



House of Peace

WINTER WORDS FROM THE HOUSE OF PEACE

Just as the height of winter is the prelude to spring, the fear that shrouds humanity can be seen as a harbinger of peace, leading to a sudden upsurge of spirit sprouting in the hearts and minds of humanity.

Humanity's challenge is to choose between extinction and great unity through reconciliation.

It is in turn a choice of victory for violence or for human spirituality.

(Venerable Nichidatsu Fujii)

In many places this has been an unusually warm winter. In many places this has been a season of violent storms, landslides, fires and devastation. In all places on this planet this is a time of catastrophic change, of climate crisis both in the realms of outer nature and in the depths of human nature. The critical shifts of weather, the unpredictable yet now somehow expected onslaught of “natural disasters” are matched, day by agonizing day, by the critical shifts in the world workings of war-making. We are one year now into the latest catastrophe that defies all description. People are suffering physical and soul devastation in Ukraine—and in Russia--

testing whether this height of humanity’s warring winter can somehow be a prelude to a spring of fearlessness and renewed spiritual strength. The cry goes out: “Negotiate! Don’t escalate!” even as the tanks are shipped, armaments and aircraft delivered, young men trained to operate death’s machinery while wives, widows and children struggle midst the rubble of their lives.

Yes, the choice here is between extinction or unity...violence or restored spirituality. Ours is the colossal struggle of conscience to do battle on every front of our own lives with these forces...to make the choices in our own lives between what brings life, light, and truth and what brings the deadening powers of darkness and untruth. How can we go on, subjected as we are to the prevailing winds of distorting propaganda and fear-enhancing isolation of many kinds?

Often we turn to those who have met war head-on in times, even recent times past. This, for example, from one Auschwitz-bound prophet, Etty Hillesum (June, 1941):

I feel like a small battlefield in which the problems, or some of the problems, of our time are being fought out. All one can hope to do is to keep oneself humbly available, to allow oneself to be a battlefield. After all, the problems must be accommodated, have somewhere to struggle and come to rest and we humans must put our inner space at their service and not run away.

Where do we find the courage to stay put and offer our own forces for these battles? We seek it at the very heart of our communities, in the deepest regions of those places where we come together to work for a culture of peace, in the day to day meeting of one with the other where the determined uprightness of unconditional hospitality and love persist as conscious choice. There we can find it and nourish it, and from there we can share it for the healing of all pain.

*Carrie Schuchardt
February, 2023*

EARTHQUAKE

The magnitude of it...the shock...the aftershocks...the unspeakable terror and disbelief. Of course words fail. Don't they always in the face of such disaster? (Has there really ever been quite such a disaster? Yes, but still....) At the House of Peace we are riveted on these events in Turkey and Syria for many reasons...but especially because for so long we have been deeply connected with precious Safeh and her uncle who have lived with us on three different occasions. Safeh's home in Syria was bombed during the unending war, and her life-changing burns brought her to Boston's Shriners Hospital for treatment and to the House of Peace for care. Safeh and her uncle, Abdulrazak, are family. Their life within our community has stretched over years and thousands of miles to their home as refugees in Turkey. We share a deep and treasured friendship.

When on February 6 the earthquake came in the middle of the night and they fled their house just barely in time, witnessing the horror of buried neighbors, they knew that once again life was giving them and all their people, both in Turkey and Syria, unimaginable suffering. We are able to communicate daily with Abdulrazak expressing our assurances that he and Safeh and the uncounted victims of this cataclysm are surrounded by a vast web of loving thoughts and prayers and that every bit of help we can send is on the way. Abdulrazak's response: "We must turn to God and treat one another with mercy and respect."

+++++++

There is a name in Arabic: Aya. It means wonderful—amazing—miracle. When a tiny newborn girl was pulled from the rubble, bruised but with a fluttering heartbeat, she was still attached to her fatally injured mother by an umbilical cord that connected life with death...incredible birthing with unfathomable dying. We gaze in awe at the child named Aya, astonished at such profound destiny. We gaze upon the ruins of a world, and whisper our hope that the cord that connects us all to the Heights from which we come and to which we shall return will be our true lifeline.



*Abdulrazak and Safeh
in Ipswich*

Recovery

*Wrap us in earth's arms
our land now an antiquity,
ruined by catastrophe.*

*Solidarity's structure
lies in our sacred ground
turned into dust.*

*Recover we must.
Our loving history
survives in between
the dirt and dying groans.*

*THERE ARE PEOPLE IN THE WORLD SO HUNGRY
THAT GOD CANNOT APPEAR TO THEM
EXCEPT IN THE FORM OF BREAD. (Mahatma Gandhi)*



The House of Peace is deeply connected to the people of Afghanistan, including not only those who live here in Ipswich and are a vital part of our community but also those so far away, caught in the never ending cycle of war and the devastating consequences of violence. We live with an ongoing commitment to offer what help we can. Several months ago we turned to one of our earlier refugees from Afghanistan who lived with us in 2011 and has remained a close friend and colleague since that time. Wafa Parwana has created incredibly supportive programs in Afghanistan for the empowerment and enrichment of women and their families. It was Wafa who inspired us then to establish in Kabul a bakery, owned and operated by women, even in the midst of the ruins of war. So look above and marvel with us at this House of Peace Bakery that serves a neighborhood in need! (See Wafa's website: www.ecoalition.org).

In early fall, 2022, Wafa returned to Afghanistan, checking on her initiatives there, visiting people far and wide, including her own family, risking her well-being to unite in person with the suffering of her people. We realized that her experience and expertise, her work in the US as well as her projects in Afghanistan could offer a wonderful resource and encouragement to the Afghan friends now established in Ipswich. And so, with the support of funds received by the House of Peace from a grant from the Cummings Foundation and in conjunction with Boston's Catholic Charities, sponsoring agency for these refugees, Wafa spent a week with us. She generously gave her time and strength, her insights and experiences in many fields to help us all – both refugees struggling to settle in the US, and volunteers and workers striving to help on every level. It was a lively time culminating in a festive community meal at the House of Peace. We are grateful for such an opportunity to reflect together on both the enormous challenges our friends continue to face in the adjustment process, and also on their astonishing resilience and perseverance. Supported by the tireless efforts of devoted volunteers who assist on a daily basis, these survivors of unspeakable trauma are emerging with independence and self-direction that will enable them to regain their right to a life of peace and dignity.





*Let the circle be wide round the fireside
And we'll make room for you
Let your heart have no fear
There are no strangers here
Just friends that you never knew.
(Tommy Sands)*

The circle is wide round the House of Peace kitchen wood stove that welcomes friends, old and new. Serious matters get discussed there; life stories told; advice given and received. Some fears disappear and some new hopes are born.

The great Irish singer and songwriter, Tommy Sands himself, was back at our hearth in October after offering the people of Ipswich and beyond a glorious concert and celebration of the House of Peace 32nd anniversary. Our friendship with this significant force for peace in Northern Ireland has long been a treasure for us, and we are all made stronger for the task to Carry On when we have Tommy's voice ringing in our hearts.

Not long after Tommy left, Salma and her mother, Eman, arrived from Egypt to begin treatment in Boston for serious burns. Their effervescent spirit and the helpful visits of their ever-widening circle of Egyptian friends in the Boston area have enriched our lives. How important it was that Salma and Eman arrived in time to know Abdulrazak and Safeh who returned to Turkey in December only to lose everything in the catastrophic earthquakes.

In August, Hailey from Mississippi joined us as an intern, adding her lively and capable enthusiasm to our circle, a vital spark in keeping the fires burning. And as always, we depend on Mary Ellen, Geraldine and Vera, our true hearth keepers, who commit themselves in their own special ways to our community life, to the needs of all who come here, to the people and events, expected and unexpected of each new day.

The circle of volunteers and helpers holds and grows: English tutors and shopping companions; drivers and tour guides; handwork, painting and eurythmy teachers. There are also the "Thursday Girls," a beloved swarm of young girls who bring games and art supplies, snacks and baking projects to Salma, and before her, Safeh and to us all. There is our faithful, strong gardener, Cameron....maintenance magician, Joel, and office saint, Kate, our faithful and wise board members and advisers. and many more.

The land, this very old house, and the people of the House of Peace feel the skilled and loving support that fills us with profound gratitude and reinforces our trust as we look to the future, seeking those who would join this community and carry its task into the future.



INSPIRATIONS: RUDOLF STEINER, KARL KONIG AND KASPAR HAUSER

The outer work of the House of Peace embraces a wide range of initiatives. We realize that the quality and effectiveness of these efforts depend on inner work that expands and deepens in earnest response to the needs that come to us.

For help in this foundation of our life we turn to many sources...to friends and partner communities also working out of spiritual sources...to those who would take up the unimaginably large tasks we face “participating in the destiny of our time to a point where it becomes our personal destiny....” and to teachers and leaders offering experienced guidance.

Some of these accompany the House of Peace in the present days. Some have crossed the threshold and work with us from the other side. And there are those who have risen in the past who continue to inspire and strengthen us, their wisdom and deeds a powerful force for the future. We experience such helpers not as patrons but as a strong presence in our life.

Many are intimately connected with Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) who developed spiritual science or Anthroposophy: a truly revolutionary approach to the worlds of matter and of spirit, challenging every individual to explore and develop the universal art of “being human”.

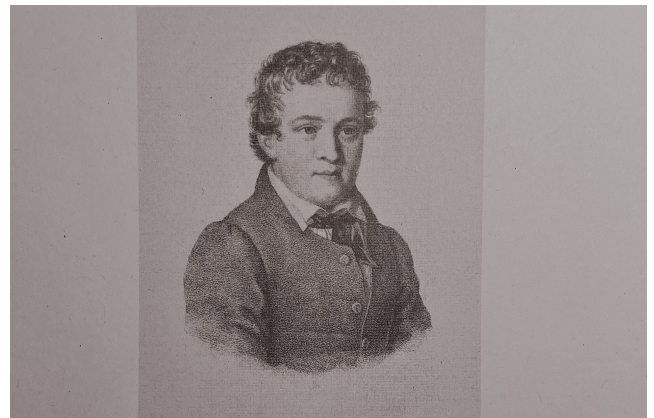
Dr. Karl Konig (1902 -1966), an Austrian pediatrician who fled the Nazi invasion of Austria, becoming himself a refugee, founded the Camphill Movement in 1940. This international network of communities is based on the curative work of Dr. Steiner and the guiding principles of the threefold social order. The House of Peace was born out of this impulse, seeking to create community where those in need of special care offer their unique gifts of unconditional hospitality to refugees and victims of war. His words:

*We are placed into apocalyptic events.
We have to behold death and destruction -
sun and moon darkened and stars fallen from the skies...
Every one of us is a piece of apocalypse....and we carry
within this apocalypse the pure image of God whereby
we can recognize each other.*

++++++

Both Rudolf Steiner and Karl Konig turned to another being of great historical significance, Kaspar Hauser (1812-1833) whose dramatic short life as nobility, victim of brutal incarceration, and “enigma of his time” is totally connected with the mission of the future. For us at the House of Peace Kaspar Hauser represents the “Revelation of the Refugee in Apocalyptic Times.” He described his vision and image of the future:

*I beheld that all and everything in all its manifoldness
was at one and the same time One,
all of humanity together with all nature
but in such a manner that it was in truth
humanity that made it into One.*



IN MEMORIAM



Helen Zipperlen (1928-2002)
“Individualist...Communitarian...Visionary...Revolutionary”

When it happens that someone connected to this House of Peace crosses the threshold we gather to speak a verse that implores Higher Beings to receive that person’s “Web of Destiny.” When our friend, colleague, partner, mentor, pillar—Helen Zipperlen--crossed over on a hot July day in Camphill Village, Kimberton Hills, the power of her destiny’s expansive web flashed before our eyes. In her final days I was grateful to spend time with Helen, bringing full circle our own place in life’s intricate web, a web she loved to call “Cosmic Crochet.” In one of her many vividly written letters to the House of Peace she offered: “The older I get the more I love tracing these threads in the Cosmic Crochet. What a task to be awake, not miss the opportunities to be a link, a loop. Much failure! Many Angels!”

Helen’s life was one of startling wakefulness!...of opportunities seized to create, inspire, heal, plant, grow in unimaginably visionary ways. Her empowerment of others, her devotion to the land and its peoples, her travels of the world from her chair in her humble home...how can we describe the beauty and joy of it all? Many are doing that in many places..... Here we can only wonder....

Helen had a deep connection with and love for the first refugee members of Kimberton Hills who came to join my family in 1980—traumatized by the Vietnam war, transformed by their new life. From them, from that community, guided and encouraged by Helen and her husband, Hubert—both personal mentors since 1970—the House of Peace was born. Their conviction that Dr. Karl Konig, Camphill founder and himself a refugee, would accompany our work and strengthen us for our task “from the other side” remains our inspiration.

In our last conversation Helen spoke of our future connection: “I am looking forward to be with the House of Peace in new ways.” This is our hope, our expectation, our treasure.



Lam Thi Lon (1937-2022)

Another mighty elder, bound up with us in that same profound web of destiny crossed the bridge into new life on October 14, 2022. We called her simply “Mother Thai” for it was she who birthed ten children on a remote farm in Vietnam. Her son, Cuong, was the first of all refugees in my life (see Newsletter of Feb. 2013 on our website for his story). When he stepped into my life in June, 1980, I made a promise to his own mother a whole world away that I would stand in for her with all my strength and love, honoring her motherhood by extending my own to her son until she could some day be with him again. That day arrived in 1992 when the Thai family was reunited...a miraculous story. Aged and wise, humble and joyful, tiny but enormous in heart and spirit, Mother Thai lived her amazing life in the light of the Buddha.

With her vast, precious family, our family, we bow with gratitude for what she gave to us all.

*ON RECEIVING A GRANT FROM THE
CUMMINGS FOUNDATION*

The emergency evacuation of nearly 200,000 US support personnel and families from Kabul, Afghanistan in August 2021 and now the catastrophic sufferings of war and earthquakes impose on us all great challenges and new responsibilities.

We are humbled by the remarkable convergence that just in these times the House of Peace was awarded a Cummings Foundation Grant, one of 140 gifts chosen from 580 applicants. Prompted by the urging and expertise of House of Peace Board members, we applied for and received an initial grant installment of \$25,000, to be repeated in each of the next 3 years. This community affirmation of our mission and major practical support has deepened our capacities and renewed our spirits with great joy!

Bill and Joyce Cummings, in 1986, initiated an astonishing commitment to charitable and non-profit organizations, primarily focused on Boston's North Shore. In making this sustained commitment to meeting the needs of our world they said,

We came to realize that no one can truly "own" anything. With our ever-so-brief stays upon this earth, how can we possibly think of ourselves as owning land? How can we ever be anything more than caretakers?

All of us have been inspired by their courage and vision to convert private wealth into common wealth. Their transformation of money, the alchemy of gift, is a parable of justice, a model that releases a life-stream of hope for the neediest and most suffering, meeting fundamental human rights to safety and security, while binding up the wounds of poverty and war.

We at the House of Peace, as caretakers of the sacred land, historic house and ever-expanding circle of souls who have come to share community life here, have received this help with profound gratitude and ever-evolving plans for its most effective use. Besides providing urgently needed subsidizing of escalating operational costs, this gift has already impacted many lives in widely ranging ways: sewing machines and fabric for our gifted Afghan seamstresses; culturally needed food and supplies; transportation costs; gifts and contributions and clothing; medical support, including much-needed though uninsured surgery for one guest; consultation and projects with Wafa (see article); a glorious concert with Tommy Sands offered free to all; and so much more.

How true the message: *Giving makes us whole....A gift is economically the most generative form of money....The spirit of gift has long been recognized as essential on a human-to-human level.* (John Bloom: The Genius of Money). We treasure the truly human reality of this grant from the Cummings foundation with its far-reaching support of our stewardship.

Always, we are deeply grateful to each of you whose generous support continues to sustain us.

Enclosed is my gift for the House of Peace

Name _____

Address _____

Amount _____

978-356-9395 1 High Street, Ipswich, MA 01938 thehouseofpeace@yahoo.com *House of Peace, Inc. is a therapeutic community serving victims of war, in companionship with adults with disabilities, and offering education for peace and moral awakening, incorporated in Massachusetts in 1990 as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable and educational corporation, supported by voluntary contributions.*

*House of Peace
1 High Street
Ipswich, MA 01938
www.houseofpeaceinc.org*



2023

*The right song at the
right moment could
change history.
(Pete Seeger)*

*The healing Spirit of truthfulness, the Light-filled harmony of Wisdom becoming Love has a name
We call her Sophia—mediating bond between the divine and the earthly.
We can feel her presence in this Verse.*

**IN THE HEART DWELLS,
IN RADIANT LIGHT,
THE HUMAN SENSE FOR HELPFULNESS.
IN THE HEART WORKS,
IN WARMING STRENGTH,
THE HUMAN POWER OF LOVE.
SO LET US CARRY
THE SOUL'S FULL WILL
IN HEART'S WARMTH
AND HEART'S LIGHT,
THAT WE MAY BRING
HEALING TO THOSE IN NEED
OUT OF GOD'S MERCY.**

(Rudolf Steiner)