

To speak the truth in the face of American/Israeli tyranny is to be like the magicians in Pharaoh's Congress. When they saw the Clear Signs & recognized the Truth they cried out: "By Him Who has created us, we can never prefer you after we have seen the Clear Signs. Therefore you may do your worst, for at most you can pass judgment concerning this worldly life. We have believed in God so that He may pardon our errors & forgive us the sins of sorcery which you forced us to practice." Quran: 20:65

Chris Hedges (as brave an American as they come): When I lived in Jerusalem I had a friend who confided in me that as a college student in the United States she attended events like these, wrote up reports & submitted them to the Israel consulate for money. It would be naive to assume this Israeli practice has ended. So, I want first to address that person, or those persons, who may have come to this event for the purpose of reporting on it to the Israeli government.

I would like to remind them that it is they who hide in darkness. It is we who stand in the light. It is they who deceive. It is we who openly proclaim our compassion & demand justice for those who suffer in Gaza. We are **not** afraid to name our names. We are **not** afraid to name our beliefs. And we know something you perhaps sense with a kind of dread. As Martin Luther King said, **the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice**, and that arc is descending with a righteous fury that is thundering down upon the US/Israeli governments.

You may have the **American** bulldozers, **American** planes & **American** helicopters that smash houses to rubble, the commandos who descend from ropes on ships & kill unarmed civilians on the high seas as well as in Gaza, the vast power of the state behind you. We have only our hands & hearts & voices. But note this. **Note this well**. It is you who are afraid of us. We are **not** afraid of you. We will keep working & praying, keep protesting & denouncing, keep pushing up against your navy & your army, with nothing but our bodies, until we prove that the force of morality & justice is greater than hate & violence. And then, when there is freedom in Gaza, we will forgive... you. We will ask you to break bread with us. We will bless your children even if you did **not** find it in your heart to bless the children of those you occupied. Maybe it is this forgiveness, maybe it is the final, insurmountable power of love, which **unsettles** you the most.

And so when some seek to name names & others seek to hide names, let me do some naming. Let me call things by their proper names. Let me cut through the jargon, the euphemisms we use to mask human suffering & war crimes. Let me **expose the sins of journalistic sorcery**. "**Closures**" **mean** heavily armed soldiers who ring Palestinian ghettos, deny those trapped inside food or basic amenities – including toys, razors, chocolate, fishing rods & musical instruments – and carry out a brutal policy of collective punishment, which is a crime under international law. "**Disputed land**" **means** land stolen from the Palestinians. "**Clashes**" **mean**, almost always, the killing or wounding of unarmed Palestinians, including children. "**Jewish neighborhoods in the West Bank**" **mean** fortress-like compounds that serve as military outposts in the campaign of ethnic cleansing of Palestinians. "**Targeted assassinations**" **mean** extrajudicial murder. "**Air strikes on militant bomb-making posts**" **mean** the dropping of huge iron fragmentation bombs from fighter jets on densely crowded neighborhoods that always leaves scores of dead and wounded, whose only contact with a bomb was the one manufactured in the United States and given to the Israeli Air Force as part of our complicity in the occupation. "**The peace process**" **means the cynical, one-way route to the crushing of the Palestinians as a people**.

These are some names. There are others. Dr. Izzeldin Abuellaish in the late afternoon of Jan. 16, 2009, had a pair of Israeli tank shells rip through a bedroom in his Gaza apartment, killing three of his daughters – Bessan, Mayar and Aya – along with a niece, Noor. *Before reading further just contemplate over what YOU would do if they were your daughters & niece*. "I have the right to feel angry," says Abuellaish. "But I ask, 'Is this the right way?' So many people were expecting me to hate. My answer to them is **I shall not hate**." "Whom to hate?" asks the 55-year-old gynecologist, who was born a Palestinian refugee. "My Israeli friends & colleagues? The Israeli babies I have delivered?"

The Palestinian poet Taha Muhammad Ali wrote this in his poem "Revenge": At times...I wish I could meet in a duel; the man who killed my father; and razed our home, expelling me into a narrow country. And if he killed me, I'd rest at last, and if I were ready – I would take my revenge! But if it came to light, when my rival appeared, that he had a mother waiting for him, or a father who'd put his right hand over the heart's place in his chest whenever his son was late even by just a quarter-hour for a meeting they'd set – then I would **not** kill him, even if I could. Likewise...I would **not**

murder him if it were soon made clear that he had a brother or sisters who loved him & constantly longed to see him. Or if he had a wife to greet him & children who couldn't bear his absence & whom his gifts would thrill.

Or if he had friends or companions, neighbors he knew or allies from prison or a hospital room, or classmates from his school...asking about him & sending him regards. But if he turned out to be on his own – cut off like a branch from a tree – without a mother or father, with neither a brother nor sister, wifeless, without a child, and without kin or neighbors or friends, colleagues or companions, then I'd add not a thing to his pain within that aloneness – not the torment of death, and not the sorrow of passing away. Instead I'd be content to ignore him when I passed him by on the street – as I convinced myself that paying him no attention in itself was a kind of revenge.

And if these words are what it means to be a Muslim, and I believe it does, **name me too a Muslim**, a follower of the Prophet, peace be upon him.

The boat to Gaza will be named "The Audacity of Hope." But these are not Barack Obama's words. These are the words of my friend the Rev. Jeremiah Wright. They are borrowed words. And Jerry Wright is not afraid to speak the truth, not afraid to tell us to **stop confusing God with America**. "America bombed Hiroshima, America bombed Nagasaki, and America nuked far more than the thousands killed in New York & the Pentagon, and we never batted an eye," Rev. Wright said. "We have supported state terrorism against the Palestinians & black South Africans, and now we are indignant because the stuff we have done overseas is now brought right back into our own front yards. America's chickens are coming home to roost." America you're evil to the core.

Or the words of Edward Said: Nothing in my view is more reprehensible than those habits of mind in the intellectual that induce avoidance, that characteristic turning away from a difficult and principled position which you know to be the right one, but which you decide **not** to take. You do **not** want to appear too political; you are afraid of seeming controversial; you want to keep a reputation for being balanced, objective, moderate; your hope is to be asked back, to consult, to be on a board or prestigious committee, and so to remain within the responsible mainstream; someday you hope to get an honorary degree, a big prize, perhaps even an ambassadorship.

For an intellectual these habits of mind are

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