

War and Peace in Judaism Worksheet: Peace within Judaism

Sources:

Source 1: [Mishna Avot 1:18](#)

רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר, על שלשה דברים העולם עומד, על הדין ועל האמת ועל השלום, שנאמר (זכריה ח) אמת ומשפט שלום שפטו בשעריכם:

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: The world exists on three things. Justice, Truth, and Peace, as it says: "Truth and the verdict of peace are you to adjudicate in your gates"

Source 2: [Mishna Avot 1:12](#)

הלל אומר, הוי מתלמידי של אהרן, אוהב שלום ורודף שלום, אוהב את הבריות ומקרבן לתורה:

Hillel says: Be among the students of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving people, and bringing them closer to the Torah

Source 3: [Vayikra Rabbah 9:9](#)

Hezekiah said: Great is peace, for of all the commandments it is written "if you see," if you meet" (*Shemot* 23:4-5), "if there a chance" (*Devarim* 22:6), that is, if the occasion for this commandment should arise, you must do it, and if not, you need not do it. In relation to peace, however, it is written "seek peace and pursue it" (*Tehillim* 34:15) seek it in your own place, and pursue it even to another place as well

Source 4: [Sifra, Behuchkotai, 1:18](#)

Without peace, there is nothing...since peace outweighs everything

Source 5: [Tanhuma, Tzav 83](#)

Everything written in the Torah was written for the sake of peace.

Source 6: *Yalkut Shimoni, Yitro 39*

God said: "Torah is peace and to whom do I give it? To the nation which loves peace"

Source 7: *Derech Eretz Zuta*

All lies are forbidden, yet it is permissible to lie in order to bring about peace between two people.

Source 8: [Talmud Bavli, Yevamot 14b](#)

Come and hear: Although Bet Shammai and Bet Hillel are in disagreement on the questions of rivals, sisters, and old bill of divorce, a doubtfully-married woman, a woman whose husband had divorced and who stayed with him overnight in an inn, money, valuables, a perutah and the value of a perutah, Bet Shammai did not abstain from marrying women of the families of Bet Hillel, nor did Bet Hillel refrain from marrying those of Bet Shammai. This is to teach you that they showed love and friendship towards one another, thus putting into practice the scriptural text: "You should love truth and peace."

Source 9: [Talmud Bavli, Eruvin 13b](#)

Rabbi Abba stated in the name of Shmuel: For three years there was a dispute between Bet Shammai and Bet Hillel, the former asserting "The Halachah is in agreement with our views", and the latter contending, "The Halachah is in agreement with our views". Then a Bat Kol (Heavenly voice) issued, announcing, "These and these are the words of the living God, but the Halachah is in agreement with the rulings of Bet Hillel."

Questions:

Source 1:

1. What does Hillel mean when he says that "the world stands" on these three values?

2. Why do you think he has chosen these three? Would you choose differently?

3. Can you think of situations where these values conflict with each other?

4. If you had to choose one above the others, which would it be?

Source 2:

5. Why is Aaron an example of a 'lover of peace'? Can you bring proof from your knowledge of Aaron in the Midrash?

6. What is the difference between loving peace and pursuing peace?

7. Are the values of loving/pursuing peace and loving people, and bringing them back to the Torah connected in any way?

Sources 3-9:

8. In these 6 sources, peace is presented as an ultimate value above many other values. Do you agree? Can you think of a value that is more important than peace?

9. Why do you think that source 3 suggests that peace is more important than all the other *mitzvot*?

10. Source 6 suggests that Israel merited receiving the Torah because they are a people of peace. Would you say this to be true? Explain your answer.
