

10/8/23

Dear Hillel at Dartmouth Family,

The current situation in Israel is difficult to process. The discerning heart is broken by the pain and suffering coursing through the land. We stand with the people of Israel.

This Shabbat morning, during the joyful holiday of Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah that we celebrated together last night at the Roth Center, Hamas launched a coordinated air, land, and sea attack on our brothers and sisters in Israel. Three thousand missiles have been launched against Israel since we met last night. As I write, more than 300 Israelis have been murdered, and 1,500 are hospitalized. An undetermined but significant number of Israelis, including older adults and children, are being held captive. This is the worst attack on Israel or the Jewish people since the Yom Kippur War 50 years ago, and the onslaught continues.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has declared war and mobilized Israel's reserve army. President Biden condemned the "appalling assault against Israel by Hamas terrorists from Gaza." Our President asserted that "terrorism is never justified. Israel has a right to defend itself and its people. ... My Administration's support for Israel's security is rock solid and unwavering."

In dark hours like these, unity is critical. It's what gives us strength. It's what helps us respond and ultimately heal. And so, I encourage us to come together—lean on each other, support one another, and let the power of our community guide you and me.

Here are three pathways we can walk on together:

1. **Rely on each other.** Students have come to the Roth Center throughout the day. Nothing is more potent than being in community. Some of you have family and friends in Israel. Your peers and our team are here to support you and help you process the unfolding events.
2. **Pray.** Prayer is the language of the soul's highest aspirations. This morning at the Roth Center, we offered prayers for the State of Israel, the brave members of the Israel Defense Forces, the captives (a telling commentary on Jewish history that we have such a prayer at the ready), and peace. Members of the Class of '62 here for

a reunion joined us. We will recite those prayers and additional Psalms on Sunday at approximately 11:30 a.m. as part of Simhat Torah services.

3. **Learn, Teach, and Stand Up.** One mainstream source from Israel I rely upon is [The Times of Israel](#), and the coverage from [The NY Times](#) and [CNN](#) is trustworthy. Interested students will be developing and sharing with you other ways for you to stay informed and help educate your peers and our wider community about what is happening. For example, per multiple requests today, we will order Israeli flags for you to display in your living spaces. Use your social media platforms. You vote, so reaching out to your elected representatives makes a difference.

We are a people of resilience. We've faced dangerous perils before, and we're here. This time will be no different. We must hold onto the hope of peace. In the charge of the prophet Jeremiah, “For I surely know the plans that I have devised for you, said the LORD, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and hope. (29:11).” Together, we will navigate these turbulent times. We will stay informed, stay connected, support one another, and sustain the people, land, and Torah of Israel.

In peace and health,

Rabbi Seth

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