



# CREATING SPACES TO SHARE OUR STORIES AND BUILD FRIENDSHIPS ACROSS DIVIDES

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## How can we be peacemakers? – JUDAISM

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### Background:

This is a story about Aaron, in the Torah he is the brother of Moses. We don't hear very much about his personality in the Torah, but we are told that after he died, the entire people cried for thirty days. He must have been very loved! Jewish legends tell us more about how he was a peacemaker, with some very inspiring stories. Aaron used to pursue peace between friends, between families and between communities.<sup>1</sup> When Aaron would sense that someone was behaving badly in private, he would go to them and connect with them.<sup>2</sup> Aaron would help them to return to the right behaviour through love and peace.<sup>3</sup> This story describes the method Aaron the righteous would use to bring about peace.



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## Aaron the Peacemaker – (Story can be found on back)

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### Follow up questions:

1. What did Aaron do to bring about peace between friends?
2. Do you think it is better to stay out of other people's disputes or to get involved? Why?
3. Can you think of any examples of when you saw someone help to heal a fight between two friends?
4. In the story, Aaron told a "white lie" to make peace between two people. What do you think of this approach to solving a dispute?

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<sup>1</sup> Mishnat Rabbi Eliezer

<sup>2</sup> Rabi Yoni of Gerondi

<sup>3</sup> Korban Aharon on the Sifra

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## Aaron the Peacemaker

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When Aaron heard of two people who were fighting with each other, he would go to one, and say to them “Peace be upon you!” The traditional response to this would be: “peace be upon you my master and my teacher. How can I help you?” Aaron would then say: “Your friend has sent me to say sorry to you because he knows he has upset you”. The first friend reflected: “a righteous person has come to ask me to forgive them” ... and then realising that the friend was sorry he exclaimed “Master, I was the one in the wrong” His heart had been changed.

Aaron would then go to the second friend and say the same to him: “Peace be upon you!” The traditional response to this would be: “peace be upon you my master and my teacher. How can I help you?” Aaron would then say: “Your friend has sent me to say sorry to you because he knows he has upset you”. The second friend reflected: “a righteous person has come to ask me to forgive them” ... and then realising that the friend was sorry he exclaimed “Master, I was the one in the wrong” His heart had been changed.

When the friends next bump into each other, one would say “I’m so sorry for upsetting you” and the other would use similar language.<sup>4</sup> Peace would be restored.

Another Aaron legend says that Aaron would stay with someone who was angry with a friend “...until they removed all the jealous rage from their heart”.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Kala Rabbati- with modernized language

<sup>5</sup> Avot de Rabbi Natan