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קהילת מוריה,
הקהילה המסורתית בחיפה

The month of Iyyar and Shabbat Kommemiyut

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It is fitting that the first Shabbat the month of Iyyar, that Shabbat which falls between Israel's Holocaust Remembrance day and Yom HaZikaron (Israel's Memorial Day) and Yom Ha'Atzmaut (Israeli Independence Day) should be appropriately marked and called "Shabbat Komemiyut".

These days following Passover are days of sorry mixed with joy; days of intense soul-searching. These days are reminiscent in a way of the period at the end of Elul and the beginning of Tishrei. In Tishrei we make an account of our deeds at the personal level while these days at the end of Nissan and the beginning of Iyyar are days where we take an account of our deeds at the national level. Between the 27th of Nissan, which is Holocaust Remembrance Day and Yom HaAtzmaut we are in a period of transition from total pain and loss to great joy.

These days require us as a people to look into the history of Israel with long-range lenses—lenses that can see back not just a few hundred years, but all the way back from our day to the days of Abraham. Therefore, we must link the days of remembrance from our modern era as an inseparable part of the tradition of the Jewish people. It is incumbent upon us to see Yom HaAtzmaut as a part of the earlier independence days of the Jewish people, the first of which being the holiday of Passover in which we went out from slavery to freedom and to the establishment of an independent reign. The second independence day is Hanukkah and the third one is the day marking the declaration of a Jewish state in the land of Israel—the modern day State of Israel.

How symbolic is it that on this Shabbat we read Parashat Kedoshim, the weekly Torah portion that deals with the subject of holiness from the perspective of the fallen as a continuation of the three Torah portions of the current, previous and coming weeks "Acharei Mot, Kedoshim and Emor".

On the one hand, we must remember the Jewish victims who were exterminated in the Holocaust and those who gave their lives in the wars of the State of Israel. On the other hand, sanctity of life and this unique day.

How symbolic it is that it is on this very Shabbat, Shabbat Rosh Chodesh Iyyar, the Shabbat that falls between Holocaust Remembrance Day and Yom HaZikaron and Yom HaAtzmaut that we deal with life, death, and once again with life; in the past and in the future. This Shabbat symbolizes the tension expressed by the Torah portions read this week on new life, accompanied forever by memory of the dead.

On Shabbat Komemiyut we combine these two parts which exist within us—that which mourns and that which hopes, the lamentation and the praise. We look to the past and turn to the future with renewed hope and courage. Amen.