

Rabbi Tamir's Address at the Rabin Memorial Assembly of Israel's Youth Movements: Rising Together — Updated with Hebrew Key Terms

Thirty-two years ago, in the winter of 1993, during the days of the Oslo Accords negotiations, I was a young student at Yeshivat Har Etzion.

My revered teacher and head of the yeshiva, Rabbi Amital, was a friend of Yitzhak Rabin. He trusted Rabin's judgment and supported his path on deep moral grounds.

But his student—today the head of the yeshiva—Rabbi Medan, passionately opposed the Accords. He launched a nationwide campaign called “Don't Give Them Rifles,” and began a hunger strike in a tent set up in the center of Jerusalem.

And we, the young students, were confused. Whom were we to support? Would the yeshiva be torn apart?

One of the formative moments of my life occurred when Rabbi Amital suddenly appeared at that protest tent. He walked inside, and all the students—including Rabbi Medan—rose to their feet in shock.

Rabbi Amital said:

“Please sit, Rabbi Yaakov, sit. You are my teacher. Although I disagree with you entirely, you are my teacher in your devotion to the people of Israel and the Land of Israel.”

In that moment, I learned what Ahavat Yisrael truly means. I learned how disagreement does not fragment us, but strengthens us. And I received a gift: the gift of freedom.

For when a person knows only one perspective, he cannot be free. But when he sees both sides in their full force—as two real possibilities—only then can he become a free human being.

This sacred mountain, Mount Herzl, includes three parts:

Yad Vashem, the memorial to the Holocaust, is the foundation of our covenant of fate—reminding us that if we are not united and ready to defend ourselves, we will not survive.

On the other side is the military cemetery, where my beloved son, Captain Amati Granot, is buried—teaching us sacrifice, camaraderie, and brotherhood.

And here, in the center, stand leadership and vision—the path to the covenant of destiny. Herzl, who knew the secret of hope (תקווה): turning the future into the present, dream into reality.

Just as six million Jews were murdered in the gas chambers in terrible unity, without anyone asking which demonstration they attended...

Just as Israeli soldiers fight together, though one supported judicial reform and another marched at Kaplan—yet they give their lives for one another...

And just as Israel was founded by leaders with vastly different beliefs—liberal and nationalist, socialist and capitalist, religious and secular...

So must we walk together, in partnership, to defend our country and help her become what she deserves to be:

A society all nations look to and say: "This is what a worthy society should look like."

I express deep appreciation to all youth movements for choosing to stand together. This must serve as a model for our leaders and our media.

And now—we must raise the bar. Today, as we remember the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin, a low point in our national life, let us elevate our values.

Some say: We must teach tolerance (tolerance — סובלנות).

The Jewish people say: We must teach mutual responsibility (mutual responsibility — ערבות).

Tolerance (סובלנות) is enduring the other.

Mutual responsibility (ערבות) is enduring for the other.

Some say: We must remain optimistic (optimism — אופטימיות).

The Jewish people say: Not optimism—hope (hope — תקווה).

Optimism (אופטימיות) expects good to happen.

Hope (תקווה) means believing that if we act together to repair the world—goodness is certain.

Some say: We must assign blame (blame — אשמה).

I say: Not blame—responsibility (responsibility — אחריות).

Blame (אשמה) looks to the past.

Responsibility (אחריות) looks to the future.

When we speak the language of blame (אשמה), we point fingers at others.

When we speak the language of responsibility (אחריות), we say: Let us take responsibility together.

And to you—the rising generation—you have a mission:

Blame (אשמה) or responsibility (אחריות).

Tolerance (סובלנות) or mutual responsibility (ערבות).

Division or partnership.

Passive optimism (אופטימיות) or active hope (תקווה).

I ask you—as a society, as a people:

Choose hope (תקווה).

Choose mutual responsibility (ערבות).

Thank you.

May the memory of Yitzhak Rabin be a blessing.

And may we live here as one people—strong, responsible, filled with faith and hope (תקווה).