

Gathering for Peace in the Middle East





"Praying together:
Two peoples, one land,
Three faiths, one root,
One earth, one mother,
One sky, one beginning, one future, one destiny,
One broken heart,
One God.

We pray to You:
Grant us a vision of unity.
May we see the many in the one and the one in the many.
May you, Life of All the Worlds,
Source of All Amazing Differences
Help us to see clearly.
Guide us gently and firmly toward each other,
Toward peace. Amen."

Rabbi Sheila Weinberg, Jewish Community of Amherst, MA

Source: Brian Berman

A Muslim Prayer for Peace

In the name of Allah, the beneficent, the merciful.
Praise be to the Lord of the Universe who has created us and made us into tribes and nations, that we may know each other, not that we may despise each other. If the enemy incline towards peace, do thou also incline towards peace, and trust in God, for the Lord is the one that heareth and knoweth all things. And the servants of God, Most Gracious are those who walk on the Earth in humility, and when we address them, we say “PEACE.”

—Based on the Koran, 49:13, 8:61

And from the Christian faith, a Doukhobor prayer

Divine One, Please Make Me Peaceful

Divine One, please grant your blessing,
Divine One, please make me peaceful—
like calm water,
please make me humble—like low-growing grass,
please make me strong—
like the bedrock mountains stand on.
You gave me this life,
you helped my spirit grow,
your love calmed the fires that burned in me.
Please teach me to be wise,
and help me understand my life
so that I may be a loving person
who works, every day,
to make the world a better place.
Thank you, Divine One

Be Careful

By Esther Perel

Be careful to separate people from the policies of their governments.
Be careful to separate people from the actions of terrorists who live among them.

Be careful not to collapse history and context into narrow interpretation.
Be careful not to eschew complexity and nuance for the sake of memeification.

Be careful to recognize that grief for one side does not mean hate for another.
Be careful to understand that support for one side does not mean hate for the other.

Be careful of gaslighting on a mass level: disinformation and denial of loss.
Be careful not to dismiss the excruciating and real pain of others. Do not make it worse.

Be careful not to say things online that you would not say to someone in real life.
Be careful not to add hatred on top of hatred; we are all being crushed underneath its
compounding weight.

Be careful not to lose empathy for those with whom you disagree.
Be careful not to dehumanize others. Doing so dehumanizes you.

Do not lose touch with the parts of you needed most.
Your compassion. Your humanity. Your care.



Speaker:

Rayya
Liebich

Prompt for everyone:

What is your
personal
connection to this
war/conflict/
occupation?

Personal Connection

My ancestors were caught
in the middle of conflict, as
innocent bystanders and I
tremendously feel hurt for
those going through the
conflict in the region
they live in

Spectator

My connection is
I work with children
& feel helpless when
I think of these
children's lived experiences

I am from
original from
occupied land
from
Palestine

An observer
who just wants
peace. Every
life matters.

WE ~~ARE~~ ARE ALL
ONE. ANY CONFLICT
ON THE PLANET
AFFECTS US ALL.

DESCEND.
I AM T

I am a few
live been a peace
activist forever
My partner +
bonus children
are Israeli

War is between
Israel and Palestine
NOT only Gaza
End of occupation =
Peace
Justice

What is your personal
connection to this
war/conflict/occupation?

we Through the
United Church in
Castlegar.

I am my
mother's
Arab
daughter

Palestinian
(Land owner)

I studied with 8
Palestinian teachers
who explained how
they try to educate
children while
surrounded by
war. Their pain &
hopefulness marked my
soul

I have been
fighting for justice,
and equality, and
human rights for
years for anyone
working on behalf
of the working class
wherever they live

I have relations
in Israel,
including a
Holocaust
survivor.

My connection to
war.

I do not believe
in war (Pacifist)

Connection

My humanity.

Peace
Balance
Love

A emotional
connection of
shared humanity

I AM JEWISH

Life Commitment
to Peace & Justice

Friends in
Both Places

A desire for
peace

A desire to
support peace

Concerned citizen
of the world.

I am a concerned
citizen of the world
who believes we
are all One - brothers
and sisters,

A post-16 lifetime
of attempting
to understand
the complex depth
of the history
of the place.

I grew up under
the Israeli occupation.
I'm from Palestine
My family is in
Palestine.

~~conflict / occupation~~
My relation -
my partner grew
up Jewish - I have
Jewish - Arab friends,
I like peace &
trauma informed
calm nervous systems.

Praying for
Peace ♡
Denouncing
violence ☸

My dear friend,
My cousin & her
husband & children
My colleague on the
Refugee Committee,
all with Palestinian
trauma & loss
My friends, cousins,
Jewish. Indigenous
people here

Anisters
Went through
the same
thing

The Canadian
Government's
support for
Israel and its
occupation.

Connection with
close friends &
neighbors - not
able to go to
West Bank

I have volunteered
in Palestine (West Bank)
as an international
observer, unarmed
civilian peacekeeper.

That I am
a
FUCKING
HUMAN!

pass
and
love for
all.

Know people in
the region and
worried about
their safety.

102
We are all
children of
one creator
and all deserve
to live in Peace!

the need for
peace in
this world.

to have names
dear friends
& colleagues
there.

I am reminded
again of the
injustice created
between the
powerful and
those without
voice.

1. Our connection
is that over
forgetting
beint their
weapons &
peace is over left

I am human.

Personal connect
ion.

War-conflict
anywhere makes
my heart break
and makes me
weep.

I am a human
being who
values the quest
for peace & understanding
in the face of division
hated & fear

I was in Gaza
in 2009 after
the invasion
by Israel
& witnessed
the destruction

Nothing Personal :
Just Sorrow on the
loss of lives.

Commitment to
Peace.

I grew up in the
Middle east. I am
an Arab.

RAIN

We have no
direct connection,
but it. It forces
us to think about
these issues and
consider our values

- ★ My Jewish Identity
+ connection to the
land of Israel
- family + friends
who live there (Israel)
- Jewish communities in
the places I've lived
- Friends who are
Palestinian.

- ① Spent last
November in
Hebron volunteering
- ② have Jewish
friends who are
deeply troubled
by the war &
experience of anti-Semitism

My in laws -
are Palestinians.
Kicked from their
homes in 48 -
longing to go home
Their home is our
home always!



“It is clear that war is not the solution and the status quo is no more...My liberation as a Palestinian cannot come through the blood of Jewish babies....

I recognize that the Palestinian feeling that ‘finally somebody struck back’ is the normal reaction of a people occupied and ruled over.

We need different voices.”

- Rula Daoud
Palestinian Israeli director of Standing Together

It is “easy and natural to hate, be angry, and want revenge...I never experienced anger or hate because the sadness covered everything...” Through dialogue and recognition, “the flames of hatred will subside, and there will be room for reconciliation and life”

- *Yuval Sapir (Israeli) who lost his sister Tamar to a Palestinian suicide bus bombing in Tel Aviv in 1994*

“I cannot blame an 18-year-old boy for shooting an innocent 10-year-old girl.” “Especially now, we need to double our efforts to achieve peace” “It’s possible to use our pain in a different way. Not just to continue preparing our kids to kill and to be killed...I don’t even think about revenge because we need to co-exist.”

- *Bassam Aramin, whose 10-year-old daughter was shot dead by Israeli soldiers in 2007*

**OUR FREEDOM, OUR SAFETY &
OUR FUTURES ARE ENTANGLED
& RELIANT ON EACH OTHER.**

*DESPITE THE BORDERS, FLAGS & LANGUAGE BARRIERS,
ANY LIBERATION IS NECESSARILY A SHARED LIBERATION.*

Speaker: Kim Robinson

Prompt: What makes it so hard to hear each other's pain?

privilege

Not fully
understanding
another's history,
experiences
and beliefs.

Blame!

- not acceptance
- denial of standing up to the bullies.
- labels given to victims to make the oppressors stronger.

We are busy
talking about
our own pain.

Having to feel
my own
vulnerability

Not knowing how
to address it.

We are all
responsible for
creating a world
with less
oppression

It is hard as there
is a dominant
narrative. Most know
the history & pain of
the Jewish community
but not of the Palestinian
people. The war is not
with Hamas but Palestinian
people.

2. A feeling of helplessness,
not being able to
change the circumstances
of what caused the
pain, continues to
cause it, amidst
so much pain,
recognizing huge
overlaps.

It is hard to separate
pain from a feeling
of helplessness and
despair.

We are so affected
by own pain.
But, we know
what pain is.

Lack of
personal experience
with another
person's suffering.
Privilege.

feeling Incapable
of Moving Past/
Through our own
Pain.

To truly hear
another's pain
you must be
prepared to
feel pain

Overwhelm

Feeling powerless
or maybe
responsible?

Discomfort—
We do not know
how to sit with it.

What makes it so hard
to hear each others pain?

Each person's ^{explaned} pain is
unique.

We are so
often bound
up in our own
problems

If you practice
compassion
someone else's
pain is your
pain.

I do hear others
pain, but it is
easy to minimize
it because of
physical distance
and a busy life.

As it relates to
the conflict in
Palestine/Israel, it
is ~~to~~ the idea
of replacement, rather
than understanding

Ego. +
deep-rooted
misunderstandings.

- it hurts but
it is a necessary
part of healing
- to bear witness

It touches
& invokes
~~our~~
own
Pain.

#2

As we re-live our own pain, and contemplate that of others, soon enough there is so much of it swirling in our minds, we cannot hear 1 at a time but rather a loud rumble.

Because we may be in pain ourselves and thus not emotionally available to hear about someone else's.

Empathy & the knowledge that so many are suffering and have suffered such horrific pain & loss.
And fear & privilege.

Each person deserves
a life of peace &
contentment

When I've already made up my mind it's difficult ~~to~~ remain open for me to remain open

3. We have empathy for the other but don't have the power to change.

It is hard to see another human suffer it ~~when~~ brings out my own pain

Our own pain
Our own history
of abuse, discrimination
- a wall put up
around one - not
to feel.
- we feel our
pain validated.

Not hard
Question is
do others ^(can) want
to hear my pain?

Colonilism

If I am in pain
and my neocortex
disconnects, I cannot
empathize. Then I
need to be held in
a safe container/event
and wise caring Elders,
Or use ritual and
art to express my
pain.

Because I know
the pain will
continue and there
is nothing I can
do to stop it.

WHAT MAKES IT
SO HARD TO HEAR
ABOUT ANOTHER'S
PAIN -

A. OUR OWN PAIN
(we ARE all connected)

If I acknowledge
your pain
does it make
mine less
real?

were afraid
the other believes
it's our fault.
It reminds us
of our own
pain.

It is so hard to hear
of the horrendous
atrocities being
experienced by
Israelis & Palestinians.



Perhaps the fear
that acknowledging
the 'other's' pain
will somehow betray
the pain we hold
more closely.

The feeling
that no one
is listening
to my pain

Too much
tribulation
→ the focus
exclusively on
one group/nation,
etc.

Blinded by
the superiority,
~~apartheid~~ ^{colonialization}
oppressing the
other and
exploited

empathy

↳ feeling + imagining
what it must
feel like, how
painful it is
↳ but also true empathy
can be difficult.

We become defensive
when we hear things
that do not resonate
with our own
experience or teachings
If we hear pain it
may overwhelm us &
that scares us

Hard To look
at both as
equally harmed
But good to be here
and listen to both

① Feeling that
one's pain/voice
is not heard / is
less of value

Lesson with
your heart.

It didn't start
on Oct - 7th

It started back
1948

our own
pain.

THE HARDNESS
OF OUR
HEARTS


Because we share
each others pain.
we each have a
beating heart

Loss of
Compassion



mircentre
for peace

Selkirk  College



**When will our
consciences grow so
tender that we will act to
prevent human misery
rather than avenge it?**

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

إذا كنت ترغب في السلام
فاعمل من أجل العدالة.

If you wish for peace, work for justice.

שלום

Shalom (Peace)

Speaker: Zaynab Mohammed

Prompt - What is one thing *you* wish people who think differently from you could understand?

my rights
equal =
human being

#3

THAT WE ARE ALL
THE SAME -

- Muslims are
peaceful.

- we are not to
blame for the
injustice in
Palestine.

We are all
ONE ♡

That capitalism
and colonialism
are systems rooted
in oppression and
exploitation.

There is only
one god
no matter how
you believe

that we are
all the same
*want the
same things
~~*want~~

That - we
are a
reflection
of each other

We are all
ONE in the
Human Race.

That we are
all connected
and all come
from God

I love you
because we
are a part
of the body
of humanity.

How trauma
is held in
the body

We are all
connected and
there is only
LOVE!

That although I hold
different views, I still
wish them ~~well~~ no harm!

THAT THERE ARE
NO WINNERS
IN WAR.

All Need Peace

that ...
I have a
story and
I have a
dream!

That I am
interested in
understanding why
they feel the
way they do.

That life is complex
and there are no
simple solutions
or reasons,

I wish they could
understand why I
feel and/or believe
the way I do.

History &
the white
privilege understanding/
interpretation

Differences don't
matter. They should
be understood.
That violence
will never solve
problems.

Just because we
think differently
doesn't mean that
we all aren't
deserving of respect,
kindness, love,
dignity, justice, and
peace ♡

That our liberation,
peace, justice
requires all of us
to care about each
other (stopping
seeing others as
wrong + enemies)

I wish others could
understand the depth
of pain, the messy
complexity, ~~the~~ to
stay in caring curiosity
or grief and not jump
early to fix, have opinion,
assume peace is easy. If
you have privilege, listen.

structural
violence, or
violence does not
begin with a
bullet or a bomb.

That Hamas
and Palestinians
are not the ~~the~~
Problem. It's the
other side who's not
choosing peace

- that U.S. + NATO
allies have
been supporting the
military industrial
complex to start
multiple wars
in the Middle East
& globally

We are all
one!

#3

That every 'one' is
equal and has worth
...and as such, we are all
connected & ... what we
do individually affects
the other

I just want to
help solve the
world's ills
= problems with
humanity

- Don't believe in ~~stereotypes~~
Stereotypes
- The goal of capitalism
is to keep us divided
- Question where you
are getting your information
from

That being
critical of Israel
doesn't make me
a self-hating
Jew.

We humans
all really want
the same thing.
We should ask each
other what we want
instead of what we
believe.

all human
is worth knowing
and must deserve
exactly the
same -

That we're all
human. you can
take another life

THERE IS VALUE
IN LISTENING AND
IN CONVERSATION.

What it's
like to be
biracial,
mixed,
"half"
never whole

That we are all
in this together

Dialogue!

① I wish they
could understand
that my truth
does not negate
& even undervalue
their truth.

NO MORE
PAIN, NO
MORE CRYING,
NO MORE SICKNESS

There's not
always a
right and a
wrong. Sometimes
there's just
"difference"

That we have
the same feelings,
there are other
points of view
that are valid

We all have
feelings

That I am
willing to open
listen to them
to gain greater
understanding.

Oppressed
people have
the right to
fight back.

Arabs are Kind,
generous, beautiful
Soulful people.
There is no gain in
Dehumanization

Peacemaking doesn't mean passivity. It is the act of interrupting injustice without mirroring injustice, the act of disarming evil without destroying the evildoer, the act of finding a third way that is neither fight nor flight but the careful, arduous pursuit of reconciliation and justice.

It is about a revolution of love that is big enough to set both the oppressed and the oppressors free.

Shane Claiborne, *Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals*

In Haifa, Israel, activists from Standing Together replaced signs that call for escalation in the fighting with posters championing solidarity between Jews and Arabs.

The message on the posters says, “We will get through this together.”

Source: **Peace, a Forgotten Word, Renews its Claim in the Holy Land**

By Roger Cohen

Photo by Amit Elkayam

The New York Times

Oct 22, 2023



Organizations working for Israel-Palestine peace

Standing Together
Combatants for Peace
The Parents Circle – Families Forum
Women Wage Peace/Women of the Sun
EcoPeace Middle East
Hand in Hand Bilingual Arab-Jewish Schools
Jerusalem Peacebuilders
Road to Recovery
Extend
Jewish Voice for Peace
Solutions Not Sides
Salaam Shalom Kitchen

Alliance for Middle East Peace

Institute for Circle Work

One Voice

Brit Shalom/Tahalof Essalam

Children of Abraham

The West-Eastern Divan

Comedy for Peace

Arab Israeli Dialogue



EcoPeace/Friends of the Earth Middle East
Middle East Justice and Development Initiatives
Peres Center for Peace
Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information
Aix Group
Givat Haviva's Jewish-Arab Center for Peace
Roots/Judur/Shorashim: The Palestinian Israeli Initiative
for Understanding, Nonviolence, and Reconciliation
Rabbis for Human Rights
*Ta'ayush** Arab-Jewish Partnership (*co-existence)
Coalition of Women for Peace
Ir Shalem co-existence program
Seeds of Peace
Children of Peace
Olives of Peace
Neve Shalom-Wahat Al-Salam (Oasis of Peace)
Hamidrasha Jewish-Arab Beit Midrash
Green Action
Oseh Shalom – Sanea al-Salam Palestinian-Jewish
Family Peacemakers Camp

“When a thought of war comes, oppose it by a stronger thought of peace. A thought of hatred must be destroyed by a more powerful thought of love.”

- Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i Writings

Speaker: Bessie Wapp

Prompt - What do we need to do to heal, and build bridges of understanding across divides in our community?

Love

more
love

Understanding
each other

Fair Justice

Listen to each
other and try
to understand
each other with
love not
criticism

WITNESS
LISTEN
Remain
Open
hearted.

- Listen ^{for}
- Allow others viewpoints
- Understand pain takes time to heal

- Collective witnessing of -11- pain Thomas Hübl
- Using art
- Educate in skills of EQ, deescalate, NVC, 4 level listening (Thegu) trauma, co-regulation Resma Mera kem ^{Sam Banks}
- Limit or ^{Sam Banks} compliance in harm - oil use, Western geopolitics

LISTEN
TO
EACH OTHER

Stop the war
and Them
and move to
me.

Put 'love' into
action. ♡

~ Truly listen + hear.

- more events
like this

- gather to share,
hear the stories

+ provide
support + love

Forgiveness

##

We need to 'listen' in
order to 'hear' each
other ... and act (take
actions) for peaceful
resolution.

Examples from
other countries
overcoming war
= genocide.

Decolonize the
Canadian and
Israeli settler
colonial states.

We need to
learn, to listen
+ to have empathy
+ understanding

Turn off social
media.
Listen to
others.
Try not to
judge.

BE
EMPATHETIC
WITHOUT BEING
AN ENABLER OF
NEGATIVITY

all parties need
to commit to
non violence
and adhere to their
religious teachings.

LISTEN TO AND
TALK TO
ONE ANOTHER.

Learn the
history &
The 75 years
of occupation
& numerous
invasions by
Israel.

Stop the violence and
dismantle systems of
oppression.

"Being pro-Palestine &
against anti-Semitism
go hand in hand, because
all systems of oppression
reinforce one another.
None can be fought in
isolation."

Peace
and
Justice

Datherings like this
like having others
in our homes
more + more,
acknowledging
+ being with our
differences +
finding changes we
can make.

Come together at
wonderful events like
today to share and
discuss but most of
all to get to know
each other as fellow
human beings. Thank
You!

Stop relying on
accusations but
talk about how we
feel, how we hope,
what step we can take
to cut through rhetoric
& remember our humanity

Approach issues
with others with
love and compassion
as much as
possible. Try to
understand others
journey.

Learn the histories
of settler colonialism
and understand
how we are implicated.

① acknowledge
the pain of the
"other"

② Search for common
ground [what do
we agree on?]

- Be active
for peace

Prayer
Communicate
non-violently
forgiveness

- Spend time
with those
affected to
hear, listen

Live in gratitude
show compassion,
love and
forgiveness.

I wonder why there
was not any
speaker from
Israel?

I think this conflict
is not just Israel-Palestine
but global geopolitics,
I wish for cease-fire
but peace seems naively
easy to do.

From my Jewish friend
who don't feel safe
I wish we can listen /
move to their loss &
loss of hope in possible
peace. Bringing them
awareness for what is
possible in an
activated state.
If you want more
peace here, I like to ↓

really listen
+ empathize
+ work together

Avoid discrimination
Love is the answer.

Create Safe
space to Share,
in a
Non Judgmental
Way - without
Confusion about
the other's Goodness

hear more from the
Jews. Even if I
disagree with them.
If you want everyone
to the table, and
build trust, I think
that is needed.

We need to
share from the
heart and
hear one
another.

To listen
beyond comfort
and conclusions
and identity

We are ^{all} the
same and
have equal
rights

We need to LISTEN
TO EACH OTHER.

LOVE EACH
OTHER AS
YOU LOVE
YOURSELF

Stop the VIOLENCE
re-frame our
Stories with
Compassion for
all. All lives
are equally valuable
Listen. ♡

Need to
listen to each
other. Be present
Less internet
online interact
ing

Extend a hand & heart
filled with compassion
empathy & love!

Listen
Share.

Come together
Slow down
Deeply listen
First Same same
different different
Deeply Listen to
your heart.



Yael Deckelbaum - Prayer Of The Mothers (Official Video)




Watch later



Share



Watch on  YouTube

What I do in the war

By Amir Peter O'Loughlin

Because I cannot carry your dead child,
I sweep the deck of my friend
and fling the dry pine needles
to the messenger breeze, and the strike
of my broom down the steps to the sea
is the shovel for digging the grave
and the birdsong is the keening
of your family and clinging companions

Instead of joining you to claw the rubble
in search of your buried mother,
I will bring bread to my neighbour
who will serve it to her children,
and I chant your name in rhythm
to the shouts and earth movers
with the warm loaf in my hand
and the autumn air gripping my chest...



I will serve tea to this welcome company
and offer a fragrant, poignant
impotent wish for peace,
an *as-salaam aleikum* with each
touch of the cup to silent lips,
while you grip your phone for news
and prepare to sleep on dark roads,
upon carpets that once had homes

Nothing in me can help you know
if your daughter is alive or dead,
or which of those is worse,
so I will whisper *b'shalom b'shalom*
with each step up this mountain
from where my strength comes
and where my cries are left
and where the eagles loft and lift



You cannot bear witness to my sorrow
for those I love whom I do not know
so I will ring the Japanese garden bell
to reach all those unjustly taken away
I will listen to its resounding song
which ears hear for ten slow breaths
but which trees hear forever
and I pledge to each of you who suffers now
a place in its vibrating prayer

Amir Peter O'Loughlin
Mayne Island, B.C. October 14, 2023

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that."

- Dr Martin Luther King Jr.