A MESSAGE FROM YANNAI

I am writing this message to you on the morning of Yom HaAtzmaut, eager to celebrate Israel’s Independence Day with my family and the entire community at this evening’s event at the JCC.

These early spring weeks have been emotional for us as a community and as a people. We mark Yom HaShoah as a tearful commemoration of the latest of the great tragedies perpetrated against our ancestors, and struggle with our promise to ourselves and the world to ensure “Never Again.”

A couple of nights ago, in honour of Yom HaZikaron we reflected on the sacrifice required to establish our state in our homeland, as well as the ongoing dangers to its defenders and citizens. For Yom HaAtzmaut, we celebrate with joy the miraculous blooming of the desert, blossoming of the start-up nation.

As we marked these days on our calendar, we personally experienced their underlying meanings and emotions in our daily news feeds. We recoiled in horror at the murderous violence of Poway and the rising tide of global antisemitism. We prayed for the safety of our brothers and sisters as missiles indiscriminately rained down on civilians, and expressed pride of the IDF’s actions as the world’s most ethical army as they worked hard to protect its citizens. We observed Israel’s vigorous democracy in action, free elections, and a free society standing out as beacons, surrounded by a sea of brutal dictatorships.

This cycle of history – of our modern Israeli calendar – parallels our ancient history and ancient Jewish calendar. We are currently in the period of the mitzvah of the counting of the Omer, the seven weeks between Pesach (Passover) and Shavuot. Passover, like Yom HaShoah and Yom HaZikaron, marks the forging of a nation through shared tragedy – persecution, violence, terror, and genocide – ultimately defeated by justice, goodness, and faith in our One God. Shavuot marks the blossoming of a nation through shared purpose and meaning.

We, at Calgary Jewish Federation, commit to working hard in building our great community for ourselves and our children. We are proud to join our brethren around the globe, standing in pride of Israel and its people as they continue to be Or Lagoyin – an inspiration to the nations of the world.

B’Shalom,

Yannai Segal
President, Calgary Jewish Federation