

This has been a very difficult time for us Jews in America. As we watch the war with Hamas, we have such mixed feelings. We want to destroy Hamas, as their stated goal is to remove Israel from the face of the earth, but we also can't ignore the overwhelming destruction that has come to innocent Gazans with the IDF's campaign against the actual enemy.

I hear from many people – young people especially – how they are having sympathy for the Palestinians. I, too, have sympathy for them. I, too, do not want to see any loss of life other than Hamas terrorists. And even then, my preference would be to capture them rather than kill them, as any loss of life is unacceptable to a Jewish person.

So there is a dilemma here on how to feel. Sitting in our ivory towers in the US, where bombs are not falling on us, it is easier to feel for both sides, but sometimes you need to take a stand and decide which of the alternatives is better.

For me, I stand with Israel. Israel's not perfect, because no nation is perfect, but it is the only democracy in the Middle East. They are a powerful ally to the United States. It is the only place in the world where Jewish people can say they are truly "home." And if you think that because we are Americans that Anti-Semitism will not affect us, look back at pre-Nazi Germany. Most of the Jewish people in Germany considered themselves Germans first and Jews second. I see the danger of that same mindset in this country, including myself. But when Anti-Semitism rears its head and violence descends upon the Jewish people of this country, no Jew will be safe – regardless of how they reacted to the current war. That is not how Anti-Semitism works.

As you work your way around this issue, finding the "correct" answer to how we should react will never be easy. We need to educate ourselves, read and listen to as many perspectives as we can, and do our best to figure out what is the best path forward.

May the hostages all be brought home safely, and may the conflict be over with as little damage to both the Israelis and the Palestinians, and may Hamas be rendered ineffective as to be able to cause damage to Israel – nor the innocent residents of Gaza – anymore.

Howie