



A Story of Diverse Citizens
Muslims and Jews, Israelis and Palestinians
Rising Together from Despair to Social Action
by Connecting, Communicating, Healing and Creating Acts of Goodwill

A remarkable group of Jews and Palestinians found one another and shared purpose during one month of intense living, in response to increased violence in Gaza and southern Israel beginning December 2008.

Friday-Saturday, 2-3 January 2009

Heartsick about violence in southern Israel and Gaza, Israeli Lee Ziv, 28, (leeluziv@gmail.com) invited to her home seventy similarly distressed Israelis.

Others including Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinians across the border participated by telephone and Skype communication.

In a weekend of listening circles, the women and men began with themselves – their emotions, frustrations, and hopes, with music, prayers, ideas for an alternative future.

Saturday, 10 January 2009

Next, at the home of Elad Vazana (Elad@havayati.co.il) Jews and Palestinians gathered around a fire.

For five hours, the women and men searched for a way to reach their own hearts and awaken the voice of compassion.

They decided to create another reality, with an innovative action for human awakening.

A next meeting was planned for the Jerusalem YMCA in four days.

Wednesday, 14 January 2009

For "five amazing hours" 28 Israelis and Palestinians met at the Jerusalem YMCA. It was a "deep and very empowering circle," from 5:00 until 10:00 at night.



FIRST, in a supportive circle they shared deep pain, grief, and damage in their hearts...and they began healing together.

THEN, they re-formed their circle to brainstorm how to awaken people's compassion and how to help people.

Their circle work had "amazing ideas coming up from people," wrote Elad.

They discovered three shared human needs:

- Not to feel alone
- To be part of a group with shared vision
- To be heard, allowing the world and people in Israel and Gaza to know there are voices calling to keep the dialogue, calling for compassion, calling to see all the people as one.

They shared deep desire to "bring humanitarian help to Gaza ASAP after the fire stops."

THEN 10 MINUTES OF SILENCE allowed each to feel "the voice of the group" for what actions are in the air - in peoples' hearts.

NEXT STEPS were to be:

- Weekend gathering for dialogue soon, at Jerusalem's Latrun Monastery
- Engage news media
- Send many messages to the world
- Each person to create more circles like this in his community
- Create a campaign of alternative messages so people will know compassion and dialogue exist, and will keep talking, sharing, caring and believing

The next meeting was planned in one week.

IMMEDIATE ACTION:

- Elad began sending thousands of e-mailings following this meeting.
- One team, inspired by Hadas Balas, 25, and Lee Ziv, 28, inspired one team to begin collecting blankets, food, diapers, and other humanitarian supplies to be sent to the people of Gaza the following week.
- A Palestinian participant from the West Bank will help convene monthly, long gatherings of Palestinians and Israelis to sit together in a process to deepen relationships and define their deep wishes.
- They sent out an Invitation to A FLAME FOR PEACE Saturday, 17 January gathering at Latrun Monastery, Jerusalem.

!מחר לטרון מנזר לייד שלום מדורת

הסולחה משפחת של הלוחשות בגחלים רוח ונפיה נמשיך בואו

אלו מטלטלים כואבים בימים במיוחד ונפגש נמשיך

שבקרבונו השלום כוחות וחיזוק לבבות קירוב של למפגש מוזמנים אתם

המשותפת עילותה המשיך על ולחשיבה לתפילה, לניגון, לדיבור למדורה מסביב נתאסף בואו

(הסולחה בשטח) לטרון במנזר 17:00 ב שבת יום

ולנשמה לגוף ומזון נגינה כלי, עצים, מחצלת להביא מוזמנים הנכם

דפנה 0522340850

أصلاحه عائلة قبل من تهمس السني بالنار الروح بث تتابع هلموا

والمؤلمة العصبية الأيام من بالرغم اللقاء متابعة علينا

القلوب لتقريب يهدف السلام لقوى داعم للقاء دعونم انتم

المشترك العمل متابعة إمكانية حول والتفكير للصلاة, للغناء, للحديث, النار موقدة حول نجتمع تعالوا

اللطرون دير في مساء الخامسة الساعة السبت يوم وذلك

والجسد للروح وغذاء, للعزف أدوات, حصيرة إحضار المحبذ من
دافنا:0522340850

A FLAME FOR PEACE will take place next to Latrun Monastery
(Close to Neve Shalom ~ Wahat al-Salam)
at Latrun Monastery this coming Saturday 17th at 17:00
the same place we did the Sulha
Participating in music, prayer and meditation, we are inviting the Sulha family and Al Tarik, and
all who feel they want to join in, around the fire together
Please bring food, wood and mats
Contact: Dafna 052-234085

Saturday, 17 January 2009

A FLAME FOR PEACE brought together 34 Jews and Muslims - Palestinians and Israelis -
"between the olive trees of the Latrun Monastery, sharing pain and hope, praying from the
depths of our hearts for the end of the pain."



They talked by phone with A. from UNRA in Gaza who was to help them pass blankets, milk,
and food to Gaza citizens.

Included will be the collection of many messages from Israelis to give Gazans hope.

Wrote Elad Vazana: "We did Havdalah to make the difference between the fighting and the
time after," calling for war to stop.

"We heard each one's voice, to bring all voices into the circle."

Next week were proposed fire circles "in Israel, Palestine, and around the world calling for
compassion, calling for all to be one."

"All the time, my heart and mind try to find a channel where all the beautiful voices of so
many people will come to everyone, so all will be heard and touch humankind," wrote Elad.

"We need those voices so much now."

From the group, a call went out for a next gathering in four days.

English and Hebrew followed by the Arabic one

مرحبا

...أعمال محطات أثمر الذي, الفانت الأربعاء من المشاعر محرك للاجتماع مواصلة

عمل و لشراكة فلسطيني إسرائيلي لقاء

أشخاص لعدة والوصول استمرارية, رسائل نقل, مشاركة, أعمال محطات لنخلق هيا

الملك شارع YMCA "المسيحيه الشبان جمعية"ب الثامنة حتى السادسة الساعة 21.01 الأربعاء يوم اللقاء
26 "هاميلخ دافيد" داوود

- تعارف دائرة سنعمل
 - والفلسطينية الإسرائيلية المطالب لبحث ونقاش بمحادثة سنقوم
 - :لأجل وعمل تدبير لمجموعات سننقسم
1. بشرية/إنسانية تآمدا إعطاء
 2. الإنساني للنهوض خلاقة أعمال
 3. إسرائيليون سكان كتبها عديدة رسائل وتزيين ترجمة، غزة لسكان رسائل كتابة
 4. للسلام شعبية مبادرة لتطویر مجموعة لبدء والدعوة والفلسطينية الإسرائيلية المطالب فهم
- بها المشاركة يمكننا والتي الموجودة درات والمبا الفعاليات جميع معرفة
!شهيأ طعاما معكم احضروا
مهم بالوقت الالتزام
0542497009 رقم على المسيق التنسيق الرجاء

שלום

...שעבר רביעי מיום המרגש למפגש בהמשך
. ועשיה שיתוף של פלסטיני ישראלי מפגש
..אנשים להרבה ולהגיע ותהמשכי, מסרים העברת, שיתוף, עשיה ערוצי ליצור בואו
26 המלך דוד ברחוב בירושלים באימקה 18:00-22:00 ב 21.1 רביעי ביום נפגש

- ושיתוף היכרות מעגל נערוך.
- והפלסטינים הישראלים של העמוקים הרצונות לבחינת שיחה נקים-
- : של ועשייה תכנון למעגלי נתחלק-
- .הומאניטרי סיוע מתן---
- .אנושית עורותלהת יצירתית פעולה---
- .ישראל תושבי ידי על נכתבו שכבר רבים מסרים וקישוט תרגום, עזה לתושבי מסרים כתיבת---
- .לשלום עממית יוזמה לפיתוח קבוצה לפתוח והזמנה והפלסטינים הישראלים של העמוקים הרצונות הבנת---
- .בהם להשתתף שאפשר בארץ הקיימות והיוזמות הפעילויות בכל נתעדכן-

!טעים משהו גם ותביא
בזמן להגיע חשוב
0542497009 ב הגעה לתאם נא

Shalom,

In continuation to last Wednesday's touching meeting, that evoked much awareness to action we can take - Israeli-Palestinian meetings of cooperation and action we can take at this moment.

Let us create channels of action, sharing, conveying messages, and continue to outreach to a wider public.

We will meet again on Wednesday 21st January from 18:00 to 22:00 at YMCA Jerusalem, 26 Rehov David Hamelekh.

- Introduction and sharing circles
- Discussion of deep wants of Palestinian and Israeli people
- Planning and Action circles of:
 - Humanitarian Aid for Gaza
 - Creative action towards human awakening
 - Messages to Gaza civilians
 - Understanding deep wants and needs, and invitation to develop People's Initiative for Peace
 - Updates of all events and initiatives

Please bring refreshments and come on time.
For more info call Elad at 0542497009

Sunday, 18 January 2009

An invitation went from group participants to their friends worldwide:

Hello dear people

We invite you to send a written message which will be transferred to Gaza in one of the convoys, in addition to the humanitarian assistance.

Let's pass on a different message to the children and people of Gaza.

In a short verse, write a little about yourself, and add a message of empathy, understanding and hope.

We only need a flicker of hope to prevent total desperation.

It is recommended to attach a picture.

Please send these messages as fast as you can to Messages4Gaza@gmail.com ,

The messages will be translated to Arabic, printed, decorated by hand, and sent.

Thank you.

Monday, 19 January

Residents of South launch Gaza aid drive

The Jerusalem Post - 19 January 2009

<http://jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPost/JPArticle/ShowFull&cid=1232292897793>

Wednesday, 21 January

Thirty people from Israel and Palestine met again in the Jerusalem YMCA.

They shared their stories and feelings in small circles.

Everyone began to write, translate into Arabic, and decorate the 150 messages they collected for Gazans from all over Israel.



They brainstormed about what more they could next initiate. Channel 2 television and journalists had begun news reports on their work. "So many people know good things are happening, as well as the big pains," wrote Elad.

They had collected seven truckloads of blankets, food, and baby needs.

Plans were made to go Friday to send the trucks across the border for 5,000 Gazans.

"Many, many people have donated it all, including more than 100,000 shekels in three days...and still want to give."

The big group wants to meet every week to keep sharing, thinking, and creating ways to peace and dialogue.

"People still want to meet, still want to talk, still want to understand, although there is a lot of anger, still..."

"I wish many people could know there is someone to talk with," Elad wrote.

Thursday, 22 January

From the Jerusalem YMCA circle, Tali Ilan (TaliPottery@gmail.com) hosted Palestinians and Jews in her home in Bakaa, Jerusalem.

When increased December violence erupted, Tali had written: "What can I do to improve the situation right now? Me as an unknown person, someone from the crowd who cares and feels, who listens and looks around and wonders."

Tali continues giving herself and her home to help many others answer these questions and become creative together.

And that day, Israeli television news broadcast the story in Hebrew to the nation:

Channel 2 News

<http://www.mako.co.il/news/channel2/Channel-2-Newscast/Articles/itemId=ff2e59ef7000f110VgnVCM100000290c10acRCRD>



Friday, 23 January 2009

The seven trucks passed through the Gaza Gate.
Operation Open Your Heart was a reality.





"We're not sleeping, we're not eating," Lee Ziv (leeluziv@gmail.com) had said on film about her project co-creator Hadas Balas, and the many volunteers who gathered goods from around Israel.

Messages to Gazans keep coming, and now there is a bigger team of people volunteering to translate them into Arabic.

Some people suggest creating a Web site for them.

Monday, 26 January 2009

A video of Operation Open Your Heart first appeared on the Internet:

Operation Open Your Heart

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-ndnHnn0CU&feature=channel_page



Wednesday, 28 January 2009

Social action grew out of the Jerusalem YMCA circle.
Elad Vazana placed photos on the Web:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/eladvazana/RecentlyUpdated?authkey=cUCU6ZvMb1Y&feat=directlink>

http://picasaweb.google.com/eladvazana/Pana_110?authkey=QNdjpvzHC9c&feat=directlink

Hadas Balas and Lee Ziv are continuing this and next week to gather humanitarian help at collection centers across Israel.

From the Jerusalem YMCA circle, Tali Ilan (TaliPottery@gmail.com) is hosting living room meetings for the Arabs and Jews every two weeks at her home in Bakaa, Jerusalem.

A Palestinian is seeking five other Palestinians and five Jews to envision new kinds of global peace building, as they keep building their own relationships.

One school is asking all its students to write beautifully decorated messages to Gaza children.

Ilana Meallem (ilanameallem@hotmail.com) invited many to a new kind of gathering by the Dead Sea. In her English, Arabic, and Hebrew, she wrote:

Salam Aleikum, Shalom Aleichem.

Join us at a Gathering of Light and Unity this weekend at my home in Metzuki Dargot beach, an oasis of beautiful fresh and saltwater pools on the banks of the Dead Sea. This area is easily accessible for both Israelis and Palestinians who can come from the region of Ramallah and Hebron without special travel permits; it is a unique and natural meeting place!

وهي ، Metzuki Dargot شاطئ عند بيتي في الاسبوع هذا نهاية في والنور الوحدة تجمع في إينام انض رجاء من لكل المنطقة لهذه الوصول يمكن. الميت البحر ضفاف على جميلة والعذبة المالحة المياه برك واحة انها ، الخاصة السفر تصاريح دون من والخليل الله رام منطقة من القادمين والفلسطيين الاسرائيليين ! للاجتماع وطبيعي نوعه من فريد مكان

מעיינות של מדהים מדבר נווה, דרגות מצוקי בחוף בביתי הקרוב שבוע בסוף, ואחדות אור של למפגש אלינו הצטרפו ונחברו רמאללה מאזור לפלסטינאים וגם לישראלים נגיש המקום. המלח ים גדות על ומלוחים מתוקים מים ובריכות מפגש כמקום קיים שבטבעו עוצמתי מקום ❖ לנסיעה מיוחד היתר צריכים שלא

The vision is for friends from Israel, Jordan and Palestine to come together in nature amidst difficult times, to share, connect, create and unite in prayer, light and action.

، الطبيعية وسط الصعبة الأوقات في معاً يلتقوا وفلسطين والاردن اسرائيل من اصدقاء لجعل وية الر والعمل الضوء ، الصلاة في والتوحد ، الاتصال ، للمشاركة

ולהתאחד ליצור, להכיר, להיפתח, לשתף מנת על זו קשה בתקופה ופלסטין, ירדן, מישראל חברים למפגש החזון. הועשי, אור, בתפילה

Here are details, feel free to pass this invite onwards:

الدعوة هذه نشر في تتردد لا ، التفاصيل هنا

ההזמנה את הלאה להעביר חופשי תרגישו ❖ למפגש המלאים הפרטים

When? Friday 30th - Saturday 31st Jan

ני 31 كانون/يناير من 31 السبت - 30 الجمعة متى؟

31.1 שבת - 30.1 ששי יום? מתי

What to bring? Tents, sleeping bags, food, firewood, instruments, empty bottles to fill up with water from the taps (at the check post where you park)

نقطة عند) الصنابير من المياه تعبئ ل الفارغة الزجاجات ، الحطب ، الطعام ، النوم أكياس ، خيام يلزمك؟ ماذا (السيارات موقف حيث ، التفتيش

(המחסום יד על בחניון ברז יש) למים ריקים בקבוקים, נגינה כלי, עצים, אוכל, שינה שקי, אוהל? להביא מה

How to arrive? Coming from Jerusalem/Ramallah on road 90, towards the Dead Sea, stop at Metzuki Dargot, just before the check post, park, fill up water bottles and walk down the beach, the zula/white campervan is on your right. Alternatively bus no's 486, 421 487 from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea stop at Metzuki Dargot.

Metzuki عند التوقف ، الميت البحر باتجاه ، 90 الطريق على الله رام / القدس من للقادمين الوصول؟ كيفية
يمينك على التجمع مكان ، الشاطئ الى والسير المياه زجاجات تعبئة . التقطيش نقطة قبل ،
Dargot Metzuki عند التوقف ، الميت البحر الى القدس من 486، 421، 487 رقم الحافلة بواسطة وكبديل
מצוקי למחסום שמגיעים לפני , 90 בכביש דרומה ופונים המלח ים לכיוון נוסעים ורמאללה מירושלים ? מגיעים איך
! הבאים ברוכים , ימין בצד גדול לבן קראוון/בית , החוף לכיוון ויורדים מים ממלאים חונים דרגות
דרגות במצוקי תחנה יש , המלח לים מירושלים 486, 421, 487 מספר באוטובוס להגיע אפשר ציבורית בתחבורה

What's the plan? Sharing circles, music, prayer, hafla, meditation and lots of nature!

للمجموعة يتبادر ما و والتأمل ، اليوغا ، الصلاة ، الموسيقى ، التقاسم دوائر تشمل سوف ولكن الخطة؟ هي ما

.....

בטבע כיף , מדיטציות , שיתוף מעגלי , שיחות , תפילות , אפלהח , מוסיקה ? התוכנית מה

For More Info contact

ب الاتصال المعلومات من لمزيد

נוסף למידע

Ilana (0508 737 911) ilanameallem@hotmail.com

Thursday, 29 January

Journalist Karin Kloosterman (Karin.Kloosterman@gmail.com) reports the Operation Open Your Heart to the Internet world.

Israeli donors offer aid and hope to Gaza

By Karin Kloosterman

Israel21C - January 29, 2009

<http://www.israel21c.org/bin/en.jsp?enDispWho=Articles%5E12440&enPage=BlankPage&enDisplay=view&enDispWhat=object&enVersion=0&enZone=Democracy&>

Friday-Saturday, 30-31 December 2009 - At the Dead Sea



A hundred people - half Israelis and half Palestinians including from Ramallah and Jericho, gathered Friday for relationship and music.

Around the fire by natural springs and the Dead Sea, they ate, absorbed natural beauty, and sang around the flames most of the night.

Saturday, in four circles, they shared stories and feelings mostly about the Gaza and southern Israel situation.



How are you connected to Gaza and southern Israel? How has it affected you? What do you feel now?

People cried a lot, largely because someone was listening to them.

Saturday evening was some prayer then more singing together.

It was just what so many people needed - to be together, to share in a relaxed schedule.

They healed by the Dead Sea, from all the tensions of life and especially war.

Elad Vazana described what he has learned.

"People need to meet many people to just listen to each other.

"If we all would do it, we would have more trust.

"So no war will happen, we need more trust just like this."

Vazana wrote about his change:

"I was afraid of Arabs only few years ago.

"I was raised in a place where an Arab person was considered as someone who was always thinking how to kill you the first opportunity he has.

"Only after meeting Arabs personally, I understood they are humans like me."

Vazana wrote about peace activism.

"Now I think that peace activists who feel they want to do more than talking, can do more by allowing more people to meet and talk and have this life-changing experience.

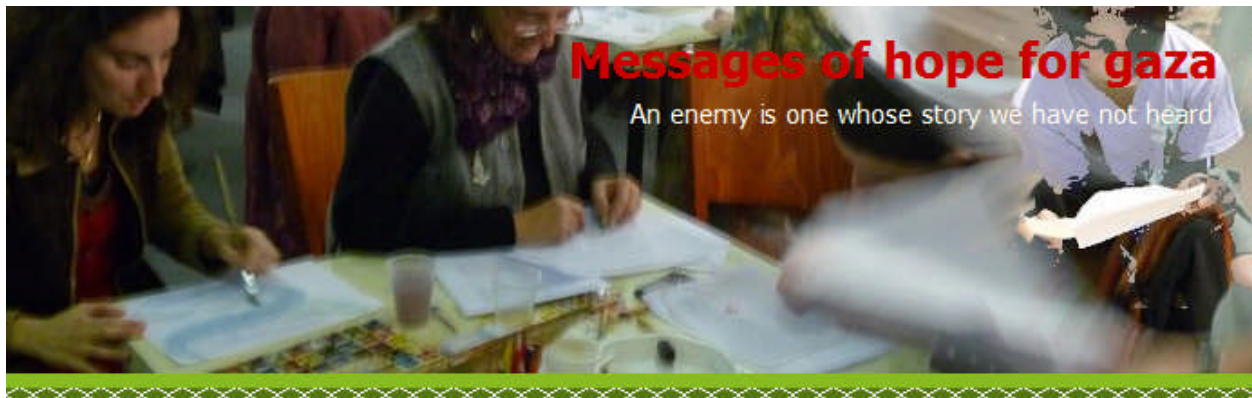
"How can I convince people now that meeting is so needed?"

Wednesday, 04 February 2009

The team uploaded to the Web MESSAGES OF HOPE FOR GAZA - a new blog with correspondence of encouragement and hope to the people of Gaza in Arabic, Hebrew, and English.

MESSAGES OF HOPE FOR GAZA

<http://messages4gaza.blogspot.com/>



رسائل من الأمل إلى غزة

Send messages of hope for people in Gaza

שלחו מסרים של תקווה לאנשים וילדים בעזה

Citizens worldwide are invited to send their own expressions to:

Messages4Gaza@gmail.com

Friday, 06 February 2009

To tell the story of these citizen-innovators, they placed a new video on the Web:

Messages of hope for Gaza from people in Israel to people in Gaza (3 min)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qz-pdc5WM64>

More than 5,000 had people had received the packages in Gaza.

Lee, Hadas, and others filled three additional trucks that crossed the border to Gaza today.

Nearly 100,000 shekels - \$30,000 - arrived from citizens to purchase more food, blankets, tents, and baby food for perhaps ten more trucks to support life across the border.

Some how-to lessons are preserved at <http://havayati.co.il> for anyone to download and use.

These citizen-heroes continued discovering healing dialogue and its path beyond war toward creativity and historic levels of generosity.

From the fire and ashes of war a unicorn is rising.

There is an in-filling of human understanding and outpouring of goodwill – people making the world better.

