



JUBILO

A COMPARATIVE APPROACH
TO JEWISH, CHRISTIAN AND ISLAMIC REALITIES



Tea for Peace

A PROGRAMME OF THE JUBILO PROJECT



3 SEPTEMBER 2007 - 17.30 | 21.00



HET NUTSHUIS

RIVIERVISMARKT 5 | THE HAGUE | THE NETHERLANDS

PROGRAMME PLAN

Tea for Peace is a new initiative of the *Jubilo* project consisting of a series of 'tea parties'. On a monthly basis, the Spanda Foundation organizes an evening event on a specific topic related to the interfaith dialogue to foster better understanding among the community of the three Abrahamic faiths.

The event starts with a film screening consisting of a documentary or selected scenes dealing with intercultural issues and themes in every day life concerning Jewish, Christian and Muslim individuals, communities and peoples. After watching the film, *Jubilo's* guest speakers initiate a round table dialogue in which the audience is welcomed to join in.

Films have a unique ability to engage, entertain and, at the same time, inform and educate. Thus, the chosen movie or scenes serve as a tool for a better understanding of the cultural, social and political background of people from different cultures and faiths, while also providing a starting point for the ensuing round table discussion. The audience benefit from the event by gaining a deeper knowledge and understanding of current problems. Furthermore, regular discussions on peace-related issues will bring people closer, and may lead to further interfaith and intercultural cooperation.

// PROBLEMS ADDRESSED ~ By providing an open forum for discussing issues and sharing ideas, and by prompting a comparative vision on Abrahamic faiths, the *Tea for Peace* programme specifically addresses the problems of education for peace, interfaith education, tolerance, civil participation, civil and human rights, cultural diversity, cross-cultural and inter-faith dialogue, ethnic integration and conflict prevention, community building and development. This allows qualified and thorough comprehension of the subject matter in all segments of the community and international audience. In its function as an educational and cultural agent, *Tea for Peace* is able to reach and enrich all segments of society. It underlines the contribution of different cultures to our common heritage and lifestyles; promoting the importance of exploring together how to develop active participation in our society through cross-cultural and inter-faith dialogue with an open attitude to the world, respecting cultural diversity in a community based on shared common values.

// TARGET ~ Professional and non-professional Dutch and international audience, individuals concerned about peaceful coexistence of people

from different faiths and ethnicities, integration and community building. Approximately 50-100 visitors per event are expected.

// PROPOSED SCENARIO ~ Each session will examine one topic from different aspects and points of view. The event will begin with the screening of a series of short extracts from films and documentaries. The best works dealing with religious, interfaith, intercultural, social and ethnical themes will be chosen. Afterwards, the guest speakers (leading religious representatives, experts on the issue, academics and the like) will discuss the questions related to the main subject of the event. Guidelines will be given to the audience beforehand to involve them actively in the discussion.

As part of the programme, a research study will be carried out within the audience examining the level of tolerance, preconceived views and stereotypes affecting the Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities and whether these preconceptions have changed as a result of participating in the event. A quick assessment of the questionnaires will close the 'official' programme, after which the audience will have the opportunity to meet the guest speakers informally while having a cup of tea or other refreshments.

// OCCURRENCE AND DURATION ~ Monthly basis; 3 hours ca.

// ADMISSION ~ Free to all participants.

// LANGUAGE ~ English.

// UPCOMING EVENTS

- ~ RELIGION AND IDENTITY
- ~ RELIGION AND EDUCATION
- ~ RELIGION AND VALUES
- ~ RELIGION AND BELIEFS
- ~ RELIGION AND VIOLENCE
- ~ RELIGION AND POLITICS
- ~ RELIGION AND THE RULE OF LAW

See you there!

THE TOPIC: FUNDAMENTALISM

Fundamentalism is historically associated with an American Protestant movement which was aimed at counterbalancing trends that were seen as eroding traditional Christianity, such as Darwinism and liberal theology. Today the term Fundamentalism can be applied to any religion, and generally means that one adheres strictly to a basic set of ideas or principles, which involves interpretation of their holy book as absolute and literal truth. Consequently, those who hold such beliefs are sometimes referred to as 'literalist'. Fundamentalism is also often seen as a response to threats to morality from modernity.

What are the implications of Fundamentalism? How does an individual become fundamentalist? Is Fundamentalism necessarily intolerant? Are there any benefits to Fundamentalism?

Although they oppose certain types of behaviour that go against their beliefs, fundamentalists can still respect others for behaving in this way because they believe retribution to be God's work, and not their own. In that case, would they still be considered tolerant?

Fundamentalism has a strong role in politics lately, not only in places like Iran, Saudi Arabia and Israel, states founded on religion and known for religious participation in politics, but also in states where religion and politics, to a further extent, have been kept apart. *Tea for Peace* would like to explore these issues during our premier evening.

THE QUESTIONS

We would like the event to be a free-flowing 'dialogue' between and among the guest speakers and the visitors, however even such a format requires a little structure. To help guide the conversation, here are a number of questions we would like to bring up for debate.

- 1 How do we define Fundamentalism?
- 2 Fundamentalism is commonly associated with violence. Is this true?
- 3 How do words shape the way we view Fundamentalism? Why do we describe certain Jewish rituals as *orthodox* while some Muslim rituals are part of *extremism*?
- 4 Is there a difference between fundamentalist, extremist, traditionalist, and orthodox? Do they give you different connotations?
- 5 Do organizations name themselves fundamentalists or is the term usually imposed by the outside world?
- 6 How does Fundamentalism affect tolerance?
- 7 Does fundamentalist behaviour contribute to reducing tolerance within a given society?

- 8 Is the act of trying to convert someone inherently intolerant?
- 9 If a person is not born in a fundamentalist family, what causes them to become a fundamentalist? Is the change social or spiritual? Exogenous or endogenous?
- 10 How great is the divide between fundamentalist groups and mainstream religions? Can you be intolerant within your own religion?

THE FILMS

The first evening of *Tea for Peace* focuses on Fundamentalism. Rather than showing a feature-length film, Spanda shows parts of the films listed below. The goal is to familiarize people with facts about religions that they may not be aware of. At the same time, Spanda would like to highlight the issues and conflicts that may arise through lack of knowledge about those who follow orthodox faiths.

JUDAISM RELATED

- // *A Life Apart: Hasidism in America* (1997) USA | Directors, Menachem Daun and Oren Rudavsky | 96', Documentary.
In this extraordinarily intimate film, seven years in the making, we are taken into the depths of the Hasidim's joyous, sometimes harsh, and often beautiful world. With their use of Yiddish, their distinctive clothes and their strict observance to Jewish ritual and law, the Hasidim are considered by many an insular people with little connection to mainstream America. And yet their values are those that many Americans find most precious: family, community and a life of meaning.
- // *The Chosen* (1981) USA | Director, Jeremy Kagan | 108', Drama.
Two Jewish teenagers in 1940s New York meet as playground rivals. After injuring Reuven, Danny calls on him at home to apologize. Their wariness turns to fascination and close friendship as each discovers and admires the other's differences. Danny thirsts for the wider knowledge represented by Reuven's environment; while Reuven is enraptured by Danny's close-knit family and synagogue community. But Danny's people oppose the State of Israel as fanatically as Reuven and his father are working to create it. The issue threatens to make them enemies once again.

CHRISTIAN RELATED

- // *Brother Born Again* (2001) USA | Director, Julia Pimsleur | 76', Documentary.
Filmmaker Julia Pimsleur used to make up elaborate lies about her brother Marc, rather than explain that he had dropped out of college, turned his

back on his Jewish heritage and moved to a Christian commune in Alaska. This documentary traces Julia's efforts to understand his conversion and to revive their relationship, despite her fundamentalist brother's disapproval of her bisexuality. Julia travels from New York City to her brother's religious community, where she and Marc search for common ground and discover the meaning of family.

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- // *Jesus Camp* (2006) USA | Directors, Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady | 87', Documentary.

Jesus Camp follows several young children as they prepare to attend a summer camp where the kids will get their daily dose of evangelical Christianity. Interesting scenes include a stay-at home mother teaching her son Creationism, and children repenting from sin. This, juxtased with clips from a moderate Christian radio show host, brings up important questions about intra-religious dialogue and methods of spreading faith.

ISLAM RELATED

- // *Dispatches: Undercover Mosque* (2007) UK | Channel 4, Commissioning Editor, Kevin Sutcliffe | 50', Documentary.

A reporter goes undercover to become a part of a British mosque that presents itself as tolerant and moderate but discovers that there are some fundamentalist imams who preach intolerance and hatred.

- // *Paradise Now* (2005) Palestine | Director, Hany Abu-Assad | 90', Drama.

Said and Khaled are two friends who have decided to perform a suicide bombing mission together. They slip into Israel as planned, but they get separated at the fence. Faced with their deadly choice by themselves, confused and lost, they have to reexamine the reasons for their murderous plans.

- // *The Forbidden Chapter* (2005) Iran | Director, Fariborz Kamkari | 90', Crime drama.

In the poor area of the city of Mashad, a number of prostitutes are being found brutally slaughtered. Habib, a police officer who has grown up in this area, is being sent from the capital to investigate the case. But when he goes against the local police department and publicly asserts that the murders are religiously motivated, he gets beaten and fired. He continues on his own and finds clues that lead him to Qur'anic school which a very strict hierarchy, led by a religious master.

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THE GUEST SPEAKERS

SJAAK DE BOER Pastor (C.) of the Church of Our Saviour, The Hague. Fr Sjaak holds a doctorate in Religious Studies from Louvain University, Belgium, and has served for more than twenty years in Kenya, USA, Brazil, UK and Belgium. For the last nine years he has been Parish Priest of The Church of Our Saviour in The Hague. He is the organiser of the European Pastors' Symposia on the Millennium Goals, and since 1986 the Chairman of Auxilia, a foundation supporting world wide projects for the poor. He has published a number of essays and books, among which the recent *Liturgia Libertadora* and *Do I Hear A Yes*.

JACOB KORF Minister (P.), Chairman of the Hague Council of Philosophies and Religions (HRLR). Ds Korf studied Theology at Kampen Theological University, Netherlands, and was ordained a minister in the Reformed Protestant Church in 1978. He served in Niezijl, Grijpskerk, Maassluis and Rotterdam and, for the last fourteen years, the congregations of Duinzichtkerk and Vredeskapel in The Hague; he is currently based at Abdijkerk in the same city. Since october 2001 he has been the Chairman of the Hague Council of Philosophies and Religions (HRLR), a platform of meeting and debate which in 2000 initiated the interfaith meetings at the Grote Kerk, The Hague, on the official annual opening day of the Dutch Parliament (*Prinsjesdag*).

NADHA SHEHADA Lecturer in Gender, Culture and Development, Institute of Social Studies (ISS), The Hague. Dr Sheada is presently giving a course on 'Islam in contemporary debates' in which issues related to Islam and modernity, secularism, publicity, activism and multiculturalism are explored. She is associated researcher at the Laboratory of Urban Anthropology (CNRS, Ivry-sur-Seine, France), and she is coordinating the three-year research project 'Islamic Family Law in Palestine and Israel: Text and Context' in cooperation with the Universities of Zurich and Bern in Switzerland. In 2005, she was a researcher at Bern University where, with the Institutes of Islamic Studies and Social Anthropology, she co-organized the conference 'Islamisches Familienrecht im Wandel' [The Transformation of the Islamic Family Law]. She was a researcher at the Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM) in Leiden from 2005 to 2006. Dr Shehada has a long been involved in NGO activism in the field of family law reform, and spent many years as director of the Gender and NGO Department of the Palestinian Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation.

AWRAHAM SOETENDORP Rabbi, Congregation of The Hague and Utrecht. Rabbi Soetendorp was born in 1943 in Amsterdam and survived as a «hidden child». He his Rabbi of the Liberal Jewish Community in The Hague and presides over the European Region of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. Rabbi Soetendorp is Earth Charter Commissioner and a Founding Board Member of Green Cross International and co-chair of the Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders. He his also a member of the International Advisory Committee of World Peace Summit, acts as an advisor to the American Jewish World Service, and is the founder and chair of the Hope Foundation for Children for Universal Education. Rabbi Soetendorp is a member of the Steering Committee of the World Council of Religious Leaders and participates as a key discussion partner of the World Economic Forum in his function as a religious leader. He is a Member of the International Advisory Board of the *Jubilo* Project.

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THIS PRESENTATION HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE

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