

Peace, the Inside Story

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circa late 2000s

Abstract:

Peace is a journey towards a place of mercy and justice, a process of being and doing. Peace is never made; it is always in the making. It is both inner experience and external task. It is a long hard path. By weaving together inside stories of people and events, this chapter throws light on how peace in the world is attainable only from a state of inner peace. In order to achieve inner peace we need unconditional self-knowledge. When we discover and accept our authentic individuality we recognize and accept the genuine uniqueness of others. Peace is a transformational process, at all levels of our being.

Once we change our conscious beliefs and the unconscious symbols, ideas, and abstractions that hold our world in place, our inner experience and outer engagement are transformed. This process of transformation shifts our perception and experience of the universe and ourselves. We see reality as a whole.

We start learning again, because we're seeing each moment with fresh eyes, responding to new situations in new ways. We integrate reason, feeling, sensing, and intuition. We experience ourselves as spiritual beings. Our consciousness expands in a fundamental sense. We grow in sensitivity to self, others, nature, and the Divine.

Peace begins with me.

*Have wings that feared ever
touched the Sun?*

*I was born when all I once
Feared — I could love.[!]*

(Rabia al Adawiyya of Basra, c. 717-801)

Background

On my way to a conference intended to expand communication between Palestinians and Israelis in Jerusalem, Israel many years ago, I fell into conversation with the taxi driver. He asked me where I came from, and because I never underestimate the value of shock in bringing a conversation to a meaningful place, I told him Syria, a country officially at war with Israel. I have lived in the United States for over 60 years, and am American, but Syria is where I began this journey, so my answer was partially true. At this point he said that he would not be able to take me all the way to my destination from West to East Jerusalem, because it was in unfriendly, unsafe territory and that he would only take me so far. As we continued talking, and I told him more about my work with peace and the meeting I was going to, he told me that all he wanted when he went home at night was for his family to be out of harm's way. "We keep killing our chances for peace," he'd said. Then, changing his mind about leaving me to my own devices, he got on the radio and arranged for a Palestinian taxi driver to meet me and take me the rest of the way.

En route home from the Jerusalem conference, I made a stop in Syria and had another profound experience with my taxi driver. It was as if they'd just hung up the phone with each other. The driver asked me where I was coming from, and so I answered Israel. Again, the power of shock broke through layers of small talk. As I told him more about my work, he told me that all he wanted for his family was to live in peace. When we reached the hotel, he wouldn't take my money, saying simply: "Please, just continue your work." These are the people I work for and these are the stories that propel me in my external work.

Life has involved me in International Relations for over half a century, both in academia and in practice—working as advisor to the United Nations and governments, serving on advisory boards of national and international NGOs dealing with issues of conflict and peace building, and working with peace makers around the globe. I have met many remarkable people throughout my life. I had the good fortune to cross paths with several Nobel Peace Prize recipients and can share that two of them, Nelson Mandela and Jimmy Carter, are examples of peacemakers guided in large part by their spiritual compasses.

My experience is influenced by my interpretation of Sufism,ⁱⁱ Islam's answer to the metaphysical search for meaning found in every culture and religion. Yet Sufi mysticism has no more claims on Islam than physics does on Greece, for example, even though physics uses Greek terms of reference as Sufism uses Islamic terms of reference. Sufism is not a religion or specific doctrine; it simply underscores the purification of one's inner self as the path to peace. It further affirms that the individual spiritual path is connected to our responsibilities in society.

Peace is a process. Though some of us recognize the connection between inner and outer peace, few of us are already a Gandhi, a Mother Theresa, a Lao Tzu, Krishna, Moses, Buddha, Christ, or Muhammad. Peace is a journey, not a destination. It's not an end goal, but inherently a process. This process involves endless transformation, a process of detachment and response, and daily challenges.

1. **Endless transformation.** There is no instant transformation. There are no instant transformers. In the same way that our limitations are inexhaustible, our growth in peace is limitless. Each moment when we see and detach from a selfish thought impulse, we deepen our peace by one step. This is how peace is transformative. It transforms consciousness from bondage to desire, into freedom to love and create.

2. **The process of detachment and response.** Peace has to recreate itself moment-by-moment, in our lives of constant change, through detachment and response. This should be obvious with respect to the abrasions that punctuate everyday life, as well as the obstacles that oppose conflict resolution.

But it also happens in meditation. Meditation starts by detaching the mind from the thoughts and memories of prior action, whether of that day, previous days or days to come. Detachment is letting-go. It keeps on letting go into the small stillness reached by the first detachment. In this way stillness deepens.

In daily life each new moment and situation is accepted for what it is—not denied, and not resisted. Then follows a conscious response. Sometimes non-action is called for. This is the action of intentional stillness. But sometimes an act of speech or body is called for. Arising as an expression of inner peace, of inner knowing, then either action or stillness has the effect of reducing disturbances in self and others.

Both types of spiritual action—(1) practice in daily meditation or prolonged retreat, and (2) practice in everyday life or conflict resolution—take right effort: that's right attention plus detachment. This sweating out of our transformation is the only way inner and outer peace can be realized. No one can do this for us; we have to do it for ourselves and then model it for others.

3. The challenges of daily life. Once peace is touched, as a temporary state, then maintaining that state requires the work of incorporating peace into daily routine. This is another process. It is sweaty work because daily life is a relentless stimulus to our latent weaknesses—and a continuous challenge to our peaceful energy. The lives of saints, sages, and prophets were also processes—responding to small and large crises one after another, day after day.

Why spiritual experience is required for outer peace. Spiritual consciousness refers to the direct knowledge we have of the world, and ourselves before any thoughts arise in the mind. Because all thoughts carry the sense of self—"I'm thinking about that"—and because the sense of self is itself a thought—only spiritual consciousness can circumvent the root of conflict. It can do this because it doesn't recognize a distinction between self and other. Without a sense of separation between self and other, only unity remains. If this perspective were to form the basis of peace solutions, any number of specific approaches would be likely to work.

This is all it would take to see that social and political peace depends on the experience of inner peace—if we understood what inner peace is: a quiet mind. But most of us don't, so let's sketch a formal argument for stillness of thoughts as a necessary condition for outer, social peace.

Stillness of thought impulses occurs easily when we recognize them, when we're conscious of them. The problem is that we are not clearly conscious of the majority of our thoughts:

1. Constant subconscious thinking means we're identifying with our thoughts.
2. Identifying with our thoughts means we're investing a sense of self in them.
3. Investing a sense of self in thoughts means we're creating the division of Self-versus-Other.

4. The division of Self-versus-Other is the germ of violence.
5. Therefore, constant subconscious thinking is the germ of competition and war.
6. Therefore, stillness of thought is a necessary condition for peace.

The key concept here is the first. Why is investing a sense of self in our thoughts built in to subconscious thinking? Because subconscious thinking means we're not recognizing thoughts as impulses separate from consciousness. Clear recognition of thoughts as transitory impulses, no more a part of our self than an impermanent itch we feel, means we recognize them as separate from who we are. When we don't clearly recognize our thought impulses as transitory 'things'—*separate* from the field of consciousness which sees them come and go—then we feel *identical* with them: This is a subconscious sense of self, invested in our thoughts.

The metaphor of the mirror is a concept used by Sufis and the image of "polishing the mirror of the heart" is a common one. With expanded, sharpened clarity, we are able to recognize our thoughts.

Because our thoughts appear to be a part of our self-identity, any individual or group who criticizes our beliefs is felt to be criticizing *us*. We take this personally. We feel threatened or angry, because we don't see that our beliefs are just subtle objects, within our field of consciousness. They're not who we are. But the "Other's" criticism threatens to destroy our beliefs. So we feel the "Other" is destroying *us*. In ordinary language, they're "shooting us down in flames," "blowing us out of the water." These are military metaphors for killing. And human beings do kill each other in wars over the ideas of Protestantism, Catholicism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Equality and Democracy, and more.

Religion has never brought universal peace. This is true despite its role at different points throughout history as a powerful force for peace and cultural harmony. Confucianism, for instance, helped end the Warring States Period of Ancient China. Christianity helped reunify the decadent Roman Empire, both East and West factions. Rabbinic Judaism blazed up as a force of peace in Exilic Babylon. Islam unified the truculent Arab tribes. Buddhism was the basis for instilling peace during Ashoka's empire in the third century BCE.

These religious groups pacified and unified broken and belligerent societies. But successor states tended to demand allegiance to their finite forms

and methods. Inevitably, this brought a return of conflict and war. Religion becomes a pawn in the political games of nations.

Religion, when twisted and corrupted, leads to exclusivity. It becomes closed, driven by fear of differences. Closed religion preaches total ownership of truth, when, in reality, we all possess parts of the truth and need each other to discover truth's totality. When we stop identifying with our beliefs—because we see them clearly, as transitory objects—then we don't take criticism personally. We retain our peace.

Peace as inner experience. As mentioned earlier, Inner peace is stillness of thought impulses. This is also clarity, the basis of wisdom, because thoughts distract consciousness from contact with reality. Reality is defined simply as our true nature, love. Here is already the connection between peace and transformation: peace is expansion of consciousness, because when conscious energy is not used up to form thoughts, desires, interpretations, prejudices, resentments, and day-dreaming and nightdreaming 24/7, then awareness is undimmed; it is enlivened. All thought impulses dim awareness of reality—just to make and maintain their own forms. Also, thought impulses prevent direct contact with reality; they're a film or veil between consciousness and the world.

Thoughts not based on direct contact with reality are delusive. If we don't see reality directly, we bump into it, or we miss it. So there's already large or small conflict with reality when we're in our heads, lost in thought.

When stillness is deep enough, consciousness feels like ecstatic joy. The healing acceptance and fulfilling joy of love are always present in the depth of the mind. But we rarely experience these blessings, because of wave after wave of disturbing thought impulses—desire, fear, anger, and greed—all expressing our deep sense of an illusory separate self.

Spiritual practices remove compulsive thought formations relentlessly agitating and disturbing our mind. Then awareness opens into deep, stable consciousness, transcending the false sense of self—born from thought, which is the source of all disturbing emotions. Our illusory individuality disappears in God's unbounded wholeness. When the self is transcended, then the resulting energetic, but stilled, awareness is love—our True Nature. All living things on the planet have their ecological function; ours is love.

When there is no self, there can be no "other." Expanded, deep, transcendental consciousness realizes that self and other are delusions created by thought. The insight that we are one is love: We are connected: We are interdependent: The whole universe is One.

In the accompanying joy of this love, conflict is recognized as coming from the emotional disturbances of the false sense of self. In contrast, actions arising from Realization are loving actions that dissolve conflict and suffering. Cooperation replaces competition.

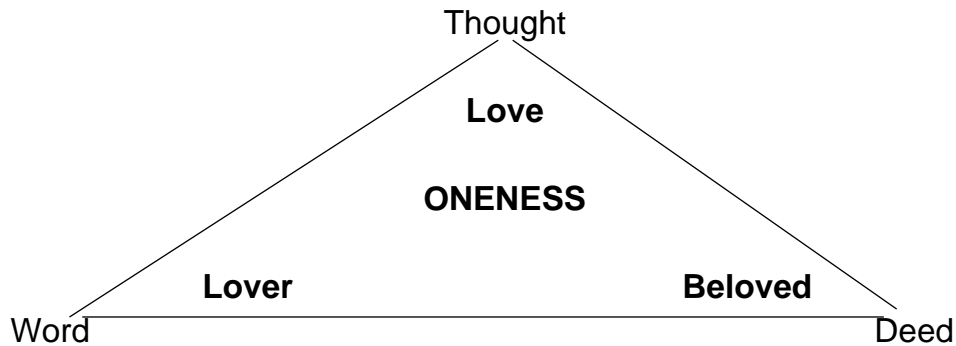
This is not utopian. This is the life experience of people who realize their true nature. They do not spend their lives in competition and conflict. But they often live intensely active lives. Gandhi and his contemporary Abdul Ghaffar Khanⁱⁱⁱ are good examples. Their wide-ranging work and countless friendships and social contacts carried peace. Their acts radiated compassion. That is why millions were open to them as they were to Rabia al Adawiyya, Mansur al-Hallaj, Abraham Maimonides and Bahá'u'lláh. In our era we can find many models too: Aung San Suu Kyi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Albert Einstein, Thomas Merton, Sakena Yacoobi, Thich Nhat Hanh, and Abdul Sat-tar Edhi^{iv}. But all humans who experience inner peace spread it to others. This is a possibility for all of us.

Peace is the doorway to compassion and nonviolence is the first step to love.

The Love Triangle. When we transcend our self-centered, desire-based thoughts, our actions reflect this peace. If not, our actions reflect conflict, because desire rejects the present moment, struggling or fighting for something else. Action from desire reflects inner conflict—and reinforces it. Action from desirelessness reflects peace and love—and reinforces them. Action and inner being are interdependent, but doing is more dependent on being than being is on doing.

This interdependence—with the priority of inner love and oneness—is represented by the Love Triangle, a Sufi image and the way to peace:

FIGURE 1.



Thought is at the apex, and words and deeds are at the corners below, because our thoughts are the originators of our speech and actions. Thoughts are expressed in our words and enacted in our deeds. When our thoughts reflect our love, our words are those of a lover, and our actions serve the beloved. We are peace.

This is a virtuous cycle. It is the opposite of the vicious cycle of violent action. In an "Unlove Triangle," originating thoughts express the fearful, desire-carrying delusion of Self-versus-Other. Then conflict is communicated in our words, and violence is expressed in our actions. Based on conflicting words and violent actions, the delusion of Self-versus-Other gets reinforced. This delusion then leads to further conflicts.

The relation of peace and love. Inner peace deepens love, and love deepens inner peace. Both love and peace are acceptance of what is. The Love Triangle symbolizes this: The Triangle's undivided interior represents the oneness of inner peace—the unity of the individual and all the rest of the universe, in love.

Here's the logic of the connection between peace and love:

1. Unconditional love is acceptance of whatever is.
2. Acceptance of whatever is, is inner peace.
3. Therefore, Love = Unconditional acceptance = Peace.

The deeper is our peace—our lack of aversion to anything, and our lack of desire for anything else than what is—then the deeper is our love. Lover, beloved, and the act of love become one. The knower, object known, and act of knowing are one.

In Oneness is no conflict because there are not two to enter into conflict. As peace deepens, its nature as love becomes more palpable.

In love and peace, conflicts dissolve. This is the point of the inner experience of peace for conflict resolution. If we look from the perspective of the Love Triangle at methods used in successful conflict resolution, we can see love everywhere.

Doing and being. The Love Triangle distinguishes inner—love, lover, and beloved—from outer—thought, word, and deed. Ultimately, Inner-versus-Outer is a false distinction, because the reality is One. But it is a useful distinction because of our deep-seated delusion of Self-versus-Other: As long as we labor under dualistic delusions, symbols like the Love Triangle are helpful because they use our delusions to grow us out of them. I have heard too many times to count, one party in conflict say about the other: "We hate them for making us do what we do, because they bring out the beast in us."

In the final analysis, doing is one with being, and outer is one with inner. Pure consciousness is the connection and the envelope. Physical and social forms are the outside of consciousness. And consciousness is the inside of physical and social forms. That's why peace work is both inner and outer, inseparably.

Working against structural violence—and for justice, abundance, and ecology—are peacemakers' "external" tasks. "External" is in quotes because we are emphasizing here that inner peace is an energy inherently acting in these outer directions.

The energy of peace dissolves suffering. Inner peace with whatever exists does not imply inaction. The nature of peace is action to eliminate suffering. Peace is a high energy state un-depleted by desires, chasing the objects of desire, and the resulting frustration, disappointment, or fighting. Any desire-carrying thought that arises in this high-energy field is burnt up. This is why

Wisdom, the combination of wisdom plus vision, or inner seeing—is a Fire, a field of still energy, dissolving suffering.

First, it dissolves latent desire impulses in the soul of the peaceful individual. But simultaneously it alleviates the suffering consciousness of other people. Nearby people get a "contact high." Distant people are also helped. This is "nonlocal causation," in accord with Quantum Nonlocality, as proven by 20th Century physicists David Böhm, John Bell, and Alain Aspect^v.

In addition to the activity of burning away psychological suffering, energetic peaceful consciousness acts to alleviate suffering—from a child's distress to the violent conflicts of nations. The ancient example—and still the best—is a mother's love. A mother accepts her child's limitations and pain—but acts to eliminate them both physically and energetically, as much as possible. The mere presence of the mother pacifies her child.

Framework for conflict resolution or When I am Peace, Peace Emanates from me and Peace returns to me

The translation of peace as first inner transformation and only then external manifestation (you are peace and from you flows peace) creates a certain framework in my conflict resolution work. This framework can be broken down into five stages, each essential for the succeeding one.

Step 1: Create for them a safe space or Getting clear

As facilitator I must create a safe space for the conflicting sides to meet. The issue here is that there is almost always a disparity in perceived power. It is difficult to feel safe when you feel powerless against the other's power. The energy, the environment and setting, the idea that you are co-participating in creating a new perspective, a new way of looking, these are what create a safe space for the encounter. Because this is an inner as much as an outer space, it requires emptying unconscious desires, emotions, and attachment to the outcome. I need to quiet my mind. In other words, I have to get *myself* out of the way.

It also requires surrendering to love. When I am connected to that state of grace within myself, it manifests externally as a calming, non-judgmental energy. This clear space invites the parties in conflict to recognize their unconscious

baggage so that they can stop embracing their pain and start wrestling with it. Only by wrestling can we progress.

This first stage tends to look like an everyday, lighthearted place that all people can connect with, such as an informal restaurant with music or dancing, or round tables with frequent coffee breaks. It involves modeling what it looks like to share inside stories of transformation and peace. I might start with an experience, perhaps the one involving the elderly woman on the bus who gave her seat to a pregnant woman and her small child. As soon as she stood, a man rose to give her his seat and another man stood to offer him his seat and a chain reaction of kindness was set in motion by one woman's standing.

I could also share my experience waiting in a long line of over-heated, frustrated customers facing one cashier in a drugstore. People in the line became impatient and fidgety and the cashier became more and more flustered. One woman in the middle of the line, when her turn came, determined to engage the cashier in compassionate conversation. After looking at her name tag and addressing her by name, she said: "My dear, what a long day you're having! You must be tired, especially with the weather being what it is..." At first the level of impatience in the line grew, but as she continued to chat and engage the cashier, the mood shifted. People in line started engaging each other and laughing and time became irrelevant. It took one person to shift the energy and open us all to a different experience of the moment.

For this first stage, coming from a place of light-heartedness and humility is essential. I cannot grapple with the emotions in the group if I am weighed down by my own, or theirs. Nelson Mandela is the consummate exemplar of these traits. I remember when he entered a conference sponsored by the Young Presidents' Organization in South Africa in the 90s, late and with a little girl in tow. He opened the discussion by explaining her presence. She had stopped him in the street on his way to the conference, he explained, to ask him if he was Mandela and when he'd confirmed her suspicions, she'd said, "but you look so old!" Only a humble man could share this story with laughter.

Step 2: Collapse the distance between them, or Making the unseen seen

The second step is to change the way the parties in conflict see each other. When they enter, they see each other as different or separate. What they need to see is that they're both victims and perpetrators, that both sides are

traumatized. Spirituality enables us to connect with a deeper self and that's the place from which attention originates. The implication is that you can then change what you give your attention to. I appeal to the commonality, that both sides are in a state of pain and both need healing. That is why I refer to them as, for example, "My dear Israelis and other Arabs" or "My dear Arabs and other Israelis;" "My dear Turks and other Greeks," or "My dear Greeks and other Turks;" "My dear Irish and other English," or "My dear English and other Irish." This again narrows the disparity of power between them. It allows them to appreciate an understanding that they are equally powerful or equally powerless because they are partners in conflict.

To do this, I must first collapse the distance within myself, the feeling of separation from wholeness, of separation from anything. I must work on avoiding self-centeredness and distraction so that I can connect with the energy of the others. Once I can do this, it opens up a broader consciousness, an awareness of the before unseen, which is the only place that reconciliation can occur. There it becomes possible to mobilize the energy of others. For example, a retired lawyer once came to see me about how to begin doing peace work himself. As we walked and talked, picked up a piece of trash from the sidewalk and put it in the garbage. He did the same a few steps later and understood what I wanted to tell him: that peace is about putting things in their place. He went home and discovered what he had been unable to see before: homeless families in his own town who had lost their houses in foreclosures. "I didn't see them before, but I see them now," he said, and he began his work of putting them back where they belong.

As for me, I can't collapse this distance without first having experienced it. The founders of the first peace studies programs at American University experienced marginalization and scorn. Often we were viewed as "flaky" scholars and were not taken seriously. But leadership is the ability to stand up in the midst of laughter. We paid a price, but in the process discovered a better prize: both humility and awareness of what separation feels and looks like. That experience of marginalization, coupled with my inner work, collapsed my belief that there is a center and a periphery. Where you are is the center and because everything is inner-connected, there is no periphery. Without this experience, I would not be able to help the parties in conflict to shift their perception.

Step 3: Build Trust or Becoming Companions on the Journey

This stage is when the parties can share their feelings and create empathy. On the surface is only blame, and they cannot get past this blame until they see each other as fellow sufferers on a journey of pain, rather than as the 'other'. They can only see each other this way by recognizing their own state of grace and their own unconscious, thus the first two steps. It helps to focus on individual and shared needs and to identify the roles of individuals in the conflict.

Stage three often looks like the peace conference that Dr. Carl Rogers, at the apex of his career at 85, convened in 1987 in Rust, Austria with the Peace Project staff and the co-sponsorship of the University for Peace in Costa Rica to end Nicaragua's civil war. Some 50 political figures and diplomats from 17 nations couldn't bring about reconciliation despite our best efforts. Then one night the Austrian government invited the delegates to celebrate a new season of wine. This night of wine and celebration brought Nicaraguans and Americans together at dinner creating the safe space necessary for sharing: the chief Nicaraguan delegate took a picture of his son from his wallet and showed it to the chief American delegate and said: "I don't want you to kill my son." The American delegate brought out a picture of his son from his wallet and said: "Let's make a deal. Next summer we'll make an exchange: my son stays with you in Nicaragua and yours will stay with my family in America." And so entered trust and the humanity of understanding.

The discussion moved from the abstract notions of national security and national interest to the concrete and personal: my family and your family. It was only then, when the sharing began and the two became companions on the journey back to understanding, that reconciliation became a possibility.

A final story to demonstrate how this process of internal to external transformation works took place in Cyprus in 1990 under the auspices of a Seeds of Peace program. We took Greek Cypriot students to the Turkish side and brought Turkish Cypriot students to the Greek side and went together to restaurants. Through music and food and discussions, they found commonality, confronted their differences, and could no longer deny the common humanity of their former enemies. By confronting their differences they discovered their similarities.

Step 4: Create a Coordinated Pace or Whirling Together^{vi}

In laying out the conflict resolution steps, one side usually feels that it is being pushed too fast. This is a result of the power imbalance. Conflict resolution is a dance and the steps need to be in sync to work. One side must step back so that the other can step forward, in turns. This is where patience comes in. The only way the negotiations will end is if one side walks out; they have to give up before I give up.

In the early 1990s, during a peace conference between Syrians and Israelis hosted by the U.S., the Syrian side felt it was being pushed too fast while the Israeli side felt comfortable. The Syrian delegation felt powerless vis-à-vis the Israelis and thus unwilling to make concessions. Then something shifted to bring both sides on to a level playing field. The political parties governing Israel changed from Likud to Labor, and with a new Israeli chief negotiator, the climate of the conference changed as well. Before his arrival, the atmosphere had been tense, formal and uncomfortable. The new principal actor happened to be a leading expert on both Syria and the Arab world and was able to create a feeling of comfort to which the Syrians responded favorably.

Together they began to develop a common perception and to whirl in sync. They set a coordinated pace for peace, and while the negotiations ultimately failed, it was not due to a perceived imbalance of power.

Step 5: Pass it On or a Few Seconds in Heaven

This last stage of the transformation process is an ongoing one. The recipients of healing, once the process has been set in motion, become conduits of healing themselves. It becomes their duty to continue the work of conflict transformation, of continuing to face the trauma and help other fractured souls wrestle with their emotions. The only way for the facilitator to bring this stage about is through modeling. Again, modeling is only possible when your conscious and your unconscious are in alignment, and this is a state of humility.

To give an example, one junior faculty member at my university many years ago was faculty advisor to the Earth Day Club, which approached him with an odd request to perform an "earth" dance. He in turn went to a senior faculty member and asked for help. The senior professor agreed, and to much laughter and amazement, danced on the quad in front of faculty and students alike. When the younger professor came to thank him, the senior professor put up a hand. "When you become a tenured professor, do the same thing for the junior faculty

member who asks you." This is a rare successful example of modeling, most are unsuccessful most of the time.

It is the same way with the question of Heaven: Heaven is where love is flowing, and Hell is where love is blocked. It may not be possible to experience Heaven for more than a few fleeting moments in a lifetime, but those seconds are what sustain you and keep you going.

With the Beloved's water of life, no illness remains
In the Beloved's rose garden of union, no thorn remains
They say there is a window from one heart to another
How can there be a window where no wall remains?^{vii}

(by Jalal ad-Din Rumi c. 1207-1273)

Conclusion:

Love is a dynamic force, not a state we possess. It is a force passing through us. To receive it, we have to give it to others. When we open up with each other, when we acknowledge that the whole world needs the whole world, our relationship becomes an exchange of the best for the best.

World events and trends will continue to expose the precariousness of international relations based on separateness in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world. In political life, the reconnection of politics to our highest and most worthy values is the most important task. In essence, spirituality dignifies politics. Spirituality provides the possibility of experiencing and accepting human solidarity and, most importantly, the wholeness of human life. Spirituality consecrates the human, and humanizes the sacred.

Many years ago I accepted an invitation to speak at the Army Sergeants Major Academy and was met at the airport by an officer in uniform. The airport was crowded, the timing just before Christmas, and I kept losing sight of my guide in the jumble of people. Suddenly I would spot him to one side helping an elderly woman with her luggage, only to lose sight again a few steps later. The last time I lost him he was snapping a photo of a mother and child in front of Santa Claus. I asked him where he had learned to disappear and he answered that it was part of his grand strategy. As a minesweeper in Vietnam, he explained, he'd lost many buddies who didn't know they were about to take their last step. "For me," he'd

said, "I learned to live between steps. And now, I celebrate life with every step I take."

We must be fully immersed and conscious in our inner world, the life between steps, in order to step out on the external path of peacebuilding with celebration and humility. As we make our way up the ladder of consciousness, from limitation to abundance, from human opportunity to divine proximity, changes open up. Then envy, resentment, paranoia, and desperate greed are transformed into trust, mercy, justice and their corresponding social forms—cooperation, innovation, and nonviolence.

My heart has become capable of every form:
It is a pasture for gazelles,
And a convent for Christian monks,
And a temple for idols and the pilgrim's Ka'ba and the tables
of the Tora and the book of the Koran.
I follow the religion of love:
Whatever way Love's camels take, that is my religion and my faith.^{viii}

(Muhyiddin ibn Al—Arabi c. 1165-1240)

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i From her poem "Die Before You Die," Love Poems From God: Twelve Sacred Voices from the East and the West, translated by: Daniel Ladinsky, Penguin Compass, 2002.

ii For further reading see the following: The Mystical Dimensions of Islam by Annemarie Schimmel, UNC Press, 1978.

iii Nonviolent Soldier of Islam: Badshah Khan, A Man to Match His Mountains by Sri Eknath Easwaran, Nilgiri Press, 1999.

iv For more information on this Pakistani legend hailed as both Mahatma Ghandi and Father Theresa, see "Playing With Fire: Pakistan at War With Itself," by Pamela Constable, Random House, 2011.

v In Quantum Physics, it is measurement that collapses the wave of possibilities of two distant, correlated electrons. Böhm's interpretation was that measurement and electrons are not different from consciousness. They are holographic—each contains the other. The physical order is implicit in the conscious order. Böhm presented this theory in his 1980 book, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*.

vi Whirling refers to the Sufi sect of Whirling Dervishes and was founded by Jalāl ad-Dīn Rumi. Dervish is translated as "seeker," or one on the Sufi journey.

vii "From Rumi, Thief of Sleep, quatrains from the Persian": translations by Shahram Shiva.

viii Reynold A. Nicholson (editor), *The Tarjuman Al-Ashwaq: A Collection of Mystical Odes*, Theosophical Publishing House Ltd: London, 1911.