

Dear Members of the Temple Beth Sholom of the East Valley community,

Our hearts are broken. For five days we have been gathering information, trying to comprehend what has just happened in our beloved Israel. We have been reaching out to family, loved ones, friends, even strangers to make connections, to offer our support, and to let people know that Israel doesn't stand alone in her bereavement and her rage. Our actions have an enormous benefit for the grief stricken families in Eretz Yisrael who are still living in fear. There is not a family in Israel tonight who has not been personally affected. So our words of comfort and support mean that they know that they are not alone in carrying this burden of the entire Jewish people. Make no mistake, the brutal actions of Hamas terrorists were not aimed at Israelis alone, they are a message to the entire Jewish people and those who support the vitality of a homeland for the Jews.

The response of the IDF and the government will be harsh and swift, but as the days pass, the need for revenge will be tempered by Israel's unwavering commitment to secure the safety of those being brutalized and held hostage, both the living and the dead. The two main goals of the government right now must be to stop any further incursions into Israel proper and secure the release and return of the many people whose living horror is still not over.

Sitting so far away at this moment, it is impossible to know the exact right thing to do. Below in this email, we have tried to gather reliable sources to help us educate ourselves on the situation as it evolves, other recommendations for action, places to donate funds, and a call for asking our congressional representatives to approve emergency funding for Israel at this time of shocking crisis.

Friends, two weeks ago, I spoke of the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War 50 years ago. The memory of the ambush that remains seared in the minds of those of us who witnessed it. The toll it took on Israeli society to lose 2,688 soldiers was unbearable for an entire generation. This day will also remain branded upon our souls. There is no redeeming grace nor justification for the deaths of either the soldiers of 1973, or of the more than 2,000 civilian and military victims this time around.

What we can pray for, however, is that through the eyes of the world focused on this spot on the globe at this moment of time, a profound change will take place. Any actions you take, letter writing to our legislators, publicizing messages of support, fighting to take down lies and incitement from public spaces, are all important at this time. The propaganda machinery on the other side has now swung into full gear, and we must continue our actions to counter the lies. We hope and pray for leadership in this world that can take the steps necessary to further a path toward a sustainable and dignified peace and security for all of its residents. This won't happen soon, but it must become the ultimate goal towards which all sides will soon work.

This Shabbat morning, at the conclusion of services, we will offer a special service of solidarity with Israel. This will take place approximately 11:30 am, and will be followed by our normal Kiddush luncheon. Even if you are unable to attend the earlier part of services, please make an effort to be present. We are continuing to enforce our enhanced security procedures, and have been in regular contact with the Chandler police department to ensure that our people remain safe and protected while on campus.

Praying for the peace of Israel,

Rabbi Tracee Rosen

P.S. See below for a special message from Rabbi Emeritus Kenneth Leitner's suggestions for action. He is currently living in Karnei Shomron, Israel.

Educate yourself

Here are some reliable sources to learn more about what's happening now and the historical context:

- [CIE — The Center for Israel Education](#)
- [The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel](#)
- [The Embassy of Israel to the United States](#)
- [Israel Defense Forces - English language site](#)
- From the [Conservative Movement](#): Prayers, resources for families, dealing with antisemitism, upcoming webinars, prayer requests, etc.

English language news sources and podcasts providing insight from within the country - free to read:

- [Yediot Aharonot](#) English site of major Hebrew language newspaper
- [Times of Israel](#) - major English language news site
- [Jerusalem Post](#) - oldest English language news source

Podcasts:

- [The Daily Briefing](#) - daily analysis from Times of Israel journalists
- [Shalom Hartman Institute](#) - pluralistic think-tank based in Jerusalem and US. Specifically 2 weekly podcasts: Identity/Crisis and For Heaven's Sake
- [Unorthodox](#) from Tablet Magazine - normally weekly, extra episodes are being added.

Donate

- [Jewish Federations of North America](#): Israel Crisis donation page
- [The Jewish Agency for Israel](#)
- [American Joint Distribution Committee](#)
- [Magen David Adom](#) (Israel Red Cross)
- [Jewish National Fund](#)
- [Friends of the IDF](#) (Israel Defense Forces)
- [Israel Bonds](#)
- NATAL – the Israel Trauma and Resiliency Center
- Jewish Funders Network: For even more deserving causes, this site has compiled a list of Israeli organizations providing direct services to those affected by the war.

Show Up

- Come to services at TBS-EV, where we will offer prayers weekly for all those affected.
- A strong presence at in-person rallies and vigils makes a world of difference. Keep up-to-date about events in our local area and on-line, and make your presence felt. One source for many options is [Jewish Phoenix](#).

Advocate for Israel

Contact your US representative and both senators and ask them to approve emergency funding for Israel.

U.S. Representatives:

(If your representative is not listed, search <https://www.azleg.gov/findmylegislator/>)

- Andy Biggs — ZIP Code 85209 — <https://biggs.house.gov/contact/email>
- Juan Ciscomani — ZIP Code 85712 — https://ciscomani.house.gov/address_authentication?form=/contact
- Eli Crane — ZIP Code 86301 — <https://crane.house.gov/contact>
- Ruben Gallego — ZIP Code 85006 — <https://rubengallego.house.gov/contact>
- Paul Gosar — ZIP Code 85338 — <https://gosar.house.gov/contact/>
- Raul Grijalva — ZIP Code 87714 — <https://grijalva.house.gov/contact-raul/>
- Debbie Lesko — ZIP Code- 85378 — <https://lesko.house.gov/email>
- David Schweikert — ZIP Code 85260 — <https://schweikert.house.gov/contact/>
- Greg Stanton — ZIP Code 85210 — <https://stanton.house.gov/contact>

U.S. Senators:

- Senator Mark Kelly: (602) 671-7901 or <https://www.kelly.senate.gov/contact/contact-form/>
- Senator Kyrsten Sinema: 602-598-7327 or <https://www.sinema.senate.gov/contact-kyrsten/>

From Rabbi Leitner:

IT IS TIME TO END THE NONSENSE OF MORAL EQUIVALENCY

What can you do?

A colleague of mine wrote, in disgust at the 'moral equivalency' that pervades American (and world) media "In terms of altering American media's notorious history of distorted ME reporting however, forget it."

I would ask you not to forget it.

Many of you have relationships with substantial segments of the non-Jewish community, and what I ask of you, you must in turn ask of them, and it is their voices which may well be more

important than our own. Many of you have relationships through Jewish Community Relations Councils (or similar organizations). Use them now.

I am going to make a supposition: National and local media outlets do look at the names of those who contact them. They do look at titles. When they get a phone call or an email from "Cohen" or "Goldberg" or anyone writing as "Rabbi" about any Jewish issue it is evaluated as 'Jews supporting Jews' - and certainly there is a deep element of truth to this. This is why the non-Jewish community becomes so important. But the Jewish voice must also be heard, not just your voices, but the voices of your congregants.

It is time to deluge the national media with messages of outrage at their 'moral equivalency' reporting. It is time to deluge their advertisers with the same message. It is time to deluge all local affiliates with exactly the same message, and to do the same to their advertisers. Do not be under the illusion that the local media does not matter. It does, and each answers, reports to and influences its national brand.

It is time to deluge the White House, your senators, and congressional representatives with the same message. It is time to deluge your state level and even your county and urban leadership with the same message. Do not be under the illusion that your state representatives and urban leadership do not have both political and media power. They do, and messaging travels up the chain, just as much as it travels down.

Will it make a dent in the abhorrent 'moral equivalency' nonsense? I do not know. But a failure to put maximum effort into this will be on our collective heads, and it will be something we will be answerable for, for all of Jewish history.

Ken Leitner / Emeritus, Temple Beth Sholom, Chandler, AZ
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