

The Power of Hope

Facilitator Guide

What can we learn from Jewish tradition about the value and actions of hope?
How did our hope and images of a better future for the hostages facilitate a new reality?

FRAMING THE ISSUE

We launched this entire project on the 100th day of captivity. We hoped and prayed each day since then that we would no longer need it, that it would become a part of our past. We never imagined that it would take so long, but we also did not give up on the hope that this moment would come.

Joyous Return

On October 13, 2025, on the eve of Simhat Torah, 738 days after they were abducted, the last twenty live hostages were returned to Israel from Gaza, as part of the Trump initiated Israel-Hamas ceasefire agreement (after other hostages were returned at earlier points, through various deals and agreements, as well as some through military action). After days and days of expressing hope and taking action, in many different ways, Israelis, Jews around the world and concerned humans everywhere saw their hopes and dreams of hostages returning home, alive, come true. It was a moment that felt almost too good to be true. It was a moment people had prayed and hoped for, and taken action to make a reality. It was because people, both lay and leaders, did not despair or give up, that it actually became a reality.

It's Not Over Yet

Tragically, not all the hostages had this happy end. Many were killed in captivity by Hamas, throughout the two years since they were abducted. Some were accidentally killed in captivity by Israeli military action. We see, love and support all of the family and loved ones of those who did not return home, and share in their deep excruciating pain. There are still 13 deceased hostages in Gaza, who, to date, were not returned for burial in Israel, despite the deal including all hostages- live and deceased. We continue to hope and pray that they will all be returned soon, for proper burial, and that their families will have the closure they need.

The Power of Visualization

One way people expressed their hope was by envisioning what it might actually look like to have them come home. How would it look? How would it feel? What would we say? In this resource, we explore the power of hope from a Jewish perspective and the importance of giving shape and form to our vision of a better reality in the future. Using text, artwork and videos, we share examples of images that became a reality (as well as some that have not. Yet.) Through these images, we invite you to encourage your learners to visualize their hopes and dreams for a better future.

Info For Facilitator



Target Audience:

Middle school, High School,
Young Adults, Adults



Length of Program:

45- 60 minutes



Materials & Prep:

- Printed copies of the source sheets for each participant
- Videos and a way to project them
- Images- printed cards or projected on a screen
- Paper and markers for participants to draw their own postcards of hope

LET'S EXPLORE

Study & Discussion:

After framing the topic with your learners, divide them into small groups (2-4) to engage with the text study on the source sheet and discuss the questions on the sheet.

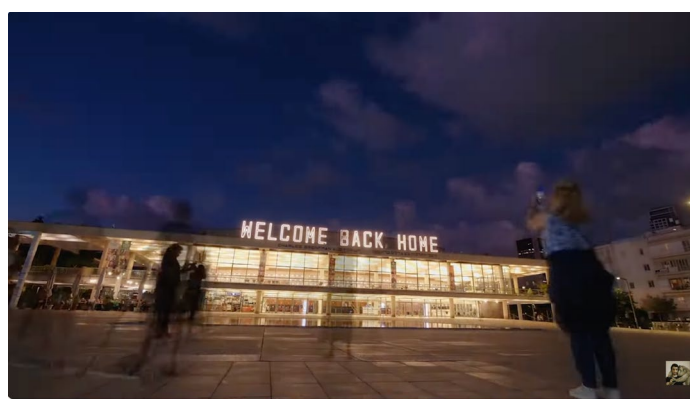
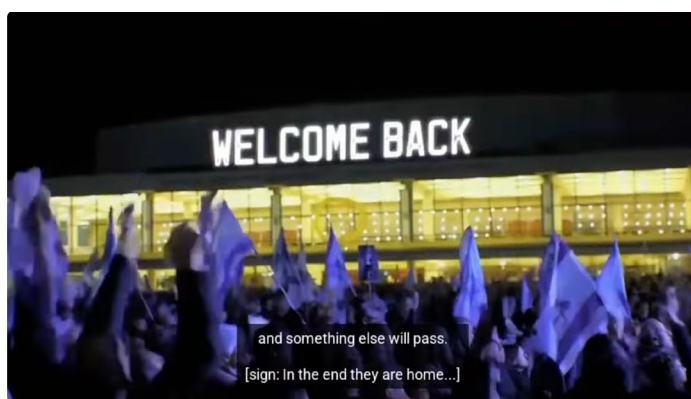
Explore Creative Visions of the Future

Throughout the war, at various points, there were people who created images of their hopeful vision of how it would look when the hostages return.

Illustrator Zeev Engelmayer, popularly known as "Shoshke, created the **"Daily Postcard" project**, in which every single day from the beginning of the war, he drew one "postcard"- a simple image, drawn in colorful markers, of something related to that day. Some of them were images of hostages, with something special that represented them, some were of people who were killed on October 7th, the horrors of Gaza, images of soldiers, people in Israel, coping with daily life. Amongst those, he created many images that were his images of hope- early on in the war, he drew playful colorful images of the hostages returning on rainbow slides or floating under umbrellas. Ayelet Levy, the mother of released hostage Naama Levy, told him she dreamed of herself hugging her daughter the way he drew it in his image, before Naama was released home in January. As this last deal came close, he drew images of specific hostages embraced by their family members- people we all came to know through their stories and activism. Early on in the war, he designed a Map of Hope, colorfully presented on the map of Israel. A few weeks ago he drew another map- that of the return of the hostages. He believes he has a role not only in portraying and sharing reality, but also in helping people dream, imagine and visualize a better future. Some of these images are shared in the image file, along with images created by other Israeli illustrators.



Israeli singer Yoni Bloch created a music video in January 2025, titled: **"Sof Tov"- A Good End**. In the video, using AI generated imagery, he shared his visions of how a good ending of this story could look. Much of it relates to the return home of the hostages, but it also includes broader visions of peace in the middle east, end of war and weapons, and compulsory Israeli draft, and includes a "Peace Tour" where Taylor Swift performs in Tel Aviv along with him. Here is a [version of the video](#), with English subtitles and some explanations of the various visual references. The video became very popular, giving people a moving image of what a good end could actually look like. On October 22, 2025, after the return of the final twenty live hostages, he released [another video](#)- this time titled: **Sof Tov- The Reality Version** of actual, non AI generated footage, of the hugs and jubilation of their return.



Click to watch video



Click to watch video

On October 12th, right before the return of the final 20 live hostages, **Rabbi Hanna Yerushalmi** published the following poem-prayer, in which she shares the hopes of how the color yellow will return to have other associations and various other objects and times that had been dedicated to our actions on behalf of the hostages will return to their mundane former uses:

Yellow Again

Empty chairs will be
saved for friends arriving late,
and tape will be
tape again,
and hostage necklaces
will be put away, forgotten in drawers,
and Saturday night will be
date night once again.

Signs for the missing will be
for dogs and cats,
(may they come home soon!)
and city squares will be filled
with grandparents pushing strollers
and lovers dreaming of futures,
walking hand in hand.

Tears will be for
mourning or joy,
but not again for anguish,
and monsters will go back to
hiding in closets or under the bed,
and when dusk settles over the land,
parents will know exactly where their children are.

And yellow will be
yellow again,
the color of fragrant etrogs,
and speckled autumn leaves,
and crown-tipped spring daffodils,
and rubber ducks, and sprinkles on a cake,
and *oh yes*, the color of the hopeful, rising sun.

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Share any or some of the above imagery with your learners, as examples of how one can give visualization to a hope or dream of a better future.

TAKE ACTION!

We have learned about the significance of hope and holding on to it, about the connection between hope and taking action, and the ways various artists help people envision the hopeful future they are aiming for. The power of this imagery can be both a way of internally keeping the hopeful vision in our own minds, as well as a way to communicate it outwardly to others. We encourage you to help your students turn hope into imagery as well as tangible action.

Choose the topic you wish to focus on- the return of the rest of the deceased hostages, or other visions for a better future in your own community.

Invite your students to imagine this hopeful future. You can take them through guided imagery to help them see it in their imagination. Then have your students draw an image/ write a poem/ create an AI generated image or video of their vision of the hopeful future.

- **Individual:** Encourage each learner to take on a personal commitment to find a way to express their hope: this can be done privately, or as a public facing act.
- **Group:** Together, our actions are stronger and have more impact. Brainstorm with the group an opportunity to create ways or events to encourage others to share their images of hope: inviting friends, colleagues, family members, neighbors and community groups, along with community leaders and social influencers, to share their images of hope.

CLOSING INTENTION

- After this session, what have I learned about the power of hope?
- What is one thing I can do to make sure that “hope is mandatory” in my own life?