

Independence and partnership

written by David M. Weinberg | 21.09.2025

As the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies in the ancient Temple in Jerusalem, he offered a prayer for the state of the nation in the coming year.

“May it be your will, O Lord,” he intoned, “that the coming year be for the Jewish People a year of rain and bounty, of fertility and sovereignty; A year in which the Jewish People will not be dependent on one another, nor dependent on other nations.”

My interpretation of this provocative prayer is that we need Heaven’s help in freeing ourselves from the clutches of fickle local politicians and even more fickle, feckless, and unfriendly foreign nations.

We pray to G-d that we “not be dependent on other nations” – meaning that we not find ourselves overly beholden for diplomatic support or weapons on the United States and other nations; that we not find ourselves squeezed by reliance on capricious Europeans and their on-again/off-again trade and scientific accords; that we not have to beg for protection from the hostile United Nations, International Criminal Court and other nefarious international institutions.

Of course, a certain degree of dependency in is unavoidable in the modern age. Israel’s strategic fortunes are tied to the state of the Western world. Israel cannot manage all diplomatic and defense files on its own. Countering the hegemonic ambitions of Iran is a good example of this – which is why the snapback of global sanctions on Iran this month is critical.

Moreover, Israel needs and wants to be part of Western cultural, scientific and business circles. Our defense/industrial/hi-tech base is dependent on exports and global partnerships. This is especially true of high values services such as banking software, cybersecurity products, and other “intellectual properties” – Israel’s electronic lifeline – which create a net surplus in the balance of trade. And Israel imports far more physical goods than it exports, including oil, machinery, metals, and food staples.

This is where Prime Minister Netanyahu erred this week in speaking about Israel as Sparta, as a rigid proto-Autarky. Israel cannot go there, and talking about

isolation and boycott runs the risk of driving a self-fulfilling prophecy.

NETANYAHU is correct about Israel's need to become more self-sufficient in the development of weapon systems and production of munitions, an issue about which I have written extensively before.

Israeli defense industries need to grow by an estimated factor of eight over the current capacity; and indigenously produce 10,000 surveillance and attack drones, 200 artillery guns, 100 armored personnel carriers, and 50 main battle tanks – per year. We also need to self-manufacture massive quantities of 155mm artillery shells and precision-guided missiles for the air force.

Israel needs to be robustly advanced in national security technologies like AI, quantum computing, and space.

Resilience also means ramping-up and reinforcing services such as hospitals, electricity grids, water and sewage networks, food manufacturing, and stockpiling of core industrial ingredients to last-out a one-year-long interruption in air and sea imports.

But to talk about Israel as a brittle closed-system economy overall, as an autarky, as an authoritarian and isolated “Super Sparta” – is neither realistic nor wise.

WITH MUCH of the world turning hostile on Israel and even antisemitic in its approach to Israel and to Jews, there is reason to be worried. Even in the US, the long-term trend is to shy away from overseas commitments, although for the moment President Trump has Israel's back.

Europe intimates that it is sick and tired of Israel. It did not take much more than 70 years for European guilt over the Holocaust to wear off, and it now defaulting to its generations-old hatred of Jews, especially strong Jews. Thus, the current EU effort to pummel Israel, to isolate and weaken Israel, to deny Israel weapons and economic benefits. I view the grandstanding by France and others over faux Palestinian statehood in a similar vein. It is a nasty act of defiance and drubbing, aimed more to punish Israel than promote peace.

So yes, it hurts to be at the whim of Western weakness, spite, and appeasement. It is disheartening to be so dependent on a world that relates to Israel with double-standards, hypocrisy, and blatant cynicism. It is uncomfortable to be

wedged between Israel's necessary, long wars of survival on the one hand, and unfair Western expectations on the other.

So, this year, when we get to that prayer of the High Priest, this is what I will be thinking:

"Oh Lord, please reduce our dependency on improvident politicians and untrustworthy statesmen; while giving us good friends, honorable allies, fair trading partners, and loyal scientific colleagues. Make Israel strong enough to work with the world, not fight with it; free enough to contribute creatively to the world, not be crushed by boycott and demonization.

"At the same time, give us the resources to be as self-reliant as needed. Help us be stout enough to set our own red lines and defend them, not be hobbled by feeble red (or Green) lines blithely set by others. Make Israel brainy enough to be respected by the world, not bullied by it. And, oh Lord, when necessary, give us the fortitude to go it alone.

"Help Israel rebuild its strength and deterrence, with crushing and overwhelming victories, over all enemies. And simultaneously, help the nations of the world comprehend Israel's necessarily aggressive security posture, and fill their hearts with understanding that will generate increased partnerships with Israel."

ALONGSIDE THIS prayer for both independence and partnership, I have decided for 5786 to adopt for myself a positive mindset about Israel's future; to embrace a plot of purpose and a belief in inevitable, righteous movement toward stability and peace.

I reject narratives of government evil and Israeli decline. I dismiss the negativism and angry bombast of radical actors, even if many of us are hurting and restless. Our storyline remains is a brilliant tale of justice, determination, and destiny. *Hatikvah*, the hope, has not been extinguished. Israelis can and certainly will drive beyond the current straits, repairing their internal ills and strengthening their strategic posture.

And therefore, as Israel enters what will be an election year, I will add a prayer on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur for a curb on polarization, stereotyping, and vulgarization in Israeli politics; an election campaign free of inter-communal curses, threats, and denigration.

“May it be your will, O Lord, that there be great affection and peace among all your people of Israel; that we should all be guided by brotherly love and compassion; that we should accept one another and learn from one another; that we should appreciate all your living beings; and that the misfortune of one person should touch the hearts of all. Amen.” (Attributed to Rabbi Nachman of Breslov.)

Published in The Jerusalem Post and Israel Hayom 19.09.2025.