

Living as one, healing together

In the midst of Middle East fury — and broken hearts and hopes — how do we begin ending war, creating community, finally living as if we are one, echad, wahad, odin?

How do we understand ourselves and our power to redirect relationships and history?

In our experience, today's more dangerous "iron dome" is the increasing hardness around people's defended hearts—inevitable outcomes of slaying, scaring, destroying, blockading and humiliating.

Too, showering ineffective rockets disregards inescapable cause-and-effect of terrifying an unhealed, fearful, heavily militarized people — any people.

Most Palestinian and Israeli citizens seem educated and inventive about everything except thoughtful communication that humanizes one another.

Who will be the new citizen-communicators who sit down to face and hear each other — listen deeply to learn, familiarize and experience ourselves in the equal-other?

With this listening, we dignify "them" and "us," become one another's doctors, and heal together — only together.

In the flames of fear, in the illusion of individual survival, most people succumb to the clan's taboo against personal contact and empathy.

Who among us will transcend this anxiety, champion the inclusive Prophets, and practice the prescription of social scientists, mental health professionals and the spiritual greats?

Who will engage to discover that "an enemy is one whose story we have not heard" and that we are one, neighbors forever?

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Peace requires human engagement

With a refreshing economy of words, Henry Siegman ("[Why America is irrelevant to Middle East peacemaking](#)", April 8, 2014) described why America or any outside force is understandably "irrelevant to Middle East peacemaking" and why change is not going to happen first among governments and political personalities.

Unfortunately Siegman recommends only a new "Palestinian struggle" while perpetuating the usual kind of conversation in the language of confrontation and governments - still blind to the required-yet-missing public peace process of face-to-face, citizen-to-citizen engagement to humanize and experience authentic trust among the people. Even inside Israel, only a tiny portion of Arabs and Jews have relationships of any depth.

Why can we not see that "wanting" peace means pursuing human engagement? Siegman misses the point that a distinctive "struggle" requires people-to-people relationship-building including within Israel.

"The people must first paint a picture of what we want life to look like." Former MK Maj. Gen. (ret.) Ami Ayalon clarified. "No people or nation is going to go down a road where it cannot see what life looks like around the corner."

Siegman would have been more helpful by framing a new courage - a modern "struggle" of engaged Palestinians and Jews becoming artisans of communication, genuine neighbors, thus empowering governments to succeed.

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