

**For you will do what is good and right in the eyes of Adonai, your God (Deut. 12:28)**

We find ourselves in difficult and painful times, when the People of Israel are dealing with loss and suffering like we have not known since the establishment of the state. Our hearts ache for the thousands of murdered victims, for the hundreds who were kidnapped, and for the wounded. The soul recoils from the atrocities and unimaginable massacres perpetrated by those who have lost their humanity. We all pray that all those who serve in the IDF and the other security forces, including many of our friends, sons, and daughters, on the front line and on the home front, those guarding us day and night, remain safe.

In these difficult moments, alongside the fighting, we must ensure that we act with tolerance and humanity towards all citizens of Israel, members of all sectors and religions, including the Arab public. Even in moments of fierce fighting, we must not smear an entire public because of the cruelty committed by Hamas. We must not discriminate against the Arab public and we must reject manifestations of incitement and racism. We must also remember now, especially now, that "beloved is a person created in the image of God," that the State of Israel is built on the foundations of preserving the divine human image and the dignity of all its citizens and residents, in the spirit of the Declaration of Independence.

We pray for days of peace and serenity and call on political and religious leaders to lower the flames. We need to remember that we will continue to live together on this land, Jews and Arabs, even after the fierce fighting. Therefore, it is our duty to work to preserve the foundation of a shared life based on respect, equality, and tolerance.

This week, as we read the Torah portion Lech-Lecha, we remember that we are all the sons and daughters of Abraham, the father of Isaac and Ishmael. We will continue our journey to the Promised Land - a land of peace and dignity for every human being.

**Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us? (Malachi 2:10)**