



WE WERE SLAVES

Remembering the Hostages

עבדים היינו



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Which of these images speak most to you?
2. How do you continue to think about, pray for, and engage with the hostages and their families, even after so many months have passed?
3. Where do you think the hostage families find their courage and their hope?
4. What symbols could you add to your seder table to represent the hostages?

By Natalie Blitt

It is hard to read about our ancestors being held against their will in Egypt without thinking of the hostages currently being held in Gaza. It feels almost impossible to call ourselves free when friends and loved ones are being held in unimaginable conditions for more than 18 months.

Over the past 18 months in Israel and around the world, art installations have been created in order to ensure that their plight remains at the forefront of the public's consciousness and to express a collective prayer for their return and reunion with their families.

We are not free as long as our sons and daughters are held in Gaza.

Consider the following song and images as expressions of those ideas and prayers. We invite you to use them as prompts for conversations and reflections.

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The song "Come in Peace" was written by Rachel Shapira and is associated with the prayer for the safe return of the IDF soldiers during the first Lebanon war. The lyrics describe the distress we are living with these days and emphasize the mutual responsibility and the feeling of shared fate. The song echoes the words of the Haggadah: that if God had not taken our ancestors from Egypt, we and our children and our children's children would be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt.

Come in peace, the gardens will open,
we have set the table and lit the candles
And before the songs will be sung,
We wait until you come back.

בוא בשלום, נפתחות חצרות
ערכנו שלחן והדלקנו נרות
ובטרם יגשר מזמור
נחכה לך שתחזר

Come in peace, the grove reminds us,
before we plant the last piece of land
And before the blinds will be shut,
Please, come to us in peace.

בוא בשלום, החרשה מזכירה
בטרם חלקה אחרונה תזרע
ובטרם יגף חלון
אנא, שוב אלינו בשלום

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Posters created by Israeli artists to raise awareness for the hostages.

Artwork by Maayan Maor, Design Duty



Artwork by Hannah Heifetz, Design Duty



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The clock in Hostage Square in Tel Aviv counts the amount of time the hostages have been in captivity.

From November 7, 2023



Installation of empty chairs, each representing a hostage in Gaza, in Hostage Square in Tel Aviv

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Bring Them Home Dog Tags



Shabbat table with place settings for each of the hostages



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Bring Them Home posters of each hostage from a demonstration in London.



Piano placed at Hostage Square to remember Alon Ohel, a talented young jazz pianist who is still being held hostage in Gaza.

For more on Alon Ohel and the piano, listen to his story on the [Israel Story podcast](http://www.israelstory.org/episode/ident-ohel/) (www.israelstory.org/episode/ident-ohel/)

