

June 2024

Dear Friend of Israel,

This year, Memorial Day in Israel bears a weight unlike any other one in recent memory. Each year, Israelis from all walks of life, even those blessed to have never lost a close relative and friend in battle or in a terror attack, have taken part in public displays and ceremonies honoring all the thousands who have been killed defending the People and Land of Israel. However, **this past year, each Israeli has truly become intertwined with the sense of painful loss and trauma.** On October 7th, everyone in Israel was compelled to face the stark, cold reality that 1,200 of their compatriots were most heinously massacred in the span of just several hours. The devastating terror attacks on that day touched every corner of our country, altering the national consciousness of Israeli society.

While solemnly observing Memorial Day, I could not help but note its poignant juxtaposition to the celebration of our independence the very next day. I was reminded of the famous poem, **“The Silver Platter,”** authored by Israeli poet Nathan Alterman several months prior to the establishment of the modern state of Israel. **I would like to share with you several lines from the poem in which Alterman foretold the inevitable challenges the People of Israel would face** with the blessing of a reborn State of Israel:

“As the nation arises, torn at heart but breathing, to receive its miracle, the only miracle. As the ceremony draws near, it will rise, standing erect in the moonlight in terror and joy. When across from it will step out a youth and a lass and slowly march toward the nation... Then a nation in tears and amazement will ask: ‘Who are you?’ And they will answer quietly, ‘We Are the silver platter on which the Jewish State was given.’ Thus, they will say and fall back in shadows. And the rest will be told in the chronicles of Israel.”

Alterman knew that the new country would not simply be handed to the People of Israel on a silver platter. While reading over his poem, **I was able to reflect on how privileged we all are to be living in a time in which the Jewish people have returned and can once again protect themselves in their own homeland.** We are not only witnessing but also taking an active role in fulfilling the prophetic restoration of Israel in its land. We are all truly blessed to be participants in what is perhaps the most special mission in mankind’s history. It would be completely impractical to expect that an undertaking involving the return of the People of Israel to its homeland after 2,000 years of exile would be accomplished without any costs or sacrifices. **This Independence Day, we stand firmly and declare with more resilience than ever before: “Am Yisrael Chai!” “The nation of Israel lives!”**

Shalom,

Shmuel Junger
Director
Christian Friends of Israeli Communities

P.S. Enclosed with this letter is the newest edition of Heartland Stories! You’ll read how your donations are saving lives in the isolated community of Shaked. With your help they have received vital surveillance cameras to protect the community and keep their families safe. **You’ve been a vital part of saving lives and bringing safety and security to Judea and Samaria. Thank you!!**