

Heroes and demons in the Middle East



Helga Weule · *Hero's journey* 2007

Joseph Campbell, the American mythologist and author of 'The Hero with a thousand faces' once said 'Man is born 12 years too early'. What does he mean by that?

Only at the age of 12 can humans live and survive, only then can they do everything that an animal is able to do very soon after birth. Our development of consciousness and identity requires this long accompaniment.

In Paul Rebillot's skilful self-discovery seminar 'The Hero's Journey' - inspired in part by Campbell's first work 'The Hero with a thousand faces' - we can experience two inner parts of every human being and bring them together: the part that follows an inner longing and vision. This is the 'hero'. He or she follows an image towards which he or she wants to develop.

And then there is the other part, which Paul calls the 'demon of resistance'. It arises from experiences of rejection of spontaneous expression of feelings and impulses to act:

Example: a child picked a beautiful flower outside and runs into the house with it to show it to the mother. The mother is mopping the floor, sees the mud on the child's shoes and shouts STOP! She doesn't want to harm the child or is not angry, no, her focus is simply on cleaning.

In order to secure the mother's continued affection (and to protect herself from similar frustration), this scene plays out differently if it is repeated: the child slows down and holds back spontaneous impulses, later pushing such situations into oblivion.

And both continue to live there: the STOP! in the sheathing of the muscles, the fasciae, and as a behavioural guideline in soul and mind. In the same way, THE SPONTANEOUS IMPULSE of being touched by beauty survives.

The demon of resistance emerges from these two parts and can become conscious again in the 'Hero's journey'. Both sides find ways of interacting with each other in order to venture into unknown territory.

But what happens when parents and children are robbed of their dignity, their homes, their possessions, their land, when they are expelled or crushed? When this happens to many families in a nation?

People of Jewish origin have created a forbidden garden of grief, hatred and violence in their souls through the stories of or the silent suffering of their parents and grandparents in the experience of the SHOA, the extermination programme of the National Socialists. A trauma. If something like the massacre in southern Israel on 7 and 8 October 2023 happens, re-traumatisation occurs and the victims' NEVER AGAIN! will turn against the perpetrators in a similar way. As long as it remains unconscious.

People of Arab origin in Palestine experienced something similar in 1948, 1956, 1967 and several times thereafter. For them it is called NAKBA. The surviving bomb victims and displaced persons in Gaza and Southern Lebanon and the families attacked by Jewish settlers in the West Bank are also experiencing re-traumatisation. In them, too, the trauma breaks out again and wants to do the same to the perpetrators. As long as it remains unconscious.

Anyone who wants to empathise with and understand this destructive dynamic of the 'enemy brothers and sisters' should definitely watch the film: 'Trauma in the Middle East - 7 October and its consequences' (synchronized in German or French):

<https://www.arte.tv/de/videos/118581-000-A/trauma-in-nahost-der-7-oktober-und-seine-folgen/>

Here, many voices on both sides speak out in favour of taking a closer look.

Particularly touching the scene in which a young man from Gaza introduces camp children to the Palestinian national dance Dabke: beauty and healing reside in body and soul as well. And these are

effective across borders and are immediately understood by all who thirst for them.

This film is an overwhelming experience and shows that solidarity with only one of the two hostile sides comes to nothing.

Trauma therapy does not yet create peace. But the fight for a peace treaty between Israelis and Palestinians will create space for joint initiatives by people from both nations, such as the ***Parents Circle***, which brings together around 600 Jewish and Arab families who have lost children in the war. More about this in Daniel Cohn-Bendit's film 'We are all German Jews' (synchronized in German or French):

<https://www.ardmediathek.de/video/doku-und-reportage/wir-sind-alle-deutsche-juden/ndr/Y3JpZ-DovL25kci5kZS8xNDkzXzIwMjItMDQtMjAtMjMtMzA>

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