

Dear members of the Jewish community of Estonia!

Dear Shimon Peres, Deputy Prime Minister of Israel, and Rabbi Yona Metzger, Chief Rabbi of Israel!

Dear friends!

The Bible tells us how Moses delivered the children of Israel through the Red Sea, back to their promised land. In the same way, figuratively speaking – through turbulent seas – we, Estonians and Jews, have come to our own country.

We do not ask for a lighter burden, but for broader shoulders – thus goes a Jewish saying.

Among alien corn or under foreign powers, we both – Estonians and Jews – have hung on to our language, our culture, our customs, in order to shape them finally into a country of our own.

Estonia has been a good and safe home for the Jewish people.

The Republic of Estonia was the first country where the Jewish people created cultural autonomy, and in gratitude, they entered the Republic of Estonia into the Golden Book of the Jewish National Fund. In 1940, before the cultural autonomy was liquidated by the Soviet occupation, over 30 different Jewish organisations were active here – all of those were closed down by the occupying power.

The occupations were a grievous and tragic experience for both our nations. The victims of those hard times shall never be forgotten.

And today, we can see once more that in free Estonia, the Jewish people are firmly keeping

their traditions alive. The synagogue, which is opening today, is another confirmation of this. It will, in a way, replace the synagogue in Maakri Street that was burned by the Soviet bombs in the final year of the Nazi occupation. In the course of the same bombing also one of Estonia's national symbols – the Estonia Theatre – was burned down.

I assure you that the Estonian Jewish community has always been a good and creative contributor to Estonian statehood.

Congratulations and my best wishes to you on the occasion of the opening of this beautiful new synagogue! 🕊

*Shalom vehhag sam'eahh!*