Religious Rhetoric in Responses to Atrocity
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The paper examines the uses of religious language in responses to atrocity. Arguing that the wholesale rejection of all religious language leaves us stuttering as we seek to respond to atrocity, I will suggest ways in which religious language draws our attention to the extremity of the events of atrocity, the necessity for response, and the proper stance to take as listeners to the testimonies of those who have suffered. Arguing that the unreflective use of religious language can obfuscate (and even participate in) the atrocity to which it seeks to respond, I will explore the ways religious language has been used to relegate perpetrators to a realm safely far away from us, to mystify the stark realities of suffering, and to gloss over or justify atrocity.