

**RABBIS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS – NORTH AMERICA**

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**רבנים למען זכויות האדם – צפון אמריקה**

**Embracing Justice:**

**An Alternative Celebration and Learning  
for  
Yom Ha'Atzma'ut/Israel's 60th Independence Day**

**3 Iyyar 5768/May 8, 2008  
Omer 18**

**Merchant's Gate  
Central Park at Columbus Circle**

עַל הַנִּסִּים וְעַל הַפְּרָקָן, וְעַל הַגְּבוּרוֹת, וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת, וְעַל  
הַמְּלָחֵמוֹת שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בְּיָמֵים הַהֵם וּבְזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

בְּיָמֵי שִׁיבַת בְּנֵי לְגִבּוֹלָם, בְּעֵת תְּקוּמַת עַם בְּאֶרֶצוֹ בְּיָמֵי קָדָם,  
נִסְגְּרוּ שַׁעְרֵי אֶרֶץ אֲבוֹת בְּפָנֵי אֲחֵינוּ פְּלִיטֵי תְּרַב, וְאוֹיְבֵים בְּאֶרֶץ  
וְשָׁבְעָה עַמְּמִים בְּעַלְי בְּרִיתָם קָמוּ לְהַכְרִית עִמָּךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאַתָּה  
בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְּבִים, עָמַדְתָּ לָהֶם בְּעֵת צָרָתָם, רַבַּת אֶת־רִיבָם,  
הִנַּח אֶת־דִּינָם, חִזַּקְתָּ אֶת־לִבָּם לְעִמּוּד בְּשַׁעַר, וּלְפָתַח שַׁעְרֵים  
לְפָרְדֵּיפִים וּלְגֹרֶשׁ אֶת־צְבָאוֹת הָאוֹיֵב מִן הָאֶרֶץ. מִסְרַת רַבִּים בְּיַד  
מַעֲטִים, וְרַשָּׁעִים בְּיַד צְדִיקִים, וּלְךָ עָשִׂיתָ שֵׁם גָּדוֹל וְקָדוֹשׁ בְּעוֹלָמְךָ,  
וּלְעַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל עָשִׂיתָ תְּשׁוּעָה גְּדוֹלָה וּפְרָקָן בְּהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה.

### *Al HaNissim for Yom HaAtzmaut*

*For the miracles, for the deliverance, for the heroism, for the victories and for the triumphs which You ensured for our ancestors in other days and in our time:*

In the days when Your children were returning to their borders,  
at the time when our people revived in its land as in ancient days --  
the gates to the land of our ancestors were shut before those feeling the sword.  
When neighboring nations sought to defeat Your people Israel,  
You in Your Great Mercy stood by them in their time of trouble,  
You defended them in their battles,  
You vindicated them in their cause,  
You gave them courage to meet their foes,  
enabling them to open the gates to those seeking refuge,  
and to free the land of armies from without.  
You delivered the hands of the many into the hands of the few,  
the destroyers into the hands of the builders,  
and You brought great victories and miraculous deliverance for Your people Israel,  
revealing Your Glory and Holiness to all the world.

## *Al Ti-ra/Do Not Be Afraid*

אל תִּירָא מִפֶּתָאִם, וּמִשֹּׂאֵת רָשָׁעִים כִּי תָבֵא. עָצוּ  
עֲצֵה וְהִפֵּר, דַּבְּרוּ דְבָר וְלֹא יָקוּם, כִּי עֲמָנוּ אֱלֹהִים. וְעַד זִקְנָה אֲנִי  
הוּא, וְעַד שִׁיבָה אֲנִי אֶסְבֵּל; אֲנִי עָשִׂיתִי וְאֲנִי אֲשָׂא, וְאֲנִי אֶסְבֵּל  
וְאֲמַלֵּט.

*Don't be afraid of sudden terror,  
Nor of the calamity that comes to the wicked.  
"Devise your evil plots -- they will fail!  
Lay out your wicked plans -- they are doomed!  
God is with us!"*

*Even to your old age, I am the same;  
When you are grey-headed, still I will sustain you!  
I have made you, and I will bear you;  
I will sustain you and I will save you!*

*(Proverbs 3:25; Isaiah 8:10, 46:4)*

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### *The Test*

*Chaim Weizmann (1874-1952, First President of the State of Israel)*

I am writing these words the day after an historic decision by the United Nations. With 1947 coming to a close, the Jewish People, and particularly the Zionists, face a great test. Before another year passes, we must establish a Jewish State... the state is only the means to an end, or in other words, the state is just a vessel that needs to be infused with content, and it is imperative to know what the nature of that content is. The first foundation of this content – and in my opinion the life vessel of a stable society, is justice; and not merely as an abstract principle, but as implemented in the judiciary and in the legal system. It must be quick and not costly – so that every person can make use of it – and it must be equal for all people. There must not be one set of laws for Jews and another for Arabs. We must maintain the principle expressed in the Torah: "The same rule shall apply to you and to the stranger who resides among you" (*Numbers 16:17*). In stating this, I do not mean that there are tendencies towards inequality or discrimination. This is only a timely warning, necessary since we will have a very large Arab minority. I am certain that the world will judge the Jewish State according to how it treats the Arabs, just as the Jewish people will be judged largely by the achievements and oversights of the State, through which we have begun given a wonderful opportunity after thousands of years of wandering and suffering.

- from *Masa Uma'as – Life Recollections of the President of Israel*,  
Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, 1963, p. 446-451

## PRAYER FOR THE STATE OF ISRAEL

Rabbi Arik Ascherman, Rabbis for Human Rights, Israel  
May 2008/Iyyar 5768

Sovereign of the Universe, accept in lovingkindness and with favor our prayers for the State of Israel, her government and all who dwell within her boundaries and under her authority. On the 60th anniversary of her founding, reopen our eyes and our hearts to the wonder of Israel and strengthen our faith in Your power to work redemption in every human soul. Grant us also the fortitude to keep ever before us those ideals to which Israel dedicated herself in her Declaration of Independence, so that we may be true partners with the people of Israel in working toward her as yet not fully fulfilled vision.

Grant those entrusted with guiding Israel's destiny the courage, wisdom and strength to do Your Will. Guide them in the paths of peace and give them the insight to see Your Image in every human being. Be with those charged with Israel's safety and defend them from all harm. May they have the strength to protect their country and the spiritual fortitude never to abuse the power placed in their hands.

Spread Your blessings over the Land. May justice and human rights abound for all her inhabitants. Guide them "To do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with your God." (*Micah 6:8*), and "May justice well up like water, righteousness like a mighty stream" (*Amos 5:24*). Implant tolerance and mutual respect in every heart, and may all realize that, "We were not brought into this world for conflict and dissension, nor for hatred, jealousy, harassment or bloodshed. Rather, we were brought into this world in order to recognize You, may You be blessed forever" (*R. Nahman of Bratzlav*). Spread over Israel and all the world Your shelter of peace, and may the vision of Your prophet soon be fulfilled: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (*Isaiah 2:4*).

So may it be Your Will that speedily and in our day all inhabitants of the earth will say of the State of Israel, "It is very good." (*Genesis 1:31*) for she will have become a blessing to the entire world and a "Light unto the nations." (*Isaiah 42:6*)

### תפילה לשלום מדינת ישראל

רבון העולם, קבל נא ברחמים ובכבוד את תפילתנו למען מדינת ישראל, ממשלתה וכל הדרים בגבוליה ותחת שליטתה.

פקח נא את עינינו ולבנו מחדש לנפלא שבקיומה וחזק את אמונתנו בכחך להביא גאולה לכל נשמה. תן לנו את האמץ וההתמדה לראות תמיד לנגד עינינו את העקרונות שהציבה לעצמה ישראל במגילת העצמאות. הבא לכך שנהיה שתפי אמת עם אזרחי ישראל בהשגת החזון שטרם נשלם במלאו.

תן לכל העוסקים בצרכי צביר את אמץ הלב, התבונה והכח לעשות רצונך בלבב שלם. הדך אותם בנתיבות שלום והענק להם את הראיה להפיר את צלם אלהים בכל אדם. חזק את מגיני ארץ קדשנו והגן עליהם מפני אויב, חרב סכנה ויגון. טע בהם עז להגן על מולדתם והאצל עליהם את גבורת הנפש לכבוש את יצר השלטון והכח.

הרק את ברכתך על הארץ ועל כל יושביה. ימצאו בה צדק וזכויות אדם לכל אדם. השרש בלב כלם את מוסר נביאיך "עשות משפט ואהבת חסד והצנע לכת עם אלהיך" (מיכה, וי; ח') ויגל פנים משפט וצדקה בנחל איתן (עמוס, ה; כד') למען ילמדו דרכי סובלנות וכבוד הדדי. יהי רצון שכל יושבי הארץ יפירו כי "לא באנו לזה העולם בשביל ריב ומחלוקת ולא בשביל שגאה וקנאה וקנטור ושיפיונות דמים. רק באנו לעולם כדי להפיר אותך תתברך לנצח (ר' נחמן מברסלב). פרוש על ישראל ועל כל תבל את ספת שלומך וסגים במהרה חזון נביאך: "לא ישא גוי אל גוי חרב ולא ילמדו עוד מלחמה" (ישעיהו, ב'; ד').

יהי רצון מלפניך שיאמרו כל יושבי תבל "הנה טוב מאד", כי יתברכו במדינת ישראל כל משפחות האדמה.