

AVERTING WAR

by Rabbi Daniel Travis

The year was 1991, and world attention was focused on Israel, which was under threat of missile attack from Iraq. The government feared that chemical weapons would be used, and so everyone lined up to collect their gas masks. Israel prepared for the worst possible scenario.

Frustrated with the atmosphere of fear that filled the air, one night I called one of the great Rabbanim of America to ask if there was anything special that I could do to prevent an attack. I expected that he would advise me to make some dramatic change in my life, and was surprised by his simple answer.

"Come to shul five minutes early every morning so that you can make sure and say korbanos," he advised, referring to the passages describing the offerings in the Temple that are meant to be recited every morning before services begin.

"Five minutes early!" I responded in amazement. "That's all we need to do to prevent war?"

The rabbi responded with equal astonishment, "I told you to get to shul five minutes early to say korbanos, and you say that's all? Do you have any idea how important it is to say korbanos?"

When the Temple stood, the merit of the offerings brought there protected us from our enemies. Today, as the Temple lies in ruins, reciting korbanos remains our primary line of defense. Let us investigate the halachos of this vital part of the morning services, so that we can ensure that we benefit from the full measure of their protection in these uncertain times (see Kaf Hachaim 1,36).

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