The Six-Day War: How Did All Begin? (Part 1)

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The Arab States never accepted the existence of the State of Israel. From the birth of the new state in 1948, they rejected any possibility of coexistence and did everything possible to eliminate Israel and "throw the Jews into the sea" – the favorite euphemism of Israel's neighbors to refer to a second holocaust. To me, the words of Jewish history professor Solomon D. Goitein, to a group of Hebrew University professors who advocated the establishment of a binational state in Palestine are one of the best explanations to understand why they tried to destroy us then and why we might have now a chance for peace. Goitein said in 1948: "I'm not ready to give my life for a pact of friendship with them [the Palestinians and Arab States] because I know that there is no chance of peace with them, as long as they believe that they can just annihilate us".

THE PROVOCATION
In 1964 Israel created what is called in Hebrew hamobil haartzí, a company that managed the freshwater water that goes from the Jordan River to the Negeb desert. Even though the amount of water used by Israel was whatever had been agreed to in international treaties, Syria sabotaged the Israeli water company, diverting the flow of the Jordan River, starting what was called: the war of the water (milchemet hamayim), which lasted for a couple of years. In 1967, under Gamal Abdul Nasser's presidency, Egypt joined Syria and began its provocations against Israel. On May 15, 1967, Egyptian troops entered the Sinai Peninsula, violating previous agreements: in 1957 Israel had conquered the Sinai, and at the end of the war it did –very naively– what no other country has done and what

no other country is required to do: Israel agreed to withdraw from the area conquered in the war in order to reach a peace agreement with Egypt (it is worth clarifying that according to international law, the territories conquered in a war – and especially in a war started by the enemy – are legally considered part of the victor's territory). The conditions for the Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai were that the area should remain demilitarized and that United Nations peacekeepers should be stationed on the peninsula to prevent an eventual invasion of Egyptian troops. The United States and other powerful European nations also guaranteed this agreement.

WHAT PEACE AGREEMENTS?

But in May 1967, Egyptian forces violated this agreement, crossing the Suez Canal and entering the Sinai. Moreover, Egypt blocked the Strait of Tiran, preventing the access of Israeli vessels through the Red Sea. This, more than a provocation, was an act of war. Nobody in the international arena did anything against Nasser: no sanctions, no embargoes. And as if that were not enough, the United Nations peacekeepers were "invited" by Egypt to leave, and incredibly, they left!. No nation in the world did anything meaningful to prevent it! As had already happened in 1948, the vulnerable nation of Israel was once again left alone. The passivity of the superpowers gave Nasser more motivation. Seeing no international reactions against Egypt, no country coming to the aid of Israel, and being completely sure of their victory due to the impressive numerical superiority, the Arab countries led by Egypt announced the imminent war and declared explicitly that they were bringing the end of Israel. Radio Cairo broadcast the following message: "President Nasser announces that our goal is to seize Israel and… liberate Palestine. Oh, Zionists! One hundred million soldiers will destroy you! Get ready because 100 million Arabs are going to dig your graves. "

TSAV SHMONE

Israel summoned up all its soldiers and reserve forces (□□□□ □□□□). The mood was very pessimistic. Everyone knew the difference in forces between the Arab countries and Israel.

Israel had 2.5 million inhabitants at that time. The Arab countries– Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Iraq – had over 100 million. The Arab armies had four times more tanks than Israel. And three times more aircraft, including modern Soviet-made Migs that were invincible then. Israel only had French planes that were already old, and everyone knew that this war was going to be decided in air battles…. the Municipalities in Israel prepared wooden coffins for funerals and people dug graves in the Kibbutzim and in the national parks, anticipating the worst.

WHAT MAKES US STRONGER?

On Iyar 22 of the Hebrew calendar, which corresponded to June 1, 1967, a special, unique, and highly positive event occurred. So positive that I would dare to affirm that this event made us deserve the miraculous victory in the Six-Day War: we Jews put aside our political differences and got together. Not only in the street, cafes, and Synagogues but also in the Keneset: Israel's Parliament. For the first time since the creation of the State of Israel, all political parties, which to this day remain highly divided and unable to form a government after four elections, formed a "government of national unity" Memshelet Likud Leumi: Religious and non-religious Jews, Sephardim and Ashkenazim, left and right, all Israelis, as the Midrash says: "as one man, with one heart." That government decided to attack the enemy preemptively instead of waiting for the imminent assault.

And HaShem was with us…