

Rosh Hashanah Message 5738 - 1977

By Mrs. Charlotte Jacobson
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Israel is a democratic state. As we prepare to celebrate its 30th anniversary, we rejoice not only in Israel's stunning successes fighting off Arab aggression both on the field of battle and at the United Nations; we celebrate -- with a mixture of awe and wonder -- the fact that

through it all Israel has remained a democratic society.

Despite the constant state of military and diplomatic emergency Israel maintained the democratic process, and with the election of a new government last May and the orderly transfer of power to the former opposition party, demonstrated that democracy is a viable form of government.

It was a test of maturity of the Jewish community world - wide, that it was able to accept the defeat of a party with which it felt "comfortable" and reaffirm its support of Israel and its right to make its own democratic choices.

This is the year of the World Zionist Congress, observing the 60th anniversary since the first Congress convened by Theodor Herzl in Basle. Some of the major Zionist strides forward were mandated by Congresses: the establishment of the Jewish National Fund; formation of the Jewish Colonial Trust (which ultimately grew into the Bank Leumi); organization and expansion of the Keren Hayesod; creation of the enlarged Jewish Agency, and the decision to establish the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. It was the first Congress which promulgated the Basle Program, and the 27th which adopted the Jerusalem Program. The forthcoming Congress faces equally great challenges and I know it will meet them with vision and courage.

This is the year in which we look forward with a little more hope to the freeing of our brothers in Syria and to the arrival of more of the reawakened Soviet Jews.

It is the year in which there is increased pressure for peace: we only hope that the Arabs will show as much courage in making peace as it takes to make war.

Whatever this new year brings to Israel diplomatically, she must remain strong enough to deter any renewed attempts at aggression by her neighbors. At the same time Israel must still deal with the problem of absorbing new immigrants, both from the free world and from behind the Iron Curtain; she must intensify her struggle to close the economic and social gaps within her society and deal with other

long-term human problems.

As we approach Rosh Hashanah it is clear that American and world Jewry face a year of increased challenge on every front. Our response to that challenge must be reaffirmation of our commitment to the cause of Israel through membership in a Zionist organization and reaffirmation of our determination to aid Israel in every way we can: financially; through increased aliyah, and through alertness to political developments.

We join with Jews the world over in prayers for a New Year of progress, and of peace.



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