

Summer of Peace™ 2013

“Spiritual Approaches to Creating Peace in the Middle East”

with Aliza Hava and Ilana Meallem (Jul. 28)

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David: Welcome, everyone. My name is David Nicol, director of the Gaiafield Project. Welcome to this Spirituality in Peace series call as part of The Shift Network's Summer of Peace program. Delighted to have you with us this morning for a special call that will explore spiritual approaches to healing in the Middle East.

Those of you who have joined us for this series will know that this series is intended to weave together a diverse global field of peace over the Northern Hemisphere summer through the practices of the world's wisdom traditions and through featuring healers and teachers and inspiring leaders from many different traditions. The idea of the series is to give you a direct experience of the essence of peace and to dedicate that experience of peace not only through our own personal development and awakening but also to the awakening of the planet.

We consider this approach a subtle form of activism in the sense that we're intending to support the whole field of collective transformation, not just personal transformation. Sometimes, I think, with these calls, it's good just to sit down, intention our attitude correctly. Even though we may be relatively small group, the thing about this sort of approach is that we really bring ourselves fully deeply present in the practice that we can open up to boundless levels of energy, of power.

And also, that we can think of our work as sort of like as if we're pioneers, laying down these vibrations of peace, creating this field of peace that others will build upon. And that we can be thinking of ourselves as just laying down this subtle energetic infrastructure of peace that can be the foundation for the world that we want to see.

So I'd encourage you when we do the practice to really bring all of yourselves present as full, as deep as you can as a gift both to yourself but also to our world. So we're building towards a peak event on September 21st, the International Day of Peace. Peak event is called Be the Peace. Last year's event had almost 250 live meditation events around the world. This year, we're aiming to have 500 events.

I hope that you can join us for this whole series and this whole process of building up towards that energetic peak. It's exciting this year too because we're

going to be synchronizing with some of the very large events happening on that day including Earthdance this year which is a very big global celebration of peace. That is going to be at the same as our event this year. So that will be very big wave of peace. We'd like to invite you to join us for this whole series and particularly to come back on September 21st for Be the Peace. You can explore that event at www.bethepeace.com.

I'm delighted to introduce today Aliza Hava who is actually going to be our host of the call. We have two inspiring young women from the Middle East on the call today and, I think, it's especially poignant whenever we do a healing that's focused on the Middle East because it occupies such a place of meaning in our world. Whenever there's a healing down in the Middle East, it seems to ripple out in exponential ways through the world.

Aliza herself is a pioneer of an event on September 21st, Peace Day Live Global Concert, that is about harnessing the power of music for peace and for healing. She is a very talented performing songwriter, producer and director. She's dedicated to using the power of music as a tool for social change. Her debut album, Rise, is an artistic statement of conscience and calling for an end to war;

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A keen awareness of our environmental responsibilities and a recognition of the unity of humanity. She is the co-founder of LIVE Peace Productions, which is a multi-media concert and film production company that promotes peaceful co-existence, women empowerment and environmental sustainability. Some of their productions have included the Peace Day Live Concert that I mentioned and the International Day of Peace and also Harmony in the Holy Land, which is the Jerusalem-based sacred music event uniting the children of Abraham.

She has been the representative for the World Peace Prayer Society since 2001. And her music is featured in the 2013 documentary, Femme: Women Healing the World, which is a wonderful documentary. Aliza is going to be introducing and hosting another remarkable young woman from the Middle East and I'll let her introduce Ilana. Welcome, Aliza. It's wonderful to have you.

Aliza: Thanks so much, David, and hello to everyone who is listening in. It's really an honor to have been asked to share some insights with you on this call today and be part of this series. It's also a privilege to be here with Ilana Maellem who is a dear friend and colleague. We've been to some very beautiful and uplifting ceremonies together in the Middle East. She's going to be sharing with you today some of those experiences.

I'd just like to briefly speak about the Harmony in the Holy Land project that David mentioned. Some of you who may already have been listening into the Summer of Peace series, you probably also know that the Birth 2012 event that The Shift Network hosted on December 21st and 22nd of last year.

And in Jerusalem we participated in the Birth 2012 event by hosting a concert with Arab and Jewish musicians for peace and all of the three monotheistic saints were represented and present there. We had spiritual leaders from all over the region come and pray together from sacred sights in Jerusalem. Also in the concert hall, we had Thomas Huebl who was also a Shift Network member and teacher. He was doing a very beautiful and powerful meditation and healing on the collective conscious, the deeper collective wounds of the Middle East with musical backing from an Arab-Jewish band named **[0:08:02] [Indiscernible]**, which is the name of the band.

It was really a powerful experience for everybody because nothing like that had really happened before in Jerusalem, a two-day event of people of all the faiths coming together spreading out throughout the city and really praying together in their own native tongues through one unified global event. That was broadcast live. So that was a really beautiful experience. Hopefully we're going to be doing more of this Harmony in the Holy Land events as time goes by.

If you'd like to learn more about that, we'll tell you how you can learn more at the end of the call. At this moment, I would love to introduce Ilana who is a peace builder. She is an activist. She has traveled around the world working with Middle Eastern and also indigenous peoples. Ilana, would you like to share a bit about yourself and where you're from and how you came to be an activist?

Ilana: Yeah. Hi, Aliza. Hi, David. Hi, everybody. Good morning. It's really also a great honor for me to be able to share on this call and thank you, everyone, for taking the time to offer of yourself to world peace on this earth. I am actually originally born in London. My ancestry is Egyptian-Jewish and British-Jewish. I grew up in a very traditional Jewish home. I left home very early with a quest to do some sort of good in this world and I found myself in the land of Israel very early on at 18.

In that time, I carried a lot of love for the land, a lot of love for the spirit of the Jewish tradition, and I also carried the outcome of experiences that my own family had had in the society that showed around me a lot of fear.

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A lot of fear of the Arab nations, of what would happen to me if I was to turn my back and be vulnerable. I took a big journey in the last 16 years, a very blessed one. It has taken me all around the world and allowed me many, many

opportunities to do the inner healing and hold that space for outer healing for others. Mostly, I think, the big points of change were when I, after many years living in Israel, was able to meet for the first time and have intimate contact with Palestinians and Jordanians through an institute in the south. It is called the Arava Institute.

There I really got the chance to break down some of my misconceptions and opened a place in my heart to trust. From that point onwards, I had spent many years both living very closely with Arabs through living in Bedouin villages doing research for a Masters on the Environment and Public and Environmental Health, and also through traveling across the Middle East creating spaces where Arabs and Jews can meet of all parts, all countries – Lebanese, Syrians, Iraqis, Jordanians, Egyptians with Israelis, with Jews.

And also really doing the work myself, of opening my heart and creating a space that is able to see beyond the labels, beyond the languages, beyond the fear. This path has taken me many, many places. A couple of years back, I began very simply living in a caravan, a peace caravan, in an area in the West Bank on the Dead Sea, and very spontaneously found myself holding space for Palestinians and Israelis to meet and gather.

It's especially strong during the time of erupting violence in Gaza where I found myself sending some messages, some emails. And over a weekend, a hundred people gathered from across the West Bank in Israel with tents and food because they so wanted to meet in that time when there was so much fear and separation. In these gatherings, we meditated. We shared of our hearts those spiritual teachers, Sufi leaders, that came to talk to us.

We rested and held a vision, a different vision together – a vision of unity and peace. From that point onwards, I've been very active in creating different organizations, retreats, gatherings, through the work of Spirituality without Borders and the work of the EcoME Centre, an actual home for peace work in the West Bank.

Aliza: Thank you, Ilana. That's all very, very inspiring work that you've been doing and I'd like to ask you to please expand a little on this Spirituality without Borders retreats that you held?

Ilana: I was very blessed along my path to meet what feels like an ancient old friend, Arkan Lushwala. He is a Peruvian ceremonial leader and also adopted into the Lakota tribe. And Arkan has offered to come to the Middle East and bring the medicine of the indigenous people, the medicine of primal universal spirituality. In our land where many of us in the Middle East, through circumstances, have lost a deep relationship with the land, the land that we are also so much divided

over and so much in conflict about, many of us have actually, though we have a strong presence of religion, we have lost a deep essence of what it means to be a human being in relationship with the land and the spirit of the land – things that many of our traditions used to practice.

The Jewish nation in the time of the temple were very, very deeply connected and were making prayers for all life through the songs, through the offerings, through the drums, through the incense. So with Arkan, in 2009 and 2010, I co-organized an event first in Egypt and then Jordan which gathered change-makers and activists from five countries around the Middle East to come together and spend five days receiving the teachings and practices of indigenous-based spirituality.

The idea behind the Spirituality without Borders retreat is that in these times of great change there is such a need to support change-makers.

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It's often very lonely to be at the forefront of shifting consciousness especially in areas where there is so much work to be done. So we gathered, put out the call and came people from various religions, backgrounds, fields, and ages from 16 to 70 years old, to come together and spend five days in deep work together.

Not only was the opportunity to go deeper into understanding while we are here, what is our work as human beings, but there was also the opportunity to meet the other. And many cases, it was the first time that somebody from Lebanon was able to sit and hear and speak to and opened to somebody from Israel, for example. Also, at the retreat, Arkan offered Sweat Lodge ceremonies and then experienced the Vision Quest and this was extremely empowering for the activists.

Many of these activists who have taken part in this retreat have shared over the last years how important their experience was, how much strength it has given them to move forward. I can share a little funny story from our retreat in Jordan, the second year. We actually did the retreat in Wadi Rum, which is a very beautiful desert mountain area wherein the Sweat Lodge ceremony that was taken part...

Actually, in the retreats in the Middle East, we had to have present a tourist policeman to kind of just protect and make sure because the presence of Israelis often bring some sense of fear for the security forces. So there's the Sweat Lodge traditional ceremonial sauna, a place of prayer, a healing purification ceremony that was taking place. Inside were Jordanians, Egyptians, Palestinians and Israelis praying together. The fire keeper was an Israeli and outside, the

tourist policeman. After the second round, he asked the Israeli fire keeper, "Can you take my gun?" He took off his clothes, went in in his shorts, and actually asked to go in and pray.

I think these moments like you shared, Aliza, of Harmony in the Holy Land, these moments when we are able, as people from all religions and nations to come together in the womb of the earth, in the purest of essence and send our prayers, I thought of that extremely powerful and impactful and have a strong vibration and a strong resonance outward.

Aliza: Ilana, what do you think is the force behind the spiritual aspect of this unifying bond as opposed to the religious aspect? Or do you think that it's opposed in terms of the ability to bring people together? Do you feel that there's a difference between the religious approach as opposed to the spiritual? Do you feel that it's actually the same? What's your perspective?

Ilana: Yeah. I feel like the spiritual approach is actually essence, the deep source of the religious approach that, from my experience, has often gotten lost. In the case of, let's say, a Sweat Lodge or an experience of Vision Quest, going back to the bare essence, speaking a prayer from your heart. I can say from my own experience growing up in a religious Jewish home, where I was taught Jewish prayers to read from a book without necessarily understanding them, when I was opened up to the native indigenous path, that actually was the first time that I really learned to pray from my heart in my language.

There in myself, experienced the power that could bring the experience of Vision Quest which is sitting alone in nature. There is nothing in between you and the source of creation. You are asking for help. That is an incredible powerful experience. And there, I think, it can be so universal. It touches a very primal memory of this is how it used to be.

And not negating the power and the beauty in all of the spiritual traditions and religions but I'm seeing that there is something in the Middle East that is calling us to come back and experience something very, very pure together. All the work that I have been doing and many of my colleagues had been doing, we do it as much as we can in nature where it's much more easy to touch that essence, that beauty of the creation.

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And where we able to remember that Mother Earth is not Israel-Palestine-Jordan-Middle East. That's the human thought. It's really something much, much bigger that we can connect to and then we have the responsibility to care too.

Aliza: Thank you. You've shared a bit about your experiences in bringing the medicine of Arkan, a Peruvian shaman to the Middle East, and I've also heard a bit about your experience living with Bedouins who are actually the indigenous peoples of that region. Would you please share a little bit about your experience with the Bedouins and how that's helped you to understand more of the relationship with the land in that region?

Ilana: When I decided to come back to do a Masters program, actually I had spent a couple of years after my first degree traveling around the world, very passionate to do activism social and environmental change. I felt this calling to come back to the Middle East. Actually, I was going to research dolphins in the Mediterranean and had a very eye opening experience through the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies through one of my courses where I was exposed to the life challenge situations of the Bedouins living in unrecognized villages in the Negev within Israeli boundaries.

These are native previously semi-nomadic peoples that are the outcome of the creation of the State of Israel. Their freedom of movement was very strictly restricted. And similar to many indigenous people all around the world, their lifestyle was extremely affected. There are numerous government policies that are very discriminatory and making life very, very difficult for them.

So I chose to change the course of my studies and went to live. It's quite a remarkable thing because as a woman and as a Jewish woman to go and live within a Bedouin society isn't common at all. But I came with a wish to do some kind of research that would help them. And I lived for six months in a very basic and what might be defined or described in other parts of the world as something like a shanty town with corrugated iron houses without proper infrastructure by a river that was once a beautiful river but is now an open sewer.

I spent many months researching their lifestyle and the impact of the changes in their lifestyle that came out of the government's policy and modernization on their public and environmental health, specifically looking at the issues of waste, which is a very fascinating issue because the changing face of waste can really reflect how our society is.

I learned a lot from being with these people. I was also very sad to see how much they have lost in a way their ability to be connected in a day to day way to the earth and to the seasonal way they use to live. I also learned a lot about the spirit of hospitality that really is one of the biggest medicines, I would say, of the people of the Middle East, especially the Arab people be it Jewish, Muslim, Christian Arabs, but this ability to really open the home and the heart and welcome all people without asking any questions to be around the fire in quiet.

There is still some traditional medicine, herbal medicine tradition and ceremony but it's very limited and I didn't get that much access to it. But mostly, I think, I was touched by this way of being, this way of welcoming all people and opening the home and the heart which is really inspirational.

Aliza: Thank you, Ilana. You mentioned about the fire and the way that fire brings people together. Would you please share a bit about the sacred fire, the Orco Waranka sacred fire that you helped to facilitate in different parts all around?

Ilana: Yeah. I'm actually very touched to have the opportunity to speak about the Orco Waranka fires because this is the first time, I think, it's probably ever being spoken about in this way. I received the blessing from Arkan a few weeks back that it is time to talk about the work that has been done. So I just want to really recognize the beauty that we have arrived at that time.

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So about ten years ago, Arkan envisioned, a Vision Quest, received instructions of a ceremony that needed to happen in that time up to December 21st 2012, when Mother Earth would give birth. So many of us were engaged in this preparation work in 2012. Many things happened and it's a long story, but Arkan was guided to travel to the mountains in Peru, the Andes, where he arrived to the community of the Q'ero nation.

And there, he was met by an elder called **[0:25:43] [Indiscernible]** Martin who told him that his grandfather told **[0:25:48] [Indiscernible]** Martin that a man would arrive around this time with a memory of a certain ceremony that **[0:25:54] [Indiscernible]** Martin would need to give the blessing that this ceremony be spread around the world. So the Orco Waranka fire – the Orco Waranka means "thousand mountains." It's a very simple and beautiful ceremony of gratitude and reciprocity to Mother Earth and it involves the sacred fire and the offerings of tobacco for the spirits of the mountain, asking for their help, and an offering of food and medicines through the fire to Mother Earth.

Arkan, in the last ten years, traveled around the world and, in very guided ways, would pass the blessing to light this fire to different people who committed to do it until December 21st. So there were some people that were lighting the fires for nine years. What happened was that four times a year in the Solstice and the Equinox in a simultaneous way, these prayers were being made. A fire was lit for four hours in each location and saying the prayer, "Thank you. Thank you. This is for you. Please, Mother Earth, use this energy, use this medicine, use this gift, use our prayers for you so you can prepare for this rebirth, so you can be nourished. Thank you for giving us so much."

It was a very, very simple prayer and a very powerful potent ceremony. There were fires that were lit by the end. By December 21st 2012, we had about a hundred different locations around the world where this prayer was being made from New Zealand to Africa, across Central and South America, across Europe, Iceland, Greenland.

My work was to helping Arkan bring this ceremony to the Middle East. So I traveled to Lebanon and there was a fire lit in Lebanon the last years, in Jordan, in Palestine, across Israel, in Egypt, China. These ceremonies, the vision that they experienced behind it was that through interconnecting these fires and stones were interchanged between each location and the fires that were being lit. We were nurturing the tissue, the lines of Mother Earth, the energy that is protecting her through our prayers interconnecting.

I can just share that, for me, being in ceremony, praying for Mother Earth, sitting at a fire on a mountain top or in a village in the West Bank where the Jews and Christians and Muslims and internationals and locals all together, it was powerful, really, really powerful. It gave people a sense of hope. In each location, the ceremony was a little bit different. The songs, the offerings were different.

A lot of work had to be made in some areas where it wasn't accepted to do such a prayer, a simple prayer where... For example, in China, or even in the Arab countries where this might be seen as pagan, a lot of care was taken. On December 21st, 2012, we lit these fires for 24 hours all around the world and gathered and celebrated and prayed together. Actually, I went to Africa to light the fire there in that time. And it was a very, very powerful ceremony, a very powerful offering for life, all life made by all nations, all peoples together saying, "Thank you and we wish to live and we wish for all life to live and we wish for our prayers and our offerings to serve generations and generations of every nation, every being, every life form."

Aliza: Thank you, Ilana.

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I just like to share that I was with Ilana in 2009 at the lighting of the fire in Sinai, in the Sinai Peninsula, at the first Spirituality without Borders retreat. Having had been a fire keeper for various ceremonies throughout the years, I can say beyond a shadow of a doubt that this is the most powerful fire experience, fire ceremony that I had ever had. Not just the fire, let's just say that. To try and describe it is trying to put words to something that's really inexplicable. But I can say that there is a consciousness that comes from the fire which helps you understand that you're connected to something much deeper in that moment.

With that, I would like to turn the conversation a little bit towards the center, Ilana, that you've been working to build in the region, at the crossroads between Jerusalem and Jericho, the EcoME Centre. The EcoME Centre is a project that Ilana and her colleagues had been developing for several years now. It's an eco-village where Palestinians and Israelis can meet together. Ilana, could you please share about the center you built?

Ilana: Yeah. Just before I do share, I just felt in my heart to honor, returning to the Orco Waranka prayer, just to really honor the Q'ero nation and all the indigenous peoples who for so many years kept their traditions and kept their ceremonies and kept the power of the ceremonies, and in gratitude that they are sharing them with us now. It goes for all the other ceremonies, Vision Quests, Sweat Lodge and all the many ceremonies and prayers that are being shared with all nations knowing that this is the time that we need to implement them and so many more people are needing that now.

EcoME came out of a real deep need for a home and a center place of healing in the Middle East. It's part of a much larger vision that is shared by many, many people to create a peace village, a model of sustainability, environmental, social, spiritual, based in the region, acting as an acupuncture points of healing, of inspiration and of actual place to really have impact and create change.

A couple of years back, knowing deeply in my heart that this is how I wish to live and this is the village I wish to raise my children in and to live in a multi-cultural, multi-lingual peaceful existence, I also realized that it was too big a vision for me and I decided to at least start by creating a center. One aspect of such a large vision. A couple of friends of mine got together and spirit did some movements in my life which really kicked me into action and got me going as often in this path that it happens.

In quite a naïve way, each of us put a little money together and we found a location on the corner of a junction between Jericho and the Dead Sea area where both Palestinians and Israelis can access, and we decided we'll have a two-month experiment and see what happens. What happens is a group of us go and start holding space in this area.

Just to give you some background, in the Middle East, in Israel, Palestine, in this situation, there is a lot of segregation between the Palestinian, West Bank Palestinians. It's all quite complicated but in general the area of the West Bank is inhabited by West Bank Palestinians and Israeli Jews who are living within settlement areas.

The West Bank Palestinians do not have easy access into Israel or out. They would have to go through some process of getting permits, often they don't get

them, check posts. It's very humiliating. And Israelis, it's illegal for them to enter into the West Bank cities. So we are sharing a land very intimately and yet we are not able to meet for the most part. And with the creation of the separation wall, this got even worse.

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Most Palestinians do not have any experience of an Israeli that is not a soldier. And many Israelis are now not having any experience of a West Bank Palestinian. So the more we disengage, the more the walls of fear and hatred starts to rise. This is the place that I felt called to bring healing, and my friends.

So we found a kind of something like a bit of a dump area and we said, "We're here. We're going to do an experiment for two months." Our vision was to create this place where people could come of their own right and not needing to go and ask for permits or have challenges with travel, that they could come and enter a space where they would be seen as equals, treated as equals; where they would touch part of the dream – the dream of the shifting consciousness, the dream of conscious peaceful living and all the ways that can be manifested.

So in EcoME, we hosted workshops, and we've hosted in the last three years. The center was a great success. That two months went into three winter seasons. Hundreds upon hundreds of people appeared. It was like there was a sudden water in the desert, an oasis. Hundreds of people came, completely voluntary-based, built together, ate together, cleaned together, cooked together.

We have hosted over the last few years thousands of people for trainings, workshops, meetings, on various topics, permaculture, nonviolent communication, women's groups, healing groups, spirituality, Arabic language, music, all kinds, desert expedition, meditation. The center has really been a point of hope and healing in a very conflicted area. Just outside our center, there are soldiers' jeeps arresting people. There was the entrance to Jericho with guards, Palestinian guards, where Israelis cannot enter, the entrance to the settlement were Palestinians cannot enter.

In EcoME, the door is open and all people are welcomed as long as they don't bring in guns, drugs, alcohol, meat, fish and abide by the laws, the guidelines that we have respecting Mother Earth. In EcoME, it was a very, very challenging work. It is a challenging work to hold the points of peace and be able to hold space for such diverse people. This was really our mission, in one way, is to how can we have a place that welcomes all people from all background – religious, irreligious, from out of the region, young and old.

We've had retreats that have been sometimes ten days so it's intensive living together. We've learned to love and part of what really helped us with our spiritual anchoring, asking for those spiritual support of the power places around us. We were surrounded by quite an incredible area. There is a scene from the cave of Qumran where would often go and ask for their spiritual protection.

The area of Jericho is very sacred to Jesus and Christianity. This area is very sacred to Islam. Nabi Musa, and there we really asked for their help. Everyday in the center, whoever was there, and this is really people from all background, from Bedouins and from more educated Palestinians to really, really diverse, will gather in the center in an area that was sacred and we would meditate and pray and envision protection. And that was very, very helpful in our work.

And another thing that we would do always before we ate was make a prayer. We would invite anyone to pray in a language in a way that would feel good to them and made a little offering, a spirit bowl it is called. A little offering of our food to, again, give back to Mother Earth and the spirit and honor their relationship.

So really we try to model and live in a good way in the center and many people were really touched and soared and experienced and felt things that they'd never felt before. And then went home to their communities, their villages, their towns, their families and shared. So it's been an amazing success, very hard work and very exhausting but very gratifying too.

Aliza: Ilana, thank you so much for sharing and for all the work that you've been doing to bring people together across divides.

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What we'd like to do now is move on to the meditation part of the call. We've got about ten minutes, 10-15 minutes to go on a little journey together to invoke some support and some visualization for really creating some peace within ourselves and in the region. Ilana has a guided meditation to take us through and, Ilana, would you like to begin, please?

Ilana: Yes, thank you. After a lot of words and ideas and concepts and I'm really grateful for this chance to sink back into our hearts and our spirit and offer this prayer through our own power and our own gift. So I'm just going to invite you all to take a nice deep breath. You can shut your eyes. Find a comfortable position.

You can put attention now on the part of your body that is touching the ground, the earth, floor. Feel the magnetic pull. Mother Earth anchoring you deep into her nourishment herself.

Allow your shoulders to drop. And then taking a nice deep inhalation. Exhalation. Inhalation. Exhalation.

Now, imagine a thread of light on the tip of your hand up to the sky, up to the stars, the universe, pulling you up and connecting you towards.

And if you're through imagine these two forces that anchored deep Mother Earth and the sky, spirit, connecting your heart.

Allow your attention now to be in your heart. With every breath, your heart filled more with light. And love. And healing.

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Imagine yourself now surrounded by light, beautiful healing light.

Each and every cell of your body is emanating light.

Now, imagine yourself being by a source of water. It can be a lake, the ocean, spring, a river. Whatever has come to you.

See the water and you ask permission to enter.

If you step into the water, your physical form dissolves as sugar would dissolve into hot water. And you become the water, still vibrating with light and healing, with love.

You and the water are one. You are now unlimited. Through the magnificence and the magic of the water, you can travel anywhere. Everything you touched received healing, received peace.

You can choose to flow down the river. You can choose to seep into the ground water. You can choose to evaporate up into the sky to become a cloud and return through rain. You can choose to enter in the form of water into an animal, a plant, a human. You are limitless.

Wherever you are, start to flow, start to make the sacred journey to the land of the Middle East. They are thirsty for your medicine. They are thirsty for your vibration of peace and healing.

Find your way.

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As you flow, all that you touch glistened with light, passing on the vibration, the prayer you carry. The prayer, rejuvenation of memory. Ancient memory.

Once you arrived in the region of the Middle East, you will be guided where is your medicine needed in the sacred places, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Giza, in the mountain, villages, the cities. The places torn right now by war. Damascus. The desert.

The people – children, elders, soldiers, women, men. You can touch everything and bring healing.

The rivers.

The youth. Active for change.

The leaders. You carry with you the medicine, the awareness and you share it. Change is coming. Peace is coming.

As water, you have the power to purify and take away that which is heavy, that which is painful. Go now to those places that need that help.

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You become aware now of the other streams of light moving, arriving from other parts of the world, other meditators. And you can see the whole region of the Middle East, all the lands and all the beings, all the trees, all the life forms, vibrating now with this light, pulsating with this life force. This ball of light connected like threads outward to each meditator around the world.

And in a moment, it will be time to come back into your own physical body. Take a last few moments to complete the work you have been doing.

I invite you back to that very first source of water which you entered. Imagine yourself stepping up and out, reversing the process, receiving back your physical form – your head, your shoulders, your arms, your trunk, your legs. And sitting back home.

Move your hands on your heart. Take a moment to thank yourself for the work that you just did, for the medicine you just offered. And know that at any

moment you can reconnect to the spirit of water and travel with her and send your prayers with her.

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It's always inside of you.

When you're ready, I invite you to open your eyes. Take a look at your surroundings. Take a few deep breaths. And arrive back. Thank you.

Aliza: Thank you, Ilana. Thank you everyone who just sent your life force into the Middle East, whose very powerful experience sent. If anybody from the listening audience would like to share, feel free to raise your hand by sending in a message on Skype or through the webcast. We would really love to hear from you, what your experiences were.

I can say for myself that it was a very emotional experience and as I became the water I could feel the tears, the cleansing and the healing tears wanting to flow out completely through my eyes and into the earth. If anyone has anything they'd like to share, now is a great time.

Lauren: So for those of you who are on the phone, you can raise your hand by pressing *2 on your phone keypad. We actually do have a couple of things that have come in over the webcast. [Participant] from Woodstock says, "Just want to let you two goddesses know I'm listening and drinking in the love and care and inspiration."

[Participant] also has a question. She says, "How can we create ongoing sustainable mutually satisfying community between Jews and Palestinians?"

Aliza: Ilana, would you like to respond to that?

Ilana: Yes. It's a great question. Definitely continuity is essential for this work to be real and to be deep. Having those homes like the EcoME Centre that can have continuous movement and a place where people could keep coming back to is definitely part of it. But it needs, I think, a lot more than just a few places that are doing it right now. So we need to be praying that our work is multiplied and the impact grows more and more.

Aliza: I'd actually like to agree with that and also add that, I think, education in the region is really crucial to that healthy community living. Until there is peace education throughout the region, it's going to be very difficult to create healthy relationships between Palestinians and Israelis because the whole region has so deeply infused with pain and anger. And until there are tools that are offered to

the public at large that can help deal with these traumas, which can be through education and therapy on a very wide scale, it's going to remain a challenge. I think that adopting a widespread peace education platform is a very crucial aspect of that.

Lauren: Okay, we have two more comments that have come in. One is from [Participant] in Cave Creek. She says, "Thank you. That was incredibly beautiful and healing. Lebanon thanks you." And [Participant] from Indiana says, "Thank you, Ilana, beautiful to work with you this way. [Participant] from the book I interviewed you."

[1:05:03]

Ilana: Thank you.

Lauren: And another one from [Participant] in Tallahassee. "Thank you, Aliza and Ilana for a powerful deep meditation and for all that you are doing to bring peace to the Middle East."

Aliza: Thank you.

David: This is David Nicol. I would just like to say also I was just so deeply touched by the meditation. In particular, what was striking to me was feeling the essence of sincerity of everyone on this call. Our sincere wishes for peace. Touching that place. I certainly felt it myself and how when we were all together in the Middle East, just feeling the true power of bringing that sincere deep wish into sort of tangible form.

Anyway, I just want to share that that was the thing that stood out for me and just was moved by the purity of that and the power of it. So thank you very much, Ilana.

Lauren: And we do have somebody live on the line. It looks like [Participant]. You're live on the line. Welcome.

Participant: Thank you. My name is [Participant]. I was so validated by what you said about bringing the heart of indigenous culture into this mix. I'm a producer of a movie called "For the Next 7 Generations" which is about 13 grandmothers from around the world who came together in 2004 and who had been traveling around the world bringing the message of how to be and see in an indigenous way.

One of the things in the course of doing that that came to me was a book by a woman named Ellen Bernstein and it's a biblical ecology. In it, what she points

to, which is, I think, really important in terms of this healing is the root that all these Semitic people share as people who were indigenous people and who had to live in the world dependent on the fact that we are all one.

I think of this a way to continue this work and help to bring people back to the fact that that there's roots. I think it could be also be very useful in the healing process. Thank you.

Lauren: Okay. Looks like those are all the questions we have. Wait, we do have one more. This is [Participant] from San Luis Obispo. She says, "Thank you for this extraordinary experience of intentional communion. This is blessing in action. Truly a way for transformative unification and harmonic healing. My heart continues to flow."

Aliza: It's so beautiful.

Ilana: Thank you.

Aliza: Thank you so much, everyone, who shared and thank you, [Participant] for your insight as well. What I'd like to do is just close with maybe a little sharing from Ilana or if anybody would like to get involved to the volunteering at the EcoME Centre, if you've ever been interested in traveling to the region and getting your hands dirty so to speak, Ilana can give you some more information as well on how you can volunteer at the EcoME Centre.

If you'd like to stay in touch and learn more about how you can support this work, please check out harmonyintheholylnd.org and there's a contact page where you can write us an email.

[1:10:00]

You can send Ilana an email through there as well and make sure that it gets to her directly. Ilana, can you share how people can get involved with the EcoME Centre?

Ilana: Yes, thank you. EcoME is a completely voluntary-based community and center. We will open again in November. We close in the summer as it gets too hot. There is many opportunities to come, to come for a week, to come for two months. We're really looking for interns who are willing to experience living in the Middle East in such a peace community and be able to support the work of the region.

There are a lot of exciting activities. We have another nonviolent communication training, a 10-day training. That will be happening at the beginning of 2014. It's a

wonderful time to come and support. We have ecological design course happening. There's many opportunities and open to people of all ages, probably about 16 upwards. We've had elders who have come and stayed with us. It's a very simple living but a very beautiful place and a beautiful experience.

So if you are interested in supporting this work and learning and experiencing life in the Middle East in such a place, then really welcome to contact me through the website. And the other aspect I'd love to make a call for help for is after three years we are ready to do another Spirituality without Borders retreat in Jordan. Arkan has offered to come to the Middle East in March. We will gather many of the activists who were there in the past who had actually gone out and been very active.

For example, there's a friend in Egypt who has been participating in the retreat and gained a lot and has been very much involved in the revolution that's been happening. So we want to gather back these activists, these change-makers and others to help them, to anchor them in a community, to anchor them spiritually, to support them in envisioning, to support them rejuvenating. We need funds to be able to do that, to provide scholarships, to bring Arkan to the Middle East.

We are looking to raise \$7,000 to make that possible. So you can also support that and donate through the Harmony website. Just thank you. I really also encourage sending the prayers and imagining and visioning their reality being different. I know that there is so much violence and it's continuing. The situation in Syria is so desperate. But we have to just keep on believing and praying and offering our hearts, what we have, our sweat, our challenges, to it being different.

So thank you for all the ways, all the activism that you are doing. And thank you for listening in on this call, for giving your time on a Sunday to support change and peace coming on this time, on this earth. Thank you.

Aliza: Thank you, Ilana, and thank you to everyone. Once again, the website is harmonyintheholyland.org. We'll be happy to send you more information about Spirituality without Borders retreat and the EcoME village. And thank you, David. Thank you, Lauren. And thank you to The Shift Network for hosting the Spirituality in Peace series, the Summer of Peace. Thank you all so much. Blessings to everyone.

David: Blessings.

[1:13:52] End of Audio

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