



SHABBAT 125KI

POWERED BY UNPACKED



Hosting Guide

As a Shabbat 25K host, you are a significant leader in a movement, gathering your peers around a Friday night dinner table for a moment of unity.

We encourage you to set an intention to create an experience that will support your community of peers, serving as a beacon of joy, a display of solidarity, a moment of reflection, or an opportunity for dialogue. Processing and discussing current events in Israel can be challenging. It's normal for these discussions to evoke strong emotions and differing opinions. As the host, your role isn't to have all the answers or to control the direction of the conversation. Rather, your goal is to foster an environment where everyone feels seen and heard, and where everyone learns from one another.

In this guide, we provide **tools**, **resources**, and a **basic primer** to support you in hosting your friends and navigating complex conversations and emotional experiences. This guide is designed to empower you, ensuring that your Shabbat dinner table becomes a space of unity and support in challenging times. You do not need to become an expert in all the topics below to facilitate meaningful conversations. Choose from amongst the topics below to enhance your Shabbat dinner experience.

**“Education is not just
what we know.
It’s who we are.”**

RABBI JONATHAN SACKS Z"l

Table of Contents

RITUAL GUIDE

Shabbat blessings 1

SETTING AN INTENTION

How to prepare and how to begin 5

FACILITATION TIPS

Six keys to successful conversations 6

CURRENT EVENTS

What's going on in Israel? 8

HISTORY

How did we get here? 10

TOUGH QUESTIONS

Encountering challenging questions 13

ZIONISM

Unpacking Zionism 18

TAKING ACTION

Using ritual to honor those who are suffering 21

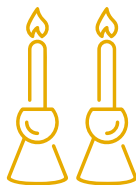
CELEBRATING WITH JOY

Am Yisrael Chai 28

“Gatherings crackle and flourish when real thought goes into them, when (often invisible) structure is baked into them, and when a host has the curiosity, willingness, and generosity of spirit to try..”

PRIYA PARKER

RITUAL GUIDE
Shabbat blessings



CANDLE LIGHTING

Lighting candles at sundown on Friday marks the end of the workweek and ushers in the sanctity of Shabbat. It is customary to light two candles, cover your eyes, and recite the following blessing:

בָּרוּךְ Blessed

אתה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ
לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת

are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign
of the universe, who hallows us with
mitzvot, commanding us to kindle
the light of Shabbat.

TRANSLITERATION *Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu, Melekh ha'olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat.*



KIDDUSH

Drinking wine or grape juice at the start of a Jewish ceremony signifies the joy of the occasion, and making a blessing sets this moment apart from the mundane. Pour a glass and recite the following blessings:

יום The sixth day

הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ
וְכָל צְבָאָם. וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם
הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה
וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְכַל
מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה.
וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת יוֹם
הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי בּוֹ
שָׁבַת מְכַל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר בְּרָא
אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת

So the heavens and the earth were finished, with all their complement. On the seventh day, God had completed the work that God had undertaken, and rested on the seventh day from all the work that God had been doing. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God ceased from all creative work that God had brought into being to fulfill its purpose.

Yom ha'shishi Va'yichulu ha'shamayim va'ha'aretz v'chol tziva'am. Va'yichol Elohim ba'yom ha'shivi'i milachto asher asah va'yishbot ba'yom ha'shivi'i mi'kol milachto asher asah. Va'yivarech Elohim et yom ha'shivi'i va'yikadesh oto ki vo shavat mi'kol melachto asher bara Elohim la'asot

בָּרוּךְ

Blessed

אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
בוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן

are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign
of the universe, who creates the
fruit of the vine.

Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu, Melekh ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

בָּרוּךְ

Blessed

אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְרָצָה
בְּנוֹ וְשָׁבַת קִדְּשׁוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה
וּבְרָצוֹן הִנְחִילָנוּ זְכוֹרֹן לְמַעֲשֵׂה
בְּרִשִׁית. כִּי הוּא יוֹם תְּחִלָּה
לְמִקְרָאֵי קִדְּשׁ זִכָּר לִיצִיאַת
מִצְרַיִם. כִּי בְּנוֹ בְּחֵרְתָּ וְאוֹתָנוּ
קִדְּשָׁתָּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים וְשָׁבַת
קִדְּשָׁךְ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן
הִנְחַלְתָּנוּ

Blessed are You, Lord our God,
Ruler of the Universe, Who made
us holy with commandments and
favored us, and gave us this holy
Shabbat in love and favor to be our
heritage as a reminder of Creation.
It is the foremost day of the holy
festivals marking the Exodus from
Egypt. For out of all the nations You
chose us and made us holy, and You
gave us Your holy Shabbat in love
and favor as our heritage.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav
v'ratzah vanu v'Shabbat kodsho b'ahavah uv'ratzon hinchilanu zikaron
l'ma'aseh v'reishit. Ki hu yom tehilah l'mikra'ei kodesh zeicher litziat
Mitzrayim. Ki vanu vacharta v'otanu k'dashta mi'kol ha'amim v'Shabbat
kodshicha b'ahavah uv'ratzon hinchaltanu. .*

בָּרוּךְ

Blessed

אַתָּה יי מְקַדֵּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת

are you, Adonai, who sanctifies the
Shabbat.

Barukh ata Adonai, m'kadesh haShabbat.



HAND WASHING

Wash your hands and recite the following blessing:

בָּרוּךְ Blessed

אֲתָהּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ
עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם

are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign
of the universe, who hallows us with
mitzvot, commanding us to wash
hands.

*Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu, Melekh ha'olam, asher kid'shanu
b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu, al n'tilat yadayim.*



MOTZI

Bread is understood as the primary source of nourishment, and its presence makes the meal. We set the table with two loaves of challah to honor the experience of abundance we experience on Shabbat. Recite the following blessing:

בָּרוּךְ Blessed

אֲתָהּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ

are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign
of the universe, who brings forth
bread from the earth.

*Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu, Melekh ha'olam, hamotzi lechem min
ha'aretz.*

SETTING AN INTENTION

How to prepare and how to begin

WHY ARE WE GATHERING?

Before your guests arrive, identify the purpose of your Shabbat dinner and consider the experience you want to create around your table. What will be the focus and tone of the experience? Are you gathering to facilitate conversations around the war in Israel and Gaza, to celebrate a moment of Jewish joy, to strengthen your local Jewish community? Decide on the mood and let the purpose you set guide the experience.

ENCOURAGE YOUR GUESTS TO "UNPLUG" AND CONNECT

We spend our weeks inundated with news alerts, hot takes on social media, and the constant barrage of emails, texts, and notifications demanding our attention. Gathering in person for dinner is a wonderful opportunity to get away from our screens and connect with friends face to face. Consider having a "no phone zone" at the dinner table.

BEGIN WITH A MOMENT OF MINDFULNESS

How you start your dinner will set the tone for the evening. You might begin with reciting a song or a blessing, reading a story or reflection, facilitating icebreakers or introductions, or leading a short meditation. Whatever your style, inviting your guests to begin with a moment of mindfulness is a great way to set the mood and create cohesion around your table.

FACILITATION TIPS
**Six keys to successful
conversations**

№ 1 ENGAGE WITH COMPASSION

"Judge all of a person favorably."

PIRKEI AVOT, 1:6

Be aware that guests might have varying connections to the conflict. Someone who has never been to Israel before will be processing what's going on very differently from someone with relatives living in Israel, or with a friend who was killed, or a loved one serving in the IDF.

№ 2 EMBRACE HUMILITY

"The principle to be kept in mind is to know what we see rather than to see what we know."

RABBI ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL

Let's understand that where people sit can influence what they see. Recognize and validate lived experiences and know that personal identities shape perspectives, which are valid even if they differ from your own.

№ 3 PRIORITIZE UNDERSTANDING OVER CONVINCING

"Speak like you're right and listen like you're wrong."

Approach discussions with an open mind, seeking to genuinely understand the other person's perspective rather than change it.

№ 4 RECOGNIZE SHARED VALUES AND FIND COMMON GROUND

"Make your ears like a funnel and acquire for yourself an understanding heart to hear."

TALMUD, CHAGIGA 3B

Even amidst disagreements, look for common values and beliefs as a foundation for dialogue.

№ 5 PRACTICE MINDFUL SPEECH

"Speak all your words gently, according to each person and each moment."

NAHMANIDES, IGGERET HARAMBAN

There is a practice known in Judaism as *shemirat hadibbur*, or practicing mindful speech. Before speaking, ask yourself: Are these words **timely**? Are they **true**? Are they **gentle**? Are they **beneficial**? Are they spoken with **goodwill**?

№ 6 PREPARE FOR DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

"From a question, no one has ever died."

YIDDISH PROVERB

The complexity of the conflict and the diversity of perspectives among Jews and Zionists in Israel and the Diaspora will inevitably lead to challenging questions being posed. It's okay. The best way to prepare is to educate yourself on the context and nuances of the situation with reputable sources of information.

CURRENT EVENTS

What's going on in Israel?

“On October 7, Israel became the most dangerous country in the world for Jews. The atrocity Hamas inflicted was literally unbearable.”

YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI

On October 7, Hamas terrorists invaded Israel, ruthlessly attacking Israeli towns and massacring civilians. In the coordinated surprise attack launched on Shabbat and the Jewish holiday of Simchat Torah, Hamas targeted innocent civilians, brutally torturing and killing men, women, and children in their homes, at a music festival, and wherever the terrorists encountered a living soul. In total, over 1,400 Israelis were slaughtered.

Hamas terrorists kidnapped over 240 Israelis into Gaza—infants, children, men, women, the elderly. Among those taken captive were peace activists, Holocaust survivors, and people with disabilities. The targeting of civilians and taking of hostages by Hamas has been widely condemned as a war crime.

In response, the Israeli military has conducted airstrikes against Hamas targets and infrastructure in Gaza. Israel cut off water, electricity, and fuel supplies to the Gaza Strip and coordinated with Egypt to enforce a blockade on Gaza, while also allowing humanitarian aid flow into the region. The IDF has launched a ground offensive in Gaza aimed at destroying Hamas and rescuing hostages.

The current situation is complex and developing, with the threat of a multi-front war opening up on Israel's northern border and tensions escalating in the West Bank. Urban combat against Hamas in Gaza poses unique challenges due to high population density, terrorists operating within the civilian population, and the extensive tunnel network built under Gaza. Hamas has released four hostages and Israel has successfully rescued a captive Israeli soldier.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Israel's response to the October 7 attack has been met with a wide wave of support from across the global community. Prominent leaders have visited Israel and expressed unwavering solidarity with Israel and the Jewish people, including the U.K. Prime Minister, the French President, and the German Chancellor. U.S. President Joe Biden, the first American president to visit Israel during a time of war, said: "We stand with Israel. And we will make sure Israel has what it needs to take care of its citizens... Hamas does not stand for the Palestinian people's right to dignity and self-determination."

Other non-Western nations, including Russia and many Arab nations have shared scrutiny and criticism of Israel's blockade and strikes in Gaza. Some have even refused to condemn the actions of Hamas. Nations such as Iran and Qatar financially support Hamas. And Egypt, an Arab country to the south of Gaza, has not allowed for their borders to constantly remain open to Palestinians during this war.

Key Ideas

- October 7 was the deadliest day in Jewish history since the Holocaust.
- Over 1,400 Israelis were killed and over 240 were taken hostage into Gaza—most of whom were civilians, including children and the elderly.
- Israel's response to Hamas' attack was to declare war against Hamas and the IDF is currently engaged in a military campaign to destroy Hamas and rescue hostages.

Discussion Questions

- World leaders have made powerful statements regarding their support for Israel. What are some speeches or showings of support that have particularly moved you?
- How might we differentiate condemnation of Hamas from compassion toward Palestinian civilians in Gaza?
- When values like sanctity of life, revenge, human dignity, security, and peace collide, which values yield and which values take precedence?

HISTORY

How did we get here?

“One precondition for joining any conversation is a basic familiarity with its context... If we want to engage in a political debate, we must be familiar with the political context.”

MICAH GOODMAN

UNPACKING THE COMPLEXITY OF CONFLICTING NARRATIVES

The establishment of the State of Israel represents a culmination of yearnings for a Jewish homeland and self-determination, celebrated annually on Yom Ha'atzmaut (Independence Day). It's also important to note that in the Palestinian telling of this story, they refer to this time as the Nakba (Catastrophe), a term they use to describe their experience of loss during Israel's creation. Six months earlier, the Arab world had rejected the United Nations vote for a Jewish state and an Arab state, claiming it was unfair. When Israel declared independence, the local Arab armies declared war and attacked Israel, joined by many Palestinian Arabs.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict does not fit into a neat binary of oppressor versus oppressed, or colonialists versus indigenous people. Israel's story is one of overcoming millennia of exile to forge a nation and reunite a scattered people, while also acknowledging the complex, intertwined, and deeply felt narratives of the Palestinian people.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT LEADING UP TO OCTOBER 7

“One cannot and must not try to erase the past merely because it does not fit the present.”

GOLDA MEIR

Hamas is a fundamentalist Islamic terrorist organization that has waged war on Israel since its founding in the 1980s. It aims to destroy Israel and its people in order to create a Palestinian state that covers the entirety of Israel. These objectives are clearly stated in Hamas' charter, citing extremist views from the Quran and antisemitic conspiracy theories.

Hamas was behind a wave of devastating suicide bombings and other activities in the 1990s and 2000s, including 40% of attacks during the Second Intifada (200-2005), which claimed the lives of over 1,000 Israelis.

In 2005, Israel made a highly controversial decision to remove all Israeli military and civilian presence from Gaza in a unilateral disengagement. Hamas won the 2006 Palestinian elections that followed, violently expelled the Fatah party opposition in a bloody coup, and took control of Gaza. It has not allowed elections to be held ever since.

Since Israel's disengagement from Gaza, Hamas has launched thousands of rockets at Israel, dug attack tunnels in order to infiltrate Israeli communities, and inspired countless lone-wolf attacks on Israeli soldiers and civilians. Notably, in 2006, Hamas abducted IDF soldier Gilad Shalit and held him captive in Gaza for five years. Amidst nationwide efforts to secure his release, Shalit was finally freed in 2011 in exchange for the release of 1,027 Palestinians held in Israeli prisons. The current leader of Hamas in Gaza, Yahya Sinwar, is one of the 1,027 convicted Palestinian prisoners who was released in the 2011 swap for Gilad Shalit.

Throughout its history, Israel has endeavored to make peace with Palestinians and with its Arab neighbors. In recent years, Israel has succeeded at making peace agreements with some historically hostile nations through the Abraham Accords. In the months

preceding Hamas' October 7 attack, Israel was making rapid progress toward making peace with Saudi Arabia, which would have likely inspired other Arab and Muslim-majority countries to make peace with Israel. Those negotiations would have included Israel making concessions to improve the conditions of Palestinians.

Hamas governs over two million Palestinians under fundamentalist religious doctrine with no freedom of speech, press, religion, and more.

Key Ideas

- **The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of competing narratives and national aspirations.**
- **Hamas is a fundamentalist Islamic terrorist organization whose aim is to annihilate the Jewish State, and it has refused to make efforts towards peace with Israel.**
- **Israel removed its military and civilian presence from Gaza in 2005 and Hamas has ruled the Gaza Strip since 2007.**

Discussion Questions

- **How can two groups that experienced the same events have such a different perspective on them? How do narrative and identity influence our understanding of history?**
- **Can Israel negotiate with a group whose very premise is anti-negotiation and pro-terror?**
- **Given what you know about Israel's past 17 years since the Gaza disengagement, do you think the decision to withdraw from this area was good or bad?**

TOUGH QUESTIONS
**Encountering challenging
questions**

"The purpose of learning isn't to affirm our beliefs; it's to evolve our beliefs."

ADAM GRANT

Our views and opinions are formed by our identities, our instincts, and influences beyond just rationality or reason. Many of us hold strong views on complex issues we don't fully understand. Try to preserve nuance in your dinner discussions. One way to do this is to educate yourself around some provocative questions and widely disseminated slogans.

COMMON QUESTIONS THAT MIGHT ARISE

What is the meaning of "from the river to the sea Palestine will be free"?

Israel is located between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. When people chant "from the river to the sea," they are most often implying, if not directly calling for, a complete annihilation of the Jewish State and in its place an establishment of a Palestinian state.

The establishment of a Palestinian state does not inherently require the denial or destruction of the Jewish State. Israel has entered

into peace negotiations with Palestinian leadership to achieve a two state solution with the establishment of a Palestinian state—notably the 1993 Oslo Accords, and the 2000 Camp David Summit. Palestinian leadership has rejected each peace proposal.

What is the meaning of “free Gaza”?

Israel and Egypt enforce a blockade on Gaza to protect from the terrorist, authoritarian and fundamentalist Islamist rule of Hamas. When people chant “free Gaza” at rallies or post “free Gaza” on social media, they most often call for an end to the Israeli-Egyptian blockade and imply that Israel is primarily and unjustly responsible for the suffering of Palestinians in Gaza.

Gazans are suffering from a lack of adequate infrastructure, food insecurity, and poverty. Hamas has spent the past 17 years using its aid money to fund terror rather than spending it on the humanitarian and basic needs of Palestinians. Hamas operates within its civilian population and infrastructure, putting innocent Gazans deliberately in harm’s way when Israel launches targeted airstrikes at Hamas. For these reasons and others, like the extremist policies against basic rights imposed on Gazans by Hamas, some have taken to responding to “free Gaza” with the phrase “free Gaza from Hamas.”

Is Israel committing war crimes in Gaza?

Israel has declared war on Hamas. Some people confuse Israel’s military offensives in Gaza, which have claimed thousands of civilian lives, as an attack against all Palestinians in Gaza. However, the IDF explicitly distinguishes between civilians and combatants and takes extensive measures to avoid civilian casualties and to target Hamas’ leaders, combatants, and military infrastructure. Due to Hamas’ tactics, embedding themselves within hospitals, mosques, schools, and residences, the IDF cannot destroy Hamas targets without also destroying civilian infrastructure and highly population areas.

War is devastating and the cost of human lives is unbearable, but engaging in war itself is not a war crime. As Israel engages in asymmetric warfare with Hamas, the consequences of military action in Gaza are tragic. However, there are distinctions between tragedies and war crimes. The Israeli military operated within the international laws of war.

Why doesn't Israel call for an immediate ceasefire?

Many are witnessing the destruction in Gaza and are calling on Israel to ceasefire. However, the Israeli government insists that they cannot call for a cease fire until all hostages are released and returned to safety in Israel. The IDF and military analysts reluctantly insist that a ceasefire would put the hostages at increased risk and allow Hamas to regroup and launch more attacks.

"Just as the United States would not agree to a ceasefire after the bombing of Pearl Harbor or after the terrorist attack of 9/11, Israel will not agree to a cessation of hostilities with Hamas after the horrific attacks of October 7. Calls for a ceasefire are calls for Israel to surrender to Hamas, to surrender to terrorism."

BENJAMIN NETANYAHU

Is all criticism of Israel antisemitic?

While not all criticism of Israel is inherently antisemitic, antisemitism does often get expressed through anti-Israel sentiments. When people single out the Jewish State for its shortcomings and mistakes, rather than recognizing that all sovereign nations deserve criticism, antisemitism fuels that focus. Moreover, the anti-Zionism movement today, which often vilifies anyone who supports the existence of a Jewish state in its ancestral homeland and equates the Jewish liberation movement with racism (or worse, Nazism), is antisemitic. It is important to scrutinize antisemitic undertones that fuel anti-Zionist and anti-Israel critiques.

Natan Sharansky presents a framework to distinguish legitimate criticism of Israel from antisemitism, called the "3D Test"—demonization, double standards, delegitimization. When Israel's actions are blown out of sensible proportion, this demonization of Israel is antisemitic. When Israel is singled out for human rights abuses while the human rights abuses of other nations are ignored, this double standard is antisemitic. When the Jewish people are solely denied self-determination and Israel's fundamental right to exist is denied, this delegitimization is antisemitic.

LEAN INTO COMPLEXITY AND NUANCE

"Both these and those are the words of the living God."

TALMUD, ERUVIN 13B

Beware of either/or framings and look for both/and nuance. When people claim that Jews or Palestinians are indigenous to the Land of Israel, it is important to recognize that both people are indigenous to the same land. When people claim that Zionism is either a response to antisemitism or it is a realization of a return to the Jewish ancestral homeland, we must recognize that Zionism holds multiple aspirations. Are Jews privileged or are Jews oppressed? Are Israelis victims or victimizers? These questions are not either/or, and the conflict is not so simple.

RETAIN MORAL CLARITY

"Living with purpose means that we stand for truth. We cannot possibly remain silent when we witness the targeting of our people. We must recognize that an attack on 'them' is an attack on 'us'. Because we are one people."

SLOVIE JUNGREIS WOLFF

While the depth of the situation might lead to varied views, there's a pressing need for moral clarity. We can universally agree on certain moral stances, such as the inherent value of every human life, while still acknowledging and respecting areas of disagreement. We can all agree that the Hamas attack on October 7 was horrific, a tragedy, and an act of evil. We can also disagree on the specific tactics Israel takes to counter Hamas.

We must remain informed, compassionate, and clear-eyed in our approach to such discussions. At the heart of this complex situation are real human beings with aspirations, sufferings, and lived experiences. It's essential to remember the humanity on all sides while navigating the myriad perspectives that arise.

Key Ideas

- **Beware of oversimplified narratives and preserve nuance in respectful dialogue. Jewish wisdom teaches both/and thinking.**
- **Maintain moral clarity when discussing the conflict in Israel and Gaza. Know which issues have valid diversity of perspective and which have clear moral stances.**
- **While not all criticism of Israel is inherently antisemitic, be aware that antisemitism is on the rise and many antisemitic views are expressed through anti-Israel sentiments.**

Discussion Questions

- **How do you maintain moral clarity regarding issues as complex as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? In what ways are your moral foundations challenged in your understanding of the October 7 attack and ensuing war?**
- **Why do you think antisemites sometimes use criticism of Israel as a smokescreen for their deep seated antisemitism? At what point does legitimate criticism of Israel become antisemitic?**

ZIONISM

Unpacking Zionism

Zionism, at its core, is the activation of the idea that the Jewish people should have national liberation, which requires a Jewish return to the Land of Israel, a connection that spans at least 3,000 years.

BRIEF HISTORY OF ZIONISM

“My nationality is inseparably connected with my ancestral heritage, with the Holy Land and the Eternal City - Jerusalem.”

MORITZ HESS

Zionism's roots originate deep in the ancient Jewish civilization that flourished in the Land of Israel for about 1,000 years. Post-exile, the Jewish people maintained their connection to the land, with the land being central to their religious practices and historical memory.

Jewish communities have existed in Israel since biblical times, and throughout the ages, different waves of Jews made efforts

to return, each influenced by a variety of motivations. During the Enlightenment, the modern Jewish national movement was reignited. Antisemitism across Europe in the 19th century led to a further revival of Zionism, highlighted by Theodor Herzl hosting the First Zionist Congress in 1897.

DIVERSITY OF ZIONIST THOUGHT

“Zionism is not an exclusive ideology, but a common platform.”

A.B. YEHOASHUA

Diversity and spirited debate have always been central to Zionism. Many schools of Zionist thought have emerged throughout the years. As Zionism developed in the modern age, it branched into different strains: Political Zionism, Religious Zionism, Cultural Zionism, Labor Zionism, Revisionist Zionism, and Diaspora Zionism. These different schools of thought often clashed with each other, but the idea of creating a Jewish state united them, sharing the view that the Jews are a people as well as a religious group, Israel is the Jewish homeland, and the Jewish state plays an essential role in a safe and thriving Judaism.

ZIONISM TODAY

“If you will it, it is no dream.”

THEODOR HERZL

Zionism is fundamentally the Jewish national liberation movement, recognizing that Jews are a people who have the right to self-determination in their ancestral homeland of Israel. However, Zionism is often mischaracterized or vilified by people who oppose the Jewish State. In actuality, Zionism does not exclude or diminish the rights of others, but this does not mean that one cannot be critical of Israel's actions. You can separate the policies of the Jewish State, which sometimes people agree with and sometimes people do not agree with, with the concept of the Jewish State.

Key Ideas

- The Jewish connection to the Land of Israel has existed for thousands of years, predating the modern, political movement of Zionism. Zionism emerged at multiple points in Jewish history, each time with a different focus and goal.
- A strong focus of Jewish leaders in early-modern times was ending antisemitism. However, a lively debate ensued whether the creation of a Jewish state would end antisemitism on the international stage, or whether a Jewish state would effectively protect Jews globally from antisemitism.
- There are many ways to identify as a Zionist and being a Zionist does not exclude one from being sympathetic toward the Palestinian cause.

Discussion Questions

- Can you share a universal commitment to equality for all peoples and a Zionist commitment to Jewish national liberation? Do you see these identities as totally separate or ones that can overlap or even complement each other?
- If Zionism can simply be understood as the Jewish national liberation movement, why do you think some people are opposed to the idea of Zionism?
- Now that Zionism has achieved a major goal of developing a Jewish state, what role do you see Zionism playing?

TAKING ACTION
**Using ritual to honor those who
are suffering**

“Compassion is an unstable emotion. It needs to be translated into action, or it withers.”

SUSAN SONTAG

How do we honor the memories of Israelis who were killed on October 7? How do we bring to mind the hostages in Gaza and the soldiers who are tasked with impossibly difficult tasks ahead?

CREATING MOMENTS OF RECOGNITION

“People often have a misguided perception that local work and global work are entirely disconnected. In reality, the work we do locally... have a profound impact on the lives of people who live millions of miles away.”

RUTH MESSINGER

There are many ways you might wish to recognize those who are suffering. Set an extra, empty, seat at the table in honor of those held captive in Gaza who won't be sitting at their family's Shabbat tables. Read the names or tell the stories of Israelis who were killed or kidnapped on October 7. Say a prayer for peace, for the safe return of hostages, or for those who are suffering in the war. Look through this list of prayers for Israel during this time or war or find a contemporary piece from Ritualwell to recite at your table.

ACHEINU "OUR BRETHREN" — PRAYER FOR OUR FELLOW JEWS
FACING ANGUISH AND CAPTIVITY

אַחֵינוּ For all our family

כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
הַנִּתְּנוּנִים בַּצָּרָה וּבַשְּׂבִיָּה
הַעֹמְדִים בֵּין בָּיִם וּבֵין בַּיְבֻשָּׁה.
הַמְּקוּם יְרַחֵם עֲלֵיהֶם
וַיּוֹצִיאֵם מִצָּרָה לְרִחוּץ
וּמֵאֲפֵלָה לְאוֹרָה
וּמִשְׁעֶבֶד לְגִאֲלָה.
הַשְּׂתָא בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזָמַן קָרִיב
וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן

of the House of Israel
who face anguish and captivity
whether on sea or on land.
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.

TRANSLITERATION *Aḥeinu kol beit yisrael, ha-n'tunim b'tzarah u-vashivyah, ha-omdim bein ba-yam u-vein ba-yabashah, ha-makom y'raḥem aleihem, v'yotzi-eim mi-tzarah lirvaḥah, u-mei-afeilah l'orah, u-mi-shibud lig'ullah, hashta ba-agala u-vizman kariv, v'nomar amen.*

PSALM 121 — PRAYER OF COMFORT AND REASSURANCE
IN CHALLENGING TIMES

שִׁיר A song

לְמַעַלּוֹת אֲשָׂא עֵינַי אֶל-הַהָרִים
מֵאֵין וּבֵא עֲזָרִי. עֲזָרִי מֵעַם יְיָ
עָשָׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ. אֵלֵי-יִתֵּן לְמוֹט
רַגְלְךָ אֶל־יְנוּגֹם שְׂמֶרְךָ. הֲנֵה לֹא-
יְנוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל.
יְיָ שְׂמֶרְךָ הַשֶּׁם צִלְךָ עַל־יָד
יְמִינְךָ. יוֹמָם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לֹא-יִכְבֶּה
וַיְרַח בַּלַּיְלָה. יְיָ יִשְׁמְרְךָ מִכָּל־רָע
יִשְׁמַר אֶת־נַפְשְׁךָ. יְיָ יִשְׁמַר־צִאֲתְךָ
וּבֹאֶךָ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם

for ascents. I lift my eyes to the
mountains; from where will my help
come? My help is from Hashem maker
of heaven and earth. He will not let you
stumble; your guard does not slumber;
Israel's guardian neither slumbers nor
sleeps! Hashem is your guardian, your
right hand protection. By day the sun will
not strike you, nor the moon by night.
Hashem will guard: you from all harm,
your life, your travels, now and forever.

"A PRAYER FOR PEACE" BY RABBI NACHMAN OF BRESLOV

Translated by Rabbi Deborah Silver

יְהִי רָצוֹן

May it be Your will

מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁתִּבְטַל
מִלְחָמוֹת וּשְׂפִיכוֹת דָּמִים מִן
הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁתִּמְשִׁיךְ שְׁלוֹם גָּדוֹל
וְנִפְלֵא בְּעוֹלָם, וְלֹא יִשָּׂא גוֹי
אֶל גּוֹי חָרֵב, וְלֹא יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד
מִלְחָמָה

Holy One, our God, our ancestors' God, that you erase war and bloodshed from the world and in its place draw down a great and glorious peace so that nation shall not lift up sword against nation neither shall they learn war any more.

רַק יִכִּירוּ וְיִדְעוּ כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי
תְּבֵל אֶת הָאֱמֻנָה לְאֻמָּתָהּ: שֶׁלֹּא
בָּאנוּ לָזֶה הָעוֹלָם בְּשִׁבִיל רִיב
וּמַחְלָקוֹת, וְלֹא בְּשִׁבִיל שִׁנְאָה
וְקִנְיָאָה וְקִנְטוֹר וּשְׂפִיכוֹת דָּמִים

Rather, may all the inhabitants of the earth recognize and deeply know this great truth: that we have not come into this world for strife and division nor for hatred and rage, nor provocation and bloodshed.

רַק בָּאוּנוּ לְעוֹלָם כְּדִי לִהְפֹּיֵר
אוֹתְךָ, תַּתְּבַרְךָ לְנִצּוֹחַ. וּבְכֵן,
רַחֵם עָלֵינוּ וְקִיֵּם בְּנוּ מִקְרָא
שִׁכְתוֹב

We have come here only to encounter You, eternally blessed One. And so, we ask your compassion upon us; raise up, by us, what is written:

וְנִתְתִּי שְׁלוֹם בְּאַרְצְךָ, וּשְׂכַבְתֶּם
וְאַיִן מַחְרִיד, וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי חַיָּה
רָעָה מִן הָאָרֶץ, וְחָרֵב לֹא תַעֲבֹר
בְּאַרְצְכֶם. וַיִּגַּל כְּמִים מִשְׁפָּט
וַיִּדְרֹקָה כְּנַחַל אֵיתָנוּ. כִּי מְלֵאָה
הָאָרֶץ דְּעָה אֶת ה' כְּמִים לַיָּם
מְכֻסִּים. וְכֵן יְהִי רָצוֹן וְנֹאמַר
אָמֵן

I shall place peace upon the earth and you shall lie down safe and undisturbed and I shall banish evil beasts from the earth and the sword shall not pass through your land, but let justice come in waves like water and righteousness flow like a river, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Holy One as the waters cover the sea. So may it be. And we say: Amen.

PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO ARE MISSING OR
BEING HELD CAPTIVE

מי שְׂבִירָךְ:

May the One who blessed

אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב
יוֹסֵף מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן דָּוִד וְשְׁלֹמֹה,
הוּא יְבָרֵךְ וְיִשְׁמֵר וְיִנְצֵר אֶת נַעֲדָרֵי
צָבָא הַגְּנֵה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת הַשְּׁבוּיִים
(שְׁמוֹת שֶׁל הַשְּׁבוּיִים) בְּתוֹךְ שְׂאֵר
אֲחֵינוּ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנִּתְּנָנִים בְּצָרָה
וּבְשִׁבְיָה

our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob,
Joseph, Moses, Aaron, David and
Solomon bless, watch and guard
those missing from the Israel
Defense Forces and the captives
[name of captives], among others of
our brethren of the House of Israel
that are situated in distress and in
captivity.

בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁהִקְהָל מִתְּפַלֵּל בְּעִבּוֹרָם.
הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יִמְלֵא רַחֲמִים
עֲלֵיהֶם, וְיוֹצִיאֵם מִחֹשֶׁךְ וְצִלְמֹת,
וּמִסְרוֹתֵיהֶם יִנְתֵּק, וּמִצְּרוּרֵיהֶם
יִוֹשִׁיעֵם, וְיִשִּׁיבֵם מִהָרָה
לְחֵיק מִשְׁפּוּחֹתֵיהֶם

On account of the congregation's
praying for them, may the Holy One,
blessed be He, grant mercy upon
them, take them out from darkness
and gloom, break their chains,
redeem them from their ordeals and
return them quickly to the comfort of
their families.

"יודו לַיהוָה חֲסֵדוֹ וְנִפְלְאוֹתָיו לְבָנָי
אֲדָם". וְיִקְיָם בְּהֵם מִקְרָא שְׂפֹתוֹב:
"וּפְדוּנֵי יִי וְשׁוֹבוֹן וּבְאוֹן צִיּוֹן בְּרָנָה
וְשִׂמְחַת עוֹלָם עַל רֵאשִׁים. שְׁשׁוֹן
וְשִׂמְחָה יִשִּׁיגוּ וְנָסוּ יְגוֹן וְאַנְחָה"
וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן

"Let them praise the Lord for His
kindness, and His wondrous deeds
for the children of man" (Psalms 107:8).
And through them, let the verse (Isaiah
35:10) be fulfilled, "And the Lord's
ransomed shall return, and come with
shouting to Zion, crowned with joy
everlasting; they shall attain joy and
gladness, while sorrow and sighing
flee." And let us say, Amen.

PRAYER FOR ISRAELI SOLDIERS

מִי שְׂבִיחַ

May the One who blessed

אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב
הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת חַיְלֵי צְבָא הַגָּנָה
לְיִשְׂרָאֵל הַעוֹמְדִים עַל מְשָׁמְר
אֶרְצֵנוּ וְעָרֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְגֹבֹל
הַלְבָנוֹן וְעַד מְדָבְרַי מִצְרַיִם וּמִן
הַיָּם הַגְּדוֹל עַד לְבוֹא הָעֶרְבָה
בִּיבְשָׁה בְּאֵוִיר וּבָיָם

our fathers, Abraham, Isaac and
Jacob, bless the soldiers of the Israel
Defense Forces, in their standing
guard upon our land and the cities of
our God from the border of Lebanon
to the Wilderness of Egypt and from
the Great Sea to the approach of the
Arava – on land, in the air, and in
the sea.

יְתֵן יְיָ אֵת אוֹיְבֵינוּ הַקְּמִים עָלֵינוּ
נִגְפִים לְפָנֵינוּ הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא
יִשְׁמַר וְיִצִּיל אֶת חַיְלֵינוּ מִכָּל צָרָה
וְצוּקָה וּמִכָּל נֶגַע וּמִחֻלָּה.
וְיִשְׁלַח בְּרָכָה וְהַצְלָחָה בְּכָל
מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם יִדְבֵר שׁוֹנְאֵינוּ
תַּחֲתֵיהֶם וְיַעֲטֵרם בְּכֹתֵר יְשׁוּעָה
וּבַעֲטָרַת נִצְחוֹן וְיִקְיָם בָּהֶם
הַכְּתוּב: כִּי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הֵהָלֵךְ
עִמָּכֶם לְהַלְחֵם לָכֶם עִם אוֹיְבֵיכֶם
לְהוֹשִׁיעַ אֶתְכֶם וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן

May the Lord give our enemies that
rise against us plagues in front of
them. May the Holy One, blessed be
He, guard and rescue our soldiers
from all trouble and distress and from
all affliction and illness; and send
blessing and success in all the work of
their hands. And let us say Amen.

LETTER FROM A MOTHER WHOSE SON IS
HELD CAPTIVE IN GAZA

You may have watched the powerful message delivered by Rachel Goldberg at the United Nations about her son Hersh, who was kidnapped into Gaza by Hamas on October 7. Read her essay below and reflect around your dinner table.

I Hope Someone Somewhere Is Being Kind to My Boy

OCTOBER 12, 2023

Ten years ago, we were preparing to celebrate the bar mitzvah of our son, Hersh. His Torah portion was the same as the one Jews around the world will read in the coming days — the story of Noah and how God destroyed much of the world with a terrible flood.

But Hersh's attention was not on destruction. Instead he focused on how water could save the world. So he swam laps to raise money for an organization that digs wells in Africa to provide clean, lifesaving water.

This is the kind of person Hersh, our oldest child and only son, is: gentle and kind and always finding creative ways to improve things and connect with other human beings.

This is the person that Hamas terrorists have taken among their innocent captives, which include children, women and older people.

Hersh was camping with his best friend at an outdoor music festival near Israel's border with Gaza when Hamas terrorists began firing machine guns into the crowd of mostly young adults. An estimated 260 people were killed in that attack. We later found out Hersh and his friends managed to escape by car but the vehicle came

under rocket fire. They were forced to stop and take cover in a roadside bomb shelter. Terrorists then attacked the shelter, blowing off Hersh's arm from the elbow down by machine gun fire or a grenade or both.

According to witnesses, Hersh, a 23-year-old American-born U.S. citizen, was then ordered into a pickup truck by armed Hamas terrorists and driven toward the Gaza border. The police told us the last known location of his mobile phone was on the Gaza border early Saturday afternoon.

I don't know if he is dead or alive or if I will ever see him again.

The only thing I know is that this is not the fate that Hersh or any of the captives, among whom are several other Americans, deserves. I am heartbroken, but the messages of support pouring in from near and far make this moment heartwarming at the same time.

I wept this morning receiving messages from his friends in Bremen, Germany, which is home to SV Werder, the team that has a friendly relationship with Hersh's beloved Hapoel Jerusalem soccer team. He befriended these German fans over

the years when they visited Jerusalem to watch their team play soccer. Together they painted a peace mural with both Arab and Jewish residents near our home in Jerusalem, where we've lived since Hersh was 7. Just five weeks ago, Hersh spent time with these friends in Germany.

The outreach from these German friends resonates with me especially because Hersh is named after my grandfather Harold and my great-uncle Hershel, who was killed in the Holocaust. It was beautiful for me to be reminded, through these friendships, that for young Germans and Jews particularly, the world that Hersh has lived in has recognized and worked to overcome the terror experienced by my great-uncle.

I never could have imagined that my son would face anything like Hershel faced.

But this is the new world that Hersh and the rest of us must live in now. The Hamas attacks were the most vicious assaults on Jews since the Holocaust.

I want things to go back to how they were before Saturday morning. Before I saw Hersh's text messages that alerted me he was in grave danger: "I love you" and "I'm sorry."

Before Hamas launched its attacks, which have claimed more than 1,200 innocent lives in Israel and resulted in about 150 innocent hostages being held in Gaza with no foreseeable way out. Before my son's phone was a black box with no answer.

But here we are, stuck in the awful present. Time is slowly ticking into the future, with these hostages approaching a week in captivity. If he is still alive, how much longer can he survive? His wounds are grievous. I hope someone somewhere is being kind to him, caring for him, attending to him.

Hersh is my whole world, and this evil is the flood that is destroying it. I really don't know if anything can save it. If anyone knows, please tell me. To save a life, our sages taught, is to save a world. Please help me save my son; it will save my world.

Every single person in Gaza has a mother, or had a mother at some point.

And I would say this, then, as mother to other mothers: If you see Hersh, please help him. I think about it a lot. I really think I would help your son, if he was in front of me, injured, near me •

SUPPORTING THOSE IN NEED

“It is not your duty to finish the work, but neither are you at liberty to neglect it.”

PIRKEI AVOT 2:16

There are many ways to support Israelis during this extremely challenging period, from supporting the Israeli troops to supporting victims of terror and emergency medical assistance. Consider sending support to Israeli aid organizations you trust. Here are a few to consider: Magen David Adom (humanitarian aid / first responders), Brothers and Sisters in Arms (displaced families), Jewish Agency's Fund for Victims of Terror.

CELEBRATING WITH JOY **Am Yisrael Chai**

“My deepest impulses are optimistic, an attitude that seems to me as spiritually necessary and proper as it is intellectually suspect.”

ELLEN WILLIS

Allow yourself to have a joyful dinner! Jewish wisdom recognizes that all moments are ones where complex emotions are at play. Honor the difficulties of the present moment, and also let yourself and your guests experience joy in being together. This is how Judaism and the Jewish people survive.

BRING ISRAELI MUSIC TO YOUR DINNER TABLE

Israeli musicians are creating beautiful art in the wake of tragedy to uplift the spirits of the nation. David Broza visited soldiers and sang a duet of Carole King’s “You’ve Got a Friend” that went viral. Share an Israeli song at your table. Celebrate Israeli voices that resonate with you.

Hanan Ben Ari wrote and released a new song, “Moledet” (Homeland) in response to October 7. In the music video, Ben Ari highlights scenes of unity and hope across Israel.

TELL STORIES OF INSPIRATION AND UNITY

Israeli society and the Jewish world have responded to the crisis with immense strength and solidarity. Israelis from across the religious and political spectrum have mobilized to support the war effort and support those in need. Jews across the globe stand in solidarity with Israel and continue to make Aliyah. It is important to celebrate the heroes who emerge and the stories of captives being reunited with their families.

CELEBRATE THE BEAUTY OF JEWISH CULTURE

Even in the face of tragedy, Israelis celebrate life, engaging in Jewish life cycle rituals like baby namings and weddings. It's important to remember that Am Yisrael Chai, the Jewish people live. Your Shabbat table is an example of how we express this truth. Be proud. Gather joyfully.

**“So I'll sing an old song, we will stay faithful forever.
We will never break neither in peace nor in trial,
neither in sweet times nor bitter. I will only sing
with you. You are the only one, the special one.
You will always be my homeland.”**

HANAN BEN ARI, MOLEDET

SHABBAT
25K

UNPACKED

Find us and learn more

 jewishunpacked.com

 [@unpacked](https://www.youtube.com/@unpacked)

 [@jewishunpacked](https://www.instagram.com/jewishunpacked)

 [@jewishunpacked](https://www.tiktok.com/@jewishunpacked)