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Yom Kippur sermon, 1979.

Yom Kippur Sermon
Daniel Jeremy Silver
September 30, 1979

Conventional wisdom insists that confession is good for the soul. A more realistic wisdom suggests that confession may be good for the soul, but does not enhance our reputation for good sense. Jewish wisdom suggests that confession is a protean explosion of emotional energy, neither good nor bad in itself; good only if wedded to contrition and to a change of conduct.

Normally, we associate confession with whispered confidences to a priest in a screened booth in a cathedral and many times we overlook the fact that confession plays a major role in our religious life, though in a quite different form. During every one of the services of Yom Kippur there is a Viddui, a confession of sins, which precedes a catalogue of human failings with the flatout statement: "We are not so presumptuous and stiff-necked to say before Thee that we are wholly righteous and have not sinned. Verily, we have sinned. We have sinned. We have transgressed. We have done perversely."

I would like to talk with you about the concept of confession. Confession plays a role in every religious tradition, but our tradition treats it in a unique and special way. By understanding the way in which Judaism deals with confession, I hope you will find some enlarged benefit in the remainder of this great fast of at-one-ment.

We immediately associate confession with the release of guilt. When we have done something which we know to be terribly wrong, emotional pressures build up inside of us. Sometimes these pressures can be paralyzing; at other times they cause us to adopt strange projective rituals. Confession opens up the sluice in the dam. It releases these pressures and allows us to regain our balance and equilibrium. Confession reduces the buildup of emotional pressure, guilt; but unless confession is combined with some form of sincere repentance, it does little to raise the moral quality of our life. By itself confession is ^{an} ethical neutral. We all know professional "I'm sorry-ers" who explode in anger or gamble away the bread money or gossip maliciously, ^{and} are quick to say: 'I did wrong, I'm sorry, forgive me'; yet, it takes them only a day or two, sometimes only minutes, before they are at it again. Confession can be a self-indulgent undertaking. That is why Judaism

ties it to a ritual such as the liturgy of Yom Kippur which focuses on sin and atonement. Yom Kippur assumes remorse; and only then moves to confession, which is the way in which we focus this vague feeling of guilt, by tying it to specific failings applicable to us. Our confession having been spoken, Yom Kippur encourages us to move on to repentance, at-one-ment, coming back to the way of life which is worthy of us and worthy of God.

In the beginning, however, confession was simply a part of a process of expiation. In ancient Egypt when a man had done something he felt to be wrong, he brought a sacrifice to the shrine of Aten or Ra and spoke his confession to the priest. The priest then opened a book of magical rites and would look down the page until he found the particular magical formula which would cancel out that man's particular guilt. The worshipper would leave with a feeling that he had been shriven, released.

There is nothing magical or mechanical about Yom Kippur. We will be as we are now after Neilah unless we have allowed the confession to speak intimately to us and unless we have made firm resolve to do better in the days ahead. The Mishnah puts it clearly and simply: "Do not sin and say that the Day of Atonements will atone. The Day of Atonement will not atone." Do not sin, believing that if you bring your little pack of wickedness to the sanctuary on Yom Kippur and go through the rites you will automatically be forgiven. Judaism has always taught that forgiveness begins only when we have reconciled ourselves to those whom we have wronged and made restitution to them for any damage we have caused them. Beyond that we must honestly begin to make plans to take our life in hand, never to act in such a way again.

Everything about confession, as it is discussed in our tradition, represents an attempt to broaden our understanding from the narrow axis of guilt and catharsis into an ethical element which will couple change of moral habit with the desired release of guilt.

Our tradition signaled this broader concern through the form of the liturgy. The Viddui is written in a particular literary style which, unfortunately, is lost in the English translation of our Prayer Book. The Hebrew text adopts an alphabetic or acrostic

form. Each line of the catalogue of sin begins with a different letter of the alphabet - a to z: ashamnu, bagadnu, gazalnu, dibarnu, dofi; alef, bet, gimel, daled. The form suggests that everyone of us can find in our actions some lapse or failure, some sin, in every area of life. We have been arrogant. We have spoken bitterly. We have acted cal-
lously. We have been deceitful. . . It is hoped we will not limit our confession to a particular wrongdoing, but recognize that we sinned every day. There was something sinful about the whole context of our life. Who among us took all the time we might have taken with friends or family? Who among us did not impose his needs upon a conversation? Who among us did not indulge himself in self-pity at some moment when the shadows lengthened? Who among us was as generous of himself or as attentive to the signals others were sending out to us as he might have been? A to z - we are involved routinely in sin.

As our tradition conceives it, confession is for the good people rather than for the wicked. True, the gates of repentance are always open; but I have always wondered what the wild people, the human animals, would really gain from participating in Yom Kippur. Generally, they would lack the sensitivity to be moved by the music, the memories, the poetry, the message, the holiness of this day. The Viddui is not a confession of crime, but a confession of inadequacy. Who among is so presumptuous and stiff-necked as to say, I have not sinned? None of us.

The tradition reinforced this theme in another way. Of all the well-known legal traditions, rabbinic law is the only one which will not admit a confession as evidence in a criminal proceeding. In our tradition confession had nothing to do with courts and crime. Judges like to go to sleep at night, convinced that they did not make a mistake, so confession is a desired end to a trial. There are in traditions a criminal must, confess before sentence can be imposed. In imperial China a criminal had to confess before he could be sentenced, and the judge had the right to use physical torture once he was convinced the person was guilty in order to secure the confession. There is the nub of the problem, the unreliability of a confession. In our far more humane ~~and~~ legal code, this country recognizes the danger of physical and psychological coercion and

has circumscribed the admissibility of confession quite narrowly; nevertheless, a confession will be admitted under certain conditions. In the Jewish tradition, never - no one declares himself to be evil. When the Jew came on Yom Kippur to his confession, his mind did not associate it with crime and the court system. Confession belonged to the sanctuary where it was spoken by the respectable and the decent. Confession was for the good people, those who know that good can always be better; if not higher.

A single issue, confession can be a self-indulgent undertaking. Let us say that we spoke some absolutely unforgivable words to a parent, spouse or a child. We were angry and bone-weary and full of our own troubles. The day had not gone well for us. Suddenly, we found ourselves saying things we should never have said. Confession would allow us to unblock the sense of guilt and give us the courage to come and apologize for our actions. And what a satisfactory conclusion. We have been released of guilt. We were reconciled to somebody we loved. But how have we changed? What, out of this happy situation, would force us to raise the whole pattern of our lives? Only when we recognize that confession relates to the whole context of our life, not to one act, one particular weakness, can there be growth in the area of moral sensitivity.

At the beginning of our history, the Biblical tradition was like the Egyptian. If an Israelite sinned he brought a sacrifice to the shrine. He spoke his confession, not to a priest but to God. The sacrifice was offered and as the smoke rose to God, he felt himself pardoned. He had gone through the prescribed exercise of expiation. This single issue approach did not satisfy for long the religious genius of our people. It was narrow. It involves guilt and catharsis, nothing more. They organized a congregational atonement, Yom Kippur. We come together as a group. We recite together the Viddui. Verily, we have sinned, everyone of us; the person in this room who you respect the most, as well as yourself. Everyone of us can read himself into every line of the Viddui. Confession is for the good people, for you and for me, because we, too, need to raise up the quality of our life, the level of our sensitivity, the level of our compassion, commitments and concerns.

As our tradition organized this corporate form of confession, the Yom Kippur, they emphasized another aspect of this communal sense. The liturgy they wrote used the first person plural - for the sins which we have sinned against Thee - we, all of us. All of us share in many sins. Sinning is not simply a private enterprise in the sense that the only people involved are myself and the person whom I have offended or misused or manipulated. There are private sins, but there are also public sins. We all share in the sins of our society. We all sin when the society fails to provide opportunity, education and justice. These are corporate sins. Judaism is not satisfied with a privatistic ethic where it would be right for me to say, I lead a good life within the bosom of my family; I am careful of those relationships; I do not want to be coarsened by the so-called real world. Judaism has no patience with those who build high walls between themselves and society. We have not encouraged people to enter monasteries or utopian communes. We do not applaud those who go off into the wilderness or to suburbia to build themselves a little shangri-la apart from the society, without recognizing that they, too, are responsible for the ills of the social order.

We sin vis a vis an individual. We can ^{sin} vis a vis our society. We cannot sin vis a vis history. Sin is always a measure of potential. I cannot sin if I could not have done otherwise. The child does not sin if it is not involved in the social and political problems of our day, since the child may not even recognize that there is a world outside his home. I can be held accountable only in those areas where I could effect a change; so our Viddui does not speak of inherited sins, of the sins of the fathers, of original sin. We do not say tonight because our ancestors did this or that to the Philistines we bear a heavy guilt to this day. Our tradition does not accept the logic of the romantic and pathetic among us who insist that we bear the sin of the pioneers and the traders who went out and killed Indians or the sin of the ship owners and the plantation managers who thrived off slavery. It is not only that our parents were neither pioneers nor plantation owners. Even the grandchildren of such people are not sinfully involved in their past. They cannot rectify it. There is enough sin, believe me, in the world of

which we are a part to satisfy the most fastidious among us. We do not have to go back and carry a burden of guilt about which we can do nothing. I rather think of such an approach as a form of masochism because there is no getting out from under. It is a way of feeling guilty without being forced to confront duty. What can we do about it? The answer is nothing, but we can be active meeting the social problems of the day head on; being involved in the causes which we think will make for larger justice and a more equitable and free social order. If we are not involved that is a sin. Don't wear a hair shirt for the generations that were before. You would not want your children or grandchildren to bear the guilt for the things that we will leave undone.

Etymologically, viddui, confession, comes from a root which has a double meaning. In the first instance it means to be specific, to point an arrow at a target. And that is what confession does, if we are honest about it. We read the general terms of the viddui and relate it to specific instances in our own life.

The second etymological root of viddui turns out to mean "to raise up", "to lift up." Confession deals not simply with guilt, but with growth. To speak of sin is to speak of possibility. If I am a sinner it is because I have failed to do what I might have done. And one of the unfortunate facts of our times is that we have tended to avoid the term "sin." We seek explanations and rationalizations for every action. They are a result of our conditioning. How could we be otherwise, having been raised in the cold, impersonal streets? We could not escape the influence of our parents or our school system or our culture. Presumably, we are what the times allowed us to be. There is a minimal truth here, but only that. Recognize what we are doing. Every time we give a sociological or psychological pseudo-explanation for an act, we say, in effect, that we could not have done otherwise. Sin is a great liberating concept which allows me to feel how much more I can become.

Some months ago I tried to explain the Jewish history of confession to a class. One of the students said to me: "Are you really doing people a favor by drawing out the concept of sin? Sin is a wearisome word. Sin is a burden. It is a heavy term. Why

lay on it?" Those of you who have whole-heartedly opened yourself to the message of Yom Kippur know that when you leave these halls at Neilah you are not depressed. On the contrary, you are exalted. Instead of being beaten down emotionally, you leave convinced that you can lift yourself up, raise your sights, live more sensitively, compassionately, generously and more intelligently than you have lived till now.

Sin measures the gap between my actions and my potential.

Our tradition offers a final insight on confession. In most traditions one confesses to a priest. One speaks of wrongdoing in the privacy of the confessional. The priest gives us instruction and imposes a penance. The penitnant accepts the penance and through those acts of penance is relieved of the guilt. In other traditions we confess not to an individual, but to our community. In Buddhism the monks would gather twice each month and after appropriate readings from the sacred scriptures each monk was encouraged to stand before his peers and speak openly of the moral failings of his life. In the early church the practice was quite similar. James, the brother of Jesus, had taught: "Confess ye one to another." Today, throughout the Communist world, this confessional ritual is replicated in character evaluation meetings of the communes. Everyone is told to speak openly of their errors. They are reproved by the group. The group decides what extra work shall be imposed as penance and the ties of community presumably are bound more tightly.

We can see the psychological mechanisms at work in these traditional forms of confession. Obviously, they have power, but Judaism, alone of one of the major religions of the world, has no ritual of private confession. Though we speak openly of our sins, we do so only in general terms of the liturgy. Our private confession we make only to God. Here, too, there is an important lesson. However wise a priest confessor may be, he seeks to shape his parishoner's soul within the context of the teachings of the church as he understands them. However integrated the spirit of the commune may be, it seeks to impose the commune's discipline, values and attitudes upon each member. Confession, in this sense, is always an enforcement of conformity. It represents an attempt by the powers

that be to impose their will and their ways on the individual. In many ways this can be good; but what if justice requires us to rebel against the teachings of our tradition or community? What happens when that commune becomes so self-righteous that they determine to go out and crusade for their position, using any and all means to achieve their ends?

Confession can be a dangerous tool of manipulation in the hands of individuals who hear our confession. "I would be a fool, indeed, if I told to another what I can't keep to myself", but the larger truth is that I must be conscious that I serve God and a human master. I may appreciate the wisdom of a teacher, parent or friend, but, ultimately, I must confront the Torah, confront God on my own in my own way and determine what the commanding voice of God says to me. We do not say tonight: for the sins which we have sinned against the State. We do not say tonight: for the sins which we have sinned against the synagogue or the church. We do not say tonight: for the sins which I have sinned against my family. We say, rather, for the sins which I have sinned against you, O God. We confess to God. We acknowledge the moral imperative of His way, which is to recognize the fallibility of all human ways, however noble they may be.

So confess tonight that you may recognize your royal reach. Confess tonight so that you can sense the possibility for spiritual enhancement which lies within you. Confess tonight because you are a good person. Confess tonight because the pattern of your lives is good but not good enough. There will always be another Yom Kippur however seriously we take this day. During the coming year we will make compromises; we will be impatient; life will catch up with us and toss us about a bit; but the effort will be all to the good. Verily, take with you words and return to the Lord, your God.

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2. are along with the 4.6 in the
for the good and the more can be the

incidents, - The ~~idea~~ of ~~repression~~ ~~is~~ ~~not~~
 correct; but what have correct - you to
 appreciate ~~the~~ spiritual & ~~therefore~~ ~~reality~~ reality 4.6
 can offer? - at the same time what good reality
 could not be valued? - and as the mind
 all ~~reality~~ ~~is~~ ~~not~~ very due of a confused

ANNEX A

5. 11. 1944

20160120

10.05

[illegible]

There is a letter number 10 in
 the 10th page of the report, the
 one which is - the one which is
 on the 10th page of the report, the
 one which is not signed, - a letter which
 found that it - the letter and the letter
 and the letter is found to be a letter which
 is 12/10/1

to be in the same line of ^{a person's} ~~information~~ - but
in all the major legal system - some kind of
an article - and the other is a person
can be a doctor - a doctor - only the
Nelson and medical school a person
in a medical case 8/11/56 7/10/56 8/11/56
a number of years have been given: a
handy summary of papers - - - - -

~~to be a person's~~
~~guidance~~ - a ~~person's~~ ~~information~~
of ~~medical~~ ~~information~~ - ~~can be a person's~~
my need to ~~information~~ - ~~can be a person's~~
~~detail of a person's~~ ~~information~~ ~~information~~
that ~~person~~ ~~played a part in the person's~~ - ~~but~~
the ~~person's~~ ~~information~~ ~~information~~ - ~~but~~
did not show the ~~information~~ ~~information~~
of the ~~person's~~ ~~information~~ ~~information~~ ~~information~~
collection ~~information~~ ~~information~~ ~~information~~
as a Formula ~~information~~ ~~information~~ ~~information~~
the ~~person's~~ ~~information~~ - ~~but~~ ~~information~~ ~~information~~



and the man in the middle believed

Not unique in a criminal, but anyone
6 years - That's the endless case of Y.K. -
In the middle stage between life - of a man
kept a good subject which belonged to a regular or
regular - in agreement - he made relations -
present a man offering to be shown - Confused
his man - Take man you need &
return into the Y.K. but - and man
covered by the man but to man from -
20 man and the man but to man from -
the man man the man from the man
return - One man - One man - One man
but the man - / The man man man
on the man of but man man
up man of the man man - to man
man man Y.K. man to man
the man the man and of man - man
at man man the man man man
man man man - the man man -

response to the... - they alone...
a measure to... for the...
... of...
The... can be...
... who...
... which...
to... - ...
by J.T. ...
... have been ...
... of ... - but ...
... 17th ...

WRHS
You ...
of your ...



Tydy to me a copy - end of an
in judged

We are pleased to be developed to a
class a few years ago - on studies asked
minutes the meaning of the words of justice
now - part a contradiction - justice is a hard

Thip - justice as wearying and paralytic -

Entirely highly emotional people can develop ELABORATE
protection defensive rituals - but

after cooperation - we but in not loaded with

later accusatory overturned

in blame the title of the imposed beliefs -

Violence - The Root of the two things - To be

permitted - direct and to PARADE - a the under

the accusations the explicitly are intentional -

The very fact that we feel only accusations - surprised -

surprised the recognition of my ability to organize

my life - You are not just guilty for what you

would not cancel

One of the most valuable of modern life
is that we are deprived for the modern

Y.H. does not stand exactly correct - but
near some of what can be done - but
a full count - Y.H. does not stand at - the
distance between are only a few
hundred miles - but for the
human mind it can be coming a human
and human being

The first day of summer, in the
lot - the first day of summer in the
particular of the human mind - but the
can also stand a lot of the human mind
might have been made a matter to

One full corner

A One full corner to the human mind

One corner in every day - the
corner to the human mind - the corner to the
being - again a single corner
corner -

No full corner - no

single corner in a corner - no

single corner in a corner - no

single corner in a corner -

has a secret printing plant
which will be used

The A.C. ~~Project~~ ~~is~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~used~~ ~~for~~ ~~the~~ ~~purpose~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~secret~~ ~~printing~~ ~~plant~~

is included in the ~~secret~~ ~~printing~~ ~~plant~~ ~~which~~ ~~will~~ ~~be~~ ~~used~~ ~~for~~ ~~the~~ ~~purpose~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~secret~~ ~~printing~~ ~~plant~~

which will be used for the purpose of the secret printing plant

which will be used for the purpose of the secret printing plant

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which will be used for the purpose of the secret printing plant

and mention that records for loss
of ~~documents~~

There are ~~records~~ for the records of
a lot of records - in ~~records~~ -
some ~~lost~~ ~~lost~~ / some ~~some~~ ~~feel~~
lost ~~and~~ ~~corresponding~~ - but they
have ~~records~~ ~~for~~ some ~~large~~
~~amounts~~

Records of
clearing up
records with
all the ~~records~~

~~Records will ~~records~~ ~~work~~ to and
also ~~records~~ ~~records~~ of ~~business~~
to ~~records~~ ~~records~~ - ~~records~~ ~~records~~
some of ~~records~~ ~~records~~ - ~~records~~ ~~records~~
many ~~records~~ ~~records~~ - ~~records~~ ~~records~~
records - but at a ~~records~~ ~~records~~
amount. ~~Records~~ ~~records~~~~

There is ~~records~~ ~~records~~ ~~records~~ -
until we start ~~records~~ ~~records~~ - // The 35.
of ~~records~~

Limitations of
records ~~records~~ ~~records~~
of ~~records~~ ~~records~~ ~~records~~

Confusion is not always good for the soul - but
 as the Lord said Confusion is a sin to be avoided
 therefore - it is good to be free of the bad -
 it is good to be clear of sins of ignorance - and
 use of the will of the soul of our nature -
 as in a clearing to be free - but -
 clear our will -



A rabbi sees a great deal of death and is asked often about the hereafter; but strangely, it is rarely the dying who ask the question. The dying worry more about the well-being of those they are leaving behind than about the darkness ahead. In the abstract, death seems forbidding - the unknown is always frightening - but in the context of age, death is often a welcome friend. There is a time to be born and a time to die. Death is not pain but the cessation of pain. Death is not an end but a translation of personality into a new realm of significance. To face death is to recognize its naturalness and its necessity. Birth and death are constituent elements of God's plan.

When the tyrants of Athens sentenced Socrates to death, they sent messengers to his cell to announce their decision that he must drink a cup of hemlock poison. Socrates, we are told, greeted the news with the simple statement: "Nature has condemned them." Those who sentenced him would not escape their mortality. The hour of birth represents one less hour that we have to live.

Surely, there is no profit in railing futilely against our nature; far wiser that our energies be spent enhancing life - our lives and the lives of others. The Bible tells us that King David had a son who was particularly precious and dear to him. When the lad became seriously ill, David became distraught. He paced the palace corridors and kept a lonely vigil at the bedside. The boy lay on his sick bed for a week during which time David frantically ordered about physicians and attendants. Nevertheless, the boy died. Knowing of his emotional attachment to the lad, the strength with which he had fought to keep his son alive, David's attendants feared to bring him the news. No one came; yet, the king sensed the boy's death and the unexpected happened. There was no explosion of anger. David went into his chambers and changed his garments. He took a bite of food and went to the Temple to pray. His courtiers were amazed. Later, they asked the king about his unexpected behavior. How was it that while the boy was alive you wept and paced the floor, but when he died you became again yourself. David answered simply: "While the boy was alive I fasted and wept, thinking that God might be gracious to me and the boy might live; but now that he has died why should I fast? Can I bring

him back again? I shall go to him. He will not come back to me."

According to the Greeks, the primary benefit of philosophy was that it teaches the naturalness of death. Leaves fall from the tree to enrich the soil beneath and to allow for the next season's growth. Death is part of life. We are part of eternity. Our Jewish tradition echoed Job's simple faith: "The Lord gives, the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord." Life and death conform to God's wisdom. Death marks a coming home after a long and tiring journey. The eternal God transcends time and is near to us in death as in life. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

It is understandable that death should remain a puzzle to us. No one has gone and returned, but the truth is that most of our anxieties about death are culturally induced. Some fear death because their parents tried to shield them from reality. By not speaking the word, by refusing to speak openly of death, they loaded death for us with a bundle of anxieties. When they refused permission to attend a grandparent's funeral, they taught us that death could not be faced straight on. Had we been taken we would have heard words of respect spoken about one whom we loved and we would have been held by those whose strength protected us - death would have lost its sting - but pushed, our eyes deliberately averted, our imaginations took over and we created nightmare images - paralyzing images - which many of us have not yet fully mastered.

Dying can be unkind, particularly now when the miracles of modern medicine can delay death's onset; but death is not. Death is surcease. Slow death, the dying, is artificial, the result of human skill and decision. Yet, though protracted dying is subject to human and humane remedies, all too often we keep the dying and their families trapped between twilight and the dark when there is no hope and no going ahead, only tubes, drugs and expense.

Why this Yizkor hour?

We are not here to help the dead. They do not need our help. They are with God.

Why this Yizkor hour? Our tradition shaped this ~~Yizkor~~ service to dispel the weight of abject grief - to help us see that though we have loved and lost, all is not lost. We have not been stripped bare. Yizkor lifts up the truth that our dead remain

our own - alive. Death takes much from us but it does not rub clean the slate. We have lost their physical presence but not their spiritual companionship. They live on in words of wisdom which echo in our minds and in the nature of their acts which remain a compelling example. How many of us have heard the voice of a dead parent admonishing us not to compromise our talents or our values? How many of us have sensed the encouragement of a dead spouse as we faced a difficult operation or conversation? Their hand was on our shoulder.

I have often noticed that the young tend to fear death more than those for whom death is a closer reality. The explanation, I believe, lies in their inexperience. Not having known grief, they do not yet know that death is not the final and complete end it at first seems to be. To lose a friend or loved one is to recognize that death has many dimensions - much survives with us: the voice, the love, the presence, the encouragement, the wisdom. Something is taken, but much remains.

Our ritual customs are designed to raise up this truth. At a death or on a Yahrzeit it is our custom to light a candle of memory, an act which at first blush seems somewhat inappropriate. The appropriate symbol of death ought to be the extinguishing of a light. A life has been snuffed out. Yet, our custom is to light the memorial candle. Death did not extinguish - cannot touch - our memories.

Death cannot extinguish our memories unless there are no compelling memories. Custom requires that a eulogy, a brief biography of praise, be spoken at a funeral. Some eulogies are long and honest descriptions of a lifetime of gracious deeds and spirited achievement. But there are times when I ask, what shall I say, and the answer is an embarrassed silence. Death cannot ennoble those who have lived foolishly or selfishly. The Talmud made this point long since: "The righteous are called alive in death, the wicked are called dead even when they are alive." We might substitute foolish, careless, irresponsible for wicked and the import would be the same. Butterfly people are called dead even when they are alive. We might substitute good, compassionate, far-seeing, noble-minded and the import would be the same. Death cannot still the voice of love or cancel dignity and worth.

Each of us will die. Such is God's will, and, as such, need not be feared. What must be feared is an aimless life. Our life is brief, yet, how many of us spend a great deal of emotional energy pushing that fact away from consciousness. Tomorrow is time enough - and it may be - if there is a tomorrow. The vulgar say: time is money. The wise say: time is all I have. I must use my time as carefully and intelligently as I can.

Life is too brief/between the budding and the falling leaf/between the seed time and the golden sheaf/for hate and spite/we have no time for malice and for greed/therefore with love make beautiful the deed/fast speeds the night.

Death makes a mockery of most of our ambitions. What purpose will all your anger and your bitterness or your pushiness or ambition serve against the measure of eternity when you are in the grave? At the same time, death and the measure of eternity validates those concerns which support family and civilization. For what is civilization but the gift of the living to the dead; and what is love but the gift of self to another human being, the enlargement of another's life? I love a phrase, familiar in our tradition, as praise of the good and the noble - they left life to the living. Children were strengthened by their example and through shared experience came to understand virtue and compassion. Family ties were strengthened by attention and care; companions were able to grasp something of the meaning of friendship - how to meet others without trying to manipulate them for personal benefit. A city was strengthened by their unselfish efforts in behalf of justice and decency and learning. When we die much remains - if we have lived by the highest.

I often wonder what passed through Moses' mind on the day of his death. Moses had spent years leading a difficult and recalcitrant people towards the Promised Land and he certainly hoped to settle there with them. This was not to be. He was to die on the far side of the Jordan River. Moses had devoted a lifetime to his people, bringing them out of Egypt and, against many odds, guiding them and sustaining them through the wilderness. He had borne patiently their burdens and bickerings and, when needed, he

had pleaded with God to forgive their sins. Now they would cross the river but he would not accompany them. Faced with the frustration of cherished hopes, many of us would have given way to self-pity and anger; but the Bible tells us that Moses remained silent. That silence, I find immensely eloquent. Moses had recognized that he was not dying short of his goal. His goal had been achieved. His spirit would continue to guide and direct the people. They would remember his leadership and the covenant to which he had bound them. He had changed them by his life. He had left life to the living and so can we - if we will only live by the highest.

Daniel Jeremy Silver

