

Daniel Jeremy Silver Collection Digitization Project

Featuring collections from the Western Reserve Historical Society and The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives

MS-4850: Daniel Jeremy Silver Papers, 1972-1993.

Series III: The Temple Tifereth-Israel, 1946-1993, undated. Sub-series B: Sermons, 1950-1989, undated.

Reel	Box	Folder
48	15	828

How to Fail In Marriage Without Really Trying, 1966.

Western Reserve Historical Society 10825 East Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44106 (216) 721-5722 wrhs.org American Jewish Archives 3101 Clifton Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45220 (513) 487-3000 AmericanJewishArchives.org

How To Fail In Marriage Without Really Trying Daniel Jeremy Silver January 30, 1966

To drive home their point the rabbis frequently adopted a language of improbable exaggeration. Consider, for instance, this bit of colorful imagery: . Now being Hebrew scholars all, you understand this

aggadah. It images the good Lord sitting, rather impatiently, and nudging the young bachelor from time to time until he's twenty years old, when are you going to get married? Twenty have come and gone and the young man is still single. God addresses to him rather pointed and acid remarks which need not be translated. Now, the language is metaphoric. No one ever imagined God as a hectering mother, anxious to get her arms around another grandchild in the family, but if the language is fanciful the impact is clear. Judaism approves of marriage. Judaism disapproves of marriage long delayed. And lest any of my high school friends run home this noon and badger dad, the rabbi told me that as soon as we finish a year of college Johnny and I can get married, let me assure these putitive Talmudic scholars that if they were lonely, glance further down the page and they will find in this text that another authority takes exception to this of bachelorhood and moves it up to twenty-two, still another to the age of twenty-four. Judaism did not believe in anyone pushing another into marriage or rushing into marriage carelessly, foolishly. And yet, Judaism saw sound and valid reasons to encourage men not to delay marriage long after they have moved into the adult season. Why so?

Adolescence is a time of fervid fancy. The impulses which burgeon within steam up, cloud our vision, we daydream, we become disconcerted, our work suf-

fers, we cannot concentrate on the studies at hand because of the amorous thoughts that cross from time to time our mind. And so the rule is that a man first marry and then undertake his graduate studies. Presumably, after he has settled down and fulfilled himself he will be able to concentrate on the preparation for life, that is, if there's not a baby or two squalling in the background.

Seriously, Judaism had greater for a man than a student's grade in en-

couraging that marriage not be long delayed. The man or the woman who remains overlong single tends to enter that shadowed world of furtive meetings and of secretive alliance, and now these secret liasons are not only unseemly but they are psychologically and spiritually unhealthy. Something very sad happens to the human soul. Living a life of clandestine relationship we tend to confuse lust and love, tenderness and conquest. We lose sight of the fundamental, the deep relationship which can exist between a man and a woman and learn, habituate ourselves, only to that relationship which existed in the passionate hour. The senses are coarsened. The gay set pays a high price for its high living. It loses the ability to settle down, to settle in, to enjoy another human being fully for days and weeks and months and years, for a lifetime. Strangely, our Bible gives a very apt description of the playboys and the party girls of our age noisy, restless, incapable of staying at home, finding peace in the quiet hour with another human being.

Judaism encouraged early marriage not because it wanted to encourage young people to be precipitous and hasty but because it wanted to preserve the simple honesty, the directness, the openness which can and must exist between two human beings who are going to spend a lifetime together. They wished to avoid the hardening, the coarsening, the vulgarity, the turning in on one's self, the reduction of love to lust, which prevents marriage as a solid, sacred, profound meaningful institution. Now Judaism, as you know, insists on constancy in marriage and encourages continence before marriage. And yet, despite these traditional rules of our faith, you will not find any prudery or any censoriousness, the thin lip, in the literature or the speech of our pulpit and of our teaching. Judaism rejoiced in love. Judaism took great pleasure in the romance, the touching of the hands, the embrace which unites two young people. There are three things which are too wonderful for me, the four of which I cannot know: the way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon the rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; the way of a young lad and a lass. Now, of course, there are cultures which have had unwarranted delicacies which have been prudish and yet ro_ mantic. The Victorian novel is filled with gallant gentlemen and glorious women and

2

love triumphant and so let me add that Judaism never used the euphimisms, the delicacies to describe the physical passion. Judaism did not avert its glance from the Judaism had its brides bring to the altar a Bible in which it had ultimate embrace. quite deliberately put some very direct, very evocative love poetry, how beautiful are thy steps and sandals, o prince's daughter, the rounding of thy thighs are like the links of a chain, the works of the hand of a skilled workman; thy havel is like a round goblet wherein is no mingled wine wanting; thy belly is like a heal of wheat set about with lilies; thy two breasts are like two fawns that are twins of a gazelle; thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes are as the quiet pools of blue water in Hesbun by the gates of Betrimon; thy head is like carmel and the hair of thy head beautiful and adorned with purple; the king is held captive in the tresses thereof; how fair and how pleasant art thou, o love, for delights.

Physical relationship matured into a spiritual relationship, marriage, is a kedushim, a holy thing, a gracious and wonderful gift of a gracious wondrous Cre-Judaism never averted its eyes to the full range, ecstasy, fulfillment possible ator. in marriage. Marriage was not a concession to the flesh as it seemed to so many other It was the fulfillment of man with woman. Judaism rejoiced in love. When a faiths. scholar was busy with his studies, with his Torah, and he heard the singing and the dancing of a wedding procession passing by he must leave off his studies and join in that singing and dancing even if he does not know the marriage family. How shall we explain then that the very teaching, the very Torah which this scholar was to leave off studying set up high barriers between that relationship which is licit and that which is illicit, between marriage, between the casual relationship and the affair? What difference does it make that society gives its imprimotur, that the family smiles in agreement to the love arrangements between two people? Isn't marriage simply a legal contrivance, family taboo, a social necessity created largely because if the family wants to protect its good name or to protect its invested capital, its inheritance, or perhaps, and probably most of all, because the family wants to protect the rights

3

of the children.

You know, Judaism is concerned with the children. Judaism is concerned with matters of inheritance, but Judaism is not concerned with marriage primarily as a social institution. If it had been, if the social pressure, the religious pressure of the seventh commandment had existed simply to shore up and to buttress the shaky walls of the home of marriage, Judaism would never have written into its fundamental law that divorce may be had without cause and without establishing grounds. Judaism was concerned not with the social institution, the sociological necessity of marriage, but with the emotional context, the love, the lack of love, the intimacy or the lack of intimacy, the growth or the stultification which can or does or does not exist between a husband and a wife.

You and I, every man child, was born an animal, born an animal but with a capacity to become human. And not all human beings succeed in becoming human beings. Not all are given the opportunity. Some apparently lack the capacity. Some never pass that barrier and transform themselves from the world of impulse and of instinct into the world of reason and of control where the pattern of life has a certain dignity. Now, the animal has passion that requires the flood tide of release. He rots and he walks away. He does not need companionship. He tends to walk alone. Promiscuity is an animal relationship. The human being enlarges lust into love. He knows the flood of passion. He knows the flood tide of release, but he has the ability to create a relationship which will be close and dear and near in the cool night long after the passion has been exhausted, in the long years when the fires of passion have dimmed.

4

This far more extensive, far more profound deeper relationship exists only between human beings. It requires reason, discretion, discrimination, steadfastness, loyalty, prudence, careful care, tenderness, sensitivity, kindness, gentleness, a whole range of virtues of which a human being is capable. Were it not the good Lord had given us a love which is far grander than lust, ^{what} terribly frightening and maddening place this world would be. Promiscuity, sandpapers, ruffles, coarseness, the nerve endings, 5

sensitivity, which allows us to relate openly with another human being, and it is for this reason that Judaism proscribes the illicit, the extra legal relationship. What is wrong with a casual liason? It's very casual. It confuses lust and love. It leads us to believe that it is the presumed ecstasy of the moment and not the intimacy of a lifetime which is crucial to human relationship. And what is wrong with an intense relationship between two people who, they believe, are deeply in love but who have not consecrated that love and made it open? Its very intensity. Imagine a blossom atop the spring stalk. It waits to be opened. It has within itself great radiance and great beauty, but what is the greatest danger it faces? Premature thaw, that sudden breath of warm air which will cause it to open, tentatively to be sure, and then having opened it has no protection against the frost and the freezing which blights the petals, destroys their capacity to unfold any further and they fall, withered, to the ground. A flower requires a steady warmth, a steady sun, and so does love. Love opens, tentatively, quiveringly, and if the love is unsteady, uncertain, thwarted, we turn in on ourselves, we wither, we are afraid to open up again to another human being. We become hardened. It's difficult for one who loves us later to find within us the full range of expression, the capacity to love entirely which a solid marriage requires.

And lest you believe that it is only the innocent, the naive, who suffer from this intimate relationship which is not open and above board, I would have you read any of the autobiographical diaries of the Casanovas of our age. They are written, dear friends, in self-pity. They are documents of search, the search for

simplicity, for an honesty, for an integrity, for a love which they gave up long long ago.

Robby Henelei, the tanah, the third century, is quoted to the effect that a man without a wife is without joy, without blessing and without goodness. Now, on the surface of it, taken literally, this teacher is incorrect. We all know of single people who can testify to their great zest and pleasure in life. Rather I believe, he he suggested, there is a heightened joy, a unique blessing, a special of well-being which comes only to the person who knows true love. What is that sense? He has opened himself, she has opened herself, to life, to feeling, to beauty, to tenderness, to the world. Those of us who know not love live in a rather neurotic world of our own fears and frustrations. We are tied up within ourselves and when we offered love no one would take this from us. But those of us who have known love, who have known what it is to be part of another human beings hopes and fears and plans and dreams to be intimate, to share a vision, know that we have become more sensitive to the world about us, to other people, to other beauties, to other experiences and have become the finer human being for it.

Man, dear friends, is born sealed. There is sealed within us at birth a thousand talents, but if we do not train our brain the intelligence stultifies. If we do not exercise the body the body weakens. If we are not given the opportunity to share, to love, love withers and dies. Much has been written of late of the love-starved child, the child who reached out for a parent, for the world, and found himself anonymous. These children are unteachable because they are unreachable. They are unreachable because when they reached out for a mother's embrace there was no mother to embrace them. The laughter, the excitement, the happiness, the friendship of our children testifies to our love in them, but as our children grow they require more than the love of a parent, a love of the experienced for the young. They require the love of one of their own age group, one of an equal, so there is the tumultuous friendships of adolescence, and beyond that that supreme relationship which is the love of a young man for a young lady, and in this relationship, in its surprise, in its suddenness, in its beauty

6

become alive. They can share life with others for what is success if you have no one

to share it with. And what is the vision that we keep imprisoned deep within if it

remains shackled? What is the sunset but the end of another day if there is no one to watch it with hands clasped. The man without a wife is without joy, without blessing, without goodness. To become a full human being you really need a happy marriage, but you know, many marriages are not happy. Perhaps the happy marriage, the marriage which knows the fullness of love is the exception and not the rule. The woman of valor, who can find? Her price is far above rubies. There are volumes and volumes written as to the reason for the unhappy marriage and statistics upon statistics on the number of marriages that end in divorce but few statistics of the number of marriages that sustain themselves but are not marriages in the real sense. Why do these marriages fail?

Many were mismatched, yes, even in this age where we give to the young their head, many are mismatched. But I must say that I enjoy watching the young people shake their heads at the medieval, archair patterns of our ancestors where the family arranged the marriage and the shadfun was the go-between. At the same time they'll go to a dance and they feed into a computer their hobbies and their interests and their talents and their hopes and the computer, this whirling, mindless, brainless creature suggests to them the young person with whom they will be happy, the modern IBM shodhom.

But I suggest that beyond all the physical and economic and psychological reasons for which marriages break up, they fail largely, I believe, because we do not bring into marriage the proper model or image of what marriage must be. Why do young people marry? Why does anyone marry? For passion, for fulfillment, to get a leg up economically, to get some status, to marry into a business, because everyone else in the set is being married, because we fear loneliness, because mother or father told us we had to, there are a hundred reasons why people marry, and they bring into marriage their separate personalities and their separate ambitions and they walk in marriage their separate ways. Very few marriages fail because people fail their responsibilities to their business, to their children, to their community, to their companions, to the home. Where do they fail? In their responsibilities to each other. And why do they

7

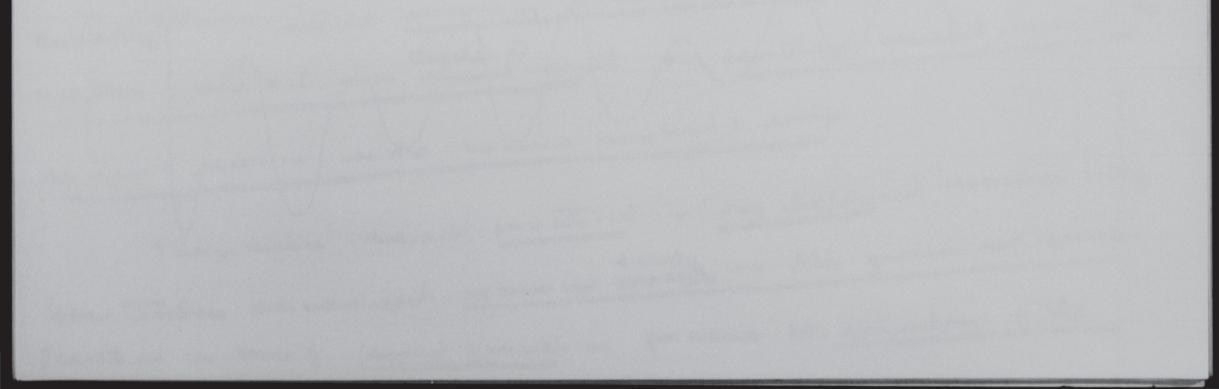
fail? Because marriage is not seen in our society as essentially and fundamentally and integrally as one, and one thing only, a husband and a wife, a man and a woman, a friend and a friend, a lifelong companion and a lifelong companion. It's wonderful that marriage leads to children. It's wonderful that marriage continues the generation of a family. It's wonderful that marriage encourages a man in a business or a woman in her social responsibilities, but fundamentally these aren't important. What is

crucial in a marriage is that it grows from passion to tenderness, that an intimacy develops between those who are married which sustains and encourages and supports. How do you fail in marriage without really trying?

By working hard at your business; by being a good mother; by doing all that's asked of you in the community; by going to all the parties to which you are invited; by entertaining your husband's business responsibilities; by being a good citizen; that's how you fail in marriage if, if you forget to give the best that you have, your freshest hours, your most eager thoughts, to the one whom you love. Many who marry have a room mate and not a soul mate. Many whom I know who are married I call intimate strangers and they're growing more estranged each year from each other. When do they see each other? Grousing in the morning, grumbling at night, rubbing sleep from their eyes at dawn, too tired to talk in the evening, sacrificing always some responsibility, forgetting the only responsibility which they really have is to each other, the responsibility, the love they share.

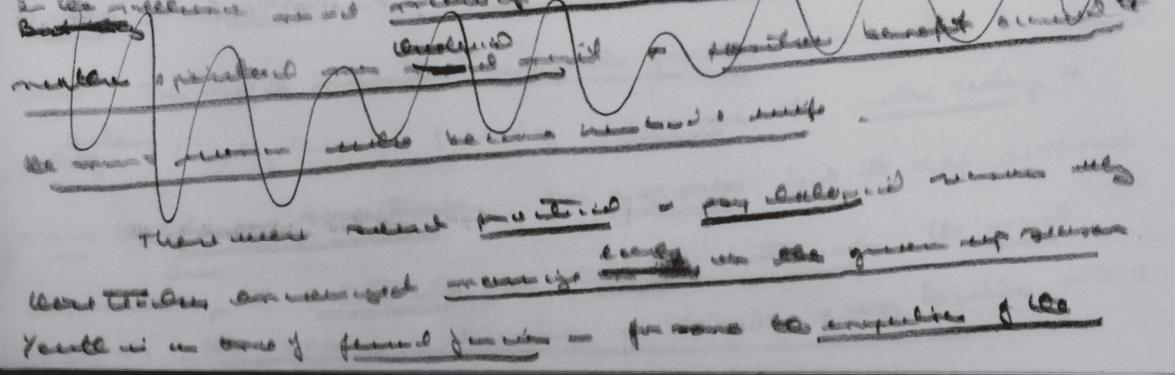
Let me turn then in conclusion to this old teaching of Rabbi Hanileiz. A husband without a wife, a wife without a husband, is without joy, without blessing and without goodness. A husband without one to share his very being, his greatest interests; a wife without one to share her grandest hopes, her deepest fears; a husband without a wife, a wife without a husband, is without joy, without blessing and without goodness. Need I add that a husband with a wife and a wife with a husband can accept the buffets of life and no joy and no goodness and know that they are truly blessed.

8

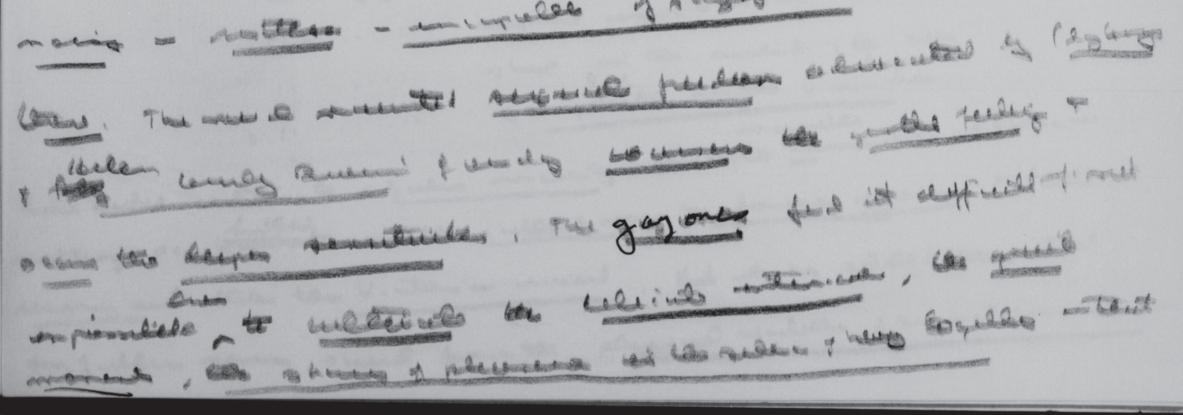


There are tonies when the Televel was entranger enorged and the little of the description of the description of the second of the company is a special property property is a special property pr

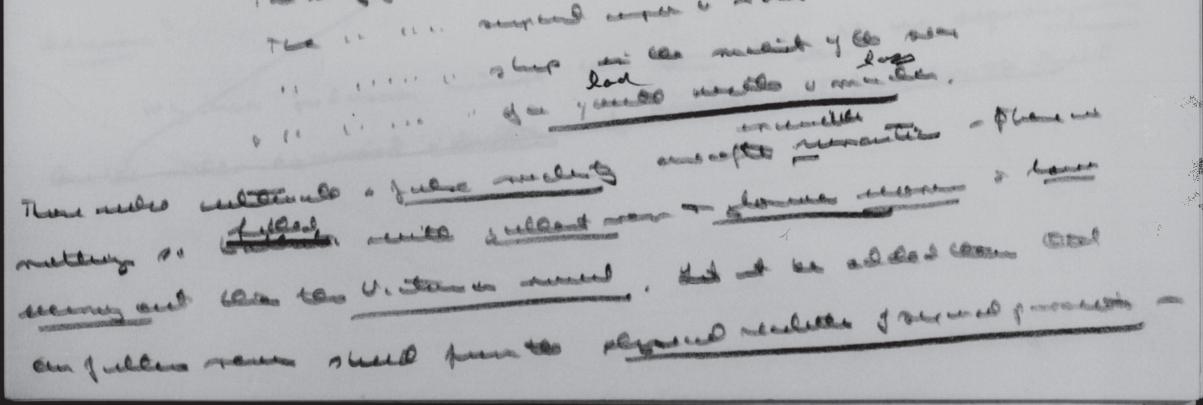
2 ile adelina and and y give a many and the

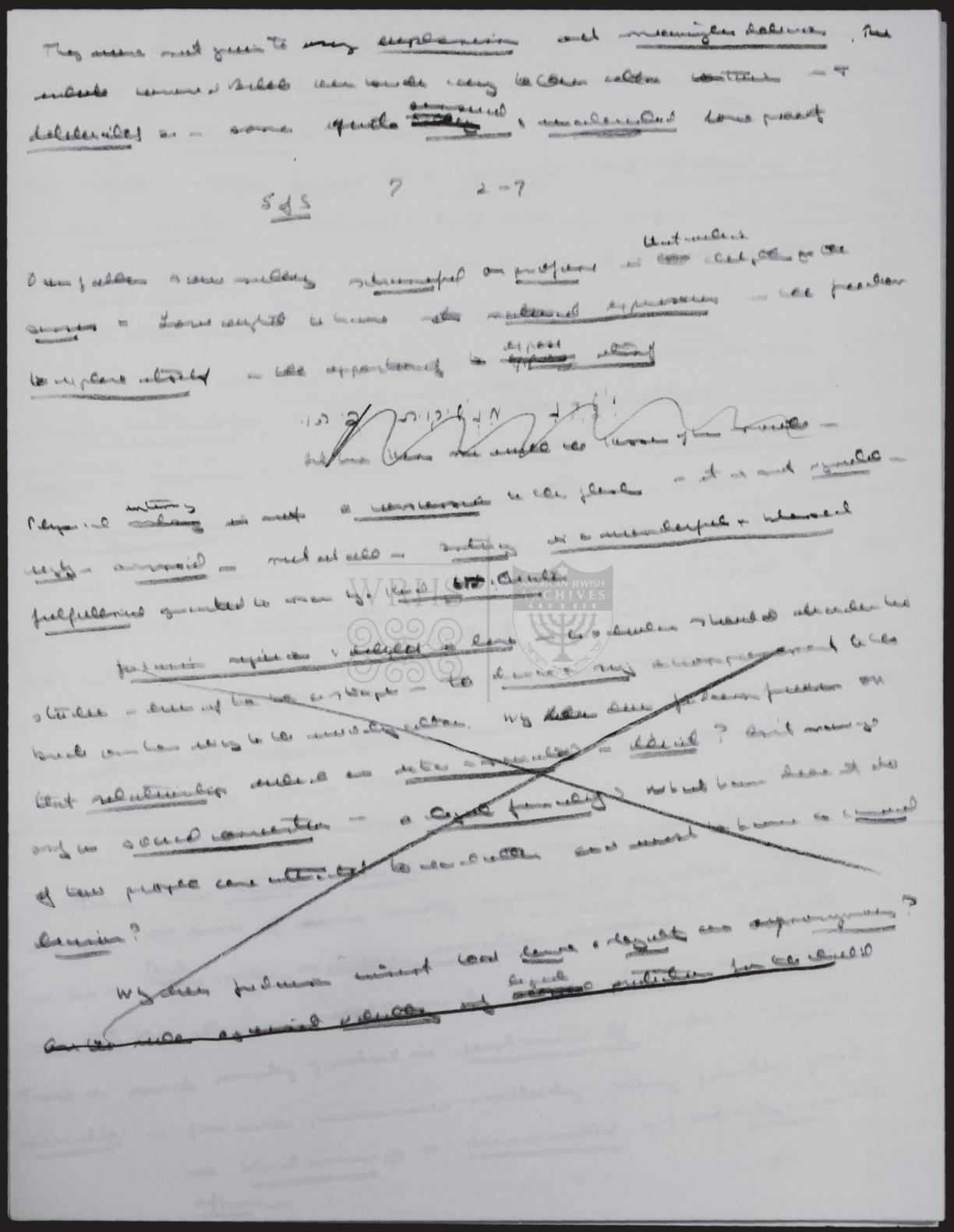


flash we a constant di Catter, The staded dy deren anount alle tem constate on he studie - no le mon a 253 and began at a state of a many and a life 11/2 c 11 ley reque publishes There i sattles as julpices de mande Herdend in were and the barren of the day - (the is with the we brune from the second to the subject weil a company of Concerned, the relation was assessed and the date and the the des brans vel unie ju alere beste der mune ige bes chaleyet anner under just with a stadion music a future master and dealetters because, which and and are and a second in Millinking and more of , but by one milting rapilly while the be when in fine & bleen WRES the RECENCE buy & men and buppen Constant in me work (States (States) aixia an 10,200 + foreid day happined neig - mitter - incredet groups hurs

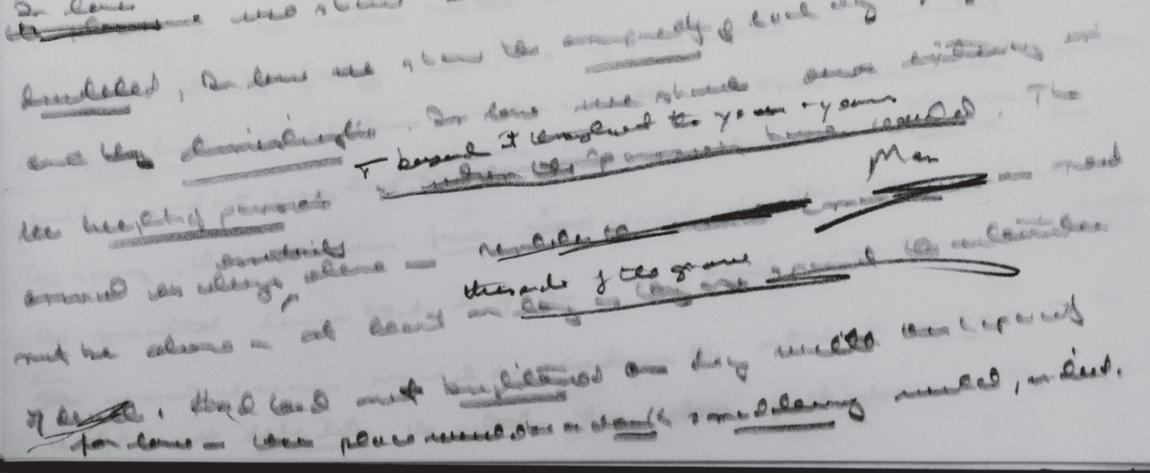


which is love - endering - which - to love which weall would would redeup to, after age in home (a fun y procent, To the get of and the second to proto the immediant to proto meaning makes, years well to preficed worker for the pulling , has lycely & the letterner a trul ached many request, mer & deeren andre hungen the tradeit of menning call & menning channel - feel at seffueto to selle it and need new ent on 23201 123 0412 activiter Esta The menor of carbon time " cancel dent has much come milles in cycalet of attended have & galesterprises there, Juderenies enjoyit an containing in many and en ellerge entening before menos when but the contractives in reiter product on the the cirrel crements alcut and . The correct to be fulfilled in T thuge and the ender a frence of the one in the property and the property of th connected elenant - a meandered goff o we bed, on fulton smiled on the moving & this of contalin Thursene ? were under and the two menceful from yours You y make a chance out The many of many le in card and The is an myend upon a meal

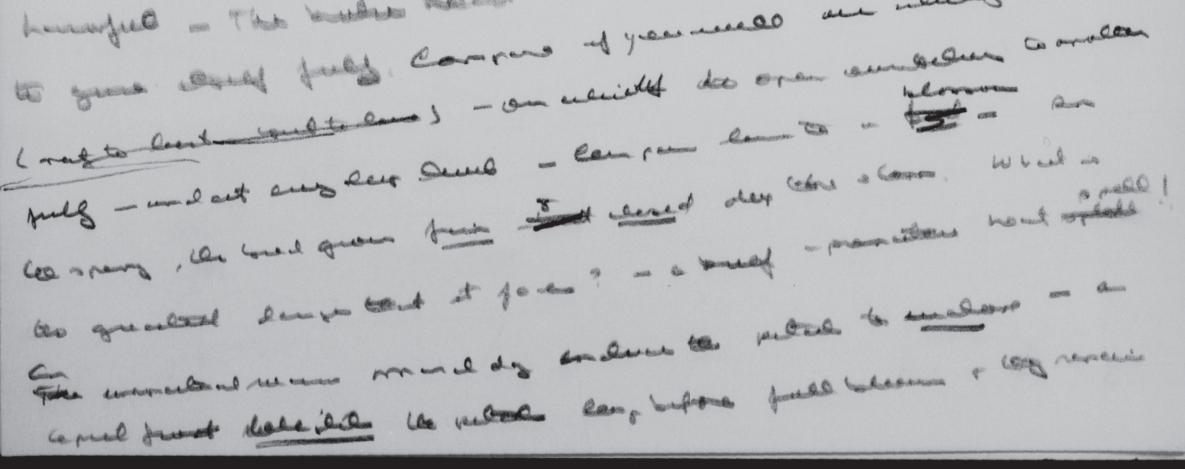




It meets to be a seed - theme A.M. - tough juce. where must emissing in contenies meters many a construction in a part of the second Jude while event to neve be flere to while all with - ite none bure permitters and peritained and a show could will be and the for the show would be and the show which of the mover you make it comenced and contained, man is been amonit - but weeks in give aprilite grunn rup with a human barry barry, mut all bulleres and genes the realized a need the more weller for and unde consume milling and commile mile - Her the attalles WRHS MERICAN JEWISH, ARCHIVES mucherele relation frances of the set and relationship And here berg town the pland of provide a general legel of released but he is complete of a quetter that we are a quetter that we are a quetter that the area of a quetter men lens synant for the second states a lever we show and the second in , is showing one way Surleled, a low we good to angreat a core ity , is showing



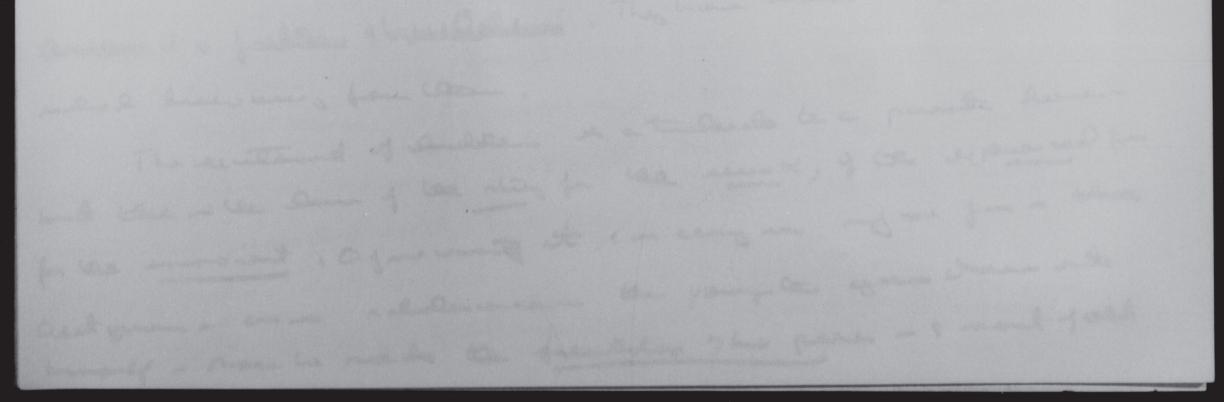
Julium worken and the enderseen & aulice of the the amount is a market when the between the Parma wind the day the merete i fait - les fulles mille d'alune cana munt lour mil A full anger - Pourfligues trangles on the water fullings which much her unspreg wellingthes and leave and to prevent. Can a an en l'ula frank with his larger I had cheedle and has been ed By the was more all works the but could and this found must be a ser land. monsiely mays much in the particular y denter WRHS MERICAN JEWISH ARCEIVIS INTERIOR PRODUCTION INTERIOR PRODUCTION INTERIOR mare less kunful - Was en a find willow & the Liend in the des demand of the house a ultre to be a set fre levere man of a life taken. It is not then the there were and the hauful - The bulks hardt is not a sound - and a second to gues any full corres of your an ulidy a ene



A sected and the Hearder as queeks to have affect ! 1° long man addre barns merelle , denne antellend for, uncount blamy, " un almentation " filtuly, of user, applicantelies in the of the second to the the egged apello hered la lete. "Ind in come and a both yes, and perturing blood. , a unpeller and reads and much Have and and I comple the intering of many of the former of a

non' housene race ould of me

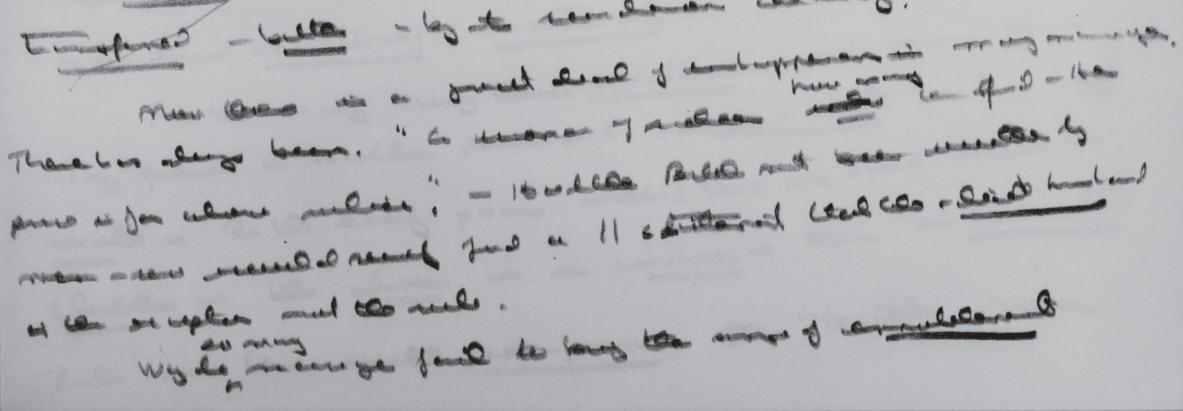
WRHS W



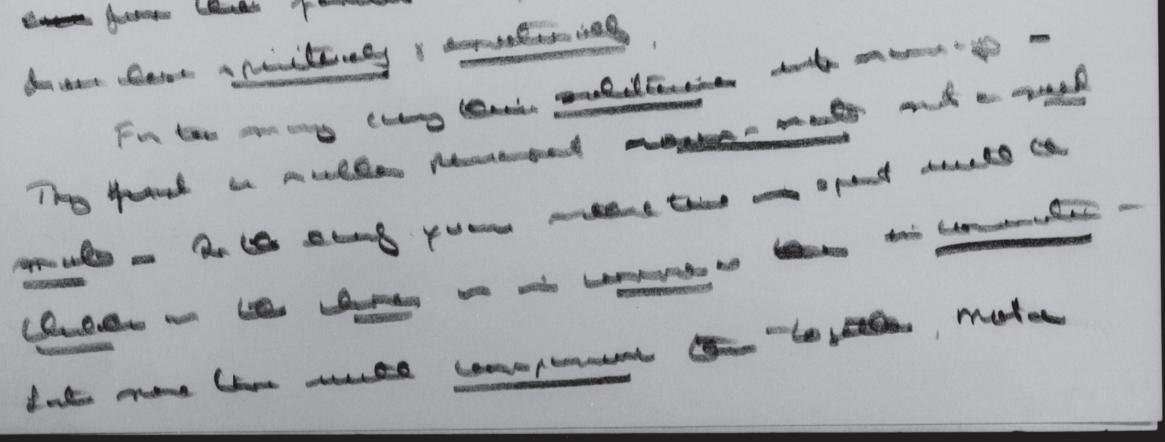
of male and the state of the man of the man of the second man the state of the second state of the second of the sec amps of header - build of some day and story, the substitutes underer & a traplice - Aparties du met and and the provedury and were due the a alline a Maria has made for the coperade to have a propped and the set of the second to Spectrue days a can a landeres presente marked of some there a free of these party and have the the elevel la ment and prode waters timet and caller tules are many placed and the provide of the provide and and the provide of the p Manufactor (any, but of the current to shall , to anothe freit, to see and Whether willing and whent, Die and here The granter of the many here you have intercally - but think the end in - the burn alment commence in which where a say we with withe and and and a level of the here we are the Know der musient en y plan was wear and a press of the offer in They have draw ours for much

mars & know were for com. The evillent of Quelder is a tubert to a promet love but the ite and I be the for the much, of the experied for file moient , Ognerente et con compos a for for - the det gues - and addresse the young the gree of the set hover - now he needs to freeding This pear - I mont fall

le nordefue allong y an alerday long, " tog me wer has no really - wy second we have an haded - Ques milled pt, meellost blamers , 8 uneland grackman " The franching & certifican marchine and presence his segural ster, mere adam is meet for a legalory to the - stands strutting - rouger and the a rectain sender love in mass will again met only an ment but in left. With in ances of low who are to show it will a week and prung y a mente ante della get i the main of the Ken and crepel = projected freky ender to a key i the se American when and a second and the open of the open of the course of the but to all allow . It is the have of money a mener we all allow un to love Lagad and and and ARCHIVES and the series of the series (200) W Those while and the states - regulates and Leel a many only a retuil - a level ale site mele stalle teen law for the acity the years - There were have three i regain a denter popul alter and there a query and as a setting that are require for les have been from trapped with the tender co.e...



I fulfalliont quela of themes been open King ? The recome and may - The works my burn Cases mon illes - yes and a the to and when we prese and from the state of a love of the confere a month for the second officers " So my it amald see that we your same to be remeny in the on the shulles the many pulse and the do he ma a have angeles and wants and the program mende, be again 1, malerer & 1/400 There are any meaning for the times and a second of the se militie (as cand and in the super well, and and and and and the second of the property of the second any when you so the trease is a second a to the second - for atter on a preserve long and a la anered have to go to show the "I we show in the public of mumber. The me works the menter has been the any one aparts writely come a cent with fill - The in the mappen and full makes mind - on the purity here a sube like where is seen geen to get a seen of the second the second of the seco Semilenullent legele tere antes - who use the off en for les forelle - ey a en for en alder - to And ber milterely & another ing,



Jeen much a shower and anti- the tom a they been mand attabled would and paramy yam. Kut menere at des relations prised here and it and manys at less impledence of the remainderthe - mal mit and but not their repeticies frequen a bellen - a bellen -Vacalest well at lange a contract de une de - the warden and when a second is a show a second of a second se and any blues war and the second of the breed and a Rx for hopp news yo - Yes much year and a you done your seen public - build think much a what You have inter , early underst you must do my multiply as breece " manufant RETS OCO OCO OCO OCO OCO

