

**YOM KIPPUR 2012/5773: ISRAEL & THE JEWISH PEOPLE  
DESPITE DANGERS, FACE FUTURE HOPEFULLY**  
isranet-publications  
Isranet Daily Briefing, September 21, 2012  
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/yom-kippur-20125773-israel-jewish-people-despite-dangers-face-future-hopefully/>

---

**GMAR CHATIMA TOVA!**

**A Note to our Readers: CIJR Briefings will resume on  
September 27, 2012 after Yom Kippur.**

<b>Articles:</b> <a href="#">The Essence of Yom Kippur</a> <a href="#">The Whispers of Democracy in Ancient Judaism</a> <a href="#">The Abandonment</a> <a href="#">Israel Takes Issue of Jewish Refugees to UN</a>	<b>On Topic Links</b> <a href="#">Ehr Kumt (He is Coming)</a> <a href="#">Confessing our Sins on Yom Kippur</a> <a href="#">The Last Command</a>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



**THE ESSENCE OF YOM KIPPUR**

***Reuven Hammer***

***[Jerusalem Post](#), September 21, 2012***

**One of the misconceptions concerning Yom Kippur is that the most important prayer of the day is Kol Nidre. In the first place, Kol Nidre is not a prayer at all. It is a quasi-legal formula for nullifying vows. The only prayer in it is the conclusion, which was added in the 13th century, in which we ask to be forgiven for our sins and are assured that God will indeed forgive the people of Israel.**

**Historically speaking, Kol Nidre was a popular formula that sprang from the demands of the people in Babylonia sometime before the eighth century and that**

**YOM KIPPUR 2012/5773: ISRAEL & THE JEWISH PEOPLE  
DESPITE DANGERS, FACE FUTURE HOPEFULLY**  
isranet-publications  
Isranet Daily Briefing, September 21, 2012  
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/yom-kippur-20125773-israel-jewish-people-despite-dangers-face-future-hopefully/>

---

was actually opposed by rabbinic authorities such as Amram Gaon, who found it foolish and quite meaningless. Yet, obviously, people did not listen to the rabbis and attributed to it the importance that it has today.

There are two possible explanations for this. One is the melody, which is so haunting and moving that one can ignore the words and be uplifted just by the sound. The other is that psychologically, the release from vows frees people from guilt over those promises we have not fulfilled or those things we know we should not have done. By abolishing unfulfilled obligations there is a lifting of a burden that, whether or not we acknowledge it, we carry with us constantly. We enter Yom Kippur released from our imperfections.

Nevertheless, Kol Nidre is not the most important prayer of Yom Kippur evening or of the day that follows. The most important one is the Vidui - the confession of our sins. This is the essential prayer without which Yom Kippur has no meaning and no efficacy. We recite this confession in two forms: the short, alphabetical "Ashamnu" followed by the lengthy, more detailed "Al Het." The essence of both of these is found in one word: "hatati" - "I have sinned."

Originally it was considered sufficient for one to have simply said that word sincerely before the beginning of Yom Kippur in order to enter the sacred day in a state of purity and forgiveness. Tradition has a way of adding to any practice to make certain that it is done properly and taken seriously. The confession has become much more complex and is recited not only before Yom Kippur at minha, but also at each of the day's services. The principle remains the same: the sincere admission of guilt.

It is worth looking into the meaning of the Hebrew word "hatati." We translate "het" in English as "sin," but somehow the connotation is different. The word "sin" carries a great deal of weight in English. It implies a measure of wickedness and of intentional wrongdoing. That meaning is sometimes found in the Hebrew as

well. God warns Cain that if he does not do right, “sin (hatat) crouches at the door” - but He also tells him that “you can be its master.”

Of Sodom and Gomorrah the Lord says, “their sin is very grave.” But note that by adding the words “is very grave,” it is implied that there are some sins that are not very grave. The original literal meaning of the verb “hata” is “to miss the mark,” as in archery. This connotation carries over into the spiritual meaning as well.

Sometimes we miss the mark. This can happen because we tried but erred, or it can happen because we deliberately decide not to do what should be done. To sin, therefore, is human. It is part and parcel of our lives. In order to change, it is necessary to admit our errors. This is what we do when we recite the Vidui. It is the most important of our Yom Kippur prayers; a necessary prelude to true repentance. [\(Top\)](#)



## THE WHISPERS OF DEMOCRACY IN ANCIENT JUDAISM

*Eric Rosenberg*

[\*Wall Street Journal\*](#), September 20, 2012

Jews are in the midst of a period known as the Days of Awe, which began on Sunday night with Rosh Hashanah and culminates next Wednesday with Yom Kippur. It seems almost a misnomer to call them "holidays," though the first marks the Jewish New Year. Rather, they are deeply personal events whose aim is self-reflection, self-improvement and repairing what is broken in daily relationships.

**YOM KIPPUR 2012/5773: ISRAEL & THE JEWISH PEOPLE  
DESPITE DANGERS, FACE FUTURE HOPEFULLY**  
isranet-publications  
Isranet Daily Briefing, September 21, 2012  
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/yom-kippur-20125773-israel-jewish-people-despite-dangers-face-future-hopefully/>

---

**It's striking how much this most important period on the Jewish calendar shares with that most essential exercise in American democracy. Walt Whitman wrote in the late 1800s that "a well-contested American national election" was "the triumphant result of faith in human kind." This country's unique sense of optimism—the view that the future is unwritten and full of possibility, that anything can be achieved—is also the sensibility underpinning the Days of Awe.**

**On a cosmic level, Rosh Hashanah commemorates the birth of the world. On an individual level, it marks the rebirth of the soul as Jews examine their faults and ask forgiveness from those they have wronged. At heart, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are deeply optimistic events. A major theme in the prayers Jews recite on the High Holidays is the striving to be a better person, with the understanding that we are in control of our future.**

**As moderns, we take for granted how fundamentally revolutionary the Jews were in arriving at this novel concept about time, destiny and personal responsibility. Until their call to monotheism nearly four millennia ago, the worldview in the Levant was very different. Life was an endless cycle devoted to agrarian pursuits and appeasing warring gods in aid of those pursuits.**

**Thomas Cahill, in his riveting book "The Gifts of the Jews," underscores the point: "For the ancients, nothing new ever did happen, except for the occasional monstrosity. Life on Earth followed the course of the stars. And what had been would, in due course, come around again. . . . The future was always to be a replay of the past, as the past was simply an earthly replay of the drama of the heavens."**

**Perhaps the most profound gift of the Jews is that they broke down this fatalistic notion of the world, in which people were trapped on a great spinning wheel, with no future or past. In this way, the ancient Jews invented the concept of history in which the future was not an endless cycle but could be steered by our actions in the present. They inserted the individual, and individual responsibility and justice,**

into the equation.

This ancient Jewish view was a massive shift in how people viewed mankind's relationship to a deity—and it put responsibility squarely on the shoulders of men and women for their own destiny. This was the end of predetermination and the beginning of personal choice, justice and the quest for liberty. These themes, prevalent in the Jewish liturgy, are on display among the candidates competing for the White House, whatever the political party.

Democracy, Mr. Cahill says, "grows directly out of the Israelite vision of individuals—subjects of value because they are images of God, each with a unique and personal destiny."

Similarly, the University of Chicago historian William F. Irwin lectured in the 1940s that it was the ancient Jewish prophets and their advocacy of freedom that would find an early expression in the Magna Carta and later in the American Bill of Rights. Perhaps that is partly because the ancient Jews had such terrible experiences with monarchs.

Before the Jews swapped their political system—one of a collection of judges—for a monarchy, to be like other Near Eastern governments, the prophet Samuel warned of the predilection of kings for tyranny and over-taxation. A people will buckle under a king, Samuel warned to no avail. "He will take your best fields, vineyards, and olive groves, and give them to his servants. He will tithe your crops and grape harvests to give to his officials and his servants. He will take your male and female slaves. . . . As for you, you will become his slaves."

One can hear, without too much strain, the distant echoes of Samuel's admonitions in Thomas Jefferson's catalog against King George in the Declaration of Independence. ([Top](#))



## **THE ABANDONMENT**

*Charles Krauthammer*

*[Washington Post](#), September 13, 2012*

**There are two positions one can take regarding the Iranian nuclear program: (a) it doesn't matter, we can deter them; or (b) it does matter, we must stop them.**

**In my view, the first position — that we can contain Iran as we did the Soviet Union — is totally wrong, a product of wishful thinking and misread history. But at least it's internally coherent.**

**Iran's quest to possess nuclear technology: Iran said it has made advances in nuclear technology, citing new uranium enrichment centrifuges and domestically made reactor fuel.**

**What is incoherent is President Obama's position. He declares the Iranian program intolerable — "I do not have a policy of containment; I have a policy to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon" — yet stands by as Iran rapidly approaches nuclearization.**

**A policy so incoherent, so knowingly and obviously contradictory, is a declaration of weakness and passivity. And this, as Anthony Cordesman, James Phillips and others have argued, can increase the chance of war. It creates, writes Cordesman, "the same conditions that helped trigger World War II — years of negotiations and threats, where the threats failed to be taken seriously until war became all too real."**

**YOM KIPPUR 2012/5773: ISRAEL & THE JEWISH PEOPLE  
DESPITE DANGERS, FACE FUTURE HOPEFULLY**  
isranet-publications  
Isranet Daily Briefing, September 21, 2012  
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/yom-kippur-20125773-israel-jewish-people-despite-dangers-face-future-hopefully/>

---

**This has precipitated the current U.S.-Israeli crisis, sharpened by the president's rebuff of the Israeli prime minister's request for a meeting during his upcoming U.S. visit. Ominous new developments; no Obama response. Alarm bells going off everywhere; Obama plays deaf.**

**The old arguments, old excuses, old pretensions have become ridiculous:**

**(1) Sanctions. The director of national intelligence testified to Congress at the beginning of the year that they had zero effect in slowing the nuclear program. Now the International Atomic Energy Agency reports (Aug. 30) that the Iranian nuclear program, far from slowing, is actually accelerating. Iran has doubled the number of high-speed centrifuges at Fordow, the facility outside Qom built into a mountain to make it impregnable to air attack.**

**This week, the agency reported Iranian advances in calculating the explosive power of an atomic warhead. It noted once again Iran's refusal to allow inspection of its weapons testing facility at Parchin and cited satellite evidence of Iranian attempts to clean up and hide what's gone on there.**

**The administration's ritual response is that it has imposed the toughest sanctions ever. So what? They're a means, not an end. And they've had no effect on the nuclear program.**

**(2) Negotiations. The latest, supposedly last-ditch round of talks in Istanbul, Baghdad, then Moscow has completely collapsed. The West even conceded to Iran the right to enrich — shattering a decade-long consensus and six Security Council resolutions demanding its cessation.**

**YOM KIPPUR 2012/5773: ISRAEL & THE JEWISH PEOPLE  
DESPITE DANGERS, FACE FUTURE HOPEFULLY**  
isranet-publications  
Isranet Daily Briefing, September 21, 2012  
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/yom-kippur-20125773-israel-jewish-people-despite-dangers-face-future-hopefully/>

---

**Iran's response? Contemptuous rejection. Why not? The mullahs have strung Obama along for more than three years and still see no credible threat emanating from the one country that could disarm them.**

**(3) Diplomatic isolation. The administration boasts that Iran is becoming increasingly isolated. Really? Just two weeks ago, 120 nations showed up in Tehran for a meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement — against U.S. entreaties not to attend. Even the U.N. secretary-general attended — after the administration implored him not to.**

**Which shows you what American entreaties are worth today. And the farcical nature of Iran's alleged isolation.**

**The Obama policy is in shambles. Which is why Cordesman argues that the only way to prevent a nuclear Iran without war is to establish a credible military threat to make Iran recalculate and reconsider. That means U.S. red lines: deadlines beyond which Washington will not allow itself to be strung, as well as benchmark actions that would trigger a response, such as the further hardening of Iran's nuclear facilities to the point of invulnerability and, therefore, irreversibility.**

**Which made all the more shocking Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's dismissal last Sunday of the very notion of any U.S. red lines. No deadlines. No bright-line action beyond which Iran must not go. The sleeping giant continues to slumber. And to wait — as the administration likes to put it, "for Iran to live up to its international obligations."**

**This is beyond feckless. The Obama policy is a double game: a rhetorical commitment to stopping Iran, yet real-life actions that everyone understands will allow Iran to go nuclear.**



Yet at the same time that it does nothing, the administration warns Israel sternly, repeatedly, publicly, even threateningly not to strike the Iranian nuclear program. With zero prospect of his policy succeeding, Obama insists on Israeli inaction, even as Iran races to close the window of opportunity for any successful attack.

Not since its birth six decades ago has Israel been so cast adrift by its closest ally.  
[\(Top\)](#)

  
**ISRAEL TAKES ISSUE OF JEWISH REFUGEES TO UN**

*Gil Shefler*

*[Jerusalem Post](#), September 21, 2012*

Israel on Friday called on the international community in a special gathering at the United Nations to recognize the suffering of Jewish refugees from Arab countries and their material claims the same way it acknowledges the plight of displaced Palestinians.

Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon, Israel's Ambassador to the UN Ron Prozor and World Jewish Congress President Ron Lauder presented the case of the recently launched diplomatic campaign in front of an audience of Israeli officials, foreign diplomats, activists and journalists at the headquarters of the international organization.

"Today's event is about the past but more importantly about the future," said Prozor. "Our purpose is clear and simple: To give justice for one million Jews whose

stories have been hidden and left untold."

He added: "For 64 years the history has been distorted and white washed in the UN. Arab countries have never taken responsibility for creating more than 800,000 refugees. Yet not a single syllable -and listen to this- can be heard in any of the 1888...UN resolution[s] on the Mideast."

Israel was founded on the ethos of being a safe haven for Jews in their historic homeland as a response to the persecution of Jews throughout history and the horrors of the Holocaust in Europe in particular. The story of its citizens who left, fled or were expelled from Arabic-speaking countries while the Israel-Arab conflict flared has been relatively neglected -a fact acknowledged by Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon in his speech.

"For some reason this issue was never raised, never discussed, and without too much mea culpa, this was wrong," Ayalon said. "But it's never too late."

Critics have said the timing of the campaign ahead of the gathering of the General Assembly of the United Nations next week is not accidental. Palestinian politicians like Hanan Ashrawi have argued Jews from Arab lands are not refugees at all and that, either way, Israel is using their claims as a counter-balance to those of Palestinian refugees against it.

"The claim that Jews who migrated to Israel, which is supposed to be their homeland, are 'refugees' who were uprooted from their homelands... is a form of deception and delusion," she wrote in a recently published article. "If Israel is their homeland then they are not 'refugees,' they are emigrants who returned either voluntarily or due to a political decision."

**YOM KIPPUR 2012/5773: ISRAEL & THE JEWISH PEOPLE  
DESPITE DANGERS, FACE FUTURE HOPEFULLY**  
isranet-publications  
Isranet Daily Briefing, September 21, 2012  
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/yom-kippur-20125773-israel-jewish-people-despite-dangers-face-future-hopefully/>

---

A chorus of Jewish politicians and activists at the event, however, said the rights of Palestinian and Jewish refugees were not mutually exclusive. "We should solve both refugee issues now," said World Jewish Congress President Ron Lauder. "The world has long recognized the Palestinian refugee problem and they should recognize those of Jews too."

Malcolm Honelein of the Conference of Presidents of Major North Americans took aim at the UN, where the gathering was taking place, saying it passed thousands of resolutions relating to the rights of Palestinian refugees but not one pertaining to those of Jews from the Middle East and North Africa. "It was manipulation by Arab delegates as early as 48 and they took it off the agenda never for it to reappear again," he said. "They say Jews left freely and were not refugees denying reality in an attempt to keep this issue off the agenda."

Lawyer and pro-Israel activist Alan Dershowitz was even harsher in his criticism of the international organization. "Think about all the refugees from places like Kongsberg, who were forced to leave when the Soviets came or in India and Bangladesh. They have all built new lives for themselves, only the refugee problem of the Palestinians persists," he said. "Why? UN!"

Sylvain Abitbol, a Moroccan Jew who emigrated to Montreal in 1967, the year a wave of anti-Jewish violence and legislation sparked by Israel's victory in the Six Days War spread across the Arab world, sat in the crowd listening to the speeches. He shrugged when asked why it took so long for Israel to launch the current campaign. "We've been working with Israel for many years, but it took Ayalon to raise this," he said.

Whatever the reasons for the delay and regardless of the political context, he said standing up for the rights of Jews from Arab countries such as himself was a worthy and just cause. "It was very difficult for Jews in Morocco, that's why I left" he said wistfully. "It was not as bad as other countries, true, but it was bad.

**YOM KIPPUR 2012/5773: ISRAEL & THE JEWISH PEOPLE  
DESPITE DANGERS, FACE FUTURE HOPEFULLY**  
isranet-publications  
Isranet Daily Briefing, September 21, 2012  
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/yom-kippur-20125773-israel-jewish-people-despite-dangers-face-future-hopefully/>

---

Listen, there used to be 200,000 Jews in Morocco and with the exception of about 2,000 who still live there they all left." [\(Top\)](#)

---

### On Topic

- *Front Page Magazine*, September 28, 2010  
Rabbi Schlomo Lewis, Etz Haim Synagogue, Atlanta GA

[Ehr Kunt \(He is Coming\)](#)  
[Ehr Kunt \(He is Coming\).pdf](#)

- *Canadian Jewish News*, September 13, 2012  
Lawrence A. Hoffman

### Confessing Our Sins On Yom Kippur

- *Jewish Press*, September 20, 2012  
Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

### The Last Command

---

Visit CIJR's Bi-Weekly Webzine: *Israzine*.

**YOM KIPPUR 2012/5773: ISRAEL & THE JEWISH PEOPLE  
DESPITE DANGERS, FACE FUTURE HOPEFULLY**  
isranet-publications  
Isranet Daily Briefing, September 21, 2012  
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/yom-kippur-20125773-israel-jewish-people-despite-dangers-face-future-hopefully/>

---

***CIJR's ISRANET Daily Briefing* is available by e-mail.**

**Please urge colleagues, friends, and family to visit our website for more information on our *ISRANET* series.**

**To join our distribution list, or to unsubscribe, visit us at <http://www.isranet.org/>.**

**The *ISRANET Daily Briefing* is a service of *CIJR*. We hope that you find it useful and that you will support it and our pro-Israel educational work by forwarding a minimum \$90.00 tax-deductible contribution [please send a cheque or VISA/MasterCard information to *CIJR* (see cover page for address)]. All donations include a membership-subscription to our respected quarterly *ISRAFAX* print magazine, which will be mailed to your home.**

***CIJR's ISRANET Daily Briefing* attempts to convey a wide variety of opinions on Israel, the Middle East and the Jewish world for its readers' educational and research purposes. Reprinted articles and documents express the opinions of their authors, and do not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of the *Canadian Institute for Jewish Research*.**