

Your Majesty, Your Royal Highnesses, Your Excellencies, Madame Chairlady and Members of the Nobel Prize Committee, Mr Marei, representative of the President of Egypt, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I ask for permission first to pay tribute to Golda Meir, my predecessor, a great leader and Prime Minister, who strove with all her heart to achieve peace between Israel and her neighbors. Her blessed memory will live forever in the hearts of the Jewish people and of all peace-loving nations.

I have come from the Land of Israel, the land of Zion and Jerusalem, and here I stand in humility and with pride as a son of the Jewish people, as one of the generation of the Holocaust and Redemption.

The ancient Jewish people gave the world the vision of eternal peace, of universal disarmament, of abolishing the teaching and learning of war. Two Prophets, Yeshayahu Ben Amotz and Micha HaMorashti, having foreseen the spiritual unity of man under God - with His word coming forth from Jerusalem - gave the nations of the world the following vision expressed in identical terms:

"And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more".

We mortals who believe in Divine Providence, when recalling those sacred prophecies, ask ourselves not whether, but when is this vision going to become reality? We remember the past; even in this century alone - and we know. We look around - and see. Millions of men of all nations are under arms. Intercontinental missiles deposited in the bowels of the earth or lying on the beds of oceans can destroy man and everything he has built. Not in Alfred Nobel's time, but in our own era, has mankind become capable of destroying itself and returning the earth to Tohu Vevohu.² Under such circumstances, should we, can we, keep our faith in an eternal peace that will one day reign over mankind? Yes, we should and we can. Perhaps that very capability of total destruction of our little planet - achieved for the first time in the annals of mankind - will one day, God willing, become the origin, the cause and the prime mover for the elimination of all instruments of destruction from the face of the earth and ultimate peace, prayed for and yearned for by previous generations, will become the portion of all nations. Despite the tragedies and disappointments of the past, we must never forsake that vision, that human dream, that unshakeable faith.

Peace is the beauty of life. It is sunshine. It is the smile of a child, the love of a mother, the joy of a father, the togetherness of a family. It is the advancement of man, the victory of a just cause, the triumph of truth. Peace is all of these and more and more.

But in my generation, Ladies and Gentlemen, there was a time indescribable. Six million Jews - men, women and children - a number larger than many a nation in Europe - were dragged to a wanton death and slaughtered methodically in the heart of the civilized continent. It was not a sudden outburst of human or rather inhuman cruelty that from time to time has happened in the history of mankind; it was a systematic process of extermination which unfolded before the eyes of the whole world for more than six years. Those who were doomed, deprived of their human dignity, starved, humiliated, led away and ultimately turned into ashes, cried out for rescue - but in vain. Other than a few famous and unforgettable exceptions they were left alone to face the destroyer.

At such a time, unheard of since the first generation, the hour struck to rise and fight - for the dignity of man, for survival, for liberty, for every value of the human image a man has been endowed with by his Creator, for every known inalienable right he stands for and lives for. Indeed, there are days when to fight for a cause so absolutely just is the highest human command. Norway has known such days, and so have we. Only in honoring that command comes the regeneration of the concept of peace. You rise, you struggle, you make sacrifices to achieve and guarantee the

prospect and hope of living in peace - for you and your people, for your children and their children.

Let it, however, be declared and known, stressed, and noted that fighters for freedom hate war, My friends and I learned this precept from Zeev Jabotinsky through his own example, and through the one he set for us from Giuseppe Garibaldi.³ Our brothers in spirit, wherever they dwell, learned it from their masters and teachers. This is our common maxim and belief - that if through your efforts and sacrifices you win liberty and with it the prospect of peace, then work for peace because there is no mission in life more sacred.

And so reborn Israel always strove for peace, yearned for it, made endless endeavors to achieve it. My colleagues and I have gone in the footsteps of our predecessors since the very first day we were called by our people to care for their future. We went any place, we looked for any avenue, we made any effort to bring about negotiations between Israel and its neighbors, negotiations without which peace remains an abstract desire.

We have labored long and hard to turn it into a reality - because of the blessings it holds for ourselves, our neighbors, the world. In peace, the Middle East, the ancient cradle of civilization, will become invigorated and transformed. Throughout its lands there will be freedom of movement of people, of ideas, of goods. Cooperation and development in agriculture will make the deserts blossom. Industry will bring the promise of a better life. Sources of water will be developed and the almost year-long sunshine will yet be harnessed for the common needs of all the nations. Yes, indeed, the Middle East, standing at the crossroads of the world, will become a peaceful center of international communication between East and West, North and South - a center of human advancement in every sphere of creative endeavor. This and more is what peace will bring to our region.

During the past year many efforts for peace were made and many significant events took place. The President of the Arab Republic of Egypt expressed his readiness to come to Jerusalem, the eternal capital of Israel, and to address our parliament, the Knesset. When that message reached me I, without delay or hesitation, extended to President Sadat on behalf of Israel, an invitation to visit our country. I told him: You will be received with respect and cordiality. And, indeed, so he was received, cordially and respectfully, by the people, by the parliament and by the government of our nation. We knew and learned that we have differences of opinion. But whenever we recall those days of Jerusalem we say, always, that they were shining, beautiful days of friendliness and understanding. It was in this same atmosphere that the meetings in Ismailya were conducted.⁴ In the spirit of the Nobel Prize tradition we gave to each other the most momentous pledge: No more war. No more bloodshed. We shall negotiate and reach agreement.

Admittedly, there were difficult times as well. Let nobody forget that we deal with a conflict of more than sixty years with its manifold tragedies. These, we must put behind us in order to establish friendship and make peace the beauty of our lives.

Many of the difficulties were overcome at Camp David where the President of the United States, Mr. Jimmy Carter, unforgettably invested unsparing effort, untiring energy and great devotion in the peace-making process. There, despite all the differences, we found solutions for problems, agreed on issues and the Framework for Peace was signed. With its signature, there was rejoicing in our countries and throughout the world. The path leading to peace was paved.

The phase that followed was the natural arduous negotiations to elaborate and conclude a peace treaty as we promised each other to do at Camp David. The delegations of both countries worked hard and have, I believe, produced a draft document that can serve, if and when signed and ratified, as a good treaty of peace between countries that decided to put an end to hostility and war and begin

a new era of understanding and cooperation. Such a treaty can serve as the first indispensable step along the road towards a comprehensive peace in our region.

If, because of all these efforts, President Sadat and I have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, let me from this rostrum again congratulate him - as I did in a direct conversation between Jerusalem and Cairo a few weeks ago on the morrow of the announcement.

Now, it is I who must express gratitude from the bottom of my heart for the great honor you do me. But, Ladies and Gentlemen, before doing so, permit me to remind us all that today is an important anniversary - the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Let us always remember the magnificently written words of its first Article. It expresses the essence of all the declarations of the rights of man and citizen written throughout history. It says:

"All human beings are born free and equal, in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood".

Free women and men everywhere must wage an incessant campaign so that these human values become a generally recognized and practised reality. We must regretfully admit that in various parts of the world this is not yet the case. Without those values and human rights the real peace of which we dream is jeopardized.

For reasons self-understood, but which every man and woman of goodwill will accept, I must remind my honored listeners of my brethren and the prisoners who are deprived of one of their most basic rights: To go home. I speak about people of great courage who deserve not only the respect but also the moral support of the free world. I speak about people who, even from the depths of their suffering, repeat the age-long prayer:

La-Shana Ha-Ba'a Biyrushalayim.
Next year in Jerusalem.

The preservation and protection of human rights are indispensable to give peace of nations and individuals its real meaning.

Allow me, now, to turn to you, Madame President of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee and to all its members and say, Thank you. I thank you for the great distinction. It does not, however, belong to me; it belongs to my people - the ancient people and renaissance nation that came back in love and devotion to the land of its ancestors after centuries of homelessness and persecution. This prestigious recognition is due to this people because they suffered so much, because they lost so many, because they love peace and want it with all their hearts for themselves and for their neighbors. On their behalf, I humbly accept the award and in their name I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

And may I express to His Majesty, the King, our deep gratitude for the gracious hospitality His Majesty, on this occasion, bestowed upon my wife and myself.

Your Majesty, Your Highnesses, Members of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Seventy-seven years ago, the first Nobel Peace Prize was awarded. Jean Henri Dunant was its recipient. On December 10, 1901, the President of the Norwegian Parliament said:

"The Norwegian people have always demanded that their independence be respected. They

have always been ready to defend it. But at the same time they have always had a keen desire and need for peace".

May I, Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of the people of Israel, respectfully subscribe to these true and noble words.

Thank you.