

Israel's Future: The Miracle Moves Forward

On May 14, 1948, the State of Israel was born. For thousands of years, our ancestors dreamed about and prayed for a return to our homeland. We have lived our entire lives with that dream having been fulfilled, and that prayer having been answered.

Israel's independence solved many problems. The Jewish people finally have a home where we can all go if we want to, or if we need to. Those of us choosing to live outside of Israel walk more proudly today because Israel exists than our grandparents did before this was the case.

Of course, Israel's independence also created other problems. In that regard, our Jewish State continues to be a work in process. We all benefit from the fact that Israel exists. We believe that we all have a role in continuing to build our homeland.

We continue to build Israel when we donate to the United Jewish Appeal. UJA dollars helped with the resettlement of our fellow Jews from the displaced persons camps of Europe and from Arab lands in the late 1940s and early 1950s. UJA dollars provided much needed financial and moral support in the period prior to and after the Six Day War in 1967.

UJA dollars helped with the absorption of Russian and Ethiopian immigrants from the 1970s onwards. UJA dollars were a tangible demonstration of our love and support when hundreds of thousands of Israelis lived in shelters enduring missile attacks from Lebanon and Gaza. UJA dollars funded and continue to fund much needed social services in underprivileged communities such as Bat Yam, Sderot and Eilat.

The era of building the State of Israel is not complete, and

it is incumbent upon all of us who love Israel to take part.

We saw how generous contributions have revitalized the Yoseftal Hospital in Eilat, with the result that young families can choose to live in Israel's most southern city knowing that first-rate medical care is available to them should an emergency arise.

We saw how generous contributions have built a community centre in Sderot where children can play, dance and learn, without fear of being injured by a missile from nearby Gaza. We saw how in Bat Yam middle school girls are learning science, math and website design in after school programs, which will position them for a bright future in Israel's 21st-century economy.

The fight for Israel's future doesn't only take place over there. It's also fought daily over here. The front for this fight is everywhere: on college campuses, in union halls and retail stores which are subject to boycott, divestment and sanction initiatives, and in the corridors of government at all levels. Your contributions fund Hillel on college campuses, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (our community's advocacy arm) and life-changing trips such as Birthright Israel and March of the Living. These are some of the antidotes to the constant challenges to Israel's right to exist. Those challenges are not subsiding. They are increasing in frequency and intensity.

The fact that Israel exists is a miracle. The fact that it's more than surviving, it's thriving, layers a miracle on top of a miracle. But even a miracle requires nurturing and care. Even a miracle should not be taken for granted. There is much work yet to do.

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