

Dear Friend:

As anti-Israel sentiment spreads around the world—from Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to former President Jimmy Carter—it has never been more important for American Jews to share their feelings and thoughts about Israel.

With the sixtieth anniversary of the birth of Israel approaching, you have a special opportunity to turn your focus to Israel and encourage your community to think about what Israel means to them. Jewish Lights can aid you in this effort with our recently published *A Dream of Zion: American Jews Reflect on Why Israel Matters to Them*, edited by Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin. This inspiring book features the insights of over 100 top scholars, business leaders, professionals, politicians, authors, artists, and community and religious leaders covering the entire denominational spectrum of Jewish life in America today. They explore:

- **Identity and Heritage**—Our relationship to ourselves, how we define who we are in the most fundamental way, and our relationship to family, community, culture, tradition, and our collective history.
- **Refuge**—Our centuries-long experience of anti-Semitism, climaxing in the Holocaust that was able to take place in part because there was no place of automatic shelter for Jewish people, is never far from a dream that remains a nightmare.
- **Faith and Covenant**—Our people's relationship to God, and our understanding of the relationship between God and the Jewish people, with Israel as an essential part of Judaism's meaning as a religion and of Jewish spiritual life.
- **Tikkun Olam (Repairing the World)**—Our messianic search for justice and peace in Israel's relationship to a broad range of Jewish denominations, and to the world of non-Jews—and our hopes for what Israel does in the context of its struggle for survival as a Jewish state.

In a recent interview with Publishers Weekly, Rabbi Salkin expressed his thoughts on how important the existence of Israel is to the survival of the Jewish people.

*I believe it is absolutely crucial. God forbid if Israel were to be lost, it would inflict a wound into the psyche of the Jewish people that would take centuries to heal. It's interesting that of all the states in the world, this is the only state about which such a speculation would even arise. That the question can even be asked testifies to the vulnerability of Jews still in this world, and shows that Israel is even that much more important.*

Use this book in your community—for Israel at 60 programs, for your board and other community leaders, in your confirmation and adult education curriculum, and as gifts to your donors. Just as the *I Am Jewish* movement gave congregations and individuals the opportunity to reflect on their individual and collective spiritual identity, this book will allow Jews to establish a deeper connection to their homeland.

**Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin** is recognized as one of the most thoughtful Jewish writers and teachers of his generation. He is also the author of *Putting God on the Guest List: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah* and *Being God's Partner: How to Find the Hidden Link Between Spirituality and Your Work*, with an introduction by Norman Lear (all Jewish Lights). He has served as the co-chair of the Commission on Outreach for the Union for Reform Judaism, and on its board as well as on the board of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

We hope this book will motivate you and your community to think more about your lives as Jews and foster a connection to Israel in the next generation of Jewish adults.

B'Shalom,

Stuart M. Matlins  
Publisher