

Nelson Mandela: in Memoriam

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We are simply better together

"I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons will live together in harmony with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for, and to see realised. But my Lord, if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

The world has lost a great man. Men die, even great men; but, ideals live on. Great ideals live forever. Nelson Mandela did a lot for his people, but what is fundamental is that "his people" were black, white, coloured, Indian - the rainbow nation. It is the assertion, beyond tolerance, beyond acceptance, that we actually like each other, we "dig" each other and are actually better off WITH each other than WITHOUT. We profit by the existence of each other - we gain.

Since February, 2013, Ziv Hospital has received over 150 patients from Syria. Initially, wounded combatants, as the months ensued, more and more of the patients were civilians, women and children. Much has been written about this - Israel's humanitarian effort, the compassion and care of Israelis towards their neighbours, the revelation to Syrian citizens that Israelis are ready to tend their wounds. Also, in the media is the financial cost of this care, and, now the threat to Israel of resistant bacteria from Syria that some patients may have brought with them.

As we analyse the data from the Syrian civil war casualties, including the range of their injuries, the outcome, the utilisation of the Trauma room, the number of operations that were performed, what becomes clear is that while 150 patients or so have received life-saving, high-quality care, WE have gained. We were busier, we used more equipment, we worked faster and harder, the cases were interesting, challenging and thought provoking. We enjoyed our work, we were more productive, we learned more, learned new things, worked with new teams, created new posts and realised something about ourselves.

We realised that we "dig" each other. There are things we really like about each other. We are capable of really raising our game as medical professionals - and we do this best when we are busy taking care of each other.