



October 2018

Dear Friend,

The holidays are over and we look forward to fall. **On the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles we said the traditional prayer for rain** and we now begin to watch and wait, praying for rain, hoping for a good winter, a winter that is drenched in rain and that will water this parched land.

The Feast of Tabernacles, as well as all the Biblical Feasts, is tied not only to a historical occasion but also to the seasons and agricultural cycles of Israel. The Feast of Tabernacles is also referred to in the Bible as the Feast of Ingathering (Exodus 34:22), the conclusion of the summer harvests. Just as these harvests conclude, the rainy season begins but given the arid nature of so much of Israel, **rain is both desperately needed and often scarce. Hence the need for a special prayer.**

G-d Himself told us of this special characteristic of Israel: *But the land that you are going over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water by the rain from heaven, a land that the Lord your God cares for. The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year (Deuteronomy 11:11-12).* While we must look to heaven for rain, G-d looks down upon us and determines whether we will receive the rain we need that year.

The prayer for rain is an ancient one, originating in Israel but recited throughout the centuries by Jews all over the world. **Growing up in the US, I could not understand why we prayed so fervently for rain.** I lived in Cleveland, OH, which has far too much rain and in the fall, we see more snow than rain. As I grew older, I understood that our prayers were not about Cleveland. They were about Israel – **the true focus of our prayers, of our heart's dreams, of our national aspirations.**

Israel has achieved miracles in water conservation and we have learned to recycle water and desalinate water, a world leader in these technologies. But the lack of water is still a problem. **I think the prayer for water, recited as it is at the start of the Jewish New Year, is symbolic of our desires for all that is good in the coming year. Water is the source of life and we pray for life.** We pray for the bounty from G-d that is the rain from Heaven. And as we launch our new year, I want to wish you, our dearest friends, who always have your eyes upon Israel, the very best of everything that you wish for. **May this new-year bring with it health, happiness and many blessings for you and your loved ones.**

Sincerely,

Sondra Oster Baras
Director, Israel Office

P.S I send you greetings for fall! As we enter the busy end of year season I want to let you know how important you are to those lives you touch in Israel through your donation. Today you have an opportunity to help save lives through emergency equipment and surveillance cameras in Shaarei Tikvah. Thank you for helping to save lives in Israel with your generous donation.