



Ramallah, Rawabi and what's in between.
By Liva Gilaad: June 19, 2013



Nabil Sha'at: Ready for compromise with Netanyahu

Could it be, that the Israeli public engaged itself, for such a long time with asking, "Where is the partner" or "We have no partner" to the extent that this public eventually ended by Not recognizing the fact that they had forgotten for a long time, to look for that partner?

"So, it is there, and I am witness to this". And you simply have to believe me, or you can move cross the Green Line to see for yourself

Last week, I went with a group of journalists from the Israeli media, together with Members of the Tel Aviv bubble group, "One Voice", crossing the A zone area to PA areas. Right before my weekend, which is supposed to be banal and superficial refuge of last hectic week, I will not lie when I tell you, that barely by the time I finished drinking my morning coffee, lots of awkward questions have already flooded my mind: what do they wear in the Palestinian territories, how is the weather there, should I disable the "V" check on the "data roaming" WI FI settings?.

After I overcame these obstacles (through sharing these questions with friends, and having a deep understanding that I'm not alone on this matter), we started our journey and before I could notice it, we arrived at the Qalandiya check post. In Ramallah we met with the Minister of Religious Affairs Mahmoud El Habbash and a senior Fatah member - Dr. Nabil Sha'at who served for 18 years as foreign minister of the Palestinian Authority.

I will not bore you with the obvious usual messages. No need really to write here, that senior Palestinian officials, moderate and intelligent, want to put an end to the conflict with non-violent means and through long-term peace. They are not interested in tanks or air force of their own, they are also prepared for the presence of the U.S. military or NATO forces in their region and added that all sides can reach a compromise - even that of the refugee problem. Everyone knows this already. Or don't they? ...

I will just tell that they are ready to return to the negotiation table – provided that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declares his intentions to resolve the conflict on the basis of the '67 borders (with possible exchange of land), something that seems a novelty, according to some journalists.

After driving for 20 minutes we arrived at Rawabi - the first planned Palestinian city ever, built within the Palestinian Authority area, which has been able to dominate the press of the day worldwide. One thing that is important for me to share with you now and which is engraved in my memory (since all other information is already available online), is the young lady who conducted the tour of this impressive city. And though it may sound trivial somehow, in my opinion this experience tells a lot. She told us how during marketing sales of the apartments, she was surprised to see how smaller apartments were sold within 40 minutes after touring the modern sales lounge. She added: "There is a cultural shift. Young couples want to live within innermost family circle. Want to live better and looking for economic independence." I thought to myself that this is the kind of people that we on our side should recognize and get acquainted with.

To conclude my message, I write this because I cannot sleep. Yes, it sounds like a fit, and all of a sudden something has really moved my heart. Gilad(me) cannot fall asleep because guilt decided to appear in the wee hours of the night after 25 years of regular fatigue (and some even call me "Sleeping Pig"). But, how can you sleep after being exposed to such optimism? How can one remain indifferent and repeat the same questions? Could it be that the Israeli public who has been busy for such a long time asking "Where is a partner", that this public may have forgotten to look for it?

So this partner is there and I saw it. Probably you have just to believe me or else you have to cross the green line yourself.

<http://www.news1.co.il/Archive/003-D-84611-00.html>

Translated and edited by Kameel Jafar/Rawabi