

Daily Meditation 10-16-23

Real Men vs. Strongmen, Netanyahu and his Kind

Good morning.

Today we're continuing to meditate on the bad, sad, and violent news from the Middle East, talking specifically about the "Strongman Syndrome" that is in evidence in Israel at this time.

But of course, this is happening around the world, including in the United States.

What I'll share with you is, I think, a wonderful statement and invitation from Tikkun magazine and the Tikkun congregation, entitled "Statement of Solidarity with Israel and Palestine." And this is a shared statement, made up by Jews and by Palestinians. Very thoughtful, I think. It reads as follows:

We are outraged by, mourn deeply, and unequivocally condemn the horrific actions of Hamas. According to Israeli sources, more than 1,200 people were killed, 4,900 injured, most of whom were civilians. And over 100 individuals, including children, women and the elderly, were taken as hostages into Gaza.

We call for the immediate release Israeli hostages and Palestinian political prisoners.

We have created this joint statement, that we hope can help us rise above divisiveness and division, and call us to our highest selves.

We invite everyone who reads this statement to add your name.

The statement is written and signed by Palestinians, Jews and others, who are committed to holding complex truths, and striving to overcome polarization.

We feel the pain of our people, identify with their pain, and need to work together to uplift our shared humanity.

The unfolding horror in Israel and Gaza is an escalation of decades of state-sanctioned violence by Israel against Palestinians. We condemn the horrific actions of Hamas against Israeli civilians. We likewise condemn Israel's unbridled bombing, and cutting off access to all basic needs, including food, water, electricity and medical care.

Attacks on Palestinian and Israeli civilians are repugnant. Israeli violence against Palestinians has been intentionally hidden, slow, and steady. Contrary to what the media is reporting, this attack was not unprovoked. The Israeli and American governments have worked together to suppress and deny the inhumane acts against Palestinians, that have led to this moment. There are Palestinians and Jews that have been raising red flags, and warning about this inevitable outcome for decades, only to be dismissed and ignored.

The world's failure to challenge Israel's ongoing occupation, apartheid, and unbridled violence by settlers and soldiers in the West Bank, provides a context for what is happening now.

The recent Israeli escalation of violence, encroachment of Al Aqsa mosque, and a 16 year siege of Gaza, has led to the current explosion.

We repeat: The brutality of Hamas's attack on Israeli civilians is unjustified.

As we watched the violent attacks and rallying of xenophobia on both sides, we are brokenhearted. Although it feels like a time to stand with "our people," we know this is a time to come together.

This is a time of great suffering for all, a time of painful emotions. It is only by recognizing our shared fears, our shared tears, that we will find our way through this nightmare. It is a struggle we need to undertake jointly. When we fall back into our separate and distinct identities, we risk becoming part of the problem, not the solution.

Both peoples suffer from ongoing trauma. We are all on high alert, the fear is palpable. And it is easy for us to objectify "the other."

We seek a third path, that neither perpetuates a xenophobic response, nor sustains an unjust status quo. This moment calls us to slow down, sit with the pain and complexity, and grapple with our discomfort. It is a moment for digging deep, seeing across differences, and

remembering our deep yearning for peace and justice. It is only through compassion and empathy, that we will find a different way.

We recognize and uplift the humanity of all peoples in Israel/Palestine. We call for an immediate ceasefire from Hamas and Israel. We demand that basic needs be provided for Gazans. We demand the United States provide only humanitarian support to Israel and Gaza.

We support the creation of a movement that recognizes and affirms the humanity, dignity and desire of both peoples to live in peace, through reconciliation and justice.

I personally feel this is a profound and fitting response to the fear and violence and trauma that so many are feeling today.

Thank you. See you next week.