

Brief Memorial for those killed and injured in Israel and Palestine

Adapted from Norman Fischer's Memorial by Taigen

Oct 7, 2023 was supposed to be one of the most joyful days in the Jewish calendar, the holiday Simchat Torah, which marks the ending of the annual cycle of Torah reading, the beginning of the new cycle, and the sweet conclusion of the long and intense holiday season that begins in late summer, and runs through the Days of Awe, including Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Traditionally on Simchat Torah the community dances with the Torah in celebration and joy.

But Oct 7 was not joyful. It was yet another day of deep mourning in the more than two thousand year history of days of mourning for the Jewish people, as truly horrifying and shocking attacks, brutal attacks no one thought possible, occurred in the state of Israel, ending the lives of many people, and terrorizing many others who were beaten, raped, or taken hostage.

And then, as all expected, including the attackers, the state of Israel began its reprisals, resulting in the terrible loss of life and deprivation for the people of Gaza, innocent people, most of them, who only want to live in peace, and do not deserve this suffering, and who certainly have been themselves brutalized for a long time. And the ravaging of Gaza continues with hospitals and shelters bombed and a great many children killed.

It is so sad to remember that Jews and Arabs are both sons and daughters of Abraham, so closely connected, of the same family, the same lineage, the same passionate faith in one God. Arabs and Jews are in truth like water mixed with water, the same people. That their division runs so intractably deep is especially tragic.

We are here today to offer incense and to bow and chant in order to extend our condolences and our hopes for peace to all those who have lost their lives and have been caused to suffer by these terrible acts of violence.

I want to especially acknowledge our sangha members whose deep disturbance about these events move us. If, as we understand, that all beings are Buddha Nature, and Buddha Nature is inherently good and compassionate, how are such horrors possible in the human world? Yes, we see in our own minds the clouds of karma that cause us to do unwise and unkind action... but such brutality, such terror? How is it possible? It shakes us to the core. We cannot explain it, we cannot cover it with a veneer of spirituality. It is raw in our hearts.

So let's take a moment to breathe with this, to open our hearts to all of it, difficult as it may be, and to bring some peace to our fear and our anguish. We have all been hurt, deeply hurt, and made fearful and upset as we contemplate these things that have happened.

How can we cope with this? And yet, together, we can, we will, and through this effort we will drive compassion deeper and truer into our hearts....

I offer a prayer from Rabbi Sheila Weinberg from the Jewish Community of Amherst, Massachussets:

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.

We have offered incense and chanted the Metta Sutta as we send waves of loving kindness to all victims of this brutality, not only in Israel and Palestine but to all peoples in all places suffering from this impossible to understand human cruelty.

Eko

May we awaken Buddha's compassion and luminous mirror wisdom. Chanting the Metta Sutta,

we offer the merit of our chanting, and our compassion and love to

All those who lost their lives in the brutal attacks in the state of Israel on October 7

To their families, and all citizens of the state of Israel and to Jews all over the world

To all those in Gaza who have lost their lives, to their families, to the Palestinian people everywhere, who have lost their homes, their self-determination, their dignity, and who have been disrespected and unseen for far too long.

May all Jews, all Palestinians, all Ukrainians, all Russians, all Sudanese, and all people everywhere be free from violence, brutality, disrespect and oppression, may they finally know the joy of security, and well being

And may we together with them find peace and healing through Buddha's Way.....

All Buddhas, ten directions....