

Seek Peace and Pursue It

A Rabbinic Call to the American Jewish Community

Seek peace and pursue it — As Psalm 34 so wisely states, peace is not merely the cessation of war, but something that must be actively pursued. This verse instructs those of us who love Israel and yearn for peace that the fragile cease-fire between Israel and Hezbollah must now be followed by a renewed commitment to a long-lasting diplomatic resolution of the conflict. The second Israel-Lebanon war has left families bereaved, neighborhoods destroyed, and serious questions in its wake. Israel, as well as its neighbors, cannot afford an ever-escalating renewal of violence.

Seek peace and pursue it — As rabbis, as Jews, as people who seek the welfare of Israel and the well-being of all people, we applaud the efforts of the U.N., the U.S. administration, and all of the members of the international community who worked for a ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah. We pray that this is the first step in ongoing diplomatic efforts to remove Hezbollah's military threat to Israel, to strengthen the moderate forces of democratic process within Lebanon, and to achieve a lasting peace between Israel and her neighbors, including the Palestinian people. We urge the U.S. administration to re-engage with all of the important players in this conflict, including Iran and Syria, and to use its influence to promote political solutions rather than polarization and conflict.

Seek peace and pursue it — As we enter the season of *teshuvah*, "turning," we hope that hearts that have been closed by hate can turn to compassion, and that minds set on violence and destruction can be turned to the reconstruction of societies damaged by war. The great faith that change is possible is the central message of our *Yamim v*, our Days of Awe. May we have no less faith that a new way is possible in the Middle East, that the vigorous, nonviolent pursuit of peace is not a naïve dream, but our only real hope.

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