

#EMPTYBEDS: SWEET DREAMS, MY LOVE

Songs, Stories and Prayers for Children in Captivity



A BEDTIME ROUTINE

As the sun sets and stars fill the twilight sky, parents around the world find a cherished few minutes to disconnect from daily distractions and focus on their children. Each bedtime routine is different but tends to include some combination of songs, stories and prayers.



At a recent rally to free the hostages, Rachel Goldberg, mother of Hersh Goldberg-Polin, shared her routine with the crowd.

Concerned about what nighttime feels like for the kids being held hostage, Rachel recounted that her lullaby “always helped Hersh sleep well. Maybe he’s singing it to the other children.”

Listen to the lullaby [here](#) or scan the QR code: →



Goodnight Hershy, sleep tight my love. May god watch over my Hersh from above.
Tomorrow I'm working. What would I do? I'd be lost and lonely if not for you.

So close your eyes. It's alright for now. I have spent my life traveling, spent my life free.
And I couldn't repay all my Hersh has done for me.

So sleep tight Hershy, unfurl your brow. And know your mamma loves you and we're
alright for now. We're alright for now.

◆ What memories do you have of your bedtime routine as a child?



PRAYERS FOR PROTECTION AND REDEMPTION

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד

Hear, Israel! Adonai is our God. Adonai is one.

הַמַּלְאָךְ הַגָּאֵל אֶתִּי מִכָּל־רָע יְבָרֵךְ אֶת־הַנְּעָרִים וְיִקְרָא בְּהֵם שְׁמִי
וְשֵׁם אֲבוֹתַי אַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וְיִדְּוֹ לְרַב בְּקִרְבַּ הָאָרֶץ:

The Angel who redeemed me from all evil, should bless the children, and let my name be called on them, together with the name of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac. May they be like fish, multiplying within the land.

One of the defining aspects of a Jewish bedtime routine is the recitation of the bedtime Shema. It begins with the Shema proclamation and includes additional prayers that relate to faith and protection as we go on a journey through sleep.

Each of the additional prayers carries special significance when considering the dark and sleepless nights that many of us are experiencing. One of those prayers, “Hamalach”, plays a central role in the bedtime routine of many Jewish homes.

◆ [Click here](#) to listen to Neshama Carlbach's *Hamalach* rendition or scan the QR code.

As you listen, close your eyes and meditate on the idea that the angel who is capable of redemption should bless the children, and everyone else, in captivity.



PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AWARENESS

It's impossible to grasp the significance of over 240 people in captivity. In attempt to demonstrate the magnitude, a number of public memorials have emerged. A massive shabbat table with over 240 seats is set, and empty, in Times Square. Blindfolded teddy bears are displayed in Madrid. Red balloons fly in Romania, the Netherlands, Germany, Mexico, and more. Concerts are played to empty auditoriums, where the faces of the those missing are taped to vacant chairs. And empty strollers are displayed near Parliament Square in London to draw attention to the children in captivity.



Recently, an installation of #emptybeds for each hostage – including cribs, toddler beds, twins and doubles – was erected in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and other cities around the world.

[See the installation here.](#)



- ◆ What does this demonstration symbolize to you?
- ◆ Imagine walking through this display. What would you be thinking about? What would you be feeling?



AN INTERACTIVE INSTALLATION

On the 30th day since the October 7th massacre, over 100 leading actors in Israel gathered at Habima Theater in Tel Aviv. They didn't put on a performance. Instead, they sat beside #emptybeds and shared their most cherished bedtime routine by reading stories to those who belong in those beds.

Children's books are often full of colorful illustrations and minimal text, but their simplicity shouldn't overshadow the profound ideas that are at their core. In fact, the real art of a children's book is the ability to convey messages that are otherwise complex in a captivating and poignant way.

What children's book would you choose to read to one of the children in captivity? And what is the central idea behind that book which you'd like to share with that child?

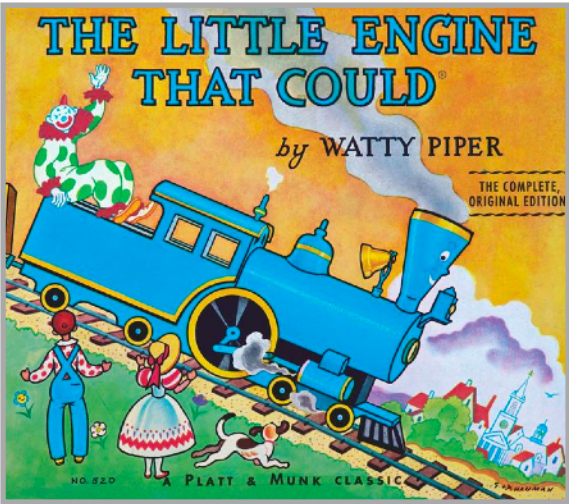
Browse [this library](#) of children's books to trigger your memory. 

Click on the top left square in the library to listen to a lullaby as you make a selection.



◆ In the space below, explain your selection as though you're telling it to the child directly.

EXAMPLE



I selected The Little Engine that Could by Watty Piper because it's a story about perseverance. What you experienced is unfathomable and will stick with you for the rest of your life. Remember, though, that you're strong and resilient beyond measure and have a whole beautiful life ahead of you.

