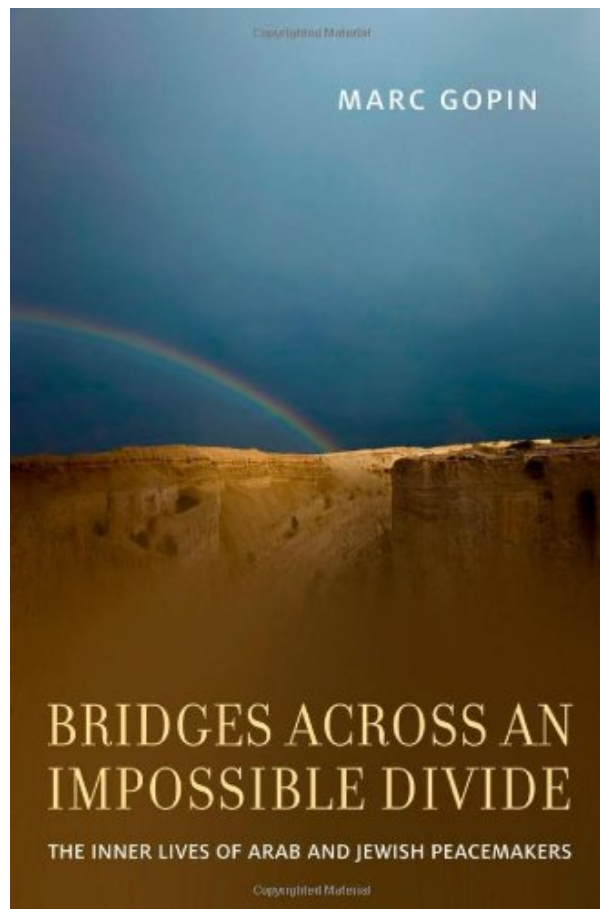
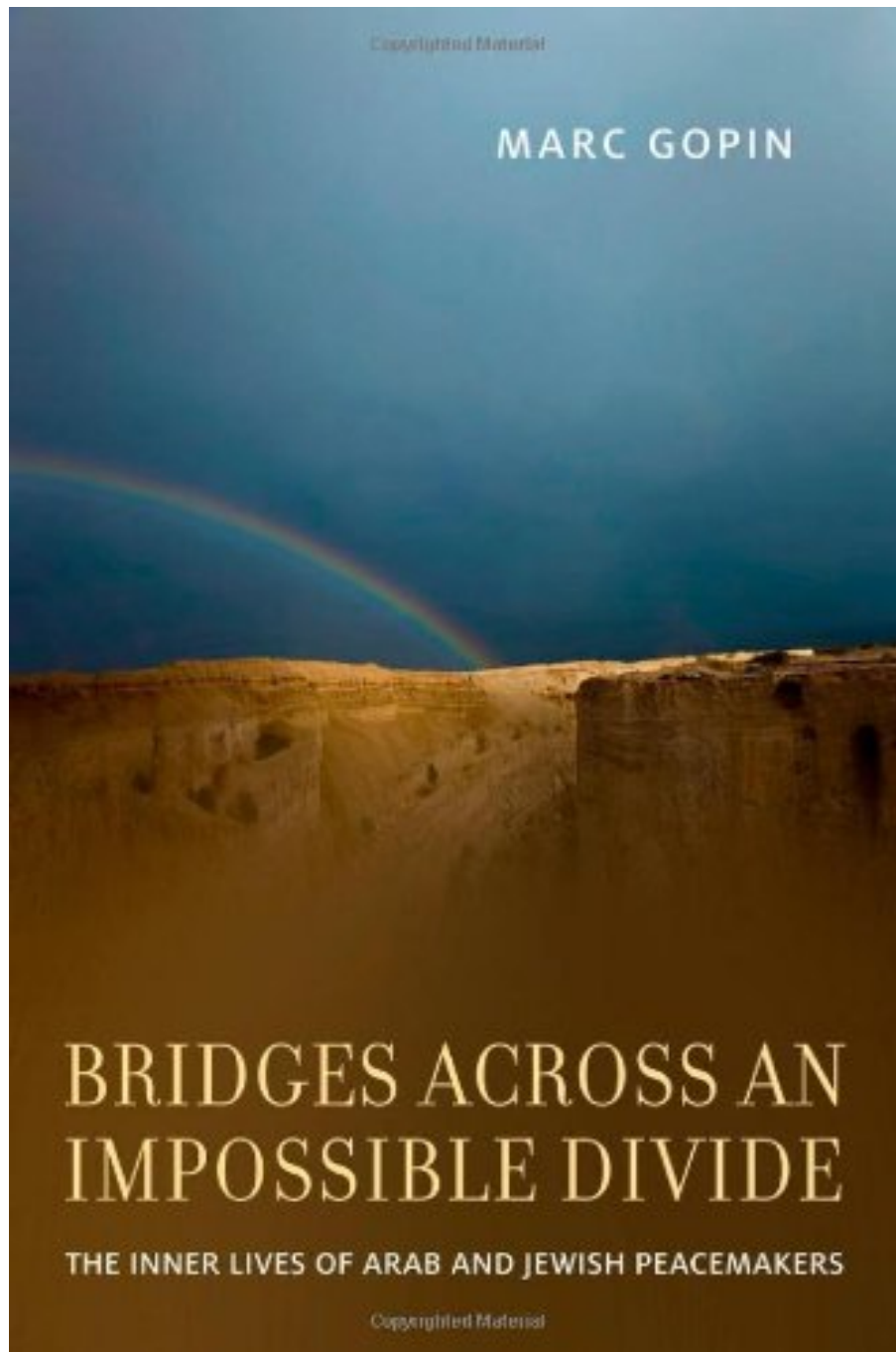


# **BRIDGES ACROSS AN IMPOSSIBLE DIVIDE: THE INNER LIVES OF ARAB AND JEWISH PEACEMAKERS BY MARC GOPIN**



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## Review

"This moving and brilliant book should be read by all who doubt that peace is possible between Arabs and Israelis. The author's own life has been a journey from the comfort of his own community to an embrace of strangers, a sacred voyage that has brought him face to face with everyday peacemakers on both sides of the divide. Gopin maps the way out of hatred through the words of extraordinary people who fight for peace."-- Laurence R. Simon, Professor of International Development, Brandeis University

"Marc Gopin's findings are fresh, unique, and greatly needed. He breaks new ground in the field of spiritually advanced social change, offering rare insight into the lives of these amazing peacemakers in the context of the most entrenched, complex, multifaceted, and difficult conflict facing the world today. What Gopin contributes in this book will be most important to the work for peace in the Middle East. This is a book that needs to be read."--Curtiss Paul DeYoung, Professor of Reconciliation Studies, Bethel University

"Bridges across an Impossible Divide puts before us what few have accomplished—an entry into the inner personal life and inter-subjective worlds of violent conflict. Through detailed and carefully recorded conversation we have insight into the fluidity of perception, the power of emotion, and the complex process of how people make sense of their lives and relationships, especially with their enemies. Take time to read these conversations slowly. They hold the sacred ground of authentic human struggle seeking ways of remaining true to the depth of loss and pain experienced while crafting relationship with those perceived to have cause it. The bridge rises from resilient spirits refusing to let the damage of violence destroy their own

humanity or find it in others."--John Paul Lederach, Professor of International Peace Studies, Kroc Institute, University of Notre Dame

#### About the Author

Marc Gopin is the James H. Laue Professor of World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution, and the Director of the Center on World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University's School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution. His books include *Holy War, Holy Peace*; *Healing the Heart of Conflict*; and *Between Eden & Armageddon*.

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# **BRIDGES ACROSS AN IMPOSSIBLE DIVIDE: THE INNER LIVES OF ARAB AND JEWISH PEACEMAKERS BY MARC GOPIN PDF**

Peace between Arabs and Jews seems forever out of reach, both sides caught in a never-ending cycle of violence and revenge. But while treaties and other top-down solutions have had little lasting effect, peacemakers on the ground are creating real change-within themselves and with their enemies.

In *Bridges across an Impossible Divide*, American professor Marc Gopin offers an unprecedented exploration of the spiritual lives of Arab and Jewish peacemakers who have evolved deep friendships despite decades of war and suffering on all sides. Through trial and error the peacemakers in this book have devised their own unique methods of looking inward and reaching out across enemy lines. Gopin provides insightful analysis of the lessons to be learned from these peace builders, outlining the characteristics that make them successful. He argues that lasting conflict and misery between enemies is the result of an emotional, cognitive, and ethical failure to self-examine, and that the true transformation of a troubled society is brought about by the spiritual introspection of extraordinary, determined individuals.

The book is unique in that its central body is the actual words of peacemakers themselves as they speak of their struggles to overcome the death of loved ones and to find common ground with adversaries. Most of these accounts are from peacemakers who have hardly written before. This is a treasure trove for scholars and the general public who seek to understand the conflict and its peacemakers at a far deeper level. These remarkable stories reveal a level of inner examination that is rarely encountered in the literature of political science, international relations, or even conflict resolution theory. They show how building friendships invigorates the effort to bring equality, nonviolent social change, and reconciliation to warring peoples.

*Bridges across an Impossible Divide* takes readers beyond the rhetoric of political leaders into the spiritual lives of men and women actually making peace with their enemies.

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#### Most helpful customer reviews

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

*The Heart of Peacemaking*

By Yafiah Katherine Randall

The distinctive mark of this book is that it goes beyond the business of negotiations and much deeper than tolerance of the other. The Jewish and Muslim peace-makers of Israel and Palestine who tell their stories in this book have all formed deep and enriching relations with each other. They understand that to look into the face of the other is like looking into a mirror and they allow themselves to be transformed by real friendship. Conflict transformation is as much about inner change as it is about political resolutions and this book by Marc Gopin, a long-time activist in the field of peace-making, raises hope that the very real love for humanity that is evident in the work of those speaking here may work like yeast, spreading peace and reconciliation from the grass roots.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

*What it takes to be a peacemaker*

By Michael J. Lowe

Despite the proliferation of conflict resolution courses at universities around the world, many of the most effective peacemakers are not academics and have not graduated from such courses. I remember talking to someone with great experience of mediation in New Guinea who had been given an honorary professorship in conflict resolution. 'Academics should be on tap,' he said, 'not on top.' There are aspects of being a peacemaker which cannot be simply learned from books and theory. They spring from the inner life, the struggle with our inner demons. They are the result of a life well-lived.

Marc Gopin is an academic - a professor of Religion, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University. But he is also a longstanding practitioner of peace in that most difficult of theatres, the Middle East. In his peacemaking capacity he has build up a network of friends who are peacemakers: Israeli Jews, Palestinians and Syrians. In this book, which accompanies a film project (Unusual Pairs [...]), he allows them to speak about the practice of peace in their own words.

The result is something wonderful and rich. A peek into the spiritual lives of these extraordinary men and women who point the way forward. Each one is unique and yet common patterns emerge which Gopin draws out: the incredible self-awareness, the emotional intelligence, the courage to keep stepping out of comfort-zones towards the feared 'other', the love of land as a basis of healing and unity rather than division. They share a commitment to creating social networks as an ethical and often a spiritual practice. They are experts at using gestures which come from the heart and go beyond words, along with the practice of storytelling as a way of sharing identities and hard memories. And they share a commitment to truth-telling about their own sides, including a willingness to hear hard truths and ask the hard questions, no matter where they lead.

Since the book was written, Syria has descended further into violence and as I write this review, 'Operation Pillar of Cloud' is escalating the conflict with Gaza. Such setbacks for peace are, sadly, almost routine in this part of the world. Lots of people come to the Holy Land filled with ideals of peace. But the historic weight of pain and division causes many of them to burn out and leave disillusioned. This study of the spiritual lives of peacemakers serves as a great resource for anyone who is ready to commit themselves for the long-term and who wants to know what it takes to be a bridge across impossible divides.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

**THE AUTHOR ACTUALLY WENT TO DIFFERENT MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES**

By Pauline Gopin

**PROFESSOR MARC GOPIN IS TRULY HONEST. I KNOW! HE WRITES THE TRUTH. HE TEACHES TRUTH. HE LIVES**

**TRUTH. HE LECTURES IN MANY DIFFERENT PARTS OF OUR WORLD &, OF COURSE, WITHIN HIS HOME COUNTRY**

**THE UNITED STATES.**

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