

Last week's Torah reading was Kedoshim, a section reminding us of our Sacred Obligation to humanity. In Kedoshim we find the verses

“You shall not hate your sibling in your heart... You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against them, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

The Torah commands us not only to avoid hatred, but to love our neighbor as ourselves. This is not a call to sentimentality—it is a demand for justice. When we see Palestinians being slaughtered and starved, when we see the cultural infrastructure in Gaza, Mosques, libraries, museums, universities and schools being destroyed, when we see the destruction of hospitals, water and food systems, when we see children, aid workers and journalists being targeted, when we see families torn apart and entire communities denied their basic rights—we cannot look away. To love our neighbor is to stand with them in their struggle. The Torah demands that we see our shared humanity.

Another Passage in the Torah shares

“When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who resides with you shall be your kin, and you shall love them as yourself.”

The Torah reminds us 'You shall love the stranger as yourself.' The Torah does not ask us to tolerate the stranger—it commands us to *love* them. In fact, Palestinians are not strangers to me, we are siblings. We must demand citizenship and equal rights for millions of Palestinians in a safe and free Israel Palestine.

Our sacred texts teach us: justice is not optional. Love—real love—calls us to act. We can only claim to love if we respond to the suffering of Gaza, if

we resist the cruelty enacted by Israel and the US. We must stand up against this ethnic cleansing, Genocide, apartheid and dispossession. Our liberation is bound together with the Palestinian people.

I call upon our university leaders, students, professors, faith communities and all people of conscience to stand up and resist this Genocidal war. Ceasefire Now. Ultimately, much like the reparation and healing process we must undertake in this land with Black and indigenous peoples, We must address the root causes of injustice impacting Palestinian people who are denied a shared future of justice, equality, and freedom. I join my teacher Rabbi Lynn Gotlieb when she says, "We must continue to hold fast to a vision with a world without walls"

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel once said during the time of the Vietnam war

Whenever I open the prayer book, I see before me images of children burning from napalm."

Today When I open the prayer book I see before me images of

- Children in Gaza being burned alive,
- Bombs scattering their body parts
- Palestinian Parents crying out with empty bowls in search of food for their families

Too many Israelis have been killed, One is too many
Too many Palestinians have been killed. One is too many

Each Martyr is an eternal sacred flame that cannot be destroyed as we carry Their dreams forward and work for a region that is free and safe for both Palestinians and Israelis.

Ceasefire Now!

