

**The Danger in the Split—  
The Importance of Integration**

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**Israel**

This lecture is dedicated to my father who passed away exactly 10 years ago on 10.18.2010.

My lecture today describes what I view as my most significant achievement in my forty years of work as an Educational psychologist and as director of the educational psychological service in the city of Tel-Aviv-Jaffa. Over these years, I built a working model that, eventually, came to be called multiculturalism. The model is designed for systems serving diverse and conflicting populations and strives to replace splits that hinder functioning with an integration leading to achievements. I developed this model for the purpose of working with a particular school in Jaffa serving a mixed population of Jewish and Arab children contending with many conflicts. The model would later be implemented in other schools and urban settings. Following its success, schools were awarded prizes for their academic achievements and the model itself was awarded a city prize which was named in Hebrew— “Etgar” ["Challenge"]. The attempt to translate analytical theory into socio-political action exerting influence beyond the clinic on the education of children and youths and on urban social processes is a huge challenge that requires activist input.

Jaffa, the place where I began my working life and of which I speak today, is also the place where I was born and the one my parents came to from Morocco, a Muslim Arab country.

Municipally, Jaffa is part of Tel-Aviv, which is known as an open and pluralistic city that embraces diversity and splits. The most significant split in Jaffa is that resulting from the coexistence of two national groups—Jews and Arabs—and three religions—Muslims, Christians and Jews.

Before the State of Israel was established, 120,000 Arab residents lived in Jaffa and most of them were forced to flee during the war of independence. 70,000 people live in Jaffa today—30,000 Arabs and 40,000 Jews—a coexistence not often discussed though, naturally, it does, at times, lead to conflicts. As an educational psychologist and a Jungian analyst, I recognized that the remnants of that war in unconscious currents still exert influence in several contexts, including education. I understood that, if I could help to preserve a balance in the hardest and most loaded place in the city, if I could successfully lead to containment, acceptance, and conflict resolution, I would be helping in the development of the city beyond education, thereby realizing my activism.

When I began my work in Jaffa, I was a young psychologist just released from my army service as a lieutenant in a combat unit. By the age of 31, I had fought in three wars, the hardest and bloodiest of them in October 1973. In this conflict, I was in immediate danger of losing my life, an experience that led me to develop an unambiguous perception of Arabs as the enemy. Therefore, when I was first asked to work in an Arab school, I refused, as I still felt war-scarred. But two years later, I was asked again, and I accepted the offer to embark on the fascinating journey I will tell you about here.

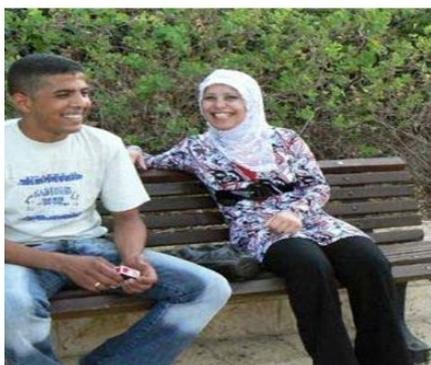
The work with an Arab population that includes students, teachers, and parents has been one of the most crucial events for me as a person and as a psychologist. Meeting with the other/the enemy and recognizing the vast difference between them and myself and still working to help, advise, and strengthen the teachers and the community was for me no less than a numinous experience.

The Arab population, beyond the enemy, was for me the “other,” different in language, culture, religion, mentality, and narratives. And yet, over the years, I have been able to touch core educational principles in the Arab schools where I worked, pose deep and essential questions, seek answers and solutions together, and also implement them. My long years of work unequivocally clarified to me that I had chosen the right profession. I felt that I had been able to integrate the enemy and the other inside myself, while realizing this was also my work outside in the real world.

When I was appointed director of the city’s educational psychological service, the principal of the Jaffa high school requested my intervention. Most of the students at this high school are Jews, with a minority of Arabs, and the principal offered a symbolic description of their circumstances.

## The Two Benches

Arab students bench



Jewish students bench



*Image 1*

As you see, during breaks students are sitting on two benches in the schoolyard—on one are the Jewish students speaking Hebrew and on the other the Arab students speaking Arabic. Symbolically, there is no connection between

the two benches, and the teachers refrain from educational interventions. I recognized the fear preventing the teachers, as the responsible adults, from approaching the two benches symbolizing the split and initiating a conversation between the two groups of students that could lead them to a dialogue about the conflict. I was shocked by the fact that these students are neighbors and study in the same class for six years or more.

The multiculturalism model emerged, when I realized there was a call to replace the split thinking pattern that sees either Arabs or Jews with one that integrates them together. During my four-years journey with the principal and the school staff, the school as a system shifted from the “or” splitting stance symbolized by the picture of the two benches toward the “and” integrating stance we aspired to.

The journey, which was a therapeutic-educational process, comprised simultaneous work at three levels. At the level of the principal, I worked individually; at the level of the school leadership, I conducted group work together with other psychologists, and at the level of the teachers’ room, group work was conducted by a team recruited for this purpose that included both Arab and Jewish psychologists. Meetings were conducted regularly over the year, focusing on the participants’ attitudes toward the shadow and toward the other. After two years of work at all three levels through a method enabling them mutual feedback, I identified a decrease in anxiety levels and an increased ability to grapple with confrontational and conflictual contents. Some of the contents trickle down from the principal to the school leadership and then to the teaching staff, and some move in the opposite direction, from the teachers’ room, through the school leadership, and up to the principal. Although the model dealt at first

mainly with conflict-related contents, we later learned that we could work similarly with any subject that needed to be expanded and worked through within a system, not necessarily a school.

Team members had to realize and acknowledge their educational duty to contain the other and, above all, the other/the enemy inside, the threatening shadow within themselves. They also learned that attaining this new consciousness was not enough and they had to remain on guard since the unconscious would continue attacking and dividing. These attitude changes in the staff quickly led to a significant decrease in displays of violence among the students as well as to the enhancement of personal identity and belongingness.

An example of the way a teacher's perception changed involved the initiative of a teacher around observance of the Memorial Day for the Fallen Soldiers of the Wars of Israel and Victims of Actions of Terrorism. This Remembrance Day marks one of the most significant and vulnerable days for the Jewish population but is also one of the most alienating moments for Arabs in Israel who, on this day, grieve over the Nakba—the catastrophe of their expulsion with the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. The teacher's unifying suggestion was to go with her students on that day to visit a memorial garden named after two casualties of a terrorist attack in the city in the 1990s—an Arab man and a Jewish woman. The students conducted a memorial service for the two victims and for all those who had died in the conflict on both sides. This is the commemoration monument in the garden.

## The Commemoration Monument



*Image 2*

In another case, I worked with a primary school in Jaffa with Jewish and Arab pupils that reached outstanding achievements after going through a similar process. The school's young principal had claimed at the start that there were no problems in her school between Arabs and Jews but agreed to implement the program. As her journey and that of the teaching staff proceeded, the events below the surface, which they had denied, were exposed to them. One significant episode was a football game that evoked tensions between Jewish and Arab students, culminating in physical violence. The principal separated the rivals and intended to suspend them. Luckily, and shamefully for her, both the Jewish and Arab students suggested replacing the suspension punishment with a homework assignment on football and violence. She and the teachers became aware that, when the staff looks away, splitting incidents occur, not necessarily below the surface but openly. This turned into a constitutive event in the process and paved the way for many insights and initiatives. One such result emerged when the Arts

and Crafts teacher assigned the students to paint on the subject of bridging differences in the school society, while presenting their conflicts symbolically. Each received a white umbrella and was asked to paint on it. The dozens of umbrellas that were hung throughout the school reflected familiar symbols of reconciling opposites.

## The Painted Umbrellas



Image 3

The principal then took a further step when she decided to make a special calendar for the school, which was to include and integrate all the holy days and festivals of the three religions and the students' birthdays.

# The Calendar



Image 4

Two years later, the school was awarded the National Education Prize for high achievements in school climate and for exceptional learning

accomplishments. A school for Jews and Arabs in an area with a relatively weak and poor population excelled, by national standards, in its academic attainments. The shift from a perspective of split to one of integration released powerful energies that had been focused on anxiety and replaced them with creativity, openness, learning, and achievements among both teachers and students. The students' sense of belongingness to the school and to the community, together with their identity according to their own religious and national origin, became much stronger. At Christmas time, fir trees stood in the classrooms; on the month of Ramadan, a Qur`an was placed in each class, and on Memorial Day all participated, with all the teachers and students aware of the difficulties this day entails for the Arab students.

At the municipal level, these experiences were viewed as a product of therapeutic educational work against schisms and splits and as reflecting the need for constant investment in the integration and preservation of the various—and at times opposite—sectors in the community and in the society while emphasizing the unifying human elements. These principles were implemented in other schools and communities in Tel-Aviv affected by similar problems, including in schools that integrate special education students.

On the Surface, splitting is a convenient solution, since it implies a high separation wall between the parties and no tension outwardly. Under the surface, however, anxiety and hostility lie in hiding, and many energies and resources are invested in defenses. On the other hand, the unconscious areas of the shadow await creativity, initiatives, and seminal ideas. To preserve unity and belongingness, efforts must be invested in preserving alertness and in the

attempt to perceive and interpret events at the symbolic level, which differentiates between split and integration.

Allow me to conclude with words written many years ago by a great Israeli, Jungian theoretician, whom you all surely know, Erich Neumann. In his deep and insightful vision of *A New Ethic*, as if predicting what is yet to come, he wrote: “whatever leads to wholeness is “good”; whatever leads to splitting is “evil”. Integration is good, disintegration is evil” (p. 126).

## Jaffa is Home for Everyone



*Image 5*

If you can spare another minute, I would like to conclude with an anecdote that brings together Jung, Jaffa, activism, and myself. I assume you all know of

Amos Oz, who is one of Israel's most famous writers whose work has been translated into many languages with great success. His writing bears a distinctly Jungian tone, and Abraham Balaban, a literary scholar and journalist well known in Israel, has suggested a Jungian analysis of his stories. As chairman of the New Israeli Jungian Association, I invited him to lecture to our members. Given that Balaban publishes a weekly journalistic column where he tells the story of a specific street in Tel-Aviv, and given that I am a Jaffa native and love the city, I suggested to him at the end of his lecture that we take a sightseeing tour of south Tel-Aviv, of Jaffa, where Jews and Arabs live together. We toured Jaffa for several hours and I told him my personal story in this city from childhood to the present. Balaban then published a column about this tour and about me, which he titled "Carl Gustav Jung in Jaffa," and I am happy and proud to show it to you.

### C. G. Jung In Jaffa



Image 6

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**Moshe Alon** (Israel) is the President of The New Israeli Jungian Association and former General Manager of the Educational Psychological Services of Tel Aviv-Jaffa. Serving in this position during times of terror war, he became one of the leading experts in Israel, intervening in trauma and emergency situations, both with individuals and communities. Moshe is also trained as a family therapist and works with families, adults, and children. Moshe is highly interested in social conflicts and mainly the Israeli-Arab conflict. He is published in Hebrew, and his articles appear in some edited books as well as Israeli journals.