



SOLIDARITY SHABBAT

שבת אחדות

OCTOBER 26-29

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#SOLIDARITYSHABBAT SUPPLEMENT

In the midst of the ongoing crisis in Israel, we will gather for Shabbat around the globe, standing in unwavering solidarity with Israel and with all the victims of this terrible attack and ongoing war—unified in the face of hatred and to proclaim our love and pride as Jews and as Conservative/Masorti Jews.

This Supplement for our Conservative/Masorti Solidarity Shabbat services offer Psalms, Prayers and Readings. We come together for Shabbat, proclaiming that we are a community strengthened by one another and resilient in the face of hatred and antisemitism.



Lech Lecha! Standing Together on our Journey

One of the most poignant moments for me in these past three weeks was receiving a text from my local Catholic priest, just asking, “How are you?” and assuring me, “I’m thinking of you and the Jewish people.” In what often feels like a very lonely time, this reaching out by a fellow faith leader and long-time friend and partner in faithful leadership brought me to tears.

In the Book of Numbers the Moabite prophet Bilaam, at God’s insistence, sees the People of Israel as “*Hen-am l’vadad yishkon* – A people that dwells apart (Num. 23:9),” always separate or distinct from the other nations of the world. While meant as praise, it also sounds like a very lonely existence for the Jewish people.

In the shadow of the Simchat Torah pogrom and the commemoration of the *yahrzeit* of the murders of 11 beautiful Jewish souls in Pittsburgh five years ago, we have two responses. First, we must ensure that, in this moment of challenge, we are standing together as a people. I saw this in my recent trip to Israel, where the phrase, “*Yachad nenatze’ach* – together we will prevail,” is on billboards and TV news screens. And it is also the responsibility of Jews around the world to stand together with our people in Israel.

Second, it means that, while our attention is often drawn to those who are not supporting us, we need to notice those who are standing by Israel and the Jewish people. From President Biden, bipartisan supporters in the US Congress and world leaders, to faith communities and many of our neighbors, there are people reaching out, and we can encourage and thank them for their friendship and support. And we can turn to others and ask them for their support and solidarity.

In this week’s portion, *Lech Lecha*, God tells Abram and Sarai to “Go forth” out into the world. They will represent God’s vision for humanity – a kind, just, and peaceful society – in a world often given over to violence and chaos. That mission, to work towards such a world, hasn’t changed in the thousands of years since the initial command to our ancestors. Sometimes it is very lonely, and sometimes we pick up friends along the way.

I hope as you pick up this Solidarity Shabbat Supplement, that you will find in it the words to draw closer to your community, closer to God and closer to a more kind, just and peaceful society.

And we always have each other, Am Yisra’el. Thank you for standing together this Shabbat. *Yachad nenatze’ach* – together we will prevail. Am Yisrael Chai!

Rabbi Jacob Blumenthal
CEO
The Rabbinical Assembly and USCJ

PSALMS FOR THIS TIME OF CRISIS IN ISRAEL

These very dark days have brought us, both as individuals and as a community, to a wide range of emotions. In times such as these, we have turned to the Book of Psalms again and again because we can recognize -- as in a distant mirror -- so many of those emotions in those who have long preceded us and whose words and thoughts still resonate. Praying these ancient words enables us to give voice to the depths of our own pain and helps us feel less alone in what we experience today.

We offer psalms as suggestions for a liturgical response to our individual and collective emotions, including grief, fear, rage (even at God), desperation, shock at the incomprehensibility of human evil, faith and doubt, yearning, and hope. These next two psalms are adapted from the Psalms Project.

Shalom al Yisrael

Compiled by Rabbis Rob Scheinberg, Gordon Tucker, and Jan Uhrbach

Psalm 142: *The experience of captivity*

מִשְׁכֵּיל לְדָוִד בְּהִיּוֹתוֹ בְּמַעְרָה תְּפִלָּה:
קוֹלִי אֱלֹהִים אֲזַעַק קוֹלִי אֱלֹהִים אֶתְחַנֵּן:
אֲשַׁפֵּךְ לְפָנָיו שִׁיחֵי צָרָתִי לְפָנָיו אֶגִּיד:
בְּהִתְעַטֵּף עָלַי רוּחִי וְאַתָּה יְדַעַת גְּתִיבָתִי בְּאַרְחֻזֵּי אֹהֶלְךָ טָמְנֵנוּ פֶּחַ לִי:
הִבִּיט יָמִין וּרְאֵה וְאִי־לִי מִכִּיר אֶבֶד מִגּוֹס מִמְּנֵי אֵין דּוֹרֵשׁ לְנַפְשִׁי:
זַעַקְתִּי אֵלֶיךָ ה' אֲמַרְתִּי אַתָּה מַחְסֵי חֶלְקִי בְּאַרְצֵךְ הַחַיִּים:
הִקְשִׁיבָה אֶל־רִנָּתִי כִּי־דְלוּתִי מְאֹד הִצִּילֵנִי מִרְדְּפֵי כִּי אֲמָצוּ מִמְּנֵי:
הוֹצִיאָה מִמִּסְגָּר נַפְשִׁי לְהוֹדוֹת אֶת־שִׁמְךָ בֵּי יִכְתְּרוֹ צַדִּיקִים כִּי תִגְמַל עָלַי:

A *maskil* of David, while he was in the cave. A prayer.

I cry aloud to Adonai; I appeal to Adonai loudly for mercy.

I pour out my complaint before God; I lay my trouble before God when my spirit fails within me. You know my course; they have laid a trap in the path I walk.

Look at my right and see— I have no friend; there is nowhere I can flee, no one cares about me.

So I cry to You, Adonai; I say, “You are my refuge, all I have in the land of the living.”

Listen to my cry, for I have been brought very low; save me from my pursuers, for they are too strong for me.

Free me from prison, that I may praise Your name. The righteous shall glory in me for Your gracious dealings with me.

(JPS 1985 - Sefaria, adapted)

Psalm 125: Our need for divine protection and the defeat of evil

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת הַבְּטָחִים בֵּה' כְּהַר־צִיּוֹן לֹא־יִמוּט לְעוֹלָם יֵשֵׁב:
יְרוּשָׁלַם הָרִים סָבִיב לָהּ וְה' סָבִיב לְעַמּוֹ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם:
כִּי לֹא יָנוּחַ שִׁבְט הָרָשָׁע עַל גּוֹרֵל הַצְּדִיקִים
לְמַעַן לֹא־יִשְׁלַחוּ הַצְּדִיקִים בְּעוֹלָתָהּ יְדֵיהֶם:
הִיטִיבָהּ ה' לְטוֹבִים וְלִישָׁרִים בְּלִבּוֹתָם:
וְהַמַּטִּים עֲקָלְקוֹתָם יוֹלִיכֵם ה' אֶת־פְּעָלֵי הָאָוֶן שְׁלוֹם עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל:

A song of ascents.

Those who trust in Adonai are like Mount Zion that cannot be moved, enduring forever.
Jerusalem, hills enfold it, God enfolds God's people now and forever.
The scepter of the wicked shall never rest upon the land allotted to the righteous, that the
righteous not set their hand to wrongdoing.
Adonai, be good to those who are good, to the upright in heart.
But those who in their crookedness act corruptly, let Adonai make them go the way of evildoers.
May it be well with Israel!

(JPS 1985, Sefaria, adapted)

A D'var Torah (sermon) from Israel

Rabbi Arie Hasit writes

When Avram went to free Lot from captivity, he freed the entire people with Lot. The world's responsibility is not only to their own, it is to every captive. No mitzvah is greater than redeeming the captives.

Rabbi Hasit recounts visiting with the families of the hostages who were sitting in Tel Aviv, holding pictures of their loved one. He says: "two hundred and twenty hostages are in Gaza. It took me 4 minutes to walk the row of people holding their pictures. There is, as far as I could tell, an 85 year age range between the youngest and oldest. Maybe more. There were multiple babies."

These last few days, I've realized that not everyone cares about life. Some people care more about their cause. But lovers of life, no matter their politics, no matter their feelings about Israel, can agree that these people deserve to come home. So lovers of life- please help us bring them home.

HaReut- The Friendship

The song *HaReut- The Friendship*, written by Haim Gouri after the 1948 war, speaks to friendship, fellowship and sacrifices and the memories of those we have lost.

<p>Al hanegev yored leil hastav Umatzit kochavim cheresh cheresh Et haru'ach over el hasaf Ananim mehalchim al haderech.</p> <p>Kvar shana, lo hirgashnu kim'at Eich avru hazmanim besdoteinu. Kvar shana, venotarnu me'at Ma rabim she'einam kvar beineinu.</p> <p>Chorus Ach nizkor et kulam Et yafei hablorit vehatohar Ki re'ut shekazot le'olam Lo titen et libenu lishko'ach Ahava mekudeshet bedam At tashuvi beinenu lifro'ach.</p>	<p>In the Negev, the autumn night falls, And it kindles the stars in the quiet, As the breeze rustles outside the door And the dust settles down on the highway.</p> <p>Time goes on, do we notice at all How the months have gone by one by one? Time goes by, there are few of us left, And so many we once knew are gone.</p> <p>Chorus They are gone from our midst, All their laughter, their youth and their splendor. But we know that a friendship like that, We are bound all our lives to remember, For a love that in battle is forged, Will endure while we live, fierce and tender.</p>	<p>על הנגב יורד ליל הסתיו ומצית כוכבים חרש חרש עת הרוח עובר על הסף עננים מהלכים על הדרך.</p> <p>כבר שנה לא הרגשנו כמעט איך עברו הזמנים בשדותינו כבר שנה ונותרנו מעט מה רבים שאינם כבר בינינו.</p> <p>אך נזכור את כולם את יפי הבלורית והתואר כי רעות שכזאת לעולם לא תיתן את ליבנו לשכוח אהבה מקודשת בדם את תשובי בינינו לפרוח.</p>
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Prayer for Kidnapped Israelis
Rabbi Joshua Ratner

Shomrei Yisrael, Guardian of Israel,

We call out to You with fervent plea and prayer to bless and protect the civilian men, women, and children brutally kidnapped by Hamas and held captive in Gaza, along with the members of Israel's Defense Forces missing in action or held captive.

May it be Your will, speedily and soon, to bring them out from darkness and the shadow of death. May the Holy One of Blessing break their bonds, deliver them from their distress, and release them swiftly back to the loving embrace of their dear ones.

Do all that must be done so that relief, rescue, and long life may be the lot of every one of the soldiers and the civilians who have been taken hostage.

Act on their behalf, Lord. Take up their cause without delay, so that You fulfill through them Your verse from Isaiah: "Those redeemed by the Lord will return; they will enter Zion with singing, and everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away."

So may it be Your will, and let us say: Amen.

USCJ #BringThemHome Advocacy

There are still 200+ hostages under Hamas control, and each one needs our prayers for liberation. Help us to match every single hostage with a congregation in North America who will pray for their safe return. Sign up now to match your congregation with a specific hostage to pray for as a community. We will provide their name, image, and Hebrew name, if known. Please keep an Empty Seat in your Sanctuary, and pray for them during your *Mi Shebeirach* prayers.

#BlueRibbon

The blue ribbon symbolizes support and solidarity for the safe return of the hostages taken by Hamas terrorists in Israel. It symbolizes solidarity with the hostages, their families, and all who care about their safety.

Wearing a ribbon publicly unites you with people of all religions, races, nationalities, ethnicities, ages, and generations and demonstrates for the people of Israel that they are not alone and that good people across the globe are with them and their families during this dark time.

A prayer for Israel at a time of anguish

This prayer, Acheinu, holds the personal and collective anguish of this moment: those of us in immediate peril, those of us who are wounded, those of us clinging to phones waiting to hear from beloved soldiers, those of us desperate for news of someone missing or in captivity, those of us in mourning, those of us huddling in shelters, and all of us sharing in this pain.

<p>For all our family of the House of Israel, fellow Jews who face anguish and captivity, whether on sea or on land:</p> <p>May the Divine have compassion upon them, and bring them from distress to relief, from darkness to light, from subjugation to redemption, now, speedily, soon, and let us say: Amen.</p>	<p>Acheinu kol beit yisrael, ha-n'tunim b'tzarah u-vashivyah, ha-omdim bein ba-yam u-vein ba-yabashah, ha-makom y'racheim aleihem, v'yotzi-eim mi-tzarah lirvachah, u-mei-afeilah l'orah, u-mi-shibud lig'ullah, hashta ba-agala u-vizman kariv, v'nomar amen.</p>	<p>אחינו כל בית ישראל הנתונים בצרה ובשביה העומדים בין בים ובין ביבשה המקום ירחם עליהם ויוציאם מצרה לרוחה ומאפלה לאורה ומשעבוד לגאולה השתא בעגלא ובזמן קריב ואמרו אמן</p>
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Prayer for the Israeli Defense Forces

<p>May the one who blessed our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah bless the soldiers of the armed forces and security forces of the army of Israel who on the ground, in the air and at sea protect the Land. May God grant that they defeat the enemies who rise up against us. May God protect our soldiers from all harm and danger, from all injury and illness, and may God afford blessing and success to all their missions. Regarding them, may the words of the Torah prove true: For Adonai Your God, who goes before You, shall join you to battle your foes and aid you to be victorious. And let us say, Amen <i>(Weekday Lev Shalem, Rabbinical Assembly forthcoming)</i></p>	<p>מי שברך אבותינו אברהם יצחק ויעקב, ואמותינו שרה רבקה רחל ולאה, הוא יברך את חילי צבא ההגנה לישראל ואנשי הבטחון, העומדים על משמר ארצנו ביבשה באויר ובים. יתן ה' את אויבינו הקמים עלינו נגפים לפניהם. הקדוש ברוך הוא ישמר ויציל את חילינו מכל צרה וצוקה ומכל נגע ומחלה, וישלח ברכה והצלחה בכל מעשי ידיהם. ויקים בהם הכתוב: כי ה' אלהיכם ההלך עמכם להלחם לכם עם אויביכם, להושיע אתכם. ונאמר אמן.</p>
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In commemoration of the fifth year yahrtzeit to the horrible attack at Congregation Tree of Life, we give pause to remember and honor those lost that fateful day. We share words of wisdom and inspiration from this resilient Pittsburgh community, who like our ancestors across time, have risen from their terrible event to rebuild and celebrate their Jewish traditions and legacies, and pay tribute to their loved ones lost in that tragedy.

Prayer for October 27th

By Rabbi Hazzan Jeffrey Myers
Tree of Life - Pittsburgh

Eloheinu Veilohai Avoteinu:

We turn to you at this great time of need, as lawlessness threatens to once again fill the earth. Inspire world leaders with your wisdom to act bravely and with certainty.

Assure that all of the hostages are returned to their families in safety.

Watch over the IDF as they protect our sacred homeland. May they be successful in their mission and also return home safely.

Comfort all those who mourn as you hold their loved ones in your eternal embrace.

Flood the land with your goodness, so that it washes away all evil and restores hope and prosperity to all its inhabitants.

May Your Sukkah of peace cover the land, enveloping all who yearn for Your light.

O God full of compassion, You who dwell in the heights with the holy and the pure, continue to watch over the eleven martyrs of our people as You have these past five years. May a new shoot emerge from the Tree of Life that reassures the world of Your Holy Presence. Bestow Your healing grace upon the people of Pittsburgh as the pain of loss resurfaces anew. May the worthy qualities in all eleven inspire us all to repair this broken world.

May all this occur speedily in our day, and let us say: Amen.

A D'var Torah (sermon) From Israel

Be a Blessing, Rabbi Tzvi Berger

October 7, 2023. 22 Tishrei 5784. Shabbat and Simchat Torah, which began on Friday night with the beauty of prayer, of joyous song and dance, by morning had become a brutal, horrific day of bestiality and carnage, of death and destruction. A day that will be etched in Israeli collective memory, causing deep scars which will remain, and will not heal.

How can one possibly respond to such horror and cruelty? This is not the place to discuss how the government and Tzahal should respond militarily. **My question is, how do we as a people, as Am Yisrael respond; spiritually and ethically?**

One response should be clear to all, with deep and enduring solidarity, the theme chosen for this Shabbat by the worldwide Conservative/Masorti movement. Such solidarity is critical, not only for Israelis, but for Jews all over the world. It has been meaningfully and concretely expressed in a wide variety of ways, by Israelis of varying political and religious perspectives, by Israeli Jews, and also by Israeli Arabs; Bedouins, Muslims, Christians, and Druze. It has also been expressed by the support of committed Jews, as well as non-Jews, by government and public figures from many different nations.

Our Torah portion suggests an additional, equally important response. The second verse reads as follows: “ואעשך לגוי גדול ואברכך ואגדלה שמך והיה ברכה” / “I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you shall be a blessing”. Abram, who has just been called to leave his native land and everything which is familiar, is immediately given a Divine promise of a blessed, glorious future.

Yet notice, the root ברך, to be blessed, appears twice in this verse. This suggests to me that the R. Hirsch's interpretation of “היה ברכה” (to be blessed) which sees these words not as a promise, but rather as a command, to literally **be a blessing**, is correct. **Such a reading is an existential and ethical imperative, a call to duty designed to imbue us with inspiration and purpose!**

The heroism and self-sacrifice, not only of soldiers and police, but also so many Israeli civilians, as well as the everyday acts of those volunteering, contributing food, clothing and essential supplies and so, so much more, must continually challenge us, to strive to be the very best that we can be.

A D'var Torah (sermon) From Israel

Thoughts from a mother, wife, and Dean of our rabbinical seminary in Israel

By Rabbi Chaya Rowen Baker

Towards the end of that dreadful Shabbat, my husband (47) received a call. At that point we were answering the phone, which we normally wouldn't on Shabbat, anxious to hear that our daughter, who serves in a coed combat unit on the Egyptian border, is okay, and dreading the ring because it might mean otherwise.

He answered the phone and on the line was a recording demanding that he depart immediately for his unit's base in the North. He is an infantry soldier, who continues to be a Reserves soldier voluntarily since his official discharge at age 40.

Our children broke down in tears, knowing only a fraction of the horrors that had occurred that day and of the war that lies ahead. We couldn't imagine at the time the extent of the heinous acts, the horrifying details of which would only unfold later, but we all knew already that it was bad.

With sobbing and fearful children and a wife lying – as it turns out – to herself and them that it is only for a few days until things calm down, my husband packed his army equipment and drove off.

Later that night my daughter called to say they were being deployed to the Gaza envelope to guard the kibbutzim there and to search for terrorists, who were known to be – and still are now – at large, and from that moment on I stopped breathing.

Even now as I write these words, the thought of them both in very real danger chokes my throat.

We live in a neighborhood of Jerusalem that borders two hostile East-Jerusalem neighborhoods, home to several known Hamas terrorists, which the police do not enter without army accompaniment.

Every night in the past three weeks we hear shooting from the villages. The first Friday of the war I was paying a shiva call across town and received a neighborhood WhatsApp message that there was a lockdown because of intel about shooting in our neighborhood. I was beside myself knowing that my kids are home alone, calling them to make sure they did the right thing but needing to be calm and unalarming. My night time routine includes locking the porch doors with the small latch that separates us from the outside, and pulling down the blinds (we have no bars), thinking that when terrorists come to our porch with guns that will earn us another 10-20 seconds to find a place to hide. My children are not allowed to sleep in rooms on the side of the house facing the other direction because there are no blinds there and one can stick a rifle directly into the room through the bars. Those are the considerations and calculations of a mother in Israel every night: how do I protect my family while alone, afraid, and the only weapon at my disposal is my common sense.

And we have been lucky so far... I cannot even imagine the depths of grief and hardship for the many, many, many, many, who have lost everything – life, love, security, home. Living in uncertainty not knowing whether your loved one is lying dead and mutilated in some field or whether they are being held hostage in the hornets' nest. Children scarred for life, having to deal with all of this without the embrace and guidance and protection of their parents. Thousands of men and women who will never heal from the smells and sights they encountered as victims, relief forces, or forensic specialists. The list of pain and damage goes on and on.

This has been our life in the past three weeks. Indescribable and insurmountable sadness. Fear. And worry that is hard to hold.

There is one ray of light: You.

One night I wrote to the listserv of women rabbis around the world about how we are doing. I described there in tears, at 2 a.m., that my Type-A personality has me convinced, that if I am awake and aware I can protect my loved ones, and therefore I cannot go to sleep because then they will be unprotected. The outpour of support that followed still brings me to tears. A dear colleague wrote lovingly, from a distant time zone, "You can go to sleep, Chaya. I am awake, I will take the night shift."

As others followed suit I found myself sobbing, as I am as I type these words. That is the essence of Peoplehood. And that is a strength that no murderous haters can take away from us.

"Lech lecha" is the beginning of the formation of a new People. A believer is urged to leave his home, his country, and his people, and to build a new home, in a new country, forming a new People and writing a new story. It is the story of a People who are family; the father of which is imperfect and makes his share of mistakes and even wrong-doings, but he will wage war to save his family from captivity and put himself at risk to promote what is good and just; and the mother of which believes in the impossible and never loses hope. It is the story of a People who will be displaced and dispersed for most of their existence, but will have the wisdom to base that existence on the axiom that we are all intertwined, and wherever we are we have each other's back.

I pray, as we enter Shabbat Lech Lecha, that our loved ones in Hamas captivity know that this family will fight to redeem them. I pray that we remember always, as Sarah did, that our spirit can be stronger than statistics or numbers or even the laws of nature. I enter this Shabbat eternally grateful for my People. I wish you strength in your hardships battling rising antisemitism and spearheading our battle in the arena of public opinion, and pray with you for resilience of spirit, protection of body and soul, and the invincible fortitude of Peoplehood.

Imperfectly Ready to Begin Again
By Rabbi Aaron Weininger

Your hug held me with the words I needed to hear

Your tears assured me I could be real

Your hands fed me when I was empty

Your heart kept pace with mine.

You reached with humanity not reasons first

So I could hold on, my friend

You revealed no stash of magic words

But listened close instead.

For the sake of my humanity

And yours

We will share hugs and tears

Hands and hearts.

For that is how we grieve

And how we heal

And wake up each day

Imperfectly ready to begin again.