

THE HIDDEN CONFLICT : AN EXPLORATION OF  
INTRA-JEWISH TENSIONS IN ISRAELI SOCIETY  
THROUGH THE LENS OF ENVIRONMENTAL  
PEACEBUILDING

**by Rachel Klein**



EXPECTATIONS VERSUS REALITY

IN 2000 "MOST ISRAELIS (IN THE 60 PERCENT RANGE) IDENTIFIED RELIGIOUS-SECULAR CONFLICT AS THE MOST DANGEROUS FOR THE STABILITY AND UNITY OF THE COUNTRY – MORE THAN TWICE THOSE WHO CHOSE THE DOVE-HAWK SPLIT."

*Israel and the Politics of Jewish Identity : The Secular-Religious Impasse*  
Asher Cohen and Bernard Susser

# MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How is intra-Jewish conflict in Israel reflected in and reproduced by the environmental peacebuilding movement?

How will intra-Jewish conflict impact the future of environmental peacebuilding in Israel?

# MAIN FINDINGS

**The Israeli environmental peacebuilding movement is primarily a secular, left-wing movement.**

*“Most of the big environmental organizations are very gross, kind of like stereotypical, anti-religious... They do their big events on Fridays and Saturdays. It's a very secular discourse.”* – Religious Zionist Rabbi, involved in peace work in the West Bank

# MAIN FINDINGS

**Disagreements between religious and secular Jewish Israelis center around the proper use of religion in environmental peacebuilding.**

*“Religion is about what differentiates us... It's not conducive to bringing people together.”* – Secular Jewish Director of the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies

*“I've had so many (secular Israeli) students... who say that religion is a bad thing, it drives people away, and I keep on telling them it can also bring people together. It depends on who you are and how you want to look at it.”* – Reform Rabbi involved in peace work

# MAIN FINDINGS

**The environmental peacebuilding movement's rejection of religious engagement methods (and religion in general) discourages participation by religious populations.**

*“The message you're sending is that peace initiatives are actually inimical to the interests of religious communities ... But, in fact, not only do you need to bring religious people on board in order to make your peace process viable, [but religious discourse] actually is a much more effective vehicle in order to be able to communicate between your different communities.” – Modern Orthodox Rabbi*

# LARGER IMPLICATIONS



BAPTISMAL SITE AT THE JORDAN RIVER