Mr. Speaker,

President of the State of Israel,

President of the Arab Republic of Egypt,

Worthy and learned men, members of the Knesset,

We send our greetings to the President and to all people of Islam in your country and wherever they may be, on this occasion of the feast of sacrifice, Eid El-Adha.

This feast reminds us also of the story of Isaac and Abraham. This was the experiment and the test the Creator put to our forefather, Abraham — our common father, Abraham — to test his faith, and Abraham did meet the challenge. But when we speak from a moral point of view and the advancement of mankind, this was a taboo of bringing sacrifices of human beings, of men.

Our two peoples in their tradition, in their olden tradition, knew and taught and preached this law of humanity and we are still discussing sacrifices to their idols, we — both peoples — did not.

The Jewish people, the people of Islam and the Arab people contributed to the progress of mankind. We continue to do so, to the civilization of mankind, up to this very day.

I greet and welcome the President of Egypt on the occasion of his visit to our country and his participation at this Knesset session. The time of the flight from Cairo to Jerusalem is short, but the distance between Cairo and Jerusalem was, until last night, almost indefinite.

But President Sadat crossed the distance courageously. We, the Jews, know how to appreciate such courage, and we shall know how to appreciate it when we see it in our distinguished guest, because with courage we are here and this is how we continue to exist and we shall continue to exist.

Mr. Speaker,

This small people, the residue of the Jewish people, who came back to our historic homeland, always wanted peace, and when the dawn of our freedom arose on the 14th of May, 1948, on the 4th of Iyar, Taf-Shin-Hct, the declaration of independence on the Charter of our National Independence, David Ben-Gurion said, «We ask for your hand in peace and to all our neighbouring countries, at all people in those countries, we call upon them to cooperate to help each other with the Jewish people independent in its own country.»
In the underground, in the struggle for liberating this nation and this country, we called on our neighbours in the following terms: We shall live together in this country, we shall progress together in this country towards a life of happiness and freedom. Our Arab neighbours, «Do not reject this hand we extend to you in peace».

But it is my bound duty, Mr. Chairman, not only my right, to say in truth today that this, our extended hand, our hand extended for peace, was not grasped, and one day after we had rescued our independence, as it was our right, our eternal right, our undisputed right, our unassailable right, we were assailed — we were attacked on three fronts, practically bereft of armaments; the few against the many, the weak against the strong.

An attempt was made, one day after the declaration of independence, to stifle our independence and smash it in the bud, and to destroy the millenary hope of the Jewish people, the yearning renewed after the years of destruction and holocaust.

No, no, we do not believe in might, and we have never put our trust in might for our relationship with the Arab Nation.

Quite to the contrary. Force was used against us during all the years of this generation, we have never stopped being attacked, as the might of the strong arm stretched out to destroy our nation, to wipe our independence, to deny our rights. We must defend ourselves. Indeed, we did defend our existence, our wives, our children, our honour. Again, these repeated attempts, repeated again and again, to crush us by the force of might, and not on one front alone.

That too is true, with the help of God Almighty, we overcame the forces opposing emigration and we ensured the survival of our nation not only for this generation but for generations to come.

We do not believe in might, we believe in right. Only in right and therefore our hope, our aspiration from the bottom of our hearts from time immemorial to this very day, has been and is, peace.

Mr. President, President of Egypt,

In this democratic house we have the commanders of all the Hebrew warring underground organisations. They all had to go forth into battles, the few against the many, against a huge power, a world power. We have the veteran commanders and captains who had to go forth into battle
because it was forced upon them and forward to victory which they could
not help since they were defending their right. They belong to various
political parties and have varying political opinions, but Mr. President, I
am sure that I am expressing the consensus of all.

The sense of the whole of this House, which I say that there is one
aspiration in our hearts, one desire in our minds, and all of us are at one
with this desire and aspiration — namely, to bring about peace, peace for
our nation that has not known even one day of peace, ever since we
started returning to Zion: And peace to our neighbours, whom we wish
the best, all the best.

And we do believe that if we make peace, if we make a real peace,
we can help one another in all the walks of life, and a new period for the
Middle East can be ushered in a period of growth and blossoming of
developments, an expansion of the calumay. It can flourish as in times
of old and in the days of antiquity.

May I therefore today sketch the contents of this peace as we under-
stand it. We wish for real, thorough peace, with all the full reconciliations
between the Jewish and Arab Nations, without being bogged down in
the memories of the past, the most terrible bloodshed.

Wonderful scions of the two nations fell in battle. We all the days
of our lives remember and keep the memory of the young men who fell
in battle, all for the sake of this day, of the day of today, to come about.
We recognize the valor and courage of the adversary, and pay tribute
to the valor and courage of the young men of the Arab Nations who fell
in battle.

But let us not be bogged down by the memories of the past. All
these bitter memories. Let us overcome them and look into the future, for
our nation and for our children, for our nations and for the many children
of our nations, for our joint and common future, because we shall all
have to live here in this area forever and ever — the great Arab Nation
in its various states and countries and the Jewish people in its country,
the land of Israel.

Therefore we are to address ourselves to the content of what peace
means.

Mr. Chairman, we are to negotiate as free negotiating partners for
this treaty, and with the help of God Almighty, we believe with all our
hearts that the day in need will come when we can sign such an agree-
ment with mutual respect. And then we shall know that the era of the war is over, that we have extended our hands to one another, we have shaken each other's hands. And the future can be glorious for all the Nations in this area.

When you come to a peace treaty, the first and foremost idea is the abolition of belligerency. I agree with you, Mr. President you have not come and we have not invited you to our country in order, as people have been saying, to put a wedge between the various Arab Nations. No.

Somebody quoted and mentioned a quotation from Rome: «Divide and rule».

Israel does not wish to rule, and does not need therefore to divide. We wish for peace with all our neighbours — with Egypt, with Jordan, with Syria, with Lebanon.

We would like to negotiate peace treaties.

One should not differentiate between the cessation of belligerency and a peace treaty. Quite the contrary. The very first paragraph of peace treaty is the cessation of belligerency forever. We wish to have normal relations between us as between all nations, even after wars. We shall learn from our history that war is avoidable.

Peace, however, is unavoidable.

Many nations have waged wars one against the other and sometimes have used the silly notion of eternal, perennial enemy. There are no perennial enemies. After all wars the inevitable does come, and that is peace.

Therefore we would like to ask you to lay down with us in a peace treaty normal relations as amongst all cultured nations.

Today in Jerusalem two flags fly side by side, the Egyptian flag and the Israeli flag, and, Mr. President, you and I have seen together little children waving those double flags.

Let us sign a peace treaty. Let us lay down this situation forever and ever both in Jerusalem and in Cairo. And I do hope that the day will come when the Egyptian children will fly the Israeli flag with the Egyptian flag just as the children of Israel waved the two flags at the same time.

You will have an Ambassador in Jerusalem — you will have our Ambassador, and we will have yours. Even if there is a divergence of
opinion, we will be able to clear it up. We are civilized people, and through the good offices of our Ambassadors, we could do that.

We suggest mutual work hand in hand, economically, for the further development of our countries, further development of the Middle East.

We have wonderful countries in the Middle East.

This is how God created this part of the world. It is an oasis in the desert, but we have deserts too. We can make those deserts flourish. But let us join hands in this respect.

Let us develop our countries. Let us do away with poverty and overcome hunger. Let us help our people rise to the level of developed countries, and let us not be called any more, developing countries. And, with all due respect, I am ready to confirm that which was said by his Honor, the King of Morocco. His Highness said in public that, if there be peace in the Middle East, then the combination of the Arab genius and the Jewish genius, together, can bring about a chance to make this part of the world a paradise on earth.

Let us open our countries to free movement from one people to another. You come to our country and we will visit your country.

I am ready to announce, Mr. Speaker, today, that our country is open to the citizens of Egypt, and I make no conditions on our part.

I think it is only proper and just that in this matter there would be a joint announcement, but, as we have different banners, different flags, we have today a mission from Cairo in our country, in our capital, and let the number of visitors increase.

Our borders will be open before you, and all other borders will be open.

And, as I pointed out, we want in the South and in the North and in the East to have one situation. Therefore, I renew and repeat my invitation to the President of Syria to follow in your steps, Mr. President, to come to us and to begin negotiations about the bringing about of peace between Israel and Syria, to sign a peace treaty.

I regret to say that there is no justification to the mourning declared across our northern border. On the contrary, such visits, such contacts, such clarifications must and can be days of rejoicing, days of a good approach of attitude for all people. I invite King Hussein to come to us, and we shall sit with him and discuss all the problems which face us,
between us and between King Hussein. Also the other representatives of
the Arab countries — I invite them to come and to clarify and to share
our future, to ensure the liberty of mankind, social peace and mutual res-
pect. And if we are invited to come to your capitals, to their capitals, we
shall respond. If we are invited to open negotiations in Damascus, in
Amman or in Beirut, we shall go to those capitals in order to negotiate
there. We do not wish to separate. We want a real and true peace with
all our neighbours, to be given expression in peace treaties and their con-
tents, as I made clear already.

Mr. President,
Mr. Speaker,

It is my duty to tell our guests and all the nations who are watching
us and listening to our words about the contacts between the Jewish peo-
ple and this country. The President mentioned the Balfour Declaration.
No, Sir, we did not take a foreign country. We came back to our homel-
land. The contact between ourselves and this country is eternal. It was
created even in the dawn of humanity and it was never disconnected, never
disrupted with this country. We developed our civilization here, we had
our Prophets here and their sanctified word stands unto this day. This
is where the Kings of Judea kneeled before their God. This is where we
became a people and this is where we had our kingdom.

When we were expelled from our land because of power which
brought about our dispersion, we never forgot this country, this land, not
even for one day. We prayed for the country, we longed to see this coun-
try, we yearned and spoke about our return to this country, since it has
been said, when God will bring us back to Zion we will be like dreamers,
our mouths will be filled with laughter and our hearts will be filled with
joy. These verses apply and are true about all our tribulations, days of
suffering. This consolation that the ingathering to Zion will come and be
true.

This, our right, was recognized. The Balfour Declaration was in-
cluded by the United Nations, included by the United States of America
and the preface to this international document is the recognition of the
solemn connection of the Jewish people with Palestine... The historical
contact between the Jewish people and Palestine or, in Hebrew, the land
of Israel, for the rebuilding, the reconstruction of a Jewish home in the
very same country that is Eretz Israel, the land of Israel.

In 1919 this right was also recognized, by the speaker of the Arab
people and in 1919, the 3rd of January, a treaty signed by Emir Faisal and Chaim Weizmann reads: «...Existing between the Arab and the Jewish peoples... with the closest possible collaboration.

This is our right. The existence, truthful existence: what happened to us? Then our homeland was taken away from us.

I was with you this morning on a visit to Yad Vashem. You saw with your own eyes the fate of our people, when this homeland was taken away from the people. It cannot be restated.

We both agreed, Mr. President, that he who did not see with his own eyes all that is displayed at the Yad Vashem institute cannot grasp what befell this nation when it was homeless, when this homeland was taken away from this people by force. We both read the document dated the 30th of January, 1939, wherein we see the word «annihilation». If there will be a war, the Jewish race will be annihilated and liquidated in Europe.

The entire world heard these words but no one came to our rescue, not during the nine decisive months since this was declared, something which was never heard of before since the world was created and the human being, man, was created and he created the devil.

During those six years, when millions of our people, and one and a half million Jewish children, small children, were killed by burning, nobody rushed to their help, neither from the East nor the West. Therefore we took an oath of loyalty, that we shall never put our people in danger again, never again will our wives and our children, will be put within the range of fire for annihilation. It is our duty to defend them even at the cost of our lives.

Since it is our duty for generations to come to remember certain things which were said and uttered against our people, we must take them with all seriousness. God forbid, for the future of our people, are we not ready to receive advice. We ought to regard such things with all seriousness and all sincerity.

President Sadat knows, and he knew from us before he came to Jerusalem, that our attitude is different from his as far as the borders around us, between ourselves and our neighbours, are concerned. But it hurts, and
I'm concerned about the President of Egypt and all our neighbours. They say there will be no negotiations to be carried on. I suggest, and this in the name of a majority in this parliament, that we shall discuss and negotiate about every point.

Anybody who says that — in the relationship between the Arab peoples around us and the State of Israel — there are things which must be removed from the realm of negotiations is mistaken. Everything must be negotiated and can be negotiated. No side will present preliminary conditions. We will conduct our negotiations with respect. If there is a divergence of opinion between us, it is not unusual. He who studied the history of wars and that which happened to peace treaties knows that all negotiations concerning a peace treaty began with a difference of opinion, disagreement, and that within the negotiations they reached agreement and consent, consensus which brought about the signing of peace treaties. This is the way that we suggest that we follow.

We shall conduct these negotiations as equals. There are no victors and no vanquished. All the people in this area, in this region, are equal and let everybody treat his neighbour with due respect in the spirit of openness, of readiness to listen one to the other, to hear facts, explanations, reasons. With all the experience of convincing each other, that which is accepted, let us conduct negotiations as I requested and suggested, to open negotiations, to continue negotiations until we reach a treaty for peace.

Mr. President,

You have this morning made your prayers in a place of worship sanctified to Islam. Then you went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, you have seen the truth known to all the world, that ever since this has become a city joined together, there is absolutely free access to all without hindrance, or barriers, to the believers of any faith — access to the sites sacred to them. That has not been the case for the previous 19 years. It has only been so for the last 11 years, and we can assure the world, both the Islam and the Christian world, to all the Nations, that forever and ever access will be free without hindrance to the holy places sanctified to each faith.

We shall defend this free access because that is our belief. We believe
in the equality of the rights of man and citizens and respect and dignity for each faith.

Mr. Speaker,

This is a special day for our legislative chamber. This day will remain in the memory of our nation. I suppose in the memory of the Egyptian Nation too, and perhaps also in the memory of all the nations, for many a day to come. My masters and teachers, members of Knesset; I shall say a prayer with your permission on behalf of you, to the God of our fathers, our common father: implant in our hearts the wisdom required to overcome the difficulties and barriers, obstacles and difficulties, calumnies and slanders, incitement and attacks, and with the help of God Almighty may God grant us that we reach that day we yearn for — that day all of our nations pray for — the day of peace. For indeed, verily so, the psalmist of Israel does indeed say: «Justice and peace have become one» and the Koran says: «Love, Truth and Peace».