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### **MS-4787: Abba Hillel Silver Papers, 1902-1989.**

Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

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Funeral of Joseph L. Fetterman, 1953.



DR. JOSEPH L. FETTERMAN

Eulogy by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver  
April 15, 1953

Honour the physician with the honour due unto him for the uses which ye may have of him; for the Lord hath created him. For of the most High cometh healing, and he shall receive honour of the king. The skill of the physician shall lift up his head; and in the sight of great men he shall be in admiration. The Lord hath created medicines out of the earth; and he that is wise will not abhor them.

He hath given men skill, that he might be honoured in his marvellous works. With such doth he heal men, and taketh away their pains. Of such doth the apothecary make a confection; and of his works there is no end; and from him is peace over all the earth.

Then give place to the physician, for the Lord hath created him; let him not go from thee, for thou hast need of him.

I have read to you, dear friends, out of the 38th Chapter of the Book of Ecclesiasticus. The author was himself a physician, **Jesus ben Sirach**, who lived a long life and garnered much wisdom and distilled that wisdom into a book, the Book of Ecclesiasticus which is now part of our Apocrypha.

Our dear departed round whose bier we are now gathered to pay our immemorial tribute, Dr. Joseph L. Fetterman, was also a physician, a healer of men. Dr. Fetterman also wrote not alone many scientific and technical studies in his chosen field of psychiatry and medicine, but he also gave expression to his philosophy of life and shared with his fellowmen his thoughts and reflections on the most vital problems of human experience. And like his eminent colleague of long ago, he condensed his observations into epigrams, into brief, pithy and profound sayings, which, beside their intrinsic value for other men, also give us a revealing insight into the author himself. On one occasion Dr. Fetterman wrote: "The doctor is a guide through the dark and fearful forest of sickness. He must provide light and leadership."



And here you have Dr. Fetterman's creed, his life's credo, and here you have his life's consecration. Dr. Fetterman dedicated himself to the role of a friendly guide, to the lost and the distraught and the depressed and the fear-beset among his fellowmen. "Fears," he said, "are the foremost among the ills of mankind. There can be no peace of body without peace of mind." And so, he set himself the task, the consecrated task to treat the fears of men and women, to teach them, those who walked in the shadows of life, how to regain faith in themselves. He set himself the task to give these men and women the drive, the psychic drive, to want to get well. And to countless patients through the years of his professional ministry, Dr. Fetterman provided light in their darkness, in their darkened and haunted lives, and firm and dependable leadership on the road back to health and normal living.

Dr. Fetterman was always interested in people, in human beings, and in their essential being, in what was deep in the hearts of men. "The wrapper," he always said, "is no guarantee of its contents." He was a friendly man and an amiable man, unselfish. His life was centered in others, not in himself. "He who is intensely interested in himself," he said, "has a narrow field of interest." And knowing so well, so very well, from his professional experiences some of the deepest tragedies of human life, the sufferings and the struggles and the frustrations of men and women who were trying so desperately hard to reach for a little happiness in their lives, Dr. Fetterman was always tolerant in his judgment. "The less creative one becomes," he said, "the more critical he is apt to be." And again, he said, "Broad criticism of others may conceal narrow self-praise."

He was concerned with creative work and creative service to heal, to extend the boundaries of his profession, especially in his own specialized field, to establish schools and clinics and workshops for the sick and the handicapped. He was too busy doing and creating to be critical and self-centered. He was a man who loved ideas and who was dedicated to ideals. "Ideas," he said, "for the mind are as essential as food for the body. Convictions are as important as calories."



Dr. Fetterman was a proud and loyal citizen of his country. During World War II he served as a Major in the Army Medical Corps, and he was instrumental in establishing the "School of Military Neuropsychiatry", of which he was for a time the executive officer. He loved America and the opportunities which it gave to a human being to develop himself most fully and most freely, and the dignity which it gave to the human being, without which dignity and self-respect human life becomes scattered and broken and lost.

He was a proud and loyal Jew, a faithful member of the household of Israel, interested in everything that transpired in the Jewish community throughout the world, and deeply interested in his faith and in his religion. He was an honored Trustee of The Temple. He wrote his philosophy of religion, and he said, "Modern man exchanges religion for science, sometimes a bad bargain. In the exchange, he has profited in material comfort, but has lost in conduct, hope, and guidance."

This is what Dr. Fetterman has meant to our community in his capacity as a doctor, as a healer of men, as a servant of his people, as a patriotic citizen, as a devoted son of Israel. What he has meant to those nearest and dearest to them in the intimate and sacred circle of family life, they know best, I am sure, and in that knowledge they will find in the days and in the years to come a great measure of pride and comfort and sustenance. Their grief at the moment is very sharp and bitter bereavement; the breaking of family ties, the touch of a vanished hand, the sound of a voice that is forever stilled always bring with it a large measure of sorrow. But I would submit to his dearly beloved ones the philosophy of him whose passing they so deeply mourn. He wrote, "Trust in Time; be patient and hopeful. Time is a great therapist."

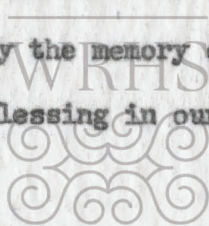
Dr. Fetterman has left behind him a name, an influence, a memory which will in due time, in the course of time bring healing to their souls. When the bitterness of death is past, dear friends, what remains? And that is the important question. What



remains after death? A shadow or a radiance? A dead silence or a resonant memory? An apology for a life or a grateful pride in that life? That's the test, the only sure and certain test of the value and the worth of that man's existence upon earth.

When the bitterness of death will have passed away, there will remain of Dr. Fetterman a radiance, a resonant memory and a grateful pride which will strengthen and enhearten his dearly beloved ones.

There was a beautiful phrase in the Bible, and with that I close - these words, all too inadequate in memorial tribute to one whom I greatly admired, to one of the finest spirits in our community. "You shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes." Blessed is the man who is able to die as a man, for after all, mortality is our common fate - no one escapes death. Blessed is he who dies in the dignity, in the stature of a man, and falls like one of the princes of men. Such has been the death of Dr. Fetterman. "May the memory of this good man, this faithful servant, this healer of men, remain as a blessing in our midst." Amen.





1. I have read - 30 - Himself a physician - who gathered much and distilled it into a book - "Ecclesiastical" of the Gory Ph.
2. Dr. Joseph L. Fetter was <sup>(unusually subtle)</sup> also a healer of men - <sup>also</sup> wrote not alone many scientific and behavioral studies in his chosen field of ~~psy~~ psychiatry and medicine - but he also gave expression to his philosophy of life and shared with his fellow-men his thoughts and reflections on the most vital problems of human experience. He hit his eminent ~~for~~ colleagues & long ago - he condensed his observations into epigrams and brief pitiful and profound sayings - which render their intrinsic value for other men, also for an <sup>unusually</sup> unjust into the author himself.
3. On one occasion he wrote: "The doctor is a guide thru the dark fearful forest of sickness. He must provide light and leadership!"
- Here is Dr. Fetterman's quest and dedication -
- He dedicated himself to the role of a friendly guide - to the lost, the distraught, the depressed, the far-best among his fellow-men -
  - "Fears, he said, are the foremost among the ills of mankind"
  - "There can be no peace, ~~the~~ body without peace, mind"
  - He set himself the task to treat the fears of men and women to reach them <sup>how</sup> to regain faith in themselves, and to join them the drive to want to get well.
- And to countless patients, thru the years, his professional wisdom, he provided light in their darkened, haunted lives, and friendships on the road to health and normal life living.



1. He was interested in people, in human beings, in their essential being, in what was in the hearts of men. "The knaffer, he said, is no guarantee of its contents"

- He was a friendly and amiable man - Unselfish. His life centered in others - not himself: "He who is intensely interested in himself has a narrow field of interest"

Knowing so well ~~the~~ from his professional experience the deepest tragedies of <sup>human</sup> life, the sufferings, the joys and pleasures of men reaching out for a little happiness in their world - he was tolerant in his judgment; ~~uncritical~~ "The less creative one becomes the more critical he is apt to be" and again "Broad criticism of others may conceal narrow self-praise" <sup>to establish</sup>

- He was concerned with creation <sup>and</sup> service - <sup>to establish</sup> schools, clinics, workshops for the sick and the handicapped -

- He was too busy doing to be critical a self-criticism

- He was a man of ideas and ideals: "Ideas for the mind are as essential as food for the body. Conventions are as important as calories"

5. Dr. Fetterman was a proud and loyal citizen - During World War II he served as a major in the Army Medical Corps, and he was instrumental in establishing the "School of Military Neuropsychiatry", of which he was for a time Executive Officer.

6. A proud and loyal Jew - Tourists / Temple - interested in



Modern man exchanges religion for science - sometimes  
a bad bargain. In the exchange, he has profited in material  
comfort but has lost in conscience, hope, and faith"

7. What he has meant: Grief at the moment - sharp bitter  
but "Trust in Time; be patient and hopeful. Time  
is a great therapist"  
He has left behind him - a wound, an influence, a memory  
- pride - in days to come.

When bitterness & death is past - what remains?  
A shadow or a radiance?  
A silence or a resonant memory?  
An apology or a grateful pride?

8. וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יָשָׁב בְּאֶרֶץ חָיִל וּבְאֶרֶץ עֹשֶׂה מַלְאָכָה  
"You shall dwell like men, and shall be one of the powers!"