

Invocation

Holocaust Memorial Committee of Long Island Kristallnacht Commemoration

11/6/05

When the sound of the closing of the door, after the first child was shoved into the crematorium, reached heaven, Michael, the most beneficent of angels, could not contain himself and angrily approached God, Michael asked, "Do You now pour out Your wrath upon children? In the past, children were indirectly caught up in the slaughter. This time they are the chief target of destruction. Have pity on the little ones, O, Lord." God piqued by Michael's insolence, shouted back at him, "I am the Lord of the Universe. If you are displeased with the way I conduct the world, I will return it to void and null." Hearing these words, Michael knew that there was no reversal. He had heard these words once before in connection with the Ten Martyrs. He knew their effect. He went back to his place, ashen and dejected, but could not resist looking back sheepishly at God and saw a huge tear rolling down His face, destined for the legendary cup which collects tears and which, when full, will bring the redemption of the world. Alas, to Michael's horror, instead of entering the cup the tear hit its rim, most of it spilling on the ground – and the fire of the crematorium continued to burn.

Preface to *THE BOOK AND THE SWORD – A LIFE OF LEARNING IN THE SHADOW OF DESTRUCTION* by David Weiss Halivni (FSG New York 1996)

Master of the universe, we cannot conceive of the horrors which we remember today. What mere words or memories could express the treachery of that era?

As if we could conceive of your majesty, we imagine that you looked on at the evil which befell your people with an equal sense of immeasurable tragedy. You endowed humanity, your most beloved creation, with free will – with the potential for unimagined kindness, and unspeakable calamity.

As we remember today the diabolic acts of evil men, remind us of our responsibility to champion justice in the future.

Heavenly guide, we also remember today two pillars of justice, who are now cherished souls in your heavens. We remember Simon Wiesenthal, who was a model of strength and courage in the shadow of the Holocaust. We also laid to rest just this week Rosa Parks, who reminded us that every person, and not just powerful leaders, has a responsibility and an ability to stand up for justice.

Let the memories of those heroes inspire us with courage and conviction. Help us learn your teachings, and inspire us with love and caring for all humanity. Let the words "never again" become not only a mantra, but a call to action. Let the words that we share today remind us that horrible acts are possible, as long as we are willing to remain comfortably silent.

Let us be reminded to speak out about oppression in our world, so that our recounting of the Holocaust not be, heaven forbid, in vain. Places like Cambodia, East Timor, Rwanda, and Bosnia cry out to us with a reminder that we have yet adequately to put our responsibility into action. Even now, the more than 400,000 deaths in Darfur Sudan escapes the attention of our community.

We are ever mindful that to deny our free will, you would have to undo creation. We perceive your tears at the horrors which our humanity has wrought. We ask your guidance today and in the future, so that "never again" may come to mean never again.

ואני תפילתי לך ה' עת רצון ילהים ברוב חסדך עניי באמת ישעך

Let my prayer, oh Lord, come before you at a time of acceptance. God, in your abundant mercy, answer me with your true salvation. Amen.