

Making peace – at home, on the streets and in global hotspots

Limmud 2024

If you come upon your enemy's bull or his stray donkey, you shall surely return it to him. If you see your enemy's donkey lying under its burden would you refrain from helping him? You shall surely help along with him. (Exodus 23:4-5)

You shall not go around as a gossipmonger amidst your people. You shall not stand by [the shedding of] your fellow's blood. I am the Lord. You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your fellow, but you shall not bear a sin on his account. You shall neither take revenge from nor bear a grudge against the members of your people; you shall love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord. (Leviticus 19:16-18)

Who is mighty? One who conquers their impulse to evil, as it is written, "One who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and one who rules over their spirit than one who conquers a city" (Pirkei Avot 4:1 quoting Proverbs 16:32)

Rabbi Tarfon said, "I wonder if there is anyone in this generation who knows how to accept reproof, for if one says to another, 'Remove the chip of wood from between your eyes', he would answer, 'Remove the beam from between your eyes'". Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah said, "I wonder if there is anyone in this generation who knows how to give reproof." (Talmud, Arachin 16b)

It is said, "When one man sins, will You be wrathful with the whole community?" (Num. 16:22). R. Simeon b. Yohai taught: This may be compared to the case of men on a ship, one of whom took a borer and began boring beneath his own place. His fellow travellers said to him: 'What are you doing?' Said he to them: 'What does that matter to you, am I not boring under my own place?' Said they: 'Because the water will come up and flood the ship for us all.' (Midrash Rabba Leviticus 4:6)

Shun evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it. (Psalms 34:15) The sages ask, why does the verse repeat itself. Would it not have been enough to state the command once? Why does the Torah say both seek and pursue. We have received this oral tradition: "Seek peace for your loved ones and pursue peace with your opponents and enemies; Seek peace where you live and pursue peace elsewhere; Seek peace with your body and pursue peace with your resources; Seek peace for yourself and pursue peace for others; Seek peace today and pursue peace tomorrow. (Midrash Vayikra Rabbah 9.9)

"We feed non-Jewish poor together with Jewish poor, visit their sick together with Jewish sick people, bury non-Jewish dead as well as Jewish dead, mipnei darchei shalom, for the sake of the ways of peace" The Rabbis of the Talmud (Talmud Gittin 59b) were discussing various examples of actions which should be taken for the sake of peace and in that context they turned to a more general rule as follows - "Said Abaye to R. Joseph: Is this rule only [a Rabbinical one] which says we should do things for the sake of peace? It derives from the Torah? — He answered: It does derive from the Torah, its object is to maintain peace. But the whole of the Torah is also for the purpose of promoting peace, as it is written, Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. (Proverbs 3:17)

Great is peace, for peace is to the world as leaven is to dough. (Perek HaShalom 1:1)

By three things does the world endure: justice, truth, and peace. R. Muna said: The three are one because if justice is done, truth has been effected and if there is truth peace is brought about. (Perek HaShalom 1:2)

Great is peace, for even in a time of war one should begin (by attempting to arrange) peace. (Perek HaShalom 1:14)

Rabbi Israel Lipschitz of Danzig (1782–1860) wrote an extensive ethical will' for his heirs which included: "Do good to all men, evil to none; do good even to the non-Jew in the street, even to an enemy who has pursued you with relentless hate. If you have an opportunity for revenge, do not avail yourselves of it, but load your adversary with favours. Never refuse a favor to any person, be he non-Jew or even an enemy. If your foe is seeking your hurt you may prevent him, but you must not injure him beyond the point of making him powerless to harm you. If an opportunity offer of serving him thank God for the chance, and though he has done you the most fearful wrongs, forget the injuries you have sustained at his hands. Make yourselves wings like eagles to succour him, and refrain from reminding him by a word of his former conduct"

...to be true to the tradition's own teachings on living with disagreement, we have no choice but to engage in the regular spiritual practice of introspection. We must regularly question our own assumptions about which views are truly evil and dangerous. We must consider whether we are responding with arrogance or competitiveness to another's legitimate point of view. We must remind ourselves again and again of the finitude of our own knowledge and vision, cultivating humility in the presence of views widely divergent from our own.

Rabbi Amy Eilberg, From Enemy to Friend, page 126

"David, on his way to fight Goliath, was given the king's armor. For a battle this unequal, with life-and-death stakes, armor made sense. But David removed the armor, for it didn't fit him. This image has stayed with me as a symbol of a key concept: that vulnerability is the greatest weapon if you are brave enough to use it."

"I always teach with an open heart. Not just for moral reasons, but for pragmatic ones—a teacher's open heart makes it possible for students to open their hearts as well."

"When evil threatens the weak, we must fight back. And yet it is true that sometimes the only way to disarm a threat is to be vulnerable, to share our common humanity, in hopes of awakening the humanity of the other."

Ariel Burger, *Witness: Lessons from Elie Wiesel's Classroom*, pages 65 & 67 (Quotes by Elie Wiesel)

Roy Eidelson and Judy Eidelson (Eidelson, Roy, J; Eidelson, Judy I (2003). "Dangerous ideas: Five beliefs that propel groups toward conflict". *American Psychologist* 58 (3): 182-192.) investigated some of the important roles that beliefs may play in triggering or constraining conflict between groups. On the basis of a review of relevant literature, five belief domains stand out as especially noteworthy:

1. Superiority. This core belief revolves around a person's enduring conviction that he or she is better than other people in important ways.
2. Injustice. The perceived mistreatment by specific others or by the world at large.
3. Vulnerability. A person's conviction that he or she is perpetually living in harm's way.
4. Distrust. The presumed hostility and malign intent of others.
5. Helplessness. The conviction that even carefully planned and executed actions will fail to produce desired outcomes.

In the 1970s Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann identified five main styles of dealing with conflict that vary in their degrees of cooperativeness and assertiveness. (Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument. First published Xicom, 1974)

- Competitive: People who tend towards a competitive style take a firm stand, and know what they want.
- Collaborative: People tending towards a collaborative style try to meet the needs of all people involved.
- Compromising: People who prefer a compromising style try to find a solution that will at least partially satisfy everyone.
- Accommodating: This style indicates a willingness to meet the needs of others at the expense of the person's own needs.
- Avoiding: People tending towards this style seek to evade the conflict entirely.

The "Interest-Based Relational (IBR) Approach" is a type of conflict resolution which respects individual differences while helping people avoid becoming too entrenched in a fixed position. (Roger Fisher and William Ury developed the IBR approach and published it in their 1981 book, "Getting to Yes.") In resolving conflict using this approach, you follow these rules:

- Make sure that good relationships are the first priority.
- Keep people and problems separate.
- Pay attention to the interests that are being presented.
- Listen first; talk second.
- Set out the "Facts" - agree and establish the objective, observable elements that will have an impact on the decision.
- Explore options together - be open to the idea that a third position may exist.

The Geneva Peacebuilding Platform is a collaborative 'knowledge hub' or think tank. One theme is that of resilience. Many, if not most studies of resilience, focus on systems, including 'complex adaptive systems.' Their attention is on the ability of any kind of system to cope, adapt, and reorganise in response to a chronic challenge. In this regard, the emphasis on resilience is not a property allowing a system to resist change, or bounce back, but rather to adapt. Consequently, this focuses our attention on the issue of change – how systems respond to change. Reflecting on how this idea can be applied to peacebuilding, what is the relationship between resilience to conflict and change? There are several possibilities:

- Resilience defined as the ability to maintain a positive peace. This is, in essence, local conflict prevention.
- Resilience defined as the ability to manage the process of transforming a negative peace into a positive peace.
- Resilience defined as a quest for status quo ante bellum. When the conflict is over the community works to consolidate peace with the aim of returning to the pre-war dispensation.
- Finally, resilience can be viewed as transformation. This is the most challenging notion arising from discussions of resilience, conflict, and change. Some conflict situations require transformational, rather than incremental change, in systems of representation and structures of power.

Johan Galtung, often described as the 'father of Peace Studies', introduced these three strategies for peace.

Peacekeeping: The dissociative approach. Peacekeeping is often the most urgent and immediate of all peace strategies as the primary aim is to intervene in actual violence and prevent further violence occurring. Peacekeeping strategies deal directly with the actors involved with violence. Peacekeeping approaches are often 'dissociative' – aimed at keeping opponents apart from each other by the use of direct interposition, 'buffer zones', or 'peace zones' but can also include monitoring and observation and protective accompaniment of threatened activists.

Peacemaking: the conflict resolution approach. Peacemaking activities include bringing the parties together in dialogue about a possible resolution to the conflict. Typical peacemaking activities include mediation, conflict resolution workshops and dialog meetings at various levels. There are a wide variety of negotiated, third-party or facilitated approaches. The application of the law would be seen as a peacemaking approach. Focus is on the parties' interests and positions in a conflict and the aim is to shift parties onto the path of positive and nonviolent conflict resolution.

Peacebuilding: the associative approach. It focuses on longer-term change at the attitudinal –social level and changing the structural cause of the violence. Peacebuilding generally has a long-term perspective and includes a huge range of activities and approaches aimed at reducing fear, prejudice and mistrust, humanizing former opponents and building positive relationships. This is often done via mutual social, sport or cultural activities or working on shared concerns. Peacebuilding works to develop a 'peace-culture' where nonviolent methods of dealing with conflict are well socialised and prominent. Psycho/social healing processes such as debriefing, ongoing emotional support for traumatized people, reconciliation processes and ensuring justice is seen to be done is crucial peacebuilding activities after periods of violence.

Further resources

The Fog of Peace; The Human Face of Conflict Resolution by Gabrielle Rifkind & Giandomenico Picco. Pub: I B Taurus 2014

From Enemy to Friend; Jewish Wisdom and the Pursuit of Peace by Rabbi Amy Eilberg. Pub: Orbis Books 2014

Fundamentals of Jewish Conflict Resolution: Traditional Jewish Perspectives on Resolving Interpersonal Conflicts (Studies in Orthodox Judaism) by Howard Kaminsky. Pub. Academic Studies Press 2018

Toward the Other in Nine Talmudic Readings by Emanuel Levinas. Pub: Indiana University Press 1990

The Other by Ryszard Kapuscinski. Pub: Verso 2008

Pardes Center for Judaism and Conflict Resolution - [link](#)

Oxford Process - [link](#)

KROC Institute for International Peace Studies - [link](#)

International Alert - [link](#)

Corymeela - [link](#)

Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School - [link](#)

Leicester Violence Reduction Network (one of 21 around the UK) - [link](#)

Met Police Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Action Plan (one of many from local authorities and police authorities in the UK) - [link](#)



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