



*Each year, I try to find some creative story-telling means of recreating an ancient ritual that seems so foreign to us, nowadays – the Yom Kippur sacrificial rites in the Ancient Temple in Jerusalem. Three years ago, the world was introduced to a new way of telling a story, with the Broadway sensation, Hamilton, which just now came to Philadelphia. Recently, many more of us have been in “**the room where it happens.**”*

*And yet, the show concludes with Eliza Hamilton, Alexander’s widow, still alive just years before the Civil War. This got me thinking: What must it have been for her as one of the only people living in the 1850’s, to REMEMBER the Revolution, the founding of the nation? Absent eye-witnesses whose generation inevitably passes (icons like Elie Wiesel and Shimon Peres, whom we lost in recent years) – how can we reclaim the drama of those ancient times, and “**who lives, who dies, who tells [our] story?**” Like the loss of the Temple, almost 2000 years ago, we are faced with the same challenge:*

### **PART I: Reclaiming the Magic of this Moment – the High Priest’s Confession:**

When a nation, losing its founding generation,  
No one living who witnessed, knew what it took, who did this  
Thing – to bring us to a Land with so much Promise –  
    The onus is on us, we must take upon us, we cannot  
    Fail to tell the tale of our founding Poppas and Mommas

No we are not throwin’ away our shot (*again*) –  
We are not throwin’ away our shot  
We got to keep hot all that they wrought, all that they fought for  
It was not for naught – it was for.... *US*....

So on this day we atone, we must remember Shimon –  
A great man, a statesman, who saw his fledgling nation grown  
While we’re compiling the story, it’s nice to pile on the Laureates –  
Nobels, like Peres, and his fellow Elie Wiesel  
    We tell their tales, their plots, no fail....

In an age of Tweets and Facebook feeds and Snapchats,  
How can we recapture the rapture, the quickly-fading chapter  
    Of survivors... we’re striving....  
    Of our founders... we’re flound’rin’  
To recount every detail that we tell, we re-tell and tell it again  
    It goes in prose and rhyme –  
So long-lost scary tales don’t become just fairy tales,  
Denied, accused as lies as just some “once upon a time” –

Like Eliza Hamilton – lived almost to the Civil War –  
Fifty years a widow, Alex shot, back in 1804....  
Eliza, whose eyes had seen George Washington and more,  
Revolution? Constitution? Those were ancient days of yore  
It’s like this moment, *AVODAH*, here on Yom Kippur  
Remember the Temple?! Can’t be done – or else it’s a bore...

You see we know Yom Kippur is slippery,  
We trip on the rites, we fast (no feast), recall the past, we ask some priest  
In weird dress, to confess, and they thought it was nice  
To go alone to atone through animal sacrifice!

It's hard to make it real, to get how folks back then would feel,  
We don't like animal slaughter, but how do you chart  
A straight path to God, to have been there, seen what it was –  
The hist'ry, the myst'ry, of the *Beit ha-Mikdash*....

On these Days of Awe, these days of "oohs and aahs,"  
When all the Jews were abuzz, we cannot lose what was  
It would be sad.... It would be tragic....  
So how can we reclaim the magic...

Magic! That's what makes us say WOW!  
It's what grabs us, what takes us right out of the *NOW*  
To the Temple Mount, but before I blow your mind let's just hold  
For the first personal confession of the Kohen Gadol....

## **PART II: The High Priest ("H.P., aka Kohen Gadol") Confesses on Behalf of his Family:**

We weren't alive for Clouds of Glory – when the Temple's Menorah they would light  
But we, their children's children tell their story – we tell the Story of these Rites...

Now when the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies,  
No one could know if he's up to the role,  
So we tied a long cord around the H.P.'s ankle –  
If he faltered at the altar, we'd just give it a yank!

So now the *Kohen* moved to the Second Confession,  
Where he reckoned – and did a heart-felt check-in  
On behalf of his fam'ly – *Kohen, Levi* –  
To cleanse his friends, defend from all the sin that may be....

## **PART III: Confession on Behalf of the Entire People of Israel – Were We Forgiven?:**

Each time the people stated, "*Baruch Shem K'vod*" –  
But they anticipated to unburden the load  
Of their guilt, so they waited, tapped their chest and "*Al Cheit-ed*"  
'Til the *Kohen* was shown' that Israel was exonerated.

How were they sure of a successful Yom Kippur?  
They tied a red cord on the door, and they waited some more  
They saw smoke from the fire, as it went ever higher –  
A straight line to *Shamayim* from the Temple floor.

When that cord turned to white, they knew all was right –  
They went out for a bagel, "*L'Shanah tovah, tikateivu!*"