

יום הזיכרון ויום העצמאות

3-4 Iyar 5782

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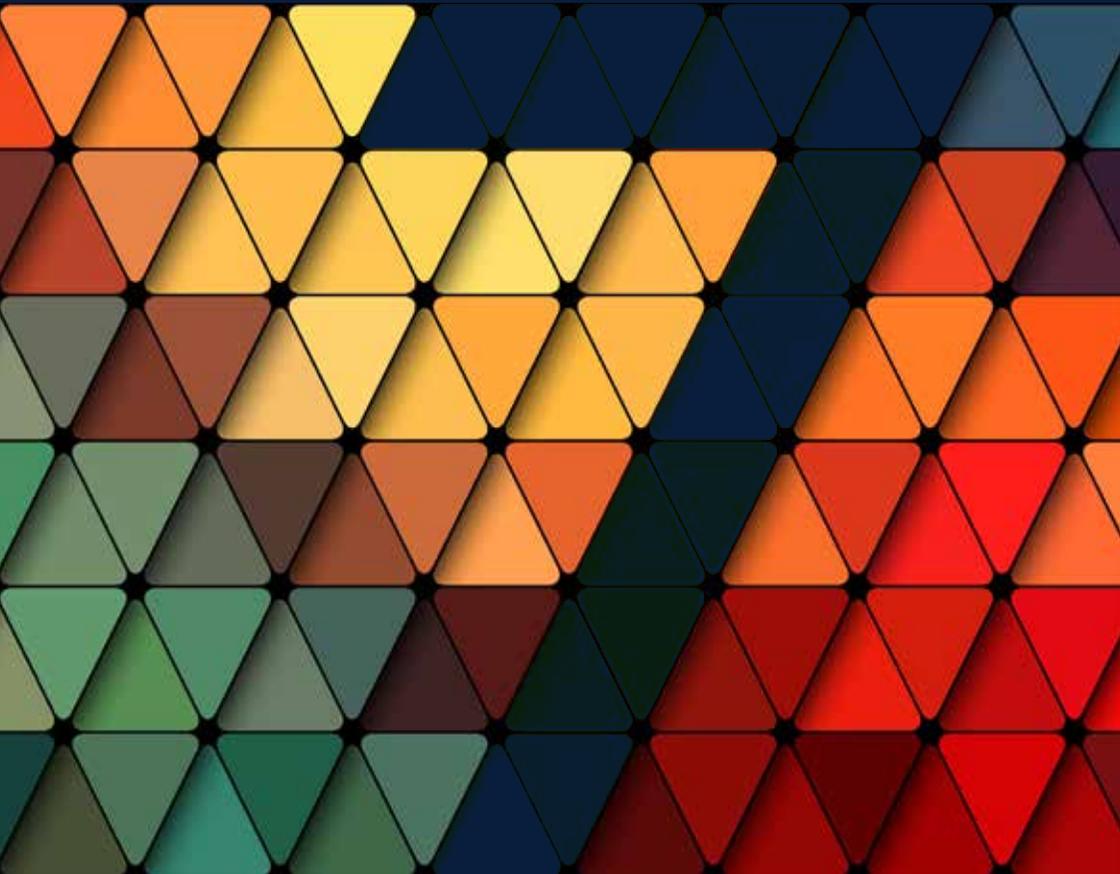


By: Rabbi Uri Lam

Yom HaZicaron and Yom HaAtzmaut

Seven Days of Reflection -
from Yom HaShoah to Yom HaAtzmaut

This year, I was able to follow the practice of my colleagues in Israel, rabbis and rabbis, who decided to fast on Yom HaShoah. A practice that mirrored the Yamim Noraim, the ten days between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. If we start the Jewish New Year with celebrations and end it with fasting, here comes a new tradition, which begins with a fast and ends, seven days later, with celebrations.



Rabbi Josh Weinberg, Vice President of the Union of Reform Judaism for Israel and Reform Zionism, as well as Executive Director of ARZA, the Reform Zionist Association of the United States of America, highlighted in a recent article a suggestion by Rabbi Mordechai "Moti" Rotem: that these seven days between Yom HaShoah and Yom HaAtzmaut be renamed Shivat Yemé Teudá, Seven Days of Testimony.

*According to Rabbi Rotem,
"during the Seven Days of
Testimony, the nation of
Israel needs, as a community,
to examine itself, to check
from year to year how well it
is succeeding in fulfilling the
destiny that fell upon it; its
mission, the legacy of death
left by the Holocaust and the
legacy of life offered by
Independence Day..."*

*As a Jew, Reform and Zionist,
I want to suggest that these
seven days be fulfilled by all
Jewish people, worldwide. As
progressive Jews, we have
the creativity to include, in
new rites, songs, poems and
prayers inspired by the
millennial tradition, but
created in the last 74 years;
or since the beginning of the
modern Zionist movement.
We can hold meetings, musi-
cal and literary soirées to
reflect on Israel's challenges
for the future: in the field of
technology and knowledge; in
education; in the relations
between Jews of different
religious and secular back-
grounds, in the coexistence
between Jewish and Arab
Israelis; and in Israel's
relations with the Palesti-
nians and with the other
nations of the world.*



We are a people who do not forget the past, but who strive toward the future. We understand that the path to the future does not pass only through flowery paths. Our reading must be critical: of anti-Semitic governments and leaderships; of those who have in mind not Medinat Israel, but an imaginary land of Israel, which can exist as long as it is in accordance with the desires and the messianic vision of their religious and political groups; and of the very way Israeli politics and society deal with their challenges.

For these Seven Days of Testimony I am inspired by the words of Rabbi Josh Weinberg and propose seven themes, one for each day:

1. The State of Israel was not a "consolation prize" given by the UN and the international community to the Jewish people because of the Shoah. The State of Israel has deep roots in the history of the People of Israel in the Land of Israel since the words of the Torah.

2. We, Progressive Jews and Zionists, affirm the undeniable right to the existence of the sovereign and democratic State of Israel.

3. We have a moral duty to be empathetic to the suffering of other peoples. Israel and the Jewish people today stand together in support of Ukrainian refugees, but we must always raise our voices in support of any and all peoples who are stateless or suffering from oppression.



4. Shabbat should always be a reference for celebration, relief from pain and worry, the breath that nourishes the soul, the pleasure that revives the body.

5. The State of Israel is for us a cultural, social, religious and spiritual reference; a granary of the creation and renewal of Jewish values and practices, in all their diversity, from generation to generation.

6. The remembrance of Israeli lives lost in wars and terrorist attacks should be accompanied by rites and a period of fasting, to be determined. We should include a kadish in memory of every Israeli killed, because we feel that they are part of our family and we mourn for them.

7. 74 years of Israeli independence! As Reform Jews and Zionists, we should mark Yom HaAtzmaut with celebration, studies, exhibitions, expressions of Israeli culture in film, theater, dance and music. Today is a day to commemorate, to feast, and to celebrate. Mazal Tov, Medinat Israel!



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