

Ode to the United States on its Bicentennial and to the Rededication of its People to the Principles of the Declaration of Independence

by Rabbi Samson A. Shain

Rabbi Samson Aaron Shain was a good friend of the Lancaster County Historical Society, and was a dear personal friend of the editor. His death on 9 March 1976 came after a two year battle with cancer. Dr. Shain discussed the accompanying ode with the editor only a few days before entering the hospital the last time.

Rabbi Shain was born in Boston in 1906, the son and grandson of rabbis. He was a graduate of Hebrew Teachers College of Boston, Harvard, Columbia University, and the Jewish Institute of Religion-Hebrew Union College. In 1942 he enlisted in the armed forces as a chaplain, from which he retired as a Colonel in the Air Force Reserve. Rabbi Shain was called to Congregation Shaarai Shomayim in 1956 which he served lovingly until his death. He was president of the Lancaster Chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews in 1964, and in 1970 was presented with their highest honor, the Human Relations Award. In 1965 he was named "Man of the Year" by the Lancaster B'nai B'rith. The Wheatland Sertoma Club presented him with their "Service to Mankind" Award. He belonged to the Torch Club, Rotary Club, and was a Mason.

Dr. Shain always was interested in history, and was a contributor to the Journal.

His memory will live among us for generations to come. He was a wonderful person in every sense.

In commemoration of the approaching 200th anniversary of the Declaration of American Independence, I find it fitting to compose the lyric poem below, in the language of the Hebrew Bible from which came the inscription on the Liberty Bell, "Proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." The ode is an alphabetical, acrostical paraphrase of Psalm 34. I have added an English translation and am happy to be able to publish it in our Bulletin, in the first month of our Bicentennial year, 1976.

RABBI SAMSON A. SHAIN.

מִזְמוֹר לְאַמְרִיקָה, לְקִרְאָת יוֹבְלָהּ הַמְּאֵתִים וְלְהַתְקַדְּשׁוֹת אֶכְלוּסְיָהּ לְעִקְרוֹנוֹת שֶׁל
הַצִּהָרֶת עֲצָמָאוֹתָהּ.

בְּבִקְשַׁת סְלִיחָה מֵאֵת הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד, גַּעֲזִים וְמִירוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל.
גִּרְסָה חֲפָשִׁית שֶׁל סֵפֶר תְּהִלִּים, פָּרָק ל"ד.

אֲבָרְכָה אֶת אַמְרִיקָה בְּכָל יְעַת, תִּמִּיד תִּהְלֶתָה בְּפִי.
בְּשִׁטָּתָה הַדְּמוּקְרַטִית תִּתְהַלֵּל נַפְשׁוֹ, יִשְׁמַע כָּל הָעוֹלָם וַיִּשְׁמַח.
גִּדְּלוּ לְרִפּוּבְלִיקָה אֲתֵנוּ, וְנִרְוּמָמָה שְׁמָה יִחָדּוּ.
דְּרָשׁוּ מִסְּנִיפֶיהָ צֶדֶק וַיִּתְנוּכֶם, וּמִכָּל רוֹדְנוֹת יִשְׁמְרוּכֶם.
הִרְהַרְנוּ עַל גְּדוּלֵי גִשְׁיָאֵינוּ וְנִהַרְנוּ, וּבִלְבָנוּ רֶגֶשׁ כְּבוֹד.
זֶה נִכְהֲ-גוֹרֵל קָרָא, וְהִלָּאֵם עָנָה, וּמִרְבַּ צְרוּתֵי הוֹשִׁיעוּ.
חֲזִנִים נִצְיָנִי הָאֵמָה סָבִיב לְאוֹרְחֶיהָ וַיִּתְלָצוּם.

טַעֲמוּ וּרְאוּ כִי טוֹבָה אֶרְצֵנוּ, אֲשֶׁרֵי הַנְּתִינִים הַיּוֹשְׁבִים בָּהּ.
יִרְאוּ וְרוֹעַ הַמִּשְׁפָּט, תוֹשְׁבֶיהָ, כִּי אֵין חֹסֶר הִנָּה לִירְאֶיהָ.
כּוֹפְרֵי בְרִית אֲבוֹתֵינוּ הַמִּיִּסְדִּים רָשׁוּ וְנִדְכָּאוּ, וְהַחַיִּים בְּאַמוּנָתָם שְׁלוֹת נַפְשׁ מִנַּת חֵלְקָם.
לְכוּ, בְּנֵי אַמְרִיקָה, שְׁמְעוּ לְנִבְיֹתֵיכֶם, סִייעַ לְמַדְיָנָה יִלְמְדוּכֶם.
מִי הַכּוֹסֵף לַחַיִּים, אוֹבֶה שָׁנִים לִשְׂבַע בְּחֵלְקוֹ.
נוֹצֵר נַפְשׁוֹ מִמֶּרְמָה וּפִיו מִדְּבָה.

סֶר מִתְרַמֵּית וְנוֹטָה לַחֲסֵד, חַי בְּשָׁלוֹם עִם רֵעֵהוּ.
עֵינֵי הַדִּינִים לְשׁוֹמְרֵי חֶק, וְאוֹנִיָּהֶם לְתַבְעֵי מִשְׁפָּט.
פְּנֵי הַשּׁוֹפְטִים בְּמַחֲלֵלֵי הַדִּין, לְעִנְשָׁם וּלְאַסְרָם.
צִנְחוּ עֲבָרֵינוּ כִּי פָשְׁעוּ, וְהַדִּינִים שְׁמְעוּ וְחָמְלוּ.
קִרְבָּה אַמְרִיקָה לְזִקְוִקִים לִישׁוּעָה, וְאֵת הָאֲמֻלִּים תַּצּוֹר.
רְבוֹת הַצָּרוֹת שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל דָּרָה, וּמִרְבֵּן תִּמְלִטֵם הַשְׁלֵטְנוֹת.
שׁוֹמְרֵת זְכוּתֵיהֶם וְנִכְסֵיהֶם, אֶחָד מֵהֶם לֹא יֵאבֹד.
תְּמוֹתֶת רָשָׁע רָצְתוּ, וְתוֹעֲבֵי הֶלְכָה יְמוּטוּ.
תּוֹמְכַת הַמִּמְשָׁלָה בְּגִרְיוֹ חֲרִיו, וְלֹא יִחְסְרוּ כָּל הַחוּסִים בָּהּ.