

Chapter 5

Jewish–Arab

Interreligious Dialogue: Empirical Perspectives Part II

ABSTRACT

This chapter building on the previous one, addresses additional themes. The first will be the impact of the discourse of the Holocaust on Jewish-Arab relations based on a description and evaluation of a Bar-Ilan University Jewish-Arab mission to Holocaust sites in 2005. Next will be an evaluation of several other interreligious dialogues organized under the auspices of the Interfaith Encounter Association (IEA). This will be followed by a subsection on the dynamics and impact of a pioneering course “Jewish-Arab Interreligious Dialogue” run by this author at Bar-Ilan University over the last number of years. This will be followed by a discussion of the impact of a pioneering group by the name of “Roots” in the area of Gush Etzion/West Bank involving dialogue and cooperation between local Palestinians and members of the Jewish national religious sector. Next will be a subsection on possibilities for moderate religious discourse on both sides. Finally the chapter will conclude with a discussion on the centrality of respect in Jewish-Arab intercultural communication.

INTRODUCTION

“Genuine peace must be the product of many nations, the sum of many acts.”

John F. Kennedy

This chapter is effectively a continuation of Chapter 4, which includes empirical data concerning the efficacy of Jewish-Arab Interreligious Dialogue. However, it begins with an important related type of peace building effort namely the discourse of the Holocaust and particularly a joint Jewish-Arab delegation from Bar-Ilan University to Holocaust Memorial sites which has definitely been a part of path

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-4476-4.ch005

breaking interfaith efforts (al-Nuaimi, et.al, 2021; Auschwitz- Berkenau State Museum, 2003; Arab News, 2023).

Following the theme of the discourse of the Holocaust and the joint Jewish-Arab Holocaust mission; the remainder of the chapter will be devoted to an extensive analysis based on a pioneering Jewish-Arab Interreligious Dialogue Course which I have been running at Bar-Ilan University for the last six years. Qualitative and quantitative data will be presented to assess the impact of the course along with elements of educational methodology.

CASE STUDY: THE DISCOURSE OF THE HOLOCAUST AS A BASIS FOR PEACE EDUCATION

This special Mission was run under the auspices of the Office of the Dean of Students of Bar-Ilan University and was coordinated by Dr. Danielle Gurewitsch in Spring 2005. In addition, the Campus Rabbi offered his strong support for the mission. Mr. Rifat Sweidan, coordinator of Arab students under the auspices of the Dean of Students at Bar-Ilan University was also actively involved in this mission. The Seminar also included a joint Jewish-Arab delegation from the “Children of Abraham Association” which served as a co-sponsor, and whose Chairman Mr. Amir Tadmor served as Seminar co-leader. The Program was run in academic consultation and research cooperation with the parallel project for Arab-Jewish Dialogue at Bar-Ilan University’s Program in Conflict Management run under the direction of this author.

The mission was composed in total of 60 participants of students and a number of faculty escorts. About one-third of the students were Arabs (of whom a significant segment were Druze).¹ The Jewish students who came from Bar-Ilan University, and its then affiliates in the Western Galilee Academic College, Safed Academic College and also the Ariel University Center represented a cross section of Ashkenazi, Sephardi, religious and secular sub-groups. The representation from the Children of Abraham Association was comprised of both Arabs and Jews.

Such an undertaking from both an educational and inter-group point of view was fraught with both potential difficulty and benefit. Indeed, educators have grappled with the proper approach to dealing with the Holocaust in the Arab sector (Ronen, 2003) with evidence of its controversial elements from their point of view.

For instance, members of Arab society in Israel have at times contended that the continued focus on the Holocaust legacy can be considered a tool for the Jewish majority to focus upon the Jewish-Zionist narrative and suffering without any acknowledgement of their needs and traumas (Maoz and Bar-On, 2002). On the other hand—at times there is a tendency among Arab educators and leaders to welcome

72 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/jewish-arab-interreligious-dialogue/358075

Related Content

Teaching Safety, Compliance, and Critical Thinking in Special Education Classrooms

Lilly B. Padía (2022). *Research Anthology on Racial Equity, Identity, and Privilege* (pp. 791-809).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/teaching-safety-compliance-and-critical-thinking-in-special-education-classrooms/296976

Capital Account Liberalization and Capital Movement in China

Badar Alam Iqbal, Nida Rahman and Mohd Nayyer Rahman (2021). *Journal of Comparative Asian Development* (pp. 63-78).

www.irma-international.org/article/capital-account-liberalization-and-capital-movement-in-china/272584

Mentoring African American Women at Historically Black Colleges/Universities: Beyond the Misconceptions of Our Identity

Tammara Petrill Thomas and Michelle Lee Maultsby (2022). *Research Anthology on Racial Equity, Identity, and Privilege* (pp. 729-750).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/mentoring-african-american-women-at-historically-black-collegesuniversities/296973

Identifying Forward and Backward Linkages From China's Infrastructure Investment in Africa

Ehizuelen Michael Mitchell Omoruyi (2021). *Journal of Comparative Asian Development* (pp. 1-31).

www.irma-international.org/article/identifying-forward-and-backward-linkages-from-chinas-infrastructure-investment-in-africa/272582

Diversity and the Media: A Curriculum Examination and Proposal for Journalism and Mass Communication Education in Africa

Uche T. Onyebadi, Mohamed A. Satti and Lindani Mbunyuza-Memani (2020). *Multidisciplinary Issues Surrounding African Diasporas* (pp. 54-79).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/diversity-and-the-media/236702