

Your Majesty, Your Royal Highnesses, Mr. Prime Minister of Israel, Madame Chairman and Members of The Nobel Peace Prize Committee, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As-Salaam Aleikum.

Peace be upon you. This is the traditional way in which, everyday, we greet one another. It reflects our deepest feelings and hopes. We always say it and we mean it.

Your Majesty, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The decision of the Nobel Prize Committee to bestow upon me the Peace Award has been received by the people of Egypt not only as an honor, but also as a confirmation of the universal recognition of our relentless efforts to achieve peace in an area in which God has chosen to bring to mankind, through Moses, Jesus and Mohamed, His message of wisdom and light.

Your Majesty, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Recognition is due to a man of the highest integrity: President Jimmy Carter whose signal efforts to overcome obstacles in the way of peace deserves our keenest appreciation.

The road to peace is one which, throughout its history which coincides with the dawn of human civilization, the people of Egypt have considered as befitting their genius, and their vocation. No people on earth have been more steadfastly faithful to the cause of peace, and none more attached to the principles of justice which constitute the cornerstone of any real and lasting peace.

Do I need to remind such an august and distinguished gathering, that the first recorded peace treaty in history was concluded more than three thousand years ago between Ramses the Great and Hattusilis, Prince of the Hittites, who resolved to establish "good peace and good brotherhood?"¹

And since then, through the ages, even when wars appeared as a necessary evil the real genius of Egypt has been one of peace... and its ambition has been to build not to destroy, to create not to annihilate, to coexist not to eliminate. Thus, the land of Egypt has always been cherished by God Almighty: Moses lived there, Jesus fled to it from injustice and foreign domination, and the Holy Koran has blessed it. And Islam, which is the religion of justice, equality and moral values, has added new dimensions to the eternal spirit of Egypt.

We have always realized that the qualities of chivalry, courage, faith and discipline that were characteristic of a romantic concept of war, should, in an era where war has become only synonymous with devastation to all, be a means of enriching life, not generating death.

It is in this spirit that Alfred Nobel created the prize which bears his name and which is aimed at encouraging mankind to follow the path of peace, development, progress and prosperity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is in the light of all this, that I embarked a year ago upon my initiative aimed at restoring peace in an area where man received the words of God.

Through me it was the eternal Egypt that was expressing itself: Let us put an end to wars, let us reshape life on the solid basis of equity and truth. And it is this call, which reflected the will of the Egyptian people, of the great majority of the Arab and Israeli peoples, and indeed of millions of men, women, and children around the world that you are today honoring. And these hundreds of millions will judge to what extent every responsible leader in the Middle East has responded to the hopes of mankind.

We have now come, in the peace process, to a moment of truth which requires each one of us to take a new look at the situation. I trust that you all know that when I made my historic trip to Jerusalem my aim was not to strike a deal as some politicians do.

I made my trip because I am convinced that we owe it to this generation and the generations to come, not to leave a stone unturned in our pursuit of peace. The ideal is the greatest one in the history of man, and we have accepted the challenge to translate it from a cherished hope into a living reality, and to win through vision and imagination, the hearts and minds of our peoples and enable them to look beyond the unhappy past.

Let me remind you of what I said in the Knesset, more than one year ago; I said:

"Let me tell you truthfully: Today we have a good chance for peace, an opportunity that cannot be repeated, if we are really serious in the quest for peace. If we throw or fritter away this chance, the curse of mankind and the curse of history will befall the one who plots against it".

I would like now, on this most solemn and moving occasion, to pledge again that we in Egypt - with the future rather than the past in mind - are determined to pursue in good faith, as we have always done, the road to peace, and to leave no avenue unexplored to reach this cherished goal, and to reconcile the sons of Ismail and the sons of Isaac. In renewing this pledge, which I hope that the other parties will also adhere to, I again repeat what I said in the Knesset more than a year ago:

"Any life lost in war is the life of a human being, irrespective of whether it is an Arab or an Israeli.

The wife who becomes widowed is a human being, entitled to live in a happy family, Arab or Israeli.

Innocent children, deprived of paternal care and sympathy are all our children, whether they live on Arab or Israeli soil and, we owe them the biggest responsibility of providing them with a happy present and bright future.

For the sake of all this, for the sake of protecting the lives of all our sons and brothers;

For our societies to produce in security and confidence;
For the development of man, his well-being and his right to share in an honorable life;

For our responsibility toward the coming generations;
For the smile of every child born on our land".

This is our conception of peace which I repeat today... The Day of Human Rights.

In the light of this let me share with you our conception of peace:

First, the true essence of peace which ensures its stability and durability, is justice. Any peace not

built on justice and on the recognition of the rights of the peoples, would be a structure of sand which would crumble under the first blow.

The peace process comprises a beginning and steps towards an end. In reaching this end the process must achieve its projected goal. That goal is to bring security to the peoples of the area, and the Palestinians in particular, restoring to them all their right to a life of liberty and dignity. We are moving steadily towards this goal for all the peoples of the region. This is what I stand for. This is the letter and the spirit of Camp David.

Second, peace is indivisible. To endure, it should be comprehensive and involve all the parties in the conflict.

Third, peace and prosperity in our area are closely linked and interrelated. Our efforts should aim at achieving both, because it is as important to save man from death by destructive weapons, as it is not to abandon him to the evils of want and misery. And war is no cure for the problems of our area. And last, but not least, peace is a dynamic construction to which all should contribute, each adding a new brick. It goes far beyond a formal agreement or treaty, it transcends a word here or there. That is why it requires politicians who enjoy vision and imagination and who, beyond the present, look towards the future.

It is with this conviction, deeply rooted in our history and our faith, that the people of Egypt have embarked upon a major effort to achieve peace in the Middle East, an area of paramount importance to the whole world. We will spare no effort, we will not tire or despair, we will not lose faith, and we are confident that, in the end, our aim will be achieved.

I will ask you all to join me in a prayer that the day may soon come when peace will prevail, on the basis of justice and the recognition of the rights of all the peoples to shape their own life, to determine their own future, and to contribute to building a world of prosperity for all mankind.