



# Yom Hazikaron Yom Ha'atzmaut

2024 / 5784

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on Hope



The Israel Movement for Reform  
and Progressive Judaism



# Yom Hazikaron

***“From my shattered depths – How, Israel, on the day we pray to the Lord and ask Him for life”***

- Yagel Harush

Memorial Day this year is a day of profound national mourning. The memories are not set in the past, but are living, searing our skin and our soul. We mark Memorial Day under the shadow of a harsh war, while so many of our dead lie before us.

So many families have joined the circle of bereavement this year: both families of terror victims and families of soldiers who fell in battle. The “family of bereavement” is one no-one wants to join. Yet, more than ever before, Israeli society seems able to come together as one family, united in pain and sorrow, but also in love and support.

On Memorial Day this year we will gather in deep sadness and pain. We will pray, cry, and be silent together. If we can, we will offer a shoulder, speak when there are no words to be said, and hold space for events of mourning that seem almost indescribable.

Since the beginning of the year, special prayers have been written for this unique time: Kaddish, Yizkor, El Malei Rachamim, and Kinot (dirges). We offer here a selection of prayers you may choose to use on Memorial Day.

May the memory of those killed in the kibbutzim around the Gaza Strip be sanctified, along with the memory of all those murdered in the terrible fighting in cities, towns, and moshavim, and the memory of the fallen from the IDF, the Police, and the security services.

May the command of friendship be sanctified - the command of mutual aid, communality, love of the Land, and adherence to the basic values of Zionism and the values of equality, liberty, and peace.

**- Rabbi Gilad Kariv**

May your soul be exalted and sanctified  
in this world, filled with so many of your blessings,  
and in other far away worlds.

You, who have done so much for your loved ones and lovers of your name,  
find good rest,

respite from your labors,  
the beauty of your life and deeds will guide us.

Through the tears,  
your actions and your warm smile will shine on,  
and will lead us on the paths of righteousness.

Bless us with shalom,  
for your whole family,  
the people of Israel  
and all the inhabitants of the world.

**- Rabbi Leora Eizrachi Vered**



God of life in whose hand rests every soul

A light shone among us, great and pure.

You gave us life; you were alongside us in our own act of creation. And now it is gone.

Shabbat, the joy of our hearts, has been turned into the mourning of our dancing (cf. Lamentations 5:15)

We remember the first cry, the first smile, the first words, and the first steps. We remember the deposit placed in our care and taken while still pure. The light that dwelt among us has now been gathered into Your sacred dwelling-place.

The innocent is preserved under the wings of Your presence; the beauty of Your creation is gathered into Your lap.

And we are left in Your broken world. Shattered and broken we stand before You, full of anger and rage, powerlessness and a sense of devastation. What can we say and how can we justify You; what can we wish and what may we pray?

Yet we gather strength and call from the depths of our sorrow:

May it be Your will that as You have taken life, so You will grant life; as You have gathered our son/daughter to You, so You will teach us to gather our strength - to live, to love, to see sparks of light in the darkness, to find comfort for our tortured soul. To choose life.

Blessed are You, Adonai, who remembers Your creations for life and mercy.

**- Rabbi Yehoyada Amir**



# Prayer for the Injured and Killed in Terror Attacks

## Rabbi Tamar Duvdevani

Give us the strength to remember the tens of thousands who were struck and are still being struck by cruel and debased humans –

Gather them into Your mercy, spread Your wings over them and enfold them. Grant them shelter in Your eternal tent that they might rest in Your lap.

Let us remember their character through human virtues; may their love shine bright in our firmament. Bind their souls with the staff of our life; their memory is our inheritance.

Our God and God of our fathers and mothers; God of the revealed and the concealed –

Grant us the strength to remember the darkness in our lives – the anger, aggression, and hatred.

We will not forget and will not allow to be forgotten the heroes who fight darkness every day,

Showing us through their lives that God's candle is the human soul.

Let us remember the men and women who courageously light God's candle in their soul from within the darkness of evil and violence.

Let us remember those who paid with their lives to defend the persecuted,

Those who preserve the Divine image in a world in which it is concealed.

Let us remember their heroism and pray that it touch us, too.

Our God and God of our fathers and mothers, God of the revealed and the concealed –

Give us the strength to remember Your presence and show Your face even in times of concealment.

You grant humans knowledge and teach them understanding. Grant us knowledge and teach us to observe.

May it be Your will, our God and God of our fathers and mothers, that You lead us in peace and draw us forward toward peace, and guide us in peace,

And grant love and peace in our hearts that we might learn from one another, teach one another, and magnify peace in the world.

May there be peace within our walls, security in our citadels.

Blessed are You, Adonai, who hears prayer.







## Prayer for the Release of the Hostages

### Rabbi Osnat Eldar

God in heaven,  
How fearsome is this place!  
See us,  
We are anxious for the return of our hostages,  
We are aching the pain of families whose loved ones will not be released  
We turn to you in prayer fulfil your covenant with us.  
Our God,  
Accept our plea, hear our cry  
Do not abandon us, be with us and protect us wherever we go.  
Let us return to the ground soaked with blood and tears  
See our suffering, as our lives shatter  
Help us mend them  
Like a quilt  
Like a shelter of peace above us and above all humanity





## Mi she-berakh / May God who blessed

Mi she-berakh our fathers and mothers Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob, Leah, and Rachel bless all the hostages and missing persons and all those in captivity and hardship.

May it be Your will, Shechinah, source of our life

That they be freed and return speedily to their homes

And may they embody the verse: “A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more [...] ‘There is hope for your descendants,’ declares the Lord. ‘Your children will return to their own land.’” (Jeremiah 31)

**- Rabbi Mira Regev**





# Yom Ha'atzmaut

***"For in its peace, you too shall have peace"***

(Jeremiah 29:7)

Prayers for the State of Israel

Yom Haatzmaut - Israel Independence Day - is the most Israeli day of the year. On this day we allow ourselves to take a break from criticism and complaints and come together to celebrate the overt miracle that we have our own state, that we have a home, that we are a free people in our own Land.

Every year we celebrate our achievements, feast together with friends and family, enjoy aerial displays, and watch the torch-lighting ceremony.

But this year, everything has changed. Our sense of security has been seriously eroded. Some of us do not have a home or even a sense of home. And it is hard to celebrate when so many have joined the Israeli "family of bereavement".

As it enters its 76th year, the State of Israel is facing a crisis unlike anything we have known before.

So how should we celebrate Independence Day this year? This question entails many others:

How can we celebrate when our hearts are heavy and bleeding?

What does "independence" really mean to us? Do we feel free in our own country?

Perhaps this year we should mark Independence Day rather than celebrate it? If so, how do we do that?

What does the day really mean for us this year? We offer here a collection of alternative prayers for the State of Israel:



## Prayer for the State of Israel

### Rabbi Hadas Ron Zariz

Let us pray  
for the wellbeing of our state  
Let us pray  
for its healing.  
May it show sensitivity to others  
so that mutual respect may flourish.

Let us pray  
that the Land will not be devastated or filled with violence,  
that all its citizens and residents may find it a warm, protecting home,  
that justice and concern, law and mercy may increase in it.

Let us pray  
for its wellbeing, for a good life of truth and peace  
for us, all Israel, and all people on Earth.  
Blessed be God, who hears prayer.



## **In its 76th year as an independent nation, may Israel**

be a worthy vessel creating a good life for all its inhabitants. May it flourish in the spirit of love, friendship, and fellowship that will distance it from hatred, enmity, and jealousy. And may it enjoy ample quiet, peace, calm, and prosperity.

May Israel always be a light unto the nations.

May we embody in full the vision of its founders, as expressed in the Declaration of Independence:

“THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.”

Blessed be those who make peace and strive for coexistence between peoples.

Blessed be those who defend freedom and democracy.

Blessed be those who defend the nation’s security.

Strengthen the defenders with might and heroism.

May all the captives and missing persons return home safely.

Blessed are you, the residents of Israel, who sustain this nation through your mercy and hard work. Send your light and truth to the leaders of the nation, to its judges and elected officials, and correct them with good advice that they might guide the nation in honesty, decency, and love.

Blessed be the labor of the human who works and creates, which has kept us alive and sustained us and enabled us to reach this time, to live in our own state.

**- Rabbi Nardy Grun**



**SELECTED PRAYERS  
FOR THE STATE OF ISRAEL**

## **Prayer for the State of Israel, its security forces, and the hostages**

### **Rabbi Yair Tobias**

May it be Your will that the State of Israel be a home in which all its residents can live with love, solidarity, peace, and friendship.

May it be a place of security, serenity, and trust, where the spirit of generosity and loving kindness flourishes.

May hate, animosity, fear, terror, and indifference find no place in it.

May all its leaders and officials be blessed with wisdom, integrity, and fairness.

Guard, protect, and give courage to all who serve and defend the State of Israel. May its soldiers, reservists, police, health, rescue, and security forces return home in sound body and mind.

May we witness the safe return, in body and in soul, of all of the captives and the missing, as it is written: "For in joy you will go forth and be guided in peace. The mountains and hills will exalt before in you in joyous song." (Isaiah 55:12)

Bless all the residents who keep the country functioning through hard work, love, and commitment so that we may see better days and the prophecies fulfilled:

"No longer will violence be heard in your land." (Isaiah 60:18)

"I will grant peace in the land, and you shall lie down untroubled by anyone; I will give the land respite from vicious beasts, and no sword shall cross your land." (Leviticus 26:6)

"And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not take up sword against nation; they shall never again know war." (Isaiah 2:4)

And let us say Amen.



## A Prayer for Democracy

Rabbi Oded Mazor

God of our ancestors

Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob, Rachel, Leah, Bilha, and Zilpah,

Bless those who stand in defense of democracy, equality, and peace,

From among our people and those all over the world who work to repair society in the face of the threat to the justice system and the rule of law

May the Holy One protect them and save them from all trouble and distress, and from every plague and illness,

From all harassment and injury and any attempt to humiliate them and undermine their commitment

In the fight against indifference, inaction, and noninvolvement.

May their efforts be successful, and may they have:

A good eye (to see wrongs done)

A good heart (so as not to stand idly by)

And the strength to act

To protect the rights of all

To do justice and bring peace to every person made in the image of God in the world.

May the words of the Torah be fulfilled: "For because of this thing God will bless you in all of your efforts and in all of your undertakings" (Deut. 15:10)

And let us say: Amen

