

On Making the Connections *by Renate Rose*

“Hope is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out.”¹

Vaclav Havel

The Findhorn Foundation in Scotland has called us for many years to become engaged in the co-creation of a new evolutionary paradigm in order to accelerate our collective understanding of what is emerging and what must change in us and in the Human Story. The following notes wish to contribute to this endeavor by focusing on the history of our evolution of consciousness and the Jewish-Christian relationship.

Thousands of people around the world have been **visionaries** and **prophets**, imagining a **world of peace** among and within nations, calling for a **new consciousness**, working in various forms of peace-movements around the globe, and hoping it will come about before we destroy the whole planet. The political movements often try to leave out “religion”, since its interpretations are highly debated and require an integral and holistic consciousness and awareness which few have achieved. Every religion has old and new prophets who work on the basis of love and mutual understanding and are engaged in one way or another in creating a New Story of cooperation and mutual learning. There are alliances and movements like the Parliament of the World Religions, the United Religions Initiative (URI), the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), Tikkun and its Network of Spiritual Progressives (NSP) or WATER (Women’s Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual), to name just a few. But how many people or how few are aware of their efforts?

The **Corona Virus 19** has shown us that we are all **one humanity**. It knows no borders or nations; no gender or ethnicity or race, it encounters everyone everywhere on all continents and islands. The same is true for **climate change**, which is now experienced by nearly everyone on the planet. Some countries have taken some modest actions toward dealing with it. However, the **connections** between climate change, healthcare, economic/social/educational inequality, religious attitudes **and** the outrageous amounts of money spent (above all by the US) on the production and maintenance of nuclear weapons (over a period of 75 years) are not recognized, explained and publicly discussed in a way that would inform and reach every world citizen. Most facts about nuclear weapons in the US have been kept secret for decades and are rarely mentioned in newspapers, TV or digital media. The

¹ Quotation in Jan Phillips: No Ordinary Time, The Rise of Spiritual Intelligence and Evolutionary Creativity, Livingkindness Foundation 2011, p. 97

governments involved wish to keep the facts and the connections **hidden**, deny them or suppress them if possible. A new book by Fred Kaplan, “The Bomb”² exposes in stark terms how close to a nuclear war we have often come through ignorance, carelessness, incompetence, silence and a genocidal mentality by Presidents or ruthless military generals, a danger that is still with us up to this day.³ A hopeful symbol of “global progress” in this area is the entrance into force in January 2021 of the **United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons** (TPNW)⁴. Nevertheless, most people here and elsewhere have never heard of it and have no idea of its significance. Most people also have never heard of the many **nuclear weapons-free zones** which demonstrate the desire of the vast majority of the world for peace and the need to abolish nuclear weapons: the United Nations **Treaty of Tlatelolco**⁵ of 1967 or the **Treaty of Rarotonga of 1985 (ratified 1986)**⁶ or the **Treaty of Bangkok of 1995-97**⁷ or the **Central Asian Nuclear Weapons-free Zone (CANWFZ) of 2006**⁸ or the **Treaty of Semei of 2006**⁹ or the **Treaty of Pelindaba** for the African Continent (47 countries) of 1996(?)¹⁰.

This lack of wide-spread information about important efforts in the 2/3rd World to prevent the production and use of nuclear weapons shows not only a lack of education but also our own dualistic consciousness in a civilization which sets up white vs. black, enemy vs. friend, science vs. religion, indigenous vs. immigrant, developed vs. less-developed countries, etc. A sizable number of people in the US and Europe realize that a **new consciousness** is needed and is in the process of being born, that a “**rise of spiritual intelligence and evolutionary creativity**”¹¹, as Jan Phillips has called it appropriately, is taking place and can be found in many places.¹² Her book is based on the ideas of Jean Gebser¹³ and the new cosmology of Thomas Berry, Teilhard de Chardin and many others who have seen the need for **thinking of one humanity** and the **unity of all living beings**, even of the whole universe. What is at stake had already been recognized by **Albert Einstein** in a letter he wrote in **1950**¹⁴:

² Simon & Schuster, 2020

³ See especially Daniel Ellsberg, *The Doomsday Machine, Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner*, Bloomsbury 2017

⁴ which was created by 122 non-nuclear countries around the world, has been signed by 86 and ratified by 51 as of December 2020.

⁵ Involving 33 Latin American States and the Caribbean, entered into force in 2002 after Cuba ratified it finally. However, the Treaty has been respected by all concerned long before that date.

⁶ But without the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, and Palau, completed in April 2018.

⁷ For South East Asia (most countries of ASEAN in October 2020)

⁸ which has no official organization but works through annual meetings

⁹ Signed in Kazakhstan in 2006 (Almaty Declaration of 1992)

¹⁰ Not yet ratified

¹¹ Jan Phillips, see above footnote 1

¹² See below p. 5

¹³ *The Ever-Present Origin*, 1985 (English Translation of: *Ursprung und Gegenwart*, 1949/53)

¹⁴ Quoted by Jan Phillips, *No Ordinary Time*, p. 107

“A human being is part of the whole called by us ‘universe’, a part limited in time and space.

We experience ourselves, our thoughts and feelings, as something separate from the rest. A kind of optical delusion of consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from the prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. The true value of a human being is determined by the measure and the sense in which they have obtained liberation from the self. We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if humanity is to survive” (underlining mine).

It is tragic that Einstein’s words, despite his universal fame, have not been heeded. I believe it has to do with the fact that humanity’s evolution of consciousness has not been taught in school. The benefits of non-violent conflict resolution and non-violent communication (Marshall Rosenberg) would be so much easier to understand, if all of us could comprehend and recognize how our own consciousness has unfolded and how it was formed and evolved through our own life’s history, our upbringing, education, environment, opportunities, economic well-being or lack thereof, etc. The different levels and structures of consciousness among and within the various religions would become apparent. We would see why we suddenly become aware of the **wisdom of indigenous communities** in the world for which unity and community are self-evident and undisputed values. It is great to proclaim that “we are all connected and all accountable to one another”¹⁵, that we must transform our consciousness in everyday life in order to create an inspiring planetary community and demonstrate attempted models to live it. But to generate a collective understanding of what is emerging and what must change - - - takes time and is a long-wearing process. Its urgency for our survival would be more visible and easier to perceive if everyone could analyze their own stage and structure of consciousness. I believe that Jean Gebser and his student Georg Feuerstein¹⁶ can help us in this effort. I would not call it a “higher” consciousness which might set up a hierarchy and lead to dualistic thinking. It is rather a transformation into a **more comprehensive, more expansive, more complex, more inclusive, more feminist, more democratic kind of consciousness** that Gebser envisioned when he studied the history of cultures and civilizations over hundred thousands of years: from the **archaic** level to the **magic, mythic, mental, and now urgently needed integral level of consciousness**. It is very important to acknowledge the positive contributions (which must be preserved and integrated into each new stage) as well as the deficiencies of each level of human consciousness as it evolved and had served its purpose before transmuting and expanding into the next stage. In a very simplified summary of Gebser’s monumental work, I will point out some of the most important

¹⁵ Findhorn Foundation, New Story Hub

¹⁶ Structures of Consciousness, Integral Publishing, 1987

features of the 5 periods of consciousness. They overlap in time and differ between regions and cultures of the world:

- 1) The **archaic** period of the first hominids with hardly any kind of consciousness, resembling more the **unity and oneness** felt by a new-born within the womb of the mother. This sense of oneness of all life is the one most lacking today and must be recovered and re-integrated into our present-day consciousness.
- 2) The **magic** period when people felt that they were still **part of nature**, but slowly became fearful and threatened by it, and started to desire controlling nature. With the primitive tools at their disposal (taboos, totem poles, etc.) their actions were relatively harmless and ineffective. However, in the mental period of the 20th century, this desire to control nature has led to the absurd power of managing the explosion of the atom, creating the capability to destroy millions of living beings and our whole environment by the push of a button.
- 3) The **mythic** period when people became more aware of themselves looking inside and outside, realizing that heaven and earth belong together and **imagining** birth-giving goddesses and gods who influence our lives through powers of compassion and mercy or wrath and evil spirits. The Bible is full of stories of divine images and prophetic calls for war and peace, but also for love, compassion, mercy and forgiveness. Some stories may have worked for a while but must now be read and re-interpreted in light of our very different cosmology and consciousness. Written by humans (probably mainly by men) some are very patriarchal/kyriarchal and no longer meaningful for understanding our life. However, this is no reason to throw away the Bible and its life stories. Many stories of the prophet's psalms and prayers and their medieval interpreters (especially women) reveal our need for unity with the divine (we can still learn from the mystics) and can inspire us to develop new images of holiness and prophetic calls to mutual accountability and care in an inclusive world without borders and strangers.
- 4) According to Gebser, the **mental** period started with Moses around 1200 BCE, but became more visible in Europe only with the discovery of the **perspective** at the end of the medieval time and during the Renaissance. At first the challenging discoveries of Galileo and Copernicus provoked unbelief and excommunication from the church and it took the church hundreds of years to accommodate such newness into its mythical world images. But the integration of perspectival light for example brought forth the most beautiful paintings, poetry, literature and music which we still admire, enjoy and would never want to miss.

However, in the 20th century, this mental period became utmost **rationalistic** and **genocidal** and led to the development and use of nuclear weapons, splitting the mind of the scientists into two different personalities: the white, male scientist in the laboratory and the father of his children and husband of his wife at home. Robert Jay Lifton and Eric Markusen ¹⁷ point out that all the wives of the scientists who worked on the atomic bomb were against such work. They kept the function of their **conscience** and their **heart** alive and wondered how their partners could find any satisfaction in the research for killing more and more people. It is

¹⁷ The Genocidal Mentality, Nazi Holocaust and Nuclear Threat, Basic Books, 1990

outrageous that the genocidal mentality is still predominant in our representatives in Congress, among most House and Senate members. We are still far from “Back from the Brink” and therefore must propagate and make accessible the New Story Consciousness to all. It would be an appropriate role for the churches and religious institutions to manifest and proclaim that *the slavery of our mind to nuclear weapons must end without delay* in order to save the planet and its people. The mainline churches are aware of the facts; to remain silent is no longer feasible. It would be blasphemous, hypocritical and immoral. The *credibility* of the “Christian” churches, who proclaim “the Prince of Peace” in the world, is at stake and has been for centuries.

- 5) A new period with an **integral consciousness** is a requirement for our survival. It will respect **diversity** but acknowledge the **unity** of all life. People who are on the way to such consciousness will see the **sacredness** of all life and integrate some form of spirituality into their work, i.e. have a unity of heart, mind, soul and intellect and an updated cosmology. Basic ethical rules will be respected in all we do and will be intrinsic to all scientific, social, economic and religious endeavors. My late husband, David Rose of MIT, pointed out more than 50 years ago that **science must serve the common good**¹⁸ and not work for its own sake or the curiosity and ambition of the scientist or engineer. Therefore, the new integral consciousness must start with the word “**conscience**”, contained in the word consciousness. Please note that the French language knows only ONE WORD for consciousness and conscience: “**conscience**”! It means there is no consciousness without conscience. All of us, but especially scientists, must be holistically aware of the **moral injury**¹⁹ to our own being which occurs when working on ways to harm and kill others.

Such an integral consciousness is already emerging and is apparent in many places in the US. I am thinking of the **YES** magazine community, of **Tikkun** and the Network of Spiritual Progressives, of **WATER** (Women’s Alliance of Theology, Ethics and Ritual), of all the movements dealing with **Climate Change** as well as the many **Peace Action movements** like **Nuclear Ban** and the **IPPNW** (International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War) and **ICAN** (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons). It is indispensable to overcome the deficiencies of the mental-rational structure of consciousness which in the digital world is still working with the binary dualism of “yes or no”, of “1 or 2”, of “male or female” and knows no “in-between areas”, as 1 and 2, no transgender humans, etc. An **integral** structure of consciousness will **affirm diversity** but see the **unity** of all beings. Some form of feminist spirituality will necessarily be part of our mind and intellect when basic ethical rules become intrinsic to all scientific, social, economic²⁰ and religious endeavors.²¹

¹⁸ On his deathbed 35 years ago, he asked his colleagues at MIT to sign a letter NOT to cooperate in any way with SDI (Strategic Defense Initiative, often called Star Wars).

¹⁹ Rita Nakashima Brock, Gabriella Lettini, *Soul Repair*, Beacon Press 2012

²⁰ See the remarks of Mariana Mazzucato in NY Times of 11/27/20 p. B6: “Today’s capitalism is incompatible with feminism”.

²¹ It will become unthinkable (as is the case today) that 50% of all scientists of the world are engaged in weapons research and war.

Everyone knows that nuclear weapons are immoral. But few realize²² that those who conceived them forgot compassion and love for their neighbors far and near. Jesus of Nazareth preached already in the first century “love your enemies” and asked us to give up once and for all on the very notion of “enmity”. But Christianity as a whole is only now slowly waking up to the fact that this teaching requires to be applied with utmost urgency in our present-day context. It would lead to the end of all wars. Wars have not only become obsolete and absurd in the nuclear age, but all wars are a crime.²³ A new integral consciousness means that old core beliefs (as for example the Just War Theory) must be given up and be radically changed. The present pope Francis has done so which means, that in principle no Catholic can condone nuclear weapons or work within their boundaries.

The religious, feminist and peace community of which I am a part has led me to believe that we have **to imagine and conceive a new story in all areas of our life and proclaim it with boldness and infectious enthusiasm**. Out of my own experience in life (now 87), I see a most urgent need for a first religious step: developing a true reconciliation between Judaism and Christianity. Having grown up in Nazi Germany in an anti-Nazi family and having received the gift of wonderful Jewish friends, especially since living in the United States, I wish to suggest that Christians are able to agree that Jesus, as a Jew and human being, initiated a reform movement, created an inclusive community of men and women, of Jews and Gentiles and practiced compassion toward all who called on him for healing. But he also called those to accountability who put money and power before all other desires. Christians must admit that we do not know whether Jesus was “the Messiah”, but we can live in his Spirit and manifest his power and love under all circumstances and in all walks of life. I remember a wonderful story about **Martin Buber**, told in one of Mark Ellis’s books. Martin Buber is said to have had a dream in which he sat at table with Jesus and his disciples and heard one of them asking Jesus whether he was the Messiah. And Buber said to himself “if I were sitting next to Jesus, I would whisper into his ear: You better not answer this question”. I strongly believe we must be willing to live with the uncertainty and ambiguity of not knowing and not with a “doctrine” that is no longer helpful. This doctrine has probably greatly contributed to the development of anti-Semitism. Some Biblical scholars believe that Jesus never made such a messianic claim²⁴ in the first place. The Christian Church as a whole would be wise to accept such a re-adjustment of Jesus’ role and mission. Since biblical studies have also shown that the Eucharist (Holy Communion) was not instituted by Jesus but by his disciples, I suggest that we develop a **Ritual of Humanity’s**

²² As for example Robert Jay Lifton et alia: The Genocidal Mentality, Nazi Holocaust and Nuclear Threat, mentioned before

²³ Professor Samuel Moyn, Yale University: “...not war-crimes are the problem, **war is the crime.**”

²⁴ Dieter Georgi (formerly my professor and teacher at Harvard Divinity School) used to say: “Jesus did not come to show us what God is like, he came to show us what it means to be fully human.” This shows integral consciousness.

Unity, celebrating the Spirit of Jesus, God's prophet and envoy of Holy Wisdom. All people of the world will gather in the "World House" (MLK) and receive "**the bread of equality**" (everyone receives the same amount) **and** drinks from the same "**cup of solidarity**".²⁵ It can be used as a *Ritual and Symbol for sharing all wealth in the world as equally as possible*. This is not such a new idea. **Alexandre Dumas** predicted already around 1860 that "the world is entering a new era when words like << *Love one another*>> will be lived without pondering who said these words, God or a human being."²⁶

In the same vein, I heard Valery Kaur, a Sikh religious leader, at a recent meeting of the Poor People's Campaign saying that "she knows no stranger". Many cultures in the Two Thirds World have a culture of hospitality which welcomes any stranger as a friend and relative of the human species with no "nationality". I also read a similar attitude into the book by Rabbi Michael Lerner "Revolutionary Love".²⁷

Some of my Jewish friends think such a gesture by Christianity would open the door for recognizing our common origin in the cosmos with new stories of creation and co-creation that we can write and live by, and which will bring about peace and a new consciousness of respect and unity among religions, countries, continents, and islands. The idea of "nations" and "nationalities" must be given up. That notion is only a few hundred years old. People used to travel to other "countries" with different languages but not to other "nations". In the 21st century we are all neighbors, can learn from one another and share and care for one another. This new story needs to be proclaimed with boldness and passion. Only if we, as former exclusivist "Christian" members with Holy Scriptures of Jewish origin become inclusivist members of a larger diverse common community with re-interpreted and revised traditions, will there be a realistic path to peace in the Middle East and the possibility of calling one another to accountability. This would have enormous political consequences because with an integral consciousness, we know that the secular Israel today cannot at the same time claim that "God" has given them a country for Jews only. The latter attitude would mean Israel lives with a stagnate medieval consciousness which refuses to be expanded and transformed. Of course, the first step in this process must come from Christians who have massively contributed to the development of this problem. There will be no peace in the world as long as there is no **peace among the religions**²⁸. And there will be no peace in the world if the so-called "nations"

²⁵ I conceived such a liturgy for my 80th birthday and celebrated it with Christians, Jews and non-believers.

²⁶ See the German newspaper Die Zeit, Dec. 7, 2020. Quotation found in a letter of Alexandre Dumas (1802-1870) to Lev Tolstoy (1828-1910) which the latter put into his diary where he kept quotations and insights, he found worthwhile to remember. Translation from the German into English is mine.

²⁷ A Political Manifesto to Heal and Transform the World, University of California Press, 2019

²⁸ Hans Küng, famous Catholic theologian, proclaimed this fact more than 30 years ago at the Parliament of the World's Religions. URI, the United Religions Initiative, has put it into practice with young people.

do not willingly change their collective consciousness and become interreligious communities of caring and sharing with one another. I believe that nearly all indigenous communities in the world have preserved their sense of oneness and unity with humankind and nature. They have an innate wisdom to share and we need to respect their natural environment. There would be no hostility on their part towards their invaders if the latter are not expelled from their original environment²⁹ by capitalist brutality.

If the German churches after WWII had made a more outspoken religious move of apologizing for their silence³⁰ during the Second World War and before, for tolerating the genocidal mentality of Germany's leaders, and if the churches had not contented themselves with the fact that as a "nation" Germany has paid some reparation for the holocaust for what could never be "repaired", we would not experience silence in Germany now towards Israel or other countries when Israel treats former inhabitants or believers of other traditions with brutality and mercilessness. It is good to remember, as Lifton and Markusen have shown in their book, any threat with nuclear weapons demonstrates a genocidal mentality! Who would want to be accused of it?

I was greatly shocked when reading in **Tanya Reinhart's** book³¹ *Israel/Palestine (How to end the war of 1948)* that the brutality and cruelty of the Israeli army can only be called "ethnic cleansing" and that the Israeli army has studied "the German takeover of the Warsaw Ghetto" by the SS in order to put down the Intifada. Has anybody read this book or otherwise learned of these facts? We must **confront the truth** and call for a change of such a behavior that demonstrates a consciousness without conscience.

It is time to listen to the **Dalai Lama** who many years ago remarked that the US (and the West in general) pays too much attention to the MIND and should focus more on the HEART. It seems that we need not only "mindfulness" (Thich Nhat Hanh) but even more a focus on compassion and "heartfulness".

Who will lead us in this endeavor? **The Arts**

in more than 100 countries by creating more than one thousand interfaith cooperation circles during the last 20 years.

²⁹ The rapist nature and violence of capitalism in India for more than a million indigenous people by a US corporation is vividly described in the book by Arundhati Roy: *Walking with the Comrades*, Outlook Magazine March 2010, Penguin Bks 2012

³⁰ With a few exceptions like Pastors Niemoeller and Bonhoeffer

³¹ Tanya Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine*, Seven Story Press, 2002, p. 116ff, and page 151.

Jan Phillips³² in her book I quoted before says:

“We can’t articulate the way art heals us anymore than we can articulate the mystery of the cosmos. We are awed by the gifts of art, soothed by its music, comforted by its imagery, inspired by its revelations of the possible and the passionate. Art speaks from the soul, to the soul. It has a language of its own. It is the language of the universe, the music of the spheres.”

...Life is happening *through us*, not to us. And though there are unpredictable, chaotic, meteoric events we are called upon to respond to, it is more a cosmic dance than anything

...a chance to practice unity consciousness, stay mindful, remain calm and rooted in joy.”

Many people say to me all this is great but totally “unrealistic”. NOT SO! I cast my lot with those who IMAGINE a world of peace with justice. Without imagination it cannot happen. Surely, we can all join a group of progressive priests who call themselves

“a gathering of people
 who work and pray with laughter
 to reach for stars that seem too distant to be touched
 or too dim to be worth the effort.”

and together we will write the New Story of Love and Peace on Earth.

³² a.a.O. p. 160, 164