

Spiritual Counseling Questionnaire

Purpose of the Questionnaire: In this program our purpose is to know/understand the spiritual world and language of the person presenting the questionnaire for the purpose of spiritual accompaniment in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In a multicultural group in which the participants come from different national, cultural and religious backgrounds, we can not only come to know the spiritual language of the individual, but also learn via the individual something of the spiritual world from which he/she comes. Through the personal accompaniment of each and every person in the group, we can give the individual a combined perspective on their personal conflict related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The purpose of the spiritual questionnaire is not judgmental. Therefore, the goal is not to evaluate the spiritual world of the presenter or to place it on any sort of scale, nor to suggest a change. Presenting the questionnaire to the group is the main point of the meeting – and the group assists in the process as a partner, a counterpoint, a midwife, a facilitator, an enabler, through serving particularly as an active listener with empathy, and as a responsive witness.

The question I bring here – the thing which is most troubling and frightening to me, my spiritual conflict in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict¹:

1. **Religious Definitions:** Try to formulate how you define yourself religiously (religious, Orthodox, observant, secular, atheist, heretic, ex-Orthodox, newly-believing, believer-who doesn't-belong-to-a-particular-religious-group, belong-to-a-particular-religious-group, other)

2. **Each person has a name:** Many people find meaningful connections to their names as well as to the nicknames given to them by people who are close to them during their lives. Sometimes, the name reminds them of someone else. Sometimes the sound of the name, or its meaning raise thoughts and reflections. What is the significance of your name/s in your eyes? Over the course of your life and today.

3. **Figure from the past:** Who is a character from your past (recent or distant) who is especially significant for you, with whom your connection has significantly influenced you and shaped you as an adult.

4. **A founding event:** Relate to an event in your life that has affected the way you perceive the purpose of your life, or that influenced the way you live your life and the choices you have made.

5. **Belonging:** Do you see yourself as belonging (part of your identity) to a group with a heritage (people, ethnic group, religion, denomination, gender, nation, family, other). What are the elements that you mark as characteristic of that heritage and which connect you to it? How do you feel about that heritage? Do you feel the belonging is a matter of choice or coercion? How has the past of the group affected you?

¹ At this stage, the answer can be temporary, so that it can be sharpened / adapted following completing the questionnaire.



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6. Family Journey: How did the life journey of your parents / grandparents influence you? (Journey may be a life event, a way of life, migration or other displacement)

7. Texts and Rituals: Try to think of a text or ritual that has or has had special significance for you (it can be a saying or a quote). What does the text or ritual mean to you and what makes it significant??

8. Social or Political Activism: Do you participate in such activities? Would you like to? What does such activity mean to you?

9. Who/what are the angels who accompany you / what brings you strength? At which moments, activities or experiences, do you feel love, full of life, satisfied, full of joy, unaware of difficulties, without anxiety? [It is preferable to focus on one or two examples.]

10. Who/what are your demons / what empties you? What are those moments, activities or experiences, that make you feel drained of energy, unable to find satisfaction and enjoyment, acting without enthusiasm or desire? [It is best to focus on one or two examples.]

11. Dealing with difficulties: Remember a time you suffered (physical, mental or spiritual). When did this happen? Describe the experience. Which thoughts, actions and people helped you to cope? What hindered you?

12. Passivity: In what ways are you passive in your life? What have you failed to do?

13. Fear of the Future: When you think about the future, what is your biggest fear? How does this impact on the way you understand your life and the purpose of your life?

14. Picture of Love: What picture or thought comes into your head when you hear the word "love"? It doesn't need to be overly private. You are invited to share an experience, thought or picture you associated in your mind with love.

15. Hope: What gives you hope for the future?

16. Spiritual gift: What would you like to give yourself as a 'spiritual' gift? What would such a gift mean to you?

17. Attitude towards death: Consider whether you want to relate to the subject of death, whether your own or that of a loved one. Try to understand your concept of death, your fears and the ways in which they impact on the choices you make in your life; what are the images you hold of your death or of the death of a loved one; what do you believe happens after death? "If these days are my last days, what would I want to happen in them?"

Finally – return to the question with which you began the questionnaire regarding the conflict. Would you like to re-phrase it? What have you understood about it?