

Religion for Peace Organization



Culture Of Peace

Religion for Peace Organization

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Religion for Peace Organization

General platform and background

Peace process, in the Middle East and elsewhere, need the basis of religious and cultural dialogue and mutual understanding to foster peaceful relations among nations and peoples. Religion must actively serve the purpose of peace and religion and cultural peace complement economic peace and political peace.

This is the motto of the Religion for Peace Organization (RPO). The RPO started as an apolitical non-profit organization in 1994. The establishment was initiated by Prof. Shimon Shetreet who served as Minister of Economy and Minister of Religious Affairs and who is now the RPO's president. The RPO's Chairman of the Board of Trustees is Mr. Sami Shamoon, a renowned international businessman. Members include religious leaders as well as public figures and business leaders.

In recent years, more and more acts of violence have been committed "in the name of religion". Innocent civilians in the United States, Turkey, Ireland, England Israel, France and Egypt, among other countries, have all been victims of such acts. Clear distinctions must be drawn between religion and marginal radical groups who abuse religion to further their own objectives. Such radical factions must be condemned by religious leaders of all convictions.

The RPO is unique in that it seeks to involve "non-religious" business and cultural leaders as well as members of the religious communities, believing that religion, as an integral part of life has an impact on the way we communicate, do business, educate our children and respect the rights and opinions of others. In other words, the impact of interfaith cooperation reaches beyond the communities of the most adherent, and the RPO seeks to promote activity that reflects this reality. That is why members of the RPO include religious leaders and unaffiliated members of society.

The objectives of the Religions for Peace Organization are defined as follows:

- Development of culture of peace
- Promotion of multiple dimensions of peace – political peace, economic peace, cultural peace and religious peace.
- Support for peace and respect of men in religion.
- Encouragement and initiation of joint interfaith projects based on equality and reciprocity.
- Improvement of the image of religion in the media.
- Development of universal standards of religious and cultural peace and respect.

Activities Report 1995-2005

The major first conference was held in September 1995 at Beit Gabriel, on the Kineret venue of the Israeli-Jordanian peace talks. Since then, a series of seminars for interfaith dialogue and understanding have been held in Israel, in the area and in Europe.

The RPO participated in interfaith meetings held in honor of personalities from abroad, e.g.: a meeting held in honor of Mr. Ottakar Hahn of the European Union and the Presentation Ceremony of the Interfaith Gold Medallion to H.E. Archbishop Andrea di Montezemelo, Apostolic Nuncio in Israel by Sir Sigmund Sternberg, Chairman of the International Council of Christians and Jews.

In addition, as a result of the RPO's sessions, lectures on Religion in the Service of Peace have been included in the Malta Mediterranean Forum (October, 1995), the Black Sea Cooperation Forum held in Bucharest (April, 1996) and the Crans-Montana Forum conference held in Switzerland (June, 1996).

Project Respect

Among the conferences and seminars held, mention should be made to the Project Respect which was held on 12th February 1997 to mark the end of the "Id el-Fitter" Festival and was attended by 65 Jewish, Christian and Muslim Religious leaders and activists. Speakers at the conference included Talal Rhoufrani (Head of the Interests Office of the Royal kingdom of Morocco).



From left: Rabi Bachri, Rabbi Meir Lau, Prof. Shimon Shetreet, Bishop Markuzo, Bishop Anba Avraham



Ambassador Talal Rhoufrani - representative of Morocco in Israel, Jerusalem reunion

In January 1997 the committee for granting peace Nobel prize to HM King Hassn II held a conference in Beer Sheba . The committee chaired by HE Prof. shimon Shetreet, hosted Mr. Ghufrani, the Morroccan Ambassador to Israel (at the time). Also present in the conference were Mayor of Beer Sheba Mr. Yaacov Terner, Mayor of Sderot Mr. Eli Moyal and others.

The conference was part of an international project to recommend HM King Hassan II for the peace Nobel price.

(HM King Hassan II unfortunately passed away in July 1999).



Prof. Shimon Shetreet, Mr. Yaacov
Terner, Mr. Shiri Weitzman



Meeting of Committee Presentation of Nobel Prize to King
Hassan II of Morocco : Mr. Yaacov Terner, Prof. Shimon
Shetreet, Mr. Eli Zino



Mr. Yaacov Terner, Mr. Talal Rhoufrani –
Ambassador of Morocco



Mr. Yaacov Terner, Prof. Shimon Shetreet and others



Ambassador Talal Rhoufrani, Prof. Shimon Shetreet,
Mr. Yaacov Terner- Mayor of Beer Sheva, Moshe
Peretz, Prof. Avraham Mehratz



From left: Prof. Shimon Shetreet, Mr. Eli Moyal –
Shderot Mayor, Mr. Moshe Peretz

On April 1997 RPO organized a conference in the Galilee on "Peace in Religion", attended by many public and religious leaders. Among the speakers were present Members of the Knesset, Ehud Barak and Salach Tariff and Mr. Eli de Castro, Mayor of Acres.



Speaking: Prof. Shimon Shetreet Mr. Ehud Barak, Dr. Nagib Saeb



Speaking: Sheikh Asalia,
Sitting: Sheikh Muwafak Tarif , Mr. Sami Shamoon



Mr. Ehud Barak giving a speech.
Sitting: Dr. Nagib Saeb, Prof. Shimon Shetreet, Sheikh Muwafak Tarif-Head of Druze Community, Mr. Sami Shamoon- Chairman of the Board
Sheikh Asalia - Chief Justice Islamic Court



Speaking: Mr. Ehud Barak
Sitting: Dr. Nagib Saeb, Prof. Shimon Shetreet, Sheikh Asalia - Chief Justice Islamic Court



From right: Prof. Shimon Shetreet, Sheikh Asalia ,
Sheikh Muwafak Tarif, Mr. Sami Shamoon



Speaking: Mr. Ehud Barak



Mr. Sami Shamoon- Chairman
of the Board

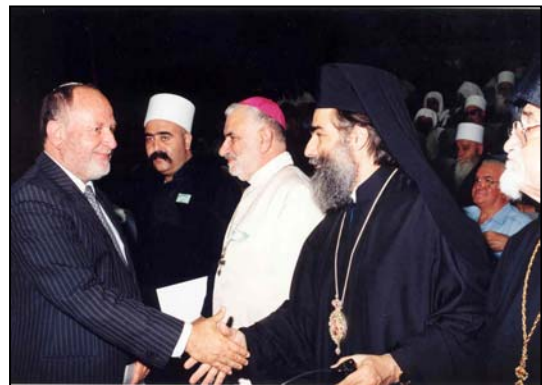


Prof. Shimon Shetreet, Mr. Ehud Barak

On the 15th of July 1997, the RPO organized a major conference at the Knesset on Religion for Peace, attended by 500 people including many different religious and political leaders. Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Meir Lau, presented a lecture about peace in Judaism and MK Dan Tichon, speaker of the Knesset, offered greetings.



Prof. Shimon Shetreet Giving a speech



Mr. Dan Tichon and
Representatives of faiths



Knesset



Prof. Shimon Shetreet, Bishop Markuzo
and others

In May 1997, the RPO organized another Seminar on Interfaith of Religions in Jerusalem (Mishkenot Sheananim) with the participation, among others, of Najib Saib, the Chairman of the association, and Judge Eliahu Nawi, Chairman of the Academic Committee.



Rabbi Meir Lau Giving a speech - Knesset



From left - Rabbi Meir Lau

On the 29th and 30th of September 1997, a RPO Seminar was held in the Marina Hotel in Tel Aviv. Lectures were presented on Religion and Peace and Respect of union. The speakers included Sheikh Raja Abdu of the Jericho Peace Center, Father Abou Hatoum from Nazareth and Mrs. Nadia Hilou.

On the 14th of December 1997, RPO held an Inter-religious Workers Leaders Meeting with the leaders of the Municipality of Jerusalem, one very successful example of Arab and Jewish collaboration. Among the speakers were Danny Bunfiel and Ahmad Mudlej, the Jewish and Arab Chairmen of the Municipality Trade Union.



From left : Haim Cohen, Miriam Bunfiel, prof. Shimon Shetreet, Danny Bunfiel, and representatives of eastern Jerusalem

On the 15th of December 1997, the RPO organized together with PASSIA (Palestinian Organization for Academic Studies), a Seminar in East Jerusalem in which gathered distinguished religious leaders and scholars. Three papers were presented on Abraham by three representatives of each religion, one Christian, one Jewish and one Muslim.

The participants included Rabbi Shear Yeshuv Cohen, Chief Rabbi of Haifa and Bishop Kafity from the Anglican Church.



Speaking Mr. Elijah Naoi



Muslim religious leaders with Prof. Shimon Shetreet

Project Culture of Peace

In cooperation with RPO international, Project Culture of Peace was launched in 1998. A true and lasting peace must be built of four strong foundations. The first and traditional foundation of peace is that of political-security peace. But the political foundation alone is not enough to hold peace together. Three equally important pillars of peace, the economic foundation, the cultural foundation and the religious foundation must accompany it.

Situations dictate that it is not always possible to work on one or other foundation of peace. Nevertheless, it is important that the lines of communication are kept open and that all parties continue to work with what is available to them at any one time.

A Culture of Peace series of seminars and conferences, under the auspices of RPO International and others, have been held since 1998 as follows:

In July 1998, a conference was held in Morocco, in cooperation with Robert Assaraf, distinguished businessman and public leader.

In February 1999, a conference was held in Jordan in cooperation with the Royal Center for Religious Studies, under the auspices of Crown Prince Hassan.

In March 1999, a conference was held in Egypt with the participation of several distinguished Muslim religious leaders.

In July 2001, a conference was held in Gaflei, Liechtenstein, co-hosted by the International Academy for Philosophy, on the Foundation of Peace in Philosophy and Religion.



From left: Mr. Rateb Amro, Former Mayor of Bon, princess Margaret Rabbi Prof. Naftali Rottenberg



Speaking: Representative of European Union,
Sitting: Ambassador Talal Rhoufrani-
representative of Morocco in Israel, Prof.
Shimon Shetreet.

In July 2002, a seminar was held in Jerusalem



From left: Prof. Faisal Al-Rfouh, HE Markus Buechel,
Prof. Shimon Shetreet



President Lorenzo Dellai



Prof. Josef Seifert, HE Markus Buechel, President
Lorenzo Dellai



Prof. Faisal Al-Rfouh

In September 2002 The Conference 2nd International Culture of Peace conference on the subject: "Foundations of Peace in Philosophy, Religion, Economy & Law" was held in Rhodes, Jerusalem and Aqaba in September 2002.

In November 2002, a seminar was held in Milano, Italy, in cooperation with University of Milan.

In February 2004, a conference was held in Trento "Building Peace Respecting Identities", in association with Gandhi Center for Peace, Amman and Horizon Centre, Amman.



President Lorenzo Dellai

In March 22nd 2005 a conference was held in the Knesset together with The Labour Party.



Prof. Shimon Shetreet

In May 2005 a conference "Challenges of Peace Culture: Economical and Cultural Peace" will be held in Morocco, with participation of Moroccan public figures.

The RPO held special events on holidays such as Ramadan, Christmas, the New Year and Hanukah for members of Muslim, Christian and Jewish communities.

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