



תשפ"ו Erev Rosh Hashanah



**Shalom, to my friends in Tzohar, everywhere.**

This letter comes, most likely, at a time when you're full of mixed emotions, as are we all given the complexity of our reality.

On the one hand, we're excited to welcome a new year, with hope for more good news to follow last year's astonishing miracles: the 12-Day War, the elimination of so many enemy leaders, and more. We have experienced great kindness from the Almighty and witnessed His power.

But we also have good reason for near-despair: dozens of hostages in the hands of our enemies, sentiment toward Israel is worsening by the day, tens of thousands of our children/soldiers are still in Gaza, and tensions abound within Israeli society.

So this is where we find ourselves as we shift our gaze to the new year, seeking to recharge ourselves with renewed energy. The question we're faced with is clear: what kind of energy will we let in? It is certainly easy to fill ourselves with despair and disappointment - of which there is no shortage. Or will we fill ourselves with joy and gratitude for all the good we have experienced?

As we enter the coming year, I bless us all with the strength to maintain our hope: to hold it tight, to cleave to it, and to act in its light.

During the Rosh Hashanah davening we say: "*Grant honor to Your people, praise to those who fear You, and **good hope** to those who seek You.*"

**Hope is what we need now.** Rabbi Jonathan Sacks explains the difference between optimism and hope: **optimism says that things will be better, but hope pushes us to make things better.**

May we believe that goodness will triumph - and act to make it triumph.

May we believe that we can strengthen our shared Jewish identity – and act to strengthen it.

May we believe that the miracles unfolding before our eyes will continue to ripen and grow - may we act to make them happen - and may we be wise enough to take full advantage.

May we believe that the coming year will be a year of heroic initiative, strength and comfort, and may we act to make that a reality.

And may it be a year in which, with God's help, everyone – finally - returns home.

**With heartfelt wishes for a good and blessed year for all Am Yisrael,**

*David Stav*



