

My dear friends,

I come before you this evening to share our grief at the loss of a man whom so many of us loved, admired, respected and celebrated.

A man whom I met many times, and had the privilege of being on his staff for several years.

A man whose calm authority and deep moral core I saw up close the day after the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin z”l.

A man whose leadership and devotion to the Jewish People were unparalleled, and whose deep sense of history was unprecedented.

Shimon Peres, Israel’s ninth President, created the structure of Israel’s Defense Ministry – at the age of 29!

He secured massive arms shipments, jet fighters, built the Dimona nuclear reactor, led Israel through war and peace, through trials and successes, through negotiations and nation building.

A realist who defined himself as an optimist;
a thinker, speaker and statesman.

A man who once said that, for him, “dreaming is simply being pragmatic.”

But also that “the Jews' greatest contribution to history is dissatisfaction! We're a nation,” he said, “born to be discontented. Whatever exists we believe can be changed for the better.”

With his passing, the founding generation has now left us.

It is even more incumbent on us – on all of us here – to continue his legacy.

We share the grief of Tziki, Yoni and Chemi, his children, along with his grandchildren, his great-grandchildren, and all the People of Israel.

A light has been extinguished in Israel this last day, and we are all the darker for it. But his memory shall, and always will, be for a blessing.

Please join me in a moment of silence to remember our friend, Shimon ben Sarah.

