

SENATE—Tuesday, June 29, 1999

The Senate met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today's prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, Rabbi Shimshon Sherer, Congregation Khai Zichron Mordechai, Brooklyn, NY.

We are pleased to have you with us.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain, Rabbi Shimshon Sherer, offered the following prayer:

Our Father in heaven: We stand before Thee in humble supplication as we yearn for divine inspiration, for guidance, and for wisdom. We turn to Thee in gratitude for this group of exceptional men and women of good faith dedicated to this great Nation and to all its people.

We bless Thee, O God, for a most precious gift that Thou bestowed upon the United States of America, upon the Jewish people, and indeed upon all of mankind, in a person, a man of history who came to be a symbol of visionary leadership and uncompromising integrity. We pay tribute to the life and legacy of the saintly revered rabbi, Rabbi Morris Sherer.

We pray to Thee, Almighty God, that his memory inspire the Members of this august body, the U.S. Senate, to find within their hearts an echo of his nobility of spirit, selfless devotion, and compassion for all in need, to demonstrate for all to see that beneath the outer veneer of our Nation's bureaucracy beats a warm heart in which the anguished cry of the depressed, the deprived, and the disadvantaged strikes a responsive chord.

Give us the understanding, O God, to grasp the true import of the sacred obligation we have, to open our hearts and hands to bring the bounties of life to every man, woman, and child in our midst.

O Father in heaven, bless this distinguished assemblage of people determined to work effectively and tirelessly for the betterment of all the people of this great Nation, that we witness in our time the fulfillment of the vision of the Psalmist, "They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy," so that from all the upheavals which shatter the soul of society today shall emerge a new world of hope, tranquility, and serenity, for the glory of God and all mankind. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Senator SPECTER will now lead the Senate in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Honorable ARLEN SPECTER, a Senator from the State of Pennsylvania, led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able acting majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 12:30 p.m. with Senator MOYNIHAN, or his designee, in control of the time between 10:30 a.m. and 11, Senator GRAMS, or his designee, in control of the time between 11 o'clock in the morning and 12 noon, and Senator SPECTER, or his designee, in control of the time between 12 noon and 12:30. Following morning business, the Senate will stand in recess until 2:15 p.m. so the weekly party conferences can meet.

When the Senate reconvenes at 2:15, there will be an additional 2 hours of morning business equally divided between the two leaders. The Senate is then expected to resume consideration of the pending and long-suffering agriculture appropriations bill. Therefore, votes are expected to occur.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SPECTER. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I thank my distinguished colleague, Senator MOYNIHAN, for yielding 2 minutes prior to the time that his special order takes effect.

RABBI MORRIS SHERER

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have sought this recognition to compliment Rabbi Sherer, who has just delivered the Senate prayer.

We are recognizing the outstanding work of Rabbi Sherer's father, also Rabbi Sherer, who died a little more than a year ago. Present today in the Senate gallery are some 200 representatives of a national convocation to recognize the outstanding work of the departed Rabbi Sherer.

I must say that Rabbi Sherer's comments this morning about freedom of religion and the impact on everyone in

America, but with special reference to Jewish Americans, is of great significance to me because both of my parents came from foreign lands to the United States and were pleased and honored to pledge their allegiance to the United States of America.

My father left a shtetl, a small community, Batchkurina, in Ukraine, to come to the United States in 1911 at the age of 18, barely a ruble in his pocket, literally walked across Europe, took stearage in the bottom of a boat to come to America to seek his fortune, as did my mother who came with her parents when she was 5 years old in 1905 from a small town on the Russian-Polish border. They settled in America. They raised their family in America. My father fought in the American Expeditionary Force to help make the world safe for democracy and, in his allegiance to his new-found country, rose to the rank of buck private. Next to his family, the greatest honor he had was serving in the U.S. Army.

Freedom of religion is fundamental Americana, and the Rabbi's prayer today brings it home to us. And I wanted to express my own views of thanks for this country, what it has done for my parents and what it has done for my brother, two sisters and me, and my sons and our granddaughters.

I thank the Chair, I thank Senator MOYNIHAN, and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS). The distinguished Senator from New York is recognized.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I believe Senator ASHCROFT would like to speak at this moment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I thank the Senator for accommodating me from the time reserved for his control.

I am glad for the opportunity to stand in the Senate today to honor Rabbi Morris Sherer, who passed away on May 17 last year. Today, I believe the very best way to pay tribute to Rabbi Sherer's memory is to celebrate his inspiring accomplishments.

When Rabbi Sherer became the executive vice president of Agudath Israel in America in 1941, the organization was but a small group with but a few members. Rabbi Sherer transformed Agudath Israel from the small organization that it was in 1941 to a respected and influential force in the culture and community we call America in both our political and religious life.

Rabbi Sherer's success came primarily from two strong leadership characteristics or character traits for