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<sup>I don't mean to be shocking when I say that</sup>  
 My friends, I am here to propose a revolution. <sup>And I do not intend to be sensational when I say that</sup> My purpose today

is to kindle the spirit of rebellion in the hearts of each and every one of us. No, not a political revolution and not an economic revolution, but a revolution non-the-less. The revolution I propose is one of forthrightness. Ours is a time when people are fortified with good thoughts, strengthened by good intentions, and inspired by a desire to do good things. Let no prophet of doom tell us that people today are worse than they ever have been, that they are basically and inherently bad. That would not be true. What is true, however, is that we, as Americans and Jews, have lost one faculty, one certain special and rare quality; and that loss has made us not a worse but a weaker people. We once had the ability to express ourselves freely, to be frank in our opinions, and open in our criticisms. We indulged in the healthy American practice of calling a spade a spade. We were not tamed by superficial politeness, and we were not cowed by petty fears. If we thought something wrong we said so in no uncertain terms, and if the conditions were <sup>not</sup> corrected we expressed our indignation. We were, one might almost say, childish. It is that childish quality of saying what must be said in the most uninhibited way, and even throwing caution to the winds, that we must attempt to recapture in this Revolution of Forthrightness. We must cast away those superficial politenesses and those petty fears. We must say and express the truth as we see it.

This is indeed a childish quality. And it is a tragedy that as our people and country have grown into national adulthood we have outgrown this most ennobling, endearing and distinguishing feature of our people. And if I had to give a name to this revolution of frankness and forthrightness, I would not be ashamed to dub it the "Diaper Revolution". The name is one which has history behind it. And the story is one which every American and every Jew must take to heart and study carefully, for it affects our lives and the lives of our children. Let me read to you a passage from "The Land of the Silent People" by Robert St. John, who was a reporter in Yugoslavia during the early days of World War II.

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(from Robert St. John's "Land of the Secret People", 1942)

"Despite public speeches, despite what the controlled radio said and what the weak-livered Yugoslav press told us, we all knew that Prime Minister Cvetkovitsch had at best only 20% of the population behind him when he joined Yugoslavia to the Axis in early 1944. But it had been the same in Romania. There the 80% ~~had~~ remained dumb. And we all expected the same pattern to be followed here in Yugoslavia. There was no reason to believe the 80% would dare speak out in denunciation. But none of us had considered the possibility of a "Diaper Revolution". Yet that is just what it was, a "Diaper Revolution". It all started with boys, and girls 10, 11 and 12 years old letting off steam with typical Balkan gusto. Sit-down strikes. Riots. A young revolution in the classrooms of grammar-schools. Hitler pictures torn to shreds. Cvetkovetsch denounced as a traitor. Slogans deriding the weakness of the government scrawled in childish writing on walls and doors. Thousands of hungry youngsters barricading themselves in their schoolhouses and refusing to obey orders from anyone. Belgrade was never prouder of its young than that day in March when its young said the things that the whole city wanted to say but didn't dare... A Yugoslav whom I had met sometime ago and who recognized me as an American reporter told me, "I tell you those kids out there may be making history today.... If this were just a few hundred kids writing a lot of nonsense it wouldn't mean anything, but these kids are only parrots. They're just repeating stuff they hear at home... This shows how the country feels.... Things are going to happen in Yugoslavia yet"....

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Yes, my friends, things did happen in Yugoslavia that day. A nation was inspired by young, childish <sup>frankness</sup> ~~forthrightness~~ to cast away the smallness of cowardice, and to escape from the paralysis of inertia. It was not so much a revolution of arms as it was a revolution of forthrightness; and it was not so much a military as a moral victory.

And how we in America need that childish daring, that naive insistence upon pulling no punches and coming to the point. And who knows but that the beginnings of such a Diaper Revolution are already in sight. For one thing, we must have such a Diaper Revolution against the crass commercial exploitation of religion - and I mean any and every religion. Only recently a prominent playwright was dismissed from a television program because he dared to insinuate that the vulgar misuse of religious hymns is the most sickening and disgusting manifestation of the decline of religion in America. Some dull and hysterical listeners influenced an equally dull and hysterical management to dismiss that playwright at once. The fact that he has been reinstated makes no difference. The fact remains that the constant repetition of these religious hymns is cheapening and offensive to all religious people. Christian hymns have no place on variety TV shows and "Eli Eli" has no place in cabarets and nightclubs. It's about time that we dared to protest in grim indignation against such outrageous invasion of the holy precincts of religion. And this is not the only example of such exploitation and misuse. To teach the word of G-d over radio and television is in itself commendable. But to conclude that therefore one should buy a certain type of Television Set is ridiculous and profane. It is ridiculous and profane to suggest that a commercial establishment be given the opportunity to control the purse-strings of those who control the heart-strings of the faithful. And I am sure that such thoughts have occurred to all of us who respect religious authority and reverence the still, small voice of religion. Yet in the fear that we might be

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condemned as old fashioned and as dispeptic and chronic complainers,  
most of us have kept a respectful silence which was actually most  
disrespectful. I say that it takes a man with the indomitable and  
courageous directness of a child to express that indignation in a  
most pointed and forceful manner. More power to George Kaufman for  
having been the first to breach the wall of silence and say what had  
to be said.

But if we as Americans can take the children of Belgrade as our  
models for the kind of revolution we need, then we as Jews have, as  
our model, the greatest of human beings who ever walked the face of  
the earth. In the portion of this week we read of the birth and  
early development of one of the greatest revolutionaries of all times.  
From the moment of his birth, Moses was characterized by a spirit of  
directness, protest, criticism and indignation.

When Moses was born, the Torah tell us, "VA'TEIRE OSSO KI TOV" -  
"and she (his mother) saw that he was good". And our Rabbis comment that  
the expression "Kitov" - "she saw that he was good", is similar to  
the expression of G-d's reaction to His creation of light - "Ki Tov".  
From this the Talmud deduces that when Moses was born the room was  
filled with a great light. So much so, that even three months  
later "VE'LO YACHLAH ODE HATZPINO", that she could no longer hide  
him from the Egyptian tyrants, so brilliant and undiminished was the  
light which radiated from him. Moses, we are made to feel, had a  
great light which it was his mission to shed upon the world. His  
elders would have preferred that he control that glory and brilliance,  
that he contain himself - but not so a Moses. If this was his mission,  
then that was what he was going to do - spread the light of G-dliness  
into the darkest nooks and covers<sup>RN</sup> of men's hearts and souls and  
raise them to a Promised Land, regardless of Egyptians or Philistines  
or Amalekites or anyone.

And then, when his mother placed him in a little basket and left him to float upon the Nile, the child began to cry - and when the daughter of Pharoah had the basket opened, "VE'HINEI NA'AR BOCHEH" - "Behold, a 'NA'AR' was crying". "NA'AR" does not mean boy or child, as is commonly believed. <sup>In</sup> For Biblical Hebrew it usually indicates a mature, grown individual. Joshua at the age of 40-odd years was called "NA'AR". And, in fact, our Rabbis make mention of that paradox - "HU YELED, VE'KOLU KE'NA'AR" - he was a baby, but his voice that of an adult. So that Moses as a child already was beginning to freely express the opinions and feelings and sentiments that the adults held and felt but were afraid to express. HU YELED VE'KOLO KE'NA'AR. Amere child who speaks like an adult. How different from the adults who are really frightened children, afraid to speak out. The crying of Moses is the crying of protest and indignation. When the adults do not dare to speak out and express themselves it is the children who voice the real sentiments of the adults.

His people were pining away for freedom and independence. Their situation was becoming unbearable. The Egyptians were cruel taskmasters. Yet it was not until many years later that they gave voice to their complaints - only after "VA' YEMYEHI BA'YAMIM HA'RABIM HA'HEIM", after many long years, and after "VA' YAMAS MELECH MITZRAYIM", after the King of Egypt died, only then "VA'YIZAKU", only then did they shout and sigh and protest. Not so Moses. True, he was only a child. But that great desire for freedom, which lay squelched in the breasts of his elders as they waited for the Tyrant to die, that desire was expressed by Moses with forthrightness and fearlessness. That is probably the meaning of the ancient Jewish legend which relates the Story of Pharoah coddling the child Moses in his arms. Moses was fascinated by the crown atop the head of the Egyptian monarch and, with a decided contempt for diplomatic protocol, Moses simply pulled the crown off Pharoah's head. Moses, the legend means to say, wanted freedom and independence, symbolized

by the crown, for his people; and so, neither Pharoahs nor politeness nor protocol could contain. He simply grabbed for it.

It is true that an attitude of this sort, throwing caution to the winds, can some times be dangerous. You can burn yourself by being overly plain-spoken and straight-forward. And, in fact, another Agadda tells of Moses literally burning himself because of this open attitude. Moses' eye was caught by a live coal, and, true to his uninhibited nature, Moses put the coal to his lips - and was to suffer its effects for the rest of his life. He thus became a "KVAD PEH U'KVAD LASHON", "slow of speech and slow of tongue". But while Moses burnt himself and could not become an orator, let us remember that he also grabbed a crown and became a liberator.

And so it was all through his life. Where his elders keep their silence, this young revolutionary declare the truth as he sees it. He is shocked by what he sees and makes it his business to correct conditions. Moses takes a long look at the "class war" of his day. He sees persecution and despotism. An Egyptian striking a Hebrew and getting away with it - Moses waits for the adults - mature, wise, experienced adults - to do something. But "VA' YIPEN KOTZ VA' KOTZ VA' YAR KI AIN ISH" - he looks here and there and he sees not one man. "Mustn't protest" say his elders, "let well enough alone. The Egyptians are hysterical these days. Go easy, Moses. These are un-Egyptian activities Committees, Moses, and if you speak out they are liable to investigate your schools and declare you a subversive. Remember, Moses, your people aren't Mayflower Egyptians. You're the son of immigrants, Canaanite subversives. Talk out against injustice and inequality and discrimination and you'll be deported". But a Moses cannot be checked by petty fears. "VAYACH ES HA'MITZRI" he strikes at the root of evil even if it means that he has to flee to Midian.

And how beautiful, in this respect, are the words of our Sages - "HARAGO BE'SHEM HA'MEFORASH". Moses killed the Egyptian by uttering the

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SHEM HA'MEFORASH, the explicit name of G-d. There are, as you know, many names for G-d. But there is one, which we do not know today, which was the ineffable or explicit and real name of G-d which reflected His essence. And what our Rabbis meant by this is that the way to beat the Egyptians of life, the way to vanquish the taskmasters and slave-drivers in the course of existence is by straight-forwardness - by pronouncing the SHEM HA'MEFORASH, by being explicit in uttering the principles and ideas which contain the Name of G-d. The only way to score a knock-out against the Pharoahs about you is by not pulling your punches. Do not spare the criticism, be direct in your approach, and when fighting the battles for G-dliness, pronounce His name explicitly - the SHEM HA'MEFORASH. There is no other way to defeat the oppressors.

So that if the world at large can pattern their Revolution of Forthrightness on the model of the Yugoslavian "Diaper Revolution", we Jews can pattern ours on the model of the revolution of the young Moses, the revolution in which the secret weapon is the SHEM HA'MEFORASH, explicitness in the name of G-d.

If we Jews had some of that youthful quality about us, we might learn to finally give vent to what pains and presses us. We might offer a great protest against those charitable organizations <sup>which</sup> ~~who~~ campaign for funds by appealing to the religious MITZVAH of TZDAKAH, **charity**, and then building a hospital in Long Island and insisting upon making it TREFAH. I am sure that we are all irked by this cruel joke that this organization is playing on American Jewry. Yet how many of us have announced that we, as part and parcel of the Jewish Community, insist upon our funds going to Kosher institutions, that we refuse to see such frauds perpetrated on us? Would that we were a bit more childish. Perhaps then we could be more adult.

It is, therefore, this youthful and childish quality of directness which Moses practiced and preached. And <sup>it is</sup> ~~if~~ for a revolution of that sort for which we must prepare, for it is the kind of revolution we need.

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With it, we can lay bare the many evils which plague our world. Without it those evils can grow and multiply like so many deadly bacteria in the dirt and dark. Without frankness, criticism becomes hypocrisy; with it, it is a sacrament. Without it, we invite the reign of tyranny; with it, we incite the Revolution - for G-dliness.