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Special Service of Concern - An Hour of Concern, 1967.

A N H O U R O F C O N C E R N

RABBI DANIEL JEREMY SILVER

THE TEMPLE

Tuesday, May 23, 1967

My dear friends:

Insecurity is the historic partner of Jewish survival.

קול חרדה שמעונו פחד ואין שלום

"We heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace." In the near past this people Israel seemed finally to have escaped the voice of trembling. Danger seemed to recede. The tide withdrew only to return. Fedayeen marauders of 1955 and 1956 vanished for a time after the Suez campaign only to reappear as the El-Fateh terrorists of the last several years.

The wilderness of Sinai, emptied of troops, after Suez bristles now again with Egyptian armies and Russian arms and the murder-loving marauders of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Last week the final fragile symbol of a more peaceful time was removed. A preemptory order from Cairo, reenforced by a few warning shots over the heads of the United Nations Emergency Force in Gaza, led to their hasty withdrawal. The voice of hate blew away the last veil of restraint.

"Syria is ready for the Liberation Operation to explode Zionist existence," the voice is that of Baghdad's defense minister. "The time has come to be rid of the Zionist cancer in Palestine," the voice is that of the Vice-Premier of Iraq. "The time has come to put an end to Israel's policy of bombast and conceit," the voice is that of Marshal Amer, the commander of Egyptian forces facing Israel. Jackel men today pant for blood and howl for war. Ahmed Shukeiry gleefully promises sabotage and

terror will begin again. These shrill voices of trembling send a shiver down our souls for they rip away the illusion, the comfortable, comforting illusion, that this world is fundamentally sane and that man is fundamentally reasonable. The Dark Ages are still with us. Their mouths parched with a thirst for vengeance, Arab men and women chant the blood cries and sanctify black hate. Ugly passion and simple viciousness is transformed into that ultimate anomaly - Jihad - so-called holy war.

So the terror of life is again upon us and, as always, we have come to our synagogue for encouragement and wisdom. Terror at least has this virtue, it heightens our perception. We see more clearly now that pathology we otherwise prefer to deny. We can admit now this simple truth -- that Israel confronts madness, that Israel is exposed to men and nations whose actions are impelled by dark and malignant passions, uncensored by conscience and indifferent to principle. The Arab world is possessed of all the furies of hate.

I have heard it said often in recent days that the danger in the Middle East lies in political miscalculation. The danger in the Middle East lies in the fact that one side or the other will play its cards too cavalierly, that there will be a confrontation which cannot be compromised. In the normal course of that constant political challenge which is usually called diplomacy, miscalculation is the danger and indeed there is peril that a random shot in Gaza or the exacerbated temper of a sergeant in the Galilean hills may lead to war. But I would submit that the real peril is not miscalculation. It is madness. The real peril lies in not recognizing that the enemy is not fully master of his own actions but possessed by overwhelming, and at times uncontrollable, passions. Madness, as you well know, sweeps away reason. Madness is deaf to conscience. Madness will not be satisfied with face-saving negotiations. Craftily and steadily

it plans and plans and proceeds toward its set fixed objective. Only restraint, only forceable restraint, can deter its course. The usual diplomatic practice of compromise and quiet arrangements is meaningless before the thrust of this demonic possession, indeed how meaningless have all the negotiations and all the conferences and all the meetings held over the past twenty year in the Middle East been. How many times in the past nineteen years has Israel offered peace to its neighbors. How many times in the last nineteen years has Israel offered to sign a non-aggression pact. How many times in the last nineteen years has Israel offered to adjudicate all the outstanding disputes. How many times has Israel pledged its word that it has no territorial ambitions. How many times has the United Nations, or our own government cautioned and admonished Arab monomania. Yet, here we are, after nineteen years of cold war and constant blockade, after a dozen years of infiltration and murder and sabotage, after ten years of an accelerated arms race, at the very brink of war. Madness sweeps aside reason and madness laughs at the advice of cautious men. It has only one purpose and nothing will deter its achieving that end.

Let us be clear on this. Israel has offered peace. Israel offers peace. Nasser has demanded war. Nasser demands war. Israel has proffered negotiations. Israel proffers negotiations. Nasser refused compromise. Nasser refuses compromise. Israel has taken military action only to defend its homes and its cities when these were under attack by an aggressive policy or threatened by a massive build-up of enemy forces.

If war comes to the Middle East it will not come because of miscalculation because the nations there have somehow played the game of bluff, of dare and double dare and one or the other has failed to keep the rules. It will come because the Arab world is a world possessed.

It will come because the Arab world is a maddened world which can dream the nightmare dreams of reducing Israel to a sea of blood and of driving the Yishuv into the sea.

Civilized societies have long since learned that insanity needs to be quarantined and that mad men need to be institutionalized. The possessed need to be controlled for their own sake and for the sake of society. It is a very simple and ordinary practice to take from these troubled folk the simplest implements with which they might harm themselves or others. Yet, incredibly, the great powers of the world have spent the better part of the last twenty years plying the hate maddened with ever more powerful weapons of carnage. Instead of embargo on arms, instead of quarantine on military purchase, Russia and the United States have competed with each other in providing the Nassers and the El Attissis and the Husseins and the Feisals with sophisticated missiles and super-sonic war planes, with heavy tanks and heavy armour. Can anyone now be surprised that mad men are in the streets brandishing these weapons and threatening not only the object of their fury and of their frenzy but the passerby, the entire world.

For the last twenty years Russia and the United States have engaged in an unceasing global rivalry. Their policies and economic ambitions have made it expedient for them to blind themselves to the obvious truth, known to any child, that it is the ultimate act of irresponsibility to give dynamite to a mad man. Such senseless acts can neither buy his friendship nor advance your interests, for madness has no other interest, save its primary fixation.

Tonight at Gaza and Sharm-El-Sheikh, the confrontation is not a simple confrontation between Israel and Egypt. Twenty years of international intrigue and fifteen years of arms peddling have inextricably

involved Moscow and Washington in the Middle East. For twenty years Israel has asked these capitals to extend multinational guarantees to the area. Eager to outbid one another for Arab ports and Arab oil, the super powers have vacillated and procrastinated and delayed. East-West multinational guarantees which could bring peace and security to the area do not exist. Israel has had to arm itself over the past twenty years against the avalanche of weapons which have been thrust by the great powers upon the Arab states. She has pleaded for effective restraint. The foreign ministries in the world have agreed that such a policy was advisable, but restraint has not been imposed. The great powers have substituted temporization for policy, and their weakness and their indecision has only fed the flames of Arab ambition and silenced the few voices of reason within the Arab world. The demagogue needs only to point to the kow-towing of the great powers as proof of his own power and of his omniscience. So tonight Israel quite properly calls upon Russia and the United States to recognize their complicity in this crisis and to acknowledge that even greater dangers are implicit. If war breaks out in the Middle East, the fragile pattern of East-West coexistence will be ripped to shreds. Can the free world permit Israel to become another Czechoslovakia or Poland? Can the Soviet Union permit the Middle East to become the graveyard of its policy of coexistence?

So often in our history, the future of Israel has become a concern not only in and of itself but one which is symbolic and symptomatic of all the dangers that threaten civilization. In recent years the Soviet Union has spoken often and again about normalizing international relations and about her desire for peaceful coexistence. Two and one half billion dollars worth of arms sent to Egypt in the last five years and a billion dollars worth of arms sent to Syria belie these professions but it was

argued that Russia could exert a restraining force and voice in Cairo and Baghdad. If these words were indeed more than a calculated deceit, then I submit that the time is past due to call up these debts and to exercise this breaking force. Russia stands to lose by the confrontation now taking place in the Middle East. She stands to lose whatever modicum of sympathy she has built up these past years in the world. She stands to lose because she will be brought to an East-West confrontation which can hardly be to her's or to anyone's advantage. Russia in the last years has snubbed Israel internationally. She has financed the armies of the United Arab Republic, Syria and Iraq. She has used Radio Moscow and her embassies to circulate Arab venom. She has backed every Arab machination in the United Nations. She has proclaimed, before the fact, Israel to be the aggressor in the present confrontation. She has catered to the madness and insanity of her maddened friends. These passions now threaten her larger interests. One looks to Russia, hopefully, against hope really, for the wisdom of Tashkent but one finds, as yet tonight, only the unbending calculation of the cold war.

Our own nation has played a more balanced, but in many ways and equally, short-sighted role in the Middle East. We have catered to Arab whim, time and again, against our better wisdom, and bowed to Arab threat. In 1956 we pledged freedom of passage through the Suez Canal only to renege on that pledge when Nasser would not bend. In 1950 we pledged ourselves to oppose force and the threat of force in the Middle East yet we have remained effectively silent during the long years of sabotage and insurgency. For almost a decade we have supplied Nasser with arms and when this military aid became unpalatable to the American public we continued to provide economic aid which freed Nasser's treasury to buy his arms else where. Deaf to the lesson of Kashmir we underwrote

and still underwrite the army of Jordan. We send and are sending modern weapons to Saudi Arabia. It was our plan that these weapons be used against Nasser's revolutionary subversion, yet today Saudi Arabia and Jordan rush to the battle front and join the bloody chorus, ready to use our arms against a professed American ally. American policy in the Middle East has equivocated and is temporized and must be said that it has remained overtly friendly to Israel and it has recognized not only the imperative of peace but the value and necessity of supporting the one true democracy in that part of the world. Had we been firmer in our convictions we might have brought stability before this time but at least we have been constant in our profession of friendship. America has finally sold Israel with some weapons and the guarantee of borders in the area remains a commitment of our national policy. The United States has recognized, and as yesterday's State Department pronouncements reemphasize, recognizes that if the rule of law and of international order breaks down in the Middle East it may and probably will be only a matter of time before it breaks down the world over. The critical question remains unanswered. Will we act? Under what provocation? How? When? The White House until this evening was preternaturally quiet during these crisis days. One wonders, even with this statement of this evening, with its rather broad description of American policy, whether Cairo may not discount our commitment and bank on our indecision. Such a judgment in Cairo would, of course, have catastrophic consequences. Questions must be asked: What does the White House and what does the State Department acknowledge precisely our commitment to be in the area and what effective response will our government make to Mr. Nasser's thumb-nosing at our 1957 guarantee of the right of passage to the Straits of Tiran?

If we look to our government for an effective response, we ask no more than for action on pledges and commitments made again and again

these past nineteen years. We look for a response which might give pause to an aggressor for he takes the step that can never be recalled.

We look to our government to support vigorously and effectively the integrity and safety of Israel. We really ask only that America understand its complicity in the present crisis. American Jews ask for no special favors for Israel but that our government recognize that ^{its} strength in the community of nations lies in the confidence that the decent and the peace-loving peoples have placed in the American word. We have assured these small nations that they will never again be sacrificed at a Munich. Will Gaza then become the Munich of the Third World War? America has recognized that one cannot appease an aggressor, that after the little nations have been gobbled up, the larger confrontation is unavoidable. But what we ask of our government is that it acts now on this certain knowledge. American Jews do not ask for special favors for Israel, only that America recognize its stake in the larger battle, the battle of reason against madness, the battle of decency against deviltry. In light of this awareness this country undertook those commitments in 1950 and reaffirmed them ever since. In 1950 to restrain Egypt and Syria and Jordan we pledged ourselves along with England and France to counter aggression or the threat of force in the Middle East. In 1957 we promised to maintain the basic principle that no nation might close an international waterway to another. Twice in his administration, President Johnson has reaffirmed that commitment. The honesty of these commitment, their integrity and their effect, is now at stake. If Nasser closes the Straits of Tiran, will American destroyers shepherd Israeli ships to Elat? If the Palestine Liberation Organization makes a travesty of the border, will the United States see that a peace keeping force of our own or of the United Nations is landed? These are the questions. Questions which we must ask our government to make.

To a nation burdened by Viet Nam, any further commitment of our power must seem taxing, if not dangerous. Can it be avoided? Will we not make a mockery of all commitments if we do not respond to the present threat? When madness is abroad no man and no nation is secure. If violence rules the world, what future is there for any man or any nation.

Prime Minister Levi Eshkol made to the world a most generous offer. He not only has reasserted Israel's consistent and sustained desire for peace but he has offered to withdraw Israeli troops from the border zone if Egypt will only do the same. Our government ought, energetically, to pursue this possibility. A major step in that direction would be a clear restatement of the American decision not to sit quietly by as the match draws closer and closer to the tinder, as if we were somehow hoping to find a rationalization for inaction. Let Nasser know that all the dictators and all the demagogues of the world know that they must face not only the courage of a little nation but the convictions and the power of a great nation. Let Nasser know that he will not only face Israel's courage but the Sixth Fleet. Let him know that war will not only wound but destroy him and badly punish his nation.

Such I believe is the message that we must bring before the conscience of our nation. Let us make clear to our friends and to our community that Israel seeks no special favors -- only the honoring of long-standing and well conceived commitments. Let us make clear to our community, to the Congress and to the White House that we understand the larger implications of this conflict. That we understand that the good name and the good will of the United States are deeply involved and that in a significant way, the hope of peace in our world lies in the balance. Meet then with those that you can. Explain to those who are innocent and unaware. Write, telephone to those in posts of authority. The time calls for action -- not only for

the sake of Israel but for the sake of this country and of mankind.

Insecurity has been the constant partner of Israel throughout our long history. There have been black hours before and our people has never wavered. There is reason for anxiety at the hour but not for despair. Our strength has not yet begun to be counted. The protection of God has not yet begun to be seen. Yet there is reason for concern and there is reason for action. "Fret not thyself of the evil doer", "but cry aloud the truth and speak abroad what needs to be said" --that Israel stands for civilization and that war threatens us all.

AMEN

Dear Rabbi:
The Temple
University Circle & Lakeside Park
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Rabbi:
Ruth and I enjoyed the service
evening. All the "back at the wall
on the head" days were very stirring
and moved and was



Mel
Melvin Neuman

MM:n

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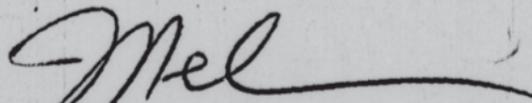
May 24, 1967

Rabbi Daniel (Jeremy) Silver
The Temple
University Circle & Silver Park
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Rabbi:

Ruth and I enjoyed the service and sermon of yesterday evening. All those around us agreed you "hit the nail on the head" directly and we were all greatly stirred and moved and made more aware.

Sincerely,


Melvin Neuman

MN:n

Dear Rabbi Silver

May 24
1967

Though my time has been occupied in such a way as to prevent my being bodily at the Temple as often as I would like, I have nevertheless never relinquished my feeling of belonging there - and so it was a great comfort to have been there last night.

This note is in a way a far letter because I do want you to know that my reaction to the special service has prompted me to say how pleased and proud I was of it and of you - It is very good to know that the dignity and intelligence which we have always associated in relation to the Temple under your father's leadership is a continuing process - Sincerely
Ruth Danziger

The Temple

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DANIEL JEREMY SILVER

RABBI

LAWRENCE A. FORMAN

ASSISTANT RABBI

MORTON H. POMERANTZ

ASSISTANT RABBI

LEO S. BAMBERGER

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

The Temple will hold a
Special Service of Concern
for "PEACE IN THE MIDDLE
EAST". The service will
be held in the Sanctuary
at 8 P. M. on Tuesday May
23rd. Rabbi Daniel Jeremy
Silver will speak.