

FORT WORTH'S FIRST ANNUAL AUTO SHOW. APRIL 12-17

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Furthermore, the example of the elders pervading its air, made it a tower of strength for the fostering of Jewish consciousness, because therein the children steadily inhaled the religious atmosphere surcharged with Jewish fervor and loyalty. And, let us not forget, the impressions of the home never fade: they become a permanent possession of our make-up. Thus the religious consciousness was transmitted to the young who grew up under the fostering care of the Altar-like homes that the Jewish domestic hearths assumed in their function as centers of religious life.

Secondly, the Jewish home served as a SCHOOL OF KNOWLEDGE, where loyalty and devotion were inculcated. As the seat of the historical observances, like Passover, Chanucchah and Purim, the home became the depository of the past and the center of historical consciousness. When the history of the events of which the festivals were commemorative, was explained to the children, according to the biblical injunction "and thou shalt relate to thy son," the traditions of the past became familiar to the young by means of this knowledge spread in the home. The observance of the festival was not unlike a lesson in history to the child. Every Passover, for instance, the story of the Exodus was rehearsed, as on every Ninth of Ab was retold the tale of the loss of political independ-

ence. Thus they were made aware of our history with its glories and sorrows. In this manner they became fervently loyal to the past. They learned to know and to love our history, teachings and traditions.

Thirdly, the Jewish home functioned as a SHRINE, where reverence and respect pervaded the atmosphere. Love and affection permeated the life of the family. Even in the midst of poverty, happiness and harmony prevailed. Optimism and a spirit of solidarity reigned supreme. Furthermore, the elders practiced self-control and restraint, while the young were taught reverence and loyalty. The reverential spirit, religiosity and faith in God were ever present in the Jewish home, inculcating moral earnestness, spiritual intensity and ways of right living.

No wonder the picture of the typical Jewish home of the centuries so fascinates us even now. We read and speak of it with wonderment and awe. When we analyze its remarkable contributions to the making of Jewish life and character, we cannot but pay homage to it as a singular institution evolved by the genius of the Jewish soul. In addition to being the family hearth, it had the singular merit of serving as the seat of religious manifestations, expressed in its three-fold character; first, as ALTAR, where the religious consciousness was fostered by means of observances and ceremonies; sec-

ondly, as SCHOOL OF KNOWLEDGE, where the historical recollections were nurtured by inculcating loyalty and devotion to the past; and thirdly, as SHRINE, where reverence and faith in God were preserved by precept and example.

To our great sorrow it must be admitted that such a picture but conjures up in our minds something that has passed into history. Alas, our homes nowadays can in no wise be differentiated from the non-Jewish ones. They are no longer distinctively Jewish. Religious observances have been banished from their premises, and either have been relegated to the past, or, what is still left of them, have been delegated to the temple and the Sabbath School. The Seder, instead of being, as it should, a family function, has become a congregational affair. The Chanucchah lights are lit, not in our homes, but in the religious school as faint reminders to our children of the glories connected with the heroic struggle and triumph of the Maccabees. And the wonderful influences of the Friday night home ceremony have almost entirely disappeared from among us, and their holy charms lost to ourselves and to our children.

To be sure, not all of the olden ways could be retained in our modified environment. The Ghetto flavor is fortunately a thing of the past. New conditions necessitate new interpreta-

tions. Nevertheless, enough of the poetry and beauty that found their place at the family fireside, can and should be retained. They may be given a modern setting to fit into the day's environment to add to our prosaic life some of the fascinations of old. Many of the prayers and the ceremonies could be resuscitated to enhance the fine flavor of the family surroundings. Thus the Sabbath and holiday celebrations may be revived in the home to add to the joy of living, and secondly to intensify our Jewishness. Then only may our homes retain their former glorious position as sources of spiritual strength and as citadels of religiosity that they ever played in our history.

Especially before a great festival like Passover this thought naturally comes to our minds. As we approach the holiday marking the natal day of Israel with his great duty and destiny, as we remind ourselves of the ways our fathers observed it, we cannot but feel the powerful plea for the revival of sacred sentiments in our homes. Do not unload all the religious observances and practices, hallowed by the centuries and reverently recalled, on the slender shoulders of the Sabbath School. The home is their place. Each Jewish family should consider it a duty and a matter of pride to restore to its hearth in affectionate family re-

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