



## AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH LAWYERS AND JURISTS

תשפ"ה – 5785 President's Rosh Hashanah Message, 2024

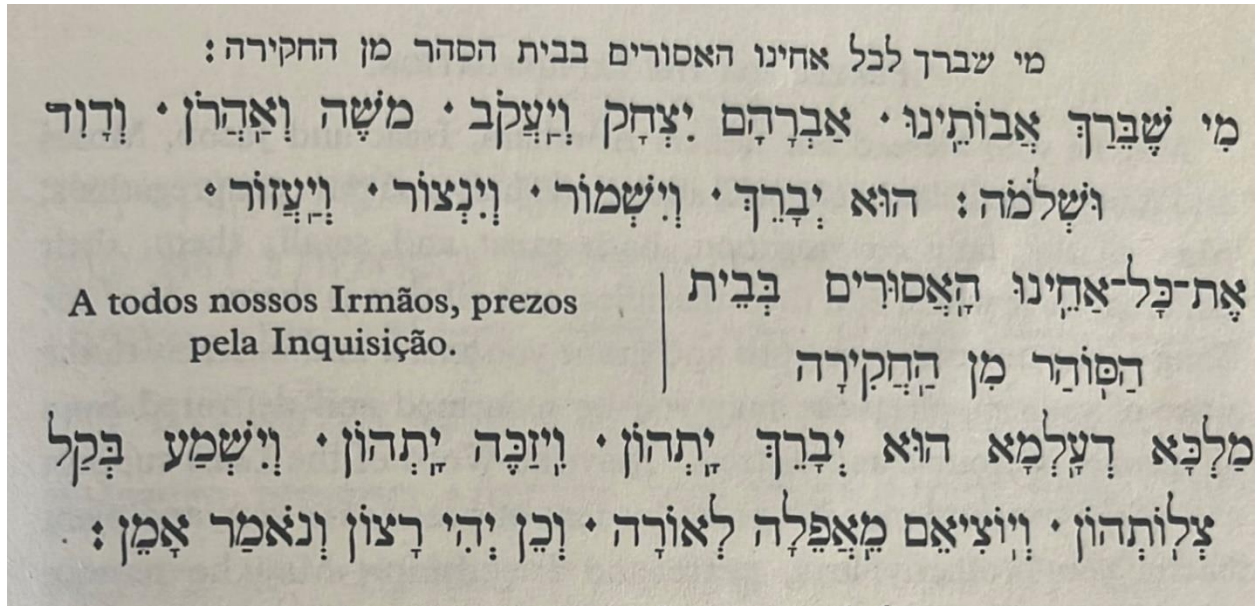
5784 has in many ways been an *annus horribilis* for the Jewish people worldwide. We have learned a great deal over the last year, nearly all things that we never wished to know. Yesterday, for example, we learned that it takes 12 minutes for a ballistic missile to travel from Iran to Israel, and many of us picked up phones immediately to check in on our loved ones.

Since October 7, the tsunami of antisemitism that we have witnessed unfortunately proved that the warnings that we, at the American Association of Jewish Lawyers, have been sounding to college presidents, were unusually prescient. In fact, on October 6, 2023, the President of the University of Pennsylvania responded to and downplayed our concerns about certain speakers who had been invited to campus. Since that time, too many cities have become increasingly uncomfortable, even dangerous, for those who openly identify as Jewish, with many campuses unable – or unwilling – to ensure the security of Jewish students.

Never has the need for the AAJLJ been more apparent. For if we, as accomplished lawyers, cannot stand up and fight against injustice for our people, nobody can. It is of no surprise that in the last year many new members have come into our ranks and energized the organization. Alongside participation in the excellent webinars that have been organized, many of the members took matters into their own hands, wrote to colleges, assisted on legal challenges and went on personal missions to Israel. We are now planning the annual Mission to Israel and are aiming to conduct a meaningful trip for mid-November. As well, we are making plans to hold our 2024 Pursuit of Justice Gala in early December.

In the background, we have also been working very hard to build a new website. We are delighted to announce that, just in time for the new year, the website is live; please visit us, and join up or renew your membership, at [www.aajlj.org](http://www.aajlj.org). On the site, you will also see a membership directory section, which will give the ability for us to find colleagues and local counsel in different cities and different practice areas. We encourage you to fill out the section; and, for those of you that are current members, that can be done through a free link, which can be obtained by emailing our Executive Director, Richard Foltin, at [exec.dir@aajlj.org](mailto:exec.dir@aajlj.org)

Despite all of Israel's recent military successes, there are still 101 hostages being held, four of whom are American: Keith Siegel, Sagui Dekel-Chen, Edan Alexander and Omer Neutra. Below is a picture of my Spanish and Portuguese Yom Kippur mahzo, where during Kol Nidrei we pray for the release of all those being held by the Inquisition. I always found it strange that we still say it every year, never thinking that in my lifetime it would prove so relevant.



We all pray that the hostages are released and returned home safely and for the lives of the those in IDF who are fighting not just for Israel but to safeguard our values. As we say on any given day, "May the one who makes peace in the heavens, make peace for us and all the people Israel."

I should like to thank all who make the AAJLJ work and in particular thank our executive director Richard Foltin for all that he has done and will do over the next year. As is always the case, we need your help including your skills and your dedication and, for those that can, I would encourage you to [donate](#). The more that we can raise, the more that we can do.

Tizku L'Shanim Rabot and l'Shanah tovah.

Robert Garson  
President

October 2, 2024