

Monday, January 15, 2024

Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Bazeh

Today was a special day. It started with our small group of 40 sitting in a room for a conversation with Naftali Bennett, the former prime minister. It ended with our group sitting in the reception hall of the president's residence for a conversation with President Isaac Herzog. But neither of these men were the most important person I met today.

In between, we visited the Bring Them Home Now headquarters in Tel Aviv and met with Dani Miran, the father of 47-year old Omri Miran, who has been held hostage by Hamas terrorists in Gaza for the past 101 days. The banner we have in front of our building? This is where the volunteers have been working day and night on a myriad of fronts to leave no stone unturned in an attempt to free the hostages being held by Hamas.

“You all came from the United States? You have families of your own? You have jobs?” Dani asked us in Hebrew, exhausted from his visit to The Hague yesterday to help defend Israel against baseless accusations of genocide. “And you left them to come here for a week to visit us?” Dani was clearly tired, yet extremely focused.

On Oct. 7, Dani's son's family, including his 6-month and 2-year old grandchildren, hid in the family's safe room when their kibbutz came under attack. When his son opened the door to help an injured neighbor, they were taken hostage. Omri went with the terrorists as hostages after they threatened to kill the entire family otherwise. Dani's only comfort is that a freed hostage was able to report that Omri was in good health, and that he knew that his wife and children were alive because another hostage had seen them on the TV their terrorist captors were watching.

What if your loved ones were in a tunnel being held hostage? Could we make it through 101 days? The strength of Dani and the families of the 135 other hostages is astounding.

“There is tragedy all over the world,” Dani told us. “Everywhere. Every country. And everywhere, they put a flower and light a candle and move on. But for the Jewish people, when tragedy strikes one of our sons or daughters, it is like every Jewish person in the world is their parent. We care for each other. The fact that you are here means everything. It means everything to us.”

Earlier in the day, I asked Naftali Bennett a question: We can defeat Hamas and eradicate the terrorists and their leadership. But, in a world that is quite different from post-WWII where the victorious Allies “denazified” Germany, how do we eradicate the ideology? His sobering response was that to attack someone, you must have a motivation and the means. We ultimately cannot control the motivation, we can only fight against and take away the tools that they will use to hurt us. This requires incredible strength and perseverance.

May we all have the strength and perseverance of Omri, Dani and the Israeli people. May we be strong in our support of the 136 hostages, and the horrors they continue to live through. May we remember that these attacks are an attack against all of us and Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Bazah - all Jews are responsible for one another.

I apologize for the lack of photos as I left my laptop in Allentown and my phone does not seem interested in allowing me to insert them into emails. You can read more about Omri and the other hostages here:

https://media.bringthemhomenow.net/media/Omri%20Miran%20has%20been%20held%20by%20Hamis%20for%2080%20days.%20He%20is%20still%20there./1_cb8lh0oe