



**COMMEMORATION FOR ALL THAT  
WAS LOST ON OCTOBER 7TH**

## Commemorating the Yahrtzeit of the October 7<sup>th</sup> Massacre and Its Aftermath

When there are no words, we rely on our tradition to carry us through. Therefore, on this Yom Kippur, this holiest of days, when we remember the martyrs of generations past, we place the story of October 7<sup>th</sup> as the newest chapter in our Eileh Ezkarah service. Our sisters and brothers who were viciously ripped from life two years ago were forced to join in a long history of blood and fire we wanted to believe was closed.

We acknowledge the suffering of many peoples throughout Israel's longest war and our hearts ache for the innocent among them, too. On this Day of Days, however, we turn to sanctify the memories of our own people. Their stories of innocence and courage radiate among the Jewish martyrs of the millennia. May their souls be bound up in the bond of Eternal Life.

On October 7, 2023, the Shabbat of Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah, the Jewish People experienced the deadliest massacre since the Holocaust.

At 6:29 am, under a heavy barrage of 2,500 rockets, thousands of Hamas terrorists invaded Israel from Gaza. Riding on vehicles, equipped with weaponry, they infiltrated army bases, kibbutzim and towns. By air with paragliders, and by foot, they descended upon the Re'im Nature Reserve, where 3,000 peace-loving Israelis were dancing at the Nova Festival. The terrorists showed unimaginable brutality. They attacked the elderly, men, women, and children indiscriminately. They burned families alive. They raped and mutilated bodies. They abducted 251 human beings, smuggled them – dead and alive – across the border to cheering crowds. By nightfall, more than 1,200 Israelis were murdered.

The shockwaves of these unparalleled events are still being felt across the globe and are still not yet fully understood. A piece of us was attacked that day. A part of us was made vulnerable that day. A piece of us is still held hostage.

### **Cantor and Congregation:**

אֵלֶּה אֶזְכָּרָה וְנִפְשֵׁי עָלֵי אֲשַׁפְּכָהּ. כִּי בָלְעוּנוּ יָדַיִם כְּעֵגֶה בְּלִי הַפּוֹכָה

*These I recall and pour my heart out.*

*How the arrogant have devoured us!*

*These things do I remember. Through all the years, ignorance, like a monster, has devoured our martyrs as in one long day of blood. Rulers have risen through the endless years, oppressive and*

*savage in their witless power, filled with a futile thought: to make an end of that which God cherishes.*

## **CANADIAN VICTIMS**

860 civilians were murdered on October 7<sup>th</sup>. They were citizens of 42 countries. Among them were eight Canadians. Let these few stories stand for them all.

**Vivian Silver z”l**, born and raised in Winnipeg, made Aliyah in 1974. Her early activism focused on women's rights and gender disparities in Israeli society. In 1990 she moved to Kibbutz Be’eri with her husband and their two sons. She served as executive director for the Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development. Vivian helped the kibbutz organize job training for Gazans and ensured that Gazan construction workers at the kibbutz were paid fairly. She served on the board of B’Tselem, a leading Israeli human rights watch. In her retirement, Vivian co-founded Women Wage Peace, and often volunteered to drive Gazan patients needing medical treatment from the border to Jerusalem and back again. On October 4, Vivian led a peace rally in Jerusalem, which attracted 1,500 Israeli and Palestinian women. Three days later she was missing. The family believed she had been taken captive into Gaza. Five weeks later, it was confirmed that Vivian had been burned alive on October 7. 1,500 people attended her funeral.

**Netta Epstein z”l**, age 21, was born in Montreal and raised on Kibbutz Kfar Aza. He worked with special needs children and had just completed his service as a paratrooper two months before October 7. Netta’s wedding was planned for Pesach-time, when family could come from Canada to celebrate.

As the sirens wailed in the early morning hours of October 7, Netta and his fiancé, Irene, took shelter in their saferoom, designed to protect them from the familiar rockets. They embraced under the covers, as terrorists roamed with knives and AK-57s.

By 8 am, the kibbutz issued an alert: “Enter lockdown. Suspicion of infiltration. Hide.” By 11:30 am, terrorists broke into Netta’s house and threw a grenade into the safe room. Netta instinctively jumped on it, as he had been trained to do. Irene hid from the terrorists behind her fiancé’s body, now riddled with bullets. Irene recalls how she heard her mother’s voice saying gently: “Netta’s life will not be taken in vain. You must stay alive.”

Irene stayed concealed by Netta’s body for five hours until the army came around 4 pm. Remembering that day, Irene recalls: “My mind was empty. I didn’t text anyone and I didn’t pray.”

62 residents of Kfar Aza were murdered that day. Another 19 were taken hostage.

**Adi Vital-Kaploun z”l** was a dual citizen of Israel and Canada. She grew up spending her summers in Ottawa with her extended family, including our own Cantorial Soloist Lindi Rivers. Adi was a dancer, a saxophonist, a basketball player. Adi was a soldier, an engineer in cybersecurity, an environmental scientist in desert studies and solar energy. Adi was a daughter, a sister, a wife, a mother. Having served in an elite intelligence unit, Adi could have lived anywhere, but chose to be a desert-farmer, raising her young children on the Gaza border.

She was 33 years old when terrorists invaded her home on the idyllic Kibbutz Holit. Adi somehow managed to save the lives of her husband and father, and with her own body, shielded her two sons, Negev, age 4 and Eshel, just 6 months old. Little Negev gave the account: “They shot up the whole house. They wanted to shoot Eshel, but Ima did not let them. Ima said she loves us the most in the world and was gone.”

Before she was murdered and the boys nearly smuggled into Gaza, Adi killed one of the terrorists herself. At her funeral, Adi’s army commander said, “She was delicate and gentle, but bursting with power, as if laced by silk and steel.”

Adi’s parents, Jacqui and Yaron, came to Holy Blossom last year to tell Adi’s harrowing and heroic story. Into their arms we placed a Torah Scroll dressed in a new white mantle, made of raw silk and lovingly dedicated to Adi. May her memory be for blessing.

**SING: ACHEINU, from a 9<sup>th</sup> century Sura/Babylonian prayerbook and from a 12<sup>th</sup> century French machzor.**

אֲחֵינוּ כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, הַנְּתוּנִים בְּצָרָה וּבְשִׁבְיָהּ, הָעוֹמְדִים בֵּין בָּיִם וּבֵין בִּיבְשָׁה

הַמְּקוּם יְרַחֵם עֲלֵיהֶם, וְיוֹצִיאֵם מִצָּרָה לְרִוְחָה, וּמֵאֲפֵלָה לְאוֹרָה, וּמִשְׁעֶבֶד לְגֵאֻלָּה

הַשְׁתָּא בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב

As for our brothers and sisters, the whole house of Israel, who are given over to trouble or captivity, whether they abide on the sea or on the dry land: May the Omnipresent God have mercy upon them, and bring them from trouble to expansiveness, from darkness to light, and from subjection to redemption, speedily now and soon.

## FALLEN SOLDIERS

Since October 7<sup>th</sup>, 913 IDF soldiers have fallen. On October 7<sup>th</sup> alone, 578 soldiers, law enforcement officers, firefighters, Shin Bet personnel, and first responders were murdered. Thousands were wounded. Let these few stories stand for them all.

**Captain Eden Nimri z”l** stood in her pajamas at the Nachal Oz base. Armed with just her personal weapon, her extraordinary spirit, and her unimaginable courage, she faced dozens of terrorists, armed from head to toe. Seventeen young women are alive today because of Eden. Eleven female soldiers managed to escape. Six others were taken hostage — and eventually returned alive.

Since the young female border guards were not given weapons, Captain Nimri single-handedly made a wall of fire at the entrance to their shelter. She held off the invaders, until her last bullet — all under heavy fire and grenades thrown her way. When the terrorists finally broke into the base, she fought them with her bare hands — until she was shot to death.

Her family spent nearly two years piecing together what had happened. Many pieces of the puzzle came together in a deeply moving meeting between Eden’s family and Liri Elbaz, a released hostage. After returning from 477 days in captivity, Liri requested to meet Eden’s family. She wanted them to know that whenever a hostage from the Nachal Oz army base met another hostage, they would be sure to tell the story of their hero -- a commander named Eden. They repeated Eden’s story over and over in their minds, determined not to forget. They knew they were alive because of one officer — someone they barely knew, who wasn’t even from their unit — who, in the most terrifying moments in the shelter, calmed them with quiet strength, until she gave her life for the decision to stand between those young women soldiers and the terrorists.

**Captain Eden Provizor z”l** was an armored corps officer, chosen to command the very first tank that led the 401st Brigade from Day One of the ground maneuver into Gaza. He understood full well that, as the first in the column, he was the most exposed target, so he dictated his will to his father.

In November of 2023, during a brief pause in the fighting, from inside Gaza, Eden managed to get hold of a phone and called home. After giving upbeat reports on speakerphone with his extended family, he asked his father, Guy, to stay on the line.

“Dad, write this down. I’m dictating my will to you now.”

Guy wrote down every word, holding an unshakable poker face so that the rest of the family in the living room wouldn’t realize what was actually happening in that moment.

“After Eden dictated his will to me,” Guy said, “I paced around like a lion in a cage. The next day I called him and begged him to pass the lead position to someone else. When you’re in that much daily danger, sooner or later your luck runs out.

Eden’s reaction to my suggestion was the first time in his life he ever shouted at me. He said: ‘Not a chance! This is my job. You raised me for this — for leadership, for responsibility, to be the one out first. That’s how you raised me my whole life, Dad.’ And I had no response.”

These are the words Eden dictated to his father:

*“Dad, I need to talk to you seriously, and I want you to listen without getting angry at me. We’re in hell here, and the situation is terrible. I can’t tell you what will happen, but there’s a chance I won’t come back home — that I’ll stay here.*

*I need you to listen to me: I want you to go on living, as if I’m still with you. Don’t fall apart and don’t live in sadness. Keep enjoying life -- go out to restaurants, travel abroad, and do all the things we loved doing together. Dad, I’m serious — you must not do anything else.*

*I want you to know that I’m proud of what I’m doing, and if something happens to me, so be it. It’s okay. I’m on the mission of my life — protecting the Land of Israel. When all this is over, and my friends tell you what I did here, you’ll be very proud of me. You gave me everything in life, and I’m asking you to really listen to me now.*

*I’ve had a good life, a full life, filled with happiness and goodness. I hope God will be with me, but even if He’s not, know that I loved you and that my life was wonderful. Dad, you must promise me this, because only then can I keep going.”*

Two days later, Eden was killed by an anti-tank missile at the entrance to Jabaliya. He was 21 years old.

#### **YIZKOR FOR FALLEN SOLDIERS. (Please Rise.)**

יִזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת נַשְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי-גִבּוֹרָיו, חֵילֵי צְבָא הַגְּנָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, שֶׁנִּפְּלוּ בְּמִלְחָמוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּפַעֲלוֹת הַגְּנָה, תַּגְּמוּל וּבְטַחֲוֹן וּבַעֲת מְלוּי תַּפְקִידֶם, וְנַשְׁמוֹת כָּל לִוְחָמֵי הַמַּחְתָּרֶת וְחִטִּיבוֹת הַלִּוְחָמִים בְּמַעֲרָכוֹת הָעֵם, שֶׁחֲרַפּוּ נַפְשָׁם לְמוֹת עַל קִדְשַׁת הַשֵּׁם, וּבְעֶזְרַת אֱלֹהֵי מַעֲרָכוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל הַבִּיאוּ לְתַקּוּמַת הָאָמָה וְהַמְּדִינָה וְלִגְאֻלַּת הָאָרֶץ וְעִיר הָאֱלֹהִים. מִנְּשָׁרִים קָלוּ וּמֵאֲרָיוֹת גָּבְרוּ, בְּהַחֲלֹצֵם לְעֶזְרַת הָעֵם וְהַרְוּוּ בְּדַמָּם הַטְּהוֹר אֶת רַגְבֵי אֲדַמַּת קִדְשָׁנוּ. זָכַר עֲקֵדְתָם וּמַעֲשֵׂה גִבּוֹרְתָם לֹא יִסּוּפוּ מֵאֲתַנּוּ לְעוֹלָמִים. תִּהְיֶינָה נַשְׁמוֹתֵיהֶם צְרוּרוֹת בְּצִרוֹר הַחַיִּים עִם נַשְׁמוֹת אֲבֹרְתָם, יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְעַם שְׂאֵר גִּבּוֹרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְקִדּוּשָׁיו שֶׁבָּגּוּ עִדּוֹן עַד עוֹלָם. אָמֵן.”

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May God remember the souls of sons and daughters who endangered their lives in the days of struggle prior to the establishment of the State of Israel and may God remember the IDF soldiers who fell in the wars of Israel and were willing to die for the sanctification of God's name. May we commemorate their lost youth, their bravery and valour, their devotion and self-sacrifice, which ended on the battlefield. May the memory of the loyal and valiant heroes of Israel be sealed forever within the hearts of the People Israel. Their sacrifice and their acts of heroism will never be forgotten. Let their souls be bound up in the bond of life, with the souls of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and with the souls of all the heroes of Israel in the Garden of Eden. May they rest in peace. And let us say, Amen.

### **“A New Yizkor for October 7” by Yaoz Sever (slightly adapted)**

*We, the Jewish People, remember the sons and daughters, the loyal and the brave, the soldiers of the Israel Defence Forces, the first responders, the members of the intelligence, security, and law enforcement communities, and the civilians who risked their lives during the events of that Black Sabbath.*

*We, the Jewish People, remember them and are blessed by them. We mourn the radiance of their youth. We praise their rare courage. We acknowledge the sanctity of their will. We honour their self-sacrifice.*

*May we remember the bravery of the kibbutzim, the moshavim, and the cities, which stood guard until they had no strength left. May we forever remember the fathers and mothers, who, with their bodies, defended their families, but were unable to save themselves. Amen.*

(Please be seated.)

## **HOSTAGES**

On October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 251 human beings – including children, the elderly, and the dead -- were abducted and smuggled over the border into Gaza. Since then, 144 hostages have been released through negotiations. Eight living hostages were rescued by daring IDF military missions. Fifty-one bodies were recovered and returned to their families for a proper burial, including the three who were tragically killed by so-called “friendly fire.”

### **The Mitzvah of Redeeming Captives – Maimonides, 12<sup>th</sup> c.**

There is no mitzvah greater than the redemption of captives, for captivity is in the same category as famine, drought, or exposure, and one's life is in imminent danger. One who hesitates from redeeming a captive violates the following mitzvot: “*Thou shalt not harden your heart from helping the poor*” and “*Thou shalt not close your hand*” [Deuteronomy 15:7]; “*Thou shalt not*

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*stand while your neighbour bleeds*” [Leviticus 19:16]; *“Thou shalt love your neighbour as yourself”* [Leviticus 19:18].

There is no mitzvah greater than *Pidyon Shvuyim*, the Redeeming of Captives.

It is reported that 48 hostages remain in Gaza, including twenty, who are believed to be alive. One of them is **Alon Ohel**, the cousin of Holy Blossom’s former Shinshinit, Noa. Because Alon is a talented piano player, his brother placed a yellow piano in Tel Aviv’s Hostage Square, inviting passersby to play a song for Alon. There are now yellow pianos all over the world, including here at Holy Blossom Temple. We promised Noa we’d continue to play it until Alon comes home.

A lover of all kinds of music, Alon Ohel went with some friends to the Nova music festival. They arrived at the desert rave at 5:30 a.m., an hour before the onslaught began. Alon and his friends fled to what is now called “The Bunker of Death,” a roadside shelter designed for protection from rockets, but not from terrorists on foot.

Alon was abducted into Gaza and has miraculously survived brutal captivity there for 727 days.

“On Erev Rosh Hashanah, we received a sign of life from our Alon,” said his mother, Idit. “We’ve looked at each and every frame [of the Hamas video clip] to get as much as we can out of it. The more we look, the more we worry.” The video is “psychological terror intended to harm us. We are held captive by this terror.”

With Yom Kippur approaching, Alon’s father Kobi sent this message: “To my Alon, my dear boy, be strong. You are strong. We saw that you are strong. Believe in yourself and believe in this moment that is almost here. The hug between us is coming. The hug with Inbar, with Ronen, with Mom, and with me is coming. It is coming soon. Be strong, my dear boy, we are with you.”

And to the world, Kobi sends this message: “What we ask is this: this is the time, this is the moment to do the right and most important act, to return Alon to us, to return all the hostages home.”

**Cantor and Congregation:**

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם מִתִּיר אֲסוּרִים:

*Praised are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, who releases the captives.*

## CANADIAN ANTISEMITISM & RESPONSES

International headlines this year included:

Rabbi Zvi Kogan was abducted from the kosher supermarket in Dubai and murdered.

A young couple working for the Israeli Embassy – Sarah Milgrim and Yaron Lischinsky -- were shot dead outside the national Jewish Museum in Washington D.C.

88-year-old Holocaust survivor, Barbara Steinmetz was one of the eight people set on fire by an Egyptian national who threw homemade Molokov cocktails at the demonstrators, who gather weekly in Boulder, Colorado to call for the release of Israeli hostages held captive in Gaza. 82-year-old Karen Diamond died of her burns.

Lesser known, however, are the nearly daily antisemitic acts perpetrated right here in Canada. Storefronts of Jewish-owned businesses and offices of Jewish elected officials are vandalized. Rocks are thrown at synagogues and hate-filled words are thrown at peaceful demonstrators and at schoolchildren.

Since October 7<sup>th</sup>, from coast to coast, there is a swell of Jew hatred, as if Canada has forgotten that more than one million Canadians served in World War II to fight back tyranny. Today, Canadian antisemitism comes from the far right and from the far left; it comes from people of different faiths and from people of no faith. The damage is far greater than shattered glass and spray paint. The threat is enough to rattle the very foundations of our country.

**In Montreal** – A Jewish father is beaten to the ground by a stranger in front of his young child.

An arsonist firebombed Congregation Beth Tikvah. This is the second such attack this synagogue has endured since Oct. 7, 2023.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police apprehend a Quebec man associated with white nationalist groups, for making violent threats against Jews and is later convicted for illegally producing 3D-printed firearms.

**In Ottawa** – Our National Holocaust Memorial is defaced with splattered red paint.

A 74-year-old woman, who sings in her synagogue choir, is stabbed in the produce section of a Loblaws grocery store. She was wearing a Jewish Star necklace, but it isn't yet clear if the attacker saw it. He has no criminal record, but has made hateful comments about Judaism online.

**In Toronto** – Since October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, gunshots were fired at Bais Chaya Mushka Girls Elementary School on three separate occasions.

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The Royal Canadian Mounted Police arrested a father and son in connection with an ISIS-inspired plot to allegedly murder Jews in the Greater Toronto Area.

**In Ontario** – A government study of Ontario schools, reports that one in six antisemitic incidents was initiated by either a teacher or occurred during school-sanctioned activities.

**In Victoria** – Scrawled onto the entrance to the oldest synagogue building in Western Canada were the words: "Jews are evil!" And worse. The threats were delivered on the morning of Tisha B'Av, the Jewish day of mourning the destruction of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Temples in ancient Jerusalem.

**In Winnipeg** – Individuals associated with a neo-Nazi movement originating in Russia, the Maniac Murder Cult, perpetrated various antisemitic acts, including graffiti and vandalism. Police charged one member, thought to be responsible for terrorism-related offences.

**In Calgary** – "The Al-Aqsa Flood" was Hamas' operational name for the October 7th Massacre. Graffiti near a synagogue and Jewish Day School threatened: "The flood is coming."

**In Vancouver** -- An arsonist attempted to burn down the Shaarei Tzedek Synagogue with worshippers still inside. The fire was lit at the entrance, as evening prayers were ending.

**In Halifax** – In a coordinated effort, two synagogues and one Jewish community centre are vandalized, with messages like: "Jews did 9/11." Rabbi Kerzner said: "We are proud to be Jews. This is not going to stop us. We are not going to hide."

Every other day of the year we ask: "What must be done? What can we do? What can I do to set this wrong right again, to fix what has been broken, to bind together what has come undone?" But today, when we devote an hour of our prayers to remember the martyrs of our people across the centuries and across the lands, we simply ask: "Why?!" And we do not expect an answer.

**"Sleeps and Slumbers, The Guardian of Israel"  
(A Psalm for October 7, after Psalm 121)  
by Rabbi Rivkah Lubitsch**

*A Song for Descents.*

*I lifted my eyes to the mountains*

*but my help did not come.*

*I had no help from God,*

*Maker of Heaven and Earth.*

*God let my foot slip,*

*let my guardians slumber.*

*Behold, how God slept and slumbered, the Guardian of  
Israel.*

*God did not protect me;*

*did not shade me at my right hand.*

*The sun struck me by day, and the moon by night.*

*God did not guard me from all harm;*

*did not guard my life.*

*So how will God guard my going and coming*

*From now and forever?*

**SING: New Day Will Rise**

written by Keren Peles, performed by Yuval Raphael,

over boos from the crowd at Eurovision Music Competition, 2025, in Basel, Switzerland.

The song won the popular vote and earned second place from the judges.

And even if you say goodbye  
You'll never go away  
You are the rainbow in my sky  
My colours in the grey  
My only wish upon a star  
Sunshine in the day  
The only song that my piano ever plays

And even if you say goodbye  
You'll always be around  
To lift me up and take me high  
Keep my feet close to the ground  
Are you proud of me tonight?  
Dreams are coming true  
I choose the light, nothing to lose if I lose  
you

**"נִם וַיִּשָׁן שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל"**

**רבקה לוביטץ**

שיר לנפילות.

נשאתי עיני אל ההרים ולא בא עזרי.

אין לי עזר מעם ה' עושה שמים וארץ.

נתן למוט רגליי, נתן לנום שומריי.

הנה נם וישן שומר ישראל.

ה' לא שמר עליי, ה' לא הצל על יד  
ימיני.

יומם השמש היכה בי וירח בלילה.

ה' לא שמר עלי מכל רע ולא שמר את  
נפשי.

איך ישמור ה' את צאתי ובואי מעתה ועד  
עולם?

**Chorus:** New day will rise, life will go on  
Everyone cries, don't cry alone  
Darkness will fade, all the pain will go by  
But we will stay, even if you say goodbye

*Et même si tu dis adieu  
Tu ne partiras jamais  
T'es l'arc-en-ciel de mon ciel bleu  
Mes couleurs dans le gris  
Et mon seul souhait sous un ciel d'art  
Un rayon dans ma journée  
La seule chanson que mon piano peut jouer*

**Chorus:** New day will rise, life will go on  
Everyone cries, don't cry alone  
Darkness will fade, all the pain will go by  
But we will stay, even if you say goodbye

מים רבים לא יכבו את האהבה ונהרות לא ישטפוה

(from the Biblical book, Song of Songs 8:7:

*“Copious waters cannot quench love; neither can floods drown it.”*)

**Chorus:** New day will rise, life will go on  
Everyone cries, don't cry alone  
Darkness will fade, all the pain will go by  
But we will stay, even if you say goodbye