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Solomon B. Freehof, 1952.

TRIBUTE
TO DR. SOLOMON B. FREEHOF
ON THE OCCASION OF HIS SIXTIETH BIRTHDAY
BY
DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER
THE TEMPLE, CLEVELAND, OHIO
November 18, 1952

As a people we have a stronger sense of history than of biography, and we think of a great man not so much in relation to himself and his personality as to his work and the greatness and merit of his achievements. The individual is absorbed in the ~~organic process of the~~ cause which he serves. "The essence of the biographies of the righteous is to be found in their deeds." Often outstanding figures in Jewish history are referred to not by their own names but by the name of some great book which they wrote. Thus, Dr. Freehof may well have been known by the name of Mikdash Me'at - "The Small Sanctuary" - for that is the name of one of the books which he wrote. This custom is similar to the gracious custom which exists among the Arabs - Kunya - in which a person is called not by his own name but as the father of so and so. The rich fancy of our people goes a step further. A man is to be known not so much by what he actually achieves - for man is finite and is sharply limited in his powers of achievement - but by the things for which he sacrifices and for which he gives his heart's blood.

Our greatest men, according to the remarkable biographic modesty of our tradition, are ^{really} the unknown and unrecognized men, the invisible hierarchy of the thirty-six saints by whose merit the visible order of the universe is maintained.

And yet, our people did delight at all times to honor its beloved sons, as we honor Dr. Freehof tonight.

A clear estimate of the life and achievements of Dr. Freehof is now possible for his has been a long career on an exposed eminence. Some men are shooting stars whose careers are swift, brilliant, but brief; others are radiant suns. Dr. Freehof belongs to the latter.

His career has been all of one piece, integrated, consistent, whose circumference ^{has} always remained true to its center. His activities have never been hectic or unrelated. Some men mount several horses at one and the same time, drive

furiously in different directions, and gallop away into scattered futility.

Dr. Freehof has been a leader who early in life saw his task and his mission clearly, and who, in quiet confidence, steadily moved toward his fixed objectives across the broken and shifting terrain of four of the most turbulent decades in history. He has not been a doctrinaire. He has never lacked vision, nor has he been a cloistered intellectual. There was always a steady, resolute quest to his ministry but never a restless insurgency. He knew his own mind, ever an open mind, never an inconclusive mind. His Judaism has always had deep roots and was planted by unfailing streams of learning, and therefore, could confidently reach up to the sun and abundantly branch out.

Hence, the dignity of his ministry which has been so notable, the high elevation and distinction of tone in word and manner - a quality which we would all like to associate with the term, rabbi. Whenever Dr. Freehof speaks, he speaks eloquently and effectively, but with restraint and responsibility. Always he is the teacher - never the agitator. He seeks not to incite men into admiration, but to persuade them into conviction. He does not attempt to impress the world with skillfully manipulated publicity. I rather think that he suspected ~~might~~ ^{has} along that the most puffed up numeral of all numerals is the zero.

He did not convert his synagogue into a noisy mart which offered ^{has} all kinds of wares to all kinds of people. He refused to put up a false facade of spurious activities to delude either himself or others. He knew the difference between a healthy, ruddy complexion and a feverish one. "Elohim Ba-kodesh Dar-ke-cha." As far as it was humanly possible, he endeavors to convey the message of the synagogue through ways of dignity and holiness, and in the darkened world of apocalyptic terror such as overtook mankind in these recent desperate years, he ^{has} sought

to hold aloft for men the undimmed torch of truth and faith and knowledge which alone can sustain ^{these} ~~the~~ hopes, ~~of men~~. Dr. Freehof ~~is~~ the student always, always the seeker after knowledge, always reverent of Jewish learning. He knows that a people perishes for want of knowledge and that it is the primary responsibility of the Rabbi to magnify the Torah, to exalt it, and to spread its knowledge among men.

From time to time there take place serious discussions, not only among laymen but also among Rabbis as to what is the real function of the Rabbi in the modern world. Some place the emphasis upon preaching; others upon pastoral work; still others upon community leadership; again, there are those who would like to have the Rabbi serve as the tribune of his people to the non-Jewish world. More recently there have been those who wish the Rabbi to become a psychiatrist ministering to the sick and wounded souls among his parishioners. I suppose that there is considerable merit in each one of these contentions although it is quite difficult to see how any one man can comprise them all in one career. But it should be remembered that traditionally among our people the primary function of the Rabbi was to be the "Talmid Chacham", the scholar, who taught and interpreted the law of Judaism to his people. By whatever names our spiritual leaders were known in the last 2500 years - whether as "Sopherim", "Chachamim", "Tannaim" or "Amoraim", "Rabgnim" - the terms always signified in one way or another the teacher, the scholar, the schoolman.

Dr. Freehof began his rabbinic career as a member of the faculty of the Hebrew Union College where he taught for nine years. Upon leaving the halls of the College, he entered the active field of the rabbinate, but he remained essentially, in and out of the pulpit, the teacher, the educator. The sermons which he preached were aimed to instruct, to enlighten, and to interpret the events of the day in the light of the vast and rich experience of his faith and

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Dr. Freehof has for many years been the Chairman of the Commission on Jewish Education which publishes textbooks for use in our Religious Schools in the training of our children. Dr. Freehof also left the imprint of his liturgical scholarship and his fine religious sensitiveness upon the newly revised Union Prayer Book.

Dr. Freehof has won national renown by the literature classes which he has been conducting in his Temple. His masterly reviews of contemporary literature carry with them the same stamp of authentic scholarship and the same mature wisdom. It is quite remarkable to note that the same mind which discusses with such penetration the most modern, not to say the most sophisticated books in contemporary world literature, delights also in delving into the obscure, intricate, legalistic and seemingly irrelevant medieval Rabbinic Responsa literature of his people. Nothing is alien to his questing, inquisitive and acquisitive mind.

There are unfortunately so many in our rabbinic profession who, hard-pressed as they are by the urgencies of life about them and by the impact of the demands of the day, forget the timeless in the timely, and lose sight of this preeminent duty and privilege of the Rabbi in Israel. It reminds one of the students who were taken into a room by a teacher and asked to describe all that they saw. Not one of them mentioned the light in the room. Dr. Freehof never forgot the light of the Torah in the life of his people.

He is persuaded that there is a great future for the Jewish community in the United States, now 5,000,000 strong - the greatest Jewish community in history - if it will remain true to its great past. An individual who loses his memory is no longer normal. A people which becomes completely emancipated from its past culture becomes likewise abnormal. We require our great past to nurture a great future. Dr. Freehof feels that the survival of the Jewish community in the United States depends upon its schools and upon the quality of Jewish education which we shall give to the rising generation. He furthermore believes that the very meaning and dignity of Jewish living in the United States depends upon our being able to produce on these gracious shores a Jewish culture on a scale and quality commensurate with the size of our community. We cannot banquet forever upon borrowing. The most significant revolution in human history was the transition from food-collecting to food-producing. We must begin to produce our own spiritual and cultural food in this country. We cannot survive long upon philanthropy or exclusively upon public worship. Our forefathers taught us the strategy of survival: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night. . . for then thou shalt make thy ways prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

Dr. Freehof has served not only his people and his faith, but also his beloved country, his state and his city with rare distinction. He loves America. He understands its traditions and the unique qualities of its genius. He is eager for the great role of leadership which America has been summoned by destiny to assume in the world. ^{to-day} He preached and ^{teaches} ~~taught~~ and exemplified the highest type of citizenship. During the First World War he was a Chaplain in the American Expeditionary Forces and saw service in France. He has been interested in the work of the Chaplain in the armed forces of our country ever since. Dr. Freehof has blended his Jewish and his American loyalties perfectly and has exemplified in his life the complete harmony and concordance of the two. He did

not find it necessary to reconcile his Americanism and his Judaism, and both of them with the historic effort to reconstitute the State of Israel, for he at no time saw any contradictions between them. The frightened clamor raised by some Jewish escapists for integration within the American scene leaves him cold and unmoved, for he rightly suspects that those who raise this cry are interested not in integration but in assimilation.

My dear friend, what is past is prologue! You stand in the full tide of your active and vigorous career with so much yet to be done and so much that you can still do. On the loom of the years you have woven the resplendent cloth of a noble career whose golden threads are ideals and service and learning, but the weaving fortunately is still to go on, according to the gracious pattern which you have set. Let the great shuttles fly! The years ahead will be even lovelier, ^{and} mellow^{er} ^{for you and your dear ones set, as they will be} in the frame of increased appreciation and the growing esteem of your friends. The Rabbis said that scholars, the older they get, the more precious their wisdom, the more profound their insights, the greater their contributions to mankind. Such is your future. Such also is you earned

Tuluth

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To Dr. Solomon B. Freehof
on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday.
Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
The Temple, Cleveland, Ohio.

As a people we have a stronger sense of history than of biography, and we think of a great man not so much in relation to himself and his personality as to his work and the greatness and merit of his achievements. The individual is absorbed in the organic process of the cause which he serves. "The essence of the biographies of the righteous is to be found in their deeds." Often outstanding figures in Jewish history are referred to not by their own names but by the name of some great book which they wrote. This custom is similar to the gracious custom which exists among the Arabs - Kunya - in which a person is called not by his own name but as the father of so and so. The rich fancy of our people goes a step further. A man is to be known not so much by what he actually achieves - for man is finite and is sharply limited in his powers of achievement - but by the things for which he sacrifices and for which he gives his heart's blood.

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And yet, our people did delight at all times to honor its beloved sons, as we honor Dr. Freehof tonight, ~~and he is not the least in the jewelled crown of our people's pride.~~

✓ Thus Dr. Freehof may well have been known by the name of Mikdash Me'at - "the Small Sanctuary" - for that is the name given by the books which he wrote.

He knew his own mind, even an open mind, never an in-
clusive mind. His ~~for~~ Judaism has always had deep roots
and was flanked by ~~the~~ ^{unfading} ~~streams~~ ^{of} ~~rearing~~ ^{of} ~~rearing~~
And therefore could confidently reach up to the sun and
branch out abundantly branch out.



As far as it was humanly possible, he endeavored to convey the message of the synagogue through ways of dignity and holiness. ^{over} Dr. Freehof was the ~~He was~~ a student always, always ^{always} a seeker after knowledge, ^{always} reverent of Jewish learning. He ~~was persuaded~~ ^{was known} that a people perishes for want of knowledge and that it is the primary responsibility of the Rabbi to magnify the Torah, to exalt it, and to spread its knowledge among men.

From time to time there ~~are~~ ^{take place} serious discussions, not only among laymen but also among Rabbis ~~themselves~~ as to what is the real function of the Rabbi in the modern world. Some ~~lay~~ ^{place} the emphasis upon preaching; others upon pastoral work; still others upon community leadership; again, there are those who would like to have ~~him~~ ^{the Rabbi serve} as the tribune of ~~the~~ ^{his} people ~~in~~ ^{to} the non-Jewish world. More recently there have been those who wish ~~him~~ ^{the Rabbi} to become a religious psychiatrist ~~serving~~ ^{working to} the sick and wounded souls among his parishioners. I suppose that there is considerable merit in each one of these ~~functions~~ ^{conventions} although it is quite difficult to see how one man can ~~compress~~ ^{comprise} them all efficiently in one career. But ~~let~~ ^{should} it not be ~~overlooked~~ ^{remembered} that traditionally among our people the primary function of the Rabbi was to be the scholar, the "Talmid Chacham", who taught and interpreted the law of Judaism to his people. By whatever names our spiritual leaders were known in the last 2500 years - whether as "Sopherim", ~~scribes~~, "Chachamim", ~~sages~~, "Tanaim" or "Amoraim" ^{Rabbanim} - the terms always signify ^{is in the way of a teacher} the teacher, ~~the student~~, the scholar, ^{the} ~~schoolman~~. Dr. Freehof began his rabbinic career ~~by serving as a teacher and professor~~ ^{when he taught} on the faculty of the Hebrew Union College for nine years, and upon leaving the halls of the ~~rabbinic academy~~ ^{George H.} and entering the active field of the rabbinate, ^{but} he remained essentially, in and out of the pulpit, the teacher, the educator. The ^{which he preached} sermons were aimed to instruct, to enlighten, ^{and} to interpret the events of the day in the light of the vast and rich experience of his faith and his people. One

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always learned something, one always carried ^{some} something away - ^{rich} a rich nugget of ^{truth} information or insight from Dr. Freehof's preaching. His ^{orderly and well-stocked} ~~orderly, scholarly~~ ^{versatile} ~~and lucid mind~~ ^{in a style of preaching at once lucid, subtle and richly endowed,} ~~was reflected in the lucidity of his preaching~~ ^{the exciting} ~~illuminating and artistically exciting~~ ^{artistry of his spoken word.}

^{has for many years been the} ~~For years~~ Dr. Freehof ^{for} ~~was~~ Chairman of the Commission of Jewish Education which publishes textbooks ^{for use} ~~used~~ in our Religious Schools ⁱⁿ ~~for~~ the training of our children. Dr. Freehof also left the imprint of his liturgical scholarship and his fine ^{religious sensitivity} ~~religious spirit~~ upon the newly revised Union Prayer Book.

^{was naturally the} ~~For years~~ Dr. Freehof has ^{been} ~~been~~ renowned ^{for his} literature classes which he has been conducting in his Temple, ^{and his} ~~and~~ ^{masterly} reviews of contemporary literature ^{carried} ~~carried~~ with them the same ^{authentic} ~~authentic~~ stamp of scholarship and ^{the same} ~~mature~~ wisdom. ^{and it is quite remarkable} ~~and it is quite remarkable~~ that the same mind which discussed ^{with such} ~~with such~~ ^{fine} ~~fine~~ penetration the most modern ^{and also} ~~and also~~ the most sophisticated ^{of the books in} ~~of the books in~~ of contemporary world literature would ^{delving into} ~~delight~~ also in ^{studying} ~~studying~~ the obscure, intricate, legalistic and seemingly irrelevant medieval Responsa literature of ^{his} ~~his~~ people. ^{Nothing is alien to his questing, inquisitive and} ~~He did not over-estimate the importance of the one even as he did~~ ^{regard the} ~~not under-estimate the importance of the other.~~

There are unfortunately so many in our rabbinic profession who, ^{as they are} ~~hard-pressed~~ by the urgencies of life ^{about} ~~around~~ them and by the impact of the demands of the day, ^{forget} ~~lose~~ sight of this preeminent duty and privilege of the Rabbi in Israel. It reminds one of the students who were taken into a room by a teacher and asked to describe all that they saw, ^{but} ~~but~~ not one of them mentioned the light in the room.

Dr. Freehof never forgot the light of the Torah in the life of his people.

^{is persuaded} ~~He believes~~ that there ^{is} ~~was~~ a great future for the Jewish community in the ^{the greatest Jewish community in history -} ~~United States~~, now 5,000,000 strong, ^{it} ~~if they~~ will remain true to ^{its} ~~their~~ great past. An individual who loses his memory is no longer normal. A people which becomes completely emancipated from its past culture ^{becomes} ~~is~~ likewise ^{abnormal.} ~~no longer normal.~~ ^{We} ~~people~~ requires ^{an} ~~a~~ great past to ^{nurture} ~~provide~~ a great future. Dr. Freehof ^{felt} ~~felt~~ that

the survival of the Jewish community in the United States depended upon its schools and upon the quality of Jewish education which we ^{shall} give to the rising generation. He furthermore ^{believes} ~~was persuaded~~ that the very meaning and dignity of Jewish living in the United States depended upon our being able to produce on these gracious shores a Jewish culture on a scale and quality commensurate with the size of ^{our} ~~the~~ community. We cannot banquet ^{forever} ~~long~~ upon borrowing. The most significant revolution in human history was the transition from food-collecting to food-producing. We must begin to produce our own spiritual and cultural food in this country. We cannot survive long upon philanthropy or ^{exclusively upon} public work-

shall not depart out, thy mouth, but thou shalt make thee thine day and night... for then thou shalt make thy ways prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success!"
Our forefathers taught us the strategy of ~~our~~ survival: - "It is a tree of life to those who lay hold of it and the supporters thereof are happy."

OK

~~Dr. Frechhof loves this country and has served it with rare distinction.~~

During the First World War he was a Chaplain in the American Expeditionary Forces and saw service in France. He has been interested in the work of the Chaplain in the armed forces of our country ever since. ^{D. Frechhof} ~~He~~ has blended his Jewish and his American loyalties perfectly and has exemplified in ^{his} life the complete harmony and concordance of the two. He did not find it necessary to reconcile his Americanism and his Judaism, and both ^{of them} with the historic effort to reconstitute ^{the state} ~~Jewish~~ national life in Israel, for he at no time saw any contradictions between them. The ^{frightened} ~~clamor~~ ^{for Jewish escape} ~~for Jewish integration~~ within the American scene ^{leaves} ~~left~~ him cold and unmoved, for he ^{rightly} ~~suspected~~ ^{right} along that those who raised ^{this} ~~the~~ cry were interested not in integration but in assimilation.

My dear friend, what is past is prologue! You stand in the full tide of ^{your} ~~an~~ active and vigorous career with so much yet to be done and so much that you can ^{still} ~~do~~. On the loom of the years you have woven ^{the} ~~a~~ resplendent cloth of a noble career whose golden threads are ^{ideals and service and the great bearing} ~~the words of the Living God~~, but the weaving ^{on} ~~on~~ the loom fortunately is still to go on, according to ^{the process} ~~a continuing~~ pattern of use ^{which you} ~~or use~~ ^{have set} ~~but~~ the great shuttles fly! The years ahead will be ^{even lovelier, mellower, fuller.} ~~fulner.~~ The Rabbis said that scholars, the older they get, the more precious their wisdom, the more profound their insights, the greater their contributions to mankind. ^{increased} ~~friendship~~, ^{appreciation} ~~and the growing esteem~~

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his beloved ^{his state and his city} country with rare distinction. He knew America. He
understands its traditions and the unique qualities of its people.
He is eager for the great role ~~which~~ leadership which
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in the ~~present~~ world. He preached and taught
and exemplified the highest type of citizenship.



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