

Rabbi's Column

In this week of Yom HaZikkaron and Yom Ha'Atzmaut (Israeli Memorial Day and Israel's Independence Day), there are other things happening in the world which impact us as members of humanity. One such event is the massive wildfire in Canada. A colleague of mine, Rabbi Irwin Huberman, comes from that location. Below are the words he shares when asked "what can we do?", along with links where donations can be made.

Our response is simple. Please log on to the Canadian Red Cross website and donate. Please encourage your congregants to do the same.

Each dollar you commit will be matched by the Canadian government, and in turn by the Alberta government. Please also remember that the Canadian dollar is worth about 25 per cent less than its American counterpart. Some have already donated, placing their contribution under Academy for Jewish Religion in the organization box.

The Canadian Red Cross website is [here](#).

Once the full extent of this disaster can be assessed, the Canadian government will help ensure that funds are targeted where they are needed.

If you wish to commit on a more immediate and localized basis, there are countless organizations which have stepped up to help, and you can also personalize your assistance by donating directly. There are dozens of businesses and non profit organizations listed through this [link](#).

Indeed, this is the place where Patte, and I and our children lived for many years. I am the author of the community's history book. Many of the homes we lived in are no more. More than 88,000 have been displaced -- including many of our friends.

We are saddened by this and have appreciated your kind words, however, we believe that the most effective way to make a difference is to donate either to the Red Cross, or other agencies.

We are grateful that aside from a number of motor vehicle fatalities, loss of life has been limited.

In the week's Torah portion, we are reminded to "*Honor Your Neighbor As Yourself.*" We hope you will continue to honor our neighbors in Fort McMurray, and in all other locations where suffering occurs.