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**Painful Hope**

**USA Speaking Tour**

Palestinians and Israelis in the West Bank/Palestinian Territories/Judea and Samaria often live in geographical proximity – yet in separate universes. By and large they have no real human contact. They know next to nothing about the other and view each other with suspicion and fear.

In the Gush Etzion-Bethlehem-Hebron area, Roots is changing that reality.

**Roots is a unique collaboration of local Palestinians and Israelis building a grassroots model for coexistence.**

**Our mission** is to nurture understanding, non-violence and personal transformation.

**Our vision** is a new social and political reality founded upon dignity, trust, and mutual recognition and respect for both peoples’ particular historic belonging to the entire Land.

Roots works primarily among those who have traditionally been marginalized by, threatened by, and opposed to peace and compromise: religious settlers, religious Muslims, and veterans of the Palestinian armed resistance and the Israeli prison system. Through our programs:

* Each side discovers the humanity of the other, overcoming suspicion and building trust.
* Joint initiatives ease tensions and improve life on the ground.
* Perspectives are transformed, creating the foundation from which peace can sprout.

Roots was founded in 2014 by Israelis and Palestinians led by Ali Abu Awwad, Shaul Judelman, and Rabbi Hanan Schlesinger. The initiative's base, Merkaz Karama (Dignity Center), is a little Garden of Eden in the heart of Gush Etzion, on land owned by the Awwad family abutting the Palestinian town of Bet Ummar. It is one of the rare places accessible to both Palestinians and Israelis without special government permits, allowing unmediated gatherings and deep conversations between people from the two sides.

The Palestinians and Israelis involved in Roots do not hide the many deep disagreements between them. They are profoundly aware of the complexities of the conflict and of the lack of equality between the two sides. What unites them is their honest search for human understanding and nonviolent resolution to the conflict.

Roots is a project of Keren Chai Shalom, an Israeli nonprofit organization dedicated to continuing the legacy of Rabbi Menachem Froman of blessed memory, a committed settler and peace activist.

**We invite you to join with Roots activists, Rabbi Hanan Schlesinger, an Israeli, and Shadi Abu Awwad, a Palestinian, as they share their personal, interconnected stories and present the groundbreaking and challenging grassroots work of our initiative.** They do not come with blueprinted peace plans in hand, but with the deep conviction that human understanding and trust are the prerequisites for lasting justice, freedom, and peace in the land they both call home.

We invite mosques, synagogues, churches, Jewish and Muslim organizations, universities, organizations involved in peace work, and any other community organization to book a speaking engagement with Roots. The presentation, “Painful Hope” generally lasts about two hours, but can be tailored to the needs of the hosting institution.

Brief videos featuring some of our speakers are available on our website at [www.friendsofroots.net/speaking-tours/](http://www.friendsofroots.net/speaking-tours/).

Our speaking tours serve both to spread the Roots message and to raise funds for our continued operations. The fee for hosting our speaking team is **$3,000** for evening and weekend events, with smaller daytime events likely having a lower fee. We ask hosting organizations to reach out to other organizations in their vicinity and to encourage them to invite us to speak at their institutions as well. Additionally, we ask the hosting institutions to help facilitate our fundraising efforts among their constituencies. In general, we will travel to any given city only if two or three evening engagements, and/or a parlor meeting or meetings with potential donors, can be arranged there.

Hosting organizations are asked to pay plane or train fare (or rental car fees) for the speakers from wherever they are travelling from in the U.S. and sometimes plane and train fare leaving the venue depending on circumstances, and to provide lodging for the speakers, with home hospitality preferred so as not to expend resources on hotel fees. In addition, each individual venue must add a set $100 surcharge to cover local ground transportation and food en-route.

Friends of Roots is a recognized 501c3 in the USA. Contributions and honorarium/expense-reimbursement checks should be made out to “Friends of Roots” and sent to:

Dave Paller

4901 Libbit Ave.

Encino, CA 91436

*Note for Jewish Groups:*

*The speakers are available for Shabbatot during their stay in the U.S. For a Shabbat program, in addition to the “Painful Hope” presentation, we offer Divrei Torah (sermons) by Rabbi Hanan and/or a full shiur (class) based on traditional Jewish sources on the topics of openness to understanding the Other, existential humility, pluralism, judging favorably, and forgiveness.*

***For further details and booking, contact Rabbi Hanan at*** [***ravhanan@gmail.com***](mailto:ravhanan@gmail.com)

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