



Jewish Community Center of Paramus  
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## **A Shabbat Message from Rabbi Weiner**

Friday May 24, 2024 ~ Parsha: Behar

Dear JCCP/CBT family,

### **We Are Not Alone**

Recent events have caused many Jews to wonder. Where have all our allies gone? Are we doomed to face the impact of October 7<sup>th</sup> and the threat of rising antisemitism by ourselves? Where are our friends when we need them. Are we alone?

The threats and challenges that we face are unprecedented in our lifetime. Once again, we must defend our own existence. It is painful to see Israel's legitimate security concerns dismissed as expansion, paranoia, or worse. It is infuriating to see Israel's noble mission to defeat Hamas and bring back the hostages castigated immorally as a genocide. It is maddening to see Hamas' murderous intent compared to Israel's right to defend itself. How can we not be resentful when we see anti-Zionist Jews lionized in the media and in the very progressive spaces that so many Jews once called their political home, or when every minority community is encouraged to define their own lived experiences, except Jews. I've been feeling that for months now. I know you have been experiencing many of these feelings and concerns as well.

I just returned from the annual conference of the Zionist Rabbinic Coalition (ZRC) in Washington this week. The ZRC is an organization of Rabbis whose mission is to strengthen commitment and love of Israel among the Rabbinic community, and among the communities we serve. At a time when Israel has become a source of division instead of a source of pride and unity, the work of our organization is more important and ever. And at a time when Rabbis critical of Israel regularly get attention, the ZRC seeks to remind all that Israel retains the avid support of the vast

majority of American Jews (over 80% in a recent poll), the greater Rabbinic community, as well as [79%](#) of Americans.

I learned a lot at the conference. But among the important lessons and messages that I took away from this conference is that the Jewish community is not alone in this struggle. Our sources of support are wide and deep. Our allies have been with us all along, and will continue to stand with us. Their support is built not on bonds of affection, or short term political or communal relationships, but rather shared values and a shared vision for the future of both Israel and United States.

Allow me to share three important examples. Among our guests was the Reverend Johnny Moore. Rev. Moore is an American evangelical leader, a former two-time commissioner for the United States [Commission](#) on International Religious Freedom, and the president of the Congress of Christian Leaders. Sadly, too many in our circles often dismiss, or fail to appreciate evangelical Christian support for Israel, and the Jewish community. We have been more comfortable with our relationships with mainline Protestant churches who have largely abandoned us in recent years.

Rev. Moore spoke with us about the enduring relationship between the evangelical community and the state of Israel. He told the story of how when Theodore Herzl, the founder of the modern Zionist movement convened the first Zionist Congress in Basel Switzerland in 1897, among the 200 delegates were 10 Christian evangelical leaders as well. I've been studying the history of the Zionist movement for over 40 years and I never learned that. His point was that Christian evangelicals were part of the Zionist movement from the very beginning, and they are not pulling out now. His message was that defending Zionism is defending democracy. He pointed out that those who passionately oppose Israel similarly oppose the United States, and American values. His message on behalf of the 60 million Americans evangelical Christians, and 600 million Christian worldwide, is that the Jewish people are not alone in this battle. And they are demonstrating their commitment with action, money, and political advocacy.

(By the way, his speech to our conference was broadcast on [C-SPAN](#).)

His important message was echoed later that evening by Rev. Dumisani Washington, the CEO of the [Institute](#) for Black Solidarity with Israel. He spoke passionately against a narrative that sought to sow division among American Jews and African Americans. He asked us not to conflate the prominence of some African Americans in the anti-Israel protest movement as indicative of an erosion for traditional support for Israel among the community he serves. His message was another reminder to us that we are not alone.

Perhaps the most significant demonstration of support for Israel was a meeting with members of Congress including Debbie Wasserman Schultz (Florida), Mike Lawler (New York), Max Miller (Ohio), Brad Sherman (California) California, Brad Schneider (Illinois), Kathy Manning (North Carolina) and Steny Hoyer (Maryland). Though of different political parties and leanings, their message was clear. Israel enjoys widespread bipartisan support and affection, and remains America's indispensable ally.

The words of these religious and political leaders reminded me that our detractors may have temporarily seized the initiative, and gained prominence in the media. But they are outnumbered exponentially by those who understand our concerns and are working for our benefit.

In times of difficulty and crisis, I have always tried to teach our community to think critically, not emotionally. In our sadness and concern about Israel and anti-Semitism, let's not lose sight of the fact that we are not alone, not by a long shot. Support for our community and its concerns is long, deep, and passionate. I am convinced that it is not going anywhere.

Shabbat Shalom,  
Rabbi Arthur D. Weiner

