

## THE NECESSITY OF A NEW MULTICULTURAL PEACE CULTURE

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COBISS 1.01

*"The same stream of life that runs through my veins day and night  
runs through the world."* (Rabindranath Tagore)

### MULTICULTURALISM VERSUS THE "WAR OF CULTURES"

Culture is the essence of personal and national identity. What people read and watch, and the kind of culture, literature, values and norms they are exposed to, through the home, education, society, television and the internet – provide them with basic values, attitudes and norms which affect and motivate them throughout their lives. The stories people hear and read as children and as adults, become an integral part of the core of their identity and personalities.

The Nobel Prize Laureate, Elie Wiesel, explained: *"We are the stories we hear and the stories we tell."* Even religions, which are an integral part of culture, are mainly built on stories and parables. It is of crucial importance therefore, that those stories we are exposed to, at the socio-cultural and educational levels, which we watch on television and in films and which we read, should be pluralistic and peaceful ones that open our eyes to the world, and that build and do not destroy.

The *Webster New World Dictionary* describes "culture" as: "The development, improvement and refinement of the mind, emotions, interests, manners, tastes, as well as: the arts, ideas, customs and skills of a given people in a given period." The *Oxford English Dictionary* adds to this definition, that culture is "The intellectual side of civilization." Multiculturalism therefore, designates a network or system of various interrelated and inter-mingled cultures, having and sharing the characteristics defined above. The definition of "multiculturalism" used in the present article is based on all the above, and it comprises values and contents promoting a harmonious climate that has succeeded to overcome cross-cultural barriers.

After the horrendous terrorist attack on the Trade Center in New York (September 11, 2001), it has become obvious that the new era has ushered a dangerous "war of

cultures." It has also become obvious that these new developments, including the trend of suicide bombings which is a crime against humanity, cannot be overcome by guns and bombs, but rather by an openness to other humanistic cultures and values, or in other words, by multiculturalism. The fear that the "enemy" disdains one's culture, and is anxious to eliminate it, is one of the profound causes of the clash of cultures.

In the era of globalization, there is a new wave of global culture spreading all over the world, parallel to the spread of a global economy, international relations, markets, information and technology. However, it is unfortunate that the emerging global culture instead of spreading positive values, is more influenced by the predominance of violence, crime and homicide films daily shown on television, than by a culture of peace and harmony.

On the other hand, multiculturalism and pluralism can promote the awareness of the oneness of humanity and the consciousness of common values and norms in various cultures, and it can promote the new identity of the "global citizen," in addition to the various ethnic identities and cultures of specific and particular groups or nations. There can be a dynamic balance and a symbiotic enrichment of both levels, that of the national culture and that of the global culture, when they come in contact with each other and nourish each other.

It has therefore become urgent to build an effective multicultural system, at regional and global levels. To accomplish this, the following measures are recommended.

States today, should invest in developing the multicultural culture of peace that would help people and nations to understand and respect each other; this would reduce the possibility of conflicts and save in the cost of armaments. The creation, developing and spreading of a multicultural peace system, could be the best investment for defense. As in "preventive medicine," the promotion of a harmonious multicultural can prevent the dangerous influence on society caused by a widespread rise of fear, terror and hatred that lead to conflicts and wars.

Governments should consider establishing ministries of "Multicultural Peace Culture," with appropriate budgets that can accomplish the great task of changing the national cultures of violence and terror to one of multicultural openness to other cultures, harmony and peace. Literature and arts in the pursuit of peace collected from the various civilizations and cultures, should be researched, translated, and widely used, and multicultural peace education and peace studies at all levels should be initiated and established, not only for children and young people, but also for teachers and parents.

## THE ROLE OF NGO'S: NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Non-governmental organizations in the various countries should be involved in the creation of the required new multicultural peace system. These should be largely sponsored to be able to operate effectively and in an interconnected fashion. NGO's

could help in the collection of the various pluralistic cultural contributions of peace literature, poetry, drama and the arts, from the best that is available in various cultures and civilizations, that would be able to reflect the many "Voices of the Earth" yearning for a peaceful world without violence, terror or war.

These multicultural works of art and literature based on peace values, would promote powerful components of BCM's: "Building Confidence Measures", among people and nations, including the values of appreciation and respect for the culture of "the other". A wide program of multicultural peace education and culture should be implemented regionally and globally, through well funded and well equipped institutions, colleges and universities.

In a conflict situation, there are several benefits to be reaped from the development of a multicultural and intercultural peace system. These can be grouped in three major stages: before, during, and after, the occurrence of a conflict or a war. Before a conflict situation, multiculturalism based on openness and peace values, can function as a preventive remedy. Coming into contact with the culture of "the other" and listening to his side of the "story" and conflict, an acceptable agreement by both sides becomes easier and he ceases to be a threat. The popular saying: "*An enemy is someone to whose story we have not listened to,*" is pertinent to this afore stage of the conflict. An open, pluralistic culture, based on values of tolerance and moderation, can help in arriving to a solution.

Even in the second stage, when conditions for a settlement may have developed, attainment of peace can be delayed by the mistrust created by the conflict situation. The building of bridges of understanding of the "other's" view, and respect for the other's culture and identity can help in the building of the required confidence measures.

In the third stage, a multicultural system can also help in building renewed trust between people and nations after the conflict or war is over. During a war not only buildings are destroyed, but also the image of the enemy, who is usually portrayed as a "demon," by each of the sides. Deep residues of fear, hatred, and mistrust linger in the hearts of former opponents. These sentiments cannot be overcome only by the signing of a peace treaty by leaders, but require also a thorough re-construction of a positive image of each other, by the people themselves, and by acquiring knowledge, understanding and respect of each other's identity, ethnicity and culture.

A suitable vehicle for this required "reconstruction," is the multicultural approach. The arts, literature and poetry, are especially suited for that, as they are vehicles of both feelings and thoughts, and as such, they have the ability to reach the deeply emotional layers of mistrust and hatred built over the years in the hearts of enemies, and they have the power to unlock the fences and to dissipate them. A multicultural approach also helps to know the history and cultural heritage of the former "enemy," which is instrumental for the reaching of a full reconciliation.

Another possible innovative aspect of the building of a new multicultural system, which municipalities could consider, is the founding of "peace museums." This development has recently been established in various countries to help propagate

multiculturalism and the peace cultural and historical heritage of nations, and to make it accessible to the whole of humanity. Peace museums have been founded in various countries, including Japan, England, Samarkand and other countries. Japan that has suffered so much from the atomic bomb during World War Two, is a leading figure in this new trend, and it has already founded more than sixty peace museums. These museums demonstrate the great yearning of the Japanese people for a multicultural peace system, after having suffered the atrocities of the atomic bombs thrown on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These Peace Museums are multicultural in their outlooks and goals. The one in Kyoto, for example, has a whole floor dedicated to the condemnation of the Holocaust and the extermination of Jews by the Nazis, during World War II, despite the fact that Japan was on the side of Germany during the war.

Multicultural peace museums represent a new conception of what a museum should be, they are "alive" and full of vital activity and multicultural programs for all ages, and are becoming increasingly popular. School children and students regularly visit them, and use their materials for their works and research on multicultural peace. They are a great aid in presenting and promoting not only national but also global cultures of peace, through various exhibitions and activities. In addition to public lectures on peace art, peace literature and poetry presentations are organized and presented to the wide public. Ideally, multicultural peace museums should become a "must" in every major city and town in our global village. Such a huge task as the building of peace museums regionally and globally, should be sponsored by well-financed governmental and municipal budgets.

Some critics ask: Where will the money for building this required new multicultural peace system come from? It is a question of prerogatives and choices. The US for instance, spends an estimated \$50 billion on maintaining the fifth fleet in the Persian Gulf and the American presence in Saudi Arabia. All the aid to all peace NGO's in the region together, from private as well as government sources, would barely amount to \$100 million. The establishment of a "Multicultural Peace Satellite" over the Middle East for instance, would cost much less, and would perhaps be more effective than spending all the money on arms. The efforts to uproot violence, hatred and the new horrific and inhumane trend of suicide bombings, could be greatly facilitated by a multicultural peace satellite network, as well as local television and radio stations, films, theater, and Internet programs.

This innovative multicultural network could use universal research works and peace literature as well as multicultural art. The struggle for the creation of a multicultural peace system, which could promote the identity of a new global citizen, could be waged on a large scale, comparable to the efforts for obtaining petroleum for instance, and with as much perseverance and tenacity. This great endeavor could gain momentum by involving global institutions like the UN, UNESCO and the World Bank, as well as the private financial sectors. These would gain in investing in such a venture, as they would be protecting themselves from possible future violence and terror as witnessed on September 11.

## **THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN BUILDING MULTICULTURALISM**

The electronic media: satellite networks, television, cinema and radio, should help to spread programs and films initiated by the new multicultural peace system, and it should be promoted globally as well as by every nation.

The media and telecommunications play an important role of interconnection between people and nations, and are a key factor in the process of the globalization of culture and the spread of multiculturalism. Until recently, people in each society mainly read news concerning their own society and watched their own local media. The growing global telecommunications system promotes the interconnection of different societies and facilitates their attempts to reach each other, and to open up to other realms than just their own. In doing so, the global media can break up stereotypes and bring about the required openness and changes in the consciousness of individuals and in society. Hence, the modern electronic communications can play a key role in the creation and the promotion of the required multicultural peace system.

The spreading by high technology communications and the media of the new ethical peace culture built on meritorious literature and arts of various nations and civilizations, can play a major role in counteracting violent cultures. It also has the power to impart pluralism and peace values and to convey the vision of the possibility of creating a peaceful world beyond war, terror and violence.

The electronic media and communications therefore, due to their capacity to ensure fast movement of information and to reach global multitudes simultaneously, have a great responsibility in shaping perceptions and opinions of people, and they can fulfill a crucial role in the building of the needed multicultural system. The globalization that is recently taking place has increased people's consciousness concerning the notion of the oneness of humanity. The electronic media – satellite, television, radio, and the Internet – can have a meritorious impact in promoting this consciousness. Links in cyberspace between people and institutions through the use of the Internet are an added dimension for the formation of multicultural partnerships and they can render possible a wide expansion of varied cultural influences, in addition to the preservation of ethnic roots. Thus multicultural globalization instead of constituting a threat to ethnic identity, can be instrumental in developing and promoting it.

Furthermore, a conscientious, balanced and responsible media, based on an ethical multicultural peace system and network, can help in the process of healing our planet of its violent characteristics, such as terror and wars, which are infesting many parts of the world, where violence is often erroneously equated to strength. Hence, it is crucial today to create and develop a "multicultural peace media network" that can contribute to the healing of our planet of its infectious disease of violence and terror.

The efficient "Peace Radio," linked to the UN University based in Porto Rico, can be considered as a first step toward the suggested multicultural peace media system. The main goals of such a system, following the Porto Rico model, is to develop, promote and spread the various aspects of multicultural artistic peace values and

research, and to make them available to the wide masses around the world. Decision makers and people responsible for the media and telecommunications, should strive to reform them in such a way that they can become reliable vehicles for the promotion and diffusion of the multiculturalism. In addition, the artists and media people in each country, who usually have an impact on popular consciousness concerning issues of war and peace, such as writers, journalists, and peace culture researchers, editors and directors – should be personally involved and motivated to contribute the best of their talents toward the development and promotion of the innovative multicultural peace system. In addition, the media should cover the aspects of society and culture that are positive and constructive, such as peace literature, poetry and drama, and widely present and expose writers, poets, playwrights and artists who are conscious of the necessity of building the new pluralistic system.

Thus, telecommunications and the media can indeed help to create the new multicultural system that would promote the global advancement of humankind toward global identification and unity, while keeping one's own traditions and intrinsic cultural diversity.

### ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN MULTICULTURALISM IN HAIFA

In regards to the possibilities of multiculturalism in Israel and the Palestinian Authority, it is important to make a distinction between two different issues:

- a) The relation between the two nations: Israel and Palestine (including the necessity of establishing a State of Palestine), and:
- b) The relation between the Jewish majority in Israel (5 million), and the Palestinian minority living in Israel (1 million), who have the Israeli citizenship.

Haifa, the major port in Israel, and the capital of the North of Israel, is a multicultural city in which the Palestinians that are Israeli citizens are 20%, and they hold equal status and have equal opportunities. One of the most successful Mayors of Haifa was Palestinian, by the name of Hassan Shukry, and today one of the major streets in Haifa bears his name. Haifa, due to its multiculturalism and democratic tendencies, outlook and ideology, can be a model for co-existence of Jews, Muslims and Christians, for the whole of the Middle East.

A factor that has proven to be instrumental in the spreading of multiculturalism in Haifa, is the activity of NGO's and other voluntary cultural organizations, encouraged by Haifa Municipality, as for instance, "IFLAC: The International Forum for the Literature and Culture of Peace," and its women's wing: "The Bridge". This is an additional reason, alongside other multicultural and peace organizations, why Haifa succeeded to become a model of co-existence, where Jews and Arabs live together and flourish peacefully. A case study of IFLAC–the Bridge is presented below.

## **IFLAC—THE BRIDGE: MULTICULTURAL COEXISTENCE AND PEACE**

### **The founding of “The Bridge”**

In 1975, two years after the Yom Kippur War, some Israeli and Arab/Palestinian women, founded in Haifa a voluntary association called: The Bridge: Jewish and Arab Women for Peace in the Middle East. This was the first association of its kind in Israel that dared to gather Jewish and Arab women in the same organization, and to promote leadership and the status of women. They met with much criticism and resistance, sometimes violent, in both sectors. They also had to overcome language barriers and cultural differences and worked hard at accomplishing this to promote their aims. They knew they were promoting a just cause, which required courage and perseverance, and it gave them strength to act and struggle to overcome difficulties including those of language and cultural barriers. To this day, the women of The Bridge, that are now part of the umbrella organization IFLAC, are still working hard to promote multiculturalism, peace in the region, and the status of women.

### **Description**

“The Bridge” is a women’s association, which is today part of IFLAC: The International Forum for the Literature and Culture of Peace, whose members originate from Israel’s various ethnic and religious communities, and who work together for the promotion of coexistence and the attainment of peace in the region.

**Legal Status:** Its legal status is a non-profit organization.

**Membership:** There are 140 paid members in Haifa, which is the center for this organization, and 1860 affiliated members, in the whole country.

**Yearly dues:** 150 NIS (\$25).

**Financial Sources:** membership, donations, and some municipal support.

**Structure:** The organization is run by an executive Board of four women, two Jewish and two Arab/Palestinian. It is elected by the General Board which comprises twenty members. The yearly General Meeting elects the two Boards, as well as the President, the Director, and the Treasurer.

### **Goals**

To awaken the consciousness of women to their power to take an active part in promoting multiculturalism so as to encourage the ongoing peace process between Israelis and Palestinians, and in promoting women’s rights. The women of The Bridge understand that both goals are inextricably linked, for when there is war, conflict and

unrest, the problem of women's rights gets shoved aside as "not the most important just now". As mothers, and educators of the new generation, they feel they have to ensure peace in their region and in the world, so that life on earth may continue. They know that they are not those that make the decisions as to the political agreements and the eventual treaty between the two sides, and that it is their leaders (in the present: Mr. Abu Mazen, the Palestinian Prime Minister, and Mr. Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Prime Minister), who will make and sign the peace accords. However, they have full confidence that efforts have to be generated at both ends, and it is up to the people to prepare the atmosphere and the conditions of understanding and respect for each other's culture and entity, so as to make it possible to reach a reconciliation, and for their leaders to sign the agreement that would end at last the long conflict between Palestine and Israel.

### **Main Activities of IFLAC–The Bridge**

1. Courses of Arabic for the Jews, and Hebrew language courses for the Arabs. It has been observed that the Arabs learn Hebrew much quicker than the Jews learn Arabic. The majority versus the minority situation and conditions certainly play a role, but also it seems that the Arabs are quicker and better at learning new languages.
2. Monthly dialogues and lectures in Hebrew and Arabic (and sometimes in English when there are delegates and visitors from abroad).
3. Meetings in Jewish, Arab and Druze towns and villages, for the building of "Bridges" of culture and understanding with the local population.
4. Exchange visits of Israeli and Arab pupils in schools, and of students at universities.
5. Group dynamics: the Jews act the roles of Arab/Palestinians, and vice versa.
6. Radio and television programs on IFLAC–the Bridge in Arabic, Hebrew, English and French.
7. Common feasts, such as Ramadan, Hanukah and Christmas, celebrated together, as well as picnics and happenings with the families.
8. Seminars, symposia and international conferences.

The fact that the women of THE BRIDGE initiated, planned and carried out important activities, projects and campaigns, promoted not only the status of women who are members and leaders of the organization, but also women in the community at large.

Furthermore, the joint activism of Israeli and Arab women, helped to advance the status of Arab/Palestinian women, who based their claims for greater freedom and rights in the home and in society, on the example of their Israeli counterparts and women colleagues. One of the interesting facts is that the first Arab women who obtained the right to vote in the Middle East, were the Arab/Palestinian citizens of Israel.



## **IFLAC: International Forum for the Literature and Culture of Peace**

The husbands and male friends of the members of The Bridge, as well as contacts from abroad, requested to join the organization and its struggle for peace through multicultural bridges, and in 1999 a new organization entitled: IFLAC – The International Forum for the Literature and Culture of Peace, which includes both women and men, as well as new international branches, was founded in Haifa. The Bridge served as a model for IFLAC, and it is organized in much the same way. It includes: weekly programs, monthly dialogues and meetings, and it also organizes exchanges of visits by Jewish and Arab/Palestinian pupils and students in schools and colleges, picnics and common festivities, symposia, and conferences.

In January 2003, for instance, as in previous years, IFLAC–the Bridge organized a common festive conference of Jews, Christians and Moslems, under the banner of: HANOUKAH, CHRISTMAS and RAMADAN at the Haifa Municipality. Members, families and the general public were invited, and they enjoyed together the excellent multicultural Hebrew and Arabic presentations and the pluralistic peace culture entertainment. The “Bridges” of respect and understanding between the various communities and ethnic entities, including the recently arrived emigrants from Russia and the former Soviet Union, as well as the Ethiopian emigrants, were indeed powerfully strengthened again on this special occasion, and it brought renewed hope of multicultural peace in the region.

### **Literary Exchanges**

IFLAC–the Bridge holds regular meetings of “Literary Exchanges of Multicultural Literature”, as well as: “Creative Women Meetings”, to promote both the national cultures and literatures as well as the regional and global identity of members and the public at large. It also organizes meetings of writers (both women and men), as well as poets, lecturers, intellectuals, teachers, journalists, media people, of all creeds and denominations, toward the building of bridges of understanding through culture and literature of “the other”.

In addition to the above mentioned activities, IFLAC–the Bridge encourages literary peace research and it organizes presentations of new multicultural books and publications, such as *Galim – Waves*, and the online magazine *Horizon*, on the struggle toward achieving the creation of multicultural bridges, and equal rights and freedom for all people of the region, both for men and women.

Two of the published books that were lately celebrated at IFLAC-The Bridge, are: *Not in Vain: An Extraordinary Life*, and *Peace Flower*. The first book is a biography of the heroic nurse Thea Woolf, a vivid and courageous heroine, as well as a universal multicultural role model, who saved Jews from the Nazi Holocaust during World War II, through the Jewish Hospital in Alexandria, with the help of Egyptian officials. The

second book is a universal educational peace adventure touching on preset dilemmas, a book for young and old. The heroine, Lee, together with her friend Ron, succeeds, despite Nuki, the Nuclear Dragon that chases them, to bring the Peace Flower from the Future in space, to the Present on Earth. Both these books were translated from the English originals into several languages, including Hebrew, Arabic and French, and they have an impact on the promotion of multiculturalism. (Both books are also available as e-books and CD's, see References).

Thus, thanks to the demographic constituency of Haifa, and the activities of IFLAC – The Bridge, as well as other organizations and institutions like the “House of the Vine” in Haifa, this mixed city of Jews and Arabs, has always been peaceful. There have always been harmonious relationships and respect between Jews and Arabs in this beautiful city on the slopes of green Mount Carmel by the shores of the blue Mediterranean. Due to the various reasons mentioned above, Haifa can indeed serve as an example of multicultural creative and harmonious relations not only between Jews and Arab/Palestinians, moreover it can serve as an example of how to ease and solve ethnic conflicts on the socio-cultural levels. (For further information and details of activities see IFLAC Website: [www.inflac.up.co.il](http://www.inflac.up.co.il))

The following is a description of the founding conference of IFLAC-The Bridge that supplied a model for all 3 yearly consecutive conferences: In Sydney, Australia, 2001; in London in 2002; and it is likewise a model for the following conference which will take place in Bursa, Turkey in October 9–11, 2003.

#### **The Founding of IFLAC–The Bridge International Pave Peace Conference** (Shavei Tsion Conference Center, Galilee, Israel, June 25–30, 1999)

The IFLAC founding conference was multicultural and international in scope, and it includes women and men from the Middle East, USA, Canada, Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. It embraced a large range of discourses and topics, combining scholarly work with position papers, and multicultural creative peace literature, stories, poems and plays. It also included background briefings, testimonial accounts, workshops, videos, plays, and musical and artistic poetry and creative programs. This purposely heterogeneous range of media and “cultural languages” appealed to the many communities, within and beyond the academy, concerned with issues involving multiculturalism, conflict resolution, and the equality of women and minorities.

#### **Among the panels the following subjects were included:**

1. The Multicultural Paving of Peace Through Culture and Literature.
2. Technology as Opportunity for Multiculturalism.
3. Refugees, Emigration and Immigration, and the Challenges of Surmounting Language and Cultural Barriers.

4. The Bridge: Jewish and Arab Women for Coexistence and Peace in the Middle East.
5. Multicultural Opportunities for Conflict Resolution in Israel and the Palestine.

**Round tables included:**

1. Democratization, Nation Building, and Creating the Global Citizenship Identity through Multiculturalism.
2. Conflict Resolution through the Building of Multicultural Bridges.
3. Fundamentalism versus Pluralism and Multiculturalism.
4. The Gendered World Order and the Challenge of Multiculturalism.
5. Multicultural and Pluralistic Networks.

## MULTICULTURAL PEACE LITERATURE

*"I am the enemy you killed my friend!"*  
(*Strange Meeting*, Wilfred Owen)

Culture, literature, and the arts are an important part of our lives, and they constitute the building blocks of both our own identity and the required culture of peace system – however, we do not give their contents and impact enough attention. The major components of literature: novels, fiction, poetry and drama, are often made into films and television scripts, and as various studies have shown, fiction and stories can often influence more than facts.

Both classical and modern peace creations collected from multicultural resources around the world should be used as models for building the needed harmonious and peaceful multiculturalism needed to repair the world from the violent phase it is going through. Outgoing, open and pluralistic and multicultural works of literature and art should characterize the first decade of the third millennium.

Despite the fact that our global village has been affected by major destructive cultural upheavals caused by conflicts, wars, and differences in development and standards of living levels, peace culture traditions and literary heritage exist in all civilizations. They have been developed at different periods of history, and in different regions, and they should now be collected and used in the present for reinforcing the common cultural themes of humankind, and to promote the new global citizen consciousness. Those collected peace works can furthermore constitute important stepping-stones toward the innovative multicultural peace developments.

The manifold benefits of a multicultural literature and the arts in the pursuit of peace should be made available to the wide public all over our global village. Various valuable classical literary peace sources that have stood the test of time, such as Rab-

indranath Tagore's philosophical poems, Wilfred Owen's peace poetry, Jubran Khalil Jubran's *The Prophet*, and Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, as well as many other valuable creative works, should be widely presented to audiences around the world, through satellite and local television programs and radio, and utilized as entertainment as well as in education, at all levels. Peace culture research studies of world literature could also highlight new angles of peace themes in great classical drama, as for instance the condemnation of violence and war in the works of Shakespeare, as can be perceived in his major tragedies: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet* and *Othello*.

Multicultural peace literature should also be intensively researched in contemporary culture and literature, and new peace books, like for instance, the historical novel *From the Nile to the Jordan*, on multiculturalism in Egypt, and the ensuing "Second Exodus" of the Jews from Egypt, starting in 1948. This kind of books describes the cooperation of Jews and Arabs in Egypt before 1948, and it stresses that in all conflicts both sides suffer and not only the one side.

We find words of peace in all cultures and in all religions. For instance, in the Holy Bible we find: "*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger of good tidings that announces peace!*" (*Isaiah 52*), and in the Koran: "*He who walks with peace – walk with him!*" (*Sura 48*). In our own times, Pope John Paul II admonishes: "*War is a defeat for humanity. Only in peace and through peace can respect for human dignity and its inalienable rights be guaranteed.*"

Governments, relevant institutions, NGO's, and the large public, should be made aware of the power of multiculturalism in the pursuit of peace, to: 1) render the world a safer place to live in, and 2) to enrich the intellectual and ethical standard of living and to improve and "repair the world", through the promotion of its pluralistic and democratic structure and freedom.

The idea of a constructive, ethical, and harmonious multiculturalism does not imply an escapist or unrealistic attitude. The concrete problems in a conflict situation, such as land, water, work opportunities and education possibilities, of people and nations, should be thoroughly investigated and addressed. However, these grievances should not only be addressed socially and politically, but also exposed through the projection of effective cultural programs in the theatre and the electronic media, about the real life experiences and problems of real people and nations.

In his influential book *Education Through Art*, the English poet and critic, Herbert Read, a pioneer in the development of the concept of a pluralistic peace culture, presents a view of human nature as capable of cooperative activity, mutual respect, and close communal relationships. His premises are that literature and the arts are the best tools for developing personal and multicultural relations, values and moral virtue. A function of literature and the arts in society and education, Read explains, is to expand human responsibility, ethical values, capacities and potentialities. He criticizes the over-emphasis and over-grading of science and technology of mainly abstract thinking, at the expense of rational "emotive wisdom", or what is termed today EQ: Emotional Quotient, versus IQ: Intelligence Quotient. According to Read, thoughts, emotions, imagination

and vision that can be expressed and acquired through literature and the arts, are more important than abstract ideas, for they involve not only the mind but also the heart.

He strongly believed that the moral function of cultural and literary education is to unite all humanity in a common bond and common ideals. Read's theory and conception of a strong global bond of all humankind through multicultural literature and the arts are especially valuable and pertinent today, when we are exposed to the "war of cultures", and they should be used in the establishment of the new peace culture system needed for sustainable global development.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSLATION**

To create a bond between nations with the aid of a vibrant multicultural literature, it is important to translate the works of peace writers, poets and playwrights of various nations, so that they can become accessible to neighboring people and countries, and to all the global village. This is especially important in the case of former enemies, as the access to the culture and literature of the "other" can overcome mistrust and fears, and open doors, minds and hearts to the reality of the other. When conflicting parties or former opponents have the chance to understand each other at the deep levels of conscious identity – it imparts better chances of creating bridges of reconciliation between them.

Translation of literary works can therefore play an important role by allowing former opponents to penetrate windows of different realities, views, and conceptions. Conflicts always include two stories, and the presentation and sharing of each other's stories, with the aid of translation, can constitute a great step forward toward full "sulha" reconciliation, which is considered a higher phase than peacemaking at the political level. Translation of great literature and poetry, and making it globally available, can moreover demonstrate and strengthen the basic oneness and similarity of humankind. It is therefore important that institutes for the translation of multicultural literature and peace works should be founded nationally and globally and largely funded, to be able to spread their multicultural art to strengthen the new identity of the future global citizens.

## **EDUCATION AND MULTICULTURALISM**

Education provides an important channel for the building and the promotion of an influential and effective multicultural peace culture. Appropriate attention should be given in schools and universities, as well as all educative institutions, to the teaching of multiculturalism.

The growing boom and expanding dimensions of communication technology offers various new opportunities and directions for the promotion of a pluralistic and

multicultural education. International multicultural cooperation and cross-disciplinary research, promoted by electronic technology and information services, can significantly enrich education at all levels.

Recognizing the importance of this new technological trend, UNESCO convened a conference on "The Impact of Information and Communication Technologies on Teaching and Teachers," (Khvilon, Patru, 1997), in order to strengthen international cooperation in the pursuit of peace and international understanding. It was a fruitful and successful conference and it opened the door to more conferences of this kind nationally and globally.

The multicultural approach in education is also an important factor as a means of fostering consciousness and sensitivity to lacks and deficiencies not only in one's own society but also in the world at large. It moreover has the ability to promote willingness to take creative action in the building of a better world. The subject of multiculturalism in general, has received relatively little attention in education, and it should be more encouraged. Ministries of education and culture regionally and globally should correct this, and should attempt to include multicultural and peace studies as required subjects at all levels of schooling.

Schools and colleges are suitable forums where culture, values, ideals and identity, as well as worldviews, are formed. Curricula should pay attention to the power of the multicultural trends and teachers should be trained to teach it. Educators need to carry out programs that would give young people a vision of what could be, a future view that would draw on their imaginations to create new visionary dimensions of a world beyond war, terror, famine and poverty.

Multiculturalism should be considered as a central educative value and should inspire and influence all aspects of education. Violence in schools and in the streets in most cases arises from the mistaken notion that force is the only way that can solve conflicts. The study of multicultural peace culture could demonstrate that it is otherwise, and new approaches should be adopted. In the teaching of history, for example, attention should be given to the policies and verbal diplomatic negotiations that lead to the successful conclusion of peace treaties, and not concentrate mainly on the waging of the wars, as is often the mode in schools in the present. The two sides of the conflicts should be presented in a lively and convincing way, and historical novels are a good means to present this duality.

In the study of literature, furthermore, lives of heroines and heroes who have advanced the cause of peace, like for instance, *Waves of Peace, In Memory of Yitzhak Rabin, (Galim 8)*, should be extensively studied, and presented as models, both in educational curricula, and to the wider public. Anthologies promoting the pluralistic *Culture of Peace* should be used as textbooks to teach conflict resolution through the pluralistic culture and the arts. The IFLAC Anthologies: *Galim: Waves* (numbers 1-10), are a good source for the teaching of the multicultural approach, and they are used in schools and universities for the teaching of multicultural peace studies, as well as the textbook: *A Song to Life and to World Peace*. (Please refer to References at the end of the article.)

The attitude towards multiculturalism in educational programs in various parts of the world often reflects the tension between preservation of traditional values and the need for change. Some extremist Islamic critics have stressed that multicultural policies threaten religious and national unity. Attempting to maintain their leading positions, some of those leaders who are usually against changes, prefer to assert their own national identities and exclusive traditional roles. Colleges and universities in some parts of the world are unfortunately ideal recruiting grounds for such kind of extreme fundamentalism. However, if places of learning become open to other cultures and attuned to adopt and develop a multicultural curriculum, fundamentalist influences and violent trends would be abated and overcome, and in time would disappear.

Multiculturalism should thus become not only a leading policy at the social and educational levels, but also at the political and diplomatic levels. The attitude towards education and its contents, have an important effect on society as a whole, for the dilemmas that confront the education system are a microcosm of the contradictions and struggles of the whole of society. The promotion of multiculturalism through education is therefore of central importance in trying to establish the dynamics that mark the interplay between society, education and even politics.

Educational institutions should establish departments of "Multicultural Literary Peace Studies," nationally and internationally and they should be empowered to function as initiators of cultural bridges among nations. They could also promote the publication of periodicals and journals, including multicultural Electronic Peace Journals. One of the electronic journals that is widely used by schools in various countries across the globe, as well as in colleges and universities for multicultural peace education is: *Horizon Pave Peace*, which can be reached through the following website: [www.New-Horizon.up.co.il](http://www.New-Horizon.up.co.il)

Peace grants for multicultural research, and the encouragement of the writing of peace literature, film-scripts, and plays, as well as the organizing of competitions, awards and prizes, could have an advantageous and high payoff. Books, cassettes, and videos displaying various aspects of multiculturalism, including music, literature and entertainment, should be produced. These should present in an attractive manner the various themes and aspects of the multicultural peace system, as well as its great advantages in various spheres of life.

## CONCLUSION

Our major challenge at the beginning of this new millennium is to search out new strategies and adopt fresh models capable of eliminating terror and wars as a means to solve conflicts, and encourage a more peaceful, equal, healthier, and democratic global society. The building of an effective "Multicultural Peace System and Network", can facilitate these important goals. It can create bridges of understanding and respect among various ethnic groups and nations, and moreover, it could function as the antidote to violence, conflicts, terror and war, regionally and globally.

Modern telecommunications and technologies such as satellite, television, radio and the Internet, can facilitate harmonious inter-cultural relations, as well as the bond and dialogue between people, nations, and civilizations. Modern technologies can also promote the consciousness of a new global citizenship, based on a shared multicultural peace values. With commitment, determination and vision, and with the aid of the media, it is indeed possible to create and promote a resourceful, effective and influential new ethical multicultural of peace, both regionally and globally. This colossal task should be considered one of the major goals of humankind in the first decade of our third millennium.

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### *POVZETEK*

### *POTREBA PO NOVI MULTIKULTURNI MIROVNI KULTURI*

*Ada Aharoni*

*Ker je konflikt med kulturami postal eden najpomembnejših dejavnikov tveganja, kar zadeva ohranitev in prihodnji razvoj človeške civilizacije, je težišče prispevka na osvetljevanju večplastnih nevarnosti tega dejavnika in oblikovanju predlogov za vzpostavitev multikulturnega mirovnega sistema, ki naj obvlada oziroma nadomesti medkulturni konflikt. Novi regionalni in globalni multikulturni sistem bi zajemal etične in mirovne vrednote iz različnih kultur in bi bil utemeljen v najrelevantnejših segmentih mirovne dediščine, kulture in literature različnih civilizacij. Sistem naj bi se širil in promoviral prek tele-*

komunikacij in medijev, s čimer naj bi ponujal alternativo regionalni in globalni kulturi terorja in nasilja. Vzpostavitev odprtega globalnega multikulturnega sistema in njegovih medijev lahko pomaga človeštvu pri oblikovanju nove multikulturne identitete, ki nastaja vzporedno z narodnimi in etničnimi identitetami, predvsem pa lahko prispeva k ustvarjanju varnejšega sveta. Razvoj multikulturnih mirovni satelitov nad konfliktnimi območji, ki naj bi popularizirali mirovne prvine iz drugih kultur in civilizacij na regionalni in globalni ravni, bi prispeval k ustvarjanju mirovne klime. Takšni sateliti bi postavljali mostove razumevanja med ljudmi in narodi in odpravljali strah pred »drugračnim«. Avtorica med drugim tudi predlaga, da bi v vseh deželah ustanovili mirovne muzeje po zgledu Japonske, kjer uspešno deluje prek 60 tovrstnih muzejev, ki bistveno prispevajo k uveljavljanju multikulturalističnih načel. V nadaljevanju predstavi izraelski in palestinski primer multikulturalizma v Haiji ter podrobno analizira strukturo, cilje in dejavnosti tamkajšnje organizacije IFLAC–The Bridge (Most) kot zgled multikulturnega sožitja.

Avtorica poudarja potrebo po »objektivnosti revoluciji« medijev. Mirovniki morajo doseči, da bodo mediji obravnavali »multikulturne in mirovne novice« kot gradivo, ki je vredno objave. Hkrati naj bi dosegli objektivno ravnovesje med »dobrimi« novicami in tistimi, ki jim mediji zdaj posvečajo največ pozornosti: namreč senzacionalnim poročilom o vojnah, nasilju in kriminalu. Nesorazmerna količina filmov in poročanja o umorih in kriminalu stopnjuje negativne vidike družbe, s tem pa izkrivlja realnost in normalnost. Nujna je uvedba inovativnega multikulturalističnega izobraževalnega sistema na vseh stopnjah šolanja, vključno z izobraževanjem staršev in učiteljev. Da bi ta sistem lahko uveljavljal nove multikulturne, pluralistične in etične mirovne vrednote v vseh družbenih sferah ter ljudem približal vizijo »globalne vasi onkraj vojne«, naj bo zgrajen na mirovni dediščini, književnosti in umetnosti raznih narodov sveta in podprt z mediji in sodobno komunikacijsko tehnologijo. Kakor hitro bo začel delovati dovolj vpliven regionalni in globalni multikulturni sistem, bo s tem po vsem svetu posejano seme stabilnejšega miru, saj bo le tak sistem lahko omogočil neštetim glasovom in kulturam sveta, ki si prizadevajo za globalno preživetje in mir, da dosežejo vse človeštvo.

Profesorica Ada Aharoni je sociologinja kulture pri Technionu (Izraelskem inštitutu za tehnologijo) v Haiji in predsednica organizacije IFLAC – the International Forum for the Literature and Culture of Peace. Je tudi pripovednica, pesnica in urednica, doslej je objavila 25 knjig, ki so bile prevedene v več jezikov. Na London University je magistrirala iz angleške književnosti, na Hebrew University v Jeruzalemu pa je doktorirala iz literarnih in socioloških znanosti.