

# Weekly Teaching

May 11, 2018

As I write this week's teaching, my mind keeps returning to the present armed conflict challenging Israel.

Iranian forces had fired rockets at Israel, prompting a serious escalation in Iran's threats to the Jewish State.

In response, Israeli war planes have struck Iranian military targets in Syria.

The worry that confronts us all is the question of whether Israel will be pulled into a protracted armed conflict with Iran.

My hope and prayer is that this won't be necessary.

But, Israel doesn't exist on simply "hope and prayer," and must take all necessary actions to appropriately secure its citizenry from harm.

As a rabbi, my authority doesn't come from any source of knowledge other than Torah.

I hold personal opinions on what might be the most practical political approaches to particular items of concern, but I acknowledge that there can be legitimate views that are different than my own.

I try to really listen to other views, and acknowledge that for complicated questions there can only be complicated answers.

However, there is a set limit to this acknowledgment.

The Torah teaches that we have an obligation to protect ourselves and the Jewish People from harm.

We certainly must attempt to pursue this obligation with maximum care. But, I am mindful that holding Israel to a higher moral standard than other democratic nations might be in and of itself a form of anti-Semitism.

If an enemy overtly threatens your destruction, and puts in place concrete actions to execute those threats, then you have an obligation to protect yourself with whatever means is appropriate and necessary.

What sovereign country wouldn't act by this simple moral principle?

In Jewish law there are two categories that are often considered to a particular scenario: "before the fact" and "after the fact".

Iran is an "after the fact" scenario, and must be discussed within this paradigm.

The government leaders of Iran consistently threaten to extinguish the Jewish State.

Iran funds terrorists that openly promote and actively attempt to destroy the Jewish State.

When Hitler threatened the Jews we should have believed his threats and acted accordingly.

Our prayers and love are not enough. More concrete actions are required.

We need to continue to educate and advocate for Israel on a constant basis.

We further must assist with sharing our resources with Israeli charitable organizations that concretely support Israelis during times of crisis.

There are many organizations that are worthy of our charitable dollars, and the tithing of our time for leadership activism.

I invite you to be in contact with me directly to discuss worthwhile options.

May God who blessed our ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah bless all the soldiers of the Israeli Defense Forces and all those who are protecting our people.

May the Source of Blessing protect them and free them from all trouble and anxiety, and may all they do be blessed.

May the Eternal listen to all the prayers of our people.

Merciful God, may Your compassion be with us, and remember Your covenant with Abraham.

Amen.

Shabbat Shalom,

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