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"Thus You Should Live, My Son." Yom Kippur sermon.
September 1952.

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~~SUGGESTED NOTES FOR YOM KIPPUR SERMON~~

"~~HOW~~ YOU SHOULD LIVE, MY SON"

Thus

I spoke on Rosh Hashonah about the importance of the survival of Judaism. The path of the future must ^{be that} ~~not be that~~ ^{not that of} assimilation or indifference, ~~but~~ of positive Jewish survival. I asked you to live as dedicated, intelligent, authentic Jews, because I felt that the survival of Judaism was necessary for Jews who would be most comfortable in its familiar embrace.

But survival of Judaism simply for the sake of providing a refuge or a womb is not enough. If we ever forget the reason for which we place so much value on this survival, then we have foresworn the majestic and vital dynamic role in favor of the lesser and more selfish.

The reason we exist and must continue to exist, is that we may, through life, fulfill the original vocation we chose and for which we were created. Israel entered a covenant with God at a crucial time and swore to maintain the relationship. Israel promised to be a kingdom of priests and a holy people - a living witness to the struggle for righteousness - God's partner in the struggle for human improvement.

Not for nothing did the lightning flash and the thunder roar at Sinai;

not for nothing was the covenant cut into the living and bleeding flesh; not for nothing was the promised land given and messianic prosperity assured. These were the symbols of the bargain that was struck. As in Faust, as in the Greek tragedy, the bargain must be kept or the evil consequences paid. In one blinding flash, a civilized ~~etc~~^{ethic} was revealed and accepted. The die was cast and for all eternity Israel and God were frozen together in an unalterable compact.

^{entire} The race of man has benefited from the bargain. Right was distinguished from wrong at Sinai, and every man on earth since then has been the benefactor. The high ethic and the moral imperative were not confined ^{exclusively} to the tribe of Habiru - but once released to them, transcended all physical and ^{national} ~~spiritual~~ barriers to become the property of entire mankind. The vocation of Israel was established - she was to be the light unto thenations - the teacher of the ethic - and her success would be measured by the breadth of the distance over which she would distribute her choice and peculiar knowledge. Unlike many other small and fearful tribes who kept discoveries to themselves, her destiny was to give away as widely and freely as possible this word of God, which was her treasure.

The ethical tradition expanded as Israel lived, and became ever more concrete and specific. From the first ten rules of conduct, the sense of values was defined and redefined in the testing crucible of ~~testing~~ ^{personal} relationships, so that rights and freedoms were added. The poor and the orphan were protected; the ruling king was limited in his power to oppress; the merchant was enjoined to honest weights; and the rules of sexual cleanliness were laid down. Israel, first among all peoples to do so, taught the dignity of man and not only taught it, but cloaked it in a protective garb of law and statute designed to render it inviolate.

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prophets still challenge admiration. The words and deeds of these men have not lost their power. They will always stir the minds and inspire the hearts of lovers of righteousness."

All of this is not to say that Biblical society was ^{already} the epitome of human ^{conduct} ~~achievement~~. Every sin ^{one} ~~you~~ can think of was committed by those Jews, even as the ethical process itself was slowly and painfully evolving. Listen to Hosea exhort them: (Hosea 7:1-4) "When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered and the wickedness of Samaria; for they commit falsehood and the thief cometh in and the troop of robbers spoil it without. And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness. They make the king glad with their wickedness and the princes with their lies. They are all adulterers."

Or take Isaiah (1:21-23) "How is the faithful city become a ^{whore} ~~harlot~~. It was full of ^{justice} ~~judgement~~, righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Thy princes are rebellious and companions of thieves; every one loveth gifts and followeth after rewards. They judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them."

Or take Isaiah (5:11) "Woe unto them that rise up early in the

morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night until wine inflame them."

Or Jeremiah (5:1) "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth justice, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it."

The list is evil and overpowering: lying, stealing, adultery, drunkenness, sycophancy to evil rulers, bribery, heartlessness, injustice - a combination of crime and brutality, oppression and indifference to the weak and needy. The list could be multiplied. But one enormous overpowering fact stands out in bold relief as we look further.

While it is true that these ^{wrongs} ~~roles~~ were being committed, they were not being condoned. They were being branded constantly as sinful and evil. The fierce and stentorian tones of the prophets lashed at the evil-doers mercilessly. The prophets and the Torah fastened upon the Jewish people a sense of guilt in connection with unethical conduct of ~~what~~ whatever sort. This is the crucial clue.

~~If the psychiatrists and psychologists will excuse me, I would~~

I would rather not, at the moment, enter into a discussion of the possible traumatic effect of such heavy guilt feelings. I know it is fashionable among certain schools ^{of psychiatry and psychoanalysis} to say that religion is responsible for many neurotic and even psychotic patterns of behaviour because of guilt complexes which certain people develop over their behaviour. But that is the same as saying that you cannot discipline a child because he may grow up hating the parents that chastise him. I know there is the danger of excessive punishment, and yet without control it is impossible to set standards.

Israel, collectively and individually, was told by her guardians of morality that she was evil and sinful and guilty. The fact that this feeling of guilt was fastened upon her went far toward controlling the quantity and quality of the corruption.

Why do I stress this? Today we are faced with a corruption in our nation so extensive as to represent a real breakdown in the ethics and integrity of American life. The highly touted honor system at West Point is vulnerable and some of our best universities, where men should learn the higher values, are the victims of athletic scandals.

Do you remember the extensive black market of a few years ago?

During the war when parents were willing to offer their sons on the high altar of moral sacrifice, the same parents lived without morals for the sake of making what was called "a fast buck". Illegal profits ran into billions of dollars and at least one in every fifteen business concerns, was dealt with by government action for one type of violation or other.

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The police who accept bribes from organized criminals to protect gambling, for example, believed this type of graft to be "clean ice" since the public wants gambling under any conditions.

It is fascinating to me that there should be a distinction between clean ice and dirty ice. Yet it is exactly this distinction, apparently, which is descriptive of the moral breakdown in society today.

Professor Marshall Clinard, of the Department of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin, has written an article entitled, "Corruption

Runs Far Deeper than Politics" in which he offers as his explanation of what is happening the fact that people are not obeying all the laws, but are choosing which laws they desire to obey. He calls this "selective obedience".

"What is central to all this selective disobedience to law by politicians, businessmen, government employes and others is the idea that such behaviour may be illegal, but it is not necessarily "immoral" or "criminal". Indeed, law breaking is often divided into two neat categories: the conventional crimes of burglary and larceny which are frequently punished by imprisonment, and those other violations of law which have come to be known as "white collar crime".

"Many people believe that the term crime and criminal should be restricted to the more overt acts like burglary and robbery, which not only fit the common stereotype, but which they themselves would never do. Their illegal behaviour might make them minor "lawbreakers" but certainly not "criminals". How society can expect to control ordinary crime with one set of standards while allowing violations of law under another set of definitions is incomprehensible."

Recently Willie Sutton, the bank robber, was quoted as saying:

"Judy Coplin is free to go as she pleases. Others accused of defrauding the government of hundreds of thousands of dollars, merely get a letter from a committee in Washington asking them to come in and talk it over. Maybe it's justice, but its puzzling to a guy like me."

When law is disobeyed, society breaks down. Law is the handmaiden of ethics and ethical behaviour. The two go together.

Prof. Lauterbach of The H.U.C. once wrote a famous essay on "The Ethics of De Halacha". He made the point that

There are two distinct processes in the progress of mankind toward ethical perfection: the process of conceiving high ethical ideals and the equally important process of their application to life.

Ethical ideals are first conceived and expressed by some great mind - prophet, priest or teacher. Afterward these ethical concepts

become the basis of law and practical legislation. Thus, *There are first* ~~you have~~

the utterances of the great moral leaders, followed by the practical legislative decrees of the lawmakers.

In Judaism, the prophets, God-inspired men, gave expression to the highest ideals of love and peace, justice and righteousness, while the rabbis of the Talmud set themselves the task of legislating these

ideals into rules for practical use. Thus, the Halakah of Judaism, Talmudic-rabbinic law had as its purpose the providing of a framework of rules of life in which a man could concretely express the noblest ideals.

"The Rabbis appreciated the fact that ideals lose their value if unaccompanied by actions, and remain merely beautiful phrases without any practical influence upon life and conduct."

The Mishnah (Abot 1:17) says:

אדם אחד לא יוכל לעולם הזה אלא ע"י מעשיו

"The main thing is conduct and not theorizing."

The purpose of all Halakah, all law, in the eyes of the Rabbis, was to give concrete expression to the prophetic ethical ideal - namely, to promote justice, peace and love among men. Thus, they viewed the whole Torah as a commentary on the Golden Rule in Leviticus

קלם בתורה כלום מן דברי חכמה (67.59b)

"The Rabbis never lost sight of the fact that the legal enactments and ritual laws of the Torah were merely a means to an end, which is moral perfection. They declared that all the precepts and ritual laws of the Torah put together cannot equal in importance one ethical principle

of the Torah. (Peah 16d)

One further point - ritual observance without ethical observance is strictly forbidden, by both prophets and rabbis.

Quote Isaiah, ch. 1 (I hate your feasts, etc.)

Quote Suk. 30a

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The performance of a mitzvah, ^{positive ritualistic (commandment)} which involves disregard of ethical principle is forbidden.

One of the ^{charges} ~~complaints~~ we often hear about the hypocrisy of organized religion has to do with - we hear ^{with} condemned the men who come to synagogue to pray, and then go out to cheat their neighbors.

This is expressly forbidden. Tosefta Shebu 2.6, says that one cannot believe in God and be dishonest to his fellow-man.

דברים אלה הם למה נאמר ע"פ דברי חכמים

"one cannot ^{deceive} ~~treacherously~~ toward his fellow-man ^{without} ~~unless~~ he ^{denying} ~~denies~~ God."

Thus, when the purpose of the law is achieved, namely when the Messianic era is reached, when men will have learned to live in brotherly love and justice, the law will not be necessary

(over to next page)

Insert

(1)

~~And one cannot deny God without~~

~~deceiving oneself.~~

II Speaking of this high sense of ethical duty,
Pierre van Paasen once said

"The essence and substance of Judaism
is a passion for justice." Jews burned
with this passion, and said its flame is
a bright ^{help} welding touch to fashion social
instruments of usefulness.

Today I notice our people ^{enjoys} ~~has~~
other passions - which would ^{seem} ~~have been~~ mighty
strange to our grandfathers. It is in good
Jewish tradition to be kind to animals, but
the passion for dogs, horses, in fact any creature
which will run around a track in a circle,
far outstrips what might be expected of a
city-dwelling, non-farming population. Have you ever
seen how excited some people become just watching
horses run? This is indeed a strange passion.

Our passion for money, by cars, fancy clothes has ~~so~~ grown by leaps & bounds, to such an extent that we might almost be accused of breaking the first commandment, which says that we ^{should} worship no false gods.

The passion for gossip has developed to a degree that the 9th commandment also stands in jeopardy. Thou shalt not bear false witness ~~is observed more in the beach~~ cannot possibly have much meaning anymore if what I have heard in ^{various} ~~the~~ dining rooms is any example of present day conduct.

We have developed an overpowering passion for playing cards and wasting time - almost as great as the zeal our fathers once had for learning and study. The 8th commandment ~~enjoins~~ enjoins us from stealing, yet we steal constantly from the welfare of the community when we waste time instead of contributing time to its improvement.

Yes, we have many new passions ~~and~~ ~~refuse~~ but no longer seem to burn in the old one for justice & truth & honesty.

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And if we don't seek justice,
but merely come to Temple on Yom
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Then we are unacceptable to God.

Amos told us long ago: (5.21-24)

"I hate, I despise your feasts,
and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies.
Yea, though ye offer the burnt offerings & meal-offerings
I will not accept them....

Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs;
and let me not hear the melody of thy psalteries.
But let justice well up as waters
and righteousness like a mighty stream."

(Niddah 61b)

לכבוד מלכותך יי אלהים

"In the Messianic age the laws will be suspended."

Thus there can be no such legitimate concept as selective obedience, choosing what laws you will obey. If law is the handmaiden of ethics, then there must be a concept of guilt and sin whenever any law is violated. The moral imperative is binding as a duty. ^(Insert) ~~the violation of ethical duty requires one to make repentance, to try with all might and main not to repeat the offensive act.~~

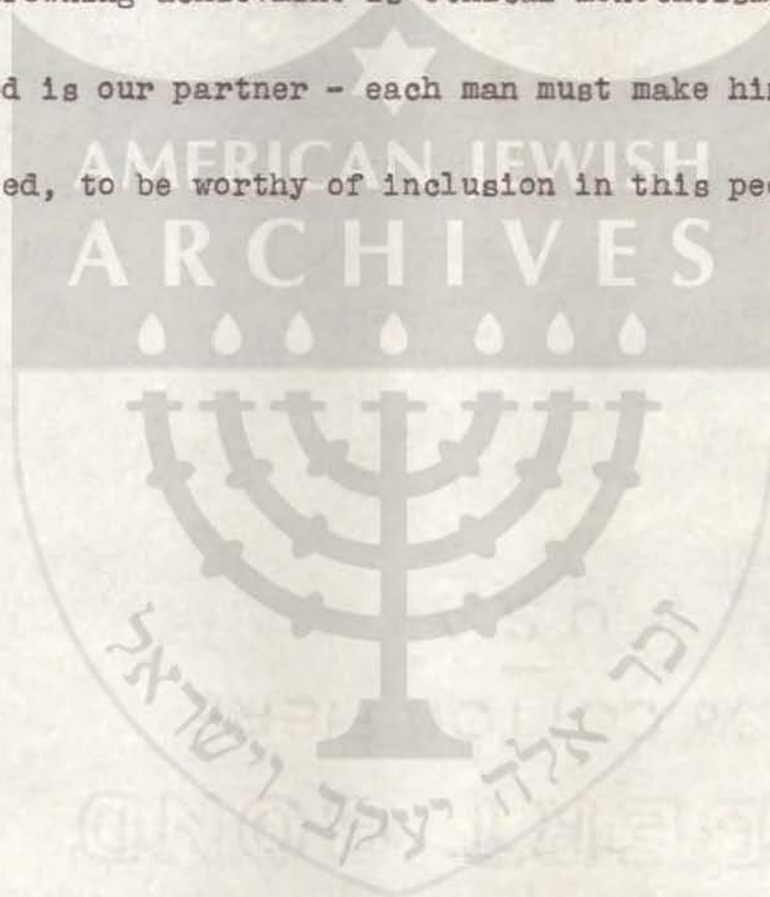
This is the meaning of our Yom Kippur. We do pray in humility and sincerity to be forgiven our errors. We do seek to improve our patterns of behaviour and to elevate our moral standards. We do want man and God to understand our weaknesses and to be merciful with our failings.

The priest^{himself} in ancient days garbed ~~themselves~~ in clean white linen and came to stand before the Lord Almighty in this pure and austere vestment. In his whiteness, he sought to persuade God that he was clean. White is the color of purity.

Isaiah said (1:16-17) "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes."

Cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."

As Jews we believe these few words to be the reason for our existence. Our crowning achievement is ethical monotheism. Ethics is our vocation - God is our partner - each man must make himself pure in thought and in deed, to be worthy of inclusion in this people.



Yom Kippur - 1952

"THUS YOU SHOULD LIVE, MY SON"

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But the survival of Judaism simply for the sake of providing a refuge or a womb is not enough. If we ever forget the reason for which we place so much value on this survival, then we have foresworn the majestic and vital dynamic role, in favor of the less ^{er} and more selfish.

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The entire race of man has benefited from the bargain. Right was distinguished from wrong at Sinai, and every man on earth since then has been the benefactor. The high ethic and the moral imperative were not confined exclusively to the tribe of Habiru - but once released to them, transcended all physical and national barriers to become the property of entire mankind. The vocation of Israel was established - she was to be the light unto the nations - the teacher of the ethic - and her success ^{*in the future*} would be measured by the breadth of the distance over which she would distribute her choice and peculiar knowledge. Unlike many other small and fearful tribes who kept discoveries to themselves,

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It is fascinating to me that there should be a distinction between clean ice and dirty ice. Yet it is exactly this distinction,

apparently, which is descriptive of the moral breakdown in society ^{to} shout today. When there are no prophets in the land, the sharp edge of moral conduct becomes fuzzy. The tendency to rationalize also sets in.

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or "criminal". Indeed, law breaking is often divided into two neat categories: the conventional crimes of burglary and larceny which are frequently punished by imprisonment, and those other violations of law which have come to be known as "white collar crime". - *ie. tax evasion, black market, etc.*

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"one cannot deceive his fellow-man without denying God."

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law is violated. The moral imperative is binding as a duty. ^{it would appear that if there is selective obedience of law in America, there is then moral breakdown in America.}
Speaking of this high sense of ethical duty, Pierre van Paasen

once said, "The essence and substance of Judaism is a passion for justice". Jews burned with this passion, and used its flame as a bright welding torch to help fashion social instruments of usefulness.

Today I notice our people enjoys other passions - which would seem mighty strange to our grandfathers. It is in good Jewish tradition to be kind to animals, but the passion for dogs, horses, in fact any creature which will run around a track in a circle, far outstrips what might be expected of a city-dwelling, non-farming population. Have you ever seen how excited some people become just watching horses run? This is indeed a strange passion.

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THUS YOU SHOULD LIVE, MY SON, BY THESE FEW RULES OF Isaiah said (1:16-17) "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes."

Cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."

As Jews we believe these few words to be the reason for our existence. Our crowning achievement is ethical monotheism. Ethics is our vocation - God is our partner - each man must make himself pure in ^{white} thought and in deed, to be worthy of inclusion in this ^{wonderful} ~~people~~ people.

YIZKOR SERVICE

We have come to pay tribute to the dead. The only real point of this service is to retain the bond of union between children and parents. The Kaddish teaches that child and parent are one. No man has altogether died if he knows that those he leaves behind will read this prayer after him, wherever they may be scattered in this wide world; that they will revere his memory as their dearest inheritance, and throughout their days recite the Kaddish in his memory as a sacred act.

וְיִזְכְּרוּ אֶת הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ
וְיִזְכְּרוּ אֶת הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ

The Kaddish is the vow which the children pronounce that it is their holiest resolve to live in unity of soul with the parent who died; that the God of the parents shall be their God; and therefore in the face of death, they exclaim:

וְיִזְכְּרוּ אֶת הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ
וְיִזְכְּרוּ אֶת הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ

Thus, the Kaddish is the bond which keeps the living together, and forms the bridge across the chasm of the grave to those whose bodies sleep in the dust, but whose souls repose in the shadow of the Almighty. This prayer is the thread in Israel that binds the generations each to each in natural piety, and makes the hearts of parents and children beat in unison.

- But Yizkor has a meaning not only for the dead - also for the living. It teaches us how to live. The Jew never feared death; frankly and

manfully did he face it. "Do not act as if the lease of eternity were thine," was the warning of our sages. "Live as if this hour were thy last, and ask thyself: Should I care to be visited by death in what I am now doing?"

Death was an inspiration to holy living. In the hour of death, infinity touches infinity. The hour of death was to our fathers the most solemn in all human existence. Such must it also become to us. Once more would then every Jew proclaim his spiritual identity with all the preceding generations in Israel by repeating the Profession of our Faith, and saying:

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד

"May I die the death of the righteous"

If he planned to meet death in this way, he would so live as not to be ashamed to meet his fathers in the world to come.

The late Chief Rabbi Hertz of the British Empire used to tell this parable:

An old Saxon chieftain on a wintry day was revelling with his warriors in the banquet hall, when he noticed a sparrow fly in at one door, hover a moment over the light and warmth of the fire in the hearth, fly across the hall to the other door, and vanish into the night whence it came. "So seems the life of man," he exclaimed. "Out of the darkness we come, we enjoy for a while the warmth and sunshine of the world, and then again into darkness we lapse."

This is strikingly beautiful, but heathen, gloomy, false. Man's life is not a journey from darkness to darkness. There is within us a divine spark. We come from God and we go back to God. "The dust returneth to the earth as it was, but the spirit returneth unto God who gave it." If we have lived justly, loved mercy, and walked in humility with God and man, then the end of our toil is not a flight into darkness, but to that life which is wholly a Sabbath - rest with God, peace everlasting.

RABBI HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN
TEMPLE EMANU-EL B'NE JESHURUN
2419 EAST KENWOOD BOULEVARD
MILWAUKEE 31, WISCONSIN

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for your Kippur sermon

Possible Yom Kippur sermon on high ethics of Judaism

② "Teshuvah" means a change in our whole standard of values and pattern of behavior in our relations with our fellow men.

① Jews were certainly evil in the past:

Hosea 2:1-4

Isaiah 1:21-23 ; 5:11-23

Jeremiah 2:33-34 5:1

But the Prophets & Torah fastened upon the Jewish people a sense of guilt in connection with unethical conduct of all sorts.
isn't enough without repentance.

Rosh Hashonah sermon

"This I Give You, My Son"

Yom Kippur sermon

"How You Should Live, My Son"



I give you the will to survive as a Jew
I give you the means to survive (Knowledge - commitment)
I give you the promise of messiah -

Analyze ethics of today - corruption
Live within yourself - cultivate your
own resources - so you don't fall
prey to the technology & the dollar.
Live by dreams - so you don't become
apical - because this breeds evil ways.
Live by universals - for every man, not
just for yourself.