



Coming Home

By Pam Morris, Early Learning Center director

14 one day. 10 another. 17 another. And still a few more the next. It seems that about 76 hostages have been released of the 240. That is what the last few days have been like. Israel is slowly, and I mean slowly, starting to see the hostages returned to their homes. Other countries are also seeing some of their residents come home. America has even seen a few. This is, of course, a wonderful occurrence, a blessing of great magnitude, yet one that should never have happened. In what world is it OK to hold babies, young children, hostage, after seeing their parents brutally murdered? In what world do individuals get kept from medical care and lay with broken limbs that no one can fix? And still families wait.

Someone at the store this weekend said, “The hostages are home; isn’t that ribbon for them? Do you need to wear it anymore?” Is that what the world hears? That they are now home? I don’t typically engage with strangers in public about anything, really, and especially controversial subjects. But I am a Jew first and foremost and an educator coming in a close second.

I responded “The terrorist organizations, Hamas specifically, have begun to release the hostages a few at a time. However, around 240 in total were taken and less than 1/3 have been released.” The person backtracked, “Oh. I was just saying that it is a good thing that hostages have been sent home.” And there is no doubt, the look of joy the children felt as they ran into their loved ones arms. The people who have been counting down the days since Oct. 7, who have been able to be there when their loved ones return, their relief is palpable.



But what about the 163 others that haven't been returned? (Please remember that there is a delay in your reading from what the real numbers are. No intentional distortion of numbers is intended.) I am a glass half-full kind of gal but... A 10-month-old is still being held. And yet, there continues to be outrage from Gaza resident supporters. There are still many instances of hatred against Jews. Still protests against Israel. And the terrorists are holding a 10-month-old. Let that sink in.

And the international community is silent. The International Red Cross is supposed to be an impartial organization that can go into war-torn countries to administer medical aid. But they weren't let in. And so an 84-year-old woman, who was vibrant, active and dependent on medication, on Oct. 6, is now fighting for her life in a hospital. Baruch HaShem, she was released 51 days after her capture but will she physically survive?

And we wait. We wait to assess the emotional destruction and aftermath. We wait to see who Hamas will let out today. We wait for all of the hostages to come home. We wait for the support of the world. Will we wait in vain?

Shabbat Shalom.