1948 Calls Out to a Broken 2025

Moshe Taragin

Yet another Yom Ha’atzmaut arrives, still shadowed by the events of Oct. 7, 2023 and the ongoing struggle to defend our homeland. As we mark the *nes* of 1948, it no longer feels like a distant historical moment; we are, once again, living through its rawness and uncertainty.

The concept of a Jewish state, which once felt self-evident, is now openly contested. And once again, am Yisrael is paying a steep, painful price for the sacred land promised to us by Hashem.

But this year’s Independence Day challenge feels different from last year, when we stood in the immediate aftermath of tragedy, immersed in the fierce urgency of battle. Last year’s emotions were not celebratory, but were sharp and unmistakable: the pain granted clarity, the intense struggle bonded us to 1948 with a deep, obvious connection.

This year, that clarity has faded into something more difficult to define. The trauma remains, but has settled into a heavy, slow-moving fog. Our people and war effort seem stuck, unable to advance decisively toward victory, unable to reach resolution or closure. The national mood is weighed down not only by grief, but by frustration and fatigue.

And beneath it all, we are watching our internal fabric fray. Political instability, scandals, and bitter rivalries have eroded public trust. The divisions within our society, especially the painful rift surrounding Haredi conscription, have deepened. Anger and suspicion have replaced unity, and the dream of shared destiny feels more distant. Heartbreak and grief have been replaced by weariness and disillusionment.

All this is eclipsed by the unbearable pain of our hostages. While we’ve been grateful to see many brought home, it feels hollow and incomplete; the suffering, sharper. The testimonies of those who have returned have opened our eyes to horrors we can scarcely imagine, making the fate of those still captive feel even more urgent.

Simply celebrating independence with barbecues, parties, Tanakh contests, and ceremonies in the midst of this heaviness feels tone-deaf. Merely paying lip service to the war feels detached and hollow. How do we respond to this year’s historical maze and the emotional haze surrounding Independence Day? What feelings and attitudes are fitting and worthy as we navigate through this bewildering and heart-wrenching chapter of the Jewish journey?

PERHAPS the solution lies not only in celebrating 1948 but also by *returning* to 1948 and *imagining* ourselves gazing through a crystal ball at 2025. What would we see from 1948 about the world of 2025, and how would we, standing in 1948, respond to the struggles of today? This time machine may provide the proper voices and emotions to honor Independence Day of 2025 with the historical depth it deserves.

If we could step into a time machine and travel back to 1948, how would we view our condition in 2025?

Looking at 2025, we may not feel unrestrained joy, but we would feel pride, beaming and radiant pride, in all we have accomplished with Hashem’s help over the past 77 years, and a profound pride in the resilience and achievements we continue to forge through this ongoing struggle.

Joy suggests celebration, closure, and emotional release, but these feelings are jarring while our people are still suffering so deeply. Pride, on the other hand, is quieter and more grounded; it acknowledges pain but also affirms meaning.

Without pride and perspective, we risk sinking into unhealthy despair and misplaced pessimism. We can take pride in our national strength, our moral resilience, and the miracle of Jewish sovereignty, even as our hearts remain broken. The selves of 1948 would want us to feel pride, even amid the ongoing struggles and tragedies.

1948 would also want us to have stamina. In general, Israel was not built for drawn-out wars. Historically, our battles have been swift and decisive. We lack the logistical depth and manpower for endless fighting, and our families, communities, and economy are straining under the pressure. But history seems to be moving more slowly now. In 1967, the world shifted in just six days. The War of Independence, though longer, lasted 10 months.

Today, though our national arc still rises with remarkable strength, this current struggle is unfolding with a different rhythm – more drawn out, more uncertain.

For generations, we whispered *Ani Ma’amin*, a quiet, unwavering song of belief in a better tomorrow, even when tomorrow felt impossibly far away. “Even if he tarries, I will wait.” We taught ourselves to wait through *galut*, persecution, and silence.

The waiting we endure now is different. *Geula* is no longer distant; it is unfolding before our eyes, yet the journey feels uncertain, the process slow. We must learn to wait not just with faith but with the endurance to face the challenges of a reality that is gradually unfolding.

We sense history trembling. We feel Hashem’s presence reentering the story. And that closeness awakens a different kind of longing – a hope for quick endings, for clean and decisive miracles. For the first few decades of the State of Israel, we believed we were witnessing this pace. The first 50 years of statehood surged forward with breathtaking momentum.

But the past year and a half has reminded us: patience is harder when the process has already begun. The “us” of 1948 would tell our current selves to have patience, just as Jews have shown patience for centuries. Quick resolutions to our internal strife may not come in our lifetimes, and our enemies will continue to threaten us. We are moving forward on all fronts – but in ways that only future generations may fully realize – with vision, patience, and stamina.

OUR SOCIETY seems too distant from *achdut* to merely preach it without offering a feasible path toward it. Perhaps we should begin with a more modest goal. If we can’t all align ideologically and religiously, let us at least cultivate loyalty toward one another.

Loyalty calls a person to act with commitment to others, placing shared values above personal agendas and needs. Loyalty is more than an emotional bond or ideological agreement; it is a deep, unwavering duty that binds us to each other and to our shared destiny.

We must remain loyal to our past and the expectations it carries. We have been entrusted with the opportunity to live in Israel, a vision that previous generations could only dream of. If we stood in 1948 next to those who fought for a state they weren’t sure would ever materialize, they would demand our loyalty to their vision, asking us to endure hardships just as they did, and to bear the burdens they never imagined we would carry.

The 600,000 Jews of Israel in 1948 would ask us to be loyal to the nearly eight million who live in 2025 and share one common battle. No one in Israel should envision building a state solely for their own group or ideology.

Perhaps, over decades or even centuries, we will merge into a singular ideology and culture, but that will take time. Until then, Israel will remain a vibrant mosaic of differing ethnicities, religious levels, and political views. The only true constants are our shared past and our collective future.

As fortunate custodians of both the land and Jewish history, we are called to account for our actions and, perhaps more importantly, our words. Encountering differing opinions can stir great frustration, a frustration that intensifies in times of war and tragedy. Instead of striving for an idealized unity, perhaps loyalty to one another is a more attainable goal.

We are sailing together on the same ship of history, and without shared purpose and collective effort, we will struggle to move forward.