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.

The State of Israel chose to mark Yom HaShoah in Nissan, when the Warsaw Ghetto uprising began. In contrast, the Chief Rabbinate instituted Yom HaShoah on the 10th of Tevet, the Yom HaKaddish HaKlali, the day for saying Kaddish for those whose date of death is unknown.

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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.

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