



Jewish Resilience in Difficult Times

Goals: Students will see our history through the lens of resilience and unity (*achdut*).

Outcomes:

- Students will understand that even though throughout history Jews have had enemies who sought to destroy us, it is our strength of identity that has helped us to persevere.
- Students will understand that unity has kept the Jewish people throughout the millennia.
- Students will understand that in times of crisis, Jews will always put their differences aside and come together for the betterment of Klal Yisrael.

Initiate a student-led discussion:

Who knows what is happening in Israel right now?

Do you feel personally affected by what is happening?

(Open for age appropriate Q&A. Antisemitism may arise. At this point, have a discussion of our history. We will provide a timeline as a resource for you.)

Ask Students the following question. Write their answers on the board or project on smartboard via word cloud.

Use one word to describe the history of the Jewish people:

Next, ask students:

If they were to describe what matters most to them about being Jewish in one word, what would it be:

While leaving up their original answers, write their new answers on the board or project via word cloud:

Ask students to examine both sets up lists. Lead a discussion on the story of our people that these two differing lists tell?

Show students the following video:

[WHY I AM A JEW](#)



Afterwards, ask students if they would change any of their answers based on the video they just saw. Why? What influenced them? Why not?

Either project and read or ask a student to read the following:

Every Passover we read this in the Haggadah:

וְהִיא שְׁעֵמֶדָה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ. שְׁלֹא אֶחָד בְּלִבָּד, עֵמֶד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ. אֲלֵא שְׁבָכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר, עוֹמְדִים
עָלֵינוּ וְתֵנוּ. וְהֵקֵל לְכַלּוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְצִילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם

"And this (the promise to Abraham that the Jewish people would thrive) is what kept our ancestors and what keeps us surviving. For, not only one (Pharaoh) arose and tried to destroy us, rather in every generation they try to destroy us, and Hashem saves us from their hands. "

Either project and read or ask a student to read the following:

Vehi Sheamda tells the story of the Jewish people and their survival. In the translation, וְהִיא (*vehi*) refers to the promise between God and the Jewish people, saying that it is what has always kept the Jewish people alive.

Instead of reading וְהִיא (*vehi*) in reference to *the promise*, read it as you normally would: referring to *the people* who have עָמְדוּ (*amdoo* - stood for) the nation of Israel לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ (*Lavoteinu v'Lanu*) for our ancestors and us). This translation acts on the knowledge that the Jewish people are not sustained by a mere word from God:

We are supported when we take action to support ourselves. When the Jewish people are united, which is why the singular **אִי** , because when we are united, we are one. *V'hee Sheamda* acts as a reminder of strength and a call to action directed towards the Jewish people who until the State of Israel was declared, did not have the ability to defend themselves or others.

Examples of heroism:

We know that 300,000 reservist soldiers have been called up to duty. They are going into battle to ensure the people of Israel are safe and secure and that the terrorist group Hamas will never again be able to inflict pain and suffering on the Jewish people. But heroism and unity can manifest in many ways. Here are three examples of heroism and bravery that have emerged from the first days of the attack on Israel.

Rachel Edry



When Hamas terrorists invaded the home of Rachel Edry in Ofakim amid the brutal onslaught from the Gaza Strip on Saturday, she treated them in the way that came most naturally to her: politely.

The terrorists spent 15 hours until early Sunday morning in the home of Edry and her husband David, a couple in their seventies from Ofakim.

Even as they told her that she and her husband would become martyrs, Rachel Edry, who was born in Iran, served the terrorist treats, joked with them in rudimentary Arabic and even sang with them a Hebrew-language song by Lior Narkis they knew from the radio.

This semblance of hospitality may have saved the couple's lives.

At 3 a.m. on Sunday, a police force broke into the duplex after hours of negotiations, killing all five terrorists and reuniting the couple, completely unharmed. Their daughter and two sons, both police officers, participated in the rescue operation.

Noam Tibon



Noam Tibon is a reserves general from Tel Aviv. Within an hour of the terrorist incursion, he quickly assembled an intervention to rescue the residents of Kibbutz Nahal Oz where his son Amir lives.

Noam's team neutralized several terrorists, including the terrorist that was outside Amir's home where he, his wife and daughters were trapped.

Inbal Rabin-Lieberman



Inbal Rabin-Lieberman is the 25-year-old security coordinator of Kibbutz Nir Am. The kibbutz is on the Gaza border, so she's heard lots of sounds, she realized that the sounds were different from those heard during the usual rocket attacks on the kibbutz. Over the objections of the higher-ups, who told her she was over-reacting, she unlocked the arms storage, gave guns to the kibbutz' kitat konnenut (volunteer security team) and took charge. She placed her people in specific places around the kibbutz. When the terrorists arrived, this was the kibbutz that was ready. Over the course of a vicious gun battle that lasted hours, the armed civilians killed more than twenty-five attackers; Inbal, herself, killed five of them. Nir Am, where a 25 year old woman took charge, was the only kibbutz in the area without casualties.

There are many ways you can be heroic and brave. It is not always easy to put yourself at risk for others. There may be times over the next several weeks where it will be easier to just not respond. There may be times when you want to take the risk and respond to people who say things that are ugly, hurtful, false, or biased. Remembering your "WHY" that you explored with the first activity of this lesson can help give you the courage to stand up for yourself. Only you can define your identity and what being a Jew means to you. Only you can determine how Israel fits into your Jewish identity and that, if it matters to you, nobody can tell you it doesn't.

When you read about *V'ehi Sheamda* you learned that **it is not our enemies who define us but our unity.**

Your ancestors' journey here may have been from Iran, Morocco, Ukraine or Poland. They may have come here to start a new life of opportunity, or they may have arrived here fleeing horrors not unlike what Israel is experiencing. They brought different customs that dated back thousands of years. They may have chosen to join the Jewish people because it felt like home. Wherever your family's history traces back to, it started long before that. In a tiny strip of land in the Middle East. Throughout the history of our people it was called Cana'an, Judea, and Palestine. After the Romans exiled us from our Home, our 1900 years of wandering taught us that we would never be safe as long as we had to depend on others for our security. We

would never be able to proudly express ourselves as Jews until we had the privilege of being a “Free People in Our Homeland.”¹

That is what Israel is to the Jewish people. Having our land, even if we don't live there, means there will always be those who will put our safety first. That is what our soldiers are doing now.

Ask students if they have any stories they would like to share.

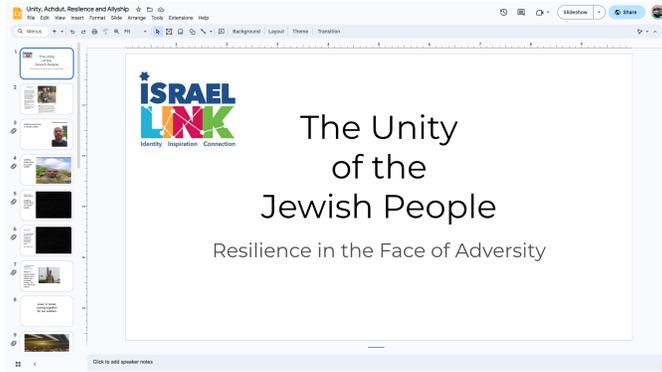
The Jewish people are a family. And like all families, sometimes we fight. We fight about important things, we fight about unimportant things; but disagreements never undermine our unity. On Friday, October 6th, Jews all over Israel were protesting. People disagreed on many issues. On Saturday October 7th, those disagreements were put aside and our unity as a people, as a family, became the most important thing worth fighting for.

We are going to take a look at a few social media posts that have come out of Israel over the last several days that represent examples of unity amongst the Jewish people. Here in North America and around the world, Jewish communities are gathering together to pray, to send supplies, raise money, to do whatever is needed for our family living in Israel. Even if they are a family we've never met.

¹ From Ha Tikvah

Jewish Unity in Israel

Teachers: Choose as many of the videos in this folder to show your students examples of [Unity, Achdut, Resilience, and Allyship](#).

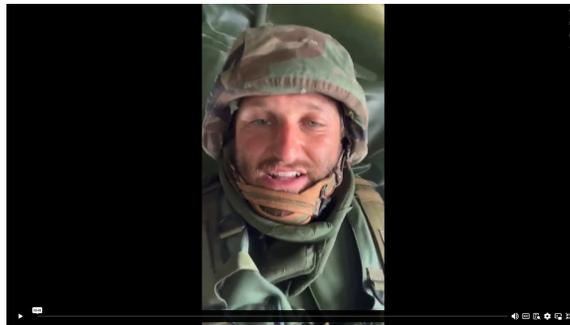


Discuss with them some of the various things people are doing to help.

- Ask them how many examples they saw of regular people showing unity for others in Israel. People they may never know.

Show this final video:

[Be Somebody's Light](#)



- Ask students for examples of how they can “be somebody’s light”
- Have each student write it on a piece of paper and create a unity wall.
- Take a picture to send to our brave soldiers who are defending our people.

Am Yisrael Chai