

Seeds of Compassion

Source Sheet

What concrete steps can we take today to tend and cultivate the compassion within us for other human beings, to make the world a better place?

One Tiny Seed

by Rachel Goldberg, mother of Hersh Goldberg Polin, aged 23, captive in Gaza

There is a lullaby that says your mother will cry 1,000 tears before you grow to be a man.
I have cried a million tears in the last 67 days.

We all have.

And I know that way over there
there's another woman
who looks just like me
because we are all so very similar
and she has also been crying.

All those tears, our sea of tears
they all taste the same.

Can we take them
gather them up,
remove the salt
and pour them over our desert of despair
and plant one tiny seed.

A seed wrapped in fear,
trauma, pain,
war and hope
and see what grows?

Could it be
that this woman
so very like me

that she and I could be sitting together in 50 years laughing without teeth
because we have drunk so much sweet tea together and now we are so very old
and our faces are creased
like worn out brown paper bags.

And our sons
have their own grandchildren
and our sons have long lives.
One of them without an arm.
But who needs two arms anyway?
Is it all a dream?
A fantasy? A prophecy?
One tiny seed.



Questions for discussion:

- *What does the author imagine might grow from tears of pain?*
- *What are the seeds she's trying to plant and what might grow from it?*
- *This poem was written on the 67th day of her son's captivity. How do you think she is feeling now?*
- *What do you find is intuitive and what is difficult about compassion?*
- *Is compassion a finite resource?*
- *How can compassion provide strength to both the giver and the receiver?*