



**שלום קישור ~ Kishur Sholom
Staying Connected with
the Temple Shalom Community**

**15 November 2023 ~ Rosh Hodesh Kislev 5784
Parashat Toldot**

Shalom, chaverim - hello, friends -

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Nearly 300,000 people came to the rally in Washington, DC. 300,000!!!
And the crowd - while not exclusively Jewish, was largely so.

There were people putting on tefillin and there were countless kippot. I heard Hebrew, English, Yiddish, Spanish. I saw joy and sadness. I saw gratitude and signs of love, support, worry, hope, determination. We chanted "Never again!" And thought to myself: what a hollow slogan that feels in this moment. We chanted "Bring them home!" (referring to the hostages) and I couldn't get past "Bring" because of my tears so I held my sign with those words higher. The speakers were many and outstanding - my personal favorite was Dr. Mijal Bitton, who is an outstanding thinker, writer, and researcher at the Shalom Hartman Institute. If you listen to no other speaker ... [I urge you to listen to Dr. Mijal Bitton, starting at 44:05.](#)

Among the most memorable moments: Though they all said, effectively, the same thing, the leaders of the United States Senate and House of Representatives stood ARM IN ARM, HAND IN HAND, TOGETHER (!!!) ON

THE DAIS. The day had a thousand priceless pictures - but on what other topic does our bicameral, bipartisan voice of the people stand on any dais together holding hands?? Their message was clear: Hamas is a terrorist organization that unleashed horror upon Israel and the threat of Islamic Jihad is real and must be stopped. The resulting rise of antisemitism in America is unacceptable and Israel has every right to defend its citizens.

Was I at the same rally?

Since leaving the rally I have been disappointed, stunned and angered by the press coverage of this momentous event. This was the single largest gathering for Israel in Washington DC — ever — and yet *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and National Public Radio were unable to bring themselves to acknowledge the power of this day.

The NYTimes downplayed the role and impact of the rally. The front page included a dramatic picture of the Capitol building, a few small Israeli flags and maybe thirty people in the photo. The caption reads “thousands attend rally” and the story is buried on A21. *The Washington Post* couldn’t even put anything on their front page and buried the historic event of the largest crowd to rally for Israel in history in its metro section. And NPR, in a move that is remarkably rare for them, farmed the story out to another news service, which simply said “thousands marched.”

Why does any of that matter? Because people go to the news outlets for information in order to create their opinion. If news is predigested, readers are misinformed and make their judgments accordingly.

Is it ok that John Hagee spoke?

Pastor John Hagee, of Christians United for Israel, spoke at the rally. One of the first emails Amy and I saw after the rally was from a couple of colleagues, who were upset Hagee was allowed to speak. Why? Because Hagee is a right-wing Christian Evangelical and for many in the non-orthodox Jewish world holds social opinions which are antithetical to their sensibilities and sensitivities.

Let’s think about it this way.

Jews and Christian Evangelicals hold Israel as sacred and recognize the importance of Israel as a democracy that is a Liberal country. Christian Evangelicals are not supportive of Israel because of some messianic goal.

They are supportive of Israel because there are some moral absolutes. Supporting Hamas and believing that chants of "From the river to the sea" mean anything other than genocide will remove Liberalism not just from Israel but from Western civilization.

The phrase "politics make strange bedfellows" exists for a reason. I may not agree with Evangelical Christians on a range of issues — but that does not mean I will never ally myself with them or that I see them as immoral. Quite to the contrary, I strenuously object to the liberal Jewish world maligning them, or marginalizing their voice.

A Peaceful Gathering

Final thought for now: I saw no graffiti. There were no calls for genocide. People were waiving American flags and Israeli flags. Banners spoke of Jewish pride, Jewish fear, Jewish aspirations. The thousands of Jewish day schoolers and the thousands of Jewish college students not only took the day off from school, they aligned themselves with Jews from throughout the Jewish world and Jewish time. There was anger at Hamas and cruel legislators who speak of cease fire without acknowledging the ills perpetrated against Israel. No one climbed on top of statues or buildings and took down U.S. flags to raise Israeli flags. And when the rally was over, people walked peacefully to their cars, buses, trains or in my case: a coffee shop to sit down after standing for five hours.

After 40 days of hardly breathing and many restless nights, yesterday, I smiled and felt happy and for just a few minutes felt like we were not alone. And actually, that feeling started on Monday, when we raised the Israeli flag at Town Hall in New Milford with over 30 of us present with our mayor and other concerned citizens. We are not alone. The battle is monumental but we are not alone.

Am Yisrael Chai - b'yachad n'natzeiach - the people of Israel lives, together we will succeed!

Rabbi Mark Cohn

Recommended Resources from the Rabbi's Desk(top)



Constant and important updates, podcasts, blogs, and articles from [Times of Israel](#) and [Tablet Magazine](#).

THE [MARCH FOR ISRAEL](#) OF NOVEMBER 14TH HAPPENED!! IT WAS THE LARGEST GATHERING FOR ISRAEL IN WASHINGTON, D.C. EVER!!

VIEW [HERE](#) TO HEAR/SEE MUSIC, SPEAKERS, PARENTS OF HOSTAGES, INSPIRING WORDS AND TEACHINGS AND MORE!

ARTICLES

["Record crowd on National Mall demands release of hostages, condemns antisemitism,"](#) in *Jewish Insider*.

["Let our people go': Nearly 300,000 rally in Washington for Israel, hostages' release,"](#) in *Times of Israel*.

["The lonely people of history,"](#) by Yossi Klein Halevi in *Times of Israel*.

["Tech warriors in the battle for Israel's future"](#) by Erel Margalit in *Times of Israel*.

["To my Western leftist friends from your leftist Israeli friend,"](#) by Yuval Idan, an Israeli Software Engineer.

[\[scream\]](#) by Eve Barlow, Journalist and Artist, on her *Substack*, "Blacklisted."

Shabbat Services & Study

**Kabbalat Shabbat on Friday Evenings
6:30PM**

**IN PERSON:
Nov. 17**

**VIA ZOOM:
Nov. 24**

**Shabbat Morning
Torah Study - 9:30am**

**IN PERSON with CJ
Kelly**

AUDIO

["Words of wisdom"](#) Leil Lebovitz (Tablet Magazine Editor) interviews Dan Senor for his new book with Saul Singer, *The Genius of Israel: The Surprising Resilience of a Divided Nation*. Plus meaningful and fun conversation with co-hosts Joshua Malina and Stephanie Butnick.

["Israel at War: A State of all its citizens,"](#)

Most recent episode of the Shalom Hartman Institute's "For Heaven's Sake" with Donniel Hartman and Yossi Klein Halevi.

TUESDAY LUNCH & LEARNS NOON - 1:00 PM

Bring a friend! Bring lunch (dairy only - no meat) if you want!

Friday, Nov. 17*

"Mapmaker, Mapmaker, make me a map..." Making sure we understand the geography (and topography)

Tuesday, Nov. 21

Deconstructing a text, a post, and a video: How social media makes things difficult.

Tuesday, Nov. 28

So, what happens to the Jewish Left, now?

Our hour will take one topic to focus on what is happening in Israel. Invariably, because events are shifting quickly, topics might be slightly (or significantly) altered.

And it's a ways off ... but not as much as you might think:

GET READY FOR A HANUKKAH PARTY AT THE SHERMAN JCC!!

Hanukkah Party

Sunday, December 10th

1-3pm @ the JCC in Sherman (9 CT-39, Sherman)

Details to follow!

In the meantime, check out the JCC in Sherman's outstanding schedule - including this coming Saturday's

"Jazz Standards and Stories." November 11th, 7:00 PM

JCCINSHERMAN.ORG

Tzedakah: WAYS TO HELP IN ISRAEL!!

[City of Gold Apartments](#) Emergency Housing Projects. This organization was recommended from Linda Lieff Altabef, who grew up in our temple community and lives in Rosh Pina (northern Israel) By way of connection, Linda is a daughter one of founding members, Marilyn & Chick (z"l) Lieff. She wrote as follows: "I have been volunteering with families from [Netivot](#) as part of the [City of Gold Apartments](#) emergency housing project and we need your help! We have helped over 100 families from Netivot who aren't receiving government funding. We are not only providing them with apartments in Jerusalem, but we also provide the families with basic necessities including food, pots and pans, clothes, toiletries, etc. Our goal is to help another 100 families." [Read a recent op-ed, "Refugees at Home"](#) about the internal displacement of roughly 500,000 Israelis.

[Achva BaKerem](#). Help support a Reform Jewish community in Jerusalem that has been spending these past few weeks bringing food to evacuees from the South and the North, providing entertainment and Shabbat services, and giving comfort during these most difficult of days. [Donate here via New Israel Fund](#) or here via [KBY Congregations Together](#). In either case: make sure to designate for Achva BaKerem, run by Rabbi Tamir Nir of Jerusalem - a friend and colleague of Rabbi Cohn.

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