

On the Preciousness of All Life

Peter Beinart, May 22, 2025 *(For full statement, go to:*

<https://peterbeinart.substack.com/p/on-the-preciousness-of-life?>)

[The] terrible murder of two young Israeli embassy officials, Yaron Lischinsky and Sarah Milgrim ...is one of those moments where it's important to be able to speak certain complementary truths...to state them in the right moral order. And the first, most fundamental, primary thing to say is that this murder was fundamentally wrong. It was not fundamentally wrong because it sets back the Palestinian cause, although it does set back the Palestinian cause. It's incredibly self-defeating and self-destructive, if you're concerned about Palestinian life in Gaza and beyond, because it turns a conversation that was growing about trying to put limits on unconditional support for Israel that's been leading to the utter destruction of the Gaza Strip. That has been now eclipsed by the discussion about this murder. So, from a tactical, strategic point of view, for people who care about Palestinian rights, this was incredibly self-defeating and destructive, but that's not the reason that this was so wrong. It's wrong because Yaron Lischinsky and Sarah Milgrim's lives are infinitely precious, and to take their lives was a terrible, terrible crime and atrocity...

The second thing to say about this murder, is that it is connected to the violence that's happening in Israel and Palestine, and the terrible, terrible slaughter and starvation that's happening in Gaza, to note that there is a connection. Again, this is not in any way to justify. To have a thoughtful, valuable conversation about so many different political events, one has to be able to distinguish between justification and understanding, and explanation... This is a distinction that Martin Luther King was making again and again and again when he tried to describe the violence that emerged out of black neighborhoods in America's cities in the sixties. He opposed it. He opposed violence. Fundamentally. But he also pleaded with Americans to understand that there was an interconnected system of violence. And interestingly, one of the people who's made this point in the wake of this terrible murder in Washington, D.C, is the Israeli, center-left leader and former general, Yair Golan, who said that Benjamin Netanyahu's policies were, "fueling anti-Semitism and hatred of Israel." Now, Yair Golan was not in a million years justifying, in any way, the murder of Yaron Lischinsky and Sarah Milgrim, But he was noting that there is a connection

between what Israel is doing and what this murderer did in Washington, D.C...

Israeli Jews, and to some degree Jews beyond Israel too, live in an inescapable network of mutuality and a single garment of destiny with Palestinians. Because of the nature of life in Israel and Palestine. And so the way to keep everybody safe is to respect the infinite preciousness and value of all human life. It's so important to say the names of Yaron Lischinsky and Sarah Milgrim as a way of honoring their lives and the value of their lives. But it's also so important to name the Palestinians who are killed in Gaza every day, whose lives are also equally, infinitely precious, and so often are never named, die in utter obscurity, as if their lives don't matter.

And these two things are interrelated. The more we honor and defend the lives, the right to life of Palestinians in Gaza, the safer Israeli Jews in Israel, and in Washington, D.C, are, because, when we recognize the profound humanity of all people who are in Israel-Palestine, who are connected to Israel-Palestine, we create a climate of a culture of valuing life, valuing all life. And I think what Yair Golan was talking about is the way in which a series of terrible events, which started before October 7th, which began with the profound oppression of Palestinians and then are followed by the horrifying murders and abductions of October 7th, and then are followed by what is widely now accepted by international legal scholars and human rights organizations as a genocide in Gaza, and now is followed by the terrible killing of these two young, precious Israeli embassy officials, that this is what it means to go further and further down a path of dehumanization and horror, and we have to fight it, by recognizing and cherishing the life of Yaron Lischinsky and Sarah Milgrim, and also cherishing and defending the lives of all of these nameless Palestinians being killed every day whose lives are also equally precious.

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Remember all the victims.

Protect life. Defend humanity.

Resist fascism.

Resist this endless war- at home and abroad.