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Sermons and notes, 1978.

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The Magic of M. Midnight
by W. O. H.

Selichet
Sat. Sept 23, 1978

Our Selichet service of prayers for forgiveness is timed to bring us to the midnight hour, to a moment which is in between yesterday and tomorrow — even as each of us stands, ethically speaking, at the crucial point of transition: IN THE NOW. We can, if we so choose, be either the children of darkness or of light.

The Sages say: Imagine that good & evil in the world are evenly balanced, and the fate of the world depends on what you decide at this very moment. Your deed can swing the scale on the side of good _____ or evil.

There is a special magic to the midnight hour ~~when~~:
~~fast approaching~~:

We approach God under the cover of darkness — as though we were trying to keep out of the bright light in ^{whose glare} which our faults and wrong doings would stand out only too visibly.

As the poet said:

Come, drink the Mystic Wine of Night
Brimming with Silence and the stars
While earth, bathed in this holy light,
Is seen without its scars

L. Untermeyer, *The Wine of Night*

May this late hour also color our estimate of each other. Could we in our drawing together be seen without our scars? Could we be less severe in condemnation of others? Could this night of mercy make us more mellow, more merciful, more forgiving toward each other?

We could reassess each other in the warm glow of this night. If we rise to higher values and a wider perspective ^{ie. to greater wisdom.} Another poet suggested that midnight is conducive to such wisdom.

The dead of night is the noon of thought
And wisdom mounts her zenith with the stars
(Anna Letitia Barraud - from
"A Summer's Evening Meditation")

Why should we be wiser at night?

Because we have stepped away from our daily work with its trivia and petty peevishness, its momentary hassle, excitement and hang-ups.

Night is the time to review, to take stock to measure achievements - and the price we paid for them. Night is the time for all sorts of considerations. There is a better chance for sound judgement at this time of rest and detachment than when we are running the race of our daily chores.

Finally, the midnight here is the messenger of hope. It marks the point from which we move closer and closer to the dawn.

→ If we succeed in reaching the very darkest side of ourselves in the honest soul searching of repentance;

If we can summon up the courage and honesty to face our faults and recognize the worst in us,

— — then we are close to a new dawn, a spiritual rebirth.

It is of such hope that the medieval poem

אֵלֵינוּ בֹרָא יְיָ

"It came to pass at Midnight" speaks:

O, Thou Guardian of the Right
Lead us onward to the light
From the darkness of the midnight

And Thy love all hearts shall sway;
And Thy light drive gloom away,
And to midday change the midnight

+file: Forgiveness
Repentance

THE MAGIC OF MIDNIGHT

By Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Washington Hebrew Congregation
Saturday Evening, September 23, 1978

SELICHOT, 1978

My dear friends,

I almost hesitate to break the mood - the beautiful mood - of this evening hour with anything like formal lecturing or sermonizing and I shall not do so this evening except to share a few thoughts which I believe this very hour suggests to us.

Our Selichot service of prayers for forgiveness is timed to bring us to the midnight hour - to a moment which is in between yesterday and tomorrow. Even as each of us stands - ethically, morally speaking - at the crucial point of transition for each of us can, by the decision we make at every moment, choose to be either children of darkness or the children of light. We can either belong and claim ourselves to be among the yesterdays with all of their imperfections and shortcomings or long to be among the tomorrows with all their opportunities and possibilities.

Our sages say, imagine that good and evil in the world are evenly balanced and the fate of the entire world depends upon what you decide at this very moment. The ethical decision is in the now. In this very moment - in every moment. - think as though you are deciding the fate of your family, the fate of your society, the fate of your generation by whichever action you choose. Your deeds, in other words, can swing the scale

on the side of good or evil. This is the deepest Jewish judgment regarding our own responsibility in the world.

There is a special magic, perhaps, to this midnight hour. We approach God under the cover of darkness as though we were trying to keep out of the bright light in whose glare our faults and our wrongdoings would stand out only too visibly - too embarrassingly. As the poet said,

Come, drink the mystic wine of night
Brimming with silence and the stars
While earth bathed in this holy light
Is seen without its scars.

May this late hour help us - we who are so often bringing the sharp searchlight of our critical judgment upon the lives of others - may it help us color and perhaps somewhat subdue our estimate of each other.

Could we, perhaps, in our drawing together on this evening, in our common awareness that we are all at fault in some way or another - that we all fall short of our own expectations and standards, Could we, perhaps, in this hour of humility and modesty see each other with a more tolerant judgment? Could we be seen by each other without our scars? Could we be less severe in condemnation of others? Could this night of mercy make us perhaps more mellow or merciful or forgiving toward each other? Could we, perhaps, reassess one another in the warm glow of this night?

I believe we can. If we could but rise to higher values,

if we could but transcend our own desire for vengeance, our own vindictive nature, if we could but see the world and ourselves in the wider perspective which is called wisdom - I think we can form a different judgment of our fellow man.

Another poet suggested that midnight is conducive to that kind of wisdom.

The dead of night is the noon of thought

And wisdom mounts her zenith with the stars.

Let us pause for a moment and ask ourselves why should we be wiser at night? Perhaps because we have stepped away from our daily work, from our pressures and compulsions, from all the trivia and petty peeves, the momentary hassles, excitements and hang-ups that clutter up our daily lives. Night is the time to review, to take stock, to measure achievements and also to measure the price that we must pay for our achievements - to consider our victories - but also to consider the high cost of many of those victories. Night is the time for all sorts of reconsiderations. There is a better chance for sound judgment at this time of rest and detachment than when we are running the race of our daily life, with all of its struggles. And finally, my good friends, the midnight hour is the messenger of hope. It marks the point from which we move closer and closer to the new dawn. If we can summon up the courage and honesty to face ourselves and recognize the worst that is in us - if we succeed in reaching the very darkest side of our own personal nature in the honest soul-searching of repentance, then we come closer to a new dawn,

a spiritual rebirth. Then we make ready the time when we can truly rework ourselves and recreate the better self there is in us. This is our true victory. It is of such hope that the medieval poem

by **יב"ל בן יצחק**, "It Came to Pass at Midnight,"

speaks:

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We approach God under the cover of darkness as though we were trying to keep out of the bright light, in whose glare our faults *like thieves* and our wrongdoings would stand out only too visibly - too *in the night?* embarrassingly. As the poet said,

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Thine Enemy

✓ If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink. -- Book of Proverbs, Chapter 25, Verse 21.

Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth. -- Proverbs 24.17

if we could but transcend our own desire for vengeance, our own vindictive nature, if we could but see the world and ourselves in the wider perspective which is called wisdom - I think we can form a different judgment of our fellow man.

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And Thy love all hearts shall sway
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And to midday change the midnight.

AMEN



"ARISE, SHINE, FOR THY LIGHT HAS COME"

There is no frivolity in the Jewish New Year.

The somber, yet festive mood

By Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Washington Hebrew Congregation

of Rosh H. differs from all other New Year's celebrations

Rosh Hashanah Eve
Sunday, October 1

throughout the world. In our tradition this day is called

יום הולדת העולם The birthday of the world, suggestive of the possibility of creating a new world, a new order, of experiencing personal rebirth ¹⁹⁷⁸ as *de par a new outlook and mentality.*

For the tenth time I'm celebrating Rosh Hashanah with you and

I'm grateful that I may say with the Psalmist, "...My lines have fallen into pleasant places.." (Psalm 16.6) Maxine and I have been with you through many of your life's important events, family celebrations of joy and also sorrows. I'm very mindful and grateful for the friendship and comradeship of men and women with whom I have studied and prayed or worked together for the good of our Congregation in the year that has ended.

We include in our wish for a blessed New Year not only you, but all your dear ones who may be distant geographically. We sadly note empty places of men and women we had come to love, -- who now remain in our memory.

We share with our Roman Catholic neighbors in this community and throughout the world a sense of great loss in the sudden death of their supreme spiritual leader who was consecrated only a month ago. I have sent the following letter, in your name and mine, to his Eminence, William Cardinal Baum of the Archdiocese of Washington:

1st Draft

"ARISE, SHINE, FOR THEY LIGHT HAS COME"

By Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Washington Hebrew Congregation

Rosh Hashanah Eve
Sunday, October 1
1978

This is my tenth Rosh Hashanah at Washington Hebrew Congregation and I am grateful that I may say with the Psalmist, "My lines have fallen into pleasant places." (Psalm 16.6) For whatever Maxine and I have tried to do, we feel greatly rewarded by your response, by your friendship and by significant common achievements.

We include in our wish for a blessed New Year not only you but all your dear ones who may be absent and distant physically but who are in your and our prayerful thoughts. We sadly note empty places of men and women we have come to love -- and now remain in our memory. We share with our Roman Catholic neighbors in this community and throughout the world a sense of great loss in the sudden death of their supreme spiritual leader who was consecrated only a month ago. I have sent the following letter, in your names and mine, to His Eminence William Cardinal Baum of the Archdiocese of Washington:

With shock and dismay we heard the news of the sudden passing of His Holiness John Paul I. Although we all bow to God's will with unfaltering faith, my people and I are saddened beyond words that the promise of his beneficent reign could not be fulfilled. I should like to extend to you and to the faithful of your Community our sympathy. May God bring consolation to all who mourn.

Five years ago, almost to the day, while Jews all over the world were assembled in the synagogues, the entire military might of Egypt moved into the Sinai desert south of Israel. At the same time, the Syrian army to the north swept through the Golan Heights, in a gigantic pincer movement which was to destroy Israel in one mighty knockout blow. Altogether the Arabs threw 4,000 tanks and a combined manpower of 1 million troops into the battle. The tank battles fought in 1973 were the largest ever waged in history, surpassing those under the command of General Patton in the west and General Montgomery in North Africa.

One may say that once more a miracle saved the State. A few hundred young reservists dug into the sand of the Sinai desert, fought like the legendary 300 Spartans who held back the Persian army at Thermopyle 2500 years ago. These young Israelis fought to the last man, delaying the Egyptian assault just long enough for Israel to reorganize her forces and snatch victory out of defeat.

The mood of those anxious days was expressed in poems such as the one by Milton Hoffman, a member of our Washington community, entitled

AGAIN

My children rise again to man their guns

Oh, Israel's sons shall not be laggard to return and defend
their hearths

The fire of their cousins shall not put terror in their
breasts

For they shall remember Dachau and Buchenwald.

Retreat! Retreat they may
But only to return and fight
For here is no Wailing Wall
But their own flesh to defend it.

I give them the sinew that is Mine
To reinforce their steel and blow their fire
I mire their foe in sand
So no command can help them overwhelm my sons.

A few of my sons will fall
And some of them will even be fettered by their foe
But the courage of the lion shall embrace them
And they shall return to the Wailing Wall again
To embrace their ancestors and render thanks unto Me.

Israel won, but there was no joy in the victory. The human and economic losses of the Yom Kippur War were staggering. Translated into American terms, that is multiplying all figures 80 times in proportion to American population figures, Israel's 2,522 fallen soldiers would constitute a comparable American blood-letting of 200,000 lives and Israel's economic loss of 9 billion dollars would be equal to a loss of over 700 billion to the American economy.

Israel fell into a deep post-war depression. Gloom overtook the nation as they contemplated the inexhaustible wealth and manpower resources of the enemy and their own almost total international isolation. The famous cartoonist, Bill Mauldin,

created a cartoon which captured the essence of Israel's situation among hostile neighbors. The cartoon represented the young state of Israel in the form of a youth who sits alone by the light of a campfire while, in the darkness beyond, a pack of wolves may be seen waiting only for the fire to die out so that they might pounce upon their victim.

All that kept the wolves away was the fire. The fire, I believe, is symbolic of world Jewry's undying love and loyalty for Israel. As the poet Masefield said,

"Love is a flame to set the will on fire."

The Jewish people never wavered in their support. While the cannons were still firing, tens of thousands of world Jewish youth, including some of our own Congregation, volunteered six months to one year of labor in Israel's depleted settlements. Once again Jewish physicians flew over to staff emergency hospitals. We and other congregations donated record-breaking amounts of blood for the many thousands of wounded Israelis. American Jewry gave sacrificially: a half billion to one billion annually in gifts and loans to help Israel rebuild her shattered life. Love for our people steeled Israel's will to live, to suffer, to endure, to win. This was the fire that kept the wolves away in 1973. But, nothing could arrest a growing wave of despair after the Yom Kippur war. From 1973 to 1978, an all-pervasive morale crisis sapped the spirit of Israel. As we celebrated her 30th anniversary, we realized that those 30 fabulous years were also 30 years of ceaseless conflict and terror punctuated by four major wars. Would it ever end? The spirit of

gathering gloom expressed itself in this typical story which made the rounds until a month ago:

1. Hope for the World
President Jimmy Carter, the Soviet Union Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Gromyko, and Menachem Begin met in heaven and each was given permission to ask one question of the Lord. Jimmy Carter turned to the good Lord and said,

"Could you tell me whether we, in the United States, will ever solve the problem of our race relations?"

God answered, "Yes, my son, but not in your lifetime."

Encouraged, Gromyko turned to God and said,

"Could you tell me whether my country and the United States will ever learn to trust each other?"

"Yes," answered God, "but not in your lifetime."

Now Menachem Begin had his turn and so he said,

"My question is, will there ever be peace between Israel and the Arabs?" To which God replied,

"Not in MY lifetime!"

Camp David has rendered this story obsolete. A new era for peace for Israel and the Middle East will commence not only in our lifetime but in this New Year, 4739 of the Jewish calendar.

When Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat embraced each other in the presence of Jimmy Carter at the end of their historic TV report to the nation and to the world, it was as though a new light had broken through the stormy sky. Suddenly Israel, at whose cradle stood the ghosts of the holocaust and whose first 30 years were overshadowed by ceaseless war, fulfilled Isaiah's radiant vision: "...Arise, shine for thy light has come." (Is. 60.1)

This New Year should be a time of jubilation, of thanksgiving, of hope. For the last 30 years, the people of Israel rebuilt their land as in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, holding in one hand the building trowel and in the other, the sword. In these 30 years they did not build in order to better fight, but were ready to fight in order to be free to build. Now that Israel will be able to build with both hands, what unimaginable achievements become possible! What new dreams become realizable -- even the dream of a more perfect society as foreseen by the prophets: ARISE, O ISRAEL, SHINE, FOR THEY LIGHT HAS COME.

Prior to Camp David, cynics and pessimists were huffing and puffing to blow out the flickering candle of hope. They floated the rumor that Begin was a sick man and mentally unstable. Yet, Begin flew 6,000 miles, subjected himself to the gruelling schedule of pre-summit meeting briefings, then spent 13 incredibly tense days and nights with very little sleep at Camp David and proceeded to address his TV audience immediately after arriving at the White House and did so with warmth and humor. Moreover he, who had been portrayed as unbending, rigid, a fanatic -- in reality proved to be surprisingly flexible, accomodating and reasonable.

No less surprising was Anwar Sadat's reversal of his previously reported resolve to break off the peace effort. Instead, he emerged as one of the chief architects of its success. And, as for Jimmy Carter, he has compelled the whole world to reassess his capacity for leadership. He has risen in our admiration and confidence.

We see in Camp David a new light of far reaching significance for all other world problems. If Israelis and Arabs can come to terms after 30 years of irreconcilable conflict, then no international problem now on the world's agenda can be beyond the scope of reason

and good will. Soviet-American detente, nuclear disarmament, even the human rights struggle in Southern Africa, Latin America and the Soviet Union appear to be less hopeless in the light of the extraordinary achievements at Camp David.

These momentous international events should have a point of relevance to our own strictly private and personal lives. Rosh Hashanah is the time of a new look. Jewish law, in its most benign sexist aspect, recommends the purchase of new clothes by the women of Israel as proper preparation for the festival. No Jewish law is more assiduously observed. But, in a deeper sense, this is a time not only for looking at our best but for looking at the best within us all. Now think of the person who offended you, who hurt you. Think of a family member for former friend for whom you lost respect or love. Shame on you if you say "...he'll never change!" Life is change. You and I are not the same today we were yesterday. George Bernard Shaw once said,

"The most sensible person I know is my tailor because, every time I order a new suit, he takes a new measure of me."

In every renewed encounter we need to see the other person in a new light. Old grudges and prejudices, like cataracts, block our vision. If Begin and Sadat could embrace each other, reconciliation between embittered family members and alienated friends should not be impossible.

But, you might object: How can you compare these two situations? A statesman must overlook grudges and resentments in view of his enormous responsibility for the whole nation. But, an ordinary individual does not have any such pressures to stop his private feuding. My answer is: On the contrary, nations have lots of time.

If there is no immediate solution, they can wait for peace, as did Israel, a whole generation. But, you and I, have only one life to live. Why spoil it with discord and resentment? You must act now. Next year may be too late.

ARISE, SHINE -- see life, see yourself and all your personal relationships in a new light. Don't shut out hope. A New Year means a new chance for a new life.

2. Hope for American Jewry

A new light has also fallen upon our own Congregation. The opening of our new Bindeman Suburban Center has given our new congregational year an auspicious start. It is as though the architect had also heeded Isaiah's call: "ARISE, SHINE....." With light streaming through the building from all sides, visitors become lyrical trying to put their impressions into words. Its spacious halls and rooms are alive with color and convey a joyful elegance while still functional in pleasing simplicity. What is the larger significance of this momentous expansion of our congregational facility? Our new building reflects a new self image of the American Jew. We want our children not merely to know their heritage; we want them to rejoice in their Jewish identity. We want them to internalize the dignity of the building and hold their heads up high with a sense of privilege as Jews.

Already on our drawing board is an ambitious renovation project that will upgrade all of our facilities also here at Macomb Street

so that this imposing main center of our Congregation not suffer by comparison with its newest branch.

What we have done in our Congregation, I see as part of an unprecedented burst of Jewish religious educational and communal activity throughout the nation. If Camp David leads to peace and stability in Israel, as we ardently hope, and if world Jewry is released from the grip of war crises, we shall be able to concentrate our attention more and more on Jewish life here at home. We shall address ourselves to problems we neglected and opportunities we have missed. Indeed, we must do something on a scale not yet attempted to repair the damage done to the Jewish family. We must better prepare our people for the covenant of marriage to prevent the tragedy of broken homes. We must be more ingenious and creative in developing new community ties for our single youth and adult population whose loneliness of heart turns their so-called "best" into their bitterest years. We must bridge the gap between us and the ever-growing number of new exiles from society known as the elderly.

America is passing through a spiritual crisis of great scope and depth. Large masses of the nation cannot cope with the new life style. With family ties weakened and a sense of community gone, people are adrift, in search of guidance, eager for structure and standards. Scores of bizarre new cults are now exploiting this need for direction. The Moonies, Hari Krishna, Divine Light Missions, plus all the other 72 varieties of the missionary cults

are attracting youth for whom the world has become too complex, who are bewildered by too many options and yearn for submission to authority. These missionary cults are shamelessly exploiting their own converts whose psychological and spiritual needs they are manipulating with cunning. The Journal of the National Association of Private Psychiatric Hospitals, in its current issue, features an article about young converts to Rev. Moon's Unification Church who are made to collect up to 1,500 dollars a day for Rev. Moon. Less talented recruits are told that they cannot come back to their dormitories at the end of the day until each has solicited at least \$150 or more. With at least 7,000 of his young followers out on the streets collecting money daily, you can imagine what a lucrative and powerful religious racket Rev. Moon has going for him.

We have it on good authority that the typical converts to Rev. Moon and other cult groups are Jews and others from a liberal religious background. We must strike back, and for this reason, we have already created a task force in our own Congregation which will study the matter and try to determine the deeper cause of this phenomenon. Where and how have we failed our own youth spiritually? What can be done to recover those alienated from their Jewish groups?

As painful as are some of these problems, I am certain that American Jewry can triumph over them. I foresee the enormous human and material resources which, until now, had to be pledged for the survival of Israel, become in the future available for the benefit of our own local communities. Never before in all of our history have we had so large, so able and so loyal a Jewish community

as our six million American Jews. We have accomplished what no other Jewry was ever able to do -- full integration in the larger society and maintenance, even intensification, of our own Jewish consciousness. We are at the threshold of another Golden Age, the flowering of the American Jew, in learning, in religious awakening and in notable achievements in all walks of life.

Conclusion

Not only a New Year but a new age is dawning. Our people is again anchored securely in their Promised Land -- and for the first time since the rebuilding of the State of Israel there is peace in the air, not only for Israel but gradually perhaps for this entire strife-torn globe.

As one of our sages once said, "The Light of Deliverance will not burst upon us suddenly, but it will dawn upon us slowly like the coming of the day, even as the black night turns slowly into dark gray and then brightens little by little until it is light. Then the sun will rise in its glory."

Let us rejoice in the New Year: "ARISE, SHIN, FOR THY LIGHT HAS COME."

AMEN

"ARISE, SHINE, FOR THY LIGHT HAS COME"

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The festive joy of a New Year is always mixed with a measure of anxiety over the uncertainties of the future. It may have been for a time such as this that King David composed the 86th Psalm which ends with the words: 

"SHOW ME A TOKEN FOR GOOD." (Psalm 86.17)

If our goals in any given year seem too far out to reach, we must at least see a sign that we are on the way or that somewhere there is a way. The small sign of progress, the mere token of what we want in life, goes a long way in sustaining our hopes and stimulating our efforts.

This year, not only prophets but plain people the world over, can see a token for good such as we have not seen in years, or even decades. The Camp David Summit has made our habitual pessimists look sick. In order to fully appreciate the historic significance of the Summit Conference, we need to see it in the context and perspective of the last five years.

Five years ago, almost to the day, while Jews all over the world were assembled in their synagogues, the entire military might of Egypt moved into the Sinai desert south of Israel. At the same time, the Syrian army to the north swept through the Golan Heights in a gigantic pincer movement which was to destroy Israel in one mighty knockout blow. Altogether, the Arabs threw 4,000 tanks and the combined manpower of 1 million troops into the battle. The tank battles fought in 1973 were the largest ever waged in history, surpassing those under the command of General Patton or General Montgomery in World War II.

Only a miracle of courage and self sacrifice saved the State on that memorable Yom Kippur day, as we so well recall. A few hundred young Israeli reservists dug into the sand of the Sinai desert, fought to the last man delaying the Egyptian assault just long enough for Israel to reorganize her forces and snatch victory out of defeat. The human and economic losses of the Yom Kippur war were staggering. Gloom overtook the nation as they contrasted their own limited resources and almost total international isolation with the inexhaustible wealth and manpower of the enemy.

The famous cartoonist, Bill Mauldin, created a cartoon which captured the essence of Israel's situation among hostile neighbors. The cartoon represented the young state of Israel in the form of a youth who sits alone by the light of a campfire while, in the darkness beyond, a pack of wolves may be seen waiting only for the fire to die out so that they might pounce upon their victim. All that keeps

the wolves away is the fire.

The fire is a historic phenomenon that must be counted among the great wonders of the world. It is the undying love and loyalty Jews have for each other. As the poet, Masefield, said,

"..Love is a flame to set the will on fire."

We never wavered in our support for our people. While the cannons were still firing, tens of thousands of Jewish youth from every country, including some of our own Congregation, volunteered 6 months to one year of labor in Israel's depleted settlements. Once again, Jewish physicians flew over to staff emergency hospitals. We and other congregations donated record breaking amounts of blood for the many thousands of wounded Israelis. American Jewry gave sacrificially to help Israel rebuild her shattered life. The unbreakable unity of our people, our mutual helpfulness -- this was the fire that kept the wolves away in 1973.

Nevertheless, from 1973 to 1978, an all pervasive morale crisis sapped the spirit of Israel. The 30th anniversary of the State brought to mind not only fabulous achievements but also 30 years of death and destruction, of terror punctuated by four major wars. Would it ever end?

Typical of the despairing mood prior to the Camp David Summit meeting is the following story which made the rounds until about three weeks ago:

1. Hope for the World

President Jimmy Carter, the Soviet Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Gromyko, and Menachem Begin met in heaven and each was given permission to ask one question of the Lord. Jimmy Carter turned to the good Lord and said,

"Could you tell me whether we will ever solve the problem of race relations in the United States?"

God answered, "Yes, my son, but in your lifetime."

Next, Gromyko turned to God and said,

"Could you tell me whether my country and America will ever trust each other?"

"Yes," answered God, "but not in your lifetime."

Now Menachem B Egin had his turn and so he said,

"My question is, will there ever be peace between Israel and the Arabs?"

To which God replied, "Not in MY lifetime!"

Until two weeks ago, peace in the Middle East appeared to be hopeless. Our people were resigned to perpetual peril on the brink of survival. ~~As of~~ ^{thank God} Now, peace for Israel and the Middle East is not only probable in our lifetime but even in this New Year of 5739.

When Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat embraced each other in the presence of Jimmy Carter at the end of their historic TV report to the nation and to the world, it was as though a new light had broken through the stormy sky. Suddenly Israel, sorrow laden with the ghosts of the holocaust and 30 years of bloodshed, is called by

Isaiah's radiant vision,

קוּמִי אֲרִיזִי כִּי אֵלֶיךָ

"ARISE, SHINE, FOR THY LIGHT HAS COME." (Is. 60.1)

This New Year should be a time of jubilation, of thanksgiving, of hope. For the last 30 years we built Israel, holding in one hand the building trowel and in the other, the sword. Our people did not build in order to better fight, but were ready to fight in order to be free to build.

Now, for the first time in 30 years, Israel will be able to build with both hands! If you buy Israel bonds this year, and I hope you'll do so at our Israel Bond Dinner next Sunday night, you may do it with far greater confidence in Israel's future. What unimaginable achievements now become possible! What new dreams become realizable, even the dream of a more perfect society as foreseen by the prophets,

"ARISE, O ISRAEL, SHINE, FOR THY LIGHT HAS COME"

We see in Camp David a new light of far reaching significance for all other world problems. If Israelis and Arabs can come to terms, then no international problem now on the world's agenda is beyond the scope of reason and good will. Soviet-American detente, nuclear disarmament, even the human rights struggle in Southern Africa and Latin America and the Soviet Union appear to be less hopeless in the light of Camp David.

This momentous international event should have a point of relevance to our own strictly private and personal lives. Rosh Hashanah is the time of a new look. Jewish law, in its most benign "sexist" aspect, recommends the purchase of new clothes

by the women of Israel as proper preparation for the festival. In a deeper sense, this is a time not only for looking at our best, but for looking at the best within us all. Now, think of the person who offended you, who hurt you. Think of a family member or former friend for whom you lost respect or love. If you say "...He'll never change!," -- shame on you! Life is change. George Bernard Shaw once said,

"The most sensible person I know is my tailor because every time I order a new suit, he takes a new measure of me."

You and I are not the same today we were yesterday. In every renewed encounter we need to see the other person in a new light. Old grudges and prejudices, like cataracts, block our vision. If Begin and Sadat could embrace each other, reconciliation between embittered family members and alienated friends should not be impossible. Insert ①

"ARISE, SHINE, ..." See your life, see yourself and all your personal relationships in a new light. Don't shut out hope. A New Year means a new chance for a new life.

2. Hope for American Jewry

A new light has also fallen upon our own congregation. The opening of our new Bindeman suburban center has given our congregation an auspicious start in the New Year. It is as though the architect had also heeded Isaiah's call, "ARISE, SHINE...."

Insert ①

The most important lesson to take home from Camp David is that you succeed ^{only} when the will to succeed is there.

Apply this to all human relations issues, to all your problems:

Usually, the conditions for success are there; only the will is lacking.

An admirer once asked the pianist Paderewski:

"Is it true that you still practice every day?"

"Yes," said the pianist, "At least 8 hours a day."

"You must have a world of patience," --said the other.

"I have no more patience than the next fellow," said Paderewski,

"I just use mine ."

You need ability! You need means! But, above all, you need will-power.

Add will to resources , --and it spells success!

With light streaming through the building from all sides, visitors become lyrical trying to put their impressions into words. Its spacious halls and rooms are alive with color and convey a joyful elegance.

What is the larger significance of this momentous expansion of our congregational facilities? How will it affect the self image of our children? I believe they will internalize the dignity of our beautiful new building. I think it will boost their pride, self confidence and sense of privilege as Jews.

Before this year ends, we shall also upgrade our facilities here at Macomb Street, so that this imposing main center of our Congregation not suffer by comparison with its newest branch. *In the immediate future,* Improvement and expansion, I believe, will be the key words of all of our Jewish institutions in America nationwide.

If Camp David leads to peace and stability in Israel, and if world Jewry is released from the grip of war crises, we shall be able to concentrate our attention at last on our own needs here at home. We shall address ourselves to problems we neglected and opportunities we have missed. For example, is it not time to do something on a scale not yet attempted to repair the damage done to the Jewish family? Could we not better prepare our people for the covenant of marriage to prevent the tragedy of broken homes? Might we not develop new community ties for our single youth and adult population whose loneliness of heart turns the so-called "best" into their bitterest years? Must we not bridge the gap between us and the ever-growing number of new exiles from society, known as the elderly?

New beautiful real estate is not enough. We must get inside our temples and religious schools for programs as inspiring as our architecture. How can we make Jewish education more effective? How relate the wisdom of Judaism to daily living?

As we relax from the long struggle for Jewish survival, we shall turn our full attention to what it is that we are surviving for: our values, our culture, our beliefs, *our way of life.*

Never before in all of our history have we had so large, so able and so loyal a Jewish community as our 6 million American Jews.

[The long years, even the centuries, of Jewish weeping and moaning are drawing to a close. The time of lamentation is ending.] We proved the strength of our peoplehood, our ability to unite and preserve our identity and religious heritage during the long ages of storm and stress. Shall we cherish our Judaism and our people as much in the warm and sunny climate of full freedom, equality and plenty in this new era? What makes us better Jews, -- the lash of oppression or liberty's opportunity?

Your response can turn our future into another Golden Age, the flowering of the American Jew, in learning, in religious awakening and in notable achievements in all walks of life. Henceforth, the challenge is not only to give but to live as Jews.

Conclusion

In the afternoon of July 4, 1776, when the Declaration of Independence was issued, a patriotic woman rushed over to Benjamin Franklin, pressed his hand, and said, "Thank you Mr. Franklin for giving us this great nation."

Franklin answered wisely,

"Yes, we have given you a great nation, if you can keep it!"

We Jews have been given a great way of life, Judaism -- if we can keep it!

AMEN



HOW MY MIND HAS CHANGED
Three Mistakes in Life

By Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Washington Hebrew Congregation

Marked
for P.H.S.B.
Kol Nidre Night
Tuesday, October 10, 1978

Once more, the Kol Nidre chant has penetrated our inmost being. Our souls were fused into one collective consciousness -- a rare and glowing moment of oneness. It is the melody of reconciliation; the anthem of atonement which becomes at-one-ment. It turns us introspective and also receptive to the voice of our brothers and sisters. We join in the spoken and unspoken confessions of our people, -- and feel cleansed.

Traditionally, this service is prefaced by the personal confession of the rabbi. As confessions go, I must admit that the one suggested for the rabbi in the Union Prayer Book is rather innocuous in its general wording:

"I have erred and sinned."

So very broad a statement spares me the jolt which a more detailed confessions would give me. Tonight, I would like to be more specific about three wrong directions of my life which I have been trying to correct, three mistaken approaches to life that are widespread and shared by many of you.

1. "Instantism"

When I began my work as a rabbi over 30 years ago, I had a touch of the so-called "Messiah complex." I thought that I had instant solutions to a number of complex problems, such as war, race hatred, religious indifference -- to mention but a few. I was naive enough

to preach instantly effective remedies. In time I discovered that "instantism" is a deep-seated ~~(national)~~ characteristic of ~~the American~~ ~~the 20th century.~~

~~(We all indulge in the folly of instantism.)~~ Were we not foolish as a nation during World War I to believe that America was fighting a war to end all wars? Did we really mean it when, not too many years ago, the United States committed itself to a "war on poverty?" Could any single campaign or program wipe out such age old scourges as war and poverty?

Day and night, hucksters in the media, in print and on the political platform try to sell us quick and easy ways to succeed. Think of all those "how to" books such as "How to Make Money," "How to Live Longer," "How to ~~be irresistible,~~ ^{Win friends etc} ~~How to Attract More~~ ~~Attractively,~~ and "How to Love More Lovingly." All this caters to the illusion of instantism, ~~for which we pay with~~ ^{usually followed by} the letdown, ~~and~~ the heartbreak and ~~the wounds of~~ cynicism.

When our Hebrew ancestors were called to conquer the Promised Land, they were told that those nations which still occupied it would be removed, ~~GYN GYN,~~ "little by little..." (Deut. 7.22).

Experience with people and community affairs has taught me that there is no quick fix for any of our major social or moral problems. We either solve them "little by little" or not at all.

Raising our four children made me see that the civilizing process by which a child turns from a little savage into a human being is a long and weary step-by-step process of many years, ~~GYN GYN,~~ "little by little."

In education, there is no shock treatment that works instantly. There is no substitute for the slow, step-by-step growth of knowledge and discernment.

In marriage, as in friendship, there are no short cuts to an enduring relationship. The dramatic moments of love vanish unless confirmed by many, many experiences of give and take in daily life and the buildup, little by little, of mutual trust.

Last Friday night one of our thoughtful lay leaders posed the question from the pulpit, "Why don't we Jews engage more aggressively in missionary campaigns?"

The answer is that Judaism does not lend itself to instant conversion. We do not aim at a mere declaration of faith with feeling but at a total way of life. Our approach to proselytism is a slow learning process. We believe that the most effective religion is not the one that shakes you up instantly like an earthquake, but *quietly nourishes your roots* ~~surrounds you and fills you and becomes part of you,~~ like the stream of water on whose banks the faithful is planted to grow slowly and flourish and, little by little, bring forth fruit in its season -- in that beautiful image of the first Psalm.

I know that seated here among us ^{today must be} tonight are men and women who have long been waiting for the great turning point in their lives. Their spirit is low. They feel unrewarded in work, unsuccessful in effort, unappreciated even in their own families.

Perhaps you ache with a sense of defeat? Perhaps you wonder whether you have not wasted generosity, love, hard work, without results or without the appreciative response you had expected?

Take heart. The accumulation of your efforts, of your good deeds, if sustained, will, little by little, crack the hardest rock of indifference or ingratitude. Stay with the task. Keep up your standard.

It is the sustained effort which leads *צטן צטן*, "little by little," to our goals.

In life, few summits can be reached by leaps and bounds. Rather, as the poet said:

One step at a time and that well placed
We reach the grandest height.
One stroke at a time earth's hidden stores
Will slowly come to light.

We achieve *צטן צטן*, "little by little."

2. "Enjoy, Enjoy"

My second mistaken approach to life which I must confess tonight is part of the almost universal temper of our times. Harry Golden captured it in the title of his book, "Enjoy, Enjoy." It has become almost another greeting and is characteristic of the dominant drive in contemporary America. I refer to the cult of comfort, the pursuit of pleasure -- our hedonism.

I must confess that I too entered the rabbinate with a hedonistic attitude. I went into my professional career convinced that the modern rabbi's first task was to make Judaism enjoyable. Is it not a religious duty to enhance the enjoyment of life? I sugar-coated much of my preaching and teaching and shunned the severe and tragic realities of life. For example, I'm ashamed to confess that it took me ten

years before I delivered my first lecture on the holocaust. Who wants to hear such horrendous things, I reasoned. My favorite theme in those days was personal fulfillment, not responsibility, not the necessity for sacrifice. The famous preacher, Harry Emerson Fosdick, turned me around with his motto,

"The task of the preacher is to comfort the afflicted
And afflict the comfortable!"

Religion is basically serious business. The ethical way of life, because it involves self denial and sacrifice, is tough, even frustrating. The discipline of self control is painful.

My own turning point toward maturity came in my 31st year through a family experience. Our first child, Debby, was then less than one year old. We were determined to raise the perfect child and, having consulted all the child guidance books then current, we anticipated all her needs and responded to her every signal. Little Debby soon caught on and managed to keep us at her crib every moment. At night we'd spend hours putting her to bed and, if we stopped rocking the crib, her screaming shook the house. We would then rush back to her side..."Oh, how could we let her suffer such pain?"

Finally, the tyranny of the infant over our lives got to be intolerable and suddenly it dawned upon us that the one essential quality we had failed to teach our Debby was precisely the capacity for enduring some small discomfort or pain, such as the pain of being left alone for a while.

I shall never forget that first evening when we were determined to let her scream all she wanted. To make the story short, it took her the better part of a week to unlearn the impression which our

indulgence had conveyed to her, that life is getting what you want, and if you don't get it -- scream! We think we ~~have~~ strengthened her character by re-training her to endure some frustration and pain because no life, no meaningful pursuit, no achievement, no real relationship can be sustained without the capacity for enduring frustration and pain.

Nothing worries me ~~nowmore~~ about America than the progressive softening of our life style. ^{insert from 0209 17 p. 7-8} Only a few years ago, we almost wrecked the entire educational system. We surrendered to the doctrine of painless education with open admission, no tests, no exams, no grades -- and no learning. Temporarily, our own Religious School yielded to the trend as we, too, tried to replace learning with entertainment. Thank God, we are now getting back to basics! We wonder, will our parents agree that the discomfort of disciplined learning is infinitely better than the waste of enjoyable loafing?

We all know about the energy shortage. Is not the problem of inflation and national security tied up with the prudent conservation of fuel? Yet we resist all stringent and effective measures that cut into our comfort. Would we give up one or two of the three cars in our family? Are we willing to use public transportation? Would we really keep the thermostat down to 65°? How much longer shall we wait for the painless way to solve the energy shortage problem?

Never before was a generation so serious about the banning of pain from human existence and as frantic about turning life into an endless round of comfort and pleasure.

Analysts have singled out a large variety of symptoms of the so-called "decline" of America. If you look at them more closely, you'll find them all related to our national intolerance for pain. Why are so many able kids dropping out of school? Why is our economic productivity falling off? Why are standards of workmanship so shoddy? Why is divorce becoming epidemic?

At the root of it all is the ever-growing unwillingness of people, young and old, to sweat and suffer long enough. We won't wait, we won't endure, we won't sacrifice and strive harder, we won't tolerate frustration!

quote poem p 8 in 5-20-77

We have increased our vocabulary for escaping: we leave, we quit, we split and we drop out.

An important feature essay in NEWSWEEK Magazine on the American family crisis touches, I believe, the heart of the problem. The article says:

"The whole message of American society, television, is you do not have to bear any discomfort. There's a pill for an upset stomach, a pill for a headache, there is a divorce for a bad marriage -- you name it and there is a way out."

In certain school districts
Our entire drug culture is part of the same escapism. ~~We were shocked by recent police raids on schools~~ in our most privileged

suburbs where drug use has become general and brazenly open, *police raids have invited to stop the drug traffic.*

Arresting the kids, however, will not solve the problem. We must

teach and train our children to try and cope with the inescapable hardships of life without narcotic crutches. By our own example in

handling our problems, we must convey to them the insight that when a problem cannot be solved, there still remains one way to cope with it: that is, to endure it! Not all problems have solutions!

~~Ours is the choice to make life easier for ourselves and for our children or make ourselves stronger to accept life such as it is.~~

With Phillips Brooks I urge you:

Oh, do not pray for easy lives,

Pray to be stronger persons.

Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers.

Pray for powers equal to your tasks!

3. Autonomy

~~My third erroneous approach to life relates to the most modern of all priorities -- and yet, it was well known even in the days of the Bible. "In those days everyone did what was right in his own eyes."~~

Doing your own thing -- autonomy, full independence -- this ~~is~~ ^{new} ~~again become~~ the characteristic passion of the age. I must tell you that to begin with, a craving for my own autonomy made the rabbinate especially attractive to me. Without clear job description, I imagined the rabbinate to allow for the greatest amount of personal freedom and independence. I could not have been more mistaken! True, rabbis don't punch the clock, but to imagine that our time is our own would be preposterous. Not independence, but interdependence is the truth of our profession as it is of people in all ages and stages.

Yet, our new life style is rushing headlong into the opposite direction -- toward total autonomy and independence -- and loneliness.

Margaret Mead put her finger on the terrible price we are paying for our exaggerated individual independence. She said,

"Old people...have been influenced by an American ideal of independence and autonomy. The most important thing in the world is to be independent. So we live alone, perhaps on the verge of starvation, in time without friends, but we are independent. This standard, American style, has been forced on every ethnic group in the country, although there are many groups in this country for whom the ideal is not practical. It is a poor ideal and pursuing it does a great deal of harm."

("Grandparents Have Copped Out" by Margaret Mead, NEW YORK TIMES, June 12, 1971, p. 29)

Concludes Margaret Mead,

"We're beginning to see the tremendous price we've paid for our emphasis on independence and autonomy. We have isolated old people and we've cut off the children, the young people, from their grandparents."

(Ibid.)

My friends, our fixation on personal autonomy is psychologically devastating. It surely destroys the family. The old, in their pursuit of independence, end up alone. The young, isolating themselves from the old in their rush for freedom, end up confused, bewildered and depressed by problems which they could handle so much better if they were not deprived of the experience of the older generations.

Is it any wonder, then, that the second highest cause of death of teen agers, next to automobile accidents, is suicide?

Dr. Menninger, asked what he would do if he felt a nervous breakdown coming on, replied, "Go across the street and help another person!" We are, in fact, dependent upon others for significant relationships in which we recover our sense of purpose and our will to live. We moderns have a dilemma: On the one hand, we want self

support, self reliance, autonomy. On the other hand, we need to boost our sense of worth by what we mean in the lives of others.

I believe our drive toward independence is irreversible. We won't give up any of it, regardless of cost. But then, we must redouble our efforts to form freely chosen associations with others and to share experiences which unite us and give us a sense of interdependence.

*add L. Carroll
Stargy p 11*

Is not the synagogue, the congregation, highly relevant to this need?
Is there anything in our life that can hold us together, young and old, as strongly as these shared religious high points of the year?
Are not all our holidays and life cycle celebrations powerful reunions of family and people? Is not our chief purpose to rebuild and recover a sense of Jewish community, of togetherness?

Conclusion

These, then, are the illusions we cherish

We have dealt with three approaches to life that have gone astray and cry out for correction:

1. Beware of the folly of instantism. The Promised Land of every worthy goal in life may be conquered only *צֶטֶן צֶטֶן*, "little by little."
2. "Enjoy, enjoy" should always be our hope but not our only program for living. We must cope with the mystery of pain. You cannot prevent it, you cannot take it away. But you can endure it. The painless, untroubled and unburdened life may be the hardest to take:

"What is life's heaviest burden?" asked one old man of the other.

"Having nothing to carry," was the reply.

Finally, we spoke of the imperative of togetherness, the interdependence of life, from which we derive motivation, meaning and sense of worth.

In Lewis Carroll's fantasies, there is an incident of a padlock with arms and legs that says to everyone it meets,

"I'm looking for a key to unlock myself."

Many of us are locked up in ourselves. We have a sense of futility. We wonder what is our purpose? What is our reason for existence? We go through life looking for the key to unlock life. And we never find it -- because nobody has the key to his own life. We should be looking for it beyond ourselves. Because the meaning of our life is disclosed to us only in relationship with others.

It is our fellow man who has the key to unlock our lives, as we have the key to his and it is God who has the master key to each of us.

AMEN

HOW MY MIND HAS CHANGED

Three Mistakes in Life

By Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Washington Hebrew Congregation

Kol Nidre Night
Tuesday, October 10
1978

As confessions go, I must admit that the one suggested for the rabbi in the Union Prayer Book is of a rather innocuous variety. I read it at the very start of our service: "I have erred and sinned."

So very broad and general a statement spares me the jolt which a more detailed confessions would give me. Tonight I would like to be more specific about three major errors of my life which I'm trying to correct, three mistakes which appear to be widespread and shared by many of you.

1. Instantism

When I began my work as a rabbi over 30 years ago, I had a touch of the so-called "Messiah Complex." I thought that I should push for instant solutions to a number of complex problems. Consequently, my sermons of those first few years in the rabbinate aimed to eradicate evils such as war, race hatred, religious indifference, to mention but a few, by prescribing what I thought were instantly effective remedies. I soon found out that these impassioned exercises in rhetoric had no measurable impact.

Consider with me, if you please, the folly of instantism. Were we not foolish as a nation during World War I to believe that

America was fighting a war to end all wars? Did we really mean it when, not too many years ago, the United States committed itself to a "war on poverty?" How naive or how recklessly Utopian must one be to assume that a single campaign would wipe out such age old scourges as war and poverty?

Day and night, hucksters in the media, in print and on the political platform promise huge benefits in short order. Day and night Americans are fooled into believing, by thousands of books and lectures, that begin "How to...." that there are quick and easy ways to succeed in business, love or the arts. All this caters to the illusion of instantism, the folly of exaggerated expectation, for which we pay with heartbreaks and scars of cynicism.

When our Hebrew ancestors were called to conquer the Promised Land, they were told that those nations which still occupied it would be removed,

GYN GYN

"Little by little..." (Deut. 7.22)

Experience with people and community affairs has taught me that there is no quick fix for any of our major social or moral problems. We either solve them "little by little.." or not at all.

Raising four children of our own made me see that the civilizing process by which a child turns from a little savage into a human being is a long and weary step-by-step process of

many years, *GYN GYN* "little by little..."

In education, there is no shock treatment that works instantly. There's no substitute for the slow, step-by-step growth of knowledge and discernment.

In marriage, as in friendship, there are no shortcuts to an enduring relationship. The dramatic moments of love vanish unless confirmed by many, many experiences of give and take and the build-up, little by little, of mutual trust.

The revolutionary changes of the civil rights struggle would have been quickly lost without the steady, ceaseless evolutionary process of *GYN GYN*, "little by little..." through the combined efforts of education, religion, the arts and the media.

One of the nagging questions which occur to Jews is, why did Christianity and not Judaism convert half the world? Did we not have a head start?

The best answer is that our sages rejected the approach of the new (Jewish) sect which dropped the demanding Torah way of life in favor of instant conversion. The instant converters split with our people and came to be known as Christians. Now, 19 centuries later, Christian theologians wonder whether it was all worth it since Christianity never took hold of the vast bulk of so-called "Christians." Did not paganism make its full comeback under the Christian banner of the bloody Crusades, followed by the horrendous wars of religion and culminating in the holocaust? According to Prof. Frank Littell, a Methodist and Chairman of the

Department of Religion at Temple University, "...The survival of the Jewish people, after their recent abandonment by the 'civilized' and 'Christian' world is one of the miracles of history. The survival of Christianity, in anything but the most superficial and cosmetic appearance, is now the critical question....The cornerstone of a renewed Christianity," concludes Prof. Littell, "must be a more true and healthy relationship to the Jewish people."

The most effective religion is not the one that shakes you up instantly like an earthquake, but surrounds you and fills you and becomes part of you, like the stream of water on whose banks the righteous would be planted to grow and flourish and, little by little, bring forth fruit in its season, in the beautiful image of Psalm 1.

Our energy and courage to work for political, moral and religious reform, must not be exhausted in that one single try for a breakthrough. Whenever we experience a success that looks like a breakthrough, it is, in reality, more like the achievement of the young apprentice who was put to the test by the master mason. The young apprentice was given a particularly hard rock of granite to split. The apprentice hit it with his mallet once, twice, even sixty times, -- to no avail. Determined, he swung his arm all around and hit the rock -- and this, the 61st stroke, broke it. Jubilantly, the apprentice exclaimed, "Master, this time I did it!"

"No, my son," replied the master. "The previous sixty strokes plus the last did it!"

It is the sustained effort which leads *GSN GSN* "little by little" to our goals.

Do you ache with a sense of defeat? Is your work unrewarded? Do you feel unappreciated even in your own family? Do you wonder whether you have not wasted generosity, love, hard work, either without results, or without the appreciative response you had expected? Take heart. The accumulation of your efforts, of your good deeds, if sustained, little by little will, in the end, crack the hardest rock of indifference or ingratitude. Stay with the task. *केरम* Uphold your standard. Tomorrow might come the breakthrough -- resulting from the long, sustained effort on your part.

In life, few summits can be reached by leaps and bounds. Rather, as the poet said:

One step at a time and that well placed,
We reach the grandest height.
One stroke at a time earth's hidden stores
Will slowly come to light.
One seed at a time, and the forest grows,
One drop at a time, and the river flows
Into the boundless sea.

2. "Enjoy, Enjoy!"

In our customary exchange of greetings at this time, we wish one another "a happy new year." Do you know that the traditional Hebrew greeting refers not to happiness but to a higher priority? It speaks of a shona tovah, which means a good, not necessarily a happy year.

Harry Golden's book title, "Enjoy, Enjoy," is characteristic of an era. I went into my professional career convinced that the modern rabbi's first task was to make Judaism enjoyable. I tried to prepare sermons that were entertaining and a religious school curriculum accentuating enjoyment.

It did not take me long to discover that if bringing pleasure were my top concern, I should have gone into the entertainment industry not the rabbinate. The famous preacher, Harry Emerson Fosdick, turned me around with his motto:

"The job of the preacher is to comfort the afflicted
And afflict the comfortable.!"

Pleasurable elements are, of course, also found in religion, -- but only incidentally. Religion is basically serious business. The ethical way of life, because it involves self denial, is tough, even frustrating. The discipline of self control is painful. It is no fun at all to suppress aggressive or destructive emotions. How much I would enjoy at times screaming back an obscenity or striking back in vengeance. Yet this is forbidden and there is no way of making the prohibition enjoyable.

My own turning point toward maturity came in my 31st year through a family experience. Our first child, Debby, was then less than one year old. We were determined to raise the perfect child and, having consulted all the child guidance books then current, we anticipated all her needs and responded to her every signal. Little Debby soon caught on and managed to keep us at her crib every moment. At night, we'd spend hours putting her to bed and, if we stopped rocking the crib, her screaming shook the house. We would then rush back to her side..."How could we let her suffer pain?"

Finally, the tyranny of the infant over our lives got to be intolerable and suddenly it dawned upon us that the one essential quality we had failed to teach our Debby was precisely the capacity for enduring some small discomfort or pain, such as the pain of being left alone for a while.

I shall never forget that first evening when we were determined to let her scream all she wanted; (but we would ^{not} make her happy that night at our expense) To make the story short, it took her the better part of a week to unlearn the impression which our indulgence had conveyed to her, namely that life is getting what you want, and if you don't get it -- scream! We think we strengtheend her in character by re-training her to get along without certain enjoyments and comforts, to endure some frustration and pain because no life, no meaningful pursuit, no achievement, no real relationships can be sustained without our capacity for enduring.

We Jews are known for our tremendous zest for life and enjoyment, but we would never have made it through the thousands of years of our history if we had not also cultivated a tremendous capacity for sacrifice and for enduring pain.

Nothing worries me now more about American than the progressive softening of our life style. Never before was a generation so serious about the banning of pain from human existence and as frantic about turning life into an endless round of pleasure. America is witnessing a proliferation of playboys, playgirls, play-daddied, play-mothers and even play-grandpas and play-grandmas! Our obsession with making everything enjoyable is as self-defeating as O'Reilly's method of foreswearing drink. Resolved to stay sober, he did not, on the way home, stop this time at his favorite tavern. Taking firm hold on himself, he looked the other way as he passed by it. After walking on some fifty feet, he suddenly stopped and said,

"O'Reilly, old boy -- I'm proud of you, the way you've suffered! Now, you deserve some fun -- go back and have a drink!"

We won't take the pain of self denial, -- not for long.

Why are so many able kids dropping out of school? Why is our economic productivity falling off? Why are standards of workmanship so shoddy? Why is inflation rising? Why is divorce becoming epidemic?

At the root of it all is the ever growing unwillingness of people, young and old, to sweat and suffer long enough, to wait, endure, sacrifice and strive harder -- and endure frustration.

We rush to buy more than we can pay for, work with less effort and precision, have no patience with the necessary drill and discipline of learning and are less willing to endure the many demands and critical stresses of marriage.

We have increased our vocabulary for escaping: leaving, quitting, splitting and dropping out.

The new "no, no" is frustration:

I never have frustration,

The reason is to wit

If at first I don't succeed

I quit!

An important feature essay in NEWSWEEK magazine on the American family crisis touches the heart of the problem:

"The whole message of American society, television, is you do not have to bear any discomfort. There is a pill for an upset stomach, a pill for a headache, there is a divorce for a bad marriage -- you name it and there is a way out."

Is not our entire drug culture with its immense toll of wasted talents and wasted lives largely the result of our nation's failure to train this generation in the endurance of tolerable pain?

Instead of frantically trying to make life easier for yourselves and our children, we should make ourselves stronger

to accept life such as it is. With Phillips Brooks I urge you:

Oh, do not pray for easy lives.

Pray to be stronger persons.

Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers.

Pray for powers equal to your tasks!

3. Autonomy

"In those days everyone did what was right in his own eyes." -- This is the judgment of the Book of Judges upon an ancient time of turmoil and insecurity. Our own time very much looks like those days.

Autonomy, doing your own thing, has again become the characteristic passion of the age.

To begin with, a craving for my own autonomy made the rabbinate especially attractive to me. Without clear job description, I imagined the rabbinate to allow for the greatest amount of personal freedom and independence. I could not have been more wrong! True, rabbis don't punch the clock, but to imagine that our time is our own would be preposterous.

No rabbi can be effective without constant involvement with people. He must be available, he must cooperate. Absolute autonomy is absolute futility. Not independence, but interdependence is the truth of our profession and of people in all ages and stages.

Yet, our new life style is rushing headlong into the opposite direction -- toward total autonomy and independence -- and loneliness.

The family car is a thing of the past. Today each adult and youth member of the family rides in the isolated splendor of his own vehicle. We are conditioned each to have his own room, his own toilet, his own personal TV set. Why share? Have your own!

Margaret Mead put her finger on the terrible price we are paying for our exaggerated individual independence:

"Young people in this country have been accused of not caring for their parents the way they would have in the old country....This is true, but it is also true that old people have been influenced by an American ideal of independence and autonomy. The most important thing in the world is to be independent. So we live alone, perhaps on the verge of starvation, in time without friends, but we are independent. This standard, American style, has been forced on every ethnic group in the country, although there are many groups in this country for whom the ideal is not practical. It is a poor ideal and pursuing it does a great deal of harm."

("Grandparents Have Copped Out" by
Margaret Mead, NEW YORK TIMES,
June 12, 1971, p. 29)

"We're beginning to see the tremendous price we've paid for our emphasis on independence and autonomy. We have isolated old people and we've cut off the children, the young people, from their grandparents."

(Ibid.)

Our fixation on personal autonomy is psychologically devastating. The old, in their pursuit of independence, end up alone. The young, isolating themselves from the old in their rush for independence, end up confused, bewildered and depressed by problems which they could handle better if they were not deprived of the experience of previous generations as Margaret Mead points out so well:

".....Grandparents....have something.... to contribute. Their generation has seen the most change in the world, and the young today need to learn that there has been change. They need to know about the past before they can understand the present and plot the future."

"Young people are being deprived of the thing they need most -- perspective...."

(Ibid.)

Is it any wonder that the second highest cause of death for teen agers next to automobile accidents is suicide?

Dr. Menninger, asked what he would do if he felt a nervous breakdown coming on, replied:

"Go across the street and help another person!"

If anybody asked me what is the highest priority for a modern synagogue, my answer is:

....To bring us together again,

One with the other,

All of us with our people,

And our people with God.

Our purpose is to rebuild and recover a sense of Jewish community. This cannot be done for you but only with you. If you will it, your participation is the only way.

Conclusion

All we have stressed tonight is suggested by the characteristics of the this very day of Yom Kippur.

We spoke of the folly of instantism and the need for perseverance. Yom Kippur, the longest day of prayer, is a test of our spiritual perseverance. It proves the impact of persistence. If we stay with it from Kol Nidre to Neila, we generally experience, little by little, the crescendo of mood that leads many of us to a spiritual breakthrough at the close of our service tomorrow evening.

The fast, painful as it is, reminds us of the inescapability of pain in life.

And the mandate to join with our people, dramatizes the imperative of interdependence and togetherness.

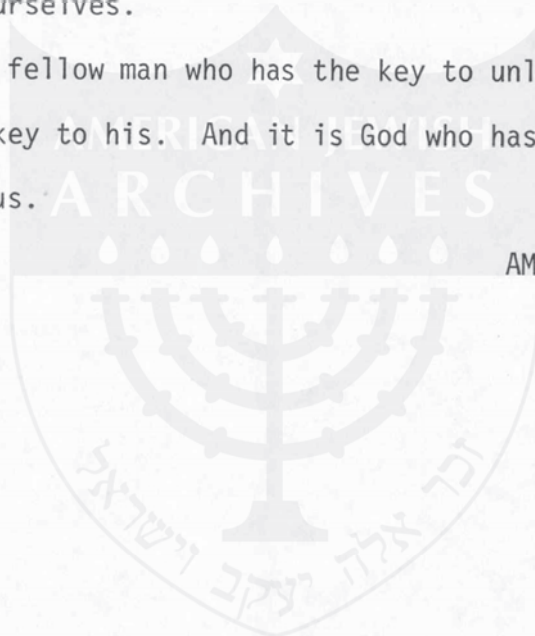
Let this be the supreme lesson to keep in mind:

In Lewis Carroll's fantasies, there is an incident of a padlock with arms and legs that says to everyone it meets, "I'm looking for a key to unlock myself."

Most of us are locked up in ourselves. We go through life looking for the key to unlock life. And we never find it because we look for it in ourselves, and we should be looking for it beyond ourselves.

It is our fellow man who has the key to unlock our lives, as we have the key to his. And it is God who has the master key to each of us.

AMEN



HOW MY MIND HAS CHANGED
Three Mistakes in Life

By Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Washington Hebrew Congregation

Kol Nidre Night
Tuesday, October 10, 1978

Once more, the Kol Nidre chant has penetrated our inmost being. Our souls were fused into one collective consciousness -- a rare and glowing moment of oneness. It is the melody of reconciliation; the anthem of atonement which becomes at-one-ment. It turns us introspective and also receptive to the voice of our brothers and sisters. We join in the spoken and unspoken confessions of our people, -- and feel cleansed.

Traditionally, this service is prefaced by the personal confession of the rabbi. As confessions go, I must admit that the one suggested for the rabbi in the Union Prayer Book is rather innocuous in its general wording:

"I have erred and sinned."

So very broad a statement spares me the jolt which a more detailed confessions would give me. Tonight, I would like to be more specific about three wrong directions of my life which I have been trying to correct, three mistaken approaches to life that are widespread and shared by many of you.

1. "Instantism"

When I began my work as a rabbi over 30 years ago, I had a touch of the so-called "Messiah complex." I thought that I had instant solutions to a number of complex problems, such as war, race hatred, religious indifference -- to mention but a few. I was naive enough

to preach instantly effective remedies. In time I discovered that "instantism" is a deep-seated national characteristic of the American people.

We all indulge in the folly of instantism. Were we not foolish as a nation during World War I to believe that America was fighting a war to end all wars? Did we really mean it when, not too many years ago, the United States committed itself to a "war on poverty?" Could any single campaign or program wipe out such age old scourges as war and poverty?

Day and night, hucksters in the media, in print and on the political platform try to sell us quick and easy ways to succeed. Think of all those "how to" books such as "How to Make Money," "How to Live Longer," "How to be Irresistible," "How to Attract More Attractively," and "How to Love More Lovingly." All this caters to the illusion of instantism, for which we pay with the letdown and heartbreak and the wounds of cynicism.

When our Hebrew ancestors were called to conquer the Promised Land, they were told that those nations which still occupied it would be removed, *קטן קטן*, "little by little..." (Deut. 7.22).

Experience with people and community affairs has taught me that there is no quick fix for any of our major social or moral problems. We either solve them "little by little" or not at all.

Raising our four children made me see that the civilizing process by which a child turns from a little savage into a human being is a long and weary step-by-step process of many years,

קטן קטן, "little by little."

In education, there is no shock treatment that works instantly. There is no substitute for the slow, step-by-step growth of knowledge and discernment.

In marriage, as in friendship, there are no short cuts to an enduring relationship. The dramatic moments of love vanish unless confirmed by many, many experiences of give and take in daily life and the buildup, little by little, of mutual trust.

Last Friday night one of our thoughtful lay leaders posed the question from the pulpit, "Why don't we Jews engage more aggressively in missionary campaigns?"

The answer is that Judaism does not lend itself to instant conversion. We do not aim at a mere declaration of faith with feeling but at a total way of life. Our approach to proselytism is a slow learning process. We believe that the most effective religion is not the one that shakes you up instantly like an earthquake, but surrounds you and fills you and becomes part of you, like the stream of water on whose banks the faithful is planted to grow slowly and flourish and, little by little, bring forth fruit in its season -- in that beautiful image of the first Psalm.

I know that seated here among us tonight are men and women who have long been waiting for the great turning point in their lives. Their spirit is low. They feel unrewarded in work, unsuccessful in effort, unappreciated even in their own families.

Perhaps you ache with a sense of defeat? Perhaps you wonder whether you have not wasted generosity, love, hard work, without results or without the appreciative response you had expected?

Take heart. The accumulation of your efforts, of your good deeds, if sustained, will, little by little, crack the hardest rock of indifference or ingratitude. Stay with the task. Keep up your standard.

It is the sustained effort which leads *צטן צטן*, "little by little," to our goals.

In life, few summits can be reached by leaps and bounds.

Rather, as the poet said:

One step at a time and that well placed

We reach the grandest height.

One stroke at a time earth's hidden stores

Will slowly come to light.

We achieve *צטן צטן*, "little by little."

2. "Enjoy, Enjoy"

My second mistaken approach to life which I must confess tonight is part of the almost universal temper of our times. Harry Golden captured it in the title of his book, "Enjoy, Enjoy." It has become almost another greeting and is characteristic of the dominant drive in contemporary America. I refer to the cult of comfort, the pursuit of pleasure -- our hedonism.

I must confess that I too entered the rabbinate with a hedonistic attitude. I went into my professional career convinced that the modern rabbi's first task was to make Judaism enjoyable. Is it not a religious duty to enhance the enjoyment of life? I sugar-coated much of my preaching and teaching and shunned the severe and tragic realities of life. For example, I'm ashamed to confess that it took me ten

years before I delivered my first lecture on the holocaust. Who wants to hear such horrendous things, I reasoned. My favorite theme in those days was personal fulfillment, not responsibility, not the necessity for sacrifice. The famous preacher, Harry Emerson Fosdick, turned me around with his motto,

"The task of the preacher is to comfort the afflicted
And afflict the comfortable!"

Religion is basically serious business. The ethical way of life, because it involves self denial and sacrifice, is tough, even frustrating. The discipline of self control is painful.

My own turning point toward maturity came in my 31st year through a family experience. Our first child, Debby, was then less than one year old. We were determined to raise the perfect child and, having consulted all the child guidance books then current, we anticipated all her needs and responded to her every signal. Little Debby soon caught on and managed to keep us at her crib every moment. At night we'd spend hours putting her to bed and, if we stopped rocking the crib, her screaming shook the house. We would then rush back to her side..."Oh, how could we let her suffer such pain?"

Finally, the tyranny of the infant over our lives got to be intolerable and suddenly it dawned upon us that the one essential quality we had failed to teach our Debby was precisely the capacity for enduring some small discomfort or pain, such as the pain of being left alone for a while.

I shall never forget that first evening when we were determined to let her scream all she wanted. To make the story short, it took her the better part of a week to unlearn the impression which our

indulgence had conveyed to her, that life is getting what you want, and if you don't get it -- scream! We think we have strengthened her character by re-training her to endure some frustration and pain because no life, no meaningful pursuit, no achievement, no real relationship can be sustained without the capacity for enduring frustration and pain.

Nothing worries me now more about America than the progressive softening of our life style. Only a few years ago, we almost wrecked the entire educational system. We surrendered to the doctrine of painless education with open admission, no tests, no exams, no grades -- and no learning. Temporarily, our own Religious School yielded to the trend as we, too, tried to replace learning with entertainment. Thank God, we are now getting back to basics! We wonder, will our parents agree that the discomfort of disciplined learning is infinitely better than the waste of enjoyable loafing?

We all know about the energy shortage. Is not the problem of inflation and national security tied up with the prudent conservation of fuel? Yet we resist all stringent and effective measures that cut into our comfort. Would we give up one or two of the three cars in our family? Are we willing to use public transportation? Would we really keep the thermostat down to 65°? How much longer shall we wait for the painless way to solve the energy shortage problem?

Never before was a generation so serious about the banning of pain from human existence and as frantic about turning life into an endless round of comfort and pleasure.

Analysts have singled out a large variety of symptoms of the so-called "decline" of America. If you look at them more closely, you'll find them all related to our national intolerance for pain. Why are so many able kids dropping out of school? Why is our economic productivity falling off? Why are standards of workmanship so shoddy? Why is divorce becoming epidemic?

At the root of it all is the ever-growing unwillingness of people, young and old, to sweat and suffer long enough. We won't wait, we won't endure, we won't sacrifice and strive harder, we won't tolerate frustration!

We have increased our vocabulary for escaping: we leave, we quit, we split and we drop out.

An important feature essay in NEWSWEEK Magazine on the American family crisis touches, I believe, the heart of the problem. The article says:

"The whole message of American society, television, is you do not have to bear any discomfort. There's a pill for an upset stomach, a pill for a headache, there is a divorce for a bad marriage -- you name it and there is a way out."

Our entire drug culture is part of the same escapism. We were shocked by recent police raids on schools in our most privileged suburbs where drug use has become general and brazenly open. Arresting the kids, however, will not solve the problem. We must teach and train our children to try and cope with the inescapable hardships of life without narcotic crutches. By our own example in

handling our problems, we must convey to them the insight that when a problem cannot be solved, there still remains one way to cope with it: that is, to endure it! Not all problems have solutions!

Ours is the choice to make life easier for ourselves and for our children or make ourselves stronger to accept life such as it is. With Phillips Brooks I urge you:

Oh, do not pray for easy lives,
Pray to be stronger persons.
Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers.
Pray for powers equal to your tasks!

3. Autonomy

My third erroneous approach to life relates to the most modern of all priorities -- and yet, it was well known even in the days of the Bible. "In those days everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

Doing your own thing -- autonomy, full independence -- this has again become the characteristic passion of the age. I must tell you that to begin with, a craving for my own autonomy made the rabbinate especially attractive to me. Without clear job description, I imagined the rabbinate to allow for the greatest amount of personal freedom and independence. I could not have been more mistaken! True, rabbis don't punch the clock, but to imagine that our time is our own would be preposterous. Not independence, but interdependence is the truth of our profession as it is of people in all ages and stages.

Yet, our new life style is rushing headlong into the opposite direction -- toward total autonomy and independence -- and loneliness.

Margaret Mead put her finger on the terrible price we are paying for our exaggerated individual independence. She said,

"Old people....have been influenced by an American ideal of independence and autonomy. The most important thing in the world is to be independent. So we live alone, perhaps on the verge of starvation, in time without friends, but we are independent. This standard, American style, has been forced on every ethnic group in the country, although there are many groups in this country for whom the ideal is not practical. It is a poor ideal and pursuing it does a great deal of harm."

("Grandparents Have Copped Out" by Margaret Mead, NEW YORK TIMES, June 12, 1971, p. 29)

Concludes Margaret Mead,

"We're beginning to see the tremendous price we've paid for our emphasis on independence and autonomy. We have isolated old people and we've cut off the children, the young people, from their grandparents."

(Ibid.)

My friends, our fixation on personal autonomy is psychologically devastating. It surely destroys the family. The old, in their pursuit of independence, end up alone. The young, isolating themselves from the old in their rush for freedom, end up confused, bewildered and depressed by problems which they could handle so much better if they were not deprived of the experience of the older generations.

Is it any wonder, then, that the second highest cause of death of teen agers, next to automobile accidents, is suicide?

Dr. Menninger, asked what he would do if he felt a nervous breakdown coming on, replied, "Go across the street and help another person!" We are, in fact, dependent upon others for significant relationships in which we recover our sense of purpose and our will to live. We moderns have a dilemma: On the one hand, we want self

support, self reliance, autonomy. On the other hand, we need to boost our sense of worth by what we mean in the lives of others.

I believe our drive toward independence is irreversible. We won't give up any of it, regardless of cost. But then, we must redouble our efforts to form freely chosen associations with others and to share experiences which unite us and give us a sense of interdependence. Is not the synagogue, the congregation, highly relevant to this need? Is there anything in our life that can hold us together, young and old, as strongly as these shared religious high points of the year? Are not all our holidays and life cycle celebrations powerful reunions of family and people? Is not our chief purpose to rebuild and recover a sense of Jewish community, of togetherness?

Conclusion

We have dealt with three approaches to life that have gone astray and cry out for correction:

Beware of the folly of instantism. The Promised Land of every worthy goal in life may be conquered only *בטן בטן*, "little by little.

"Enjoy, enjoy" should always be our hope but not our only program for living. We must cope with the mystery of pain. You cannot prevent it, you cannot take it away. But you can endure it. The painless, untroubled and unburdened life may be the hardest to take:

"What is life's heaviest burden?" asked one old man of the other.

"Having nothing to carry," was the reply.

Finally, we spoke of the imperative of togetherness, the interdependence of life, from which we derive motivation, meaning and sense of worth.

In Lewis Carroll's fantasies, there is an incident of a padlock with arms and legs that says to everyone it meets,

"I'm looking for a key to unlock myself."

Many of us are locked up in ourselves. We have a sense of futility. We wonder what is our purpose? What is our reason for existence? We go through life looking for the key to unlock life. And we never find it -- because nobody has the key to his own life. We should be looking for it beyond ourselves. Because the meaning of our life is disclosed to us only in relationship with others.

It is our fellow man who has the key to unlock our lives, as we have the key to his and it is God who has the master key to each of us.

AMEN

THE BELL OF ATRI

By Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Washington Hebrew Congregation

Family Children's Service
Yom Kippur Morning
October 11, 1978

2nd Family Sabbath
Friday, March 4th 83

I have brought a bell with me (~~this morning~~) because I have a story to tell you about it. Think for a moment, why do people ring bells? Think about it for a moment. ~~And I imagine what goes through your mind is -- well, people ring a bell because they want to give a signal or there may be a message for the people in the town or the city.~~ ^{out} A long time ago, ~~when there was no~~ ^{before} fire engines and ~~no~~ ^{were} sirens, and ~~there was danger~~, people would ring a bell ~~just~~ ^{intimes of danger} ~~to alarm the people~~ -- to bring them together -- to let them know that something important had happened. And, of course, every school child knows why we ring bells these days. When classes are about to begin, the bell says....stop now... ~~you're playing around~~... get ready...be in your classroom because something important will happen.

And now let me tell you the story about the bell.

It happened in Italy in a small town known as the town of Atri, which was built halfway up the hill. And there there was a king with a little kingdom. And this king, one day, began building a tower in the little town of Atri and everybody wanted to know why the king was building a tower. ~~He was a very smart and a shrewd and a clever king. He had a purpose but he didn't tell the people and the people were very curious.~~ They watched the tower go up higher and higher. Day by day it grew just a little bit. When the tower was all finished the people were all gathered in the market place ^{wondering} ~~watching~~ what would happen. And to the surprise of everyone a carriage came along - the king's carriage - and on the carriage they saw a big bell -- bigger than this one -- a big bell. And strong workmen, with ropes, lifted the bell off of the carriage and ~~to the surprise of everyone~~ ^{it} the king ordered that the bell be raised up to the top of the tower;

The people looked

around and wanted to know why would there be just a tower with a bell-- no church, no building, nothing next to it, just the tower with the bell. And the king made this proclamation:

"My good people, you have all wanted to know why I have built this tower and put the bell on it. Well, I shall tell you why. Whenever any man, woman or child in this kingdom of mine needs help -- whenever anyone feels that wrong has been done to him or to her, let that person come to this tower and hanging down from the bell is the rope." And he pointed to the rope. "And you just ^{pull the rope to} ring the bell. When ^I the king, hear the sound of the bell I shall tell my judge to go down to the market place and see that justice is done."

Well, when ~~the~~ people heard that they began to cheer ~~and they~~ ^{"They were proud because"} said, "Long live the king, ~~because the~~ king will do justice in the kingdom!" ^{who wanted to}

And ^{so} ~~then~~ came many good days for the people of the village of Atri. ~~The people were happy because whenever any wrong was done, they didn't have to wait very long.~~ ^{People would rush over to the tower,} ~~whoever felt he was hurt~~ ^{and} ~~he would pull the rope.~~ ^{would come.} ~~Soon enough,~~ ^{see that} afterwards, the judge in his black robe ~~rushed~~ down to the market place and justice was done.

After the people had been pulling the rope so many times over the years, one day ^{the end piece of} the rope broke. ~~Can you imagine that?~~ ^{so} ~~The rope broke! It wore out.~~ And so there was ~~a~~ man in Atri ~~who~~ thought that the rope was too high to reach and he tied a branch to the end of the rope so that people -- smaller people, even children -- could pull at the branch ^{which now extended} and the rope and the bell would ring. ^{Since} ~~and~~ the branch looked ^{did not} very pretty, ~~and so~~ people in the ^{town of} ~~city of~~ Atri -- ~~the town of~~ Atri -- would bring vines and branches and leaves and decorate it and tie it ^{all} to the rope. It almost looked like a bush that was hanging from the rope. ~~And so it was.~~



-3-

Now there lived in Atri a very rich man who loved to hunt with horses and with hounds. And then after years passed, this man got ~~too old to hunt and~~ *too old to hunt and* very old. ~~And first he sold his dogs and hounds.~~ Then he sold his horses, ~~one by one,~~ except one horse that he couldn't sell. The horse was ^{too} old. No one wanted to buy ~~him~~ *it*. And so the old man decided to keep the horse in his stable. But he refused to give the horse food. He asked himself, why should I feed the horse. It's not doing me any good and food costs money. ~~And the horse is not doing any work.~~ Let him find his own food. And the poor horse was getting thinner and thinner. ~~Soon the bones of the horse were showing.~~ The horse neighed a pitiful neigh, disturbed the neighborhood, ~~but~~ ~~after all, people didn't know just what was the reason for it and~~ ~~the old man would not give food to the horse.~~ After ~~a number of~~ *many* days had passed and the horse had gotten really very thin and sick, one night, the horse broke out of the stable, ~~looking through~~ *searching in* the streets of Atri for some food.

~~Well, let's get back to the horse.~~ The horse was looking around everywhere in the streets of Atri for grass and couldn't find it. It was in the middle of the night when the horse came to the center

4

of the market place where the tower was. ~~And being so very, very~~
~~hungry and starved, the horse went right over to the rope and saw~~ *Seem*
the leaves of the branches that had been tied to the rope, ~~and~~ *dehorse* began
to eat very happily. And finally ~~he~~ *it* gave one more bite and pulled
the branch, pulled the rope, and all of a sudden, in the middle of
the night, the bell began to ring.

~~Guess what happened?~~ *Immediately people* ~~Everybody~~ looked out their windows. ~~People~~ *Some*
came out in their nightgowns. Even the king heard the bell. Who
wants help in the middle of the night? And before you knew it,
the judge hastily put on his black robe. He, too, rushed down to
the market place and there, to the amazement of all, with the crowd
gathering about the tower, they saw the horse munching the leaves
from the rope.

Well, the judge stood up and he said, "Ding, dong, ding dong,
someone has done a wrong, a wrong..." He looked around. Well,
where was the person? When the judge finally saw no one..no person
near the rope, ~~but~~ *only* the horse tugging away at the green vines that
were tied to the rope, the judge recognized the horse. He said,
"Oh, that is the one horse left to the rich man. What a smart horse
he must be. It must have been treated wrong and so it rang the bell."
And the crowd of people all began to shout. Yes, they had heard
the pitiful neighing of the horse for many, many days. ~~Some~~ *ding*
wrong was done to the horse. The judge said, "Quiet, people. We
want witnesses." And a few people-- neighbors of the ~~rich man~~ *owner of the horse* --
~~came to the judge and~~ said, "This ~~rich~~ man had used the horse for
many years. And when the horse became old he no longer would feed

it. That is very wrong.

The judge ~~did not have to hear many witnesses.~~ He called the owner of the horse and he said, "You have done your horse great wrong. That is why it rang the bell. Do you have anything to say?"

And the rich man said, "I can do to my horse what I want to do."

"Oh, no!" shouted the people. Then the judge spoke.

"It is the will of the court and of the king that everyone who rings the bell shall have ~~his wrong made right.~~ ^{justice} When this horse was young, it served you well. Now that the horse is old, you must give ~~him~~ ^{it} shelter in your stable, food and a special field for ~~him~~ ^{it} to graze on and feed every day."

The people applauded. The ~~rich~~ man bowed to the judgment, brought home the horse and fed it ever happily after. And when the king heard this judgment, he laughed and he said,

"I am very happy that my bell helps not only men and women and children, but also innocent beasts that are mistreated. The poor horse has made the Bell of Atri famous for all time."

I wonder if you realize that God has given each of us something inside that give us, too, a signal or a message. What might that be? I'll give you a hint. Whenever we are about to do something wrong -- whenever we are about to do something we know we should not do, ~~don't you~~ ^{we} get a feeling inside? ^{certain} Isn't it as though something were telling you -- maybe a sound inside that you can't hear but you can feel it -- something inside that says !

In

"Stop, don't do it!" Or when we keep putting off something that we ought to do, like our homework or something important that we know we ought to do, again we hear, as it were, a signal inside. This is God's bell inside each of us and it will ring, urging us to do right or warning us against doing wrong. What^{do} we call that bell inside that we can't see and touch?-- it doesn't even make a sound but we can hear it. I think we all know -- we call it the conscience, the voice inside!

And now I ask you to listen -- listen to that bell, that voice, that signal God has given us inside -- your conscience.

~~The King of Kings, our God, has given us this conscience as a signal and on this day of Yom Kippur, the most sacred day of the year, we all want to make this resolution, that whenever the voice inside, your conscience, reminds ^{you} us of your duties, we shall do them. So help ^{you} us God!~~

Amen

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THE BELL OF ATRI

By Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Washington Hebrew Congregation

Family Children's Service and Family Sabbath,
Friday, March 4, 1983
Yom Kippur Morning, October 11, 1978

I have brought a bell with me because I have a story to tell you about it. Think for a moment, why do people ring bells? Think about it for a moment. A long time ago, before there were fire engines and sirens, people would ring a bell in times of danger or just to bring them together, to let them know that something important had happened. And of course, every school child knows why we ring bells these days. When classes are about to begin, the bell says....stop now... get ready... be in your classroom because something important will happen.

And now, let me tell you the story about the bell.

It happened in Italy in a small town known as the town of Atri, which was built halfway up the hill. And there, there was a king with a little kingdom. And this king, one day, began building a tower in the little town of Atri and everybody wanted to know why the king was building a tower. They watched the tower go up higher and higher. Day by day, it grew just a little bit. When the tower was all finished, the people were all gathered in the market place wondering what would happen.

And to the surprise of everyone, a carriage came along - the king's carriage - and on the carriage they saw a big bell -- bigger than this one -- a big bell. And strong workmen, with ropes, lifted the bell off the carriage and raised it up to the top of the tower. The people looked around and wanted to know, why would there be just a tower with a bell -- no church, no building, nothing next to it, just the tower with the bell. And the king made this proclamation:

"My good people, you have all wanted to know why I have built this tower and put the bell on it. Well, I'll all tell you why. Whenever any man, woman or child in this kingdom of mine needs help -- whenever anyone feels that wrong has been done to him or to her, let that person come to this tower. Hanging down from the bell is the rope." and he pointed to the rope. "And you just pull the rope to ring the bell. Whenever I, the king, hear the sound of the bell, I shall tell my judge to go down to the market place and see that justice is done."

The people cheered, "Long live the king!" They were proud to have a king who wanted to do justice in the kingdom!

And so, whenever any wrong was done, whoever felt he was hurt would rush ^{to the tower} and pull the rope. Soon enough, the judge in his black robe would come down to the market place and see that justice was done.

After the people had been pulling the rope so many times over the years, one day, the end piece of the rope broke. So a man in Atri tied a branch to the end of the rope so that people, smaller people, even children, could pull at the branch which now extended the rope and the bell would ring. Since the branch did not look very pretty, people in the town of Atri would bring vines and branches and leaves and decorate it and tie it all to the rope. It almost looked like a bush that was hanging from the rope.

Now, there lived in Atri a very rich man who loved to hunt with horses and with hounds. And then after years passed, this man got too old to hunt and sold his dogs and hounds. Then he sold his horses, except one horse that he couldn't sell. The horse was too old. No one wanted to buy it and so the old man decided to keep the horse in his stable. But he refused to give the horse food. He asked himself, why should I feed the horse? It's not doing me any good and food costs money. Let him find his own food. And the poor horse was getting thinner and thinner. Soon, the bones of the horse were showing. The horse neighed a pitiful neigh, disturbed the neighborhood. After many days passed and the horse had gotten really very thin and sick, one night, the horse broke out of the stable, searching in the streets of Atri for some food.

The horse was looking around everywhere in the streets of Atri for grass and couldn't find it. It was in the middle of the night when the horse came to the center of the market place where the tower was. Seeing the leaves of the branches that had been tied to the rope, the horse began to eat very happily. And finally, it gave one more bite and pulled the branch, pulled the rope and all of a sudden, in the middle of the night, the bell began to ring.

Immediately, people looked out from their windows. Some came out in their nightgowns. Even the king heard the bell. Who wants help in the middle of the night? And before you knew it, the judge hastily put on his black robe. He, too, rushed down to the market place and there, to the amazement of all, with the crowd gathering about the tower, they saw the horse munching the leaves from the rope.

Well, the judge stood up and he said, "Ding, dong, ding dong, someone has done a wrong, a wrong..." He looked around. Well, where was the person? When the judge finally saw no one, no person near the rope, only the horse tugging away at the green vines that were tied to the rope, the judge recognized the horse. He said, "Oh, that is the one horse left to the rich man. What a smart horse he must be. It must have been treated wrong and so it rang the bell." And the crowd of people all began to shout. Yes, they had heard the pitiful neighing of the horse for many, many days. Some wrong was done to the horse. The judge said,

"Quiet, people. We want witnesses." And a few people -- neighbors of the owner of the horse said, "This man had used the horse for many years. And when the horse became old, he no longer would feed it. That is very wrong."

The judge called the owner of the horse and he said, "You have done your horse great wrong. That is why it rang the bell. It is the will of the court and of the king that everyone who rings the bell shall have justice. When this horse was young, it served you well. Now that the horse is old, you must give it shelter in your stable, food and a special field for it to graze on and feed every day."

The people applauded. The man bowed to the judgment, brought home the horse and fed it ever happily after. And when the king heard this judgment, he laughed and he said,

"I am very happy that my bell helps not only men and women and children, but also innocent beasts that are mistreated. The poor horse has made the Bell of Atri famous for all time."

I wonder if you realize that God has given each of us something inside that give us, too, a signal or a message. What might that be? I'll give you a hint. Whenever we are about to do something wrong -- whenever we are about to do something we know we should NOT do, we get a certain feeling inside. Isn't it as though something were telling you -- maybe a sound inside that you can't hear but you can feel it -- something inside says:

"Stop, don't do it!" Or when we keep putting off something that we ought to do , like our homework or something important that we know we ought to do, again we hear, as it were, a signal inside. This is God's bell inside each of us and it will ring, urging us to do right or warning us against doing wrong. What do we call that bell inside that we can't see and touch? -- it doesn't even make a sound but we can hear it. I think we all know -- we call it the conscience, the voice inside.

And now I ask you to listen -- listen to that bell, that voice, that signal God has given us inside -- your conscience. And make this resolution: whenever the voice inside, your conscience, reminds you of your duties, do them. So help you God!

AMEN



based
on 1972

MEMORIAL SERMON

NEILA
YOM KIPPUR AFTERNOON, 1978

By Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Washington Hebrew Congregation

The moment of parting is a moment of truth. You can tell the true feeling between people by the way they say goodbye to each other. One of those revealing moments is described in the Book of Samuel. The young prince, Jonathan, son of King Saul, bids farewell to his beloved friend, David, and as they part one from the other Jonathan says, "Thou shalt be missed because thy seat will be empty." Of all the things that Jonathan could have said to his parting friend, this was the simplest and yet perhaps the most meaningful statement. We shall notice your absence. Your empty seat will not be filled. We shall miss you. "Thou shalt be missed because thy seat will be empty." It was the tribute of love.

Oh, how we would want our departed now to hear these words if they could. We miss you, beloved ones. Is this not, perhaps, the essential meaning of this hour -- to give voice to an expression of yearning -- a sigh with the hope that somehow the souls of our beloved might take note that their place has not been filled? That there still is a void in our hearts. That their seat remains empty.

This is more than an hour of memory or an hour of yearning. It is also -- and it should be for us -- an hour of deeper understanding -- even of reconciliation with our departed. The Proverbs

say, "Hear, my son, the instruction of thy father and forsake not the teaching of thy mother."

When we think of our parents -- those who have departed -- we find that death has not diminished their influence. In many ways it has only made us more conscious of their worth -- the qualities which earned our respect. The father whom we, perhaps, battled in our youth -- whose instruction we resented -- whose old fashioned ideas we rejected -- gradually changes in retrospect with the passage of years and little by little we realize that maybe what was missing in our life heretofore is precisely that parental standard which we once opposed -- an old but not obsolete standard. And how we tried to escape a mother's ever watchful eye. How embarrassed we used to be by her extreme concern -- those endless questions -- where are you going? -- who said what? Yes, it used to annoy us. But now, how we wish there might still be someone around who cared so much and asked so many questions of us.

You never know what people will miss most and what they will best remember you for. An 18-year old boy wrote the following letter after his father died in an airplane crash:

The last time I saw my Dad was when he was typing some business letter and I was getting ready for bed. He was barebacked and as I passed him he looked around and I slapped him on the back. In an instant, he grabbed my ankle. He missed but I stumbled and nearly fell. And I'll never forget the smile that played on his lips as I tripped past. It was the last time I saw him. A smile -- that's what I'll remember. To me it is the remembrance of the past 18 years of love and kindness, of understanding and patience -- a smile, that's what I'll remember. A priceless possession.

A good question for us to ask this late afternoon is who would miss us and what for if we, too, suddenly vanished? Our own family, for sure, at least for a while. And what would they miss? It is strange that what most men put first in their own scale of responsibility, namely providing financially, rarely gets any mention after the man's death. I have yet to hear anyone in a family say -- we miss our provider. The place that remains empty is the heart. What we miss most is the guidance, the companionship, the words of faith or encouragement -- even rebuke and concern -- that we received. Would friends miss us? Would we be missed in the congregation? It depends how much we meant to them-- what we have done -- is our name linked with the history and achievement of important worthy causes? Would we be missed in the wider community? How tragic -- how wasted a life seems to be when it is of no consequence to anyone. Sigmund Freud had the great misfortune of having had a father who left nothing worth remembering. When his father died, Freud wrote about him: "His life was over long before he died."

This is a time for us not only to remember the departed but to remember our own life, our so-called life-style , our values. And it is good to think that it is never too late to consider the life we live for it is still in our power to vastly increase its value to others, to elevate ourselves in the esteem of the community, to occupy a place in the hearts of people. And that is why we ought to ponder the sentence from our Torah...

..."So teach us to number our days that we may get us a heart of wisdom."

This is a time when we count days and years, when life seems very precious. We are conscious of its fragility.

The voices of our departed have been silenced. But their lives speak to us. Their examples are a permanent faculty of teachers and as we think of them we know, of course, that what matters more than anything material was everything they were and meant to us as persons. So we think of parents for whose devotion there is no replacement. We think of a spouse - a husband or wife - whose love and companionship even in memory still strengthens us. We think of children - children whose voices and laughter surpassed all of our pleasures. How we miss them! We think of a brother or sister in whose death a part of ourselves seemed to die.

Death is not the cover that conceals life; it is also the mysterious revealer of life for it brings into full view the value, the beauty, the qualities which perhaps we took for granted while we had them with us. Now in retrospect we value them so much the more. Yes, death takes away those who are near and dear to us but it transforms them in our hearts and in our memories and we see them ever so much more clearly....and even feel their influence so much more strongly. Shall we, ourselves, some day be missed as much as we now miss these, our departed?

A very wise man once said, "...Remember on the day of your death everything you possess in the world will belong to somebody else. But what you are, will be yours forever."

They are not dead in hearts they leave behind

In those whom they have blessed, they live
a life again

And shall live through the years

AMEN



High Blotchy Themes

Say what you mean & Mean what
you say

Allen Bloom: youth today do not, in what were once called
p122 - love affair, say: "I love you".

one student told him that, of course, he says "I love you"
to girl/friends "when we are breaking up" It is the
clean and easy break - no damage, no fault -
at which they are adept. . . .

The Three Polarities

Greeks: Body & Soul

Rousseau: Nature & Society - ^{to exist by friend}

Judaism: Good & Evil life

↑ The search for solutions bears stamp of modernity; - antiquity
treated the fundamental tensions as permanent.
Allan Bloom p17/top.

CHASSIDIC STORIES FOR THE HIGH HOLY DAYS

God Accepts The Prayer From The Heart

A simple, uneducated Jew entered the crowded synagogue on Yom Kippur and was bewildered by the prayerbook. He had difficulties reading the Hebrew prayers and surely did not understand them. Yet, he felt close to God and wanted to honor God in prayer. But which prayer? He knew not a single one by heart. An idea struck him. Quietly, he began to recite the Aleph-Beit:

"Aleph, beit, gimmel--etc."

When he had finished reciting the whole alphabet, he said:

"Dear God, please take the letters which I have pronounced and put them together in the proper prayers because You can do it much better than I. Please put my thoughts and feelings into beautiful words and let these words praise Your glory, Your justice and Your love!"

They say that this prayer of that illiterate, simple man immediately broke through the heavens and reached the throne of God and gave God more pleasure than any other prayer He received that day. What counts is not the length of the prayers nor the choice of words, but the feelings that come from the heart and are directed toward God.

What Good Is Endless Remorse?

On one Yom Kippur Day, a rabbi watched his congregation as they were reciting their confessional prayers. He saw certain men and women who were beating their chests with tears running down their faces as they confessed their various misdeeds, wrongdoing and sins. Some of these people carried on with great emotion, even sobbing and shouting out their sense of guilt and self-contempt for having done all these things. Finally, the rabbi put a stop to it and spoke these words:

"Our prayerbook provides for us written confessions which list many transgressions and sins. It is good to confess the wrong we have done; it is good to feel remorse about it; it is good to ask for forgiveness. But, let us not prolong remorse beyond reason. If you take a broom to sweep the room and you sweep the dirt and you keep sweeping it back and forth, what good does it do? The broom remains dirty. It will not become clean for all the sweeping you do back and forth. --Enough now, lift up your hearts to the radiance of God's love and compassion and let His forgiveness cleanse you!

The object of Yom Kippur is not to make us feel bad as we remember all the wrong we have done but rather to

help us overcome it and start a new, clean slate. So, after we have made our confession, shown remorse, offered correction and restitution to those whom we have wronged,--then it is time to turn away from the past and to begin a new life with confidence that God will help us cleanse our hearts and do good if only we want to do good."



Reason & Faith

~~The~~ Capture of reason by faith ^{must} exclude all coercion
Respect of absolute freedom to think

p124 The powers & limits of reason