



## Fuzzy Socks

**By Pam Morris, Early Learning Center director**

You know that feeling when you first slip your feet into a pair of warm, fuzzy socks? It's the feeling of comfort and familiarity. It's the feeling of safety and security. It's the feeling of home.

My family and I love to take trips and most recently, because of everyone's school and work schedules, our travel choices are close by. We don't fly for a variety of reasons. Mostly cost, of course. There are five of us so ticket prices can be a bit prohibitive. But there is another reason. It's the stuff. We have been so accustomed to traveling by car, that we have a hard time paring down our number of bags. There always seems to be just one more thing we need.

It's the extra blanket to make it feel more like home. The thermometer in case someone isn't feeling well. Go ahead and throw in the extra spices for cooking. (More often than not, we stay somewhere with a kitchen) And don't forget the fuzzy socks.

The rationale for needing these extra comforts and the problems associated with carting it all with us, are definitely considered 'first world problems'. I know that it is a luxury that my family and I have, living in Chandler, AZ and that not everyone else, and certainly not all over the world, have these comforts. This has never been more evident than now. When I was in 7th grade, my Hebrew school classmates were acting as 7th graders often do. They were particularly disrespectful to the teachers. I am using the "they" because I was a goody-two-shoes. I didn't typically give the teachers any trouble. But on this particular Tuesday afternoon, when we arrived at the synagogue, Mrs. Goldstein and one of the other teachers, I am blanking on her name, called us all together in the sanctuary with the Rabbi.

"There has just been an announcement made," Mrs. Goldstein said. "All Jews have 1 hour to return home, pack one bag, and report to Bethpage High School." I was 11 years old. This scared us, beyond belief, as it was meant to. This exercise was meant to drive home what the Jewish community experienced in Nazi Germany, in Poland, in Hungary, in countless other countries, as the Jews were forced from their homes and sent to the concentration camps. And the fact that they could "pack" was really just an illusion. These items would not have been for comfort. It made it easier for the Nazis to get ahold of valuables. This past weekend was International Holocaust Remembrance Day as designated by the United Nations to commemorate the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. And for many years, I think, I could safely say that this all happened in the past.



On Oct. 7, I could no longer view this as something that happened years ago. Jews, Arabs, citizens from other countries, were forcibly removed from Israel. They were taken from their homes, from their families, their safety, their security. The world debates how to negotiate with these terrorists, the perpetrators.

What can be given to secure the release of the remaining 136 hostages? What will Hamas accept so the hostages don't spend even one more day away from their loved ones?

There are no comforts where they are being held hostage. No sense of security; no semblance of safety. We pray for their safe return. We pray that the IDF soldiers are swift and secure in their missions to find the hostages and safely bring them home. We have faith in G-d. We have faith that HaShem will watch over the hostages and the soldiers so they are successful. We do mitzvot in their merit to secure their safe return. We do mitzvot to tip the scales to the side of good.

And we hold onto the fuzzy socks, hoping and praying that the hostages will come home soon to their own comforts.

Shabbat Shalom.