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## ELOQUENT SERMON BY RABBI AMDUR ON THE PASSOVER

### What This Greatest of Jewish Celebrations Signifies—"The Beacon Light of Liberty"

The following sermon was delivered by Rabbi Bernard L. Amdur at the Hazen avenue synagogue yesterday morning:

"PASSOVER, THE HISTORICAL LIBERTY BELL."

Passover, the glorious commemoration and the beacon light of liberty. The pillar of our history and the king of all festivals—that ever resplendent memento whose splendor the remotest of ages could not dim, and the transition of events render obscure. This grand anniversary is with us once more, and Israel everywhere extend a cordial welcome to that great distinguished guest, Passover, the institution of liberty, uttering words of thanks for the past, and inspiring expressions of hope for the future.

The scripture in Deut. 16:1 in regard to the Passover bids us in the following words: "Observe the month of Abib, (spring) and celebrate the Passover unto the Lord, thy God; for in the month of Abib the Lord brought thee forth out of Egypt by night." Should not the question arise, is there any specific importance attached to the month of the spring as to make its observance mandatory? Are the wonders of God more potent in the month of Abib? In order to meet our quest with a plausible answer, we must give the matter a reflective thought. The principle underlying our feast is not merely a remembrance of the past. It is a chain of transitory events; a series of incidents, diversities and multifariousities. Nations have risen and fallen, humanity has changed its appearance, nay, we ourselves have undergone such strange mutations that our very existence is a phenomenon to the historian. Therefore the feast appeals to every heart, mind and soul, and as such it is befitting to commemorate this ancient occurrence with such affection as if to merge all historical experiences in this one event. It is therefore most appropriate that it comes to us with the coming of the spring. For whatever we celebrate as the doings of

God in history, the springtime reveals to us as the doings of the creator in nature, it is the same lesson differently told and easily understood by those whose hearts are filled with love and whose minds seek after truth. How wonderful is the process of nature in the springtime; when but a short time ago everything seemed barren and dead, now the promises and forebodings of life are appearing, awakened by the loving glance of the sun, the shakles, the bonds of sleep, the fetters of the winter, are broken, and nature clothes herself in beautiful verdure. The branch on the tree assumes a brighter hue and the tiny buds that were hidden snow-capped, awakened by the warming rays out of their slumber, begin to unfold their blossoms. From the depth beneath, from the heights above, the unfettered powers of nature begin the work of recreation and every heart and soul feels the strong pulsation indicating new strength and vigor of life. Even the feeble, the frail and the sick draw fresh hope from the overflowing fountain of promise which the spring offers for all. The same power which during the months of the winter seemed dead or sleeping, that power is now to awaken the dead and to reanimate the slumbering and to restore the children of nature unto life.

Long and dreary was the slavery under which our ancestors sighed in Egypt, groaning in servitude under the iron rule of a nation that was intellectually and morally in darkness; the yoke that was put upon them was calculated to crush out their life, but he who rules in history "does not slumber." He watched over Israel and protected them against destruction to preserve them for the time of liberty. Thus we see the protection of God in nature and in history alike. So as the spring is a time of joy and good tidings, when we draw a deeper breath in the warm and pleasant air, in such days of cheerfulness we love to speak of the unpleasant time of the winter when our movements were hindered by reason of

the cold, snow and ice, thus our fathers when in the time of liberation had come, loved to revert in their thoughts to the time of their misery and oppression; and when the day of their spring of freedom returned in the month of Abib, they were to celebrate the Passover as a commemoration of their sorrows and humiliation in the land of slavery. For, as there is no greater agony than to remember happier things in the midst of our distress, so there is no greater satisfaction than to recall our troubles and misfortunes in the days of our happiness.

Passover is the natal day of the first independent nation, constituted upon the principles of liberty and equality. It is the historic liberty bell of the world. Much older than the one in the state house of Philadelphia, paramount in grandeur and sublimity to the famous Baroltho statue at the gateway of the United States in the harbor of New York. It was erected by the invisible hand of God 35 centuries ago, built not of mortar and clay, of metal and bronze or of any other material subject to destruction. It is of a supernatural substance that stands the brunt of decay from the elements of nature and which is proof against the ravages of time and space. It pealed forth the great and powerful words of the Almighty "and proclaim liberty through all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." Lev. 25-10. Man is free, mind is free, the spirit is free; and now it rolls and re-echoes from ocean to ocean, from pole to pole, the eternal blast from the trumpet of freedom.

Liberty is God's gift to mankind, and Israel was the first people that started in existence with a declaration of independence, and was solemnly enjoined never for a moment to forget the principle, which is the cause of its national existence, the aim and goal of its organization, for it is not of political import only. It is also of the highest moral importance. Freedom is the indispensable condition of good-nature, virtue, purity and sincerity. The free man only can be virtuous, moral and honorable, the slave, whose doings are compulsory, coerced to do this and shun that, forced to act so and not otherwise, the person without a free will is neither virtuous nor wicked, neither moral nor immoral, neither honorable nor dishonorable. All his doings are unconcerned as to the animal, the tree, the fire or any other element. Take away freedom from human nature, and whatever remains of it is an anomaly, some nameless thing of human form and animal indifference. Liberty was given to Israel, not only for their benefit, but that they might spread it through the world. Israel was made its standard to proclaim it to the world and to teach at the same time, that while liberty is the greatest boon to mankind, it is of no avail unless it is concomitant with enlightenment. Servitude and darkness go together, but where there is light of reason, the fetters are broken and mind as well as body will emancipate itself. Yes, the two principles must go together, either one is worthless without the other. Where there is liberty there is light. It is dangerous for people to have freedom without having wisdom how to use it.

Liberty must not become license, but must be tempered by the restraints of law and order. Unbounded freedom is the complaint of slavery, as to borrow of Peter to pay Paul. Liberty beyond confines is more detrimental to society than bare slavery. When our ancestors were to be freed from Egypt, it was not that they might run riot and pursue whims and vain pleasures. The divine voice spoke to Pharaoh through Moses saying, "Let my people go that they may serve me." It exhorted the people, ye shall be slaves to no man but to me only. After they gained deliverance, they were but a few weeks on their march of freedom when they were made to pause before the Mount Sinai, from which in thundering tones were proclaimed the commandments, telling them what they must do and what they must not do. After liberty was restored to them the words from the summit of Sinai came to them that liberty means not freedom to do what you please, but to do what you ought, conveying the idea that man being the image of God is his representative on earth, a free, moral and intellectual agent to preserve the welfare of the human race. "Ye shall be a kingdom of priests," was announced to the people, every one a priest, every person regarded as one of the highest class and caste—none to be superior and none inferior—one law and one statute to be for all, the native and the alien. To exclude none and to protect all who live among you and seek prosperity

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## NEARLY A DAY LOST BY MAKING CALL AT HALIFAX FOR THE MAILS

"As an enterprising newspaper man with the interests of St. John at heart, you should not neglect to call attention to the fact that the passengers on this steamer will be nearly one day later reaching Liverpool owing to the arrangement which necessitates the taking of the mails at Halifax," said Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, president of the C. P. R., to a Telegraph reporter yesterday just before he sailed for England on the Empress of Britain.

The Empress will be at Halifax until 5 or 6 o'clock tomorrow evening, according to Sir Thomas, "while if the mails had left Montreal last night and been shipped here the steamer would have gained nearly a day."

The Empress got away at 1 o'clock yesterday afternoon, and will make the trip to Halifax in about fifteen hours, arriving there early this morning, and will be waiting the arrival of the train the entire day. Sir Thomas arrived at 12:30 on the special section of No. 9 train, which went straight to St. John's, and at 1 o'clock the steamer pulled out from her wharf.

The mission of the C. P. R. president to England is one of combined business and pleasure. It was reported from Montreal that Arthur Piers, the marine superintendent in England, had given orders for two more Empresses, but the president denied this story. "No order," he said, "has yet been given, and no plans have been made in that direction."

Asked concerning his opposition to the All Red route, Sir Thomas said that the scheme was not yet in such a stage as to call for serious consideration. "However," he said, "in the transaction of business while in England discussion of the project may take place, but my main

purpose in going is to enjoy myself."

Sir Thomas was asked regarding the sale of the N. B. Southern to the C. P. R., but he laughingly turned the question aside. "You will have to ask Col. McLean about that. That is his road, is it not?"

D. McNeil, vice-president of the C. P. R., who accompanied the president, in conversation with a Telegraph reporter, also drew attention to the Empress being delayed by the call at Halifax. "It is a needless arrangement," he said, "and you should exert yourselves here in St. John to have it rectified."

Mr. McNeil was asked regarding the truth of an interview in Montreal in which he was reported to have commented on the poor quality of the coal fields at Minot on the Central Railway. "I said that the seams discovered, so far have been very thin," was the response. "We are quite ready to enter the field if the mines prove profitable, and we keep ourselves informed on these matters. The C. P. R. will be willing to consider a proposition if the mines look like paying."

Mr. McNeil came to St. John to accompany his daughter, who sailed on the Empress. He will remain over in St. John, and will be joined today by J. W. Leonard, general manager. They will make a tour over the lines this section, accompanied by General Superintendent Downie and other officials.

and happiness with you. This is the groundwork of liberty proper, so in all our actions, in our thoughts, in our beliefs, let there also be the light of guidance, of higher principle, of truth. Let us bring and maintain the best of everything in our presentage. What is the corner-stone of the dominion of the New World? And that of the United States. What makes it to become so pre-eminently the land of freedom, while the republics of ancient and medieval times were unchristian experiments of liberty. To what origin must this success be traced? The founders of America got their ideas, not from any text-books on politics or political economy, but obtained their main inspiration from the Hebrew Bible, the book of light and standard of liberty, and it entirely dwells on the need of education, and insists on it; encourages the spread of the light of wisdom and admonishes that the actions of its citizens must have fullest freedom, must nevertheless be governed by the principles of right, justice and truth, for with the individual as well as with a nation, liberty and light go together. Now, there is the extreme reverse in darkest Russia, whose despotic record is dyed with human blood, all the existing evils there are merely due to the barbaric way over its subjects, by keeping them in darkness of ignorance. "Let there be no light" is the order of the day that prevails there. It not only fails to provide for education, but even places impediments on every possible way leading to public education. It enforces restrictions to prevent them from gaining the light of reason and truth—there darkness and servitude cling together.

Friends, in our daily observation, we are confronted with diverse occurrences that beset mankind in the process of time. Deplorable and worthless is the condition of the man suffering from want and poverty. Sad, indeed, is his fate, but much more so is the piteous predicament of the poor inventor, who, with his gifted talent and incessant physical and mental exertions, succeeds in the process of time, in a viable invention, but while being poor and helpless, was forced to give away the production of his brains and the creation of his faculties unto others, who availed themselves of the opportunity. They prospered by it, while the poor inventor, who only sees his fortune into the hands of others, and with a heavy heart laments over his ill-fate. Who is the first that proclaimed freedom for the world? Who are the people that always conceived an aversion to slavery, protesting against human oppression and who, when they obtained equal rights to all inhabitants of the land? Who will gainsay that it was other than the old inventor, Israel. Yet, the barbarous nations of the Orient perpetrated the most atrocious acts in reducing Israel to a mark of rejection, and the first banner-bearer of freedom was made the target of intolerance, prejudice and prejudgment.

However, the springtime of liberty dawned for Israel as for all humanity, we are celebrating the feast of liberation, the symbol of which is the Passover. The experiences we have undergone in the vicissitudes of time in history. It is the symbol of progress that leads up from the darkness of despotism, of spiritual and bodily bondage to the bright and luminous day of freedom and tolerance, of equal rights and equal duties, of mutual respect and mutual assistance—a time when man is weighed by his deed, not by his creed, when man is esteemed for his love to all and not for his hatred against a helpless class of people.

Let the historic liberty bell that first resounded the declaration of independence on the banks of the Nile peal forth its sonorous tones to inspire the heart and soul of true mankind. Let liberty proper be given and taken within the legal bounds of law and order and may the remembrance of our celebration become a source of joy for the friend of humanity as it proclaims the old Jewish principle so ardently sought by the most sagacious and noblest of minds "One law and one right for all, liberty for every individual."

WALTER E. BENTLEY.  
Ascension Rectory, Kent Street,  
Brooklyn, N. Y.

P.S.—My latest living example was a man who had passed twenty-six years on the stage, and who, after three years' hard training, is now in charge of his own work, highly esteemed, and they who know him best, love him most.

W. E. B.

**RECRUIT CHURCH FROM THE STAGE**  
Rector of the Church of the Ascension in Brooklyn  
Makes a Suggestion

Referring to the dearth of candidates for Holy Orders in the Anglican Church Rev. Walter E. Bentley, of the Church of the Ascension, Brooklyn, N. Y., makes a novel suggestion, in which he recommends the dramatic profession as a recruiting ground.

The reverend gentleman speaks from years of professional experience, followed by work with several church organizations composed of theatrical people.

In a letter to the Living Church, a leading journal of the Episcopal Church in the United States, the reverend gentleman says:

every quarter attempting to solve the problem and yet it remains unsolved. We earnestly offer the Litany petition, and while there is a slight increase, "yet there is room" and the laborers are still few. "Why not follow the parable to its logical conclusion? Why not obey its specific command in regard to the increase of the clergy as we do that of the laity—"Go out into the highway and compel them to come in?"

I desire to draw the earnest attention of my brethren, both clerical and lay, to the one great "highway" which has been sadly neglected and ignored. I mean that of the dramatic profession. This, I am sure, would prove grand recruiting ground (especially nowadays) and for many reasons, among which let me state the following:

First.—Few young men enter into the dramatic profession through the love of money. If they do, they soon leave it or enter into business ranks as managers, etc., and forsake the artistic impulse for love of the money. The truly artistic (like the truly devout) are usually devoid of the money sense. This, I beg to remark, is the reason most commonly advanced to account for the prevailing dearth among the clergy; the sphere of "business" holds out a more flattering reward (at least here below) and certainly a surer future. But to the young man of fine taste and high ideals—the young man the Church so badly needs and does not always get—business as commonly understood (and mismanaged) is most distasteful. There are scores of such in the actors' calling who, for lack of a guiding hand—for lack of, not an "open pulpit" so much as an open door to get into the pulpit, are simply throwing their lives away when they might be devotedly serving Christ and His Church if they had the chance and did but know the way.

I speak what I do know. Many years of professional experience, followed by my work in the Actors' Church Alliance and the Actors' Church Union in Great Britain and Ireland, added to nearly a dozen actors' whom I have known and who have helped directly towards the ministry, give me, at least, a living experience that surely counts for something.

Secondly.—The first requisite of an actor is that he should know how to open his mouth. This, what this would mean in and to the American church, if all our clergy possessed that first and most requisite qualification! No more lingering deaths of a murdered though "matchless" Liturgy; no more prosing, and drowsing expelled from the pulpit and in the general day of family Bible readings, and His word as it deserves to be read, thus enabling Him, at least once a week, to speak to His people afresh.

Remember our Lord's mountain sermon and how He "opened His mouth" (St. Matt. 5: 2, 2). Dramatic delivery, it seems, was not beneath His notice, and His gracious words so vividly spoken were remembered and recorded years after and they still "live." And we, His followers, are sent as heralds and to preach "from the house-tops," and sometimes we are not heard beyond the front steps. Oh, that we all knew how to open our mouths, or, at least, would not consider it indecent or improper to do so.

I know there are dangers in what I propose (none know better); but for many years I have been convinced something should be done, and to this end I have inserted a standing advertisement in the leading Dramatic Journal of this country and already have received replies and still they come. What shall I do with those who offer themselves? Will any of my Right Reverend Fathers welcome them upon my recommendation following a personal examination and test as to worth, fitness and ability? That great and good master in Israel, dear Bishop Huntington, took me from before the footlights (after Phillips Brooks had shaken my dramatic allegiance, and, under God, made me and my associates what we are today. "Viv, I ask, will be his successor in the good work? My appeal is to the whole Church, and as it may be a question of "first come, first served," I anxiously await a reply.

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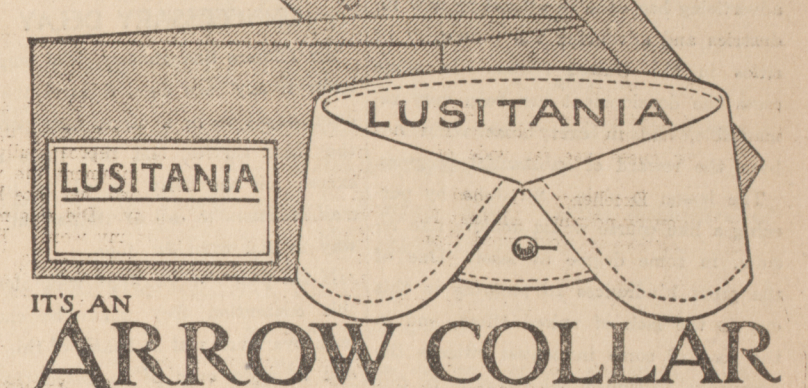
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