



Daniel Jeremy Silver Collection Digitization Project

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

Series III: The Temple Tifereth-Israel, 1946-1993, undated.

Sub-series B: Sermons, 1950-1989, undated.

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The Mystery of Jewish Survival, 1967.

This tape was not
very char. in places

Marie

The Mystery of Jewish Survival
Daniel Jeremy Silver
March 26, 1967

When you enter the historical wing of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem the first thing that meets your eye is a floor to ceiling blown-up photograph of an Egyptian tomb painting. The scene depicted is of the Pharaoh sitting upon the throne. His generals bring before him four soldiers captured in battle. Each of the soldiers represents another Asian . The third is broad-shouldered, tall, bearded, a Hebrew and below the painting there is this inscription - Israel is wasted, his seed is no more. Then you walk on and turn the corner and you come into a museum filled with the glories of thirty centuries of high Jewish history. The pharaoh led us to believe that he had squashed our people even before our history had begun, and since that day we have outlived every tyrant and every oppressor and we have confounded that law of history which says that as to men so to nations there is an inevitable cycle of birth and youth, maturity, age and death. Here we are, by every rule of history we simply ought not be. What is the explanation of this strange survival of our people?

Faith offers one explanation. Abraham, for his obedience and for his loyalty, was rewarded with an eternal covenant, a pact everlasting, made with him and with his seed. The of God is the protector and that he specially safeguards and vouchsafes the passage of Israel through history. The guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor does he sleep. It assumes that whenever we reach one of those tipping points, when life becomes too difficult and the challenge too high, before we go under God somehow reaches out and buoys us up and sets us again on our feet. Be of good cheer, o my people, for thou hast been sold unto the nations but not for destruction. Such is the explanation of the faith, but, unfortunately, taken literally it can be substantiated or supported.

Today's Purim we read together the story of the reprieve of the Jews of Shushan from that terrible sentence of genocide. In Persia the days of the Jews

were changed - from sorrow to gladness, from mourning to celebration, but by a quirk of the calendar today is also Easter, a joyous festival to our neighbors, a festival of the Christ risen, reborn, but for a thousand years this weekend between Good Friday and Easter is anything but a happy, carefree time for our people for it is at this time that the church rehearsed to the faithful the story of the crucifixion and many was the time that a foolhardy congregation poured out of the church, its eyes flaming red, determined to kill the pious descendants of the Christ killers. God has protected the Jews and many times he has not protected our people. There are many Purims, not just one. There are many stories in our history, unexpected relief reprieve.

The interesting thing about Purim is that it is a holiday which divides and divides and becomes one and then a second and then a third. Many communities had their own megillah, their old scroll of the miraculous deliverance. The place is Saragosa, Aragon, Spain. The time is the middle of the 14th century. The occasion is the anniversary of the king's coronation. It was the Aragonese monarch's custom to make a circuit, a procession, in this capital on his coronation day anniversary and as he came to each neighborhood he received the homage of the nobles and they gave him a gift and they brought with them the relics from their churches as symbol of their loyalty. And when he came to the Adyami, to the Jewish quarter, he was met there by the leading Jewish notables and they gave him a gift and they brought with them those magnificent gilded Torah cases which are the glory of the Spanish synagogue. Instead of putting their scrolls of the Torah into an ark such as we do, each scroll was encased in a beautifully embossed box, cabinet, but some obnoxious fellow told the king that the Jews mocked him. They brought empty boxes, they called him empty-headed, there was no Torah in the case and, indeed, such was the fact for over many years of experience the Jews have learned to carry these cases in the procession as to fray the parchment,

to rip the binding, to tear the sewing and so they had gotten into the habit of leaving the scrolls behind in the synagogues. The king, this particular day, was determined to see if, in fact, the Jews were mocking him. He would order the cases opened. He came to the Alyamin, he stood before the heads of the Jewish community and demanded that the Torah cases be opened. In fear and trembling they were opened and lo and behold, the Torahs were in their case. That night, the night before, the shamas, the

in the synagogue had had a dream and he had heard a voice in that dream and the voice had told him to leave the scrolls that day in the ark and so on Saragosa in the middle of the 14th century their anguish was turned into celebration and Saragosa, for the rest of its Jewish history, had its own Purim and you will find all this written in its megillah. There had been miraculous deliverances, but a hundred years this self same community of Saragosa was faced with the frightful choice of exile, baptism or death and a hundred years was no more. The taken literally cannot be substantiated or supported for the guardian of Israel if he guards it fully would have seen to it that by today we were not a mere twelve million minority in the world population of some two billion, but by the simple laws of progeny we would be today the vast majority, the preponderance of mankind. Many have died. Many have fallen by the wayside.

Now, what have we done if we've smashed the ancient piety. Have we come any closer to a solution to the riddle of Jewish survival, but there is a stubborn fact, we are, how do we explain it? Assume, if we must, that we celebrate Purim because it's the exception rather than the rule, that ^{if} it delivers were the rule there would be no reason for celebration except that many have died, that we have lost perhaps a majority of our people. How yet do we explain the miracle of Jewish survival?

Historians come to our aid with one explanation, it seems reasonable. It is compelling because it seems to be full of common sense. They say that Israel

has survived because we were a scattered people, because of the dispersion. We never had all our eggs in one basket and so all of our heads could not be cracked by one tyrant. But is this a sufficient explanation of the survival of Israel?

In the first century of the Common Era monastics, men who followed the mystery cults of every community from Gibraltar to the gates of India. In every community we have found Jews, we have found these devotees of the various mystery cults. The Jews are, and they are no more. The simple fact of dispersion does not explain survival. It is probably the technique of survival, the strategy of survival, perhaps, but had we not something to show us up, to keep us going, to enliven and spirit us Israel would not be here today despite the dispersion. Why, then, have we survived?

Probably through faith is the simple one. When we accept the ancient pieties we do so flat out. We assume that God must operate as man operates. If we were given the task of protecting the people what would we do? We would build high battlements; we would build deep into the ground; we would find a deterrent armor; we would use weapons, army, troops; we would try and shield those whom we protect and guard from their enemies. And would it avail us? Have the arms races of mankind, the high royals of the ancient castles, have the lines of modern man ever protected a people from its enemies? God's ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not our thoughts.

I love the line in Isaiah which says, God goes about His work, but His work is strange to the human mind. We fear that He must react as we would react when, in fact, He follows His own deeper and higher wisdom. I do not pretend to know how God has brought about the miracle of Jewish survival, but I am tempted to believe that it has something to do with the spirit, with the faith, that God gave us the secret of survival at Sinai when He gave us a faith which we could never achieve, when He revealed to us

Himself, a God who cannot ever be fully comprehended when he insisted that we must abide by a rule, a discipline, which will always escape our attainment. The rule in Judaism is not respectability, but righteousness. We are not told to be judicious, but to be for the right. We are not told to give charity but to walk uprightly. Their dower is a demand resting upon us which we have not yet met for what are we demanded to do by our ethic, to alienate God, and no man ever achieves the dimensions of the divine. As I am holy be thou holy, as I am just be thou just, as I am righteous be thou righteous, as I am kindly be thou kindly. Judaism is a foolish faith, foolish because it imposes upon us demands beyond our competence and yet, I submit, that this very folly is wisdom and, indeed, that it is the spirit which has permitted our survival.

I look about me. When does a man or a woman age? They age when life loses purpose, when each day is a routine for which there is no meaning, you're simply dragging yourself along without knowing the why or the wherefore. And when do the days fly by and when is man at his full strength? It is not a matter of years or chronology but when he feels that he is needed, when she feels that she is important to her family, when he knows that the business cannot survive without his talents, when he feels that he has something he must contribute to his profession, then life has meaning, then life has spirit and vigor and vitality and as with men, so with nations. History is not simply a matter of weapons, technology and gross populations, of great national economic products, of finance and the like. If history is simply a matter of bulk, of force, the Roman Empire would never have fallen. the whole Roman Empire would never have disintegrated. We would have long since have had our war in South Vietnam, but there is a force in history which is spiritual, psychological, human, and it is this that is the real force of man for no people which believed something deeply was ever crushed by . Generations might be destroyed, but, ultimately, the ideal went through.

God gave us our immortality at Sinai when He gave us the law, a discipline, a vision, a faith, which could somehow reach into us in every generation and demand of us that follow which is wisdom, that ambition which brings out the youth that is within us.

You know the old saw, from rags to riches, from riches to rags in three generations. Why does it hold true? The grandfather is no more talented intellectually than his grandson, but he had a purpose, he worked for a reason, he was ambitious, life had taste for him, he used his energies, while the grandson had only a legacy, only inheritance, only the responsibility of spending what the grandfather had made. And what about families like the Adams family and the Rockefeller family who escaped the cycle of rags to riches and riches to rags, why did they escape it? Because the sons and grandsons of fine subsequent generations had other ideas which marshalled their energies, which compelled the best that's in them, which renews their youth because it renews their strength, because it gives life purpose. We have in largest measure survived because we have always had a purpose to live it. We have never been able to achieve what we must achieve, indeed, we will never achieve it, man will never be divine. There will always be more than we can do and that is the secret of our immortality.

Let's speak again of wisdom and folly. Youth is impetuous, youth is a dreaming age, youth is ambitious, youth will not listen to the worldly wise, and Judaism is a religion which speaks to the youth, speaks to all as if we are young, it will not allow any of us to settle into satiety and flatulence and middle age and comfortable living.

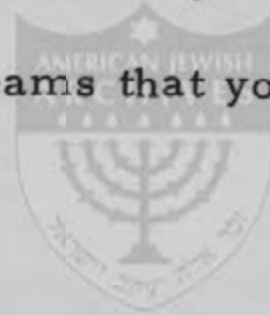
go on, happy in his father's home, comfortable, he could easily have climbed the ladder of success and yet he was told by God to do a foolish thing, to seek an unknown faith and an uncertain freedom. How many fathers have told their sons, you know, you can find yourself in Cleveland quite as easily as in New York or in the woods or in San Francisco, but God is with the child. Was Moses happy tending his

father-in-law's flock, peace with his wife and his family, the wilderness, without a care in the world. He was told by God to do an immensely foolish thing, to throw all this up, to go to Pharaoh, to demand that a motley of slaves to be freed or to bring this motley array of people to the wilderness, to a promised land. Implausible, but possible, folly, but Moses went. How many of us have the folly to be wise? How many of us, being foolish, will find again our youth?

The prophets were fools. They ran about the streets of Sumaria and Jerusalem castigating perfectly nice people, good businessmen who gave to charity; leaders of the community who came regularly to the sacrifices at the Temple; and one day you find civic figures came to these prophets and said, 'meshuga, you're meshuga you prophet, what are you doing, these are fine people, why are you castigating them. Everybody has failings and mistakes, to be sure, but you can't change human nature and that's the way it's always going to be.' The prophets went out and demanded more. They would not be satisfied with all of the excuses and all of the rationalizations about human nature because you can change human nature if your sights are high enough, your ideas are profound enough. He talked about a people who have been off of the soil for a thousand years, taking them back to a blasted, wasted, sandy land and building there a modern technological state, a Jewish state. Those friends turned to him in absolute dismay - you're being absolutely paranoid about the whole thing, Herzl. Is there a possibility of doing this. You don't own the land, the people will not come, they do not have the skills. The people came. The land became theirs.

What's the secret of Jewish survival? Faith, a faith so foolish that it's wise, a faith which asked us to believe in a God who can never be seen, a faith which asks us to achieve a standard of discipline which is immediately beyond each and every one of us, but the very demand that the faith makes on us is our youth. No Jew, unless he be blind and ignorant, no Jew need ever lack a reason for living. No Jew ever need

retire. There's always something to be done. There's always a child to be taught. There's always a home which needs your help. There's always a community which needs your advice. There's always some new activity which demands minds such as yours. There's always a service which requires tenderness and love. Now, some Jews resign from Judaism. They come to Temple but they're resigned from Judaism because they resigned from their human responsibility. They live, but without a reason for living. Nothing impels them. There's no dream anymore. They assume that you must be young to dream. There are those who have been in their seventies and eighties have dreamt the dreams of mankind and built the cities of mankind and written the philosophies of mankind and fought the revolutions of mankind. Dreams are not the monopoly of the young. They are the burden of the Jew and if you want to survive as a human being and as a Jew be so foolish in your dreams that you are wise in your living.



As your ~~inter~~ lettered ~~me~~ of the Jewish Museum in Jerusalem
your say is blocked by a new high class say of a 13th part 7th
ent. Egyptian Trade ~~company~~, 4 ~~captains~~ - each represented for
American ~~map~~ have been brought before the company ~~present~~ -
~~man~~ ~~re-placed~~, the 3rd ~~figure~~ - ~~100~~, broad shoulders, ~~beard~~ in
a ~~thick~~ ~~hair~~. The ~~inscription~~ reads ~~full~~ "forced to ~~work~~
be ~~used~~ ~~as~~ ~~no~~ ~~more~~ & ~~you~~ ~~will~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~new~~ ~~city~~ ~~and~~ ~~it~~
~~detail~~ ~~the~~ ~~subsequent~~ 3 ~~million~~ of high Jewish ~~integrity~~.

That Pharaoh believed he had destroyed all people before
Jewish history in ~~even~~ he said he had ~~been~~ ~~before~~. But he ~~is~~ ~~not~~ ~~an~~
people has ~~attained~~ any ~~conquering~~ ~~status~~ who ~~defied~~ ~~the~~
line of history ~~which~~ ~~any~~ ~~word~~ in the ~~days~~ of ~~history~~ ~~as~~ ~~a~~
the ~~top~~ of ~~gold~~. ~~There~~ ~~is~~ ~~your~~, ~~on~~ ~~standing~~, ~~age~~, ~~1~~ ~~century~~. ~~We~~ ~~are~~ ~~not~~
under ~~an~~ ~~eye~~ ~~of~~ ~~history~~ ~~and~~ ~~we~~ ~~are~~ ~~not~~ ~~able~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~

Can Jewish ~~status~~ be explained?

Partly offers an ~~explanation~~. "The ~~murder~~ of ~~David~~
~~million~~ ~~slaves~~ ~~on~~ ~~slaves~~, ~~and~~ ~~murder~~ ~~on~~ ~~David~~. ~~The~~
his ~~royalty~~ & ~~standing~~ but ~~made~~ ~~an~~ ~~anti~~ ~~country~~ ~~movement~~
with ~~standing~~ ~~in~~ ~~need~~. ~~Let~~ ~~the~~ ~~interior~~ ~~movement~~ - ~~at~~ ~~the~~
top ~~points~~ - ~~history~~ ~~when~~ ~~David~~ ~~was~~ ~~murdered~~ ~~with~~
~~opposition~~; ~~and~~ ~~shielded~~ ~~the~~ ~~movement~~ & ~~saved~~ ~~the~~ ~~people~~.
"Be of good ~~company~~, ~~no~~ ~~people~~, ~~you~~ ~~are~~ ~~not~~ ~~able~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~murdered~~
but ~~not~~ ~~for~~ ~~the~~ ~~murder~~."

in England's republic
the land of the free



like would make any idea not but not Power or
 too crucial, Had Hansen cannot another particular idea,
Power very could have discovered, but not to just
of idea, The explanation seems quite reasonable and not
but it does not go to the heart of the matter in the last
chapter on the subject, however would be good to have
commentary from unbiased to the author of the idea when
you are to be paid for it and no more, Permanently
in the body of the work seems not to guarantee it.

[illegible]

now have full & long record and have been expected.
has ~~record~~ been more ^{fully delayed} ~~than~~ ^{than} &
~~less~~ to make our hold standing, if our record
20, on flame concern, fire power attacked day
and have located S.V.N.

There is uncommon power to be afforded to a
family more for days to return, which to say is 3
years less as far as it is concerned - we must not say
with family production which is uncommon power produced
grandchildren - probably not - but we had a good ice
river - and - very bad and very bad, uncommon
and uncommon on family cycle - by
the done ? The children and children and children
business of uncommon and new published and new

revision of uncommon -
not of power on by right but to as spirit
Sustained is a body of uncommon power of uncommon
revision - was a power and of a revision for
body - the revision - it uncommon and of uncommon of
its uncommon revision, was of uncommon revision

I found several in a lot of good and of bad kind. Good to
the little which is not seen to me, but to the fact
which which are in hand & closed in a whole.
Just in my days - One day it is not in closed, To
anyone who is unprepared & very interested; but would
his and respectably is not a rule - respectably -
that which is not a rule of good nature; but simply a
rule to the community & not needed as community has
not needed; that being - a attainment; but
quantity of the spirit in a high nature - of some to
use the energy & force - I needed - but and fulfilled
in deliberation and the community - will to grow
in a full and summar all day energy - which
keep us about, disorderly, disorderly & unhappy.

To be young is to be forced - unpleasant - to be
cinders of the rule of old & not approved men
The number of good is the number of good men
and men - number of the number of old men
approved men.

Once found in a young number some other
by counting & counting at the end of the year

4 What is the way of peace

When we are young & young - ~~we are peaceful people~~
in a full no peace - that we must - peace
play it - each and the many - many and the people
in a full no peace that we must play it
unfulfilled peace - we are peace - peace
the - peace - peace - peace - peace
about a peace but after the peace of peace
new -

One full peace of peace - of peace - of peace -
not of peace peace - peace peace

One full peace of peace - peace peace -
and we must peace peace

One full peace of peace - peace -
peace - peace peace, peace peace

peace

Full of peace - peace

Full of peace - peace

Full of peace - peace

Full of peace - peace

Full of peace - peace

Kaddish

Friday March 24
Sunday 26

(Those who passed away this week

MIKE B. BERNSTEIN

Jahrzeiten

MAXWELL L. LAPPIN
MOLLIE FRIEDMAN.
JACOB A. KLEIN
DR. EMANUEL KLAUS
LILLIE A. COPENHAGEN
EUGENE FRIED
WILBUR A. STEUER
ESTHER SEIDMAN
AARON E. TRATTNER
CAROLINE SCHARTEBERG
EDWIN R. COLE
FANNIE MAYER DRYFOOS
REBECCA WOLF LUNTZ
HERMAN BERNHEIMER
SAMUEL D. WISE
CHARLES TILLES

ANNIE LEVIN
DAVID J. COHEN