



Honoring Yom HaShoah

Post-October 7

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Drawing on collective Jewish wisdom and the personal experiences of Hartman's network of North American and Israeli research fellows, faculty, rabbis, and Jewish communal professionals, our new blog [Notes for the Field](#) offers guidance, inspiration, and support for navigating the challenges facing the Jewish people today.



The Shalom Hartman Institute is a leading center of Jewish thought and education, serving Israel and North America. Our mission is to strengthen Jewish peoplehood, identity, and pluralism; to enhance the Jewish and democratic character of Israel; and to ensure that Judaism is a compelling force for good in the 21st century.

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The pain of October 7 and the war in Gaza have cast a shadow over every holiday on the Jewish calendar this year. Now that Passover is over, our attention is turning to Yom HaShoah. In light of the excruciating realities of the current conflict, how will we honor the memories of those who were murdered in the Holocaust?

Last year, the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America published a [haggadah for Hitkansut](#), a new ritual for Yom HaShoah developed by the Center for Ritual at the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem. The Hitkansut haggadah offers a liturgy for commemorating the Shoah in the 21st century, as the number of survivors left to tell their stories is dwindling. Like the Passover hagaddah, the text for Hitkansut follows a specific order, moving from remembering Jewish life before the war, to lamenting the loss of that life, to confronting evil, to celebrating human dignity. It moves participants from *kinah* (lamentation) to *kimah* (rising up again) allowing for silence, for family stories, for song and for reflection along the way. The ritual is meant to be modified and adapted, both by the host who can choose which texts and stories to include in each section and by participants who are invited to share their own family stories, names, memories, and ideas.

Although it was originally designed before October 7, I believe that the ritual of Hitkansut can hold both the pain of the past and of the present. Ideally, all ritual can give structure and direction even as the feelings and thoughts we bring to it may be chaotic and overwhelming, if we engage with intention. This year, that means that we must commemorate the Shoah and all that it means to our families and the Jewish people, while also explicitly acknowledging that we are living through a moment that reverberates emotionally and spiritually with Shoah remembrance.

If you plan to host Hitkansut this year, I recommend that you acknowledge the complexity and pain of this year from the outset, even in your invitations to the gathering. Introduce music that is particularly evocative this year, such as “Acheinu,” a song pleading with God to have mercy on Jews living in dire straits that’s become an anthem for the hostages in Gaza, or “Hatikvah,” the Israeli national anthem and an expression of eternal Jewish hope. Include new readings and images that resonate with the need to confront contemporary evil and recognize that we have the fortitude to stand up again.

I find these two contemporary poems translated from Hebrew particularly powerful for this purpose:

Rabbi Mori Lidar, "The Houses There Are Similar to Mine"

The houses there are similar to mine
The paths are also a bit cracked
and the grass between the fences
is yellowing a little at the edges,
The surrounding trees that paint everything green
Here and there
A shoe that a dog took to nibble from one of the back yards
And a scooter and a bike and a ball
waiting for the kids to play again
and run and fall and fly and dream

And it could have been my home
and it could have been the path below it
and my lawn
and the ball and the bike and their ball
all thrown aside

And there is no longer anyone who will pick up and will throw
and will drop and will fly and will dream
and all around
the trees that stand and are silent, are still
kneeling and bowing in this evil wind
here and here and here and here
and cannot escape

Aharon Bas, "Zachor/Remember"

Remember what Amalek did to you
on your journey, after you left Egypt
how he surprised you on the march
and when you were on European soil
in the gas chambers and incinerators
in ghettos that are crying in pain
and while sitting in the envelope towns
how he pursued and captured and tortured and murdered
from youth to the elderly
from toddler to old
children and women in one day
Remember
Remember and never forget

הבתים שם דומים לשלי
גם השבילים הסדוקים קצת,
והדשא שבין הגדרות,
קצת מצהיב בקצוות,
העצים מסביב שצובעים את הכל מסביב
בירוק
פה ושם
נעל שכלב לקח לנשנש מאחת החצרות
וקורקינט ואופן וכדור
מחכים לילדים שיחזרו לשחק
ולרוץ וליפול ולעוף ולחלום
וזה היה יכול להיות הבית שלי
וזה היה יכול להיות השביל מתחתיו
והדשא שלי
והכדור והאופן והכדור שלהן
זרוקים בצד
ואין כבר מי שירים וזרוק ויפיל ויעוף
ויחלום
ומסביב
העצים שעומדים ושותקים, דוממים
כורעים ומשתחוים ברוח הרעה הזאת
לכאן ולכאן ולכאן ולכאן
ולא מצליחים לברוח.

זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק
בדרך בצאתך ממצרים
אשר קרך בדרך
ובהיותך על אדמת אירופה
בתאי הגזים והמשרפות
בגטאות בוכיות מכאב
ובמושבך בישובי העוטף
אשר רדף ושהה וענה ורצח
מנער ועד זקן
מעולל ועד ישישה
טף ונשים ביום אחד
זכור
זכור ואל תשכח