

Weekly Teaching

February 2, 2018

By mid-life, I like many people, had learned the erosive quality of hatred and its cousin emotion, anger.

I try to remember to keep the fuel of these emotions low and in perspective.

What fuels hate and anger?

Prejudice and injustice, yet these are realities that we experience in life at all time periods.

As I am soon to go to Israel on our Interfaith Trip, I will again pray for peace in the land, peace among our human family, and peace between cousins.

There is change and motion on the prospect of peace with the U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, the withholding of financial support from UNRWA, etc.

But, there is an institutionalized anti-Zionism; the B.D.S (Boycott, Divest, Sanction) groups especially active at College Campuses; some countries even recognizing an unborn Palestinian State.

Can a Peace process be coerced by withholding money?

Can a solution to such a challenging problem as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict really be found with such a long history of hate and anger?

So many questions and thoughts traverse my mind, and I want to feel compassion and justice more than frustration and self-preservation.

I want to keep prejudices and defensiveness in perspective.

So I recall recent history; history that I can learn from; history I read that can move me.

We are inundated with so many narratives of brutality around the world.

To survive, we often distance ourselves from those narratives. We harden our hearts to the pain and to the parade of troubles.

But, the history that buoyed me through my recent turbulent thoughts and feelings about prayer, peace, the Palestinians, the Jewish homeland and Hatikva ("The Hope"), was history I knew, but was reminded about recently.

It is the history of the Hiroshima Maidens written powerfully and poignantly about in a [Times of Israel column](#) by Sara Shapiro.

It is a largely forgotten history, buried already with the weight of time and wide brush of progress.

An atomic bomb fell, people suffered, Japan humbled, but rose again, as an economic power.

Yet, for some women who did not die and get mourned, their lives and faces of disfigurement remained a repudiation; a reminder of Japan's defeat. They were shunned. Their lives, they who survived, became like that of Cain, with his mark of revulsion.

But an author, Pearl S. Buck, was asked to help make the world aware of the type of war these survivors continued to live. She connected two individuals, Reverend Tanimoto and the Jewish writer and editor Norman Cousins.

The clergyman, Reverend Tanimoto, provided a haven and purpose for these women, so that their lives would be more than a scar of humiliation for their countrymen.

He opened a sewing workshop with many sewing machines and twenty-five of the women worked there in safety and productiveness.

Yet, they needed more.

Reverend Tanimoto and Norman Cousins started the Hiroshima Maiden Project, raising money from donations from Cousins' "The Saturday Review," so readers could bring the women to the United States to receive plastic surgery to enable them to be more than symbols or reminders of defeat.

The women stayed in American homes during their surgeries and healing.

The daughters of both the clergyman and the writer met at an event honoring one of their fathers, the writer, Norman Cousins.

The clergyman's daughter, Koko Tanimoto, had only internal scars from Hiroshima's bomb.

She couldn't have children, she was not able to marry a boy because she was considered flawed.

She also had another scar, the scar of hate and anger toward the person who caused all the hardship in her life.

Yet she finally met him, heard his voice.

A television show "This is Your Life" brought her and her parents out to America to do the show.

The pilot who had dropped the bomb from the plane on Hiroshima was there, and she saw the tear in the corner of his eye.

"That tear saved me from hatred" she said. Even with all she lived through, being saved from hatred is no small thing.

The Hiroshima Maiden story, the story of the daughter, the history of the bomb, the sorrow of the pilot, the hate, the avoiding the hatred, all dominate my mind's struggle about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Palestinian people have taught generations to hate. But, there may be a possibility for peace when the hate can be banished for hope.

That will be what I pray for in Israel; that both sides might discover the tears that might save us from our hate and anger, and prompt us to instead reach out and cling to both love and hope.

Shabbat Shalom,

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