

THE DECLARATION OF OUR COMMON DESTINY

Initial Draft, September 2019/Elul 5779

We, the Jewish People, the descendants of Abraham and Sarah, together with all of those who have converted to Judaism throughout the generations, have come together on this day to declare a renewed covenant and shared vision of common destiny for the Jewish People.

We are the People who escaped slavery in Egypt, who stood together at Mount Sinai and who established an ancient kingdom in the Land of Israel. We are the People who unveiled to the world the concept of monotheistic faith and gave to the world the Bible, the 'Book of Books,' which teaches that every person is created in the image of G-d and establishes the core value of the dignity of every human being.

We are also the descendants of the People who shared with the world the idea of a weekly day of rest, and the hope for mutual respect, responsibility and love for the other-- including one's neighbor, the orphan, the widow, and the stranger. Throughout human history, the story of our perseverance, survival, exodus and flourishing has inspired many others to fight for freedom, equality and justice.

We are the descendants of a People who were exiled from their land by militant forces and yet, throughout our history and wherever we have lived, we have developed and celebrated the values of education, the importance of studying in partnership and the centrality of the House of Learning. We are a People who have emphasized the core values of community and ongoing dialogue, who model the values of intensive life-long learning, inclusive of multiple and opposing interpretations, and who incorporate learning into everyday ritual and ethical practices.

We are a People who survived the destruction of ancient Jerusalem and were dispersed throughout the entire world for thousands of years. Every place we have lived, our ancestors preserved ancient traditions of Jewish identity while contributing extensively to the cultures and peoples among whom they lived. Throughout the centuries of exile, our People suffered unthinkable persecution and violence at the hands of other nations and religions, culminating in the murder of six million Jews – men, women and children – in the Shoah (Holocaust).

Throughout the generations, and even as we emerged from the horrific death camps, we never abandoned our principles. Nor did we forsake our prayer and hope to return to our Land and to establish an ideal society: a nation that will bring blessing to all nations, promote peace and prosperity the world over, uphold our values and traditions, and maintain our commitment to keep the "Ways of G-d, to do righteousness and justice."

Throughout many periods of enormous suffering, we never abandoned our faith, our ancient prayer that "from Zion shall go forth Torah" and the prophetic vision that "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." We have always sought to

create a reality in which all of humanity, and all nations of the world, shall forever respect and honor one another.

More than seventy years ago, our millennia-old dream came to fruition. Because of the pioneering spirit of many, including immigrants from every corner of the world, and the heroism and self-sacrifice of the defenders of our land and our People, the Prophetic promise of a return to Zion was fulfilled. From every Diaspora Jewish community, from the east and the west, we, the descendants of the Jewish People, returned to the Land of Israel and Jerusalem, to establish and build the State of Israel. Through the toil of our own hands and infinite dedication, faced with innumerable challenges and incessant struggle for our safety, the Zionist pioneers developed the State of Israel into a Jewish and democratic state, one that contributes advanced knowledge and extensive assistance in technological development, agriculture, medical sciences to the entire world, as well as emergency assistance and disaster relief wherever needed.

Simultaneously, Jewish communities developed and grew in every part of the world, achieving prominence and contributing immensely to their home countries, to the Jewish People and to all of humanity. As we have in the past, our People continue to make great contributions to world development, science, health care, technology and the human spirit.

For the first time in nearly two thousand years, the Jewish People have the privilege and responsibility of national sovereignty, security, economic and scientific growth. At the same time, we are also experiencing the challenges of shifting Jewish identities and diminishing affiliation. In view of these concerns, we believe that the time has come to rise above internal disputes. We must transcend the ways in which we have understood our relationship to each other. We must move forward from a sense of shared fate, a 'Covenant of Fate,' one that focuses on a past in which we had less self-determination, to a covenant of a shared future, a 'Covenant of Destiny,' and join together to create a future that we can determine for ourselves.

The time has come to strengthen the ties of our mutual responsibility, to deepen our knowledge of one another, to expand our knowledge of our roots and origins and embrace together anew the shared mission of our People and our shared age-old and ever-modern dream. We are all connected to each other, and although our ancestry and our journeys may be different, together we form one People. Our connection to a common past, to our sacred texts, to our ways of life and shared aspirations link us all. We share a profound sense of deep mutual commitment, while leaving enough room for diverse interpretation and avenues of thought which flow from the depths of our shared history and give us strength. We must learn to better understand one another, act together toward the realization of our shared destiny and work together toward a renewed vision for our future, one which everyone pursues according to their own sensibilities and each movement, organization, and community according to their chosen path.

That is why we have come together, people of vision and spirit, representing the diverse parts of the colorful spectrum of Jewish life, from Israel and from every corner of the Jewish world. Inspired by our shared memory, by our honor and yearning for those who are not here with us this day, by our vision of a new Jewish future and by our commitment to the betterment of all humanity, we hereby declare a covenant of our common destiny and principles of responsibility and action.

The purpose of this shared vision is to strengthen and deepen unity among our People brought together by celebrating our shared destiny, to endorse and enhance our common values and moral code, and ground Jewish practice in every aspect of life on a broad and commonly accepted set of principles stemming from Jewish tradition and its vision for the world.

Our Common Destiny: Shared Principles of Responsibility and Action

ON THE STRENGTH OF A DEEP UNDERSTANDING THAT THE FUTURE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE DEPENDS ON THE REALIZATION OF OUR DESTINY, WE DO HEREBY ASSUME THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR A NEW STRENGTHENING OF OUR PEOPLE AND THE PURSUIT OF OUR DESTINY AND PURPOSE IN THE WORLD:

Strengthening the Jewish People

1. **Security and Well-being:** We share a commitment to act for the bolstering and protection of all Jewish communities in the world and of every Jew, as well as a commitment to strengthen the existence and prosperity of the State of Israel, to help keep its gates always open to every Jew of the world as a shared homeland for us all, in the following ways:

- a.
- b.

2. **Mutual Responsibility and Connection:** We share a commitment to reinforce the ties and unity among all Jews wherever they may live, to increase mutual understanding, respect and honor, to encourage dialogue and to create and support new shared initiatives between Jews throughout the world and in Israel, in the following ways:

- a.
- b.

3. **Strengthening Jewish Identity:** We share a commitment to creating more opportunities to deepen Jewish identity in all of its diverse expressions, to teaching and sharing knowledge of Jewish history and heritage, to preserving the memory, history and lessons of the Shoah (Holocaust), and to enhancing Jewish life throughout the world and in Israel, in the following ways:

- a.
- b.

Our Jewish Destiny and Our Commitment to All of Humanity:

4. **Promoting Ethics and Morality:** We share a commitment to act to ensure that values, ethics and morality are the foundations of communal life in the State of Israel and Jewish

communities around the world, to ensure the development of all Jewish communities so that we will continue to ensure ethics, morality and social justice, and a commitment to doing good throughout the world, in the following ways:

- a.
- b.

5. **Light Unto the Nations:** We share a commitment to strive to make the world a better place. We are committed, from a humanistic and moral standpoint, to strive to serve as a “Light unto the Nations” and ensure that we constantly act on human values and basic morality and extend assistance and aid to all those in need who we can help.

- a.
- b.

6. **World Development and Improvement:** We share a commitment to the development of the world from the technological and scientific viewpoint, in a way that brings the entire world closer to a better future, as well as the commitment to preserve and protect human values and the continued existence of the world.

- a.
- b.

For the sake of our People we seek peace and we seek goodness, and we believe that we must act together for the benefit of the entire world. We make these pledges because of our commitment to our shared destiny and to the enduring and eternal significance of the People of Israel, - “Netzach Yisrael.”

IN WITNESS THEREOF WE DO HEREBY SIGN THIS DECLARATION ON THIS ____ DAY OF ____ ____
CORRESPONDING TO THE _____ DAY OF _____, AT _____.

SIGNED: