

Protecting Human Dignity – Especially in Times of Social Upheaval

An Urgent Call from Educators

Foreword

We have all experienced a tough, challenging summer: The kidnapping and murder of the young boys, violent demonstrations, political bullying, racial incitements, hate crimes, escalation in the hostility between left and right, Jews and Arabs, and the war in Gaza.

Each one of us is entitled to his/her personal views but none of us holds rights to enforce our views on others let alone hurt others when their views conflict with ours.

Nevertheless, as educators, we have a deep obligation to promote informed and reflective thinking, pluralistic and tolerant public discourse, humane and respectful treatment of others, civic engagement and adherence to the rule of law.

In preparation for the opening of the next academic year 2014-15 and in light of President's Rivlin call, "not to remain silent in light of the various forms of political extremism and ideological violence" we have joined together – Jewish and Arabs, secular and religious – in an urgent call to teachers, students and parents: adhering firmly to protecting Human Dignity – Especially in Times of Social Upheaval.

Our CALL focuses on the ethical message. Indeed, we leave the pedagogical tools in the hands of the teachers and the educators. From preschool to high schools, to universities and education colleges- we trust that you will look for suitable means and most fitting methods and find the proper study disciplines to encourage our students to stay stubbornly human, particularly in these challenging times.

Manifesto

As educators from different communities – Jews and Arabs, secular and religious – we are partners in our outright rejection of the horrors of terror, racism, ideological violence and hate crimes. We stand together in favor of fundamental principles and cultural values without which people lose their humanity and society degenerates into chaos.

The central principle underlying overall human morality is respect for human dignity, preservation of human rights and assurance of social equality – as all people are created in the image of God.

Notwithstanding the fact that none of us is protected from the ills of prejudice and stereotypical thinking, we must be particularly severe with ourselves in overcoming these primal emotions and simplistic perspectives and refrain from any racist positions.

As educators and in the light of the above, we categorically state the following:

- No to racism, ideological violence, and hate crimes.
- No to bloodshed and harm to innocent people.
- No to violent protest, violation of human rights, and the destruction of the rule of law.
- No to calls for acts of revenge and incitement through the media or the social media.