Standing up for Israel

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The Talmud posits an important principle: the Heavenly court deals with us by the exact same standards that we use to deal with others (Sotah 8b). If we are kind and compassionate, we can expect to be judged by God with kindness and compassion. If we are cruel and unfairly critical of others, we can expect the Heavenly court to deal with us with the same qualities we have shown to others.

"Midah keNeged Midah"--being judged measure for measure--can be applied to political leaders and nations who act and speak hypocritically and hatefully. They may appear to be powerful now, but they will one day stand before the Heavenly Court. The standards they use to judge others are the same standards that will be used by the Heavenly court to judge them.

Sometimes, people think they can advance themselves politically or economically by engaging in immoral behavior. They may seem to "prosper" in this world. But, in fact, they are condemning themselves to stand before God with blood on their hands. They do not understand that their immorality will come back to haunt them.

During the past weeks, we have seen and heard abuse, malice and violence perpetrated against the State of Israel and against the Jewish People. Various world "leaders" and media figures have maligned Israel in the grossest, most malicious ways. Other world "leaders" and media figures have remained silent, or tepid in their support of Israel. Demagogues have fomented anti-Israel and anti-Semitic hatred; the UN has played its traditional role as the world's foremost agency for promoting anti-Semitism. Few, if any, even ask to hear Israel's side of the story. They aren't interested in hearing Israel's side: they are interested in

harming the Jewish State. The active and vocal anti-Israel, anti-Semitic forces are a curse on the world and a curse on themselves. Those who stand by quietly and who "abstain" are accomplices in the crime.

We cannot expect miracles these days, where the forces of evil are simply swallowed up by Divine command.

We can remind the world, though, that there is a God, that there is ultimate justice, that evil does not and cannot prevail. We can remind the world that those who demonstrate injustice, cruelty, and moral depravity in their attacks on Israel--they will be judged by the Heavenly court with these very same standards of harshness. People who are infected with hatred and treachery, live ugly and distorted lives. They destroy the "image of God" within themselves, and cause suffering to all humanity. But their day of judgment will come.

Although we fully believe in the ultimate justice of the Heavenly court, this doesn't solve our problems here on earth. Even if all the evil people will face a horrible fate when they stand before the Divine court, in the meanwhile they are doing a lot of damage to us here and now.

What is our response to this wave of hatred, hypocrisy, and violence against Israel and the Jewish People? Here are some suggestions.

First, we need to pray, to turn to the Almighty for strength and guidance, to draw on our spiritual resources. We need to come together as a community.

We also need to be alert to the dangers, to be articulate spokespeople for the House of Israel, to let our elected officials know that we want loud and clear support of Israel, and loud and clear condemnation of those who threaten the very existence of Israel.

We need to let Israel know that we genuinely care, and that our fate is inextricably bound with the destiny of Israel. We need to travel to Israel, to invest in Israeli companies, to buy Israel bonds, to contribute to UJA and to educational institutions in Israel, to human services agencies in Israel. We need to buy Israeli products. We need to support those agencies that fight on behalf of Israel and on behalf of the Jewish People.

The world is filled with many hateful and cruel voices. It is filled with many who prefer to stay "neutral". Let the Almighty deal with these people according to the standards by which they themselves act.

We need to do our best to demand justice and righteousness, to promote love and harmony among humanity, to fight against the forces of evil that threaten to undermine human civilization.

We need to remind ourselves that the Heavenly court will deal with each of us by the same standards with which we deal with others. Let those standards be the standards of honesty and goodness, fairness and compassion, integrity and strength of character. May God who brings peace in the heavenly spheres bring peace to us, to all Israel, and to all good people everywhere.