

## **Rabbi Hauer's Letter to The President**

May 20, 2011  
The Honorable Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Mr. President:

I want to thank you for your kind invitation to visit you in the White House this past Tuesday, together with other Jewish leaders. It was a privilege for me to meet you, and to have the opportunity to recall the blessing our Sages prescribed upon seeing a head of state, "Blessed is He Who Grants of His honor to human beings". G-d has indeed granted you a position of great importance and significance at a critical juncture in history. I am grateful for the warmth and the respect you accorded us, and I wish you the wisdom and the courage to lead our beloved country and the world to true peace, security and harmony.

I was therefore especially dismayed by your Mideast policy address, delivered yesterday. This address was your opportunity to call upon the existing and recently collapsed dictatorships in the Middle East to look inward and respond to the calls of their people for democracy and freedom. You took that opportunity and expressed the call eloquently. Yet at the same time that message was clearly lost - as a cursory review of today's headlines will show - because you used the speech to highlight and impose new, unfair and very poorly timed demands on the one true democracy in the Middle East, Israel.

In your own words: "In the face of (their) challenges, too many leaders in the region tried to direct their people's grievances elsewhere.... Antagonism towards Israel became the only acceptable outlet for political expression." Yet at this moment of truth, when the people's grievances are finally being properly directed towards the despots that rule their countries, the leader of the free world has redirected their grievances towards Israel. This was a very poor choice at a very critical time.

The message was also very poorly timed for the parties within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Palestinian government, that has never ceased to incite its citizens and its children to violence and hatred towards Israel, has chosen to align itself with the terrorists of Hamas and to take a step away from the promise of responsible nation-building initiated under PM Fayyad. This is hardly the time to up the ante on their expectations of Israel, and to initiate suggestions that require Israel to take existential risks. This is the time to remind the Palestinians that their current direction will move them further away from their hopes and dreams. Yet again, the message that lingers from yesterday's address is that it is the Israelis who need to look inward and change.

I know we share a solid commitment to the unbreakable partnership of the United States with Israel, as well as to the pursuit of peace in the region as a whole. I encourage you as the leader of the free world to advance these goals by shining the light away from Israel

and where it belongs, on those who truly need to seize this moment in history to join the ranks of the free, democratic and peace-loving nations of the world.

I pray that G-d bless you in your sincere efforts to make the world a better place for all people.

Respectfully,

Rabbi Moshe Hauer