



Yom Haatzmaut – The Two-State Solution

When G-d miraculously took the Israelites out of Egypt 3323 years ago, it was with one destination in mind: *Eretz Yisrael*, The Land of Israel. The divine promise/covenant that G-d pledged to our forefathers and mothers four hundred and forty years earlier was realized in the year 2488, when Joshua led the Israelites across the Jordan River into the Holy Land. The plan at that time was clear: **A One-State Solution.**

A lot of sand has washed onto the Mediterranean shores over the last three thousand years, and there is a vastly different political reality with entirely different facts on the ground today. During the twenty years following the Oslo Accords in 1993, there have been no shortage of meetings, summits, negotiation sessions led by several different ambassadors, and envoys with the aim of ultimately reaching a peaceful Two-State Solution. Throughout the years and certainly today, even these plans have unraveled and Palestinians internally speak today of their own One-State Solution. On April 26, 2011, the Palestinian Media Watch documented that the official maps of the Palestinian Authority – as displayed in its offices, at PA and Fatah events, and in Schoolbooks – erase all of Israel and replace it with “Palestine”. Rumors are now floating across the international media that Israel may respond with legislation annexing areas of Yehudah and Shmron, also called The West Bank. All this while an internet call for the Third Intifada was announced for May 15th, and plans to declare statehood by the PA in the fall abound at the United Nations. At a time when we are still reeling from the recent terrorist murders – on March 12, 2011, the merciless slaughtering of the Fogel family in Itamar and on the Sunday of *Chol Hamoed* Pesach, April 24, 2011, the shooting of Mr. Ben-Yosef Livnat, a Jerusalem resident in his mid-20’s, en-route to pray at the tomb of our father Joseph. This is the backdrop of peace in the Middle East surrounding our historic homeland Israel as she prepares for Israel’s Independence Day – *Yom Haatzmaut* 5771/2011 – her 63rd birthday.

How are we supposed to process and celebrate Israel’s Independence Day at this difficult and uncertain time? There will be those that push reality aside for a day and instead bask in the heroic and miraculous recent history of the people of Israel in the State of Israel. Despite all the troubles that afflict us, we not only survive, but thrive as a first-rate, first world country surrounded by dozens of hostile enemies on all borders. On the other extreme, there will be those that ignore and/or lament the day because of the myriad existential troubles and dangers that exist and show no signs of going away. I would instead like to propose a **Two-State Solution.**

The **Two-State Solution** includes a *State of Gratitude*, as well as a *State of Introspection*.

A State of Gratitude: On Israel’s Independence Day this year, we should express gratitude to G-d for sustaining us as His nation and returning us to our historic homeland sixty-three years ago. We are the



only people in the history of the world that made a comeback (Rabbi Berel Wein). The modern Greeks are not the ancient Greeks, the modern Egyptians are not the Egyptians that enslaved us 3400 years ago, and the modern day Italians are not the same Romans of the Roman Empire. But **we** are the same Israelites of yesteryear. We name our children the same names as we did then, we celebrate the same holidays as we did then, and we live by the same Torah that we did then. We should also express our gratitude to all our brothers and sisters that have sacrificed their lives for *us* to have a haven to visit, live in, and take pride in. Corporal Gilad Shalit has been held captive by our enemies for almost five years since he was captured at the Kerem Shalom crossing in June 2006. Let us pray for Gilad and his family and all the suffering families of Israel that long for their missing and/or martyred soldiers.

A State of Introspection: On Israel's Independence Day this year, let us introspect on our personal relationship with the State of Israel. What does it mean to us? What should it mean to us? How can we help our homeland? How can we support our homeland? When the early Zionists conceived of the modern State of Israel, they truly believed that is the State of Israel would become a reality, no Jew would ever want to live anywhere else. Our national history originates in the land of Israel, and our destiny will no doubt lead us back to the land of Israel. For two thousand years while in exile, we longed for, prayed for, and wept for the day we would return to Zion. It is still a common custom for a Jew to kiss the earth when arriving on the holy soil of Israel.

Only G-d knows how the Matrix of the Middle East will sort out, but in the meantime we must do our part. Our part includes learning about, praying for, visiting, and feeling pride in the Holy Land of Israel. This *Yom Haatzmaut*, let us invoke our own **Two-State Solution** – A State of Gratitude and a State of Introspection. And in the merit of our efforts, may G-d hear our prayers and bring true peace to Israel and the ultimate rebuilding of Jerusalem – Amen.

Shabbat Shalom,
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