



Healing Spirit

LESLIE SAFFER, MAT Reiki Master

July 2002

LISTEN

The experienced moderator leaned toward one of the panelists and spoke somewhat tentatively, "I don't want to end on that note." A discussion taking its cue from audience questions was winding up following the closing night performance of "Alive from Palestine." In some moments, especially towards the end, the discussion itself was as poignant as the performance.

The Long Wharf Theatre production was a model subject for New Haven's annual International Festival of Arts and Ideas, melding both these elements in an arranged marriage of contemporary concerns.

The discussion will center on the play with no detours to political tangents, the moderator says at the start.

The idea of what is normal keeps shifting, says the director of the Ramallah-based Al-Kasaba Theatre company. Through the pain and through the humor, the play reflects how, as we adapt within the downward spiral, we begin to view the unacceptable as "normal." But, he adds, the play ends with uplifted hands on a note of hope.

"I have no hope," offers a young Palestinian man from the audience.

Perhaps seeking balance, the moderator turns to another panelist, a young Palestinian woman, a poet and filmmaker who lives half the year in New York, half in her shattered homeland. "I decline to speak on the subject of hope," the panelist comments quietly. "I don't want to hear what my words will say."

"I don't want to end on that note," interjects the skilled moderator.

A young girl in the audience asks about suicide bombers. Why weren't they included in the play?

There are many stories. The theatre director and his company put out a call to artists to respond to the broiling conflict in the region, and these are *their* stories.

"I am a man of non-violence," he says. "But I see violence in my life every day.

"Until you live it, you cannot understand what would drive a man or woman to choose suicide bombing. I don't approve. But because I live with it, I understand how violent manipulation of the human condition can drive the human mind to these hopeless acts of violence.

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REIKI III Class: Please see page 2.

" We want to get out of this way of living -- both sides do, not just the Palestinians. But don't take sides, he adds. Be just. *Listen* to us. Please help us."

Finally, a woman from the audience speaks of thanks and appreciation. "The play opens us to a view of human faces we haven't seen before and I'm grateful for that," she says.

The third panelist, a New York theatre artist and an observant American Jew who studied and lived extensively in Israel brings forward a concept he attributes to Ram Dass (Richard Alpert), an American who for years has lived as a spiritual seeker, teacher and author:

"When the Palestinians and the Israelis enter into a room together and grieve together the blood of their loved ones, only then will the healing begin."

Al-Kasaba is an Arabic word that refers to the throat center, "the place of breath, the heart of the city" ... and, I would add, the center of creativity, expression and the will.

If it's true that where there is a will, there is a way, then may we invoke the will to talk and grieve together, to listen to one another, to create together, to walk through the storm together ... so that we may begin to heal together.

And so, it is here on that note that I wish to end.

ADDRESS CORRECTION
REQUESTED



Healing Spirit

LESLIE SAFFER, MAT ♦ Reiki Master
78 Atwater Street
New Haven, CT 06513

Please phone or e-mail to let me know if you would like
to discontinue these mailings. Thank you.

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78 Atwater Street • New Haven, CT 06513 203.865.8440 Isaffer@snet.net

*Allah always gives you signs when
you are with Him that
He is with you.
Malcolm X*

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Lori Klein and Barbara Valentine**

received their Reiki III Mastership certification in mid-May after successfully completing their seven-month apprenticeship.

Their final project focussed on bringing Reiki to grateful residents of the West Haven Animal Shelter.



*What lies behind us and what lies
before us are tiny
matters compared to what
lies within us.*

Oliver Wendell Holmes

REIKI SHARING Second Wednesday
of each month, 6:45 to 9:30pm

- \$15 contribution.

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Please phone **203.865.8440**.

This issue of Healing Spirit is dedicated to my sister, Pamella, who holds the heart of the world in her own. She dances her truth in the night; she sings her passion in the wind; she rides the wave in the eye of the storm.