


THE SPIRIT AND INSIGHTS OF THE AXIAL FLOWERINGS: A PARADIGM FOR
CONFLICT RESOLUTION?

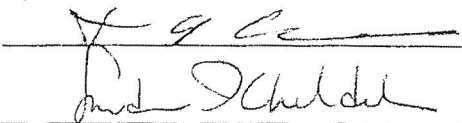
by

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For Zerakhanu

and

In memory of my brothers Shaukatali and Sayedali

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This has not been a solitary effort.

If the spirit of the axial flowerings was rendered meaningful to me, it is because of the context furnished by the community of faith and tradition in which I have evolved; for this context, I express deep gratitude to His Highness the Aga Khan.

I have been fortunate to have a committee who are not only experienced and learned, but more importantly, exceptionally understanding and sympathetic of the conditions under which I have worked over the past seven years. Without their guidance and inspiration, it would have become infinitely more difficult (perhaps impossible) to complete the dissertation. I am immensely grateful to each committee member.

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From my late mother, I inherited a voracious appetite for reading; from my late father, an early understanding that little could substitute for practical experience.

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All errors of commission and omission remain solely mine.

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ABSTRACT

THE SPIRIT AND INSIGHTS OF THE AXIAL FLOWERING: A PARADIGM FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION?

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The purpose of this study is to consider the relevance and applicability of the spirit and insights of the Axial Flowerings to the modern practice of conflict resolution.

Jaspers, a German philosopher, articulated the term Axial Age in his book that was translated into English in 1953. Jaspers identified, in the context of history, the Axial Age as a pivotal change in human condition that was marked by the emergence of reflexivity, historicity and agentiality of the individual in four distinct and distant areas – China, India, eastern Mediterranean, and Greece.

Jaspers' focus on the Axial Age was Eurocentric, and rooted in the ethos of Christianity. In recent years, Jaspers' term has been expanded and elaborated to include Axial civilizations more broadly, and Axial Age civilizations to bring into consideration the undocumented civilizations, as also other contemporary ancient civilizations that did not feature in Jaspers' thesis.

Ideas have been the well spring of intellectual development of mankind. Ideas agitated by seminal thinkers have been agents of change, for better or for worse, throughout history. There is, thus, a direct nexus between the history of ideas, and the Axial Flowerings. Modern scholars have debated religion, ethics, culture, power distribution, social justice, as also individuals and their relationship to associational living, that were the core concerns of society of the Axial epochs. Religion, and its contradictory proclivities of violence and non-violence; ethics and its binding force; culture and its varied manifestations; individuals and communities and their varying values; power and its asymmetries; are as germane to the present day discourse of conflict resolution, as they were in those far away times. Moreover, recently, additional subjects such as other civilizations, cultures, education, and the global ramifications of each, have entered the discourse of Axial Age, Axial Flowerings and other Axial breakthroughs.

The current convention of the conflict resolution discipline is that it is a 20th century dispensation. My study argues that looking through the lenses of the history of ideas and the Axial Flowerings, points to ancient and noble ancestry for conflict resolution. It is, after all, a trite saying that from time immemorial conflict has been ever present in associational living, and that all conflicts are ultimately settled by each society through culturally legitimated processes.

I, therefore, argue detailed study of the Axial Flowerings together with the history of ideas is a fit and proper paradigm for conflict resolution, and presents a great opportunity

to learn and profit from multi-disciplinary, and multi-dimensional insights of the Axial Age and the Axial breakthroughs, and to relate these to the present conditions.

Background

This study is the product of a subjective worldview of one who comes from varied cultural and professional backgrounds, as also from a monotheistic religious tradition. I am African by birth, Asian by blood, easterner by upbringing, westerner by education, believer by faith, (and, not least, an optimist by outlook!). But, first and foremost, I am a human being by biological right.

I was born in colonial Kenya, in a multiethnic (yet stratified) society, raised in multicultural (but iniquitous) environments, and later, earned my living in a multiracial (though, at times, insular) workplace. My education up to high school was defective, having been acquired at a racially homogenous school, as decreed by a racially prejudiced colonial administration.

I am a carrier of multiple cultures. The rainbow of my cultural and religious antecedents, educational acquisitions, and experiential accretions overarches my sense of self, as also my value system, and my worldview. Experience gained from professional and voluntary work has convinced me of the power of faith and moral suasion.

My conviction about the equality of all human beings, my respect for a diversity of cultures, and above all, my empathy for those trapped in the vicious circle of poverty, deprivation, and denial of human dignity, continue to inform my search for dispute resolution mechanisms that are least tainted by *realpolitik*, by power disparities, cultural stereotyping, or prejudice, racial, ethnic, religious or otherwise. I also face a constant internal struggle to find a balance between an individual's private right to make free, and

informed choices, on the one hand, and the need for the community to maintain cohesion, and continuity of social structures, on the other.

It is a trite observation that conflicts, at all levels, and across the spectrum of social classes, have revolved around issues of culture, faith, identity, and power. I have constantly reflected upon the multiplicity of the identities that define me as an individual and sought their common elements by which to navigate my trajectory through life, as also to expand my horizons.

Identity rooted in a national state, expected to trump other identities, presents obvious limitations. Lately, I have been persuaded that it is possible to transcend the boundaries of nationality and to be, for want of a better term, a “cosmopolitan citizen.”

Chapter 1: Introduction

Kant laments: Out of the crooked timber of humanity nothing straight was ever made

Berlin grieves: Mortal being heedless of the realities of social injustice continues to inflict self-administered wounds of despair upon self and others

Hope consoles: The Cosmopolitans of Conflict Resolution can plane down the crooked timber into a sturdy staff that can steady humankind's journey through history*

*(Adapted from the writings of Berlin & Hardy, 1997 and *Ramsbotham, Miall, & Woodhouse, 2012).*

The idea of conflict is deeply rooted in the instinct of self-preservation of human beings. With the evolution of philosophical thought and advancement of science, thinkers and scholars have conceptualized conflict under various theories. For example, Ross, in his book, *The Culture of Conflict* (1993) posits that “In the most general terms, the psychocultural dispositions rooted in a society’s early socialization experiences shape the overall level of conflict, whilst its specific pattern of social organization determines whether the targets of conflict and aggression are located within a society, outside it, or both” (quoted by Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 234).

Jane Goodall has traced human aggression far further back by comparing it with “the murderous propensities of our genetically nearest cousins, the chimpanzees (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 234). In the same vein, Freud (“death drive *thanatos*”), Dollard (frustration/aggression), Bandura (aggression as a learnt response), and others, have advanced different theories of conflict from the perspective of their own disciplines.

Conflict is latent in every society. It remains dormant largely because of asymmetry of power between the strong and the weak. In earlier societies this asymmetry was passively accepted as a given from forces on high that were little understood, and much feared. Societies were highly stratified and upward mobility from lower to higher social class was unknown. An upshot of this situation was that the marginalized constituencies sought comfort in a higher and unseen power. This power was seen as embedded in superstition, magic, and later in religious feelings.

The idea of power gave rise to a dual worldview: one rooted in religion; and the other in secular segment. (I am indebted to Prof. Scimecca for pointing out this fundamental bifurcation to me during a personal meeting). Latent conflict becomes manifest when the powerless find their position unbearable and untenable. They find common ground with others suffering from the same deprivations. The initial group expression of manifest conflict is in protest movements. The next step is confrontation with the powers that be. If the situation is not ameliorated, conflict escalates into violence.

The idea of conflict resolution is enshrined in Ancient Wisdom, and encapsulated in the Golden Rule. Confucius was the first to formulate the rule ("Never do to others what you would not like them to do to you" (Armstrong, 2006, p. 208). Other traditions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam et al.) developed their own versions (expressed in positive or negative terms). *Scarboro Missions* lists thirteen sacred texts containing their respective version of the Golden Rule (McKenna, 2000).

The emergence of conflict resolution as an academic discipline, as also a profession, has been traced to the pioneering work of scholars and practitioners in several disciplines. Among these are: Follet (1942) (Scimecca, 1998), Kenneth and Elise Boulding, Burton, Azar (Ramsbotham et al., 2012).

The 21st century has inherited many conflicts from the most violent 20th Century. This situation has been exacerbated by new conflicts (wars, social and political protests, economic upheavals). Conflict resolution specialists are constantly trying innovative strategies to find enduring solutions to a wide spectrum of conflict. It would be useful to cast one's mind back to the conflict resolution mechanisms conceived and practiced in the past, to view them in a different light to determine whether the 'old' mechanisms can be modified, or fine-tuned to meet the present needs of the conflict resolution theory and practice.

In 1986 (the International Year of Peace), UNESCO (an agency of United Nations Organization) published *The Seville Statement on Violence*, in which "scholars from around the world" put forward several propositions pertaining to violence and war. The overall conclusion of the scholars was: "Just as 'wars begin in the minds of men,' peace also begins in our minds. The same species who invented war is capable of inventing peace. The responsibility lies with each of us" ("Seville Statement on Violence, Spain, 1986," n.d.).

Conflict and conflict resolution are coextensive with humankind's march through history. The foundation myth of the modern discipline of conflict resolution is that it is a new revelation (Avruch, 1998; Kriesberg, 2007; J. Scimecca, 1998). Conflict resolution

has manifested itself in different avatars in different cultures much as the Hindu belief reveals itself in four *yugas*¹ and ten *avatars*².

The four prominent geographical areas of simultaneous manifestation of conflict resolution are: China, India, eastern Mediterranean, and Greece. The avatars of conflict resolution can be identified as the teachings of sages including: Confucius, Mencius, Shang Yang, and Zhuangzi (China); Mahavira and Buddha (India); Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Isaiah of Babylon (eastern Mediterranean); and Socrates, Solon, Plato and Aristotle (Greece).

In each of these manifestations there were social and moral rules of a less institutionalized kind that were developed into explicit, institutionalized, and complex mode (Roberts, 1986). These rules were derived from religious prescriptions and the dictates of social morality or convention. The fundamental purpose of the rules enunciated by the sages was threefold: to bring about beneficial social change, to exercise social control, and to secure social justice (specifically, to equality before the law) (Hughes, 1980). The object of the sages was to exhort the powers that be to remedy “systemic injustice” that was “a religious as well as an economic problem” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 87). Armstrong points out, in the specific case of the eastern Mediterranean, that “justice was an essential pillar of religion” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 68).

Systemic injustice continues to subsist in the form of “divisions of class, gender, rank, location, religion, community and other established barriers” (Sen, 2009, p. 389). Sen and

¹ The yugas are: Satya, Treta, Dwapura, and Kali (to come).

² The Hindu avatars are identified as: Matsya (Fish); Kurma (Tortoise); Vara(Boar); Narsimha (Half-man/half-lion); Vamanal Dwarf); Parshurama...; Rama; Krishna; Buddha; Kalki (Partridge) (Levin, 1973, p. 255).

Rawls each have addressed the issue from different perspectives. The starting point for both is the notion of social contract. The dominant notion (among several alternative conceptions of social contract) views “society as artificial rather than natural, primarily as being the work of man rather than of God or Nature...the world of man as deriving from man’s own will rather than being merely the expression of external forces.” (Sen) This premise rules out the claim of divine right (proposed for example, by Locke), displaces Hobbes’ surrender of sovereignty to the state, and replaces these with the idea of consent of a free individual given freely. (Levin, 1973, p. 255).

Rawls has posited a particular idea of justice as: “justice as fairness” (Rawls, 2003, p. 3). He has opted for establishing “just institutions” (characterized as “arrangement focused” by (Sen, 2009, p. 10) to underpin “the basic structure of society, or more exactly, the way in which the major institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation” (Rawls, 1973, p. 7). Rawls’s thesis is that “once the gravest forms of political injustices are eliminated by following just (or at least decent) social policies and establishing just (or at least decent) basic institutions...the great evils of human history-unjust war and oppression, religious persecution and the denial of liberty of conscience, starvation and poverty, not to mention genocide and mass murder (following from political injustice) will eventually disappear” (Rawls, 2003, p. 7). He has called this idea “realistic utopia” (Rawls, 2003, pp. 5–6).

Sen takes a different tack to argue that “Justice is ultimately connected with the way people’s lives go, and not merely with the nature of the institutions surrounding them” (characterized by him as “realization focused”) (Sen, 2009, pp. x–xi.).

From the perspective of conflict resolution, each approach has relevance: right institutions (state as well as civil society) are as necessary as right behavior on the part of people in their daily lives. Both approaches have to be situated within a broad framework of antecedent and current religious sensibilities and ethics.

Overview of Study

The purpose of my study, thus, is to demonstrate a nexus between the ‘ancient’ and the ‘modern’ avatars of conflict resolution. My point of reference is the notion of the Axial Age articulated by Jaspers in 1949. This notion has been expanded, modified and critiqued by scholars in several disciplines. For the purposes of this enquiry I have used the term ‘Axial Flowerings’ compendiously to denote the alternative conceptions of Jaspers’ original formulation. This study has several objectives:

- To position conflict resolution within the realm of history of ideas.
- To relate conflict resolution to the spirit and insights of the Axial Flowerings.
- To identify the role of religion in conflict resolution.
- To put ethics in the context of conflict resolution.
- To consider the role of civil society in conflict resolution in the second decade (and beyond) of the 21st century.

The impulse underlying my enquiry is the following premise: “While respecting the integrity and need for specialized departments of learning, the historian of ideas [as

indeed the student - ZA] makes his particular contribution to knowledge by tracing the cultural roots and historical ramifications of the major specialized concerns of the mind” (Wiener, 1973, vii). My starting point is the use of “imaginative insight” in the sense used by Vico, in the 18th century (Berlin, 1981). This imaginative insight has been used, among others, by Lederach (moral imagination) (Lederach, 2005), and C.W. Mills (sociological imagination) (C.W. Mills, 1959).

The study primarily rests on the recognition of the *humanity* and *equality* of every person who is a party to, or affected by the conflict. It incorporates, in the measure possible, “the ethical universals” that enjoin doing what is ‘right,’ and forsaking doing what is ‘wrong’ (P. Singer, 1994). The concepts of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ have been defined keeping in view the broad cultural and religious traditions of different societies. The study endeavors to draw out uniformity and diversity of ethical norms among different societies.

Research Design & Strategy

My research design has, of necessity, been flexible and qualitative. I have drawn primarily on library and internet-based research supplemented by the following resources:

- Writings of the scholars and practitioners of Conflict resolution and secondary sources mentioned therein;
- Media reports on conflicts and interpretive commentary academics and pundits;
- Findings and assessments by organizations involved in faith-based conflict resolution, and faith-based diplomacy;

- Ideas and experiences of conflict specialists practicing conflict resolution in the context of their individual disciplines;
- Peer or independent evaluation of the work conflict specialists engaged in this discipline; and
- Reflections and assessments of religious actors, scholars, and writers.

Research Questions

The research questions, formulated on the basis of advice, guidance, and recommendations of the Committee are:

- What is the spirit of the Axial Flowerings?
- What are the insights to be derived from the great spiritual, economic, social, cultural, and political changes that took place in the Axial Flowerings?
- What was the role of power, culture, ethics, religion, and civil society during the Axial Flowerings?
- What opportunities and challenges confront Conflict resolution in the 21st Century given the legacy of the Axial Flowerings?

Methodology

My methodology has been multipronged. First, the main source of enquiry has been through library research, which enabled me to bring under the various lenses the extensive and diffused literature on the subject. Second, I have utilized, the databases of Worldcat, Proquest and similar online resources. Third, I have tried to weave the narratives from various supplemental sources to construct a coherent picture of the

concrete work of conflict resolution practitioners who have, explicitly or implicitly, used the insights of the Axial Flowerings in promoting conflict resolution in its broadest sense. Fourth, I have subjected the collected evidence to “analysis (that) entails classifying, comparing...and combining material...to extract the meaning and implications, to reveal patterns, or stitch together descriptions of events into coherent narrative” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 201). Fifth, I have endeavored to combine themes, events with topical markers, and “names of places, people, organizations that provide hooks that tie separate parts of a narrative together” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 207). Finally, I have tried to relate the result of the foregoing process to the central theme of my research, namely, the spirit and insights of the Axial Flowerings.

The broad canvas formed in my mind has triggered questions relating to conceptual and concrete issues surrounding the notions of ‘conflict’ and ‘conflict resolution.’ The process of conceptualization is an exercise in imagination. This, in turn, raises the question: What is the place of imagination in the scheme of conflict analysis and resolution? I use the term ‘imagination’ in the sense of “the ability of the mind to be creative or resourceful” (*The Concise Oxford dictionary of current English*, 1990). The term has been amplified by several writers: C. Wright Mills has written about “sociological imagination” (2000), while Lederach has written about “moral imagination” from the perspective of conflict resolution. Last but not least, Northrop Frye has expounded the role of the educated imagination in Massey lectures delivered on Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, in 1962. Among the many lessons for conflict resolution from Elise Boulding’s vast knowledge, experience, and commitment, is that the roots of

conflict resolution are buried deep in the past, have borne fruit in different epochs, and have unlimited potential for further flowering in the future. In doing so, Boulding gives place of pride to the role of imagination (a la Vico) over technology (“packaged knowledge”). Elise Boulding visualizes this “international order” becoming reality by “social imagination,” integrating “thinking, and feeling and acting” (Boulding, 1990, p. xi). At the heart of her “social imagination” is the message of hope.

In *The Moral Imagination* (a sequel to *Buildingpeace*), Lederach extols the virtue of a creative process that combines the “art and skill” of conflict resolution (Lederach, 2005, p. xi). He defines moral imagination “as the capacity to imagine something rooted in the challenges of the real world yet capable of giving birth to that which does not yet exist” (Lederach, 2005, p. ix). In his article, *Civil Society and Reconciliation*, Lederach’s framework is for peacebuilding in civil society (Lederach, 2006). He moves forward from conflict resolution to reconciliation by privileging four notions: truth, mercy, justice, and peace - terms that are part of the moral and ethical code prescribed by all major civil societies.

Significance of the Study

It is my hope that as a result of this study there will be the following outcomes:

- Various institutions, structures, and actors involved in Conflict Resolution become the conveyer belt for the transmission of insights and values of the sages of the Axial Flowerings.

- In the 21st century, the consolidation and success of the Conflict Resolution discipline recognizes the valuable resource in the spirit and insights of the Axial Flowerings.
- There is acknowledgement that the heart of Conflict Resolution lies in the recognition of a common humanity that binds mankind.
- It awakens a need to examine the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of faith-based Conflict Resolution and faith-based diplomacy.
- There is evolution ethically-anchored Conflict Resolution theory, practice, and research.
- There is recognition of the validity and success of the insights of the Axial Flowerings in identifying and satisfying the basic human needs posited by among others, Azar and Burton .
- There is an acceptance by theorists, scholars, and practitioners of conflict resolution that underlying the variety and diversity of conflict resolution mechanisms in various traditions, there is an essential unity of concepts, theories, and practices that can be traced back to the wisdom of Axial Flowerings. The sagacity of these insights demonstrates their validity and applicability to all societies, irrespective of cultural, religious, or ethnic differences.
- The essential role that civil society (and its diverse organs) can play in conflict resolution and conflict transformation in the 21st century is acknowledged.

- That the study brings to the surface a space between diversity and unity, which can be synthesized into a conflict resolution code setting out flexible rules that can be fine-tuned and adapted in the light of the experiences of individual practitioners supporting different schools of thought and practice.
- Consideration is given to the impact of practical and people-oriented policies, strategies, and action programs that deal with the fundamental issues touching upon perennial problems of economic inequality, political exclusion, and social discrimination.
- This study contributes to a broadening of the discussion about the role of religion, ethics, and civil society in the discipline of conflict resolution.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to undertake a brief review of the vast literature on the subjects germane to this study. An important purpose is to establish, in the measure possible, the relevance to, and impact upon, the modern disciplines of conflict resolution and of history of ideas, as also the Axial Age and its subsequent flowerings in different parts of the world.

History of Ideas

Isaiah Berlin was exemplar of this tradition of taking a multidisciplinary approach. A philosopher, Berlin concentrated his intellectual energies in extensive examination of the “human realm,” a broad term that brings under scrutiny a host of inter-related pivotal ideas (e.g. freedom, choice, self-conscious purposive action, ethics and morality, liberty, freedom) centered on individuals (and communities?) divorced from the world of impersonal forces”. (A selection of Berlin’s seminal essays has been published under the title: *Berlin: The Proper Study of Mankind* (2004) – the sub-title presumably adopted from Alexander Pope’s famous exhortation “Know then thy self! Presume not God to scan! The proper study of mankind is man” (Lovejoy, 1976, p. 9). Berlin writes that in the Western tradition “the concept of the perfect society is one of the oldest and most deeply pervasive” (Berlin, 1981, p. 120). This quest and the search for answers to perennial human problems stretch back to two millenniums and more. The wished for solution to human problems was initially grounded, according to Berlin, in the Platonic ideal that “all genuine questions must have one true answer and one only, all the rest being necessarily errors... (and)...The timeless truths must in principle be knowable” (Berlin, 2000, p. 5). The pathways explored were: religion (including mysticism), natural science (including mathematics and experiment), and inner search (including intellect and intuition) (Berlin, 2000, p. 5).

The search for this true answer preoccupied philosophers, scholars, religious leaders, and social activists et al. for more than a millennium until the eighteenth century

Enlightenment. The progression of the search for a perfect society was along a spectrum of myth, to institutionalized religion, to dreams of earthly utopias, to unlocking of the secrets of natural science, to rational analysis of the mundane world (Berlin, 1981, p. 120). Along the entire spectrum a common theme underlying the search was “the universality, objectivity, immutability of ultimate values – peace, justice, happiness, rational organization...and...individual freedom to do what is and avoid what is wrong (Berlin, 1981, p. 123).

The Enlightenment gave new impetus to this search. Enlightenment enthroned reason as the supreme intellectual virtue, as panacea for all the ills and afflictions of human kind. The French *philosophes* and their German disciples “believed that reality was ordered in terms of universal, timeless objective, unalterable laws which rational investigation could discover...(Berlin, 2000, p. 359). The corner stone of French Enlightenment, in Berlin’s formulation, was:

One set of universal and unalterable principles governed the world of theists, deists and atheists, for optimists and pessimists, puritans, primitivists and believers in progress and the richest fruits of science and culture; these laws governed inanimate and animate nature, facts and events, means and ends, private life and public, all societies, epochs and civilizations; it was solely by departing from them that men fell into crime, vice, misery. Thinkers might differ about what these laws were, or how to discover them, or who were qualified to expand them; that these laws were real, and could be known, whether with certainty, or only probability, remained the central dogma of the entire Enlightenment. (Berlin, 1981, pp. 3-4)

Berlin's point of departure from this dogma was to examine the ideas of thinkers who sailed against the current of Enlightenment. These thinkers gave salience to an equally ancient counter tradition going back to the Greek sophists:

[t]hat beliefs involving value-judgments, and the institutions founded upon them, rested not on discoveries objective and unalterable and natural facts, but on human opinion, which was variable and differed between different societies and at different times; that moral and political values, and in particular justice and social arrangement in general, rested on fluctuating human convention...It seemed to follow that no universal truths, established by scientific methods, that is, truths that anyone could verify by the use of proper methods, anywhere, at any time, could in principle be established in human affairs. (Berlin, 1981, p. 2)

Until the renaissance (in the Western tradition), the Church (Catholic) dominated every aspect of a person's life. The feudal system was the hand maiden to the Church in exercising control over laity. The Church preached, but did not practice, "...a common core of conviction that the ultimate ends of all men at all times were, in effect identical: all men sought the satisfaction of basic physical and biological needs, such as food, shelter, security, and also peace, happiness, justice, the harmonious development their natural faculties, truth..." (Berlin, 1981, p. 3). The unholy alliance between the Church and Feudalism conspired to keep ordinary people locked into ignorance and superstition.

The French Enlightenment was thus, a reaction "against ignorance, superstition, fanaticism, oppression, and barbarism, which crippled human effort and frustrated men's search for truth and rational self-direction" (Berlin, 1981, p. 3). The Enlightenment's prescribed remedy was to re-formulate the reality of natural law in the vocabulary of reason (and away from the language and idiom of religious doctrine). This re-formulation

was, in essence, an effort to search for “One set of universal and unalterable principles...(that)...governed the world for theists, deists, atheists, for pessimists, puritans, primitivists and believers in progress and the richest fruits of science and culture...” (Berlin, 1981, p. 3). The exclusivity accorded to reason, and the consequent down grading of religion, attracted a strong reaction. Berlin gave importance to this sailing “against the current” (the title of a collection of Berlin’s “Essays in the History of Ideas.” The purpose of these essays is to enlarge the understanding of the Enlightenment through presentation of the ‘other side’ of the story.

In *Vico and the Ideal of Enlightenment*, Berlin discusses Giambattista Vico’s different approach (Berlin, 1981, pp. 120-129). Vico maintained that “...since men are directly acquainted with human motives, purposes, hopes, fears, which are their own, they can know human affairs as they cannot know nature (i.e. the occurrence of phenomena in the external world- nature... only God, who created it, knows it in this fashion” (Berlin, 1981, p. 4). For Vico,

change - unavoidable change - rules all man’s history, not determined by mechanical causes, as he thinks it is for Stoics or Spinoza, nor due to chance, as it is for Epicurus and his modern followers. For it follows a divinely determined pattern of its own. But in the course of this process gains in one respect necessarily entail losses in another, losses which cannot be made good if the new values, which are part of the unalterable historical process, are, as indeed, they must be, realized, each in its due season. (Berlin, 1981, pp. 123-124)

Vico was a person of faith. But he squarely placed the human condition, and change in it, for better or worse, in the domain of culture and history, rather than in external

impersonal forces. That, according to Berlin, revealed “the power and originality of his thought” (Berlin, 1981, p. 129).

Berlin expands on these themes in *Herder and the Enlightenment* (2004). Berlin elucidated Herder’s distinction between natural law and those applicable to “the changing spirit of man...(that)...put new life into the notion of social patterns, social growth, the vital importance of considering qualitative as well as quantitative factors – the impalpable and the imponderable, which the concepts of natural science ignore or deny” (Berlin, 2000, p. 359). Berlin highlighted three “cardinal ideas...*populism*, “*expressionism* and *pluralism*” that informed Herder’s case against Enlightenment.

In *The Counter Enlightenment* (Berlin, 2000, pp. 248–252) Berlin discusses J. G. Hamann’s aggressive attack upon the Enlightenment edifice. Hamann was a theologian, philosopher, and a pietist. His theses broadly “rested on the conviction that all truth is particular, never general: that reason is impotent to demonstrate the existence of anything and is an instrument only for conveniently classifying arranging data in patterns to which nothing in reality corresponds; that to understand is to be communicated with, by men or by God” (Berlin, 2004, 148-149). Hamann buttressed his position with Hume’s ‘demolition’ “of the rationalist claim that there is an a priori route to reality, insisting that all knowledge and belief ultimately rest on acquaintance with the idea of direct perception” (Berlin, 1981, p. 249). Hamann’s narrower thesis was stark: “all truth is particular, never general...Things and plants and animals are themselves symbols with

which God communicates with his creatures. Everything rests on faith; faith is as basic an organ of acquaintance with reality as the senses” (Berlin, 2000, p. 249).

The indestructibility of the ethos of faith is demonstrated in the quotidian events of life. Three current examples in the international arena come to mind. In the recent days three leaders from the international community have given salience, explicitly or by implication, to the moral power of suasion in dealing with the chaotic conflicts of the world. President Putin pointed out that “The potential strike by the United States against Syria, despite strong opposition from many countries *and major political and religious leaders including the pope*, will result in more innocent victims and escalation, potentially spreading the conflict far beyond Syria’s borders” (emphasis supplied) (Putin, 2013). In a similar vein, the newly elected and *clerically anointed* President of Iran, Hassan Rouhani, has argued for “constructive engagement” with the world. He has also referred to “the issue of identity as key driver of tension in, and beyond, the Middle East” (Rouhani, 2013). As a representative of a theocracy, Rouhani’s reference to identity appears to be the code word for central place of faith (or religion or God) in the affairs of mankind. The third example is Pope Francis’ August 2013 exclusive interview with Antonio Spadaro, S. J., editor in chief of *La Civiltà Cattolica*. Three notable views emerged from this lengthy interview: the transparent humility of the pope manifested in his faith, words, deeds, and life style; the people-centered purpose of his ministry; and the pope’s deliberate, un-hasty, considered, and gradual approach to change needed in the Catholic Church of the twenty-first century.

Similarly, to illustrate the invisible hand of faith in the realm of social life, I have selected two examples. The first relates to Berlin's attitude towards religion. Berlin was, at best, a religious skeptic ("a verificationist atheist...a skeptic rather than a heretic... (who)...would certainly like to believe in God and an after-life, but had simply no evidence that such things existed (Ignatieff, 1999, p. 293). Ignatieff has traced Berlin's genealogy to rabbinical antecedents (Ignatieff, 1999, p. 15). Berlin's father was "easy-going" over religious matters; his mother was staunch in her belief and practice. Berlin maintained the three strands of his identity - Russian, English and Jewish - neatly woven into a skein. To Judaism he owed "the fact that his liberalism had given such room to the human need to belong. It is, perhaps, in this vein that Berlin, from a sense of ancient duty, observed and partook of the celebration of Jewish high days and holy days. However, Ignatieff quotes Berlin as having said in 1984: "As for the meaning of life, I do not believe that it has any. I do not at all ask what it is, but I suspect it has none and this is a source of great comfort for me. We make of it what we can and that is all there is about it. Those who seek for some deep cosmic all embracing...libretto or God are, believe me, mistaken (Ignatieff, 1999, p. 279).

My second example of faith in the social realm relates to an ethnographic study I carried out in Prof. Peter Black's ICAR class. My subject was a Jewish couple (both of them medical specialists) who had emigrated from Ukraine. In the United States they were living in a senior citizens community with other émigrés from the former Soviet Union. Both of them said they were atheist as they had not received any instruction in religion in their younger days. Yet, at frequent times they invoked "God Bless America"

to express their gratitude to America. More strikingly, they revealed to me that they had, at very considerable physical risk, spirited out of Ukraine a religious book (a family heirloom) given to the husband by his father.

The rumor about God's demise has been around for three centuries and longer. The global revival of faith (and its impact) is a live-wire issue in the discourse in the present day conflicts and their resolution. Micklethwait and Woolridge have titled their book on the subject "God is Back" (2009) If the foregoing analysis has any validity, the spark of faith in human conscience never burns out. It would then follow that an arguable case could be pleaded that God never went anywhere. He is here, invisible in plain sight!

In *The Originality of Machiavelli* (1981), the thrust of Berlin's argument is to synthesize the various and varying interpretations of Machiavelli's writings (more particularly *The Prince*), and of Machiavelli's character, motives and convictions (Berlin, 1981). These interpretations range over many areas – his advocacy of brutal force; unscrupulous use of power and duplicity; and the perception of his being anti-church, on the one hand, and either "a passionate patriot, a democrat, a believer in liberty," or no more than a contemporary writer penning "a mirror for princes like others...but not so very different in style, content, or intention" (Berlin, 1981, pp. 27-28), on the other. Berlin seems inclined towards the view "that Machiavelli's goal – the discovery of the permanent principles of a political science – was anything but utopian: and that he came nearer than most to attaining them" (Berlin, 1981, p. 31). Berlin also appears to concur with thinkers who have advanced the position that "ascribes to Machiavelli the divorce of

politics from ethics (as also from theology),” and that gives it “an independent status of its own: of politics for politics’ sake (Croce’s formulation)” (Berlin, 1981, p. 35). An interesting point to note is that every serious thinker about history and politics from the Enlightenment onwards has expressed in his writings, views on Machiavelli’s ideas, motives and intentions.

Berlin’s ultimate assessment is that Machiavelli “was a political expert, a well-read man of letters” (Berlin, 1981, p. 36). Among the positive beliefs that Berlin attributed to Machiavelli were: a pragmatic and practical understanding of the human realm; understanding the wisdom of leaders of antiquity; “shrewd observation of contemporary reality;” a clear grasp of the factors necessary to establish a civil society anchored on strong exercise of power; unequivocal assertion of the need for “a firm hand at the helm” of the ship of state; and an acute assessment of the psychological makeup of men who seem to him “for the most part to be ‘ungrateful, wanton, false and dissimulating, cowardly and greedy’...arrogant and mean, their natural impulse is to be insolent when their affairs are prospering and abjectly servile when adversity hits them” (Berlin, 1981, pp. 40-41). Above all, Berlin finds that Machiavelli’s cardinal virtue (in the modern sense of the word) was “his de facto recognition that ends equally ultimate, equally sacred, may contradict each other, that entire systems of value may come into collision without the possibility of rational arbitration...as part of the normal human situation” (Berlin, 1981, pp. 74-75). Implicit in Machiavelli’s analysis was the obligation on the part of each individual to examine their moral values – which is perhaps both an unforeseen outcome, and an unintended consequence, flowing from Machiavelli’s theses.

The combination of Machiavelli's articulation of the foregoing dichotomy, the articulation of the remedy, and the unintended consequences, put the cat of controversy among the pigeons of popular uniformity, religious and secular. The resulting commotion continues to date among partisans and pundits. The latest shot has been fired by Phillip Bobitt in his book, *The Garments of Court and Palace Machiavelli and the World that He Made*, which has received extensive reviews. According to one reviewer, Francis Fukuyama, Bobitt portrays Machiavelli "as a critical theoretician of classical republicanism - one who, particularly in his *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy*, greatly influenced the mixed regime of separated powers that underlies the American Constitution" (Fukuyama, 2013). However, Fukuyama characterizes Bobitt's reading of Machiavelli as "highly selective" and one that "fails to confront some key issues in the latter's thought" (Fukuyama, 2013). Fukuyama discusses two issues which seem to undercut Bobitt's attempt at "sanitizing the Florentine philosopher for modern readers" (Fukuyama, 2013). The first is the salience Machiavelli gives to the concept of state as an entity "dominated and run in the interest of particular group within it. The second is "the theme that runs through the whole of Machiavelli's work...(namely)...the centrality of executive audacity action to its authority" (Fukuyama, 2013). The common denominator in both these ideas is the exercise of power, either by an individual, or, at best, by a small group of people.

In the essay *Nationalism*, Berlin addresses this as one dimension of the concept of identity: "The need to belong to an easily identifiable group had been regarded, at any rate since Aristotle, as a natural requirement on the part of human beings: families, clans,

tribes, estates, social orders, classes, religious organizations, political parties, and finally nations and states, were historical forms of fulfillment of this basic human need” (Berlin, 1981, 338). Berlin traces “the historical progression” of societal forms of association from Plato up to the modern times (Berlin, 1981, p. 338). He identifies the constituent elements of society as:

“Common ancestry, common language, customs, traditions, memories, continuous occupancy of the same territory...This kind of homogeneity emphasized the differences between one group and its neighbours, the existence of tribal cultural or national solidarity, and with it, a sense of difference from, often accompanied by active dislike or contempt for, groups with different customs and different real or mythical origins.” (Berlin, 1981, p. 338)

It would seem, in Berlin’s reading, that the concept of nationalism gives rise to the conviction (among others) that:

“...men belong to a particular human group, and that the way of life of the group differs from that of the others; that the characters of the individuals who compose the group are shaped by, and cannot be understood apart from those of the group, defined in terms of common territory, customs, laws, memories, beliefs, language, artistic and religious expression, social institutions, ways of life...(and)...it is these factors which shape human beings, their purposes and their values.” (Berlin, 1981, p. 341)

This attitude breeds coercion and jingoism; its dominant mantra is racial, cultural, and political superiority; its aim is domination and subjugation. The combination of fervor of nationalism and the Westphalian concept of the state was the cause of the horrendous tragedies of World Wars I and II. Perhaps a slightly less virulent (but equally

risky) manifestation of this is embodied in the claim of ‘exceptionalism’ touted by some present day politicians.

The rival interpretation and reinterpretation of a thinker’s ideas is the mettle of the history of ideas: “The total body of doctrine of any philosopher or school is always complex and heterogeneous aggregate – *and often in ways in which the philosopher himself does not suspect*” (emphasis added (Lovejoy, 1976, p. 3). Hausheer has offered the reflection:

“that there may be many levels of intentional action, and that some of the insights of a man of original intellectual action, and the full implications and consequences of these, may never become transparently clear, either to himself or to others, in his own lifetime...the full significance and impact of what he was searching for...may emerge only centuries after his death, when sophisticated vocabulary and appropriate methods have grown up around the constellation of problems which he was among the very first to touch upon.” (Hausheer, 1991, p. xv)

Subjectively speaking, this observation would be apt for some at least of the sages of conflict resolution.

Axial Flowerings

Literature on the Axial Age and civilizations has proliferated over the past twenty five years or so. Scholars from various disciplines (e.g. anthropology and sociology) are continuously involved in unpacking the pregnant, latent, and pragmatic implications of the Axial breakthroughs. The emergent discipline of “Axial Age or Civilizations” (Eisenstadt, 2005, p. 1) is ‘work in process.’ From that perspective, the three emergent disciplines (history of ideas, Axial flowerings, and conflict resolution) seem to share the

common ground of reflection, analysis, debate among scholars, and adoption of, as well as adaptations from, the more established academic disciplines.

For the purposes of my study on this area of my thesis, I have focused on four books (although I have perused and reference here several more) to gain a broad understanding of the continuously increasing insights of what I have compendiously called Axial Flowerings. These volumes are:

- *The Origin and Goal of History*: this is the English translation of Jasper's original German version of the book of the same name published in 1949;
- *The Origin and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations*; this volume contains "the original papers...revised by the authors in light of the discussions at the conference" that took place in January 1983 in Bad Homburg, Germany;
- *Axial Civilizations and World History*: this volume contains papers that were presented at a conference in Florence, Italy in December 2001; and
- *The Axial Age and its Consequences*: this volume contains the contributions of diverse scholars to explain the astonishing efflorescence of religious and philosophical creativity (presented in 2008).

My purpose is to establish the nexus between (and possible mutual relevance of) the three disciplines. Read together, these volumes narrate the in-depth discussions of latent religious, philosophical, political, cultural, and economic problematic inherent in the insights of the Axial flowerings. These issues became patent in the course of expanding discourse of the ramifications of the Axial flowerings.

By the same token, the discipline of conflict resolution can derive great benefit from expanded (more correctly, innovative) modes of thought and interpretation advocated for the Axial discipline. It is interesting to note that Arnason et.al (2005b) have identified, following the discussions at the Florence conference, four main themes further to stimulate the ongoing dialogue. These are: (i) renewed consideration of the complexity and historicity of pre–Axial civilizations; (ii) stronger emphasis on the diversity of developments (and the resultant traditions) in different regions during the axial transitions; (iii) re-evaluation of the links between cultural innovations and the changing constellations of power; and (iv) evaluation of the later developments, not as secondary breakthroughs but as successive adaptation of the original transformation that brought about formative change (Árnason et al., 2005b, pp. 3–4).

For example, a comparable agenda for conflict resolution would be to consider more in-depth understanding of the conflict resolution practices of tribal societies; the culture based conflict resolution practices that are privileged over the ‘modern’ (Western); the reasons for longevity and binding force of culture centric conflict resolution; the constitutive role of power in social hierarchy; and last but not the least, the merits (or demerits) of imposing a ‘modern’ system that is not in consonance with customs and traditions of a particular society. I note that some aspects of the foregoing issues have been addressed in *Conflict Resolution: Cross – Cultural Perspectives* (Avruch, Black, & Scimecca, 1998).

Discourse on Axial Flowerings has its present ‘home’ in conferences (e.g. Conference held in Bad Homburg, Germany (January 1983); Conference held at the European University Institute, Florence, Italy in December 2001; and Conference held at the University of Erfurt, Germany in July 2008. There does not appear to be an institute or school within academe catering for formal courses on the Axial Age or Axial Civilizations.

The theme of the Bad Homburg conference was *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Civilizations*. The main purpose was to explore “the general conditions under which these [Axial] breakthroughs developed or have facilitated such developments, as well as the different constellations of conditions which account for the specific characteristics of each of these civilizations” (Eisenstadt, 1986, p. xi). *The Origin and Diversity of Axial Civilizations* (1986) papers indicated several conclusions. Among these were:

- “No one homogeneous world history emerged nor were the different types of civilizations similar or convergent. Rather, there emerged a multiplicity of different, divergent yet continuously mutually impinging world civilizations, each attempting to reconstruct the world in its own mode, according to its basic premises, and attempting either to absorb the others or consciously to segregate itself from them” (Eisenstadt, 1986, p. 15).
- The dichotomy between the transcendent and the mundane played an important role in this differentiation and distinction (Eisenstadt, 1986, p. 15).

- The Axial Age civilizations were constructed on components that included “the level and distribution of resources among different groups in a society...the institutional entrepreneurs...are available- or competing – for the mobilization and structuring for the organization and articulation of the interests of major groups...(and)...the nature of the conceptions of “visions” which inform the activities of these elites and which are derived, above all, from the major cultural orientations or codes prevalent in a society” (Eisenstadt, 1986, p. 18).
- There were two specific causes for the social sea change. First was the “disintegration of relatively narrow tribal or territorial units; second was the crystallization of new broad collectivities and of growing internal structural differentiation within these collectivities” (Eisenstadt, 1986, p. 19).
- The papers enlarged the ambit of enquiry to include consideration of certain pre-Axial civilizations (the “Great Archaic Empires - Ancient Egypt, Assyrian ones, or the Meso-American ones” (Eisenstadt, 1986, p. 19) and post-Axial civilization (specifically Islam).
- The impacts of the patterns of development were influenced by “the degree of concentration as opposed to dispersion, of the impact of new forces – be they demographic (movements of population), economic (primarily international trade), and political (especially conquest and/or tributary relations), and the relative exposure of different institutional sectors of a given society to their influence” (Eisenstadt, 1986, p. 23). No leap of

imagination is required to grasp the similarity between then and now, and that the foregoing conditions are already prevailing in the societies of the 21st century.

Well before both the publication of *The Origin and Goal of History*, and the conference papers on *The Origin and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations*, Jaspers compartmentalized the Axial Age in a ‘historical’ framework and within a fixed period of about 600 years. He disregarded as ‘un-historical’ the events and happenings of earlier societies that developed in the second millennium BCE (Jaspers, 1953). It would seem Jaspers’ intention was to tie the western values (and civilization) to its Christian moorings as Western society had become adrift from these moorings during the first half of the twentieth century. Jaspers initial formulation has been critiqued, elaborated (and, indeed, modified) in the last thirty five years or so. Among the leaders of this movement are: S. N. Eisenstadt, J. P. Arnason, B. Wittrock, R. N. Bellah, and H. Joas. At least two decades after *The Origin and Goal of History* and *The Origin and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations*, Armstrong also looked at the Axial Age from the angle of development of religious traditions, albeit from four specific areas (China, India, eastern Mediterranean, and Greece). Her book, *The Great Transformation: The Beginning of our Religious Tradition* (Armstrong, 2006) gives a detailed analysis of the development of religion and of notions of non-violence, compassion, and of the norms of ethics rooted in religion. Armstrong’s approach was inclusive, and emphasized the common meeting points in the religious teachings of these traditions. Needless to say, pundits of all persuasions have strongly critiqued both Jaspers’ and Armstrong’s thesis.

The papers in *Axial Civilizations and World History* (2005), presented in Florence in December 2001, take Jaspers' thesis grounded on the philosophy of history as the point of departure. They offer "historical-sociological" reinterpretation in terms of "radical changes to cultural patterns and their relationship to the structures of social power" (Árnason, Eisenstadt, & Wittrock, 2005a, p. 2). This approach has opened up new vistas of enquiry. The Florence conference reexamined the theme of *The Axial Civilizations in World History*. There were several common participants at the two conferences. The editors (Árnason, Eisenstadt, and Wittrock) formulated the lessons drawn "in negative terms":

The civilizations in question experience a comprehensive rupture and problematization of order. They respond to this challenge by elaborating new models of order, based on contrasts and connections between transcendental foundations and mundane lifeworlds. (Árnason et al., 2005b, p. 2)

The broad conclusion indicated was a "broadening of horizons" to a second order of thinking - from particularism to potentially universal perspectives. This, in turn, created "a surplus of meaning, open to conflicting interpretations and capable of adaptation to new situations... the long term consequences can only be understood in the light of the interaction between cultural orientations and the dynamics of social power...to justify or transfigure, but also to question and contest existing institutions...to articulate legitimacy as well as protest" (Árnason et al., 2005b, p. 2).

Wittrock in his paper *The Meaning of the Axial Age* argues "that the Axial Age involved shifts along dimensions of human existence that we may describe as changes in terms of reflexivity, historicity, and agentiality – and in this respect is reminiscent of the

transformations that we associate with the formation of our own modernity” (Árnason et al., 2005b, p. 52). It is easy to see the vast distance traveled from Jaspers’ narrow formulation to Wittrock’ s broad generalization.

The Axial Age and Its Consequences (2012) is the most recent offering of this genre. Several of the contributors have brought fresh pairs of eyes from their mother disciplines to examine the themes put forward Jaspers and Armstrong. The purpose of this compilation of the papers presented at the Max Weber Center of the University of Erfurt, in July 2008, was to advance the case that “the Axial Age is only intelligible in terms of what went before it: a very long and very significant history in which human culture did emerge as way of relating to the world shared by no other animal” (Bellah & Joas, 2012, p. 2). Bellah and Joas regard culture as cumulative (in the evolutionary sense of preserving the beneficial strands) of various stages of development of society (named by Donald as: episodic, mimetic, mythical, and theoretic).

In fact, in his recent paper, *The Heritage of the Axial Age: Resource or Burden?* (2012), Bellah addresses the issue of the role of religion in human evolution. He accepts biological evolution as a given. Bellah’s conception of social and evolution is “neo-Darwinian, with variation and selection operating not with genes but with cultural traits and institutional structures” (Bellah, 2012, p. 447). His first argument is that “evolution and history are two mutually compatible ways of looking at long term development in nature and in culture” (Bellah, 2012, p. 448). Bellah’s idea of social evolution (following Habermas) is expressed in scientific and moral-practical terms. He sees the “the human

project” as a two way process, but warns that “we may expect to find regress as well as progress and face the possibility that the human project may end in complete failure” (Bellah, 2012, p. 449).

The main theme of *The Heritage of the Axial Age: Resource or Burden?* is “whether the heritage of the Axial Age is a resource or a burden in our current human crisis” (Bellah, 2012, p. 449). Bellah starts with the premise that the Axial transitions, if not class struggle, “all involved social criticism and harsh judgments on existing social and political conditions” (Bellah, 2012, p. 451). These judgments emanated from “renouncer” (a moniker borrowed from Hindu tradition). The renouncers became permanently homeless, stood outside the centers of power, offering criticism against oppressive elites. He included Chinese sages, as also Socrates and Plato, (What about Hebrew prophets? - ZA) among the renouncers (Bellah, 2012, pp. 451–452).

In the same vein, Sullivan has shone light on “education...[as] one of the great legacies of the Axial turn” (Sullivan, 2012, p. 411). In *The Axial Invention of Education and Today’s Global Knowledge Culture* (Sullivan, 2012, pp. 411–429) he has addressed the question: Whether a better understanding of the Axial era and its tensions...could help reshape global educational culture to realign theoretic reason with moral-practical sources of understanding?” (Sullivan, 2012, p. 413). His point of reference is Plato’s philosophy that emerged as a result of “the perceived “breakdown” of the then ruling moral order of Athens of the fourth century BCE. In pleading his case, Sullivan cites the pragmatic philosopher Dewey’s “theory of inquiry” that placed the detached, analytical

stance of scientific investigation as a “moment” within the larger process of human experience” (Sullivan, 2012, p. 425.)

History, religion, culture, and their social organization and transformation have up to now been the staples of the Axial Age dialogue. Exciting and challenging has been the new pathways created by the ideas canvassed at these conferences. It is now recognized the seminal breakthroughs occurred with development and sophistication of language and writing gave impetus to new creative tensions to the Axial breakthroughs (Assmann, 2012).

Another central preoccupation of the Axial Flowerings in every area was internal and external conflict and violence triggered by greed and power. Between the ninth and third centuries BCE, sages in China, India, Eastern Mediterranean, and Greece re-conceptualized and refined concepts of religion, ethics, and civil society. They purged religion of violent rituals, subjected superstitions to the scrutiny of reason, enunciated ethical rules of conduct for civil society, advocated social justice, and pleaded for moderation in the exercise of power and control over people and resources.

Appleby’s *The Ambivalence of the Sacred* (2000) provides a detailed account of the evolution of the “emerging theories of ‘religious peacebuilding’.” His cautiously optimistic conclusion is that “religious traditions are internally plural, fluid, and evolving, responsive to new interpretations by gifted religious leaders and capable of forming individuals, social movements, and communities that practice and promote the civic and non-violent tolerance of others” (Appleby, 2000, p. 281). Various dimensions, potentials,

and limitations of the role of religion in conflict and conflict resolution are highlighted in the writings of conflict specialists (Appleby, 2000, 2006; Gopin, 2000; D. M. Johnston, 2003; Montville, 1991; Mosher, 2002). Overall, these writings project a favorable image, and continuing engagement, of “non-violent militants” in the enterprise of conflict prevention and reconciliation.

Similarly relevant are the various writings of Lederach based on his extensive work in different parts of the world, which derive their energy and drive from his affiliation to, and association with, a Christian tradition. *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* provides a conceptual framework for building and sustaining peace. The framework is predicated on four elements: “structure, process, reconciliation, and resources” (Lederach, 2004, p. 150). The concept envisages a “long term commitment to establishing an infrastructure across various levels of a society, an infrastructure that empowers people, and allocates resources toward reconciliation from within that society and performing “second track diplomacy” (Lederach, 2004, pp. xvi–xvii). Lederach provides various recipes for mobilizing socioeconomic and socio-cultural resources from within the society that is the locus of conflict (Lederach, 2004, p. 87). Particularly instructive are his ideas about peacebuilding from the bottom up, of reconciliation through adopting “four major concepts of ‘Truth, Mercy, Justice and Peace’ that are enshrined in Psalm 85 (Lederach, 2004, p. 28). Overall, his approach is deeply rooted in the impulses of his Christian faith. In the same vein, Lederach traces the path of *The Journey Towards Reconciliation* in which he seeks to reconcile, in the light of modern realities of conflict formation, “two seemingly contradictory biblical messages

of enemies found in the bible: the cry to crush the enemies, the call to love them” (Lederach, 1999, p. 32).

Wattles’ study in *The Golden Rule* (Wattles, 1996) looks “beyond conventional interpretation...and the practice of the rule...beyond conventional morality.” A primary building block of Wattle’s argument is “the theme of human kinship.” He also deals with some of the limitations, and modern objections to the Golden Rule (Wattles, 1996).

Chambers & Kymlicka (Chambers & Kymlicka, 2002) and Seligman (Seligman, 2002) argue that the rules of conduct of the modern civil society underpin the discipline of conflict prevention. These rules emanate from “deep structural elements” common to different human societies -“common standards, common ideals, common tastes, common priorities, that make a common morality possible, rest on shared joys and sorrows and all require active sympathy” (Midgley, 2000). These rules have been used by conflict specialists (e.g. Hume), and politicians (e.g. Obama) to rally support for non-violent and ethical resolution of the entire spectrum of conflicts.

E. Boulding in *Cultures of Peace: The Hidden Side of History*, after reviewing the past and present cultures of peace, presents a “Possible Future.” This future is presented as an “imagined possibility” premised on “a source of hope [that] lies in the capacity for social learning of individuals, families, grassroots groups, old and new faith communities, NGOs, and of institutions of governance, including state and intergovernmental bodies” (Boulding, 2000, p. 257). Boulding’s global framework is centered on the work of the United Nations, its various agencies, international, national and regional NGOs, as also on a myriad of grassroots organizations. The essence of her

argument is that in the midst of pessimistic Cassandras of gloom and doom, there is hope for humanity, and the planet earth. Boulding's challenge (and opportunity), as I understand it, is dispelling "Ignorance of each other's ways and lives (or what I consider 'culture') [that] has been a common cause, through the history of mankind, of that suspicion and mistrust between the people of the world through which their differences have broken into war" (Boulding, 2000, p. 5).

Boulding's view is echoed by others. The Aga Khan, the spiritual leader of Shia Ismaili Muslims, has also expressed strong sentiments in favor of ethics, civil society, and pluralism in a series of speeches on these subjects, collected under the title *Where Hope Takes Root* (Khan & Clarkson, 2008). Professors Baruch Bush and Joseph Folgers, the authors of *The Promise of Mediation*, argue "Open interaction is at the heart of harmonious life in society. Disruption or breakdown in communication results in confusion, misunderstanding, and conflict. The goal of transformative mediation is to help parties reconnect, and restore, if necessary over an extended period, their previous relationship (Bush & Folger, 2005). Similarly, Broome in his *Managing differences in conflict resolution: The role of relational empathy* gives salience to the notion of meaning. Contrary to the "prevailing conceptualizations of empathy", he urges "the creation of *shared meaning* (italics in the original) during the interpersonal encounter" (Broome, Benjamin, 1993, p. 98). A shared meaning emerges from a relational view of empathy between the interlocutors. From the perspective of history, in *History As Prelude*, Montville, too, seeks to demonstrate the practical symbiosis between people of

different faiths, cultures, and language achieved during the Muslim rule in Al Andalusia in Spain between the tenth and twelfth centuries (Montville, 2011, p. viii).

Two important lessons to be drawn from the contributions of various authors are: first, that the historical hurts and injustices suffered by victims can be purged through *expression* of “genuine remorse for their or their people’s violence and aggression, and to ask for forgiveness of their victims” (Montville, 2011, p. viii); and second, that there are historical precedents to show that communities (e.g. Jews, Christians, and Muslims) that are in conflict today have, in the past, “lived a life once called *Convivencia*- literally “living together”(Montville, 2011, p. viii).

An alternative conception is taken by Jared Diamond in his three books (Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies (2005b); Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fall or Succeed (2005a),; The World Until Yesterday: What Can We Learn from Traditional Societies (2012),). He takes geography and environment as his point of departure. Read together, Diamond’s insights relevant to conflict resolution can be summarized as follows:

- Geography and environment are the major determinants of birth, growth, decay, and death of societies. Critics have labeled this conclusion “geographic determinism” undercuts the notion of biological evolution as a driver of human creativity and progress (Diamond, 2005b).
- Stratification of society in elites (e.g. chiefs, kings, priests) characterized as “kleptocrats”, and masses (Diamond, 2005b),

- Religion as a constant factor in human progress as a solace and sanctuary, as an instrument of social control, and to aid and abet “kleptocracies” (Diamond, 2005b, pp. 277–278). Also, deeply held religious values lead to “irrational” behaviors that threaten the integrity and survival of society (Diamond, 2005a, p. 432).
- The use of “guns, germs, and steel” to subjugate and enslave weaker societies that did not have similar technological and military wherewithals (Diamond, 2005b, p. 453).
- Geography has played a significant role in the emergence of two kinds of institutional structure: centralized (e.g. China), and decentralized (e.g. Europe) (Diamond, 2005b, pp. 455–456).
- Key factors for stability and longevity of societies are development anchored in “a long chain of historical connections from ultimate causes rooted in geography to the proximate dependent variables of the institutions” (Diamond, 2005b, p. 463).
- Societies can choose a “bottom-up” or a “top-down” approach to avoid environmental disasters that threaten the survival of societies (Diamond, 2005a, p. 277).
- Rational but selfish behavior leads to blindness to the larger and long term good of society (Diamond, 2005a, p. 427). Therein are embedded the seeds of conflict.

Media reviews of Diamond's latest book *The World Until Yesterday: What We Can Learn From Traditional Societies* (2012) have highlighted the following insights relevant to conflict resolution:

- Most societies have held on to some form of religion as a way of maintaining social order, comforting the anxious, and teaching political obedience (“In God’s Name,” 2007).
- Traditional societies settle disputes without the intervention of a formal justice system, by relying on mediation and ordering “traditional forms of compensation (“In God’s Name,” 2007).
- Warfare is a constant in human history. In traditional societies, blood feud and revenge was a common currency of conflict settlement (Brooks, 2013).
- Community and not the individual is the focus of dispute resolution (Brooks, 2013).
- Restraint on “lust for revenge” has to be taught in the larger interest of the community (Brooks, 2013).

In summary, this study indicates that there are several common features among conflict resolution, the history of ideas, and Axial Flowerings. My research has touched upon some of these (e.g. religion, culture, ethics, and power). Juxtaposing the history of ideas and the Axial flowerings brings to the fore a number of issues of interest and importance to the discipline of conflict resolution that have not been fully explored by scholars and practitioners. There is no doubt that conflict resolution specialists by parity of reasoning, and example, can derive valuable insights by closer examination of the

nascent paradigms of conflict resolution. However, today's conflict resolution specialists also have the intellectual sophistication, technological savvy, and professional competence to undertake "up-stream thinking" (including re-evaluation of the Axial concept) of the type employed by the savants of the Axial exposition.

The history of ideas has dealt with the subject of religion (including faith and God) ethics, and culture. From time immemorial, the idea of religion (faith and God) has intimidated, intrigued, perplexed, and gripped thinkers in every age. The basic tension has been between the conception of forces of nature, on the one hand, and creation of the world under divine fiat, on the other. Contributions to study of the literature on Axial Flowerings are in the process of unfolding the implications, among others, of social formation, formation of structures, and distribution of power. However, it seems that there has not been any direct engagement by either Axial Flowering or the history of ideas with conflict, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation. This may also be true of engagement between the history of ideas and Axial Flowerings. The significance for conflict resolution from the foregoing exposition may be summarized as:

- The continual movement and change in human society spawns new ideas about understanding and managing social change.
- The advance in natural science, and development of new technology pointing towards better understanding society and its multifarious problems.
- The commonalities and differences between concepts, categories, methodologies, and outcomes of research in natural sciences and social sciences.

- The limitations of social science in providing ‘one size fit all’ solutions for conflicts at different levels of society.
- The limitations of application of reason, and the persistent survival of faith as a moral point of reference in the affairs of mankind.
- The unmasking (e.g. by Marx and others) of the hypocrisy “and disguises under which some of the most brutal manifestations of...social and political conflicts and their social and intellectual consequences were concealed” (Berlin, 1981, p. 336).
- The continual shift and change in the meaning, value, and validity of pivotal concepts such as identity, culture, religion, politics et al.

Chapter 3: History of Ideas and Axial Flowerings

History of Ideas

Modern conflict resolution is multi-disciplinary. An important source of its knowledge base is the cross fertilization of ideas brought to the scholarship by practitioners who hail from other academic disciplines. Historically, ideas have been the well-spring of knowledge, action, and change.

The history of ideas, like Axial Flowerings and conflict resolution, is a comparatively new field of study. Its relevance to, and nexus with, the other two spheres is important because

“...it attempts (among other things) to trace the birth and development of the ruling concepts of a civilization or culture through long periods of mental change, and to reconstruct the image men have of themselves and their activities, in given age and culture...” (Hausheer, 1991, p. xvii)

The significance, relevance, and value of the history of ideas to conflict resolution is attested by the fact that the history traces the origin and development of several ideas that are central to the discourse, theory, and practice of conflict resolution in the twenty first century. Among these are:

- Identity ((see e.g. *Nationalism: Past neglect and Present Power* in the Literature Review section). This article discusses how, in the aftermath of the first and second world wars, people reverted to identity anchored on religious affiliation, or alternatively, in their amorphous cosmopolitanism.);

- Culture (see e.g. *Vico and the Ideal of Enlightenment* (Berlin, 1981, pp. 120–129). In this essay Berlin discusses Giambattista Vico’s different approach to the orthodoxy of the Enlightenment.);
- Politics (see e.g. *The Originality of Machiavelli*). In this offering Berlin illustrates Machiavelli’s seminal contribution to politics by spelling out Machiavelli’s seminal insight that politics and morality are irreconcilable.);
- Religion (see e.g. *The Counter Enlightenment* (Berlin, 2000, pp. 248–252). Berlin discusses J. G. Hamann’s pietist and aggressive attack upon the Enlightenment edifice that tried to demolish religion.); and
- Civil society and a just civil order. (see e.g. *Herder and the Enlightenment* (Berlin, 2000, pp. 359-435). Berlin elucidated Herder’s distinction between natural law and laws of social science applicable to “the changing spirit of man...(that)...put new life into the notion of social patterns, social growth, the vital importance of considering qualitative as well as quantitative factors – the impalpable and the imponderable, which the concepts of natural science ignore or deny;” and

The history of ideas offers an opportunity to look at conflict resolution under the lens of this multi-disciplinary subject. Lovejoy succinctly summarizes the task of the history of ideas:

...it is a part of the eventual task of the history of ideas to apply its own distinctive analytic method in the attempt to understand how *new* beliefs and intellectual fashions are introduced and diffused, to help to elucidate the psychological character of the processes by which changes in the vogue and

influence of ideas have come about; to make clear, if possible, how conceptions dominant, or extensively prevalent, in one generation lose their hold upon men's minds and give place to others. (Lovejoy, 1976, p. 20)

Based on his deep and intensive study of famous and obscure philosophers and thinkers going back to two thousand years (among these: the Sophists, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Vico, Herder, Voltaire, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Newton, Sartre, et al.), Berlin drew several bold conclusions. Some of these are:

- The notion of the perfect whole the ultimate solution, in which all good things coexist, seems...to be not to be unattainable-that is a truism- but conceptually incoherent (Berlin, 1981, p. 11).
- All men have a basic sense of good and evil, no matter what cultures they belong to; but any study of society shows that every solution creates a new situation which breeds its own new needs and problems, new demands (Berlin, 1981, p. 12).
- We cannot legislate for the consequences of consequences of consequences (Berlin, 1981, p. 12).
- The kernel of "ethical thought" thorough the ages has been that "the day would dawn when men and women would take their lives in their own hands and not be self-seeking beings or the playthings of blind forces that they did not understand" (Berlin, 2000, p. 6).
- An important concept that emerges from engagement with these thinkers is that of "pluralism - that is, the conception that there are many different ends that men may seek and still be fully rational, fully men, capable of

understanding each other and sympathizing and deriving light from each other...(about)...worlds, outlooks, very remote from our own” (Berlin, 2000, p. 9).

- The element of being “human” is the bridge that makes it possible for “intercommunication between cultures in time and space...” (Berlin, 2000, p. 9).

Berlin’s experience and intellectual endeavors highlighted for Berlin two factors that chiefly “shaped human history in the twentieth century”:

...development of the natural sciences and technology...(and)...the great ideological storms that have altered the lives of virtually all mankind: The Russian Revolution and its aftermath - totalitarian tyrannies of both right and left and the explosion of nationalism, racism and, in places, religious bigotry... that will... be held to be the most demanding of explanation and analysis. *But it is as well to realize that these great movements began with ideas in people’s heads: ideas about what relations between men have been, are, might be and should be; and to realize how they came to be transformed in the name of a vision of some supreme goal in the minds of the leaders, above all of the prophets with armies at their backs. Such ideas are the substance of ethics* (emphasis added). (Berlin, 2000, p. 1)

Taking Berlin’s forgoing insight is a starting point for establishing a connection between the history of ideas and Axial flowerings. In essence, Berlin highlighted the position of those who posited the difference between “the natural, external world” (mundane), and “the inner, moral and spiritual world of human experience” (Hausheer, 1991, p. xx).

This may also be true of engagement between the history of ideas and Axial Flowerings. If these observations have validity, they present a significant opportunity for

conflict specialists to trawl the vast reservoir of pertinent ideas, theories, and mechanisms presented by thinkers from diverse sister disciplines who are drawing significant insights from unraveling of the diverse strands of thought that have animated the history of ideas and Axial Flowerings. Some of the questions of interest to conflict resolution would be:

- What is the relevance of the history of ideas to the conflict resolution discipline?
- What conditions or factors were responsible for Axial Flowerings?
- What, if any, was the beneficial impact of ideas and Axial Flowerings' insights?
- What, if any, was the negative impact?
- Have there been any demonstrably successful examples of the ideas, insights, and spirit of Axial Flowerings?
- What pertinent lessons can conflict specialists learn from the history of ideas and Axial Flowerings?

I am immensely grateful to Prof. Avruch and Prof. Rubenstein for pointing the way to this line of enquiry, which triggered thoughts pointing to the history of ideas, and it's nexus with the Axial flowerings. It would be presumptuous on my part to suggest that I can provide answers to the foregoing questions. Based on my no more than a nodding acquaintance with these vast and deep subjects, I pen the following tentative and cautious responses.

What is the relevance of the history of ideas to the conflict resolution discipline?

The concept of ideas goes back to Plato. He conceptualized idea primarily at an esoteric level. His search was to bring to the surface:

“Truth...in universals, which have a place in the mind of God, or in some far-off heaven. These were revealed to men in former state of existence, and are recovered by reminiscence (anamnesis) or association from sensible things. The sensible things are not realities, but shadows only, in relation to the truth” (Plato, n.d.)

The subject of ideas has featured in many of Socratic dialogues, and these dialogues are not mutually consistent. They are basically centered on ethics and the concept of good. Viewed from a broader perspective, they seem to resonate with the dichotomy of transcendence and mundane that informs the discourse of Axial Flowerings. Aristotle’s views about ethics and good are grounded on the secular and practical of life. These two differing approaches have generated debate in various disciplines including theology, philosophy, politics et al. to the present day.

The value of the history of ideas is evident from the multi-disciplinary input from various thinkers. A five volume publication, *Dictionary of the History of Ideas* (1980) contains numerous contributions from scholars from a wide range of disciplines on subjects “about the external order of nature studied by biological sciences (p. ix). Lovejoy has written about the Platonic ideas (philosophical and religious) that have “two conflicting major strains...otherworldliness and this worldliness.” In Lovejoy’s lexicon the otherworldly philosopher “not only seeks but is capable of finding some final, fixed, immutable, intrinsic, perfectly satisfying good, as the human reason seeks, and can find, some stable definitive, coherent, self-contained, and self-explanatory object or objects of

contemplation” (Lovejoy, 1976, p. 26). This worldliness denotes a search of continuity of life, struggle (an identification of the chief value of existence with process and struggle in time, an antipathy to satisfaction and finality, a sense of the ‘glory of the imperfect’...(Lovejoy, 1976, p. 25).

Berlin has placed the history of ideas in the realm of ethics, culture, and continual change. He gave salience to beliefs

“...involving value-judgments, and the institutions founded upon them, rested not of discoveries of objective and unalterable natural facts, but on human opinion, which was variable and differed between different societies and at different times; that moral and political values, and in particular justice and social arrangements in general rested upon fluctuating human convention”. (Berlin, Hardy, & Hausheer, 1981, p. 2)

Scholars and practitioners in conflict resolution can derive pertinent insights from Lovejoy’s and Berlin’s ideas by bringing them under the lens of conflict and conflict resolution.

Axial Flowerings

Almost three thousand years ago there began a brilliant burst of energy and enlightenment in the human condition. Karl Jaspers (1886-1969) has called this period the Axial Age.

The Axial Age was the period between about 900 to 200 BCE (different scholars have posited different time periods within this range) during which “in four distinct regions, the great world traditions that have continued to nourish humanity came into being: Confucianism and Daoism in China; Hinduism and Buddhism in India;

monotheism in the Eastern Mediterranean; and philosophical rationalism in Greece” (Armstrong, 2006, p. xii).

Historical consciousness among human beings developed in stages - from little understood myth and mystery of creation, to marginally grasped understanding of role of human being as a very small cog in an enormous wheel of “divine activity”, to share of “revelation” as God’s chosen creation (through prophets of diverse traditions), to aligning of reason with empirical thrust of science, to separating the symbolism of scriptures from their literal meaning, to acceptance of the fact that the cosmos (universe) is infinite and ever expanding, to acceptance of diverse faiths, traditions, cultures, and civilizations, and to the recognition of global ramifications of local conflicts (and vice versa). Historical consciousness also underlines various constants including power, control, and coercion.

Jaspers placed the Axial Age within the broad framework of History arguing

We and the present in which we live are situated in the midst of history. The present of ours becomes null and void if it loses itself in the narrow horizon of the day and degenerates into a *mere* (emphasis in the original) present...On the other hand, the present reaches fulfillment through the future latent within it...A present that has attained fulfillment allows us to cast anchor in the eternal origin.” (Jaspers, 1953, p. Forward)

An interesting aspect of Jasper’s historical narrative is that that he considers the Axial Age as an interregnum between great empires whereas the present world presents a situation of chaos after the dissolution of the empires of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries’.

In *The Origin and the Goal of History*, taking the Axial Age as the starting point, Jaspers takes the position that the spirit and insights of that age were kept alive by the

“Indo-German” tribes (specifically, German) through gradual and continuous development of religious, cultural, and political institutions inspired by the intellectual ferment of that age. He draws a line between West and the East. In the former, he includes the Greek, Iranian, and Jewish traditions. He places China and India in the latter category, and argues these two traditions failed to develop their Axial Age heritage with the argument:

The dissimilarity (of China and India) to Europe is not a radical one. The great analogy remains: the creative epoch of the Axial Period followed revolutions and renaissances, until 1500 CE when Europe takes its unprecedented step, whereas China and India, at the same moment, enter into cultural decline.(Jaspers, 1953, pp. 51–70)

Several caveats needs to be entered in a close reading of *The Origin and Goal of History*: Jasper’s perspective of history is essentially western (specifically, German); his thesis was developed in the aftermath of Hitler’s regime and World War II (perhaps an apology for the German people?). Jaspers writing paints a broad brush picture of history, and, in the process, omits to mention other flowerings of the Axial Age spirit, particularly, the Islamic civilizations (in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Europe), and their positive impact on the development of the Western traditions.

Jaspers has privileged Christianity (and the culture grounded in it) as the main stay of stability. For him, the consciousness of the West, Christ is the axis of history: “Christianity in the shape of the Christian Church, is perhaps the greatest and the highest organizational form yet evolved by the human spirit” (Jaspers, 1953, p. 58). He also notes that the great dogmatic religions, after the third century AD, became factors of political unity. The Iranian religion became the bearer of the Sasanian Empire from 224

BCE onward; the Christian religion the bearer of the Roman Empire; and Islam the bearer of the Arab Empire from the seventh century onward (Jaspers, 1953, pp. 58–59). Religion thus was the breeding ground for conflict, as much as it was a harbinger of peace.

In *The Great Transformation: The Beginning of our Religious Traditions*, Armstrong also addresses the role of religion. She argues that the great world religious traditions emerged out of the chaos, confusion, and uncertainty of that age. Certain features were common throughout the Axial Flowerings in each of the four traditions: superstition, fear, pessimism, conflict, and violence. Sages in each tradition helped their people to navigate out of this morass. A very important component of Armstrong's argument is to delineate "the great pioneering spiritualities" that sages and prophets of the Axial Age developed independent of one another in each of the four traditions.

These pioneering spiritualities laid the foundation for the institutionalization of religion, enunciation of codes of ethics, emergence of civil society, as also other institutions. Armstrong's point of departure is the salience she gives the religious traditions within a broad framework of spirituality, empathy, and compassion. She argues a radical aspect of the Axial Age spirituality was its skepticism about dogma and theological certainty. The sages "believed nobody... should ever take any religious teaching on faith or secondhand. It was essential to question everything and to test any teaching empirically, against your personal experience" (Armstrong, 2006, p. xiii). True practice of religion called for correct behavior rather than blind belief (Armstrong, 2006, p. xiii). The salient elements of this behavior included "a spirituality of empathy and compassion", and a universally inclusive approach to extend benevolence to the entire

world (Armstrong, 2005, p. xiv). This was the essence of the transformation brought about by the Axial Flowerings.

In the past three decades or so, scholars have expanded Jaspers' concept of the Axial Age into studies of "Axial or Axial Age civilizations" (Árnason et al., 2005b, p. 1). These studies have undertaken detailed consideration of "an Axial Age - a period of radical cultural transformations in several major centers of civilization that unfolded during four or five centuries around the middle of the last millennium BCE..." (Eisenstadt, 2005). In the words of Eisenstadt:

Instead of assuming that the crystallization of axial civilizations entailed the emergence of a distinct, distinctive, more or less uniform Axial Age world in history, it is better to speak of an axial complex in the sense of a whole spectrum of patterns of decoupling of social structural and ontological dimensions of social order, thus opening to their autonomous developments, greatly dependent on a variety of factors...and to their re-combinations in different non-congruent institutional patterns within the societies in question. (Eisenstadt, 2005, p. 558)

These recent studies conceive "the axial complex as an important - indeed a very crucial - component in the history of human societies which developed in different ways and contexts, giving rise to different, multiple axialities which interacted continually among themselves and with non-axial civilizations in the shaping of different patterns of world history or histories" (Eisenstadt, 2005, p. 531).

The foregoing broad approach opened up new windows on various civilizations, and their ways of "elaborating new models of order, based on contrasts and connections between transcendental foundations and mundane lifeworlds" (Árnason et al., 2005b).

Eisenstadt has used the notion of “multiple” to argue the case for “Multiple Modernities:

While a general trend toward structural differentiation developed across a wide range of institutions in most of these (modern) societies - in family life, economic and political structures, urbanization, modern education, mass communication, and individualistic orientations - the ways in which these arenas were defined and organized varied greatly, in different periods of their development, giving rise to multiple institutional and ideological patterns. (Eisenstadt, 2005, p. 2)

The ambit of these studies is very wide. It includes, among others, the notion of “global cultural crystallization” (Wittrock, 2005, p. 63), and of “the relations between the cosmological visions or premises prevalent within (several civilizations) and the institutional dimensions thereof” (Eisenstadt, 2005, p. 533). The notions of multiple axialities and modernities are germane to the discourse of modern discipline and profession of conflict resolution. In this study, I have used the omnibus moniker ‘Axial Flowerings’ to denote, where appropriate, the various renderings of Axial Age, Axial Civilizations, Axial complex, and Axial breakthroughs.

The most astonishing part of this efflorescence, spread over about seven hundred years, was that it took place in four different parts of the world unconnected (territorially or otherwise) with one another. The “defining characteristics” of the initial axial flowering were: “radical changes to cultural patterns and their relationship to the structure of social power.” These changes took place in the context of Jewish monotheism, Greek philosophical thought, Chinese socio-economic order, and Indian religions (Eisenstadt, 2005, pp. 2–3). This intellectual explosion underlined several fundamental truths: the essential humanity of every human being; the inherent intellectual potential of every

human being, the unseen (but ubiquitous) interconnectedness of all human beings separated by vast physical and intellectual distances.

These truths provided the insights that the answers to vexing perennial questions (among these, causes of conflict and conflict resolution) are within human beings themselves, and the solution to violence and conflict is to be found not in more violence (eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth) but in non-violence (*ahimsa*) and compassion. The defining features of teachings of the sages were social justice and “a spirituality of empathy and compassion” (Armstrong, 2006, p. xiv). The insights of the sages were different, were ‘modern’ in the sense that they marked a departure from the accepted societal norms of the time. They aimed to avoid violence, to mitigate conflicts, and to secure social justice for all; these objectives are the pedigree of, and remain at the heart, of modern enterprise of conflict resolution.

Out of the wisdom of the sages of the Axial Flowerings emanated three springs: of Compassion, of Ethics, and of Non-violence. Broadly speaking, these concepts coalesce under the rubric of the modern idea of religious and cultural pluralism. Compassion derived its flow from scriptures, Ethics from philosophy, and Non-violence from experience of peaceful associational living. The three springs ran parallel to one another, intermingling at times, ebbing and flowing at other. Fortunately none of them has dried up completely at any time in the past three millennia.

The broad canvass of multiple axialities rooted in ancient civilizations, as also of multiple modernities rooted in modern societies, has refuted the assumption “that the cultural program of modernity as it developed in modern Europe and the basic

institutional constellations that emerged there would ultimately take over in all modernizing and modern societies; with the expansion of modernity, they would prevail throughout the world” (Eisenstadt, S.N., 2000, p. 1).

The reality on the ground is that although the concept of modernity is a “Western project”, each society has articulated its own version that is “distinctively modern, though greatly influenced by specific cultural premises, traditions, and historical experiences” (Eisenstadt, S.N., 2000, p. 2). There are two aspects of this modernity that are relevant to conflict resolution.

First, each society has its own culturally legitimated conflict resolution mechanisms that are followed, reconstructed, modified, and expanded to meet the modern needs of that society. Second, the societies that were formerly under a dominant colonial culture have resisted copying slavishly the Western cultural and political path to modernity. They have struggled to construct their own modernities. This situation has led to tension among Western and non-Western societies characterized as “clash of civilization” by Huntington (2003). On the positive side is the increasing “recognition of the legitimacy of multiple individual and group goals and interests, as a consequence allowed for multiple interpretations of the common good” (Eisenstadt, 2005, p. 5).

Perhaps a more objective way of looking at the non-Western approach is that non-Western societies have appropriated “specific themes and institutional patterns (through) continuous selection, reinterpretation, and reformulation of these imported ideas” (Eisenstadt, S.N., 2000, p. 15). These appropriations include, among others, the concept and institutional structures of a nation-state. A significant difference between Western

modernity and non-Western modernity is that Western modernity is predicated on the secular premise of the primacy of reason, and the centrality of individual agency; the non-Western modernity has continued to rely on its historical traditions that are essentially grounded in religion, and in communal identity.

The picture that emerges shows that pluralistic and universal values are not mutually exclusive; there is room for both in a globalized world. Indeed, it is possible to tackle the most pressing issues of our conflicted world (such as gender inequality, inequitable sharing of resources, responsible stewardship of environment) through the cultural resources that are the legacy of various civilizations and traditions.

Armstrong's contention is that these three impulses (of Compassion, of Ethics, and of Non-violence) have, in fact, shaped and influenced the evolution and development of every institution as also of behavioral codes of all societies (Armstrong, 2006). They have also provided mechanisms for preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts. Armstrong argues that the great world traditions emerged out of the chaos, confusion, and uncertainty of the Axial Age. Certain features were common throughout the Axial Age in each of the four traditions: superstition, fear, pessimism, conflict, and violence. Sages in each tradition helped their people to navigate out of this morass. It is, therefore, worth exploring whether these impulses animated the philosophies, thinking, and actions of the precursors, founders, and consolidators of the conflict resolution discipline.

The process of transformation, which occurred in the context of the existential conditions of each milieu, was not uniform, and took place over centuries. The progression was from the primordial religious traditions grounded in superstition,

pessimism, and “rooted in fear and pain” to spiritual understanding of religion (Armstrong, 2006, p. 59). The aim was to eliminate conflict and violence, to protect the weak, to secure social justice, and to promote stable and peaceful society. To this end, the great sages made a gradual paradigm shift in their understanding, interpretation and practice of religion and social behavior. The shift in each geographical area was quite independent of the changes taking place in other parts of the world. The changes were incorporated within the existing political, cultural, social, economic, and other conditions of each society. The hallmarks were non-violence, compassion, empathy, reciprocity and justice.

The transition triggered by the Axial Flowerings was gradual, incremental, qualitative, and demographically limited. It was evolutionary and not revolutionary. Changes were grafted onto an existing system to accommodate the evolving conditions of urbanization, improving economy, spread of education, and political awakening. The changes were within the social structure of each society. The disparity of the rate of progress notwithstanding, the convergence of the religious and ethical traditions underlined, if nothing else, the common humanity and common aspiration of humankind.

The sages of the Axial Flowerings used their insights as agents of change. The most striking aspect of the approach of the sages was radical. Each sage tried to fashion in his own time and in consonance with the prevailing social and other conditions, a new vision. The cumulative effect of these diverse endeavors resulted in, according to Armstrong (2006), the Great Transformation that became the template for understanding the unchanging and changing role of religion and ethics in human affairs.

The unchanging role is the relevance of religion and ethics for a multitude of peoples in their daily life; the changing role is the innovative and imaginative way of reinterpreting religious prescriptions, traditions, practices, rites and rituals to meet the existential needs of modern society. Neither religion nor ethics is frozen in time. Both are dynamic. Overall, the spirit of the Axial Flowerings resulted in reimagining of the world in terms of worldly realities rather than mythology, in doing good to human beings rather than propitiating gods, in terms of introspection and spirituality rather than external emotions and arid theology, and in terms of beneficial change rather than static monotony.

At the root of institutional formations in diverse societies was the factor of power (“different modes of elite contestation and co-optation in different political systems and different cosmological conceptions and political ideologies”) (Eisenstadt, 2005, p. 559). Equally important was the role of different social actors in each society. The role of power, as also that of various structures, and actors, is explicated in the later part of this study (Chapters 12 and 14).

The insights of the sages provided failsafe recipes for the prevention, containment, management, resolution, and transformation of conflict. Notwithstanding the undoubted progress, the Axial Flowerings did not succeed in ending conflict, eradicating unhappiness, or in clearing the ambiguity surrounding religion and spirituality. This condition remains the legacy for human kind even after three millennia.

Furthermore, with proliferation of knowledge and consequent better understanding of human beings and human nature, the truisms of the insights of the sages

have acquired renewed validity and vitality. However, these insights remain to be consciously and conscientiously applied to the conflictual and complex situations of the modern life. For example, the notion of spiritual education, translated and understood in modern ethical vocabulary, can become a powerful instrument of change, not the least for the discipline of conflict resolution. Humankind's abiding good fortune is that the spirit of this endeavor has remained alive. The abiding tragedy is that the world has either forgotten or ignored the lessons taught by the sages. As a consequence, conflict (punctuated by sporadic conflict resolution) has remained a part of human heritage and culture.

Jaspers' concentration was to place and interpret the Axial Age "in a great heritage of historical knowledge" (Jaspers, 1953, p. 266). Armstrong's efforts are directed towards identifying and articulating the commonalities of the great religious traditions that were articulated during the Axial Flowerings. The arguments of Eisenstadt, Arnason et.al aim to achieve a synthesis of "a surplus meaning, open to conflicting interpretations and capable of creative adaptation to new situations" (Eisenstadt, 2005, p. 2).

Present day scholars take a much broader view that "it seems better to conceive of the axial syndrome as a crucially important component in the history of human societies, which develops in different ways in different contexts, giving rise to different, multiple axialities which interact continually among themselves and with non-axial civilizations in the shaping of different patterns of world history or histories" (Eisenstadt, 2005, p. 5). They also take different approaches to study this. Jasper's approach places conflict and

social change as part of a process of history. Armstrong argues for overall beneficial role of religion as an instrument of conflict resolution. The broader approach of Arnason et al. brings under scrutiny “the interaction between cultural orientations and the dynamics of social power” (Eisenstadt, 2005, p. 2).

The insights of the Axial Flowerings were rooted in ancient wisdom. The aim of the sages was to eliminate (or, at least, mitigate) conflict, violence, and endemic strife. The founders of the discipline of conflict analysis and conflict resolution entertained the same spirit. Their insights were derived from the experiences of, and revulsion from, the horrors of meaningless warfare. Both groups wanted to be agents of beneficial change. The sages operated within a defined geographical area, and within relatively small states; today’s conflict specialists are called upon to operate in a global environment and under the policies of national states, norms of international organizations, and the judgments of omnipresent media. They were not subject to scrutiny or pressures of outside entities; conflict specialists, in contrast, have to contend with the scrutiny from academia and from the unrelenting glare of the 24-hour news cycle.

However viewed, the commonality of spirit, insights, and purpose trumps the differences of time, place, and conditions. The basic structures and institutions put in place by various civilizations have evolved over time, and underpin the superstructures of modern society. These agencies used by the sages have endured to this day. In India and in the Eastern Mediterranean religion was used as the medium; in China and Greece the polity (civil society?) was the channel. In the twelfth century there was convergence of the insights of the sages attributed to the rediscovery and translation of long forgotten

works of Aristotle (Rubenstein, 2003) . This good fortune led to unprecedented cooperation among Christian, Muslim, and Jewish innovative thinkers (specifically in Muslim Spain) to address complex disputes revolving around faith and reason (Menocal, 2002; Montville, 2011; Rubenstein, 2003). Although this cooperation was relatively short lived, it demonstrated the feasibility of addressing common human concerns in a spirit of cooperation and without violence.

Each of the conceptualizations of the Axial Flowerings by Jaspers, Armstrong, Eisenstadt, Wittock (and others) is germane to the modern enterprise of conflict resolution. Conceptual, philosophical and academic arguments apart, all of them indicate fundamental transformations in intellectual thought processes within specific cultural and political orders. The wisdom of the sages crystallized in several fundamental ideas, categories, and concepts. Among these were: compassion, empathy, reciprocity, and non-violence.

It is, perhaps, not an exaggeration to say that the impulse of these ideas has, in fact, shaped and influenced the evolution and development of every institution, and behavioral code of modern society. Broadly speaking, these ideas and concepts coalesce under the modern ideas of cultural and religious pluralism, tolerance, social justice, and human rights. In the modern vocabulary of conflict resolution these notions get subsumed under the rubric of basic human needs. In short, the insights of the sages provided recipes for the prevention, containment, management, resolution, and transformation of conflict.

Relevance of the Axial Spirit and Insights in the 21st Century

The relevance of the Axial spirit and insights can be viewed from several perspectives. First, it could be argued that the original insights of the sages are applicable without modification to the modern world. Second, it could be argued that these insights should be applied on a selective basis. Third, it could be argued that the insights of the sages can be interpreted and reinterpreted and rendered valid for the contested issues of the present day. The third perspective opens the door to focus “on the possibility of different interpretations of core transcendental visions and basic ontological conceptions prevalent in a particular society or civilization” (Eisenstadt, S.N., 2000, p. 4).

Another perspective of the relevance of the Axial Age to the present day conditions can, perhaps, be better understood by projecting in reverse Elise Boulding’s “200 year present” (1990) into “200 year past” to look at the state of affairs in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The nineteenth century marked the apogee of colonialism and imperialism. Slave trade, scramble for land and natural resources, relegation of subservient religions and cultures, discrimination based on ethnicity and race, distortion of scriptures, and exertion of military might resulted in subjugation of a very significant percentage of the peoples of the world by the western nations (Britain, France, Portugal, Germany, the United States et al.).

The bubble of imperial aggrandizement burst in the twentieth century making it one of “the most violent periods in human history. An estimated 191 million people lost their lives directly or indirectly as a result of conflict, and well over half of them were

civilian” (World Health Organization, n.d.). The aftermath of this grim legacy continues in the twenty first century.

Conflict resolution, as an intellectual and academic discipline is conceived as being new, experimental and emerging (*Conflict*, 2008). Conflict resolution as a craft is older, and is evolving (Avruch et al., 1998; Kriesberg, 2007) In the present day, both draw sustenance from many disciplines including law, medicine, psychology et.al.

As a craft, conflict resolution has ancient pedigree. From time immemorial, human beings living in organized groups have faced internal and external conflicts. Each such group has developed culturally legitimated methods to resolve such conflicts (Just, 1998, pp. 107–143).

Origin of conflicts (and the ideal of conflict resolution) can be traced to the earliest recorded history of human kind. Originally essentially rooted in religion, the ideal of conflict resolution has, since Enlightenment, come to be viewed from two distinct perspectives: religion-based and secular-based (I am obliged to Prof. Scimecca for this insight).

The roots of conflict lie in inequality; the roots of inequality are to be found in unequal distribution of society’s surplus production of goods; the roots of surplus of goods are in domestication of animals and technology; advance of technology is the result of development of language and powers of reasoning. Scholars have examined these phenomena from different perspectives: history (e.g. Jaspers); geography (e.g. Diamond) religion (e.g. Armstrong); politics (e.g. Huntington); economics (e.g.

Diamond). The lenses used for their examination, among others, are: culture, ethics, and power. The point of reference for each line of enquiry is the Axial insights.

Perhaps the most salient of the Axial insights was the demarcation of the foundational values of society. These values were clothed in different raiment. In China, they wore the garment of family piety; in India, that of religious piety; in the Eastern Mediterranean, they were robed in the raiment of Covenant with God and Law; in Greece, they were adorned in the finery of speculation and reason. Their objective was to establish a humane, ethical, and just society within the context of their individual environments. These values were implicit in the organization of each society, but had not been articulated clearly. They, nonetheless, formed the basis of every civilization.

Historians have pointed to the beginning of human settlements at about 10,000 years ago (Barraclough, 1980, p. 16). The fundamental factor in this development was “farming revolution” or “food gathering revolution.” (Roberts, 1986, p. 49). Scholars have designated this period as pre-historical. About that time, “in the beginnings of settlements of permanence and some size, in the elaboration of technology, in the growth of language and the dawn of characterization in art were some of the rudimentary elements of the compound which was eventually to crystallize as civilization” (Roberts, 1986, pp. 53–60). Before 6000 BCE there was human settlement, but it lacked certain essential elements of civilization. Jasper has argued “History extends as far back as linguistic evidence...Nowhere does linguistic evidence go further back than 3000 B.C. History has therefore lasted about 5000 years.” (Jaspers, 1953, p. 28).

There is no unanimity among scholars about the definition of civilization. According to Roberts the common denominator of civilization is “complexity...Civilization is the name we give to the interaction of human beings in a very creative way, when, as it were, a critical mass of cultural potential and a certain surplus of resources has been built up. In civilization, this releases human capacities for development at quite a new level and in large measure the development that follows is self-sustaining.” (Roberts, 1986, pp. 57–58).

Between 3500 and 2500 BCE several civilizations took shape: Mesopotamia, Egypt, Crete, India, and China. Each of these civilizations developed through change, differentiation, and through enlarging human scale of things (Roberts, 1986).

An understanding of the civilizational antecedents and cultural heritage of modern states is vital for scholars and practitioners of conflict resolution. An arguable case can be made for the thesis that ignorance, or willful neglect of these factors is responsible for the adventures (and their aftermaths) of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The same argument applies to the ongoing standoff with countries such as Iran and Syria. Iraqis trace their intellectual and cultural heritage to Mesopotamia going back to “about 4000 BC” (Roberts, 1986, p. 65). Afghanistan’s legacy of war goes back to the time of Alexander (over 2000 years). Similarly, Iranians trace their political and religious (Zoroastrianism) heritage to the ancient Persian Empire (founded by Cyrus) that flourished about 2600 years ago (Stearns, Adas, Schwartz, & Gilbert, 2008, p. 96). Syria has the religious and cultural heritage of the three Abrahamic faiths Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Lack of understanding and appreciation of the historical and cultural

sensitivities of these countries (as also of Palestine) has bedeviled the present volatile and ugly situation in the whole region.

What conditions or factors were responsible for the Axial Flowerings?

In most pre-Axial societies there existed the concept of two worlds. One was that of “this world”; second was that of “the other world which was the abode of the dead, the world of spirits, and not entirely unlike the mundane world in detail” (Eisenstadt, 1986, p. 3). It is common ground amongst scholars that the Axial Flowerings (characterized as “revolutions” by Eisenstadt) marked a sharp differentiation between “the mundane and the transmundane world...” (Eisenstadt, 1986, p. 2). This separation gave rise to groups of primary and secondary elites. Each group vied for recognition and power. Among these were “the intellectuals”. In Eisenstadt’s telling it is these elites that were the most active in the reconstructing of the world and the institutional creativity that developed in these societies (Eisenstadt, 1986). The upshot of these new groups “was the development of ‘cultural’ or ‘religious’ collectivities as distinct from ethnic and political ones” (Eisenstadt, 1986, p. 6). Therein were sown the seeds of future social conflict. This social conflict ultimately “developed linkages between different levels of issues ranging potentially up to the very principle of legitimation of the social and political order. These new levels of conflict generated new processes of change and continuous reconstruction of the social order” (Eisenstadt, 1986, p. 9). The development of the second order thinking was combined with “the perennial themes of social protest, such as the emphasis on equality and solidarity, or the suspension of social division of labor” (Eisenstadt,

1986, p. 11). A remarkable feature of this dynamic was that the new elites were participants in the ruling coalitions as well as in the protest movements (Recall the role of the Hebrew prophets in the Jewish society).

The papers of the three conferences read closely and generously, together with the history of ideas, from the perspective of conflict resolution, offer a cornucopia of ideas and pathways to refine and enlarge the corpus of conflict resolution paradigms, theory, and practice. It is a consummation devoutly to be wished. The origin of the idea of the Axial Age lies in the form of a new “reflectivity and historical consciousness” in four separate parts of the world (Wittrock, 2005, p. 51).

This development opened an altogether a new vista for human beings to change profoundly their condition. It brought about several transformations. Among these were: innovative understanding of religion (transcendence), cultural transformation, emergence of new social and political orders. Wittrock has characterized these changes “in terms of reflexivity, historicity and agentiality – and in this respect it is of course reminiscent of the transformations that we associate with the formation of our modernity” (Wittrock, 2005, p. 52). Present day scholars have persuasively argued that these changes continue to play a pivotal role in the understanding and ordering of modern life.

According to Wittrock, the emergence of modernity is the result of “...deep seated cultural crystallization” (Wittrock, 2005, p. 60). He suggests a research program “to examine the lineage in scholarship, that constitute what may never have been a mainstream trend. Although in some cases all but forgotten a number of traditions in

social thought and historical scholarship may prove to be exceptionally profitable from a wider perspective” (Wittrock, 2005, p. 61).

Multiple factors were responsible for Axial flowerings in different cultures. The general improvement in economic conditions, improvement in technology, and refinement of language gave rise to an intellectual elite class that was allied to, and vied for, a say in the social power structure. This class had a foot each in two camps. In addition to supporting the ruling elite, they also criticized the conditions in their societies. Bellah gives examples from “ancient Israel” of Amos complaining that “the rich and the rulers “trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth, and turn aside the turn of the afflicted...(and warning about)...the Day of the Lord when judgment will come to the earth and justice “will roll down like the waters, and righteousness like an ever flowing stream” (Bellah, 2012, p. 452).

In ancient China, sages (e.g. Mencius, Confucius) spoke boldly against “the sad state of society, the corruption of the rulers and the oppression of the peasantry, and offered an alternative form of government: ruled by moral example by conformity Li, the normative order and not by punishment. Bella traces this type of approach in Plato e.g. (Gorgia, The Republic and the Laws.) A similar illustration is given in respect of the Hindu epic, the Ramayana. In the case of Buddhism, similarly, religious reform and political criticism went hand in hand.

Bella concludes that the Axial age presented ‘theory’ in two senses and both these have been problematic ever since. The utopian visions have resulted in “some of the

noblest achievements of mankind: they have also motivated some of the worst actions of human beings” (Bellah, 2012, p. 465). The theory of “disengaged knowing, enquiry for the sake of understanding, with or without moral evaluation has equally given rise to achievement as well as destruction” (Bellah, 2012, p. 465).

This cross fertilization of ideas is the hallmark of the current dialogue taking place in conferences relating to the Axial Flowerings.

What if any, was the beneficial impact of ideas and Axial flowerings’ insights?

Initially, Jaspers’ insight about the Axial Age drew a distinction between pre-history and history. Jaspers assumed that there was no prehistory in the sense of documented records until the change brought about by the Axial Age. All scholars took this assumption as a given. Eisenstaedt and his colleagues challenged this assumption, and the three conferences opened up new areas of investigation and interpretation including the history of pre-Axial civilizations. They have gained deeper insight from this broadened framework. A student of conflict resolution is entitled to entertain the hope that if a similar approach is taken in respect of conflict resolution (i.e. going back beyond the beginning of conflict resolution as a modern discipline) digging to the bedrock of archeology of conflict resolution in various societies at various times could lead to the discover of fundamental principles that were enshrined in the ethics of each society for prevention, management, and settlement of conflicts.

What if any was the negative impact of ideas and Axial flowerings’ insights?

It is not easy to point to any specific negative impact arising from the Axial Age insights. Broadly put, it could have resulted in the structure and crystallization of a specific social order that became and remained status quo in the following generations. The outcome of such structures may have created several classes in a society – at the top would be the rulers (and to an extent the intellectual elite), a middle level which were responsible for creation of surplus wealth, and the lower level where the common masses remained unaffected and continued to live in poverty and wretchedness.

Have there been any demonstrably successful examples of the ideas and insights of the spirit on the Axial Flowerings?

It is difficult to find in the recorded history any direct example of the success of the coming out of the insights and spirit of Axial flowerings. However, it could perhaps be argued that the rein of Mahavira, following upon his adoption of Buddhism as the state religion brought about relative peace and social justice to his people. Another example might be the spirit of tolerance and mutual trust and productive coexistence among Muslims, Christians and Jews in Andalucía (Spain). Menocal has documented anecdotal evidence portraying these conditions. Another example that comes to mind is the events portrayed by Montville in his *History as Prelude: Muslims and Jews in the Medieval Mediterranean* (2011). Some evidence could also be gleaned from the narration of the life in the time of the Mughal Emperor Akbar in India.

What pertinent lessons can conflict specialists learn from the ideas and insights of the Axial flowerings?

It is significant to note conflict and conflict resolution (both of which are coextensive with human history, culture, and religion) have not featured in an organized manner in the discourse of the history of ideas and the Axial flowerings. Students and conflict specialists can derive fresh insights from the debates. In these two fields a rough parallel that is suggested is that of modern technology that has enabled geologists and others to locate oil and other resources in areas that earlier were not considered to have this potential.

Treating history or ideas and insights of the Axial flowerings as a continuum, a foundation can be laid for conflict analysis and resolution specialists to dig into the archeology of knowledge to establish the primordial roots of a discipline that is not an invention of the 21st century. In order to interpret and understand the import of these primordial roots, the lives, thoughts, actions, and foresight of the sages of the Axial flowerings become relevant. They also provide a nexus with the conditions and understandings that brought about change in progress for human kind. The next chapter examines the acts and deeds of the sages who flourished during the Axial flowering.

The tradition of second order thinking is already present in the conflict resolution discipline at SCAR. For example, Burton undertook constant upstream thinking and modified his theory and practice in the light of his continuing experience, of changing social, political, economic conditions, and the insights gained by other practitioners within and outside the conflict resolution discipline.

Avruch (2013) has enlarged the enquiry regarding the role of culture after he and others established a firm footing for culture in conflict resolution. In *Context and Pretext in Conflict Resolution: Culture, Identity, Power, and Practice* (2013) Avruch deals with the initial resistance to culture by conflict resolution practitioners by pointing out that “for those who worked in deep-rooted or intractable conflicts around issues of race, ethnicity, religion, nationalism, (the whole of so called identity conflicts), often marked by extreme enmity, violence, and suffering, it seemed that anything having to do with culture was part of the problem and not the solution; therefore, any attempt to bring attention to culture back to the conflict was both counterproductive of conflict resolution – and probably unethical” (Avruch, 2013, p. 7). Avruch characterizes this as “a sort of categorical error, conflating *culture* as an analytic term and *culture* as a political term used in identity politics” (Avruch, 2013, p. 7). He argues persuasively that by “keeping culture (in the analytical sense) out means that the practitioner is potentially self-blinded to the sorts of obstacles – say, communicational impedances or misinterpretations of key symbols by one side or the another – that may doom a negotiation or an entire peace.” (Avruch, 2013, p. 8).

In the same vein, Avruch has sought to give an answer to Huntington’s thesis that in the 21st century the clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. Avruch points out “the weakness of Huntington’s definition of civilization or the misalignment of his scale...his simplification of global dynamics (as in the phrase ‘the West vs. the Rest’); and his ethnocentrism – his brief for the uniqueness and superiority of Western civilization” (Avruch, 2013, p. 83). The use of the term civilization seems to include the

term culture. Leading conflict resolution scholars have vehemently challenged Huntington's assumptions, conclusions, and his gloomy prognosis (Rubenstein & Crocker, 1994, p. 113).

Rubenstein in his book *Aristotle's Children: How Christians, Muslims and Jews Rediscovered Ancient Wisdom and Illuminated the Dark Ages* has enlarged on the lessons of tolerance and mutual learning amongst the monotheistic communities in the 12th Century CE.

In *Thus Saith the Lord: The Revolutionary Moral Vision of Isaiah and Jeremiah*, Rubenstein draws on the two ancient Jewish prophets, recipes for conflict resolution although some of these recipes involved violence. In doing so Rubenstein concedes that the story "has been a way of reconnecting with my own religious traditions" (2006, p. xii). His conclusion:

Now the answer seems much clearer, for the God who speaks through the prophets is, above all, the source of ethical creativity – the announcer of "new things" as Isaiah of Babylon puts it. It is He who declares that the old regime of power-based domination and subjection is doomed, that a just and peaceful world order is actually obtainable, and that bringing this new world into existence is the task for which all of us are chosen. Exploring the origins and development of this glowing, demanding vision brought me back to the core of my own unorthodox faith. Almost three thousand years after they first arose to disturb the complacency of Israel, the prophets have not lost their ability to challenge and inspire us. (Rubenstein, 2006, p. xii)

A similar thinking process appears to have informed the transformative mediation approach adopted by Bush and Folger in their book *The Promise of Mediation: The Transformative Approach to Conflict* (2005).

Metaphorically speaking, Nature and Human Intellect are two siblings. Nature is older, mature, and wise. Intellect is young, keen to learn, and is undergoing a process of maturation. Intellect has several offspring's: religion, ethics, and power among others. Intellect draws upon the experience and wisdom of Nature for an orderly operation of society. Intellect also employs human ingenuity to devise means of maintaining a stable social order. The means developed by intellect are a mixed bag – good, bad, and indifferent.

The mission of conflict resolution is to increase good means, eradicate in the measure possible the bad ones, and to improve upon indifferent ones to make them workable for benefit of good society. The interaction between the history of ideas and the Axial flowerings affords to conflict resolution the opportunity to broaden its remit and to shape new and innovative strategies for nonviolent conflict resolution.

The Axial flowerings are the fruits of intellect's search for the ideal of a perfect society. Like all ideals, this one remains and will continue to remain unfulfilled, but merit lies in the continuous effort and in not getting mired in the morass of ignorance and conflict.

Chapter 4: Sages of the Axial Flowerings

Toynbee's thesis in *Mankind and Mother Earth: A Narrative History of the World* is predicated on the premise that all sentient life dwells in "the biosphere" ("a film of dry land, water, and air enveloping the globe (or virtual globe) of our planet earth"); only human beings are inhabitants of "another realm as well - a spiritual realm that is non-material and invisible" (Toynbee, 1976, pp. 18–20). This realm "is also an integral part of total reality; it differs from the biosphere in being both non-material and infinite; and, in his life in the spiritual world, Man finds that his mission is to seek, not for a material mastery over his non-human environment, but for spiritual mastery over himself" (Toynbee, 1976, p. 18). The foundation of this thesis and the implication of each realm (physical and spiritual) for conflict generation and conflict resolution may be sought in the spirit and insights of individual sages of the flowerings.

China and Confucius

Confucius (551-479 BCE) lived during an age of constant social and political turmoil. The cause of the instability was the existence of small states that were constantly at war with one another. He was a pragmatist and was "concerned with Man as a participant in society, rather than as an intellect or as a soul." Confucius was "profoundly alienated from his time" because of the internecine wars among myriad small states in China. His focus, as also of other contemporary philosophers, was on "the social and political plane of human affairs" (Armstrong, 2006, pp. 203–211).

The common ground among the philosophers was that “aristocratic birth could not, and should not, continue to be the avenue to public office” (Toynbee, 1976, p. 218). Implicit in this was the notion of division and sharing of power.

Confucius advocated a return to the “Way of Heaven” through scrupulous adherence to ritual, “cultivation of humanness”, and filial piety and political loyalty (Toynbee, 1976, pp. 219–221). Confucius was the first to promulgate the Golden Rule. After Confucius’s death, China entered into a period of even greater instability. This period has been characterized as that of “the Warring States.” In the event, the teachings of Confucius, explicated and elaborated by his disciples, in ethical sense (virtue of humanness) won the day. Confucius’s lasting legacy to human kind has been his aim to want “human dignity, nobility, and holiness...Confucius was asking people to trust in the power of an enhanced humanity instead of coercion” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 210).

Mencius

Mencius (371- 288 BCE) was a follower of Confucius. Although unable to secure any governmental position, he believed that “he (had) been appointed Heaven’s messenger to the princes” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 302). His belief was that “human nature was basically good...that it was as natural for us to behave morally as it was for our bodies to develop in into mature human form.” And he was an optimist (Armstrong, 2006, pp. 303–304). He advocated good leadership, avoidance of coercion, benevolence, and justice (Armstrong, 2006, pp. 302–303). He was more this worldly than Confucius and acknowledged and admired the “practical men of action” like engineers (Armstrong, 2006, p. 302).

The Legalist School

A contemporary and competing school of thought was that of the Legalist. This school argued that “Law was paramount to a ruler’s fiat.” The adherents of this school of thought “further held that a ruler was justified in imposing his fiat by force on his subjects and on his peers up to the limit of his powers” (Toynbee, 1976, p. 218). The objective of the Legalist was to privilege a system of law that aimed “to achieve control from above” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 333). In this respect, it would seem that this concept was an early incarnation of Realism. It evidentially found favor with “warring states” in China.

Shang Yang

A striking contrast to Confucius (and more aligned to the Legalist tradition) is provided by Shang Yang (C. 390-338 BCE). He became chief adviser to the prince of one of the many states in China. He was a pragmatist and eschewed loyalty to past tradition. His practical approach was that “when the guiding principles become unsuited to their circumstances...their standard of value must change” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 334). He reviled the Confucians and derided the Golden Rule. He espoused the doctrine: “A truly effective prince would inflict upon the enemy exactly what he would *not* (emphasis in the original) wish to have done to his troops...If in war you perform what the enemy would not venture to perform, you will be strong...If in enterprises you undertake what the enemy would be ashamed to do, you have the advantage” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 335). It seems that Shang in his unconcern for ethic (and morality) in politics anticipated Machiavelli by at least 1800 years!

Zhuangzi

Armstrong has called Zhuangzi (370-311 BCE) “one of the most important figures of the Chinese Axial Age” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 294). Zhuangzi’s teachings have been documented in a book called “Inner Chapters.” His point of divergence from Confucius’s ‘this worldly’ approach was his focus on ‘the other worldly’.” He saw life as a state of impermanence and “in flux and constantly in the process of becoming something else...” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 296). For Zhuangzi:

[T]he Way was unthinkable, inexpressible, and impossible to define. It had no qualities, no form; it could be experienced but never seen. It was not a god; it had existed before Heaven and Earth, and was beyond divinity; it was more ancient than antiquity - yet it was not old. It was both being and nonbeing. (Armstrong, 2006, p. 296)

Zhuangzi called this “the Great Knowledge.” The purpose of this metaphysical formulation appears to be to erase egotism and selfishness, and to concentrate the mind to the soul’s “great transformation” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 300).

Eastern Mediterranean

Two Isaiahs and Jeremiah

The sages of the eastern Mediterranean were the prophets. The concept of prophets is characterized as: “a religious phenomenon...which is used as the translation of the Canaanite word *nabi*, means proclaimer not foreteller though the prophet’s message might be a presage as well as directive” (Toynbee, 1976, p. 130).

The prophets in Judea appeared in “the atmosphere of political disruption, economic war, and religious degeneration” (Armstrong, 2005, pp. 94–99; Durant, 1992,

p. 315; Rubenstein, 2006; Toynbee, 1976). According to Toynbee, “the years 592-587 BCE saw...the beginning of the history of the Jews and Judaism” (Toynbee, 1976, p. 162).

The two Isaiahs and Jeremiah were among the more prominent prophets. Their relevance to conflict resolution is encapsulated by Rubenstein:

My ambition was to tell the stories of Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and their contemporaries by situating them in their own time and place, and to discover on that basis what they might have to say to us more than 2500 years later. (Rubenstein, 2006, p. x)

The value of their spirit and insights underlines the relevance of religion in an increasingly secular world.

Isaiah’s prophetic ministry was long, “extending...through the reigns of four kings, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah,” and encompassing forty years, from 740 BCE to 700 BCE (“The Times of Isaiah, The Prophet,” 2006). During this time, there were two distinct aspects of social dysfunction. First, it was a period of imperial acquisition, conflict, and subjugation of small states. These states were weak and got caught in the middle of rivalry among greedy ambitions of empire builders (much the same way as those of the European powers of the nineteenth century).

It was also the time

when Israel had forsaken God and placed their faith in worldly prosperity, warlike resources, superstition and idolatry. Middle class luxury, oppression of the poor by wealthy merchants and tradesmen, wantonness of women, excess in festive drinking and perversion of moral distinctions, abounded on every hand. (The Times of Isaiah, The Prophet, 2006)

The genius of Isaiah and Jeremiah was that “they were sophisticated, and innovative thinkers who seized on ideas emanating from the imperial centers, fused them

with their own traditions, and used the product - a new ethics and theology of history - to criticize both sides and chart a new course for their people. They found a middle way between getting subsumed in a “new world system” that would extinguish their identity, or offering violent resistance that would result in the same fate. They made their proclamations in the name of a monotheistic God as

the source of ethical creativity...He who declares that the old regime of power-based domination and subjection is doomed, that a just and peaceful world is actually obtainable, and that bringing this new world into existence is the task for which all of us are chosen. (Rubenstein, 2006, p. xii)

Isaiah’s counsel to the four kings spanned three areas: religion, politics, and social justice. On religion, his uncompromising stand was on belief and trust in God to the exclusion of all other gods. In the realm of politics, his advice was to maintain the internal cohesion of the Jewish polity through pragmatic compromises. Similarly, with respect to external politics, he was a cosmopolitan pragmatist. He understood the force of power in the game of international rivalry for conquest and empire building. He, however, argued for judicious choices based on divine guidance dispensed through the voice of the prophet. In the social field, Isaiah was a passionate activist for social justice. He was a vehement critic of “idolatrous and dissipated aristocrats, corrupt officials who filled their own pockets by exploiting the poor and neglecting the weak” (Rubenstein, 2006, p. 44). He was an ardent and eloquent activist on behalf of the marginalized and under privileged (recall his exhortations to the priests of the temple: “Cease to do evil, learn to do good, search for justice, help the oppressed, be just to the orphan, plead for the widow”) (Rubenstein, 2006, p. 45).

Perhaps the most important task of his mission was to keep hope alive. He equated unity of God with the unity of mankind - “the correlative of monotheism is the unity of mankind” (Rubenstein, 2006, p. 81). The heart of his teaching was the supremacy of “the Law of God.” The principle that “he affirmed was simultaneously spiritual and political. With or without a specific divine intervention, unjust government incubates disaster” (Rubenstein, 2006, p. 55). Isaiah also recognized that all nations are morally equal and that “all...are destined to suffer for their commitment to violent, unjust power. All will be rewarded turning back to justice, integrity and peace” (Rubenstein, 2006, p. 81). He envisaged an era when God would “adjudicate between many peoples” and “These will hammer their swords into plowshares, Their spears into sickles, Nations will not lift swords against nation, There will be no more training for war” (Rubenstein, 2006, p. 82).

Isaiah of Babylon

The prophetic mission of second Isaiah (of Babylon) arose some two hundred years after the first Isaiah. He too, brought a message of “consolation and hope” (Rubenstein, 2006, p. 139). He conceived a new international order: YHVH’s law that would defeat the old order that strengthened and perpetuated “the old power-worshipping injustice-sanctifying superstitions” (Rubenstein, 2006, p. 146). His vision, however, competed with the alternative vision of the ruler, Cyrus the Great, whose policy was more cosmopolitan, and the tenets of his religion (Zoroastrian) “emphasizing the eternal conflict between good and evil, “Justice” and “the Lie” were far more advanced than

those of other religions”(Rubenstein, 2006, p. 146). Rubenstein argues that the second Isaiah, by “understanding that the One God implies the oneness of humanity...opened the door of monotheistic faith to all, and in doing so redefined Israel’s historic mission” (Rubenstein, 2006, p. 148).

Jeremiah

Jeremiah was an avatar of Cassandra. He was a ‘reluctant’ prophet (in contrast with Isaiah who was a ‘volunteer’ prophet). He was a complainer *par excellence* - “You have right on your side, YHVH, when I complain about you. But I would like to debate a point of justice with you. Why is that the wicked live so prosperously? Why do scoundrels enjoy peace?” (Rubenstein, 2006, p. 87). And yet he carried “messages of hope and consolation” (Rubenstein, 2006, p. 86). Jeremiah saw in himself personification of his entire nation (Rubenstein, 2006, p. 95), (much in the same way as De Gaulle saw himself as personification of the French nation). The hallmark of Jeremiah’s preaching was his sincerity that saved him from being lynched by a mob of avaricious and vengeful priests (Rubenstein, 2006). It is possible that introspective Jeremiah was hoping for “spiritual transformation” instead of mere “ceremonial reforms” (Rubenstein, 2006).

Difference of styles notwithstanding, God’s message to his people through Jeremiah was essentially the same: “if you do not exploit the stranger, the orphan and the widow, if you do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow alien gods to your own ruin, then here in this place I will stay with you, in the land that long ago I gave to your fathers forever” (Rubenstein, 2006, p. 100). Jeremiah also re-

conceptualized moral law, shifting moral responsibility from the collective (sins of father being visited on their children), to the individual, “each is to die for his own sins” (Rubenstein, 2006, pp. 127–128).

Reading the spirit and insights of the prophets (the two Isaiahs and Jeremiah) together validates Rubenstein’s summing up:

The idea of a voluntary spiritual consensus is the ultimate response of classical prophecy to the enterprise of empire-building. Implicitly, it annihilates the legitimacy of power-based imperial systems. For great empires generate goals and expectations that coercive methods cannot satisfy - hopes for human solidarity and world order, international standards of justice, national liberation, and peaceful resolution of disputes. (Rubenstein, 2003, p. 148)

Isaiah, Jeremiah, and second Isaiah, individually, and all three collectively, threw down the gauntlet of a paradigm shift against the conventional wisdom of the legitimacy of state power. This was the right to challenge the legitimacy of state power in order to secure release from “violation, unjust authority” (Rubenstein, 2006, p. 148). Their purpose was twofold: first, to deepen the spiritual aspect of religion (away from insipid forms and empty rituals); and second, to secure social justice, security, and equality. An important influence on their campaigns was the impact of interaction among the varied cultures of several imperial dynasties (Egyptian, Syrian, Assyrian, Babylon). It might be ventured that the seeds of cosmopolitan conflict resolution were planted in the soil of converging cultures of these empires, a soil that would be rendered fertile by a spiritual understanding of religion.

India

In India the *leitmotif* of the Axial Flowerings was non-violence (*ahimsa*). This idea found its expression through the teachings of two sages - Mahavira and the Buddha - and two new religions - Jainism and Buddhism (Armstrong, 2006, pp. 240–244 & 274–288).

In India, the dominant concern of the time was that of an unending cycle of birth and death with the attendant pain and suffering (*dukkha*). The thought of the transient nature of life of regression and progression was an added anxiety to a poverty-driven existence. Life was also circumscribed by the class in which an individual was born. Practice of religion was centered on ritual, performance of which was the monopoly of the priestly class. Change came through two related developments. First, the monopoly of religious rituals by Brahmins (that involved animal sacrifices) was broken, and rituals moved to the family (and the home). The second was at the other extreme where individual “renouncers” (*samnyasins*) “lived rough, owned no property, and begged for food. Some let their hair grow wild and matted, some wore yellow robes and others went naked” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 120). Ultimately, it was the cult of the renouncers that became “the agent of religious change” - from external ritual to interior spirituality (Armstrong, 2006, p. 120). The transition was from “a religion externally conceived to one that was enacted within the self” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 123). The relevant practices were codified in scriptures (*upanishads*), but the old Vedic rituals-based religion offered no spiritual solace. There was a spiritual vacuum that was filled by change through the ideal of *ahimsa* (harmlessness) (Armstrong, 2006, p. 232). Jainism was preached by

Mahavira (the Great Hero) or a spiritual conqueror; Buddha (the Enlightened One) had “woken up to a different dimension of existence (Armstrong, 2006, p. 233).

Mahavira

Mahavira (circa 385 BCE) preached “religious fatalism: Human effort is ineffective...All animals, creatures, beings, and souls lack power and energy. They are bent this way and that by fate, by the necessary condition of their class, and by their individual nature” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 239). “The touch stone of Mahavira’s teaching was twofold: nonviolence (and boundless compassion, tenderness and sympathy) away from the ethos of violence of the warrior class; and recognition of common humanity” (Armstrong, 2006, pp. 241–244). His followers came to be known as the Jains, and his “dharma” was designated as “the Way of the Conquerors” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 241). “This esoteric knowledge was imparted by mystically inclined sages to a few spiritually gifted pupils who sat at their feet” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 127). At the exoteric level, however, liberation from “the painful cycle of birth and death” could be achieved by a person through *karma*. “He must chant the Vedas, bring up his children, meditate, and practice *ahimsa*, refraining from violence and acting with kindness to others” (Armstrong, 2006, pp. 132–134). Practice of yoga through development “of the natural capacity of the human person” helped to conquer suffering (*dukkha*). In addition, “the doctrine of karma” which had been controversial earlier, became universally acceptable (Armstrong, 2006, p. 232). Mahavira and the Buddha re-conceptualized this doctrine as a code of ethical conduct to govern the everyday life of the faithful.

The Buddha

Siddhartha Gautama (c. 567-487) was born in a warrior (*Kshattriya*) family. At the age of twenty nine he left his wife and family in search of *nirvana* (*nibbana*) to escape the inexorable cycle of “birth...ageing, illness, death, sorrow and corruption” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 274). Through personal insights gained from physical abstinence, and mental penance, he gained the insight to counteract “the traditional five “prohibitions” of the “unhelpful” states of violence, stealing, lying, intoxication, and sex.” This insight crystallized into a code of conduct of compassion, loving-kindness (positive thoughts and action), and mindfulness (Armstrong, 2006, p. 277). Through this enlightenment, the Buddha found through his own lived experience that conscious practice of this code “extinguished the craving, hatred, and ignorance that humanity in thrall” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 280). Although the Buddha “denied the existence of a supreme being,” it is not difficult to discern an esoteric dimension in his teaching similar to “words later used by monotheists to describe their experience of the ineffable God” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 282).

It would be interesting and instructive to find out why neither the old ‘dispensation’ (Vedic) nor the two new ‘revelations’ (Jainism and Buddhism) opened pathways to improvement of the material conditions of the people. One explanation could be the fatalism of the masses; another could be the trap of the caste system that condemned individuals to a blinkered and narrow existence of their particular group and calling, stymieing any possibility of social mobility. This curse has endured for the masses of India up to the present day.

Ashoka

Ashoka (273-232 BCE) was the grandson of Chandragupta of the Mauryan dynasty. Chandragupta (322-298 BCE) had founded the dynasty in Maghada after violently overthrowing the ruling Nanda family (Durant, 1992, p. 441). Magadha was the state in India in which “Buddha had won his Enlightenment” (Toynbee, 1976, p. 226). Military might and the counsel of his “Machiavellian adviser” (Kautaliya Chanakya) made Chandragupta’s government “most powerful then existing in the world” (Durant, 1992, p. 441).

Ashoka excelled his grandfather in violence as also in conquests. He expelled the remnants of Alexander’s successors, and extended and consolidated his control extending “from the east coast of India to the Straits of Gibraltar” (Toynbee, 1976, p. 229). After a particularly vicious war, he defeated Kalinga (an independent enclave in Maghada) (Toynbee, 1976, p. 226). This war was a turning point in Ashoka’s life. He converted to Buddhism “in his remorse for the evil he had done in conquering Kalinga” (Toynbee, 1976, p. 226). He “diverted his action in regions beyond his empire’s frontiers from conquest to the propagation of the Buddhist *dhamma-dharma*.” The Rock Edicts (pillars) that he erected in the far flung regions of his empire bear witness to his proselytizing zeal. These pillars bear inscriptions that provide evidence that “he propagated, both at home and abroad, the “*dhamma*” as an ethical standard of conduct. (Toynbee, 1976, p. 228). However, the empire did not last. It “crumbled to pieces” within a generation of his passing (Durant, 1992, p. 449).

The charisma of Ashoka's name endures to the present day. His legacy is enshrined in the national flag of India. The Ashoka chakra in the middle of the flag depicts the 24 spokes of the wheel of Buddhist life (Dhamma). These chakras were embossed on many of the Rock Edicts. The written inscriptions are also instructive. They prescribe ethical rules including "little impiety, many good deeds, compassion, liberality, truthfulness, purity...Ashoka ordered his officials everywhere to regard the people as their children, never to imprison them without good cause" (Durant, 1992, p. 448).

There is no demonstrable evidence to indicate whether Ashoka's efforts made his subjects more ethical, or his administration more efficient. Historians seem to think his influence was, at best, mixed. Durant poses the question: "Do these moral edicts have any result in improving the conduct of the people?" His answer: "Perhaps they had something to do with spreading the idea of *ahimsa*, and encouraging abstinence from meat and alcoholic drinks among the upper classes of India" (Durant, 1992, p. 448).

Ashoka's great achievement is considered to be "the bloodless conquest of Asia" - a reference to the rapid spread of Buddhism, among others, to Sri Lanka, China, and Japan (Durant, 1992, p. 450). The contemporary face of Buddhism, like most major religions, is Janus-like: "energetic engagement with social and political issues and crises at least as much as it means monastic or meditative withdrawal" (Queen and King, 1996, ix). Today, the dark side is manifested by the inter-religious strife in Sri Lanka, and the Buddhist militancy in Myanmar (Burma).

Greece

Socrates

The founding of the Greek Axial Flowerings was the creation of “the polis, the small, independent city-state, where the citizens learned the art of self-government” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 101). As in other geographical areas, agricultural technology and surplus underpinned growth of population, and emergence of an egalitarian society (barring slaves and women). Practical problems featured in the public discussion along with “abstract principles of justice and morality” (Armstrong, 2006, pp. 101–103). It was a warrior society that extolled the heroic tradition immortalized in Homeric epics.

Development of trade and contact with the outside world led to expectation of better quality of life as also differentiation of society by wealth between aristocrats and farmers. Dissatisfaction among the marginalized sections of the polis resulted in crisis. Hesiod, the poet, gave voice to the cries of the deprived for social justice (Armstrong, 2006, pp. 139–140).

Solon

In Athens at the time, the leading light was Solon (638-558 BCE), who was an Archon (one of the nine chief magistrates in ancient Athens). He was also a poet (highlighting the plight of the poor in verses), a successful businessman, and champion of fairness and social justice (Plutarch, n.d.).

The Athenian society was plagued with conflicts. At the social level, there were “judicial issues, financial issues, and general class division (social issues)” (West, n.d.).

The cause of political turmoil was the division of the society in three factions: the people of the hills, who favored democracy; and the people of the plains, who favored oligarchy; and the people of the shore who favored a mixed government and prevented either of the other two from prevailing” (Plutarch, n.d.).

Modern scholars have attributed to Solon reforms that bridged the gap between haves and have-nots. Solon abolished the pernicious system of “debt bondage” that allowed creditors to sell debtors into slavery. He is also given credit for reforms that “transformed the structure of political authority from informal oligarchy...to a legally fixed government based on law” (West, n.d.). His reforms made it possible for the rich and the poor to participate in the political process (Plutarch, n.d.).

Solon helped Athens to navigate the political morass through evenhanded treatment of the rich and the poor. Violent conflict between aristocrats and farmers was averted through mediation by Solon (Armstrong, 2006, p. 183).

Plato

Plato (428-348 BCE) was born into a distinguished family of Athens. His early life was marked by “the disastrous years of the Peloponnesian War, the shattering of the Athenian Empire, and the fierce civil strife of oligarchs and democrats in the years of anarchy 404-403 BCE.” He was a disciple of Socrates (who was condemned to death) which led to Plato’s disenchantment with oligarchs as well as democrats. Plato “abandoned his intention of devoting himself to politics.” He found his vocation in philosophy (following the teachings of Socrates). He founded the Academy in c.387 BCE, making it the center of Greek life (Plato, 1955).

Notwithstanding the advent of democracy, political affairs were dominated by members of old (and rich) families (e.g. Themistocles, Pericles). At best, democracy was highly selective. Excluded were women, people of a mixed race, and slaves; as were the poor whose first priority was to secure economic stability (Roberts, 1986). Greek society was permeated with irrationality and superstition. But it also had an ancient tradition of “one of the great intuitions of all time, that a coherent and logical explanation of things could be found, that the world did not ultimately rest on the arbitrary fiat of gods or demons” (Roberts, 1986, p. 204). Plato preached his credo in this milieu.

Building upon the arguments of Socrates (more particularly those advanced by him in *Apology* and *Crito*), Plato re-conceptualized philosophy. Plato’s point of departure was his mentor Socrates’ mantra: “the unexamined life is not worth living” (Plato, 1955). Using his dialogues featuring Socrates, Plato refined the concepts of nature and society. His most revolutionary insight was that “in life we experience only the images of pure Forms and Ideas, the heavenly embodiments of true reality, which can only be apprehended by thought, a matter not only of systematic speculation, but of intuition, too” (recall Plato’s analogy of people trapped in a cave and seeing only shadows and not the sunlight) (Roberts, 1986, p. 207).

Plato’s preoccupation was with ethical issues of “justice” and “good” (1990, pp. 357–358). His arguments in *The Republic* can be read, interpreted and understood from three perspectives: exoteric (secular), esoteric (spiritual), and integrated (considering the two as part of one whole and attaching meaning and weight to each based on the context).

These diverse perspectives have provoked discussion and imitation over the past two thousand years and more.

Aristotle (384-322)

Like Plato, Aristotle was also a pupil of Socrates. Aristotle's tribute to his guru was: "the man whom it is not lawful for bad men even to praise, who alone or first mortal clearly revealed, by his own life and by the methods of his words, how to be happy is to be good" (1955c, p. v). Aristotle was born at Stagira. His father was court physician to king Amyanta II the father of Phillip of Macedon (and grandfather of Alexander). Very few details have survived of the life Aristotle led at the Academy for twenty years. In an atmosphere of intellectual freedom, Aristotle discovered there was no orthodoxy to which he was required to conform. Some of his own interests such as biology and psychology had not yet become ripe for "analysis, but there (was) nothing to stop him from 'theorizing these subjects and making them his own'" (Rubenstein, 2003, p. 24). Plato recognized his brilliance and called him "the reader" and "the brains of the school" (Rubenstein, 2003, p. 25). Dante celebrated him by calling him "the master of those who know" (Rubenstein, 2003, p. 22).

Unlike Plato and his preoccupation with soul and spirit, Aristotle's feet were firmly planted on the secular aspects of life. His inspiration was derived from the study of nature and the life sciences. He considered himself "to be part of a living, integrated, self-sufficient universe - a place whose basic principles could be understood by reasoning from the data presented by the sense impressions" (Rubenstein, 2003, pp. 27-28).

Aristotle's approach was fundamentally different from Plato's conviction "that behind the façade of deceptive sense impressions and turbulent emotions was a realm of pure thought that gave mundane experience whatever intelligibility and value it had." Aristotle denied "the existence of a world of absolute intelligibilities separate from the natural world;" and asserted that "human beings using their powers of reason can apprehend the principles inherent in things" (Rubenstein, 2003, p. 29).

Aristotle was the star pupil of Plato at the Academy. He was "a thinker more comprehensive and balanced, less skeptical of the possibilities of the actual, and less adventurous than (Plato)" (Roberts, 1986, p. 209). Aristotle's approach was more exoteric than esoteric. His writings (and lectures?) "provided a framework for the discussion of biology, physics, mathematics, logic literary criticism, aesthetics, psychology, ethics and politics for two thousand years" (Roberts, 1986, p. 209). His conception that "the city-state was the best conceivable social form" was congruent with that of his mentor. His aim was to understand "what led in most states to happiness." His recipe for this was that of "the Mean - the idea that excellence lay in a balance between extremes" (Roberts, 1986, p. 210).

Aristotle wrote on a variety of subjects including logic, metaphysics, biology, rhetoric, poetics, ethics, and politics. In *Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle, 1955a) he sets out in great depth and in detail the ethical underpinnings of "the common (or universal) good" as the foundation of "happiness." In *Politics* translated by Jowett (Aristotle, 1955b) Aristotle defines in full the components of a society - family, village, and state. He also sets out the rules governing each of these components. The rules that he

prescribes are different from those proposed by Plato in the *Republic*. He comes out against Plato's notion of "the community of women and children, the community of property, and the constitution of the state" (Aristotle, 1955b, p. 460). Here again Aristotle's thrust seems to be towards "a mean" between "oligarchy, monarchy, and democracy" (Aristotle, 1955b, p. 461). Rubenstein provides a succinct encapsulation of Aristotle's "human-centered, this-worldly ethics and politics." To Aristotle, the good life always meant living happily in the present world rather than renouncing temporal pleasures for the sake of eternal bliss. Moderation, as opposed to extremes of asceticism or sensuality, was his watchword. Friendship, family life, political participation, and study ("contemplation") were keys to genuine happiness (Rubenstein, 2003, p. 33).

Both these worldviews influenced the thinking of theologians and philosophers of the three Abrahamic faiths. Augustine "Platonized Christianity;" Aquinas synthesized Aristotle's scientific approach - he (and other Church Fathers) "by marrying Christian theology to Aristotelian science...committed the West to an ethic of rational inquiry that would generate a succession of "scientific revolutions" as well as unforeseen upheavals in social and religious thought" (Rubenstein, 2003, p. 9). Similarly, Ibn Rushd (Averroes), the Muslim philosopher, and Maimonides, the Jewish philosopher, engaged with Aristotle's rationalistic approach, although neither of them was able to change "the traditional religious perspectives." The end result, according to Rubenstein, was that "gripped by...a "slavish traditionalism," the Muslim world turned definitively away from scientific inquiry. So did the Jewish world, which saw Maimonides' Aristotelian

masterpiece, *The Guide to the Perplexed*, denounced as heretical by the rabbis who applauded his legal and moral works” (Rubenstein, 2003, p. 85).

Conclusion

It does not call for a huge leap of imagination to see that the sages of the Axial Flowerings were alienated by the oppressive social structures, social hierarchies and the resultant resentments and conflicts. But they persevered in their ideas, concepts, and actions to promote a just and humane society.

For example, looking at the past from the perspective of the present, the prescriptions in Plato’s *Republic* sound positively antisocial, elitist, and, perhaps, imperialistic; so also do some of the ideas of Aristotle concerning organization of society. Both Plato and Aristotle thought in terms of a highly compartmentalized society in which upward social mobility was an exception. Within this narrow framework, each put forward new ideas for imparting order in the interaction between individuals and groups. Considered in the light of the then prevailing social instability, competition for resources, fractured social structure, and continuous conflict, the stand taken by the sages to bring about meaningful and beneficial change was radical.

The primary preoccupation of the sages was to prevent conflict and disorder. Their precepts aimed at preserving balance, order, human dignity, improvement of the human condition, and, to an extent, development of the inherent potential of each human being. The sages seem to have proceeded on the assumption that their recipes were valid only for the upper crust (tyrants, aristocrats, oligarchs, and landed gentry) of society; they do not seem to have examined the possibility of motivation on the part of individuals

from the lesser groups (women, slaves, foreigners) to improve their status. Part of the reason for this unexamined assumption could be the rigid division of society into status, authority, and class, the marginalized constituencies being considered unworthy of such privileges.

It is not difficult to draw a parallel between the conditions during the Axial Flowerings and modern times. Each part of the world was in the grip of conflict ignorance, suspicion, and superstition. Human relationships were tainted with greed, dishonesty, jealousy, and hatred. These vices corroded the moral ethos of the society. In this inhospitable soil, the sages sowed the seeds of theological thinking and creativity to forge a new order in their respective societies. Mahavira and the Buddha chose the path of religion. Socrates, through his transparent honesty, demonstrated the strength of ethical conduct. Isaiah and Jeremiah pleaded for social justice and for protection of marginalized groups. Confucius and Zhuangzi, and others, taught social stability through ritual purity, filial and political loyalty.

None of them achieved total success. There is, however, inspiration to be drawn from their spirit and insights. The paramount inspiration is that of hope and optimism. Despite all its blunders, bad judgments, and repeated follies, Mankind is capable of forging a just New World Order through theological and ethical creativity even in a far flung, complex and bewildering world. Today, it has the great advantage of the intellectual creativity, refined power of reasoning, tools of advanced technology, exchange and cross-fertilization of ideas across the globe that is now the common capital of the global community.

In modern sociological terminology, the spirit and insights of the sages embraced the entire gamut of social desiderata to restore human dignity, to secure social justice, and to remove obstacles from the path of orderly human development of an entire society. In the past hundred years, sociology has widened the concept and remit of society and social order to include segments of associational living. Sociology has become a distinctive as also a multi-disciplinary enterprise (Kivisto, 2003, p. 1). Different approaches have spawned multiple theories expounded by sociologists (Marx, Durkheim, Simmel, Weber, among others).

The nexus between sociology, and conflict formation and conflict resolution is to be found in the concepts of formation of societies, structures, the role of individual, and the dynamic tension created by the interplay among these factors. Marx situated conflict in the *bourgeoisie* (owners of means of production) and the *proletariat* (producers of products). Durkheim speaks about “the relations of the individual to social solidarity” and the demands of individual autonomy, on the one hand, and social solidarity, on the other (2003, p. 38) in Kivisto’s book *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*. Simmel wrote about interaction among individuals “on the basis of certain drives or for the sake of certain purposes. Erotic, religious, or merely associative purposes; and purposes of defense, attack, play, gain, aid or instruction - these and countless others cause men to live with other men, to act for them, with them, against them, and thus to correlate his condition with theirs. In brief he influences and is influenced by them” (2003, p. 107). Simmel has called this interaction “sociation” (2003, p. 107).

Scimecca in *Society and Freedom* has argued a case for humanist sociology: “The study of human freedom and of all the social obstacles that must be overcome to insure this freedom” (J. A. Scimecca, 1995, p. 2). Scimecca’s concept of human freedom includes, among others, development of individual, social organization, social stratification and inequality (J. A. Scimecca, 1995, pp. 55–75).

The insights of the sages and their suggested remedies for avoidance management and settlement of conflicts have been sharpened by a better understanding gained through various branches of social science. These include philosophy, psychology, anthropology, diplomacy, international relations et al. That said, the ancient wisdom, enshrined in the history of ideas and the Axial Flowerings can offer inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and the opportunity to compare and contrast and to learn. From this perspective the next chapter examines the sources of conflict and conflict resolution in the past and also in the 21st century.

Chapter 5: Conflict

Causes of Conflict Then and Now

More than 2000 years ago, Aristotle taught that Man is a social animal. Over time, social structures are constructed to accommodate the competing needs of individual members and to promote social harmony. However, when individual needs, wants, and aspirations are not fully met, the resulting tension is the main cause of conflict (whether potential or actual) and is inherent in every society.

The corollary to every society striving for harmony and, to this end, to control its members, is that every society also accepts the presence of latent or manifest conflict. Informal structures (e.g. patriarchal authority, conciliation within a clan, tribe, or group) and formal structures (judiciary, bureaucracy et al.) have existed at various levels in all societies, consistent with the development of each society, and its diverse traditions. It is interesting to note that the traditional techniques of analyzing (and settling) conflicts have continued in some traditional societies, where they are preferred to formal judicial machinery (Brooks, 2013), and are sometimes even combined with faith based (denominational or spiritual) interventions (Shook & Kwan, 1998).

Conflict can arise from several sources: “the pursuit of incompatible goals by different groups” (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 30); the need for self-preservation, a wish to preserve group identity, greed to control limited resources, and from craving for power or domination over others. Social conflict can lead to division as well as unity (Coser, 1964). Contrary to conventional belief, conflict is not always harmful. Conflict

(particularly when it is non-violent) can be constructive, and yield beneficial change. In fact, internal conflict in the face of outside aggression can be a cohesive factor for a society (Coser, 1964).

Although the notion of violence is often implicit in the concept of conflict, all conflicts do not end up in violence. Violence is perpetrated in several forms. Violence as a legitimated instrument of law enforcement has been a feature of most, if not all, societies, through stages of their development. Similarly, violence in the name and cause of religion has been a common feature of all religions that have allied themselves to the ambitions of territorial expansion of states (e.g. Catholicism and the Roman Empire; Protestantism and the British Empire; Islam and Muslim dynasties).

Unlike violence, power *is* ubiquitous in every conflict. It is a manifestation of control exercised by a leader, a group or a society over an individual, and the validity of the right to inflict violence was seldom questioned. In ancient times, power was concentrated in the state (in the person of king, or the high priest), and was considered to emanate from on-high. The king's fiat also decreed ethical norms. However, concentration of power in the hand of one person led to abuse. The ethical norms enunciated by the sages of the Axial Flowerings were evolved against such abuse, and against a background of ignorance, superstition, conflict, violence, chaos, confusion, and pessimism. The main causes of conflict were wars, struggle for power and property, control over people and exploitation of their intellectual limitations, social stratification, inequality of means and opportunity, absence of social justice and equity, and endless and senseless strife. Out of this mind-numbing complexity, the sages created a worldview

(rooted primarily in a fresh interpretation and understanding of the role of religion, culture, and ethics). Thus, the ancient and medieval concept of law incorporated the notion of authority and that of commanding what is right and forbidding what is not, and the main object of state power was retribution and deterrence.

It is not surprising then, that in the 17th century, the philosopher Hobbes defined law as: the command of that person, whether man or court, whose precept contains in it the reason of obedience on the part of the Citizen, and more succinctly as: the word of him, that by right hath command over others. (2012). Essentially, until the eighteenth century, legal sanction took the form of extreme and cruel corporal punishment, incarceration, banishment and death. It was not until post-enlightenment 18th century, that the notion of tradition and authority for the right to inflict punishment was challenged, and subsequently, the focus of law enlarged to include the reform of the criminal and to question the value and severity of the punishment.

Alongside greater social awareness, the notion of personal liberty was in ascendancy in the 19th century. It gave impetus to detailed examination of the justification and utility of violence as an instrument of law, and led, in that century to the foundation being laid for the science of criminology. The 20th century saw collaboration between the newly liberated science of criminology and the other independent sciences such as sociology, psychology and anthropology. The interdisciplinary dialogue generated by the cross-fertilization of ideas has led to in-depth examination of the idea of violence in the context of law.

Among myriad of causes of conflict, the more salient ones in the 21st century are: real or perceived threat to individual, and group identity and interests. The term 'group identity' as used here includes the moniker used by the underprivileged (or, more correctly, deprived and discriminated) constituencies. These constituencies include women, children, minorities, etc. Other examples are conflict for equality of opportunities for economic advancement, for participation in political processes, and personal development; for protection of the physical environment.

Conflict in the 21st Century

Avruch has coined a broader definition of conflict: Conflict occurs when two related parties - individuals, groups, communities, or nation-states - find themselves divided by perceived incompatible interests or goals or in competition for control of scarce resources (Avruch, 2002, p. 25). This definition is culture-sensitive and has implicit within it, the seeds of conflict resolution strategies. (Avruch, 2002, p. 25).

Thus, in as much as the roots of conflict are embedded in the needs, wants, ambitions, and greed of individuals, of communities, and nations, the roots of conflict resolution are buried in the archeology of culture, religion and morality. These roots reach deep into the religious, philosophical, cultural, political, and social development of diverse societies. Just succinctly encapsulates this idea:

(I)n a great many societies there may be a wide variety of culturally legitimated paths of behavior dedicated to the resolution of conflicts, the settlement of disputes, and the allocation of responsibility for trespass against personal rights, communal interests, and public morality...They are often the principal means by which disputes are settled, conflicts resolved, and the moral fabric of the community maintained and enforced. (Just, 1998, p. 107)

Conflict resolution has evolved over a continuum of custom, convention, tradition, unwritten law, written law, codified law, to modern formal legislative processes. The law was sanctified through a tight, interwoven cluster of magic, custom and religion (Albrecht, n.d.). As civilizations developed, customs and traditions were arranged in legal codes (e.g. Code of Hammurabi, Mosaic Law, Draconian and Solon Laws, the Roman Law - the Twelve Tablets, and Law Code of Grotius). The imperial expansion (beginning in the 16th century) exported these legal codes to their colonial possessions. However, the importing societies were slow in adopting these codes, and they continued to rely upon their local traditions and mechanisms of conflict analysis and resolution (P. W. Black, 1998; Just, 1998; Lederach, 1998; Shook & Kwan, 1998; G. M. White, 1998).

In the second decade of the 21st century, conflicts still persist, but their focus and character has changed, and so has the approach to their resolution. Until World War II (and also during the Cold War), conflicts were framed in terms of power (rational objective of state interest) and coercion (exercise of military might). Internal conflicts were not within the purview of international relations. Equal (perhaps greater) attention is now being paid to “internal conflicts” within states, and societies.

Conflict is co-extensive with every human society; new is the pervasiveness and the destructive potential of conflict. At the dawn of the 21st century the world is faced with multifarious conflicts, ranging from intra-personal to inter-personal, from intra-group to inter-group, and encompasses gender, race, class, social, and religious; from

intra-state to inter-state conflicts. All these conflicts fall within the purview of the emergent discipline of conflict analysis and conflict resolution (Kriesberg, 2006).

Conflict situations in the 21st century fall into several categories:

- Conflicts spawned by the end of Cold War.
- Conflicts tied to issues of identity and nationalism lying dormant under authoritarian regimes.
- Conflicts simmering under authoritarian regimes, tied to identity, nationalism, and religious affiliations.
- Conflicts arising from insensitive division of territories of vanquished enemies (e.g. mutilation of the Ottoman Empire after World War I; indiscriminate division of tribal lands during the scramble for Africa toward the end of the 19th century)
- Conflicts surfacing under claims of relative deprivation (Gurr).
- Conflicts touching upon unfulfilled basic human and developmental needs (Kriesberg, 2006, p. 408; Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 4).

In the post-Cold War era, latent internal conflicts simmering under the Soviet rule surfaced bearing labels of identity, religion, and nationalism. Their rallying cry was rooted in “chosen trauma” or “chosen glory” of distant past (Volkan, 1997). More recently, in the developed world these latent conflicts have shaped nascent ‘movements’ such as Tea Party, Occupy Wall Street (an illustration of Gurr’s theory of Relative Deprivation (Gurr, 1970, 1993)). The uprising of the Arab Spring in several North African and Middle Eastern countries of long-entrenched authoritarian regimes is an

illustration of Azar's theory of Protracted Social Conflict (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, pp. 80–84).

Such movements notwithstanding, there are many societies across the world whose human needs remain to be addressed and satisfied. Burton classified such needs into: negotiable interests (those amenable to settlement through compromise), and non-negotiable (those that require removal of underlying causes). Azar categorized these needs as: security needs, development needs, political access needs, and identity needs (Ramsbotham, 2005, p. 86).

In the developing world, these needs remain unfulfilled for many reasons: power differentials, lack of resources, and inadequate ability to create wider awareness of the plight of the underprivileged. Relative deprivation, unfulfilled human needs, and unmet developmental needs occupy center stage in the current public debate, policy considerations, and practical programs in the context of conflict formation and conflict resolution. All the foregoing situations are harbingers of latent or manifest conflict.

Conflicts inherited from the 20th century include: Identity conflicts within states, as also across state boundaries (a legacy of indiscriminate fracturing of ethnic and tribal groups engineered to meet the strategic and political needs of now demised imperial powers); social movements (feminism, gay rights, environmentalists et al.); cultural movements (e.g. those involving “concerns about justice, autonomy, and equality” (Kriesberg, 2006, p. 408).

Among the legacy of conflicts inherited by the 21st century world, the antagonism between Western world and the Muslim world, perhaps, appears the most deep-rooted,

debilitative, destructive and pervasive. It is deep-rooted because some choose to trace its origin to distant historical events (e.g. the Crusades); debilitating because it stymies efforts to find common ground for promotion of understanding; destructive because it drains energy, effort, and resources into destructive, rather than constructive channels; pervasive because of its large geographical proliferation. Conflict resolution specialists attribute the causes of this mutual hostility to several factors. Among these are: religion, culture, class, identity, economics, and politics. (Appleby, 2000, 2006; Curle, 1995; Gopin, 2000; D. M. Johnston, 2003; Lederach, 2006). Each factor has its own tension points. When combined with one or more of the others, the intensity increases in geometrical progression. Adding to the confusion is the confounding element of the frenetic fulminations of fundamentalist fringes that concede no ground to the validity of alternative (or, indeed, complementary) perspectives. The resulting discourse (if any) becomes a dialogue of the deaf, with each side instead of talking with, ends up in talking at, or past the other. The potential for finding common ground is driven into oblivion.

Social conflicts are analyzed under different names. What Burton named “deep rooted conflicts,” Edward Azar called “protracted social conflict (PSC)” (Avruch, 2002, p. 86). According to Azar, conflicts have impact beyond their local origins. Local conflicts acquire regional, national, and international dimensions, and vice versa. Jeong argues that the root causes of social conflict can be traced to the distortion of the structure that gives rise to social injustice (2003, pp. 154–155). He identifies “different theoretical interpretations in understanding structural sources of conflict” (Jeong, 2003, p. 155).

In the last third of the 20th century, a wide variety of interests (ethnic, gender, environmental et al) pressed their claims for a say in the society's political, development, and other activities. Groups representing significant number of individuals aggressively pursued the cause of social justice. The proponents of social justice found some of the new approaches of conflict resolution inimical to their aim to secure swift and complete social justice. At the heart of this problem is the over-arching issue of change and its pace. Any evolutionary change seems to move at a glacial pace. There is, thus, a constant tension between speed of change, on the one hand, and the pace of social justice on the other.

Conflict has become globalized - "local conflicts are manifesting themselves globally and global conflicts locally, and the effects of conflicts can be felt far from their sites" (Ramsbotham, 2005, p. 250). The upshot is the need for new thinking about conflict and of ethical intervention and resolution. It has also called for redefinition and expansion of practice of conflict resolution beyond the confines of a particular state, society, or tradition. The underlying idea is to promote "a moral community" envisaged by Kant and "to open new spaces in which citizens from different parts of the world can tackle the transnational sources of conflict" (Ramsbotham, 2005, p. 251).

The legal basis for this approach is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, as also in its' subsequent documents and treaties. These documents assert the equal rights of all human beings, and impose duties to protect others. Assumption of this duty calls upon conflict resolution specialists to broaden their horizon from "particularist ethics" to "ethical universalism" applicable to a global society (Ramsbotham, 2005, p. 251).

Conflict today is worldwide, alive and much more destructive. The bloody legacies of Kashmir and Israel/Palestine continue to fester. War drums are beating louder and louder in the Middle East. Israel and its supporters in the US are at odds with Iran. Syria is embroiled in an internecine civil war. The Arab Spring is fast turning into a winter of discontent and strife. The war in Afghanistan is stalemated, pacification of Iraq is tenuous. Pakistan is a frail state. In each case, there is increasing insecurity for the ordinary citizen. In the Far East, China, Japan, Taiwan, and North Korea feud about uninhabited islands in the name of national sovereignty, a sober reminder of the erstwhile Cold War.

In Africa, sectarian wars in Nigeria are becoming more intense. Somalia remains a failed state; Libya is in the danger of becoming yet another. Southern Sudan, as a newly-born state is in an incubator and fighting for survival. The ragtag 'slave' army of the Ugandan warlord Joseph Kony survives to terrorize children and their families in Eastern Uganda. Other states (e.g. Mali) are being overrun by political and economic opportunist groups from within and outside.

In Latin America, the drug wars in Mexico show no sign of abating. The FARC peace negotiations in Colombia are lurching forward in fits and starts reaching nowhere. In Europe, the dormant embers of the Cold War (and its concomitant proxy wars) are erupting again with increase in rhetoric and belligerency from Russia. High unemployment, drastic reductions in social benefits, and discontent and frustration among people across generational divide have combined to undermine the stability of European

Union states. Racism in the shape of anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia is cropping up in several countries (e.g. France, Holland, Germany et al.).

Worldwide armament production continues to remain a growth industry. Every major country (including the United States, China, Russia, and Iran) has a military-industrial complex and remains involved in the production, supply and sale of weapons of mass destruction to all comers. This pipeline feeds proxy wars, inter- and intra- state wars that ultimately leads to death and disaster for the civilian populations.

It is a sobering thought that the administration of a Nobel Peace Laureate is responsible for 'drone wars' whose many victims are innocent civilians as collateral damage. There are other potential conflicts on the horizon: the unquenched demands for oil and energy in different parts of the world; the grab for the mineral wealth and land in Africa; control of water resources; the rare earth deposits in strategic areas of the world. Invisible wars (of hacking and wrecking) in cyber space are yet another manifestation of new dimension of conflict.

In North America (specifically the United States), unprovoked and senseless mass violence (especially against children) has spiked. The argument of a constitutional right to bear arms is used to shield sociopaths bent on causing social disruptions. Similar violence has been seen in other parts of the world (e.g. in India, gang rape cases and molestation of children; in Pakistan, the shooting of a student activist). Social structures and social mores are undergoing convulsive change. At the forefront are issues of fundamental redefinition and restructuring of age-old institutions of marriage and family, social mores, sexual orientations, gender equality et al. Each is fraught with potential

conflicts that can destabilize civil society. Social networks (Facebook, Twitter et al.) have exported these notions to cultures and societies across the world.

Society worldwide is in turmoil. On the social, cultural, and economic fronts, the conflict between the haves (1%) and have-nots (99%) is assuming global dimensions. Demand for social justice, and equitable share in material resources, as also for gainful employment and participation in political processes is intensifying in different parts of the world. The psychological, emotional, and social traumas unleashed by rapid change are fanning the flames of conflict in the developed as well as the developing world. Conflict (and its concomitant violence) has become global and its intensity is palpable. In addition to social, economic, and political factors, there are overtones of identity, ethnic and religious influences at play.

Mankind in the midst of plenty, groans under the agony of violence. The horrific and senseless massacre of children and adults in Newtown, Connecticut bears witness to senseless violence. Armstrong has characterized the present state of the world as a spiritual crisis akin to that of the Axial Age (Armstrong, 2006).

The Axial sages were confronted with spiritual and social crisis that was circumscribed by their geography, history, politics, and culture. The sages of conflict resolution are faced with borderless conflict, waged by invisible enemies fighting for shifting causes, indiscriminately using weapons of mass destruction against innocent and helpless people. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the world community today is faced with a crisis that is spiritual as well as moral.

Conflict in the ancient world was taken for granted as an everyday reality. It was part of life without theory. Modern science (sociology, social sciences et al.) has conceptualized myriad theories of conflict. The sages emancipated themselves from the existing system based on their lived experience, and without grounding their recipes in a theoretical structure.

Contributions to study of the literature on Axial Flowerings are in the process of unfolding the implications, among others, of social formation, formation of structures, and distribution of power. However, it seems that there has not been any direct engagement by either Axial Flowering or the history of ideas with conflict, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation.

The religious discourse in relation to conflict and conflict resolution in the 21st century has a debit and a credit side. On the credit side: Ramsbotham et al. have discussed the role of religious discourse in conflict resolution, in their writing on “Religion and Conflict resolution”. First is in the sphere of diplomacy (Johnson and Sampson, 1994); second is in the “twin enterprises of comparative religious ethics (Twiss, 1993) and inter-religious dialogue (King and Kushell, 1993). Third is that there is already a consensus among religions which can be the basis for global ethic – a minimum fundamental consensus concerning the binding values, irrevocable standards, and fundamental moral attitudes (King and Kushell, 1993); and the Dialogue of Civilizations project of the United Nations Millennium Summit of World Religious Leaders.

There is a whole spectrum of pundits, practitioners, opinion makers, opinion leaders, policy makers involved in the discourse of religion. This spectrum disregards the misuse of the term “fundamentalists” (Recall Appleby’s statement: “Some commentators automatically equate “fundamentalism” with extremism and use the term as a broad brush with which to tar every religiously orthodox, literate, and committed believer. In that wrongheaded view, every believer is a militant, every militant a fundamentalist, every fundamentalist an extremist” (Appleby, 2000, p. 86).

On the debit side is 9/11 and its aftermaths of wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Mali, Syria, and Egypt. These conflicts are a savage and stunning reminder of the dark side of religion as the messenger of death and destruction. The world’s understandable revulsion at the senselessness of the 9/11 massacre spawned, in its turn, the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya. The Arab Spring sprouted the slender stalk of non-violent change in mid 2010. But this stalk soon got contaminated with protest, riots, and violence.

The Arab spring of exuberance, hope and expectations has already turned (or is about to turn) into winter of discontent, desperation, and desolation. The resultant toxic environment of intra-religion, inter-religion, sectarian violence has become an exportable commodity to other parts of the world.

The spread of violence, the use of drones to ferret out and kill terrorists, the “collateral damage” of innocent human beings brings into question Steven Pinker’s thesis that violence has declined over the past two thousand years of recorded history. This claim is buttressed with impressive collection of statistics. Pinker devotes a separate

chapter to “six major trends...The Pacification Process as a sea-change from “anarchy of hunting, gathering, and horticultural societies” development economy and food surplus, as also “a reduction in the chronic raiding feuding that characterized life in a state of nature and ...fivefold decrease in rates of violent death. The Civilizing Process occurring through consolidation of small principalities “into large kingdoms with centralized authority and an infra-structure on commerce”. The Humanitarian Revolution, the impulse of which started with Enlightenment and extended to many movements including “to abolish slavery, dueling, judicial torture, superstitious killing, sadistic punishment, and cruelty to animals, together with the first stirrings of systematic pacifism”. The Long Peace: The period following World War II during which “the great powers and the developed states in general, have stopped waging war on one another. The New Peace: the tentative move towards measureable decline in “civil wars, genocides, repression, by autocratic governments, and terrorist attacks” (Pinker, 2012). But the geographical areas of attacks have spread, and hitherto ‘safe’ and innocent people have become victims (e.g. the Boko Haram bands, and the Al Shabab infiltration in Kenya). The Rights Revolution: Assertion of the rights of various minorities such as women, children, gay people, as also animals. It is not altogether clear, on the first reading whether Pinker has taken account of the cultural and structural violence posited by Galtung.

Pinker’s claims have not gone unchallenged. Edward S. Herman and David Peterson (2012) have characterized Pinker’s effort as “Reality Denial: Apologetics for Western-Imperial Violence”. The gravamen of this rejoinder seems to be that Pinker’s pick of facts is selective and selfserving. According to the authors the US is engaged in

war on “at least four continents (Asia, Africa, Europe, and South America); USA’s less than neutral stance on the Palestine/Israel conflict. The post World War II “long peace” assertion ignores the US’s intervention in various local and regional wars to protect its geo-political interests and to support its favored allies (client states?). Likewise, Pinker (2012) comes across, according to the two authors, as biased in favor of “the great democracies” and against those with lesser power; the aggressive expansion of NATO in Eastern Europe. The list of the counter accusations against is long and varied. The push back from the two journalists is long that can be summed up as “*Better Angles* is an overwhelmingly ideological work, with biases that reveal themselves at every level – sourcing, language, framing, historical and political contexts, and substance- and on all topics” (Herman & Peterson, 2012, p. 25).

Subjectively speaking, the jury is still out on this issue. There are several festering problems: the extra territorial resurgence of Al Qaeda, militant extremists, resentful youths, and criminal elements that could aggravate an already precarious situation worldwide; second is the declared intention of US to withdraw from the US various theatres of war, the war weariness of the American public, the anemic economic recovery in the US and in Europe.

In the context of endemic violence in Africa, Archbishop Desmond Tutu has pointed out some political leaders in Africa

are effectively looking for to kill, maim, and oppress their own people without consequence. They believe the interest of the people should not stand in the way of their ambitions of wealth and power...that those who get in their way- the victims: their own people- should remain faceless and

voiceless...Most of all, they believe that neither the golden rule, nor the rule of law applies to them. (Tutu, 2013)

Viewed in the light of the ongoing violence, and the potential for its escalation in various countries of Africa (among these: Nigeria, Libya, Kenya, Sudan, Mali), it is difficult to agree with Pinker's optimistic assessment.

In the realm of political punditry, at one extreme are Richard Dawkins (the God Delusion) and his acolytes, and at the other extreme are the committed believers who claim that the 'Real Truth' has been vouchsafed exclusively to their particular tradition (e.g. Billy Graham and his admirers). They seek to avoid "penetration of the religious community by secular or religious outsiders...(Genuine) fundamentalists define "outsiders to include lukewarm, compromising, or liberal coreligionists as well as people or institutions of another or no religion" (Appleby, 2000, p. 87). In between there is a wide majority of believers who profess and practice the prescriptions of their particular faith with due respect to the beliefs and practices of other faith communities. The most compelling contribution of the wide ranging conversations on the history of ideas and the Axial Age is to keep the dialogue evergreen and to extract newer and deeper understanding of the continuities (and discontinuities) of the concept of transcendence and secular in the 21st century's vocabulary and idiom.

From the perspective of conflict resolution, mysticism dimension of the world religions is an unaddressed, or forgotten, or neglected subject. All major religions have their particular tradition of mysticism (e.g. Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) (Parrider, 1976). In all these traditions the common thread is the potential in

every individual for “mystical experience...That mystical claims are made claims are made in many religions is taken both as proof of universality of the inner life of the soul and as the real link between religions which may be divided by dogma but are really united in their quest for the universal One. The door is “search for a unity at the center of things that alone guarantees the coherence which is necessary to all rational enterprises” (Parrider, 1976, p. 190). The key to this door is: unconditional love in all its manifold dimensions, more specifically, love for God, love for humanity, and blissful self-love (not narcissism).

There is reason to believe that in this century mysticism is no longer the exclusive domain of yogis and secretly initiated seekers; it seems to have become main stream spiritual search. For example, Mark Muesse has lectured about exploration of the spiritual aspect of faith by four sages, Confucius, Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad, and about their insights into the human condition and the nature of ultimate reality.

In his article *What Rumi Means to Me, or Why a Southern Baptist – turned – Buddhist Came to Revere a 13th – century Muslim Mystic*, Muesse explicates Rumi’s longing for “mystic union with god” from sorrow of separation that “transmutes into music (poetry), music into insight, and insight into love” (Muesse, 2005). “Although I don’t embrace theism it is beneficial for me to surround myself with the words and images of those who see the divine in such a vivid, concrete way. I need not subscribe to a saint’s theology to admire her or to find nourishment in his example” (Muesse, 2005).

It may seem like a farfetched leap of imagination to think that conflict resolution specialists might find insights into the nature of conflict and conflict resolution in this

unlit nook and cranny of religion. The lesson taught by the history of ideas and Axial Flowerings is that it is this type of imagination, and in the critical examination of these secret corners that, new unsuspected insights can be gained into hitherto unseen possibilities for conflict resolution.

The current understanding of conflicts of various kinds has been theorized by specialists in various branches of learning.

In sociology or social science (see e.g. *The Sociological Imagination* C. Wright Mills, 2000), Mills raises the issue of social science running the risk of becoming the captive handmaiden of the power elite. The term power elite seems to include politicians, military generals, media moguls, corporate tycoons et al. President Eisenhower characterized these as “the military-industrial complex.” A subjective reading of *The Sociological Imagination* suggests the author’s pre-occupation with a power elite that has been subverting social sciences from its mission, in order to serve its own designs to control society. Conflict was at the time seen as violent hostility between states. Intra-state strife was treated as an internal affair of the state, to be handled according to the state’s own law and practice.

The following chapter examines a selection of theories that touch upon human nature, human motivations, human psychology, among others.

Chapter 6: Theories of Conflict

As for theoretical underpinning, Jeong has identified “different theoretical interpretations in understanding structural sources of conflict” (Jeong, 2003, p. 155). Among these are: Marx’s theory of class conflict theory (Marx); Social identity theory; Group behavior theory (Volkan); Basic human needs theory (John Burton); Social conflict theory (Coser); Relative deprivation theory (Ted Gurr). Equally, perhaps more germane, is Edward Azar’s theory of Protracted Social Conflict (PSC).

Modern sages (Burton, Azar et al.) insisted on providing a theoretical base for their analysis of conflict and conflict resolution prescriptions. Azar and Burton rejected the distinction between domestic and international politics as artificial, and maintained there was a single social environment and its domestic side was more important and compelling. Azar further maintained that the role of the state was “to satisfy or frustrate basic communal needs, thus preventing or promoting conflict” (Ramsbotham, 2005, pp. 84–96). The theoretical superstructure of conflict theories (and the suggested conflict resolution mechanisms) consists of a number of formulations.

Marxist Class Conflict Theory

The Marxist theory is embodied in the various writings of Karl Marx (e.g. Alienated Labor; The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844; The Communist Manifesto (1848); Theories of Surplus Value (1862-63); Capital (1894) et al.). These writings are grounded in economics and politics, and address the then current issues

affecting the relationship between the wealth owning class, and the wealth producing class (Marx, 2003, p. 6).

Marx situates the class conflict in the perspective of history, by tracing the rise and fall of highly differentiated societies, such as ancient Rome and the feudal system of the middle ages, in which “oppressor and oppressed stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight that each time ended either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes” (Marx & Engels, 2003, p. 16).

Marx’s diagnosis for the ills suffered by the proletariat was the unjust enrichment of the bourgeoisie at the expense of the proletariat, and second, the operation of the inexorable historical processes of birth, growth, and decay of society.

Marx’s prescribed remedy for cure was for the proletariat (as a “revolutionary class”) to mount a fight against the bourgeoisie (Marx & Engels, 2003, p. 21). Hence his battle-cry of “Workers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains” (Marx & Engels, 2003, p. 21).

Scimecca has argued that Marx’s views were predicated on his concentration only on (and abhorrence of) the capitalist economy, and thus “his analysis is somewhat limited” (1995, p. 8) However, Marx brought into account “the idea of an externally determining system of relationships among human beings”(J. A. Scimecca, 1995, p. 9). Scimecca’s conclusion is that Marx’s abhorrence of the capitalist system got the better of his analytic faculties, resulting in abandonment of his original “assumption that human nature was basically creative and cooperative” (J. A. Scimecca, 1995, p. 9). Scimecca

recognizes Marx's contribution which "by emphasizing the totality, the interrelationship of human societies, and the wide spread nature of conflict, contradiction, and change, Marx provided a valuable strategy point for conflict theory..." (J. A. Scimecca, 1995, p. 9). Some late 20th century scholars have tried to read the last rites to Marx's theory of conflict and class wars.

Social Identity Theory

Historically, empires (e.g. Roman, British, Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman) absorbed diverse ethnic, racial, religious, and social groups, and invested them with common identity grounded in the "peace" of the empire (*e.g. pax Romana, pax Britannica*). Such identities unraveled when the empires ceased to exist.

De-colonization following the end of World War II, the break-up of the Soviet Union, and intra-state divisions in various countries in the world has brought to the fore the dormant ethnic and national sentiments that were subsumed in the larger identity of the occupying powers. The breakup of the British Empire spawned tribal, ethnic, and racial conflicts in India, Pakistan, Palestine, Kenya, and other parts of the erstwhile empire. Similarly, dissolution of the Soviet empire led to different ethnic groups staking their claims to territory and other resources. Ramsbotham et al (58) have listed 44 "countries with major armed conflicts in progress, 1995-97." The causes of all these conflicts are identity based, and "deeply embedded in the histories and memory traces of collectivities" (Jabri, V., 1976, p. 123).

The roots of the social identity theory can be traced to the writings of "Freud, Mead, and Erikson" (Jabri, V., 1976, p. 124). Social identity theory as conceptualized by

Bloom (1990, p. 1) posits two interlinked notions: the individual's "inherent drive to identify" and the need to "enhance and protect the identification that he or she has made." The need for identification is traced to the primordial drive for survival, and an infant's realization of differentiation between his or herself, as also his or her dependence on an 'other'. This differentiation of identity "is not a constant, but a shifting framework based on interaction between the individual and her or his social environment" (Jabri, V., 1976, p. 125). More recent approaches of social identity theory seek to concentrate on "group formation and group differentiation." In the context of conflict analysis and conflict resolution, social identity is seen "to be the link between needs theory and inter-group relations" (Jabri, V., 1976, p. 125). This approach is in consonance with Tajfel's theory that "an individual will tend to remain a member of a group, or seek membership of new groups, have some contribution to make to the positive aspects of his social identity" (Tajfel quoted by (Jabri, V., 1976, p. 125).

Volkan's Big Tent Theory

Volkan's pioneering work is in linking psychoanalysis with group identity and behavior, and in his use of "the principles of psychoanalysis to search for the meaning of cultural identity, ethnic attachment, and the passions related to such relationships" (1997, p. 18). Volkan's central argument is that "bloodlines of ethnicity" are the glue that bond members of a group together. The origin of these bloodlines is partly mythical, and partly anchored in the continuity of history, realities of geography, and actual or romanticized memory of shared events (characterized as "chosen trauma" or "chosen glory"). Volkan draws a distinction between race, and ethnicity; race is predicated on biology (e.g.

physical features, color of skin, texture of hair et al.); ethnicity is predicated on history, culture, religion, language, value system, and social structure.

Building upon Freud's theory of group psychology (which, in turn, depends upon the postulations of Gustave Le Bon), Volkan uses "the analogy of a vast canvas tent." Volkan postulates two layers of identity: a personal identity, and an ethnic ("emotionally bonded large group") identity. In creating a sense of "we-ness", the individual's vital needs become congruous with those of the group, and become merged into the group. This results in blind adherence of the individual to the priorities, hopes, fears, and aspiration of the group, to the inflation of the group's value system, and corresponding devaluation of the values of 'the other'. In time of stress, this orientation "sometimes leads to mass violence and horrifying acts" (Volkan, 1997, p. 27).

The mainstay ("the tent pole") is the leader of the group, whose charisma can provide protection, but who can also be a leader to darkness and death. The issues of political and social identities are closely tied up with those relating to culture (see below under Culture). Donald Horowitz points out the need for ethnic conflicts to be examined from the perspective of "the realm of feelings" and that "a bloody phenomenon cannot be explained by a bloodless theory" (Volkan, 1997, p. 18).

Human Needs Theory

Burton's concept of conflict is two-fold: *disputes* relating to "negotiable interests", and *conflicts* regarding "ontological human needs" (Burton, John, 1993, p. 55). Negotiable interests are those pertaining to disagreements about allocation of scarce resources, enforcement of contractual and other rights. Burton identifies *human needs* as:

“a need for consistency in response, a need for security, a need for recognition, a need for stimulation, a need for distributive justice, a need for meaning, a need for rationality (and to be seen as rational), a need for control” (Burton, 1990, p. 72). Burton compendiously groups the foregoing under the notion of “role”: the attempt of an individual “to secure a role and to preserve a role by which he acquires his recognition, security, and stimulation” (Burton, John, 1990, p. 73). Identity is thus postulated as a basic human need. Structure has a direct impact on the individuals craving for a meaningful role, and its satisfaction (or resolution).

Based on his human needs theory, Burton has developed a conflict resolution theory, at the heart of which is the concept of problem-solving, through analytical process, to the exclusion of other factors such as power, and culture. In his *Conflict resolution as a political philosophy* (1993, p. 59), he succinctly sums up his concept of “problem-solving conflict resolution”: analysis of parties and issues, arranging facilitated interaction aimed at in-depth analysis of the disputants’ mutual relationship, similar sequential analysis of other parties and issues affecting the dispute, settling an agreed definition of the problem, assessing the costs of maintaining existing policies, exploring all positive options, and determining action strategies for resolution. In propounding his theory, Burton sought to bring about seismic changes in the fields of dispute settlement and conflict resolution, in the national as well as international arenas.

However, Burton’s attempt to conflate the domestic and international disputes into a generic theory, and his shift of focus of the unit of analysis, from society to individual has attracted criticism from several quarters.

Social Conflict Theory

Coser in *The Functions of Social Conflict* (Coser, 1964) provides a very incisive analysis of social conflict. In relatively open societies, conflicts between groups can be “stabilizing and integrative”, and can lead to re-alignment of the existing norms, or to setting up of new ones. The process of modification of prevalent norms, as also creation of new ones is the harbingers of beneficial social change. Internal conflicts can also provide a useful mechanism for “the maintenance or continued adjustment of the balance of power” (Coser, 2003, pp. 208–211).

Social conflicts between groups can also help to order a broader social environment that defines and demarcates the power relationship among different groups. Overall Coser’s conclusion is that a rigid social structure that lacks tolerance and institutionalization of conflict becomes an obvious candidate for destructive conflict. The role of human agency towards achievement, and reformulation of social purpose, is an indispensable part of the equation.

Relative Deprivation Theory

Ted Gurr defines relative deprivation as “actors’ perception of discrepancy between their value expectation and their value capabilities. He deconstructs the term value in several ways: values are the desired events, objects and conditions for which men strive; values can relate to: welfare values (contributing to physical well-being and self-realization; power values (ability to influence the actions of others, and preventing the others from “returning the compliment”); interpersonal values (satisfaction derived from interactions with other individuals and groups). Gurr’s hypothesis appears to be that

a feeling of relative deprivation is a condition precedent to the emergence of conflict. Others do not generally share this view, as emergence of conflict can be inferred from the presence of other factors (Gurr, 1993).

Protracted Social Conflict Theory

What Burton named “deep-rooted conflicts”, Edward Azar has called “protracted social conflict” (Avruch, 2002, p. 86). According to Azar, PSC was a manifestation of “the prolonged and often violent struggle by communal groups for such basic needs as security, recognition and acceptance, fair access to political institutions and economic participation” (Ramsbotham, 2005, pp. 84–86).

Lack of agreement in the field of conflict analysis and resolution about the causes of conflict (including PSC) can be traced to the early days of the emergent discipline. The scholars and practitioners of the discipline hailed from more established disciplines such as anthropology, international relations, psychology et al. The field of international relations was concerned with states “as the unit actor of action and analysis” (Avruch, 2002, p. 28), and saw the state as a monolithic entity acting rationally to maximize security and other goods, operating within a balance of power system in the international arena. The intra-state affairs of the society were outside its purview. The dominant theme was power, and, in the classic formulation of Morgenthau “all political phenomena can be reduced to three basic types. A political polity seeks either to keep power, to increase power, or to demonstrate power” (1956, p. 52).

Until 1945, the traditional concern regarding conflict and conflict resolution was concentrated on the international arena, and the major actors were national states. Azar, like Burton, rejected the distinction between domestic and international politics as artificial, and maintained that there was a single social environment and its domestic side was more important and compelling. Azar further maintained that the role of the state was “to satisfy or frustrate basic communal needs, thus preventing or promoting conflict” (Ramsbotham, 2005, pp. 84–86).

Based on his study and interpretation of available datasets of PSC, Azar identified a large number of conflicts in various parts of the world, which were distinct from the traditional disputes; and which revolved “around questions of communal identity” (ibid.). He drew a threefold contrast between the traditional and the new approach: First, traditionally, conflict was seen from “the dichotomy of internal and external dimensions”; the PSC perspective indicated that covert and third world conflicts blurred the distinction between external and internal conflicts. Second, the traditional analysis was based on functional differentiation, whereas PSC had a combination of causal factors and changing dynamics of goals, actors, and targets. Third, hitherto the concentration was on overt and violent conflict to the exclusion of covert, latent, or non-violent conflict; and pacification of violent acts was equated with the termination of conflict. PSC, on the other hand, did not have a clearly demarcated beginning and end (Ramsbotham, 2005, pp. 84–86).

As can be seen, Azar’s focus is on the community (“the identity group”), as a separate entity from the state. He attributes the disjunction between the two as a legacy of

the colonial policy of divide and rule. According to him, identity groups are the unit through which the needs and interests of the individual are negotiated, and these, in turn, are mediated through culturally conditioned processes. Like Burton, Azar considers the human needs (elaborated as security needs, development needs, political access needs, and identity needs) as non-negotiable. If these needs are not satisfied, the resulting conflict is likely to be intense, vicious and from a traditional Clausewitzian perspective irrational. Another critical factor cited by Azar is the dysfunctional government policies and processes that give rise to and intensify PSC; additional factors are incompetent governance, weak institutions, and unwise and self-serving international linkages (Ramsbotham, 2005, pp. 84–86).

Azar's research was grounded in his personal experience of life in Lebanon, a country which was mandated to the French during the inter-war years (1919-1939). Subjective experience of life in colonial and post-colonial time in an African country, attests to the validity of Azar's presentation of symptoms, diagnosis and prognosis.

Humanist Sociology

Scimecca has defined humanist sociology as: "The study of human freedom and of all the social obstacles that must be overcome in order to insure this freedom." According to Scimecca "sociologists are concerned primarily with the social structure of society (the groups people belong to and the positions they occupy in them) and its relationship to the personality of the individual. Unlike the traditional sociologists...humanist sociologists seek to use the knowledge they uncover to benefit

people His purpose is to give primacy to “the dignity, interests, and values of human beings” (J. A. Scimecca, 1995, pp. 1–2).

From the perspective of conflict and conflict resolution, Scimecca draws upon the conflict theory of Marx. This theory “explains human behavior in terms of self-interest and the perpetuation of the social order by the organized coercion of various groups over others” (J. A. Scimecca, 1995, p. 8). The result is a social order at the apex of which are powerful groups who exert control over the lower levels. The purpose of humanist sociology is to bridge the gap through “a valid theory of personality formation...[that] envisions human beings as both shaping and being shaped by the world” (J. A. Scimecca, 1995, p. 14). In Scimecca’s view C. Wright Mills was an exemplar of humanist sociology: “Mills offers a sociology that is liberating while still possessing an adequate conception of social structure- one that does not sacrifice the volitional, active nature of socialstructure. Mills points out a path toward freedom (J. A. Scimecca, 1995).

Non-violent conflict resolution theories

Manfred Steger (the coeditor of *Violence and its Alternatives: An Interdisciplinary Reader*) after performing “An Autopsy of Marxist Socialism” gives salience to the insights “on the relationship between power, social control, and popular support of the kind we have come to associate...with the tradition of non-violence championed by thinkers such as M. K. Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and Gene Sharp” (Steger & Lind, 1999, pp. 284–289).

Gandhi eschewed “the doctrine of the sword” in favor of the doctrine of non-violence that holds “non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment” (M. Gandhi, 1999, pp. 293–301). Non-violence is rooted in the ancient Hindu religion and tradition of “suffering.” Gandhi described non-violence as: “Non-violence is the greatest force man has been endowed with. Truth is the only goal he has. For God is none than Truth... But Truth cannot be, never will be, reached except through non-violence” (M. Gandhi, 1999, p. 295). Gandhi considered non-violence as the law of life and for human beings and both as a means and an end.” In Gandhi’s application of non-violence, it is pertinent to note two points. First, Gandhi accepted that “where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence I would advise violence” (M. Gandhi, 1999, p. 293). Second, the reality on the ground in the struggle for independence, there was no practical possibility of an armed struggle succeeding against the military force of the British Raj. An armed ‘rebellion’ by Subhash Chandra Bose (aided by Japan) was ruthlessly quashed by the British.

Martin Luther King Jr. adopted, preached, and practiced non-violent civil disobedience in the struggle for black empowerment, racial justice, and equality, in the face of statutorily legitimated discrimination against an oppressed minority. King’s mantra was: “The first principle in the movement (i.e. civil disobedience) is the idea that the means must be as pure as the end (in contra distinction to Machiavelli’s teaching that “the end justifies the means”). For King: “in the long run of history, immoral destructive means cannot bring about moral and constructive

ends” (King, 1999, pp. 302–307). The unprecedented success of the student movement as also the establishment of civil rights was a vindication of his philosophy, strategy, and action programs. It is a supreme irony of history that both Gandhi and King met with violent death.

My subjective understanding of the theory of conflict is summarized here below:

- Conflict is a fact of life in every society. Conflict can be a beneficial agent of change, as also a destructive force.
- The primary source for thinking about theory of conflict, and conflict resolution is derived from social philosophers, and their implication for the realities of life, from theorists of sociology. And the disciplinary bias of each imposes a limitation on the adoption of their views in their entirety, to the subject matter of conflict analysis, and conflict resolution.
- Philosophers, scholars, and practitioners of various disciplines have not succeeded in developing a universally acceptable general theory of conflict.
- A proper understanding of the theory (or theories), and a rational analysis of the underlying causes of the conflict, is a condition precedent to the design, and implementation of effective, and productive conflict resolution strategies.
- Collaboration rather than coercion, and cooperation rather than dominance, enlightened self-interest rather than selfishness, and an attitude of one-for-all and all for one will produce sustainable solutions to conflict.

Marxism had become unfashionable in the post-World War II milieu due largely to improvement in the economic, political, and social condition of the masses. This development coupled with the implosion of the Soviet Union in 1990s resulted in desuetude of Marxism.

The parlous state of the world economy since 2007, unacceptable levels of unemployment (particularly among the young, and professionals), glaring inequalities in the distribution of national productive resources and their fruits, has revived interest Marx and Marxism.

The conventional reading of Marx's philosophy and interpretation of history can be summarized into several cardinal mantras:

- Economic exploitation of the masses is the root cause of class struggle between haves and have-nots.
- Overthrow of this inequitable system and its leaders is the key to secure freedom from the heavy burden on the long suffering proletariat, of lack of freedom of expression, movement, and action.
- Once the yoke of capitalism has been thrown off, a just new society will emerge based on the maxim "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."
- Human beings do not live in isolation but as part of a society.

- Living in social groups enables human beings to develop and realize their full potential.
- Common economic interests promote nurturing of other social, culture, and political interests.

Terry Eagleton, a true believer in Marxism, has mounted a robust defense of Marxism in the current unstable economic environment. His main argument can be summed up as: The main impulse of Marxism is not economics but creating social meaning to enable human beings to function as human beings and not as robots. This defense is underpinned by the argument that capitalism and the capitalist society of the 21st century are ripe to sink under the weight of their own inequity. Eagleton points out the difference between Marxism and Communism. At first sight this sounds like a distinction without a difference, and a special pleading on behalf of Marx. (Eagleton, 2011) Other commentators have pointed out the recent protest ‘movements’ (e.g. Occupy Wall Street) have not hoisted the flag of Marxism. The implication seems to be that Marxism has become passé, and that Eagleton’s effort was an exercise for rehabilitation of Marx. In fairness, however, it is important to recall Scimecca had pointed out much earlier that there was a human touch in Marx’s philosophy that had been overshadowed by his ideology. Be that as it may, Marx will continue to remain a point of reference in the discourse of conflict and conflict resolution.

A cynical view might be that every new theory adds to the complexity of the subject rather than clarifying it (and there are as many theories as there are experts, making confusion worse confounded).

It is a trite observation that conflict analysis must precede conflict resolution. The enterprise of conflict resolution in the 21st century thus depends upon the infrastructure built around conflict theories.

Chapter 7: Conflict Resolution in the 21st Century

The Ideals of Conflict Resolution

The core ideals emanating from the thinking and teachings of the sages of the Axial Flowerings can be identified as:

- Recognizing the common humanity of all human beings.
- Honoring the dignity of every individual human being.
- Respecting diversity of religions - Maintaining healthy skepticism about faith.
- Nurturing ethics - Establishing and respecting universal ethical sensibilities.
- Promoting virtues of compassion, love, empathy, and justice.
- Deepening spiritual dimension of religion - Preaching and practicing a life of spiritual and ethical commitment.
- Upholding healthy civil society - Encouraging and strengthening institutions of associational living.
- Combining the worlds of faith, reason, and action based on ethical premise.
- Investing in enlightened education to dispel “conflict of ignorance.”
- Encouraging more dialogue and understanding amongst different faiths.

The foregoing ideals can be grouped under several headings: Religious; Ethical; Social; Political; Economic. The spiritual dimension is centered on religion; the secular dimension is covered by social, political, and economic fields. In addition to the above, the following principles emanated subsequently, and were inspired and developed

by modern thinkers, but who essentially drew their inspiration from the insights of the Axial sages:

- Tolerance - Nurturing respect, cooperation, and pluralism across faiths and cultures.
- Protecting human rights - Promoting democracy and mutual understanding across all nations.
- Protecting creative freedom of expression.

The foregoing ideals were conceptualized, articulated, and advocated by each sage or modern thinker within his political, cultural, social, and economic conditions. Collectively, the purpose of the ideals was to aim to establish a secure society, to improve the quality of life across all classes, and to give protection to women, children, and the aged. History has taught the lesson that in reality very few of these ideals have been reached in any polity. Looked at positively, real life teaches the lesson that: “True hope is swift, and flies with swallow’s wings; Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures kings (Shakespeare, 2002, Act V, Scene ii).

The Realities of Conflict Resolution

A subjective, brief sketch of historical landscape at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century provides the backdrop to the eventual emergence of the discipline of conflict resolution. In 1896, Lord Acton, editor of *The Cambridge Modern History*, spoke about the “fullness of the knowledge which the nineteenth century is about to bequeath and show the point we have reached (from conventional history to ultimate

history)...now that all information is within reach, and every problem has become capable of solution” (Carr, 1961, p. 161).

At the beginning of the 20th century there were two realities of superpower. One was Britain at the pinnacle of its imperial power. It had consolidated its power to justify the boast ‘the sun never sets on the British Empire.’ This was the result of taking lion’s share of “the scramble for Africa” (Pakenham, 1991), as also of colonizing strategic territories in Asia and other parts of the world. The second reality that emerged was that alongside the reigning power of the day was another potential superpower of the near future - the United States of America (Roberts, 1986, p. 721).

Interstate quarrels among European states triggered the First World War. Treaty obligations and self-interest led nation states to choose sides and to get embroiled in Europe’s boiling cauldron. The war revealed “the enormous war making power of industrial societies.” Two unforeseen and coincidental developments confounded the situation. One was the entry of the United States into the war, and the other, the revolution in Russia. Both occurred in 1917. The stalemated, senseless, and corrosive war sapped the blood and treasury of the warring nations and their allies. The enormous spiritual and material havoc in “the destruction of ideals, confidence, and goodwill” led J. M. Keynes, then a young economist, to note “Never in the lifetime of men now living has the universal element in the soul of man burnt so dimly” (Roberts, 1986, pp. 830–837).

The Treaty of Versailles, signed in June 1919, was imposed on the Germans and their allies. Its terms were harsh and punitive. President Woodrow Wilson of the United States provided the conceptual energy for the Treaty, more specifically, on the principle

of self-determination for the subject nations of the defeated enemies and the victors. The carving up of the territorial possessions of the vanquished empires, under the idea of “Mandates” was essentially a ruse “to drape with respectability the last major conquests of European imperialism” (Roberts, 1986, p. 839).

The League of Nations, the brain child of the idealism of president Wilson, was born with an incurable defect - failure to take account of “the actual state of world political forces” (Roberts, 1986, 839). This limitation was compounded by the refusal of the US Congress to ratify the Treaty. As a result, the League failed to deliver on the expectations of the world community (Roberts, 1986, pp. 836–840).

A positive outcome of the war was the realization on the part of thinking people of the futility of wars. This led to the establishment in 1918 of international relations (IR) as a distinct academic discipline (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 37). The inadequacies of the League resulted in IR dominating the realist thinking that privileged the state system acting in self-interest on a rational calculus (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 37).

World War II shattered any delusion of the supremacy of diplomacy. In the aftermath of the war, Burton (and others) switched gears from the world of diplomacy and power politics (i.e. IR) and sought and implemented other alternatives for resolving conflicts. This approach marked the birth of the academic discipline of conflict resolution (Pakenham, 1991).

Conceptual Underpinnings

Altruism

Aristotle and Aquinas have both expressed the essence of altruism as “the love of benevolence.” The idea is thus embedded in both philosophy and in religion. Comte co-opted the notion in sociology under the moniker “altruism.” It has been variously defined. Macaulay and Berkowitz have defined altruism as “behavior carried out to benefit another without anticipation of reward from external sources” (1970, p. 3). It covers the notions of motive as well as behavior. Altruism stands at the top end of a spectrum “from compassion and kindness to altruism and voluntarism” (Post, 2003, p. 162). Compassion is an emotion, sharing the pain of another. Altruism goes a step further. It motivates action. But an act done out of a sense of duty (without a feeling of compassion) would, perhaps, not qualify as altruistic. At its highest, “Altruistic love is giving, sacrificial love: it often involves the sacrifice of very important interests, including sacrificing of the individual life.” The common feature of all definitions of altruism is: “the goal or purpose of enhancing the welfare of another” (Krebs & Van Hesteren, 1992, p. 149).

From the perspective of conflict resolution, the importance of altruism is twofold. First, it is part of social ethics. Second, it is a counter point to the idea of power that denotes motivation, behavior, and action, that is essentially selfish. Altruism on the other hand implies the notion that the recipients are regarded as an end in themselves, without a corresponding benefit to the donor.

The spirit of altruism is embedded in the Golden Rule.

Pluralism

Isaiah Berlin has expressed his view on the idea of pluralism in several separate writings. He describes “pluralism that is the conception that there are many different ends that man may seek and still be fully rational, fully men, capable of understanding each other and sympathizing and deriving light from each other, as we derive it from reading Plato or the novels of medieval Japan - the words, outlooks, very remote from our own (Berlin, 2000, p. 9). He also writes,

There is a plurality of culture and of temperaments... there is a plurality of values which men can and do seek, and that these values differ...I think these values are objective - that is to say, their nature, the pursuit of them, is part of what it is to be a human being, and this is a an objective given...and part of this objective fact is that there are certain values, and only those values, which men, while remaining men, can pursue. If I am a man or a woman with sufficient imagination...I can enter into a value system which is not my own, but which is nevertheless something I can conceive of men pursuing while remaining human, while remaining creatures with whom I can communicate, with whom I have some common values- -for all human beings must have some common values or they cease to be human, and also some different values else they cease to differ, as they in fact they do...[M]onism- -the ancient belief that there is a single harmony of truths into which everything, if it is genuine, in the end must fit...is at the root of every extremism. (Berlin, 1998)

It can be argued that the spirit of pluralism was contemplated by at least some of the sages of the Axial Flowerings. It is a broad notion that extends beyond diversity, tolerance, and relativism (Eck, n.d.). Its driving force is active engagement and meaningful dialogue with racial, religious, ethnic, and cultural identities of disparate groups. Pluralism advocates identification, recognition and acceptance of shared values and shared rules of conduct among such groups (Harvard Pluralism Project (Eck, n.d.).

Similar sentiments have been voiced by the Aga Khan in a series of speeches on “Democracy and Pluralism” collected under the moniker of *Where Hope Takes Root* (2008). The Global Centre for Pluralism established by the Aga Khan in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada is “a major new international centre for research, education and exchange about the values, practices and policies that underpin plural societies” (“Global Centre for Pluralism,” n.d.).

Cosmopolitanism

Kwame Appiah, the Ghanaian philosopher, is a prominent proponent of cosmopolitanism. The essence of his argument is “we live in a world where our most trivial deeds can affect unknown millions on the other side of globe.” Appiah’s thesis stands on two pillars: “We are responsible for every other human being; (and) universal concern and respect for legitimate difference” for (quoted by Sophie Botros in the *Guardian* August 25 2006). These ideas resonate with the ancient ideal, attributed to Diogenes (404-423 BCE) that “all human beings were fellow citizens of the world.” It underpins two important notions, namely, “mutual respect and understanding among the world’s people, and recognizing our obligations to other human beings” (Appiah, n.d.). Appiah privileges the individual as the (“not nations, tribes or “peoples””), but places the ultimate responsibility “for moral concerns” about the welfare of the individuals to the government. An interesting aspect of Appiah’s argument is that there is (or should be) a limit to the extent of sacrifice that an individual can make toward the good of the community. His argument seems to be that every individual has the right to secure their own (and that of their near and dear ones) happiness as a first priority.

In his article “*The Case for Contamination*” (2006), Appiah situates the concept of cosmopolitanism within a dichotomy of continuity of local culture and change (in relationships, mores et al.), homogeneity and plurality, secular progress and spiritual development, local affiliations of clans and international dispersion of families. In a fast changing world of migration (particularly from developing to developed countries), and globalization (in all its aspects), he sees the opportunity for cosmopolitanism to flourish.

The difference between cosmopolitanism and pluralism, to a lay person, appears to be that the former represents an effort to find common ground to meet and to work together in unity; the latter seeks to give salience to, and gain acceptance of, difference. Either way, each has valid role in the practice of conflict resolution.

Conflict Resolution under the lens of Axial Flowerings spirit and insights

Taking a broader view, the present state of the practice of conflict resolution warrants the assumption that conflict specialists implicitly (and, perhaps, unconsciously) apply the insights of the Axial Flowerings through various agencies of present day society. For example, the spirit of the Axial Flowerings is invisible in plain sight in the practice of faith-based conflict resolution. In the words of Kriesberg:

The universalistic religions that are prevalent in the contemporary world assume the equal and shared humanity of everyone. This provides the ethical basis for seeking solutions to conflicts that incorporate the partial truths known to the various disputants in a more comprehensive shared truth. (Kriesberg, 2003, p. 135)

Based on the knowledge of the sensibility of their religious backgrounds, the conflict resolution work of a significant number of religious actors (e.g. Martin Luther King, the Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu) can be said to be similarly informed

by the insights of the Axial Flowerings sages. The same attribution can be given to the work of leading scholars including Mark Gopin, Joseph Montville, (late) Adam Curle, and Karen Armstrong. Also of the same piece are the efforts of the faith based institutions (e.g. Christian Mennonite Center, Society of Friends (Quakers), Community of Sant'Egidio, World Council of Churches (Appleby, 2000, pp. 217–244), to name a few, and the structures developed by them (e.g. Wehr's and Lederach's extensive work of conflict resolution in different parts of the world has been done using the resources and structures of the Christian Mennonite community).

In assessing the validity and viability of the spirit and insights of Axial Flowerings in the context of conflict resolution, it is necessary to keep in the forefront, two fundamental points - all conflicts ultimately get settled; and most cultures sanction, under certain circumstances, the use of force for processing social conflict (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 345). To this must be added a third dimension: conflict resolution (including conflict transformation) can never be permanent. In this context, it is useful to recall Berlin's analysis to the effect that,

If the old perennial belief in the possibility of realizing ultimate harmony is a fallacy, then there is a risk of "collision" between expectations and outcomes, the collisions, even if they cannot be avoided, can be softened. Claims can be balanced, compromises can be reached; in concrete situations not every claim is of equal force - so much liberty and so much equality; so much for sharp moral condemnation, and so much for understanding a given human situation; so much for the full force of the law, so much for the prerogative of mercy; for feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, healing the sick, sheltering the homeless. Priorities, never final and absolute, must be established. (Berlin, 2000, p. 14)

The Discipline of Conflict Resolution

Modern conflict resolution as a distinct field of study took root in the mid-20th century. It was experimental and evolved through a combination of practice and theory, adopting and adapting practices and theories from various disciplines (medicine, psychology...) (*Conflict*, 2008).

In the modern era, Kenneth and Elise Boulding were among the moving spirits of conflict resolution movement. The Bouldings' motivation "personally and spiritually" came from their background as members of the Society of Friends (Quakers) (Ramsbotham, 2005, pp. 32–54). Other conflict resolution specialists (e.g. Lederach, Appleby et al.) have also brought their spiritual sensibilities to bear on their professional work.

Kenneth Boulding, one of the pioneers of the discipline, explained the original objective of the conflict resolution discipline as prevention of a global war. Some fifteen years later, the focus was enlarged to include "international conflict over justice, equality and human dignity; problems of conflict resolution for ecological balance" (Ramsbotham, 2005, p. 32). Johan Galtung in Europe, and John Burton, in Europe and the United States, gave impetus to the movement (Ramsbotham, 2005, pp. 39–47).

The modern enterprise of conflict resolution has its origin in the Western tradition. It is rooted in the categories and concepts of Western culture. It is chiefly derived from "middle-class white American" practice (Avruch, 1998, p. 7). But, of late, there have been other welcome developments: the emergence of specialists from non-Western tradition, recognition being given to the long standing traditions of dispute

resolution in the non-Western societies, and increasing credence being given to the conflict resolution strategies prescribed in diverse scriptures and codes of ethics.

Conflict resolution is genus of which International Relations (IR), Peace Research (PR), and Conflict Analysis & Resolution (CAR) are species. IR, PR, and CAR each claim fealty to the scientific method. Each also seeks scientific explanation for conflict and conflict resolution. According to some authors, IR appears to have lost its scientific luster (Hollis & Smith, 2004, pp. 50–55). But Machiavelli, and his political progeny (Morgenthau, Kennan, Huntington et al.) are alive and well. PR retains its ideological appeal. Gandhi and his disciples of non-violence (King, Tutu, Galtung et.al) have kept burning and alive the lamps of peace through non-violent conflict resolution (Ramsbotham, 2005, pp. 38–40). Kenneth and Elise Boulding, Burton, Azar and their compatriots sparked the “expansion and development” of the CAR discipline that is ongoing (Ramsbotham, 2005, pp. 40–41 & 52–54).

Acceptance of conflict resolution as an academic discipline and as a profession has not been unqualified (Ramsbotham, 2005; J. Scimecca, 1998). The first advocates of the idea of modern conflict resolution were natural scientists and medical doctors. They understood the destructive costs of war (deaths, maiming, physical and psychological traumas), and the suffering inflicted upon innocent civilians, as the unhealthy outcomes of scientific and technological advancement.

The idealistic and humanistic aspirations of the advocates of non-violent conflict resolution, and their premises and assumptions have been critiqued on various fronts. In the West, the battle lines are drawn between realists (and neo-realists) on one side, and

‘pragmatists’ on the other. Realists continue to plead the case for the exercise of “hard power” and for Western hegemony (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, pp. 399–401). Their main argument appears to be based on the state system. They argue that conflict resolution is incapable of dealing with “the lethal combination of ‘rogue states,’ globalized crime, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the fanatical ideologues of international terrorism” (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 400).

At the other end of the spectrum are people (e.g. Richard Falk) who have concentrated on “research in terms of individuals, vulnerable groups and the wider environment within a global analytic framework, rather than in terms of the state system.” Their objective is driven “by the imperative of the survival of whatever is humane in humanity.” Attainment of this objective would constitute “an axial moment of normative restructuring of collective and individual life...(and provide)...the best and most realistic basis of hope about how to work toward human betterment, as understood and applied in many separate ways around the world” (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 398).

Conflict resolution is a process as well as a product (Avruch, 2002; Ramsbotham et al., 2012). There are two distinct conceptions of Western conflict resolution: an overall discontinuation (termed “broad” by Avruch), and a selective end (termed “narrow” by him). The former consists of actions or steps (including inter party negotiations or third party intervention, or the exit of one of the parties) that ostensibly bring the dispute to an end without necessarily ‘resolving’ it. The latter tries to tackle and eliminate the roots of the problem. The main proponents of the second approach are (among others) John Burton, Johan Galtung, John Paul Lederach (Avruch, 2002, pp. 26–27). Pruitt and Kim,

adopting a socio-psychological approach, treat conflict from the perspective “of the impact of mental status on social behavior” (Pruitt, Kim, & Rubin, 2004, p. 8).

Conflict resolution as an ideal has to be adjusted to, and practiced in, consonance with the realities of everyday life. There are multiple realities. These realities are always present in the discourse of conflict and conflict resolution. One set of realities is represented by a spectrum of interests - national (e.g. sovereign states), regional (e.g. the European Union), and supranational entities (e.g. the United Nations Organization (UNO), and its many agencies). Yet another set of realities consists of the interplay of human nature, power, culture, self-interest, ambition, vanity, and greed for control of scarce resources. These realities are not mutually exclusive. They intersect, and add to the complexity of conflict, and conflict resolution discourse.

The concept of conflict resolution continues to evolve. From the “state-centric” approach, it has moved to focus on civil society, and is gradually evolving towards accepting “the need to bring into the discourse of dispute resolution the ideal of a global civic culture which (will be) responsive to the voices often left out of the politics of international order” (Ramsbotham, 2005, pp. 169–170). This remit calls for an authoritative enunciation of the ethics that should govern the practice, theory, and research in the field.

The broader reach of 21st century conflict resolution gives salience to individual needs with emphasis on positive human interaction instead of use of coercive power to settle conflicts. Bush and Folger (the pioneers of Transformative Mediation) have called this approach “*relational worldview*” (2005, p. 1). This is a welcome trend in conflict

resolution. Pointing to an inclusive approach towards other traditions, it aims to combine, for example, “a rich tradition of tribal conflict management (which) has thousands of years of experience and wisdom behind it” (Paul Salem, quoted by (Ramsbotham, 2005, pp. 169–170), with the training of people inside the society in conflict. The informal standards of ethics governing these practices could offer useful pointers for Western practices.

A number of terms are used to denote an end to a conflict: conflict containment, conflict settlement, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation. The last two terms are increasingly gaining prominence. Conflict resolution is “a more comprehensive term than conflict settlement and conflict containment, which implies that the deep rooted sources of conflict are addressed and transformed.” Conflict transformation “is a term, which for some analysts is a significant step beyond conflict resolution, but which... represents its deepest level...It corresponds to the underlying tasks of structural and cultural peacebuilding” (Ramsbotham et al., 2012).

John Burton strenuously argued for a shift from “power politics realism” to “behavioral realism,” and called for focus away from institutions, and to make “persons as the unit of analysis.” He drew a clear distinction between negotiable interests, on the one hand, and non-negotiable ontological needs that he termed “basic human needs”, on the other. He called his theory “conflict resolution” (Burton, John, 1990).

Conflict transformation is the downstream development of a concept that had its genesis in the foundation laid by a number of pioneers (Kenneth Boulding, John Burton, Johan Galtung et al.). They moved their attention away from the realm of international

relations, to peace studies, and management and resolution of conflicts in all areas of human activities, irrespective of their origin. Conflict transformation is the formulation that Lederach devised to bring “constructive change,” above and beyond Burton’s idea of conflict resolution (Lederach, 2003, p. 1). The main thrust of Lederach’s conflict transformation approach is grounded in his very extensive experience of group conflicts in several parts of the world.

Lederach offers building peace as a “paradigm shift...away from a concern with the resolution of issues and toward a frame of reference that provides a focus on the restoration and rebuilding of relationships” (2004, p. ix). His approach has several distinct merits: his “thinking and approach emerge from the stand point of a practitioner than a theorist” (2004, p. xi). It is firmly grounded in ethics and is informed by deep religious sensibilities. In *The Moral Imagination* (2005), a sequel to *Buildingpeace*, Lederach extols the virtue of a creative process that combines the “art and skill” of conflict resolution (2005, p. ix). He defines moral imagination “as the capacity to imagine something rooted in the challenges of the real world yet capable of giving birth to that which does not yet exist” (2004, p. ix). In his article *Civil Society and Reconciliation* (2006), Lederach’s framework is for peacebuilding in civil society. He moves forward from conflict resolution to reconciliation by privileging four notions: truth, mercy, justice, and peace, terms that are part of the moral and ethical code prescribed by all major civil societies.

Reading Lederach’s writing together yields a significant insight that: spiritual values and social obligations are not mutually exclusive. They can maintain

complementary and cooperative existence in civil society. Equally, the insight underlines the value of religious concepts and prescriptions as valid tools for conflict resolution.

Lederach has built his argument for reconciliation within the twin frameworks of faith, and civil society. For Lederach, reconciliation is a journey, not a destination (reminiscent of Aristotle's notion of "becoming" rather than "being"?). In *The Journey Towards Reconciliation* (1999), Lederach frames his approach to reconciliation in terms of his Anabaptist faith. The "theological underpinnings" of his extensive work in reconciliation, and conflict transformation are explained through narration of Biblical and other stories using the metaphor of "journey."

At the practice level, the broader reach of 21st century conflict resolution gives salience to individual needs with emphasis on positive human interaction instead of use of coercive power to settle conflicts. Bush and Folger (the pioneers of Transformative Mediation) have called this approach "*relational worldview*" (2005, p. 1).

This welcome trend in conflict resolution points in the direction of an inclusive approach towards other traditions that aims to combine, for example, "a rich tradition of tribal conflict management (which) has thousands of years of experience and wisdom behind it" (Paul Salem, quoted by (Ramsbotham, 2005, pp. 169–170)) with training of people inside the society in conflict.

Cosmopolitan Conflict Resolution

Cosmopolitan conflict resolution can be better understood through the idea of cosmopolitan citizenship. This concept calls for the understanding "that separate states

and other actors have an obligation to give institutional expression to the idea of a universal communication community which reflects the heterogeneous character of international society” (Linklater, 1998). This notion is an extension of Habermas’ assertion that “Even if we still have a long way to go before fully achieving it, the cosmopolitan condition is no longer merely a mirage. State citizenship and world citizenship form a continuum whose contours, at least, are already becoming visible” (Habermas, 1984). It is perhaps not unfair to say, from the perspective of conflict resolution, that cosmopolitan conflict resolution has stronger chances of becoming a reality than cosmopolitan citizenship, in the foreseeable future.

Cosmopolitan conflict resolution is a refined concept advanced by Ramsbotham et al., the authors of *Contemporary Conflict Resolution* to advocate the broader values of conflict resolution in an environment:

at a particularly uncertain moment in world history, with the promise of a new US administration once again ready to embrace conflict resolution approaches in wider foreign policy formulation, but with mounting challenges from rising non-western powers (notably China), increasingly complex links between state failure and international terrorism, a severely shaken global economy, and embroilment in Afghanistan and Iraq continuing to wreak a serious backlash against the whole concept of ‘liberal peace - in which conflict resolution is often seen to be implicated. (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 3)

At the risk of oversimplification, contemporary conflict resolution can be described as the downstream extension of the spectrum of conflict settlement, conflict management, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation. This task is undertaken in the broader context of the international community to tackle “underlying tasks of structural and cultural peacebuilding...linking the personal, societal, global and ecological spheres... (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, pp. 31–32).

The international dimensions of conflict resolution across the wide range of conflict - “international relations, domestic politics, industrial relations, communities or families or between individuals”- become more salient in the work of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in development and humanitarian aid fields (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 4). The declared purpose of cosmopolitan conflict resolution is to point to the direction of “an approach that is not situated within any particular state, society or established site of power, but promotes constructive means of handling conflict at local through to global levels in the interest of humanity” (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 265). The ultimate objective of cosmopolitan conflict resolution appears to be to forge a new global moral order through promotion of social-democratic ideas in politics, equitable opportunity in the economic field, and social justice and participation in the civil society (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, pp. 265–266).

The desired goal of cosmopolitan conflict resolution (as articulated by the authors of *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*) is “that only full engagement with emerging non-western and non-northern practices and norms can deliver what is needed and fulfill the original aspirations of the founders of the field” (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 267).

In considering the contribution of the modern sages it is important to bear in mind a significant distinction. The Axial sages operated within a limited geographic area, in relatively homogeneous communities, with relatively less developed intellectual equipment. Nevertheless, the impulses that motivated the sages of the 21st century had their origin in the spirit, understanding, insights, and teachings of the Axial flowerings. In comparison, the remit of the modern sages is international, multifaceted, and they can

draw recipes from diverse religious and cultural traditions. It must be considered that the portraits painted below are but a very small selection. There would be many more who would qualify; it is not a disrespect that they have not been included.

Chapter 8: Sages of Conflict Resolution in the 20th-21st Centuries

A school of thought maintains that the ideals of conflict resolution forged during the Axial Flowerings were “very much a fresh beginning”, superseding the then existing social order (Tomek, 2007). On the other hand, several writers have posited that these ideas were inherent in every society from the time of its formation. For example, Jared Diamond, and Robert Kaplan accord a dominant role not to “human biology” but to natural factors (for example geography) in a continuum starting about 13,000 years BCE in the development of different societies, in different continental environments. Diamond argues that primitive societies with their advantage or limitations of geography crafted their own dispute resolution mechanisms (Diamond, 2005b). Kaplan, in *The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells Us About Coming Conflicts and Battle Against Fate* (Slaughter, 2012) proceeds on the assumption “that humankind is in essence divided rather than connected”, and privileges geography over human motivations. In his article *Geography Strikes Back* (2012) Kaplan argues: “although technology has collapsed distance, but it has hardly negated geography (that demonstrates)...the spatial representation of humanity’s divisions, possibilities and - most important - constraints.” He also concedes geography is common sense, but it is not fate. Individual choice operates within a certain geographical and historical context, which affects decisions but leaves many possibilities open.

The French philosopher Raymond Aron captured this spirit with his notion of “probabilistic determinism,” which leaves ample room for human agency. David Singer

points out the impact of geography in the telling phrase “the man-milieu relationship [in] two distinct geographical and social settings - South Asia (macroscopic), and a pair of limited populations in urban and rural Ireland (microscopic)” (1960).

The foregoing hypotheses need to be put under the lens of conflict resolution discourse to determine their validity.

The spirit and insights of the sages of the discipline of Conflict Resolution needs to be understood against the background of conflict and violence realities of the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries.

The twentieth century will go down in history as probably the most violent in human annals. World War I ushered in the era of weapons of mass destruction more particularly impacting innocent civilians. The victors (more particularly imperial powers such as Great Britain and France) carved up the colonial possessions of the vanquished (Ottoman, Hapsburg, and German empires) to consolidate their respective ‘spheres of influence’ in different parts of the world. Disenchantment with wars led to the establishment of the League of Nations as an international body “with an emphasis on the power of reason and the rule of law to enhance the prospects of peace” (Dunn, 2001) and also to the founding of the discipline of International Relations (IR). The League, and its idealistic aspirations, turned out to be a ‘toothless bulldog’; and IR became prisoner of Realist doctrine whose “...goals have been “law and order” and interventions into the prevailing economic and social systems designed to preserve those systems and to promote further the immediate concerns of influential interests” (Nasser, 1983).

World War II marked the beginning of the end of the colonial era. It also gave birth to the Cold War and the arms race. The Realist theory of balance of power in terms of state interest was given academic respectability by Morgenthau and others. Very little attention was paid to “societal concerns” that were the breeding ground for “high levels of conflict at all societal levels, national and international levels” (Nasser, 1983). The time was ripe for new thinking, new concepts, and new approaches to conflict resolution. The sages who took up this challenge came from different backgrounds, different disciplines, and different worldviews.

According to Berlin, in his article *Historical Inevitability*, there are theories according to which the lives of entire peoples and societies have been decisively influenced by exceptional individuals... “The notion of greatness, unlike those of goodness or wickedness or talent or beauty, is not a mere characteristic of individuals in a more or less private context, but is, as we ordinarily use it, directly connected with social effectiveness, the capacity of individuals to alter things radically on a large scale” (Berlin & Hardy, 1997, p. 122).

Ramsbotham and his co-authors have categorized the forefathers of conflict resolution into: precursors, founders, consolidators, and reconstructors. The precursors were the founders of the International Relations (IR) discipline, the early advocates of a new “science of peace, social scientists refining concepts that would also prove of importance to the interdisciplinary study of conflict resolution: psychology, politics, and international studies” (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 38). The founders were those for whom the post-1945 world of “added threat of weapons added a new urgency for peace

and conflict research” (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, pp. 42–49). The consolidators were those “drawing from a wide range of disciplines and with a reasonably sound institutional base, had defined its specific subject area in relation to three projects of avoiding nuclear war, removing glaring inequalities and injustices in the global system, and achieving ecological balance and control” (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, pp. 49–55).

The reconstructors came to the fore in the wake of the Cold War. They attempted a transition from the old world order to a “new world order” (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, pp. 55–62). This task is still work in progress. Finally, there lies ahead the fifth generation, dubbed Cosmopolitans by Ramsbotham and his co-authors. Their assigned mission is to ensure that “conflict resolution is indeed truly international, as the founders intended. If the central goal of transforming potential violence into non-violent change is not shared cross culturally, then there is no international, let alone cosmopolitan, conflict resolution” (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 425).

The paragraphs here below set out the background and insights of a select few.

John Burton

Burton was a native of Australia. He was educated in England and by the early age of thirty-two had reached a senior position in the Australian bureaucracy. He played “an important part in the planning and execution of Australian foreign policy” (Dunn, 2001).

His transition to academia was a default position after he resigned in “protest at the policies relating to China, Korea and the United States”; fundamentally, he stood opposed to power politics and contemporary interpretations of communism (Dunn, 2001).

He was a rebel with a cause. He put the individual (and not the institution) at the heart of a search for conflict resolution. He privileged human subjects over institutions. In Dunn's words, "the primary level of analysis for Burton is the human being. Conflict will be resolved when the issues that separate people as people disappear" (Dunn, 2001).

His first engagement was with IR. His criticism of "the conventional wisdom of (IR)" presented him with the challenge to "provide an alternative explanation of conflict, but (he) chose to explain afresh conflicts that had not already been explained in conventional terms" (Dunn, 2001); hence, his advocacy of the new discipline of Conflict Resolution. In retrospect, IR's loss was Conflict Resolution's gain!

Burton's seminal contribution has thus to be viewed and evaluated as much from the framework of Conflict Resolution, as also the history of ideas and the need for interdisciplinary cross-fertilization of ideas from diverse disciplines. It seems that Burton stimulated discussion among his peers, and refined his own ideas and concepts based on new learning and new experiences. Drawing upon the ideas of others as much from his own reflections, Burton focused on "the shift to human rather than institutional values" (Dunn, 2001). A refreshing aspect of Burton's approach was that he readily admitted the mistakes made in developing the theoretical and practical aspects of the new discipline. He was prepared to go back to the drawing board to think afresh about fundamental assumptions and practices. Dunn has traced in Burton's writings the evolution of his thinking away from the anachronism and utility assumptions of IR to the potential of problem-solving strength of Conflict Resolution. Dunn refers in particular to the following texts: *Conflict and Communication*, 1969; *World Society*, 1972; *Deviance*,

Terrorism and War, 1979. Burton elaborated and refined his views in *Resolution and Prevention*, 1990, *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*, 1990; *Conflict resolution as a political philosophy*, 1993.

The main thrust of Burton's thesis was to shift the focus from "power politics" to a "truly human dimension" (Burton, 2001). In *Deviance, Terrorism and War*, Burton (1979) privileged individuals (and their "universal, ontological, and generic genetic human needs") over "social institutions, structures, norms, laws, or conventions." He called this a "Kuhnian paradigm shift." This claim was reinforced by Burton and Sandole with an additional dimension - that of "*Generic Theory: The Basis of Conflict Resolution*" (Burton, 1998). Their colleagues, Avruch and Black, challenged these claims. Their well-reasoned arguments were grounded in the authors' perspectives as anthropologists, and theorists of "human culture." The most they were prepared to accord Burton's claim was a "paradigm renovation" (Black, Peter & Avruch, Kevin, n.d., pp. 87–100). Other scholars (e.g. Ramsbotham et al.) have also expressed doubts "that a single all-encompassing explanation will be adequate for conflicts of different types" in different parts of the world (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 94).

In *Conflict Resolution as a Political Philosophy*, Burton used his concept of 'basic human needs' to support his notion of Conflict Resolution as being "concerned with prediction and policy formation based on a political philosophy that asserts that the satisfaction of human needs that are universal must be the ultimate goal of survivable societies" (Burton, 1993, p. 60). He starts by drawing a clear distinction between the terms *disputes* and *conflict*, and *settlement* and *resolution*. "Disputes' involve negotiable

interests, while ‘conflicts’ are concerned with issues that are not negotiable, issues that relate to ontological human needs that cannot be compromised” (Burton, 1993, p. 60). He attributes the term ‘settlement’ to “negotiated or arbitrated outcomes of disputes; and he refers to ‘resolution’ as “outcomes of a conflict situation that must satisfy the inherent human needs of all.”

Burton draws a double contrast, and, argues, on the one hand, that there is no dichotomy between domestic and international disputes and conflicts, and, on the other, that the phenomena ‘disputes’ and ‘conflicts’ “are generic: there are both domestic and international conflicts and disputes” (Burton, 1993, p. 56). Based on the foregoing, he constructs two conceptual frames: one covering disputes, which lend themselves situations that are negotiable and amenable to adjudication or arbitration, and the other, relating to situations that require “analytical problem solving.” With this framework as the background, Burton argues that the practice of political realism, as also of political idealism, is devoid of theory, hence incapable of offering explanation of conflicts, or of offering prediction of future conflicts. He advocates rejection of “the power political track” in favor of “a theory of behavior that explains conflicts, and deduces from this theory the appropriate means of handling them” (Burton, 1993, p. 57). A theory of behavior would provide an objective basis on which to define concepts such as ‘justice’ ‘the social good’, and ‘democracy’. Burton maintains that these concepts “relate to conditions that satisfy human needs of identity, recognition, and autonomy, all of which imply equity” (Burton, 1993, p. 58)

Burton recognized that as in the case of “paradigm shift” his political philosophy faced “resistance from both scholars and practitioners” (1993, p. 58). His counter-argument was: “We are experiencing a paradigm shift, a fundamental one, touching on the foundations of political philosophy. It challenges the traditional notion that the person can be socialized into the requirements of institutions, and asserts that institutions must accommodate in a continuing way to certain inherent and universal human needs” (Burton, 1993, pp. 58–59).

Burton’s initial point of departure was IR. For Burton “the issue was about the connection of change and states. The problem, he argued, was that change was pretty much the norm in the circumstances of the modern world economy and state system (Dunn, 2001).

More recently, Dunn has suggested a reappraisal of Burton’s contribution to IR. Dunn considers IR discipline to be “in difficulties” and thinks “Skeptics might find more to prevention than meets the eye.” He also questions the paramountacy of “statist pretence.” He sees the need to “grasp the nettle of holism” specifically in the context of “the need to unite the individual with the evolving nature of world society”- a concept advocated by Burton “thirty years ago” (Dunn, 2001).

Philosophical and theoretical arguments and differences of opinion apart, Burton’s spirit and insights were seminal, offered against the current. For example, Burton insisted on the construction of foundation of theory to underpin the structure of a belief system or ideology (Burton, John, 1993, p. 57). He also emphasized the need for “second order learning” (of creating more constructive realities (Ramsbotham et al.,

2012, p. 106). The first order learning is based on limited observation, received wisdom and conventional methods of analysis of social science. The second order learning calls for use of imagination to visualize possibilities beyond casual observation (Sieler, n.d.) Burton paid a heavy price for intellectual independence (and for speaking truth to power) in terms of virtual ostracism from his first love (IR). Burton, like most sages (prophets), was not honored in his lifetime. History will, hopefully, give him his just due as a true sage of the conflict resolution discipline.

Azar

Azar's name too may not appear in the pantheon of the sages of Conflict Resolution. But his analysis, finding, and conclusions anticipate the developments in the post-Cold War milieu. Azar was born and educated in Lebanon in the colonial era. He did his graduate work in the United States beginning with quantitative analysis of inter-state conflict. His experience of the ramifications of the colonial era in Lebanon, and generally in the Middle East, lay at the forefront of his concerns. This brought him into discussions of "the new conflict resolution fraternity, whose attempted reconceptualization of the roots of large-scale contemporary violence he found congenial and confirmatory of his own thinking" (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 99). His most compelling insight was: "there is only one social environment and its domestic face is the more compelling" Azar and Burton, 1986, quoted by (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 100).

Azar's theory of "protracted social conflict" (PSC) was his singular contribution to the conceptual apparatus of conflict analysis and conflict resolution. His contribution

builds on the work of several theorists including John Burton. His approach rejects the traditional distinction between domestic and international politics.

According to Azar, PSC is a manifestation of “the prolonged and often violent struggle by communal groups for such basic needs as security, recognition and acceptance, fair access to political institutions and economic participation” (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 99). PSC addresses:

Four clusters of variables...identity groups...deprivation of human needs...governance and state's role as the critical factor in the satisfaction or frustration of individual and identity group needs...‘international linkages in particular a political-economic relations of economic dependency within the international economic system, and the network of political military linkages constituting regional and global patterns of clientage and cross-border interests (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, pp. 100–102).

Azar's theory synthesizes the differences between inter-state and intra-state disputes. Consequently, conflict is now considered to be a genus, and of which inter-state and intra-state conflict are species. PSC was “an attempt to ‘synthesize the realist and structuralist paradigms into a pluralist framework’ more suitable for explaining prevalent patterns of conflict than the more limited alternatives” (Azar, 1991, 95, quoted by (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 103).

Ramsbotham and his co-authors present a compelling case that Azar's theory has been confirmed by the post-Cold War and post-9/11 events and happenings. Two very cogent parts of Azar's analysis relate to the role of the state in satisfying the human needs of its citizens, and the international linkages that led to “the distortions of post-colonial economic and political structures.” These, in turn, spawned “new wars” that “merge into forms of cross border economic exploitation and criminal networks and are sustained

often by the very measures taken to end them” (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 106). This open-ended situation illustrates Azar’s point that PSCs “do not show clear starting and terminating points” (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 106).

An unintended outcome of misguided policies of vested interests, and well-intended but misdirected actions of the international community, is the neglect of other fundamental needs, such as human rights (and freedom of assembly and practice of religion. Azar’s theory resonates with the needs and demands of unemployed young people in the developed and the developing worlds. Azar, from this perspective, becomes an eminent candidate for recognition as a sage of Conflict Resolution.

Azar’s colonial experience was illuminating, but not necessarily unique. Three other colonial subjects had similar epiphany.

Said was a Palestinian Christian (1935-2003) born in Jerusalem, under the British Mandate for Palestine. He championed the rights of Palestinians to a state of their own. As a critique of culture, he singled out Orientalism as the basis for undermining the culture, religion, traditions and aspirations of the colonial people. To Said Orientalism represents “subtle and Euro-centric prejudice” against non-occidental culture and a blunt weapon to use as a ground for justifying (old and new) imperial ambitions (E. Said, 1979).

The reaction to political and intellectual imperialism was resistance in the 19th and 20th centuries. The political deliverance came at the end of WWII. Said’s thesis is that the intellectual imperialism was subtle, subversive, and persuasive. Said’s theory is grounded on literature. Said argued “The power to narrate, or to block other narratives

from forming and merging is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them. (1994). Subjectively, it seems to apply to other areas of activities as well.

In his *Culture and Imperialism* Said (1994), argued “Gone are the binary oppositions dear to the nationalist and imperialist enterprise. Instead we begin to sense that old authority cannot simply be replaced by new authority, but that new alignments made across borders, types, nations, and essences are rapidly coming into view, and it is those new alignments that now provoke and challenge the fundamentally static notion of *identity* (italics in the original) that has been the core of cultural thought during the era of imperialism. Throughout the exchange between European and their “others ... that has scarcely varied is that there is an “us” and a “them”, each quite settled, clear, unassailably self-evident” (p. xxv).

The foregoing writings of Said read together can be summarized as under:

- The Euro-centric approach (and Western generally) has drawn a line between “us” and “them”; “the us” (Western) being superior and advanced; “the them” being inferior and backward.
- The foregoing basic distinction has led to “the tightening of the grip demeaning generalization and triumphalist cliché, the dominance of crude power allied with simplistic contempt for dissenters and others...” (Said, 2003)
- The patronizing (and paternalistic?) attitude is the main cause of friction between the West and the East, more specifically with the Arab world.

- The will to dominate for the purpose of control is the true intent for the wars in the Middle East, and other parts of the world.
- Unfortunately there is a class of academics, and some sections of the media “all of them re-cycling the same unverifiable fictions and vast generalizations so as to stir up “America” against the foreign devil” (Said, 2003).
- Said offers a number of solutions. First, an enhanced role for the United nation “the welcome emergence of a new collective constituency that gives the often facile notion of “one world” a new urgency” (Said, 2003). Second, dialogue and discussion:

We still have at our disposal the rational interpretative skills that are the legacy of humanistic education, not as a sentimental piety enjoining us to return to traditional values or the classics but as the active practice of worldly secular rational discourse. The secular world is the world of history as made by human beings. Critical thought does not submit to commands to join in the ranks marching against one or another approved enemy. Rather than the manufactured clash of civilizations, we need to concentrate on the slow working together of cultures that overlap, borrow from each other, and live in a far more interesting ways than any abridged or inauthentic mode of understanding can allow. (Said, 2003)

Said placed the issue of the Other within the framework of the Other. The conundrum of the Other will continue to loom large in the discourse of conflict and conflict resolution.

Paul Salem is Director of Carnegie Middle East Center, Beirut, Lebanon. He was born in Jerusalem. In *A Critique of Western Conflict Resolution from a Non-Western Perspective* (Salem, 1993), he presents a comparative perspective of the Arab conflict

resolution, and Western conflict resolution. He echoes Said's take that the purpose of transplanting the Western model of conflict resolution on the foreign soil is to maintain the status quo- "to maintain the West's position in the world" (1993, p. 370).

Salem points out certain fundamental differences between the Western and non-Western (specifically, Arab) approaches to conflict resolution. Among these are: The wide gulf between the have-nots and the haves, seriously limiting the bargaining power of the former. Equally relevant is the status of the individual as a member of family, clan, or small society in the Arab society, and that of the individual as the center in the Western society.

The Western approach is essentially secular and is based on the utilitarian concept of "the suffering is bad and comfort is good" (Salem, 1993, p. 364) ; the Arab view is rooted in "a truly religious worldview in which conflict is the result of a struggle between divine and devilish or profane forces; a moralistic worldview in which conflict is the result of a natural struggle between good and evil; or a superstitious worldview in which conflict is the result of magic, unknowable causes" (Salem, 1993, p. 265). This dichotomy between the sacred and the profane plays a significant influence in the discourse of conflict resolution.

Ali Mazrui is an academic who teaches and writes on the varied subjects of culture, politics, and religion. He identifies the locus of economic power, and political power in the Western countries. His main argument is that the Western culture is presently dominant, but "the validity of this culture needs to be challenged and is being challenged (Mazrui, 2000).

Mazrui is optimistic that the Western culture can absorb other cultural values, and that Islamic culture is equally open to expansion and enrichment. The instruments necessary for this change would be “underlying shift in the structure of power”, as also judicious use of “global information revolution.” He is cautiously optimistic that “the signs are that the powers of the world are ready for a more inclusive global culture: ‘some optimism is defensible’ (Mazrui, 2000).

For a person born in the 1930s, and brought up under in an environment of restrictions, deprivation, and humiliation, a number of distinct points stand out. First was the prevalence, pervasiveness, and poisonous proliferation of the malaise in so many parts of the world. Second was the capacity of the victims to move beyond these constraints, and to develop a positive attitude towards the basic dignity and value of human beings. Third was the thought that the voices of Fouad Ajumis and Bernard Lewis’ of this world carried the days and that the wise words of Said, Salems, and Mazuris were blown away by the winds of hegemony. Finally, would history have taken a different course if the lessons of experience had been applied to the imperial adventures in, among others, Iraq and Afghanistan? It would not be an exaggeration to say that Azar’s writings anticipated the rise of Al Qaeda, of the Arab Spring, the proxy/civil war in Syria, and the desert war in Mali.

Elise Boulding

Elise Boulding was born in Norway. She was a Quaker, and a mother of five children, and a sociologist. She was a homemaker, student, teacher, author, and a pioneer of peace studies. Amongst the causes she championed were: the abolition of war, strong

family ties, inclusion of women at the highest levels of diplomacy, protection of the environment, and cross-cultural communities. She was an ardent supporter of global civic culture, as also of the United Nations' peace initiatives (Weber, 2010).

Elise Boulding has been called “a new voice in conflict resolution” (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, pp. 54–55). She collaborated closely with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in propagating “the idea of ‘imaging the future’. It was a powerful way of enabling people to break out of the defensive private shells into which they retreated, often out of fear of what was happening in the public world, and encouraging them to participate in the construction of a peaceful and tolerant global culture” (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, pp. 54–55).

Elise Boulding was an exemplar of, at least, three mutually reinforcing disciplines: conflict resolution, peace research, and women's roles in society.

In conflict resolution, she used her training as a sociologist to provide new insights in her collaboration with Kenneth Boulding and his associates in their work at the Michigan (University) Center. In peace research, Elise Boulding advocated an international peace culture that encouraged participation of women and children, as also other hitherto ignored voices. Boulding's powerful imagery of “200-year present” connects the present with the past and the future (especially in terms of generational relationship) (Boulding, 1990).

She was a shining example, and an indefatigable advocate, of women's role in society. She successfully asserted the rightful place of women as equals with men in the domestic as well as the public arena, independent of any condescension, or concession

from men (Ramsbotham, 2005, pp. 52–54). As an equal partner in a stable marriage and family, Boulding highlighted the important contribution of each member of a family (husband, wife, children of all ages) toward building a civic culture at home that would radiate into community, country, and world at large.

In *Building a Global Civic Culture: Education for an Interdependent World*, Boulding presents a blueprint based on two ideas: “Sense of time and history- The 200 year Present”, and “Use of Social Imagination.” She advances “the concept of a global civic culture (that) requires the acceptance at some level of a shared identity with other human beings” (Boulding, 1990, p. 56). She gives salience to the problem of identity (“ethnic and racial identity, religious identity, and...gender identity”). Each of these identities carries within itself the seeds of conflict in the twenty-first century (Boulding, 1990, p. 58). But each also has positive aspects.

Boulding sees assertion of ethnic identity, especially in urban settings, as a mechanism for “responding to contemporary economic and social needs, using contemporary communication and mobilization techniques.” The value of “ethnic and racially homogeneous neighborhoods in cities” lies in the mutual support, and safety net provided by ethnic organizations.

Religious identity (e.g. “Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and others”) provides “two sets of teachings: “the teachings about violence and war, and the teachings about living in peace” (Boulding, 1990, p. 61). Historically, greater importance has been given to violence and war (to maintain control over the faithful?). However,

according to Boulding, the “peace face” has also been present in religion, propagated “by nurturers and reconcilers, seeking justice and equality for all” (Boulding, 1990, p. 61).

Boulding recommends that different identities are not a bar against “the world’s major religious traditions and to some degree, work together to activate that reconciler image.” This approach would call for adoption of “pragmatic conflict resolution” strategies of the type used to craft the Treaty of Westphalia that ended the religious wars of the 17th century. Involvement of faith organizations would open up space for “shared public place and civic dialogue” (Boulding, 1990, pp. 61–62).

Boulding puts forward a strong argument for an open and equal role for women in a unified civic culture, based on a similar but hidden and invisible role played by them in the patriarchal society of the past.

Boulding imagines “development of a species identity” to form “the community of mankind” (based on the dictionary definition of species—a class of individuals having common attributes and designated by a common name). Such an identity would lead to, at least, two rules of conduct: “avoid doing harm to any fellow human being”; and “enter into social interaction and become more consciously linked across national borders, to give substance to (the concept of) civic culture” (Boulding, 1990, p. 66).

Boulding connects the development of species identity with “empathy (the ability to feel that another is feeling)” and “altruism (wanting something good for another and helping to bring it about, at some cost to self)” (Boulding, 1990, pp. 72–73). Both of these qualities are enshrined in ancient wisdom, religion and ethics.

Boulding's interest in varied causes is reflected, among others, in her two books: *Building a Global Civic Culture: Education for an Interdependent World* (1990), and *Cultures of Peace: The Hidden Side of History* (2000).

The central theme in *Building a Global Civic Culture* (1990) is to identify the building blocks of “global civic culture” as a substitute for war. (Boulding, 1990, p. 1). The idea is predicated on “the patterning of how we share a common space, common resources, and common opportunities and manage interdependence...” (Boulding, 1990, p. xix). This interdependence is not limited to that among human beings; it also extends to “public space...physical space...social space” (Boulding, 1990, p. xix). Boulding extends the notion of interdependence to the world community. She envisaged a process of forging an “international order” that “can either take place peacefully through dialogue, negotiation, and diplomacy; or it can be pushed (and slowed down) by military force” (Boulding, 1990, p. xxi). These words were written before the implosion of the Soviet Union, but the underlying thesis remains patent in the post-Cold War world.

Several elements stand out in Boulding's ideas, thoughts, and teachings. First is the ‘forward and backward’ time frame encapsulated in the idea of “200 year present” (Boulding, 1990, p. 1). Second is consolidation of the value system subsisting at the family level, as the first step towards projecting (and improving) the same values to extended families, groups, communities, and nations. Third is the emphasis on similarities rather than differences among myriad communities that make up the human family. The overall message is of a hopeful, better and peaceful future for mankind.

Boulding visualizes this “international order” becoming reality by “social imagination”

integrating “thinking, and feeling and acting” (Boulding, 1990, p. xi). At the heart of her “social imagination” is the message of hope.

Cultures of Peace offers “an integrated social science and activist perspective” spread on the larger canvas of world community of diverse cultures” (Boulding, 2000, p. xi). Boulding has defined peace culture as:

Put in the simplest possible terms, a peace culture is a culture that promotes peaceable diversity. Such a culture includes lifeways, patterns of belief, values, behavior, and accompanying institutional arrangements that promote mutual caring and well-being as well as an equality that includes appreciation of difference, stewardship, and equitable sharing of the earth’s resources among its members and with all living beings. It offers mutual security for humankind in all its diversity through a profound sense of species identity as well as kinship with the living earth. There is no need for violence...peaceableness is an action concept, involving a constant shaping and reshaping of understandings, situations, and behaviors in a constantly changing lifeworld, to sustain well-being for all. (Boulding, 2000, p. 1)

Kenneth Boulding

“There is a race between knowledge and disaster, but in this race the longer disaster is staved off, the better chance we have of acquiring knowledge to prevent it altogether” Kenneth Boulding, “Social Sciences”, in *Great Ideas Today* (1965).

Kenneth Boulding was born in Liverpool, England in 1910. His family background was modest. His educational and professional achievements were very high. His worldview was shaped by “his genetic and cultural heritage” (Kerman, 1974). His religious antecedents were “deeply Methodist.” As a young man he became a Quaker. He was a man of erudition and many parts (a Jefferson of Conflict Resolution?). He was a

“much honored but unorthodox economist, philosopher, and poet.” His economist colleagues called him “half Milton Friedman, half Mahatma Gandhi”, and a universal philosopher” (Nasser, 1983).. Two passions were dominant in Boulding’s approach: prevention of global war; and promotion of IR and conflict resolution as a multidisciplinary enterprise (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 35).

Boulding’s abhorrence of war was shaped by the impressions, deprivations, physical and mental damage, and deaths caused by World War I (and its aftermath). The war left a lasting mark on young Boulding (Kerman, 1974). He became convinced that “war is one of the two or three most pressing problems mankind has to solve, and probably the worst aberration of the human spirit” (Kerman, 1974, p. 66). As early as 1937, he published (under the aegis of British Society of Friends) “a cogent and persuasive development of the theory of nonviolent resistance as it could be applied to international, national, and interpersonal problems” (Kerman, 1974, p. 67).

Boulding wrote *Economics of Peace* (as also other articles) analyzing the costs of war in terms of blood, treasure, demography, and psychological damage. His insight was “War also tends to destroy the subtle moral bonds that are the unseen underpinning of all economic life” (Kerman, 1974, p. 67). Preoccupation with human suffering wrought and economic costs incurred by war triggered his interest in peace research and conflict resolution (Kerman, 1974).

As a polymath, Boulding approached the enterprise across a spectrum of diverse disciplines and themes. Like Burton, he was able to motivate and mobilize group of like-minded people (Elise Boulding among them) to give impetus to peace research. The

result was the birth of *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. The birth was not painless. There was skepticism within the academic environment at Michigan University, and suspicion in the toxic political climate of McCarthyism.

Boulding articulated the mission of the Journal thus: (to) devise an intellectual engine of sufficient power to move the greatest problem of our time -- the prevention of war.” Boulding’s main argument during the 1940s to bring an early end to war was twofold: “its increasing horror and its increasing unprofitability - the moral cost and the financial cost. He argued that “war, as a specific human institution, is the result not of conflicts, nor of human wickedness, but of political organization of the world into a number of separate, sovereign and irresponsible countries” (Kerman, 1974, p. 79). In the context of war and peace, Boulding resolutely maintained, as early as 1931, that the Westphalian sovereign state had become “as obsolete as the city-state” (Kerman, 1974, p. 80). He advocated adoption of an “international systems approach to building a scientific knowledge (as) the only hopeful way...of getting intellectual purchase on the rusty bolt of the problem of war” (Kerman, 1974, p. 84).

Boulding conceptualized “three kinds of social organizers: the threat system (power of mutual coercion), the exchange system (negotiation of mutually beneficial relationship), the integrative system (altruistic giving without expectation of reciprocation) (Kerman, 1974, p. 11). Ramsbotham and his co-authors have re-conceptualized and counter-posed this formulation as “threat power, exchange power, and integrative power”. They juxtapose this against “the one dimensional realist understanding of power (coercion).” The aim of conflict resolution, they say, is to

“replace threat power by exchange power and integrative power in human transaction at all different levels” (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, pp. 269–270).

As a professional theorist, Kenneth Boulding took a holistic view of society. He came to the conclusion that “there is no such thing as economics - there is only social science applied to economic problems. Indeed, there may not even be such a thing as social science - there may only be general science applied to problems of society” (Kerman, 1974, p. 34). This broad worldview enabled him to make a manifold seminal contribution to Conflict Resolution.

First, was his contention that wars could be avoided by developing “social data stations” (akin to weather stations). The function of these warning stations would be to anticipate and neutralize developing war symptoms across the world. He also proposed a two-pronged action program: “reduction of armament”, and increase in “cultural exchange.” Second, as an economist, he argued forcefully that from an economic point of view, wars were totally ruinous.

Boulding’s lack of confidence in the sovereign state does not seem to be shared by the international community. At the end of World War II there were 58 states that became members of the United Nations Organization (UNO). Today there are 193 members, and there may be more in the near future. Nevertheless, Boulding’s support of supranational institutions to bring about systems change concerning war, conflict, and violence has taken hold in the working of the United Nations and its multifarious agencies. The retreat of the United States into isolationism in 1920s-1930s led to the untimely demise of the League of Nations. It is a sobering thought that the efficacy of the

UN has been diminished by the present stance of a certain constituency in the US whose aim is to use UN as an instrument to further Western (specifically American) hegemony.

Kenneth and Elise Boulding were both passionately concerned with social change, and to create an image of “cultures of peace.” (Boulding, 1990) posited the possibility of social change “viewed as a push-pull process in which Society is at once pulled forward by its own magnetic images of an idealized future and pushed from behind from its realized past” (Polak, as quoted by E. Boulding, 1990). He postulates that, using imagination, human beings can create “the image of the future” through triangulation of the past, the present and the future including “a projection backward, from the future into the present” (Polak, as quoted by E. Boulding, 2000)

The Bouldings personally knew Polak (Elise Boulding translated Polak’s book from Dutch into English). Kenneth Boulding in his book, *The Image* used Polak’s idea to urge a new “concept for theory of organization and the sociology of knowledge and social change (that) are traced in past, present, and future” (Kerman, 1974, p. 49). Elise Boulding has similarly used the same idea to promote the notion that “[the] very ability to imagine something different and better than what currently exists for the possibility of social change” (Boulding, 2000, p. 29). Like Polak, she believed that entertaining a positive image of the future was a key to positive action for social change (Boulding, 2000, pp. 105–106). Kerman considers this a prophetic quality:

[t]he prophet occupies a central role in the change of the system because he helps to shape the images of the future held by the group to which he belongs, and the image of the future, in Boulding’s philosophy of history, is a powerful determinant of what the future will be like. (1974, pp. 63–64)

It is interesting, in the context of imagination, to compare Mills' concept of sociological imagination:

Every individual lives, from one generation to the next, in some society, lives it out within some historical sequence...it is by means of sociological imagination that men can now hope to grasp what is going on in the world, and what is happening in themselves as minute points of the intersections of biography and history within society. (Mills, 2000, p. 7)

An overall consideration of the family background, education, intellectual development, and experience of Elise and Kenneth Boulding both individually and collectively, marks them as sages of Conflict Resolution. Like the sages of the Axial Flowerings, their spirit and insights were grounded in the bedrock of religious and ethical ideas, active action, imagination, and hope in the future of humankind (Kerman, 1974, pp. 136–137).

Johan Galtung

Johan Galtung was Kenneth Boulding's counterpart in peace research in Europe. He was born in Norway in 1930. His father was a doctor. Johan Galtung has doctorates in mathematics and sociology. He has held teaching positions at many universities across the world. His academic work has earned him accolades from a host of universities.

His approach to peace research was along the lines of medical profession - diagnosis, prognosis, therapy. Many of his arguments were clothed in medical metaphors.

Galtung has distinguished himself as a prolific writer (50+ books, and numerous articles). He has made a seminal contribution towards enunciating new concepts and categories of conflict, violence, and peace. He continues to refine these multifaceted

categories in the light of his activism and advocacy of “peace through peaceful means” through his TRANSCEND project (Johan Galtung, n.d.).

As early as 1969, Galtung articulated “the idea of peace”, and of violence. Peace is defined as below:

1. The term ‘peace’ shall be used for social goals at least verbally agreed to by many, if not necessarily by most.
2. These social goals may be complex and difficult, but not impossible, to attain.
3. The statement *peace is absence of violence* shall be retained as valid (emphasis in the original)” (Galtung, 1969, p. 167)

Violence is defined as below:

“violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations (emphasis in the original).” (Galtung, 1969, p. 169)

Galtung presented a conflict situation as a triangle in three dimensions: Contradiction, Attitude, Behaviour; Structural Violence, Cultural Violence, Direct Violence; Peace-building, Peace-making, Peace-keeping (Johan Galtung, 1996, p. 72; Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 10). For Galtung, conflict is a “dynamic process in which structures, attitudes and behaviors are constantly changing and influencing one another” (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, p. 110). He pointed out the distinction between direct violence (children are murdered), structural violence (children die through poverty) and cultural violence (those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence - exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal

science (logic, mathematics)- that can be used to justify legitimate direct or structural violence) (J. Galtung, 1990)

Galtung, like Burton, has emphasized that “the point of departure for any study of politics in general, and international or global politics is particular basic human needs” (2009, p. 159) His catalogue of human needs is somewhat broader than that of Burton and Azar. He has classified needs into four broad categories: the most basic need (life, survival): basic needs (food, water, clothes, shelter, health, education, togetherness); near-basic needs (work, creativity, freedom, mobility, politics, participation); and relation to nature (partnership)(Johan Galtung, 2009, p. 161). According to Galtung, failure to satisfy these basic needs is the cause of “violence, misery, repression, and environmental deterioration” (2009, p. 162). Galtung argues for “structural changes” at political level to remedy these problems.

Like Boulding, his remit is also to plead for the abolition of war, and to seek “peace by peaceful means” (Johan Galtung, n.d.). Galtung placed peace into two categories: negative peace (absence of war), and positive peace (absence of structural violence - social justice) (Galtung, 2009, p. 183).

Galtung’s categories have been critiqued from philosophical and theoretical perspectives. Peter Lawler (1995) has drawn attention to the conceptual and intellectual weaknesses in Galtung’s formulations. Burton has joined issue with the bifurcation of peace into negative and positive peace. He seems to prefer a middle way between the two that he calls “stable peace” (Boulding, 1977, pp. 75–86).

Be that as it may, Galtung's published and unpublished writings show significant similarity with Elsie Boulding's notion of cultures of peace (recall Boulding's *Cultures of Peace: The Hidden Side of History*). It seems that the common factor between the two is their Norwegian background; Galtung is a non-believer and Boulding's approach is grounded in the pacific tradition of Quakers.

Lederach

Lederach's passion for conflict resolution and transformation is explicitly rooted in the tradition of a peace church - the Mennonites (Appleby, 2000). He has defined himself as "a believer, a peacemaker, and mediator, a sociologist, a teacher, and always a learner." He has consistently drawn upon the "theological underpinning" of his Christian faith to inform his work (Lederach, 1999, p. 15). In his own words:

My deepest sense of vocation...arises from a faith context that is grounded in an Anabaptist/Mennonite religious-ethical framework. This perspective understands peace as embedded in justice. It emphasises the importance of building right relationships and social structures through a radical respect for human rights and life. It advocates nonviolence as a way of life and work (Lederach, 2003, pp. 3-4).

The most impressive part of Lederach's professional approach is his transparent integrity, humility and skepticism. He confesses his struggle with "a series of dilemmas" and confrontation with power: "I struggle with my inner community of prophets and mediators. The prophet in me cries for justice and truth, and the mediator for empathy, understanding, and mercy" (Lederach, 1999, p. 93). Yet another dilemma is that of balancing the demand between the humility decreed by his faith, and the danger of hubris generated by recognition, prestige, status, and power. Lederach, on his own account "has

chosen to keep ambiguity and holiness together, rather than choosing one over the other” (Lederach, 1999, p. 96).

The leitmotif of Lederach’s work is fourfold: conflict; reconciliation, transformation and hope. In *The Journey Toward Reconciliation*, Lederach makes continuous reference to conflict:

Conflict is...like a journey...Deep conflicts are stressful and painful. At worst, they are violent and destructive. Yet at the same time, they create some of the most intense spiritual encounters we experience. Conflict opens a path, a holy path, toward revelation and reconciliation. (Lederach, 1999, p. 14)

Although Lederach was speaking in the specific context of the Mennonite Church, his observations would apply equally to mundane affairs. Lederach has characterized reconciliation as a “journey” with attendant difficulties, uncertainties, and unforeseen deviations. He regards “reconciliation to be dynamic, adaptive processes aimed at building and healing the torn fabric of interpersonal and community lives and relationships...reconciliation is made up of processes that build relationships in a context of interdependence” (Lederach, 2006, p. 842).

Lederach’s solid contribution to the discipline is underpinned by his very extensive experience of conflict resolution in 25 countries spread over several continents: South America (Columbia), Africa (Kenya), Europe (Ireland), Asia (Philippines), North America (USA). His approach, as a mediator and “sociolinguist”, to conflict resolution gives salience to the culture, folk language, and traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution prevalent in a given society (Avruch et al., 1998).

In *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*, Lederach provides a conceptual and practical perspective on conflict transformation. His basic premise is that "...conflict is a normal and continuous dynamic within human relationships." He defines conflict transformation thus:

Conflict transformation is to envision and respond to the ebb and flow conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real life problems in human relationships. (Lederach, 2003, p. 22)

Conflict, according to Lederach, provides an opportunity to mend, heal, and transform human relationships, and "to respond, innovate, and change" (Lederach, 2003, p. 18). Inherent in conflict transformation is "the potential for constructive change" (Lederach, 2003, p. 68). An important aspect of conflict transformation is that "the horizon for change is mid-to-long range and is intentionally crisis-responsive rather than crisis-driven (Lederach, 2003, p. 33).

In *Civil Society and Reconciliation* (Lederach, 2006, pp. 841–854) Lederach presents a composite picture of the status of conflict, conflict resolution, reconciliation, conflict transformation, and peace, at the beginning of the 21st century.

Lederach's personal and professional life and his reflections mark his insights as those of a sage.

Adam Curle

Curle was born in England in 1906 in a comfortable middle class family. His worldview was formed by his family's losses of relatives in the senseless World War I. He was educated at Oxford, England. He had a varied career as a teacher, soldier, author,

academic, and mediator. Spiritually, he identified himself as a “semi-lapsed Quaker and a devotee of the Dalai Lama.” A combination of the religious ethos of each was the impulse behind his advocacy of non-violence. His abiding passion was the abhorrence of war. One might conjecture on his part a sense of responsibility as a British subject for the guilt of the builders of the British Empire over the period during which sun never set on their imperial adventure.

Curle traces the origin of social conflict to the *Pursuit and Protection of Profit* (Curle, 1999, p. 10). He worked tirelessly as a mediator on some of the most violent conflicts of the 20th century in Asia (Sri Lanka); Africa (South Africa); Europe (Bosnia) (Curle, 1999, pp. 3–4).

To Tame the Hydra is more a statement of Curle’s philosophy of life, and a distillation of his lived experience, than an academic work. He takes as his starting point situating conflict within a *culture of violence* in the global context. Curle maintains that each conflict, like the proverbial Hydra, spawns a new conflict. The basic purpose of these conflicts, according to Curle, is invariably to secure the interests, powers and position of the elite. He attributes greed and avarice primarily to the Westphalian state system, and to (misinterpretation) of the Calvinistic ethic of “the acquisition of wealth and the raising of social status” (Curle, 1999, pp. 13–14). He maintains that a combination of institutions and policies has loaded the dice against the poor and oppressed. He singles out the military forces of Western nations and international economic institutions as the handmaidens of powerful states deployed to consolidate, extend, and perpetuate their

power, profit, and privileges (Curle, 1999, p. 19). An added potent cause of a culture of violence is the depression and desperation of the perpetually poor and marginalized.

His suggested remedy is “*to effect a change of heart or awareness or culture*” in individuals (Curle, 1999, p. 21). (Emphasis in the original).

Curle groups five factors to achieve the desired human-centered approach: Sufficiency --meeting the basic human needs; Satisfaction -- providing basic human needs in a healthy and peaceful environment; Safety or Security -- freedom from fear of physical oppression, protection under the rule of law, financial and medical support in emergency; Stimulus -- opportunity for personal development; and Service -- to contribute in a meaningful way to community life. Curle’s characterization calls for a move away from a continuous cycle of violence to Gandhian (Buddhist) “non-violent alternative” (Curle, 1999, p. 88).

Curle’s involvement in Conflict Resolution was as a high-level mediator in very explosive wars (e.g. India-Pakistan War in 1965; the Nigerian Civil War in 1967-70). Based on these experiences, Curle in *In the Middle* (Curle, 1986) advocated the use of mediation to promote peace. His strategy has three strands: “to establish and nurture social and economic systems that minimize the inequality that generate conflict; to act by all available non-violent means...against dangerous, violent, aggressive and oppressive policies; to bring about reconciliation between those who are in conflict” (Curle, 1986, p. 1).

In the Middle presents “Non-official Mediation in Violent Situations” from two perspectives: the Quaker approach; and the personal insights gained by Curle in his

mediation work. Quakerism, a Christian sect, traces its origin to 1661. George Fox, the founder of the sect, gave the Peace Testimony “We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapon for any end or under any pretence whatsoever. And this is our testimony to the whole world”(“Peace,” 2011). The Social Justice Testimony is stated as: “There are numerous Quaker testimonies including in alphabetic order, anti-racism, community building, equality, integrity, love, optimism, peacemaking and social justice” (Wilson, 2011).

A distinct (and unique?) feature of Curle’s work was that he worked as volunteer (and not as paid professional). Such volunteers “come essentially as friends, drawn by concern for the suffering all concerned in the struggle, including the mental anguish of those in power...they come in the spirit of goodwill to do whatever they can to help the victims of the conflict to escape from the trap of violence” (Curle, 1986, p. 27). Curle expresses his motivation in these terms: “As for me, having had my family life interrupted countless times, and often suffering inconvenience, loneliness and occasional illness and danger, I still go on because I believe, and indeed have been told, that it may help. This seems to me to be sufficient reason to continue trying, and sufficient cause to hope that the effort will bring a small measure of good results (Curle, 1986, p. 52).

Another Way: Positive response to contemporary violence is an amalgam. It is part autobiographical, part theological, part philosophical, and part psychological. Curle’s lived experience, and transparent honesty is inspirational. His spirit and insights offer a message of love and hope. Love for humanity and hope for the future. The underlying

theme is that of “interconnectedness and interdependence” of all sentient beings (Curle, 1995, p. viii).

Based on his upbringing, religious affiliation, professional training, and extensive experience, Curle offers new dimensions on peace, violence, conflict and personal recipes for “positive response to contemporary violence” (Curle, 1995).

Curle conceptualizes peace in terms of relationships: peaceful relationships would be ones in which the various parties did each other more good than harm; Whereas unpeaceful ones would be those doing more harm than good” (Curle, 1995, p. 10).

Curle places violence in several contexts. He rejects “the argument for congenital aggression.” He takes the position that the roots of personal violence lie in “three poisons – ignorance; yearning, longing, wanting, lusting and greed; and jealousy and hatred.” Ignorance consists in isolating the individual from the flow of happenings that constantly shape and reshape the flow of the universe. This isolation creates a sense of inferiority that, in turn, seeks compensation through craving for, and attachment to “power, wealth, and position.” From there to jealousy and hatred is just a short step. The combined effect of the three poisons is to cause pain that “may break out in a variety of forms: exaggerated yearning, fears or prejudices; psychological or related physical illness; aberrant or antisocial behavior; or violence towards others or against the self” (Curle, 1995, pp. 16–21).

The historical context for violence, in Curle’s view is that “war is not something that is intrinsic to our nature...the practice of war developed with the growth of our social

complexity (resulting from competition for water and other resources)” (Curle, 1995, pp. 22–24).

At the societal level, materialism, wealth, and power are valued “external symptoms of achievement, rather than by personal skills and qualities” (Curle, 1995, p. 26). The post-Cold War conflicts in Europe and Asia (much the same as similar wars in post-colonial Africa) are the result of the earlier indiscriminate splitting of tribes, of placing (communities) under the control of others with whom they had little in common.” These conditions created confusion and disorientation for the newly ‘freed’ people, as also revival of the memories of historical traumas.

Curle offers a distinction between violence and conflict: “Violence is something which does harm to people; harm in the sense of words, deed, or situations which damage the ability to develop fully the human potential feeling, creation and happy maturity...Conflict...is a word often used ambiguously to mean either something as violent as war, or as innocuous and even creative as a difference of opinion” (Curle, 1995, p. 9).

Curle attributes violence to alienation: “estrangement from life, from the world of the living, a descent into the realm of death, disaster, and despair” (Curle, 1995, p. 126). His suggested antidote is to show, and put into action, “compassionate concern for human well-being.” He offers the example of Centre for Peace, Nonviolence and Human Rights established in the aftermath of the ethnic wars following the breakup of former Yugoslavia (Curle, 1995, pp. 111–136).

The Osijek Centre was established in 1992 by a number of women who chose the path of peaceful conflict resolution in the face of wars of ethnic cleansing. The peacebuilding efforts of the Centre are predicated on four basic values: non-violence, reconciliation, empowerment, and sustainable development” (“About Us,” n.d.). The present priorities of the Centre are: “community revival, culture of non-violence and democracy, human rights, and philanthropy” (“Centre for Peace, Non-Violence and Human Rights,” n.d.).

At the risk of oversimplification, the essence of Curle’s ideas and insights can be summed up as follows:

- There is inter-connection and unity in diversity of humankind.
- Conflict, of itself, is not destructive; it is part of human life.
- The roots of violence among individuals, groups, communities, and nations are to be found in individual psychology, in social structures, in imperial greed, lust for power, control, and possession over people and resources, and in repressed resentment for unjust treatment and violation of identity and basic human dignity.
- Peacemaking is “fundamentally a psychological activity, although, depending on circumstances, effective economic, diplomatic, political, or other action may form part of it” (Curle, 1995, p. 80).
- People-oriented development activities are the best antidote to alienation.

The sages of the Axial Flowerings lived in a more or less homogenous community, with common culture, limited common language. Geography dictated their territorial limitations. Conflict specialists are called upon to deal with a plethora of communities, with varied cultures, twenty four hour exposure to the media, obliteration of geographical barriers, and various different languages being spoken. The advantages of the modern advances and facilities are, perhaps, neutralized by the complexity and multiplicity of potential and actual conflicts. The range of strategies and action programs available to the sages of the 21st century is wide and varied. The commonalities of the subject dealt with by the sages in both epochs (21st century and Axial) were religion, ethics, social justice, identity, and power. These are addressed in the subsequent pages.

Chapter 9: Religion

Origins and Role

Religion is primordial and *sui juris*. The origin of religious impulse could, perhaps, be traced to fear of the unknown. In the early stages of development of society people did not have the intellectual tools to understand the operations of laws of nature. Their lives were short, nasty, and brutish. They took recourse to magic in order to escape natural calamities. Magical practices involved rituals practiced and performed by a class of people who ultimately became the priestly class. They wielded very strong influence on the daily life of the members of the society. It is conceivable that most influential among them graduated to kingship of society. Kings ultimately claimed divinity, or at least, the authority on earth of the gods. Under the Roman Empire “after Augustus, emperors always held office of the chief priest (pontifex maximus) and political and religious primacy were combined in the same person” (Roberts, 1986, p. 253). Rituals consisting of incantations were the weapons of control of society. These were augmented with animal and human sacrifices.

Historical evidence of the origin of religion has been traced back to the Upper Paleolithic period. According to Roberts “the origins of religion have been hinted at in Neanderthal burials and appear even more strongly in those of the Upper Palaeolithic peoples which are often elaborate; here, in their art, is something where inferences are even harder to resist. Perhaps, it provides the first surviving relics of organized religion” (1986, p. 43).

In the eastern Mediterranean the great Jewish prophets (among them Isaiah and Jeremiah) preached the gospel of monotheism, and advocated the ethical standards that shaped “the connexions of religion with morality which were to dominate not only Judaism but Christianity and Islam” (Roberts, 1986, p. 125). It is, perhaps, not an exaggeration to say the staying power of religion was the yearning of the people to seek insurance from pressures of fortune and fate (Roberts, 1986, p. 224).

Religion as the *fons et origo* of civilization has several distinct dimensions: “It has its crude barbaric antecedents and early manifestations, and again, it may be developed into something beautiful, pure and glorious” (Otto, quoted by (Appleby, 2000, p. 28). Religion has endured the entirety of human history. It has underpinned associational living (e.g. civil society), created institutions (e.g. god kings), provided structures (e.g. class of clergy and teachers), and legitimized states (e.g. in Europe). At the same time, religion has been omnipresent in dramas of conflict formation and conflict resolution.

In this varied process, religion has engendered discontinuities, whilst ensuring continuity and self-preservation. Religion is thus suffused with ambiguity and ambivalence. The ambiguity resides in the propensity of religion to contain “*within itself* (emphasis in the original) the authority to kill and to heal” (Appleby, 2000, p. 29). The ambivalence is fostered by “the coexistence in one person of contradictory emotions or attitudes (as love and hatred) towards a person or thing” (Appleby, 2000, p. 29).

Religion has been, and continues to be a strong marker of social identity. In many cases “the social identity so formed can be so compelling and all-consuming that it

becomes what can only be called a total social identity, displacing or subsuming other aspects of an individual's identity" (P Black, 2003, p. 120).

Intellectual development opened up a new dimension in the practice of religion: a search for meaning. Continuity, consistency amidst constant change, historical impact, a critical mass of adherents, and sense of purpose attach to the practice of religion. They offer validation of the usefulness of these actors, institutions and structures. It is, therefore, reasonable to entertain an optimistic view about the beneficial role of these actors, structures and institutions in the field of conflict resolution. Support for this optimism can be found in the ethos and work of religious and civic actors (e.g. the Aga Khan, Appleby, Curle, the Dalai Lama, Galtung, Lederach, George Mitchell et al.), structures (e.g. social movements that view conflict resolution as a path for establishing "how individuals relate to one another, how communities sustain themselves and their members, and how governance earns and maintains legitimacy" (Dukes, 1999, p. 166), and institutions (e.g. Society of Friends (Quakers), the Mennonites, the Community of St. Egidio) (Appleby, 2000).

The authors of *God is Back* (2009) have drawn the conclusion that "the secularization theorists are wrong to claim that modernity and religion are incompatible...it is also thriving in much of the modernizing world too...The great forces of modernity - technology and democracy, choice and freedom - are all strengthening religion rather than undermining it" (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2009).

An unscripted homily recently given by Pope Francis has been the subject of "normative" discussion between Catholics, and some atheists. The relevant text of the homily is as under:

The Lord has redeemed all of us...all of us, not just Catholics...Everyone!...Even the atheists. Everyone!...even the atheists...We are created children in the likeness of God...And we all have a duty to good. And this commandment for everyone to do good...is also a beautiful path towards peace. If we, each doing our own part, if we do good to others, if we meet there, doing good, and we go slowly, gently, little by little, we will make that culture of encounter: we need that so much. We must meet one another doing good...this "closing off" that imagines that those outside, everyone, cannot do good is a wall that leads to war and also to what some people throughout history have conceived of killing in the name of God. And that, simply, is blasphemy. To say that you can kill in the name of God is blasphemy. ("Pope at Mass: Culture of encounter is the foundation of peace," 2013)

Looked at from a non-normative perspective, this homily, eloquent in its simplicity and sincerity, may represent the aspirational essence of all religions in the third Millennium. It addresses two core issues most germane to conflict resolution -- religion and ethics. Moreover, it validates the Golden Rule. That said, it is worth reflecting on the "explanatory note" from a Vatican spokesperson on the day following the homily clarifying that "Only through this Church can one obtain the *fullness of the means of salvation*" (Rosica, 2013 Emphasis in original). The ensuing debate (challenging amongst other doctrines, that of papal infallibility) exposes an ambivalence perhaps integral to organised religion. In the process, it also may also reveal the fragility of Axial insights.

Ambiguity and Ambivalence

In most societies, from the earliest times, religion, power, culture, identity, politics, and economics have been intertwined, and have been used as direct and indirect instruments of intra-societal as well as inter-societal conflicts.

Religion has been called “notoriously Janus-faced” (P Black, 2003, p. 132). On the one hand it presents “significant resources for would-be peacemakers.” On the other hand, “religion has been and continues to be deeply implicated in many of humanity’s cruelest struggles” (P Black, 2003, p. 120). The notoriety, by and large overshadows the beneficent role of religion in conflict resolution. Characterized as the chief culprit in conflict creation, religion is also a primary resource for conflict prevention, conflict management, and conflict resolution. Thus, in every conflict with overtones of religion, there is constant tension between those who wish to use violence to protect and defend their religion, and those who reject violence at the risk (and not infrequently at the cost) of their lives.

Appleby (2000, p. 290) explains the ambiguity and ambivalence of religion as follows:

The ambiguity that marks our experience of the profane world is related to - some religious philosophers would say rooted in - our limited apprehension of the holy (“the ambiguity of the sacred”). Likewise, humankind’s ambivalent attitude toward violence, sexuality, and other self-transcending powers reflects an awareness that both possibilities –life and death- reside within the holy (“the ambivalence of the sacred”).

Religion and Conflict

The characterization of religions as promoters of war, rather than promoters of peace has historical antecedents. Every major religion (e.g. Judaism, Christianity, Islam) has record of a dark side of wanting to enforce its theocratic superiority through ruthless violence. The record continues even today and finds expression in internecine, inter-faith, and intra-faith warfare. In the 21st century, conflicts will continue to be waged in the name of religion, although upon a closer analysis these may be found to be rooted more in Black's notion of "a total social identity" adopted by individuals and groups, irrespective of their tenuous and questionable understanding of the fundamentals of the faith that they profess to protect (P Black, 2003, p. 1320).

Violence and religion have been uneasy (and unwelcome?) bedfellows from time immemorial. Violence, in the shape of animal (and human) sacrifice was part of primordial religion. Religion was practiced at two levels: superstition: a fear of the unknown (a contest between good and evil); and existential fear: dread of the unknown in an environment of violence, terror, political turbulence, atrocity, suffering, and human greed (Armstrong, 2006, p. 11). Religion has shed its primal image of superstition and magic, but its association with horrors of violence and atrocity continues to subsist.

In the wrong hands, religion as an institution has become an instrument of power, resulting in manipulation and exploitation. People deprived of the barest necessities of life seek solace in religion. This, in turn, makes them vulnerable and open to manipulation. Leaders, spiritual and secular, exploit this vulnerability, either to create (often spurious) religion-based hatred, or to destabilize an existing social order, or to

achieve their personal selfish purposes. The innocent victims are incited to violent action, or cowered into unquestioning submission by promises of unachievable earthly or heavenly rewards, or both.

Separation of church and state is a fiction that is untenable in the modern world. Religion, for better or worse, is very much a part of discourse of conflict and conflict resolution in civil society. Religion was, is and will continue to remain a source of conflict; equally it will also be a potent potential to transform conflict.

Amongst the ways religion continues to feature in the field of conflict and conflict resolution is as a perceived primary cause of inter-faith conflict (e.g. Christianity/Islam (Nigeria); Buddhism/Islam (in Myanmar); or of intra-faith or sectarian strife (e.g. Shia/Sunni in Arab countries and in Pakistan); or as a secondary cause (i.e. secondary to the issues of (group) identity, or to “material issues of power, institutions, economic wherewithal, political conditions of agency....” In both cases cultural sensitivities play a significant role. (Ram-Prasad, 2002, p. 231).

At the level of conflict resolution, religion is brought into play in several ways. First, it is used as a mediating means between two (or more religious groups) who seek a common ground between their religions. Second, the teachings and directions of religion are used to craft reconciliation strategies. Third, sometimes religious conflict is settled through the intervention of a third party of a different religion. Fourth, intervention is frequently sought from a third party professing a different religion. Fifth, where the parties belong to the same religion, the ‘spiritual’ resources of that religion are resorted to find pathways to reconciliation (Ram-Prasad, 2002, pp. 232–233).

Contrary to popular notions, religion, is not always the root cause of conflict. A whole lot of factors, including lack of security, threat to personal and group identity, deprivation of basic human needs etc. drive people to seek asylum or redress under the roof of a religious institution. If the religious institution takes up their plight, any ensuing conflict risks being characterized as a religious conflict.

Religion and Conflict Resolution

Appleby (2000) has written in considerable detail about religion and conflict transformation. Drawing upon the experience of various religious actors' intervention in conflicts in different parts of the world he has posited a "typology of religious conflict transformation" (Appleby, 2000, pp. 211–212). Religious peacebuilding (a term also used by Lederach), as envisaged by Appleby, has three dimensions: conflict management, conflict resolution, and structural reform. Based on practical experience, the role of religious agency seems to have crystallized as a catalyst in which "religious individuals and organizations collaborated effectively with government, non-government, and other religious actors; indeed, "religious peacebuilding is a misnomer if it leads one to believe that religious actors were able to transform dimensions of modern conflict by functioning independently of government and other secular and religious actors" (Appleby, 2000, p. 212).

From the perspective of conflict resolution, the position can, perhaps, be put thus: conflict specialists see (or should see) in the debate between 'clash of civilizations' and 'clash of ignorance' an opportunity to demonstrate that religion, as a founding factor of civilization, has applied the wisdom of the sages of the Axial Flowerings in resolving

conflict. This wisdom contains universally acceptable ethical and moral values that stress, among others, tolerance, mutual respect, reciprocal help and human solidarity.

Viewed thus, the role of religion is more productive than destructive. For example, a proper, broader, and objective understanding of religion can be a foundation for fostering and building “open, inclusive, educational, and non-adversarial institutions” (Dukes, 1999, p. 165) to resolve inter-personal, group, regional, national, and international conflicts.

The discipline of conflict analysis and resolution has traveled a fair distance from the days of its precursors. Their preoccupation was conflict containment (or cessation), and their aim was to install an early warning system. The second generation of conflict resolution scholars established the ‘Early Church’ that marked a point of departure from the dominance of the discipline of International Relations.

Implicit in the approach to conflict resolution of such pioneers as Kenneth and Elise Boulding, and Lederach, are unarticulated and articulated religious sensibilities (Ramsbotham et al., 2012).

Lederach and the Bouldings touch upon the creative capacity of religious sensibilities to promote non-violent social change. They offer to conflict specialists, time and experience tested recipes that combine pragmatic perspectives rooted in the real world, and the faith based conceptual ability to visualize mechanisms that can be crafted to meet the changing needs and norms of society.

In the second half of the 20th century, two parallel ideas regarding conflict and conflict resolution have gained prominence: first, peoples of different faiths, and their

governments, in many parts of the world, have begun to realize that in an interdependent world, there is no warrant for their particular religion, culture or moral values to compete against similar values of other societies; secondly, and more importantly, there is an increasing realization among the 'silent majority' of believers of all faiths that, objectively considered, many of the values prescribed by diverse faiths are mutually compatible. These shared values can, therefore, play a powerful role in the search for appropriate mechanisms for conflict resolution, peace, and reconciliation.

If Azar's theory of protracted social conflict and Huntington's theory of clash of civilizations are juxtaposed, we find that at one end are the unrepentant realists (Morgenthau, Huntington et al.), who choose to view the world through the lens of power. Their lament is: "the late twentieth-century has seen a global resurgence of religion around the world" (Huntington, 2003, p. 64). They see in this resurgence the seeds of a 'clash of civilizations' (translation: a challenge to the power hegemony of the West).

Leading conflict resolution scholars have vehemently challenged Huntington's assumptions, conclusions, and his gloomy prognosis (Rubenstein & Crocker, 1994).

Realists and conflict specialists diverge in their understanding of the resurgence of religion. Realists see in it a threat to Morgenthau's concept of the *realpolitik* system ("the practice of power politics based on a tough minded, realistic view of the political, economic, and security factors that dominate any given situation" (Preface, *Faith-based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik*, 2003) that is anchored in the Westphalian state paradigm. Conflict specialists see in the same situation an opportunity to emulate the

codes of conduct prescribed by various religions. These codes contain universally acceptable ethical and moral values that stress, among others, tolerance, mutual respect, mutual help and human solidarity.

Azar's theory of "protracted social conflict" has enabled conflict scholars to mount a challenge to and, in a large measure, dethrone, the supremacy claimed for the doctrine of *realpolitik*. The social ills catalogued, and the redress prescribed by Azar et al, have their echo in the moral and ethical code of conduct prescribed by almost all religions. Among the beneficial outcomes of Azar's theory is the explicit space created for, among others, religious agency to play an open role in the discipline and practice of conflict analysis, and resolution. This direct participation of religious agency in conflict analysis lights up an insightful pathway to examine, and understand the ideas animating Azar's, and Huntington's contrasting theories. For the foregoing reasons, religious agency deserves to be studied more closely and extensively, and put into practice especially by those aspiring to be active practitioners in the broader field of cosmopolitan conflict resolution.

Additionally, Azar's theory highlighted the awareness in academia that there were other equally important unresolved conflict issues touching upon human dignity, freedom, equality, justice, as well as protection of environment.

In stating the foregoing, I do not ignore that the realist theory of power is always present to legitimize negative and violent behavior associated with organized religion, and to de-legitimize the potential of organized religion as an instrument of conflict resolution. The most recent instance of this pessimistic and pernicious scenario is

Huntington's dire prediction of the inevitability of a clash of civilizations in which religion, religion-based identity, and religious community will feature prominently (Huntington, 2003).

Conflict resolution practitioners of the 21st century will need to factor in the reality of religion and its role in the formation and resolution of conflict. They will thus undertake non-normative, and comparative studies of major religious traditions. The dark shadow of Janus notwithstanding, conflict resolution specialists have used faith and culture based recipes to create home-made and wholesome 'cuisine' rooted in religion, to overcome social injustices (including ethnic, class, and gender discrimination) in various traditions (Agnivesh, 2002; D'Souza, 2002; Engineer, 2002; Ram-Prasad, 2002).

My experience as a voluntary mediator and conciliator suggests a culinary metaphor adopted, by amongst others, Hodgson, as appropriate in evaluating the potential of religion as a vital tool for conflict resolution and also describing its Janus-faced nature: A recipe for a holiday pastry may be 'traditional' in the sense merely that it is transmitted unaltered from mother to daughter for untold generations. If it is merely transmissive, a sheer habit, then any change of circumstances may lead to its abandonment, at least when the mother is gone. But if it is vital, meeting a real need, then the tradition will be readjusted to grow as required by circumstances" (Hodgson, 1974, p. 79).

Resurgent Religion in the 21st Century

The post-World War II era has brought about a resurgence of religion in most parts of the world, and notably, in South America, Asia, and Africa. The most remarkable aspect of this resurgence is that "this revival, *la revanche de Dieu*, Gilles Kepel termed it,

has pervaded every continent, and virtually every country” (Huntington, 2003, p. 96). Huntington argued that the most powerful cause of resurgence is the rapid urbanization and modernization that has disrupted the traditional systems of authority, and created a class in the society that “need new sources of identity, new forms of stable community, and new sets of moral precepts to provide them with a sense of meaning and purpose” (Huntington, 2003, p. 97). A return to religion has provided one of the strongest pathways in the search for a sheet anchor. At a more mundane level, religious groups are attracting new adherents because they provide basic social needs (food, clothing, shelter, health services, and education et. al.) that many governments are unable or unwilling to meet. Marx’s 19th century stigmatization of religion as ‘the opium of the people, has become in the 21st century “the vitamin of the weak” (Regis Debray quoted by (Huntington, 2003, p. 101). What is more noteworthy about this phenomenon is that the largest cohort of adherents to religion is that of young adults, who, particularly among Muslims, are more religious than their parents.

Religion today for many means a rediscovery of “a spirituality of empathy and compassion” (Armstrong, 2006, p. xiv)

According to Appleby, “Religion is a human response to a reality perceived as sacred” (Appleby, 2000, p. 8). This idea of religion embraces the notions of creed (the standard of beliefs and values, based on symbols and supernatural events, culminating in enunciation of doctrines and dogmas), of cult (communal practice of prayers, devotions, and observance of spiritual disciplines); and community organization (having a

prescribed code of conduct). All three notions impact the worldview, meaning system, and actions of a religious person, as an individual as well as part of a group.

An additional positive aspect is that there is heightened, deeper (although, quite often, paradoxical) interest in religion across a spectrum of a continuum of diverse meaning systems. Thus religion in the 21st century can be viewed from three perspectives: as an institution representing inherited traditions of promoting peace and reconciliation; a long established entity with a dependable organization structure and resources, whose new strategic mission could expand from a restricted normative value system to promoter of a broad pluralistic value system; and a global, innovative and forward looking enterprise that values its past, leverages its present, and projects a creative future of hope and diverse systems of meaning.

Religion in modern times presents a scrambled mosaic. There are umpteen pieces; some appear to fit in more than one place; others do not fit anywhere at all. The result is that the picture cannot be complete and remains a perpetual challenge to those keen to get grip on the ambiguities and ambivalence inherent in the very concept of religion. The resurgence of religion (and, in particular, ‘fundamentalism’) represents “a way of coping with the experience of chaos, the loss of identity, meaning and secure social structures created by the rapid introduction of modern social and political patterns, secularism, scientific cultural economic development” (Huntington, 2003, p. 98). Huntington (as also other Realists) has included religion under the rubric of civilization, and raised the specter of a “clash of civilizations.” This assertion ignores the fact that broadly viewed Civilization (upper case ‘C’) is a continuous human enterprise - each civilization

consciously or unconsciously learning from, and adopting or adapting the achievement of the others

As an example, it is generally not known or acknowledged in the West that Islam has a sound track record as a continuum of Civilization: Islam provided a political organization which, by holding together a huge area, cradled a culture which was essentially syncretic, mingling, before it was done, Hellenistic, Christian, Jewish, Zoroastrian and Hindu ideas (Roberts, 1986, p. 333). Hodgson has characterized Islamic society as:

Not only what may be called the religion proper, then, but the whole social and cultural complex associated with it - indeed, at the most extreme extension, the totality of all the lifeways accepted among any Muslims anywhere - may be looked on as Islam and seen as a self - contained whole, a total context within which daily life has proceeded in all its ramifications. All can, in some sense, be derived as consequent upon the initial posture of *Islam*, of personal submission to God. (Hodgson, 1974, p. 75)

On one hand, ignorance (or devaluation of) in the West about Islam's contribution to the heritage of mankind is to a large extent responsible for the confusion, misunderstanding, and standoff between Islam and the West. On the other hand, there is the acceptance in parts of the Islamic world of some of the benefits of scientific, and technological progress, and an equal reluctance in others to face the change that flows from adoption of these benefits.

Despite huge image and perception problems, religion has enjoyed a revival since the second half of the twentieth century. Religious advocacy in the US has also entered the realm of lobbying with "212 faith-oriented groups, which spend about \$ 390 million

per year” to canvass policy initiatives (e.g. abortion, same-sex marriage and home-schooling) germane to their faith convictions (Boorstein, 2011).

Religion as an institution in the 21st century has become multi-faceted: fundamentalist, spiritual, secular, socialized. It is interesting to note that the reappearance center stage of religion in the 21st century is not confined to the masses in the developing countries. According to Micklethwait and Wooldridge “In much of the world it is exactly the sort of upwardly mobile, educated middle classes that Marx and Weber presumed would shed such superstitions who are driving the explosion of faith” (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2009, p. 18). This constituency seems to put greater emphasis on spirituality than on forms and rituals. In her book, *The Spiral Staircase: My Climb Out of Darkness*, Armstrong characterizes this approach as: “Every single one of the major traditions - Confucianism, Buddhism, and Hinduism, as well as monotheisms - teaches a spirituality of empathy, by means of which you relate your own suffering to that of others.” (2005, p. 272). The authors also mention the presence of a significant constituency of crusaders of atheism such as Sam Harris (*The End of Faith*), Richard Dawkins (*The God Delusion*), Christopher Hitchens (*God Is Not Great-How Religion Poisons Everything*). Each of these aspects impacts the discipline of Conflict Resolution.

On the credit side, stands the part played by organized religion, its institutions, actors and structures in ameliorating the wretchedness of the masses. For example, The Church (in England and in the United States) led the fights for abolition of the slave trade worldwide towards the end of the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, Church

leaders and their institutions were also at the forefront of civil rights movements in the United States and other parts of the world.

Mechanisms of Religious Agency

Religious agency has a vital role to play as an agent of beneficial change, and inclusive justice, if it operates with flexibility, awareness of the context, and the power dynamics of the specific conflict under consideration.

John Paul Lederach has built his argument for reconciliation within the twin frameworks of faith, and civil society. For Lederach, reconciliation is a journey, not a destination (reminiscent of Aristotle's notion of "becoming" rather than "being"). In *The Journey Towards Reconciliation* (1999), Lederach frames his approach to reconciliation in terms of his Anabaptist faith. The "theological underpinnings" of his extensive work in reconciliation, and conflict transformation are explained through narration of Biblical and other stories using the metaphor of a "journey."

The 18th century Enlightenment marked the beginning of the decline of religion as the primary force in civil society. Over the next two centuries, as the Western world became increasingly secularized, the power of religion declined, but unlike the Roman Empire, religion as an institution has survived. The secularization theory, as also Blake's "Janus-faced" characterization (P Black, 2003) notwithstanding, religion continues to hold sway over the daily life of a vast majority of people in the world (Appleby, 2006, p. 821). Indeed, the closing years of the 20th century witnessed increased awareness of "the constructive role that religions and religious actors are capable of playing across the

range of activities that make up peacebuilding” (Appleby, 2006, p. 822). Appleby sees a promising role for religion as “an agent of peacebuilding” in the broadening era of globalization. Justification for this optimism can be found in several areas.

First is the salience of religion in civil society and its influence upon social service networks and institutions providing education, health services, and other social services outside the ambit of state control. Second is the hermeneutic reinterpretation of sacred texts of various traditions to draw out non-violent principles of conflict resolution (and beyond, to conflict transformation and peacebuilding) latent in Jewish, Christian, Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, and Confucian scriptures (Appleby, 2000; Gadamer, 1989; Gopin, 2000; Queen & King, 1996; A. A. Said, Funk, & Kadayifci, 2001; Smith, 1991).. Third is that religious opinion makers and opinion leaders are the intermediaries in starting and sustaining a dialogue between those who have to deal with the everyday consequences of a conflict situation (the grassroot level), and policy makers, and decision makers at the top level (Lederach, 2004). These leaders are also the exemplars (positive and negative) of value systems, and ethics of civil society.

Some of the mechanisms of religious agency, not necessarily in order of importance, are outlined below:

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics and psychology have played a significant role in giving fresh meaning to sacred texts and traditions. Gadamer has called hermeneutics “the art or technique of understanding and interpretation” (Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion). His theory involves consideration of the claims to truth of a particular philosophical

proposition or a text, in relation to the existing understanding of a person. This dialectic results in refinement or enlargement of the meaning, hopefully leading to a change of perspective and understanding (Gadamer, 1989). Gopin advocates the need “to construct hermeneutics of religious tradition, as well as hermeneutics of modern culture and the modern state” (Gopin, 2000, p. 12). He places strong emphasis on the need for “creative hermeneutics” (Gopin, 2000, p. 50) to tease out new meanings, find deeper explanations, and gain fresh insights from the ancient texts and traditions. He argues, following Gadamer’s interpretation of the science of hermeneutics, that in “religious hermeneutics”, subtle, constant, and continuous reinterpretation is taking place, of “stories, institutions, rituals, texts, precepts and values” (Gopin, 2000, p. 59).

Forgiveness

For Montville, the key to resolving long enduring political conflicts lies in the parties “working to affirm the innate value of their adversaries through acts of respect, self-analysis, self-criticism, and contrition” (Montville, 1991, p. 183). Montville makes a strong case for forgiveness “through the experience of profound psychological processes” (Montville, 1991, p. 181). He envisages a mutual and reciprocal process between the oppressors and the victims; the oppressors acknowledging their wrongs and asking for forgiveness, and the victims, in turn, forgiving the aggressors. Both sides complete a mourning of their losses, to establish new equilibrium and a true sense of mutual respect and security to describe the relationship.

Inter-faith Dialogue

There seems to be considerable support for inter-faith dialogue, among the “informal diplomacy” community. Dialogue is a multi-faceted exercise. At its simplest, it is a conversation between like-minded people. At its most complex, it is a sophisticated inter-action amongst knowledgeable people of different faiths, traditions, and cultures.

According to Abu-Nimer, a genuine dialogue can be a powerful turning point in the thinking of the participants, and help them to “develop new and more sensitive radars for language of hatred, exclusion, and prejudice” (Abu-Nimer, 2002, p. 15). Inter-faith dialogue is more than inter-ethnic dialogue that is predicated on “change in the head, change in the heart, and change through the hand.” The participants “utilize their spiritual identities... have a positive emotional experience...(and) make a deeper human connection with each other through their spiritual encounter” (Abu-Nimer, 2002, p. 17). This, in turn, results in deeper commitment on the part of the participants to bring about social change, and to accelerate peace building.

The central message that emerges from *Inter-faith Dialogue* (Abu-Nimer, 2002) is twofold: first, when religion is a factor in conflict, it is “usually one of the interrelated causal factors such as ethnicity, economic disparities, and regional differences; and second, that inter-faith dialogue can be “of great value even when religion is not the central cause of a conflict” (Smock, 2002, p. 127).

Faith-based Diplomacy

Perhaps the earliest example of successes, limitations, and tensions of faith-based diplomacy is to be found in the Abrahamic traditions. Jewish prophets such as Isaiah and

Jeremiah went against the current and decried polytheism in the Jewish polity of their times. They exhorted -- in the name of God -- their people to beat their swords into plowshares. Each succeeded, albeit to a limited extent, in avoiding or resolving conflicts that were ravaging their respective communities (Rubenstein, 2006). Prophet Muhammad decreed conciliation and mediation for settlement of disputes.

In the Christian tradition, the violent controversy around the Nicene Creed³ is a case in point. The Roman Emperor, Theodosius recognized the Creed, proclaimed Christianity the state religion, and brought about short-lived resolution of violent theological conflicts. The limitation in each case was manifested in the continuation of the controversy (and the attendant violence) within the community. The ongoing tensions eventually led to the destruction of the Jewish polity, as also a lasting estrangement between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches (Rubenstein, 1999b, pp. 211–232). In the Islamic tradition, the *Constitution of Medina* stands as a guiding paradigm for peaceful conflict resolution. The ethos of the *Constitution of Medina* is, however, honored more in breach than in practice.

On the modern front of faith-based and peace diplomacy (incorporating the spirits and insights of the sages), scholars like Douglas Johnston, and Cynthia Sampson have canvassed the case for the role of religion in statecraft, and *realpolitik* (D. Johnston & Sampson, 1995), (D. Johnston, 2003). Mark Gopin has written extensively, and pioneered initiatives for conflict resolution under the umbrella of the three Abrahamic dispensations

³Nicene Creed, a controversial and much contested statement of Christian Doctrine was finally settled in a "simple, broadly inclusive statement of faith" around 359 CE. Slightly different versions of it are used by most major Christian denominations as part of their liturgy (Rubenstein, 1999). Rubenstein considers the adoption of the Creed as a major achievement of conflict resolution, at least in matters involving religion.

(Gopin, 2000, 2002). David Smock and others (2002) have argued the case for interfaith dialogue.

Among the better known of religion-based institutions engaged in this activity are: Society of Friends (The Quakers), the Society of Sant Egidio and the Mennonite Conciliation Service. Appleby has characterized such entities, known as private voluntary organizations (PVO), as “a global third sector of self-governing organizations dedicated not to amassing profits for shareholders or directors but to pursue public goals outside the formal apparatus of the state (2000, 288), Other akin organizations are: various agencies of the United Nations, OXFAM, Catholic Relief Services (“The Mission of Catholic Relief Services,” 2013), the International Committee of Red Cross (“The mandate and mission of the ICRC,” n.d.).

Douglas Johnston and other writers illustrate the role of “the peacemaking tenets of key religions” in five case studies (Kashmir, Sri Lanka, Palestine, Bosnia-Herzegovina & Kosovo, and Sudan). They stake the claim that involvement of faith-based institutions in conflict resolution, at the level of diplomacy, marks the emergence of a new paradigm: faith-based diplomacy (FBD). FBD “speaks to the heart, mind and spirit of the combatants...(and)... provides a transcendent capability that, under the right conditions, can resolve differences where all else has failed” (Hamilton, 2003, p. ix). Their aim is to broaden the base of diplomacy by the inclusion of the religious dimension, and “to suggest a new goal for realist politics that provides a greater capability for understanding and dealing with the full range of human imperatives through its strategic inclusion of religious considerations” (Hamilton, 2003, p. xii).

The Iraq Study Group published its report on December 6, 2006. The Report makes a significant number of recommendations for “national reconciliation.” A cursory reading of the Report indicates that the Group has given voice to the American public’s concern about an unjust (and un-winnable) war, and has made many useful recommendations from the perspective of the foreign policy interests of the United States. However, from the perspective of the Iraqis (and, perhaps also of the world community) absent is the “etic”(Avruch, 2002, pp. 66–68) cultural analysis of the Iraqi situation so vital to a proper understanding of the issues. Equally perplexing is the absence of any consideration of the role of religious agency in what has now become a manifestly internal religious conflict.

Rituals

Religious rituals are embedded in culture and are a concrete manifestation of the traditions, custom and creed of a religion. They thus carry with them religious and cultural sensitivities. Some conflict resolution scholars (e.g. Abu-Nimer) consider participation in rituals of other faiths as a means of getting a glimpse (understanding) of the worldview of its community. However, experience teaches that participation in rituals can be a double-edged sword. Rightly understood it can instruct; wrongly performed, it can give deep offense; ignorantly interpreted, it can aggravate the conflictual situation.

Conclusion

Every religious tradition has its own concepts of truth, mercy, justice, and peace. Among them, they encapsulate the spirit and purpose of the enterprise of conflict

resolution. Unfortunately, the meaning and purpose of these terms has been the subject of endless theological discussion, philosophical speculation, ideological nit-picking, and political posturing. The resulting cacophony has debased the currency of these noble notions. If conflict specialists concentrate on the simple and straightforward meanings of these words, they are likely to find a meeting point for religious agency and conflict resolution in their application to the most intractable conflicts currently plaguing the world.

The following propositions are offered to position the role of religion in conflict resolution:

- Religion in the 21st century, contrary to conventional wisdom, is alive, well and growing.
- Ambivalence and ambiguity about religion and its benefits continues and will continue to persist.
- Religion remains a source of destructive force that has to be factored into any scheme for conflict resolution.
- The constructive force of religion is also a reality demonstrated through the work of religious institutions, actors, and processes.
- Religion as an institution will continue to be faced with multifarious challenges.
- The constructive force of religion in conflict analysis and resolution can be leveraged through the use of mechanisms such as: reconciliation, promotion

of justice, and hermeneutic reinterpretation of sacred texts, inter-faith dialogue, and rituals.

Religion, culture, ethics are value-laden words. These words are used to derive meaning. “Meaning is derived from reasoning; but reasoning is influenced by a culture’s particular worldview” (Hamill, 1990, p. 199). Nuance is used to illustrate subtle difference in or shade of meaning, feeling... (*The Concise Oxford dictionary of current English*, 1990). A word can wield tyranny of its own (Recall: “When I use a word...it means just what I mean it to mean –neither more nor less (Humpty Dumpty)...The question is: Whether you can make words mean so many different things (Alice)...The question is which is to be master...that’s all) (Humpty Dumpty. *Through the Looking Glass*, Chapter 6). Juliet: What is in a name? That which we call rose by any other name would smell as sweet (Shakespeare, 1993, Act II, Scene ii). The words religion, culture, and ethics seem to be used in the senses used by Humpty Dumpty and Juliet.

A case in point is Young’s use of religious humanism and secular humanism (Young, 2002). Young attempts to find meaning in religion without believing in God. His argument is in the context of the Jewish faith, although he professes to be a non-believer. Emptying “the religious concept of spirituality [and] stripping it of its transcendental or supernatural meanings” his identification as a Jew becomes a mere cultural marker (P Black, 2003).

The mosaic of religion continues to evolve in at least two opposing dimensions. The first is the attempt on the part of secularists to either banish religion completely, or failing that, to drive it away from the public square. (Consider, for instance, the June

2013 controversy engendered by the European Commission's insistence that the National Bank of Slovakia remove crosses and halos from special commemorative euro coins due to be minted to mark the 1,150th anniversary of the coming of Christianity to Slovak lands, a directive that Roman Catholic Archbishop Zvolensky of Bratislava notes as indicative of a "rising tide of militant secularism." Similarly, consider, as noted in connection with the same matter, the omission in official descriptions of the circle of twelve stars that appear on the European Union flag (as indeed on all euro coins) of the inspiration from iconography of the Virgin Mary on which French Catholic Arsène Heitz drew when he designed the flag in 1955 (Higgins, 2013).

The second is an equally determined effort on the part of established organized religions (particularly, Christianity and Islam) to increase their flock (and garner support) for participation in policymaking. This competition to win minds and hearts, and the resulting tensions will remain part of conflict resolution conversations.

An interesting aspect attracting attention of scholars is the idea of expressing the notion of nation in terms of a religious creed. This approach amounts to reification of the idea of nation (notwithstanding Avruch's warning about reification of culture -- (Avruch, 2002, p. 14)

Michael Angrosino in his article Civil Religion Redux has adopted the characterization "an enduring American civil religion"(2002). He adopts "Greetz's position that religion is any "system of symbols which acts to establish powerful pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in [in a people] by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an

aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic” (Greetz, 1973, 90, quoted by Angrosino, 2002).

The basis for this formulation is the thesis “that for all its secular materialism, the United States (and, perhaps, many sovereign states) still struggles to define a moral dimension when formulating public policy. And despite their outer show of cynicism, Americans seem to feel that their political and social institutions are doing the “right” thing, and not simply the expedient thing” (Angrosino, 2002).

Angrosino has identified “three major strands of civil religion: 1) civil religion as culture religion; 2) civil religion as religious nationalism; and 3) civil religion as transcendent religion. The heart of the formulation is “predicated on religion being understood to be the meaningful inner core of culture, and on culture being the outer manifestation of religion... Religion is the ultimate power that drives the shared, common life of a community” (Angrosino, 2002). Angrosino’s argument is that culture religion is the “invisible religion” of a community (Luckman 1967 quoted by Angrosino, 2002) which is manifested in its shared symbols, values, and ideals”; civil religion as religious nationalism “focuses on the power of religion to legitimize the state, to the extent that the state itself came to be defined by its sacred power; civil religion as transcendent religion as a “genuine apprehension of universal and transcendent reality as seen in, or...as revealed through the experience of the...people (Angrosino, 2002).

Angrosino further argues that in the context of the United States, civil religion underpins two ideas--an ethical imperative for a just social order (quoting the former Senator George McGovern), and as a power base “independent of both organized

religions and the institutions of government, which represents a set of collective religious symbols, a sacralized national identity, and a system of transcendent, quasi-religious principles of political order (Chidester, 1988, 83 quoted by Angrosino, 2002)).

Viewed objectively, Angrosino seems to attempt to find a place for the concept of religion in public discourse in an environment that insists on the separation of church and state in public policy debate. The positive aspect is that, in an environment in which there is radical redefinition of institutions of family, and marriage (as also others), the door is kept open for the voice of organized religion to be heard.

Most recently (June 2013), the Archbishop of Canterbury (Julian Welby) has expressed his opposition to the same sex marriage bill debated in the House of Lords. He has argued against the bill that “In the bill...marriage is abolished, redefined and recreated...The concept of marriage as a normative place for procreation is lost...The idea of marriage as covenant is diminished. The family in its normal sense, pre-dating the state and as our base community of society...is weakened” (H. White, 2013). The foregoing issues are of concern to a large number of people whose value-systems are predicated on institutions of marriage and family. These concerns remain to be addressed and acceptable understandings (or solutions) reached.

Religion, culture, and ethics are, and will continue to remain, live wire issues in an increasingly interdependent world – both as generators of conflict, and as sources of innovative conflict resolution recipes.

The longevity or robust staying power of religion has been aptly summed up by Jonathan Sacks, the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations that “religion is the

greatest survivor...Super powers tend to last centuries; the great faiths last millenniums” (2012).

There is a long standing tradition in all faith communities that ethics is part of religion and its sanctity and sanction is derived from the scriptures that have divine origin. The second school of thought is that ethics has nothing to do with religion; that it is a structure devised by human beings for an orderly conduct of their daily lives. However, both schools of thought rest on a common foundation that codes of ethics are necessary to maintain mutual trust and confidence, integrity, and orderly function of various structures of society. The diverse aspects of ethics are examined here below.

Chapter 10: Ethics and Power

The words ‘ETHICS’ and ‘MORALITY’ have been used interchangeably. I concede that the dictionary meaning of each of these words is qualitatively different from the other. The Concise Oxford Dictionary (*The Concise Oxford dictionary of current English*, 1990) defines them as:

Ethics: 1 the science of morals in human conduct. 2a moral principles; 2b a set of these (*medical ethics*).

Morality: 1 the degree of conformity of an idea, practice etc. to moral principles. 2 right moral conduct. 3 lesson in morals. 4 the science of morals. 5 a particular system of morals. 6 moral principles, points of ethics.

According to the editors of Reader’s Digest Use the Right Word: Modern Guide to Synonyms and Related Words (1969): Moral and Ethical “refer to acts that are in accord with a code of right and wrong...once distinguishable from each other have recently taken fine distinctions in meaning. *Moral* is now more often used in a quasi-religious sense, *ethical* in a quasi-legal sense. To put it more extremely, *moral* can often be taken to mean private, codified and rigid; *ethical*, to mean public, improvisory and flexible: agreeing, despite differing *moral* values, on *ethical* ways to work with each other...they can still be used interchangeably (emphasis added)).

Peter Singer’s perspective on the two terms is instructive:

What is ethics? The word itself is sometimes used to refer to the set of rules, principles, or ways of thinking that guide, or claim authority to guide the actions of a particular group; and sometimes it stands for the systematic study of reasoning about how we ought to act...Some writers use the term 'morality' for the first descriptive sense in which I am using 'ethics'...They would reserve 'ethics' (or sometimes 'moral philosophy') for the field of study or the subject taught in departments of philosophy. I have not adopted this usage. Both 'ethics' and 'morality' have their roots in a word for 'customs', the former being a derivative of the Greek term from which we get 'ethos', and the latter from the Latin root that gives us 'mores', a word still used sometimes to describe the customs of a people. 'Morality' brings with it a particular, and sometimes inappropriate, resonance today. Very often morality is assumed to have a religious basis. These connotations of 'morality' are features of a particular conception of ethics, one linked to the Jewish and Christian traditions, rather than an inherent feature of any ethical system. (P. Singer, 1994, p. 4)

Subjectively, Singer's formulation appears to be more appropriate in the context of conflict analysis and conflict resolution.

The ideal of a system of ethics in society is twofold. One consists of the "systematic examination of the relations of human beings to each other, the conceptions, interests and ideals from which human ways of treating one another spring and the systems of value of on which such ends of life are based" (Berlin, 2000, p. 1). Second is to eradicate "injustice, oppression, falsity in human relations, imprisonment whether by stone walls or conformism- unprotesting submission to man-made yokes - moral blindness, egoism, cruelty, humiliation, servility, poverty, helplessness, bitter indignation, despair on the part of so many" (Berlin, 2000, p. 2). The purpose of the examination was also twofold. First was to understand "the nature of these experiences and their roots in the human condition" (Berlin, 2000, p. 2). Second was "to know what would bring about

the opposite of this, a reign of truth , love, honesty, justice, security, personal relations based on the possibility of human dignity, decency, independence, freedom, spiritual fulfillment” (Berlin, 2000, p. 3). Historical experience teaches the lesson that the reality has, so far, fallen far short of this ideal.

There are two distinct schools of thought about ethics: one rooted in religious prescriptions; the other rooted in secular ideas.

Religious prescriptions are enshrined in scriptures, and are said to have emanated from on high. These prescriptions are considered immutable, applicable to all human being at all times. They are ideal and frozen in time; infraction of these prescriptions will create adverse repercussions in this life and in the hereafter.

On the secular side it is claimed that the substance of ethics emanates from:

ideas about what relations between men and women have been, are, might be and should be; and to realize how they came to be transformed in the name two of a vision of some supreme goal in the minds of the leaders, above all of prophets with armies at their backs. (Berlin, 2000, p. 1)

Ethical thought, in Berlin’s formulation, “consists of the systematic examination of relation of human beings to each other, the conceptions , interests and ideals from which human ways of treating one another spring, and the systems of value on which such ends of life are based” (Berlin, 2000, p. 1).

Over centuries, standards of ethics have been framed in narrow or broad perspectives. The narrow perspective provides standards that are fixed and rigid and

disregard the consequences. The broader perspective is situational, contextual, and pays heed to the possible consequences. Many thinkers (including Aristotle, Confucius and the Buddha) preached a middle way between worldly happiness, and other worldly preoccupations. The standard of ethics set by these sages are being interpreted, re-interpreted, and refined to address the ethical issues germane to modern living. (Baker, 2007).

The basic ideal of ethics is rooted in “a fundamental principle of respect for all rational beings” (Stevenson & Haberman, 2004, pp. 236–244). In the context of conflict resolution, ethics is the connecting link between religion and civil society. Moral rules, common to many religions have been described in terms of:

- a conviction of the fundamental unity of the human family, and the equality and dignity of all human beings
- a sense of sacredness of the individual person and his or her conscience
- a sense of the value of human community
- a realization that might is not right; that human power is not sufficient and absolute
- a belief that love, compassion, selflessness, and the force of inner truthfulness and of the spirit have ultimately greater power than hate, enmity, and self-interest
- a sense of obligation to stand on the side of the oppressed as against the oppressor
- a profound hope that good will prevail (D. Johnston & Sampson, 1995, p. 314).

The source of associational ethics can be traced to the teachings of sages of various traditions (Aristotle, Buddha, Confucius, Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Maimonides, etc.). Associational ethics is premised on the notion of ‘good and right’. The notion holds that: “The ideas of the good and the right span the greater part of the field of moral philosophy. They conceptualize basic phenomena in human life: the good, that men are purposive or goal-seeking beings who have desires and aspirations (goalseeking framework); and the right, that men carry on their lives in groups that require some modes of organization and regulation involving practices, rules, and institutions (the juridical framework)” (Hughes, 1980, p. 173) It is concerned with moral duties and choices of individuals and community. The aim is to regulate the relationship of individual with other members of the society, to avoid conflict, and to promote social harmony.

Ethics is the life blood of associational living. Peter Singer puts it thus:

Ethics deals with values, with good and bad, with right and wrong. We cannot avoid involvement in ethics, for what we do – and what we don’t do - is always a possible subject of ethical evaluation. Anyone who thinks about what he or she ought to do is, consciously or unconsciously, involved in ethics (P. Singer, 1994, p. v).”

Singer aptly captures the ubiquity and perpetual presence of ethics in daily life. However, the first decade of the third millennium seems to lend greater salience and urgency to the need for closer attention to issues of ethics in all walks of life. There are many reasons for this state of affairs. Some of these reasons are: shrinkage of time and space in a technologically-driven world, the twenty-four hour news cycle and intrusion of

media in private and public life, rapid pace of change, emergence and influence of supranational institutions, globalization of local issues, as also localization of global issues.

Swidler articulates this thought thus:

When the fact of the epistemological revolutions leading to the growing necessity of interreligious, interideological, intercultural dialogue is coupled with the fact of all mankind's interdependency...there arises the pressing need to focus the energy of these dialogues on not only how humans perceive and understand the world and its meaning, but also how they should act in relationship to themselves, to other persons, and to nature, within the context of reality's undergirding, pervasive, overarching source, energy and goal, however understood. In brief, humankind increasingly desperately needs to engage in the development of, not a Buddhist ethic, a Christian ethic, a Marxist ethic, etc., but of a global ethic...(Swidler, 1999, p. 7)

There are two modern schools of thought about ethics. One maintains (e.g. Kellner et al.) that ethical norms are a natural and logical extension of the prescriptions inscribed in the scriptures. The other (e.g. Singer et al.) holds that ethics is a social construct and does not need theological underpinning. A more nuanced view would be to say that in a given milieu, the sanction for, and the binding force of, ethical values (compactly termed 'system of ethics') of a society lies in its lived experience, culture, and the existential needs (Silberbauer, 2000, pp. 14–28), in religious beliefs (Kellner, 2000, pp. 82–90; Nanji, 2000, pp. 106–118; Preston, 2000, pp. 91–105), and in the politics of that society (Coady, 2000, pp. 373–383).

In the modern context, the rules of ethics present a tension between extreme individualism, competition, "survival of the fittest" and "consideration for the claims of others." The common strands among the diverse ethical systems resonate with the issues

(e.g. world poverty and development) - basic human needs in Burton's terminology, social justice, (e.g. discrimination, corruption) that confront the world community.

From a historical perspective, it appears that in each tradition there has been (and continues to be) overlapping of faith and ethics. The former seems to reside in understanding, interpreting and applying the prescriptions of scriptures "being good"- (Armstrong, 2006, p. 272). The latter seems to be rooted in pragmatic and utilitarian practice of "doing good" ("a deliberately cultivated attitude of benevolence") (Armstrong, 2006, pp. 270–271) .

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the powerful currents of the Enlightenment dethroned faith and made reason the king. Rapid progress of science, technology, education, social, economic and political advancement conspired to relegate faith and its accouterments to a secondary role in society; but ethics continues to permeate society's conscience.

The ethical foundation of conflict resolution rests on the premise that every conscious action of an individual has a moral content (either as a 'do' or as a 'don't'). Its concepts, strategies, and actions include recognition of the common humanity of all human beings, the ties of relationships (at all levels of society across cultures and geography), willingness to put in place systemic changes, modifying institutional structures, and going beyond cessation of hostilities to transformation towards reconciliation.

Ethical considerations (and dilemmas) are at the heart of society's efforts to find answers to social conflict. The scientific fact of evolution theory of Darwin has been

accommodated by hermeneutical interpretations that explain the ethical values enshrined in the scriptures. Marx's economics has been reinterpreted in terms of economic justice for the underclass. Freud's pessimistic theories of human nature have been refuted by demonstrating the innate goodness of human beings. Communism's banishment of religion has run out of steam and ethics grounded in religion has taken center stage. The insights and teachings of "paradigmatic personalities" such as Confucius, Mozi, Socrates, Buddha, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad et al., live on to show us how human lives can and should be lived.

Ethical norms are not rigid, nor frozen in time. They are interpreted, reinterpreted, amplified, modified, and changed to meet societal needs. The upshot is a dynamic tension between continuities and discontinuities, between permanence and change, and between old and new norms. More recently, thinkers, scholars, and policy makers have tried to find common ground for adoption of a code of ethics by the global community, in the interests of humanity at large (e.g. *The Global Ethic* document Swidler, n.d.).

The document identifies "elements of a fundamental minimal consensus on ethics...which will provide us with moral framework within which we can relate to ourselves, each other and the world in a just and respectful manner" (Swidler, n.d.). Essentially, the document advocates the adoption of a minimum standard of ethic for every member of the global community. The search for common ground for ethics for conflict resolution has found resonance with ideas and views of many scholars, thinkers, and civic leaders (e.g. Paul McKenna, Scarborough Missions (the Golden Rule). Karen Armstrong (Charter for Compassion, 2009), Gewirth (Principle of Generic Consistency,

1978, 162). The suggested norms are germane to the emergent discipline of conflict resolution.

Every tradition has its own notions of ethics; the nature of the problems of ethics is also universal. The basic question, as formulated by Singer is: “how we ought to live...[and]...the goal is wisdom about how to live our lives” (P. Singer, 1994, p. 3). It is a search undertaken over the past two millennia in many traditions, including among others Chinese, Greek, Hindu, Jewish, Christian, and Islamic. Religious teachers, philosophers, scientists, sociologists, psychologists, humanists, educators, and others have engaged with the question in the context of their particular traditions, disciplines, times, and the needs of their societies.

Cultural and definitional differences notwithstanding, there is definite commonality in the ethical norms obtaining across cultures, and societies. Peter Singer puts it thus:

If ethics is a jigsaw puzzle, then we are now at the stage where we have laid out all the pieces, and are beginning to see the outline of the picture. For ethics is not a meaningless series of different things to different people in different times and places. Rather against a background of historically and culturally diverse approaches (interpreted in their broadest meaning-ZA) to how we ought to live, the degree of convergence is striking. Human nature has its constants and there are only a limited number of ways in which human beings can live together and flourish... (2000, pp. 543–545).

The convergence mentioned in the foregoing quotation illustrates the modern spirit of the insights of the sages of the Axial Flowerings.

Some writers have claimed that from the later part of the 20th century Non-Religious Ethics (P. Singer, 2000) have been ascendant. Others (e.g. Wattles,) seek to emphasize “religious ethics” (Wattles, 1996, pp. 165–172). Yet others speak about

“humanistic ethics” (human goodness is properly understood in strictly human terms) (Wattles, 1996, p. 9). Perhaps a more nuanced rendering would be that the debates are not mutually exclusive; rather, they form a continuum of discussions and understandings that at times run parallel to one another, at other time intersect, and at others merge into a single stream.

One might venture to say that the world in the second decade of the third millennium is facing a crisis of ethics. There are ethical lapses in polity at national levels - government (open or tacit acceptance of unethical activity, e.g. corruption), legislature (questionable behavior by legislators (e.g. soliciting or accepting bribes), judiciary (e.g. soliciting financial support for securing judicial office), at international level (e.g. alleged corruption in distribution of aid under the aegis of the United Nations programs), in sports (e.g. questionable conduct of members of FIFA), in the media (e.g. Wikileaks), in professions (e.g. fraudulent claims by doctors from Medicare). The overall picture looks grim enough to undermine the confidence of citizens in the institutions of civil society.

For every individual, notions, and norms of ethics are influenced by upbringing, family value system, culturally conditioned group behavior, as also by associational world view.

Like charity, ethics begins at home. An individual’s ethical outlook is formed, among other, from his or her upbringing (family value system), group socialization, cultural orientation, community orientation, and religious affiliation. This outlook is modified and extended with further experiences, and affiliations. An individual can have ethical standards for the conduct of his or her personal life, for conduct in civil society,

and for conduct of professional life. All the foregoing are, by and large, mutually reinforcing, and within an overarching framework of morality.

In the recent past, the conflict resolution enterprise has emerged as a self-conscious and deliberate effort to situate itself within a broad framework of a “world community” that seeks non-violent solutions to conflict. Ethics is the lifeblood of peaceful associational living.

In the context of society at large, associational living imposes certain duties upon its participants. Authority for imposition of such duty is founded on the practical notion of avoiding, or minimizing, conflict, as also for securing the continuity and wellbeing of society as a whole (Hobbes, 2012).

Every society has ethical norms based on its lived experience, culture, history, and social needs. These ethical norms are not rigid. They are flexible, and vary within an overall framework of certain general principles (compendiously called ethics or morality) to accommodate the changing needs of succeeding generations. Within this diversity there is underlying unity as exemplified by the venerable Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would want to do unto you.

The impulse for adherence to ethical principles by individuals, communities, and specialist groups is to be found in “egoistic prudence” (Midgley, 2000, p. 1) - survival, security, recognition, and growth, in religious prescriptions, in social cohesion, in economic prudence, and in professional solidarity.

From the perspective of conflict resolution, useful insights emerge from the principled and ethical approaches adopted by leaders recognized as campaigners for social justice or as freedom fighters. As early as the 1890's, Mohandas Gandhi, an Indian barrister qualified in England, had made efforts to fight, through establishment of the Natal Indian Congress in South Africa, and through non-violent means, rank discrimination against Indians. During the Boer War, Gandhi mobilized support from the local Indians for the British war efforts. Notwithstanding this support, the white-controlled government continued to tighten the thumbscrews on all the disenfranchised and dispossessed people of South Africa. An interesting aspect of Gandhi's legal and public career in South Africa was his preaching and practice of ethical and non-violent dispute resolution:

I had learnt to find out the better side of human nature and to enter men's hearts. I realized that the true function of a lawyer was to unite parties riven asunder. The lesson was so indelibly burnt into me that a large part of my time during the twenty years of my practice as a lawyer was occupied in bringing about compromises of hundreds of cases. (M. K. Gandhi, 1982, p. 112)

An important objective of codes of ethics in society is to bring about, maintain, and sustain social justice. Social justice can only be achieved if a society is prepared not only to lay down rules, and also encourages compliance, indeed compels members to adhere, and is also is prepared to back up that code with sanctions.

The development of the conflict resolution profession is marked by several milestones. Some of these are: the emergence of conflict resolution as a social movement, the contribution and service orientation of "religious organizations (particularly those

associated with the Society of Friends (Quakers) and the Mennonites (as also Society St. Egidio); addition of new and innovative conflict resolution mechanisms, proliferation of conflict resolution courses at institutions of higher learning, publication of related literature (Kriesberg, 2006, p. 411).

Perhaps the most important mile stone was “crystallization” of the idea that “conflicts could be restructured and reframed so that partisans would regard the conflict as a shared problem that had mutually acceptable solution”; and its concomitant that “intermediaries provide many services that assist adversaries to construct mutually acceptable agreements to settle and ultimately resolve their conflicts” (Kriesberg, 2006, p. 411).

Codes of ethics

At the religious level, all religions prescribe compliance with ethical rules, and indeed, impose punishment in this world and the hereafter for transgression.

At the secular level social opprobrium and stigmatism are used as effective sanctions to secure compliance. Most professions prescribe stringent penalties (including disbarment for unethical conduct). In the context of conflict resolution, bioethics offers useful and parallel insights about ethics, and the usefulness of a code of ethics.

Bioethics, like conflict resolution, is a relatively new discipline. The views of bioethicists about the need for a code of ethics for their profession are worthy of attention:

I see no a priori reason for thinking that ethics is so complicated, confusing or delicate an enterprise that it alone among professions should be without a shared and public understanding of the moral dimensions of its practice...Clinical ethics is neither above nor below the need for a code. (Freedman, 1989, 137-38 cited by Robert Baker, 2007, p. 24)

The foregoing observation seems to apply with equal force to the conflict resolution discipline. A code of ethics provides to the practitioner a sense of cohesion, guidance and protection in “morally complex contexts (such as those involving confidentiality, conflicts of interests, and so forth)” (Baker, 2007, p. 27). The alternative is to leave the judgment of ethics to the personal values of individual practitioners, or to have no code at all, or to apply a ‘band aid’ of ad hoc and ersatz “substitutes of uncertain utility and authority” (Baker, 2007, p. 25).

The observation of Jonathan Moreno concerning the debate about ethics of bio ethics “in one sense the issues raised in this debate are routine in the history of a profession that at a certain point goes self-conscious about its substantive responsibilities and its public image” (Moreno, 2007, p. xv) holds true for the conflict resolution practice.

The debate takes account of the multidisciplinary nature of the profession, as also of “the methods of moral philosophy (meta ethics-ZA), history, and literary criticism, the teachings of particular religious traditions, and the techniques of social science, and to see practitioners aim variously at facilitating sound moral reasoning and judgment, building moral community, or nurturing moral development” (Eckenwiler, 2007, pp. xx–xxi).

Conflict resolution discipline does not, at present, have a code of ethics. There is, however, a Model Standard of Conduct for Mediators, established jointly by American Arbitration Association, American Bar Association, and Association for Conflict Resolution. The model is advisory, limited in scope and application, and non-binding as can be seen from the following ‘disclaimer’ clause:

Various aspects of a mediation, including some matters covered by these Standards, may also be affected by applicable law, court rules, regulations, other applicable professional rules, mediation rules to which the parties have agreed and other agreements of the parties. These sources may create conflicts with, and may take precedence over, these Standards (Model Standards Of Conduct For Mediators, September, 2005. <http://www.acrnet.org/about/committees/ethics.htm>).

The foregoing disclaimer needs to be examined in the light of the question raised in the context of bio ethics (Baker, 2007, 321): Can conflict resolution continue to function effectively without a code of ethics publicly proclaiming its values and standards of integrity?

The main argument advanced by skeptics of code of ethics in bioethics was that “the field of bioethics is too diverse to develop a code of ethics (Baker, 2007, p. 32). No such open skepticism seems to have been put forward by conflict resolution specialists.

However, Bush & Folger (2005, pp. 237–266), the advocates of transformative mediation, argue that “there are real and deep differences in the mediation field today, as to both practice approaches and underlying ideologies” (Bush & Folger, 2005, p. 259). In their view these differences will persist “for a long time to come” (Bush & Folger, 2005, p. 260). They privilege *relational worldview* over “the individualist worldview” (Bush

& Folger, 2005, p. 261). The authors recognize that “the challenge for the field is to develop ways of living with the diversity in practices and beliefs that the private and public users of mediation are demanding and that practitioners have been responding to” (Bush & Folger, 2005, p. 262). They maintain “the practices, (and ethics), and premises of these two models (settlement oriented and transformative) of practice are so different that it is difficult to imagine how any practitioner could combine them in a coherent and principled way” (Bush & Folger, 2005, pp. 262-264). Their advice is for the mediator to make a clear choice between the two, and to provide “support for diversity pluralism in practice, rather than sameness and homogeneity” (Bush & Folger, 2005, p. 264). The authors go out on a limb and suggest “it may be beneficial for the field at this juncture to encourage the formation of of different and parallel organizations, rather than trying to merge everyone into a homogenizing organization that does not allow difference to surface in full force” (Bush & Folger, 2005, p. 265).

Be that as it may, the core values of conflict resolution premises, practice, and ethics are the same or similar, and can be upheld, protected, and nurtured under the umbrella of a code of ethics. The study will build on the foregoing premise. It will draw on the relevant codes of ethics in use by practitioners of other disciplines that are available in the collection of Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT). IIT maintains a library of codes of ethics that lists over 800 codes adopted by multifarious organizations (<http://iit.edu/index1.php/programs/codes%20>).

In formulating the elements of code of ethics for conflict resolution, the following questions, among others, need to be addressed:

- Has the discipline and practice of conflict resolution reached a stage of maturity to warrant a code of ethics (the Code)?
- What are the parameters for formulating the Code?
- Which specific theme, or themes, of should inform the formulation of the Code?
- Should the Code be formulated exclusively on the Western concepts, or should it be broadened to include practices of ethics prevalent in Non-Western traditions?
- What should be the geographical applicability of the Code?
- Should the Code be taught as a core course in the ICAR syllabus?

The basis for formulating the foregoing questions is the assumption that “theories are constructed as speculative and tentative conjectures or guesses freely created by human intellect in an attempt to overcome problems disclosed by previous theories and to give an adequate account of the behavior of some aspect of the world or universe...Theories that fail to stand up to observational experimental tests must be eliminated and replaced by further speculative conjecture” (Chalmers, *What is this thing called Science*, 1978; Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Theories* 1996); Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, 1969). Tentative answers to the foregoing questions could include consideration of the following points:

- An ethics of conflict resolution in the 21st century will rest on the recognition of the *humanity* of the parties in conflict.
- The Ethics will be grounded in equality of every person who is a party to the conflict.

- Conflict resolution practice will be driven by “ethical universals” (P. Singer, 1994, p. 6) that enjoin doing what is ‘right’, and forsaking doing what is ‘wrong’. The concepts of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ will be defined with due regard to the cultural and religious traditions of the parties in conflict.
- The Ethics will pay due regard to uniformity and diversity of ethical norms between different societies.
- The Ethics will strive to include provisions that recognize the importance in conflict resolution, of basic human needs, social justice, as also participation in civil society.
- The Ethics will promote reconciliation, and transformation of relationship, between the parties in conflict.
- The Ethics will aim at consistency, objectivity, and impartiality in its interventions.

C. Wright Mills has raised a red flag indicating that social sciences are at risk because social scientists have allowed themselves to become the hand maiden to politics (Mills, 2000). Assuming for the purposes of this argument that Mills’ analysis and conclusion is correct (or partially correct), the question to be addressed is: Is Conflict Resolution, as discipline and practice, in the same jeopardy of being compromised?

The answer to this question can, perhaps, be found by examining the similarities, and differences between his concept of social sciences, on the one hand, and Conflict Resolution on the other.

Some of the similarities are:

- Each has a vested interest in maintaining social stability.
- Each professes to be agent of beneficial change in the established social order.
- Each is interested in promoting welfare of, and harmony between different strata of society.
- Power, and its ramifications still exercise significant influence on the levers of social stability and control.

The salient differences are:

- Although each has encountered identity and image problems, Conflict Resolution appears to have, by and large, overcome these limitations.
- Equally, conflictual situations in domestic, institutional, national, regional arena has created a better awareness, and understanding of the actual and potential implications of association of conflict analysts and resolvers, with various parties.
- As a result of the foregoing, conflict specialists have been able to undertake greater activism and advocacy for the profession.
- The resources of information technology and highway have enabled easier and quicker access to, and dissemination of conflict resolution knowledge and information worldwide.

Be that as it may, my subjective view is that it would be imprudent to think that Conflict Resolution will not continue to face dilemmas similar to those experienced by social sciences. I am, however, persuaded that the position of Conflict Resolution is

significantly different, in form and substance, from that of social sciences, and that it is capable of building effective bulwarks against any attack on its utility, independence, integrity, or neutrality.

Based on the foregoing, the elements of a code of ethics for conflict resolution would include the following elements:

Elements of a code of ethics for conflict resolution

- To consolidate the standards of practice in diverse branches of conflict resolution into a uniform code.
- To serve as a guide for the conduct of conflict resolution specialists.
- To promote among conflict resolution practitioners ethical conduct and a high level of competence, including honesty integrity, impartiality and the exercise of good judgment in their work.
- To provide guidance for resolving ethical dilemmas inevitable in the practice of conflict resolution.
- To inform the parties in dispute about the capabilities and limitations of conflict resolution practice.
- To promote public trust in conflict resolution as a valid process for non-violent resolution of diverse forms of conflict.
- To promote greater awareness among the public about the value and use of neutral dispute resolution procedures.
- To articulate the norms of duty owed by conflict resolution practitioners to the parties in dispute, to the profession, and to themselves

- To protect the interests of unrepresented parties in the conflict.
- To promote the development of new mechanisms, new practitioners, and advancement of conflict resolution practice.
- To participate in providing *pro bono* services in appropriate circumstances.

The spirit of ancient wisdom and ethics remains the unarticulated premise present in the entire spectrum of conflict resolution concepts and strategies, from conflict prevention, to conflict containment, to conflict management, to conflict settlement, to conflict resolution, to conflict transformation. Viewed from the foregoing perspective, it is not unreasonable to infer that ethical considerations have animated, perhaps invisible in plain sight, the thinking and discourse of all conflict resolution thinkers from the precursors to the most recent generation. It is, therefore, a little curious that ethics and its implications have not featured more explicitly in the discourse of conflict resolution.

In recent times, reformers have toyed with the idea of promoting a ‘universal’ religion. In the nature of things this idea is unachievable. However, the notion of ‘universal ethic’ seems a little more plausible: The Global Ethic document is rooted in the notion of “ethic in the singular i.e. the fundamental attitude toward good and evil.” The forgoing analysis has endeavored to articulate the building blocks of the edifice of ethics.

The issues of sanctions and their enforcement depend upon power, its legitimacy, and responsible and fairness of its use. The section here below describes the ramifications of power. Power exercised judiciously and wisely facilitates achievement of social justice; power used arbitrarily or capriciously compounds social injustice.

Power

In primitive society, Nature was the be all and end all of power. The reason was a lack of understanding on the part of human beings about the processes of nature, as also underestimation of the power of human reasoning and human ingenuity. With the development of society, and in particular advent of civilization, the notion crystallized in “human community’s collective power” (Toynbee, 1976, p. 178).

Historians have pointed to the beginning of human settlements at about 10,000 years ago (Barracough, 1980, p. 16). The fundamental factor in this development was “farming revolution” or “food gathering revolution” (Roberts, 1986, p. 49). Scholars have designated this period as pre-historical. About that time, “(i)n the beginnings of settlements of permanence and some size, in the elaboration of technology, in the growth of language and the dawn of characterization in art were some of the rudimentary elements of the compound which was eventually to crystallize as civilization” (Roberts, 1986, p. 48). Other important components of civilization were: development of language and discovery of writing (Jaspers, 1953, p. 45).

Before 6000 BCE there was human settlement, but it lacked certain essential elements of civilization. Jaspers has argued “History extends as far back as linguistic evidence...Nowhere does linguistic evidence go further back than 3000 BCE History has therefore lasted about 5000 years” (Jaspers, 1953, p. 28). The dawn of history raised in the minds of people, according to Jaspers, “question of the consciousness of life and existence” (Jaspers, 1953, p. 265). Implicit in this awareness is the polarity of the transcendent from the profane - transcendence residing in “consciousness of Being”, (the

inward transformation) and the mundane in “awareness of presentness as a whole, the Now...” (Development of human potential) (Jaspers, 1953, p. 270).

Power in the axial societies was hegemonic and hierarchical. It was jealously guarded by the elite; any attempt to challenge this power was ruthlessly and violently put down.

The modern conceptions of power are enveloped in ambiguities of “hidden assumptions and unanswered questions” (Lukes, 1986, p. 1). Scholars in different disciplines have defined power in various ways (e.g. Bertrand Russell-“the production of intended effects”; Max Weber: “The probability that an actor in a social relationship will be able to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which the probability rests”; Robert Dahl: “power amounts to the control of behavior”; Talcott Parsons: “A system resource, a ‘generalized facility or resource in the society’, analogous to money, which enables the achievement of collective goals through the agreement of members of a society to legitimize leadership positions whose incumbents further the goals of the system, if necessary by the use of negative sanctions”; C. Wright Williams: “By the powerful we mean...those who are able to realize their will, even if others resist it” (quoted by Lukes, 1986, pp. 2–3)

The loci of power are situated in: (i) individuals and (ii) groups. Power, from time immemorial, underpinned social structure. It clearly and decisively delineated the status of the haves and have-nots (e.g. the division between a noble and a commoner in ancient Egypt, between a free person and a slave under the feudal system, the rigid caste system in India (Stearns et al., 2008) The mantra that “humans are inherently unequal and their

lot in life is determined by the families social strata in which they are born...(was) upheld by creation myths and religious beliefs that proclaimed their divine origins and the danger of punishment if they were challenged” (Stearns et al., 2008, pp. 122–123). The purpose was to maintain status quo, as also to maintain the stranglehold of the powerful.

Admittedly, in the 20th century, impetus for equality, dignity, and economic opportunity has been spearheaded by many underprivileged groups in many countries. Notwithstanding the protection of basic human rights decreed by national and international institutions, power plays overt and covert role in perpetuating this pernicious practice.

Lord Acton coined in 1887 the phrase: Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. He was referring to the claims made by Roman emperors who declared themselves as gods, and in the 19th century by Napoleon Bonaparte who crowned himself as emperor. Underlining the thought expressed by Lord Acton was the idea that power has to be leavened with responsibility and buttressed with legitimacy. Viewed from the perspective of Axial breakthroughs, it can perhaps be claimed that the breakdown in various pre-Axial societies came about when the ruling elite exercised power without responsibility that led to social chaos, injustice, and violence et al. This state of affairs ultimately led to protests from the ordinary citizens. A. V. Dicey pointed out towards the end of the 19th century: power ultimately resides with the ordinary citizens (recall the most recent example of the implosion of the Soviet Union generally, and more specific instances such as in Romania).

Power combined with responsibility and accountability is the foundation of a well ordered society. Unless there is a judicious combination of power, legitimacy and authority, the political, economic, and social processes of a society are likely to lead to social conflict. It seems that this aspect of conflict generation has not been examined in depth by conflict analysis practitioners. Looking back at the Axial age breakthroughs, it is permissible to draw the conclusion that it was at this time of breakdown that the sages appeared on the social scene and took up cudgels on behalf of the aggrieved and deprived sections of society.

The next chapter briefly examines the idea and working of social justice and identity in society.

Chapter 11: Social Justice and Identity

The issue of social justice has become center stage in the discourse of conflict resolution. As early as 1968 Herman Schmid raised the issue with

those working in the field for failing to engage critically with issues of social justice. Absence of war on its own (negative peace) can obscure deep injustices which make mockery of peace, and if unaddressed, contain the seeds of future violent conflict. (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, pp. 44–45)

Rubenstein as well Black and Avruch each addressed the issue of social justice in the context of the multi-faceted ethical concerns that preoccupied their erstwhile colleague Jim Laue.

Rubenstein has brought under scrutiny the ‘conversation’ between John Burton and Jim Laue. His point of reference is the three concepts of social justice posited by Morton Deutsch for the purpose of establishing a “Good Society” (Rubenstein, 1999a). These principles are: Equity, Equality, and Need. Equity denotes a distribution of goods, services, and tangible values that is proportional to the individual merits of the society’s members; equity represents “a distribution in which each person is assumed to have the right to the same quantity or quality of values regardless of his or her merit. And Need indicates a distribution in which values are proportioned to the needs (neither merits nor mere wants) of each individual” (Rubenstein, 1999a). These three concepts become manifest in various combinations in practical life. Rubenstein looked at the Burton- Laue discussions in the context of Deutsch’s analysis, as well as Rawl’s theory of justice. He

found points of convergence as also divergence. However, in one area Laue's perspective was quite different:

Jim believed strongly that peaceful, incremental social transformation could take place only if motivated by a combination of social affection (Christian love or agape, as he might have put it) and enlightened self-interest. This is one reason he parted company with John Burton, since in Burton's view, nothing can substitute for the satisfaction of basic human needs." (Rubenstein, 1999a)

Rubenstein offers the speculation that Burton, from a conflict resolution angle, would have arranged Deutsch's triple coordinates into a "hierarchy" with Need at the top, followed by Equity, and, after that Equality.

Avruch looked at the ethical issues that agitated Laue from the perspective of culture. Laue's dominant concern was to ensure social justice ("a just society is one in which public are fully participative, and key resources are adequately and equitably distributed" (Peter Black & Avruch, 1999), and to this end Laue's realism that "whereas justice and freedom are desired goals or end-state, power is what is necessary to bring this about...The out party's possession of power is, ultimately, the only guarantee that it will at least be given hearing by the establishment .In the absence of any effective power - even if, initially and typically, power only to disturb the status quo – the in party has no need to recognize or listen to the out party " (Peter Black & Avruch, 1999). The issue of culture, like issues of power, ethics, and morality remains to be addressed in the equation of conflict analysis and conflict resolution. The two analysis point to the nexus between good society and culture.

The tensions highlighted by Rubenstein, Black and Avruch point to the necessity to clarify, elucidate, and expand understanding of social justice as a vital component of conflict resolution. These, of course, are tensions of growth and progress, and not of stagnation or regress.

Public Justice and Social Justice

The idea of justice has been conceptualized as an end and as a means. It represents “the collective feelings and aspirations of men politically, theologically or otherwise” (Forkosch, 1973, pp. 658–659). Scriptures, covenants, and systems of law have struggled, over millennia, to find objective criteria of justice. Plato, Aristotle, and Hobbes (among others) have offered various definitions of justice in the realm of politics. Religious thinkers such as Augustine, Aquinas (and many others) have sought to define justice as constant and absolute emanating from Divine Reason. At the practical level, the source of the idea of justice has been attributed to “history, custom, or the spirit of the people” (*Volkgeist*) (Forkosch, 1973, p. 658). Modern scholars have opened new pathways for achieving social justice.

Historically, stratification entrenched inequality in the social order. An important cause of injustice is the continuing compartmentalization of society into “divisions of class, gender, rank, location, religion, community and other established barriers” (Sen, 2009, p. 389). It has been argued “Plato and Aristotle would...state the logic of (Hammurabi’s) code by arguing that justice consists not in giving equal rights to men naturally, but in giving every man his due” (Forkosch, 1973, p. 658). Idealists continue to

argue for giving equal opportunity to every individual to realize their full human potential. At the social level, the ideal of justice (to achieve a perfectly just world), like all ideals, is and will remain unattainable in an imperfect world.

Isaiah Berlin, has asked: “How...could the great utopian hopes of the 18th and 19th centuries...have given way to the 20th century horrors of Nazism and Soviet Communism?” Berlin argued that “the ideas that a perfectly just society could be created and that reason could be its unshakable foundation were the very ideas that led to communist tyranny” (Rothstein, 1998). The optimism generated by the self-confidence and idea of continuous progress has given way to grim realities of a conflicted world.

The French Enlightenment of the 18th century proclaimed the supremacy of the rule of reason, and of empirical knowledge over traditional, transcendental, ancient wisdom and values. Opposition to this dogma offered by “the relativist and skeptical tradition that went back to the ancient world” (Berlin, 1981, p. 1). The relativist doctrine going back to Greek sophists was predicated on the premise that beliefs involving value-judgments, and the institutions founded upon them, rested not on discoveries of objective and observable and unalterable natural facts, but on human opinion, which was variable and differed between different societies, and at different times, that moral and political values, and in particular justice and social arrangements in general, rested on fluctuating human conventions (Berlin, 1981, p. 2).

Prominent 20th century thinkers have conceptualized justice in various ways. Among these are: John Rawls, Amartya Sen, Jürgen Habermas. All three give reason a central role. Rawls has defined justice in one word, “fairness” (Rawls, 1973, p. 11). For

him, “A conception of social justice...is to be regarded as providing...a standard whereby the distributive aspects of the basic structure are to be assessed.” It appears to be predicated on the notion of a social contract among members of society “to act justly... the guiding idea is that the principles of justice for the basic structure of the society are the object of the original agreement.” The mutual objective is to choose “the principles which are to assign basic rights and duties and to determine the division of social benefits” (Rawls, 1973, pp. 10–11). Rawls, in *The Law of Peoples* (2003) extends the application (of the definition of justice) “to mean the particular political principles for regulating the mutual political relations between peoples...” (Rawls, 2003, p. 3). He makes a distinction between people (acting as citizens), and “people acting through their governments [i.e. states]”. For a student of conflict resolution, these features resonate with the desiderata urged by Burton and Azar.

Rawls identifies three features of a free (or liberal) society: “a reasonably just constitutional democratic government that serves their fundamental interests... Citizens united by...common sympathies...and a moral nature...The first is institutional, the second is cultural, and the third requires firm attachment to a political (moral) conception of right and justice” (Rawls, 2003, p. 23).

Sen has conceded that “a perfectly just world” is not achievable. More importantly, he has given recognition to the idea of equal opportunity for each individual to realize their human potential. Sen accepts that “What moves us...is not the realization that the world falls short of being completely just...but that there are clearly remediable injustices around us which we want to eliminate” (Sen, 2009, p. vii). Sen’s point of

departure is the “centrality of human lives in reasoned assessments of the world in which we live” (Sen, 2009, p. 225). In addition to sanctity of life, Sen lists other desirable quality of life factors “particularly of social organization, including public healthcare, the assurance of medical care, the nature of schooling and education, the extent of social cohesion and harmony...” (Sen, 2009, p. 227).

Sen has extended his argument to the idea of global democracy to include the role of “many institutions including the United Nations and the institutions associated with it...[and] the committed work of citizens’ organizations, of many NGOs and parts of the news media” (Sen, 2009, pp. 408–409).

Sen has persuasively argued:

We could have been creatures incapable of sympathy, unmoved by the pain and humiliation of others, uncaring of freedom, and no less significant - unable to reason, argue, disagree and concur. The strong presence of these features in human lives...does indicate that the general pursuit of justice might be hard to eradicate inhuman society, even though we go about that pursuit in different ways (Sen, 2009, pp. 414–415).

Sen contends that: “The connection between the disparate theories of justice have to be firmly noted since, in the debates about different theories tends to be on differences rather than on similarities...And yet there is an important shared involvement in being concerned with justice in the first place” (Sen, 2009, p. 413).

Rama Mani has identified three categories of public justice: “legal justice”, “rectificatory justice”, and “distributive justice” The relevance of “legal justice” (through the rule of law) consists in establishing truth of events in protracted social conflicts. However, establishing responsibility for violence and war does not eradicate the physical and emotional damage inflicted upon victims (especially women and children who

become collateral damage.) More than physical damage, the “invisible effects” are severe and long lasting. Rectificatory justice deals with “past abuses in response to gross human rights violations.” Distributive justice endeavors to address “the structural and systemic injustices such as political and economic discrimination and inequalities of distribution that are frequently underlying causes of conflict” (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, pp. 249-250). The Conflict Resolution discipline provides the forum and forms to action Mani’s rectificatory justice. Conflict resolution, thus, seeks to bridge the gap between revenge (eye for an eye), amnesia (forgive and forget), and reconciliation (reconstruction of relationships). Examples of each of the foregoing are: the genocide in Rwanda (indiscriminate revenge); Spain after the death of Franco (collective amnesia); Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa (the “third way” between Nuremberg and amnesia”) (Ramsbotham et al., 2012, pp. 248–255).

The experience of conflict resolution practitioners indicates that “though religion itself can sometimes be direct, primary source of antagonism and enmity among people, religious fanaticism and inter-religious belligerence do not generally stand alone but are most commonly catalyzed by powerful determinants external to religion itself (Steenbrink, 2002, p. 388). The demand for social justice represents one of these determinants. Almost all religious institutions involved with conflict resolution demand social justice for people who do not have a strong enough constituency that will articulate to the policymakers their needs and wants. The validity of this view appears to be borne out by the experience of conflicts now plaguing some of the Middle Eastern and North African countries.

A cardinal rule of jurisprudence is that “law needs to be related to the system of values recognized in the particular community in which it operates” (Lloyd, 1991, p. 116). Conventional wisdom is that law is equivalent to justice. This is not necessarily so. The idea of justice has varied implications. Fundamentally, justice itself is a moral value, and essential “to attain the good life” (Lloyd, 1991, p. 117). Inherent in this concept are number of implications. Amongst them: performance of a person or thing within its own “sphere” (Plato’s formulation); and equality of treatment before law in accordance with prescribed rules in consonance with “the moral or social needs of the particular society” (Lloyd, 1991, p. 120). Seligman has highlighted the tension between “liberty and equality, between the autonomous individual and that mutuality existing between individuals, in essence between the terms of justice and those of social solidarity (Seligman, 1995, p. 102).

The relationship between law and justice is complex. Justice according to law incorporates three principles, namely, “the existence of rules, their generality, and impartial application.” Justice as an idea is a concept of “rational order and coherence.” In concrete terms, rendering of substantial justice involves consideration of ethical values, as also of equity in tempering justice with mercy (Lloyd, 1991). The express purpose of law is to render “substantial justice” within the value system of a particular society. In order to achieve this end, every formal system builds in “certain flexibility in the rules of ...organs of legal administration” (Lloyd, 1991).

The foregoing bulwarks notwithstanding, present day legal systems have become cluttered with complexity and ambiguities, and elaborate and expensive procedures. As a

result, formal legal systems have not been very effective in achieving conflict resolution to the satisfaction of the constituencies they serve. The Conflict Resolution discipline has tried to bridge the gap.

Proponents of conflict resolution as an adjunct to, or outside, the judicial system point to the relative ease, speed, and financial efficacy of conflict resolution mechanisms; opponents condemn the practice as an instrument of control of the less privileged designed to maintain the status quo, and to undermine equality before the law. Neither seems to concede that their approach has failed to render social justice.

Identity

One of the important elements of social justice is to allow individuals and groups to have, maintain, and nurture one or more identities. The concept of identity is a social construct. The construct is of relatively recent origin. Erikson (1993) developed the idea in the 1950s. It is something of an enigma. Identity is currently used in two linked senses: social (a social category) and personal (a distinguishing characteristic that a person takes pride in, or views as socially consequential but more or less unchangeable (Fearon, 1999).

The topic of identity is interrelated with those of power and culture. Born, raised and having lived in highly differentiated, multicultural, multiethnic, multiracial society, I have been painfully aware of the gamut of bigotry, prejudice, discrimination, power and control exercised by a dominant authority. Aware thus of the role of culture in forming and sustaining individuals as well as groups, I know that to analyze identity without

factoring in power and culture would be like staging Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark!

Black recognises several identities in the context of Conflict Resolution: social, ethnicity, race, gender, religion, kinship, nationalism (2003). He points out that aggressive assertion of identity is a cause of conflict; conversely, “conflict can play an important role in generating and sustaining social identity”. Each of the foregoing categories leads to the formation of group identity. Black pleads for the idea of identity not to get trapped in “the detached debates of academic social theory” (P. Black, 2003, p. 122)

Identity wraps itself around a flag (e.g. nationality), a revered icon (e.g. religion), external caste or sartorial markers (e.g. culture), ideology (e.g. Communism, Ujamaa in Tanzania), compartmentalized constituencies (e.g. ethnicity, race, gender, kinship). In the global village, cosmopolitan identity will, most likely, compete for supremacy, over nationality. The resultant stresses will, in turn, generate conflict issues of their own. Be that as it may, the relationship between identity and power will remain fraught with tension.

Variety and number makes identity an unstable concept. Power, its asymmetries and longevity make it a powerful competitor and aggressor. In the cosmopolitan world, Cosmopolitans (Ramsbotham et al., 2012) will, sooner rather than later, have to grapple with the nettles of “identity politics” (P Black, 2003, p. 120).

The analysis given in the forgoing chapters explains, in the measure possible, the evolution and development of ideas of conflict and conflict resolution harking back to the

Axial Age and taking a recognizable form in the 21st century. The next chapter is a broad summary of what has been discussed in more detail earlier.

Chapter 12: Fruits of the Axial Flowerings and Lessons Learned

The spirit of the Axial Flowerings became anchored in different institutions. In China, it resided in civil society. In India, it remained enshrined in the ritual practice of religion, but purged of its cruelty and violence. In Greece, it took root in philosophy, and the processes of polity. In the eastern Mediterranean it was grounded in monotheism. However, the resulting ethical norms had universal features, albeit expressed in the idiom and vocabulary of local society. The underlying impulse was “the seeds of the self-abandonment that would be crucial to all the religious tradition of the Axial Age” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 86). Its hallmarks were non-violence, compassion, empathy, reciprocity and justice.

The transition in the Axial Flowerings over a period of about 700 years was gradual, incremental, qualitative, and demographically limited. It was evolutionary and not revolutionary. Changes were grafted onto an existing system to accommodate the evolving conditions of urbanization, improving economy, spread of education, and political awakening. The changes were within the social structure of each society. The disparity of the rate of progress, the convergence of the religious and ethical traditions underlined, if nothing else, the common humanity and common aspiration of humankind.

The sages of the Axial Flowerings were to become agents of change. The most striking aspect of the sages’ approach was radical. For example, they treated religion as non-normative and open ended to the extent that:

Some sages steadfastly refused even to discuss theology, claiming that it was distracting and damaging. Others argued that it was immature, unrealistic, and perverse to look for the kind of certainty that many people expect religion to provide” (Armstrong, 2006, p. xiii).

Each sage tried to fashion, in his own time and in consonance with the prevailing social and other conditions, a new ethical vision. The cumulative effect of these diverse endeavors resulted in, according to Armstrong, the Great Transformation that became the template for understanding the unchanging and changing role of religion and ethics in human affairs. The unchanging role is the relevance of religion and ethics for multitude of peoples in their daily life; the changing role is the innovative and imaginative way of reinterpreting religious prescriptions, traditions, practices, rites and rituals to meet the existential needs of modern society. Neither religion nor ethics is frozen in time. Both are dynamic.

Overall, the spirit of the Axial Flowerings resulted in a reimagining of the world in terms of worldly realities rather than mythology, in doing good to human beings rather than propitiating gods, in terms of introspection and spirituality rather than external emotions and arid theology, in terms of beneficial change rather than static monotony.

The insights of the sages provided failsafe recipes for the prevention, containment, management, resolution, and transformation of conflict. Notwithstanding the undoubted progress, the Axial Age did not succeed in ending conflict, eradicating unhappiness, or in clearing the ambiguity surrounding religion and spirituality. This condition remains the legacy for human kind even after two millennia.

Answers to the Axial Flowerings Questions

My case for the ancient ancestry of conflict resolution and its modern relevance is predicated on the foundation of a clear definition of ideas of religion, of ethics, and culture during the Axial Flowerings, and on the spirit and insights of the sages of the time. The strands of these notions have constituted the warp and weft of every major society. They crystallized during the release of religious, ethical, and intellectual energies, initially in four particular geographical areas. These flowered later at different times in other parts of the world.

These fundamental ideas have remained patent for 2000 years and more. They have evolved, been modified, refined, and expanded to meet the existential needs of society. In that sense, they are perennially ‘modern’. They also constitute the bedrock of conflict resolution in the modern world. They are ‘old medicine’. The issue to be addressed is: Can they be put into ‘new vessels’?

There are several modern receptacles into which the medicine can be poured. Some of these are: religious institutions, civil society, regional and global government and non-governmental institutions, supranational global institutions.

The quanta of historically perpetual problems have remained constant. These problems include: denial of human dignity, poverty, hunger, disease, insecurity, social injustice, violation of human rights, exclusion from political participation, distinctions and imposed disabilities of class, ethnicity, and race.

The complexity of the situation is compounded by a host of new issues with global dimensions on the horizon: convulsive change in the basic social institutions

(family, marriage, parenting, gender affiliations), identity, nationality and patriotism, pervasive impact of social media, and the resulting militancy.

The answers penned below have to be viewed in the light of the foregoing background.

What is the spirit (as also the insights) of the Axial Flowerings?

The spirit of the Axial Flowerings can be encapsulated in the following statement: The Axial sages wished to become agents of beneficial change, to make life human-centric rather than god-centric, to encourage search for meaning and purpose of human life through the application of human intellect and power of reasoning (as opposed to unreasoning and blind submission to the forces of nature), to understanding of natural phenomena, to create consciousness of spiritual dimension of life, to improve the quality of life, and to achieve stable society through minimization of conflict, factionalism, and strife.

The sages' dissatisfaction with the wretched conditions, and alienation from the society spurred them to speak truth to power. The price they paid was notoriety and hostility of the elite; the long term achievement was reform and progress.

The insights gained by the sages of the Axial Flowerings can be identified as:

- Recognition of the fundamental sanctity and dignity of individual human beings.
- Respecting diversity of religions - Maintaining healthy skepticism about faith.

- Tolerance - Nurturing respect, cooperation, and pluralism across faiths and cultures.
- Nurturing ethics - Establishing and respecting universal ethical sensibilities.
- Promoting virtues of compassion, love, empathy, and justice.
- Deepening spiritual dimension of religion - Preaching and practicing a life of spiritual and ethical commitment.
- Upholding healthy civil society - Encouraging and strengthening institutions of associational living.
- Protecting human rights - Promoting democracy and mutual understanding across all nations.
- Combining the worlds of faith, reason, and action based on ethical premise.
- Protecting creative free expression.
- Investing in enlightened education to dispel a “conflict of ignorance.”
- Encouraging more dialogue and understanding amongst different faiths.

The essence of the spirit plays out (or, more correctly, should play out) in several domains of human activity, namely, Religious; Ethical; Social; Political; Economic. The ethical norms enunciated by the sages were evolved against a background of conflict, violence, chaos, confusion, and pessimism.

An incisive insight of the sages is anchored on the bedrock of an ethical life coupled with “disciplined and habitual life” (Armstrong, 2006, p. xiv). This insight was

translated into “the empathic spirituality of the Golden Rule” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 391). The Golden Rule privileged humanity over theology, empathy over orthodoxy, substance over form. According to Armstrong, for the sages of Axial Age, “religion was the Golden Rule” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 392).

The spirit of the Axial Age flowerings pervades three domains - religion, ethics, and culture. The sages of the Axial Flowerings reconceptualized religious prescriptions, rearticulated rules of ethics, and realigned cultural norms.

The first resulted in the birth of two new religions namely, Zarathustraism (Zoroastrian) in the eastern Mediterranean and Buddhism in India. Confucius through his teachings of ethics undergirded the code of social conduct in China.

Toynbee in his book, *Mankind and Mother Earth*, has identified “five great seers” of the Axial Flowerings. These are: Zarathustra, ‘Deutero-Isaiah’, the Buddha, Confucius, and Pythagoras (Toynbee, 1976). Toynbee’s perspective on history was essentially “New departures in Spiritual Life” (1976, p. 176).

Zarathustra advanced the most spiritually potent concepts - immortality, the Last Judgment, God’s operation through the Holy Spirit...” that began a new religion in the eastern Iran based on the concept of a conflict between a spirit of light and good and a spirit of darkness and evil. These concepts, according to Toynbee, transited eventually into Judaism and Christianity (1976).

In China, Confucius (and others) tried to realign the “traditional rites” to their proper performance “concentrated on this world”, and away from the desire “to gain the favor of the gods” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 205). He redefined the role of a gentleman as “a

scholar not a warrior” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 204). His object was to shift the emphasis from “sacrifices (performed) simply to gain the favor of the gods” to practicing goodness in this world. (Armstrong, 2006, p. 204)

In the Hellenistic world, Pythagoras founded a new religion that had a fivefold credo (reality rooted in mathematics; spiritual purification through philosophy; elevation of soul to union with divinity; mystical significance of certain symbols; strict loyalty and secrecy to the Order) (O’Connor & Robertson, 1999).

In India the Buddha sought, found, and preached liberation through *nibbana*, (nirvana) from the trauma of human aging, illness, death, sorrow, corruption, and cycle reincarnation (Armstrong, 2006, p. 274).

In the eastern Mediterranean, the prophet Isaiah conveyed the message of God to his people that He did not want empty prayers or meaningless sacrifices, but practical actions to “cease to do evil, learn to do good, search for justice, help the oppressed, be just to the orphan, plead for the widow” (Rubenstein, 2006, p. 45).

It is not difficult to see the demarcation between the sacred and the secular in the seminal insights of these sages.

What are the insights to be derived from the great spiritual, economic, social, cultural, and political changes that took place in the Axial Flowerings?

The most momentous outcome of the Axial Flowerings at religious level was “the attainment by an individual being, of a direct personal relation with the ultimate spiritual

reality in and behind the Universe in which Man finds himself” (Toynbee, 1976, p. 178). This insight became the heart of spirituality of belief.

At the secular level, the world became ‘human-centered rather than god-centered.’” The most valuable insight was that human beings have intellect, and that by using the faculty of reason coupled with action, human beings can find answers to most, if not all their problems. But hubris about human intellectual and innovative potential debased the currency of faith.

The insights of the sages sharpened the perceptions of human nature and moral precepts (witness: the impassioned messages delivered by the prophets in the Jewish tradition) (Rubenstein, 2006). Paying heed to these messages saved the community from calamities; disregarding them led to internecine wars and to death and destruction.

Economic (and technological) changes during the Axial Flowerings laid the foundation for the emergence of stable society. These changes consisted of the development of agriculture (resulting in surplus and storage of food), domestication of plants and animals, and refinement of existing technology (guns, steel, swords) (Diamond, 2005b). The positive reward was the release of leisure time to indulge in observation of the physical world and universe (science), and equally important, “extending to man himself, his nature, and his place in order of things, the character of human society, and the best way of governing it” (Kelly, 1994, p. 1). The negative fallout from the new-found wealth and prosperity was the unequal distribution of the fruits; hence frustrations and social unrest and strife.

The progression of social structure from nuclear family, to clan, to village community, to urban organization resulted in introduction of impersonal institutions. These institutions attenuated personal relationships, and placed individuals into relationships in collective and impersonal institutions of society. The positive lesson was that cooperation and mutual support provided safety and security to all to those committed to associational living. The flip side was competition for control of resources, assertion of group identity, and social stratification that led to division into class, caste, race, and elitism. The resulting tensions became the breeding ground for protracted social conflict.

On the front of culture, the sages clearly articulated the generic (“direct(ing) attention to universal attributes of human behavior, to human nature” (Avruch, 2012). The other aspect of (local) traditional values underwent continuous change to accommodate the existential needs, mores, sophistication of society, as also constant changes of technology (Jaspers, 1953) (Avruch’s analogy of continual evolution and interaction between culture and language (e.g. English) illustrates the point).

Positive aspects of culture led to development of social conscious, and to refinement and promotion of high culture. Negative aspects triggered wars across cultural boundaries. Identity conflicts centered on culture (and religion) manacled individuals (in the famous words of Rousseau: “Man is born free, mankind has fettered itself in chains.”)

Politics provided a coherent framework for orderly management of a complex society. Subordination of individual freedom to an institution made it possible to avoid friction, and violent and ongoing conflict. Bureaucracy at various levels prescribed and

regulated individual actions. On the other hand, power and its ramifications became a perennial source of competition and contention. Institutions became the vehicle for control of hearts and minds of ordinary people (Foucault).

The positive and negative ramifications of the Axial Flowerings have remained, for better and worse, the legacy for mankind.

What was the role of power, culture, ethics, religion, and civil society during the Axial Flowerings?

The foundation of civilization rested upon a number of pillars: a critical mass of hunter gatherers adopting a way of settled life; creation of agricultural surpluses generated by improved use of tools; advancement of technology; urbanization et al. Urbanization led to the development of cities clustered around “a religious center or market” (Roberts, 1986, p. 61). Creation of agricultural wealth led to the emergence of the priestly class that elaborated “a complex religious structure.” This was followed by construction of monumental buildings, development of language, and documentation of oral literature. The cumulative outcome was the emergence of capacity to “change the human scale of things” (Roberts, 1986, p. 61). A second, and equally important, outcome was the awareness of “human consciousness and purposefulness” (Toynbee, 1976, p. 2).

Establishment of methods to organize and control people and their environment was an important element in the development of society. It seems this process was begun as early as 6000-5000 BCE. The origin of power is to be found in the influence exercised by the priestly class, as also in the social stratification of society. Social differentiation was common in China, India, eastern Mediterranean, and Greece.

In China, traditional status constituted the society. Basically there were two levels - aristocracy, and peasantry. The aristocracy included royalty, and nobility. Power remained concentrated in the hands of aristocrats. However, Confucius opened the way to upward social mobility by redefining and enlarging the role of a nobleman to that of a “true gentleman (who) should be a scholar and not a warrior”. For Confucius, “everybody had the potential to become a *Junzi*...a fully developed human being” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 201). Post-Confucius, his teachings helped to correct the imbalance in the power structure “by substituting ability for birth as the criterion for employment in public service; and the consequent extension to all classes of the opportunity and the insecurity which had previously been the peculiar concern of an aristocratic minority” (Toynbee, 1976, p. 217).

In India, the structure of the society, originally based on the division between invaders (the Aryans) and the conquered (the Natives), crystallized into four castes: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishyas, and Shudhra. This structure has endured to this day. The resultant rigidity also determined the power structure of the Indian society (Toynbee, 1976, p. 143).

In the eastern Mediterranean, the Jewish society was predicated on the view that “history was a meaningful story, providentially ordained, a cosmic drama of the unfolding design of the one, omnipotent God for His chosen people.” The foundation and stability of the society was anchored on the obedience to “His law” (Roberts, 1986, p. 250).

In Greece, the binding force for the society (Hellenes) was a shared culture, a common language (Greek), a shared religion and myth.

It is relevant to note that in recent discourse, the limit set by Jaspers on historical epochs has been modified to bring under consideration known Axial civilizations, as also those who left no written records other than archeological remnants. This approach, according to some scholars, vitiates or dilutes the uniqueness of the Axial age. They consider Axial breakthroughs as a continual process manifesting itself in different place, at different times, and at different circumstances. The most striking example is the advent of Islam in the 7th century.

Opportunities and Challenges for Conflict Resolution

In the present context of myriad of territorial, political, economic, and social conflicts, the conflict resolution field has unique opportunity to be a significant player in ameliorating, if not eliminating, destructive strife.

A number of challenges, however, continue to subsist. These include “the tension between art and science, practice and theory, dominance of practice over theory, theory lagging behind practice, concentration of practice in “the West and situated in special portions of it” (Avruch et al., 1998, p. 40).

Another challenge is that the ‘migrants’ from many disciplines bring with them the theories and practices of their ‘mother’ disciplines. The presence of plethora of disciplines has created diversity, but not unity. The challenge is to determine whether this diversity is a help or a hindrance to the application of Conflict Resolution-specific rules of ethics. A further challenge is how to address the complex issues relating to minority

groups (and others) who have become center stage in the field of conflict and conflict resolution.

Morgan Brigg has, in *The New Politics of Conflict Resolution: Responding to Difference* (2008) projected his personal experience based on his work with Aborigines in Australia. He presents a new challenge - that of recognition of “difference”, with particular reference to the increasing assertion of indigenous traditions of conflict resolution (and rejection of the dominance of “the broadly Western values”). The ethical dimension highlighted by Brigg is that conflict resolution processes, conceived and articulated in the Western tradition, underrate, subordinate, devalue, marginalize, and push into relative obscurity, the conflict resolution processes of diverse local traditions. Brigg’s concern is valid. But accommodating that concern, more particularly the subjective experience and viewpoint of the intervener, runs the risk of making the intervener part of the problem, instead of part of the solution. What is required, perhaps, is the sensitivity and respect of the intervener (à la Lederach) for the local culture, traditions, and value system.

Given the source, evolution, development, nexus with other disciplines, opportunities and challenges, of the conflict resolution field, lessons can be learnt from other disciplines to reinforce the core of ethics of conflict resolution.

Lessons Learned

The analysis made in this study yield the following lessons relevant to conflict formation and conflict resolution:

- Conflict is an integral part of every human society.

- Conflict can be destructive as well as constructive.
- Conflict leads to change, sometime beneficial, and sometimes harmful.
- All conflicts are ultimately resolved, but not always permanently.
- Many factors play a part in the generation, management and settlement of conflict.
- Among the factors are: Religion; Ethics; Civil Society, History, Geography, Economics, Politics, and Technology.
- Conflict resolution as a craft and as an academic discipline derives its impulse from the spirit and insights of the sages of the Axial Flowerings.
- The recipes for conflict resolution developed by the sages have achieved mixed results.
- Conflict generation and conflict resolution in the 21st century, unlike previous epochs, are played out in macro context.
- Generation, management, and resolution of conflict in the 21st century is not confined to national states.
- Regional and international forces, structures, institutions, and actors play an important part in the generation and resolution of conflict in the 21st century.
- The impulses that drive the efforts for conflict resolution are located in the seminal insights of the sages of the Axial Flowerings.
- The insights of the sages provide pathways to conflict resolution in the 21st century.

- Scimecca's division of conflict and conflict resolution into spiritual and secular remains valid. Each domain plays a significant part in the generation, escalation, and resolution of conflict.

The received wisdom in the discipline of conflict resolution is that peace and justice are neither mutually exclusive nor natural allies. Each is considered to be a desirable end but the issue of privileging one over the other is dictated by a host of complex factors connected with the conflict. Geography, history, culture, religion, ideology, politics, and economics all play varying roles in the analysis and settlement of conflicts, as also in the future trajectory of the settlement. There is thus a dynamic tension between peace and justice as the desired goals of a settlement.

From a broader perspective, the root cause of tension between the concepts of peace and justice can perhaps be traced to the genesis and evolution of conflict analysis and resolution as a multi-disciplinary science. The discipline of international relations (IR), as the precursor of conflict analysis and resolution, arose in the aftermath of World War I. The basic assumption then was that wars were the fundamental problem in the way of world peace, and the realist theory of power operating in the international arena was the answer. The horrendous toll extracted by World War II exploded this myth. Equally importantly, it underlined the need for an interdisciplinary enterprise drawing its discourse from all the social sciences and even further afield.

The initiatives taken by pioneers like Boulding, Burton, and others marked the emergence of the discipline of conflict analysis and resolution.

In a parallel development, other conflict resolution processes, and agencies were coming into being in the United States. Among these were: vehicles to streamline organizational relations (mainly in industry) and community relations, active involvement of religious figures in ‘peacemaking’, and the emergence of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms.

More recently, Lederach, Montville, Appleby, Johnston, Gopin et al. have underlined the rich resources of texts, traditions and rituals within all major religions for conflict resolution through individual and institutional interventions, faith-based diplomacy, inter-faith dialogue, as also for post conflict healing through truth, forgiveness, mercy, and reconciliation processes. Some have also sensed the presence of religious sensibility (disclaimed by the proponents) in the relatively new intervention of transformative mediation.

In the last third of the 20th century, a wide variety of interests (ethnic, gender, environmental et al) pressed their claims for a say in the society’s political and other activities. Groups representing significant number of individuals aggressively pursued the cause of social justice. The proponents of social justice found some of the new approaches of conflict resolution inimical to their aim to secure swift and complete social justice. At the heart of this problem is the over-arching issue of change and its pace. Any evolutionary change seems to move at a glacial pace. There is, thus, a constant tension between pace of change, on the one hand, and social justice on the other.

The term “social justice” is very wide, and has different connotations in different disciplines. A generally accepted definition is: “the constellation of theories and

practices, which are chiefly concerned with analyzing and addressing persistent social inequities” (Schoeny & Warfield, 2000).

In the discourse of conflict, peace and justice are given varied connotations. One school of thought considers peace and justice as mutually incompatible, the implication being (as I understand it) that conflict analysts can achieve one or the other, but not both at the same time. This argument seems to rest on the premise that imposition of peace lies in the realm of politics that is often dictated by the geo-political priorities of the intervening superior power; justice as a dividend of peace is, more likely than not, incidental (if not accidental!).

Another school contends neither of these concepts is as monolithic as is often made out. They see negative peace and positive peace (of Galtung’s formulation) as two ends connected by justice to form a continuum. Additionally, justice is also seen as multidimensional, branching out through the paths of establishment of rule of law, rectificatory justice, and structural adjustments to ensure future equity, leading up to reconstitution of relationship, and ultimately to reconciliation.

Protracted conflict creates rupture in human relationship and breakdown of social institutions. Neither peace nor justice by itself can provide a lasting solution. Peace without justice is degradation of humanity; justice without peace is a sure recipe for perpetual conflict. Reconciliation is one long-term way of bridging the two. Many conflict specialists have canvassed the merit of reconciliation as an effective process of relationship repair. Imaging the future, and structuring lasting (and equitable) agreements can secure future unity, security, cooperation, and harmony. Justice can be achieved by

neutralizing the past through confession and mutual forgiveness, and, in the measure possible, by material and other compensations. Globalization and the events of 9/11 have underlined the deep antagonism between the haves and the have-nots that can perhaps be explained in terms of the tension between security (peace), and human rights (justice). Scholars, policy makers, and conflict specialists are now addressing this unresolved issue under the rubric of holistic human development.

Conclusions

This study points to the following broad conclusions:

- Conflict in the 21st century will be generated by the demands of a variety of constituencies. Among these are: activists for distinct ethnic, religious and cultural identities; “the 1% of the world” demanding social justice and participation in political and development processes; gender equality activists; constituencies representing different social, cultural and sexual orientations; promoters of communal against individual welfare, etc.
- Conflict resolution discipline and practice must provide solutions to meet the needs and demands of these varied constituencies.
- Conflict resolution in the 21st century as an academic discipline and a craft is a valid vehicle to develop solutions to meet the needs of the varied constituencies.
- Conflict resolution enterprise has become established, and is a candidate for expansion as a multi-disciplinary cosmopolitan academic endeavor and as a profession.

- Practice and theory of conflict resolution interact with each other to open innovative pathways to the multiple and complex conflicts that are the staple of daily life in the 21st century.
- The spirit and insights of the sages of the Axial Flowerings afford a valid nexus between conflict resolution in the past, and present-day conflict resolution theories and practices.
- Scholars and practitioners of conflict resolution should craft their theories and practices with due regard to (and, indeed, application, adoption, and adaptation of) the seminal insights of the sages of the Axial Flowerings.

Quo Vadis?

My study has opened for me a vast sea of insights and understanding of the idea of Conflict Resolution and its many facets and implications. The sea is dotted with several islands each of which has its own culturally legitimated systems of conflict formation, conflict analysis, and conflict settlement. These islands can be identified as: Coercion; Diplomacy; Scriptural Prescriptions; Moral Suasion; Cultural Inheritance. The proclaimed aim of each is to avoid violence, to alleviate human suffering, to secure social justice, and to establish a just social order. Equally implicit in the operation of each system are the overt and covert agendas of exercising control over territory, people, and resources. Each system is burdened with internal and external tensions.

Reflecting upon these insights raises the question: Can the energies and potentials of each system be harnessed under a universal system drawing upon the strengths of

each, and neutralizing, in the measure possible, their weaknesses? I believe this desirable end is achievable.

Conflict resolution is one of the several fields of study (e.g. conflict formation and settlement; diplomacy; international relations; the Axial breakthroughs; the history of ideas et al.) engaged in preventing conflict, resolving conflict, and crafting a new, nonviolent and just social order. These fields are presently uncoordinated, with each group 'doing its own thing'. What the enterprise needs is to bring the groups under Volkanian "Big Tent".

The ideas presented in the following paragraphs represent the conclusions drawn from the lived experience of a voluntary mediator, a practicing lawyer, and a business executive. I am consciously articulating them as a thinking process as I do not pretend that I have fully understood or reflected upon the multifarious implications, ramifications and complexities of each individual idea. Each represents the germination of a thought that needs to be tended and nurtured with loving care. I have tried to group these thoughts under subjectively chosen headings.

Development of Second Order Thinking

Following Burton, I believe it is vital for conflict specialists to continue conceptualization and development of the theoretical base of conflict resolution in a much wider context than hereto before. The future success of Conflict Resolution will lie in the pursuit of the hopeful dream of peace and justice achieved not simultaneously, but sequentially through the use of a variety of interventions, including the relatively new

(and still evolving) insights, methods, and applications generated by conflict specialists, by in-depth study and understanding of the history of ideas, and by transformative techniques implicit in the insights of the Axial Flowerings.

I personally subscribe to the view that Conflict Resolution theorists and practitioners will need to pay due regard to, and seek a balance between, the transcendental and secular aspects of life. Both play a part in the prevention, generation, management, and resolution of conflict.

Conflict Resolution in the 21st century presents several dimensions. First, although conceived in the Western tradition, it now operates in all areas of the world affected by internal or external conflict. Second, in Azerian terms the ramifications of conflict and conflict resolution, irrespective their origin, reverberate locally and globally. Third, in terms of Lederach's "pyramid of leadership" conflict resolution operates at all levels of society - grassroots, middle level, and the highest level. Fourth, in terms of the consolidators and re-constructors, the corpus of knowledge is being refined, modified, and expanded in the light of new experiences, and importation of knowledge from other disciplines. Fifth, appropriate organization structures are put in place to cater for the needs of constituencies at different levels. Sixth, the actors involved are not necessarily conflict specialists; they represent a wide spectrum of people with knowledge and experience from different walks of life. Seventh, the attitude of conflict resolution practitioners towards the home grown paradigms is pragmatic. They are open to new learning and to move on.

Organization Structures

At the international level, there are several sets of organizations – United Nations and its multifarious associate agencies (e.g. The International Criminal Court); institutions connected with sovereign states (e.g. USAID) serving in foreign countries; agencies operating independently at international level (e.g. The International Committee of Red Cross); agencies affiliated with faith based communities (e.g. The Religious Society of Friends).

At the regional level there are organizations representing religious, philanthropic, social, economic, and other interests involved in human development, advocating protection of under privileged constituencies such as women, children, ethnic minorities et al. (Oxfam, Catholic Relief Services).

At the national level, governments have established cabinet level portfolios, with significant funding, to redress political, economic, social and other imbalances within and outside their nation state.

At the grass-root level are literally thousands of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that for many years have been quietly laboring in the fields of promotion of basic human rights and protection of vulnerable minorities.

At the grassroots the leadership consists of local leaders, leaders of indigenous NGOs, community developers, local health officials, refugee camp leaders. The middle-range leaders are: leaders respected in sectors, ethnic, religious leaders, academics,

intellectuals, humanitarian leaders (NGOs). The top leadership is represented by military, political, religious leaders with high visibility.

Equally indispensable is the presence of several tiers of independent but interrelated national, regional, and supra national bodies (e.g. Oxfam International). Many of these are connected, directly or indirectly with one or more national governments. Each of these institutions has its strengths and weaknesses. Cultural, political, social, and economic differences generate tensions that quite often become part of the problem rather than solution.

Conceptual Framework

The first task of the leaders of diverse fields would be to re-conceptualize and encapsulate the idea of Conflict Resolution within a very broad vision. The aim would be to review the current paradigms, find commonalities of definition, vocabulary, idiom, practice and application. In order to avoid bias two major requirements for the process of synthesis to succeed would be leadership, and frank, open and objective dialogue (not debate) among the interlocutors.

Coordination and leadership would necessarily have to be provided by an impartial outsider – an institution such as the United States Institute for Peace, or the Carnegie Foundation, or an individual with stature and standing (e.g. Kofi Annan, or George Mitchell, or Desmond Tutu).

Dialogue would be conducted through inter-disciplinary discussions at conferences (a la the Axial Age conferences), Seminars, Town Hall meetings of

professionals. Hopefully, SCAR can become the proverbial ‘Tent Pole’. Perhaps the Point of View property of SCAR could play a role in establishing a visible presence for the enterprise.

Two major anticipated outcomes would be emergence of a Consolidated Code of Conflict Resolution Practice; and the formation of a Grand alliance leading to the establishment of “Conflict Resolvers Without Borders”.

Academic Level

In order to meet the demands of the consolidated code, a Conflict Resolution professional in the 21st century will need a broad global perspective, and a base of knowledge and experience covering human nature, religion, culture, history of ideas, history, politics, and economics.

Knowledge of the theories, techniques, and methods of conflict analysis by themselves will not, in my view, adequately prepare an individual for the challenging task of practicing as a conflict specialist. Entry into the profession would be more beneficial if accompanied by previous exposure to, understanding and experience of the complexities and ramifications of the everyday reality of life in familiar and unfamiliar environments. Equally important will be a broad base of knowledge of subjects that will feature in the discourse of conflict analysis and conflict resolution.

If the foregoing conclusions are valid, a case can be made for expansion of the course offerings at SCAR at the undergraduate as well as graduate level. Such courses should include all or some of the following:

- History
- Role of Geography in Conflict and Conflict Resolution
- World Civilizations
- History of ideas
- Comparative religions (non-normative)
- Role of ethics in conflict resolution
- Alternative conceptions of civil society

Practice Level

SCAR is eminently well placed to take the leading role in the establishment of CONFLICT RESOLVERS WITHOUT BORDERS (an organization akin to Doctors Without Borders). SCAR is located in a city that is, for all practical purposes, center for decision making affecting the well-being of multitudes of people. There are other institutions (e.g. The United States Institute for Peace, Carnegie Foundation, et al) located in Washington D.C. (or within convenient distance) to enable amicable working relationships that can be forged. It would be relatively easy for such a group to mobilize financial support from philanthropists (e.g. Gates, Buffet et al.) and other members of the billionaires club who have pledged (and continue to pledge) significant portions of their wealth for the common good.

SCAR now has an established reputation in academia. However, it needs to take pro-active steps to create greater awareness in the general public about its work, and, perhaps more importantly, it's potential as a bulwark against violence and conflict.

The foregoing scenario can be viewed from different perspectives. A cynic might say it is an exercise in futility. A pessimist might dismiss it with a shrug, muttering “nothing but a pipe dream”. An optimist with imagination would enthuse “go all out for it”, for as the poet has said “a man’s reach should exceed his grasp – or what’s a heaven for?” My choice is clear.

In the long term perspective of history and geography, non-violent conflict resolution offers better hope for human kind’s survival than continuous conflict and unending enmity. I respectfully echo the expression of hope adopted by the authors of *Contemporary Conflict Resolution* (2005, p. 316) from Seamus Heaney’s *The Cure at Troy*:

History says, Don’t hope
On this side of grave
But then, once in a lifetime
The longed for tidal wave
Of justice can rise up
And hope and history rhyme

So hope for a great sea-change
On the far side of revenge
Believe that a further shore
Is reachable from here
Believe in miracles
And cures and healing wells.

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Biography

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