

Yom Kippur 5774

BS"D Yom Kippur 5774

Part A:

On Yom Kippur, we recite the "vidui hagadol" (the great confession) beginning with the words

אני חוטא ואני רשע

It includes the whole spectrum of the individuals implemented and potential wrong-doings, and is the first stage in the teshuva process. However, there is one grave and austere sin which, for some reason, is not included in the list, which I will point out later (murder is not included in the list because murder is an Aisav and Yishmael trait but not of Yitzchak).

Part B:

This Yom Kippur we will solemnize the fortieth anniversary of the 1973 Yom Kippur War, with its 2500 martyred Jewish soldiers and many more wounded and anguished lives.

It is popularly accepted that at 1:45 in the afternoon, Egypt and Syria perpetrated their "Pearl Harbor" surprise attack on the State of Israel, taking advantage of the low preparedness of the nation on its holiest day.

This is false! As I know from my personal experience.

In 1968, I was drafted into Tzahal. At the end of the three month basic training, I was informed by the captain that I will assigned to be a rav tzva'ie (military chaplain). I told him that in civilian life I am a rabbi, but in the military I want to be a combat soldier (we had 4 children at the time). He responded by testing my sincerity, that if I insisted on

being combat material, he will assign me to the Suez Canal where the bitter "War of Attrition" was taking place. I told the captain that wherever I am needed, I will go.

I was assigned to an anti-aircraft unit which was part of the artillery forces. A few months later, the entire anti-aircraft section was transferred to the Air Force, and I found myself to be a small clog in the great machine called the Israeli Air Force.

At 6:30 on the morning of that Yom Kippur in 1973, my brother Meir z"l and I were walking to the bet kneset, when suddenly there appeared overhead two air force Skyhawk planes loaded down with ordnance – bombs and missiles.

I said to Meir that something is going on because these planes never fly over Yerushalayim, and most certainly not on Yom Kippur.

That was at 6:30 A.M. seven hours later, at 1:45 we received the explanation. War! Surprise attack on our holiest day!

Soon after, soldiers started arriving in the bet kneset with immediate draft notices for many of the men. I was waiting for my call up, but to my increasing frustration it did not come. It was very distressing, because the first reservists to be called up in times of emergency are the anti-aircraft.

At 4:00 A.M. a soldier arrived at my home with the orders to report to my base in Hertzalia. After saying shalom to my wife and children I departed to the unknown. At 7:00 A.M. I arrived at the base, but it was not the base I had known for years. The base was always a beehive of activity with hundreds of soldiers in various stages of training. On the morning of my arrival we were 25 soldiers.

Then the awful truth became revealed.

The soldiers who lived in the area of the base – Tel Aviv,

Hertzalia etc., were called up on **Friday afternoon**, and by night fall they were all at their positions in the Sinai.

We who were now at the base were soldiers who lived in Yerushalayim, Haifa etc., who would have taken too long to arrive at the base on Friday and would have held up the others who had to be in the Sinai as soon as possible.

We remained on the base until Monday evening when we were released, and told to be prepared to replace the soldiers who were now in Sinai; which did not happen.

I traveled back to Yerushalayim in an army truck. It stopped at Bet Dagan to pick up soldiers, including two women soldiers who were radio operators returning from the front. They informed us that after 2 days of fighting, we had already sustained the impossible number of 2000 dead.

The Yom Kippur War was not a surprise attack. It was part of an agreement between Israel, the US, Egypt and Syria. The deal was that Egypt and Syria would make a limited attack in order to gain some ground from Israel. This victory would be sufficient to restore the lost honor to the Arabs, and pave the way for peace talks.

But here was the betrayal. The Egyptians and Syrians did not keep their side of the agreement. They attacked and instead of limiting their advance they continued almost unimpeded, until Israel was able to call up the reserves.

Part C:

I wrote above, "There is one grave and austere sin which, for some reason, is not included in the list (of Al Chet). The sin is our relying on the promises of foreign nations and gentile "friends," rather than on HaShem. Many lessons can be taken from the Yom Kippur War, but perhaps the most essential one is: do not trust what a goy promises you. We Jews have only two entities in whom we can rely one: Our Father in Heaven and

our fellow Jews.

As the prophet Hoshea states (chapter 14) we cannot rely upon allies, such as Assyria or Egypt, the two super powers of the time, but only on HaShem:

יְשׁוּעָה אֶתְּחַנּוּן אֶתְּחַנּוּן אֶתְּחַנּוּן אֶתְּחַנּוּן :אֶתְּחַנּוּן אֶתְּחַנּוּן אֶתְּחַנּוּן-אֵל 'אֵל אֶתְּחַנּוּן אֶתְּחַנּוּן
אֶתְּחַנּוּן :אֶתְּחַנּוּן אֶתְּחַנּוּן אֶתְּחַנּוּן אֶתְּחַנּוּן אֶתְּחַנּוּן אֶתְּחַנּוּן אֶתְּחַנּוּן אֶתְּחַנּוּן 'אֵל אֵל
...אֶתְּחַנּוּן אֵל

1 Return, Israel, to the Lord your God. Your sins have been your downfall!

2 Take words with you and return to the Lord. Say to him: "Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips."

3 Assyria cannot save us...

King Tzidkiyahu's reliance of Egypt against Bavel paved the way for the destruction of the first Temple, and our early reliance upon Rome brought about the destruction of the second Temple.

I have reason to believe that our political leaders of today know the harsh truth, that our friends are not real friends but our enemies are real enemies.

אֶתְּחַנּוּן אֶתְּחַנּוּן אֶתְּחַנּוּן אֶתְּחַנּוּן אֶתְּחַנּוּן

אֶתְּחַנּוּן אֶתְּחַנּוּן אֶתְּחַנּוּן אֶתְּחַנּוּן אֶתְּחַנּוּן

Our Father and King nullify the intent of those who hate us

Our Father and King nullify the advice of our enemies

Part D:

The Mishna (Ta'anit 26b) states that Yom Kippur was one of the two happiest days in the Jewish calendar year, the other being

the 15th of Av.

רבות נהגו ביום הזה להצטייר בלבוש יפה וליצא לרחובות ולידוע זה לזה ולישאל זה את זה ולישאל זה את זה ולישאל זה את זה... ולישאל זה את זה ולישאל זה את זה... ולישאל זה את זה ולישאל זה את זה ! ולישאל זה את זה : ולישאל זה את זה

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said, there were no happier days in Yisrael than the 15th of Av and Yom Kippur... when the daughters of Yerushalayim would dance in the vineyards in order to present themselves to the young men (potential suitors).

Yom Kippur was not the solemn day we feel now but rather a time of rejoicing, when the young women of Yerushalayim would dance in public in full view of eligible young men. And the Gemara explains that the source of joy was the knowledge that HaShem would forgive the Jewish people on the holy day of Yom Kippur.

In these days preceding Yom Kippur, many thousands of Israelis stream to the Kotel via the Jewish Quarter. In the Churva Square of the Quarter, most groups stop to sing and dance religious and Israeli songs, in the spirit of the above Mishna.

Basically, Israelis are happy. The source of our happiness is the knowledge that we were chosen by HaShem to live the life our fathers dreamed of for 2000 years – not the nightmare of galut.

This deep seeded optimism explains why the Israel fertility rate is higher than that of any other country in the developed world, and the only fertility rate substantially above replacement.

I cannot elaborate on why Israelis have a high level of satisfaction in life, because for us in Eretz Yisrael it is natural, but for those who are far away no explanation could

suffice.

Shabbat Shalom and Gemar Chatima Tova

Nachman Kahana

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