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70 years of Zionism

The organized Zionist movement is currently observing its seventieth birthday.

It was in 1889 that the first Zionist Congress was held in Switzerland. "This day I founded a nation," wrote Herzl in his diary.

It was an audacious statement for a young man to make, and yet history was to prove Nerzl right. The Jewish state as a physical and legal entity was of course a good way off. He would not live to see it -- but he really had no need to see it. So assured was he that he once confided to the late Rabbi Stephen Wise that while he wouldn't live to see it, Wise would -- and so it proved to be.

Herzl's meetings with kings and prime ministers, his stirrings of the plain people, the organization which he brought into being, started the ball rolling and, with each year, there was an acceleration of purpose until the hour struck.

The achievement was not to come with the ease with which Nerzl envisioned it. No charter by the great powers would alone bring the state into being. The blood and sweat and sacrifices of Jews alone could do that.

And when the miracle happened it was a culmination of effort and tragedy. Israel was history's answer to Hitler's madness.

Great problems still loom for the land, but Israel is here to stay. Let the would-be-detractors of Zionism say what they will, Israel today is the jewel of the Jewish world, and acclaimed by the plaudits of the free world for her recent display of fortitude against her combined enemies.

We have reason to believe that Israel will prove even greater in peace for her real mission is peace.

"The Bible" of Course

by Dr. Samuel Silver

What book "surges with vitality?"

What book "Omits nothing?"

What book is inordinately praised but seldom read?
The Bible, of course.

But young people are beginning to discover the significance of the Bible.

For example, down in Alexandria, Va., where the rabbi is Rabbi Emmet Frank, there's an annual prize for the youngster who writes the best essay on the Bible. Called the Solomon Dimond Memorial Award, the prize this year went to young Ellen Lasser, who described the Bible as "A World of Life," and saluted it in these words, worthy of reproduction:

"What is the Bible? To different people the Bible is different things. However, to almost everyone, it seems to be a classic merely existing for praise and not actually meant to be read. Yet, this remarkable classic has lasted throughout the world during thousands of generations. The reason: the Bible has something very special to say. It is a story so wonderful that once one knows its purpose, this story can be told and retold without losing its power. It shows life, life with its meaning found in God. This is what can be found while reading the rich poetry; this is what can be heard in the eloquent speeches. This like a single melody with many variations can be found throughout the Scriptures. The Bible surges with the vitality of such a melody. Its singers praise the beauty of life, a life which is full of love such as displayed between Jacob and Rachel, Jonathan and David, Ruth and Naomi. This life reveals the stirring drama of adventure such as displayed by thrilling deeds of courageous men like Daniel and brave women like Esther. This life reveals the wisdom of the Lord as spoken through such prophets as Amos

Our Broken Promises

BY Rabbi Samuel Umen

Inspiration gives rise to dreams; it is the paramount cause of creation. The finest literature, the greatest poetry, the undying music, the loveliest architecture, the most beautiful art, are all the fruit of inspiration.

Moments of profound inspiration tend to soften the heart, stir the mind, and often transform a human being into something nobler, greater, and finer than he ordinarily is. In such moments selfishness is weakened, stubbornness broke, laxity is overcome, the animal in man is subdued, his best human qualities emerge and take command. In short, during moments of deep inspiration, man rises to his highest self. "All poets" says Ralph W. Emerson, "have signalized their consciousness of rare moments when they were superior to themselves, when a light, a freedom, a power came to them which lifted them to performances far better than they could reach at other times."

The High Holy Days afford us rare moments of inspiration. The Holy Day moments appeal to the very best in us. They clearly show us how we live, what we are, what we can be and what we ought to strive to be if we are, what we can be and what we ought to strive to be if we are to be above the beast.

In response to the Holy Days' appeal, we promise ourselves that in the days to come our way of life will be much nobler than before; that the time allotted to us will henceforth be used more frugally, wisely, and fruitfully.

There is an ancient saying, "Promises made in storms are forgotten in calm". So it is with the resolutions we make on the Holy Days. The storm of the Holy Days so to speak passes, the calm sets in, and the high promises lose their force. What appears to be a simple act under the spell of inspiration, under mundane circumstances, becomes burdensome, trying, insurmountable, and is consequently deferred for a later time.

Thus a New Year comes, reminds us of our broken promises, evokes new ones from us which are similarly destined to be ignored, and silently passes on.

What is to be done? Shall we discontinue making resolutions on the New Year? Shall we determine not to heed the appeal of the Holy Days, which reveal our foibles, failings, defects and arouses the soul to clamor for it due?

The answer of course is that we must continue to repeat promising and vowing again and again until we realize that every mission we impose upon ourselves, every goal and objective we set for ourselves, cannot and will not be attained without sacrifice.

"Oh let my weakness have an end!

Give unto me, made lowly wise,

The spirit of self sacrifice..."

To suit our actions to our words and our words to our actions, to be true to our commitments, true to ourselves, we must be prepared for sacrifices even as the patriarch Abraham was prepared to sacrifice Isaac as told in the story of the "Akedah", the Scriptural reading for Rosh Hashana.

Nothing good, nothing enduring, has ever been achieved by man or society without "sweat, blood and tears". Yes, it is better, it is wise, to continue making promises and fail to fulfill them rather than refrain from extracting resolutions from ourselves.

For unfulfilled promises have a way of haunting, nagging and tormenting the conscience. This being the case, there is hope that one day we might call a halt to vacillation, deferment, indifference, become masters of our destiny, and at long last thrill to the experience of having turned words into acts and acts that have made us better and happier human beings.

Let us trust that God in His mercy, will grant us another year of life, another chance to make a promise, and that this time we will seize the opportunity, and by will and sacrifice, succeed in wiping failure from our record.

Of the new opportunity that may come our way to make good our promises the poet sings thusly:

"They do me wrong who say I come no more

When once I knock and fail to find you in;

For every day I stand outside your door

And bid you wake, and rise to fight and win.

Wail not for precious chances passed away!

Weep not for golden ages on the wane!

Each night I burn the records of the day

At sunrise every soul is born again!

Dost thou behold thy lost youth all aghast?

Dost reel from righteous retribution's blow?

Then turn from blotted archives of the past

And find the future's pages white as snow."

and Isaiah. The Bible is a complete history of the Jewish people, of our people. It omits nothing. It does not hide the evil of Israel like that done at the foot of Mount Siani. It does not hide the mistakes of our great like the wrong done by Jacob when he won the blessing of his father. No, the Bible tells everything. Yet, it is more than just a history or a classic. It teaches more than morals or traditions. It helps reveal the value of life, and even more important, the Holy Scriptures teaches reverence for the Lord.

TELL TALES

"One Man Plus The Truth
Constitutes A Majority"

BY JACK TELL



Two Years Closer

Two years ago, many members of our Faith resented the pending passage of the Statement on the Jews by the Ecumenical Council of the Roman Catholic Church. Shortly thereafter the statement was adopted.

Since then, so many innovations have taken place to repel anti-Semitism throughout the world, we thought it fitting and proper to remind our readers of the tribulation endured by the Jewish people for centuries and the differences in the two short years after the passage of the Statement.

While anti-Semitism may be never totally obliterated, and the full effect of the Statement may not be realized for many generations, the tremendous strides towards anti-bias since 1965 have been nothing less than miraculous. Even the strongest doubters cannot dispute events that have transpired in the past 24 months leading to circumstances under which we are living right now.

To name a few happenings that took place after Pope Paul VI publicly deplored the practice of anti-Semitism: The Simon of Trent incident was investigated and a full exoneration of Jewish complicity was publicly declared by the Catholic Church; Father Toomey appeared on our pulpit; a N.J. Episcopalian Bishop excommunicated anti-Semitic "Rat Finks"; the Pope spoke of his concern for the Jews, "who had suffered such terrible persecution"; a Vatican spokesman declared that what happened to the Jews in recent times was a shame on humanity; 165-year-old Passion Play removed anti-semitic overtones.

We continue with a partial listing of what took place since the Ecumenical Statement: In Holland, Dutch Reformed and Roman Catholic Churches abandoned their missionary societies to the Jews and created new agencies for "dialogue!"; in Paris, the Orthodox Chief Rabbi designated Jewish scholars to explore religious questions with Catholic scholars; in Belgium's Louvain University, a comprehensive scientific study was launched by Roman Catholics to ascertain the nature and degrees of negative references to Jews in French-language Catholic textbooks; key authorities from Catholic, Protestant and Jewish Faiths met at Cambridge University to implement programs for Jewish-Christian relations (it was the first time that Catholic and Protestant leaders confessed publicly the part played by Christians in contributing to anti-Semitic outrages); inter-Faith dialogues were established; Synagogues were re-established in Spain after more than 500 years of oppression and etc.

In order that our readers be not too complacent about recent developments and take for granted the present and improving state of affairs, we reprint a column that appeared in this space two years ago. It will remind all of us that the road towards the Utopia of religious freedom was rough and snaggy at the outset and not entirely free of obstacles created by leaders of our own Faith.

(FROM ROSH HASHANA EDITION, SEPT. 24, 1965)

End of Anti-Semitism?

This Sunday evening, Services in Temples throughout the land will usher in the new Jewish year, 5726.

For ten days thereafter, we observe a period of repentance, which culminates in the most solemn of Jewish holidays, Yom Kippur, when we ask forgiveness for our sins.

Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the most sacred of all Hebrew Holy Days, is a continuous 24-hour fast, during which we silently confess, do penance and ask forgiveness.

How overwhelming!

How awe-inspiring!

According to the Columbia Encyclopedia: In European countries, before the fast day, people go to the homes of their neighbors and acquaintances, friend and enemy alike, announce and accept forgiveness for the wrongs of the past year, and wish one another to be "written and sealed into the Book of the Living," where the names of all the virtuous are entered.

There is something special about these particular High Holy Days celebrating almost five and three quarter thousands of years of Judaism.

It is possible, even highly probable, that an event will take place this year that will improve and alter the status of all Jews in all lands for all time to come.

We are living right now at this moment, not in an age or a lifetime, BUT IN THE YEAR, when the cause, the seeds, the roots of anti-Semitism may be abolished.

Without going back through a history of centuries and thousands of years of persecution and human indignity suffered by our People, but just looking around and taking cognizance of what we see and are told, is it conceivable to

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