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תנ"צ'ב'ה

In loving memory of my father
Israel Kaminsky ז"ל

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Preface

Conflict resolution theorists, who have developed their paradigmatic models of conflict resolution based on Western cultural values and principles of social psychology, have expressed concern about the cultural specificity of their approaches. Their concern is that, in developing their models of conflict resolution, they may have overlooked alternative orientations and perspectives that offer valuable contributions to conflict resolution theory and practice.¹ One of the clearest indications of this is that their models of conflict resolution often fail dismally in addressing the needs of religious communities whose ideologies and values differ significantly from those of Western culture. This realization has sparked a movement that has attempted to integrate conflict resolution theory and religious ethics. Professor Marc Gopin of George Mason University, who is at the forefront of this movement, has forcefully argued that through an understanding of religious approaches to resolving conflict, conflict resolution theorists may not only formulate models of conflict resolution that appeal to even the most traditionally religious groups, they may also come to broaden their own perspectives and incorporate key missing ingredients in the work that they do.²

1 See Morton Deutsch, introduction to *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*, ed. Morton Deutsch and Peter T. Coleman (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 16; and Peter T. Coleman, concluding overview to *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*, ed. Morton Deutsch and Peter T. Coleman (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 595–97.

2 Marc Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence, and Peacemaking* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 152–54, 167–95. See also S. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana, “Ethno-Religious Conflicts: Exploring the Role of Religion in Conflict Resolution,” in *The SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution*, ed. Jacob Bercovitch, Victor Kremenyuk, and I. William Zartman (Los Angeles: Sage

Gopin has specifically bemoaned the fact that there is as of yet no “serious investigation of Jewish tradition” that explicates “a Jewish philosophy of conflict resolution.”³ Even though there exists a diverse and impressive body of literature in Hebrew that offers in-depth analyses of specific aspects of the traditional Jewish approach towards promoting peace and resolving conflict, and there are even a number of more extensive works that cover multiple topics, there is currently no scholarly work that presents in English an in-depth, systematic study of the major components of traditional Judaism’s perspective on conflict resolution. This book will attempt to take a small first step in trying to fill this void by explicating a Jewish paradigm of interpersonal conflict resolution.

The Focal Topic

Conflict resolution theorists, researchers, and practitioners differentiate between and categorize conflicts in a variety of ways. One of the primary ways that they categorize conflicts is to classify them as being either “interpersonal” (a conflict that takes place between two people, e.g., a husband and wife; two friends, neighbors, or coworkers; or two total strangers who meet in the street, and so on) or as being “intergroup” (a conflict that takes place between any two groups, e.g., conflicts between religious factions; social, ethnic, or racial groups; management and labor, and so on). My focus in this work will be on interpersonal conflicts (although for certain chapters one may find multiple applications to intergroup conflicts as well).⁴ Specifically, I will focus on the common, everyday interpersonal

Publications, 2009), 274–78; and Rachel Goldberg and Brian Blancke, “God in the Process: Is There a Place for Religion in Conflict Resolution?” *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* 28, no. 4 (2011): 386, 392.

3 Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon*, 194–95. See also Gerald Steinberg, “Jewish Sources on Conflict Management: Realism and Human Nature,” in *Conflict and Conflict Management in Jewish Sources*, ed. Michal Rones (Ramat Gan, Israel: Program on Conflict Management and Negotiation, Bar-Ilan University, 2008), 10.

4 Social psychologists have highlighted an array of phenomena that interpersonal and intergroup conflicts share. For example, both levels of conflict may accurately be described in terms of their underlying motivations, misunderstandings between the

conflict, and I will attempt to present what I believe to be the essential substance of traditional Jewish thought that relates to the prevention, amelioration, and resolution of such conflicts.⁵

It should be understood that all religious traditions have their own unique perspectives on peace and conflict.⁶ Judaism, with its

parties, breakdowns in communication, parties' tendencies to judge themselves favorably and the other party negatively, abilities to restrain emotional responses, competencies to reconcile differences in a rational and judicious manner, and their capacities to forgive each other (see Morton Deutsch, *The Resolution of Conflict: Constructive and Destructive Processes* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973], 7; and Deutsch, *Handbook of Conflict Resolution*, 6–9). Despite the similarities, there are very significant differences that exist between the dynamics of interpersonal conflicts and those of intergroup conflicts. For example, in intergroup conflicts, the parties exhibit a greater degree of difficulty in empathizing with and taking the other party's perspective, they act more irrationally and aggressively, and conflict escalates faster and to a higher degree than in interpersonal conflicts (see Amelie Mummendey and Sabine Otten, "Aggression: Interaction between Individuals and Social Groups," in *Aggression and Violence: Social Interactionist Perspectives*, ed. Richard B. Felson and James T. Tedeschi [Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1993], 145–67; and Joseph M. Mikolic, John C. Parker, and Dean G. Pruitt, "Escalation in Response to Persistent Annoyance: Groups Versus Individuals and Gender Effects," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 72, no. 1 [1997]: 151–63). Therefore, one would be well advised to not indiscriminately extrapolate from the interpersonal realm to that of the intergroup.

- 5 Even though a good percentage of what I will be discussing could very well be designated as "conflict prevention" or as "conflict management" (a term that is often used in relation to cases in which conflict cannot be totally resolved, but its destructive effects are ameliorated; see, for example, Berghof Foundation, ed., "Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution," in *Berghof Glossary on Conflict Transformation* [Berlin, Germany: Berghof Foundation, 2012], 18), I will be employing the terminology "conflict resolution." This reflects the standard usage of the term *conflict resolution*, which in many contexts encompasses the prevention and management of conflicts as well as their resolution (e.g., "conflict resolution" education teaches skills that are not only meant to resolve conflicts after they have developed but are also supposed to help prevent conflicts from developing and ameliorate the destructive effects of conflicts that cannot be resolved). For discussions of conflict terminology that lend support to the usage of the term *conflict resolution* as an umbrella term that encompasses the prevention, amelioration, and resolution of conflict, see Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse, Hugh Miall, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), 9–10; Berghof Foundation, "Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution," 18; and Karin Aggestam, "Conflict Prevention: Old Wine in New Bottles?" *International Peacekeeping* 10, no. 1 (2003): 20.
- 6 For an overview of works on Jewish perspectives, see Daniel Roth, "Masoret Aharon Rodef Shalom ben Ish le-Ish ke-Model Rabani le-Fiyus" [The Tradition of Aaron Pursuer of Peace between People as a Rabbinic Model of Reconciliation] (PhD diss., Bar-Ilan University, 2012), 1–9. For examples of Christian perspectives, see Ronald G. Musto,

unique halakhic (see Glossary) emphasis on normative standards of behavior, has developed a *sui generis* set of principles and procedures for averting and responding to conflict. Within the vast corpus of traditional Jewish literature, there exists what may be viewed as various complex paradigms (conceptual and methodological models) of conflict resolution. Using the standard classifications of conflict resolution theorists, we may differentiate between Jewish paradigms of conflict resolution that relate to interpersonal conflicts and those that relate to intergroup conflicts, in which each individual paradigm encompasses a set of underlying values, fundamental concepts, prescriptive rules, and guidelines for addressing its specific form of conflict. I intend to traverse the spectrum of traditional Jewish texts and cull from Scripture, Mishnah, Talmud, Midrash, halakhic and ethical literature to elucidate a Jewish paradigm of interpersonal conflict resolution.

The Catholic Peace Tradition (New York: Peace Books, 2002); Ken Sendek, *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004); and Catherine Morris, "Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding: A Selected Bibliography—Christian Perspectives on Conflict Transformation, Nonviolence and Reconciliation," Peacemakers Trust, accessed November 4, 2016, <http://www.peacemakers.ca/bibliography/bib40christian.html>. For Islamic perspectives, see Abdul Aziz Said, Nathan C. Funk, and Ayse S. Kadayifci, *Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam: Precept and Practice* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001); Mohammed Abu-Nimer, *Nonviolence and Peace Building in Islam: Theory and Practice* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2003); and Elias Jabbour, *Sulha: Palestinian Traditional Peacemaking Process* (Montreat, NC: House of Hope Publications, 1996). For Buddhist perspectives, John Ferguson, "Buddhism," in *War and Peace in the World's Religions* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1978); David W. Chappell, *Buddhist Peacework* (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 1999); and Thich Nhat Hanh, *Being Peace* (Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, 1987). For Hinduism, see Rajmohan Ghandi, "Hinduism and Peacebuilding," in *Religion and Peacebuilding*, eds. Harold Coward and Gordon S. Smith (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 45–68; and Dawn Hibbard, "Conflict Resolution and Hinduism," accessed September 11, 2016, <https://www.kettering.edu/news/conflict-resolution-and-hinduism>. Some good general works include Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon*; Harold Coward and Gordon S. Smith, eds., *Religion and Peacebuilding* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004); and R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000).

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