

Winter Words from the House of Peace

...as rivers of tears are melting away into the breaking waves...

Even as blizzard and storms for months have covered our seaside corner of New England with dunes of snow, so do the winters of war seem to bury the fragile landscapes of peace, obscuring the contours of hope, so courageously constructed. But late as it will be, the thaw will come, and the upstart Spring will carry the snows away. Can we then hope that not far behind, a Season of Peace may dawn, melting the rivers of tears frozen for so long, joyfully swelling the breaking waves?

What greater power of warmth can ray upon the ice dams of despair than the holy powerlessness of children? At the House of Peace, so often filled with the burned limbs, scarred faces, and broken bodies of Iraqi children, we know the awe-inspiring strength of that humble, mysterious force of the little ones who come to us for healing.

From high summer until Christmas, 2010, a great prophet of pain and the over-coming of pain came to live with us. Appropriately, his name is Mohammed. He had been discovered in Jordan --- a refugee from Iraq, huddled into two crowded rooms with his parents and three siblings. It was a team of selfless, brilliant and idealistic law students, studying human rights, who were led to this family from Fallujah --- an Iraqi city whose every right to exist was blown apart by the U.S. invasion -- a legacy of toxins and depleted uranium crippling its people.

Mohammed, an ever-smiling boy of 12, was inching away from life, carrying on the ravaged ruin of his back a growth that would halt his digestion, smother his breathing, but never, somehow never, crush his spirit. Only radical surgery could save him. ***“For what is the world without rescue, but a wasteland and a worthless peril?”*** (Sebastian Barry)

The unswerving commitment of the law students, Noam Biale and Lauren DiMartini, and others of the Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project, and a wide circle of their family and friends, offered great support to “Save Mohammed.” As the House of Peace joined forces, awe-struck at this network, doors were flung open; visas finally came through; Children’s Hospital of Boston reached out its time-honored, world-famous help, and --- after surmounting a startling variety of obstacles, Mohammed arrived, his valiant smile beaming above his crushing burden. Pushing his wheelchair with indomitable strength and trust came his young mother, ready to undergo the separation from her husband and other children, for the duration of Mohammed’s treatment. Under her heart she was carrying her fifth child, realizing her son’s surgery and baby’s birth would possibly be only days apart.

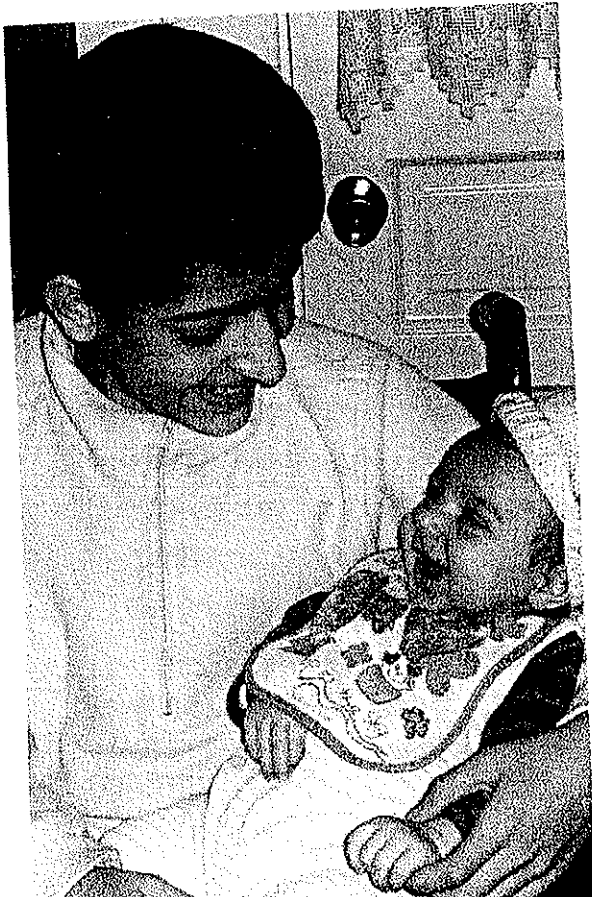
Many weeks of tests and preparations followed, and a wondrous procession of House of Peace friends carried Mohammed and his mother on their wings. English tutoring, music lessons, card games, baby clothes gathering, songs, walks -- all came together in a flow of healing.

On August 30, at Children's Hospital, Dr. Thomas Hedequist and his expert team encircled this prophetic Mohammed in the early morning hours. By late afternoon their masterpiece was complete --- a spinal fusion, a fusion of so many forces, truly a breaking forth of Spring.

Mohammed's rebirth was soon followed by another birth. In the hush of a September twilight in the sunset-lit room of the North Shore Birth Center, into a space carved out by the stunning demands of destiny, a holy space protected from despair, Yusuf was born: In a flood of evening light and a still greater flood of Grandmotherly tears, I bent to that timeless task of such mystery: the cutting of the cord, freeing this strong, tiny boy from the protection of his mother's womb, to enter the vast temple of his precious life.

Dear Mohammed, so far away now, back in Jordan with your family, exiled from Iraq, we embrace you always, as our hearts would stretch to embrace all wondrous children whose souls suffer deeply but stand so straight and love so much.

Dear Yusuf, warmed in the arms of your big brother, we send this song to you this night. Dear children of all war, born into the hope of a new Spring, we send this prayer to you this night, a lullaby from Iraq:



*Sleep my son, Sweet child of mine
Soft as summer breezes calling your name,
Don't be afraid.*

*Sleep my son, Sweet child of mine
Safe, as rivers of tears are melting away,
into the breaking waves.*

*Sleep my son, Sweet child of mine
See the restless soul in enemies' eyes,
Blurred by lies, left to feel the cold, with no
place to hide,*

Beneath the moonlit sky.

Dilelol, dilelol

Tonight, nothing bad can harm you

Dilelol, dilelol

Tonight I am here to calm you.

*Cassie Schuchardt
February, 2011*



Hibaku Maria

There is a small statue in Urakami Cathedral in Nagasaki, Japan. It carries enormous significance. It is *Hibaku Maria*, the radiation-bombed head of the Madonna that once sat high above the central altar in the original Cathedral. That major church, located 500 meters from the epicenter of the atomic bomb dropped by the U.S. on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945 was totally destroyed.

Discovered in the ruins was this fragment of the glories of Urakami, the focal point of Christian communities in the East. Cherished in quiet solitude for decades, *Hibaku Maria* was finally returned to the rebuilt cathedral. On August 9, 2005, in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the nuclear holocaust of Nagasaki, the precious statue was placed upon a newly-created altar, where she is today profoundly venerated.

Gazing out from the haunting emptiness of her all-seeing eyes this Maria of Compassion beholds the nuclear-imperiled world, beseeching the vast array of the Earth's armies to abolish all war and all weapons of war. In penetrating silence the cry of *Hibaku Maria* echoes the pleas of Japan's inspiring "Hibakusha" --- those who have survived the radiated destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Their message: "Never Again!"

In early May, 2010 many of these heroic Hibakusha traveled to the United Nations in New York City to offer their testimony to the eighth review conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). They carried signatures of 7 million people gathered in person, on street corners, calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons. In the midst of this urgent proceeding, *Hibaku Maria* appeared, carried to New York by Rev. Joseph Mitsuaki Takami, Archbishop of Nagasaki. In many settings her message was given and the grandeur of her presence was profoundly experienced.

The House of Peace --- John, Carrie, family, young interns --- was there, marching with thousands from Times Square to the U.N., where the monks of Nipponzan Myohoji were holding vigil, all raising our voices to call for the creation of a nuclear-free world. And then a great mystery unfolded. Carrie met with Archbishop Takami, who had heard of the book she is writing about *Hibaku Maria*. In a moment of grace and unspeakable trust, the Archbishop suggested that this treasured statue be brought by his emissary, Mr. Yoshimuro, to the House of Peace, during its final day in America.

And so it was that *Hibaku Maria*, whose picture has hung above the altar in the House of Peace chapel for more than seven years, came to bless us. In the brief span of 20 hours, this inestimable gift was shared at an interfaith service for the children of war, at a Mass at the Sisters of Notre Dame in Ipswich, at a regional gathering of more than fifty Veterans for Peace at the House of Peace, and finally at a Mass at Brandeis University. The rains fell steadily --- as did the heart-wrenching tears of so many who could recognize the meaning here.

But in the end, as we neared the train station where the journey back to Japan would begin, a stunning double rainbow of brilliant beauty arched above us,--- a seven-fold illumination we would hold in grateful awe.

Yes, a bow in the clouds... and a new covenant --- between ourselves and the Healing Sophia of the future.

O God, Save this Land

(Report of Fellowship of Reconciliation civilian diplomacy delegation to Iran --- John Schuchardt)

On the massive stone lintel above The Gate of All Nations, the ceremonial entrance to Persepolis, these words are inscribed, **“O God, Save this Land from Falsehood, Foe and Famine.”**

Persepolis is the magnificent capital of the greatest of the early civilizations, Persia, governing 26 satraps, from India to the Danube. Persepolis' mighty grandeur of walls, foundations, halls, and soaring 50 foot columns standing perfectly vertical after 2,500 years, is a testament to what lives in the East, which the West needs reverence, lest we perish from the Earth by our own hands. The Mount of Mercy, Mt. Mithra, stands powerfully silent behind Persepolis; together they command the spreading plains below.

While spending hour after hour in this inspiring, humbling testament to mysteries of unsurpassable engineering, stonework, and human genius, I felt questioned and challenged by the mysteries of our time. We were in the land of Zoroaster, “Star of God”, who revealed the One God and revered Ahura Masda, “the great spirit being of the Sun.” We stopped in Kashan, where, according to oral tradition, the Magi, Three Zoroastrian Priests, saw a Star of Destiny and followed it, Westward leading, to Bethlehem, where “The very greatest streams of humanity (Persia, Egypt, Babylon) flowed into the earthly destiny of Jesus the Christ.” (Studies in the Gospel, Emil Bock, p. 80)

“O God, Save this Land!” No other words could more fully express the urgent longing of our 10 person civilian diplomacy delegation to Iran, November 7 to 19, 2010, sponsored by The Fellowship of Reconciliation. Ours was a prayer for the people of Iran. Ours was a prayer for America and for All Nations today ensnared by webs of the falsehood and violence of our nuclear, militarized world. What Rudolf Steiner called “the carcinomas of civilization” can be sharply seen metastasizing in the Middle East, threatening life everywhere .

On the Holy Day of Eid, the last day of pilgrimage, Iranian families go to the graves to pray with their dead. We were given the privilege of mingling with countless thousands of grieving families, whose sons and brothers and husbands had been victims of the Iraq-Iran War of 1980-1988. Women weeping, in their flowing black *chadors*, moved amongst the rows of horizontal marble tombstones, each stone inscribed with exquisite calligraphy. The stones were washed, sprinkled with rose water, covered with flower petals; the bereaved knelt, lost in memory and prayer. Some of the mourners were so generous as to include us in the custom of offering us an orange or sweet, so that our lives would forever be bound to their grief.

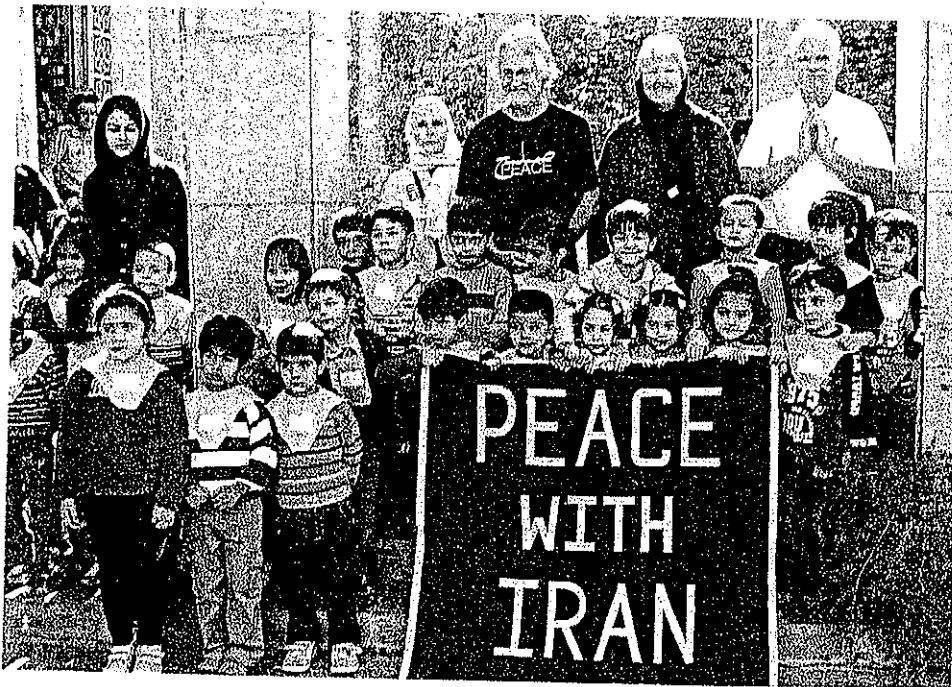
The 1980 attack on Iran by U.S. ally Saddam Hussein had been cynically instigated to punish the Iranian people for their successful revolution against the 26 year dictatorship of the Shah. We Americans had little comprehension of the suffering and destruction of that 8 year war, with more than 500,000 dead on each side. And, similarly, we had little feeling for the devastating injury to a people that comes from decades of British imperial exploitation, followed by a C.I.A. coup in 1953 when President Mosadeqh decided to use Iranian oil wealth to benefit the people, rather than Anglo-Persian Oil (Now B.P.). Winston Churchill worked with the C.I.A.'s Operation Ajax to install the dictatorship and give to the U.S. 40% of Iranian oil.

What do we know of “the great Spirit being of the Sun”? Has our epoch betrayed the destiny promised at Bethlehem and instead bowed down to Mammon and Mars? How brief is the span of our Age of Oil, little more than the life-span of my father. And do we know what

spiritually lies behind oil? The Owa people of Columbia say *"It is the blood of our Mother. If you take it, we will die."* General Schwartzkopf says, *"Middle East oil is the West's lifeblood. It fuels us today, and being 77% of the Free World's proven oil reserves, is going to fuel us when the rest of the world has run dry...."* (Feb 8, 1990, Senate Armed Services Com.) There are 70 major oil companies extracting oil and gas from around Iran and the Caspian Sea. One third of these companies are U.S./ British/Canadian, another third are G-7 and N.A.T.O. countries. Rather than following the Star of Destiny to the child-God of Love, the U.S./ NATO militaries have, since 1989, been "Eastward leading, still proceeding," encircling Iran on all sides with enormous bases, deployments, and nuclear weapons, up to the borders of Russia and China.

What Dr. Steiner called "the tumors, the cancers of civilization", have erupted in the West, sunk in materialism, and are devastating the East: Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Lebanon, Israel/Palestine, beyond anything seen elsewhere on Earth. A cold rhetoric of threat and counter-threat fills the region, with U.S., Israel, Britain, Russia, China, India, Pakistan, and France all on nuclear high alert. As in 1914, all preparations are in place, awaiting a precipitating event.

O God, Save this Land from Falsehood, Foe, and Famine.



Sa'di shrine, Shiraz, John far right: O God, Save these Children
(Look above AC to fall in love with Iranian twin girls!)

*You're my destiny
You're my guiding light
You're my soul and my treasure
Sleep my child
Through the night.*

*Sleep my paradise
My garden flower
You're the song of my life
Sing to my heart
Sing the darkness away*

*You're my soul and my treasure
Sleep my child through the night.*

Iranian lullaby

Understanding Cancer

“It is very evident that humanity today again needs a kind of civilization that comes really close to the human heart and the human soul.”

(Rudolf Steiner Nov. 11, 1923)

Since beginning in 1990, the House of Peace has actively shared this vision of such a heart-filled, soul-penetrated civilization. In community with others we work to make this vision a reality in our world.

But the ever-present, universal illness of war has pervaded the very essence of society which is ***“infiltrated by the currents of human hatred and human coldness... resulting in the utterly diseased tissues of civilization.”*** Harmony of the Creative Word

How shall we confront the forces that have unleashed a spiritual and physical cancer that has erupted universally in catastrophic ulcers? A powerful response to our anguished question came to us in August when the House of Peace hosted the Summer Conference of the Christian Community – A Movement for Religious Renewal, working towards a new relationship between human beings on Earth and the beings of the spiritual world.

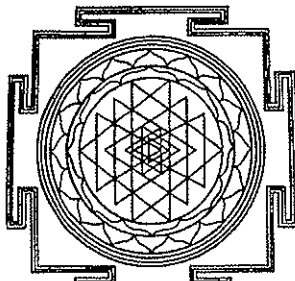
Rev. Julia Polter, priest from the Boston center of the Christian Community, was joined by therapeutic eurythmist, Elke von Laue and anthroposophical physician, Broder von Laue, all offering deep wisdom and guidance gained from decades of pastoral and medical work. Fifty participants gathered here for the two day Conference: Understanding Cancer. Dr. Broder von Laue described their hope to present ***“the spiritual aspect of cancer, the illness of our time.***

Modern medicine is perfect in treating the body; it has learned to look to the psychosomatic aspect of many illnesses. But it has not taken up the eternal view of every human being: the biographical singularity, the on-going development during life and after death, the individual’s eternal being. We work to develop an understanding and better treatment of this illness that is so much related to fear and mutilating destruction.”

Healing paths do converge and in the shimmering light of our conference days this was beheld by all. Illness and health, cancer and healing, war and peace --- pondered by a large circle of earnestly seeking friends, led by true artists of healing and care --- all woven together in a profoundly significant way.

And for the House of Peace? We were left with treasured words, given by our German guests, in whom we met a rare ability and willingness to perceive the true striving of our work. If only we can ever strive towards their vision:

“Your life has been dedicated to recreate the space of freedom and development in those who were tortured and injured by our modern life. This way of life creates in the individual being, selfishness, and in society, the necessity of war. You are working against this egoism with all your means, with all your heart. We feel ourselves united with you striving for inner and outer peace.”



In Memoriam

*Hear the prayer of our soul. There speaks our truth and faith:
To fulfill our task on earth we need Powers great from lands where spirits dwell,
Strength that comes from friends who have died. (Rudolf Steiner)*

Slowly, quietly, the circle widens. The arc of companions, family members, colleagues in the work, and others in the web of shared destinies crossing into the spiritual world rays upon us ever more intensely. We turn to them daily in our commitment to "stay connected." We also turn to them in a special way at our annual Festival of All Souls. At this November event, gifted singers from the New England Conservatory of Music, led by our dear friend, Lyle Davidson, offer music that slips aside the veils between our realm and that of the so-called "Dead." We name those who have passed and experience anew our individual and community responsibility to care for those on the other side.

Yes, the grieving is profound as we confront the depths of loss and pain. But so too does joy take its place in this mysterious process of being present in the realm of death and dying. We carry it quietly, we reverence the blessing of it all, we stretch with expectation toward the destination of such powerful pilgrimages beyond the threshold.

To Our Con-Tributors

The word itself is packed with intense social meaning: con-tribute... to pay tribute together... to give towards a common cause... to donate to others toward a shared goal. How full our House of Peace life is of wonderful con-tributors.

People who pass by or stay on are a steady source of strength for us all. We are especially grateful for the contributions of our interns who lavish with enthusiasm their array of skills upon us. James and Josephine, Minji and Korbinian, Debra, Kathryn, Adrienne, Windsong and Osahowskis All!

And there are the generous givers of food and clothing, furniture and fun, ideas, thoughts, prayers, and companionship. There are the drivers and seamstresses, cooks and cleaners, gardeners and planters, weeders and mowers. And, of course, this wild winter's shovelers and keepers of the hearth-fires are at the heart of it all.

We pay tribute together, honoring the vast array of gifts that allow us to reach far and wide with what we earnestly hope is a warm, healing embrace.

Should you wish to contribute in any way to the House of Peace, please know that you will have a special place in the wide, diverse, ever joyful circle that welcomes you with gratitude.

Enclosed is my gift for The House of Peace:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Amount _____

