

JUDAISM AND PEACEBUILDING [\[i\]](#)

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The central axis of Judaism has been rabbinic literature for 2000 years. Classical rabbinic literature has a mix of texts on the subject of conflict. There is an extensive body of literature celebrating peace as a religious value, as a name of God, and as a supreme ethical principle. [\[ii\]](#) There is some Talmudic discussion of legitimate and illegitimate wars that Jewish kings may or may not wage. [\[iii\]](#) Maimonides (1135-1204 CE) elaborated this and codified it. [\[iv\]](#) This, in turn, has given plenty of grist for the mill to Jewish theoreticians of just war, who, in keeping with their Christian counterparts, have tried to develop in recent years some cogent thoughts on just war.

Rabbinic Judaism's discussion of just war has always been theoretical, however. There have never been "rabbinic" kings, that is, kings who were thoroughly steeped in rabbinic Judaism, unless one accepts the traditionalist or fundamentalist position that rabbinic Judaism existed from the beginning of Jewish Biblical history. Thus, the present-day discussion rests on tenuous theoretical grounds with no practical experience to draw upon. It seems to be a rather desperate attempt to catch up with the military realities facing a secular state of Israel run almost completely by Jews, which is, in and of itself, a historically unprecedented arrangement.

Most importantly, the Jewish just war versus Jewish pacifist discussions have not addressed creatively what Judaism has said or could say about how

to prevent violence, how to keep wars from happening, to de-escalate them, or how to heal people once the war has stopped. But Judaism has many things to say about these critical elements of conflict resolution.

The section of the community that would be most comfortable with delving deeply into the *halakhic* (legal/spiritual) sources as the authoritative guide to life, namely the Orthodox community, has been particularly uninterested in confronting Jewish resources on conflict resolution, despite righteous outcries against wanton hatred (*sin'at hinam*) and conflict (*mahloket*). On the contrary, the prevailing focus of attention has been increasingly on those rituals and laws of Judaism that would buttress cultural and physical survival, which would be specifically aimed against annihilation.

I am referring to rituals that make the Jew different. These include: obligations of protecting Jewish life, education to the uniqueness of Jewish life and practice, inculcating radical levels of defense of any Jew whose life is in danger, and ritual practices that are particularist by definition, such as the dietary and purity laws. Even the laws with universal application, such as the Sabbath, tend to be seen as uniquely Jewish.

This trend especially focuses on minutiae of practice that make a clear boundary between who is in and who is out of the group, who can be trusted and who cannot be trusted, rituals that become, in their modern incarnation, markers of ethnic and national trust, markers of distinction, markers of insulation from a dangerous world. Now this does not do justice to a variety of theologians and rabbis across the religious spectrum, including Orthodox representatives, who have, in fact, addressed issues of universal concern in the post-Holocaust era. [\[v\]](#) But this characterization does explain

a definite trend of religious Jewish life that must be understood by conflict analysis theory.

This phenomenon is not dissimilar to trends within the other monotheisms. All of them have significant sub-cultures today that are selectively winnowing their traditions for what makes their adherents different and alienated from others.

This global fundamentalist and militarist trend expresses itself through a variety of venues in the Jewish context. *Haredi*, ultra-Orthodox life, stands in an oppositional identity to most modern concepts of civil society. The effects on Jewish aggressive responses to the outside world have been varied. For the most part, it has expressed itself in a concerted effort to keep alien and modern influences out of *haredi* realms. But it also expresses itself in aggressive attempts to control, through legislation, personal status issues in Israel.

The kind of violence that this position results in involves rare assaults on property and on persons, non-Jewish or secular Jewish, whose presence in their midst is a threat to the cultural milieu. This is particularly focused on women and the threat that exposure of the woman's body poses to their society. This has obvious parallels in historical Christianity but most especially today in the world of Islam.

The impact of *haredi* separatism on Israel's relationship to Arabs is more complicated. Most *haredi* political influence has had the effect of pitting the pro-peace and anti-peace camps of secular Israeli politics against each other in a fierce competition for who can "buy off" the religious parties with more funds. On the whole, *haredim* clearly have hard, anti-Arab sentiments. Ironically, however, Shas, the most important *haredi* party of all, representing the Oriental Jewish population, has often given a cushion to the pro-peace camp, since its leaders have some pro-

peace tendencies. Habad, on the other hand, one of the most aggressive of the *haredi* groups, has been instrumental in several elections in bolstering the anti-peace camp.

The most important and successful obstacle to a Palestinian/Israeli treaty has come from the modern Orthodox community, the religious Zionists, out of whose midst Gush Emunim, the pre-eminent ideological founders of settler Judaism, and other much more extreme groups have emerged. It is this camp that has populated aggressively the West Bank and Gaza, and who have effectively blocked any prime minister's efforts to slow down or halt the expansion of settlements.

As the results of the uprising of 2000 indicate, it is the inextricability of the Palestinian and settler populations that has made a deal all but impossible. Indeed this was the plan. The settlers are supported globally by modern Orthodox Jewry in other countries, and the latter literally have many of their children living on those settlements. This has made the latest uprising in 2000 into a very personal life and death struggle for Orthodox Jewish families around the world.

As is the case with Islam, the deadliest combinations in the history of religion are modern and highly politicized ethno-nationalist aspirations which merge in new ways with old traditions, rituals and meaning systems. Just as the complete redefinition of and re-visioning of *jihad* has artfully combined with modern methods of terror, so too old Jewish attachments to the land of Israel, and all the accompanying *mitsvot*, commandments, have been re-worked to justify the level of oppression of local populations.

Now I would like to move toward the question of how it is possible to move significant numbers of religious Jews in the direction of peacemaking. Before we can

even elicit a theory of conflict resolution from Judaism's pro-social ethics, sacred stories, symbols and mythologies, conflict theory must creatively respond to the rage that many Jews feel at the world. This is especially true in light of the Holocaust, historically brutal anti-Semitism suffered in the Christian world, and traditionally second class citizenship endured in the Middle Eastern communities of Islam. If not, conflict resolution as a vocation will be dismissed by the very section of the community that has the longest memory but that needs religiously and culturally rooted conflict resolution the most.

The first stage of a Jewish conflict resolution theory may, for some people, be mourning. Mourning is a close cousin to and healthy evolution out of rage over the past. This is not as unusual as it might seem when it comes to intractable conflicts involving groups that have suffered over many centuries, and it may be relevant to the inner workings of many religious groups across the globe. Conflict resolution theory and practice must develop interventions that address the full spectrum of a particular group's responses to conflict, especially the most violent sections of that group. If an abnormal level of mourning that seems to perpetuate itself over history is a key element of the conflict, an effective religious peacemaking program must directly confront this. [\[vi\]](#)

A peacemaking mourning process must speak to the deepest identity needs of a group, and also to the group's sense of threat to its future, its fear of annihilation. Often what is mourned, but mourned in ways that create violence, is a loss of the group's honor, security, or a sense of confidence in its future. There is also a sense of loss of some romanticized time--real, imaginary, or a combination thereof--in which the group had a fulfilled, secure existence.

Aveilus, Jewish religious mourning, is the ritual process of expressing the death of a loved one. That loved one is a part of oneself, one's history, one's very being. It is the ability to acknowledge loss unabashedly, to watch the lost thing [\[vii\]](#) or person buried in the ground, especially to be able to engage in burial yourself, and feel the full horror of this. It is to immerse oneself for a very long time in the life and memory of the one who is gone, up to a year for parents. Then, in response to this, it is to be aided by the community and one's relationship to God, to a slow and steady recovery from this loss. The recital of the mourning prayers, *kaddish* and *yizkor*, is critical to this process. [\[viii\]](#)

There is no conflict, especially deadly conflict, which does not involve loss. These losses, often unacknowledged, are the fuel of conflict. Many people in conflict hope in vain that by perpetuating the conflict and winning one can somehow make up for what one has lost. But this is illusory, and the sooner that these permanent damages are acknowledged the easier it will be to focus on the concrete moves that need to be made to end the conflict, negotiate and compromise on the concrete differences, and begin rebuilding peoples' lives.

As far as the Israeli-Arab conflict is concerned, to take an example, there is much that *aveilus* can teach. It seems clear to me that a profound transformation of relationship would occur if Arabs and Jews, in addition to negotiating the obvious central issues of land and resource distribution, would engage in a simultaneous process of helping each group to mourn what they have lost. The losses of one hundred years, for each group, represent an important time-span that generally includes the memories that people have directly from parents and grandparents. It is this memory that must be addressed. This would involve focusing on all the lost

children, husbands, fathers, all the lost time and resources, the lost homes, and of course the lost land.

It would be very powerful indeed if groups of Arabs and Jews, perhaps aided by sympathetic Western Christians--who also have a key role in causing and healing this tragic conflict--would begin, in detail, to mourn what was lost. They must begin to visit the dead together, to bury them together in symbolic ways, to memorialize lost lives and lost homes. They need to talk about the losses for as long as it is necessary, to thoroughly indulge the past rather than suppress it, for fear that it would disrupt rational dialogue and conversation. We must do exactly what rational peacemakers have tried to suppress, namely, we must indulge memory. But we must do it, not destructively as it is indulged in the privacy of particular groups but, as a part of peacemaking, as part of an effort to honor each group's memories, at the same time that we struggle constructively over the present.

There are several critical guidelines. One is to utilize religious constructs to A. heal deep injuries, and B. reconstitute a cultural and spiritual identity that responds to the need for uniqueness, but that does not need to do this by way of hatred of the outsider. There must be an emphasis on a unique Jewish role and style of engaging this work of conflict resolution and peacebuilding. This responds to the fear of annihilation, but it also channels it into pro-social values.

A culture of conflict resolution that maintains a clearly unique role for Jewish values could then lead at a second stage to tentative statements and agreements about shared values with other groups, be they non-Orthodox Jews, secular Jews, Palestinians or Muslims. But it must begin from a premise that acknowledges and even values boundaries between cultural entities and respects those boundaries.

I want to move on now to an in-depth analysis of Jewish tradition as it is relevant to conflict resolution. I will divide my analysis into some standard categories in the conflict resolution field that prove useful here: conflict prevention, management and resolution, post-trauma healing, and transformation. Post-trauma healing we have already covered out of order in our discussion of mourning.

Prevention is the most effective tool of all in peacemaking because relationships are easier to mend at very early stages of problems. An example of a conflict prevention value is the mandate to experience of self-love, a theme taken up by many moral sense theorists in the nineteenth century as a basis for a moral system. [ix] In classical Judaism, the religious psyche is meant to be self-loving in order to be loving in an other-directed sense. The classical basis of this is the Golden Rule, which comes in its earliest monotheistic form from the Torah in Leviticus 19:18, “Do not take vengeance, or a bear a grudge. And you must love your neighbor as yourself, I am the Eternal God.” The verse is generally assumed to mean that you must love the Other as you love yourself, which cannot be done without self-love, a practice that for many people takes a lifetime to achieve. This is one of the hardest things for members of a hated minority to truly feel. [x] In my experience, my conflict resolution activists have a hard time with this principle as well, and it negatively impacts their work.

Another key point in the self-oriented values is *imitatio dei*. For the religious human being the fact that one can be like God if one is a peacemaker is a deeply empowering psychological phenomenon. It makes one’s experience larger than life, a conquest of mortality, and a unification with eternity, as well as with others past and present who have walked the same path. To the degree to which this experience could be applied to the lonely life of the peacemaker who champions benevolent values it

could have a significant impact on the psychological sustainability of conflict resolution as a vocation.

As we move into values that govern interpersonal relationships, there are a few that are particularly noteworthy. The importance of interpersonal meeting, especially face to face encounter cannot be overemphasized. The principal Biblical phrase for love is *motseh hen*, to find grace in the eyes of the Other who is encountered. The Talmudic Rabbis (henceforth, the Rabbis) mandated that one should greet everyone with a loving, or literally “beautiful”, face, “*sever panim yafot*”. They prohibited the kind of language and actions that make the face turn white with embarrassment, making the latter into a sin akin to murder, literally the shedding of the blood of the face. Conversely, they made the honor of the Other into a supreme *mitsvah*, the opposite of humiliation of the face of the Other. [\[xi\]](#) Honoring of the Other, in theory, can become an experience of intense religious fulfillment.

Face is a critical category in conflict analysis. [\[xii\]](#) Saving face is a key generator of conflict in many situations, for a variety of reasons, including the inability to back down from the action-reaction spiral of aggressive behavior due the fear of losing face. This is especially true of leaders who fear the wrath of their followers who could not cope with the loss of face without turning on the leaders themselves. Collective humiliation is one of the main reasons for the self-perpetuating cycles of numerous international and inter-ethnic conflicts.

Honor, as an intentional peacemaking act, is a rather under-utilized strategy of conflict prevention and conflict resolution at the current time. The better diplomats understand this method, but it is rarely made into a conscious process that applies generally to the interaction of large populations. Any Jewish methodology of conflict resolution would

have to focus on honor and the necessary engagement with the face of the enemy, on both the elite level and on the grassroots level.

I have tried to internalize a discipline and psychology of honor in my own processes of mediation as an insider/partial, as a Jew and a rabbi who is in an adversarial relationship with Arabs, but also a kind of mediator and translator between them and the Israelis. At various junctures I assessed what was wrong with a Jewish/Arab encounter in which I found myself, and I saw it more often than not as principally centered on issues of honor and shame.

I countered this with my enemies by going out of my way to honor, sometimes excessively, as a combination of a moral gesture and an act of repentance or penance. I recall one time when it was clear to me when I met a very high Palestinian military leader that our initial meeting and its context were quite dishonorable to him. I and my partner concluded that, at some personal risk, we had to visit him in his cultural milieu, which we did. He knew how hard it was for us. In turn, he showered us with a lavish vegetarian (kosher) meal, and insisted on sitting with us, even though he himself was engaged in a religious fast! Honor became contagious and the relationship has grown warmer and warmer, each recognizing how hard it is to take this step. The mutual honoring led to substantive talk about the issues and plans for cooperation, which have been put on hold because of the terrible violence as of the end of 2000.

I also recall meeting Mr. Arafat for the first time, six months before the tragedies of 2000, when, for complicated reasons, I was an honored guest at his headquarters. In fact I was seated next to him to facilitate our conversation. I made a decision to bring him gifts. He in turn gave me and another rabbi, and his wife, gifts.

I went one step further. I had known from inside sources that Arafat had felt humiliated by some of his encounters with Barak, and that, in general, various high level Palestinians had expressed to me that since the end of the Rabin era they would be happy if they were simply treated like human beings. The use of this phrase shocked me, especially because it came from several sources. I decided, therefore, to emphasize to Arafat—despite extremely ambivalent feelings toward him as a Jew and as a target of his past actions as a terrorist and present support of violence—to emphasize the attitude of Jewish tradition and law to honor of the human being. I said these sources repeatedly and emphasized to him that these sources needed to form the foundation of Arab/Israeli negotiations and encounters.

I was sending him a message, and so were my colleagues, that honor and equality were at the core, not the periphery, of our vision of a future between Jews and Palestinians. And I was sending him a message that Jewish religion and monotheism in general, despite the behavior of many extremists, could be the basis of a new relationship, and that, in fact, some religious values and practices could provide a unique bridge between the two sides.

Arafat, in turn, kept emphasizing the honoring of treaties, the Pact of Omar in particular, which were important cultural precedents for him of a Muslim leader in charge of a political realm treating everyone honorably. He said the words ‘pact of Omar’ three times for emphasis.

Now where this kind of exchange could have gone in our relationship with the Palestinian leadership I will never know because we never had the power or the support from the liberal community of diplomats and peacemakers to pursue this avenue of peacemaking. But what I was attempting to do was to create a different and parallel negotiation process, a process that negotiates and builds on fundamental

moral/psychological building blocks. The most important one was honor, but there are others such as the acknowledgement of memory, admission of wrongs, visions of the future, and gestures of good will that resonate with religious and cultural institutions of the traditions involved.

The creative extension of some of these rabbinic values to complex conflict is potentially a powerful tool of peacemaking . I would like now to list some others for consideration in Judaism: 1. Involvement in the suffering of others, 2. Taking responsibility to heal that suffering, 3. Social justice, in the form of a reasonable redistribution of resources, as a religious task or *mitsvah*, 4. Constructive social criticism, which usually accompanies the implementation of social justice, perceived as a *mitsvah* as well, 5. A strong sense of responsibility to connect the home and the public sphere by way of the openness of the home to the “street”, that is, making one’s home and family open to some degree as a refuge from the inevitable harshness of the public sphere, 6. A detailed attention to customs of civility as socially constructive and as, therefore, religious duties, 7. A commitment to voluntarily limit one’s physical needs and discourage excessive wealth, in order to make a society in which everyone can live, and, finally, 8. A *halakhic* commitment to make conflict resolution into a social *mitsvah*, a *mitsvah* of *bakesh shalom ve’radfehu* [\[xiii\]](#), “seeking peace and pursuing it”, literally a *mitsvah* to go and seek out other peoples’ conflicts to solve. This last *mitsvah* is particularly potent as a vehicle through which to advocate conflict resolution training in even the most fundamentalist contexts.

Now let us turn to conflict management, resolution, and reconciliation. Some of the most important constructs of conflict resolution in numerous rabbinic sources are expressed by Midrashic metaphor. The Rabbis make the Biblical figure Aaron, the High Priest, and brother of Moses, into the paradigmatic peacemaker: [\[xiv\]](#)

And thus when two men were in a conflict, Aaron would go and sit with one of them. He would say to him: My son, look at your friend, [look at what he is saying], he is tearing at his heart and ripping his clothing. He says, ‘Woe is me, how can I lift my eyes and see my friend. I am ashamed before him, for it is I who wronged him. And he [Aaron] would stay with him until he removed all of the jealous rage from his heart. And Aaron would then go to the other man, and say [the same thing. And when the two would finally meet, they would hug and kiss each other. [\[xv\]](#)

The context of this story is a religious universe in which the High Priest has the most elevated status in the community. Thus a key element here is the humility and even self-abnegation of the intermediary. More importantly, the actions of the third party are a critical role model for the conflicting parties. They demonstrate that the mediator must be prepared to lose a little face in order to do something sublime, something spiritual, a *mitsvah*. In so doing, Aaron prepares the parties for a crucial and difficult stage of conflict resolution, or more specifically reconciliation, which usually involves swallowing a little pride, in other words, losing a little face. Furthermore, reconciliation generally involves a certain level of remorse, which again entails a psychological loss of pride or face. This, I suggest, is a crucial psychological juncture for conflict resolution that is often overlooked. [\[xvi\]](#)

Another key element in Aaron’s method is empathic listening. [\[xvii\]](#) The details of the story indicate that he speaks but also stays with each person for an extensive period of time, in fact, he “would stay with him until he removed all of the jealous rage from his heart”. This combination of listening, staying with someone who is enraged, and having an open-ended time frame, seems to be crucial to conflict resolution in traditional cultures in general.

The ideal Jewish peacemaker's path, as seen from the Aaron stories, involves: the development of a pious or moral character worthy of respect, the conscious creation of role models of peacemaking, purposeful acts of humility that sometimes involve personal sacrifice or loss of face, active or empathic listening, a method of helping people work through destructive emotions, and, finally, the gift of abundant if not unlimited time. [\[xviii\]](#)

A critical and unique strategy of Jewish conflict resolution with Biblical roots suggests an alternative strategy to the typical focus on dialogue of conflict resolution theory. It does not call into question the importance of communication to conflict resolution, but it does suggest that there are forms of communication other than dialogue. The principal source for this is the Biblical *mitsvah* to help your enemy when he is faltering with a burden. [\[xix\]](#) There are a variety of rabbinic rationales for this as a conflict resolution device. [\[xx\]](#) Essentially, it involves what I have termed the positive uses of cognitive dissonance. The Rabbis suggested that enemies have a certain set understanding of each other that plays a vital role in their commitment to hate each other. Conflict resolution theory concurs with this. [\[xxi\]](#) The purpose of this mandated change in behavior is to create cognitive dissonance, to shatter the conception of the enemy. This leads, in turn, to a moral sense of regret inside the person who is the recipient of the unilateral gesture of physical aid from the enemy. He decides that he really misunderstood his enemy, or that his enemy really is not an enemy, 'he could not be if he did this for me'. In other words, it is designed to shatter the false image of the enemy, and complexify the real person behind the image.

It is also, I would argue, a perfect way to make justice and peace work together as a conflict resolution strategy, rather than be at odds with each other. But it does require great skill and patience. A simplistic belief that such gestures would or

should work after one time is foolish, and will cause a backlash. Unilateral gestures of aiding those who are suffering require repeated and surprising innovations. The whole point of cognitive dissonance is that it is undoing something that is deeply entrenched, causing great anxiety, and will only result in a new emotive homeostasis after a great deal of time and struggle.

To take an example, it would take repeated and extensive gestures of Israelis working in Arab and Palestinian villages, to build good, permanent homes, before it became clear that there were Israelis who understood the Palestinian demand for justice, and were serious about their desire for reconciliation and coexistence. It would take repeated gestures of religious Israelis making donations to the upkeep of mosques before it would sink in that there were many religious Israelis who did not see all Muslims as enemies. It would take repeated offers of condolences, visits and gestures of comfort, on the part of Palestinians for Israeli victims of bombs for it to sink in that not all Arabs wanted those bombs to go off. It would take many Islamic gestures of hospitality to make religious Jews believe that they are finally welcome back to the Middle East as permanent residents. These bilateral gestures, over time, could create a far greater moderate middle than exists currently in Israel and the West Bank. This, in turn, would shift the population matrix undergirding the rejectionism of various political parties.

Essentially, these gestures move us into the realm of conflict transformation, the transformation of enemy relationships. In Jewish terms, this is best expressed by the statement, "Who is the strongest of the warriors?..." He who turns one who hates him into one who loves him." [\[xxii\]](#) What sort of strategies can truly make such a profound transformation of relationship?

There is a process for Jewish personal, interpersonal and communal transformation, roughly coming under the rubric of *teshuva*, which can mean repentance, but also means literally ‘returning’, or ‘turning toward’. The prophets say in the name of God at one point, “Turn toward me, *shuvu eylay*, and I will turn toward you, *ve’ashuva aleikhem* (Zakhariah 1:3)”. [\[xxiii\]](#) There is a covenantal mutuality built into the concept of *teshuva*, and it applies to both the human-Divine form of *teshuva*, and to the inter-human process of *teshuva* for wrongs done and relationships broken.

There are a number of elements to the ideal form of *teshuva*. First and foremost, *teshuva* cannot replace restitution. In other words, restitution must precede or accompany the process of conflict transformation if there have been real damages that require restitution. Beyond financial or physical restitution, however, the restorative aspect of *teshuva* must take place. This is where justice and peace have to work together or not work at all.

The restorative or conciliatory stage of *teshuva* ideally involves a confession of wrongdoing. [\[xxiv\]](#) It is ideal if this confession, if it involves wrongs to other human beings, be done in public. [\[xxv\]](#) Abraham ben David of Posquières (c. 1125-1198) added that the public confession convinces the wronged party that the change in his adversary is authentic. [\[xxvi\]](#) Other elements of the *teshuva* process involve, according to the Talmudic Rabbis, the giving of charity--always a standard of Jewish penance--, [\[xxvii\]](#) a change in one’s name or identity, and some argue even a change in one’s place, and, last but not least, crying. [\[xxviii\]](#) Maimonides clarified that all of these practices and emotional states are elements of authentic change, and he even recommends that a person cognitively dissociate from his own prior self by saying, “I am another person, and I am not the person who did those things.” Maimonides

continues, “...and he changes his deeds completely to the good and to the straight path, and he exiles himself from his current place. For exile atones for sin, because it makes him to be humble and low of spirit.” [\[xxix\]](#)

Thus, there are four basic stages of *teshuva*. There is restitution. There is an expression of deep remorse (*harata*), a detailed confession, privately or publicly, of what one has done (*vidui*), and there is finally a commitment to change in the future, to the point of even changing one’s identity (*kabbalah le-haba*).

The outer forms and rituals of *teshuva* are often focused in the Jewish ritual life cycle on fasting and deprivation of the body. The Day of Atonement is the most notable example, although some very pious Jews used to fast every Monday and Thursday, as part of a life-time process of purification and repentance. Indeed repentance themes are built into many elements of daily prayers.

It is for this reason that in the uprising and tragedies of 2000 I have instigated a series of actions in Jerusalem and elsewhere regarding fasting. The idea is for Jews to fast at the same time as Ramadan, as a Jewish act of solidarity with Muslims who are going through an act of purification. Instead of Ramadan becoming a killing season as it has become in Algeria, the idea is to steal the symbolic thunder from Hamas and make Ramadan a time for sharing of rituals of purification. A colleague in Jerusalem wisely recommended that we make the days of joint fasting to be Mondays and Thursdays in order for it to resonate with Jewish tradition. Also, the focus would be on gestures of feasting together at night, offering gifts of appropriate foods. It was also fortuitous in 2000 that Ramadan, Christmas and Chanukah all coincided on one day, and thus provided a ritual opportunity associated with one key theme of repentance, which is rebirth, and light in the midst of darkness.

The key with efforts at ritually based and mythically based inter-religious peacemaking is the willingness to engage in trial and error and to allow new experiments and gestures time to germinate. For example, for years the religious Zionist peace camp, especially embodied in Oz ve-Shalom, utilized the universalist and peace symbols associated with the holiday of Sukkot, Tabernacles, and the actual booth that every religious Jew constructs outside his or her house, to be a place of Israeli/Arab encounter. This had its counterpart in religious innovations in the United States, especially initiated by Arthur Waskow, I believe, though the history of this should be studied. But suddenly, as a result of the terrible violence unleashed in 2000, the unprecedented riots of thousands of Arab Israelis, and the questions raised by the killing of 13 Arab Israeli civilians by the police, there was an outpouring of efforts for Jews and Arabs inside Israel to meet. Many met in Sukkot across the country because it was that time of year and because of years of preparation for that ritualistic space to be a place of embrace and reconciliation.

Another ritual form of reconciliation that has been underway in 2000 is a process of chanting Shalom and Sala'am simultaneously every Friday above the area of the Temple Mount for Jews, the Haram al Sharif for Muslims. This went on right in the middle of the rioting. It has been an effort of Jews and Muslims to engage in a kind of purification and penance right at the site of the birthplace of the conflict.

I want to turn to another major religious institution germane to our topic. There has been much discussion about the value of forgiveness in conflict resolution. From my research it would seem that only when forgiveness is placed in the context of individual cultures can it play a crucial role in conflict resolution. It interacts in complicated ways with competing moral and spiritual responses, such as commitments to truth, justice, apology, repentance, penance, among others.

Forgiveness plays a role in Jewish forms of reconciliation, but only when embedded in the *teshuva* process, which is either unilateral or bilateral depending on what injuries have been sustained by conflict. The key to a Jewish understanding of forgiveness is the centralization of repentance, and the placing of forgiveness only in that context. To the degree to which, in the enormously varied Christian expressions and articulation of forgiveness, there are parallels to the Jewish formulation then there can be great cooperation. Indeed, from what I have seen many Jews, Christians and Muslims have the same criteria for the practice of forgiveness. But the differences in nuance must be acknowledged. When I hear “forgiveness” in Christian circles my instinct is to assume a diminution of justice or real acts of repentance, and the suppression and burying of history and memory. This may be unfair but it is real in my Jewish consciousness and my memories of history, and it does have some reality in certain current trends of Christianity. As another example, when injured or minority parties hear talk of “peace” they often hear an effort to bury justice. Thus, as we all engage in these processes it is crucial to be explicit about what we all mean.

As far as the application of this approach to forgiveness and apology, I wonder how powerful such a *teshuva* apology process could be on a much larger scale involving massive injury, murder and genocide. Surely, it would be a deeper process than simple payment for losses incurred, restitution, or the indictment of selected representatives of the war criminals. The latter is all the international community has been able to orchestrate when it comes to genocide until now, and all that this really even attempts to satisfy is the demands of justice, and it usually fails at that also. Indeed it has to. Who could construct an appropriate restitution for the loss of one’s family, one’s world? It seems to me that victim communities, and their tormentors, need to do much more in order to transform the past and present into a redemptive future.

The sites of war, mass graves, and past horrors, are critical here. They are places that do not just deserve memorials. They should be places in which confession, apologies and restitutions are made on an ongoing basis, not in order to inject a sense of self-loathing into former aggressors. On the contrary, it is to free everyone to develop a new sense of self, to mourn the past together with the victims, regularly, in order to foster a new future.

After all of the internal work on a religious tradition and its possible relationship to conflict resolution is done, the most important question facing the interaction of religion and conflict resolution theory is the multi-cultural, multi-religious, and secular nature of most contemporary social settings. Religious traditions, such as Judaism, tend to operate in their theological and moral constructs as if no other system exists. This means that as we think about these traditions in pragmatic terms it must be remembered that we study religious peacemaking, not in order to suggest an imposition of those traditions on society. Rather, we do this in order to creatively interact with those who are religious, to be prepared to creatively integrate pro-social religious traditions with secular, democratic constructs, or constructs from other religions and cultures. Further, we do this in order for the secular community to have the courage to learn from the religious community as well.

[1] A fuller treatment of this subject is to be found in my *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence, and Peacemaking* (New York and London: Oxford

University Press, 2000), and my *Holy War, Holy Peace: The Role of the Abrahamic Religions in Israeli/Palestinian Conflict and Peacemaking*(forthcoming).

[ii] There is a large literature on this subject. See the following for selections of rabbinic aphorisms: Avot of Rabbi Nathan 12; T.B. Perek ha-Shalom; Leviticus Rabbah 9; Numbers Rabbah 11. For some contemporary discussion, see Murray Polner and Naomi Goodman, eds., *The Challenge of Shalom*, (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1994), and my essay ad loc., “Is there a Jewish God of Peace”.

[iii] On early justifications for war, see the discussion in T.B. Sotah 44b; for a contemporary overview and analysis of the rabbinic discussion, see Reuven Kimelman, “War”, in *Frontiers of Jewish Thought*, ed. Steven Katz, (Washington, DC: B’nai B’rith Books, 1992), pp. 309-332.

[iv] Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Kings 5.

[v] See, for example, Menachem Kellner, ed., *Contemporary Jewish Ethics* (New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., 1978); Elliot Dorff & Louis Newman, eds., *Contemporary Jewish Ethics and Morality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[vi] On uncompleted mourning and conflict, see Vamik Volkan, *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1997); idem, *The Need to Have Enemies and Allies* (Northvale, NJ: J. Aronson, 1994).

[vii] *Aveilus* also applies to events in history and objects, such as the Temple in Jerusalem, although this is negotiated in a somewhat different fashion by *halakha*, Jewish law. Nevertheless, its extension to realms beyond the individual/interpersonal suggests its usefulness in dealing with overarching collective experiences of the people.

[viii] On mourning in Judaism, see Maurice Lamm, *The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning* (New York: Jonathon David Publishers, 1969). *Kaddish* is a formal responsive prayer said by mourners a number of times in the daily prayer service, where there is a quorum present.

[ix] See, for example, Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections with Illustrations upon the Moral Sense* (London, 1728). Other key figures included the Third Earl of Shaftesbury, David Hume and Adam Smith.

[x] It is interesting to note that R. Akiva (c. 110-135 C.E.) considered this the preeminent principle of Judaism. However, his contemporary Ben Azzai stated that the most important principle is the idea that every human being is created in the image of God, and is therefore invaluable. It is superior as a principle to the love principle, lest, “...someone say, ‘since I have been abused, let my fellow human being be abused, since I have been cursed let my fellow human being be cursed.’” *Genesis Rabbah* 24. R. Tanhuma adds, ad loc., ‘If you do this (abuse others), know who you are abusing: ...in the image of God He made him [Genesis 5:1]’. We have here, in a nutshell, what might be the thought patterns of abused people the world over who, despite a good conscience, feel that, from the point of view of justice, if they have been unloved and abused why should they treat others any differently? This statement by Ben Azzai is meant

to contradict that tendency of feeling within the Jewish people of his time. It means that the only way that a Jewish person could devalue another human being would be to consider him or her not really created in the image of God, not really human, which manifestly contradicts the sacred text.

[xi] See a fine example of contemporary rabbinic hermeneutics on the relationship of honor for all people as a way of protecting human life, Micha Odenheimer, "Honor or Death," *Jerusalem Report* IX:22 (March 1, 1999), p. 25.

[xii] B.R. Brown, "Face-Saving and Face-Restoration in Negotiation," in *Negotiations*, ed. D. Druckman (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1977), pp. 275-299.

[xiii] Psalms 34:15.

[xiv] See Marc Gopin, "Is There a Jewish God of Peace?" in *The Challenge of Shalom*, ed. Murray Polner and Naomi Goodman (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1994), pp. 32-39.

[xv] Avot of Rabbi Nathan 12:3.

[xvi] I leave aside here the inappropriateness of this story as a model for any contemporary solution to a marital crisis. Any husband who throws his wife out of the house can and should be subject to prosecution if he does not come to some more equitable way to separate, if that is what they must do. I urge the reader to see the moral tale in its context, suspend contemporary moral evaluations temporarily, in order to see the pro-social message of the story that is intended to teach mediators how they should behave. We do not use it as a role-model a husband's behavior or a contemporary solution to that behavior.

[xvii] As a contemporary example, Leah Green, based on the work of Gene Knudsen Hoffman on compassionate listening, has initiated the Middle East Compassionate Listening Project, based in Indianola, WA. It has brought a variety of American Jews to the West Bank and Israel to engage in listening to the full spectrum of Israeli and Palestinian points of view, without engaging in debate, but simply in the discipline of listening. They are one of the only groups, to my knowledge, that listens actively to settlers as well as the more radical Muslims on the West Bank. The Fellowship of Reconciliation also has an extensive program of Compassionate Listening projects.

[xviii] I have raised elsewhere the moral problematics of Aaron's use of subterfuge in his healing process. The question of when and how truth is told or not told has not been honestly dealt with in matters of diplomacy and conflict resolution. There is a great deal of pious commitment to "transparency", but in practice diplomacy is a business of partial truths, and, in particular, the concealment of negotiating positions from 90% of populations on both sides of conflicts. I have condemned this on numerous occasions myself but, on the other hand, these are not simple matters. Again, I always return to the family model. Should one repeat everything one hears in families? Is there nothing that should be concealed for the purpose of peace? Does not everyone have at least one thing they know about a family member that they wisely choose to not reveal to others in order not to break up the family? What I am interested in is not the justification of

lying, or a simplistic application of Aaron's method. Rather I am interested in ways of conflict resolution that struggle with moral categories and the complexity of competing moral claims, such as justice, compassion, forgiveness and truth. They must struggle with each other in order to create a livable and realistic peace.

[xix] Exodus 23:5; Deuteronomy 22:4; see also, Proverbs 25:21.

[xx] See Reuven Kimelman, "Nonviolence in the Talmud," *Judaism* vol. 17 (1968), pp. 318ff. for the rabbinic sources.

[xxi] See Vamik Volkan, *The Need to Have Enemies and Allies*, *op. cit.*.

[xxii] Avot of Rabbi Nathan 23:1.

[xxiii] There are potentially fascinating parallels here to other traditions that, if studied jointly could lead to creative bonds between communities. There is a great deal of Sufi literature on repentance, remorse, and the turning around of oneself. I thank Frederick Denny for pointing this out. This kind of parallelism could lead to joint study between communities, such as are taking place in Jerusalem, but also important rituals of peace that may evolve between the communities over time.

[xxiv] T.B. Ta'anit 67a.

[xxv] See T.B. Yoma 86b; Maimonides (1135-1204), *Mishneh Torah*, Book of Knowledge, Laws of Teshuva, ch. 2.

[xxvi] See his gloss on Maimonides, *ad loc.*

[xxvii] Cf. to Islam, where generosity in debt disputes that were arbitrated by Muhammad, was seen as a central way to bring about peace between enemies (*Hadith Sahih Bukhari* 3.49.868-870).

[xxviii] See T.B. Rosh ha-Shanah 16b and Kesef Mishneh commentary to Maimondes, *ad loc.*, Laws of *teshuva* 2:4.

[xxix] Maimonides, *ad loc.*, Laws of Teshuva 2:4.