

# Focus On Israel

By Kenny Gross

## O Ye Of Little Faith!

We have in the past month marked the Days of Awe during which we subjected ourselves to merciless cross examination. Having clarified our thoughts we seek forgiveness for numerous transgressions.

*"For the sin wherein we have sinned before Thee unwittingly; And for the sin wherein we have sinned before Thee with utterance of the lips; And for the sin wherein we have sinned before Thee in presumption, and in error; For the sin wherein we have sinned before Thee by a breach of trust."*

Only each one of us knows in their heart of hearts to what extent these pleas for forgiveness apply to their own attitude in the recent Phalangist Lebanese catastrophe. All accept that it was an unforgiveable act of murderous decimation.

But how many of you blamed Israel, perhaps not for the slaughter itself but for opening the gates of the Abattoir? Did you really believe that Jews were capable of encouraging such cold blooded murder? Well, some of us did. Some inferred that Israel opened the gates with the intention of allowing the vengeful Phalangists to wreck their vengeance in full measure.

There were those who write for a living on the national newspaper level - Jews or near Jews; those who write or draw with sharpened pencils dipped in vitriol, on the local level. One depicted General Sharon sitting in the "Eichman" glass booth, claiming that he was only obeying orders (ala Nazi). This goes beyond belief and truth. I have listened to a number of speeches by Arik Sharon. He has consistently accepted full responsibility. Where does "only obeying orders" come in? I wonder.

And on the political level in Israel itself...Shimon Peres making all sorts of insinuations and twisted hints, for political capital. Even after the establishment of a judicial commission he could not resist (inspired by the power of the American news media) a final shot "we know which two leaders will be found guilty." He has much to learn from the previous leader of the opposition in regard to Hadar (refinement and grace).

And all this without a shred of evidence against a man who, for the love of his people, has lived through the hell of Russian prison camp in the Arctic, who walked round and round the gallows erected by the British in pre-state Palestine, with a dangling noose readied for his neck, for four long years; against a man who served his country so loyally and faithfully in opposition, as its leader in the Knesset for

twenty-seven years and who has been a symbol of strength since his election as Prime Minister. All this performed selflessly and without personal profit.

And all this without established evidence against an Israeli-born General, who turned the tide on his own initiative and risk, in a precarious time in the Yom Kippur War.

And "we kept quiet and allowed this to happen". We listened to the rantings of "mighty mice" on our T.V. networks. I was in Europe in August. I listened to the news in German and French - no raving - objective reporting. I returned in early September. I did not recognize some of the quiet guys. A former anchor-man turned commentator, blasting sanctimoniously at Israel at an unbelievable speed - his spittle did not have time to clear his mouth - I was amazed. And then I learned. He had been to Beirut and been conditioned. The boys had a ball.

And the veiled threats issued by "aides" (those mysterious "come and gone" talking machines) - somewhat in the style of the "his master's voice" phonograph of old with the dog listening.

All our friends on the bandwagon, Jesse Helms had his penny's worth (picked up by his "new friend" in a cartoon in our morning bad news).

And what did we do? Mourn, grieve, write a few hopeful letters. In the cool of the Fall air, how does your conscience shape up? Did you sin unwittingly by keeping quiet or believing in Menachem Begin's guilt of being an accomplice? Did you utter of the lips by criticizing in doubtful evidence? Did you presume or err? Did you break trust? Only you can know.

But contrition and penitence will earn forgiveness! The greatest penitence is proven by a change of heart and by avoiding repetition of previous errors. And the time to prove yourself comes soon. There will be a protracted, judicial commission. The dogs of war will be howling at every tittle of evidence of weakness or error on the part of Israel's leaders or Army.

This time let us reply with strength! But even more constructively! We are now campaigning for UJA and Israel Bonds. Let us show the detractors of Israel what faith means. Let us show them the strength of our love for Israel. Give and invest in amounts that mean extraordinary support in time of trouble and need. Rise to the occasion. Give until it hurts. A sacrifice cleareth the soul.

## UJA Israel Mission

Dear Friends:

I write you this letter with joy in my heart.

I have returned from Israel and Lebanon. I will be returning February 6 through 16 with the Charlotte Jewish Federation - U. J. A. Mission.

I am urging you to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to learn through personal observation and an understanding heart. Israel is a remarkable country. My eyes are opened. There is no better way to be sensitized to the truth than through personal observation.

I viewed Lebanon. I saw a country in ruin, decimated as a result of seven years under the P. L. O. A country without taxation, international smuggling port of the world, Mercedes Benz roam through the streets smuggled in from Europe and sold to the Arabs.

A country with electricity and water - free, because there is no one to enforce the payment. A country of seventy armies, many intent on exacting vengeance from the other.

There is so much to tell you about Israel, however, your eyes and your own ears are the best teachers.

Please consider going with me. You understand the wonderful and unique opportunity the Federation is affording you. The trip cost is \$1600, but, is payable over eighteen months.

### Security Measures

PARIS (JTA) - Tight security measures were taken around and in synagogues in France during Yom Kippur. The most closely guarded area was the Rue des Rosiers Jewish quarter in Paris. Barriers blocked access to the street and passers-by.



Avi Rocklin, Rabbi Richard Rocklin, Richard Klein (Federation Pres.) and Israeli soldier at the top of Beaufort castle.



Richard Klein with Israeli youth. One of many the three Charlotteans (Rabbi Rocklin, Ron Katz and Mr. Klein) met and shared with.

I promise to be with you during the entire ten days. I will show you the land and you will hear from Government officials; you will come back inspired. I can never write on paper the joy in my heart.

Let's travel together and as one candle can light a

thousand - you will be able to light a thousand more and inspire others - Jew and Christian to understand the righteousness of the State of Israel.

Please call me. Israel is waiting for Us.

Blessings,  
Rabbi Richard K. Rocklin

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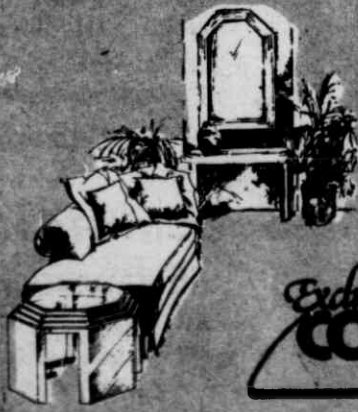
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