

WAR & PEACE



Learning War and Peace

Is Judaism a religion of peace? What is a Jewish war? Can you be at peace with those you disagree with in society? Is the Torah a path to peace? These were the questions that led us to choose this overarching theme. We wanted to get to the heart of so many important topics; enemies and revenge, peace-building and compromise, siblings and society, to name just a few of the many topics covered by this book.

Beyond these timeless issues there are many pertinent links with our own contemporary reality, from terrorism on the streets of Europe, to the desire for a lasting peace in Israel / Palestine, and the conflicts that exist in our own Jewish communities. War is rarely out of the news, and peace all too often falls by the wayside. The conversations in this book are current and relevant and can inspire a vibrant discussion rooted in our tradition. Though often written hundreds, or even thousands of years ago, these texts have a huge amount to add to our contemporary debates on these topics. The questions we seek to ask are tough, and we don't expect the answers to be any simpler. War and peace are complex ideas and on occasion our texts offer up solutions that are hard to accept.

This year's Chavruta book will trace a narrative starting with War and moving forward to Peace. We will first explore the scope of war and conflict, and what can be included in these categories, then move on to the actions of war. As War comes to a close we will interrogate methods of peace-making, compromise and interfaith engagement, before finally looking at the concept of eternal peace.

There is a vast body of Jewish sources about war and peace, and the Chavruta Project team has been working hard to present it in an accessible way. The bulk of this book is made up of traditional Jewish sources (on the right-hand pages) and other, non-traditional or non-Jewish sources (on the left-hand pages). We have included **Points to consider**, as starting points for discussion, and suggested paths through the book, via the **Connections**. However, there are myriad ways to study with this book, and if our questions or connections aren't your cup of tea, feel free to ignore them!

We have been lucky again this year to have collaborated with four incredible teams of volunteers from around the Limmud globe. All of them, particularly the team leaders, deserve the lion's share of credit for producing this book. You will notice that each section has its own distinctive message, as designed by each team. We are proud that this project is truly international, and hope that everyone studying it will benefit from this cosmopolitan authorship.

Section One, 'War and conflict', led by Ellen Flax, with Yuliya Mazur, Mark Solomon and Jeremy Tabick, our team in New York. This section will look at a variety of potential origins for war and conflict.

Section Two, 'Making war', led by Helene Levitan, with Yoni Sher, Rivka Hermelin, Karen Kallmann, David Lubinsky and Sharon Shaked, our team in South Africa. This section will question the actions of war and their ethics.

Section Three, 'Making peace', led by Irit Burkeman, with Miriam Lorie, Halima Krausen, Gloria Rubin, Danny Burkeman and Pete Martin,

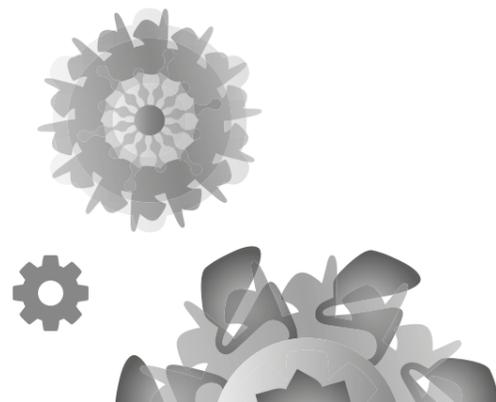
our team in London. This section will delve into different methods of achieving peace.

Section Four, 'Keeping peace', led by David Biton, with Merav Arbel our team in Israel. This section will explore the concept of a lasting peace in greater depth.

In addition to the team members listed above, we would like to thank Lindsey Taylor-Guthartz for proofreading the English text; Yuval Keren for setting and proofreading the Hebrew text; Chani Smith for proofreading the Hebrew text; Sarah Grabiner for detailed feedback and corrections; and Uri Berkowitz of Maven Design for the graphic design of this book and invaluable guidance. Last but not least, we would like to thank all the wonderful people who agreed to present and facilitate Chavruta sessions at Limmud Conference 2015, as well as all of you who came along to learn. Limmud exists because of all the amazing participants and volunteers!

The aim of the Limmud Chavruta project is to present Jewish perspectives on a topic that will capture the imagination of all Jews. We hope that the theme of **War and Peace** will both inspire and enthuse people to learn, and provide the space and energy for discussions that are truly *I'shem shamayim* (for the sake of heaven).

Hannah Skolnick and Joe Grabiner Chairs, Chavruta Project 2015



What is Limmud?

Based in the UK and founded over 30 years ago, Limmud (the Hebrew word for 'learning') is a global leader in innovative, inclusive Jewish education.

The widely acclaimed winter Limmud Conference is one of the largest international gatherings of Jewish people. Over two and a half thousand people take part in over a thousand sessions over five intense, fun-filled, intellectually-challenging and unforgettable days. As at every Limmud event, presenters give their time and share their knowledge freely.

Limmud events and programmes also include Regional day Limmuds across the UK, a summer festival Limmud in the Woods, emails, podcasts, a Shabbat book and the Chavruta Project.

Limmud International

Limmud is now very much an international movement with volunteer teams planning and running events in over 80 communities around the world.

Limmud set up Limmud International as the body to develop and provide training, mentoring and support for groups around the world. Its vision is that every Jew, wherever they are, will be taken one step further on their Jewish journey.

With shared principles and values, Limmud International encourages and creates common spaces between the different Limmud groups around the world. We are proud that this year's Chavruta Project is again an international collaboration by volunteers from so many Limmud communities. It shows what we can all achieve by working together.

www.limmudinternational.org

The Chavruta Project and Limmud's core values

Chavruta is something that all Limmud events are encouraged to include because it is such a clear example of Limmud's values:

- Chavruta is a model of **learning** which changes people, inspires action and opens new worlds. It is the only model where every participant can be a teacher and a student *at the same time*. This creates a learning environment in which people are able to reflect and grow.
- Chavruta is part of the Limmud community of learning, and embraces its **commitment to community and mutual responsibility**. Chavruta is also a collective experience, through which participants strengthen and develop their Jewish identity, and is therefore a prime example of how Limmud is **expanding Jewish horizons**.
- Chavruta relies on **empowerment**, giving every participant a forum to teach as well as to learn, and **participation**, encouraging participants to play an exceptionally active role in the session. Chavruta is the ultimate form of participatory learning.
- Chavruta is a cross-communal and cross-generational experience, which aims to be accessible to all who want to learn. Chavruta embraces **diversity** and harnesses its power to create profound experiences. In this way, Chavruta is enabling **connections** to be made between individuals from all streams of our community. Chavruta provides a space where participants connect spiritually, emotionally and intellectually.

The real power of Chavruta is that participants can not only take their experiences home but also use the resources and learning model in their own lives and introduce it to the lives of others.



For the full text of Limmud's mission, values and principles, visit: limmud.org/home/mission

Chavruta at Limmud Conference in the UK

The starting point for many learners are the Chavruta sessions at Limmud Conference.

There are two study modes available:

- **Guided:** a hands-on facilitator guides participants through a selection of sources by means of group discussion punctuated by opportunities to explore a new text with your chavruta partner;
- **Traditional:** the original Limmud Chavruta experience – beginning and concluding with a facilitated group discussion and plenty of time in between to learn with your partner, creating your own journey through the texts.