



ISRAEL

קונסוליה כללית  
CONSULATE GENERAL

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Israel's Tribute to the Righteous

Opening remarks by the Consul General of Israel Mr. R. Amir,

These are times, my friends, when words are inept vehicles of expression. This is one of them. Who among us can satisfactorily articulate the tribute and the salute worthy of the acts of heroism and of fortitude performed by the righteous women and men whom Israel is honoring this day? We grope for adjectives aware that it is of things larger than ourselves that we speak. "One who saves a human life saves, as it were, a whole world", declares the Talmud. By placing their own lives in deadly peril in order that others might live on, these brave souls vindicated the whole of Humanity. Within the nightmare of the barbaric Nazi order of which they themselves were victims, they demonstrated the sanctity of life of the human spirit. Those whom they harboured belonged to a people condemned to death, every last man, woman and child of them. They stood by their side, fed them, sheltered them, preserved them from the apocalyptic Holocaust raging outside. Their only motive was human compassion, their only reward, the knowledge that but for them yet another life would be mercilessly trodden underfoot.

If, today, the people of Israel feel compelled to extend this tribute of gratitude to you, it is because Israel was the people condemned to die and to which you gave your succour. It is because Israel is the heritage which clings to life as the sacred absolute. It is because in preserving human life you helped save a whole world for a better, saner, more hopeful tomorrow. Israel was born out of the dawn you helped bring. Its very being proclaims a credo, enshrining the message your own deeds so magnificently enunciated - that the human image is mightier than barbaric tyranny; that the life of the Jew is precious because he is a human creature; that the 20th Century Odyssey of Jewish defenselessness is finally over; and that wherever a Jew is threatened because he is a Jew, there are those who will risk all in order to come to his aid.

We have come together today in order to pay tribute to these righteous people.

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