Israel and Palestine: Ongoing Dialogue Among Teachers in Times of Crisis

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The Israel / Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI) is a joint Israeli-Palestinian organization founded in Jerusalem in 1988, and engages in two broad strategic areas: (i) peacemaking—bringing Israelis and Palestinians together for policy discussions and planning to develop policy alternatives and practical solutions for the leaders of Israel, Palestine, and the international community to advance peace processes; (ii) and peace building—bringing Israelis and Palestinians together in cooperative programs to develop greater understanding and build constituencies for peace.

The work of IPCRI is divided into three main focus areas:

- IPCRI's political initiatives, including
  - Israeli-Palestinian working group on the roles of third parties in verification and monitoring of negotiations for agreements,
  - Israeli-Palestinian Jerusalem working group,
  - Israeli-Palestinian economics working group,
  - Israeli-Palestinian agriculture working group,
  - feasibility study on industrial zones between the "green line" and the "wall," and
  - Israeli-Palestinian road map working group.
- Water and environmental cooperation, including
  - Israeli-Palestinian water working group,
  - the second Israeli-Palestinian international academic conference on water,
  - program on alternatives to methyl bromide,
  - Joint Environmental Mediation Service (JEMS)-Israel, and
  - JEMS-Palestine.
- Peace education.

IPCRI's Peace Education Program, established in 1996 and ongoing, consists of educational programs in over 54 Israeli and Palestinian schools, and mainly targets educators, who are perceived as agents of change.

Program Rationale

Those who live in the midst of ongoing violent conflict may find themselves accustomed to attitudes and behaviors that derive from violence and distrust. This context refuels attitudes and behaviors that construct and reinforce it, and so we find ourselves imprisoned in a vicious cycle of violence.

Our goal is to bring about (i) social change, a change in awareness and patterns of thought that will change the behavior of all involved in education (students, teachers, school principals, program staff, etc.); (ii) a structural change to realize an equal, just society that contains and accepts the other; and (iii) a society that regards just peace as a state of mind, a chosen value, and a way of life.

Education for peace is an ongoing and continuous process that first and foremost transfers the way of coping with conflict from a violent to a nonviolent track.

The objective of peace education is to impart tolerance and acceptance of the other, and respect for human rights, equality, and social justice. In this critical process all involved in education are asked to examine themselves, their truths, and their relation and behavior toward their close environment, and only later toward the remote environment and their enemies.

The success of peace education is to be evaluated, therefore, by the degree of direct action taken by the participants to change their environment and the context of their life; and to change their attitudes and behaviors that are related to and derive from the conflict, on the basis of a deeper and better understanding of its causes, dynamic development, and parties involved.

To enable change to occur we need to focus on three areas: values, knowledge, and skills. We need to clarify what values we choose to guide our lives, and what price we must pay to make these choices.

To make decisions, we need to be exposed to knowledge and to understand the system, its power relations and control mechanisms. After we have chosen a way and learned and understood the facts, we need to acquire skills and tools to cope with reality in peaceful ways.

The educational process is facilitated in workshops, using a holistic approach, in small groups, to allow all participants to express their emotional and analytical sides.

Based on the above principles, we develop, collect, and process tools and frameworks to clarify and study the content of peace education, to develop commitment to peace, and, on the practical level, to impart skills. This is done within each community (uni-nationally or in single-identity groups) and in encounters between the different communities.

We hold principals', educators', and students' encounters and organize professional trainings in the values, knowledge, and skills required to conduct peace education.

The staff of the department guides, trains, and crystallizes the partnership with and between all who participate in education to enable growth and advance change.

Curriculums

The curriculums implemented in 2003–2004 in the 10th and 11th grades are the following:

- Pathways into Reconciliation (PIR) in Israeli schools and Education for Peace in the Palestinian schools—the basic program for the 10th grade, which advances civic and democratic values, and is in its eighth year of implementation. The program was developed through cooperation with the Adam Institute as well as Nur Center, and two of the program units were rewritten for school year 2003–2004. The curriculum includes learning a conceptual language of basic values that stand as the basis of peace and democracy (equality, liberty, and social involvement); learning and understanding control mechanisms (What controls?—majority-minority relations, social codes, and more; PIR 2003–2004: Who controls? personal, gender, cultural and national control); and discussing questions regarding meta-history (What is history? Whose history is it?) and learning skills of conflict transformation.

  The curriculum comprises three units, which can be implemented in Israel through literature, social science, and history studies and through Arabic lessons, English, and social studies in Palestinian schools and requires at least 16 2-hour (45 minutes x 2 units) meetings for a group of up to 20.
- Workable Peace—a curriculum developed for the 11th and 12th grades, through cooperation with the Consensus Building Institute (CBI) from Cambridge, Massachusetts, US. The program focuses on nego-

tiation skills between groups using simulation games, which are embedded in the conflict between Athens and Milos in the 5th century BC, and the conflict between the Republicans and the Loyalists in Northern Ireland today.

The program consists of a framework unit requiring 12 hours of implementation, a simulation game of 4 consecutive hours, and another simulation game that requires a whole school day. The program is implemented in the framework of one class.

- Program for Young Negotiators (PYN) was developed by Harvard University and implemented by us in cooperation with the Faculty of Law at Haifa University. The program involves training in negotiation between individuals and is held for 3 consecutive days at a time.

Programs are in different stages of development by the department's staff, with the cooperation of educators and organizations in the area and abroad. Staff members attempt to answer the special needs that arise in the field, helping to process, develop, and tailor special programs in peace education.

Work Process in Schools

All schools are divided into regional groups: three in Israel and four in Palestine, each guided by a facilitator from the department's staff. A new school that joins the program chooses a team of teachers to implement the program—preferably in two 10th-grade pilot classes to be divided into four groups (1–2 teachers per class). One teacher is appointed as the school contact person.

Training in curriculum takes place during summer vacation. The school needs to decide how the program will be implemented, and to schedule a time-frame to implement the regular weekly schedule—whether 2 weekly hours per semester for two parallel groups (since the class is divided into two groups), 2 weekly hours per year (a different group meeting every week), or in concentrated days (5 days for the entire program).

The Peace Education Department's (PED) staff guides facilitation. All principals and new teachers are invited to an educators' encounter during the school year, as long as there are parallel holidays or vacations in the Jewish, Muslim, and Christian schools, or during summer vacation.

After the pilot year, the teachers are invited to expand the program to include up to the entire 10th and 11th grades.

Veteran teachers and principals are invited every year to a Jewish-Palestinian educators' encounter and to further trainings with the following programs: Conflict resolution and negotiation skills between groups (28 hours); Peer mediation (28 hours); Conflict analysis and ways of coping with conflicts (in cooperation with Responding To Conflict, an international organization based in Birmingham, UK); Group facilitation skills (56 or 120 hours).

The educational process is long and, therefore, our program is a continuous one, and the longer the teachers participate in it, the more Jewish-Palestinian educators' encounters, trainings, and workshops they attend. As a result, a network of schools has developed, including support groups by region and by topic (for those who have undergone training in CBI), or based on relations formed between teachers or between schools. We promote, guide, and, many times, fund initiatives that develop between schools. Such initiatives reinforce the relations between the schools and between the teachers, thus creating support networks which are necessary to cope with the harsh reality of our lives.

Educators' Encounter—What is it All About?

In the general reality of winter 2003–2004, Israelis and Palestinians could not meet as equals, face to face. Yet, all the educators joining the

programs of IPCRI-PED participate in at least a 5-day encounter as part of their first year training in peace education. The encounters usually take place abroad, on neutral land.

The encounter consists of several stages and is held in small groups of no more than 20 participants from three communities: Palestinians from the Palestinian Authority, Palestinian citizens of Israel, and Jewish citizens of Israel. The languages spoken are Hebrew and Arabic. (When speaking of sensitive issues, people prefer to use their own language. It is also another tool for creating, as much as possible, an equal setting for the group.) Two facilitators—one Palestinian and one Jewish—as well as a translator, work with every group. Some of the sessions are of uni-national subgroups, aiming to process what takes place in the binational group, serve as safe zones where people can receive support from their subgroup colleagues, and enable participants to be challenged, to "stretch their edges." Often, only after "airing" their feelings and thoughts in a safe zone can participants bring them back to the joint group. The following are the main stages in the encounter:

- ice breaking and personal acquaintance;
- acquaintance in depth—personal, cultural, political;
- collective narratives—work in subgroups and presentation to the group; and
- conflict resolution—from stands to needs in uni-national subgroups, and negotiation over the needs, trying to reach agreements in small joint groups.

What happens during the encounters is recorded in two articles; one in a newspaper and another in a letter from a participant (Boxes 1 and 2).

BOX 1

"Teachers Greet the Enemy," *Jerusalem Post,* April 2003, by Eetta Prince-Gibson. About an encounter held in Antalya, Turkey.

Israeli teacher Miki didn't think she wanted to talk. Palestinian teacher Ibrahim didn't think he wanted to listen. But in spite of their mutual distrust, both agreed to be part of a group of about 80 educators that went to Turkey in February to learn how to talk to each other.

Afterward Miki said, "I didn't know it then, but I really wasn't ready for any kind of dialogue. In my heart, I wanted to prove to the Palestinians that they are wrong, that they are terrorists, and those we, the Jews, are right."

Ibrahim said, "As a Palestinian, I really didn't want to hear how the Jews have suffered. I didn't want to hear that people they love have died, or that they are afraid."

Before the trip, Miki, a teacher from Israel's central region, was anxious and excited. "What will I say to them?" she asked herself. "How will I get to know them? What if this doesn't work? What the hell am I doing here?"

Kobi stood off to the side, reading a mystery novel. Until almost the very last minute, he wasn't sure he would come.

"I was a combat soldier, and I've done reserve duty during this *intifada*. Friends of mine have died fighting Palestinians. I didn't know what I wanted to say and I didn't know what I wanted to hear."

But his school adopted the "Pathways to Reconciliation" project and he wanted to be part of it, so he had to come.

Ibrahim, a Palestinian educator from a village near Jenin, stood with the other Palestinians. They have different passports and had to go through a different security check. His attitude was a mixture of angry defiance and an almost-submissive fear.

Later, Ibrahim said he realized he was becoming angry because he didn't want to listen. "But I listened. And then we were able to stop competing over who has suffered more, begin to empathize, and think about what we could do to make things better."

This group of Jewish Israeli, Arab Israeli, and Palestinian teachers from the West Bank spent five days in Antalya at a conference entitled "Continuing Dialogue in Times of Crisis."

But this was not the usual academic affair. It was an emotionally demanding, intellectually challenging and morally troubling experience for all, with each participant confronting his or her self as well as the enemy "other."

For many of the Jewish participants, it was the first time they had met a Palestinian who was their social and professional equal. For many Palestinians, it was the first time they had met an Israeli Jew other than a soldier.

"This is the first time I ever felt equal to Jews," said Ibrahim. "Most of the Jews I know are soldiers and they are more powerful than me. They have guns and they rule my life. They decide if I can pass through a checkpoint or if they will shoot me. In the discussions, I felt equal, so after a while, I felt less angry."

"One of our roles as facilitators," said Fakhira Halloun, an Arab from northern Israel, "is to help the participants realize how complicated these issues are. Both sides feel powerless, and both sides have power. But it's hard for them to acknowledge this."

Explained Michal Levin, who co-facilitates with Halloun: "Without facilitation, Israelis and Palestinians will just reproduce the usual kinds of power relations with endless cycles of mutual blaming and attacking. I believe that people want an opportunity to experience themselves in a different way, but they are also afraid. Our job is to help them, sometimes despite themselves."

It wasn't easy. Noah Salameh, a Palestinian facilitator from Bethlehem, is director of the Center for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation. During the first intifada, he was arrested and spent 15 years in jail. Because of security restrictions, he is the only participant who wasn't allowed to come through Israel, so it took him three days to arrive in Antalya.

"Facilitation is demanding, draining, and rewarding," Salameh said. "As a facilitator, I have to neutralize my own feelings and experiences in order to create an atmosphere in which the group members can express theirs. I have to be able to hear their pain, anger, frustrations, and hopes without putting my own needs into the process. It is very hard but, if in the end they have learned something, if they have grown in their ability to listen to each other and promote peace, then I feel rewarded and satisfied."

Halloun observed: "There is always a paradox here. On the one hand, participants say they want to hear the truth from each other. But the truth is painful, and so they start to feel guilty, and don't want to listen. It is a struggle."

The participants wrote questions and comments on note cards, and tacked them to the walls for all to read. "Shalom to the Jews," one Palestinian wrote. "What is the source of your feelings of suspicion and lack of trust toward Palestinians who are citizens of Israel?"

"A question to the Palestinians," a Jew wrote. "Do you personally know the mother of a shahid who blew himself up? If you do know one, tell us what she goes through."

At one point, half of the group were blindfolded and led around the hotel by other group members. Blindfolded participants didn't know who was leading them. One blindfolded Palestinian instinctively sat down, his legs crossed and hands behind his back, as he did when arrested not long ago by Israeli soldiers. A Jewish woman was overwhelmed by feeling responsible for a Palestinian.

Another time, a large number of balloons were put in the middle of a room. The Jews were told they had to move all the balloons to another part of the room within five minutes. The Palestinians were told they had to do the same thing—but within seven minutes. Neither group knew what instructions had been given to the other group—but neither were they told that they couldn't ask.

They didn't ask, so they never realized there was no contradiction between the two "missions."

The Jews began to form barricades to prevent the Palestinians from reaching their balloons. The Palestinians responded by popping the balloons to prevent the Jews from having them. Within minutes, there were only pieces of torn balloons in the middle of the room. They talked about this for many hours.

At several points, participants formed uni-national groups. Explained Halloun: "The uni-national groups had two goals. On the one hand, they provided a safety net for people, a support group; on the other hand, in an environment where people feel accepted and supported, they can examine their most basic individual and collective stands."

In such groups, each nation wrote a collective narrative, describing its understanding of how the country came to the situation it is in. In one group, the Jews couldn't even agree enough to write one narrative and had to write two: one a traditional Zionist narrative, and one a post-Zionist narrative that described Zionism as colonialism. The discussion was heated and angry.

"I was appalled at the stances that some of my friends took," said Shiri, a teacher from the Tel Aviv area. "I told them that when I was younger, I had helped establish a settlement in Judea and Samaria and that I was proud of that. Some of the Palestinians could hear that, but some of the Israeli Jews couldn't stand it. They called me an occupier."

Kobi said: "I always defined myself as a liberal leftist. But I never really thought about it. When I actually sat down in the uni-national group, I realized how important some things—Jerusalem, my Zionist legacy—really are to me."

For the Arabs who are citizens of Israel, the uni-national meetings were often the most difficult. Which group should they join? The Palestinians from the West Bank? The other Israelis? Should they form a group of their own?

They referred to themselves as "1948 Palestinians" (those who stayed in Israel) or "1967 Palestinians" (from the West Bank and Gaza).

Nihaia said: "For the first time, I really had to face my own identity. Who am I? An Arab? A Muslim? An Israeli? I live in the State of Israel, I study in institutions run by the State of Israel. I could be killed by a terrorist, too, yet I feel my fellow Palestinians' pain."

By the middle of the fourth day, members of the group were ready to try to solve problems. But first they had to learn to look at conflict in a different way—in terms of needs, not in terms of demands, positions, or stands. The facilitators told the teachers:

A state isn't a need—but a sense of identity is.

Sovereignty over the Western Wall isn't a need—but the right to pray there is.

No checkpoint is a need—but dignity is.

Said Levin: "When you learn to restate a problem in terms of needs, not in terms of positions, it is very liberating. People learn that their position is merely one way of trying to meet their needs—and it may not be the best one."

Some were able to reach agreements so creative they would impress official Palestinian and Israeli negotiators. Others were stymied and frustrated. Not everyone learned to be empathic, not everyone could listen, and, even after four days of dialogue, not everyone wanted to.

Yet on the last night the mood suddenly became fun and festive, almost manic. Despite the reality that they were about to return to, many of the teachers began to dance debkas and rock together.

BOX 2

A letter from Ram Cohen, principal, Municipal School of Arts (Tel Aviv), following an encounter in Turkey in December 2002, to the teachers of his school and colleagues in other schools.

Shalom everyone,

From 29 December and 2 January I participated in a conference in Antalya, Turkey, for Jewish and Arab principals and teachers. Dynamic and intense workshops took place in four different groups. Each group included educators who were Jewish-Israeli, Israeli Arab (1948), and Palestinian (1967). Each group had about 20 participants.

Every night at the end of the workshops, informal encounters continued between friends to clarify questions and problems concerning the painful reality in which we all live.

The workshops were dynamic and provided participants with a variety of possibilities to share their frustrations, experiences, fears, desires, personal and collective stories (narratives), goals, and dreams with other members. The encounters summoned up the great frustration and anger of all sides, one upon the other, and only the skilled hand and reason and prudence of the facilitators enabled this dynamic process to proceed without chairs being thrown in the air, and without the hatred burning in the hearts of the enemies. I went to examine the program's concept to decide whether to incorporate it next year more intensively at school and to discuss it at the school's management meeting. The only contact we have with the program is through Tali Goldsmith's class, who has implemented it from the beginning of the year.

The goal of the program, generally, is to learn to talk among ourselves, to examine where and how much we speak with ourselves, and later to begin talking with our neighbors.

The encounter was intentionally held on neutral ground, and the languages spoken were Hebrew, English, and Arabic. Each group had one translator, and two facilitators—an Arab and a Jew. It seems this is the first time both 1948 and 1967 Arabs felt fully equal encountering Jewish-Israelis, with no language barriers, or need for permits, money, or any other thing.

The discourse that developed opened wounds and caused pains. Only long hours of joint meetings eye to eye, heart to heart, face to face, could have enabled deep understanding of the conflict in which we live.

The pain, the blood, and the fear were common to us all. Everyone brought with them the ghosts of their life (in the words of Yehudit Hendel). The Jews brought them packed in explosive belts, well tightened, and the Arabs brought them cramped in tanks and helicopters.

I wanted to relate to several points and reflections following the encounter:

- One of the issues spoken of was what we are ready to give up, and what they are ready to give up so that this country will quiet down. Where are we ready to withdraw, and what are they ready to accept, in order to stop the terror attacks and the killing? What are the limits of the concession? Each side tried to clarify this to itself and say it to the other side.
- The Israeli Arabs (1948) are greatly distressed. On the one hand they must be completely loyal and blindly obedient to the state. On the other hand are their aching brothers. In their state they are discriminated against financially (it is a fact!), a priori suspected, and all the time under examination. They want a state that will be a state of all its citizens, and not a Jewish state. Their brothers in the occupied territories suspect them, are jealous of them, angry at them. They cannot be envied. Some of their leaders do them a great disservice.
- The checkpoints are the worst thing for the 1967 Arabs. The degradation they experience at the checkpoints, the hours of delays in sun and in rain, the tanks, and belittlement by the soldiers—all madden and anger them. No doubt some soldiers do not always behave humanely for different reasons (faulty education, fear, misunderstanding, sadism, and more). Yet, those who go through the checkpoints are the simple people. The terrorists get into Israel

through the valleys, with the explosive belt. Therefore, we bring many people into the circle of hatred and anger. This is certainly worth renewed thought and examination.

- A good word from the soldier or officer to a simple man may restore his dignity. One participant told us that at one checkpoint a soldier gave him back his identity card and said, "Bon voyage." The man suddenly discovered the soldier's human side. He did not understand how someone could suddenly reveal humaneness and generosity, even if it was verbal. In contrast, the director of IPCRI told of how when he visited a hospital in East Jerusalem with a group of people from abroad, a soldier at a checkpoint threw a doctor's certificate onto the ground and told the doctor, "You are a doctor? You are a dog, pick up the certificate."
- For 5 days I sat and listened most attentively to the Arabs. I concentrated on each of their words. I remembered their names and everything they said. I understood with the broken Arabic in my head almost every word said. I did not cease speaking with them. I even concentrated during translation. I saw in this a way to respect them. On the fifth day, an hour before the end, one of the 1948 Arabs told me that a few of them suspected that I was from the Shin Bet. It hurt me.
- A participant in my group, an elderly a Palestinian teacher from East Jerusalem, said that four of his five children had left the country. He begs them to come back, promises to buy them anything, yet they have no intention to do so. "Me, ya Rami, I don't have many years left to live, but my children would continue to suffer here." At night his statement haunted me. Another teacher from Jenin told us that every morning he hopes to see all his pupils in school. The curfew prevents them from coming regularly. To see all the children—always—come to learn is his hope.
- We played the balloon game. We divided up into two groups (luckily not uni-national groups). Balloons were placed between the two groups. Each was instructed to collect as many balloons as possible. At the end both groups were left without any balloons. Everyone blew them up in an attempt to say, "This is mine." We wanted as much as we could, and were left with nothing. Aggression came out. A lot.
- And on the last night, a *khafla* (party) to release any anger aroused in the last few days. Songs in Arabic and Hebrew, dancing, laughter. We wanted to escape the reality of tomorrow. The one that will come and hurt and wound and bleed us to death. The ghosts that came in explosive belts and tanks will probably return to life on the way back, will fill their lungs with thin air over the Mediterranean.
- We landed at the airport. The 1967 Arabs were separated from us. Those who on neutral ground felt equal were separated. Their passports were taken, they were asked to collect their suitcases and stand in the security room for examination. Yes, we must protect ourselves, but it is so terrible. We stayed, waiting for them. The entire group—Jews and 1948 Arabs, 1967 Arabs—were examined. A matter of solidarity of educators, of human beings? Let's settle for solidarity.
- After the passport check, a security officer apparently made a mistake, returned Sammy's passport, and did not send him to a security examination. Sammy, a teacher from Bethlehem, a good man who was with me in the workshop throughout the 5 days, came to Anat, one of the directors of IPCRI, and asked, "What to do?" Anat told him, "Go, go home, take the suitcases and go." I saw Sammy's fear. Maybe this was a test? Maybe the mistake would soon be found out, maybe he needed to go to the security personnel and say, "You made a mistake, examine me." This is the mentality of someone who is occupied. Run, Sammy run, you have more checkpoints on the way.

It is Saturday. The pictures, the sights, the hearsay evidence chase after me and do not leave me alone. It was very difficult. I very much hope that we will sometime return to the 1967 borders, that we will reach a settlement in Jerusalem, and that we will concede the right of return. That we will convince 200,000 settlers to come home to Israel. That we will

educate our children to be less aggressive and more compassionate.

And in the meantime, we will continue to live by the sword, to ask for peace and pursue it.

In the upcoming days we will begin to build a team of teachers who will construct next years' teachers training in Jewish and Israeli identity. I have no doubt that this year supplies us with much material for thought.

I invite you to speak with the other participants and listen to their personal experiences.

Educators interested in participating next year in the adoption of IPCRI's project are invited to speak with me.

Ram Cohen

Impact

Dr. Yifat Sassa-Biton's PhD research, done during 1999–2000 in Israeli and Palestinian schools participating in IPCRI's programs, concluded that students who joined our programs defined "peace" more broadly and were less willing to support violent solutions than students who did not participate. Ilana Lustig, another student of Professor Gabi Salomon, from the Department of Peace Education at the University of Haifa, conducted research for her MA thesis on the ability to empathize with the other—in our case, for Jews to empathize with Palestinians, and vice versa. The research was done in 2000 among students who had undergone both programs of IPCRI-PED-PIR and Workable Peace-CBI, Cambridge, Massachusetts, US, curriculum on intergroup negotiation and simulations)—and control groups. The findings were clear-cut. The students who had undergone both programs showed a greater ability to empathize and to accept the narrative of the other as legitimate, although not necessarily agreed upon.

In her article, "Teachers greet the enemy," Eeta Prince-Gibson concludes: "Yet People-to-People (P2P) programs did not prevent the current violence, and since the outbreak of violence, most P2P programs have ceased to function."

According to Maya Kahanoff of the Swiss Center for Conflict Research, Management, and Resolution at The Hebrew University, the Oslo process was mostly a "top-down program," involving primarily the political, diplomatic, and academic elites.

Less than 5% of Israelis and Palestinians ever actually participated in peace-related P2P activities. Yet, she maintains, even small numbers of P2P participants can have a positive effect on the region.

Each year a few hundred teachers influence several hundred students. And all of them influence their families, friends, and communities. Eventually, the positive effects of these meetings will proliferate, even if it takes much longer than we had hoped."

Prince-Gibson ends: "It's important to know that Israelis and Palestinians can meet together, with professional facilitation, and discuss their differences rather than kill each other."

Personally, after being involved for 8 years with the work of the PED of IPCRI, first as a coordinator, and then as the co-director for the last 2 years, I can only say that a process of learning and unlearning peace in an environment of open and violent conflict is a most demanding and challenging one. Peace, for me, is a state of mind, a value, and a way of life. I believe that fence-sitting is not an option. One can either continue being a part of the problem or choose to become a part of the solution.