**[Rabbinic Call to "Seek Peace and Pursue It"](http://btvshalom.org/btvshalom.org/rabbiniccabinetcampaigns.shtml" \l "seekpeace) - Launched 9/12/06**

Text and Signers

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 Noraim, 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.

(written by Rabbi Toba Spitzer )

**Signed by:**

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  2. Rabbi Allen B. Bennett (Alameda, CA)
  3. Rabbi Carol Caine (Albany, CA)
  4. Rabbi Paula Marcus (Aptos, CA)
  5. Rabbi Jonathan Omer-Man (Berkeley, CA)
  6. Rabbi Kenneth Jay Weiss (Carlsbad, CA)
  7. Rabbi Nancy Ester Wechsler-Azen (Carmichael, CA)
  8. Rabbi Zev-Hayyim Feyer (Claremont, CA)
  9. Cantor Richard Schwartz (Culver City, CA)
  10. Rabbi Dan Goldblatt (Danville, CA)
  11. Rabbi Greg Wolfe (Davis, CA)
  12. Rabbi Bridget Wynne (El Cerrito, CA)
  13. Rabbi Eva Goldfinger (Encino, CA)
  14. Rabbi Malka Mittelman La (Crescenta, CA)
  15. Rabbi Roberto Graetz (Lafayette, CA)
  16. Rabbi Judy Shanks (Lafayette, CA)
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  18. Rabbi Haim Dov Beliak (Los Angeles, CA)
  19. Rabbi Lynn Brody (Los Angeles, CA)
  20. Rabbi Kenneth Chasen (Los Angeles, CA)
  21. Rabbi Lisa A. Edwards (Los Angeles, CA)
  22. Rabbi Susan Laemmle (Los Angeles, CA)
  23. Rabbi Stanley Levy (Los Angeles, CA)
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  27. Rabbi Suzanne Singer (Los Angeles, CA)
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  35. Rabbi Steven Carr Reuben Pacific (Palisades, CA)
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  54. Rabbi Beth Janus (Soquel, CA)
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  67. Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen (New Haven, CT)
  68. Rabbi Aaron Rosenberg (Waterford, CT)
  69. Rabbi Andrea S. Cohen-Kiener (West Hartford, CT)
  70. Rabbi Danielle Janine Upbin (Clearwater, FL)
  71. Rabbi Erwin Allan Bloom (Davie, FL)
  72. Rabbi Sheldon Isenberg (Gainesville, FL)
  73. Rabbi David Kaiman (Gainesville, FL)
  74. Rabbi Stephen Fisher Moch (Holiday, FL)
  75. Rabbi David Osachy (Jacksonville, FL)
  76. Rabbi Yoseif A Leevy (Lamont, FL)
  77. Rabbi Peter E. Kasdan (Longboat Key, FL)
  78. Rabbi Rebecca Lillian (Miami, FL)
  79. Rabbi Paul J Menitoff (Palm Beach, FL)
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  82. Rabbi Scott Saulson (Atlanta, GA)
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  298. Rabbi Jill Borodin (Seattle, WA)
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  300. Rabbi Hillel Gamoran (Seattle, WA)
  301. Rabbi Michael Adam Latz (Seattle, WA)
  302. Rabbi Zari M. Weiss (Seattle, WA)
  303. Rabbi Dena Feingold (Kenosha, WI)
  304. Rabbi Jonathan Arthur Biatch (Madison, WI)
  305. Rabbi Darryl Arthur Crystal (Madison, WI)
  306. Rabbi Laurie Zimmerman (Madison, WI)
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**Press Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 15, 2006

**300 RABBIS CALL ON JEWISH COMMUNITY**

**TO "SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT"**

CHICAGO -- More than three-hundred rabbis and cantors from across the country today urged the American Jewish community to use the upcoming High Holy Days to actively pursue peace in the Middle East in a rabbinic call released today by Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, the Jewish Alliance for Justice and Peace.

The full text of "Seek Peace and Pursue It: A Rabbinic Call to the American Jewish Community" and a list of signers follows this release.

In the call, the rabbis and cantors invoke High Holy Day traditions to encourage American Jews to, in the words of Psalm 34, "seek peace and pursue it," underscoring that "peace is not merely the cessation of war, but something that must be actively pursued."

Specifically, the call cites the tradition of teshuvah which is commonly understood to mean "repentance." The rabbis, however, draw instead on the term's literal definition to turn in this case to turn away from the violence that has defined Israel's relationship with her neighbors and to turn towards a "faith that a new way is possible in the Middle East, that the vigorous, nonviolent pursuit of peace is not a naieve dream, but our only real hope."

The signers urged the U.S administration to re-engage 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. The call also applauds the international diplomatic efforts to broker a ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah, expressing hope the ceasefire is just the first step in removing Hezbollah's military threat to Israel, strengthening the moderate forces of democratic process within Lebanon, and achieving a lasting peace between Israel and her neighbors, including the Palestinian people.

"This has been a year of tremendous tumult, upset, sadness and fear for those of us who care deeply about Israel," said Rabbi John Friedman, who chairs Brit Tzedek's Rabbinic Council that spearheaded the campaign. "The concurrence of the cessation of hostilities with Lebanon and the High Holy Day season has allowed us a reprieve, a critical opportunity to rethink what role we as individuals and as a community can play in the coming year in charting a more peaceful and secure course for Israel's future," he added.

**Media**

**[The Counsel of Hope by Rabbi Herbert Bronstein](http://web.archive.org/web/20061029020838/http://btvshalom.org/pressrelease/bronstein_oped.shtml)**

[**For Those who Seek It by Rabbi John Friedman**](http://web.archive.org/web/20061029020838/http://btvshalom.org/pressrelease/friedman_oped.shtml)

[**Turning Towards Peace by Rabbi Steven B. Jacobs**](http://web.archive.org/web/20061029020838/http://btvshalom.org/pressrelease/jacobs_oped.shtml)

**Jewish Clergy Calls for Turn to Peace. JTA News, September 2006**

More than 300 U.S. rabbis and cantors called on U.S. Jews to “actively pursue peace” during the High Holidays.

In a statement released late last week by Brit Tzedek v’Shalom, or the Jewish Alliance for Justice and Peace, the clergy said they “hope that hearts that have been closed by hate can turn to compassion.”

They said the Bush administration should use the recent cease-fire between Israel and Hezbollah as a first step in efforts to disarm the Shi’ite militia, strengthen pro-democracy forces in Lebanon and achieve peace between Israel and its neighbors.