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Yom Kippur, 1965.

EXCERPTS FROM YOM KIPPUR ADDRESS GIVEN BY RABBI DANIEL JEREMY SILVER

October 5, 1965

THE TEMPLE

Death exposes the exaggeration and illusions which mis-shape our lives. Conceits are quickly forgotten. No one can reconstruct from a skeleton the color of a man's skin, the number of his civic honors, or the address at which he lived. Tonight we must face the cruelest truth of all, that there may be no civilization to pass on to our children. A happy future is an illusion. There is no evidence that the nation's have moved beyond policies of economic greed and naked power which can only lead to war.

Is there hope? Hope is remote, but we are not prisoners of some satanic fate. The work of peace is man's work and the work of peace begins in our private lives. It is the tenderness with which a parent teaches decency and understanding. It is the happiness and the sense of wholeness which pervades a loving home. It is our impatience with economic and social indignities which blight the lives of neighbors. We will make our contribution not on the rostrum of the United Nations but in sincere repentance and through the decencies of our lives. Will our change of heart assure a peaceful world? I do not know. But surely, this is where we must begin.

#150

The Temple
Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
October 5, 1965

Yom Kippur, my dear friends, offers us a preview of death. This is the fast day. By denying the flesh, we remind ourselves of its impermanence. Our forefathers, on this day, wore a long white cloak, the self same garment which would be their burial shroud. But there is more to this day than a concern with death. Yom Kippur promises life - a new and better life. Our altar is decked in white, the white of atonement. We are to be forgiven. The evil decree will be rescinded and we can look forward to the new year in confidence and in hope. Life and death. Opposites, yet complimentary. Antipodes yet woven of a single creative scheme. Neither can be understood apart from the other. Neither has meaning without the other. Intertwined as they are, they reveal their wisdom only by way of paradox and it is this paradox that I would examine with you this evening.

"How is man to live? Let him learn to die. How is man to die? Let him learn to live." These rhetorical questions and their enigmatic answers rest on the observation that living is an acquired skill. Normally we think of life as the natural consequence of birth. This is true only in the most limited sense. How often have you heard someone, perhaps yourself say, "This is no life." Behind that sigh there may be the heartbreak of a bitter marriage or the sheer exhaustion of a fruitless assault on success, or perhaps simply the melancholy of one up in years who looks back on a humdrum career. Each sigh is the summation of a unique biography, but each is the self same confession of failure.

"What must a man do to live? Let him learn to die. What must a man do to die? Let him learn to live." There are some who say that this sigh is inevitable.

There is no more to life than this. Every dream is but a dream. Every hope will be dashed. There are contemparary voices who tell us that life is a genetic accident, a riddle to be sure, but a riddle without a solution. All of philosophy is but guess work, the shadow of wisdom. There are no teachings to be absorbed, only burdens to be borne.

Our life is ticked off as a long day's journey into the night, and as an arduous and hapless journey at that. And so you hear, 'I can't make sense of it all.'

'Perhaps there is some meaning to the struggle and all this exertion, to my tears, to my frustrations - I don't know. All I know is this - that I work hard and have only a few years of strength; I intend to make the most of them.'

Three thousand years ago the prophet, Elijah, became impatient with the excuses and the equivocations of his generation. "How long will you halt between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him. If Baal be God, follow him." To follow God, is to accept the high ethical disciplines of our Scripture. To follow Baal is to accept the pointlessness of life and to enjoy the pageantry and the

indulgence of the fertility cults. To our ancestor's everlasting credit that day they accepted God.

Our generation is not unlike theirs. We halt between two opinions. We are part-time saints and part-time sinners. We are timid in our virtues and timid in our vices, timid in our faith and timid in our skepticism. At times all virtue seems insubstantial. Life seems a maelstrom which swallows up in its maw all of our goodness and the decency, kindliness and the kindly. Other times, as tonight, we speak fondly of the decencies, and the purpose and place real hope in family loyalty, in sensitivity to another's feelings, in the service of a city's welfare. How long will you halt between two opinions? If the good be worthwhile, do it. If life be a noisy parade, go to it and live it up.

Tonight we have only one option. Life is God ordained. There is sound and there is fury but it signifies something. Behind all the noise there is harmony; behind the kaleidoscope of events which surrounds us, there is stability. We accept a responsible vision, such is our faith and it is reasonable. "See I have set before you this day life and death. Choose life." This is our faith. Indeed, this is our observation and our experience. The Elijah story is a miracle story. In some wondrous way, Elijah caused his sacrifice to God to flame up, while the sacrifice which was being offered by the priests of Baal remained damp and sodden. Elijah made God's presence manifest on Mt. Carmel. He offered proof. We too have proof - not the proof of miracle but the proof of experience. Every school, every settlement, every hospital, every library, every playground, every treatment center, every free institution, every free land is proof that the good, the substantial is worth the doing. What is civilization if not visible proof that goodness is worth the doing. Light can be wrenched out of darkness, healing out of

pain and order out of chaos.

Our paradox is worth exploring. There is wisdom to be learned, and guidance to be gained. "What must a man do to live? Let him learn to die."

Death teaches us to recognize the supreme value of time.

The clock of life is wound but once and no man has the power to tell just when the hand will stop, at late or early hour.

Now is the only time you own.

Live, love, work with a will Place no faith in tomorrow,

The clock may then be still.

You and I do a great deal of talking about death, but we tend to believe ourselves immortal. Our acts reflect this fancy. We procrastinate. We fritter away opportunity, schooling, the precious free hours. We say to ourselves, 'there is yet time.' We delay the quiet hour of intimacy with our parents. We defer acting on promises made. We neglect apologizing to a friend that we have misused. We put off registering for community service. "There is time." Delay, Procrastination, Tomorrow. Rare is the man who uses each day to its full measure. Rare is the man who says, 'I can't count on tomorrow!' Rare is the man who lives by the discipline of time, who will undertake to do today what should be done today. If there is reconciliation to be sought, he seeks it today. If there is love to be expressed, he expresses it today. If he must take himself in hand and refashion his life, he does it now.

More often we are like the child in the confectionery or toy store. We are dazzled by the array of delights spread before us. We want to touch, to finger, to experiment, to taste. We completely forget that mother told us to meet her

ten minutes ago. Is it not true that we are dazzled by the abundance about us? We want touch, to taste, to experience, to try everything, to acquire everything and in this latest model. Our lives become a desparate rush to taste everything and acquire everything. We have no time for ourselves, for our marriage, for our family. Until one day, the death of a friend, an anniversary, retirement, jolts us awake and suddenly we find that it is too late. We are married to a stranger. Our children are grown and gone. Our friendships have withered.

'What must a man do to live? Let him learn to die.' If the beginning of death's wisdom is to recognize the supreme value of time, the fullness of death's wisdom is to recognize the mist of exaggeration and illusion which surrounds our lives. How quickly the grave covers over our fancy airs and our conceits, all our social pretensions, the family connections of which we are so proud, the good looks over which we take such care. No one can reconstruct from a skeleton the figures of a man's bankbook, the number of his civic awards or the size of the house in which he lived. "The silver cord is snapped asunder, the golden bowl is shattered."

"What must a man do to live? Let him learn to die." The fullness of death's wisdom is to recognize the mist of exaggeration and illusion which surrounds and shapes our lives. I do not know what we will think of when we knock at death's door but I suspect that we will muse rather soberly on life and reflect how one by one our ambitions were stripped from us. When we were young we set out to reform and conquer the world. We had not yet learned how obstinate and how indifferent the world can be. Later we said to ourselves, at least we will convince our friends and our associates of the rightness of our views. We did not yet comprehend the

obstinacy or the mulishness of human nature. Then we said, at least our children will grow to cherish the values we hold dear. Youth has a mind of its own. "The silver cord is snapped asunder, the golden bowl is shattered." It would be wonderful, would it not, if we could learn early in our lives, death's wisdom. How much misery and grief mankind would have been spared if those who set out confidently to reform the world and been frustrated by human nature, had not turned against the world and sought to impose their worldly view by tyranny. How many of us, frustrated in our ambisions, withdrew from life, withdrew from citizenship, soured on our family and embittered their lives with our frustrations.

"What must a man do to live? Let him learn to die." The fullness of death's wisdom is to recognize the mist of illusion and of exaggeration which surrounds and shapes our lives. Each of us knows those who pay an occasional debt to religion in the hope that they can guarantee themselves a comforable eternity. We have seen those who, under the sentence of death, set about frenetically setting their biographies in order, begging forgiveness, protesting their love, guiltridden by self-made nightmares. Their protestations of love are no longer listened to. They try to buy back their guilt but they cannot escape from their self-made nightmares. It is then that I have known the truth of the ancient teaching. "The righteous are considered living even when dead and the wicked are considered dead even when living."

"What must a man do to live? Let him learn to die." Let him learn to walk clear of the mist of illusion and exaggeration which normally surrounds him. Death compels us to face many cruel truths, but none more cruel than its judgement on our day and age. We accept death rather philosophically for the sake of our children. We are the harvest and they are the seed. Our death is their opportunity. But what if our death does not make room? What if we die together? The mind recoils from considering a common grave. Yet I ask you for clear evidence that

our world has shaken off the habits of national greed and of power grab which traditionally have plunged us into a blood bath every quarter of a century or so. I plead with you to find for me evidence that our terrible weapons of human butchery will not be used in the bloody game of international rivalry. If you are childless, and you take some comfort from the statistics of the death game, I ask you to find for me, the evidence that if a few hundred thousands do survive, they will have the wherewithall, the natural resource with which to begin civilization over again. The truth is that we have so exhausted the readily available coal and iron and metal, that if man is stripped of his complex industrial machine, it cannot again be put together.

"What must a man do to live? Let him learn to die." To think only these thoughts is madness. We cannot keep our sanity and admit that our children's death warrant is signed. Yet our world plunges on towards the inferno. What's for it then? If we are passive and men of habit, only madness, turning into ourselves, a denial of life. But there is another way. We spoke of paradox. What must a man do to die? Let him learn to live. Beyond confession there is atonement. Beyond death there is life. The Chassidim tell of a famous Zaddik who lay on his death bed. He rallied about him his favorite disciples and spoke to them his last teaching: 'When I was young, I felt that my faith was of such power that I could inspire the world. I failed. Later on I felt that my faith was so strong that I would at least change the heart of the congregation. I failed. Then I felt that at least I would inspire my children by my example of love and I failed there too.

Now I know that I should have begun where I have ended - by strengthening my soul.' There is in each of us, the capacity for spiritual greatness, for growth, for kindness, for love, for decency beyond anything we can imagine. However

generous we are in our feelings, we possess greater capacities of love. And so it is that each year we return and make confession and seek repentence, move from contrition to resolution, from one level of life to a higher. We are surrounded by a world of exaggeration and illusion. We blame our failings and our feelings on others. Our vanity is quick to blame another's honesty. Our children fail, so we accuse the times, the school, their friends. There is no peace, we blame the politicians. We fail in our business, we blame the administration, we blame our competitors.

Tonight the searchlight is turned inward. We look at ourselves and though we are good people, and responsible, we recognize that there are levels of decency, many levels of response which we have not yet begun to achieve, even to admit! If death has stripped us of the blindfold of illusion, now honesty floods our being. We see what lasting achievement is yet within our power. But wait, I can hear you say, 'Rabbi, you disappoint me, how can you raise the spector of total destruction, and console me with thoughts of private virtue. ' I did not mean to console you. I am not consoled. I find no evidence that the nations of the world are aware of the lateress of the hour or that they are willing to give up their privilege and their petty prerogatives to yoke themselves into a world community. Peace requires political solutions and there is no evidence of solid act beyond all the diplomatic high talk. Even this grand nation of ours, so rich in a tradition of decency, shows no willingness to yoke its prosperity and its privilege to the poverty, the misery and the ignorance of the world. I am not consoled and I do not mean to console. There are no guarantees that there will not be a third world war. I mean only to preach the ancient teachings of our people and our statement of a patient hope. For it is our teaching and our faith that the work of peace, like the work of war, is human work. Peace and war

are human creations. There is no inevitable fate. And it is our teaching, also, that the work of peace begins in the quiet private world of parents and children, of husband and wife, of the heart seeking repentence. There is an old proverb among our people that he who would move a mountain must begin by carrying away the small stones. And so it is in life. If we raise a son, a daughter, to be proud of the disciplines of honor, to understand that it is more important to share than to own, that living is not daring but doing, a son and daughter who has enjoyed love and knows how to love, we will have sent out into the world, a peacemaker. One who does not need to vent neurotic violence on his neighbor. If our home is filled with love and joy, those who live there are nourished and encouraged and strengthened and do not spend the day nagging at others, taking from others, roiling human relationships, or imposing the lust for power on the community. The work of peace is the work of the teacher and the work of the tutor. The work of peace is the work of one who opens the door of opportunity and of one who extends the hand of friendship. The work of any one who will encourage a single life. The work of peace is quiet work.

"What must a man do to die? Let him learn to live." The fullness of life's wisdom is to recognize the infinite capacity of the human soul for growth—the infinite capacity of the human soul for growth. We recognize it tonight, do we not? We recognize it even as contrition and remorse fill our hearts. It is not that we have lived a wicked life. It is not that we are sinners in the criminal sense. Not at all. We are responsible citizens, parents, men of honor in affairs. What then? How comes this sens of contrition? Here we are and in here is the realization of the man and woman we might have been. There is always the man and the woman we can yet become. There is always the challenge of Yom Kippur, repent, improve, atone.

"What must a man do to live? Let him learn to die. What must a man do to die? Let him learn to live." I know that I have not placed before you a solution to the problems of the world. I am convinced that the problems of the world will not be solved in speech or even in conference but in the quiet and the silence of repentence as it works its magic within men's hearts. This, at least, is the beginning of peace.

Prayer, charity and decency, goodness can avert the evil decree. So it is written. That is our faith. What else have we to live by?



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ROSH HASHANAH

TEMPLE

SEVERANCE

Torah:

Abe Luntz

Torah: Bert Krohngold

Irving Sadugor Torah:

Torah: William A. Schumacher

YOM KIPPUR

Morning

TEMPLE

Reader: (pp. 170-202) Raphael Silver

Torah: Ernest Siegler Torah: Ed Friedman

SEVERANCE

ToRah: Fred Rivchun

Torah: Ralph Hurwitz

YOM KIPPUR

Afternoon

TEMPLE

Jonah: Max Eisner (pp.296-299)
Reader: Jared Faulb (pp.262-267)
Reader: Sheldon Guren(pp.267-272)

Torah: Paul Meldon Torah: William M. Neye SEVERANCE

Jonah: Leonard Sternberg(pp.296-299)
Reader: Dr.Marvin Dorfman(pp.262-267)
Reader: Leonard Himmel(pp.267-272)

Torah: Jack Gladstone Torah: Fred Heiber

YOM KIPFUR - 1965

Announcements

The Temple

Yom Kippur Evening

MORNING SERVICES for the Day of Atonement, Wednesday, October 6, at 9:30 a.m.

A CHILDREN'S SERVICE will be held at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, October 6th. Parents are invited to accompany their children and to sit with them during the services.

AFTERNOON SERVICES will be held at 2:45 p.m. for the Day of Atonement, Wednesday, October 6.

THE DOORS OF THE TEMPLE WILL BE CLOSED at the start of the MEMORIAL SERVICE and will remain closed until the end of the Concluding Service.

Omen 15-17 Vgrd. 56-23 Tomorum

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YOMKIPPUR - 1965

CHILDREN'S SERVICE

Announcements

The Temple

SERVICES FOR THE FESTIVAL OF SUCCOTH will be held on Monday morning, October 11th at 10:30 a.m.



YOM KIPPUR

MEMORIAL SERVICE

"Naked came I from my mother's womb and naked shall I return there." Our faith takes a realistic and unromantic view of birth and death. Man enters the world with a cry and leaves it with a cry. He comes into it weeping and leaves with weeping. On entering the world his hands are clenched as if to say "the whole world is mine, I shall inherit it" but when he departs his hands are spread as if to say "I have inherited nothing from the world." It is to the credit of our wisdom that we have always been sound it to accept the bitter in life without blinking and faced up to life in all the houses.

Life is bruising. Life is brief. Neither wisdom nor wealth is of any use the other side of the grave. All philosophies agree on this, but some are so discolored by childish peeve and petulance that life is seen as a worthless thing. If we cannot have things our way - heaven on earth - we want no part of it. Burdened by the fear of death and puzzled by death's unpredictable timing many a philosophy turns its back on life and advises man not to expect any pleasure or peace of mind. The the brilliant Greek tragedian Sophocoles wrote, "Not to be born is past all saying best, but, when a man has seen the light this is next best by far - that with all speed he should go thither whence he has come." If the suit is not cut to our taste we declare the unsuitable and either cultivate a sardonic disdain or else dream of some golden land beyond the grave which no one has ever seen and which, in fact, may not be.

The Psalmist had a first-hand acquaintence with pain and anguish "Out of the depths I call..."My soul is sated with troubles, my light draws nigh unto the grave, I am counted with those who godown into the pit. I am become as one that has no help, set apart from men like the slain that lie in the grave."

Yet we find in the psalms, indeed in the whole Bible, an eagerness for life and being here Entirely Mast a simple pleasure in being which is absent in Sophoeles and "I shall not die but live and declare the works of the Lord." Our people walked a bitter history. They felt the sharp edge of the sword, the racking pain of illness and the emplosive anguish of sudden dooth. Where did they find their faith in life o this amazing assumption that life can be joyous and pleasing. Their EAGENNES GREW BUT OF Their FAITH - Their Our faith was born, I believe, in a subtle and wise understanding of God. Death was not to be feared. God ordains life and death. Death is a basic element in Godia creative plan. The seed permits the harvest and the harvest must be cut to permit next year's sowing. Leaves must fall from the three for the new buds to the room to grow. Within our bodies there is a constant REGINE WALL process of death and rebieth, catabolism and metabolism. Each generation gives birth to its successor and must give way for the young to come into their proper place and responsibility.

We do not know what lies beyond the grave. We do not know what lies before birth. We do know that we have no memory of pain or loneliness and we are confident that when we die we will be near God and have peace.

Our pleasure in life was born also of experience of memory. This hour is set acide for collection. Recall to mind the tenderness and the decency of those whom we have loved and lost - a father's patient strength - a mother's sheltering wisdom - a husband; s gentle encouragement - a wife's silent understanding, a child's eagerness and innocence - a friend's fine achievement. As we pass these memories before our mind we recognize that death cannot sow man. These were strong and proud people. Here were vigorous and generous human beings. There was love and sometimes ecstasy. There was accomplishment and sometimes a true nobility, there was goodness in their lives, peace in their homes and confidence in their hearts and there were the dark hours, the struggle to make one's way, The

when loved ones had to be left behind, illness, infirmity, death. Our dead were neither innocent nor neither. They had all the full weight of life's yet they lived without whimpering or complaint. They said with Hezekiah "the living, the living, praise Thee as I do this day." Our memories give the lie to all postures of despair. The opportunity for life overagehes its memories give us a courage, a faith to reach out, to explore, to date to adventure, to climb, to love, to share, to laugh.

IT WER

Let us go one step further into the faith that finds meaning in life. Job was overwrought when he cried out "Naked am I out of my mother's womb, Naked hap been taken from him shall I return there." His children, his health, his world had suddenly opened under him. Yet, trady, he was not naked at his birth, he was born into a physician's skillful arms and into his mother's love - into civilization and into a family. Nor do we die naked. We die into God's arms, and when we die not all iserased. There is the memory that we leave behind and more than memory WE have TAISED IN LOVE WE HAVE HONDIABLY OFTHE HOULD there is the accomplishment, the home, the business, the books we have written, the counsel we have given, the opportunity we have lent. The rabbi's say that there are those who leave life to the living. Are we not our parent's teaching? In marriage did we not grow into another's vision, did not our friends sacrifice CHIERESIS P and spur ourflagging cities whip? We live in a world of libraries and schools of music and beauty, of law and justice, of synagogue, of healing. How came all AND THE GIFT TOW OFOUR these? Is civilization not the creation of the dead? Is civilization not the triumph of life over death? Moses is not dead. He lies in the sanctuary. Akiba Maimonides, Dr. Silver, they are not dead, they are here, they gave us their Bible and our teaching, our building and the abiding. / Drop a stone into the water and in a moment it is gone, but there are a hundred ripples circling on and on and on. Say an unkind word. this mement and in a moment it is gone but there are a hundred ripples circling on and on and on. Say a word of cheer and splendor and in a moment it is gone, but there are a hundred ripples circling on and on and on.

MEN

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