



When They Come For Us

By Pam Morris, Early Learning Center director

In the early '80s, I was a teenager, spending my Tuesday evenings at USY (United Synagogue Youth), a Jewish teen group. My Saturday evenings were usually spent at a dance or a Jewish weekend event and listening to Safam. Have you heard of them? Safam was a musical group, begun in the 1970s and they even performed at some of these USY events. Now you can find them on iTunes and Spotify and if the website is to be believed, you can contact them to come and perform.

A memory of a song came to me this weekend when the name Anatoly Sharansky came up in a conversation. Do you remember him? After being held in a Soviet prison and labor camp for nine years, Anatoly Sharansky, a refusenik, changed his name to Natan and made Aliyah. The song *Leaving Mother Russia*, performed by Safam, shares a message of resiliency in the face of these dire circumstances.

Written by Robbie Solomon in 1978, *Leaving Mother Russia's* chorus chants:

*We are leaving Mother Russia,
We have waited far too long.
We are leaving Mother Russia,
When they come for us we'll be gone.*

The last refrain goes on:

*For in my darkest hour
Alone inside my cell
I kept the vision
Of my home in Yisrael.
My friends we know what silence brings,
Another Hitler waiting in the wings,
So stand up now and shout it to the sky,
They may bring us to our knees but we'll never die!*



And as I recall these words, the words that evoke sadness and strength at the same time, these words that at the time referred to the Jewish citizens in the former Soviet Union, I can't help but realize the connection to what we are witnessing now. Our sons, daughters, *sibim, sibatot*, and children, the hostages being held in Gaza, what are they feeling? Are they even still alive? The terrorists that took them out of their homes, are keeping them from their loved ones, the terrorists are the evil presence in the region. Why is this so hard for people to understand?

Up until Oct. 6, residents of Gaza freely entered and left Israel to work. They worked in the fields, they worked in construction, they worked in industry (Read about Soda Stream [here](#)) All Israeli citizens were offered the same protection, the same opportunities, Arab Israelis, Christian Israelis, Jewish Israelis, the same benefits, the same pay for the same work.

But then, Oct. 7 happened. Terrorists streamed across the border into Israel from Gaza. Terrorists parachuted into a music festival. People were instantly gunned down or knifed to death. Women were raped. People were burned. People were taken. Propaganda continues to fly from the mouths of the terrorists. From the terrorists themselves, they admit to: using hospitals full of the sick, the elderly, the wounded as safe harbors. "Abu Shlouf also told the IDF under interrogation about the ways in which terror groups like Islamic Jihad and Hamas use hospitals as terrorist headquarters, and how they transported their leaders in secret using ambulances."

(WorldIsraelNews.com, 4/8/2024)

While Israel continues to map out their targets, trying to avoid the hospitals, limiting the number of civilian casualties, the world turns a blind eye and believes the terrorists. It is so disheartening when I see reports of Israel being scolded for continuing the war.

Where is the outrage that the terrorists haven't let the hostages go? Where's the outrage that the International Red Cross hasn't been in to check on the hostages? Where is the outrage that the terrorists even took people to begin with?



And that Israel should stop? I have no words. I hope those leaders never have their family members kidnapped, assaulted, kept from life-saving medicine, murdered. I hope they never have to choose to be the “bigger person” and let those kidnappers, those rapists, those murderers, off the hook.

In the words of Safam, “So stand up now and shout it to the sky, They may bring us to our knees but we’ll never die!”

Shabbat Shalom.