

THE DECLARATION OF OUR COMMON DESTINY

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We, the Jewish People, descendants of Abraham and Sarah together with all of those who have converted to Judaism throughout the generations, have come together to declare a renewed covenant and shared vision for our common destiny.

We are the People who escaped slavery in Egypt, who stood together at Mount Sinai and who established an ancient kingdom in the Land of Israel. We are the People who unveiled to the world the concept of monotheistic faith and gave to the world the Bible, the 'Book of Books,' which teaches that every human being is created in the image of G-d, establishing the core value of the dignity of every person.

We are also the People who shared with the world the idea of a weekly day of rest, as well as mutual respect, responsibility and love for the other-- including one's neighbor, the orphan, the widow, and the stranger. Throughout human history the story of our perseverance, survival, exodus and flourishing has inspired many others to fight for freedom, equality and justice.

We are the People who, wherever we lived, developed and celebrated the values of education, the importance of studying in partnership and the centrality of the House of Learning. We are the People who have emphasized the core values of community and ongoing dialogue, who model the values of intensive life-long learning as well as the possibilities of multiple and opposing interpretations, and who incorporate study into everyday ritual and ethical practices.

We are the People who survived the destruction of ancient Jerusalem, were exiled from their land by militant forces and were dispersed throughout the entire world for thousands of years. Every place we have lived, our ancestors preserved ancient traditions of Jewish identity while contributing extensively to the cultures and peoples among whom we lived. Throughout the centuries of exile, our People suffered unthinkable persecution and violence at the hands of other nations and religions culminating in the murder of six million Jews – men, women and children – in the Shoah (Holocaust).

Throughout history, even as we emerged from horrific death camps, we never abandoned our principles. Nor did we forsake our prayer and hope to return to our Land and establish an ideal society. We strive to be a nation that will bring blessing to all nations, promote peace and prosperity the world over, uphold our values and traditions, and maintain our commitment to keep the "Ways of G-d, ways of righteousness and justice."

We never abandoned our faith, our ancient prayer that "from Zion shall go forth Torah," or the prophetic vision that "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." We have always sought to create a reality in which all of humanity --all nations of the world-- shall respect and honor one another.

More than seventy years ago our millennia-old dream came to fruition. Because of the pioneering spirit of many, including immigrants from every corner of the world, and the heroism and self-sacrifice of the defenders of our land and our People, the Prophetic promise of a return to Zion was fulfilled. From every Diaspora Jewish community, from the east and the west, we, the descendants of the Jewish People, returned to the Land of Israel and Jerusalem, to establish and build the State of Israel. Through the toil of our hands and infinite dedication, faced with innumerable challenges and incessant struggle for our safety, the Zionist pioneers developed the State of Israel into a Jewish and democratic state, one that contributes advanced knowledge and extensive assistance in technological development, agriculture, and medical sciences to the entire world, as well as providing emergency assistance and disaster relief wherever needed.

Simultaneously, Jewish communities developed and grew in every part of the world, achieving prominence and contributing immensely to their home countries, to the Jewish People and to all of humanity. Our People continue to make great contributions to world development, science, health care, technology and the human spirit.

For the first time in nearly two thousand years, the Jewish People have the privilege and responsibility of national sovereignty, security, economic and scientific growth. At the same time, we are also experiencing the challenges of shifting Jewish identities and diminishing affiliation. In view of these concerns we believe that the time has come to rise above internal disputes. We also must move beyond a sense of shared fate, a 'Covenant of Fate,' beyond a past in which we had less self-determination, toward a covenant of a shared future, a 'Covenant of Destiny.' We must join together to create a future that we determine for ourselves.

The time has come to strengthen the ties of our mutual responsibility, to deepen our understanding of one another, to expand our knowledge of our roots and origins and embrace together anew our shared mission and our shared age-old and ever-modern dream. Although our ancestry and our journeys may be differ-

ent, together we form one People. Our connection to a common past, sacred texts, traditions and shared aspirations link us all, while at the same time, leave enough room for diverse interpretations that flow from the depths of our shared history and give us strength.

We must learn to better understand one another—and act together toward the realization of our shared destiny. We must work together toward a renewed vision for our future-- a future which each of us pursues according to our own sensibilities, movement, organization, and community-- each according to our chosen path.

That is why we have come together, people of vision and spirit, representing the diverse parts of the colorful spectrum of Jewish life, from Israel and from every corner of the Jewish world. Inspired by our shared memory, by our honor and yearning for those who are not here with us this day, by our vision of a new Jewish future and by our commitment to the betterment of all humanity, we hereby declare a covenant of our common destiny and five principles of responsibility and action.

The purpose of this shared vision is to strengthen and deepen unity among our People brought together by celebrating our shared destiny, to endorse and enhance our common values and moral code, and ground Jewish practice in every aspect of life on a broad and commonly accepted set of principles stemming from Jewish tradition and its vision for the world.

Our Common Destiny: Five Shared Principles of Responsibility and Action

On the strength of a deep understanding that the future of the Jewish people depends on the realization of our common destiny, we hereby assume the responsibility for a new strengthening of our people and the pursuit of our common destiny and purpose in the world.

Principle 1: Security and Well-being: We share a mutual commitment and responsibility to act to bolster and protect all Jewish communities in the world as well as every Jew wherever they are. We also share a commitment to fight anti-Semitism in all its forms and to strengthen the existence and prosperity of the State of Israel, to help keep its gates always open to every Jew of the world as a shared homeland for us all.

Principle 2: Mutual Responsibility and Connection: We share a commitment to reinforce the ties and unity among all Jews wherever they may live; to in-

crease mutual understanding, respect and honor, to encourage dialogue and to create and support new shared initiatives between Jews throughout the world and in Israel.

Principle 3: Strengthening Jewish Identity: We share a commitment to creating more opportunities to deepen Jewish identity in all of its diverse expressions, to teaching and sharing knowledge of Jewish history and heritage, to preserving the memory, history and lessons of the Shoah (Holocaust), and to enhancing Jewish life throughout the world and in Israel.

Principle 4: Light Unto the Nations: We share a commitment to doing good and strive to serve the world as a "Light unto the Nations." We share a commitment to ensure that we do good throughout the world, uphold human values and basic morality and extend assistance and aid to all those in need as much as possible. We share a commitment to act to ensure that values, ethics and morality are the foundations of communal life in the State of Israel and in Jewish communities around the world.

Principle 5: World Development and Improvement: We share a commitment to the development of the world from the technological and scientific viewpoint, in a way that brings the entire world closer to a better future, as well as the commitment to preserve and protect human values and the continued existence of the world.

For the sake of our People we seek peace and we seek goodness, and we believe that we must act together for the benefit of the entire world. We make these pledges because of our commitment to our shared destiny and to the enduring and eternal significance of the People of Israel, - "Netzach Yisrael."