

## *The Cycle of Conferences – The Geneva Accord*

### *Light over Palestine*

(Adapted extracts from a full moon talk given at the Festival of Capricorn in London, December 2004)

With the election of the first democratically chosen Palestinian leader, Mahmoud Abbas, commonly known as Abu Mazen, the scene is set for a new era in Middle East peace negotiations. Abu Mazen is a moderate who has been vociferous in his condemnation of violent intifadas and he has the respect of many leading Israeli politicians, not least of these being Shimon Peres, a staunch advocate of peace negotiations who was just been made deputy prime minister in Ariel Sharon's latest coalition government. These auspicious circumstances must be utilised to the full, with every support being given to the difficult task of integrating all sections of the Palestinian people into full co-operation in peace-building. This unprecedented opportunity also represents an unprecedented challenge for none would deny that great diplomatic skills will be required to create constructive compromise while also obtaining justice and rights for the Palestinians.

One of the greatest needs for those involved in conflict resolution and peace initiatives is an understanding of the importance of language in the settlement of disputes, and the tightrope that has to be delicately negotiated by representatives of both sides. Compromise and adaptation have to be wrought out and deliberately worked into the language of agreements that will be closely scrutinised by politicians, lawyers and experts of all kinds. It is a long and demanding search to find the words and terms of balance and progress that make it plain that sacrifices are not being made by one side only, that neither side has lost face and that both sides benefit. Although the resulting final treaties may be long, meticulous and nearly incomprehensible in places, this leaves room for interpretation and manoeuvre and it allows negotiators to win the support and backing of those they represent. And even though many such initiatives do eventually fail, their work and experience form a basis for future negotiations and further the slow progression towards peace.

It has been as a result of many such apparently failed peace initiatives that the Geneva Accord emerged determined to harness the power of public opinion by directly enlisting the support of ordinary Israelis and Palestinians rather than relying solely on governmental groups. This trend towards the mobilisation of public support is becoming an increasingly significant and constructive factor in current world politics and as such is welcomed by the more enlightened politicians. Recently at discussions about the Geneva Initiative in the post Arafat era, Jean Asselborn, Luxembourg's deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs said "the actual problem is not that we do not know what the final status should be. Rather, it is about political will and beyond that, the scope for building majorities and gaining support." He continued, "Indeed many problems in this world cannot be solved if only politicians are in charge of finding a solution. Let's take the example of Ukraine where it is the determination and the will of the population which have put in motion the developments we are presently witnessing. The Geneva Initiative can of course not be compared to the mass protests in the streets of Ukraine but as in Ukraine any lasting solution in the Middle East must be carried by the people."

The Israeli/Palestinian conflict is a symbol of humanity's long evolutionary struggle to transmute the forces of the lower nature into higher regions enabling the heart to shine its light abroad. The wider opportunities for peace are cyclical with the light of the heart breaking in only to recede again as we fail to make use of it fully and we temporarily sink back into the twilight world of destructive activities and attitudes. Over the decades, Middle East peace initiatives have appeared, the hope of peace growing with the inflowing light, but seemingly without the will and courage to support and sustain peace. Now, once again, the conflict is being raised into the light, and by continuing to send the united will-to-good of the Cycle of Conferences group to enlighten and irradiate the mental atmosphere in which upcoming meetings and negotiations take place, we can play an important part in ushering in a new era of peace.

Ironically, Jerusalem, the name of the city at the heart of this long raging conflict, means “the place of peace”. True peace is not a passive state of affairs however, but a dynamic will based activity. This is why it is said that the one and only place of complete “peace” on the planet is ‘the Centre where the Will of God is known’, which has, in the ancient Scriptures, been called the "place of serene determination and of poised, quiescent will." This offers a needed dynamic to our concept of peace – a focused harmony of intention that abides in the hearts of those who are consciously working to bring in a new era of right human relationships in the world.

Headquarters Group  
Cycle of Conferences

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