



Dear [Village of Hope & Justice Ministry Community](#),

Earlier this week, We attended the VOHJM's [program for Yom HaZikaron](#), a day on which Israelis, and Jews throughout the world, mourn Israel's fallen soldiers and victims of terrorist attacks. As we remembered them through our service and prayers and sang Hebrew songs that evoked the day's sadness, we observed the people coming. Jews and Israelis of all ages, far away from Israel, connect to their deepest pain through service, prayers, poetry, and song. All of them sang proudly, not missing a word or a melody. Behind us, younger women and men sat quietly, with tears running down their faces. We wondered whom the gentleman was singing for; we wondered whom the young women and men were crying for.

This powerful evening was a bookend to our community observance, one week prior, of Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, and a prelude to our joyful, festive [Yom Ha'atzma-ut, Israeli Independence Day, celebrations](#). Within one week, Jews worldwide observe our most painful moments and our most hopeful ones. The VOHJM proudly holds our entire community online and in-person together in the heaviness of memory and the joy of celebration.

We observe these evocative days against the backdrop of the tumultuous times in which we live, where we read daily about the [war in Ukraine](#), the warming of our planet, violence in Israel, and the erosion of reproductive rights for women. The magnitude of these days makes us wonder how they will be remembered in the future. Will they be days of despair that recall what happened when the aggressors won, and the victims suffered? Or will they be days of celebration that honor those who made the world safer, fairer, and healthier?

On this Shabbat, may we find the opportunity for rest and restoration? Furthermore, when the new week begins, may we seize the opportunity [to right the wrongs and repair the brokenness](#), such that when these very days are observed in the future, they will be days of happiness and hope.

Shabbat Shalom,

[Rabbi Harel](#) and [Rabbanit Gavriela Frye](#)

[May is the Jewish American Heritage Month](#): It is an Annual recognition of Jewish American achievements and contributions to the United States. Let's learn about the American Jewish Heritage [HERE](#)! Read a book of your choice [HERE](#)! Please feel free to [contact us](#) if you wish to join our [VOHJM Community](#) and [Congregations](#), [Havurot](#), also attend [events with us this month of May 2022 with your family, teach your children about our Jewish American Heritage!](#)