

Rallying for Israel - The *Halachic* Perspective

Rabbi Mayer Twersky

Originally published on Nov. 23, 2023

Reprinted with permission from TorahWeb.org⁴

Hashem runs the world.

The Torah guarantees that whenever we repent and cry out wholeheartedly, He answers our prayers (*Hilchos Teshuvah* 2:6).

These realities and fundamentals of faith notwithstanding, it is a sacred, categorical obligation that (in addition to prayer) we also vigorously defend ourselves by natural means. Specifically, we are obligated to defend ourselves militarily and diplomatically. The Ramban writes (*Bereishis* 32:4):

למדנו עוד שהוא לא בטח בצדקתו והשתדל בהצלה בכל יכלתו ויש
בה עוד רמז לדורות כי כל אשר אירע לאבינו עם עשו אחיו יארע לנו
תמיד עם בני עשו וראוי לנו לאחז בדרכו של צדיק שנזמין עצמנו
לשלשת הדברים שהזמין הוא את עצמו לתפלה ולדורון ולהצלה בדרך
מלחמה לברוח ולהנצל וכבר ראו רבותינו הרמז הזה מן הפרשה הזאת
כאשר אזכיר

Everyone recognizes that the support of the United States in

⁴https://www.torahweb.org/torah/special/2023/rtwe_rally.html

Israel's defensive, existential war against Hamas is crucial. America provides vital armaments and billions of dollars of financial aid; additionally, it serves as a bulwark against international pressure. Everyone also knows that it is imperative to demonstrate widespread support amongst the electorate for such support. Tuesday's rally did just that.

We are not more deserving or righteous than Yaakov; we too must exert ourselves to the maximum in pursuing avenues of rescue. Indubitably, Tuesday's rally comprised one aspect of that effort.

Without unstinting American support, there is a very real danger that the IDF will be constrained in a way that presently endangers our soldiers and, in the future, endangers the civilian population in the State of Israel. Rallying to sustain and expand such support was thus unquestionably also a fulfillment of (*Vayikra* 19:16), "*Lo sa'amod al dam re'echa*".

At the rally, religious and not yet religious Jews stood side by side. Jews who believe and those who do not yet believe stood shoulder to shoulder. The existential threat in 1967 similarly galvanized Jews from across the spectrum. (In fact, in 1967, all Yeshiva students participated in the rally.) Wonderful! If only all Jews already appreciated the gift of Torah and were believers and religious. Tragically, that is not yet the case. In the interim it is wonderful that myriads of Jews, to a degree, embraced their identity and shared destiny and overwhelmingly came to support the Jewish people, their people.

Of course, we can never act or speak in a way that legitimizes or

validates inauthentic forms of *Yahadus*, which is why in some other contexts inter-denominational activities are proscribed. Attending the political rally, however, simply expressed unwavering support for our brethren in the State of Israel in their battle for survival and security; it clearly did not affirm or validate anyone else's beliefs.

Attending the rally condemned Hamas' savage butchering, massacre, and mutilation of Jews (and some non-Jews) and called for their (Hamas') eradication; it obviously did not endorse any aspect of the program, the choice of speakers, their respective beliefs or lifestyles.

The prophetic verse (*Zechariah 4:6*), "*Lo b'chayil v'lo b'koach ki im b'ruchi amar Hashem Tzevakos*" narrowly refers to the building of the second Temple. Even as a figure of speech, it is irrelevant and inapplicable in the present context wherein our *mesorah* (tradition) demands that we exert ourselves to the maximum in pursuing all avenues of rescue.

May Hashem answer our prayer *vikol harsha'ah karega toveid, v'kol oyevei amcha mihara yikreisu* (May all evil instantaneously perish and all Your nation's enemies be speedily excised) and may there be no need for any further rallies.