effect on me "or else."

Gradually I was able to control my thoughts more and more. In the field of imagination there seemed no time-space limitations. I found that I could throw my thoughts backward or forward in the stream of time to any place I chose. It was as if my mind were a motion-picture screen and I could run on it whatever picture I selected from an unlimited list. You





may be sure that most of my scenarios took me to places as different as possible from my very gloomy surroundings, such as warm sunny lands.

Thus there were moments when my predicament was forgotten; when I was conscious only of a peaceful mind adrift upon the adventurous tides of imagination.

But these adventures of the imagination were in the physical field and they were not enough. It was not so simple as that. I had to find other assets within myself if I hoped to survive. To substitute pleasant thoughts for gloomy ones was good but something more was needed.

So I explored as best I could into the uncharted and unknown areas of the mind; and slowly, as the days passed, I came on to some things. I discovered how much a man's world can be a world of the mind. And that a man himself determines or makes his world, which thus, to a degree, is the reflection of his own inner self wherein dwells the universal spirit of good.

It seemed to me that if a man could bring about the domination of his spiritual self over his worser self he could dry up the springs of fear and could then be captain of his ship and invulnerable to any fate, even to the sting of death.

And so went my battle at the Advance Base. It was an adventure of the mind and the spirit.

And now, many years later I am passing on through this splendid BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE some of the knowledge I got during the long night in the shadow of the South Pole.

Much has happened in those years. Probably very few of you find it necessary to look within yourself for help. And you do not have to depend upon your imagination for entertainment. You are literally flooded with adventure stories by the radio, television and the movies. And now there are the atom bombs, rockets, the faster-than-sound planes and so forth.

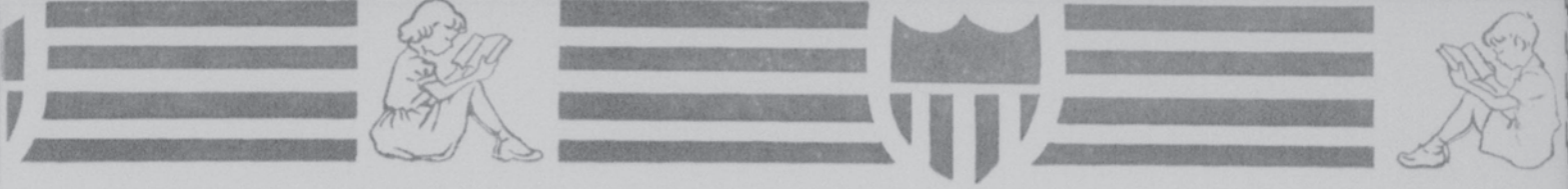
All of that seems quite wonderful. But in the meantime there is universal confusion. Freedom is in danger the world over and there are threats of a third world war. You, my young friends, will have the job of solving these problems left you by your blundering elders.

May I tell you frankly what I believe to be the mistake we, your fathers and your grandfathers, have made? The trouble started in the twentieth century, the technological century. There have been more technical advances in the first half of the twentieth century than were made in the entire previous history of the world.

Man has been making, for the past fifty years, the very costly mistake of believing that real human progress consists in the development of ever more powerful weapons of destruction and in the development, more particularly, of all sorts of mechanical appliances and apparatus to bring him greater comforts and ease, diversions and entertainment, and all manner of pleasures.

Thus, most of the genius that man possesses has been used in the field of the material sciences. Man has shrunk the world with lightning-like rapidity and has thereby created among human beings a great interdependence with which he is not ready to cope. In other words, he has created an extremely complicated environment into which he can not ade-





quately fit himself, thus making people everywhere easy prey to the "isms" taught by the false prophets. Man is too selfish to change his environment to fit himself. Therefore he must change himself to fit his environment.

And so man's problem in the last analysis is not the atom bomb or technology or the war-mad leaders and the false prophets, *but is man himself*. If he is to emerge a victor instead of a slave he must explore his mind and his spirit so as to know himself.

A man beset by evil within and from without can mobilize his spiritual self to conquer that evil. Just so can the human race mobilize its moral and spiritual power to defeat the material power of evil that threatens it.

As I see it, the absolute essential for a peaceful and free world is a human race united—I repeat united—against the onward march of evil.

Here is how I believe man can achieve a united world if he so wills. We know that in the affairs of men it is essential to have a common purpose in order to achieve unity. As I see it, man has for long had that common purpose. All decent men and women the world over, of whatever creed or race or color, desire for themselves and their loved ones *a chance for the pursuit of happiness, and liberty and freedom of worship*. This is our common global purpose.

And to achieve this purpose there is a workable method—the Golden Rule, which men and women of all religions can understand. It is the idea of consideration, ordinary everyday kindness and decency, good will and friendliness, justice, mercy and human sympathy. In short, it is the brotherhood-of-man idea. It is the realization that the well-being of one man depends upon the well-being of his neighbor, the well-being of one group depends upon the well-being of its neighbor group, and that the well-being of a nation depends upon the well-being of its neighbor nation. And all nations are now neighbors.

But we must not make the mistake of considering what the Great Teacher told us two thousand years ago as a teaching based on weakness. Above all things, it is important for man to base his fight for brotherhood and unity upon firmness, strength and fortitude behind what is right and just.

We know, however, that it will take time to mobilize the moral and spiritual force of man so as to unite the world behind our common, global purpose. And we also know that until the world is so united, the war-like leaders and false prophets must be held in leash by physical force.

By Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd, U.S.N. (Ret.)



Happy Birthday to THE BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE and its many young readers all over the world on this Fortieth Birthday, and many more years of happy reading in a truly good set of books.

LOUIS SHORES

DEAN, SCHOOL OF LIBRARY TRAINING AND SERVICE,
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

I am very pleased to send a message through THE BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE to the youth of America. The twentieth century will undoubtedly come to be known in history as the American Century. Because of its wealth and power, America is destined to be the paramount influence in the affairs of the world. Much will depend upon the quality of leadership that the American people will be prepared to give to the world. In the last analysis, this quality of leadership will be determined by the knowledge and the moral inspiration of the present generation of American youth.

It is not at all clear at the moment whether the future will belong to the forces of reaction and dictatorship or to the forces of freedom and democracy. In the world-wide struggle that is now unfolding between these two opposing forces, victory will come to those who are equipped with knowledge, with wisdom based on a true understanding of the past, and with moral courage that derives from the inspiring records of the struggles of men in all parts of the world, through the ages, against all forms of tyranny and oppression, for the unalienable rights of man as a child of God.

This is a great age in which to live, for vast issues are being decided. The free citizens of this blessed Republic in this generation face the opportunity and the challenge to lead the world to such a just and satisfactory solution of these issues as will bring to pass an enduring peace and the good society.

THE REVEREND ABBA HILLEL SILVER

RABBI, THE TEMPLE, CLEVELAND, OHIO
FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE ZIONIST ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA

BLACKSTONE STUDIOS, INC.





The pattern established by THE BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE has shown it to be an early and lasting influence for countless youngsters through forty years of growth in maturing America. Its earliest readers have never forgotten the many experiences they encountered in its pages, and the enthusiasm they pass on to their children finds ready acceptance in every generation.

The glittering magic of knowledge beckons every young mind, and those lucky enough to have access to THE BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE have found a stimulating source of apparently timeless authority and usefulness. The applications of learning are many.

PAUL C. SMITH

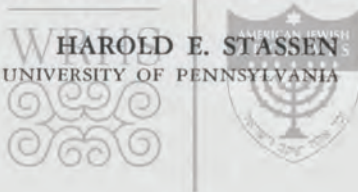
EDITOR AND GENERAL MANAGER,
"SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE"



Greetings and best wishes to THE BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE on its Fortieth Birthday.

HAROLD E. STASSEN

PRESIDENT, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA



HARRIS & EWING

To be a child in this awe-inspiring age of speed and power and infinite possibilities for exploration is a fearful and wonderful thing. We must face a whole new world of knowledge and master it for the good of all mankind. This we can not do alone. So we need to know, through their culture and art, the desires of people in all lands. Only by understanding the hearts of others can we ever hope to build with them a happier and healthier home on this tiny globe, hung in the lonely wilderness of the stars.

Let us work that we may think and learn together about this world of heart and mind and matter in which we live.

RAYMOND S. STITES

CURATOR OF EDUCATION,
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Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver
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Dear Rabbi Silver:

You will find enclosed two copies of the special Birthday Greeting section which is being bound into Volume One of the 1950 Book of Knowledge. This contains, as you will see, the message which you graciously sent us. The editors hope that you will be pleased with the appearance of this brochure. Once more let us thank you most sincerely for your warm-hearted greeting to The Book of Knowledge on the fortieth anniversary of its service to children.

Cordially yours,

Ellen W. Laughlin
Editor-in-Chief

EVMCL:MA