

SHABBAT: TESTAMENT & PROMISE

Creating a Collective Memory for Shabbat, October 7



Following the Shabbat that shattered the Jewish People on October 7, 2023, a Shabbat table with more than 220 empty seats was set up outside the Art Museum of Tel Aviv.

The high chairs at a handful of seats, the children's cups in other settings and the white roses alongside some of the plates make the symbolism painfully clear: This table is for the 220+ hostages Hamas is holding in Gaza.



Source: The Jerusalem Post; Photo credit: GILI YAARI /FLASH90

In the week that followed, similar tables were set in Rome, Los Angeles, Sydney, Paris, Washington D.C and more.

Consider:

- ◆ When looking at this photo, I see _____
- ◆ When looking at this photo, I notice _____
- ◆ When looking at these photos I feel _____ and _____



Contrast the empty Shabbat table with this one; then read the text that follows:



Source: JNS: Jewish News Syndicate; Photo courtesy of OneTable.

“Six days a week we live under the tyranny of things of space; on the Sabbath we try to become attuned to holiness in time. It is a day on which we are called upon to share in what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation, from the world of creation to the creation of the world...” - The Sabbath, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

Consider:

- ◆ What words come to mind when thinking about your Shabbat table?
- ◆ What does Shabbat represent for you, for your family, and for the Jewish people?

On Shabbat, October 7th, one of Judaism's greatest gifts and most beautiful *mitzvot* - Shabbat - was shattered. Our sacred day of rest, warmth and meaning turned into a day of despair and bloodshed. Yet with all the loss, and with all the horror, the following week Shabbat came again. And it will continue to come. It can, and will, continue to give us warmth. As Echad Ha'am famously said: "More than Jews have kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept the Jews".

- ◆ Might the image of the empty shabbat table represent both loss and continuity? Can this Shabbat Table be **both** a testament to the horrors and loss, **and** also a promise that we will prevail?

There are two images of the empty Shabbat table on the next page.

- ◆ On one, write a caption that serves as a testament to Shabbat, October 7, 2023.
- ◆ On the other, write a caption that serves as a promise of hope, of continuity, and of rebuilding.
- ◆ Now, look at the image again, and again describe two feelings: describe what they feel – two feelings: _____ and _____





Source: The Jerusalem Post; Photo credit: GILI YAARI /FLASH90

CAPTION: _____



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CAPTION: _____