



My Dear Friends,

Sitting in the packed gallery at the joint session of Congress as Israel's President Isaac Herzog delivered his address celebrating Israel's 75th anniversary, I recalled the lament of a prophet 2,500 years ago over a building destroyed 6,000 miles from Washington, D.C.



As President Herzog noted, Jews across the globe are marking the beginning of the Hebrew month of Av, on whose ninth day Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. In the biblical book of Lamentations, traditionally ascribed to Jeremiah and read in synagogues every year on that day, Judaism's holiest city is described as reduced to ruins and simmering ash. As the King James Version renders the prophet's pained wail, "How doth the city sit solitary... all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies." These words articulated antisemitism's greatest triumph millennia before the term

had even been coined - the Jewish people were defeated, their holy place desecrated. They were alone.

Undoubtedly, the specter of antisemitism still looms on the street and social media. Reports of antisemitic incidents are rising in the United States and across the world. Vigilance and sound policy are required to combat it. But unlike the time of the Babylonians of bygone days, it is important to recognize that today Israel and the Jewish people are no longer alone.

The unbreakable bond between the United States and Israel is sealed not in arrangements of political expediency and polling numbers, but in the deep roots of shared values and a common commitment to democracy. Congress is a “chamber of liberty and freedom,” where I passed a marble statue of Moses in the gallery, a testament to the Hebrew Bible’s voice in the moral language of the United States. The partnership between Israel and the United States is not simply built on a shared past but on an aspiration to birth a better tomorrow for all of humanity.

We are not alone because our circle of friends has expanded in historic ways. The Abraham Accords, for example, realigned imaginations, offering “peace anchored in trust, hope and prosperity.” Israeli tourism has contributed \$325 million to the UAE economy in 2022 alone, and seventeen new flight routes have been established between Israel and its regional partners. The Jewish university which I am privileged to lead held an academic conference in Dubai, formed new partnerships with Christian universities and experienced student exchanges in Morocco. When Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Al-Issa, secretary general of the Muslim World League based in Saudi Arabia, visited our campus, he spoke of the “new opportunity” of the children of Abraham to build a conversation imbued with values and mutual respect “to grow research and apply technologies in the right way.”



Click [link](#) or on the image above to watch a video about President Herzog's speech

These are not weak ties but covenantal bonds. President Herzog quoted the late Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, who wrote extensively about the nature of covenants. “A contract is about interests. A covenant is about identity.” Contracts benefit, but covenants transform. Covenants bring people together in bonds of trust and love to share lives and pledge loyalty. We have learned the hard way in blood and tears throughout history that we can “do together what neither can achieve alone.” We need covenantal commitments to build a better tomorrow for all of God’s children.

Leaving the Capital that day, I felt lifted and hopeful. Jeremiah’s lament over Israel’s loneliness will once again be read in synagogue in the coming days in keeping with tradition. We will be sad as we recall a history of defeat and ongoing persecution. But there is much room for optimism as well. When I sit on the floor and recite ancient words of grief and loss, I will hold on to a vision of hope and change: the moment when President Herzog said Am Yisrael Chai - the people of Israel live - to a long standing ovation by both parties in Congress.

Warm regards,

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