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Yom Kippur, 1971.

YOM KIPPUR - ~~September 28, 1971~~

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver

Yom Kippur is also known as the *יום כיפור*, the white fast. The colored curtain in front of the Ark is taken down and replaced with one of solid white; the same exchange is made for the mantles which cover the Torah, indeed, to accent their whiteness, they are stripped of all silver ornamentation. If you were to enter a traditional synagogue tonight you would see it as a restless sea of white. On Kol Nidre night alone of the evenings of the year, worshippers don the white long prayer shawl, the Tallit and will remain so attired throughout the Day of Atonement. An older custom yet brought the medieval Jew to his synagogue dressed in a long flowing white robe, a white wrap-around, called a Kittel -- a seamless, pocketless, white garment which would eventually be his shroud.

Why the association of Yom Kippur and whiteness? I remember as a youngster being set the task of declaiming an oration about the flag which began "White is the color of purity, red is the color of valor, blue is the color of justice . . . " I don't know how accurate these color definitions were, but it is true that in the West white has been a traditional symbol of purity. We swaddle our children in the white of innocence. We dress our brides in virginal white. Hospitals insist that those who deal with patients be dressed in antiseptic white.

White is the color of purity and so universal has been this identification that the sociologists tell us it led men to adopt white as the color of our shirting, as proof that they were not engaged in dirty or menial occupations; that their lives were above blame; that they were eminently respectable "of clean hands and pure heart." As an aside I suspect that the change from white to colored cloth which has taken place in the last few years is not simply a change of style but represents a final philosophic separation on our parts from various long-lived and lingering medieval concepts of purity which defined purity as dispassion, as an avoidance of all that is physical and sensual, in short all those definitions which sharply separate body and soul and declare the flesh corruptible and weak.

The Romans dressed their juries in white togas as if to say: here are men who are pure of heart and pure of intention, whose judgment can be accepted and respected. From that day to this in the West, white has been the symbol of a peculiar and particular virtue, purity; a virtue which looked on man as engaged in a struggle to overcome that which was physical within him, to free his soul from the trammels of the flesh; a virtue which looked upon all that was sinful and enjoyable and physical as somehow suspect; which sought to make man not so much a confident earthling as to transform him into an angelic being. If anyone were to visit us on Yom Kippur and see the white on the altar, they understandably would assume that we are celebrating the virtue of purity. But

I would remind them, as I remind you, that the association of white with Yom Kippur antedates the movement of the Jew into the Western world and that the extirpation of the physical is not the Jewish way.

If you read our ethical literature you find two themes occurring and reoccurring throughout. The first is this -- *אל תהיה צדיק צדקתך עמך* -- do not be overly righteous; do not be rigid and unbending; do not be so concerned with what are the conventional manners or morals in your day that you lose all sympathy, empathy and compassion, all ability to be flexible -- your humanity. Scrupulosity taken to the extreme is a neurosis, not a virtue.

The second theme that you will find throughout our literature is this -- *אין אדם צדיק כלל* -- there is no man so righteous that he sins not. The man or woman whom you most respect is here tonight; has spoken the confession with you, fully conscious of his or her guilt, fully recognizing the need to confess sins. We are born human beings, we die as human beings. Perfection belongs only to God.

Another Yom Kippur will take place a year from now and another the year following, and each year the best of us will have a full litany of sins to confess. *אין אדם צדיק כלל* -- man is man not angel nor can he ever be. It is important that we recognize that Yom Kippur speaks not of an ideal which is unnatural or supernatural; that Judaism does not demand a degree of santliness, of holiness, which is beyond the attainment of each and

every human being. Each of us is born a bundle of contradictions and impulses. ~~Each of us is born a bundle of confusion.~~ And as we ^{mature} grow, we grow in discipline; we grow in judgment, but we will never attain complete self-discipline and our judgment will never be infallible. Each of us lives with some dignity and some coarseness. Each of us has principles and each of us makes compromises. At times each of us speaks untruth. At times each of us does that which is unworthy. We would not be human if this were not so. What we seek tonight is not a moment of transfiguration which will suddenly wrench us from our human state to some angelic level; but a moment of encouragement, the sense of relief and hope which will allow us to feel confident that we can start again; that we can somehow face the new year with confidence and courage.

If white does not represent the virtue of purity what then does it represent? I believe it represents two ideas: one drawn from the depths of the human spirit; the other drawn from the depths of our Jewish teaching. In the days of the second temple on Yom Kippur, the High Priest would enter The Temple clothed in the glorious golden robes of his office. So garbed and accompanied by his accolytes he would perform the initial ceremonies of the day. But when it came time to mount the steps to the innermost sanctuary, to the Holy of Holies, where he, as representative of the people, would make the great Confession to the God, a tent hastily was erected and the Levites took off the garment of gold and replaced it with one of pure white linen. So dressed, he appeared before God.

Instinctively we associate evil with the dark. We speak of sin as a stain on the character. We speak of an evil man as possessed of a dark soul and of a perverse person as someone who lives in the shadows. When we effect reconciliation we have a sense of being cleansed, of having washed our souls, of having scoured our insides. ~~We have left the shadows and life in the light.~~ We are white, we have become clean. The darkness has been lifted from our soul and it is again clean washed. Long before, psychologists described for us how guilt-ridden people sometimes wash their hands over and over again as if by this physical act they will wash away the stain they feel within them. A Psalmist ~~had~~ used the imagery of stain and cleansing when he asked God for forgiveness: "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; Cleanse me and I shall be as white as snow." A prophet Isaiah cried out to the people: "Wash you, make you clean. Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil. Learn to do well." Then, "If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." The association of white with penitence, repentance, atonement and forgiveness, with all the psychological mechanisms involved with Yom Kippur, are elemental to man's perception of his inner life.

When we sin we bring darkness to our ~~own~~ souls, not only ~~heaviness and~~ ^{the darkness of} guilt but the darkness of alienation, of separation from those we love best. ^{and from ourselves at our best.} When ^{manipulate & they} we ~~fail to speak the truth,~~ when we live a coarse or calloused life; we create

distance, darkness between us and our mate, between us and our parents, between us and our children, between us and ourselves, between us and our God. We force ourselves to live in the shadow, within the darkness, tense, uptight. And when we manage a reconciliation, when we go to those whom we have abused or mistreated and say "Forgive me. I was wrong." "Forgive me. I was selfish. I apologize. Let me be your friend again", then somehow, not only is a weight lifted from our soul but light floods our being. We sense that we are again in the daylight. We can talk again to that person easily, directly, without pretense.

This simple truth was graphically illustrated for me ^{A few weeks ago,} ~~Sunday last.~~ I had scheduled a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Foundation of Jewish Culture and we decided we would meet at the airport since men were flying in from here and there. The meeting room had no windows. We had an open, easy, pleasant meeting and then suddenly in the middle of our discussion all the lights at the motel went out. We found ourselves in pitch darkness. We went on talking, there was nothing else we could do. And it was fascinating because a meeting which had been open and easy suddenly became tentative and freighted. Men could not see each other and now every phrase was prefaced -- "I hope you understand" "Please take what I am going to say in the right way." Darkness had interposed distance between men who were friends and who had come in common purpose. Wronging another imposes just

such darkness onto our relationships with others and our relationship with God, the most important relationship of all. This darkness is real and the sense of relief is bright and exciting, when we have the courage to ask forgiveness, to confess errors, to seek to open up relationships again.

When the High Priest descended to the altar court after having made the ritual confession, two goats were brought before him. One was selected for the day's sacrifice, the other became the scapegoat. The High Priest placed his hands on its head and so symbolically laid on that goat the burden of sins of the people. The Azazel, the scapegoat, then was driven out of the compound of the Temple and out of the gates of Jerusalem into the wilderness; and the people felt light again, relieved. They could face the new year because they began with a clean slate, the dark lines of sin had been erased from their souls. There is darkness, there are shadows, in each of our lives and we, and we alone, have put them there. We have put them there by the way in which we have lived. Each of us has been selfish and self-centered; has spoken in anger and in bitterness; has been vindictive and cruel. Only confession and reconciliation can bring light into our lives. ~~No one can bring whiteness, reconciliation, a clean slate but the sinner.~~ Only we can say, "I am sorry" and ask forgiveness. Only we can say to God "I am sorry that I have abused and wasted my talents and faltered in my duties, and been careless of the rules and opportunities with which you have blessed me." If we can be reconciled, and God will always welcome us back, then light, joy come into our lives.

I spoke of a second meaning for the white of the altar. I said that that meaning derived from a conscious and deliberate teaching of our people. To explain I would ask you to remember that many of our customs and ceremonies began long ago in Oriental environments entirely different from ours. When we think of death we think of black, of crepe. In the Middle-East white is the color of mourning. The body was laid out under a white sheet and buried in a white shroud. The medieval Jew was buried in a white kittel, his white shroud; and ~~it was this garment of death which~~ he wore in the synagogue on this day. When the High Priest made his confession in the Temple, he was dressed in white ^{not because he was} ~~as~~ a penitent ^{but} ~~and~~ because he was as if dead. God was in the Holy of Holies and if the priest stumbled or stammered or was hypocritical God would strike him dead -- so went the ancient legend.

What has death to do with Yom Kippur? We don't like to think of death. ~~Certainly~~ ^{But to} Judaism has ~~avoided~~ morbid preoccupation with death. We have not been told to make elaborate preparations for whatever lies beyond. Our people never built pyramids nor did they bury their dead with utensels and food for the future journey. What then has death to do with Yom Kippur? Simply this. Yom Kippur wants to tear us away from our normal preoccupation with life. We are born into a mother's loving arms. We are raised and socialized by a family. We go to school with others. We form friendships with our peers. All of our lives we live with and among others. They grace our lives and, hopefully,

we grace theirs. It is hard for one who is caught up in the bonds of relationship-life, to recognize that despite all the ties of love and family and friends, he is ultimately alone. Death is aloneness. No one can die for us. We cannot ask ^{another} ~~anyone~~ to be our surrogate, to take our place. When we die we die and no one else. To face death is to face the reality of our aloneness. The basic decisions we make -- the decisions which have to do with the quality of our lives, the ends and purposes of our being -- these decisions we make alone and we alone must accept the consequences. The quality of these judgments, their direction and their possibility, depend ultimately on what is within us not on what others tell us ought to be our ~~set of~~ values. Today we are encouraged to face death so that we will face the loneliness of responsibility -- and its ultimate significance.

What is the quality of our life? Have we been so caught up with the worldly, with things of status, of society, with possessions, with the worldly, the material, the physical, that we have neglected the spirit within? There are two ways of living, are there not? One is a joyous way, the other grey and drab. I can have joy and be an unknown who leads a quiet life; or my life can be grey though I have all the possessions that another dreams of acquiring. What makes the difference? A sense of personal worth. A feeling of the propriety of what I am doing. A feeling that I am using each day as fully and as wisely as I can. No more can be asked of me. No more can I ask of myself.

On an October day in 1913, a twenty-six year old young man born to privilege, a university instructor in philosophy, went into a small, unfashionable synagogue in Berlin. He had never been there before and he had come on a paradoxical mission. He had decided to become a Christian, to convert. His reasons were a compound of conviction and convenience; he had not found in Judaism a message that touched his soul. For reasons ^{of} ~~for~~ which he himself may not have been entirely clear, he had decided to convert but only after having gone through a last authentic Jewish experience. He would give Judaism, in a sense, one last chance. What happened to this man, Franz Rosenszweig, on that Yom Kippur day we do not know. He kept his privacy and never wrote about it. But that day made Judaism live to him. In that synagogue he found for the first time the bite, and the power, and the truth of the Jewish message. Years later, writing about Yom Kippur he used the same black-white death-life images that I have placed before you tonight.

On the Day of Atonement the shawl is worn as the true attire of death. Man is utterly alone on the day of his death. When he is clothed in his shroud and in the prayers of these days he is also alone. They too send him, lonely and naked, straight before the throne of God. In time to come God will judge him solely by his own deeds and the thoughts of his own heart. God will not ask him about those around him -- what they have done to help him or corrupt him. He will be judged solely according to what he himself has done and thought. On Yom Kippur he can face the eyes of his judge in utter loneliness as if he were dead in the midst of life. Utter loneliness - dead in the midst of life.

Who of us will have the power, the will today, tonight and tomorrow to dwell on death as the beginning of a consecrated life. Think what it would mean to acknowledge those elements which we cannot bend to our will or make over, to live recognizing the exigencies of time and place and circumstance, to accept ultimate loneliness and ultimate responsibility, to find the texture, the context, the drive, the goal which is true, meaningful and valid for us and us alone.

Death appears again and again in the liturgy of this day. The old myth has it, and perhaps it is not a myth, that on this day God sits in the heavenly court and a record of each of our lives is passed in review before Him and that on the basis of His review God decides who shall live and who shall die. This is no nursery tale. It speaks of physical death -- who shall go down to the grave and who shall be alive twelve months from now -- but it speaks really of that which is a living death. Isn't routine, vulgar existence a living death when there is so much more to life? ~~Doesn't~~^{hns} each of us ~~have~~^{have} the capacity to be more vibrant, more alive, more sensitive, more emphatic, more useful than we are now; to give more of ourselves; to share more of our wisdom, of our understanding? ^{To be more alive,} How alive are you? How much of you is dead? Joy comes with a sense of worth. How worthwhile is each day, this day? How much of you is alive? How much of you could be alive? ^{I truly believe that} ~~I am a very alive person~~

Righteousness, devoted living, deliverance from death

Do not feel abandoned.

MEMORIAL SERMON -1971

"What can I say?" How often I am asked that question. "What can I say to a friend who has suffered tragedy." And the answer is "It does not matter what you say. What matters is that you go." Our words are tokens -- not remedies. What matters is that we offer our love; our presence; our support; that we rescue someone we love from loneliness -- the sense of having been singled out and cut off.

It is not required that life make sense. We do not know why we are born, nor why we die. We know only that these are the terms of the human condition -- terms which we did not arrange but must accept. And if we can not understand our own existence, how can we explain this mystery to others? Ultimately, what we offer at a time of condolence is not an explanation or even a rationalization (we know our explanations are irrelevant even as we offer them); but the encouragement of our presence. The lonely need love and friendship desperately. Our visit - it is more than a perfunctory social obligation - says to the grief-stricken, "You are not alone; you have been bruised but you have not been singled out; it is not your fault, this is simply the way of life. As Ecclesiastes summed the human condition years ago 'To everything there is a time and a season. There is a time to be born and there is a time to die.' " The harvest season comes to each of us - to everyone we love. Do not feel abandoned.

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Our tradition put the truth into these words: "Seek not to explain God's ways to man, for these are beyond your understanding." The poet Nelly Sachs somehow survived the Nazi holocaust and returned to live in a German community where every citizen was a mourner and every meeting a condolence call. She had daily experience with the futility of explanations and capsuled her experience with these images:

"We are gardeners who have no flowers.

No herb may be transplanted

From yesterday to tomorrow.

The sage has faded in the cradles -

Rosemary lost its scent facing the new dead -

Even wormwood was only bitter yesterday.

The blossoms of comfort are too small

Not enough for the Torment of a child's tear.

New seed may perhaps be gathered

In the heart of a nocturnal singer.

Which of us may comfort?

In the depth of the defile

Between yesterday and tomorrow

The cherub stands

Grinding the lightnings of sorrow with his wings

But his hands hold apart the rocks

Of yesterday and tomorrow

Like the edges of a wound

Which must remain open

That may not yet heal.

The lightnings of sorrow do not allow

The field of forgetting to fall asleep.

Which of us may comfort?

We are gardeners who have no flowers

And stand upon a shining star

And weep. "

"Which of us may comfort?" The answer is no one -- not if we mean --
"Who of us can speak the healing words?" This memorial hour offers no special
wisdom. There is none. "Which of us may comfort?" Everyone may comfort.
Being a part of this congregation does comfort. We are caught up again in the
bundle of life. We have shared the bruises and the dangers. Somehow there is
healing in the community of those who share similar burdens and grief, that is

the community of men. We learn that we are not solitary and do not brave alone the storms of life. If others have loved and lost and lived again, so can we. There are here those who have lost - young husbands; young wives; young children; whose sons have died in war; whose dearest were suddenly torn away by a fearful accident or who had to watch a painful and protracted terminal illness. Who can measure another's pain? What is certain is that none has escaped. None has escaped death, but many have escaped bitterness and self-pity. Your visit reminds the mourner, as does this service, of human capacity.

Which of us may comfort? The dead comfort the living. This hour has a special meaning implicit in its very name: Yizkor -- Remembrance -- The Hour of Memorial. It is an observable fact that when death deprives us of the living presence of someone we have loved, it does not at the same time deprive us of their living personality. We still hear a father's wise words/ we still feel a mother's tender caress/ the joy we shared with a mate/ the happy noises of our children and their compelling innocence. We are still moved by compelling heroic examples. We seal our lips to complain, because he never complained. We seek to learn because he was graced by wisdom and she by art.

Every culture has had its particular idea of life beyond death: resurrection; immortality of the soul; heaven. No one knows. But what we do know is that the goodness of a man or a woman does not die but continues creatively in other lives. I could not love if my parents had not loved me as a child. I

would not "know" if others had not taught me. I might not be here but for the skill of trained physicians who destroyed the killing diseases of childhood. I could not enjoy a book or a painting if another had not sacrificed himself into it. Interestingly in our language "end" has two meanings: the one, finis -- completion, the other purpose the goal toward which we strive; or ends towards which we direct our lives. Those whose lives are good and wise and serve well establish a memorial which does not end. We are their memorial, for we are their memories. What can I say? I am here. What can I do? Live in such a way that those who love you will be healed and made whole by the memories you bequeathe.



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Yom Kippur is also known as the ^{inge from wh^{the}} white fast. The colored curtain in front of the Ark is taken down and replaced with one of solid white; the same exchange is made for the mantles which cover the Torah, indeed, to accent their whiteness, they are stripped of all silver ornamentation. If you were to enter a traditional synagogue tonight you would see it as a restless sea of white. On Kol Nidre night alone of the evenings of the year, worshippers don the white long prayer shawl, the Tallit and will remain so attired throughout the Day of Atonement. An older custom yet brought the medieval Jew to his synagogue dressed in a long flowing white robe, a white wrap-around, called a Kitt^{le} -- a seamless, pocketless, white garment which would eventually be his shroud.

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This simple truth was graphically illustrated for me Sunday last. I had scheduled a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Foundation of Jewish Culture and we decided we would meet at the airport since men were flying in from here and there. The meeting room had no windows. We had an open, easy, pleasant meeting and then suddenly in the middle of our discussion all the lights at the motel went out. We found ourselves in pitch darkness. We went on talking, there was nothing else we could do. And it was fascinating because a meeting which had been open and easy suddenly became tentative and freighted. Men could not see each other and now every phrase was prefaced -- "I hope you understand" "Please take what I am going to say in the right way." Darkness had interposed distance between men who were friends and who had come in common purpose. Wronging another imposes just such a darkness onto our relationship with others and our relationship with God, the most important relationship of all. This darkness is real and the sense of relief is bright and exciting, when we have the courage to ask forgiveness, to confess errors, to seek to open up relationships again.

When the High Priest descended to the altar court after having made the ritual confession, two goats were brought before him. One was selected for the day's sacrifice, the other became the scapegoat. The High Priest placed his

hands on ~~its~~^{his} head and so symbolically laid on that goat the burden of sins of the people. The Azazel, the scapegoat, then was driven out of the compound of the Temple and out of the gates of Jerusalem into the wilderness; and the people felt light again, relieved. They could ~~again~~ face the new year because they began with a clean slate, the dark lines of sin had been erased from their souls. There is darkness, there are shadows, in each of our lives ^{and we alone} and we have put them there. We have put them there by the way in which we have lived. Each of us has been selfish and self-centered; has spoken in anger and in bitterness; has been vindictive and cruel. Only confession and reconciliation can bring light into our lives. No one can ^{bring} ~~effect~~ a whiteness, reconciliation, a clean slate but the sinner. Only we can say, "I am sorry" and ask forgiveness. Only we can say to God "I am sorry that I have abused and wasted my talents and faltered in my duties, and been careless of the rules and opportunities with which you have blessed me." If we can be reconciled, and God will always ^{welcome} ~~draw~~ us back, then light, joy come into our lives.

I spoke of a second meaning for the white of ^{the} ~~the~~ altar, ~~on Yom Kippur~~. I said that that meaning derived from a conscious and deliberate teaching of our people. To explain I would ask you to remember that many of our customs and ceremonies began long ago in Oriental ~~agricultural~~ environments entirely different from ours. When we think of death we think of black, of crepe. In the Middle-East white is the color of mourning. The body was laid out under a white sheet and buried in a white shroud. The medieval Jew was buried in a white kittel, his white shroud;

and it was this garment of death which he wore in the synagogue on this day. When the High Priest made his confession in the Temple, he was dressed in white as a penitent and because he was as if dead. God was in the Holy of Holies and if the priest stumbled or stammered or was hypocritical God would strike him dead -- so went the ancient legend.

What has death to do with Yom Kippur? We don't like to think of death. Certainly Judaism has avoided morbid preoccupation with death. We have not been told to make elaborate preparations for whatever lies beyond. Our people never built pyramids nor did they bury their dead with utensels and food for the future journey. What then has death to do with Yom Kippur? Simply this. Yom Kippur wants to tear us away from our normal preoccupation with life. We are born into a mother's loving arms. We are raised and socialized by a family. We go to school with others. We form friendships with our peers. All of our lives we live with and among others. They grace our lives and, hopefully, we grace theirs. It is hard for one who is caught up in the bonds of relationship-life to recognize that despite all the ties of love and family and friends, he is ultimately alone. Death is aloneness. No one can die for us. We cannot ask anyone to be our surrogate, to take our place. When we die we die and no one else. To face death is to face the reality of our aloneness. The basic decisions we make -- the decisions which have to do with the quality of our lives, the ends and purposes of our being -- these decisions we make alone and we alone must accept

the consequences. The quality of these judgments, their direction and their ~~possibility~~^{possibilities}, depend ultimately on what is within us not on what others tell us ought to be our set of values. Today we are encouraged to face death so that we will face the loneliness of responsibility -- and its ultimate significance.

What is the quality of our life? Have we been so caught up with the worldly, with things of status, of society, with possessions, with the worldly, the material, the physical, that we have neglected the spirit within? There are two ways of living, are there not? One is a joyous way, the other grey and drab. I can have joy and be ~~quite~~^{at} unknown ^{which leads a quiet life;} or my life can be grey though I have all the possessions that another dreams of acquiring. What makes the difference? A sense of personal worth. A feeling of the propriety of what I am doing. A feeling that I am using each day as fully and as wisely as I can. No more can be asked of me. No more can I ask of myself.

On an October day in 1913, a twenty-six year old young man born to privilege, a university instructor in philosophy, went into a small, unfashionable synagogue in Berlin. He had never been there before and he had come on a paradoxical mission. He had decided to become a Christian, to convert. His reasons were a compound of conviction and convenience; he had not found in Judaism a message that touched him^{soul}. For reasons for which he himself may not have been entirely clear^{but} he decided to convert^{but} only after having gone through a last authentic Jewish experience. He would give Judaism, in a sense, one last

chance. ~~Now~~ What happened to this man, Franz Rosenszweig, on that Yom Kippur day we do not know. He kept his privacy and never wrote about it. But that day ~~brought~~^{made} Judaism ~~alive~~^{live} to him. In that synagogue he found for the first time the bite, and the power, and the truth of the Jewish message. Years later, writing about Yom Kippur he used the same black-white ~~images~~^{death-life} that I have placed before you tonight.

On the Day of Atonement the shawl is worn as the true attire of death. Man is utterly alone on the day of his death. When he is clothed in his shroud and in the prayers of these days he is also alone. They too send him, lonely and naked, straight before the throne of God. In time to come God will judge him solely by his own deeds and the thoughts of his own heart. God will not ask him about those around him -- what they have done to help him or corrupt him. He will be judged solely according to what he himself has done and thought. On Yom Kippur he can face the eyes of his judge in utter loneliness as if he were dead in the midst of life. Utter loneliness - dead in the midst of life.

Who of us will have the power, the will today, tonight and tomorrow to dwell on death as the beginning of a consecrated life. Think what it would mean to acknowledge those elements which we cannot bend to our will or make over, to live recognizing the exigencies of time and place and circumstance, to accept the ultimate loneliness ~~of life~~ and ultimate responsibility, to find the texture, the context, the drive, the goal which is true^e, meaningful and valid for us and us alone.

Death appears again and again in the liturgy of this day. The old myth has it, and perhaps it is not a myth, that on this day God sits in the heavenly court and a record of each of our lives is passed in review before Him and that on the basis of His review God decides who shall live and who shall die. This is no nursery tale. It speaks ~~not~~ of physical death -- who shall go down to the grave and who shall be alive ^{there} ~~four~~ months from now -- ^{It speaks really} but of that which is a living death. Isn't routine, vulgar existence a living death when there is so much more to life? Doesn't each of us have the capacity to be more vibrant, more alive, more sensitive, more emphatic, more useful than we are now; to give more of ourselves; to share more of our wisdom, of our understanding? How alive are you? How much of you is dead? ~~There is joy in life.~~ Joy comes with a sense of worth. ^{How worthwhile is each day, this day?} ~~Then life is not simply joyous when there is a weekend or a vacation or a gala but there is a quiet joy which uses every moment because every moment is truly, truly worthwhile.~~ How much of you is alive? How much of you could be alive?

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alone on the day of his death, when he is clothed in his shroud, and in the prayers of these days he is also alone. They too set him, lonely and naked, straight before the throne of God. In time to come, God will judge him solely by his own deeds and the thoughts of his own heart. God will not ask about those around him and what they have done to help him or to corrupt him. He will be judged solely according to what he himself has done and thought. On the Days of Awe too, he confronts the eyes of his judge in utter loneliness, as if he were dead in the midst of life, ~~a member of the community of man which, like himself, has placed itself beyond the grave in the very fullness of living. Everything lies behind him. At the commencement of the last day, the Day of Atonement, for which the preceding nine Days of Awe were only a preparation, he had prayed that all his vows, his self-consecration, and his good resolves might be annulled, and in that prayer he had attained to that pure humility which asks to be nothing but the erring child of Him and before Him, whom he implores to forgive him just as He forgave "all the congregation of the children of Israel, and the stranger that sojourneth among them, for in respect of all that people it was done in error."~~ Now he is ready to confess, and to repeat the confession of his own sin in the sight of God. He is no longer guilty before man. If he were oppressed by guilt against man, he would have to have it remitted in confessing it, man to man. The Day of Atonement does not remit such guilt and has nothing to do with it. On the Day of Atonement, all sins, even those committed against and pardoned by man, are sins before God, the sins of the solitary individual, the sins of the soul for it is the soul that sins. And God lifts up his countenance to this united and lonely pleading of men in their shrouds, men ~~before the grave~~ of a community of souls, God who loves man both before and after he has sinned, ~~God whom man, in his need, may challenge asking why he has forsaken him,~~ God who is "merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, who keeps his mercy unto the thousandth generation, who forgives iniquity and transgression and sin, and has mercy on him who returns." And ~~so man to whom the divine countenance is lifted bursts out into the exultant profession:~~ "The Lord is God: this God of love, he alone is God!"

THE WAY BACK INTO THE YEAR

Everything earthly lies so far behind the transport of error in this confession, that it is difficult to imagine that a way can lead back from here into the circuit of the year. That is why it is most significant for the structure of the spiritual year that the festivals of immedi-

From the desk of—

RABBI DANIEL JEREMY SILVER

AND YOU SHALL SEEK ME AND FIND ME,
When you shall SEARCH FOR me with all
your heart — Thus the promise of
God as he spoke them to Jeremiah
AND TO US — God is AS NEAR TO US
AS THE RESOLUTION TO TAKE OUR DEATH
AND OUR LIFE WITH ULTIMATE SERIOUSNESS —
God is AS NEAR TO US AS OUR determined
SEARCH FOR the TRUE MEASURE OF
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5'8" 11

YOM KIPPUR ANNOUNCEMENTS - 1971

THE BRANCH

Wednesday morning - September 29th

READINGS AND DISCUSSION will be held in the Lounge at the Temple, beginning at 12:30 p.m. today.

A CHILDREN'S SERVICE will be held at 1:30 p.m. at The Temple. Parents are invited to accompany their children.

AFTERNOON SERVICES will be held at 2:45 p.m. this afternoon. The doors will be closed at the start of the Memorial Service and will remain closed until the end of the services.

A SUCCOTH FESTIVAL will be held at 5:10 p.m. at The Branch on Sunday evening, October 3rd. An original celebration will be followed by a picnic supper. Attendance is by reservations only.

SUCCOTH SERVICES will be held at the Branch on Monday morning, October 4th, beginning at 10:30 a.m.

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on a cross is under the cross

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is in the cross is in the cross - is in the cross
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