



Dear Friend of Israel,

Happy 73rd Birthday Israel! **On the 15th of April we will celebrate Israel Independence Day.** Every country has its special day, when citizens celebrate their independence or express their patriotism towards their country. But I don't think there is another country for whom Independence Day is a holy day. Ours is a holiday that celebrates the miracle of the Restoration of Israel as foretold by the prophets. ***"This is the day that G-d made, let us rejoice and be happy on it." (Psalm 118:24)***

When G-d gave us the Torah, He commanded us to celebrate the Feasts of the Lord. Three of those feasts celebrate the miracles that G-d wrought for us: **Passover celebrates the Exodus, Shavuot celebrates the Revelation at Sinai and the Feast of Tabernacles commemorates our miraculous 40 years in the desert.** There are two additional holidays that were added after the Biblical period: Purim which celebrates the miracle of salvation from the wicked Haman during the Exile in Persia and Hannukah which celebrates the miraculous victory of the Maccabees over the Syrian Greeks. In each of these holidays, we remember the suffering of our people and the miracle of our salvation.

**On Israel Independence Day, we celebrate the full sweep of Jewish history,** including all of the miracles that we celebrate individually. After nearly 2,000 years of exile, persecution and anti-Semitism, we have been restored to our Land. We have returned to the same land that G-d first brought us to, as the culmination of the Exodus, the Revelation at Sinai and 40 years of wandering in the desert. And we firmly believe that we have begun the final restoration of Israel, as G-d promised in Amos: ***I will restore my people Israel. They shall rebuild ruined cities and inhabit them, they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine (Amos 9:14).***

Join me and my people as we celebrate the miracle that is Israel. We face many challenges and continue to be threatened from all sides. But our faith in G-d gives us the strength to persevere, to celebrate the miracle that we have been blessed to experience. **By standing with Israel, by remaining faithful to the truth of G-d's promises, you, too can be a part of this amazing miracle.**

Sincerely,

Sondra Oster Baras  
Director, Israel Office

P.S. This month you have the opportunity to bless families in Israel during the Passover holiday. There is still time to help purchase food vouchers for families in need or help families who have a special needs child. We are also offering a special 20% off sale to plant a tree, it makes a great gift for Mother's Day! Or if you want to save lives, the Samaria Region is in desperate need of a regional Fire Station. You can help by contributing towards the building of the new Fire Station that is featured this month in our Heartland Highlight. Please see the flyers enclosed with this letter for more information on ways you can be involved with the amazing miracle that is Israel!