

Like many American Jews, I feel powerless and feel disgusted by my powerlessness. So what can I do? What can we do?

First, inform yourself. Read, watch, and listen to sources with a variety of points of view. Don't believe first reports of breaking news, as they are often unreliable or unconfirmed. Breaking news is often unreliable, so don't jump to conclusions. Don't click share or forward right away. Ask yourself always, who benefits from certain stories and events? Know the biases of the news sources you are reading. There is no objective news. Please don't only get your news only (or primarily) from TV news or news stories your friends link to on social media or WhatsApp. Rumors are not news and are often false.

- Honest Reporting put out a list of the top 6 Israeli News Sources in English – they are <https://www.timesofisrael.com/>, <https://www.ipost.com/>, <https://www.ynetnews.com/>, <https://www.israelhayom.com/>, <https://www.haaretz.com/>, and <https://www.i24news.tv/en>.
- There are U.S. based sources that contain a mix of opinion and news coverage as well. <https://www.tabletmag.com/>, <https://www.jta.org/>, <https://forward.com/>, <https://jewishinsider.com/>, <https://www.thefp.com/>, and <https://honestreporting.com/>.
- Of course, there are also the big news outlets: <https://www.nytimes.com/>, <https://www.wsj.com/>, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/>, <https://www.cnn.com/>, and <https://www.foxnews.com/>. There are smaller excellent sites that break news as well. Barak Ravid at <https://www.axios.com/> is probably the best reporter at breaking Israel news for an American news outlet.
- Worth reading for different perspectives, especially when you disagree, are <https://www.economist.com/> (British), <https://www.aljazeera.com/> (Qatari), <https://english.alarabiya.net/> (Saudi) and <https://www.arabnews.com/> (also Saudi).
- Podcasts are also great. The best source for Israel news and analysis is Dan Senor's Call Me Back. In the coming months, I'm sure the Unorthodox Podcast will produce excellent material as well. Bari Weiss's Honestly Podcast features an interview with West Orange's own Michael Oren. The John Batchelor Show has a podcast where the previous evening's three hours are carved up into manageable 8 minute snippets. He doesn't only cover Israel, but when he does, he often features Malcolm Hoenlein, the longtime Vice Chairman of the Conference of Presidents. You can find these podcasts on Apple podcasts, on Spotify, or on your favorite podcast app. Don't have a favorite, I recommend Pocket Casts.

Second, we need to speak up and organize. The First Amendment recognizes our inherent free speech rights, but also our rights to peaceably assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances. Let's use those rights. We need to hold our elected representatives to account to make sure the United States government does more for Israel, not just today when it's easy, but next month when it will be hard. We also need to march, attend rallies, and speak up.

So reach out to our two Senators. Senator Booker was in Israel on a morning jog in Jerusalem when the attacks began. His DC office can be reached at (202) 224-3224. Also, just because Senator Menendez has been indicted, it doesn't mean he isn't still our Senator – Senator Menendez's office can be reached at (202) 224-4744.

Most members of our congregation live in the 11th Congressional District of New Jersey which covers Millburn, Maplewood, South Orange, Livingston, and other towns. If you aren't sure what district you are in, you can check at <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative> .

Here is a list of our local Representative's and their DC office phone numbers:

- Rep. Mikie Sherrill's office (11th District) can be reached at (202) 225-5034.
- Rep. Donald Payne Jr.'s office (10th District) can be reached at (202) 225-3436.
- Representative Tom Kean, Jr.'s office (7th District) can be reached at (202) 225-5361.
- Representative Rob Menendez's office (8th District) can be reached at (202) 225-7919.

You can also reach the White House to thank the President for his support and ask for such support to continue. See <https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/> or text the President at (302) 404-0880 or at <https://my.community.com/potus?t=Hello%20Mr.%20President%20%F0%9F%87%BA%F0%9F%87%B8>

Also, even though he's not a federal official, reach out to Governor Murphy. There is a decent chance that he'll be picking a United States Senator soon. Make sure his pick is as pro-Israel as Bob Menendez. You can text Governor Murphy at (732) 605-5455. You can also fill out the Governor's contact form at <https://nj.gov/governor/contact/>

Do you want to attend pro-Israel rallies? I do. There was one Sunday night. I wish I had a list of events and will try to update everyone on upcoming local and NYC pro-Israel rallies. If you find a list, please reach out. I'm sure we'll hear about a national rally in DC as well in the coming days and weeks.

Let your many non-Jewish friends know what you are experiencing. Many of them are amazing and will be sympathetic. They saw the barbarity of what happened on Saturday and are appalled. Although Israel's ethos is to be self-reliant, it's easier to do things with friends.

A word about politics. I don't care if you are a Republican or Democrat, if you like Biden or don't. The politicians in office now are the politicians with the power to effect whether Israel gets aid or not, whether that aid continues into the future or not. Don't like Tom Kean, Jr. because he's a Republican – get over it. Think Joe Biden is too old - get over it. Vote and donate to candidates how you want, but the current officeholders have the power to influence Israel's destiny. Israel's fight is about whether Jews can live freely and safely in our ancient homeland. It's really that important. Please remember this when reaching out and be courteous.

Third, donate money (on top of what you are donating to CBI).

- The easiest place to donate is through Federation's Israel Emergency Fund. <https://www.ifedgmw.org/support-your-community/emergency-funding-for-israel/>

- American Friends of Magen David Adom: [https://secure.afmda.org/site/Donation2?df_id=2000&2000.donation=form1&s_src=GNR LWEB&FURL=UR](https://secure.afmda.org/site/Donation2?df_id=2000&2000.donation=form1&s_src=GNRLWEB&FURL=UR)
- Friends of the IDF: <https://www.fidf.org/>..
- JNF: <https://www.jnf.org/>

Fourth -- live Jewishly. Come to synagogue. Come for Shabbat, come for prayer, come for learning, come for friends, come for food. Come to comfort and come to get comfort. Bring your kids to Shabbat services. They are Jewish too. Make them come for Friday night services and then they can hang out with friends. Be a living Jew. Be a practicing Jew. The answer to Jew hatred is to be more Jewish. Come to services more. Our synagogue offers amazing programming. This month there will be USY apple picking on Sunday, USY Amazing Race on the 19th, Sisterhood game night on the 19th, Jeopardy / Trivia Night on the 28th (prediction, I'm going to win), in addition to Shabbat services, daily morning and evening minyan on Zoom, and our fantastic pre-school and religious school. Come. Come back.

This is overwhelming. If you need help, reach out for help. If you want to cry, it's ok. If you want to scream, it's ok too. We're all angry and sad and miserable. When people ask how are you, you don't have to respond good. In fact, not responding "good" can let people know what you are feeling and what we are all feeling. What's going on is terrible and we can't say for certain that it will all turn out ok. We can say for certain that there will be difficult days ahead and that it's going to be hard. There are about 150 hostages in Israel now and we can't imagine what they are thinking or feeling or experiencing. Hamas has threatened to execute them on live TV. They have families and friends. If you have any connection to Israel, you have friends or family who are hurting. Reach out to them. Not only does it help the people you are reaching out know that they are supported, but it helps you too.

Finally, pray. Pray that the One who makes peace in the high heavens make peace upon us and for all of Israel, and say Amen.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו,
 הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ
 וְעַל כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

If you want to reach out to see what we can do together, please email me at dybner@gmail.com.

Thanks.

Ariel Dybner