

## “The Testimony of Children”

By Rabbi David Wolpe

Hanging on the walls of Sinai Temple for the past two months is the art of the children from Sderot. There are crayon pictures of rockets trailing red fire blasting through roofs; stick-figure parents and children running for shelter; families huddled together in tears.

Seeing these pictures I cannot help but recall another cache of children's pictures. *I Never saw Another Butterfly* is a book that records the poetry and drawings of the children of Thereisenstadt. There, in a very different sort of siege, Jewish children's lives spun out of control, and they expressed their fear in indelible images.

What ties together these painful images is not the suffering alone but the bestial joy of those who darken young lives. Even the most convincing claims of deprivation or oppression do not explain why the death of children should be celebrated or deemed 'heroic.' The rockets in S'derot begin at 8 in the morning, the Mayor told us when we visited, because that is when the children go off to school.

Who are the children victimized by such evil? What sort of spirits do the murderers seek to kill? Here is the last stanza of a poem from Thereisenstadt:

*Try to open up your heart  
To beauty; Go to the woods someday  
And weave a wreath of memory there  
Then if tears obscure your way  
You'll know how wonderful it is to be alive.*