



May Her Memory Forever Be For a Blessing

By Pam Morris, Early Learning Center director

Mourning in Judaism honors the people left behind. The days set aside for *shiva* are meant to be used for the family to talk about the loved ones, share stories about who they were, how much they meant to the family.

The loss of a loved one is never easy. Whether the person was sick for a long time or the death is sudden, no one is ready for the finality of death. There is always just one more thing you want to say to your loved one.

Even in the movies, it is depicted this way. In *Good Will Hunting*, Skylar, Minnie Driver's character, says to Will Hunting, Matt Damon's character, "Do you think I don't wake up every day, that I wouldn't give this money back in a second if it meant I could have just one more day with my dad? But I can't and that's my life."

During this past year, the number of moms, dads, sisters, brothers, sabas, savtas that wake up like Skylar, wishing for just one more day with their loved one, the number is astounding. Of course every year's numbers would be large, but this year, since Oct. 7, the numbers and the impact seems insurmountable. There are the initial 1,200 plus deaths from the Nova music festival but how many more soldiers and civilians over the course of the year?

And then there was Sunday. Shirel Golan, 22, a survivor of the Nova Music Festival, after two hospitalizations for her mental health, after losing countless friends on Oct. 7, after fleeing from the Hamas terrorists who



parachuted into the festival, killing, kidnapping, assaulting the attendees, took her own life on her 22nd birthday.

Shirel's story is heartbreaking. Her family's experiences can't be compared to anyone else's. The Bibas family's experiences can't be compared to anyone else's. Each Nova survivor has a story. Each hostage has a story. Each family has a story.

And those are firsthand accounts. What about the families that are impacted? Or the friends of the families?

One year later, this Thursday evening we celebrate Simchat Torah, we aren't talking about second generation and third generation survivors like we do when it comes to the Holocaust. These witnesses to their parents' victimization and torture will soon be the only accounts we have left. But Oct. 7 is right here, in our faces. Survivors are experiencing PTSD right before our eyes. And as the attacks by the terrorists continue, the hostages not being released, we haven't begun to see what the aftermath will be.

And the sadness coming from Israel, well we live in a global society. The sadness stretches across the oceans. It stretches across continents. It is all over social media. It is in my heart and I am connected only as a Jew.

May her memory forever be for a blessing. May his memory forever be for a blessing. May their memories forever be for blessings. *Zikhronah/zikhrono livrakha*

Shabbat Shalom.