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Rosh Hashanah, 1966.

#174

ROSH HASHANAH - 1966

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver

The Temple

September 14, 1966

Cleveland, Ohio

We prayed tonight for life - for a full year of life and more for ourselves and for our loved ones. We prayed tonight for joy and for blessing in the New Year. The more innocent among us spent this hour planning the good times and savoring the delights that await tomorrow. The more somber among us curbed our imaginations for we knew that each year is woven of the same stuff, a multi-colored thread alternately bright and gray. It is as the poet said: "Time heals all wounds but deals us fresh blows with its scythe." Life is the blessing but it is often a bruising blessing. Life is all that we have. It is infinitely precious to us, but it is so brief, so uncertain, and the way is often painful. Sometimes we must muster every ounce of strength we possess simply to carry on. Life is a kaleidoscope - life is confusion. So, quite naturally, on a day such as this, we pray for the wisdom to use life wisely. So, quite naturally, on a day such as this, our fathers advised us to consider again the mystery that is life, to ponder its riddles and to seek for understanding.

This evening I would follow this ancient way. There is no solution to the riddle of life, but every approach has its merit, every understanding gained its advantage. I propose to approach our subject by unfolding two of the classic illustrations of life. One illustration is Greek, the other is Jewish. Greek literature tells of a tyrant of Syracuse by the name of Diogenes who was the very model of a Greek autocrat. At a tyrant's court all honor and all opportunity depend upon the whim of the ruler. Courtiers

quickly develop the lackey's arts of flattery and sycophancy, and at this particular court none was more agile in this abasing art than a certain Damocles. Damocles boasted that he could bend the mood of the king to suit his fancy. But Digenes was no fool. One day he summoned Damocles to a banquet. He invited Damocles to sit in the seat of honor. He plied him with attention and with all matter of dainties and delicacies but Damocles enjoyed himself not one wit, for as he was being seated he looked up and saw dangling above his head an evil-looking sword, hanging there by a single slender thread. The importance of this legend is that it passed into Greek literature where it became the classic text of a simple truth: There is no security this side of the grave. Each of us is Damocles. When life is comfortable we become expansive and good-natured about it all. We look upon the home we have built and upon the opportunity which is ours as solidly founded, nothing can shake us. How wrong we are. In such moments we rather pride ourselves on the ease with which we make friendships, or on the important connections we have with people of quality. Some there be who pride themselves on their good looks and on the size of their inheritance. Of course, there are among us those of far more substantial accomplishment. Men and women who have honed their talents finely and who give to the world in thought and in art creations of quality and of merit -- men and women of first-rate professional competence, who have every reason to be proud of their investment of time and discipline. But, whether our achievements be substantial or trivial one truth applies to us all. Above us there hangs a sword.

In an instant we can be stripped of our achievements, of all that we possess. A sudden crippling disease strikes; the screech of brakes and of corpse to give the illusion of life. Each of us knows the grasshopper people

rubber on the pavement, too late; a merger and a manager is told to pare the personnel; there is a change in the policies of the nation and some men must go into exile, and some boys must go off to war. Each man is Damocles. This world makes no promises to us. There is no guarantee that tomorrow will be woven of the golden stuff of our dreams. Tomorrow is not even guaranteed. Life is not even fair. It does not reward decency and honorable ways. It does not protect the innocent. Reliability, moderation, learning, loyalty and love have been the hallmarks of the Jewish people for thousands of years and our reward has been almost universal calumny. In half the world today the reward for independence of spirit is the prisoner's cell. In Mississippi just this week a young boy was beaten to a bloody pulp. His leg broken. His crime? He obeyed his parents and the state and went to school.

There is a sword over our heads. The Greeks insisted that we must return again and again to the image of the Damoclean sword. Why? Because each of us is a liar. We lie to ourselves. We delude ourselves. We are afraid to look at life as it is, in the raw, so we shut our eyes and close our ears and build a private world of fancy and illusion. What a terrible price we must pay for these illusions, for the more vaulting our expectations, the more shattering the fall.

Few of us dares to see life for what it is. Uncertain. Raw. Cruel. Brutal. Each of us is Damocles. What fact is more routine than the intrusion of death? Who is there so innocent that he has not met death? And yet does not each of us know those overly gentle folk who build a wall of verbal circumlocutions and euphemism around the fact of death? They shy from the word 'death' - better 'he has passed on'. They pretty up the corpse to give the illusion of life. Each of us knows the grasshopper people

who play and procreastinate, who put off, who assume somehow that youth will remain and that vigor and strength and beauty will last to the very edge of the grave. I used simply to tick off these people as shallow and selfish. Now I believe the fault goes deeper. They are blind or rather they have blinded themselves to the most universal of truths - the certainty of death and the uncertainty of its timing. And the consummate tragedy is that when death reaches its chill hand into their home it is precisely these overly romantic folk, these grasshopper people, who whine and complain, who feel themselves particularly singled out by God. 'Why me?' they cry. Why not? We are all mortals. The grace of grief and the strength to live comes only to those who have accepted life with all of its privation, with all of its limitation, for what it is. Those of us who have the childish notion that we stand center stage and all the world revolves around us - are in for a rude shock and a rude awakening. Yet, psychology tells us that there are many who refuse to grow up or wake up, or who, having once seen the raw power of life, draw back into a private dream world, into a tragedy all their own.

Each of us is Damocles. How busy all of us are drawing about ourselves some philosophy of encouragement. We say to ourselves: 'the headlines may be black, the future may seem uncertain but mankind will manage. We will muddle through. We always have.' We pooh pooh the prophets who speak of the probability of another war and of the possibility of an end to civilization. When I push the optimist for his proof he speaks to me of the power of reason. He speaks to me of the promise of education. He speaks to me of the benefits of our science. But I cannot help wondering if he is not speaking to keep up the facade of his own courage. On what does he base this confidence?

Where is the evidence that mankind has developed a new courage and a cleaner moral vision, that we have broken once and for all the cycle of greed and stupidity which has brought about the recurrent wars and devastations of the past. Some of us, I am afraid, make the mistake of confusing the "Heights" for the world; the easy confraternity of people of relative abundance with the bitter struggle for survival in most of the world. Perhaps we can excuse ourself. This is the only world we know. The world with which we are familiar. But is it really? Most of us lived through or grew up in the abject poverty of the depression and many of us fought in the most barbarous of all World Wars or in the little lingering wars of the last decade. Hitler and Stalin were not medieval monsters but our contemporaries. We ate dinner at our tables while Auschwitz and Hiroshima were burning.

We speak confidently of the power of reason. Well, what is more reasonable than the United Nations and wherein ^{is} its power? We speak encouragingly of the promise of education. What country was better educated than Nazi Germany and which country was ever more barbarous? We speak of the benefits of our science. It was our own nation which used our science to erase cities from the face of the globe. Look up if you dare. But so many complain when one reminds them of the sword of Damocles. Why do you want to strip us of our hope? The world is maddening if we are not encouraged somehow to carry on. Why must we live in the bleak world of chill and stark tragedy? A Greek would answer simply, and his answer would be valid. 'It is such false confidence which precipitates the very doom which you fear. "All will be well." "Pat the saint on the back and go back to earning a living." "Linger over your leisure." "We'll somehow muddle through." It is this kind of indifference which saps the will of men, which lulls us to sleep until suddenly we have toppled over the abyss! What virtue is there in living in tragedy? To the Greek there

was the virtue of dignity. He had no use for the whimpering or the complaining of men. He would have felt out of place in our age which delighted to pour out its petty complaints and give expression to all its grievances. At least let man wrap himself in the mantle of his dignity - be proud and strong. Let him walk the way with courage. The poet and essayist Epictetus phrased it this way:

"I must die, must I die groaning?

I must go to prison, but need I complain?

I must go into exile. Can't I go with a stout heart and
with a smile and in peace?"

There is much to commend this stark philosophy of the Greeks to our bloated age. So many of us are so engulfed in leisure and in abundance and in things that we whine and complain over the most trivial of frustrations. Many of us live in the slough of self-pity. We expect the world to dance to our tune, to present us with all manner of delight and when the least attention is missing, when someone forgets to pay us a compliment, to ask about our health, to consider our sensibilities, we are bitter. We waste days in sad complaint.

There is much truth to this Greek wisdom but it is not the fullness of truth. For if there is a sword hanging over our heads there is also a cornucopia by our hands. If the future is a dangerous place it is also a place of delightful opportunity. The new year is foreboding. It is also full of promise. The Greeks came to their philosophy of resignation from their concept of evil. They looked upon evil as part of the natural order of things, as placed on this earth by the gods. One could not escape calamity. War, pestilence, famine, murder most foul, greed and all the rest are integral parts

of a fore-ordained pattern of life.

You remember the story of Pandora's box. The first men had grown in knowledge. The gods feared that men would become their rivals. So Zeus fashioned a beautiful maiden and a magical box and ordered Pandora to come down to the earth and spread the word that this box contained all manner of celestial blessing. However, he stamped the box with these words: "The Gods forbid the opening." Zeus counted on human curiosity; and sure enough, When Pandora told men that the box contained wonderful blessings, men reached for the box and ripped open the lid and in an instant all the dark angels had spread across the world. Ever after man has been burdened by all the evils which beset him. To the Greeks evil is ubiquitous, inevitable, but to the Jew evil is largely accidental. Evil is not God-ordained but manufactured by man. Handcrafted. We are the perpetrators and creators of war. We are the perpetrators and creators of slavery. We are the perpetrators and creators of the burdens under which men groan. The Rabbis put it this way: "The sword came into the world because of the justice being perverted, and because of men who render wrong decisions." Which is another way of saying that the Hough riots occurred because of years and years of pointless meetings downtown which ended without help to our city, because of slums and rats, because of the cruelty of men to men, because of inadequate education and lack of opportunity and all the rest.

But what man has brutalized man can civilize. To the Jew life was not only a burden to be borne but a gift of God. The future was not only dark and chill but throbbing and full of promise. So the Jewish legend. When the Jews came out of Egypt and crossed the Red Sea to their freedom, Moses determined to bring the people to the mountain of revelation, to Sinai. As the tribes

approached Sinai God suddenly reached down, ripped out the mountain by its roots, and held Sinai over the heads of the Jews and said, "Either the Torah or the mountain will crush you." Now the image is clear. There is a dark shadow over our head. A sword if you will. We have no reason to be confident that mankind will somehow muddle through or that we can sit back and relax and wait for that wonderful day. There is danger. War is possible. The Bible is quite specific. There was a time when God let the mountain fall. In the Sixth Century B.C.E. the Judean Kingdom was corrupt and venal and idolotrous and God let the mountain fall. The people were destroyed and the remnant was taken into exile.

So it can be with us, but it need not be. A war which will end all wars because it will end mankind is possible, perhaps probable; but it is not inevitable - if we accept the Torah. Now these words are easily said but not easily implemented. Toray is not a life of ordinary routine enlightened by a few ritual candles. Torah is not a life of coarseness and rudeness with a once-a-year sacring of weaklings who are timid in their virtues and terrified in their vices. Torah is not the life most of us lead. Torah is a life in which we uproot ourselves from indifference and selfishness and plant ourselves solidly in the world of social concern, of justice and of truth. Torah is not a sheltered life. It is a life of action. Torah is deed and not good intentions. Torah is holiness not banality. Torah is honor and not calculation. Torah is patience with need and impatience with greed. Torah is conviction, strong conviction, and not easy affability. Torah is honor - truth - justice, a life which has dignity and strength and purpose to it. For a nation Torah is the breaking of swords and not the stockpiling of arms. Torah is the breaking off of battle and not the escalation of war. Torah is the breaking down of prejudice and the breaking up of

all that makes for poverty and ignorance and illiteracy, and the breaking away from the unearned advantages of privilege. Torah is wholesomeness and a nation devoted to justice for all its people.

It has been the wisdom of our people through the long centuries that all the political equations are reduceable ultimately to a moral equation: Either accept the Torah or the mountain will fall. The price of our dream is a life of discipline and sanctity. There is no other way. Yet most of us lack the courage. Most of us prefer the easy way. We reinterpret Torah as conformity, as respectability, as good manners, as good intentions, as being agreeable, as being successful. As Jews we still stand at Sinai. The mountain is over our heads. We who have a civilizing tradition certainly cannot be numbered among the grave diggers of civilization. It is not our metier. We are historically builders and the teachers and, by God, we ought to be in the front rank of the builders and the teachers. So we have each year the season of renewal, this opportunity for return, for stock-taking, for awareness. Where is the measure? The Torah is the measure. Here is a man. Here is the measure. How do we measure up? What are we going to do about it?

The judgment, the private judgment, each man must make of his soul. We come of noble stock. We come from a noble tradition. Our people have given the vision and the way to mankind. Have the courage to accept it.

Rabbi, you say, encourage me, preach to me words of comfort. There is only one word of comfort I can give you and that is "be a son of God." There is no encouragement except the possibility you create. Through your deeds, through your love, through your sacrifice, through your citizenship, through your achievement, through your decency the mountain can stay firmly in the hand of God.

We pray this night for life, for a full measure of life, and more for ourselves and for our children. We pray this night for blessing and for joy in the coming year. Tonight we add a third prayer: For the strength to grasp hold of the teaching which has been for centuries our own: To live a life which will give our world its hope and chance. Amen.



To-night

We prayed for life - a full year of life and more

"... blessings & joy as the NY.

The more unpleasant & confused among us planned the good times and
enjoyed anticipating delight. The more thoughtful kept their eyes on
their uniqueness. Each year is a season of its own multi-colored
stuff - alternately loved & gloomy. "This head cold season - oh
how our hearts feel blown with its scythe".

Life is bleeding - but at times a brisk bleeding. It is all over here -
but not all over - is truth

unstable

full of pain, it requires all the uncertainty mostly
we can ^{just} mouth to make a stupid way. Tonight we were prayed for life,
most of us added a prayer for the children to live - Life has so
many moods & aspects - the dark of fear and the sublimity of love - the
quick severity and the fighting darkness - gentle sunlight - gentle rain &
the farthest battlements of the elements - But we need understanding element
all - understanding of the human mystery - deeply.

~~No man can order the mystery of life. Each man must seek meaning
in its depths. Forgetting the~~

2 purposes, also seeing that we explore the mystery together; to
unfolding 2 of the diverse distinctions of life - one break on other
between -

R.H. Tucker

Time gone & time yet to be

The recalled & lost yet to be remembered

Bitter sweet experience and constant expectation

This day we pay to life - a full year of life and more

The unmistakable & confused plan can reveal the unhelpful power
to become time itself

For even as we pay for life, we acknowledge that life is not an
unblemished blessing. Life is all we have - yet it is brief

unmistakable

unmistakable

So an now hopeful thought dwell on the "goodness" of the N.Y. and
see most thoughtful prayers ^{11.11.34 N.Y. P.M.} ask simply for the strength to bear the
year with dignity - to walk straight [^] along a way which would be
challenged & difficult.

It is unmistakable these thoughts - for they are unmistakable - by way
of unmistakable 21st century unmistakable of antiquity - one Greek - the other
unmistakable

Philone knew of a certain Dionysius, friend of Syracuse, who was
as a notorious official Greek autocrat. At a typical court, however,
opportunities depend on the ruler's whim. Location elsewhere
the Rader's talent of flattery and sycophancy - and a Syracuse
more over more skilled at playing up to the tyrant than Dionysius -
he even boasted of his talent & its profit. D. was no fool, one
night he arranged a wonderful banquet and placed Dom. at
the seat of honor, Dom. was placed under delirium of food & drink
and was the center of the tyrant's attention - but Dom. enjoyed himself
not at all - for D. had been & by a single grape of all

The Greeks considered this the consequence of all evil. Let each
man see the sword hanging so menacing. They returned to draw the sword open
& again. Why? Because they said most people have a hidden capacity
for self-deception. We shut our eyes & close our ears - & build up
a mask ward of our affection. We refuse to accept life as it is now -
as it is. And we end by paying a bitter price for our unpleasant, for
more vulgar our expectation; the more shattering our fall!

^{none can}
bury ~~the~~ the commercial fact of death - but many do.
Lovers said who invited survivors "he has passed on" - who put
up the dead as if the man still breathing, all about in the
gross happy people - who play and put off & procrastinate, & will
marvel at their selfishness - ^{2nd} let it be so much selfishness
as emotional blindness. This is wrong. Youth needs to be
grown. Death has not entered on the plane of being. But it has of us,
what is passed the too quick word - the falling aptitude - the part
of romantic fun who are played into the arms of grief. Life is a
play enjoying for the benefit. They are old with the eyes and
more the one a dark and thrusting, and, as it is, is terrible
damn - Self pity follows on the line

The greatest grief comes about to those who know death, & expect
death - who have watched human beings in the world as it is -
who have watched the end

Each of us is Pan. A small about the city and a human world
of confusion & hope, marked with some modest things, men
open to me of the power of reason & of the power of ad of the
benefit of the product of our own. Standard values the confusion -
and the more one is confident and the more firmly comforted
and. How can we forget that S.H. is not the world but

any can - dare believe reflecting offhand might be missed one
of days. Perhaps make no other st. to make to judge of. Can now!
most of us know the anguished power of the depression
may of us forget in the most barbarian of all W.W.
The anguished builders of bible & stolen men in our eye & not matter -
so was unclarity & heredity - Asian prayer & american - us
rights.

P. look up!

Yours truly for a terrible headache.

On what do you base your trust in the power of reason? what is
more reasonable than the U.N. & what
is the power?

... .. power of ad.? what is the matter

... .. admitted the Nazi Germany
which was never barbarous

... .. imposed products of our power
... .. which can even matter under the feet of
american city under atomic power.

My attitude was desperate! It is better enough would withstand nothing in
of hope. Perhaps - but ^{these families &} your children will you & confide you & not
you of the power to act. The hearten the very holocaust was all from
for us to us "all would be well" it doesn't matter if you longer
as you observe, I at the point on the road, & get back to among
a being. No cause in months a fight. Keep your friend you my need
them on another day.

My attitude was desperate! In order that we may live with some
measures of dignity. Can men be helped & confide to help.
Who then truly friend? The city which is only one to frustrated

We have made of our material - rough, heavy,
warm, and musty, crude, hard. - Only one
unaged gift had no scent - the gift of hair.

End, to 100000, was uliginosa 140000 to 100000 on the side
~~was, 100000~~
~~was, 100000~~ End, to 100000, was 100000 + 100000
 End - all was into the water and was not in the water

crafted - all came into the world long before our day.
The sword, the rubber band, cigarette the pencil because of
justice ^{being} degraded; because of justice being perverted, & because of
these under money degradation.

[illegible]

Death was in avoid, Disease still there - Death was
 becoming more a battle but - Reynold Quaker & Leaving the other
English of life we make a turn home, "I can do nothing more
 "unless some man rejoins," "then man say saying", "Let us
 not mistake any more than the quaker if an answer is not
 of life. The year refused to be satisfied with a turning of the
and pretense, "my hand must stand for our down", "with the word".
 background left me still you can understand 11 to the Reynold Quaker.
 As is found in the mid, "it's a simple story read - no more than the
 legal text under the of down seems to divine - but read up
 the mt. which is our heart saying: "the quaker the turn
 or avoid under the avoid",

~~There~~ are several kinds of sea pines
there is no south pine because very valuable species - sand another
would introduce much else change.

The first record was assigned to Smith his case & to be of. This
is something more than a haphazard business - it is a systematic system.
First is something more than a mere business - there have of it
then power to transfer the power of it.

There are no further ~~to be~~ sup. - in a round one ~~the~~ hand -
 2 can a pull before the trial. The mill-lane and under the bridge
 appears good to me. y. m. - Lewis - have pulled the net. and by the way
 held on the hand again. "Ethan says the Tread is the best
 under the water."

The way we

There is no account yet of his grave. Each day a monument.
Do not wait in London.

[illegible]

AL

En savoir l'usage et les avantages.

The remainder of our stay was uneventful

but all are now under - the new series.

The future is much different & better - but also much poorer -
"My new world is Toned" "of new world is nothing of life and mind"

digress & conclude. The lesson, I have to add is not a very

comprehended.

Find us on Monday 'at noon at London at noon

Total is not a halfhearted combination of weakness under
an armed ex-~~cess~~ ~~renew~~ + terrified at their need

Total is not conscious + vulgar rejected ~~unusually~~ ~~renewed~~ ~~dear~~
the pure field represents reason

Total is no more than a life represented from the side of reality + endless +
represented in the scale of human nature + an absolute number to judge.
From independent + no matter practice Total - for Total is a

a response and - shallow as law

a life of concern for people - not preoccupation with bill + gull
billboard

a life of lifts : not of learning

" .. " strong opinion + not of an easy unusually needed
overlook the mind : the renewal

" sanctity + not of sanctity

" ... dead + not of live cannot

" .. when there is no gap between the search and practical
the life is lost

" .. of human activity + not calculation

" .. pattern with need + impulse with good

" .. "

In the life of nations Total

in the breakdown + renewal + not the stock policy of renewal

the breakdown of of builds + not its calculation

the " up of principles + the breakdown down of principles

the breakdown of

the budget of science + practical + needed another + change

a public order of help to learn when are confronted of what +

a technological continuum

The old state police

Justice

Right to

Peace -

like accept the peace to
hundred under the id. - men
have along understand and
the peace equation of let an
assured peace equation

~~Great the Total - many good things to be done~~
The Total is the peace of humanity dreams - but the high
price - ultimately more for an fully measured up to living - ruled
us total and both understand of an living equation - on a the my idea
put it the Total is an infinite series of the names of God, The Total is the
movement of us becoming human - by becoming divine, we have said
you before 2 accept - we accept. We try. We feel short. There can
series of peace + renewal. There can series of peace today + peace
today. There is Total - There is 2 - 2 have not fully met my
opportunity. I will by the N.Y. - I will blat myself and of my beliefs -
Break and of the whole chain of conscience. Since God is not some else,
For I see the mt. - it, where is God the end. I can not be among the
grand layers of quilt - for I can among these who have the vision of
Total to be used. I see the have. I will it to be, my life - my mind.

1966 ANNOUNCEMENTS

ROSH HASHANAH MORNING

Severance Hall

A CHILDREN'S SERVICE will be held in The Temple only at 2:15 p.m. today.

Children under school age should not be brought to these services. Parents are requested to sit with their children.

Rabbi and Mrs. Daniel Jeremy Silver will be at home to the members of The Temple and their families this evening from 7 to 10 p.m. Residence: 2841 Weybridge Road, Shaker Heights.

ON YOM KIPPUR evening services will again be consecutive. The early service will start 7 o'clock and the second service at 9 o'clock on Friday, September 23rd. The congregation is urged to be in their seats by the time the service begins, as the doors will be closed at the beginning of the Kol Nidre.

Those who wish the names of their dear departed who passed away during the past year mentioned during the Memorial Service on Yom Kippur afternoon are requested to send those names in to The Temple Office before Tuesday, September 20th.

1966

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ROSH HASHANAH EVENING

The Temple

MORNING SERVICES - Thursday, September 15 - 9:30 a.m.

CHILDREN'S SERVICE will be held in The Temple at 2:15 p.m. Thursday, September 15th. Children under school age should not be brought to these services. Parents are requested to sit with their children.

Those members who are parked in the aisles of the parking lot are requested to leave promptly and remove their cars from the aisles as quickly as possible so that the parking lot may be cleared with the least amount of confusion.

Rabbi and Mrs. Daniel Jeremy Silver will be at home to the members of The Temple and their families New Year's Evening, Thursday, September 15, 7 to 10 o'clock. Residence: 2841 Weybridge Road, Shaker Heights.