

## Talking for Peace – A Karl Kahane Lecture Series

The Bruno Kreisky Forum for International Dialogue  
in co-operation with the Karl Kahane Foundation and Haddassah Austria

kindly invites to

### **Hadassah - An Island of Sanity and Peace**

Dr. **Yoram Weiss** in dialogue with Dr. **Hasham Ruhi**

Welcome address and introduction:

**Patrica Kahane**

President of the Karl Kahane Foundation

**Susi Shaked**

President of Hadassah Austria

Moderation:

**Josef Shaked**

Psychoanalyst

Thursday | September 29, 2005 | 19.00 h

Bruno Kreisky Forum for International Dialogue | Armbrustergasse 15 | 1190 Vienna

The Hadassah Medical Organization, which has achieved international acclaim for promoting peace in the Middle East region by - despite treating more terror victims than other medical centres - providing equal treatment to Palestinians and Israelis, tries to support co-operation and co-existence set by the mixed staff of people of all faiths.

Incorporating all medical and surgical sub-specialties, the Hadassah University Medical Centre is a tertiary care referral facility, known for pioneering new medical techniques. A teaching hospital and research centre, the Medical Centre is equipped with the most sophisticated diagnostic, treatment and research equipment enabling its renowned faculty to furnish the most modern medical care. The Karl Kahane Foundation grants scholarships to Palestinian physicians who need professional training and thus enabling them to study and specialize in their fields of research in the Hadassah hospitals in Jerusalem. Those physicians commute day by day from the Palestinian territories to the Hadassah hospitals in Jerusalem to work with their Israeli colleagues. After having finished their training the physicians return to the Palestinian territories as highly qualified specialists and pass on their trust of and their confidence in their Israeli colleagues to their patients, and, as a result, strengthening co-operation, co-existence and building bridges for peace.

Dr. **Hasham Ruhi** a Palestinian anaesthetist and Kahane Fellow, is doing a specialized training in intensive care, and works together with Dr. **Yoram Weiss**, Head of the Intensive Care Unit in the Hadassah Hospital Jerusalem.

**The Hadassah Medical Peace Centre has been nominated for the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize.**

### **Patricia Kahane**

This is a great day somewhere on the way of a long journey. We came together here this evening at the Bruno Kreisky Forum which is not really a coincidence as Bruno Kreisky was one of the very first European politicians to put a lot of work into a then almost non-existing dialogue between a few courageous Palestinians and a few courageous Israelis. This evening we are here to present to you one of many successful people to people cooperations between Israeli and Palestinian individuals and organisations independently from the day to day political situation and upheavals, the specialisation to any program of Palestinian doctors within the framework of the Hadassah medical organisation in Jerusalem. My late father together with Professor Jonathan Mann developed the Karl Kahane Fellowship at Hadassah Hospital back in 1987. This is almost twenty years ago. Since then we have had 36 physicians in the program, and a handful of other organisations have started as I am glad to see and hear to participate lately. It was followed up by Professor Sami Penchas and now Professor Shlomo Mor Yosef is in charge. But no one would have been able to follow through with this project without its real mother, Shulamit Rahav, who holds it all together including her care for our fellows to get to work through the road blocs along their way and many other things. I don't want to take more of your time. You came to listen to our Kahane Fellow, Dr. Ruhi, and Dr. Yoram Weiss, moderated by Professor Shaked. Thank you very much for doing this, Professor Shaked. I will leave the place to Ms. Shaked, the President of Hadassah Austria who was the untiring main motor to putting this evening together for all of us. Thank you.

### **Susi Shaked**

Distinguished guests, dear friends of Hadassah, this is called a Karl Kahane Lecture and I think it is indeed in the true sense of the word a Karl Kahane Lecture. When he was approached in 1987 by the Hadassah Hospitals from Jerusalem, he immediately agreed to help the two peoples in this region, the Palestinians and the Israelis. So they came up with this scholarship. The idea of this scholarship is very exciting. It gives Palestinian doctors the possibility of making a specialisation at the Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem. To make a specialisation at the Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem is something really special because it is not only an excellent hospital, but a center of research and a center of healing. It is not easy for a Palestinian doctor who comes from a different surrounding, has a different languages, has to learn a lot. The idea of the scholarship is that once they finished their studies and developed a relationship of trust between both, the Israeli colleagues and the Palestinian colleagues, they pass it on to their patients. Back to the Palestinian territories a doctor has about 50 patients per day which makes 300 patients in a week. You can go on how much it would make in a month.

Dr. Ruhi has the rare privilege and chance to stand here for all the colleagues that have benefited of this scholarship, and will express his thanks for this idea and for the help to the Kahane family. As I understood he is the first doctor who made all his exams in Hebrew, but he also did the European diploma. He is here with his colleague Dr. Yoram Weiss. They have developed a warm friendship and will explain how we work at Hadassah. Prof. Mor Yosef (?) who is the director of the hospital will join us later. I leave the floor to the two doctors. Thank you so much.

Hadassah Austria managed one scholarship for a year, hopefully with the help of everybody and with donors we might add another scholarship.

### **Yoram Weiss**

Good evening. When we heard of this presentation we were sitting in the office and were thinking what will we do. It is difficult. Someone before asked me how long we work together. And it looks to me as if it is yesterday, but it is basically nearly seven years. We have gone a very long way. What we thought is to share with you a little bit of our experiences. Some of them won't be easy. But I think you have to understand them in order to understand us. This is the presentation. As an Israeli who is working at Hadassah institute I really would like to say that I think that the Kahane Foundation is extremely important. I think peace is not gained by one big bang and we love each other. It will be gained by many, many small steps to reach peace. Maybe, hopefully with this we have started one of these long journeys for peace. We will tell you about our experience. We are from the Hadassah Hebrew University Medical Center in Jerusalem. Ruhi well tell you a few quotes that we found.

### **Hasham Ruhi**

Good evening. First of all I want to thank you that you came and secondly the Kahane Foundation which gives us a chance to improve ourselves and do specialisations in different fields in medicine. I took some quotes to talk about peace I would like to share with you.

Peace can't be kept by force. It can be only achieved by understanding. We look forward to the time when the power of love will replace the love of power. Then will our work know the blessings of peace. Nothing is more precious than peace. Peace is the most basic starting point for the advancement of human kind. There is no way to peace, peace is the way. Peace may sound simple. One beautiful word but it requires everything we have, every quality, every strength, every dream, every high idea.

### **Weiss**

Yes, it is a long way. I am from a family that came from Germany. After the Second World War we came to Israel: I graduated at the Israeli Institute of Technology as a physician. Then I went on to Hadassah. I specialised in anesthesia and intensive care. I went over to the United States and spent two and a half years in the United States working as a researcher in attending intensive care and anesthesia. Then in mid-1990 I came back to Israel and spent a large extent of my time in the intensive care unit. Actually both Ruhi and I spent a very long time in the intensive care unit during a very turbulent period, starting in 2001/2002 during the events that took place during the Intifada with a lot of violence that we saw in Jerusalem.

### **Ruhi**

I was born in Nablus in Palestine in 1968, graduated in 1996. After finishing school I didn't go directly to medicine. My father insisted that I will become be an engineer. I learned at Bir Zeit University one and a half year. After that started the first Intifada, and I stopped studying engineering and got a scholarship to finish medical school. After that I returned to Jordan and stayed one year and did internship. After 1997 I came to Palestine, to Ramallah hospital, and I spent nearly one year in cardiovascular surgery. After this, at the end of 1998 I started the residency at Hadassah hospital. Now I have an Israeli and European diploma. I would like to speak a few words about my city Nablus, situated about 65 kilometers north of Jerusalem. The population is 150.000. It is famous for sweets and soap. We have one big university in this city with 7.000 students. Even at the darkest hour there is light. Despite that I didn't knew Hebrew, despite the difficulties to cross the barriers and checkpoints, despite the lack of places for specialisation, and despite the large competition to gain residency places, I am a specialist in anesthesia thanks to the Kahane Foundation.

## **Weiss**

We will tell you first about our organisation. The Hadassah Medical Organisation is basically an organisation that is mainly concentrated in the United States. It is the largest women organisation. I always say that the board of directors at Hadassah is basically only run by women. I am feeling very comfortable with that. It has also 30 chapters in many countries, one of them here in Austria. A lot of work is being done at Hadassah, which before the foundation of Israel had a large system of health care spread all over the country. When the state was created they decided to relinquish everything to the government except for the center in Jerusalem which was created to be a place of tertiary care medicine, education and the best medical practice that can be placed in the world if we can, and in research also. The mission is, as it was pioneered by the founder, to have basically development of health care standards in the Middle East. At that time it was Palestine. From the beginning the Hadassah Medical Organisation stood for creation of peace. Unfortunately we know very well, the conflict in our country did not start yesterday. It is a conflict that is already a century old. Working within these constraints, despite that we are interested in advancement of health care, in research, and in teaching. We are also trying to reach out to the population that is not only Israeli but that is surrounding us. The Hadassah Medical Center is two hospitals. One is the tertiary care center which has 750 beds. There is another smaller campus which is the Mount Scopus regional care center which has 300 beds. It is a very beautiful hospital. This is the area that we are serving. We are not only serving the Israeli population, we serve also Palestinian areas in Bethlehem, Hebron, Nablus and others. Tertiary care is a hospital that is equipped with all the departments to provide the best medical services. You expect them to have all the most modern techniques for diagnosis and for intervention, having both neural surgery, cardiac surgery, and obviously also a very developed intensive care system.

As you well know the Jerusalem population is a very mixed population. You can find religious people, you can find Christians, you have Muslims, and you have also people that are secular. All of them mix into an amazing blend in Jerusalem. This is the population we are serving and we are dealing with. We are basically a hospital that is providing the highest medical services we can, trying to put also a lot of emphasis on teaching. As a community hospital we serve the population of Jerusalem. We are also a research center, and we are one of the biggest centers of research in the Middle East, and in Israel for sure. Finally and unfortunately we are there as a trauma center first for car accidents and other events of trauma, but unfortunately also because there is violence. Unfortunately during the past four years we have seen a lot of violence. Both me and Ruhi have seen an enormous amount of violence because as being intensive care physicians we are at the forefront of taking care of the most severely injured patients. We have tried during this entire period to keep a balance. I must give credit to our administration. For two reasons. One is for really allowing us to do two things at the same time, deal with the upheaval that we had to undergo which is all the traumas we had to take care of, but at the same time encouraging us to continue with day to day work trying to serve the community and also providing us with the possibility to do research. All of us realise that at a certain point violence will come down and things will start to go in a better way. There Hadassah won't be remembered for its trauma service which I think we have done a very nice job, but will be remembered for the research, for the teaching, for the education.

I have to say a few words about the trauma center. To understand the friendship that Ruhi and I have, you have to speak about trauma. We are a major trauma center. We see the worst patients that are injured from both sides. We have seen 2.655 terror victims treated at Hadassah since September 2000. 700 were hospitalised, 70 the majority in our ICU which is the general intensive care unit. Actually the biggest event we had was not a terror event. It

was when a wedding hall in Jerusalem collapsed, and the entire hospital had to go into a situation where we had to take care of nearly 300 patients during one night. And all of us worked for a few days to try and help these people. Unfortunately we have seen also terror attacks, and we have seen a lot of them, we have seen very severe injuries. We had a patient whom a watch penetrated from a bomb into her neck and we were able to save her. It is one of our I would say miraculous works where everybody contributed. We had a young girl who was hit by a bomb and her legs were shattered, and she survived also. We had a young lady, a mathematician, who was sitting in a coffee shop at the Hebrew University. A bomb exploded very close to her. She had significant injuries to her lungs, burns, and she had significant injury to her head where from the blast air penetrated into her brains. She recovered. Our motto during this entire period was: even with the worst injured patients, and it doesn't matter if they are Jews or Arabs, we are there to provide the best medical care we can together, all of us. We are Israeli physicians, we are Arab physicians, we are Palestinians, and we are there to provide the best medical care we can to anyone who comes to the hospital. We don't care who he is.

Maybe some of you will ask us questions later about psychological effects of this period. I think psychological effects are on both sides, and we are well aware of that. We have a rehabilitation center which is doing a wonderful work in the Mount Scopus campus. And we have also been going out to help others. We are providing care in the Marshall Islands, we were at the Tsunami where we tried to see whether we can help. The help we provided was minimal because it was a magnitude that is much above the magnitude of one small hospital. We are providing cooperation and education not only for Palestinians but also to people from Africa, and from South America. They come to Hadassah, and we try to provide an education and good medical background. Unfortunately we are touched by death. People from Hadassah lost their lives. A friend of Ruhi and me, a dermatologist who worked at Hadassah, was killed during the upheaval. Everything is touching us. It is very difficult to say I don't know what is going on. The violence was touching us but still we were able to work together. Unfortunately both communities have suffered enormously.

### **Ruhi**

Both sides suffered from this violence. Many times we see in the ICU both sides, their beds near each other, and both sides receive the same treatments from both sides. I treat them, and Yoram treats them without distinguishing Palestinian or Israeli or from another country.

I would like to tell you some statistics about Hadassah. 12% of the Hadassah staff are Israeli Arabs and Palestinians from the territories. We have good relations. But during the first period we were a little bit worried about the relations, will they improve or decrease. But things improved. Still we have a lot of Palestinian patients who come to Hadassah. Hadassah accepts more than 5.000 Palestinians from the territories every year. Most of them are covered by the Palestinian Authority national health assurance. But many Palestinians come without proper coveries, for example after a trauma, work trauma, accidents. Hadassah is not hesitating to give them proper treatment. Approximately five requests for transfer every day of sick patients, difficult patients to the ICU. Because we have lack of places or lack of training in intensive care in Palestine, all the difficult cases ask for transfer to Hadassah. More than a third of the ICU patients are Palestinian patients. Sometimes we see more than half. This is because of trauma, or car accidents. In pediatric ICU we usually see in the last two years a lot of Palestinian patients, more than half because a lot of trauma and major heart surgery. Every day we have one or two pediatric heart surgery and other surgery. The reason for the high number of admissions to Hadassah is the lack of environmental safety. The workers work at places without safety standards, they fall down or get electrical shocks or

accidents. We have a cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians on patient oriented projects, especially in pediatric heart surgery and malignant diseases in children. Another important point are practitioner oriented projects. Many Palestinian doctors are covered by the Kahane Foundation. We have now doctors for heart surgery and anesthesiology that are working and receiving funds from Hadassah. And we also have basic nursing courses. Every two or three months we have a course for nursing, for continuing education, and also trauma education for physicians and nurses from the Palestinian Authority. They come to Hadassah and get a course for two or three months. We have also a trilateral cooperation, Hadassah and Harvard Medical School and Palestinian Authority funded by the US Department of State, to develop emergency medicine and treatment of trauma patients. We have also the Hebrew University Hadassah School of Public Health and Community Medicine. They provide public health decrees to Palestinian health professionals. Hadassah provides post-graduate courses for dental medicine. We have a lot of Palestinian doctors that come for specialisation in dental medicine. We have a special agreement with the Jerusalem St. Johns hospital and combined residency program and projects in collaboration with the Palestinian Authority. We have a Palestinian oncological center established newly which serves the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza. Also Augusta Victoria opened radio- and chemotherapy project and the training of radiotherapy for physicians and technicians, and also hematology training for physicians. This is supervised by Hadassah for continuing monitoring and quality control. Also we have common meetings for continued medical education and humanitarian assistance. Usually every week, every two weeks we organise Israeli and Palestinian doctors and they treat a lot of poor people in their villages, Palestinians.

### **Weiss**

This work has been discussed, we were published in the press abroad. The important thing is to try and find a balance. The balance was between coping with the violence and on the other side continue the regular work of a hospital and looking forward for the future. The future is research, the future is education. About 40% of biomedical research in Israel is conducted at Hadassah which I think is a very respectful number. Our research is both in hightech, and we are highly involved in CT-guided surgeries, both in orthopedic surgery and in ENT-neurosurgery etc. And we are also doing basic science research. This is my personal baby. My interest is ??? lung due to pneumonia or infections. Many people do other work at Hadassah. We are trying to provide new medications and new ways to deliver medicine to the lung. So we are committed to research. We have also an organisation within Hadassah that is there to help us to open also the commercial arm of Hadassah for development of research which is extremely important in this world of biotech. The founder of Hadassah said, make my eyes look to the future. I think the work that is being done at Hadassah should make her proud and make all of us working at Hadassah. At least I can say when I get up in the morning I am very proud to work at this institution. We are looking for the future. We have now a new center for emergency medicine that was just opened. We have a hotel and commercial center, which is being built now. The mother and child pavillion is being enlarged to contain more place for the mothers and children that come to Hadassah. Finally we are looking forward to transfer the old hospital to a new building that I think is extremely important. Because when you think of an organisation and you think of a hospital you need to think forwards. This is the importance. The importance is to continue the work that we have started and to look for the future. The future when we will have real collaboration and will be able to have more people, not only maybe Palestinians, even people from other Arab countries, come to Hadassah not only to be treated but to do research together and to have a collaboration.

## **Ruhi**

As we said, peace is a way. If there is to be peace in the world there must be peace in the nations. If there is to be peace in the nations there must be peace in cities. If there is to be peace in the cities there must be peace between neighbors. If there is to be peace between neighbors there must be peace in the home. If there is to be peace in the home there must be peace in the heart. This is the most important thing. I would like to thank Hadassah and its administration because they really give us a chance to work and to learn. I am maybe the first at Hadassah that successfully completed the exams and also European exams. But we have also many doctors who complete the Hebrew exams and they benefit from being at Hadassah. I would like also to thank Dr. Yoram. He is really a wonderful doctor who taught me a lot. We worked together in the difficult period, and we treated a lot of injured people in the last four years. He gave me a lot of power to understand and to help. I am really proud of my specialisation at Hadassah. If there will other chances for other doctors this will be a wonderful thing.

## **Josef Shaked**

Prof. Shlomo Mor-Yosef has arrived directly from Israel and I would like to invite him to address us.

## **Shlomo Mor-Yosef**

Good evening and my apologies for being a bit late, but I flew in from Israel for this specific event. I came here to thank the Kahane Foundation and the family, Patricia and Marie-Rose. I haven't got the chance to know the father, the late Karl Kahane. But due to his vision, and his support, and his generosity we are standing here today and being able to present such a broad cooperation and partnership between Palestinian and Israeli physicians. It sounds very simple, but it is not. It starts with everyone, family, stories, lives and experiences. If I take myself as an example, I am a physician, I am an obstetrician, a gynecologist, I practiced in Hadassah, then I went to subspecialty in gynecological oncology in England, then I moved to administration, I took a master degree at Harvard University in management, in the last five years I am the head of the Hadassah hospital in Jerusalem. But this is not the important part.

The important part as I see it is my family story which is a family story of a typical Israeli family. My father came to Israel from Morocco, from Marrakesh, Casablanca. My mother is a seventh generation Israeli. My wife's parents came from Germany to Israel just after the Kristallnacht. My brother was killed in the 1973 war at the Golan Heights. My parents in law who came from Germany, at the age of 70 decided to go to Egypt. We had peace with Egypt. So they wanted to go to Egypt and see the history, the archeology, the culture of Egypt. They crossed the border in a tourist bus and were attacked by Palestinians. He was killed, she was badly injured. My son served in the army, he was stationed in Bethlehem. During the Intifada before the shooting there was stone throwing. So he was stoned directly to his eye and lost his eye. At this point you have two options. One option is to hate, to fight, to kill. And there is another option to try, maybe there is another way. As you can understand I chose myself and chose the Hadassah way.

The spirit of Hadassah is what we are stating in our mission statement. In our mission statement apart from excellence, and teaching, and research, and healing, we say that we would like to serve and bridge to peace. You won't find many hospitals where in their mission statement you can read this. But this is part of the Hadassah spirit, which started in the US, moved to Israel, and invested in the health care system in Israel in the last 90 years with the help of people like the late Karl Kahane with visions for a different future.

As you heard from our two doctors who came all the way it was not easy. I don't know exactly how much you heard about the difficulties that Dr. Ruhi had to come here. Just to come from his home to the airport and to fly to Vienna. It is not an easy process. It was much more easier for Dr. Weiss. But we bypassed and we fought all the problems. For Dr. Ruhi to come every day to the hospital is a challenge. He has to cross checkpoints, sometimes he is humiliated. But we have a system to support all our Palestinian physicians. Right now at this specific time we have more than 25 Palestinian physicians at the hospital sponsored by different avenues, part from internal resources of the hospital, many from the Kahane Foundation, Peres Center for Peace. We are looking for these groups who would like to build these small bridges to peace. We won't bring peace from the hospital. But we can make some connections. We can present a different type or different phrase of the Israeli behavior, not the high research, not the cutting edge technology, but the humanitarian activities of Hadassah trying to touch each other and not to kill each other. At the time of the Intifada when we killed each other on the streets, the minute we enter the hospital with a white coat it was an island of sanity, like a transformation that happened to everyone of us. Arab Israelis, Palestinians, Jews. It was my challenge as the director general of the hospital to try and build this environment. I did not start it. I continued the spirit of Hadassah. But I was at a most difficult time when our kids were in danger in the streets, busses, restaurants, and I was under a very high emotional pressure. During this period we build these bridges. Many of the projects that you just heard about started during the time of the Intifada. Instead of just sitting aside, and fighting, and waiting for a better day, we tried to build this better day. Again, I would like to thank you for all the support, and all the generosity, and all the help that you from here gave to us in Israel. Thank you very much.

### **Josef Shaked**

I have the difficult task of bringing two close friends who used to be bitter enemies into dialogue. As a psychoanalyst I would be interested to hear also about your daily routine, about your conditions of living, about the way you handle all those things and get along with friends and enemies. Let's see what comes out of it, before we let the public participate in this dialogue.

### **Ruhi**

As Prof. Mor-Yosef said, it is not easy. At the beginning my specialisation at Hadassah was very difficult. First of all I didn't know Hebrew. Second thing, to cross all the checkpoints every day and to speak with soldiers and to convince them that I am a doctor at Hadassah. No one can imagine that a Palestinian doctor works at Hadassah hospital. I did not know anyone at the hospital, it is a big hospital, and another system. But slowly I got a lot of friends. I know all the doctors. We work with each other. Entering Hadassah I don't think that I am Palestinian, and this doctor an Israeli, and this doctor from South Africa or America. We just see each other as doctors in a big hospital. We have patients. We must give them the best treatment. This is the most important thing. When a patient comes to the trauma unit, I don't ask from where he is, what is his name, what is his religion. I ask which part of the body is injured as to be prepared to call other doctors from other specialisation. We work in a difficult period in the ICU and treat a lot of injured patients from both sides. Both receive the best treatment. A lot of them are without proper coverage. And Hadassah treats them and helps them. When I started, maybe I was the second or third Palestinian doctor at Hadassah. Now I look around and see more than 25, 30 Palestinian doctors and they ask me, I help them, because I have the experience. I hope this number will grow and grow. When they return to our hospitals they will improve the medical treatment in our hospitals.



Especially in the last two years I met many mothers with their small babies who come from Palestinian areas for heart operations. Usually they stay at the hospital for about two weeks. They live their life inside Hadassah and find the relations, they find the relations between the doctors, between the nurses, and the nurses to the mothers. I think that most of them, when they go back they feel pleasure and a lot of thanks to Hadassah which gave them good feelings during their stay at Hadassah. We can start from this small island, and we can build these bridges of peace. Of course, we need confidence and we need trust, every side has to trust the other. When a mother brings her small child for heart surgery she trusts the surgeon, nurses, doctors.

### **Weiss**

I just want to say that after my friend Ruhi, I cannot add more.

### **Question**

Not undermining the importance of what you are doing, but you came here to present Hadassah as a common project. What I got here, my feeling from all your statements is not partnership at all. I am very sorry to say that. I don't understand that you can actually underline that 12% of your staff is Palestinian. So many Palestinian highly qualified doctors are abroad in top hospitals. Where are they? Why only 12%? Why not 50%? Second, you didn't mention at all the difficulties of Palestinians coming to your hospital. You spoke about the difficulties of a privileged doctor who works with you, who even has to thank you for working with you. I am totally upset about that, I have to say. I am very curious to hear that also, Mr. Director, you came here to present your speech. The first statement that you made while presenting your honorable CV and the wonderful possibilities that you have got, was just counting up all the horrible things that have happened to your family, I am sorry for that, but also pointing out what Palestinians have done to you. So it actually shows that you have not overcome at all the hostility in your heart because it is still there. And you want to preach about that project as a common project. I cannot understand, I am sorry.

### **Ruhi**

I can say some words about what you said. We have difficulties to cross checkpoints. From my experience, I am at Hadassah about seven years. Sometimes when I take a bus to Hadassah, inside myself, I am happy that they check everyone who is entering the bus. Why? Because I don't want to die or other people die inside the bus because I am going to my work or to help my family or help my society. I was sent by the Palestinian Authority to do my specialisation at Hadassah. You don't know the competition, 40 doctors wanted to come to this place to do specialisation. A lot of them waited for a place to do specialisation more than ten years.

### **Question**

But see. That is the kind, you still need to be thankful.

### **Weiss**

Could you let me answer and maybe then you respond. Excuse me for saying this, but let's be civilised, okay. Let me finish and then I will be more than happy to let you finish. I will tell you also a few things. You don't listen. Our mission is a humanitarian mission. Don't mix us with politics. I have my personal ideas which you don't know what they are. I have my personal political ideas which you will never guess what they are. When I enter my hospital – as my director said, and I am very proud of him, because you never worked in a place where a bus explodes in your face every two minutes – the important thing is that we were able, all of us, to have a small area where we collaborate. Are there problems? There are many problems.

Do you think I feel comfortable that Ruhi cannot go on a bus and go to his home in Nablus and come every day from Nablus to our work? I don't feel good about that. Do I want every Palestinian who wants to come and work at Hadassah? Yes. But you know what, life is not very simple, life has a lot of obstacles. And the way you cross obstacles and solve them is not to say, what you are doing is worthless and let's throw this out of the window. Let's try and keep the baby in the cradle. Maybe this baby will grow to something bigger. Do we have enormous problems? We have huge problems. Listen to the TV today. Do you think we are not aware of that? Sure we are. What we are trying to do is do something very, very small within our small world. With the help of many people that were personally hurt on both sides. Ruhi, Shlomo, maybe myself, what do we know about ourselves however we try. Let us do it? Let us try and be positive.

### **Mor-Yosef**

We are not politicians. We came here to present what we at Hadassah are doing. You think that I still have some hatred in my heart. For sure you have it in your speech. You did not present anything alternative. We are a private hospital. We are not a governmental hospital. We are owned by the Hadassah organisation in New York, and we could have just treated patients. We took upon ourselves a responsibility that we don't have to take. We wanted to participate, we wanted to give something. Is it enough? Can't we do more? Of course, it is not enough, and of course we can do more. But I will give you one example. We have the Kahane Foundation Fellowship. I called the Palestinian Authority, and I asked them two questions. One: which type of doctors you would like us to train? And second: can you recommend names of physicians so that we can interview them? And we wanted to do it first because we wanted to train physicians and surgeons that the Palestinian Authority needs. Secondly, we wanted to build some commitment in these physicians to go back to the Palestinian Authority. We did not receive any cooperation. You said it is not a partnership. You are right, it is not partnership. We try to give whatever we can. We try to partner with whomever would like to partner with us. Unfortunately there are two sides to this conflict. And I don't know what the other side will present. There is suffering, there is killing, there is hatred in the Middle East. We just came to say that we try to do something different. We didn't say that everything is rosy and nice and clear. We just try to show that even in this difficult situation we can do something.

### **Shaked**

We have to realise that we cannot keep the conflict in the Middle East completely out of this Forum also, but we try to concentrate on the humanitarian aspects and not to solve the whole political war conditions in the Middle East.

### **Question**

I am from Germany, from Frankfurt. I am very impressed about the work you are doing. And despite all the difficulties you have in your two countries I think it is the only way to peace to work together even if there are less Palestinians and more Jewish doctors. Have you ever faced difficulties with the patients? I could imagine that maybe some Jewish patients think it is very difficult to be treated by a Palestinian doctor or vice versa? Or has the patient no possibility? I just would like to know if you have faced any difficulties with your patients?

### **Weiss**

First of all patients when they get through the gates to Hadassah I think they realise that this place is dealing with medicine. I have never encountered a family that will say this is an Arab physician and he won't treat us. I must say that Ruhi is basically today functioning in the evening as the person who is responsible for anesthesia and intensive care at our department.

He has basically to give orders both to Israeli physicians and he treats patients, speaks to families and there was never a problem that we have encountered. Not only that. I can tell you that during the worst period of the Intifada we used sometimes to have a person that perpetrated something vis-à-vis the people that were hurt by him. As time went by the families, both families from both sides arrived. I won't say there weren't any tensions. But they will sit in the same room and wait for us to come out to give them information. We never had to call in either the police or the hospital guards to separate because there was a fight or something like that. I think that it is important to understand. I know from far it looks like how can it be. Look all over the world and things won't work like this. We were able to achieve something, we achieved with a lot of good will. And it worked for the benefit of all of our patients and all of our physicians, and I hope it will continue. It is not that we don't have tensions. There are many tensions. You have to understand, when you have a bus that explodes, do you think that the people that run the emergency room don't have their own emotions. You have to understand that politics is out of the game. This comes from Mor-Yosef, goes down through the heads of departments, goes down to people like me who run an intensive care unit. And people understand it. When they understand that politics are out of the game, then politics are out of the game. And I am serious. It is very important to understand that. We are not dealing with politics at Hadassah. We are doing the best we can, we have to try and help every person that arrives at the gates of Hadassah.

### **Mor-Yosef**

I really would like Dr. Ruhi to address this question because I think it is a very important question. How the Palestinian patients view the treatment? And are the Israeli patients willing to share the same facilities with Palestinians? If you enter Hadassah we don't have specific areas for different nationalities or religions. We have waiting rooms, we have treating rooms, and you can see Jews and Arabs. We say Palestinians, but we have two groups of Arabs. There are Arab Israelis and Palestinians. If you go through the hospital according to how they dress you see if they are ultra-orthodox Jews, secular or Arabs, Palestinians, or Israelis.

I would like to give you one example to show how the patients feel. A group from Toscana, Italy wanted very much to help the Palestinians by establishing a program for cardiac surgery for children. They came to the region. They met with Palestinian physicians. And they offered to these kids and families to fly to Toscana, Italy to have the operation, to stay there for two or three weeks and then go back to their place in the Palestinian Authority. They started the project. It didn't work. They went back and asked the patients why they don't want to come, we offer you free of charge, everything will be covered. They said no, we don't feel at home in Italy. They asked where do you want to have the operations. They said we want to have the operation in Hadassah. The minute they said, and the group from Italy together with the Peres Center for Peace decided to help. In the last year we operated around a hundred cases. They come to the hospital, they live in the hospital. On a daily basis and patient to patient relationship we don't have these problems.

But we experience some problems. During the Intifada one of the Arab social workers in the emergency room came to us and said that she can't work at the emergency room after a terror attack. We asked why. She said, that the Israeli patients after a terror attack, when they come to the emergency room, would not want to see as the first person an Arab social worker. She was sensitive to the reaction of the Israelis. And we have many examples like this from both sides. We try to be very sensitive for the needs of the patients, but for them it is much easier. They come as patients, and suddenly someone needs a towel, the other needs just eye keeping on the kids because she is going to buy something. And so they are building a relationship for the week or two they stay in the hospital before going back home.

**Ruhi**

During my work in intensive care, for about five years in intensive care with Dr. Yoram and other senior doctors, every day after the round we sit with the families. I try to sit with Arab families because most of them don't know Hebrew, so I translate. My feeling is that the families of these patients feel happy that their son or daughter receives treatment at Hadassah and in intensive care. Even when we insist that the patient has improved and must be transferred to a department, they insist that they stay one or two days longer in intensive care. Some of them know that I am Palestinian from Nablus, and they ask me, we see no difference between you and the other doctors. How does this work? They are surprised to see that we are working with each other and helping each other for the help of the patient, and ask how does it work. Usually my answer is that inside Hadassah we have no politics. When entering Hadassah I am not caring who is the patient. We try to do the best. And everyone is satisfied with this. I work also in the pediatric ICU. After cardiac surgery I help these children, I explain to the mothers about the treatment. I ask why did you choose to come to Hadassah? They said to me that instead of going abroad to Italy or to France for this operation, having never been outside, not knowing anyone there, here they have good treatment, here they do not need more. And good relations which is the most important thing. As we said this is a small island. We can't cover all the problems between the two nations. We can't solve. We start only this way. We hope that things will improve. But we can't solve and we can't answer for every question. Because this is out of our job. Our job inside the hospital is the benefit of the patient. The patients come to the hospital, not covered from the Palestinian Authority. They ask me, we have no money, what to do. I say to them, you are here and you receive treatment, after that we think about money, the important thing is that you receive treatment. Many families ask me what to do. They have no money to pay for the treatment. Their son fell down from a height, received serious injuries. Sometimes the patients stay in the ICU for one month, two months. At the end they go home. I don't know what to say more. The basic things that we see every day are really good things. Some Palestinian patients come to Hadassah and ask me, "I have a relative who want come to Hadassah because he sees that we treat his mother or father well, I want to bring him, how can I do this?" All patients who were treated at Hadassah, they remember these good times. I don't speak about the outside and the checkpoints, I speak about inside Hadassah and the treatment and the relation between the families. Every day I see Arab and Jewish families, and they speak with each other, "good morning, how is your son, how is your baby, improving, not improving." This builds relations because everyone cares for the other.

**Question**

Is the Hadassah hospital the only hospital that treats all the nations in Israel?

**Weiss**

It is a pretty unique system. What happens is that since 1995 when the Palestinian Authority was created basically everything that goes to health care within the West Bank and Gaza is under the Palestinian Authority. Obviously the system there is not working perfectly, and they need the help from Israeli hospitals or from Jordanian hospitals. Some sick patients end up in Jordanian hospitals, some patients end up in Israeli hospitals. Some of them will end in hospitals that belong to the government. It is important to have Palestinian physicians come, work and train at Hadassah because mission is not only just to say okay, there is a problem in Gaza, we will treat the patient. Another part of our mission is try to help in everyday life, to try and improve the medical service not only in hospitals in Israel, but at the end in hospitals in the West Bank and Gaza.

**Mor-Yosef**

Let me complete the answer. Palestinians are being treated in all hospitals in Israel. What is unique about Hadassah is the scope of programmes, of partnership and cooperation, not just the treatment.

**Question**

I am a Palestinian student. I am really interested in Hadassah projects and what they are doing in Israel and a little bit in Palestine. But I have to say that for us Palestinians getting to Hadassah is more of a fantasy. To really see that actually some Palestinians are getting to Hadassah is great. Some people are really sick and they would love to get to Hadassah or to be treated in a good hospital, except they cannot get to that. I would like to note the tone that has been spoken with. You just told us that your son lost his eye in Bethlehem. But I have a little question. What was he doing in Bethlehem? I think this is really about the hospital and not about our personal experiences. Because if you want to go back to who was injured, your brother who died in 1973, we could back to people who died in Gaza 2005, people who died in 1967 and who emigrated from the three villages that were demolished, or you go back to 1948. But this is not the aim, I believe, not going back. This is too political. We want to talk about the hospital itself. That is why there is one thing I would like to note. You just said in the very last thing that you have Israeli doctors and Palestinian doctors, and they are not the same. I would really like to put minds on that because if your hospital really wants a peace image I think you should really need to start thinking about equality between the nations. Also Dr. Ruhi, I really believe you shouldn't be mentioning Palestinians and Jews. You should actually be saying Palestinians and Israelis. Because I am a Palestinian, I have so many encounters with Jews, I have no problem dealing with Jews. Really it is not a problem of Islam and Jews or Christians or whatever. It is a problem, a conflict of nations. I really think we should note that, that it is not a problem of religion. Seriously. The last thing I would like to ask. Could you please tell us a little bit more about what you said that it is a little bit hard for the Palestinian doctors to get to the hospital? Can you actually tell us how hard is it for Palestinian patients to get to the hospital? Do you have incidents where patients died on the way because they were delayed too long at the checkpoint or they were not given access? You just said that Palestinian patients are treated in all Israeli hospitals. I am sorry but really this is not true, they are not treated in all Israeli hospitals, and mostly they are barely treated in Israeli hospitals. Maybe you can specify a little bit more about the humiliation people get on checkpoints even if they are going to play a concert for example in Jerusalem. They say they have a peace vision. But I don't see the peace vision if you say they are not the same. Thank you.

**Question**

Can I just make one small point to what you have said. The fact that the doctor mentioned all the injuries that have happened in his family, I think he was trying to make the point that he had the choice then of hating or hating. And that was why he mentioned the injuries. Just to point out that he did have the choice, not because he wanted to list injuries.

**Mor-Yosef**

Thank you very much. That is exactly what I meant. I didn't want to say that only my family had problems. I just wanted to say that I had a conflict after such a family history and I had to choose between two ways. And I chose. This is what I tried to present. I know that there is maybe much more suffering at the Palestinian side, of killing, of wounding. But not all of them are making the same choice. Part of them are looking for cooperation, some of them are looking for fighting back like other Israelis. You ask about the difficulties of Palestinians to come to Hadassah and to Israel. It is very, very difficult. First of all you have to be sick

enough to be transferred to Israel. Then you have to have all the authority for the military services and securities. And then sometimes you have to find a way to cover the costs. So there are many hardships for Palestinians to come to the hospitals. We try to help them in each of these avenues. We try to sponsor them. We can't treat for free everyone, but we try to sponsor part of it. We have a direct hotline with the military in order to be able to cross the checkpoints with the patients in much quicker ways. But it is not an easy journey for both sides. I would just like to remind you that Hadassah is an Israeli hospital. We are not part of the Palestinian Authority. We try to help. But in today's terms unfortunately we are building walls between the two nations and not ways of cooperation. And we try to do our best in order to ease the difficulties in crossing the checkpoints. Just for Dr. Ruhi to come here was much more difficult than for Dr. Weiss. Because we are still in an area in which we fight each other. And it is very easy to present the fights and not the cooperation. But when we present the cooperation it doesn't mean that the fights are behind us, and it does not mean that we don't have many problems. We have many problems.

### **Question**

I wanted to know if you have a partner hospital in Palestine with which you work.

### **Weiss**

First of all we have partners in the Palestinian Authority. One partner hospital is Augusta Victoria which we mentioned before. Augusta Victoria is a Palestinian hospital that is in East Jerusalem. It is not an organisational collaboration where you would say we have a signed agreement. But every Palestinian physician who works in the intensive care unit in the West Bank, in Hebron, in Ramallah knows that if he has a problem with a patient who he thinks might benefit from Hadassah then they will call us either on the phone or send a fax and say we would like to transfer the patient. If we think that we can really help the patient, it goes on from the administration down to us. If the patient has a chance let's bring the patient and we will deal with the possibilities how to find finances. Prof. Mor-Yosef (?) said it, and I think I need to re-emphasise it. We are a non-for-profit organisation. We don't have funds that are endless. The government of Israel isn't standing behind us, neither the Palestinian Authority in its paying for every patient. There are some patients that we get and we give the service pro bono, because we really believe that this is a patient that can benefit of increased care, that we can help him go back to his family. The other thing I wanted to say to the young lady, and I don't want to go into argument. We go all the time back, both Israelis and Palestinians. I think if we could one day stop, take a deep breath and say enough, let's stop counting backwards how many deeds and terrible we did to each other. As an Israeli I can tell you I am sure that as Israelis we haven't done only good things. And I am sure that Ruhi will agree with me that as Palestinians and maybe even this lady in the back haven't done everything. What we are trying to do is to say let's take a deep breath and let's see what we can do to improve the situation. I didn't learn a lot of psychology. But someone said that hate and love are the two extremes of the same thing. Maybe we can change the hate and make it into love. It is a long way, and we have an enormous way to go, and I think it will be a very turbulent way, and I think turbulence isn't over in the Middle East. All we are trying to do is a small step in the right direction.

### **Gertraud Auer**

I just wanted to say something personal and emphasise the importance of education, of the training of doctors who learn on a very high quality level very difficult disciplines and then go back and do practice of what they have learned. I am very happy to thank you because my brother learned at Hadassah. He had the opportunity to study for six months laparoscopy, and he is one of the finest doctors in Austria now. I think this is a very important thing not only in

the specific Israeli-Palestinian area, to transmit your knowledge to other people, to teach them and to make them practice on a very high quality level in order to save people's lives.

### **Susi Shaked**

I want to add a point regarding treatment for patients that don't have the money. We are a worldwide volunteer organisation, there are members from all over the world, we have a small fund, and I invite everybody to contribute to it. It is called the Fund for the Poorest of the Poores. Sometimes it is empty, but sometimes there is money in it. But it is thanks to everybody, many of you who are here, and I want to thank you for all you are donating and giving us for this case.

### **Question**

As a colleague I first would like to express that you are not only doing a great job but accomplishing wonderful work. I would like to take the question of acceptance by the patients of the other people. Is there any reluctance from colleagues from your own people who might think you collaborate and not just serve a wonderful idea? Have you ever had the feeling of not being completely accepted by your own colleagues, you from your Palestinian colleagues and you from your Israeli colleagues?

### **Ruhi**

All these feelings, all these politics we leave outside the hospital. When I see the patient I don't care who he is. Inside the hospital I must treat this patient. From the face of the patient you cannot decide who he is. You cannot distinguish Arabs and Jews, Israelis. When they bring trauma patients you cannot distinguish by his face if he is Arabic or Palestinian or an Israeli patient. You treat this patient. All the doctors inside Hadassah help each other. We have many doctors from Bulgaria, from Germany, from the United States, Israeli Arabs inside Israel, and Israeli doctors and doctors from Russia. All these doctors help this patient. No one criticises the other doctors. Or the feeling that you treat the other patient, we have no distinguishing feeling.

### **Question**

This is not exactly what I asked, you on both sides are completely committed to what you are doing. But there is the rest of the world, outside of Hadassah. Colleagues from your own population, how do they feel.

### **Ruhi**

Especially in Jerusalem, both the Arab and the Israeli parts live together. It is difficult sometimes to separate. In East Jerusalem we have Israeli people that live there. These are not doctors, but other people, workers, or engineers, they work here and there. And they have connections, relations with each other. And they know that some Palestinian doctors come to work and do specialisation like in other countries in the world. This is our job. We have no places, we come here and they offer us a place to do it.

### **Question**

Peter Kreisky. I remember, some years ago when Karl Kahane and my late father were blamed by an Austrian daily *Der Standard*, by the journalist Ben Segenreich – maybe he has changed his positions meanwhile – to being traitors of the Jewish people as people of Jewish descent. This big mistrust goes in the wrong direction. As I know the Kahane family they are active since many years and not being very popular among nationalist Jewish people for this active engagement for a peaceful solution in the Middle East. As a left social democrat I know this tradition that people in Austria are aggressive against those who are doing good work in

humanistic and peace aspects and criticise them for not dealing enough with the big problems which are hindering a development of understanding and cooperation. So this is wrongly directed. The energy should be directed to people who really don't want peace. Some of them have changed, as Frangi from the Palestinian side who was the European main diplomat and on the other side Uri Avnery. I remember when they participated in a dialogue in Austria about ten years ago in remembrance to my father. Both of them said they started as terrorists in their youth. Bridging these gaps is much more important than having too much distrust and mistrust for people who try to be an island in the midst of this terrible conflict.

### **Question**

I am happy about the discussion that I raised because I think that my misunderstanding actually came from the fact that the presentation was not outlining the speciality of what you are doing. I think you should have started – that is just a suggestion for further presentations that misunderstandings like between me and you would have not arisen -, you outlined how the situation really is and how difficult usually cooperation and all this is, and then to outline the great work that Hadassah does. Then it would be much easier to understand.

### **Weiss**

I would like to say something to quote on you and this is, you asked how is Dr. Hashem Ruhi accepted in his community. I want to speak about people that are being trained at Hadassah – and you mentioned education. I was educated at Hadassah. I started as a very young doctor, and am now in a managerial position also. I think that the importance is enormous. Some people asked me what is the communication between you and other ICUs in other hospitals. I think this is the foundation for the future. This is an ICU that Ruhi will direct. Me and him will always have a way to communicate that you cannot create by sending faxes, or speaking by phone, or meeting in meetings. What we have now is something that is much beyond just being collaborators in everyday life. We are much more than that. And this is the importance of what we are doing with these friends that come to work with us at Hadassah.

### **Mor-Yosef**

I have to reply to what Mr. Kreisky said. We came here to present what we are doing. Obviously it is not enough. But you have to understand, when we presented to our friends, donors around the world, we have been approached by few who said because of this we are not going to give Hadassah any more donations, because we don't want our money to be spent on treating Palestinians. We have the whole spectrum. And we have to do what we think is important. I just would like to go back to the vision of Mr. Karl Kahane. The way I understood it from what I learned from Prof. Penchas who was the director of Hadassah at that time, the main idea of this Foundation is not to help Hadassah. The main idea of this Foundation is not to help in this specific project Israel. The main idea is to build the professional infrastructure for the Palestinian Authority in the field of the health care system. This is the reason why we try to train people. Then they go back, and build the system there, and continue collaboration with us. This was behind the idea to build a blood bank for the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah with the assistance of the Kahane Foundation. So there are many ways to this vision, to build the infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority. And we are proud to take part in this vision. Thank you.

### **Shaked**

We had here a high degree of consensus and harmony. But I am glad also that some dissenting voices could be heard. We should not get the idea that everything is perfect and harmonious. This would be a false view of things. We had also voices which showed that this



hospital is an island in a very bellicose area with wars and conflicts. We can depart from each other knowing that not everything is perfect. Thank you.