

# ABRAHAM'S TABLE FORUM SERIES

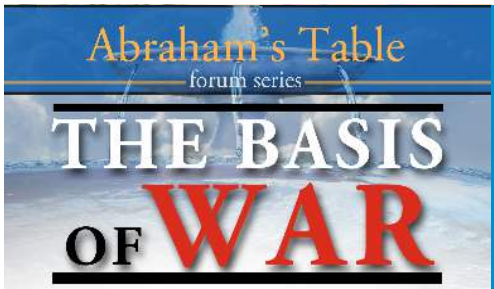
The Basis of War  
According to Judaism, Christianity and Islam



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## The Basis of War according to Judaism, Christianity and Islam

Abraham's table is a forum series organized by the center for interfaith affairs of Peace Islands Institute. It aims to establish a common ground among Abrahamic traditions.

In this session of Abraham's table principles of justification of wars in Abrahamic traditions will be examined. Can war have an excuse? Is war just? Under what circumstances? What are principles of war?



## BIOGRAPHIES

**Rabbi Jack Bemporad** has been Director of the Center for Interreligious Understanding since its inception in 1992. He is also Director of the John Paul II Center and Professor of Interreligious Studies at the Vatican's Angelicum University in Rome, as well as Senior Rabbinic Scholar at Chavurah Beth Shalom in Alpine, NJ. Promoting inter-faith dialogue for more than 30 years, he has met with world religious leaders from Pope John Paul II to the Dalai Lama, and former Iranian president Mohammad Khatami. In 2010, he led eight leading American Imams and Moslem leaders to Auschwitz under a grant from the Adenauer Foundation, and as a result of their experience, the Imams issued a public statement condemning Holocaust Denial. Most recently, the CIU hosted a groundbreaking conference in New York attended by scholars, Rabbis and Imams, in which the methodology of interpreting their religious texts was explored. Author of *Our Age: The Historic New Era of Christian-Jewish Understanding*, and editor of *The Inner Journey: Views from the Jewish Tradition*, Rabbi Bemporad also contributed the chapter on "Norms of War in Judaism" for *World Religions and Norms of War*, published by the United Nations University Press. In addition, he authored the articles on "Soul in Judaism" and "Suffering" in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam for the *Encyclopedia of Religion*, as well as been honored with The Pave the Way Foundation's "Inter-Religious Dialogue" Award, Sri Chinmoy's "Lifting Up the World with a Oneness-Heart" Award, and "The Peace and Tolerance Award" from the (Muslim) Interfaith Dialog Center.

**Andrew Skotnicki** is a Professor of Christian Ethics and Chair of the Religious Studies Department at Manhattan College. He also taught Christian Ethics at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. He did his undergraduate work at Marquette University and received my Ph.D. in Religion and Society from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. He has written three books, Religion and the Development of the American Penal System, Criminal Justice and the Catholic Church, and, most recently, *The Last Judgment: Christian Ethics in a Legal Culture*.

**Ibrahim Sayar** is the Director of the Center for Interfaith Affairs at the Peace Islands Institute. He has his theological ordination from Harran University in Turkey and studied master's degree in Psychology at Concordia University in Chicago. He has been involved in interfaith and intercultural dialogue activities for the last 10 years in Chicago, Boston and New York. He is happily married with two children named Abdurrahim and Omer Rasim.

**Rabbi Jack Bemporad** is the director of the Center for Interreligious Understanding, as well as the director of the John Paul II Center. As the first speaker of the night, Rabbi Bemporad spoke about the many ways that the Old Testament discourages war. He stated, "War is something that you have to avoid; the real goal should be peace". Deuteronomy, chapter 17 was quoted, giving basis to Bemporad's argument "Thou shall not multiply horses, wives, nor silver and gold", as well as other biblical passages. He examined war historically from the Judaic perspective. He defined war as "the worst possible thing" in the world. He talked about the doctrine of just war, and underlined that there is no Just war; however, there are some instances that people have to defend themselves which we can call the "least unjust war". More than that he added, we have prevent humanity from roots that may lead us eventually to a war before it is too late.

**Andrew Skotnicki** was our second speaker of the night. A professor of Christian Ethics and Chair of the Religious Studies department at Manhattan College, Professor Skotnicki emphasized on how the message of love and Jesus Christ has left Christianity. He started with the quote "Christians are supposed to love everyone; you don't kill the one you love". Connecting the 1,700-year relationship between war and Christianity after Emperor Constantine's famous battle, Professor Skotnicki notes that Jesus Christ himself has never been used to justify war, nor can he ever, because of his image and message of love. He gave examples of wars throughout the history committed in the name God, religion or Land. Then he studied the term love according to Christian tradition which teaches its followers to love the enemy. "How can you fight with someone you love" he asked.

The third speaker of the night was our very own Director of the Center for Interfaith Affairs of PII, Mr. Ibrahim Sayar. He talked about the faith based categorization of man according to Quran. He gave the general judiciary structure of Islam which is to protect five given rights. Mr. Sayar gave the rules and principles of war before starting it and added " I do not know either if there is a just war with the weapons that people are holing which do not differentiate between innocent and combaters.



## KEYNOTES

"War is something that you have to avoid; the real goal should be peace"  
**Rabbi Jack Bemporad**

"Christians are supposed to love everyone... you don't kill the one you love"  
**Andrew Skotnicki**

"The definition of darkness is the absence if light"  
**Ibrahim Sayar**