



Do You Remember?

By Pam Morris, Early Learning Center director

On the eve of 9/11, it is 340 days since the hostages were abducted from the Nova Music Festival, ripped from their lives, their loved ones, experienced cruel, sadistic torture. It is 340 days since the countless murders, rapes, beheadings took place. I think it is important to keep all of this in context.

On Sept. 11 this year, people from the age of 6 years old in 2001 on up, will have discussions about where they were on 9/11. I was in Chandler, Arizona, driving to work at the East Valley JCC, listening to the radio with my almost 13-month-old in the backseat as announcers told us that 1 tower was hit. Then only a few minutes later telling us that a second tower had been hit in New York City. They reported that a plane had hit the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. They reported that a plane had crashed in a field in Pennsylvania. This was unbelievable. This was gut wrenching. This was devastating.

After the first tower was hit, I did something I shouldn't have done. While I was driving, I called my husband on my cell phone, but didn't use my speaker phone as I didn't want my child to hear. "Are your parents ok?" - my father in law used to work in lower Manhattan. My husband had not been listening to the radio and had no idea what I was talking about. Ahhh, to still be ignorant of what occurred.

We all have stories. Some of us lost loved ones on that day. Our family didn't, but we know people who did. Close friends lost their sister, Vicky Yancey; she was on flight 77 which was flown into the Pentagon. We have stories of near misses. People who didn't go into Manhattan that day, although they should have, and therefore survived.

On 9/11, our lives changed forever. There were new protocols for safety at schools, in office buildings, at the airport. People would complain but if there was an Israeli nearby, the answer would always be the same, "Welcome to Israel." Because, while 9/11 really knocked us for a loop, Israelis were used to all of this.

Security was and is no joke in Israel. We Americans were spoiled; we were naive. We were ignorant. We had that luxury. And now the powers that be wonder, did Israel become



complacent? Did they get too comfortable and therefore the Simchat Torah terrorist attack happened?

The newest estimates by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) state that around “3,000 terrorists invaded southern Israel to carry out the murderous rampage through Gaza border towns.” (The Times of Israel) This attack “claimed the lives of some 1,400 people in Israel, mostly civilians butchered in their homes or at Nova. The terrorists also seized at least 245 hostages of all ages, under the cover of a deluge of thousands of rockets fired at Israeli towns and cities.”

The number of deaths on 9/11 is greater. According to the 9/11 Memorial and Museum, the 9/11 attacks left 2,977 dead across New York, Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania. There is no comparison, however, that allows for stating that the American tragedy was greater than the Israeli tragedy. One can't play the game of comparing the two and then saying one was worse than the other.

Both were horrific. Both claimed too many lives. Both continue to this day with countless deaths from the fallout from the buildings and the first responders whose sicknesses continue to claim lives because of the fallen buildings in lower Manhattan. The terrorist attack on Oct. 7 is still going on and has created a resurgence in the Anti-Semitism throughout the world.

My pain isn't greater than those who lost loved ones on 9/11. But as a Jew, my life is so different now than it was on Oct. 6. The new worries I have when someone stops me in a grocery store and asks, after seeing the bag with Hebrew that I'm carrying, “Hey, are you Jewish?” The new worries I have about my daughters on college campuses.

Do I remember 9/10? If I am being honest, I really don't. But 9/11 and its aftermath, that I remember. Do I remember Oct. 6? That I can answer unequivocally yes. I remember when I wasn't scared for my daughters at university. I remember when I wasn't fearful about what will happen next. I remember the security and safety I felt, past tense.

We say #neverforget #neveragain for the Holocaust. Have we forgotten already?

Shabbat Shalom.