



April 2023

Dear Friend of Israel,

April is a very special month this year. At the start of the month, we will celebrate Passover, which marks the first redemption of our people from slavery and persecution. One week after Passover ends, we will mourn the six million Jews who were murdered during the Holocaust, and one week after that, we will mark Memorial Day for our fallen soldiers and terrorist victims, and Israel Independence Day, when **we will celebrate 75 years since the creation of the State of Israel.**

It is no secret that even as we mark so many significant events in our history, our country is marred by internal divisions and tensions like never before. It is not judicial reform, however, that lies at **the heart of the division, but rather a long-standing debate within Israeli society as to how to define our identity.** There is overwhelming consensus on the enormous historical ramifications of the return of the Jewish people to their land. There are huge patriots on both sides of the divide, who appreciate the miracle that is the State of Israel and stand in awe at the unprecedented rebirth of the Jewish people in its own country.

In the early years of the state, it was the secular Zionists who set the tone. They made up the majority of the early pioneers of the country and their goal was to create a new Jew, divorced from the ancient traditions preserved through centuries of exile and, instead, to create a new culture that would place the Nation of Israel firmly within the family of modern, secular nations. In recent years, however, more and **more Israelis are reconnecting to our ancient traditions. They revel in the Jewish state as a fulfillment of prophecy.** Passover is both a national holiday and a religious one. Shabbat is a time for family and friends to gather, when there is quiet in the streets as public transportation grinds to a halt. The majority of Israelis want a more traditional society, based on conservative values. And that is a good thing. But like any period of transition, those who suddenly find themselves in the minority, secular and left-wing Israelis, feel threatened.

As we enter the final quarter of our first century, we must remember that **we were bound together as a people, just after the Exodus, at Sinai and that G-d is our ultimate leader and guide. That our path to modern independence started with the Exodus from Egypt as recorded in the Bible.** Let us pray that more and more will turn to G-d for answers and will seek harmony within His protection. There are many paths to G-d and we don't have to agree. But if we see ourselves as His children, we will find our way back to unity, solidarity and love. I believe this will happen! And as true friends of Israel who believe that modern Israel is the fulfillment of prophecy, I hope you share my optimism.

Shalom,

Sondra Oster Baras
Director, Israel Office

P.S. Enclosed you will find our 2022 Annual Report. The thanks belong to you! As you read about all of the people who were helped in 2022, know that your donations are part of rebuilding the ancient ruins, just as the prophet foretold. You helped fulfill prophecy in the mountains of Judea and Samaria. **Thank you!**