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CREATING A POLITICAL LANGUAGE FOR PEACE:
GRASSROOTS DIALOGUE WITHIN A PEACE PROCESS

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INTRODUCTION

Gradually during the 1990s, the recognition began to surface that creating peace called for a process much broader than an agreement negotiated by political leaders.[1] This insight has many sources. Some were academic and involved the groundbreaking work of former Australian diplomat John Burton. Burton felt that the resolutions of many of the world's most pressing conflicts lay outside the formal paradigms and protocols of diplomatic interaction. Another noticeable contribution was the problem-solving workshops of Herbert Kelman, a Harvard psychologist who has been very instrumental in bringing about better understanding in the Middle East. (Fisher, 1997) The most significant contribution has probably come from Harold Saunders, a career US diplomat. Saunders was involved in the early shuttle diplomacy of Henry Kissinger and participated in mediating the Camp David accords. He was also a central figure in the Dartmouth Conference, the longest continuous bilateral dialogue between US and Soviet citizens during the Cold War. (Saunders, 1991, 1997)

In additions to these contributions, there were also important political events that broadened our understanding of the peacemaking process. One in particular stands out as major turning point. In 1977, as diplomatic progress on the Arab-Israeli front slowed, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat felt that the main obstacle was the Israeli belief that no Arab leader would ever recognize Israel as a state in the Middle East. He decided to visit the Knesset and make a human-to-human appeal. Before the gathered body, he announced:

> *Yet, there remains another wall. This wall constitutes a psychological barrier between us, a barrier of suspicion, a barrier of rejection; a barrier of fear, of deception, a barrier of hallucination without any action, deed or decision. … A barrier of distorted and eroded interpretation of every event and statement. It is this psychological barrier which I describe in official statements as constituting 70% of the whole problem. Today, through my visit, I ask you why don't we stretch out our hands with faith and sincerity so that together we might destroy this barrier?* (Saunders, 1991, p 177)

The negotiating position that Sadat presented in the rest of his speech offered nothing that the Israelis had not heard and for the most part rejected many times before.[2] Still, his message of acceptance of Israel overshadowed the specifics of his proposal.

In less dramatic fashion, the multitude of confidential and behind-the-scenes meetings between Afrikaners and ANC representatives leading to the historic transition in South Africa only adds more creditability to the notion of a peace process.[3] (Waldmeir, 1997) Sri Lanka and the Basque conflict provide citation for similar examples. (Darby & Mac Ginty, 2000) Indeed, the resolution of almost every serious political conflict today is framed in the context of a peace process.

Peace Processes: Confronting the Challenges

A peace process starts many years before negotiators first sit across a table in an effort to strike a deal. It continues long past the moment they emerge from behind closed doors waving the accord they have just signed. The notion of a peace process is also more comprehensive than a narrow focus on conflict resolution, mediation, or conflict management. It is not limited to either a list of institutional reforms or the mechanism of a ceasefire. All of these are obviously important and central parts of a peace process, but they don't capture the full scope of what it involves.

The term *peace process* first arose in the mid 1970s to describe the gradual, systematic approach the United States launched in an effort to bring about peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors. (Quandt, 2001, p1) Since then, the concept has evolved significantly in response to the 38 formal peace settlements that were signed in 33 countries between 1988 and 1998. (Darby & Mac Ginty, 2000, p3) The growing awareness that the political agenda shifts dramatically once a ceasefire has been struck gave rise to a new set of problems not previously encountered. While these difficulties no doubt have features particular to the conflict in which they are embedded, there are nevertheless many commonalities these obstacles share. Some concern contentious political issues involving weapons, political prisoners, policing, human rights, etc. Others have to do with the hurt and suffering that a legacy of violence has left in its wake. Beneath these are cognitive processes common to all human beings that seem to make a thorny problem even more arduous.

My purpose in this paper is to identify and analyze some of the more common and problematic challenges that peace processes face. It would be possible to illustrate these with examples from around the world. However, limiting myself to the Middle East has many advantages since the accounts it offers are both vivid and well known. I also approach this analysis with a background of involvement in Northern Ireland. Thus, the themes that I highlight are closely connected to dynamics that I feel are relevant to this conflict.

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It is generally recognized that a peace process consists of four phases. (Darby, 2001) First, there is a pre-negotiation phase, which usually involves secret meetings and behind the scenes maneuvering. It is always a controversial time with various strands of activity coming together. Next is the ending violence or ceasefire phase in which the participants declare a truce. However, a ceasefire by itself never brings a complete halt to violence since political violence tends to reappear in other forms. Third, negotiations to reach a political agreement begin, and, unless successful, the peace process will usually breakdown at this juncture. Finally, the parties enter a protracted phase of implementation and post-settlement peace-building, which may not necessarily have a clear endpoint.

Movement between and within these stages is never clear-cut or linear. There will be reversal and stalemates with some activities occurring simultaneously with others in a different phase. Sometimes, developments that are linked in various ways occur at significantly different speeds. Some scholars have concluded that engagement in a peace process is like climbing a mountain range. (Darby, 2001) Peaks are always appearing over what you thought was the summit. At times, mountains seem to appear out of nowhere. People who may have previously been at each other's throats are now roped together. Furthermore, there appear to be no reliable guidebooks and few established skills to draw upon. Climbing a mountain range is not the same as traversing an obvious sequence of previously surveyed hills.

As if the first three stages geared toward reaching an agreement weren't hard enough, people have recently begun to recognize more fully the overwhelming complexity and enormous difficulty involved in the implementation and peace-building stage. (Stedman, Rothchild, Cousens, 2002) While the emphasis in this final phase is usually on political and economic development and institutional reform, two underlying objectives, which often seem to be at cross purposes, are paramount. It is critical that former militants be reintegrated back into society, a task that becomes even more difficult if the conflict has extended over multiple generations. Younger people, who have never known anything but the conflict, have no former positions in society to which they can return. In addition, some way must be found to address the hurt, pain, and loss of those who have been injured or who have lost loved ones. Quite often, these victims have suffered their tragedy at the hands of those who have been targeted for reintegration back into the society. They resent what appears to them as special treatment, especially since many believe that former combatants are simply criminals deserving severe punishment. Clearly, the tension between these two goals creates treacherous pitfalls for the peace process.

The Middle East offers a stunning example of what can happen when deep-seated fears and mistrust are either neglected or manipulated by political leaders. While the negotiations initiated in Madrid and Oslo did much to move a resolution of the conflict forward, progress has remained deadlocked since 1996

largely because grassroots people on both sides have been unable to overcome their sense of insecurity and develop the trust needed to end the conflict.[4] Many continue to see themselves as the innocent victims of vindictive attacks by their enemy and thus make little effort to look at the conflict from the perspective of the other side. Moreover, a significant number still believe that the land belongs exclusively to them and therefore refuse to entertain the painful, yet necessary steps that must be taken toward peace. The vast majority remain only superficially aware of the feelings and aspirations that motivate the other side. Furthermore, faced with the uncertainty of peace, each chooses to preserve its own internal unity rather than risk division over the contentious issues that must be addressed as part of a peace settlement. In an important analysis, Tamar Hermann and David Newman argue that the failure to reach a settlement lies with the deeply rooted perceptions and beliefs of the populations at large rather than with any particular political leader. (Hermann & Newman, 2000)

The Important Role of Dialogue

At every stage, but particularly in the implementation phase, events and activities that may not appear greatly significant at the time often play a critical role in advancing a peace processes. One feature that may not be fully appreciated but actually has a central role is dialogue – the many conversations that crop up at various levels throughout the society and in a bewildering number of settings. Quite often, dialogue appears to move at cross-purposes to the goal of peace since it seems to highlight rather than resolve disagreements. However, the cumulative effect of these exchanges is almost always positive. It may not lead directly to a breakthrough or even to an improved sense of political partnership. Still, it is hard to imagine progress without these conversations taking place.

An important and necessary tension exists between dialogue and a peace process. In general, the goal of dialogue is greater understanding while the purpose of a peace process is to create productive political relationships. Although greater understanding can help advance a peace process, it is sometimes overlooked that greater understanding can also lead to deeper alienation. After an extensive conversation, one side may conclude that reaching common ground is actually more impossible than it had initially thought. However, this may help clarify the steps needed to move forward. The task is to identify the conversations that hold the greatest promise of being constructive.

The question of whether to engage in dialogue or not is always center stage in a peace process. The need to create a better future is obviously one of the more compelling reasons for dialogue. Still, people who refuse to enter into dialogue may also have legitimate reasons for their decisions. My purpose is not to list and assess the points for and against dialogue. Instead, I want to identify two reasons for entering dialogue that seem fundamental in that they are also the base-line motives for engaging in a peace process.

In a divided society, most people are painfully aware that it is impossible to do the things that they most want to do without also impinging on what the other side wants to do. In other words, whenever we engage in something important, it invariably seems to interfere with what the other side thinks is important. There are obviously more academic ways to say it, but in essence we get in each other's hair most of the time – and we do so sometimes in ways that appear almost unimaginable. This realization gives rise to the recognition that we aren't going to get what we want without the other side's cooperation.

There is more to this first reason for entering dialogue than may initially meet the eye. If we can accomplish all that we want by ourselves – or at least enough of it so that we can live with the results – then we really have nothing substantive to talk about. The need to dialogue arises only when we can't achieve what we want on our own. On these occasions, we need to entice someone, who may not be so inclined, to help us out. Among other things, dialogue is about figuring out what we can reasonably expect given that other people disagree with our basic objectives. It enables us to explore the human stories that give rise to political positions that veto our getting on with our lives in the way we want to. It creates an opportunity for us to probe beneath political rhetoric in order to identify interests that might find common cause with our own. Put straightforwardly, dialogue allows us to discover what it might take to get the other side to cooperate – or alternatively not to interfere – in our endeavors. (Although it is concerned with negotiation rather than dialogue per se, this is basically the famous *getting to yes* approach.)

The second reason for entering dialogue involves the recognition that the other side is not going away. They are here to stay and will have to be dealt with. We may prefer otherwise, but wishing them away is a pipedream. Dialogue is not about doing away with differences but about discovering a way to live with differences. The long-term hope is some of these differences might be resolved, but a more realistic goal is simply to find a way to make them less important. Often this is done by discovering things that have the potential to become more important. However, this can be a long and slow process, but dialogue is often the only reliable means.

While some people may enter into dialogue out of more virtuous interests or convictions, the base-line reasons nevertheless remain these two: (1) we can only accomplish what we want if the other side comes along and (2) the other side is not going away. These reasons overlap those for engaging in a peace process in the sense that a peace process is about creating what is possible given (1) that neither side is going to win and thus achieve its goal by imposing its will and (2) that the opposing interests must be managed, resolved or transformed because neither side is going to disappear. (Darby, 2001) These parallel set of conditions give rise to both the need for dialogue and the need for a peace process. If either set of conditions didn't apply, then dialogue and a peace process might be avoided. To the extent that neither set can be overturned, we have no recourse except dialogue and political engagement.

* * *

Dialogue can occur at many levels within a divided society. Most often media attention focuses upon the interactions between opposing political leaders. While these exchanges are important particularly at critical stages in the negotiation process, dialogue at the grassroots can play an equally decisive role in determining the pace at which a peace process unfolds. Indeed, lack of engagement within local communities can undermine the far-sighted plans of leading politicians if these constituencies simply veto any efforts to reach accommodation. In crucial ways, a peace process can accomplish no more than that to which the grassroots has implicitly given its consent.

From this perspective, the work of Community Dialogue (CD) in Northern Ireland could not appear more important. In fostering grassroots interaction, CD proposes that dialogue should center on three questions:

1. What do you want?
2. Why do you want it?
3. What can you live with given that others disagree?

While each is important in its own way, the last is critical. In this question, dialogue intersects with the peace process. The task is to explore what we can reasonably expect knowing that other people have different and sometimes conflicting interests and concerns. In confronting this challenge, we are thrown back to the first two questions and forced to reassess our answers. How we reaffirm or modify our positions may be less important than the act of critical engagement and assessment itself. As a result, we take charge of formulating our own view and positions and begin to develop the language we will need to live with our differences. This is the dialogue process, and its purpose is to empower each of us to create a history and culture that we can call our own.

Exploring the Shape of Peaceful Relationships

At critical points along the way, the dialogue process seems to stall. We run through the issues over and over like a car spinning its wheels. There is plenty of activity, but we don't seem to experience any movement. The work of Latin American educator Paulo Freire on the role of dialogue in education casts an insightful eye on this dilemma. (Freire, 1970; Freire, 1997) Freire was born to a middle class family in Recife, Brazil, the home to extreme poverty and underdevelopment. During his youth, Freire's family suffered financial ruin, and he found himself sharing the plight of the poor. As a result, he experienced first hand the pain and frustration of being left behind in education and schooled in what he later called a *culture of silence*. His entire life as an educator was dedicated to overcoming the passive indoctrination that the education process instilled in students.

For Freire, the goal of education is to empower people to become the creators of their own history and culture. This transformation occurs when they cease to be spectators and begin to name and recreate the world using a language grounded in their own experience. At the heart of this educational process are problem-posing and dialogue, and the decisive moment occurs when the students begin asking themselves what they wish to dialogue about. (Freire, 1970, p81-82) The dialogical encounter is the practice of freedom in which people critically engage each other in an effort to know more than they currently do. In doing so, they embrace their historical vocation to become more fully human.

For my purposes, the key element in Freire's discussion of dialogue is generative themes. Generative themes arise from the way we perceive the world and disclose a web of meaning through which we interpret reality. (Freire, 1970, p86) They are generative because they unfold into multitudes of other themes that comprise our personal and collective lives. The dialogical investigation of these themes opens up aspects of our world that have been previously closed off to us. The themes themselves do not offer answers in the standard sort of way. Instead, they expose new possibilities for us to create our own answers. Freire maintains that until we explore these themes through dialogue engagement they will continue to stand in the way of our moving forward. In what follows, I offer four generative themes around which dialogue within a peace process might take shape.

* * *

Many years ago, the influential social psychologist Kurt Lewin, a German Jew who fled to the US during the rise of Nazism, began studying how to de-Nazify German society even as the battles of WWII were still raging. He introduced the notion of viewing societies in transition as force fields. (Lewin, 1999; Lewin 1997) There would be forces pushing for change as well as forces resisting these efforts. This insight led him to think about ways that he could remove or lessen the resistance to change that these forces put up. One helpful way to think about these resisting forces is to view them as *barriers*. (Mnookin & Ross, 1995)

Some of the most formidable barriers resisting the resolution of conflict involve psychological processes that pertain to the way we human beings perceive and understand the world around us. In other words, they are a product of the things that make us human. They are not necessarily the creation of evil designs or malicious intent. We encounter them as a consequence of the way we go about our daily business. For example, most people in a divided society want things to be peaceful. They want to be free to cherish their hopes and aspirations and left alone to mourn their losses. Moreover, they also care deeply about the justice and fairness of their lives. Indeed, these esteemed enterprises collectively comprise some of our most cherished ideals. Not to honor them so would somehow diminish our humanity. Still, these quite normal and indeed admirable qualities can give rise to some of the most intractable obstacles.

This notion of barriers intersects creatively with the emphasis that Freire placed on generative themes. [5] Indeed, an analysis of these simple but formidable hurdles associated with the human aspiration noted above – wanting things to be peaceful, cherishing hopes and aspirations, mourning losses, and caring about justice – identifies the outline of the generative themes that I want to explore. As I investigate these barriers, I want to focus on ways of overcoming them and offer suggestions on what advancing the peace process may mean.

* * *

Dialogue intersects with a peace process when groups and individuals come together to explore the question of how to construct ways to live with the differences that have been the source of conflict. This type of exchange is often a visionary enterprise that attempts to construct creative deals not yet on the political agenda of either party. It tried to identify breakthrough compromises and place them in the context of plausible accommodation. Indeed, their purpose is often to float proposals with the hope that they may begin to attract political backing. However, a much more subtle process is often also going on concurrently. In it, people begin scoping out the shape of the relationship that might get them to the agreements under consideration.

In many conflicts like the Middle East, the blueprint of what the settlement will look like – if there is to be a settlement – is relatively apparent and well-known. [6] What is far from clear is the nature of the relationship that could get the parties to this settlement. In the themes that I explore below, I am making an explicit shift from focusing on the outlines of a settlement to the mapping of the relationship that is needed to reach a settlement. My intention is to help the parties identify crucial elements and investigate their implications.

In what follows, I offer four generative themes around which dialogue within a peace process might take shape. They are: (1) the peace question, (2) open and closed agreements, (3) the problem of loss, and (4) just entitlements. There are no doubt others that could and should be added to this list. The role of blame and the issue of identity are very good candidates. Still, these four provide a start. In identifying these, I am suggesting that how people in divided societies come to terms with these themes will determine how they will ultimately create ways to live or not live with their differences.

At the end of each section, I have listed a set of questions that are designed to help explore more fully their impact.[7] In setting forth these questions, I do not intend to tell anyone what opinions he or she should hold. My sole contention is that engaging these questions is important. The conclusions that people reach should be their own. No one can tell someone else what he or she should think or feel about the challenges a peace process presents. I only maintain that finding your own position on these matters is critical for the sole reason that you will live with the consequences.

Two Transitional Comments

There is one concept that needs noting at the start because it runs throughout my analysis as a whole. This is the notion of naïve realism, and it concerns three related convictions about the commonsense way we see the world. (Ross & Ward, 1996)

1) We see the world pretty much as it really is. Our perceptions are relatively unbiased by self-interest or ideology and are not colored by powerful emotions or experience. The unique or special experiences that we have had help us to see more clearly and more deeply into the truth of the world before us.

2) Other people who are fair and intelligent will generally come to share our views on the nature of reality to the extent that they are provided with the right kind of information and assess it in an open-minded and thoughtful manner.

3) When people fail to come to the same conclusions that we have, it is the result of at least one of the following reasons:
    a) They have not received the right information.
    b) They have not made the effort to analyze the information properly.
    c) They are influenced by self-interest, ideology, or other distorting personal biases.

Naïve realism hints at a situation that people engaged in political dialogue often encounter. Ideally, we want both to hear the views of the other side and to present more clearly our own views. Naïve realism suggests that neither of these happens as cleanly as we might hope. We will have a tendency to attribute the differences that we have with those with whom we disagree to things like lack of important information, biased assessment, or other personal distortions rather than to real differences in perception. As a result, we will be inclined to overestimate impact of dialogue on the other side's views and to underestimate the significance of these differences when it comes to reassessing our own views.

Still, a very difficult problem arises in relationship to the third tenet. This contention maintains that the failure of the other side to see "reality as it really is" – that is, reality as we see it – must reflect distorting influences about which they may or may not be conscious. While it is possible to attribute these factors to relatively innocent motives, we are more likely to ascribe malevolent intentions to our adversaries. The important point is that we need to explain the persistence of disagreement to ourselves and that this explanation becomes a factor in the disagreement itself. Where relationships have a history of acrimonious and contentious interactions, the effect of this explication is likely to be negative, thereby

adding fuel to an already raging fire. This downward spiral is especially the case when the dialogue is a public exchange taking place within general political discourse.

However, when dialogue consists of personal, face-to-face interactions, a different path can open up. It begins with the recognition that the sources of our disagreements lie in the things that make both of us human, rather than in devious and malicious designs. While it is true that others do see the world through biased and self-interested lenses, it is also the case that we do the same. Particular events do distort their perceptions, but our experiences also influence our own points of view. We do gain insight and understanding from the things that have happened to us, and they do so as well. We can't simply jump out of our skins and onto a transcendent plane, but we can take a more sympathetic and serious view of the factors that lead to our disagreements.

In taking this stance, we are not giving up on truth or adopting the position that everything is relative. Rather we begin with the belief that while we may differ, our disagreements arise from authentic points of view that reflect our lives and our histories. In other words, we disagree because we both value friendships and family, want to see justice served, respect fair play, admire compassion for the less fortunate, and hold personal responsibility in the highest regard. This list might go on to cover a host of attributes that we revere. Our views are authentic because they reflect these noble qualities as well as others that we also share which make us less angelic. The goal of this kind of dialogue is not that we necessarily come to agree, but that we disagree in a more insightful and constructive way.

* * *

One final caveat concerning peace processes needs discussion. Avishai Margalit notes that the term *peace process* can viewed as an unbreakable compound.[8] For example, to say that someone is an intellectual dwarf does not imply that he or she is either an intellectual or a dwarf. The two words combine to form a new meaning that must be taken as a whole and cannot be broken into its parts without changing the sense. As an unbreakable compound, the peace process indicates neither peace nor process *per se*. Instead, it refers to neither peace nor war but to a state suspended between the two. Likewise, it signifies neither a complete halt of unfolding events nor a dynamic process leading to a peaceful end-state. Again, the image of a car stuck in mud spinning its wheels is apt.

The danger inherent in any peace process is that it will become as protracted as the conflicts it seeks to address. (Darby & Mac Ginty, 2003, p3) Often, the failure to resolve root causes results in new grievances being added to old. Indeed, the flourish of activity surrounding a peace process can give the false impression that progress has been made when, in fact, the parties have only become more entrenched in their partisan positions. John Darby and Roger Mac Ginty cite the example of judicial reform, which may involve enormous effort but may do little to alter perceptions that the law functions for one community and against another. (p3) In the end, the peace process takes a semi-permanent form with a diminishing capacity to effect genuine change. Caught in this quagmire, it becomes a venue for protagonists to stall, evade, quibble, hedge, and thereby stymie serious peacemaking initiatives. It evolves into a forum that stokes the flames of conflict that spill out often violently into the wide community.

Commenting on Israeli perceptions as they entered the 1991 Madrid Talks, Meron Benvenisti notes, "They yearned for peace as the realization of a prophetic vision, not as a system of concrete arrangements tied down to the real world." (Benvenisti, 1995, p155)The painful concessions that real peace would require failed to receive serious attention. As a result, it deferred adjustments that accommodation would compel and postponed inconveniences that tolerance would impose. It allowed the parties to have their cake and eat it too – or more precisely, to enjoy supposed triumphs imposed on their enemies that were nothing more than pure fantasy. The peace process establishes an illusion of a peace that does not cost, and because it does not exact a price, it does not exist.

In a TV news report following one of the many setbacks in the Middle East, a dejected Palestinian responded that what they needed was more peace and less process.[9] Perched between war and peace and between stagnation and movement, a peace process can be helpful in the short-term since it engages the parties in less violent, if not non-violent, activities. However, unless there is eventual progress toward a

more stable situation, the long-term outcome may prove disastrous, as expectations that peaceful relationships will necessarily evolve are dashed.

It may be that every peace process must go through this stage at some point. There will always be some unrealistic moment in time when the possibility of peace exclusively on our own terms seems high. It is the best of all possible worlds – a time before unavoidable costs and inescapable compromises are confronted. A peace process can get stuck in this utopia or it can push forward toward a disappointing but nevertheless real peace. Certainly, the Oslo accords found this realm both seductive and fraudulent. The engagement that I am proposing here attempts to advance the peace process beyond this stalled phase by envisioning the relationships that might have a realistic chance of creating the possibility of peace.

THE PEACE QUESTION

Many people assume that conflict in divided societies is the result of an insufficient commitment to peace. While this may be true sometimes, there are far more instances in which it is most likely not the case. Indeed, almost everywhere, peace seems to be foremost on people's mind, and their dedication to it is often quite passionate. Moreover, hotly contested issues, especially those that have an imminent threat of violence, often have the effect of strengthening people's devotion to peace, especially to their own particular version of what peace should look like. Instead, the causes of conflict appear to be with the nature of the peace people seek rather than in their level of commitment to it.

Take for example the Middle East. It seems that there are several visions of a peaceful future clamoring for allegiance. For the most part, the settlers and many members of the Israeli right envision a safe, secure, and prosperous homeland comprised of Israel proper, the West Bank, and Gaza.[10] In it, Jews live just and non-violent lives, free from anti-Semitic assaults and the threat of a future Auschwitz. Another vision of peace arises from the aspirations of Hamas and Islamic Jihad. (Mishal & Sela, 2000, p3; pp175-199) In it, the state of Palestine stretches from the Jordan border to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.[11] Palestinians live just and non-violent lives, free from the horrors and oppression of the 1948 catastrophe – *al-Nakba* – in which their historical homeland was stolen from them. They also live for *al-Awda* – The Return – a gigantic in-gathering of Palestinian to retake possession of their belongs "from the river to the sea." (Benvenisti, 1995, pp205-206) Israeli political essayist Amos Elon calls these two versions Greater Israel and Greater Palestine and notes the mutual veto that each holds over the other. (Elon, 2002)

Finally, there is a vision of the future that consists of two states living side by side. While there are several versions, all entails some close approximation of the Clinton Plan. (Margalit, 2001) Recently, the International Crisis Groups, a well-known and respected private multinational organization, issued what is perhaps the most detailed and realist vision of a comprehensive settlement that takes off from the Clinton proposals and the progress made at Taba. It roughly calls for the establishment of a Palestinian state based on the borers of June 4, 1967 with an exchange of up to 4 % equal value land to accommodate settlers and security concerns. The Palestinian state will be non-militarized, and a US-led multinational team will monitor the implementation of the agreement. A special regime will govern the Old City with West Jerusalem and Jewish neighborhood of East Jerusalem as the capital of Israeli and the Arab communities of East Jerusalem as Palestine's capital. Haram al-Sharif (Temple Mount) will be under Palestinian sovereignty, and Kotel (Western Wall) will fall under Israeli rule. By offering the Palestinians a menu of choices regarding reparations and/or resettlement, the refugee issue will be resolved in ways that take into account Palestinians' sense of a terrible injustice while honoring Israels demographic concerns.[12] Finally, this agreement will mark the end of the conflict.[13] Thus, by mutual consent, both Israelis and Palestinians will have to accept difficult compromises that each feels, quite understandably, to be unjust. Still, both will manage to live just and non-violent lives to the greatest extent possible within the constraints they have adopted.

The fact that each of the visions is linked with assertions that it offers the possibility for certain people, if not everybody, to live just and non-violent lives is important to note. People tend to think of peace as the expression of this quality. Peace means that Israelis live just and non-violent lives or that Palestinians live just and non-violent lives or that both live as justly and non-violently as possible given that they have to live with each other. The first two visions are conceptually the same in the sense that there are essentially no Palestinians in the first and that there are essentially no Israelis in the second. These conceptions represent the victory of one side over the other and differ only in who wins and who loses. The third offers what may be the only feasible option for both sides to live together in something resembling a minimal level of peace without total victory. The conflict in the Middle East is the result of more people being more committed to one of the first two visions of peace than think the last is viable.[15]

The Problem of Enemies

The conflict in the Middle East arises from the contradictory promises that the British made to Jews and Arabs during the course of WW1. During the height of the campaign, British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour issued a letter to Lord Rothschild, a prominent British Zionist, pledging support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. About the same time, the Hashemite rulers of Mecca received assurances that Arab areas would be granted independence in return for armed resistance against Turkish forces fighting for the Axis powers. Preoccupied with marshaling the force needed to defeat Germany, the British apparently failed to consider sufficiently the clash of aspirations that they were setting in motion. Commenting on the post-WW1 settlement in the region, British Field Marshal Earl Wavell probably got it right when he called it "a peace to end all peace." (Shlaim, 1995, p18)

Still, these conflicting aspirations have deeper and even more entangled roots. The Jewish hope for a homeland took concrete political form in response to the vicious pogroms – "devastation" in Russian – that that transpired in Russia during the latter part of the 19th century. Most of the world's Jews lived in a part of the Russian Empire known as the Pale of Settlement. Basic freedoms were either denied or curtailed, and poverty and discrimination were widespread. Bad as conditions were, things took a turn for the worse in 1881 when a band of young revolutionaries assassinated Czar Alexander II. A wave of violence swept across the Jewish communities of Russia as they became the targeted scapegoats. Moreover, a set of crushing legislations followed these pogroms resulting in the rapid impoverishment of virtually the entire Jewish population. These events effectively destroyed all hope that Jews had for their emancipation and ultimate assimilation within Russia. As a result, the emerging Zionist movement gained greater momentum and prominence as many began to seek a way out of the beleaguered shtetls of Eastern Europe. (Morris, 2001, pp14-17)

As most Jews concluded that life in Russia was no longer tenable, many started emigrating. While their principal destination was the United States, a small but increasingly significant number chose to join their religious brothers and sisters already living in Palestine.[16] This first movement of Jews into Palestinian territory in the years between 1881 and 1903 launched what became know as the First Aliyah. (Morris, 2001, p19) A second and larger wave of emigration came in response to the even more savage pogroms of 1903-6. Many of these new exiles were members of the self-defense groups that had formed to protect Jews from marauding Russians, and they translated their Russian experiences into a Palestinian idiom whereby Palestinians became the new Russian gentiles, local confrontations became pogroms, and territorial feuding and antagonisms became anti-Semitism. (p25) Although Zionist leaders made public references to the effect that Jewish immigration posed no threat to the local Arab population, more than a few expressed in private that the displacement and transfer of the Palestinians – albeit with full and fair compensation – seemed increasingly unavoidable. (p21)

Not surprisingly, the buying and selling of land set in motion a counter dynamic within the Arabs of Palestine. Although Palestine was not a separate district in the Ottoman Empire until 1881, the common Muslim and Christian religious practices and structures related to its being the Holy Land helped give rise to a distinctive identity. Still, the birth of Palestinian national identity cannot be separated from reactions to increasing Zionist ownership of the land. Absentee proprietors living outside Palestine owned much of the land that was available for purchase by the incoming Jews. (p5) These sales displaced local Palestinian

tenants who had the right by custom to work the land and had deep feelings of attachment to it. Moreover, these new Jewish immigrants cared little about learning to read and write in Arabic or about honoring Arab customs and mores. (p45) Consequently, everything about them seemed different, provocative, and thus a threat to the Arab character of the region. As a result, the Palestinians feared – and rightly so – their displacement from what they now saw as their historic homeland.

Historian Benny Morris summarizes the conflict that arose during the period in the following perceptive way:

> (T)he major cause of tension and violence throughout the period 1882-1914 was not accidents, misunderstandings, or attitudes and behaviors of either side, but objective historical conditions and the conflicting interests and goals of the two populations. The Arabs sought instinctively to retain the Arab and Muslim character of the region and to maintain their position as rightful inhabitants; the Zionists sought radically to change the status quo, buying as much land as possible, settling on it, and eventually turn an Arab-populated country into a Jewish homeland. (Morris, 2001, p49)

Similarly, Mark Tessler, an historian who wants to give greater weight to the possibility that the violent clashes of later years might have been averted, also argued that "(t)here were both systemic obstacles to Arab-Jewish accommodation and fundamental interests that, at least in part, were truly incompatible." (Tessler, 1994, p165) While these two historians differ on the degree to which the conflict between Jews and Palestinians was inherently zero-sum, both provide clear evidence that the dynamics set in motion during this period eventually became the enemy relationship that came to dominate Palestinian and Israeli interactions.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

In *The Concept of the Political*, Carl Schmitt develops a technical, but important, definition of the enemy. For him, politics concerns the degrees of association and dissociation that exist between communities, and the enemy represents the most extreme form of distancing. The enemy is *other*, *different*, *alien*, and *strange* to the extent that no commonality exists. The breach between us and them is total, and this severance produces an unmitigated threat to our existence. Enemies seek the destruction of our way of life. Their mere existence portends the negation of who we are, our existential being, our identity both individually and as a people. The preservation of our political and social life is now at issue in even the most minor disputes. To think of compromise is perilous; to countenance forbearance is dangerously unwise – because all disagreements are pushed to the extreme. By definition, the enemy is a foe who puts our very being at risk.

If enemies are those who seek our destruction, then the hate, distrust, fear, abhorrence, and revulsion that we usually feel toward enemies are mere add-ons that are not essential in any fundamental sense. In other words, the emotions associated with enemies may add fuel for the fire, but they are not the fire itself. The only essential core requirement for enemies in addition to the formal qualification that they seek our destruction is the rise of a heightened expectation that real killing will take place. Indeed, within enemy relationships, killing and violence may appear as urgent self-defense imperatives because our own lives seem at stake.

No doubt, countless citations from the Middle East would illustrate emerging enemy relationships as Schmitt describes them. Two from the years just after WW1 seem to capture their absolutist character in an especially unambiguous way. In 1919, when the extent of the brewing conflict was just becoming fully apparent, representatives of the Jaffa Muslim-Christian Association summed up their assessment of the crisis they were facing in the following statement: "We will push the Zionists into the sea – or they will send us back into the desert." (Morris, 2001, p90) The zero-sum quality of this perspective is disconcertingly prescient. A 1925 editorial in a Arab newspaper declared: "The weeping of the Jews by the Wailing Wall and their kisses do not come of their love for the wall, but from their secret desire to win control of the Haram a-Sharif, as everyone knows." (Benvenisti, 1995, p5) The same can be said for comments made by the future first Prime Minister of Israeli, David Ben-Gurion to the Yishuv's main governing body in same year: "We, as a nation, want this country to be ours; the Arabs, as a nation, want

this country to be theirs." (Morris, 2001, p90) In similar fashion, Chaim Weizmann told the Paris Peace Conference that Palestine would eventually become "as Jewish as England was English." (Tessler, 1994, p167)

Perhaps the most stunning illustration of the all or nothing character of enemy relationships came from Ben-Gurion's chief aide, Moshe Shertok, who wrote to friends in Tel Aviv on February 14, 1914:

> *We have forgotten that we have not come to an empty land to inherit it, but we have come to conquer a country from a people inhabiting it, that governs it by virtue of its language and savage culture. … Recently, there has been appearing in our newspapers the clarification about "the mutual misunderstanding" between us and the Arabs, about "common interests" [and] about "the possibility of unity and peace between the two fraternal peoples." … [But] we must not allow ourselves to be deluded by such illusive hopes … for if we cease to look upon our land, the Land of Israel, as ours alone and we allow a partner into our estate – all content and meaning will be lost to our enterprise.* (HaAretz, Friday Supplement, December 1, 1995; Morris, 2001, p91)

Although countless Palestinian pronouncements mirror these extreme sentiments, few could present the essence of enemy perceptions as starkly or as eloquently. My point is not that every Jew or Arab in Palestine harbored feeling of enmity to this extent, but rather that Shertok's views clearly underscore degree of alienation and dissociation that Schmitt's notion of enemies connotes.

Thus, between enemies, peace appears utterly and completely impossible. In fact, the mere presence of the enemy seems to signify the negation of all that we consider peaceful. Moreover, peace arises as a serious possibility only when we are able to remove or neutralize the threat to our survival that the enemy violently denotes. Only two possibilities exist: we either defeat enemies or transform them into some other agonistic, but non-violent, political opponent. The problem of peace in the Middle East – and in many other situations of prolonged conflict – is that neither option appears feasible.

While the moral and political dilemmas that attend the decision to attempt to defeat our enemies are relatively straightforward, the difficulties we face in choosing to remake our enemies into some other less destructive political adversary are much more complex. The problem begins with the recognition that, with enemies, there is nothing of substance to talk about. What do you discuss with people who are doing their utmost to bring about your destruction? The shift from enemy to rival occurs when the parties discover that they have a mutual stake in something.[17] This common ground becomes the basis for dialogue. You may still be far away from being actual friends, but because you have something in common to talk about, you have left war and entered politics. Politics is not necessarily about agreement; it is instead about constructing a way to live with differences.

Remaking Enemies: An Inclusive Vision of a Non-humiliating Peace

As noted earlier, parties enter conflict because of their commitment to peace and thus bring to the conflict a well-developed language of peace. This language is forged on the anvil of the conflict and functions to sustain the parties as they engage in conflict. (Bar-Tal, 2000) It is well-honed on the sharpening stone of threatened values, identity, and exclusive aspirations. What this language does not provide is a foundation for accommodation, compromise, and tolerance.

One of the critical elements in the move away from enemy relationship is the development of a new language of peace. Rather than articulating singular claims, this language must express the possibility of common ground and joint aspirations. It must describe the necessity of making a place for the other in our hopes for the future. It must enunciate a spirit of accommodation and cooperation within a framework of outstanding differences. This new language of peace must disclose possibilities that do not yet exist. It must restore hope within the context of diminished hopes.

* * *

It is hard to imagine Palestinians cooperating with Israelis who see peace as a greater Israel because their vision puts forward a future that most Palestinians could not bear – or more accurately, it offers them no future since they are not even in the picture.[18] It is the same for Israelis with Palestinians who see peace as a greater Palestine. From their respective perspectives, no settlement is better than the settlement proposed by the other side because it envisions a future that is intolerable.[19] Only the two-state vision of peace takes the other side into account, and the question is whether either side would find this vision of a peaceful future bearable. This question leads to what we call the *peace question*: where is each side in the other's vision of the future and are they there in ways that they would find tolerable, if not ideal?

There are many questions beside the *peace question* that impact events in the Middle East. One is the justice question: to what are people justly entitled? Another is the security question: how should people defend against things that threaten them? A third pertains to legitimate and illegitimate aspirations. Also, related to this are questions concerning identity and culture. Still, the *peace question* seems fundamental not in the sense that it is more important, but that consensus around the other questions often depends upon the parties answering this question to each other's satisfaction.

A serious exploration of the *peace question* can often lead to a subtle, but very significant, insight. When asked about their view of the place of the other side in their vision of the future, many will say that they want for the other what they want for themselves. It's a fair response. Still, this gesture, even when authentically magnanimous, is ultimately insufficient. Instead of wanting for the other what we want for ourselves, we must want for the other side *what they want for themselves*. What each side wants might be different, and this difference could be significant.

However, this outcome may set the mark too high. For quite legitimate reasons, some may be incapable of wanting anything for the other that requires their active assistance or collaboration. Instead, they may be unable to consider anything more than limiting their own actions so as not to interfere directly with the other side's pursuit of its goals. While this lowering of the bar scales back considerably the impact that the peace question can have, it may prove more realistic in the end. In any case, the importance of addressing the place of the other in relationship to our own aspirations remains paramount.

The *peace question* does not necessarily call for good will. While not denying the value of benevolent or charitable ideals, the goal may be exceedingly minimal when measured against them. The baseline may involve nothing more than a move from active to Platonic hate.[20] The concept of a non-humiliating peace is relevant to this shift. In *The Decent Society*, Avishai Margalit argues that humiliation is the rejection of human beings from the human commonwealth. (Margalit, 1996) In rejecting them, we treat human beings as if they were not human, in other words, as sub-humans. Humiliation occurs when we fail to see human beings as embodying psychological states, when we deny them a sense of legitimate belonging or place, and when we deny them basic control over their affairs. It is a rich concept full of subtle and diverse meanings. The peace we seek may not afford others all that that they want or feel they deserve, but it must avoid these indignities of humiliation.

The critical significance of envisioning a peace that does not humiliate arises against the backdrop of the failed Oslo accords. While their collapse was due to many causes, none is more fundamental than the humiliation it institutionalized in the daily life of Palestinians. (Margalit, 2003) Under these provisions, the Israelis broke the West Bank into regions that were classified according to security arrangements. While Palestinians had previously moved freely within the West Bank, they were now subject to checkpoints and searches when they moved from one region to another. The Palestinians experienced this constant intrusion into their lives as a daily reminder of their tenuous status under Israeli occupation. It also reinforced their already overwhelming sense of subjugation, hammering home the unmistakable message that they had been granted only minuscule control over their own affairs. When these humiliations became unbearable, so did the peace of which they were a part. The unshakeable sense of being relentlessly humiliated goes along way toward explaining the vehement Palestinian hate that erupted in *Intifada II*.

The idea of a non-humiliating peace presents us with a moral challenge that other notions of peace do not. From a moral perspective, we may not owe someone accommodation or tolerance because their actions may be beyond the permissible or not worthy of forbearance. However, even in these instances, we

have a responsibility to treat them in ways that do not humiliate them. A non-humiliating peace does not necessarily start as an accommodating or a tolerating peace, but it offers a base upon which grander schemes might arise. In fact, when all else fails, non-humiliation provides bedrock.

Still, a non-humiliating peace must take shape around something more politically concrete than subjective assessments of personal standing and mortal challenges to respect human dignity. To include a person in the human commonwealth is literally to give them a place in the body politic. It calls for more than forbearance if or when they happen to be present, but instead compels us to insist on their participation even as we vehemently oppose their every move. It is the recognition that the body politic without their inclusion will remain forever incomplete, and thus the politics that we need to make everyday life livable will continually fail us. We may spend every moment of every day working against what they most want to achieve, but we grant them a place at the table. Clearly, a non-humiliating peace cannot ask us to endorse goals that fundamentally undercut our own aspirations, but it does require us to concede that the political future will be decided in a contest of ideas and aspirations and that their dreams and hopes are legitimate and necessary players in this competition.

I need to be cautious not to overstate the case at this point. A non-humiliating peace can restore politics, but it cannot replace politics. The successful politics depends upon our pursuing our own aims with greater sensitivity to what the other side may want for itself. We must at least consider how the collective set of objectives brought to the political table interact and possibly mesh with each other because, in politics, we will achieve our own ends only to the extent that we can entertain ways of helping them obtain their own goals. This requirement alone will encourage us to broaden our focus above and beyond what we are doing to obtain our own desired ends. No notion of peace can substitute for the politics that peace demands, and any notion that tries is ultimately doomed to failure.

* * *

The challenge of the *peace question* itself is to explore and create the types of relationships that might enable both (or all) sides to achieve the outcomes they seek – or at least as many of the outcomes as realistically possible given that some may cancel each other out. People who tackle the *peace question* face difficult and painful choices. Many who embrace the two-state vision in the Middle East do so with a keen sense of the tragic. If the conflict in the Middle East was a consequence of what people are wrong about, it would be easy to fix. It is not. It is much more the product of what both sides are right about, and this makes it much harder to resolve. Most who consent to a two-state solution do not find it just, do not believe that it affords complete security, and do not think it honors the legitimacy of their deep-felt aspirations. What it offers is a reasonable chance at a realistic settlement, and this prospect has to be weighted against other important concerns for which the *peace question* will have limited answers. There will always be some Israelis and Palestinians who feel that these concerns override what a settlement might offer and thus prefer no settlement at all to any compromise. I understand how I might come to the same conclusion if I were in their shoes. I make no pretense to having a superior point of view on how these matters should be decided. I only insist that the choices and dilemmas are real.

Questions:

What is your vision of the future for Northern Ireland? What aspects are the most important to you and why? What would need to change in the current state of affairs? How would individuals and leaders within your community be better/worse off? How would individuals and leaders within other communities be better/worse off? How would you personally be better/worse off? Would people from other communities find your vision tolerable? If not, are there ways that you could imagine modifying your vision to make it more acceptable to them?

OPEN AND CLOSED AGREEMENTS

When is a settlement a settlement and when is it a solely a staging ground for further demands? This is the question that worried Palestinian and Israeli negotiators at Taba, the last-stab attempt to reach an agreement convened at the end of the Clinton administration. The negotiators had before them a set of proposals outlining what many felt was the last, and perhaps the best, chance to reach peace. The details aren't of great significance except for the fact that most insightful observers knew that, if there was ever going to be a mutually agreeable settlement, it would have to look roughly similar to the one under consideration. Of course, there were many on both sides who maintained that no agreement was preferable to this one.

After Taba, some participants thought that the parties were within a hairbreadth of reaching a settlement while others felt that the sides remained very far apart. It soon became clear that those who held these divergent perceptions were actually disagreeing about different things. The negotiators and commentators who felt that an agreement was within close reach were talking about the particular issues on the table. Indeed, the sides did seem very close to striking a deal on Jerusalem, the borders, settlements, and the refugees. On the other hand, those who thought that a settlement was quite far way were looking through different lenses. They assessed the outcome against a standard that called for settling things once and for all – every outstanding issue, all irredentist claims, the whole shebang! On this scorecard, few believed that the parties were even in the same universe.[21]

A deal at Taba would probably have averted the impending disaster that has followed, but it would not have put an end to the overall conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. At the heart of this conundrum stands a tension that is often found when societies divided by violence try to put an end to conflict. Clearly, the current crisis needs to be solved through mutual accord. Then again, the parties want also to remain free to pursue divergent aspirations. In other words, the sides need to agree about the present while disagreeing about the future. It is a tightrope on which few can keep their balance.

Israelis sometimes say that they are willing to give land for peace, but not for the mere possibility of peace. This is especially true when they believe, as many Israelis do, that the Palestinians will abide by the peace only so long as they know that they cannot achieve their historical goals by violent means. While the Israelis may be willing to entertain difficult concessions, they will do so only when they believe that it will lead to a real and lasting peace as they conceive it. As long as they believe that the Palestinians regard the current agreement as nothing more than a way station on the road to further demands, they have little incentive to offer immediate compromises and every reason to hold back until such time when accommodating gestures can be traded for permanent concessions in a final deal.[22]

For the Palestinians, the situation looks very different. To give up their historical claims and aspirations is emotionally too painful and politically too difficult. Agreements that ask this are simply unacceptable. From their perspective, any reasonable solution must allow them to pursue their dreams and hopes, or else it will ultimately prove to be intolerable. Even if the prospect of achieving these goals is extremely faint, it is a necessary element in any resolution. A settlement will be final only to the extent that it leaves open the possibility of achieving historical aspirations at some future date.

An agreement that satisfies the demands of both the Israelis and the Palestinians will require some delicate architecture. We formulate this problem as one of open and closed agreements and locate the answer in providing legitimate political challenges for each side to pursue its hopes and to forestall its fears. The obvious question that must be faced concerns what must be resolved and what can be left open. The first rule of thumb is to decide whether an issue, if not resolved, is likely to become more important or less important in the future. Those likely to fade in importance can be left open or dealt with ambiguously. However, those likely to become more important must be addressed. Nevertheless, some issues, irrespective of how important they may become, will still resist final resolution. In fact, most of the really contentious issues may fall into this category. One option is to see if the parties can agree on a process for deciding the matter. The consent principle in Northern Island's Good Friday Agreement is an example of this type of approach. Even so, the most divisive issues will almost certainly remain unresolved.

* * *

An important caveat makes the issues of open and closed agreements even more complicated. The optimistic view hopes that the things over which we can reach agreement will ultimately prove satisfying to the other side. The pessimistic view holds that they won't even if the other side currently believes that they will. These opposing views raise the question of whether we are engaged in reaching an agreement because we believe that it will settle the outstanding issues or because we think that it is a good tactical move to achieve our goals but frustrate theirs. In other words, does the proposed settlement offer or only appear to offer the other side what it wants? Is the settlement attractive because it encourages the other side to think that it offers more than it actually does? This consideration draws us back to the peace questions.

If the outcome results in something less satisfying than the other side expected, then the settlement will not prove viable. What was thought closed will be reopened. It remains doubtful whether we should enter an agreement that we don't think will result in outcomes that the other side could live with. This concern casts a critical eye, especially from an Israeli standpoint, on the two-state solution that many feel is the only viable settlement for the Middle East. If we think that creation of a Palestinian state will meet current Palestinian hopes but that the final shape of this entity will ultimately disappoint their expectations, then it may not be advisable to enter into an agreement – at least until we can foresee an outcome that will be minimally satisfying for the other side. On the other hand, we may feel that, while the outcome may fail to satisfy the other side's current hopes, it may seductively alter these aspirations and thus prove more rewarding than we initially suspect. This is plausible but treacherous terrain, and we should be aware of the pitfalls is holds.

Implementing Agreements: Politics at the Grassroots

A further word about open and closed agreements is helpful here. After undertaking an extensive study of the difficulties encountered during the implementation of peace agreements (Stedman, Rothchild, & Cousens, 2002), Steve Stedman has identified a central problem that revolves around the conflicting beliefs that the parties have concerning the nature of the settlement.[23] One view holds that the settlement is essentially a *contract* and that the task at hand is to produce on the ground what was signed on paper. Another position maintains that a settlement mainly provides a context with which relationships must unfold and evolve. It is basically a *process* that allows parties to respond to changing circumstance and to react to new developments in the hope that constructive interactions will be maintained and possibly even strengthened. In truth, a peace agreement is both *contract* and *process*. (Stedman, in press)

Most often these two views intermingle. One side insists that certain aspects of an agreement are contractual in nature and others are unfolding in an evolving process. The other side contends the same except in reverse order. The difference usually turns upon how favorably we view the stipulation under contention. If we are for it or feel that it is to our advantage, we assert it is a signed contract that must be implemented to the letter of the law. Alternatively, if it was the product of a concession on our part and represents a disadvantage to us, we stress the need to modify the provision in response to emerging events. Both sides charge the other with failing to live up to their agreements or with not having the flexibility and vision to see what peace requires or both. There is one word that captures both these elements and holds them in creative tensions: *politics*.

The politics that we are talking about happens at two levels. First, there is the formal associations of elected leaders, executive and legislative bodies, ministerial committees, etc. Politics is pro and con about everything. One US politician defined politics as just one damn thing after another, an observation that points to the divisive and fractious interactions that inevitably arise. Almost like clockwork, what we are for others are invariable against. It is maddening, exasperating, and wearisome to the point that we cry out for a better alternative. This is the surface level, and it is quite easy to despair about what occurs in these gatherings.

However, there is a deeper level of politics that has a very different orientation. This notion of politics concerns the open exchange of ideas in public space. (Arendt, 1958) It occurs when people engage each other about what they think. In politics, we encounter the wants, goals, and aspirations of another who may oppose those that we put forth. We refine our perspective within an encounter with another perspective.

We explore the common world we share by confronting the experiences of another. Even at this deeper level, political relationships are inherently contentious, and this is the way it should be. Taken as a whole, politics looks a lot like the dialogue process offered by Community Dialogue.

When politics at the formal level becomes disconnected from politics at the deeper level, it becomes a cynical and dispiriting enterprise. Formal politics must be fed by deeper politics where the non-politicians of the society hold divergent aspirations and struggle to give them expression. When this occurs, the politics of politicians seeks a level of resolution appropriate for the day while continuing to construct staging grounds for future conflicts. In this sense, politics at both levels becomes both a final settlement and the pursuit of opposing hopes and dreams.

Within divided societies, the stability of a peace agreement often rests with the opportunity it provides to pursue through political, non-violent means outcomes over which there is currently no consensus. While the temptation will always loom greater for a party to revert to violence if it feels it can succeed, the legitimacy of the political alternative depends at every stage upon the quality of voice it gives to both consensus and dispute, to both conciliation and discord, to both compromise and confrontation. In the end, the argument for pursuing politics rests upon the horrific high costs that all-out victory would impose and upon the attraction of the common ground it creates. Standing on these two foundations, peace has a chance.

Questions:

What important goals have you had to give up (or compromise on) in the current agreement (or in any agreement that is likely to be possible under current circumstances)? Do you think it is legitimate to continue to work toward those goals even after a final agreement is reached? What particular means would be legitimate (political process, education, etc.) and what means would be illegitimate to pursue in terms of those goals? How does the current agreement actually constitute a resolution of the critical issues of the conflict for you, and how does it merely change the way you think those issues can and should be contested?

What important goals have people in other communities had to give up (or compromise on)? Do you think it would be legitimate for those folks to continue to work toward those goals even after a final agreement is reached? What particular means would be legitimate or illegitimate, for them to pursue in terms of those goals?

THE PROBLEM OF LOSS

One of the most difficult problems encountered in the aftermath of virtually every peace agreement is a deep and pervasive sense of loss that usually one but sometimes both parties feel. Often, this sentiment is vague and difficult to articulate. Still, it can cover a variety of concerns. Some have to do with a sense of diminished certainty and stability. It can involve the feeling that we are no longer in control of events or that our identity is under attack. The foundations upon which our self-worth rested seem increasingly precarious. We may have a strong intuition that we are being asked to give more and to receive less than those on the other side. Moreover, we may believe that what we are offering is more valuable than what we are receiving in return. Furthermore, we may harbor diminishing expectations regarding the future and thus feel that what we are losing is hope. The list might go on.

Although the emotions surrounding loss are almost always strong and personal, the other side frequently fails to grant our feelings much legitimacy. They may see our pain as simply strategic ploys to avoid important issues. They may think that we are simply using our feeling of loss to block reforms needed to move things forward into a new future. They may believe that our longing for past things is only a desire to hold on to benefits that unfair privilege and advantage previously conferred. They may also think that we are claiming the spotlight in order to divert attention away from the concessions that they

have to make. In the end, whatever our losses may be, our feelings do not constitute serious expressions of emotional trauma.

We, in turn, often respond by denying the validity of their allegations. In fact, we may countercharge that these accusations represent nothing but devious, underhanded maneuverings intent on belittling the generous actions we have graciously undertaken. We may feel that they reveal triumphal attitudes that dismiss our feelings as either irrelevant or non-existent. Moreover, their rhetoric proves that the things we had held in high regard will have no place if they control the future. Indeed, given their point of view, it appears that we are no longer welcome in our own society.

Aside from the many issues involved in these exchanges, what remains certain is that our emotions seem to us authentic and powerful. What may be less clear is that the other side may also be experiencing similar feelings. Once we consider this possibility, we may have to entertain the prospect that we are mirroring many of the responses and sentiments that we reject on the other side. Perhaps we are not guilty to same extent, but there is still a chance that we too have devalued their concessions, ignored their disappointments, and dismissed their complaints – in short, have also denied their sense of loss any legitimacy. Whether we ultimately agree or not, it is at least plausible that some on our side have made them feel unwelcome as well.

The Power of Loss Aversion

My point is not to assign blame nor condemn but to emphasize that the emotions associated with loss are genuine and potent. Recent psychological research indicates that parties in general will attach much greater weight to potential losses than to potential gains. (Kahneman & Tversky, 1995; Kahneman & Tversky, 2000) A simple thought experiment demonstrates this effect in a particularly compelling way. Suppose that you have agreed to play a game in which we flip a coin with your choosing either heads or tails. If you guess wrong, you will loose £10. How much would you have to win on a correct choice to feel that it was a sensible wager? If losses and gains were equally valued, anything over £10, once you are committed to playing the game, looks like a good bet. However, research indicates that most people say about £20. If we up the stakes to £10,000 and do the experiment with wealthy business executives, we get about the same percentage jump – £20,000. In other words, it takes the prospect of winning about twice as much as we might lose to make the stakes seem worthwhile.

This insight has particular relevance for parties in conflict. It is also especially pronounced when the losses are certain and immediate and the gains are somewhat uncertain and pertain more to the future than to the present. This tendency makes perfect sense once we consider that we have a first-hand experience of what we are losing but only hopeful estimates and guesses about the value of what we might gain. Thus, in a sense, we apply a different set of standards to evaluate losses than we do to assess gains. As a result, losses will almost always appear more consequential than gains. This insight helps explain why, when faced with change, we seldom find that the things we hope to gain outweigh the things we stand to lose.

The Middle East offers some exceptional – and catastrophic – illustrations of how this insight plays out in the real world. At Oslo, both Palestinian and Israeli leaders signed agreements that called for actions that would result in unavoidable political costs for both of them. Large constituencies on both sides would have found different aspects of these concessions very unpopular. To take but one of many possible examples from each side, the Israelis would eventually have to withdraw a significant number of its settlement from the West Bank, and the Palestinians were going to have to give up notions that they would someday return to their ancestral homes within Israel proper. Both were very emotional issues involving deep senses of loss on both sides. Instead of confronting their grassroots with the changes needed to make the Oslo process viable, both Israeli and Palestinian leaders began to renege on their commitments – in spirit if not in actual letter.

Even this brief, surface description demonstrates the degree to which both parties sought to avoid immediate and certain costs (losses) by foolishly putting the peace process at risk. At the same time, the parties proved unwilling to take on the costs and to assume the risks that were necessary for peace to be

achieved even when a more peaceful outcome seemed virtually at hand. Furthermore, both parties refused to undertake actions that would have resulted in potential benefits that would have clearly outweighed the costs involved. Clearly these actions in themselves did not doom the peace process, but combined with similar missed opportunities and strategic blunders they helped create the climate that made the likelihood of success remote.

This simple example highlights three practical insights that represent significant problems for peace processes more generally.

1. Parties who face certain or immediate losses will tend to take unwise risks to reverse them.

2. Parties will often be unwilling to take risks in order to pursue gains, even when the risks are much less likely to come about.

3. Parties will frequently turn down proposed changes or concessions that offer a mix of gains and losses, even when the promised gains are objectively greater than the losses.

These factors undoubtedly influenced Palestinian and Israeli perceptions of whether Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak offered a generous peace at Camp David that Arafat flatly turned down. Both sides responded more to the risks that they perceived than the opportunities before them. On the Israeli side, Barak has admitted that he allowed the settlements in the West Bank to continue in part to mollify the Israeli right, who had the potential to scuttle the run up to a final settlement. Indeed, he reneged on several important interim steps because he didn't want to estrange his domestic support by appearing to "waste" important concessions on an uncertain deal. Instead, he turned Oslo on its head by sweeping the table clear of gradual stages and going for a comprehensive final, all-or-nothing package. While his stated goal was to present the Israeli people all the achievements and concession in one fell swoop, the heart of his strategy was a hedge against failure that guarded against making preliminary concessions out of fear that a final deal would not be struck. (Agha & Malley, 2001) However, it fatally ignored the psychological underpinning of trust needed by Palestinians embrace the deal he was offering. (Margalit, 2001) It deprived Arafat of the core constituencies whose support for the Oslo process had been critical. As a result, the overriding concern to avoid risk dominated and doomed the Israeli approach.

Similarly, risk aversion dictated the Palestinian strategy. Viewed from the West Bank and Gaza, Barak's opening moves were not reassuring. Oslo had produced what seemed like a string of unfulfilled promises – more Israeli settlements, less freedom of movement, worsening economic conditions. Arafat thus concluded that the Israeli were setting a trap, and his primary goal became to avert losses rather than to maximize gains. (Agha & Malley, 2001) Their experience with the ambiguous formulations that had been the bridge to past agreements suggested that they would always be interpreted in a way advantageous to the Israelis. Moreover, they feared making concessions that would later undermine the international legitimacy conferred on them by UN Resolutions 242 and 338. They panicked at the prospect of agreeing to principles detailed enough to supersede these resolutions but too vague to produce their expected outcomes. This caution created an inflexibility that stifled creative responses that could have furthered Palestinian interests.[24] Israeli proposal remained on the table unexploited for the potential benefit they might offer.

* * *

There is no obvious, easy way around these impediments. However, our assessment that something is a loss relates to the way events are framed. Clearly, we cannot decide whether something is a loss or a gain without reference to some predetermined reference point. Take for example a £10 note. Is it a loss or a gain? It will depend upon whether you were expecting £5 or £20. This reference point also determines how big or small your loss or gain is and how great or small your disappointment or elation is. As you can see, a great deal of what you feel about this £10 note is governed by the benchmark to which you compare it, even though its value – £10 – remains exactly the same.

The Middle East again provides a useful illustration these dynamics in action. Most experts believe that any future peace settlement will have to be based on a two-state approach. This will require Israel to relinquish the territories that they have occupied since the 1973 war. Given what we know about loss and

gains, we can expect that many Israelis will experience the turning over of land as a major concession. The reason is that their reference point has become the present state of occupation, not the 1967 borders. Because prospective losses are valued more than prospective gains, we can forecast that Israelis will have difficulty believing that anything the Palestinians offer in return will have comparable value to what they will have given. This will be the case despite the fact that they will have given up nothing if the 1967 borders are taken as the reference point – as in fact many Palestinians do. (Margalit, 2001)

Understand why Israelis take the current occupation as their reference point, requires us to add another piece to this puzzle. It seems that once we acquire a particular set of benefits, we tend to assimilate these gains very quickly to the status quo, thereby making them a normal and expected parts of our everyday life.[25] Alternatively, we are very slow to reconcile with losses in the same way. As a result, we experience another inconsistency in the way we feel about concessions received and granted. Things we accumulate easily become entitlements while the things we give up remain constant irritants. This disparity makes it unlikely that the parties will agree about the worth of any particular concession, especially when it is tied to one or both sides feeling that we have lost something. It is also easy to see how this inconsistency in evaluation fosters mistrust and suspicion in a big way.

Returning to the Middle East example, it is now clear why the Palestinians might view anything less than a return to the 1967 borders as a double loss. On the one hand, they have understandably refused to afford the occupation any legitimacy as a starting point for negotiations and thus hold the 1967 boundaries as the yardstick to measure Israeli concessions. On the other, many feel that even this point of reference is completely erroneous and degrading since their reference is the time when all of Palestine was theirs. Conversely, Israelis retain completely different criteria having incorporated the occupied territories into their legitimate holdings at the start of the negotiations. We are not saying that Israelis believe that the occupation is fair or just. Clearly, many do not. We are only stating that they feel that this land is a legitimate card in their hand as they begin negotiating a final status. Furthermore, we maintain that this is exactly what many Palestinians dispute, because they claim a different reference point.

The Risky Status Quo: Comparing actual and potential losses

The remaining piece to this puzzle concerning loss comes from a separate but related set of topics – risk assessment. When facing uncertain situations, we often see risks at every turn. All the alternatives are replete with hazards and pitfalls. Going in this direction is terrifying in a certain regard. However, taking another route poses other potential dangers. Apprehension and fear lurk everywhere. After surveying all the options, there seems to be no relatively risk-free way out of this perilous state of affairs in which we find ourselves. As a result, we conclude that no course of action offers bearable risks, and so we act by refusing to act.

Clearly, our assessment of the risks involved in any situation depends in part upon the value we place on what we stand to gain and lose. We may feel that every possible option contains likely costs that far outweigh any possible benefits that may occur. Many Israelis feel that allowing the Palestinians to have a state of their own may or may not bring peace, but it will certainly result in a neighbor who can cause great havoc if and when it so chooses. Faced with the risks that having a potentially hostile Palestinian state on its borders would pose, more than a few Israelis prefer to preserve the tense status quo. However, this assessment overlooks one very important detail. Simply maintaining the status quo itself harbors potentially serious risks. Without constructive action, the situation may deteriorate even further and become even more unraveled. In itself, this realization may not change Israeli assessment of the dangers involved in having a Palestinian state as a neighbor. Still, it places these risks in a more realistic framework and may make alternatives previously deemed too risky appear more attractive.

On the Palestinian side, recent events provide a bitter demonstration of how the interplay between risk and loss can lead to disastrous consequences. At the time of Taba, the Palestinian negotiators felt rightly or wrongly that the proposals on the table in the final negotiations would inflict harsh costs on them. While it is not for me to say whether they made the best choice, it does seem fair to conclude that their choice to hold out would make sense only if the conditions under which Palestinians lived remained roughly the

same. However, this isn't the way things turn out. Instead, the peace process went into a disastrous tailspin. Looking back from where things stand today, it seems at least plausible that many Palestinians who felt justified in not accepting proposals offered at Taba would now view them as a positive step forward.

Respect for Loss: Creating a Way to Live with Differences

There is no straightforward way to overcome the barriers that arise in relationship to our sense of loss and our fear of risk. Loss will also remain painful, and risk will always appear frightening. Knowing that they exist and understanding how they influence our perceptions and behavior may alleviate some of the difficulties we encounter, but some firmer foundation upon which to ground our actions to surmount these obstacles would be helpful. Arguing that losses and risks aren't really losses and risks if looked at from a certain perspective is not likely to move many people. Something more potent is needed.

A clue arises from the notion of interactional justice. Interactional justice is an offshoot of procedural justice that has recently received increasing recognition as a separate domain. The concept of procedural justice developed from research over the last two decades that clearly demonstrated the increased willingness of people to accept decisions that they consider unjust when they feel that the process used to arrive at these outcomes was fair. (Tyler, et al., 1997, pp75-102; Tyler & Smith, 1998, p604) Two elements seem to play a major role in determining whether a process is judged to be fair. The first is decision control, and it concerns the extent to which people feel that they can play a role in shaping the final outcome. The second relates to process control, and it entails the ability to present evidence – sometimes called *voice*. This same research also established that procedural justice is especially important in situations in which strong personal or social bonds cannot be relied upon to hold relationships together.[26]

As researchers began looking more closely at procedural justice, they realized that there were really two distinct concepts at work. (McGuire, 2002) One involves the formal procedures themselves while the other pertains to the way these procedures are enacted. Independent of the fairness of the process itself, people cared whether they were treated decently and courteously, and it influenced their feelings about the justice of the process. Interactional justice concerns the way people feel treated particularly with regard to having their voice heard and respected when working out disputed claims about justice. (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001)

Lurking within these notions of interactional justice lies a deeper issue of political respect. Concerning matters in which loss plays a contentious role, we don't believe that the other side respects what we have experienced. We have received little indication from them that they understand the pain and suffering that we have endured. We may never feel that justice has been served, but we may find more acceptable the compromises that we must tolerate if we feel that we have been accorded the respect that interactional justice requires.

In *The Decent* Society, Avishai Margalit connects respect to the idea of "treating human beings as human." (Margalit, 1996, pp89-112) As mentioned earlier, this hopelessly vague phrase expresses the sense of seeing human beings as embodying psychological states. From a humanistic perspective, saying that people have souls means that they are "subjects of psychological predicates." (p109) In other words, they are expressions of rich mental states. To deny them this depth is to humiliate them – to make them sub-human.

Margalit notes the poet Denis Silk's literary use of a "vanishing powder" that is dusted on Palestinian workers from the occupied territories to make them invisible: "A good Arab should be worked but not seen." (Margalit, 1998, p101; Margalit, 1998, p154)[27] We frequently sprinkle this "vanishing powder" on the emotions of loss as well. Respect means allowing the fullness of those who have suffered tragic losses to stand forth. For this to happen, we need to receive some measure of acknowledgement of, if not remorse for, the wounds that we have endured. This kind of respect emerges from a conscious awareness of the unspeakable ordeals that we and others have born, and it begins with the recognition of the integrity of our feelings about loss.

The granting of respect is a long process. Aristotle identified it as an important element in political relationships although he did not use the term *per se*. Instead, he talked about friendship or *philia politikē*, but the notion of friendship no longer captures what he had in mind. Aristotle was identifying the ingredient within a relationship that had the power to hold a city together. (Aristotle, 196, p215) It emerged as private individuals moved into the commonality of interests that forms the foundation for every form of human association. It was more than mutually beneficial interactions because it rested upon the fundamental regard that we have for one another as human beings. Aristotle thought it consisted of a willingness to regard another with the same attitude as one has toward oneself. (Aristotle, 1962, p271)

Hannah Arendt suggests that respect might better convey this meaning. (Arendt, 1958, p242) Political respect is not based solely upon the benefits we receive from the relationship nor on the enjoyment we get from being in someone's presence. Instead, it aims at a reciprocating good-will unconnected with intimacy or even closeness. Individual characteristics or personal attraction play little or no role. Respect creates the space for people who fundamentally differ to live together nevertheless.

Questions:

What are the most significant losses that you have experienced? What do you think are the most significant losses that the other side has experienced? What are the potential losses you and/or your community might suffer if the situation continues to deteriorate? How do the actual losses you've experience compare to the potential losses if no action is taken? What does your community stand to gain from your vision of the future? Are there any ways these gains represent a loss for the the other community?

What are the most significant improvements over the status quo that your vision of the future offers people from other communities (from their perspective)? Would these improvements for others in any way represent a loss for you personally or people in your community? If so, how? Are there conditions under which you might consider expanding those potential benefits to other communities even further? What would need to change to bring these conditions about?

JUST ENTITLEMENTS

Few things matter more to people than the sense that they, and indeed others, are being treated justly. This concern for justice lingers just below the surface in each of the previous themes that I have raised. While the first three themes explore some of the difficult and painful choices that people must face if they want peace, only justice has the additional capacity to make the peace that they might achieve seem satisfying. Yet, the notion that the only true peace worth valuing is a just peace, while ennobling, is deeply problematic.

Some scholars see our concern for justice as so fundamental that they claim human beings have a justice motive operating at the core of their psychological makeup. (Lerner, 2002; Tyler & Smith, 1998) They maintain that this drive cannot be simply reduced to the various forms of disguised self-interest that also play a major role in determining our behavior.[28] Instead, our interest in justice seems to arise almost involuntarily from our perception that we are related to other human beings.

This standard view tends to see justice as the "grease" that makes social relationships productive, rewarding, and durable. Accordingly, justice becomes an implicit mechanism for resolving the conflicts that would otherwise disrupt our interactions. Justice helps facilitate agreement by acting as a focal point that serves to coordinate divergent expectations. In this capacity, justice makes agreement more likely by smoothing the exchange of concessions and decreasing competitive behavior. The capacity of justice to perform these functions is obvious and compelling in a great many instances.[29]

Still, there are nevertheless other cases where this claim seems more dubious. (Hamsphire, 1983) Cecilia Albin argues that, in especially difficult and divisive situations, conceptions of justice and fairness

can exacerbate conflict by creating divergent, rather than converging, expectations.[30] (Albin, 2001, pp34-38) In these instances, notions of justice enter the negotiation process as elements of contention and thus become embedded in the conflict itself. As a result, they can often lead to violence and war. Hence, it is not surprising that justice has played a prominent role in the outbreak of war over the last two centuries. (Welsh, 1993)

There is perhaps no more stunning example of how appeals to justice can fail to resolve conflicts than the Middle East. A complex array of historically conditioned perceptions has led many Israelis and Palestinian to think that they have a just and exclusive right to the land promised to Abraham. Both peoples base their claim on their having been the first communities to live there (priority) and on their having spent the longest uninterrupted time of residence (duration). (Hermann & Newman, 2000) Each gives priority to the facts that align with and reinforce its own sense of just entitlement. Both use their own myths and histories along with their own archaeological evidence to back the justice of their claims. Consequently, the land represents to both of them an ancestral homeland filled with sites that are central to their national identities. In this sense, each side is more right than wrong about what it feels is justly theirs. As a result, the conflict is tragically much more over what each side is right about than what it is wrong about.[31]

Injustice: An Alternative Approach

This tension between justice and peace is a serious problem for those engaged in a peace process. While most parties believe that the settlement of the conflict, if one is to come about, must be just, they disagree about what justice entails. (Mnookin & Ross, 1995) As a result, there will be very few outcomes, if any at all, that will appear equally just to both sides. One side usually thinks that a prospective settlement is more unfair to it, and sometimes both think this. Consequently, the realm of acceptable outcomes frequently shrinks to naught. Floating various options in the hope of discovering one that both sides might view as just is frequently a fruitless task.[32]

If satisfying our sense of justice while at the same time reaching a mutually agreeable settlement seems extremely elusive, if not outright impossible, then a good place to start constructing a way out of this dilemma is with an assessment of the normal model of justice itself. Judith Shklar argues that, within this model, thinking begins with the question of what constitutes justice and then assigns entitlements and responsibilities accordingly. (Shklar, 1990, p17) From this perspective, justice prevails over injustice, thereby controlling if not eliminating it. As a result, this model views injustice as simply a breakdown in the way justice functions.

However, in real life, injustice doesn't quite disappear this easily. Indeed, our common experience questions the notion that justice prevents injustice from occurring. Instead, a persistent sense that something is not right – that violations are occurring or that responsibilities are being ignored – undermines the complacency that comes with the claim that justice has made everything – or should have made everything – okay. Although we may be accustomed to thinking of justice as functioning in the way that the normal model indicates, it is not necessarily the way we actually experience it.

We all live in a world in which the myriad presence of injustice is both obvious and, at times, overwhelming. Some of these injustices affect us directly; many more impinge on other people. Some of those that don't fall on us directly can nevertheless have an indirect, but not inconsequential, effect. My point is that we never stumble upon a system of justice that appears comprehensive enough to eliminate all injustice. Whatever justice we do encounter always seems mixed with a considerable amount of injustice. Furthermore, despite what the normal view claims, we often come across instances of injustice that don't much look like glitches in an otherwise just system. Indeed, some of these injustices appear to be the direct result of the just claims made by other people. Others seem more indirect or the product of unintended consequences.

No matter what level of justice we aspire to, there is always a domain of injustice that resists being subsumed and thereby either controlled or eradicated. If we take this experience of injustice seriously, we

soon realize that the normal model of justice is radically incomplete. Moreover, the prominent and persistent role that injustice plays in our lives causes us to believe that a comprehensive notion of justice may be forever beyond our reach. This impossibility forces us to consider an alternative approach that takes the primacy of injustice as a guide.

* * *

The most commonplace experience of injustice is not getting that to which we feel entitled.[33] Of course, this does not mean that a real injustice has occurred. Someone may have an outlandish sense of his or her entitlements. Still, the feeling of being a victim of injustice may nevertheless be strong. The issue may turn on the question of how we get our sense of entitlement. The simple answer is that we get it by comparing ourselves to people we judge to be our equivalent. We determine what we are due by observing the rewards, prerogatives, and privileges that people similar to us appear to get. If we believe that we are getting less than they, we feel mistreated. Researchers call this *relative deprivation*, and it gives rise to some very interesting observations.

Relative deprivation was first used to explain why American WWII soldiers felt satisfied or dissatisfied with their situation, and it turned out that it had little to do with their objective circumstances. (Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith, Huo, 1997, p14) For example, highly promoted airmen were much more discontented than military policemen who were rarely advanced. It all hinges on whom they compared themselves to. Airmen evaluated themselves relative to their peers in the more rapidly promoted air corps while the military police judged themselves relative to their colleagues in the police service who were moved forward at exactly the same rate as themselves. The objective quality of their situation mattered less than their standing relative to those they consider to be their equals.

Relative deprivation comes in many varieties and can influence people's behavior in some surprisingly contradictory and counterintuitive ways. Still, all have to do with how people feel about social comparisons that they make. This social comparison at the heart of relative deprivation is actually quite flexible. An striking demonstration comes from East Jerusalem in the wake of Israeli occupation and annexation after the 1967 war. Real income in this region had doubled by the mid 70s and continued to climb until 1987. Nevertheless, the sense of deprivation and resent also rose as the Arabs of East Jerusalem shifted their point of reference from the prior conditions of the West Bank to their Jewish neighbors in Jerusalem and throughout Israel more generally. (Benvenisti, 1996, p193) Despite an impressive improvement in their overall economic welfare during this period, their sense of being victimized dramatically increased.

As this instance suggests, negative appraisals between different social groups frequently leads to an especially potent form of relative deprivation. For example, people are likely to feel highly aggrieved on occasions when they feel that their group is being unfairly surpassed by another rising group or when their formerly important contributions to society are now being devalued or ignored. (Tyler & Smith, 1998) Indeed, studies suggest that the narrowing of a gap between one's group and a previously lower status group will cause more resentment and anger than a widening distance between one's group and a higher status group. Perhaps the most interesting illustration of this dynamic is a study of tool-room workers in a particular aircraft engineering factory. These workers preferred to maintain a wage gap between themselves and less prestigious workers over accepting a pay grid that would have paid them more but would also have lessened this gap. (Tyler Boeckmann, Smith, Huo, 1997, p34)

* * *

All this may seem far a field from objective injustice since relative deprivation is actually a felt sense of mistreatment that may or may not be related to anything really unjust. For a grievance to count as an injustice, it must transgress a just expectation, and these anticipations are greatly influenced by our understanding of the situation in which we happen to find ourselves. (Deutsch, 2000) Within intimate relationships like those of a family, we often feel that treating people fairly requires us to pay close attention to their *needs*. Fairness in more communal settings frequently means treating people *equally*. When we are more concerned with productive rather than social relationships, we tend to think that *equity* –

that is, receiving in proportion to what one has contributed – should govern our interactions. Thus, an injustice may occur when people are (1) inappropriately neglected, (2) treated unequally, or (3) dealt with inequitably.

There is also a fourth way that we can experience a violation of justice that stands somewhat apart from these understandings. The three instances identified above – inappropriate neglect, unequal treatment, and inequitable dealings – refer to transactions that usually take place within the bounds of a social unit, namely a family, a community, a place of employment, etc. In divided societies, a slightly different type of interaction usually takes place because the social unit itself is disrupted. In these situations, an injustice occurs when the presence or actions of the other group *interferes* with our attempts to enjoy our entitlements. Groups in divided societies do this to each other in spades. Indeed, one might say that they are divided precisely because they prevent each other from obtaining what they feel are their entitlements. As a result, opposing groups tend to see each other, almost by definition, as the embodiment of injustice.

Returning to relative deprivation as a starting point, we can see the outlines of a definition injustice falling into place. Injustice is some combination of:

(1) *Neglect*: denying people what they need when the needs of similar people are met;

(2) *Inequality*: denying people the type of treatment that similar people enjoy;

(3) *Inequity*: denying people rewards that similar people receive for equivalent contributions; and

(4) *Interference*: denying people the right to the entitlement they think they deserve.

Making Peace Better: Rectifying Injustice

The concern for justice that we noted earlier as a fundamental part of our make-up now takes a surprising and subtle twist. Whereas we normally defend, demand, or fight for justice, taking injustice as our starting point encourages us instead to seek the rectification of injustices. While addressing injustice will not suddenly solve all conflicts, it will make the status quo less unjust. This feature of bettering the status quo is critical because agreements that better the status quo are much easier to envision and have a much better prospect of achieving consensus than those that seek to satisfy all our notions of justice. Once we start with the mix of justice and injustice that is our predominant experience and turn our attention to finding ways to improve on the status quo by rectifying injustice, the task of resolving conflict become much easier.

This notion of rectifying injustice is closely akin to the conflict resolution technique called problem-solving. (Weitzman & Weitzman, 2000) Problem-solving attempts to recast a conflict as a problem – a riddle, puzzle or dilemma – that must be solved by finding a mutually acceptable remedy. As issues of justice arise from the clashes of just entitlements, they are recast as problems involving the rectification of injustice. While other approaches to conflict resolution often call on the parties to make compromises or to adopt procedures for deciding contentious issues – methods that would call on the parties to concede important principles or deeply felt needs – the rectification of injustice cast as problem-solving seeks instead integrative solutions that satisfy people's demands in innovative ways.[34]

The Middles East provides another helpful illustration. As long as land is viewed through the historical/religious lens of just entitlements, the conflict is zero-sum and fundamentally intractable. Indeed, at the start of the Oslo Process, Israeli diplomat Uri Savir and Palestinian leader Abu Ala recognized the futility of arguing the justice of historical claims. At one of the first meetings, Abu Ala asked Savir to explain why the Israelis saw the Palestinians as a threat given the overwhelming imbalance in military force between the two sides. Savir replied that the Palestinians wanted to live in his home in Jerusalem. Abu Ala replied that his lineage had lived in Jerusalem much longer than Savir's, whose grandfather had been born in Germany. Savir responded that they could debate history for years and never come to an agreement and suggested that they focus on the future instead. Reflecting on this exchange, Savir notes:

> *We had arrived at our first understanding. Never again would we argue about the past. This was an important step, for it moved us beyond an endless wrangle over right and wrong. Discussing*

the future would mean reconciling two rights, not redressing ancient wrongs. (Savir, 1998, pp14-15)

In light of this understanding, the Oslo process sought to charter a different course that relied heavily on economic development and integrations. (Savir, 1998, pp 14 & 37, 101) This approach hoped to instigate a political reorientation away from the conflict of exclusive claims and toward a peace based upon concrete, practical considerations that could improve life for both communities. (Newman, 1999) Indeed, the preamble to Paris Protocols reached in 1994 clearly states that both sides viewed "the economic domain as one of the cornerstones in their mutual relations" leading toward "a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace." (Protocal, 1994, p1) To accomplish this, the Oslo negotiators tried to move the tangible security and economic concerns of Israelis and Palestinians to the center of the political stage. Since both experienced their insecurity and material deprivation as an injustice, these focal points offered an opportunity for mutual collaboration in the rectification of an injustice that each side could recognize and acknowledge.[35]

The ultimate success of the Oslo approach depended upon the mutual assessment that things were better in peace than they had been before the Oslo process was launched. Both the Israelis and the Palestinians quickly abandoned this course of action. Beginning in May 1994, the Israelis responded to an increase in violent attacks with border closures that prevented Palestinians workers from entering Israel and severely restricted the flow of trade. (Arnon, et al, 1997, p166)[36] These actions gutted the free movement of goods and labor provisions, which were the centerpiece of future Palestinian prosperity and development. (p8) The result was a 20% drop in the Palestinians standard of living. (Sontag, 2001) Others have placed the lost in GNP per capita at somewhere around a third for the period of 1993-1996 – a statistic made even more poignant when one considers that the Palestinian GNP per capita is already one-tenth that of Israelis. (La Guadia, 2003, p314) In 1996 alone, the West Bank and Gaza were placed under general closure for 121 days—one third of the year. The lost revenue for first four years of Oslo doubled the amount contributed by international donors.

The Palestinians felt that these economics sanctions were a form of unjustified collective punishment by Israel, and their stepped up their bombing campaign was at least partially a response to their harshness. Faced with escalating terrorist attacks, Israel responded with more border closures of greater duration. No doubt, the failure of the Oslo accords to deliver on either increased security for Israel or economic prosperity for the Palestinians was one of the major factors contributing to the collapse of the peace process. (Albin, 2001; La Guardia, 2003, p314) The first part of Rabin's famous pledge to "seek peace as if there were no terrorism, and fight terrorism as if there were no peace" fell by the wayside as both Israelis and Palestinians questioned whether peace might actually be a curse.

Creating Justice on Common Ground

As this Middle East example highlights, the success of this approach will rest upon achieving a strong and durable consensus about the injustices that need to be rectified. Lee Ross has investigated the gap that frequently exists between differing views, and has identified a phenomena he calls *false polarization*. (Ross, 1995) False polarization occurs because the parties tend to overestimate the degree of divergence between their positions. It is not that the parties perceive a difference of opinion where there isn't one, but rather they see a larger gap than actually exists. Interestingly, this miscalculation is due more to an underestimation of the ambivalence rather than an overestimation of the conviction they feel toward opposing positions.

This failure to perceive accurately the presence of ambiguity suggests that the source of misunderstanding may lie with way the sides present their case. When arguing for their outlook, each offers the strongest possible reasons while sliding over weaker points. This pool of common weaker points is important because it defines frequently overlooked areas where potential common ground might be found. Reaching agreement on the points that arise from this new-found common ground probably won't resolve the conflict completely. Still, recognizing that this neglected domain actually exists opens a new realm of potentially acceptable outcomes that peace processes could exploit.

This research also shows that simply explaining our position more clearly to the other side does not overcome *false polarization*. They don't gain a more accurate picture of our views because the same dynamic of emphasizing our strong point rather than acknowledging our ambivalences is in place. Thus, nothing occurs that could correct any mistaken assessments they may have made. (Puccio) Instead, another approach appears more successful. This scheme consists of having one side present what it thinks are the strongest points of other side, and of course vice versa. Ironically, the increase in accuracy occurs on the listening, not on the presenting, side. The reasons for this surprising twist are actually straightforward. The presentation allows the listening side to hear elements of ambiguity, uncertainty, and limited enthusiasm that could not be inferred from listening to them present their own case. While getting a more accurate view of the other's position does not bridge the differences that remain, it does lessen the difficulties significantly.

Once the extent of the difference between positions is clarified, the task of reaching a consensus about what to do remains. While there are no doubt many ways to build consensus, the one I find most interesting is reciprocity. (Gutman & Thompson, 1996) Reciprocity is a form of deliberation that searches for mutually acceptable terms of cooperative interaction, and it flows from the type of exchanges that are useful in lessening false polarization. In this instance, we make a case for our own position but use as much as possible the framework of the other side to make our points. Reciprocity uses the other side's beliefs to make a case for concerns that arise from our own values. In other words, we try to make a case that we think the other side would accept because it reflects their viewpoint.

Reciprocity stands in contrast to approaches that sidestep justice issues by appealing only to self-interest in the form of mutual advantage. It also avoids employing impersonal reason to impose an impartial and thus superior form of justice, which simply trumps the justice concerns expressed by each side. In contrast, reciprocity seeks to use the interests and concerns we bring to a disagreement as the starting point for reaching agreement. Instead of appealing to reasons that arise from our own perspective, we make the case for rectifying an injustice in terms that refer to the other side's point of view.

Questions:

What do you think that you are justly entitled to that you currently don't have? In what ways has the conflict contributed to this state of affairs? What changes would need to occur in order to rectify these injustices? Are there entitlements that you currently enjoy that you feel are under threat? In what ways do you need the assistance or cooperation of other communities in order to achieve or protect the entitlements you feel are most important? What would you need them to do or not do? How might you solicit their assistance, and what might be the incentive for them to give you that assistance? What barriers exist to your acceptance of their assistance or cooperation?

CONCLUDING REMARKS

I want to end by reflecting briefly on the sets of questions that follow each section. For your convenience, I have collected them at the end of this short section. These questions are the result of a collaborative effort by Lee Ross, Brenna Powell, and myself and are designed specifically with the communities of Northern Ireland with whom we are engaged in mind. They arise from the undoubtedly difficult acknowledgement that the other side, along with its dreams, goals, and political aspirations, isn't going to go away. This recognition forces upon people a need to think critically and constructively about the complicated and perhaps painful consequences that follow from this far-reaching fact.

In this paper, I have not made a case for the particular composition of the questions that we raise. This is because the makeup and order of these questions may need to vary from one situation to the next in response to different circumstances. Still, it may be helpful to identify the two meta-questions that define the terrain we sought to explore:

1. Given our past history and common future, what do we think we owe the other side?

2. Given our past history and common future, what do we think we need from the other side?

In the context of cross-community dialogue, we have suggested four factors that will figure prominently in the answers people give to these two meta-questions. (Powell, 2003)

1. A tolerable vision of the future
2. A balance of safeguards (trusted resolution of certain issues) and political participation (active engagement on other issues)
3. Respect for loss
4. A means or process of addressing the issue of justice

Our questions are meant to help people create a language for expressing the kind of peace that they want to achieve. This enterprise will almost certainly lead to better understanding of what is involved. It will trim away some of the unrealistic hopes that block the way. In the end, it may provide greater insight in to how people might reach the peace they have come to articulate and envision. If our questions accomplish even a small part of this, we consider them a success.

The Peace Question

What is your vision of the future for Northern Ireland? What aspects are the most important to you and why? What would need to change in the current state of affairs? How would individuals and leaders within your community be better/worse off? How would individuals and leaders within other communities be better/worse off? How would you personally be better/worse off? Would people from other communities find your vision tolerable? If not, are there ways that you could imagine modifying your vision to make it more acceptable to them?

Open and Closed Agreements

What important goals have you had to give up (or compromise on) in the current agreement (or in any agreement that is likely to be possible under current circumstances)? Do you think it is legitimate to continue to work toward those goals even after a final agreement is reached? What particular means would be legitimate (political process, education, etc.) and what means would be illegitimate to pursue in terms of those goals? How does the current agreement actually constitute a resolution of the critical issues of the conflict for you, and how does it merely change the way you think those issues can and should be contested?

What important goals have people in other communities had to give up (or compromise on)? Do you think it would be legitimate for those folks to continue to work toward those goals even after a final agreement is reached? What particular means would be legitimate or illegitimate, for them to pursue in terms of those goals?

The Problem of Loss

What are the most significant losses that you have experienced? What do you think are the most significant losses that the other side has experienced? What are the potential losses you and/or your community might suffer if the situation continues to deteriorate? How do the actual losses you've experience compare to the potential losses if no action is taken? What does your community stand to gain from your vision of the future? Are there any ways these gains represent a loss for the the other community?

What are the most significant improvements over the status quo that your vision of the future offers people from other communities (from their perspective)? Would these improvements for others in any way represent a loss for you personally or people in your community? If so, how? Are there conditions under which you might consider expanding those potential benefits to other communities even further? What would need to change to bring these conditions about?

Just Entitlements

What do you think that you are justly entitled to that you currently don't have? What changes would need to occur in order to rectify these injustices? Are there entitlements that you currently enjoy that you feel are under threat? In what ways do you need the assistance or cooperation of other communities in order to achieve or protect the entitlements you feel are most important? What would you need them to do or not do? How might you solicit their cooperation, and what might be the incentive for them to give you that cooperation? What barriers exist to your acceptance of their assistance or cooperation?

Are there any things people on the other side of the conflict are entitled to that they don't currently have? What changes would need to occur in order to rectify these injustices? Are there entitlements that they currently enjoy that you can see are under threat? In what ways do they need the assistance or cooperation of your community in order to achieve or protect the entitlements that are most important to them? What barriers exist to your community's willingness to provide that assistance or cooperation? What would you need them to do or not do? How might the other community solicit your cooperation?

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End Notes

[1] The term *peace process* was coined in 1974-5 because the mediators in Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy needed a short-hand expression to convey what they were doing. (Saunders, 1991, p 3) It later came to describe the gradual, step-by-step approach that Israel and its Arab neighbors, with the leadership of United States, used to pursue a peace agreement between them. (Quandt, 2001, p1)

[2] Sadat reiterated his unqualified insistence that Israel return all the territories conquered in 1967 and that the Palestinian be granted self-determination. After Sadat finished his speech, Begin responded by insisting that Israel's right to "secure borders," well-known code for refusing to return to the '67 borders and a rejection of a Palestinian state. While not budging from demands that the Begin government found completely unacceptable, Sadat was nevertheless able to create a belief within the Israeli public that peace was possible. (Bar-On, 1996, p96)

[3] Between 1985-89, South African whites and the ANC would hold over 75 second-track meetings. (Sisk, 1995, p78)

[4] From June 1994 to January 1998, Jewish public in Israel remained equally split between those who opposed and those who supported Oslo process. ((Hermann & Newman, 2000, p119) Moreover, in 1995, 48% of Israeli believed that the Oslo process had made them less secure. (p127) Finally, 75% of Jewish respondents favored greater separation between Palestinians and Israelis and between a future Palestinian State and Israel. (127) Similarly, in 1995, most Palestinians felt that the Israeli crackdown in response to suicide attacks was a vindictive and retaliatory collective punishment. (130)

[5] Paulo Freire would call these barriers *limit-situations.* They call forth *limit-act* that transcend the closed boundaries prescribed by these barrier. Beyond these boundaries lies a realm of *untested feasibility*, which dialogue should explore.

[6] There has been no shortage of proposed settlements for the Middle East. One of the first was the Sykes-Picot plan offered in 1916 before the WW1 ended with the break-up of the Ottoman Empire. The list goes no to include the Arlosoroff Plan of 1933, the Peel Commission Plan of 1936, the Woodhead Commission Plan of 1938 all the way to and beyond the UN General assembly Resolution of 1947. There have been Vatican palns, Dutch plans, Quarter plans as well as Palestinian and Jordanian plans. For a summary list see Benvenisti, 1995, p46

[7] I want to acknowledge the important contribution of Brenna Powell in formulating these questions. Their construction arises from on our on-going collaboration with Community Dialogue and with many other groups in Northern Ireland with whom we have become friends. Brenna has played a key role in assessing and reassessing, framing and reframing them in light of growing understanding and involvement.

[8] Avishai Margalit conveyed this insight to me in a personal conversation. The technical term for unbreakable compound is syncategormatic.

[9] Steve Stedman told me this story.

[10] Indeed, the official maps of the Israeli governmental show no line of demarcation between Israel proper and the occupied territories. (NY Times Editorial, Oct. 3, 2003)

[11] Indeed, the PLO charter of 1968 defines its objectives as the liberation of all Palestine through armed struggle and the establishment of an state containing a negligible minority of Jewish citizens. As the PLO leadership moved more

to a two state option, Hamas and other groups have increasingly embraced this cause and invested it with Islamic rather than secular meaning. (Mishal & Sela, 2000, p14 & 15)

[12] Margalit argues that UN Resolution 194 does not specify a right of return but instead states that refugees "wishing to return to their homes and live in peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so." Few Israelis believe that the returning Palestinians have any intention to live in peace with them once they return. (Margalit, 2001)

[13] A list of multilateral agreements concerning implementation as well as regional settlements with Syria and Lebanon surround this plan.

[15] The UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Terje Roed-Larsen, maintains that the conflict in the Middles East involves deep existential passions. (Roed-Larson, 2002) The Israelis experience each day as a struggle for their survival. They hear words and see actions that confirm their suspicion that the Palestinians seek to destroy their existence as a people and as a state. While this fear may seem irrational to outsiders, it appears very real to people who have encountered this threat in the concrete events of their lifetime. Palestinians also believe that they are engaged in a struggle in which their existence as an independent people hangs in the balance. Every day, their future hope seems more and more remote as settlement expands and the occupation deepens. They face a growing military power that appears to take less and less note of their existence.

　　Roed-Larsen notes that the vast majority of Israelis want and believe in a peace with the Palestinians. Their image of this peace may not be quite what the Palestinians envision, but it is nevertheless heart-felt. The vast majority of Palestinians do not want an end to Israeli, only an end to the occupation. They may want more territory that Israel will presently conceded, but their aspiration to life side by side with Israel is quite genuine. Obviously, it is possible to reconcile these aspirations, but at present Israelis and Palestinians do not share a vision of how this could be done.

[16] Palestine was the fourth destination of choice after the US, Canada and Argentina. (LaGuadia, 2003, p70)

[17] Drawing on Schmitt's friend/enemies distinction, Chantal Mouffe argues a pluralistic democratic order rests on a shift from enemy to adversary. (Mouffe, 1993) Like Schmitt, she maintains that a political world without conflict is a dangerous illusion because all political identities are relational and depend upon a constitutive other, a difference that determined the boundary between *us* and *them*. Antagonisms unavoidably arise along this demarcation, and the possibility always exists that these disagreements will take the most extreme form of friend/enemy. The challenge is to defuse the element of hostility that is latent in all political identities and to create instead an agonistic pluralism.[17] She writes:

> (T)*he opponent should be considered not as an enemy to be destroyed, but as an adversary whose existence is legitimate and must be tolerated. We will fight against his ideas but we will not question his right to defend them. The category of the 'enemy' does not disappear but is displaced; it remains pertinent with respect to those who do not accept the democratic 'rules of the game' and who thereby exclude themselves from the political community. (p4)*

[18] Deborah Sontag reports that many Palestinian now believe that the inclusion of the far-right parties in Sharon's government indicates a renewed respectability for the ideal of transferring Palestinians out of the West Bank to neighboring Arab countries. (Sontag, 2001)

[19] In an interview with Benny Morris, Ehud Barak proclaimed his belief that Arafat and his colleagues seek a Palestinian state that includes all of Palestine. He charged them, with seeking a "truce á la Hudnat Hudaybiyah – "a temporary truce that the Prophet Muhammad concluded with the leaders of Mecca during 628-629, which he subsequently unilaterally violated." (Morris, 2002)

[20] I borrow the idea from Avishai Margalit. I make a connection between this idea and the notion of an exclusionary reason – a reason against acting for other well-founded reasons – that Margalit uses to justify forgiveness. Margalit calls forgiveness an exclusionary reason against acting on reasons that related to the injury to the forgiver committed by the offender. He says that forgiveness is like a promise that commitments us to disregard certain reasons for action. The possibility of Platonic hate arises when we begin to have reasons for not acting on the reasons – however valid they may be – for hating another person or group.

[21] Avishai Margalit presented this analysis to the Stanford Center on Conflict and Negotiation's Interdisciplinary Seminar on February 12, 2002.

[22] Ehud Barak has charged the Palestinian with a game plan that establishes a Palestinian state and then pursues "'legitimate' demands down the road." Their goal is the destruction of the Jewish state not by kicking the Jews out but by overtaking them demographically. (Morris, 2002)

[23] The study itself is entitled *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements* (Stephen J. Stedman, Donald Rothchild, and Elizabeth Cousens, ed., Boulder, CO: Lynne Reiner Publishers, 2002). The conclusions to which I am referring are made in another article that is currently at the press.

[24] To be fair, the Palestinians felt that they had offered the creative solutions to most of the issues in the Oslo process. Faced with illegal settlement, they had offered to exchange land with Israel. Concerning the right of refugee retrun, they had agreed to compromise on a mechanism that would ensure the Jewish character of the Israeli state. On Jerusalem, they had conceded Israeli sovereignty in violation of their principles. (Agha & Malley, 2001)

[25] In an insightful study, our colleague Lee Ross has demonstrated the tendency of people to justify advantages that have previously been conferred on them by the status quo. (Diekmann, Samuels, Ross, & Bazerman, 1997) In the first part, people were asked to divide rewards for doing a job, and they overwhelmingly chose an equal split. Moreover, they continued to choose this outcome even when giving themselves a bigger portion would have been easy to justify. However, this egalitarian attitude changed in the second part of the study when in various ways the norm of equality was made intentionally less salient. In one instance, someone else had previously proposed an uneven division, and the result was that a large majority of those who received the lion's share felt an uneven split was now fair. While this outcome in itself was not very surprising, the remarkable capacity of the people who benefited to justify their advantage was quite astounding. This tendency was especially pronounced if the participants had come from already privileged backgrounds in real life. It comes as no surprise that none of the people in this study who received the smaller portion felt that the unequal distribution was fair.

This study demonstrated more than simply this propensity. It also indicated that they would defend particular benefits as reasonable that they would never think fair to impose in situations where they were absent. Furthermore, these self-serving claims were not mere rationalizations offered after the fact but reflect people's real, although biased, assessments of what fairness entails. Equally striking is the propensity to ignore or downplay the inequality and unfairness experienced by the other side as a consequence of the uneven distribution.

[26] Researchers have also suggested that relational concerns are more important in situations of relatively equal power and that instrumental aspects or outcome become more important as the power differential rises. (Tyler & Smith, 1998, 619)

[27] *Rubbed into the skin of a million*
   Ahmeds bused in from the
Territories. In to the skin, the hair,
   the kaffiyeh, the shirt.
For Arabs should be worked but
   Not seen.
(From Dennis Silk, "Vanishing Trick")

[28] The dominant psychological model for the justice motive has long been the social exchange theory. It contents that people pursue their own self-interest when interacting with others but that they also need mutual cooperation in order to be effective. Justice provides a ways to regulate social interactions so that the societal cooperation needed to produce mutually beneficial exchanges can develop. According to this theory, the motive for justice arises in the move from short-term to long-term considerations. As research has advanced our knowledge about justice, more and more inconsistencies with an instrumental approach have emerged. The primary alternative models that have arisen are based upon social identity theory, which maintains that people do not assess their social relationship solely on the basis of material gains and gives greater weight to the role played by social bonds that unite groups. (Tyler & Smith, 1998)

[29] Some scholars have also argued that we have a need to believe that the world we live in is basically just. On the whole, people get what they deserve and deserve what they get. (Lerner, 1980) Psychologists call this the *just world hypothesis*, and it arises in part from our need for the world to be predictable and controllable. We struggle to see the pattern that conveys not only order and certainty but also fairness in the world around us. Moreover, we want to believe this rule generally holds most of the time and certainly over the long term.

However, large segments of our world fall clearly short of the orderly just realm that we hope for. We all know that bad, even terrible, things sometimes happen to good and deserving people. Indeed, few of us would have

trouble pinpointing times in our own lives when unwarranted suffering has occurred. Yet, we have trouble dealing with a world that seems to be only a series of random events. This contradiction between what we know to be true and what we want to believe causes us discomfort, and we lessen the tension by extending the perception of justice into areas where it doesn't objectively apply. In other words, we invent a just world not exactly out of whole cloth but nevertheless in obvious disregard of certain aspects of the world before us. It is not quite correct to say that we believe in a just world despite the evidence. Instead, we use our belief in a just world to change the evidence.

The degree to which philosophical thinking reflects this inclination to see the world as just could be a subject for serious debate. Still, despite their spectacular failure over the centuries to establish agreement about the nature of justice, philosophers have tended to concur about one remarkable aspect concerning the role that it plays in everyday life. Within the proposition that the world is ostensibly just most of the time at least over the long run, justice becomes the default position that either corrects or controls all instances of injustice. Judith Shklar calls this consensus the normal model of justice (Shklar, 1990), and we all partake of this outlook if not in its entirety then to a greater or lesser extent

[30] To probe this problem more deeply, it is useful to draw a distinction between what we owe people by virtue of the fact that they are human beings (morality) and what we owe people because of the particular relationship that we have with them (ethics). (Margalit, 2002) Our commonsense notions of justice involve a mixture of both domains. Thus, it is quite possible to reach general agreement about the justice we owe people because they are human beings and to use this consensus to adjudicate conflicts. However, because we agree about our duties to people as human being does not mean that we agree about the justice that we owe them as a consequence of the particular ways in which we are related.

It is in this realm of thick relationships – relationships that are rich in meaning and have complex textures – that justice most often fails to resolve conflict. Part of the reason concerns the scope and composition of the entitlements and responsibilities that link us together in complex ways. Our commitments to these duties are embedded in distinct configurations of specific moral precepts that define particular ways of living. It is dedication to a distinctive way of life unites us together as a people, but it is also what divides us from others who embrace a different way of living. These ways of life don't necessarily differ in the duties they prescribe regarding human beings vis-à-vis other human beings, but they often disagree fundamentally about the order and priority that we assign responsibilities once we become more than mere abstract human beings to one another. In this domain, a plea for justice is commonly a way of advancing our own way of life over another. Because such appeals specify no universal ground for adjudicating conflict, appeals to justice usually provide little more than fuel for the conflict.

[31] Avishai Margalit aptly sums of the dilemma: "Zionism is a tragedy in the Hegelian sense, that is, in the sense of a collision between two moral forces with powerful but conflicting rights. The position of each of the conflicting parties is in itself justifiable, but the outcome is one of mutual destruction.." (Margalit, 1986)

[32] For justice to function as a way of resolving seriously disruptive conflict, it must provide principles to which we can appeal for making just decisions. These principles must reside above the chaos and discord that conflict generates as a transcendent authority. At the same time, they must be grounded in the disparate perspectives that give rise to the conflict. Without these foundations, justice lacks either the authority or the legitimacy – or both – that it needs to render final decisions. There is no easy way around this dilemma since the lack of just principles that meet these two requirements is part and parcel of the reason that there is conflict in the first place.

[33] Judith Shklar defines injustice as "a special kind of anger we feel when we are denied promised benefits and when we do not get what we believe to be our due." (Shklar, 1990, p83)

[34] The problem-solving approach depends upon the development of groups like interactions between divergent communities. (Gray, 1993) In other words, they need to begin thinking of themselves as a *we*. Harold Saunders calls this shift the development of a relationship and describes the dramatic transformation that occurs when *we-thinking* arises. (Saunders, 1999, p33)

[35] The measures taken at Oslo must be seen against the backdrop of the economic decline that began with the *Intifada*. During 1998 and 1991, the Palestinian GNP dropped 20% and unemployment reached between 30% and 40%. (Benvenisti, 1995, p160) Much of this downturn was caused by the numerous border closures and curfews that Israelis instituted in response to their growing sense of insecurity. Israel also introduced a pass system dangerously similar to South Africa's apartheid laws that severely restricted Palestinian employment opportunities. (p178) Industries like agriculture and construction that depended heavily on cheap labor were virtually shutdown causing the Israeli government to import tens of thousands of foreign labors from Thailand, Romania and the Philippines.

(p179) These measures continued through the Gulf War and the Madrid Conference were largely still in place when Oslo was launched.

[36] Between September 1993 when the Oslo Accords were signed and March 1995, 49 civilians and 22 soldiers were killed within the 1967 borders of Israel. The 18 months prior to Oslo had seen 14 civilians and 6 soldiers causalities. (However, by contrast 750 Israelis died due to traffic accidents during each of these two periods.) The biggest episodes were the suicide bombing of a bus on Dizengoff Street in late 1994, which massacred 22 passengers and a second suicide bombing north of Tel Aviv in January 1995, which killed 22 Israeli soldiers. (Margarlit, 1998, pp305-306)