# Thoughts for Yom Ha'Atsma'ut

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At around the time that the State of Israel was being recognized by the United Nations, the Chief Rabbis of Israel wrote a letter in Arabic to the Arab world. The Sephardic Chief Rabbi Benzion Uziel, who was fluent in Arabic, likely wrote this letter that was signed by him and the Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi Yitzchak Herzog.

Although so many years have passed since the formal establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the message of peace conveyed in this letter has largely been eclipsed by the ongoing hostilities and warfare.

Yom Ha'Atsma'ut, Israel Independence day, is observed this year on Tuesday night April 21 and Wednesday April 22. It's worthwhile to review the words of Rabbis Uziel and Herzog, and pray that the message of peace will prevail...sooner rather than later.

21 Kislev, 5708
"A Call to the Leaders of Islam for Peace and Brotherhood."

To the Heads of The Islamic Religion in the Land of Israel and throughout the Arab lands near and far, Shalom U'Vracha:

Brothers, at this hour, as the Jewish people have returned to its land and state, per the word of God and the prophets in the Holy Scriptures, and in accordance with the decision of the United Nations, we approach you in peace and brotherhood, in the name of God's Torah and the Holy Scriptures, and we say to you:

Please remember the peaceful and friendly relations that existed between us when we lived together in Arab lands and under Islamic Rulers during the Golden Age, when together we developed brilliant intellectual insights of

wisdom and science for all of humanity's benefit. Please remember the sacred words of the prophet Malachi, who said: "Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we break faith with one another, profaning the covenant of our ancestors?" (Malachi 2:10).

We were brothers, and we shall once again be brothers, working together in cordial and neighborly relations in this Holy Land, so that we will build it and make it flourish, for the benefit of all of its inhabitants, without discrimination against anyone. We shall do so in faithful and calm collaboration, so that we may all merit God's blessing on His land, from which there shall radiate the light of peace to the entire world.

Signed,
Ben-Zion Meir Hai Uziel
Yitschak Isaac Ha-Levi Herzog