

Shabbat Parashat Ha'azinu
A Call to the Heavens and the Earth

At the very beginning of this week's *parasha*, as Moses is continuing his farewell address to the children of Israel, he calls out the heavens and the earth to heed his message about the nature of God and the importance of being faithful to the Teaching that God has given as a gift to Israel. This "sermon" is a universal charge, not only directed to the people gathered around him at that point in time, but also to all generations to come. With the heavens and the earth as his witnesses and audience, Moses' message could endure for all time. The centrality and importance that Moses associated with this, his final speech to the people, begs the questions: What should our enduring instructions be? If we could create a proverbial time capsule, lifting a message to the heavens and implanting it on the earth for all time, what content would we include?

Our generation has an uncanny similarity to those to whom Moses was addressing his final message. The adults would be the ones who would soon cross over the Jordan River and conquer the Land of Israel. The younger generation would be entrusted with the responsibility of securing the land, fending off potential neighboring attackers, and helping the land to flourish as the Jewish people would settle and grow in its own homeland for the first time. Today, all these centuries later, it is our parents and grandparents generation that fought for and defended the establishment of the State of Israel back in the Promised Land and, as their descendants, it is our responsibility to help to safeguard and ensure its existence *l'olam va'ed* (for all time).

It is true that we may feel detached from the State of Israel as a result of our geographic separation from it or the complex politics in which she is involved. However, the simple fact is that *kol Yisra'el areivim zeh la'zeh* "all of Israel is dependent (only) upon itself." If members of the worldwide Jewish community do not band together in support of Israel, its security, and its long-lasting existence, then no one else will do it for us. Living in Canada, we are fortunate to be led by a government that supports Israel in its struggles against a variety of forces, most notably Iran, on the international stage **and** on a regular basis. Prime Minister Stephen Harper and other government officials, even this week, spoke in support of Israel and received thanks from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for Canada's on-going leadership in this area and its vision for a peaceful and secure Israel in the Middle East. As a Jewish community committed to Jewish identity and continuity, it is our duty to follow our government's lead in supporting Israel. Learning about and developing understandings of Israel grows as our students get older and older in our school. I encourage all of us to take time at home as well to talk about and be supportive of Israel. With Heaven and Earth as **our** witnesses, we must be mindful of our obligation to be supportive of our brothers and sisters in Israel, even when we may not necessarily agree with every political decision that her government may make. Out of respect for the sacrifices made by the generations that came before us both in Israel and around the world, this is what we owe to our Homeland away from home. Some ways to show your support for Israel and to fulfill the teaching of *kol Yisra'el areivim zeh la'zeh* are:

- Travel to Israel with your family as tourists or on an institutional mission
- Write/E-mail your government representatives letting them know that you are grateful for and support their support of Israel
- Purchase State of Israel Bonds gifts for children and relatives as investments in Israel
- Write pro-Israel editorial responses to anti-Israel television and newspaper reporting
- "Shop Israel" by purchasing goods made in Israel

Shabbat Shalom and *Moadim L'simcha* as Sukkot approaches!