

Two Candles --One Light --



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Rotary Xmas Luncheon
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The spirit and mood of this occasion would
by any fair measure of judgement seem to call
for almost anyone else on earth to speak at
this time but me. ^{I know the warm feelings it prompts} I know the ^{to make me} shairman of your
Program committee and your chairman of the day
has introduced me with extraordinary grace.

But, really, what in the world is a rabbi
if he be in his right mind doing even sharing
a Christmas program. ^{Most} of all I am pro-
foundly appreciative of the friendship and
understanding of Howard Dooley who ^{alone is bound} ~~does belong~~
^{substitute this program} here and who will bring you a Christmas
message that comes from the heart and will
find its way to the heart... It is, to my
mind, the spirit of Christmas that is exempli-
fied both in Howard and in the generosity of
most of you ^{who are Xmas} that accords recognition to me
and, thru me, to the other ^{in Rotary} members of my
faith, ~~in Rotary~~... For the truth is that
while we Jews have no religious connection
with ~~the~~ Christmas, we cannot help but be
affected by the atmosphere of mutuality that

pervades these days. (All of us wish that such would ~~be the~~ typify the relationships of human encounter in all areas long beyond this season. (God knows we need it.

(What I am trying to say is that while I confess to being quite outside the religious significance of Christmas as such,

(we Jews are not unaware of the meaning of Christmas or insensitive to the profounder meanings of the ~~fix~~ day celebrating the birth of Jesus who is regarded as the Savior by Christians. (And it is only in recent times that , with direct acknowledgment of the exterior position of the Jew in relation to Xmas , (that there has finally come about a mutual recognition of each other's unique positions. (That is tribute to a new sense of the ^{integrity} ~~uniqueness~~ of the separate faiths and is, in my judgement, a far more honest and stable basis for

than that which directly or indirectly implies that ^{one faith} ~~my faith~~ must be conditioned by ^{agreement of another} ~~that of someone else~~ ^{which solely upon} ~~common denominators~~.

Practically speaking, it is an historical accident that Xmas and the Jewish festival of Channuka are celebrated ~~at~~ at the same time of year. (While there is no connection between the two in mood or circumstance, there is something which impresses me and which I think is appropriate for me to point out to you today... Even as you have begun the celebratic of Xmas with the kindling of lights and with song, (so last night in my home and in the home of my co-religionists, we too began ~~the~~ the celebration of Channuka -- ^a ~~the~~ festival of Dedication ^{We did so, with family in blessings & prayer?} with the kindling of candles and with traditional ^{joys} song. ... Our celebration for the next eight days ^{commemorates & recalls} ~~has to do with~~ an historic occasion that ~~long~~ ante-dates ^{by almost 200 yrs.} Christmas. (We rejoice that in Maccabean times, the power of the ~~Syri~~ Syrian tyrant and his armies was not able to conquer the a small population of Jews who insisted on their right to practice their faith in accordance with the tradi;tion of their fathers. ^{This first battle for rel. freedom & civil liberties} The Maccabean victory and the rededication of a defiled Temple in Jerusalem is celebrated by

additional

by the kindling of ~~xxxxxxxx~~ candle ~~xxxxxxxx~~
~~xxxxxxxx~~ in the Channuka candelabrum for ~~xxxx~~
eight successive nights. And we sing the old

ymn: Rock of Ages, let our song
Praise thy saving power;
Thou amidst the raging foes;
Wast our sheltering tower.
Furious they assailed us,
But Thine arm availed us,
And thy word
Broke their sword
When our own strength failed us.

The details are not important here and now. (But
the general mood and message is. (Consider the
contrast, or, if you will, the compliment,
represented by the two holidays and the two
traditions. (Ours is a ~~xxxx~~ celebration of group
survival. (Christmas is the beginning of what
becomes in Christianity personal salvation. //
Ours is rooted not in mystery but in the
events of history unless one considers the very
endurance of the Jewish People a mystery in itself
Christmas appeals to the inner mystery of spirit
and its application to ~~xxxx~~ history here and now, //
In the Channuka story there is no hero but the
Jewish People and God working thru ~~history~~ the
redemption of that people. (In The Christmas story,

the birth of ~~the savior~~^{Jesus} is the story of the beginning of the heroic par excellence in the redemption of each who holds that child to be his savior. Channuka recalls Mt. Sinai where was revealed the moral law for all men. Christmas presages Calvary whereon the personal ~~redemptive~~ redemption of ~~the~~ each confessor was assured.

Which is which? What is true? I know which captivates my mind and soul and ~~so do you.~~ ^{& you know which is yours}

But I suggest to you that both are necessary to our world and to our spiritual condition.

That which speaks of society and that which calls the individual; that which ~~calls~~ is voiced in the mystery of ~~poetry~~ poetry and that which ~~is~~ which ties us to history;

that which demands of this life and that which hopes for life eternal. Not contradictions but compliments; not conflicting faiths but the strongest of spiritual allies.

We have kindled two candles-- which give to all of us one Light: the Light of decency, of hope, of the worth of man, of the promise of a better world .

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To all of us our Channuka hymn sings:

Children of the martyr's race
Whether free or fettered,
Wake the echoes of the songs,
Where^{er} ye may be scattered.

Yours the message cheering,
That the time is nearing

Which shall see
All men free,
Tyrants disappearing.