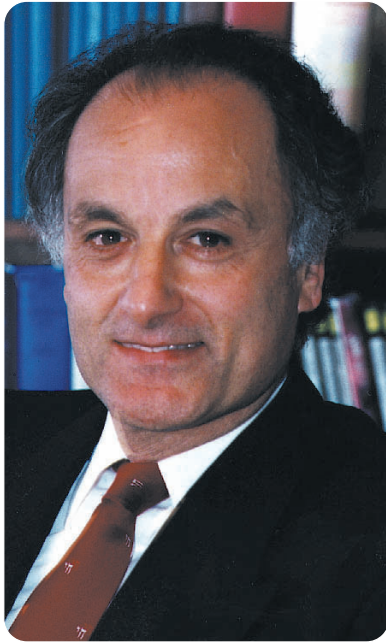


## The Fleeting Dove



Jacques B. Doukhan,  
D.H.L., Th.D.

To produce a second issue of *Shabbat Shalom* on peace is a symbolic gesture. It means that peace has not yet been achieved; it also means that we have not abandoned hope.

Debating about peace has never been so needed and so relevant. And beyond the local and violent tension in the Middle East we may even wonder about other programs of peace. For the “impossible” peace between Jews and Arabs stands out like a paradigm that would speak about peace between the nations of the world, peace between religions, and even peace in the family or in my neighborhood. How can we achieve peace? And what about spiritual peace, the peace with God and the inner peace that brings harmony and balance within ourselves? The dove seems always to escape from our feverish hands.

To catch the fleeting dove, *Shabbat Shalom* has called for help from many hands: Nobel Prize recipient and Auschwitz survivor **Elie Wiesel**; political scientist and consultant in international relations **Dr. Jane Sabes**; founders of peace movements such as Hebrew University professor **Shlomo Elbaz** for the *East for Peace* and peace activist **Alan Harber ben Eleazar** for the *Megiddo Peace Project*. The Holy Scriptures have also been consulted. Ancient peace

treaties in the history of the Middle East have been uncovered by the archaeologist for this occasion. Words of wisdom, challenging thoughts and suggestions have been proposed. Will one day our words, our efforts, our cries and struggles hit the right chord and catch the fleeting dove?

Peace is so difficult—difficult to catch, to start, to build, and to keep. “Seek peace and pursue it,” says the Psalmist (Psalm 34:14). It is therefore our duty to keep working on this biblical text. The rabbis of the Talmud commented: “Seek peace in your own place and pursue it in another” (*Y. Peah*, 1,1). In that sense peacemaking is God’s most important commandment. For “the Torah enjoins us not to run after a *mitzvah*, but to perform it only if it comes to us. With regard to peace, however, it enjoins us to pursue it” (*Bemidbar Rabbah*, 19,27). The reason for this exception is that peace implies force we cannot control; it involves the other in his or her difference and the unpredictable course of events. Also because peace is the highest ideal ever. Even after having achieved political, economical, social or family peace, there is always a peace to seek and to pursue. It must always remain the fleeting dove.