

## **ANTI ZIONISM is ANTI SEMITISM**

HOLY HOPE HERITAGE CHURCH February 9, 2003  
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I truly believe that when horrible, difficult or traumatic things happen to us they can bear a gift. Yes a gift!!! We can heal all our wounds, we can heal all our past traumas, hurtful, and heinous experiences when we discover the gift in that wound.

I am here this morning because Jean Wright was my gift from a very deep wounding that took place on January 1, this year.

On January 1<sup>st</sup> Jean and I participated in ONE DAY OF PEACE at the Islamic House of Wisdom. An event that brought together Christians, Muslims, Jews, Blacks, Whites, children and parents to celebrate a day of Peace. For many it was the first time they had met “the other”.

The event started out with children singing songs. Your teen group had us clapping our hand in new ways. Teens from Seeds of Peace spoke about how getting to know each other created bonds of respect and understanding ... bonds that replaced walls of fear, prejudice and intolerance.

I had the honor of teaching Angel lessons. Lessons in how we can be Gods messengers of love and peace here on earth. Lessons in how to act and speak like angels... Lessons in learning to love ourselves and all others just like God loves all his children. The children were precious. They wanted to be angels of peace. A five year old cub scout said “we needed to hold hands”. One four year old girl said “we needed to believe in miracles.” I left the stage in an elated state to speak with a reporter from Fox. As I returned to the room Malike Shabaz was at the podium with a body guard. Both were dressed in the combative uniforms of the new black panthers, a chilling toughness complete with berets and black out sunglasses. When I heard his hateful rhetoric about America and his frightening anti- Semitic remarks I was shocked and speechless from his remarks and because I didn't know why he was at the podium at all, he was never on the program.

It has been a challenge to bring together people of different faiths and color, even for this One Day of Peace event there had been fear, and trepidation. And now the greatest fear of Jewish people had been spoken. The Jewish Kidz Klez band was scheduled to end the event. Cantor Dubov, Asa Shani and the kids were so upset they wanted to leave. At the same time I was trying to comfort Jenifer who was sobbing from Malike's remarks. The kids played. Jenifer stopped crying. And we released hundreds of balloons with messages of peace.

So now you must be asking, what did he say that was so hurtful? And where is the gift?

Malike Shabaz said: "We must get rid of all terrorism and we must especially get rid of Zionism and all Zionists." To get rid of all Zionists means to a Jewish person "finish what Hilter started." Death to the Jews, drive them into the sea." For Jews, his remarks are the equivalent of having the Klu Klux Clan burn a cross on your lawn. The messages are the same: WE HATE YOU!!! WE DO NOT WANT YOU HERE!!! To get rid of Zionism and all Zionists means killing all Jews. For Jews ...Anti Zionism is anti Semitism is anti Jewish.

As I felt the pain of his remarks I felt his pain and the pain of all black people. We both are members of persecuted minorities. We both have been hated. Is there anyone here that has not been a victim of bigotry? We share many parallels in our histories. No one explains these parallels better than the great Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. "Blacks and Jews were uprooted involuntarily from their homelands. Both people were shaped by their tragic experience of slavery. Both people were forced to live in ghettos, victims of segregation. Both people were subjected to laws passed with the intent of oppressing them, simply because they were Jewish or Black. Both people have been subjected to oppression and genocide on a level unprecedented in history." And both our people were rounded up, branded like cattle with hot irons... irons that scared our psyche.

That is why Dr. King had such an empathic awareness and a profound understanding of the Jews embrace of Zionism. Zionism is simply our desire for self determination. As Jews we want a homeland, a safe place, free of hate and persecution. We see Israel

as a refuge for all Jewry from everywhere in the world. We need a refuge because in our 4,500 year history every generation of Jews has been subjected to Anti Semitism, oppressive policies and an annihilation of 6 million Jews just 56 years ago during the Holocaust. Dr. King so eloquently expressed our plight: “The Jewish people have been the product of landlessness; they have suffered intolerance, oppression, exile, massacres, persecution by tyrants and abuse by the Church and Mosque who encouraged anti-Semitism to satisfy their own insecurities and political desires.” Dr. King had a deep understanding of Jewish traumatizing. He revealed a profound awareness of the trans-generational wounding of insecurity and fear that many Jewish people carry in their psyche because of anti Semitism.

Dr King inspired me to look to the love at the core of all human experience...to find the gift in my wounding...to find the gift in the hurtful words of Malike Shabaz. My gift was Jean Wright ...a compassionate caring woman who was brave enough to ask me: “What did he say that was so hurtful?” Jean is a woman who had the courage and conviction to invite me here today to share my story...to share the healing of finding the gift in my wound.

We can heal our wounds. As Jews and Blacks we must never forget what happened to our people. But it is time to release ourselves from viewing ourselves as victims. We need to forgive ourselves and others. Hate and anger never hurts the perpetrator. It only hurt us.

When we hold hate and anger its like cutting open a vein, pouring in poison and waiting for the other person to die.

We need to dispel old stereotypes and myths of both our people:

- They are all cheap, greedy and materialistic
- They are all good dancers
- They are all stupid
- They are all heavy drinkers
- They all think they are better
- They are all lazy

We need to teach love not hate. We need to foster recognition, trust, acceptance, appreciation and cooperation.

We need to stop fueling blame.

We need to teach respect and equality for all.

We need to let go of the need for dominance, control, or power over others.

We need to come together and be partners. We can be a powerful force for good. We need to walk together, raise our voices together, and stand up for equality, justice and freedom together.

We can find the gifts in our shattered, broken, and traumatized world.

We have the power, the answers... the ability to change our world.

We can put feet to Dr. King's Dream. Together we are the gift....

**WE ARE THE MIRACLE THE WORLD NEEDS.**