

## Solidarity Salons

This year, more than ever, Israeli society and the global Jewish people find themselves bound by a covenant of fate and covenant of destiny. These covenants prove themselves powerful and relevant as we witness the values of *Arvut Hadadit* ערבות הדדית and solidarity within Israeli society and with our brothers and sisters in the global Jewish world, playing a significant and integral role in building resilience and revival.

There is no doubt that it is our time to take responsibility - as community leaders - and to dedicate time to strengthening the sense of solidarity, but also to learn, understand, and commit to the unity of our people.

We find ourselves increasingly engaged in the question of "how to" encourage solidarity - how to awaken it, between whom, and how to maintain it over time? In recent months, a wide variety of projects and initiatives have been created to strengthen solidarity among all parts of the Jewish people - from philanthropy to solidarity missions, the creation of unique educational resources, and more.

Now, as we approach Israel's national days and due to the ongoing war, we have created "**Solidarity Salons**" - a methodology based on gathering and dialogue, in an intimate group, allowing it's participants a meaningful encounter.

"Solidarity Salons" provide an opportunity for both the hosts and the participants to come together for an entire evening, dedicating it to shared discussion and learning that allows exposure and familiarity with the various voices of the Jewish people and their inclusion within the intimate space of the salon.

Below are four proposals for themes for the Solidarity Salons, which serve as central milestones in all our lives since the events of October 7th and the new reality we all experience:

Solidarity Salon "In their light and memory"	Solidarity Salon "Am Yisrael Chai"
Solidarity Salon "Ma Nishtana - What has changed?" - Between 'there' and 'here'	Solidarity Salon "Unity and Leadership Across Generations"

In the brief guide below, you will find a proposal for the structure of the salon for each of the presented themes, including a suggestion for an opening, references to possible content, and the use of resources related to the chosen topic, as well as guiding questions and additional instructions to help shape your salon in the way you choose.

**Remember - the success of the salon lies in its existence.** There are no 'rules' regarding the length of the salon, the decoration, etc. - choose what is comfortable and will allow for an open and relaxed atmosphere among the participants. Honor the evening, make sure there is a pleasant space for sharing thoughts and feelings, and above all - focus on being present and place the feeling of solidarity at the center.

[\[Link to a file containing diverse texts for use during "Solidarity Salons"\]](#)

## **Salon 1: Solidarity Salon "To Their Light and Memory"**

### **Framework**

The war that broke out on October 7th didn't spare anyone in Israel and the Jewish people as a whole. We all felt the sense of fear that prevailed and the understanding that our lives were about to change. As the dimensions of destruction unfolded, so did the stories of bravery and inspiration of those who survived the events, as well as those who were kidnapped or didn't survive.

Each person carries within them their story and their life experiences, which have shaped who they are. Through each story, we can discern the values that guided each individual throughout their lives in making crucial and meaningful decisions that defined them at those moments – whether they are values of Zionism, courage, family, solidarity, and more. These values are the common foundation for us – the Jewish people – from which we must draw inspiration and act for our future. They are what unite us - in every place in the world, in every community, and in every language.

In the "To Their Light and Memory" salon, we want to invite you to choose a story of one person, and illuminate them - tell their story, extract the values that led them throughout their lives, discuss their connection to our lives, and think together about how we can continue walk in their path while spreading these values to the entire Jewish world.

Objective: The salon will provide a space to illuminate and remember the fallen, the victims, and the kidnapped and their Jewish story (immigration, interests, community activism, education etc.), and to trace the central values that guided them on their journey and give us inspiration.

Leading Question: What core value led the person we chose to illuminate and remember, and how can it inspire us in our lives today - as people and as communities- working for the creation, strengthening, and preservation of solidarity in the Jewish people?

### Preparation for Hosting the Salon:

Choose a character you want to illuminate and remember - explore their personal story and understand the central values that led them during their life. You can use any source you're comfortable with to explore the many personal .

We recommend choosing a character to whom you or your community have a personal connection to, who represents values that you want to inspire or whose story was a turning point for you.

### **Evening Program:**

Opening and Personal Connection - Open the evening by tell participants why you chose to host your 'Solidarity Salon' by the theme "To Their Light and Memory". You can start with a reading that will connect the salon members to the evening ahead.

Personal Story – Share with the participants your personal story and your connection to the salon, and encourage participants to also share about themselves, and why they chose to join us tonight.

Main Session – Share with the participants to the rationale behind the salon topic, set the goal and central question in the center of the room.

Screen the special video produced in memory of the fallen and missing soldiers, the ["Hallelujah" video](#).

Now, share with the participants the personal story of the person you chose to illuminate and remember. You can tell their story through reading and learning, and you can also use external sources such as videos, online articles, social media pages, memorial pages, or alternatively public pages like "Daily Postcard" and more.

You can also invite family and friends of the chosen person to share the story from their personal and firsthand perspective, thereby creating meaningful connection for them and for the salon participants.

After sharing the chosen person's story with the participants in the salon - open the leading question and think together: What are the central values that led the character you chose?

Conduct a discussion with salon participants about these values, brainstorm and think together about all their leading values.

Discussion and discourse – This is the place and time to be together, to share thoughts, and to move forward with the values discourse.

After gathering all the values, choose a leading value and continue the discussion:

- Where can we identify the solidarity of the Jewish people in the personal story of the character? At which points did they meet solidarity, and how did they fulfill its Jewish identity?
- Try to discuss the connectivity question of the same value to our world - both within Israeli society and in the entire Jewish world.
- Think together how we can continue the character's path while spreading these values to the community.

## **Salon 2: Solidarity Salon "Am Yisrael Chai"**

### **Framework**

Beyond all the slogans of unity and victory that have surrounded us in recent months, such as "Together we will win" and "Unity above all," there is one that stands out with pride – the expression "Am Yisrael Chai."

This expression, heard in the mouths of every Jewish community around the world, whether in Israel, the United States, Australia, Latin America, Europe, and beyond, manages to encapsulate all the positive feelings and hope that lead us to action and resilience, conveying strength and fortitude – all in just three words, "Am Yisrael Chai."

However, some may be cynical when hearing this expression. They may see it as representing a specific sector within the Jewish people, or they may think it is used with excessive zeal and without genuine intent. But it is enough to see and hear the calls from Jewish communities worldwide to

understand that this is not a gimmick, it is not just a slogan – it is an almost prophetic promise, which the entire people intend to work hard to fulfill.

We hear this expression from all directions, and in this salon, we want to celebrate the strength of the Jewish people and draw strength from it – to expose ourselves to the diverse Jewish communities around the world, to explore the massive demonstrations of solidarity worldwide, in expressions of support and encouragement, in the significant steps taken by the global Jewish people for the people residing in Israel – and to ask why they act this way across the seas and how it strengthens our sense of belonging to the Jewish people.

Objective: The salon will provide a space for exploring and exposing the richness of Jewish culture worldwide and the massive demonstrations of solidarity around the world – from a sense of strengthening and communal continuity and Jewish peoplehood.

Leading Question: "Am Yisrael Chai" – Is this a covenant of fate or a covenant of destiny, and how can we together continue to strengthen it?

Preparation for Hosting the Salon:

Choose several expressions of solidarity from the Jewish world – solidarity letters from the [Solidarity Initiative website](#), videos, images from the internet, and more.

### **Evening Program:**

Opening and Personal Connection – Open the evening by tell participants why you chose to host your 'Solidarity Salon' by the theme "Am Yisrael Chai." You can start with a reading that will connect the salon members to the evening ahead.

Personal Story – Share with the participants your personal story and your connection to the salon, and encourage participants to also share about themselves, and why they chose to join us tonight.

Main Salon – Share with the participants to the rationale behind the salon topic, set the goal and central question in the center of the room.

Share with the salon participants the [world map](#) showing Jewish communities around the world and their sizes. Based on the depth of knowledge among the salon participants, conduct a brief opening discussion about the Jewish communities appearing on the map. Ask the salon members which community is the most surprising in terms of numbers or share specific customs or traditions you know or have learned about the different and diverse communities – we do that to expose salon participants to the richness of the various Jewish communities worldwide.

We will try to show that our ways of life are diverse, our opinions are different, but throughout history, among all Jewish communities worldwide, there has been a covenant of destiny and a covenant of fate – and we will place these two concepts 'on the table' for further discussion.

After the initial discussion and the thought-provoking exploration of the wide variety of Jewish communities worldwide, we want to expose our salon members to the various expressions of solidarity from around the world.

We will present to the salon several expressions of solidarity from the Jewish world that we have chosen in advance ([solidarity letters](#), videos, pictures, and more), and we will indicate which community appreciated them.

Ask the salon members to choose one expression that particularly moves them and best represents to them the expression "Am Yisrael Chai."

Discussion and discourse – This is the time and place to be together, to share thoughts, and to continue the discourse.

After each participant has chosen the expression of solidarity that especially resonates with them – ask:

- Which video did you choose? What about it touched you?
- What common symbols did you identify between the video and us in Israel?
- What can we learn about the Jewish community and its support for Israel from the video?
- If you could, what would you say to the participants of the demonstration you saw in the video?
- Is this expression of support important, and why?
- Is this expression of support an expression of a covenant of fate or a covenant of destiny?

### **Salon 3: Solidarity Salon "Ma Nishtana - What Has Changed?" – Between 'Here' and 'There'**

#### **Framework**

The Jewish world in which we live today is no longer the same world.

On one hand, in Israel, changes have occurred abruptly with the outbreak of conflict on the morning of Simchat Torah – families uprooted from their homes, loved ones lost, people enlisting for months of reserve duties, massive acts of volunteering, and more. Amidst these immediate changes, over time we also identify many underlying changes surfacing beneath the surface – questions about Israeli identity today and the essence of our Jewish identity here surround us, and we are required to address those as part of the emerging process of resilience.

On the other hand, significant transformations have also occurred for our brothers and sisters outside of Israel since October 7th, and their lives overseas don't look the same either. Concern for families in Israel, tremendous philanthropic mobilization, increased levels of antisemitism, challenges on university campuses, and more. The connection between Jewish communities worldwide and Israel becomes more complex than ever, as they become targets for those opposing Israel's actions.

Much has changed, and it's time to start pondering together "Ma Nishtana - What has changed?" – we want to invite you to come together and learn about the transformations and changes that have occurred and are still occurring "there" – in the Jewish communities beyond the sea, and also here,

at home. If we can identify and understand what has changed, we can also strengthen the sense of solidarity and chart the new and best path for our people.

Objective: The salon will provide a space for dialogue and learning around the changes that the Jewish people outside of Israel have undergone since the events of October 7th, and how it relates to our lives, wherever we are.

Leading question: "Ma Nishtana - What has changed?" in the Jewish communities across the sea and in Israel, and how does it connect to our lives, wherever we are?

Preparation for hosting the salon:

Go on personal research and prepare yourselves – collect and identify the main data and important points on which you want to focus during the evening.

### **Evening Program:**

Opening and Personal Connection – Open the evening by tell participants why you chose to host your 'Solidarity Salon' by the theme "Ma Nishtana - What has changed?" You can start with a reading that will connect the salon members to the evening ahead.

Personal Story – Share with the participants your personal story and your connection to the salon, and encourage participants to also share about themselves, and why they chose to join us tonight.

Main Salon - Share with the participants to the rationale behind the salon topic, set the goal and central question in the center of the room.

Introduce the "[David's Cards](#)" – Choose the "Explore דפדוף" game room and ask each participant to enter the game, and choose 3 cards: 1. A card representing their personal Jewish identity before October 7th; 2. A card representing their personal Jewish identity after October 7th; 3. A card representing the Jewish identity they aspire to.

Ask salon members to share – as they present their cards, try to guide them with questions about what has changed between card 1 and card 2, and what needs to change to get from card 2 to card 3.

Collect the "What has changed" points raised by each individual and write them down in a visible place for everyone to see.

Now – pose the question "What has changed?" to the participants, this time from the perspective of world Jewry, and ask: In your opinion, what has changed for world Jewry after October 7th? Salon host can now share the gathered data and highlighted trends during the preparation phase, in order to provide a knowledge basis for the conversation.

If desired, invite a guest speaker who can share their personal story via video call, allowing you to hear together and learn from their personal story about the changes experienced by Jews around the world.

Collect everyone's responses and record them alongside the "What has changed" points you've already collected in the previous stage. Try to write the two sequences differently (in different

colors, with a separating line) so that we can easily continue the "What has changed" process and attribute the correct characteristics to the "there" and "here" aspects.

Discussion and discourse –This is the time and place to be together, to share thoughts, and to continue the discourse.

After collecting the "What has changed" points for our lives here and for the lives of world Jewry, open the discussion and conduct a debate around the following questions:

- What are the similarities in the changes between us and world Jewry?
- What are the differences of change for us and for world Jewry? Why do you think these points are different?
- How does the "What has changed" for world Jewry affect our lives here, at home?
- What can we do to support and help our brothers and sisters across the sea cope with the challenges they face as a result of the changes they are experiencing?

#### **Salon 4: Solidarity Salon "Unity and Leadership throughout Generations"**

##### **Framework**

The question of Jewish unity has always been a crucial concern in our collective memory as a people. Whether in early periods in our history upon entering the promised land, during the Babylonian exile, or in modern history with the advent of the Zionist movement or the establishment of the State of Israel.

In each such situation, there was at least one central figure who led, stood at the forefront, and guided the entire people in the path they deemed right. Each figure drew inspiration from a different direction and navigated our ship towards a different horizon, but what can be said with certainty is that these figures saw the good of the entire Jewish people in front of them. Unity of the people was always a goal they aspired to, and even if they didn't always achieve it, they worked towards it constantly.

Even today, the unity of Am Israel or the Jewish people is in the headlines - where has it disappeared to in recent years? How can we preserve it today? Between whom should unity be achieved and what does such unity look like? And perhaps more than ever, it is our responsibility to understand what that 'unity' is that we all aspire to, how it was achieved in the past - and what our role is in achieving it now.

Objective: The salon will provide a space to examine the concept of unity through inspiring leadership figures throughout Jewish history.

Leading Question: How has the concept of unity evolved throughout the generations and been expressed through inspiring leadership figures, and what can we learn and apply in our own time?

Preparation for Hosting the Salon:

Choose three inspiring leadership figures from different historical periods representing different aspects of leadership and diverse voices of the global Jewish people - we recommend selecting one figure from an early historical period (for example, Moses or Queen Esther), one figure from the modern period (such as Golda Meir or Abraham Joshua Heschel), and one contemporary figure taking a leadership role in the Jewish community today. This broad spectrum will allow for a deep and engaging examination of the concept of unity and the path that led to it.

When choosing your inspiring leadership figures, we recommend taking under consideration the Jewish calendar, or the geographic location in which you find yourselves - for example, if the salon is held during the period between Purim and Passover, you can choose characters associated with one of these holidays. Alternatively, if you choose to hold the salon during Israel's national holidays, we recommend selecting figures from the Zionist movement, through which we can also connect to the specific time of year.

Additionally, think in advance would how you want to present them - whether the presentation is oral, through prominent quotes from that figure, using a source page, or alternatively through a video showcasing their actions and more.

You can use these sources for inspiration on the topic of inspiring leadership figures, or any other source available to you:

- [Source 1 - National Library: Figures in the History of Israel](#)
- [Source 2 - National Library: Figures in Judaism](#)

### **Evening Program:**

Opening and Personal Connection – Open the evening by tell participants why you chose to host your 'Solidarity Salon' by the theme "Unity and Leadership throughout Generations" You can start with a reading that will connect the salon members to the evening ahead.

Personal Story – Share with the participants your personal story and your connection to the salon, and encourage participants to also share about themselves, and why they chose to join us tonight.

Main Salon - Share with the participants to the rationale behind the salon topic, set the goal and central question in the center of the room.

Present your chosen three characters - and the characteristics you choose to focus on (for example, prominent personality traits, core values, major areas of activity, life partners, leadership style, etc.).

While presenting the characters, also present the spirit of the Jewish people at the time - whether it was united, in what areas it was divided, and what challenges it faced.

Now - move on to the next stage and compare the leadership styles of the characters and the results they led to.

Discussion and discourse – This is the time and place to be together, to share thoughts, and to continue the discourse.

Continue the comparison and learning process –



- What was the leadership move that each of the leading figures led the people during their respective periods?
- Was their leadership style well received by the people, or was there criticism?
- What kind of unity was there among the Jewish people at that time - and how much was it influenced by the leadership style of the chosen figure?
- What can we learn from historical examples about uniting the Jewish people over the years?
- How can we implement findings and action plans to create and maintain Jewish unity, without necessitating uniformity?