



Dear Rabbis, Synagogue and Communal Leaders, and Members of the Jewish Communities in the United Kingdom,

Shalom from Yad Vashem, located on the Mount of Remembrance in Jerusalem, the capital of the State of Israel.

We are on the threshold of the month of Nissan, which marks the commencement of spring, during which we celebrate the holiday of Passover, the festival of freedom. This month signifies nature's renewal and the birth of the Jewish nation. Every year at this time, we revisit the experience, memory and significance of the Exodus from Egypt as individuals, families and communities. This year, as always, we will sit together at the Passover Seder and tell the story of our departure from Egypt, the chronicles of the Jewish nation, and our responsibility to ensure the continuity of the Jewish people. Together we will remember the wonders that our nation experienced, as well as the hardships of slavery and our tribulations.

During the twentieth century, we experienced our most terrible tragedy, the Holocaust that consumed six million of our people. After two thousand years of exile during which we survived in the Diaspora, the dreadful Holocaust befell our people; an event unprecedented in the history of our people and the annals of humanity. The Holocaust was the result of a murderous ideology whose goal was to destroy the Jewish people, men and women, young and old.

Despite the harrowing period of the Holocaust, in the very same decade we merited to witness the establishment of the State of Israel with its promise of redemption. From the East and West, the children of Israel came in their masses to establish and rebuild our nation. In spite of the terrible destruction that we endured, our people found the strength to strive to realize the proclamation made annually at the conclusion of the Seder, *"Next year in the rebuilt Jerusalem"*.

Holocaust survivors flocked from all across Europe to the land of Israel and the state in the making. The survivors who came to Israel were determined to rebuild their lives, to participate in building the country, to ensure the memory of the Holocaust, and that of their loved ones who perished. We, the survivors merited to build, and to be rebuilt.

We, the survivors of the Holocaust were at the forefront in calling for the establishment of a Holocaust Remembrance Day. Israel's Knesset, the sovereign authority of the renewed Jewish state, responded to our call. The 27<sup>th</sup> of Nissan, soon after the conclusion of Passover and the anniversary of the outbreak of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1943, was declared a national day of observance for the State of Israel and the Jewish people to commemorate the Holocaust, the memory of the victims, the heroism, courage and fighting spirit of the Jewish masses who fought to preserve their lives and their faith in the shadow of death. On this day, a National Memorial Ceremony is held at Yad Vashem, with other events and ceremonies taking place around the world, including the reading of names of those who perished, under the title *"Unto Every Person There is a Name"*.



Following the Passover holiday, the Jewish calendar now includes Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, and Israel's Independence Day, which we celebrate immediately following the Memorial Day for Israeli Fallen Soldiers.

Since the inception of the Biblical law "*This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you*", the Jewish calendar constitutes a profound expression of Jewish solidarity that serves as a unifying force for our people during our tragedies and our triumphs.

The month of Nissan, Passover, and Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, followed by the Memorial Day for Israel's fallen soldiers and the celebration of Israel's Independence Day at the beginning of the month of Iyar are all an expression of the common fate of our people. These days express our willingness to struggle together for the common values of freedom, for the rights of mankind created in God's image to live their lives, and for the right of the Jewish people to maintain our heritage in our land and in communities worldwide.

In these times of rising antisemitism, and the undermining of the State of Israel's right to exist, we must unite during these holy days and commemorate - together.

I call upon my brothers and sisters, partners in the building and continuity of our nation, to commemorate Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day in your homes and in your communities, by lighting a candle in memory of the victims, and to participate together with Yad Vashem and all of Israel in reciting their names.

With heartfelt wishes for a joyous Passover,

Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau  
Chairman of the Yad Vashem Council  
Jerusalem  
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