



Days of Redemption

In recent years, there has been an initiative to call the 10 days between Yom HaShoah and Yom HaAtzmaut *Aseret Yemei Toda*, 10 days of thanksgiving, similar to the *Aseret Yemei Teshuva*.

In these 10 days, we tread the path our forefathers trod from exile to redemption. And just as the *Aseret Yemei Teshuva* precede the month of mercy and forgiveness, so the *Aseret Yemei Todah* begin in the month of freedom.

The Jews have always known how to be attentive to time: the days of the week, the months of the year and the seasons of nature. As Rav Kook says, “The Exodus from Egypt will remain forever the spring of the whole world.” Until the Jews left Egypt, the world did not recognize the concept of the liberation of slaves. In the month of Nissan, freedom descended into the world. That is why I see a direct connection between Seder Night and Yom HaAtzmaut.

I would like to share with you an idea I heard from Rabbi Avraham Krieger, Director of the Shem Olam Institute in Kfar Haroeh. The same freedom that flowed in Jewish blood on the day we left Egypt is the same freedom flowing in Jewish veins today. This is the freedom that gave our ancestors strength when our enemies tried to destroy us. During the Holocaust, we experienced a clash between the Nazi-German civilization and our Jewish civilization. On the one hand enlightened, technological, philosophical, cultural. On the other, ancient wisdom, longstanding tradition, and a scattered and separated people. And then the war exposed an inhumane monstrousness and barbarism on the

one hand, and daily stories of heroism, communal *areivut*, respect for elders and devotion on the other – a culture that withstood the ultimate tests and yet retained its humanity.

Freedom to be G-d's people on earth.

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When we speak about the sanctity of time, behind these two dates stand two worldviews. The 10th of Tevet, in the middle of the dark and cold winter, gives expression to the daily heroism of the six million murdered for being

Jews, who passed the embers of the Jewish people on through the survivors, through telling the stories to future generations.

גבורה שגבורה יום השואה והגבורה bursts forth in spring and seeks to express the spontaneous, momentary acts of resistance. It shines a spotlight on one ghetto, one act of resistance, one simple kindness, through which many years of war become bathed in eternal light.

It is this same heroism – גבורה שגבורה – we encounter in the Counting of the Omer. איזה גבור? הכובש את יצרו. The hero is the one who fights every morning to be a better person. Jewish heroism is not necessarily an outburst of courage. It is quiet, strong, human (and often superhuman). The more we learn about the ghettos and extermination camps, the more we are exposed to the depth of that heroism.

The days between Yom HaShoah and Yom HaAtzmaut – *Aseret Yemei Toda* – remind us that between Pesach and Yom HaAtzmaut and what they represent, *Am Yisrael* have been forged and shaped through every exile into the strong and proud nation we are today.

לשנה הבאה בירושלים הבנויה!

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