Israel at War

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By

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Our prayers are with the people of Israel as they once again are compelled to defend themselves against the forces of terror, hatred and destruction. We pray that the time will come, speedily and soon, when Israel and its neighbors will live in peace and friendship, enabling all the people of the region to prosper and enjoy God's blessings.

War is ugly. It has been a scourge of humanity from time immemorial and it continues to plague humanity today. War entails fighting and killing enemies. It entails a vast commitment of resources to mobilize and arm one's forces and to strengthen one's defenses. It involves heavy financial, social and psychological costs. It entails casualties and loss of life. War is surely a messy and ugly affair. Peace is so much nicer.

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook taught: "We must see life in two dimensions, as it is, and as it should be. Absolute righteousness is always rooted in how things should be, but provisional righteousness which touches more on acting in the present, is built on how things actually are...The two are connected, like alternating horizons on a long journey." (Igrot Ha Reiyah, I94).

How things should be: peaceful, with love prevailing among humankind. How things are: warlike, with hatred and violence spreading like wildfire.

How are we to deal with this dichotomy? We are to maintain our commitment to absolute righteousness, peace, a world of love and harmony. At the same time, we must deal with harsh realities with strength and courage. Even while engaging in ugly warfare, our dreams need to be squarely focused on peace.

As I write these lines, Israel is engaged in war with Iran. Israel's courage and strength are astounding. Israel's goal is to eliminate Iran's nuclear threat. While Israel's attacks on Iran have been powerful, Iran has retaliated with numerous ballistic missiles aimed at Israeli cities and towns. The Israeli Defense Forces has been remarkably successful in shooting down Iranian missiles, but some have gotten through causing death and destruction in Israel.

Anyone who knows anything at all about Israel, knows that this is a country that wants peace, that strives for peace, that has sacrificed incredibly to attain peace.

But in spite of Israel’s desire for peace, its enemies preach hatred, violence, terrorism, and the most vicious anti-Israel, anti-Jewish propaganda.

War is surely a messy and ugly affair. Peace is so much nicer. But we must view life in two dimensions: as it is, and as it should be. As it is: we must fight in order to maintain ourselves and our nation. As it should be: we are fighting for a righteous, loving and peaceful world.

Hashem oz le'amo yiten, Hashem yevarekh et amo bashalom. God will give strength to His people, God will bless His people with peace.

Angel for Shabbat