



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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

Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

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Intermarriage, undated.

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weakened, the sense of the strong bond of union uniting one Jew to another is growing weaker every year x. What then, was the result of this x Inter-marriage has grown in many circles of Israel x You can trace the influence of the weakening of these three forces upon the growth of inter-marriage, by studying certain groups of our people x

Mr. Pupin, in a rather exhaustive study of the subject, catalogued Israel into four groups with reference to the subject of inter-marriage x

The first group is made up of the real orthodox Jews, the Jews that who have become but slightly modernized, the Jews who still retain their medieval customs and practices, the Jews who have not ~~been~~ been brought into contact with the world about them, the Jews of Galicia, of Turkey, of Eastern Asia, the orthodox Jew in America. Now among these people, inter-marriage is just 2% - that is for every 100 cases of pure Jewish marriages, we may find two cases of inter marriage, and there is a

second group, says Mr. R-,
 made up of the more
 modern, of the ~~more~~ somewhat
 more prosperous group of
 these same people, - people
 who speak the language
 of the country, along with
 their own language & people
 who have been ~~but~~ the
 more cultured & prosperous Jews
 of Russia, the orthodox Jews
 of America, the of Hungary,
 etc, - intermarriages among
 them are from two to ten
 percent, and there is a
 third group, made up of
 that class of people
 that have no longer
 retained the Yiddish, or

have no longer any knowledge
of their own Hebrew literature,
those for whom the Ceremonial
law is no longer in a
large sense valid, who are
still allied with the Temple
or synagogues but who pay
allegiance to their faith
only during the holy days.
The percentage of inter-marriage
among them, says Mr. R., is
from 10 to 30%, that is, for
every 100 cases of pure Jewish
marriages there are from 10
to 30 cases of inter-marriage,
and there is the fourth
class, says Mr. R., made
up of those who have lost,
perhaps, every interest in
Jewish life, who remain

Jews out of a sense of family pride, or whose interest in Jewish life is limited to their contributions to Jewish philanthropies, people who are just Jewish in name - inter-marriage among them is from 30 to 50%, and these four groups, says Mr. R are not fixed and stationary, but have merged one into another - it takes four or five generations before the first group becomes the fourth group, so that, of all the Jews that lived in Berlin, four generations ago, during the time of Mendelssohn, there is not one, who has a

Jewish descendant. In France and Italy, today, it is a very common practice for Jews to inter-marry. In Sweden the number of mixed marriages is actually greater than the number of pure Jewish marriages. In Denmark the percentage is 96, in Berlin 45, in Amsterdam 60, so you see that the problem of assimilation is not a purely academic problem. While this is not a menace, while I am not trying to over-exaggerate this fact, because you must remember that we Jews have lost numbers at all times, and we have survived it. It

takes two Jews to make a purely
 Jewish marriage, while it takes
 only one Jew to make an
 inter-marriage. The problem
 of inter-marriage is not a
 menacing one, but it is
 really as pressing, a vital
 one. The thought comes to us
 that it may be better that
 this tendency  to grow  allowed

will we not become enemies
 of freedom and progress
 when we attempt to check
 this tide? What is wrong
 in it? I shall not
 discuss the problem from
 the Racial point of view.
 Certain ethnologists