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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 Year in Review, 1978.



The Year In Review  
Daniel Jeremy Silver  
May 15, 1978

This is our last Sunday service for this season and I would like to use it as an occasion to look back over the last 12 months to see where we have been and where we are going. Somehow, if you look simply at single events you have no sense of how it fits in into the process which we call history. Normally I take this look at the year in review at the end of December or early in January, but I was in Israel at the time with some of our local Christian clergy and so we will have to have December in May or May in December.

Just a year ago this weekend President Carter was in London. He was attending a summit meeting of the Western allies. With him in London were the Prime Ministers of Canada, Great Britain, France, West Germany and Italy. Their agenda was primarily economic, trade. Tensions had developed among the Western Alliance countries because of the trade policies, some countries were accusing others of subsidizing the export of their goods, what we call dumping. There was trouble with the currency exchange rates and the highest level of unemployment in the western world there had been since the years immediately following the end of the second World War.

Now, if one takes a 30-year look at the summit meetings to the west, an interesting pattern emerges. During the first two decades or so, most of the western summits dealt with issues of national security, or international security. The agenda concerned the cold war, tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States, between the Warsaw Pact nations and NATO. In the last ten years the agenda of the Western Summit had dealt more and more with the more complicated, the more obdurate, issues of trade, economic issues, and the tensions which they have reflected are not only the tensions which exist east to west, but which exist within the west itself. That is not to say that the issues of international security, of military security, have



diminished or disappeared. Detente is a hope, not a reality. It is an expression of our ability to trade with the Soviet even while we compete with the Soviet for spheres of influence. And certainly this last year has seen any number of signs that the Soviet Union has intensified its world-wide competition with the western nations, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and central Asia. We have read of Soviet arms and Cuban troops operating outside the borders of Rhodesia and Angola, with parts of the Ethiopian army in the Agaden. We have read of the massive transfer of Soviet weapons to Libya, Uganda, Syria, to Iraq, other countries of the world. The tensions, the competition, the traditional competition between the east and the west has not diminished, but there are signs that the world has become a more complex place and that the issues not only are between east and west, between the so-called Communist world and capitalist world, the so-called Russian world and the free world, but within these worlds themselves.

Just this last week we saw how tense the Chinese Communists and the Russian Communists remain with each other and there were broad sides delivered over radio Peking and radio Moscow because of the incursion of a small band of Russian troops into Chinese Manchuria. Increasingly, over the last months, we have noticed that Poland and Roumania and Hungary have begun to undertake their own initiatives in foreign policy and in trade. We know that there has been an attempt by the Western Communist parties in France and Spain and Italy to assert their independence vis a vis the domination of the Russian Communist Party. Similarly, within the Western Alliance we have seen the United States express concern that West Germany and Japan were subsidizing the export of their goods to our markets. There have been complaints about the dumping of television sets and of steel and of cars here. And we have heard the, France particularly, and other countries in Western Europe, demand an independent foreign policy from that of United States. We have seen that in matters of <sup>the</sup> selling of arms, say to the



Middle East, France and West Germany have been willing to go it alone without some of the restraints that United States might wish to impose. We have heard most of the countries of western Europe complain that the United States is seeking in various ways to make them pay some of the cost, the domestic price, of our own economic failures. Our world is becoming an infinitely more complex place. Many of you may have noticed what I have noticed <sup>that</sup> when we tend of an evening to discuss international relationships, foreign policies, someone is bound to say, where are the leaders of great vision, where are the grand visions which somehow sustained us in the years past.

Now, you know, that grand visions can exist only when people share a relatively naive and simplistic idea of the problems which confront them. You can have a grand vision of a military victory because it is a simple military equation that you are dealing with. Wilson could have had a grand vision of a new world order because America was unaware, innocent, of the complexities of the relationships between the states. We were just coming alive to the larger world, but in a world such as the one we live in, when power is not only broadly shared but seems to be flowing more and more to more peripheral sources, there are not only more political factors to be contended with, but more political actors, more people who have power, economic and military power. It is safe to say that a grand vision, an overarching vision, a vision which reduces everything to a simplistic commitment, is probably impossible, probably undesirable.

Henry Kissinger, writing in Public Affairs some years ago, said: "We are immersed in an unending process, not in a quest for a final destination." We are immersed in an unending process, not in a quest for a final destination, and I would accept his definition of our needs today with one Judaic addition. I prefer the sense of journey of process which emerges from God's command to Abraham. Abraham is summoned from his ancestral home - Leave your roots, your home, your father's place -



and you can almost hear Abraham say, alright, if I go where shall I go, what is my final destination. And God answers: <sup>You</sup> will have a sense of where you must go as you travel along. But then the peculiar Judaic edition: Whatever you do, whatever part of the journey you take, be sure that you add to the sum total of human happiness, that you are a blessing.

Complexity is the order of the day. Complexity suggests that the problems which we confront are various, manifold, obdurate, perhaps some of them insoluble. Now, this pattern of complexity has emerged more and more as we moved away from the victory of the second World War. In 1945 there was only one world power, the United States, only one source of economic and military power, our own country. We chose not to exert a gemini over the rest of the world and in a matter of a few years Russia recovered from the war-time devastation and you had a bi-polar condition, two great sources of world power, and each of the great super powers were able to dominate a series of nations, of satellites, if you will, Russia with a heavy hand, America with a less visible economic set of controls, of opportunities. And, essentially, the ten years which followed were years in which all policy was determined in Moscow or in Washington and in the relationship, the often tense relationship, between these countries.

The United States emerged from the war, determined to create, at least in the west, a set of conditions which would allow free enterprise and freedom and democracy to thrive. And it was our best thinking that this could be achieved if we helped Europe and Japan to emerge economically, if we tore down the old trade barriers, the protectionist barriers, which had made each nation a law unto itself, and if we created a true community of western allies we would share in the prosperity which our new technology would allow. And so we had the Breton Woods arrangements at the end of the



second World War where we were to have fixed currency relationships. We had the general agreements on tariffs and trade, the GATT agreements, which were to eliminate the protectionist barriers in tariffs and to allow for the free exchange of goods. The Marshall Plan was set into effect. We had such prosperity that we could share that prosperity freely with our immediate trading partners, the so-called first world; but, more than this, we were even so prosperous that we could allow Europe, at least, to set up trade barriers against the entrance of our own goods in a freely competitive way. We encouraged the European Common Market even though it meant that some of our goods would be taxed in a non-competitive way as opposed to goods produced by our western allies. And for ten years this pattern of survival flourished and worked. Europe drew closer together. Trade barriers were diminished, if not abolished, and American power reigned in a benevolent kind of way.

But then, as the Western allies and Japan began to grow economically, their rates of growth approached our own and surpassed our own, we began to realize that our economic allies were now often our economic rivals. We began to feel that since we were sharing the major part of the cost of the defense of western Europe, we had allowed certain restrictions against our goods entering into the markets of western Europe, we were being unfairly put upon and there had developed a series of summit meetings from Boulet in London and elsewhere in which we tried to readjust the Western Alliance to reflect the new reality, the new reality being that there were other now almost independent sources of power. Just as Hungary and Poland and Roumania were beginning to speak out within the eastern world more and more independently, so France went her own way and increasingly West Germany went her own way and the United States tried as best she could to see that cooperation on a military and security level remained and that we were, in fact, not too badly put upon.



One of the major headlines, recurring headlines, of this last year has been the headline which has detailed the devaluation, the dropping value of our dollar, vis a vis the currencies of most of our allies. Now this, of course, is not a new phenomenon. In the early 1970's it was already quite recognizable to the then Nixon administration that our economy was no longer absolutely predominant. You remember, it was the Nixon Administration that in 1971 ordered that the dollar no longer be convertible into gold and imposed a ten percent tariff on almost all goods coming into these United States. There were two devaluations of the dollar in 1971 and 1973. There was the emergence of protection sentiment in the United States reflected in the establishment of certain kinds of target prices for steel or other goods, that if some country can sell goods below that price it must be pegged at least at that price so that our goods can be competitive.

What I am trying to describe is the slow movement of power from the two super powers to their allies, from the two super powers and their allies out into the rest of the world, quite visibly to the oil producing nations, the OPEC nations, and even, to a large degree, to the nations of the Third World. This is the new reality. No longer is the will of Washington and the will of Moscow predominant. No longer are the issues which are of concern between the two nations the only main issues. No longer does the peace of the world depend upon detente between these two powers. The peace of the world can now be threatened way down the line by tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan, between Rhodesia and her neighbors, between Israel and the Arab countries of the Middle East. Power exists in many centers and many centers have the military and economic power to create great mischief, if they wish, in the world. During the last year we have read a great deal about the attempts by this administration



to have a successful second SALT agreement, a second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty. You have read a great deal about criticism of the President for being willing, single-handedly, without a reciprocal action by the Russians to delay the building of a new unmanned missile, the Cruise missile, in the hopes that Russia will make a similar response and there can truly be some significant arms limitations. Arms limitations there need to be, but while we have been preoccupied with the difficult technical and emotional and political strategic issues involved in these talks between the two super powers, it is well for us to remember that 11 billion dollars of arms, which include some of the most advanced, technologically advanced, weapons in the world went out, were sold by the advanced nations of the world to the Third World last year, three times the values of arms that were sold ten years ago. More advanced weaponry went into sub-Sahara Africa in 1977, on year, than had gone into those countries in the 76 preceding years of the century. The world is increasing its armament, not only its level of armament, but sophistication of its weaponry at an incredible pace. And, increasingly, supersonic jet planes, ground-to-ground missiles, all of the armours of the super powers, are available to huntas, tin-horn dictators, to rogue states like Libya and Uganda, with possibilities that are frightful to contemplate.

The second item on the agenda in London a year ago was a non-economic item and had to do with nuclear proliferation. The United States was concerned by the stated determination of West Germany and of France to sell nuclear information and technology outside the so-called group of six, six countries which now have nuclear weaponry. Nothing was achieved. A committee was brought into being. The committee is still meeting. Such technology has been sold to Iran and to the Arabians and to others, but what we all must remember is that by 1984 forty countries on this earth will have plants to produce atomic energy and that senior at Princeton University was simply the information available to him in scientific journals was able to produce



all the technology necessary to produce an atomic bomb. And if the world were to take just the residue, the atomic residue, the plutonium residue, from the atomic energy plants that would be in operation in 1984 in the forty countries outside the super powers, there would be enough atomic material just from that separated waste to produce three thousand bombs of the power of the bombs which we dropped on Hiroshima at the end of the second World War. Until 1970 or so it required a tremendous investment of research monies, of experimentation monies, in order to produce nuclear warheads. It's all there. It's all been written about. The technology exists on paper. You don't have to spend money for the research. The atomic materials are more or less available and certainly by the mid 1980's there will not be six, but sixteen or twenty-six countries, who have a nuclear potential.

Power has moved from the center to the periphery. Power exists in many hands and the level of power increases with every year. The problems are intricately more complex. They are infinitely involved more with provincial problems, regional problems, tensions between tribes than they ever were before. And when I hesitate to think of what could happen when one of the more irresponsible leaders of the world, I don't know how many responsible leaders in the world there are, but there are degrees of irresponsibility, when an Edi Amin or has a nuclear power in his hands, when terrorists have such power.

Two years ago, already, the Italian government discovered terrorists outside the Rome airport. They were preparing to shoot ground-to-air missiles at incoming planes. We live in a world of increased complexity. We live in a world where none of us should ever believe that there are some simple overarching solutions, one or two problems, plans which we can undertake which if successfully concluded would eliminate the major problems of our world. Each day, each year, our world becomes



a more difficult place in which to live and we are faced with a new set, an increasing set, of problems.

Now, Americans, by and large, do not like to contemplate a world of increasing complexity. We pride ourselves on being pragmatists and in being technique-oriented, on being engineers. We assume that to every problem there is some kind of solution, preferably a quick solution. And we elected as our President, seventeen months ago, a man who seemed to voice the old-time American feeling that there were simple, overarching solutions to the problems of the world. Mr. Carter spoke of a crusade for human rights. He spoke of the need to deal with the Soviet Union as simply another large power and not in terms of some international conspiracy. He spoke of our obligation to encourage the emergence of the impoverished masses of the world. He spoke many of the hopes which lie deepest within the breasts of most of us. The problem is that none of these programs are simple of solution, however simple they may seem to be of statement. And we have only to see to what degree his human rights plank has been twisted and distorted and, to a large degree, erased and eliminated. One can point the finger at an enemy if he is distant enough, but not if he is strong enough. One can point the finger at some nations but not at other nations because of the complexity of other relationships. Those who offer simple solutions in this complex age are often people who misguide and who mislead. It is hard for us to remember that it was just a year ago this week that Menachem Begin was elected Prime Minister of the State of Israel. The Likud victory was just a year ago. So much has happened; it seems so long ago.

Now why did the Menachem Begin emerge from political obscurity, from the shadows into power? To a certain degree because of the simplicity of an American president; to a certain degree because an American president had announced that 1977 would be the year of Geneva and Geneva would be a meeting at which all of the



parties would be involved and that, therefore, giving to the most rejectionist of the groups, the most obstinate, the most unwilling of the groups, essentially, a veto power over what would happen at Geneva. The Israeli population had many issues at stake, but certainly, one of them was the fear that the traditional powers might be too willing to go along because America was so strong, they wanted a man who seemed stronger. And in that intervening year we have seen the impossibility of a simple solution. The simple solution was symbolized by Sadat coming to Jerusalem and being received in Jerusalem by Mr. Begin. It all seemed so simple. There they were, talking together, smiling at each other, couldn't it all be arranged? And, of course, very little was arranged because when one moved from the symbolic act, from the simple, to negotiations which are inevitably complex, the questions of security which are inevitably terribly involved, one found that there was very little give on the one side and some very complex demands on the other, and, as a result, November has not led to a new spring. It has led to a series of heightened tensions and concerns and an increasingly desperate look for some way to break out of the current feeling that not enough is happening, if anything at all is happening.

How does one live in a complex world? I suspect one lives in a complex world the same way one lives one's own life for our lives are filled with complexities, are they not? They are filled with the demands of our own needs, the demands of those whom we love, family, husband, wife, children, parents. They are filled with the professional demands of our businesses, our skills. They are filled with the demands placed upon us by our communities. They are filled by the pressures placed upon us by the politics and by the economics of the times in which we live. One of the ways in which we live in this world of complexity is to strain our expectations, to keep them fairly realistic, to know that we cannot expect to have everything handed to us. And one of



the ways we can live, I think, in a world of increasing complexity is to recognize that for us and for our children, and probably for our children's children, there will be no final destination. There will be no arriving at a moment when the world is ultimately secure, when peace has blossomed forth everywhere, but that we must face each day and its problems in the hope that we can reduce tensions, we can prevent issues from blowing up into military confrontations or global confrontations. We can find ways to achieve what can be achieved given the equipment, the economics, the politics, the people we must deal with. We need to lower our expectations. There will be no peace, but it doesn't mean that the world cannot know a kind of restless quiet. There will be no prosperity for America such as we enjoyed at the end of the second World War where we alone had all of the power in the world, but that doesn't mean there cannot be for America a decent standard of living and that we cannot provide for our institutions, <sup>that</sup> we cannot provide for our families dignity and opportunity, but, obviously, this is going to require the reorientation of priorities. What kind of world is it when the richest country, still the richest country on the face of the world, cannot keep its schools open? What kind of a country is it when the richest country on the face of the earth cannot really provide adequate employment or adequate welfare for most of its citizens, or those of its citizens who require it? What kind of situation is it when not simply the center cities, the gutted places of our world, but the suburbs and the small towns of our world cannot provide police and fire protection and the basic services? Obviously, there has to be a reorientation of priorities, domestically, nationally and internationally. They will not come easily, but at some point our world surely will wake up to the fact that it is not by power and not by might that you make for a decent standard of living, that every gun that you add to your arsenal means that you withdraw some service from that which you are offering to your people. The cartoon that I saw this year that made the deepest



impression on me was the cartoon of a group of ladies behind a table in a school. One was saying to the other. it's going to be a wonderful world when we can have a bake sale for a new bomber rather than for a new school. We need a reorientation of priorities. We need a reorientation of expectations. We need to recognize that no one who offers us simplistic solutions offers us an adequate solution. We're going to have to face problems which are terribly terribly complicated. The issue that is before the Senate tomorrow is one such issue, the issue of the bombers, the jet fighters, for Saudi Arabia, for Israel and for Egypt. Those who would vote against, the position I would take, that we ought to vote down this whole proposal because it is an unfortunate combination of proposals, do so in part for good reason. They know that the United States requires the oil of the Middle East and they call Nakol Saudi Arabia a moderate state because it is moderate vis a vis price rises for that oil, not because it is moderate vis a vis peacemaking in the Middle East. And when you talk to our senators, as I have been talking to them, you find that it is a question of domestic economics which is uppermost in their minds and it is so much so that they are willing for Israel to take chances, that Israel should not to have to take chances, because of their concerns, the immediate needs of the country.

A complex world. There is an old rabbinic saying, and I close with it, a simple man is never a saintly man. There are religious traditions, philosophic traditions, which see a certain saintliness in innocence. I think that there are many in America who believe somehow there are simple answers to these problems and those who are simple and hard will find their way through. We don't need to think so much as we need to act as if a better world were here. That's not the Jewish way. The Jewish way requires sechel, the mind, a hard application of fact, of thought, of information, of wisdom, of knowledge, of understanding to the problems that confront us.



The fact that our world is a complex place does not make it an impossible place, but it will become impossible if, frightened by the complexities of the problems which we face, we turn away from the world and leave it to others to do. That's the great danger. Economic problems, the political problems of the world must be faced by us, not simply by those who claim to be our leaders. And we must be prepared to think through what can be done and not simply <sup>to</sup>, from time to time, shout with someone who seems to be saying things that we approve of.

As this season closes if I were to make any plea it would be a plea for an increased awareness of the context of the political and economic life which we lead, that we somehow find the ways of informing ourselves as intelligently as we can about as many problems as we can and involving ourselves as best we can in the community in efforts to their solution.

I spoke to you at the beginning of the year about what I call the messianic journey. It's one way of saying what Kissinger was saying, pulling Machiavelli out of Kissinger. The messianic journey says there is no final destination for you and for me. When we die it may be years hence our world will still have its share of heartaches and headaches, but we can have diminished some of these problems by the way in which we live, by the energy with which we involve ourselves in the community on those issues of immediate concern to us, those issues which can be effective. I commend you that journey. We are immersed in an unending process. Jews have always been immersed in the messianic journey.



4 years ago - the week - Mr. Carter was in London  
participating in a Western summit meeting with the P.M.  
of Canada, Gov. Antai, F.A., West Ger., & H. The agenda was  
largely economic - dealing with the stream of goods and  
energy coming in from the Free World because of the  
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are symptomatic of the increasing complexity of international  
affairs - but not only done in the summit level with the  
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the East-West Conference, 2nd part 12 months



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would represent barriers against our own goods.

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