

Report of the MINICONFERENCE

"PEACE WILL COME, WHY NOT NOW", report by Abraham de Kruijf

February 1, 2010, 12:30 – 16:30 hrs. Van Leer's Jerusalem Institute.

AIM: To discuss this peace program with *both sides* at the same time and to advance towards peace.

1) Present were:

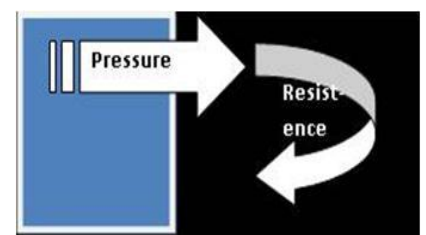
Avril Promislow (Deputy director Interreligious Affairs, AJC, for Rabbi David Rosen, chairperson Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land), Nahed Natsheh (International Peace and Cooperation Center, Jerusalem, for Lily Habash, Palestinian Government Staff, Secretary General Palestine Forum), Jacob Shryman (Sderot Media), Noam Bedien (director Sderot Media), Nader Ajloni (driver of Abraham), Abraham de Kruijf (organizer, originator of *Peace will come, why not now*). Elad Vazana, chairperson of Sulha.com, was to come but had to go to court for a friend. Many more influential people have been met in 2009 and have been invited for this meeting, but could not come due to different reasons. Like Haim Assaraf, director Palestinian Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Mohammad Ahmad Husein, Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and Palestine, Richard Miron, Chief Public Information Officer, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. These functionaries receive this report too, to continue to include them in our endeavors.

We started with a lunch. During the lunch we met with Imam Muhammad Sharif, of the Ahmadiyya Moslim Community and spoke shortly about each other's activities.

All attendees receive a handout with the agenda and a printout of 14 sheets, which are also on www.mijneu.eu. Our participants share and complement experiences from both Israeli as well as Palestinian sides, though we were a small group, this first time. We also stood still at Gaza, and Sderot. Where we are against suffering at both sides, of course being aware of the magnitudes. Jacob tells us about the theatre that is being developed and played in Sderot to resolve people's trauma's. There could be told so much more here, about both sides. Avril shares with us the blessing of communication technology: parents can have contact with their children at any moment, also in dangerous situations. And organizations and people can communicate boundaryless.

2) Growing longing for conciliation

In Israel there is a growing longing for conciliation. And at the same time Israel has great power, in political as well as military way. Both Israeli and Palestinians are victims of war. But the risk of more pressure is: more resistance. And this can repeat itself forever, even including crises, more victims, et cetera.



It is incredibly difficult for a weaker party/person to say "I want to conciliate": it seems to make you even weaker. Confidence building is something that really can matter, at a political, as well as at a personal level. "*Peace will come, why not now*" shows ways for all to become evenworthy. As every human being is evenworthy, has equal worth, equal value, independent of your position. And when this is our conviction you want to make this come true in life, in our world, true, for 100%.

One can make a positive act without weakness, being under pressure, and even gain recognition for that. But this demands a statesmanship-like wisdom and capacity for explaining the act.

3) (In)Justice, Sulha, Slicha

All of us tend to agree that the degree of injustice is heavily weighted on Palestinians. Very

look for political solutions, but are thinking: “what can I do, here and now, today, to enhance my future”. But they do not feel secure about what initiatives to take to indeed improve their future.

6) History, and its effect on the present as well as on the future

“History should be set aside...?” NOT TO BE forgotten, but to be seen as it is: history. We say NO TO DISRESPECT OF HISTORY. But want to make effort to heal wounds and to step into the future, being careful not to repeat historical and disastrous errors. Conversations on peace, you may say, always tend to go backwards: who has done what and why, and we blame him/her for having done that. And then always discussion starts, interpretations, victimization, blaming, without solution. Partially because even history is subjective in a way, because people project their way of perception into it. Talking about history though, partially may be caused by lacking an inspiring and realizable road to reconciliation and peace! We also need to educate our children like this: perceive history as history, respect pain and suffering from the past, but/and, with eyes open to the future. Much effort for forgiveness has to be practiced.

7) “Under the radar of the government”

There are hundreds, thousands, of grassroots movements, working for peace, bi-lingual schools, Haifa, Neve Shalom, et cetera, et cetera. But many of these initiatives remain “under the radar of the governments”. (Abraham: while making this report I thought of the great level of cooperation in Haifa as Muhammad Sharif shared with us during lunch, and what we have heard before. Paradoxically success stories may NOT inspire governments: that people and religions work very well together locally, may create a longing in the population to cooperate on a much bigger, nationwide, scale. But there is not any guarantee that things will work nationwide. Maybe you free a horse to run, that you never can catch again. With great risks for countrywide security. So government may want to keep some distance from these examples. As long as security is not guaranteed.)

8) Security

Security needs seem to overshadow everything. Isn't it so that the need for security is being exaggerated? Where Palestinians require Justice, Israel wants perfect Security: Bitahon Atzmi, self-security, is most important for Israel. This also it the reason that Israel (almost) always lays UN-resolutions aside, because these may harm Israel's Bitahon Atzmi. But step by step the world is accepting this less.

Where we also need to mention the tread that Iran's President wants to create. (Abraham, though being only alone as NGO, has also contacts with Iran on *Peace will come, why not now.*) And Israel “has always been alone” in its difficult past, according to Dr. Uzi Arad, National Security Coordinator for Prime Minister Netanyahu. Always alone. At least: when we forget about the contact with GOD which is always possible and obliges us as human beings. Israel was so often alone that it is not afraid to stand alone any more. But this may work the other way around: that one manifests acts that do make one standing alone, which may lead to exaggeration. Which can be too much. Is it so that Israel has experienced so much pain that it never wants something like that (historical violence) to happen ever again (of course)? But this might lead to an unrealistic and much too harsh behavior especially towards Palestinians, who have nothing to do with Israel's past. But here we realize ourselves that still the thread is hanging in the air that Hamas officially still wants the destruction of (the State and people of) Israel. And that Fatah nor Hamas remove the not-recognition of Israel out of their chart-

ers. And that Israel does not recognize Palestine as a state. Is the situation that simple? one may ask.

9) To turn the risk of losing total credibility into opportunity

When Israel and Palestine continue to fight they may lose credibility. US are “considering loans to Israel”. EU warned Palestine to make more efforts for peace. A carrot and stick mechanism is also presented in *Peace will come, why not now* (www.mijneu.eu) : in Recursive Reciprocity, together with Obligated Forgive and Reconcile. This is well known at the US, EU and Dutch governments. If Israel and Palestine forgive and cooperate: they receive more (financial) help from the world; when one does not cooperate both lose their help ... This is a “carrot & stick mechanism” to help to transform into another way of thinking and acting.

10) Declaration proposal

Peace will come, why not now offers three peace scenario's: 1) “*Peace will come, why not now*”, as such on

www.mijneu.eu , 2) “One for one” liberation of the respected soldier Gilad Shalit, 3) “Guided Tour to a specific Jerusalem Museum”. These can be combined with any other Peace Plan from the world.

Abraham refers to the proposal for a joint declaration by our group. Because of the time we have no more time to dive into that. Abraham: THE DECLARATION PROPOSAL HAS NOT BEEN CHECKED BY THE OTHERS, BUT I ALREADY MENTION IT HERE, WAITING FOR ALL YOUR COMMENTS AND I AM WILLING TO CHANGE. Everybody takes the printout with him/her.

We'll contact each other via email. The attendees receive scarfs, and t-shirt: “*Peace will come, why not now*”. February 2 Abraham continues with our results and goes to Hebron.

→ We as group want to spread the news. Abraham is available for guiding realization of the proposal.

11) Last point: Questionnaire Abraham / Ibrahim, Sarah , Hagar, Ishmael, Isaac

Peace will come, why not now also concerns the religious level, because: without religious peace there will not be a stable societal and political peace. In the time of patriarch Abraham the split between Sarah and Isaac, and Hagar and Ishmael happened. Thoroughly studying this history resulted in a questionnaire. Through this we relive the split when Hagar and Ishmael left. We see two different stories: Judaism and Christianity in Tenach / Old Testament, and Islam in Qur'an. The questionnaire is designed to make it possible that the reader expresses to agree or to disagree.

Was all this God's plan? Or: did God allow it after Abraham and Sarah did not want to wait for Sarah's son and through Hagar Ismael was born first? Did you know that in Qur'an Ibrahim traveled together with Hagar and Ishmael? And that in Judaism we find a story that Abraham loved Hagar so much that after Sarah's death he married Hagar (again), but now she has the name Kethura...

Is now the day coming that through learning humility all of us will meet again? In love and reconciliation. Including being able to love our (former) enemies. Which is so important in the work, life and resurrection (according to the New Testament) of Jesus. What a glorious day this will be.

