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Yeshiva University
Office of the President

My Dear Friends,

In this past week's Torah reading, we are mandated to "Remember the days of old. Consider the years of ages past" (Devarim 32:7). And today, we remember this past year and the harrowing losses it brought. We are living in historic times, times that we will recall one day in the future to the generations that come after us. We are a memory people. It is because we constantly look to the past and respect our history that we are able to construct a future, often in impossible and improbable ways.

Part of respecting the past is to balance despair with gratitude, anguish with hope, and loss with aspirations. It is natural to become overwhelmed by the losses - the mourning is so real and the prayers for the return of the hostages so front in our minds. But we also can not lose sight of the miracles: the kindness and generosity, the love and the pride that has been generated throughout the world, and especially in Israel. We are agents of history because we have always seen in suffering, a spark of opportunity to rebuild ourselves and make ourselves stronger in the breaking points. This is the essence of teshuva; it is an act of constant self-creation.



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In 1902, Theodor Herzl wrote, "Zionism was the sabbath of my life." He offered an honest assessment of himself and of the future: "I believe my effectiveness as a leader may be attributed to the fact that I, who as a man and a writer have had so many faults, made so many mistakes, and done so many foolish things, have been pure of heart and utterly selfless to the Zionist cause."

On this day October 7th, we grieve together, and, one day soon, please God, we will rebuild together. Let that be the commitment we make to all those who have fallen this past year, who were, in Herzl's words, "utterly selfless to the Zionist cause."

My warmest wishes,

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