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Message of Israel hour, 1951.

"MESSAGE OF ISRAEL" BROADCAST

By **Dr. Abba Hillel Silver**
Rabbi of The Temple Jewish
Cleveland, Ohio

**November 4, 1951****THE ONE AND THE MANY**

The crisis of our age is far more spiritual than economic or political. It is a crisis of ideas and attitudes. Were it mainly economic, our enormous material resources, our advanced technological skill, our new sources of power, and our increased facilities for transportation and distribution would be by way of solving it. They are not solving it. They are contributing more and more to conflict, breakdown and chaos. The besetting fear of our age is not that sufficient food may not be available for the world's expanding population. Rather is it the fear that while food and all the desirable things of life may be abundant and near at hand, the human race, like Tantalus, will, because of some fatal perversity of fate, never be permitted to enjoy them.

Likewise is the political crisis a derivative one. It results from a loss of faith in the capacity of man to order his collective life in justice and freedom without recourse to violence, terror and dictatorship.

Our age has passed beyond cynicism or sophistication. It is now distraught; not because its high hopes for scientific progress have not been realized. These have been realized far beyond its most extravagant hopes. The first half of the 20th century was the most brilliantly creative period in scientific history. In it man made his deepest soundings in the mysterious realms of matter and energy. His inventive genius achieved for him miracles of power and riches. But they failed to give him what he had hoped for most and what he needs preeminently - security, dignity, happiness. He had hoped that his scientific laboratories would yield him the magic keys to all progress and well-being; but in the darkening world about him, we find him crying unto his helpless idols, like the priests of Baal in the story of Elijah, "O Baal, answer us." But "though they proceeded to slash one another according to their custom with swords and with lances until the blood gushed out upon them..., there was no voice, no answer...."

Our age is suffering from what the Bible calls "a drooping of the soul", a dangerous deflation of morale; a spiritual malaise. Its brilliant intellectual and scientific achievements only serve to illumine phosphorescently the appalling stages of

of its decomposition.

In one of his recently published "Unpopular Essays", Bertrand Russell writes: "The importance of Man, which is the one indispensable dogma of the theologians, receives no support from a scientific view of the future of the solar system." To which one is prompted to reply, so much the worse for the scientific view, which doubtless will go through many revisions and corrections in the future, as have so many other scientific views and doctrines in the past. Time and again science has been tardy in arriving at conclusions which the intuitive religious genius of mankind postulated long ago. Furthermore, there are religious convictions which require no confirmation at the hands of science and which science can never affirm or deny.

But Bertrand Russell is entirely correct when he states that "the importance of Man is the one indispensable dogma of the theologians." It is also the one indispensable dogma of democracy, and it is at the heart of the terrible crisis which is today cleaving and rending our world apart.

Judaism holds that man has immense significance in the scheme of things. Man is very important to God in the unfolding of His purposes - each man, every man - rich or poor, wise or simple, white or black, saint or sinner. Sin is a voluntary lapse into unworthiness and unimportance. It is descent into paltriness. Man should live and act as if his life were tremendously significant, as if he were a co-worker of God in creation, as if his soul and mind were boundless in their capacities, and in their influence reaching distant shores and extending far into the future.

One of the sages of Israel long ago, employing the rich imagery which so often characterized their utterances, declared: "When a man goes forth on his way, a troop of angels precedes him and proclaims: 'Make way for the image of God, blessed be He.'"

While Judaism demanded much of man in terms of duty and sacrifice, it gave much to him in terms of status, dignity and inalienable rights. "Every man has the right to say," declared an inspired teacher of Israel, "for my sake was the whole world created." A sense of kinship ^{with} God "crowned man with glory and honor" and made him "a little lower than the angels."

The poet of American democracy, Walt Whitman, asserted: "The whole theory of the universe is directed unerringly to one single individual - namely, to you." This is the heroic dogma of American democracy which derived its inspiration and sanctions from the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Religion always addressed itself directly to the individual: "I am the Lord, thy God!" It always held inviolate for man a relationship with God which transcended all his other relationships with society.

Our age, unfortunately, makes little of the individual. His personal life is not very important. Men are considered impersonally in the mass. Increasingly they are becoming statistics in the hands of a predatory collectivism. They are shunted about like herds of cattle. They are slaughtered in the millions. They are coordinated and subjugated to the state until the last vestige of their freedom and their rights vanishes. Because the religious basis of our society has been denied, and materialistic theories of life and history have taken hold of the thoughts and actions of men and governments, the stature of the individual, and with it, his rights and inherent dignity, have suffered tragic abatement and diminution in our day. Every precinct of his life has been invaded and violated. Having denied to man the image of God, he has been given the mask of the robot.

Because man is regarded as unimportant and possessed of no rights which are inherently and inalienably his, subject to no veto either of the state or of society, it has been possible in our day for usurping parties and governments to achieve the expropriation or even the extermination of whole classes and people of whose political and economic views and interests they did not approve. Our age has witnessed the appalling mass slaughter of millions of men, women and children because of some insane race theories held by a totalitarian government. It has been experiencing recurrent waves of dangerous mass propaganda steeped in hate and bigotry, and aimed at depriving the individual of his dignity, equality and freedom. We have been swinging into an ever-widening orbit of intolerance.

Our civilization today lacks compassion and mercy because man, the individual, is contemned. He is seldom thought of as an end in himself, but as a tool for something or someone else - the state, the party, the system - to be used, abused, broken and cast aside.

We are moving into dangerous times as mankind gropes for a solution of its grave economic problems and seeks to find a fair balance between social control and individual enterprise, between authority and freedom. Unfortunately, we are moving into these dangerous times with little love in our hearts and with little respect and regard for man as such. We are spiritually unprepared for the enormous task.

What our age needs is a new mood and point of view - a renewed faith in the individual, a new reverence for his spiritual sovereignty and the inviolability of his personality, a new covenant with character.

This is what Judaism and the classic religions of mankind have been teaching all the time. Unfortunately, these teachings have gone unheeded most of the time, and most especially in our time. Hence, the "drooping of the soul" of our age and our low morale. Hence, "the line of confusion which has been stretched over it, and the plummet of emptiness..."

The call to our age is the ancient prophetic call: "Make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die...turn yourselves, and live."

"MESSAGE OF ISRAEL"

by Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
Rabbi of The Temple
Cleveland, Ohio



November 11, 1951

THE OLD AND THE NEW

There are people who, discouraged and frustrated, surrender themselves to defeat. They then proceed to rationalize their surrender in one way or another. It is not worth the effort, anyhow. Life is cheap and meaningless. Man is caught in a hopeless trap.

There have been and still are religions which declared that man is governed by fate, and that it is, therefore, hopeless or even impious to try to change what has been decreed. These beliefs and philosophies make man subject either to the compulsion of impersonal nature, or to the influence of the stars or planets, or to his own past irrevocable acts or to the unaccountable willfulness of some divinity. Judaism denies and rejects them all.

The problem of human freedom was not unknown to the thinkers of Judaism, and they were not unaware of the difficulty in reconciling man's freedom of choice with God's omniscience. But the intellectual difficulty which they encountered in their effort to solve this problem - one of the many unsolved problems and contradictions which abound not only in the field of religion but in the field of science as well - did not move them to commit the grave error of denying free will to man altogether.

They realized that there were limitations to human freedom, but they also realized that there were vital areas in which man was free - in which man had a vivid intuition and experience of freedom. Because the boundaries between what was free and what was determined were not clearly defined, man should act as if they did not constrict him at all insofar as his moral initiative was concerned. It is man's duty to develop freedom within himself just as it is his duty to develop his mind and reason although they, too, have their limitations.

It is part of recorded history that man has, by dint of his will and exertion, increased his physical security on earth and the amenities of his life, diminished want and poverty, and improved health and education - and there are no visible limits to such improvements. Man has within his limitations been able to accomplish much which he never would have accomplished had he accepted literally the idea "that that

which is crooked cannot be made straight and that which is wanting cannot be filled, and there is nothing new under the sun."

Judaism proclaimed to the world the liberating doctrine of moral freedom, and therefore, also of moral responsibility. "See, I have set before thee this day life and good and death and evil. Therefore, choose life that you may live, you and your seed."

Not only is man free and able to renew himself, but in this enterprise towards newness and regeneration lie the meaning and significance of his life. Concerning all the things which God created in the first days of the world, the Bible says, "And God saw that it was good." The creation of light, the firmament and of all the beasts of the earth are characterized as good and very good. But of the creation of man, it is not said that it was good. Because, say the Rabbis, man was not created perfect, but perfectable. His destiny is to perfect himself in this world - regardless of the struggle, the strain and the sacrifice.

Man should reach out for newness. The new is not always the true, but neither is the old. Scientific text-books are out-dated and discarded almost every few years. At this very moment science is going through a most revolutionary reorientation. An altogether new set of principles concerning the nature of the universe, of time and of space, and concerning the origin of matter, energy, life and consciousness is being propounded. The truly scientific mind is humble and eager for new ideas which can help to explain more accurately the nature, the origin or the relation of the things and forces in nature.

This unfortunately is not the case when it comes to the social life of men, or to their personal lives, their economic arrangements or to international relations. Here they cling tenaciously to old arrangements, old ways and out-dated philosophies. Here they resent the prophet of new ideas. They seek to discredit or destroy the spokesman of unpopular new doctrines. He is denounced as the disturber, the enemy, "the man of the spirit is mad."

It is for continuous newness in these realms of human life that Judaism pleads. Our faith urges us to make unendingly new covenants with a better life and advancing social life, and not to be content with the past. For while there was much good in the past, there was also much evil in it. Our faith urges us not to be content with the present, for while there is much good in the present, there is also much evil in it.

Our present age is tired and afraid. There are no great liberating ideals sweeping over our world today. On the one hand there is a fearful dictatorship which has been clamped down upon a large section of mankind. This dictatorship is certainly not new. It is a dark and savage tyranny, a throw-back to ancient forms of bondage and to the most ruthless voodoo disciplines of primitive society. It is the dead hand of the past, but deadlier by far today because it is mailed in science and technology. On the other hand, freedom and democracy have lost their revolutionary fires, their crusading zeal. They are on the defensive. They are building a Maginot line around themselves, as a defense against an aggressive Communism. They are joining hands and seeking allies among their unreconciled enemies. They are not trying to build a world-wide fraternity of freedom-loving peoples, united by common needs and aspirations. They are attempting to cement with gold a military alliance of frightened governments. Democracy is no longer the mighty faith which in the golden prime of its youth shook the foundations of the world, toppled kingdoms and empires, and broke the chains of enslaved peoples everywhere. They seem to have become old institutions fighting for survival, neglected shrines at which the fires of dedication and sacrifice are burning low unto extinction.

All this is sad to contemplate. For in essence democracy and freedom represent the very newness and freshness of human life, the eternal springtime of humanity. Unfortunately, we have become so accustomed to them that they have lost their spell over us. The poet Shelley somewhere speaks of "the film of familiarity". It is this "film of familiarity" which tragically screens today the great ideals and institutions of

mankind - liberty, self-government and the inalienable rights of man - which in the past kindled the spirits of generations of men with high exaltation, ardor and devotion.

We must begin to see them again with new eyes. Herein lies our salvation. There are times when our liberties are threatened by foreign ~~forces~~^{forces}, but most often they are determined from within, by ourselves, because we lose our faith in them or because of fear, or panic, or impatience, or the disastrous lure of expediency.

Democracy will not be saved for mankind by destroying Communism, nor will we stop tyranny abroad by stifling freedom at home. Mankind will ultimately destroy Communism by living and practicing courageously the exacting mandates of political, social and economic democracy. It is not in Korea where the issue of freedom versus dictatorship will be settled, but in every town, village and city in our beloved country, and in the way of life of every individual citizen here and in every other democracy on earth. The global strategy of democracy begins at home. Our expeditionary forces will do nothing to save it, if it collapses at the base.

We must renew our faith and our dedication to our own ideals and set about rectifying all that we know to be wrong. We should dare to experiment with new forms of economic and social life while employing all the time the tried methods of democracy. Democracy is a permanent, peaceful revolution! It anticipates unrest by timely change and adjustment. Ours is not yet the perfect society. There is still much of poverty, exploitation, bigotry, crime, vice, and group and class hatreds in our midst to justify any complacency on our part. We need but read the published records of broken homes, of juvenile delinquency, of moral deterioration, of gambling, of police and official corruption, and of influence peddling in high places to realize that, in practice, our democratic society is both imperfect and gravely menaced. The road is still long, but it is an open and a promising road.

"The real slavery of Israel in Egypt was that they had learned to endure it," declared one of our sages. The danger lies in our acceptance as inevitable, what is inadequate in ourselves, in our country or in society.

The curtain may be falling upon a dying world. It may be rising upon a brighter

and better world. What our religion is trying to tell us is that we alone can determine whether it shall rise or fall, even as we alone must devise the plot, write the words, and act the parts. The whole drama of social life is of our own composition.

It all depends upon our wisdom, our courage, our faith.



"MESSAGE OF ISRAEL" BROADCAST
By Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
Rabbi of The Temple
Cleveland, Ohio



November 18, 1951

THE WALL AND THE BRIDGE

① I have always been fascinated by bridges and walls. They have much to say. They are among the most fruitful and inspiring symbols in the speech and thought of mankind.

② Walls have their definite value and purpose in human life. They give us shelter, security and privacy. They carve for us out of unlimited space which is too vast for us to dominate, a smaller area which we can subdue to our needs, and they enclose us in a manageable world which we can master. This gives us a sense of aloneness and confidence which are good for us. Walls and fences often also serve a good purpose in defining beyond the peradventure of doubt ~~and dispute~~ what is ours and what is our neighbors. The poet Robert Frost put it: "Good fences make good neighbors." To the building of such walls for protection, privacy and ownership, there can be no objection. They are part of the necessary routine of civilized life.

③ But there are other walls which men erect which serve no such good purpose, but on the contrary, are harmful to the best interests of society.

There are, for example, walls which men set up between themselves and God. False philosophies are such walls - philosophies which maintain that matter is the whole and basic constituent of the universe, that mind and consciousness and all spiritual processes are only modes of matter. From these premises it is but a step to agnosticism and atheism. Those who hold such opinions beguile themselves into believing that their opinions are backed up by science; but science offers no props to atheism and no arguments for materialism. Men needlessly erect such walls which separate them from their God.

Sin is a wall. This is the very essence of sin - separation. "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God." Sin is self-banishment from a world where man can be at one and at peace with his Maker, and where man can be at one and at peace with himself. Sin is a wall of inner contradiction, a grievous disharmony which disintegrates personality.

There are other walls which men erect between themselves and their fellow-men. Selfishness is such a wall. A man barricades himself behind that wall. It becomes his prison wall. He fondly believes that this wall of self-centeredness will give him greater strength and security, and will insure him against being exploited and imposed upon. Actually it isolates him and shuts him off in loneliness from the great and exciting world about him.

4 Prejudice, intolerance, race and group hatreds are tragic walls which men build around themselves, and our age has unfortunately witnessed the erection of many such forbidding walls. John Hersey significantly called the story which he wrote about the extermination of the Jews of Warsaw at the hand of the Nazis "The Wall". That wall behind which tens of thousands of brave men and women perished was the symbol of similar walls which Nazi racial intolerance set up all over the world. It led to the second World War. Millions were exterminated, cities and countries were laid waste, and the earth was filled with horror, death and desolation by these builders of hate-walls. The fomenters of group antagonisms are still active in the world today, even in our own country. Whenever there is unhappiness, discontent or unrest among men, these racial and religious bigots swarm out of their dark holes, sweep over the land and sow the dragon seed of suspicion and hate.

5 Sometimes even good and respectable citizens build walls around themselves, which are effective blocks to mutual understanding and good will. They build walls of social exclusiveness and snobbery. They segregate themselves in some illusory eminence and hug to their bosoms the delusion that they are somehow better than the common run of humanity. In the sight of God there are no blue bloods and no first families, no Brahmins and no untouchables - only children of the dust whose brief careers on earth may be made bright by the cultivation of the heart and mind, and we may find a measure of happiness in life by helping one another in goodness and love. This is to earn distinction, honor and security.

"It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the humble than to divide the spoils with the proud."

6 Our world is divided today by political walls and iron curtains. There are those who would build these walls still higher, who resent those who suggest ways for razing these walls and leveling them off. In every age there have been the wall-building doctrinaires, the exponents of the irreconcilable. Either I or you survive! No middle road - no meeting ground - no compromise! This, of course, is the fateful road to war, and wars only serve to erect new walls on the ruined foundations of the old.

7 There are nations which put their trust and security in strong walls, in impregnable Maginot Lines, in Chinese walls. But they all crumble sooner or later. ~~The mighty walls of Jericho fell and the broad walls of Babylon were utterly overthrown.~~ "The Lord God hath a day upon every lofty tower and upon every fortified wall." A nation must not put its sole trust in armament, even as formidable as atomic bombs. The very strength of a nation often brings about its downfall. It becomes over-confident, over-bearing, precipitate; it drains its strength in numerous military adventures; its domestic economy breaks down and unrest and revolution finally weaken it and prepare it for ultimate defeat on the battle-field.

8 A nation should put its trust in the strength of its moral and intellectual life, the justice and fairness of its laws and institutions, the well-being and contentment of its citizens, the moral training of its youth, and the stability of its homes.

Our religious
~~Christian~~ urged men to be builders of bridges rather than of walls. Life abounds in numerous tragic chasms and gulfs which separate men, in deep rivers and their swift, dark currents. Men must learn to build bridges across them and they are more difficult to build than walls. Charity, compassion, sympathy, magnanimity, great mindedness are such bridges. So is friendship; so is tolerance; so is brotherhood. "Love thy neighbor as thyself" is perhaps the noblest and most enduring of

all bridges ever devised. "With malice towards none, with charity for all," is another bridge which an immortal American built across a river of blood and a civil war.

(19) Every earnest effort at international understanding and cooperation is a bridge leading to the Kingdom of God, to the good society. The League of Nations was such a bridge. It collapsed. Bridges often collapse and must be rebuilt. The United Nations is such a bridge. It is in danger of collapse. We must see to it that it does not collapse. War is never a bridge. At best it is a Bridge of Sighs leading men from doom to death.

Prayer is a bridge - a bridge to God. Memory is a bridge - across the physically impassable gulf of death to our dear departed. As long as there is remembrance, there is no separation.

We must be builders of bridges. Within our own families we must never permit any wall to separate us, no misunderstanding, no selfishness, no faithlessness. We must draw our dear ones close to us - very close - with a network of highways of love and bridges of reconciliation, or we shall find ourselves lonely and defeated.

Our neighbor? We should knock at his door and build a bridge of neighborliness to him. "A great city is a great wilderness." Neighborliness makes it a community. ~~It~~

The poor, the weak, the stranger, the sinner? We must build a bridge and go to them. In a real sense we are all poor, weak, strangers and sinners. Even to our enemy we should build a bridge - a bridge of forgiveness. "Men should be as pliant as a reed, not hard as a cedar," declared our sages.

All life is a bridge - from birth to death, from the past to the future. Death may be but another bridge athwart the night of darkness to another dawn.

✓ The whole magnificent ethical message of our great historic faith, Judaism, may be summed up in the challenging symbolism of walls and bridges.



November 25, 1951

THE ROAD AND THE GOAL

In the 19th century, wrote Victor Hugo, war will be dead, the scaffold will be dead, hatred will be dead, frontiers will be dead, royalty will be dead, dogmas will be dead, and man will begin to live.

But here we are half-way down the 20th century and war is not dead, the scaffold is not dead, hatred is not dead, frontiers are not dead, royalty is not dead, dogmas are not dead, but man is beginning to die. The vista which stretches before our generation today ends at the edge of a wilderness. For years now men have lived in a world of mounting hate, intolerance and bigotry, of revolutions, invasions, war, amidst the slaughter of millions of their kind. Great peoples have destroyed their liberties and enslaved themselves. Millions of men cower today in terrorized submissiveness. The wealth of nations is being drained in wars and in preparations for wars.

The human spirit stands today frightened, weighted down with apocalyptic foreboding as if awaiting the crash of doom. The thoughtful among men have accordingly begun to search earnestly for a road away from disaster. They are seeking desperately to rediscover that vision which was somehow lost amidst the brilliant pageantry of scientific achievement in the last century to the hurt and sorrow of the world. They understand now what the wise men of the earth have always known, that increased knowledge does not necessarily mean increased goodness or happiness, that facts are not in themselves blessings, that truth can make us mad as well as free, that the prolongation of human life is not the same as the improvement of human life, that the acceleration of a process does not always insure a finer product, that change does not necessarily spell progress and that democracy, as Locky pointed out more than a half-century ago, may often destroy liberty. They realize now that the fault is not with science or education or democracy as such, but with the interpretation which men have put upon them, with the omnipotence and autonomy which they have ascribed to them and with their failure to understand that science, education and democracy are means, not ends in themselves.

What has been tragically missing in our civilization is the compelling and unifying faith in the great human goals which religion and religion alone has set for mankind, and towards the attainment of which science, education and democracy should contribute

if they are to fulfill their chief functions. Mankind lost sight of these goals; therefore, human progress today has no clear direction. Good material and good tools are not enough for the builder. The builder must have a plan. To build a noble and enduring society it is not enough to have wealth and knowledge. Mankind must have an architectural plan, and that only the spiritual vision of man has designed. Mankind must also have the will and the loyalty to follow this plan, and that the moral sense of mankind alone can provide. Without faith in God, the reality of the spiritual vision as well as the moral sense in man are quickly denied and rejected.

But our faith cautions us against pessimism and despair. Pessimism is a form of atheism for it omits God from man's calculations, and it omits the God that is in man. "Share thy burden with the Lord, and He will sustain thee," says the Psalmist. Man should continue to strive and aspire, to build again and yet again upon the ruins of his many broken hopes and dreams.

We cannot see beyond the horizon of our own times. What lies ahead, no one knows. But Judaism constantly reminds us that beyond all horizons, there is God.

The stars and planets were there and all the moving constellations before man ever recognized them. In the dark imprisoned mind of the cave dweller in the dawn of time, there already lay impounded all the marvelous achievements of man that were to come, all that he could not see, nor grasp, nor understand - all that he would have refused to believe - the inventions and discoveries, the power and the mastery, the worlds of music, song and poetry, of philosophy and science. In the mind of that primitive cave dweller there was already contained, as in a seed, all the blossoming and flowering civilizations that were to come, but he could not see the shape of things to come. He could not penetrate the curtains which enshrouded his immediately visible and empirical world. He would have been justified in a total pessimism about the future of mankind far more than we of this generation. For we, after all, have a long recorded past to contemplate, a past which, in spite of all its turns and windings, did lead

mankind forward to amazing achievements. We are warranted in reading in the past both heartening prologue and prophecy.

On the surface of things it looks as though our times are not propitious for moral optimism or idealism. There is a danger of a defeatist mood sweeping over our people, especially our young people, a mood of "Oh, what's the use?" Just six short years ago we were at war, and now we are at war again! We defeated one dictatorship only to be confronted with another. Again our lives are being dislocated. Again we are being separated from our homes and our careers. Again the draft, the camps, the uniforms and the casualty lists! What have all of us experienced since 1914 but wars and revolutions, class struggles, the extermination of millions, violence, hate, plottings and propaganda. All about us one hears nothing but the talk of cold wars, shooting wars, preventive wars! We are today re-arming our former enemies and mobilizing against our former allies. What hopeless, disastrous confusion! Why speak of building a better world and why challenge men and women to clean up such a cloaca maxima - such a dreggy, slimy world!

We shall be utterly lost if we give way to such despair and cynicism. Our age is not the worst of all ages. In many ways it is a great age - one of the greatest. The mind of man is scoring epochal triumphs, revolutionary advances. It is his spirit which is lagging. Hence, the pulling apart, the tensions, the discords, the pessimism. There were darker ages than ours and from them mankind nevertheless emerged to clearer days and brighter prospects. It is important for us to raise our sights and look far ahead.

Ours may well be the dread, dark hour of uncertainty and hesitation before the dawn of a new and happier age, an age of greater peace, security and well-being for the whole of mankind. Long and cruel centuries of human greed and oppression, of exploitation, imperialism, and the enslavement of nations and races do not end peacefully and do not gently pass over into a new age of freedom, justice and order without a terrible and painful wrench. Such times are times of trouble and upheaval, of the clashing and confounding chaos of ideas.

But the work of the world is nevertheless going on in spite of the confusion and strife. Many oppressed peoples which have long been denied their freedom, have achieved or are in the process of achieving their independence. They are on the road to a new and better life. The long-exploited masses of the earth have gained and are gaining in our day greater competence, security, dignity, and a higher standard of living. Knowledge is increasing and so is the health of the race. Determined efforts are being made by brave and undiscouraged men everywhere and by nations to find the way which will lead both to freedom, social stability and international peace. Long and hard is the way and many are the pitfalls, but there is a way, there is a goal, and the faithful sons of light do follow it unweariedly. They know the goals which they seek and will not be swerved from them.

We cannot always wait to do the thing which needs to be done until we see the road clearly ahead of us. Sometimes we must act in faith, even when we do not know what lies immediately ahead. Sometimes we must move forward through mist and fog. "If we could know where we are," declared Abraham Lincoln, "and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do and how to do it." And yet Lincoln was not deterred from action by the doubts and bewilderments which beset him. He did what had to be done with the material and the opportunities which lay at hand, trusting that what he was honestly striving to do was within the pattern of the true and abiding design of human progress.

"Thine is not the duty," declared our sages, "to complete the task, but neither art thou free to desist from it."

Judaism admonished us not to despair of the future, nor of our own strength, nor of mankind's inexhaustible spiritual resources nor of God's cooperation. If we continue to have love for man, reverence for the human spirit, and faith in its un-failing resurgence, we shall succeed in the end. This may be called mystical, but men do not live by the logical, but by the mystical. They do not die for the fact, but for the faith.

51-3

Community Thanksgiving Service

sponsored by

Church of the Master
Euclid Avenue Christian Church
Euclid Avenue Congregational Church
The Temple

Wednesday, November 21, 1951
8:00 P. M.

Organ Prelude "Vision" Rheinberger

Reading of the President's Proclamation Rev. Robert C. Newell

Invocation

Hymn No. 117 "We Gather to Ask the Lord's Blessing"

Responsive Reading No. 46, Old Testament Rev. Howard Spangler

Solo "A Song of Thanksgiving" Allitsen



Organ Meditation

Pastoral Prayer

Rev. William H. Dudley

Organ Meditation

The Thanksgiving

Rev. William H. Dudley

Anthem

"Thanks Be to Thee"

Handel

Scripture Reading

Rev. Howard Spangler

Hymn No. 548 "My Country! 'Tis of Thee"

415 Balcony

Organ Meditation

A Thanksgiving Message

"Sharing in Freedom"

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver

Hymn No. 550 "O Beautiful for Spacious Skies"

407 Balcony

Benediction

Rev. Robert C. Newell

Organ Postlude

"Tocatta"

Boellman

Notes

The Offering, beyond expenses, will be forwarded to The Cleveland Community Fund.

At the organ is Mr. Russell A. Hehr, Director of Music for the Church of the Master.

Mr. Anthony Fitch is tenor soloist of The Temple.

The Choir is composed of choristers from the Church of the Master, the Euclid Avenue Christian Church, and the Euclid Avenue Congregational Church.

Leading the worship are: Rev. William H. Dudley, Euclid Avenue Congregational Church; Rev. Robert C. Newell, Church of the Master; Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, The Temple; and Rev. Howard Spangler, Euclid Avenue Christian Church.

Participating in this service are: The Church of the Master, Fidelity Baptist Church, Euclid Avenue Christian Church, Euclid Avenue Congregational Church, The Temple, Unitarian Society of Cleveland, and Wade Park Methodist Church.

This service is being recorded for broadcast over WSRS tomorrow at 7:30 p.m., 1490 on your radio dial.

MESSAGE OF ISRAEL



See also record
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UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS UNITED JEWISH LAYMAN'S COMMITTEE INC.

UNION HOUSE OF LIVING JUDAISM, 838 Fifth Ave., New York 21, N. Y., TEmpleton 8-2223 or Regent 7-8200

AMERICAN BROADCASTING COMPANY

Every Sunday, 10-10:30 A.M., New York Time

DAVID J. WISE, Radio Director

THE ONE AND THE MANY

November 4, 1951

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver

The crisis of our age is far more spiritual than economic or political. It is a crisis of ideas and attitudes. Were it mainly economic, our enormous material resources, our advanced technological skill, our new sources of power, and our increased facilities for transportation and distribution would be by way of solving it. They are not solving it. They are contributing more and more to conflict, breakdown and chaos. The besetting fear of our age is not that sufficient food may not be available for the world's expanding population. Rather is it the fear that while food and all the desirable things of life may be abundant and near at hand, the human race, like Tantalus, will, because of some fatal perversity of fate, never be permitted to enjoy them.

Likewise is the political crisis a derivative one. It results from a loss of faith in the capacity of man to order his collective life in justice and freedom without recourse to violence, terror and dictatorship.

Our age has passed beyond cynicism or sophistication. It is now distraught; not because its high hopes for scientific progress have not been realized. These have been realized far beyond its most extravagant hopes. The first half of the 20th century was the most brilliantly creative period in scientific history. In it man made his deepest soundings in the mysterious realms of matter and energy. His inventive genius achieved for him miracles of power and riches. But they failed to give him what he had hoped for most and what he needs preeminently - security, dignity, happiness. He had hopes that his scientific laboratories would yield him the magic keys to all progress and well-being; but in the darkening world about him, we find him crying unto his helpless idols, like the priests of Baal in the story of Elijah, "O Baal, answer us." But "though they proceeded to slash one another according to their custom with swords and with lances until the blood gushed out upon them...there was no voice, no answer...."

Our age is suffering from what the Bible calls "a cropping of the soul," a dangerous deflation of morale, a spiritual malaise. Its brilliant intellectual and scientific achievements only serve to illumine phosphorescently the appalling stages of its decomposition.

In one of his recently published "Unpopular Essays," Bertrand Russell writes: "The importance of Man, which is the one indispensable dogma of the theologians, receives no support from a scientific view of the future of the solar system." To which one is prompted to reply, so much the worse for the scientific view, which doubtless will go through many revisions and corrections in the future, as have so many other scientific views and doctrines in the past. Time and again science has been tardy in arriving at conclusions which the intuitive religious genius of mankind postulated long ago. Furthermore, there are religious convictions which require no confirmation at the hands of science and which science can never affirm or deny.

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RABBI JONAH B. WISE

But Bertrand Russell is entirely correct when he states that "the importance of Man is the one indispensable dogma of the theologians." It is also the one indispensable dogma of democracy; and it is at the heart of the terrible crisis which is today cleaving and rending our world apart.

Judaism holds that man has immense significance in the scheme of things. Man is very important to God in the unfoldment of His purposes - each man, every man - rich or poor, wise or simple, white or black, saint or sinner. Sin is a voluntary lapse into unworthiness and unimportance. It is descent into paltriness. Man should live and act as if his life were tremendously significant, as if he were a co-worker of God in creation, as if his soul and mind were boundless in their capacities, and in their influence reaching distant shores and extending far into the future.

One of the sages of Israel long ago, employing the rich imagery which so often characterized their utterances, declared: "When a man goes forth on his way, a troop of angels precedes him and proclaims: 'Make way for the image of God, blessed be He.'"

While Judaism demanded much of man in terms of duty and sacrifice, it gave much to him in terms of status, dignity and inalienable rights. "Every man has the right to say," declared an inspired teacher of Israel, "for my sake was the whole world created." A sense of kinship with God "crowned man with glory and honor" and made him "a little lower than the angels."

The poet of American democracy, Walt Whitman, asserted: "The whole theory of the universe is directed unerringly to one single individual - namely, to you." This is the heroic dogma of American democracy which derived its inspiration and sanctions from the Judaic-Christian tradition. Religion always addressed itself directly to the individual: "I am the lord, thy God!" It always held inviolate for man a relationship with God which transcended all his other relationships with society.

Our age, unfortunately, makes little of the individual. His personal life is not very important. Men are considered impersonally in the mass. Increasingly they are becoming statistics in the hands of a predatory collectivism. They are shunted about like herds of cattle. They are slaughtered in the millions. They are coordinated and subjugated to the state until the last vestige of their freedom and their rights vanishes. Because the religious basis of our society has been denied, and materialistic theories of life and history have taken hold of the thoughts and actions of men and governments, the stature of the individual, and with it, his rights and inherent dignity, have suffered tragic abatement and diminution in our day. Every precinct of his life has been invaded and violated. Having denied to man the image of God, he has been given the mask of the robot.

Because man is regarded as unimportant and possessed of no rights which are inherently and inalienably his, subject to no veto either of the state or of society, it has been possible in our day for usurping parties and governments to achieve the expropriation or even the extermination of whole classes and people of whose political and economic views and interests they did not approve. Our age has witnessed the appalling mass slaughter of millions of men, women and children because of some insane race theories held by a totalitarian government. It has been experiencing recurrent waves of dangerous mass propaganda steeped in hate and bigotry, and aimed at depriving the individual of his dignity, equality and freedom. We have been swinging into an ever-widening orbit of intolerance.

Our civilization today lacks compassion and mercy because man, the individual, is contemned. He is seldom thought of as an end in himself, but as a tool for something or someone else - the state, the party, the system - to be used, abused, broken and cast aside.

We are moving into dangerous times as mankind gropes for a solution of its grave economic problems and seeks to find a fair balance between social control and individual enterprise, between authority and freedom. Unfortunately, we are moving into these dangerous times with little love in our hearts and with little respect and

regard for man as such. We are spiritually unprepared for the enormous task.

What our age needs is a new mood and point of view - a renewed faith in the individual, a new reverence for his spiritual sovereignty and the inviolability of his personality, a new covenant with character.

This is what Judaism and the classic religions of mankind have been teaching all the time. Unfortunately, these teachings have gone unheeded most of the time, and most especially in our time. Hence, the "drooping of the soul" of our age and our low morale. Hence, "the line of confusion which has been stretched over it, and the plummet of emptiness..."

The call to our age is the ancient prophetic call: "Make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die...turn yourselves, and live."



MESSAGE OF ISRAEL



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THE WALL AND THE BRIDGE

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver

November 25, 1951

I have always been fascinated by bridges and walls. They have much to say. They are among the most fruitful and inspiring symbols in the speech and thought of mankind.

Walls have their definite value and purpose in human life. They give us shelter, security and privacy. They carve for us out of unlimited space which is too vast for us to dominate, a smaller area which we can subdue to our needs, and they enclose us in a manageable world which we can master. This gives us a sense of athomeness and confidence which are good for us. Walls and fences often also serve a good purpose in defining beyond the peradventure of doubt and dispute what is ours and what is our neighbors. The poet Robert Frost put it: "Good fences make good neighbors." To the building of such walls for protection, privacy and ownership, there can be no objection. They are part of the necessary routine of civilized life.

But there are other walls which men erect which serve no such good purpose, but on the contrary, are harmful to the best interests of society.

There are, for example, walls which men set up between themselves and God. False philosophies are such walls - philosophies which maintain that matter is the whole and basic constituent of the universe, that mind and consciousness and all spiritual processes are only modes of matter. From these premises it is but a step to agnosticism and atheism. Those who hold such opinions beguile themselves into believing that their opinions are backed up by science; but science offers no props to atheism and no arguments for materialism. Men needlessly erect such walls which separate them from their God.

Sin is a wall. This is the very essence of sin - separation. "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God." Sin is self-banishment from a world where man can be at one and at peace with his Maker, and where man can be at one and at peace with himself. Sin is a wall of inner contradiction, a grievous disharmony which disintegrates personality.

There are other walls which men erect between themselves and their fellowmen. Selfishness is such a wall. A man barricades himself behind that wall. It becomes his prison wall. He fondly believes that this wall of self-centeredness will give him greater strength and security, and will insure him against being exploited and imposed upon. Actually it isolates him and shuts him off in loneliness from the great and exciting world about him.

Prajudice, intolerance, race and group hatreds are tragic walls which men build around themselves, and our age has unfortunately witnessed the erection of many such

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forbidding walls." John Hersey significantly called the story which he wrote about the extermination of the Jews of Warsaw at the hand of the Nazis "The Wall". That wall behind which tens of thousands of brave men and women perished was the symbol of similar walls which Nazi racial intolerance set up all over the world. It led to the second World War. Millions were exterminated, cities and countries were laid waste, and the earth was filled with horror, death and desolation by these builders of hate-walls. The fomenters of group antagonisms are still active in the world today, even in our own country. Whenever there is unhappiness, discontent or unrest among men, these racial and religious bigots swarm out of their dark holes, sweep over the land and sow the dragon seed of suspicion and hate.

Sometimes even good and respectable citizens build walls around themselves, which are effective blocks to mutual understanding and good will. They build walls of social exclusiveness and snobbery. They segregate themselves in some illusory eminence and hug to their bosoms the delusion that they are somehow better than the common run of humanity. In the sight of God there are no blue bloods and no first families, no Brahmins and no untouchables - only children of the dust whose brief careers on earth may be made bright by the cultivation of the heart and mind, and who may find a measure of happiness in life by helping one another in goodness and love. This is to earn distinction, honor and security.

"It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the humble than to divide the spoils with the proud."

Our world is divided today by political walls and iron curtains. There are those who would build these walls still higher, who resent those who suggest ways for razing these walls and leveling them off. In every age there have been the wall-building doctrinaires, the exponents of the irreconcilable. Either I or you survive! No middle road - no meeting ground - no compromise! This, of course, is the fateful road to war, and wars only serve to erect new walls on the ruined foundations of the old.

There are nations which put their trust and security in strong walls, in impregnable Maginot lines, in Chinese walls. But they all crumble sooner or later. The mighty walls of Jericho fell and the broad walls of Babylon were utterly overthrown. "The Lord God hath a day upon every lofty tower and upon every fortified wall." A nation must not put its sole trust in armament, even as formidable as atomic bombs. The very strength of a nation often brings about its downfall. It becomes over-confident, over-bearing, precipitate; it drains its strength in numerous military adventures; its domestic economy breaks down and unrest and revolution finally weaken it and prepare it for ultimate defeat on the battle-field.

A nation should put its trust in the strength of its moral and intellectual life, the justice and fairness of its laws and institutions, the wellbeing and contentment of its citizens, the moral training of its youth, and the stability of its homes.

Judaism urges men to be builders of bridges rather than of walls. Life abounds in numerous tragic chasms and gulfs which separate men, in deep rivers and their swift, dark currents. Men must learn to build bridges across them and they are more difficult to build than walls. Charity, compassion, sympathy, magnanimity, great mindedness are such bridges. So is friendship; so is tolerance; so is brotherhood. "Love thy neighbor as thyself" is perhaps the noblest and most enduring of all bridges ever devised. "With malice towards none, with charity for all," is another bridge which an immortal American built across a river of blood and a civil war.

(over)

Every earnest effort at international understanding and cooperation is a bridge leading to the Kingdom of God, to the good society. The League of Nations was such a bridge. It collapsed. Bridges often collapse and must be rebuilt. The United Nations is such a bridge. It is in danger of collapse. We must see to it that it does not collapse. War is never a bridge. At best it is a Bridge of Sighs leading men from doom to death.

Prayer is a bridge - a bridge to God. Memory is a bridge - across the physically impassable gulf of death to our dear departed. As long as there is remembrance, there is no separation.

We must be builders of bridges. Within our own families we must never permit any wall to separate us, no misunderstanding, no selfishness, no faithlessness. We must draw our dear ones close to us - very close - with a network of highways of love and bridges of reconciliation, or we shall find ourselves lonely and defeated.

Our neighbor? We should knock at his door and build a bridge of neighborliness to him. "A great city is a great wilderness." Neighborliness makes it a community.

The poor, the weak, the stranger, the sinner? We must build a bridge and go to them. In a real sense we are all poor, weak, strangers and sinners. Even to our enemy we should build a bridge - a bridge of forgiveness. "Men should be as pliant as a reed, not hard as a cedar." declared our sages.

All life is a bridge - from birth to death, from the past to the future. Death may be but another bridge athwart the night of darkness to another dawn.

The whole magnificent ethical message of our great historic faith, Judaism, may be summed up in the challenging symbolism of walls and bridges.