

## **A Lamentation for Gaza**

Gaza weeps alone.  
Bombs falling without end  
her cheeks wet with tears.  
A widow abandoned  
imprisoned on all sides  
with none willing to save her.

We who once knew oppression  
have become the oppressors.  
Those who have been pursued  
are now the pursuers.  
We have uprooted families  
from their homes, we have  
driven them deep into  
this desolate place,  
this narrow strip of exile.

All along the roads there is mourning.  
The teeming marketplaces  
have been bombed into emptiness.  
The only sounds we hear  
are cries of pain  
sirens blaring  
drones buzzing  
bitterness echoing  
into the black vacuum  
of homes destroyed  
and dreams denied.

We have become Gaza's master  
leveling neighborhoods  
with the mere touch of a button  
for her transgression of resistance.  
Her children are born into captivity  
they know us only as occupiers  
enemies to be feared  
and hated.

We have lost all  
that once was precious to us.  
This fatal attachment to our own might  
has become our downfall.  
This idolatrous veneration of the land

has sent us wandering into  
a wilderness of our own making.

We have robbed Gaza of  
her deepest dignity  
plunged her into sorrow and darkness.  
Her people crowd into refugee camps  
held captive by fences and buffer zones  
gunboats, mortar rounds  
and Apache missiles.

We sing of Jerusalem,  
to “a free people in their own land”  
but our song has become a mockery.  
How can we sing a song of freedom  
imprisoned inside behind walls we have built  
with our own fear and dread?

Here we sit clinging to our illusions  
of comfort and security  
while we unleash hell on earth  
on the other side of the border.  
We sit on hillsides and cheer  
as our explosions light up the sky  
while far below, whole neighborhoods  
are reduced to rubble.

For these things I weep:  
for the toxic fear we have unleashed  
from the dark place of our hearts  
for the endless grief  
we are inflicting  
on the people of Gaza.

(Rabbi Brant Rosen, August 1, 2014)