



A Text Study in Commemoration of October 7th

As we approach the anniversary of the terrible events of October 7th, all of us seek opportunities to be real about what we feel, about grappling with the hard times that remain since that day, while not giving up on the hope that has characterized our national identity since its genesis. Out of this sentiment have emerged many thoughtful works of activism, art, courage, community, perseverance and poetry. In the following text study Pedagogy of Partnership offers an opportunity for *havruta*, in the traditional sense as well as the literal sense of connection, with one another and a modern text which wrestles with the realities we've just described. We wish for its learners that the text study provides a moment of deep listening and meaningful expression, of learning and nourishment, with which to build ourselves and one another up in the New Year.

Zoom In, Zoom Out Protocol:

Greetings:

- 1 Greet your partner and take a minute to catch up socially.
- 2 Choose one person to read the text aloud and welcome the text into the havruta.

Zoom In:

- 3 Individually, take a few minutes to read through the text on your own and notice (and underline or highlight) three details that stand out to you.
- 4 Take turns sharing each detail you have noticed, alternating who is sharing each detail. Discuss each detail's possible significance. Remember to use prompts such as *I notice...*, *I think...*, and, *What do you think?*

Zoom Out:

- 5 Read the text aloud again as a whole. The partner who did not read the first time should take this turn to give voice to the text.
- 6 Discuss the following question: "What does this poem teach us about holding space for difficult emotions while staying open to what lies beyond them?"

Reflection and Appreciation:

- 7 Share a word, phrase, or idea that comes from this poem that particularly speaks to you in this moment.
- 8 Each of you share one thing you appreciated about learning with your partner.

נרות שבת מאת אסנת אלדר	"Shabbat Candles" by Osnat Eldar ¹
<p>א. עת אבוא בחדריך התראני ? אתהלך ביניהם בגמלוניות לא אחשש להפיל בדרכי את הפמוטים</p> <p>ב. כבר שברת לי את ה"שמרי" נשארתי עם ה"זכרי" שעליו נערמו זכרונות השבת היא שבה אטמת את חדרריך שלא תראה שלא תשמע שלא תדע.</p> <p>ג. שבועות מתהלכת גולה בארצי וביתי זר לי נרות שבת ממשיכים להאיר כהרגל מגונה שסגלתי</p> <p>ד. בין גלוי לכסוי מהבהבת נשמתי מסמנת לי שיש לי עוד צהר המזמין אותי לאחות את שברי ה"שמרי" להדליק את ה"זכרי" להכניס את השבת כצרך, כצפיה לדאג שהדמעות ליכבו את הנרות</p>	<p>A. When I come into Your chambers² Will you receive me? I'll be walking awkwardly And won't worry about dropping my candlesticks along the way</p> <p>B. You already broke the "Protect" commandment I am left with the "Remember"³ On which are heaped the memories of that Shabbat When you sealed Your chambers so You wouldn't see So You wouldn't hear So You wouldn't know.</p> <p>C. For weeks I have been walking, An exile in my land and a stranger in my home Shabbat candles continue to cast light Like a shameful customary habit.</p> <p>D. Between the revealed and the hidden My soul flickers Signaling to me that there is still an opening Inviting me to unite the fragments of the "Protect" To light the "Remember" To welcome the Shabbat as a need, an expectation To make sure that tears do not extinguish the candles</p>



¹ "Shabbat Candles" by Osnat Eldar is found in the book "Shiva: Poems of October 7" edited by Rachel Korazim, Michael Bohnen and Heather Silverman, The Institute for Jewish Research and Publications, Cambridge, MA 2024

² A reference to Song of Songs 1:4 (see "connected texts" section). Throughout the book, a couple in love is presented as a symbol for God and the Jewish people.

³ The words "protect" and "remember" in this poem, are a play on the two versions of the commandment concerning Shabbat in the Ten Commandments, one indicating "Remember (*zakhor*) the Shabbat day" (Exodus 20:8) and the other "Protect/Observe (*shamor*) the Shabbat day" (Deuteronomy 5:12). The Talmud (Shavuot 20b) famously says God uttered both words simultaneously.

Connected texts:

שיר השירים א:ד	Song of Songs 1:4
<p>מְשַׁכְנֵי אַחֲרַיִךְ נִרוּצָה הֵבִיאֵנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ חֲדָרָיו נְגִילָה וְנִשְׁמָחָה בְּךָ נִזְכִּירָה דְדִילֵךְ מִיַּיִן מִיִּשְׁרָיִם אֶהְבֹּוֹךְ: {פ}</p>	<p>Draw me after you, let us run! The king has brought me to his chambers. Let us delight and rejoice in your love, Savoring it more than wine— Like new wine they love you!</p>

תלמוד בבלי מס' שבת כה ע"ב	Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat 25b
<p>“וְתִזְנַח מִשְׁלוֹם נְפָשֵׁי נְשִׂיתֵי טוֹבָה.” מַאי “וְתִזְנַח מִשְׁלוֹם נְפָשֵׁי” — אָמַר רַבִּי אֲבָהוּ: זֶה הַדְּלָקַת נֵר בְּשַׁבָּת.</p>	<p>“And my soul is removed far off from peace, I forgot prosperity” (Lamentations 3:17). What is: And my soul is removed far off from peace? Rabbi Abbahu said: That is the lack of opportunity to engage in kindling the Shabbat lights.</p>