



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

**25 October 2023 ~ 10 Heshvan 5784**  
**Parashat Lech L'cha**

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Shalom, chaverim - hello, friends -

I'm not an analyst of geopolitics and I have no background to know what the best posture would be for Israel, or for the United States, in this moment of extreme crisis.

I just know that our brothers and sisters in Israel are suffering mightily and doing everything they can to keep the country afloat right now.

For nine months, Israel was fighting for its soul as there were weekly protests against the government's efforts to make reformations not just to the judiciary but to Israeli society. Since October 7th, Israel has been in a fight for its life as enemies are attacking from nearly all sides. There was even an attack from yet another Iran-backed player in the region, this time [from Houthis in Yemen](#).

And on our home front: In western Massachusetts, where I live, I had the displeasure of seeing a protest in Springfield and then another one in Northampton last week.

## **IT'S MORE THAN JUST BAD PRESS COVERAGE**

Curiously, the television reporters didn't interview anyone who was Palestinian. They didn't interview Israelis. They didn't interview anyone who was Muslim. They didn't interview anyone who was Christian. They only interviewed Jews. On the face of it - not a bad thing. After all, one of the interviewees was the Director of the Jewish Federation in Western Massachusetts, Nora Gorenstein. I know Nora and she did the important job of representing the issues and current struggles well. That being said, she had the shortest clip and they even managed to misspell her name - despite it being written on her Zoom screen clear as day.

At the Springfield rally, the reporter found a rabbi who is part of an extremist, fringe, small minority, obscure group of ultra-orthodox Jews who believe that the founding of a sovereign state of Israel is contrary to Jewish thought and belief. Why? Because according to that opinion, we cannot have Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel until the messiah comes. The rabbi decried the loss of Palestinian life at the hands of Israel and said nothing of Israeli deaths or the viciousness of Hamas, which is the reason for Israel fighting a war. Just by way of reminder: Hamas is a terrorist, dictatorial regime that controls Gaza. It maintains its control by intimidating - to the point of murdering - its detractors. It has prevented people from leaving sites of Israeli attacks and for fifteen years has used its own people as human shields.

At the Northampton rally, the news coverage only interviewed a representative of the Jewish Voice for Peace who seemed to offer no words of peace - let alone hope for safety and security - for Israelis. There was no mention of the loss of life and complete upheaval of reality for the victims of Hamas' infiltration targeting Israeli citizens: Bedouin, Druze, Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

## **A SEASON FOR EVERYTHING UNDER THE SUN**

I am a proponent of multiple views and looking at matters from various sides. I am a proponent of peace. But as Israelis are burying their dead, worried sick over hostages, arming its soldiers to defend our sacred land, I am reminded of Ecclesiastes' wisdom: **"There is a time for peace and a time for war. There is a time to speak and a time to keep silent."** Sometimes, those times are concurrent. Sometimes they are distinct.

Currently, Jewish and Israeli students are being threatened and intimidated on college campuses and in high schools across this great nation. And the silence from our supposed social justice allies is deafening. Jewish Americans who have stood shoulder-to-shoulder for social justice causes are being abandoned by those for whom they have fought and told that "this is what resistance looks like" and given a horrific "whataboutism" that reminds us what our ancestors would simply shake their heads and understand: that Jewish blood is not as red as the blood of others. Perhaps even harder for me? Watching fellow Jews abandon our sacred heritage and covenant by supporting those who seek our downfall. So when the local media grab marginal Jewish voices they manipulate the discussion in a not-so-subtle way and say: "See, even the Jews are opposed to Israel."

There is a time for peace and please God, that will come. But right now is a time for war. There is a time to speak and now is the moment. While our detractors are speaking loudly against Israel and former allies are silent about - or justify - the spilling of Jewish blood, we must speak and act strongly in the face of the atrocity and horror of the Simchat Torah Massacre of October 7th. Donation opportunities are below. I encourage you to write your Congressional Delegation to remind them of the importance of supporting Israel. I promise you they are receiving many calls and letters encouraging them to support a ceasefire and to reduce aid to Israel.

### **REMEMBERING WHAT WE ARE FIGHTING FOR**

[Israel's Declaration of Independence](#) proved vitally important in framing the nine months of protests against the government. Those same words speak to who and what Israel strives to be and become. They are words worth fighting for and working to fulfill.

May we use our efforts to support all those who seek to bring about blessing for all those in the Land of Israel. As is plastered all over Israel currently: ננצח ביחד ~ N'natzeiach b'yachad - we will succeed together!

Bivracha, with blessing,

Rabbi Mark Cohn

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**Recommended  
Resources from  
the Rabbi's  
Desk(top)**



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

**ARTICLES**

["When the state disappeared, unfathomable courage emerged' and 'It's time to exile all Gazans to a different part of the world,'](#) by Danny Gordis on *Israel from the Inside*.

["They are doing their part - are you?"](#) by Felicia Herman in *Sapir Journal*.

[" Hamas's Apologists and the Assault on Reason,"](#) by Saul Rosenberg in *Sapir Journal*.

["On Double Standards and Deafening Silence,"](#) by Bari Weiss in *The Free Press*.

["The Ultimate Condescension toward the Palestinians,"](#) by John McWhorter in *The Free Press*.

**AUDIO**

["American Jewry and the War in Israel: What do we do now?"](#) A conversation at Park Avenue Synagogue with Bret Stephens ([Sapir Journal](#)) and Rachel Fish ([Boundless Israel](#)), moderated by Rabbi Elliot Cosgrove.

["Israel at War: Into the Unknown"](#) Most recent episode of the Shalom Hartman Institute's "For Heaven's Sake" with Donniel Hartman and Yossi Klein Halevi.

**Shabbat  
Services & Study**

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

**VIA ZOOM:  
Oct. 27**

**IN PERSON:  
Nov. 3 & 17**

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

**IN PERSON with CJ  
Kelly**

## VIDEO

[Hamas leader's son who became a spy explains what Hamas really wants](#) on CNN.



**RED, WHITE AND JEWISH!**

### **"Jewish Participation in the American Revolution" With Eric Chandler**

When: Thursday, November 2nd at 7:00 PM

Where: The New Milford Historical Society & Museum, 6 Aspetuck Avenue (on top of the Green)

LEARN more from [this flyer!](#)

## **Coming soon ...**

### **TUESDAY LUNCH & LEARN**

**ISRAEL ON OUR MINDS:  
SO NOW WHAT?**

**NOVEMBER 7, 14, 21, 28  
12:00 PM**

Rabbi Mark Cohn will lead an hour-long study/ discussion related to the current war in Israel. Using text, story, songs and more, come explore how we can frame and understand the realities of this moment in Jewish time and Israeli history.

## **Three ways to help in Israel**

[Achva BaKerem](#). Later, I was planning to introduce you to a friend of mine, Rabbi Tamir Nir, who lives in Jerusalem. He is one of the sweetest, kindest men I know. He is a Reform rabbi with a lovely community in Jerusalem. [Please read Tamir's email to me as his community seeks support for the war effort.](#) As you consider organizations to

assist, I know his community will do good work with your generosity. In his note, you will find links for donation.

**[SPNI: Society for Preservation of Nature in Israel](#)** is an Israeli NGO that normally works on matters related to environmental education and advocacy. They also have many "field schools" and are opening them to residents who have been dislocated given the horrific attacks in the South and also communities being evacuated in the North. Please consider their campaign - to learn more **[visit here](#)**.

**[Brothers and Sisters for Israel](#)** is an organization that started with the protests of the last 40 weeks and has shifted its focus to working on helping Israelis face the war with Hamas. You may donate to **[Brothers and Sisters for Israel here](#)**.

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**[Temple Sholom Website \(www.tsholom.org\)](http://www.tsholom.org)**  
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