

On the Nepal Earthquake

April 30, 2015 / 11 Iyyar 5775

Dear Friends,

I, like you, have been deeply pained to see the havoc and losses caused by the earthquake which has, figuratively and literally, shaken Nepal to its core. The devastation, the loss of life, the destruction of sacred Temples and important structures has been heartbreaking to see. I know that you join me in expressing condolences to the families of those who have been lost, recovery to those injured and strength as the country copes, heals and rebuilds. I was in Israel when the quake occurred.

I witnessed first-hand both Israel's concern for the Nepalese people and the desire to help. Israel was among the first nations to respond by sending a plane-load of army soldiers and reservists, many of whom volunteered to go, in order to assist with the rescue and recovery and to establish a field hospital, which is now up and running. Despite the issues which occupy Israeli lives on a daily basis, the loss of life and the widespread devastation in Nepal created the immediate response of Israel and Israelis to help. We take pride in the compassion and responsiveness of the Israeli people toward those who suffer. We too can respond. Although we are not able to go to Nepal, in part due to the serious damage done to the Katmandu airport runways, we can support the victims through donations.

The Emergency Fund of the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia (jewishphilly.org)* is maintained for just this purpose. I encourage you to give to Federation which, through the JDC and other channels, has the ability to respond with aid to those who need it most. Food is also in short supply. The American Jewish World Services (www.ajws.org)* works primarily on delivering food to victims of natural and man-made crises. They, too, have the mechanisms in place to get help to those who need it most. Beyond direct aid, we share with those who suffer our thoughts and prayers.

On Shabbat morning we will include a special communal prayer during our services for the victims of the earthquake.

B'Shalom, Neil S. Cooper, Rabbi

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