

III. Supporting Israel

Since its inception, the Conservative Movement has believed in, and helped to further, the cause of Zionism. As Conservative Jews, we must find ways to increase our ties to Israel in concrete ways.

As far back as 1926, the United Synagogue was instrumental in creating the Yeshurun Synagogue in Jerusalem as a gift to the Jews of the Holy Land. In 1972, the USCJ created the Center for Conservative Judaism in Jerusalem. For almost a quarter of a century, the Center (now the Shirley and Jacob Fuchsberg Center) has served as the address for many educational activities both for Jerusalemites and for visitors from abroad. In addition, the Center serves as the Israel headquarters for all USY Israel activities. The United Synagogue Yeshiva, housed at the Center, provides a place for young men and women to engage in intensive Jewish study.

You can show your support for Israel as well:

- Support the USCJ Fuchsberg Center in Jerusalem
- Join MERCAZ (the Conservative Zionist Organization)
- Travel frequently to Israel
- Send your children and grandchildren on Israel programs
- Support Israel financially
- Consider making *aliyah* (immigrating to Israel)

THE UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

Founded in 1913 by Dr. Solomon Schechter as the association of Conservative synagogues in North America, the USCJ, through its numerous programs and publications, serves as a resource to its affiliated congregations and works to formulate a Conservative Jewish response to pressing social and religious issues. The United Synagogue, which works actively in the areas of educational programming and youth activities, also maintains an active presence in the State of Israel.

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A Rosh Hashanah Reflection



From The Department of Public Affairs



A Rosh Hashanah Reflection

*Grant true and lasting peace to Your People Israel
for You are the supreme Sovereign of peace.
" May it please You to bless Your People Israel
in every season and at all times with Your gift of peace.*

This Rosh Hashanah, it is incumbent upon each of us to reaffirm our strong support for the State of Israel and to offer our heartfelt prayers that a way will yet be found to attain a lasting and secure peace in the Middle East. Our thoughts should focus on two concepts in particular: (1) the importance of peace in Jewish tradition; (2) the centrality of the State of Israel and the ways in which we can show our support.

I. The importance of peace

from the essay "Shalom" by Kenneth Goldrich
5761 USCJ Art/Engagement Calendar

Shalom is more than just a description of a state of being --it is also a goal to be achieved. "*Oseh shalom bimromav, Hu ya 'aseh shalom aleynu, May the One who makes peace above also make peace among us.*"

The *mitzvah* (obligation) of achieving peace must be pursued aggressively. Some obligations are to be performed only if certain circumstances occur. For example, if you see your enemy's ox or donkey wandering about, then you must take it back to him (Deut. 22:4). With respect to peace, one is obligated *bakesh shalom v'rodfeihu*, (to) seek peace and pursue it (Psalms 34: 15); that is, to actively seek out opportunities to make peace (*B'midbar Rabbah* 19:27, *Vayikra Rabba* 9:9).

Yet *shalom* is even more; it is an independent value from which the Rabbis deduced other *mitzvot* (see, for example, *Mishna Gittin* 5:8, *Talmud Gittin* 59a- 61a). *Rabbi Abaye raised the following question: Is an obligation deduced from the principle mipnei darkhei shalom* rabbinic in origin, or is it " considered *d'oraita*, from the Torah itself? Rabbi Yosef answered that not only is it from the Torah, but that the entirety of the Torah is itself *mipnei darkhei shalom*—for the sake of peace.



II. Diaspora-Israel Relations

From "Towards a Global Jewish Partnership" by David Breakstone Fall 5762
United Synagogue Review

As with so many other trends, Jews are in the forefront of the current phenomenon of globalization. It might even be argued that we invented the concept, though until now we have called it something else: Israel-Diaspora relations. Increasingly aware of our interdependence and responsibility towards one another, we are taking practical measures that reflect recognition that we are all residents of a single global Jewish village.

"Interdependence" is simply another term for the collective fate and common destiny that we have always believed we share as Jews, and the "mutual responsibility" we talk about is nothing but a translation of a fundamental maxim of our people: *kol Yisrael areivim zeh l'zeh*. The phraseology has indeed been made more contemporary. The Jewish Agency now presents itself as "The Global Jewish Partnership with Israel at its Heart." But this sentiment, and its practical implications, have certainly been with us for a long time.

The examples are endless, and often dramatic: Machal, the Law of Return, Entebbe, the struggle for Soviet Jewry, Operation Magic Carpet, Operation Shlomo... And when they are less dramatic, they are no less significant. Over the years, billions of dollars have been raised by Jews around the world under the slogan "We are one," or some variation on the theme, and today, when Israel is going through what is perhaps its most difficult period since the War of Independence, morale has been boosted by the arrival of thousands of Diaspora Jews participating in missions of solidarity with those of us who live on the front lines.

I don't mean to suggest, however, that the relationship between the Jews of Israel and the Jews of the Diaspora is without conflict or free of tension. Anyone who is even marginally involved organizationally with the "global Jewish partnership" mentioned above knows that very well. But all of the above is important because it suggests that whatever the points of contention between us, the global Jewish village we are in the process of building is being constructed on solid foundations that will not crumble -- even under the weight of the arguments that might at times distract us.