

The Yom Kippur War in Perspective

*by Prime Minister Rabin*

Something has happened to this country since the Yom Kippur War. Even though we scored one of our greatest victories in that war, many of us have deeply troubled hearts. This feeling is due to a combination of two factors: unwarranted expectations that vanished in the war, and the grief for the human lives lost in the campaign. We are sensitive to human life, and the war, with its dead and wounded, has had a profound effect on our lives.

But here and there were those who exploited this feeling of depression in order to increase confusion and spread weakness and perplexity, who have tried to turn legitimate differences of opinion into a dialogue of the deaf, mutual tolerance into a witch-hunt, and public debate into factionalism. Some have forgotten the ancient historic lesson, that *"Because of causeless hatred Jerusalem was destroyed."*

We must shake off our despondency. If we look about us we will see that we are not in the vale of tears. Our cause is just, and our strength has increased, our full rights and our spiritual vigor have not lost their momentum. We must reinforce our self-confidence and fully restore our faith in ourselves.

A backward glance at the era of revival and resurgence teaches us that we have known how to learn from even the most difficult crises, and it was precisely those grave trials that fortified us and helped us to find new paths. If we look back on the long, historic road we have taken - the crises of the early settlements, the sufferings of the Nazi Holocaust and the rehabilitation of its survivors, the War of Independence, mass immigration, economic crises and wars - if we take a bird's-eye view of what we have created in this land, if we look at the human image that has emerged through the building and defense of the country, we can look forward to the future with hope and confidence.

We live in a democratic system which we will preserve with all our might. We want a variety of opinions, freedom of opinion and a creative struggle between opinions. Let us respect the opinions of others, even when we differ; let us show respect to each other even during vehement controversies. Beyond the differences of Government and opposition, let us not impair the most important element in our lives - our national unity. A unity based on a common destiny, on faith in our causes, on our determination to build the country, to safeguard its security, to develop its creative activity, and to elevate the individual and society in Israel.