



CIRCLEtime

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INSTITUTE FOR CIRCLEWORK

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

OCTOBER 2009

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A Letter From Director Jalaja Bonheim

Greetings!

My deepest gratitude goes out to all of you who helped three Middle Eastern women attend the recent Circlework Leadership Training: Olla Adeem, a Druze from Northern Israel, Nimala Kharoufeh, a Palestinian Christian from the West Bank, and Ilana Ehrman, an Israeli Jew.

Taking It Home

All three returned home with a whole new understanding of what a circle gathering is, and how to use it as a tool for healing, empowerment, and peacemaking.

The gifts of healing, empowerment, and sisterhood they

received will undoubtedly benefit thousands of women in the Middle East. Words cannot begin to describe how deeply our shared time in sacred space touched and moved us all, and how much we learned and grew together. As one woman put it, "Meeting my Middle Eastern sisters has bonded me to women around the world, and has healed the painful sense of disconnection I previously experienced."

Empowering Women

Nimala and Olla brought into sharp focus the harsh repression that they, like so many women around the world, are subject to. At the same time, their irrepressible strength and courageousness amazed us

and gave us hope for the future. Alone, they are powerless to change the injustice and violence around them. But united with women from Israel, Palestine, the United States, and elsewhere, they are a force to be reckoned with.

Circles for Palestinian Women

"In my community, there are no healing circles like this for women," Nimala told us. "And we need them so desperately." Since I first met Nimala, she has begun working for a Palestinian organization called the Holy Land Trust, which offers non-violence training in the West Bank. Nimala plans to lead ongoing

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Nimala's Dream: A Fundraising Appeal

Our work is done on a shoe-string budget, but we do need support, now more than ever. A group of Palestinian women has appealed to us: they want to experience Circlework with Jalaja. Due to the political situation, they are unable to attend her

circles in Israel, and due to their economic challenges, any circles we offer them need to be free of charge.

We don't want to let them down; they need our support, and deserve it. Please empower us to empower

them by making a donation now. And please consider giving on a monthly basis. \$10 a month isn't much! Most of us routinely spend more than that without thinking twice. Yet all it takes for a Palestinian woman to attend a two-day retreat with Jalaja is

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Jalaja's Letter Continued ...



Nimala, one of our scholarship recipients for the 2009 training.

“[The women in the West Bank] need us to come to them, share our skills and insights, and affirm their beauty, wisdom, and value.”

Awareness of the conflict in Israel motivates Ilana's passion for women's circles.



circles for the female staff of the organization. In addition, she has asked me to come to the West Bank this coming January in order to lead a two-day retreat for the women in her community.

As you probably know, these women struggle with the double challenges of political oppression and gender-based oppression. They have never known the freedom we enjoy to travel and to work with teachers and teachings from all corners of the Earth. Instead, they need us to come to them, share our skills and insights, and affirm their beauty, wisdom, and value.

Olla and Ilana

Though Olla lives in Israel, she too struggles with the oppression of women in her community, where women are not infrequently murdered by their own fathers and brothers for alleged acts of immorality. For example, one of Olla's friends was killed because her family suspected her of having a boyfriend. Where, we all wondered, did Olla find the courage to become the incredibly sexy, boldly adventurous woman that she is?

Ilana, an Israeli Jew, lives a mere thirty minutes away from Olla's village, and yet, she might as well be from another world. "My life is just like yours," she told us. In some ways, this is true. Yet she lives under the constant shadow of the conflict that is shredding her part of the world, igniting round after round of warfare and devastation. It is this awareness that motivates Ilana's passion for women's circles. After her return, she plans to begin a series of circles that will provide a safe place for Jewish and Arab women to explore their femininity and their sisterhood.

Women of the Middle East: Their Stories, Struggles, and Journeys

We wanted to give the greater community of Ithaca a chance to meet these extraordinary women. Therefore, in the middle of the training, we all journeyed

to the "big city" of Ithaca in order to offer a public evening event. Rasa Spa generously offered to host the gathering, and the Center for Transformative Action was our co-sponsor. In addition, Jayne Demakos and her women's singing group and Regi Carpenter, a local storyteller, wrapped us in a web of sweet enchantment.

The event was titled Women of the Middle East: Their Stories, Struggles and Journeys. Each one of our Middle Eastern sisters spoke moving about her journey and her faith in Circlework as a tool for healing and transforming our communities. Afterwards, dozens of people told me how deeply the evening had touched them.

Looking Ahead

This year's training taught us a lot about how to structure the International Circlework Leadership Training, which we hope to begin next year, and which will include women from various cultures and continents. Meanwhile, I'm preparing to visit the Bay Area in November, so if that's where you reside, I hope to be in touch with you.

Also, my next trip to Israel/Palestine is scheduled for January. However, to make this trip a reality, we will need to raise at least \$25,000 by the end of this year. Please, send the most generous donation you're capable of at this time, so that together, we can continue to weave a web of healing and peace around our suffering planet. Also, as the holiday season approaches, you might consider asking friends to give a donation to the Institute of Circlework in lieu of presents.

Thank you for being part of our circle! As we move into the dark time of the year, I pray that your heart might be filled with light.

Sincerely,

Jalaja Bonheim, ICW Founder
Institute for Circlework

Nimala's Dream Continued ...

for you and a caring friend to each donate \$10 a month for one year.

If you are able to support us in a larger way, all the better. **For just \$50 a year, you can become an official Circlework supporter.**

As a token of our thanks, Circlework supporters may select any of one the following items:

- Interview with Jalaja Bonheim on New Dimensions Radio (CD, 60 minutes)
- Interview with Justine Toms, host of New Dimensions Radio, on the role of circles in her life and community (CD, 49 minutes)

For \$100 per year, we can send you any CD or DVD of your choice, including:

- *Circlework: A Path to Peace in the Middle East* (DVD, 17 minutes)

- *Circlework* by Jalaja Bonheim (CD, 60 minutes)
- *The Descent of Inanna: A Guided Journey through the Ancient Sumerian Goddess Myth* by Jalaja Bonheim (CD, 60 minutes)
- *Three Guided Meditations* by Jalaja Bonheim (CD, 60 minutes)
- Interview with Jalaja Bonheim on New Dimensions Radio (CD, 60 minutes)
- Interview with Justine Toms, host of New Dimensions Radio, on the role of circles in her life and community (CD, 49 minutes)

To donate to the Institute for Circlework, [click here](#).

The Dalai Lama says that the world will be saved by the Western woman. Be that woman.

Featured Board Member: Beth Paris



"I have been a physical therapist and massage therapist for 30 years, and my practice, Hands On Physical Therapy, devoted to management and treatment of chronic and acute pain through manual therapies, is located in Ithaca, NY. I have raised two children. Jalaja has been wonderfully supportive in my life, and I welcomed this opportunity to give back to her, and to further her reach in this challenged world."

The Institute for Circlework on Facebook!

The Institute for Circlework now has its very own Facebook page!

When you fan us on Facebook, you will receive status updates on what we're doing, reading, and watching. We will also put event pages there if you want to RSVP to any of our events.

[Click here](#) to be taken to our page. You may need to log into Facebook to see it.

Jalaja is also on Twitter! You can subscribe to her feed [here](#).





People walking at Light on the Hill, our retreat location.

“Beyond Belief is a powerful documentary.”



Upcoming Dates and Events

November 6-22, 2009

Jalaja will be in the San Francisco Bay Area for a Trainers' Circle and several fundraising events. She will be available for private counseling sessions. To schedule, please call (607) 351-3363.

January 2010

Jalaja's next Israel trip will include a circle for long-term students, a three-day retreat at Ein Kerem near Jerusalem, a two-day retreat for Palestinian women in Jerusalem (see our fundraising appeal!), and several other talks and gatherings.

May 14-16 2010

Women's Retreat at Light on the Hill, NY

September 20-26, 2010

International Circlework Training at Light on the Hill, NY (please check back to confirm dates).

Film Recommendation

Beyond Belief is a powerful documentary about two widows whose husbands were killed in the 9/11 attacks, and who, instead of retreating into bitterness and hatred, chose to reach out to Afghani widows, a choice that transforms their lives, and the lives of hundreds of women in Afghanistan. The culmination of this film is an extraordinary and deeply moving circle gathering. Keep some tissues on hand-you're going to need them!

A New Addition to Our Team

We're incredibly grateful to Kayleigh Ayn Bohémier, who has been helping us enter the digital era in a big way. A recent graduate of Smith College, Kayleigh is working with the Institute for Circlework to create a Facebook page and blog, along with planning to increase the Institute for Circlework's visibility on social bookmarking sites.



Scenes from Light on the Hill, where this year's Circlework training took place.



THE INSTITUTE FOR CIRCLEWORK

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[To join our mailing list and receive
our E-newsletter, click here.](#)

We are a growing community of people who support the healing of individuals, communities and the planet through the practice of Circlework, a group process developed by Jalaja Bonheim, Ph.D. that uses circle gatherings to awaken diverse groups of people to their unity and interconnectedness. Our mission is to make the transformative power of Circlework available to the world, especially to those working in service of global peace and healing.

The Institute for Circlework serves as a hub for people involved in Circlework, both in the United States and around the world. Since 2001, we have been providing scholarships for participants in the Circlework Leadership Training. Today, ministers, social activists, counselors, psychologists, and teachers are applying the gifts of Circlework in schools and hospitals, churches and community centers.

Since 2005, we have been sponsoring circles for Jewish and Palestinian women in Israel. We believe that connection and communication are the only viable alternatives to bloodshed and violence. For a first-hand glimpse of Circlework in Israel, please watch our DVD documentary *Circlework: A Path to Peace in the Middle East*.



Women's Circle Events Near You!

A Sacred Circle for Women: Exploring Our Oneness

With Michelle Jurika, MA

**Sunday, October 18th
2 - 4:30 PM
Piedmont, CA**

A Pachamama Alliance Stewardship Circle Event

For more info, please contact Dianne Morrison
atpachadianne@gmail.com.

Ithaca Women's Circle

The Ithaca Women's Circle is a gathering of women who share the intention of creating sacred space through song, dance, chant, ritual, and deep connection.

**We gather on the new and full moon from
6:30 to 8:30 PM at the Foundation of Light
building in Ithaca, NY.**

The gatherings are facilitated by Cara Stone, healing arts practitioner, mother of three, and graduate of the Circlework training program.

All women are welcome, but due to limited space, please contact Cara at cara.eve@gmail.com before attending.