

# Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam the “Oasis of Peace”



## Quick Facts about NSWAS

- ▶ **60 families** - half Jewish, half Palestinian - live in the “Oasis of Peace.”
- ▶ The village is home to the **first binational, bilingual & multicultural primary school** in Israel since 1983.
- ▶ Since its creation in 1979, more than **50,000 youth and adults** have participated in the School for Peace programs.
- ▶ The Pluralistic Spiritual Center has become a **leader in interfaith dialogue** in Israel.
- ▶ Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam has been **nominated five times for the Nobel Peace Prize** and is the recipient of many international prizes.

## Nurturing an “Oasis of Peace”

The work of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam stems from its cross-cultural founding in the 1970s by Father Bruno Hussar who envisioned a place where Jews, Muslims, and Christians would live together and learn to listen to, understand, respect, and trust one another. Born in Egypt in 1911 to secular Jewish Hungarian parents, Bruno Hussar moved to France to study during his early 20s and converted to Catholicism. In 1970, he convinced the abbots of the nearby Trappist Abbey to lease him land for an intentional interfaith and multicultural community. On a barren hillside overlooking the Ayalon Valley, Bruno’s dream was destined to grow and flourish - inspired by the phrase from the Bible: “My people shall dwell in an oasis of peace” (Isaiah 18:32). Father Bruno named the new community Neve Shalom (in Hebrew) and Wahat al-Salam (in Arabic), meaning “Oasis of Peace.” Today, 60 families reside in the village - equal numbers of Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel - while another 500 families remain on a waiting list.

The community of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam is a beacon of hope in the region building what could be a tangible reality for all people in the region. This community is a microcosm demonstrating that Jews and Palestinians can live together. NSWAS is a role model for Palestinians and Jews, but it is also an international example for people in conflict.



### Find Us Online

Website: [www.oasisofpeace.org](http://www.oasisofpeace.org)

Facebook: [Wahat al-Salam - Neve Shalom](https://www.facebook.com/Wahat-al-Salom-Neve-Shalom)

Twitter: [@oasisofpeaceus](https://twitter.com/oasisofpeaceus)



### The Primary School

The idea of creating an educational framework that would express Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam's ideals of coexistence and equality was born together with the community's first children. The idea took shape in the form of a binational nursery, quickly followed by a kindergarten and a primary school.

Formally founded in 1983, the Primary School (K-6) is the first bilingual, binational, multicultural Jewish-Arab school in the region. Offering classes to about 250 children in both Hebrew and Arabic while recognizing issues of national identities, the school draws 90% of its students from communities surrounding the village.

Special activities include a state of the art Language Laboratory, a Multi-Media Resource Center, an Archaeology Project where children are uncovering a Byzantine floor, a Zoo Lab for interactions with animals and the Ecology Project to teach children about environmental issues. Other bilingual schools in the region were created based on the model of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam's.



### The School for Peace

The School for Peace was established in 1979 for the purpose of conducting outreach educational work. The SFP engages in encounter work between Arabs and Jews. This work is informed by the vision of a humane, egalitarian and just society. The goal of the encounters is to develop the awareness of the participants towards the conflict and their role in it, as well as to enable them to explore and evolve their identity through interaction with the other. During many years of experience the School has developed an educational approach that places an emphasis on elements such as power relations and the exploration of ethnic and national identities.

A leader in dialogue and conflict management, activities include university courses, programs for women, training programs in facilitation and workshops for teenagers. In recent years, programs supported by the United States Agency for International Development and the European Union have focused on creating a cadre of leaders in civil society and developing negotiation frameworks for future peace agreements.



### The Pluralistic Spiritual Center

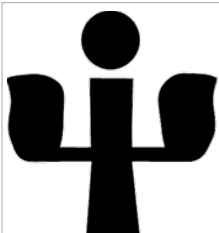
In memory of Father Bruno Hussar, the Pluralistic Spiritual Center's activities draw inspiration from the resources and spiritual traditions of the Middle East and the world at large. Programs focus on open inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue and the advancement of peace.

The Center coordinates seminars and lectures on spiritual and ethical values. Programs include "Dirasat," three seminars on Feminism in Islam, the Image of Jesus in Hebrew Literature and A Christian Palestinian Reading of the Old Testament.

Another program, "Mediation in a Multicultural Context" is developing a topology of mediation in a multicultural society, aiming to publish a curriculum based on pilot training of mediators and mediator-trainers, focusing on the role and process of mediation between the Jewish and Arab-Palestinian society in this context.

"Massa-Massar" brings together young people to discover the stories of their shared homeland and rediscover hope in the possibility of living together in peace.

*Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam is also home to a new **Peace College**, a **Humanitarian Aid Program**, a **Youth Club** and a **Guest House**.*



**THE AMERICAN FRIENDS OF NEVE SHALOM/WAHAT AL-SALAM** encourages, supports and publicizes the projects of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, the "Oasis of Peace." For more than thirty years, Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam has been dedicated to dialogue, cooperation and a genuine and durable peace between Arabs and Jews, Palestinians and Israelis.

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