



# PEOPLEHOOD IN TIMES OF CRISIS

*...Each of us will forever remember the moment when we first heard about the October 7 massacres. I had just arrived at the community I lead, the Downtown Minyan, my mind filled with plans for that night's Simchat Torah celebrations. I am shomeret Shabbat [she observes Shabbat laws, such as not using technology], so I was completely surprised when a congregant, frantic with worry, approached me before I had a chance to remove my jacket. He urgently informed me about a devastating attack on Israel. He spoke of Hamas breaching the border, civilian hostages, and reported atrocities.*

*I was in shock and gripped immediately by a visceral pain for my beloved Jewish people..*

*A teaching by Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik (known as the Rav) came to my mind that Shabbat, a piece of Torah that I have returned to every day since October 7. It is about Jewish peoplehood. The pain I felt in that moment was for the Jewish people, and I knew many others would be feeling the same, perhaps for the first time so acutely...*



- What do you remember about where you were, what you thought, and how you felt on October 7, 2023?
- What, if anything, surprised you about your reaction or other people's reactions?

*In a 1956 sermon, Rabbi Soloveitchik asks whether the dispersion of Jews across the world—and the ensuing diversity of Jewish customs, languages, and ways of life—has caused Jews to cease being one people: “Is the Jewish Diaspora one or not?” Are we still a “we”?*