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Friends,

As you all undoubtedly know, the Prime Minister of the State of Israel, Ariel Sharon, has suffered a massive cerebral hemorrhage and has probably suffered irreversible brain damage. He is currently in an induced coma and his doctors do not think that they will attempt to revive him until Sunday.

This is a scary time for the Jewish State. The uncertainty of what will be is now more profoundly felt. The mood in Israel is somber, as the fear of what tomorrow will bring without Prime Minister Sharon crashes into the sadness that one feels at the dramatic decline of the health of an Israeli icon. What should one focus on at such a time: the existential political anxiety or the sadness over such a devastating health ailment?

I urge you to keep Prime Minister Sharon in your thoughts and prayers. When saddened by such an event it is appropriate to recite *Tehillim*, or Psalms, with the sick in mind. His name, Ariel ben Vera, can be included in your prayers as well. You may add it into the blessing for healing in the *amidah*.

This is not a time to decide on an appropriate response based on one's political proclivities. Regardless of one's politics, this is a time to pray for the health of the sitting prime minister of Israel, a man who has dedicated his life to doing what he believed was right for the Jewish people.

May God who blessed our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, bring blessing and healing to Ariel ben Vera. May the Holy One mercifully restore him to health and vigor, granting him physical and spiritual well being, together with all others who are ill.

In Peace,



Rabbi David A. Schuck