



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

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Formula for freedom, 1952.

Destiny has singled out our beloved country, the foremost democracy on earth, to give leadership to the world today and to lead mankind out of the predicament in which it finds itself. This is the American century. I believe that American leadership can prove itself equal to the challenge if it will take counsel of faith and not of fear. We are not unequipped for the task of leadership. We are not wanting in strength or in experience or in traditions.

But in order to give leadership to the world, we must first look to our own defenses - political, economic and spiritual, at home. We must remain free at home and solvent and civically uncorrupt. If our own free institutions and the moral character of our own people are undermined at home, the last great hope of mankind for a new birth of freedom will have perished.

We must ^{not} take our rich heritage of freedom for granted. It can be lost and dissipated. Democracy can be easily damaged and easily destroyed. We must be on the alert to defend it against enemies from without and within, against hostile propaganda, but also against hysteria and witch-hunting.

We should not overburden our government if we wish to keep it free. When impossible political and economic burdens are placed upon a democratic government, it collapses. We must work unrelentingly for economic justice, for the avoidance of prolonged economic depressions and large-scale unemployment among our people. We should resist all forms of bigotry and intolerance in our midst. Racial and religious intolerance will disrupt our national unity in dangerous times and will call into question our credentials for leadership in a world which is not all of one color or of one religion.

Above all, we should safeguard with all our strength the moral integrity of our government. The multiplying evidences of civic and political corruption are profoundly disturbing. I believe that a moral revival among our people is long overdue. Freedom survives only in spiritual discipline. All the great de-

mocracies of the past which perished were first undermined from within by corruption and moral laxity. In this great age we must learn to live greatly. We can best help other nations to freedom by building freedom enduringly here at home and by an example which will inspire others to do likewise.



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principles of justice, mercy and freedom which every age must be challenged to work into such institutions as will best satisfy its needs. Judaism, which is in the nature of a permanent social and spiritual revolution, is concerned with eternal ideals which must be constantly approximated but which can never be fully realized. Neither the rule of king, demos or proletariat is sufficient insurance against abuse of power, the ruthless exploitation of man and the defeat of the spiritual promises of human life.

Those of our intellectuals who in the last generation detoured away from Judaism and the Jewish community in their quest for short-cuts to the millenium found to their consternation and sorrow at the end of their road either a Hitler or a Stalin. Many of these intellectuals have retraced their steps and have found their way back to their people and their faith, ^{some condemningly,} some penitently, others expecting the fatted calf to be killed in celebration of their return. ^{Others} unfortunately have remained permanent ^{spiritually} spiritually-displaced persons, forever seeking the lost half of their divided beings.

✓ We have also come to understand that there is no survival for our people in the Diaspora except in and through Judaism. I mean, of course, a dignified and purposeful survival, for a people can drag out an inflorious and meaningless existence almost indefinitely. We shall not be able to survive as a secular nationality group in the Diaspora, especially in those countries, like the United States, where there are no minority nationality groups determined to preserve their cultural identities. Freedom will accelerate the process of disintegration, and persecution may retard it, but the process is inevitable.

✓ The establishment of the State of Israel is undoubtedly one of the most significant and magnificent events in Jewish history. With it we have reached one of the great stages in our history. Its importance will not be isolated in time nor limited to Israel. It is too early for us to foresee all its spreading and deepening influences in the future. It will undoubtedly affect all Jewish life in the Diaspora,

these sinister aberrations and dark conspiracies of the rebels against light - though they have not as yet entirely obliterated them. And the tides are now whirling around the bastions of the remaining dictatorships of the earth. They will surely succumb. They cannot, in the long run, win in the contest for man's heart and man's loyalties. Man has struggled through the long, weary centuries to free himself from the bondage of nature. He will not voluntarily and for long submit to the bondage of man. Neither dictatorship nor racialism nor statism nor militarism can or will command the fortunes of the human race. They represent the sunk wreckage of the past which the storms of our day have dredged up again from the bottom of their buried depths and have set them afloat again dangerously along the ship lanes of the world.

Good
The coming age will be a great age for America. The next hundred years at least seem likely to be known, I believe, as the "American Century," in the same sense as the 19th century was "The Century of Great Britain." Destiny has singled out our beloved country, the foremost democracy on earth, to give leadership to the world and to lead mankind out of the grave social, political and economic predicament in which it finds itself. I believe that American leadership will prove itself equal to the challenge, if it will take counsel of faith and not of fear, and if it will be guided by the prophetic insights and the wide perspectives of the Founding Fathers of this republic.

I believe that our age will find the formula of toleration which will enable the many evolving and fluid forms of capitalism and socialism to work out their destinies in the one world in which we live. They may be irreconcilable in theory; they need not be in practice.

America will lead in finding the way. The way is not that of a global armament race which will impoverish the peoples of the earth - ourselves included - and end as such races always end - in the catastrophe of war. The way is rather

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that of conference, of courageous diplomacy, of giving urgent leadership in the United Nations to a program of speedy and balanced reduction of armament and help to the backward peoples of the earth.

I believe that the American people will earnestly strive to be worthy of the challenge and opportunities of the American Century.

And I believe, too, that it will be a great age for American Jewry if the catastrophe of war does not shatter its security and life. As a minority, we are helpless against the ravages of hate and demagoguery which war and economic depressions unleash. But given peace and economic stability, the American Jewish community will move forward and develop. It will expand its cultural and religious life and institutions, and will make worthy contributions to the total life of America.

If the American Jews of the coming decades will carry on uninterruptedly and with wisdom and discrimination, putting first things first, and accentuating the positive and indispensable enterprises of Jewish life, they will make the numerically largest Jewish community in the world also one of the greatest in terms of faith, culture and scholarship. What may endanger our Jewish future here is not conscious escapism or deliberate assimilationist tendencies such as characterized Jewish communities elsewhere and at other times. Rather, an unconscious drift and a carefree relaxation of all disciplines - not out of conviction but out of sheer indifference - such as belonging to synagogues but not attending them, or sending children to Sunday Schools which are so limited as to time that they cannot really give them an adequate Jewish education, or in very many instances, not giving them any instruction at all, or homes which are emptied of all Jewish content.

Too many of our people want an easy-going religion, one which does not challenge or disturb them, a religion without any spiritual travail, without any stab of thought or conscience, without any sacrifices, the religion of a self-pampering

What a needed and innovative - Revolution - Beantucker Leit
Reconstruction - Return - new commitment - Dr. [unclear]
Consciousness over 2,000 years - revelation - that will not [unclear]

people. No religion has ever survived in that kind of an emotional and intellectual vacuum, Judaism least of all. - Need no longer to "modernize" - over-estimated

importance - refrain from [unclear] - obliged! Fail to observe even one day - Even seems [unclear]

It is a great virtue in our people that they are generous in heart - charitable and responsive to all human need and suffering. It is a noble tradition of Israel and a by-product of a religion which, foremost among all the religions of mankind, made charity and loving-kindness central in its code of human conduct. But Judaism is much more than charity, and the charitable impulse alone will not preserve our faith and our people. "This Book of the Law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success." No Jewish community ever survived for long which

did not cultivate Jewish learning and study and which did not cultivate the prescribed way of Jewish life, at least in its essentials. The axe must never be permitted to exalt itself over the man who wields it...

What we should fear most is the rise of a generation of prosperous Jews who have no spiritual anchorage, or a generation of clever, restless Jews of quick ferment and high voltage, rooted in no religious tradition, reverent of no moral code, ignorant of all Jewish learning and held to social responsibility by no inner spiritual restraint, who will range and bluster all over the American scene from literature and art to politics and government and will commit their fellow Jews in the eyes of the American people. Such floating mines are a danger to any people, but especially to a minority group. Some of these mines are already exploding.

If American Jewry of tomorrow will restore what has become peripheral in our life to the center again - the synagogue, the school, rel. in public schools the academy and the religious disciplines of Judaism - if it will recapture the wisdom of our ancient teachers

who admonished us that the study of the Torah outweighs all other commandments for it leads directly to them all - then American Jewry is destined to enjoy a resplendent century of spiritual growth in this gracious land.



and no attempts to isolate it from the rest of world Jewry will succeed. The contacts and the influences will be continuous and increasing. ^{these} They will, of course, be non-political. We shall not belabor this point just because others are inclined to distort it. But it would be a mistake to assume that the State of Israel will preserve Judaism either inside or outside of Israel. This is a task all of its own, which the Jews of the world must carry on in the future as in the past. This applies also to the Jews of the State of Israel. They need Judaism quite as much as we do. A political state cannot be counted upon to preserve ~~our~~ ^a spiritual heritage. There was danger of the extinction of Judaism even within ancient Palestine, and the seers and prophets and the spiritually faithful had to fight desperately hard for its preservation against powerful assimilationist tendencies. ^{even} ~~there~~.

It is good for our clear confronting of this universal task of vitalizing and preserving Judaism that the State of Israel ^{WRHS} has been established and that the controversy which raged around its establishment has finally been resolved. ^{AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES} (Liberal Judaism unfortunately spent too much time and energy in fighting Zionism. It took it too long a time to arrive at the conclusion that opposition to Zionism was not an integral part of the philosophy or the purposes of Liberal Judaism. This issue fortunately is now closed. There are, of course, ^{certain} the intransigent few who are still flogging the horse of this dead controversy, out of habit, I presume, or out of duddgeon, but where their efforts are not mischievous, they are quite silly and futile.)

The State of Israel is there and will, by the grace of God, continue. The Jews of the world will continue to take pride in it and to support it. Jews from all parts of the world who in the days to come will wish to migrate there or who may have to - for who can forecast the future or foresee the course of events in our people's history, ^{which is so} distinguished for its unpredictability - will find a welcoming home there. But it is clear that the majority of the Jewish people will, in the foreseeable future, live outside the borders of Israel, and the majority of these will live in the United