

The World Network of Religious Futurists



Note

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Editorial

In this issue we continue our serialisation of Linda Groff and Paul Smoker's exploration of the foundations for peace in the next century. We have a report from our Eurasian Director, and Moshe Dror explores the relationship between Judaism and Cyberspace. We also have our first book review, of "SMALL is Powerful", by John Papworth. If any members of the network wish to recommend other books we might review, I would be very glad to hear from them.

The fragile shoots of peace I detected while preparing the last issue have indeed turned out to be fragile, but efforts do and must continue to overcome conflicts. May we continue to

work for peace and justice for all the citizens of earth.

Finally, a technical note. Some E-mail hosts (particularly AOL) have been having problems decoding characters not normally found on American keyboards. To avoid problems for our E-mail subscribers in future, I propose to adopt the international convention and denote currencies by (standard) three-letter codes. Those I am most likely to need are as follows:

DEM = German Marks
GBP = British Pounds
JYN = Japanese Yen
USD = US Dollars.

I will define these abbreviations before I use them in articles in future issues.

Enjoy the magazine.

Gordon Arthur.

Spirituality, Religion, and Peace: Exploring the foundations for inner-outer peace in the Twenty-First Century

by Linda Groff and Paul Smoker

Part II: Further Explorations of the Esoteric/Inner and Exoteric/Outer Aspects of Religion and Culture

B. Male and Female Aspects of Divinity in Dif-

ferent Religions and Cultures

1. In Different Cultures and Historical Periods, People Have Believed in Nature Spirits, Goddesses, Gods and Goddesses, and in One God (often Interpreted as Male).

At different times in history, and in different cultures, divinity or the sacred or spiritual has been represented in different ways: sometimes as nature spirits (such as Shintoism in Japan, American Indian traditions, as well as other indigenous people's spiritual traditions, such as the Aborigines in Australia); sometimes as goddesses, often associated with fertility and the earth (seen in the ancient temples in Malta or the Old Europe documented by Marija Gimbutis); sometimes as a balance between male and female gods and goddesses, each representing different aspects or attributes of the one God (as in Ancient Egypt and Hinduism); and sometimes as a monotheistic, all powerful God who is often portrayed as God the Father or male (in Western monotheistic religions, including Judaism, Christianity, and Islam).

There are a number of books that have been written in recent years – many by feminists who are trying to recapture the spiritual and societal role of women historically – about the factors leading to the above transition from female goddess to male God (Please

consult the Bibliography for a few of these recommended sources, such as Anne Baring and Jules Cashford, Elise Boulding, Riane Eisler, Marija Gimbutas, David Leeming and Jake Page, Shirley Nicholson, and Merlin Stone). There is not space here to explore this subject in greater depth. The important point here is just to note that divinity has been portrayed and experienced differently at different times in history, and in different cultures. Underneath this diversity, however, was a common search for some kind of spiritual meaning in life – whatever

the form that this took – which one could argue was at least partly a reflection of the dominant cultural values that existed at the time.

2. In Essence Spirit or God (in Mystical Traditions of All Religions) Transcends Polar Opposites or Dualities (often Portrayed Symbolically as Male and Female).

It is not the purpose of this paper to argue that one symbol system for spirit or divinity is correct and others are wrong. All sought to honor spirit in some way. If God or spirit is beyond all dualities, however –

which the mystical traditions of all religions seem to suggest – then clearly God or spirit or divinity is also beyond our human attempts to categorize it as either all male or all female, at the exclusion of the other. As Lao Tzu said, “The Tao that can be named is not the Tao”. Yet in our limited consciousness, and in our effort to create a personal relationship with what is essentially beyond form, infinite, and partaking of the great mystery, we tend to personify god or spirit – in different ways at different times and places historically.

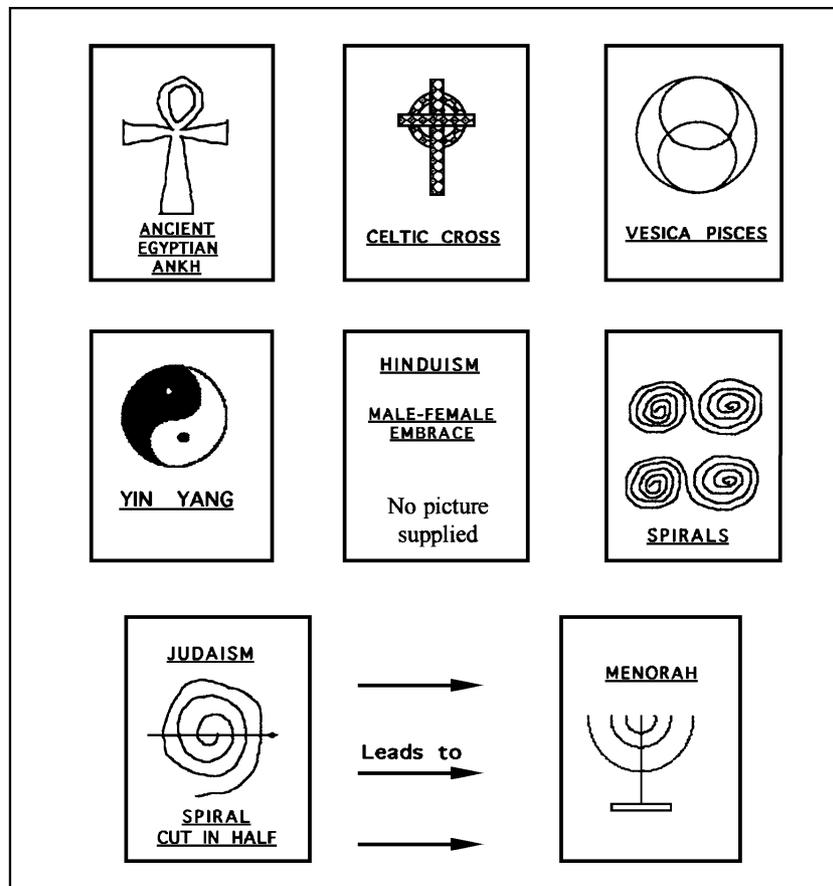


Figure 3: Spiritual Symbols From Different Religious Traditions Representing the Unity or Transcendence of Opposites.

(Please note: if the reader is aware of additional symbols, from different religious traditions, illustrating this idea of the unity of opposites, the writers would appreciate hearing from you about this. Thank you.)

One of the themes of this paper is that if we want to create peace in the world, then we need to find a way to include all the parts of the whole, or the world, in this process. It would thus seem in keeping with this theme that divinity or spirit should be seen to be the unity that transcends all opposites or dualities, however they are represented. In support of this idea, Figure 3 cites examples of spiritual symbols from a number of different religions in the world, which are all based on this idea of recognizing that the spiritual path involves balancing and transcending polar opposites, or dualities. Indeed, the mystical or esoteric path in all religions is based on this simple truth: unitive consciousness transcends duality.

Explanation For the Symbols in Figure 3:

Ancient Egyptian Ankh: Represents the unity of opposites, which are symbolized by the two halves of the Ankh: the top, circular part representing the female principle; the bottom straight part representing the male principle. The Ankh also symbolized eternal life and immortality (with the balancing and transcending of opposites – represented by the male and female principles – being the way to get there), as well as the union of Upper and Lower Egypt (the upper half representing the Delta region of Lower Egypt and the bottom half representing the rest of the Nile River that flowed through Upper Egypt, in the South, to the Delta in the North).

Celtic Cross: The Celtic Cross is an interesting Christian cross in that it combines the traditional symbol of the cross (representing Christ on the cross, who died to the physical life and was resurrected into eternal life with the Father – more a representation of the male principle) with the circle around it (representing the female principle). In this regard, it should be noted that the ancient temples in Malta to the goddess were all made in circular shapes representing the female figure.

Vesica Pisces (Pre-Christian, Celtic Symbol): This pre-Christian, Celtic symbol also represents the unity (outer circle) of opposites – the two inner circles, which are also seen to be overlapping or interdependent. The area in the middle, where these two circles overlap, is also the shape of a fish, which later became one of the dominant symbols for Christianity. This symbol can be found on the ancient well at Glastonbury, England, which some call the mythical “Isle of Avalon” of King Arthur legends. This well has provided healing waters at a constant temperature for 5,000 years, according to tradition. This overlapping and interdependence of opposites also represents, in the Celtic tradition, the interdependence of spiritual and material life; it is not a choice of one or the other, but of both together.

Yin Yang: This is the famous Yin-Yang symbol from Taoism, which also represents the idea of the unity, balance, and interdependence of opposites – as the basis for a bal-

anced and healthy life, including a spiritual life. What is most interesting here is that there is always a small amount of the opposite characteristic in each half of the symbol (Yin or Female in Yang or Male, and Yang or Male in Yin or Female). The meaning of this is clear. If you try to totally eliminate your opposite, and create a pure Yin, or pure Yang (half of the whole), it will have the opposite effect of what you intended, i.e., the state of total Yin, or Yang, will be so out of balance that it will cause the situation to begin to move in its opposite direction – towards what you were trying to eliminate. Thus the lesson is clear: if you want to maintain a current situation, always keep a little of its opposite present, so that the situation will be partially balanced and thus maintainable. This basic philosophical principle is also embedded in the I Ching, or Chinese Book of Changes.

Hinduism: Male-Female Embrace: Another version of the balance of male and female principles or opposites as a symbol of the path to attain spiritual union with God can be seen in the Hindu symbol of a male and female in an often voluptuous embrace. Westerners sometimes misinterpret the meaning of this symbol. What it really means is that the spiritual, mystical path requires the balancing and transcending of opposites, not the elimination of opposites.

Spirals (Coming Into Form, Going Out of Form): These ancient spirals – moving in two opposite circular directions – can be found on the ancient

temples to the goddess in Malta, on ancient stone circles in England and Europe, and even in the Andes, as well as other places. These symbols have been interpreted to mean the spiral of coming into life and the spiral of going out of life as a continuous and interconnected process, thus indicating a belief in reincarnation by the people drawing these symbols.

Jewish Menorah: Apparently the Jewish Menorah is an outgrowth of one of these spirals which was cut in half. Further research follows re: its symbolic meaning.

In conclusion, if a symbol can represent a whole philosophy, as well as an approach, to the mystical path of enlightenment, then perhaps these symbols – from a number of different religious traditions – are a simple, visual way to do so. These symbols are also archetypal and thus communicate in deeper archetypal ways to our psyche or consciousness. One might also note that many, if not most religions, are based not only on the idea of the unity or interconnectedness of opposites; they are also based on the trinity principle in which two opposites come together and create something new.

C. Joseph Campbell and Mythology: Universal Aspects of the Hero's Journey in the Myths of all Cultures: and East-West Differences

This section will look at the role of mythology – especially as interpreted in the works of Joseph Campbell, and later Jean Houston – in showing a way to bridge one's outer life in the world with the inner life of the spirit. It will also look at universal aspects of the "hero's journey" (the journey to our inner selves) in the myths of all cultures; the stages of the hero's journey; and East-West cultural and historical differences in the hero's journey.

1. Mythology: A link between Our Outer Lives and the Search for Deeper Meaning and Purpose in Life – including the Inner Life of the Spirit.

While some people living in our demythified Western world tend to think of only facts as true, and therefore myths as untrue or illusory, those who study myths note that they have a deeper type of truth to them, which attracts people in almost all cultures to them. Indeed, mythology can be seen as a link between our outer lives in the world and the search for deeper, archetypal levels of meaning and purpose in life, which then leads to the inner life of the spirit. Therefore myths do not speak to us in factual terms, but in archetypal, metaphorical language. Joseph Campbell himself said that "myth is the secret open-

ing through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human manifestation." Thus myths provide maps for the inner spiritual journey. Myths can also help people realize how their everyday life can take on extraordinary or heroic dimensions via the way they choose to deal with these events, as often inspired by other heroic figures from mythology.

2. Joseph Campbell: Universal Aspects of the Hero's Journey in the Myths of All Cultures.

Joseph Campbell's most famous study is probably "The Hero With a Thousand Faces", originally published in 1947. In this he posits the idea of a "monomyth" – the one great story which underlies much mythology" from different cultures around the world. It is basically the story of any human being who sets out on a journey to discover whom he/she really is. While the outer forms can vary from one culture to another, the deeper aspects of the journey are universal and transcend different cultures.

Besides *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell also wrote a number of other books. His ideas gained a great following and popularity in the United States through the six part television series, "The Power of Myth", in which Bill Moyers interviewed Joseph Campbell for public television. In this series, as in other writing, Campbell encouraged people to "follow your bliss", meaning to listen to your own inner voices and

follow your own dream, which will take you on your own hero's journey of self discovery and transformation.

3. Jean Houston's "Sacred Psychology" and the Role of Mythology in it.

Jean Houston, who works with mythology in the tradition of Joseph Campbell, talks about "sacred psychology" where our "deepest fulfillment comes from experiencing union with the divine and bringing a sense of the sacred into our everyday lives" – especially in Western society which has become increasingly disconnected from the deeper "waters of life." Jean believes that we humans are multilevel beings, living in three realms, and that the middle realm (of mythology and archetypes) helps us connect our everyday outer lives with our inner spiritual selves. These three realms include:

(i) The "THIS IS ME" realm of our everyday self, the space-and-time bound personality that is heavily influenced by habit, social conditioning and cultural patterns.

(ii) The "WE ARE" realm housing "the myths and guiding archetypes that connect the personal self with its spiritual source. This realm also serves as a cultural template, providing the primal patterns that take form as works of art, architecture, literature and drama."

(iii) The "I AM" realm described by mystics throughout the ages as the realm of limitless Seeing, boundless love and pure potency. This is the realm that was revealed to

Moses in the wilderness, for example.

Jean Houston believes that jumping from the time bound, socially conditioned life of the THIS IS ME realm directly into the "boundless unconditioned state of I AM ness" is too much for most people. They need the intermediate WE ARE realm of mythology and archetypal stories as a bridging place to prepare for the life of the spirit and to learn how to navigate through the various stages of the hero's journey.

4. Stages of the Hero's Journey; Universal Path to Self awareness and Mastery in All Culture – Though the Outer Form May Vary.

The hero's journey is basically a road map that shows any human being a pathway from the outer world of our everyday lives inward towards deeper spiritual dimensions. There are various versions of these stages. Campbell himself said: "A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man" (Campbell, 1949). In one version of the hero's journey, there are three key stages: separation (from one's everyday life); initiation (where one is tested); and return (to one's everyday life, to share with others what one has learned and experienced).

Another more detailed version of the hero's journey has

five stages, borrowing on ideas of both Joseph Campbell first, and then Jean Houston, in each stage as follows:

(i) Nothing Holding You to Current Situation: you are open for the adventure of the hero's journey because there is nothing holding you to your current situation and you are, in effect, seeking some deeper meaning or purpose in your life. Another version of this stage is that you hear an inner call to adventure, which you can either accept or reject.

(ii) Find a Mentor or Teacher. Often a mentor or teacher must be found who can act as a guide on the journey. Another version of this stage is that once the call is accepted, you will find allies to help you on the journey. "These secret allies represent undeveloped potentials and skills that will be evoked" on the journey.

(iii) Jumping off Place into the Unknown: There is a particular point or place where you must leave all the things of your old, familiar life behind you, and jump off into the unknown. Another version of this stage is that you must get past the guardians at the threshold, who represent the limitations of conventional thinking, which one must outwit if one is to be allowed to enter the realms of the creative and mysterious depths, where one will be tested.

(iv) You Must Be Tested – both externally, in the world, and internally; The hero's journey involves real testing, where you will be confronted with demons and dangers, which will require that you confront your own inner de-

mons and fears and limitations, if you are to develop mastery in the situation; this part of the hero's journey is the real "initiation". If you survive it, you will grow and be changed in the process, and you will be able to return to your society a changed or transformed person – whether your hero's journey was an adventure (as Odysseus), a spiritual initiation (as Christ, Buddha, Moses, and others), or the development of authentic mastery in some artistic tradition.

(v) Return to Society, to share the wisdom and mastery that you have learned: If you survive the initiation and testing, and develop internal, as well as external mastery, then you will be able to return to your society able to share your wisdom and mastery with others. You will have received great boons, i.e., new powers and perceptual abilities which can help others.

5. Historical and East-West Differences in the Hero's Journey

While there are, according to Campbell and Houston, universal aspects of the hero's journey in the myths of all cultures (as noted above), Campbell and others also noted that there are important distinctions in the nature of the hero's journey – at different stages of history, as well as in Eastern and Western cultures. While we cannot go into these differences in any depth here, it should be noted that Campbell believed that there were four major mythological periods:

(i) The Way of the Animal Powers, i.e., the way of sha-

manistic hunter-gatherers in Paleolithic times, where "the individual has an inner experience which calls him or her to the role of shaman;"

(ii) The Way of the Seeded Earth, i.e., when settled agricultural communities emerged and there was a cycle of birth, death (or ritual sacrifice), and rebirth;

(iii) The Way of the Celestial Lights, with the emergence of the high civilizations, where priests and priestesses were ordained by institutions (rather than from an inner calling); writing and higher mathematics were invented; mythological systems were based on the movements of the planets, moon and sun; and large bureaucracies and monumental architecture emerged; and

(iv) The Way of Man, focusing on the modern world, where rationalism replaces the older role of mythology, and philosophy replaces theology, and art and culture are individually expressed, rather than products of society as a whole.

Campbell and others have also noted important differences in the hero's journey as it is lived in Eastern and Western cultures. In the East, where a group identity and culture are more dominant, one must follow the path set before by one's guru, spiritual teacher or master, in an unbroken lineage passed down from master to apprentice, while in the West, where individual identity and culture are more dominant, the hero must embark on the hero's journey at a place and time of his own choosing. In short, the hero cannot follow a path set by others, but must

find his own path. Campbell believed that the best illustration of the hero's journey in Western culture was King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, where each of the knights, in their search for the Holy Grail (which search is basically that of the hero's journey) had to enter the forest (the unknown) at a point of their own choosing.

6. Need to Adapt the Hero's Journey to the Time and Culture (Star Wars: An Adaptation by George Lucas of the Hero's Journey for the Space Age). [Editor's note: this section was written before George Lucas announced he is to make a fourth Star Wars film]

Campbell also believed that the hero's journey – if it is to impact people's lives – must be adapted to the times and the culture in which this mythological story appears. Ancient myths or stories must thus be reset in new contexts and environments if they are to relate to people's lives today. In this context, it is interesting that the Star Wars Trilogy was George Lucas' attempt to take the idea of the hero's journey and adapt it to a space age environment, which may be one of the reasons for the film's great popularity. If one looks at the five stages of the hero's journey (outlined under Section 4 above), one can see how closely the Star Wars story followed Campbell's five stages:

(i) Nothing Holding you to Current Situation: Here Luke Skywalker (who lived with his aunt and uncle who were farmers and were suddenly found

murdered) had already been yearning to explore new horizons and now had nothing holding him to his old life anymore.

(ii) Find a Mentor or Teacher: Luke finds Obi-Wan Kenobe, who becomes his teacher in the ways of “the force”.

(iii) Jumping Off Place Into the Unknown: There is a famous bar scene, filled with strange looking alien creatures, which symbolically represents Luke’s jumping off place into the world of the unknown, which he does in the company of his mentor, Obi-Wan Kenobe.

(iv) You Must Be Tested – Both Externally in the World and Internally: Once in the unknown, Luke must receive further training in the ways of the force – by Obi-Wan Kenobe and later by Yoda; he must undergo many adventures; and then he must finally be tested, in the form of confronting Darth Vader – the symbol of evil itself. Only after he has passed this test, does the adventure come to an end.

(v) Return to Society, to Share the Wisdom and Mastery that You have Learned: Here victory over the dark side is celebrated and the trilogy ends.

7. Need to Create New Types of Hero Figures Today Besides Warriors.

While Star Wars was a great success, it still glorified fighting and violence (against evil), and as such is still not the best archetypal model we can find for creating a peaceful, nonviolent world in the future. In-

deed, society seems more violent than ever. In looking at the role of the warrior image in mythology, such as Star Wars, a few observations need to be made:

First, it is important to point out that the hero’s journey – even for the warrior archetype – need not be violent. With the destructive power of modern technology, clearly our future survival requires that we find alternative ways to resolve our conflicts short of violence. As Elise Boulding has noted, we can take the adventuresome energy of the warrior hero archetype and channel it (consciously) into nonviolent action in the world.

Second, it is clear that we also need to find new types of hero figures, besides the warrior archetype, today. Various books have been written exploring alternative types of archetypes, and this type of research needs to continue. Women, who identify less as a whole with the warrior archetype than men, are looking for such alternative archetypal images, which could provide models with which they could identify as women. In addition, alternative, non-warrior archetypes also need to be found for men.

Third and lastly, we need to remember that when we go to do battle in the world – the warrior archetype – that the real battle is really within oneself. Indeed, the external battle in the world is really a reflection or mirror of the inner battle within – to master one’s own fears, limitations, insecurities and demons. Once we can consciously recognize this,

then perhaps we will realize that we can focus our primary energies there, on developing internal mastery and balance, which can then be expressed in nonviolent ways in the world, and then we will not have to act out the warrior need to do battle in the external world in what has too often been a violent way. Or if we must do battle in the world, we can do it against poverty, injustice, ignorance, prejudice, intolerance, etc. Certainly there are plenty of admirable battles that need to be addressed and they do not require violence as a means to engage in such efforts.

8. Conclusion.

In conclusion, this section has explored the possible role of mythology as a bridge between our outer lives in the world – what is comparable to the exoteric aspect of religion, with the development of an inner life of the spirit – what is comparable to the esoteric aspects of religion. If mythology and archetypal figures can help us to embark on the hero’s journey to discover and encounter the deeper aspects of our being, then perhaps nonviolent, archetypal models can also be found for our actions in the world that are appropriate to our technologically sophisticated and interdependent world for our actions in the world.

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Book Review:
SMALL is Powerful:
The future as if people
really mattered
by John Papworth

ADAMANTINE STUDIES
ON THE 21ST CENTURY
Published in association with
New European Publications
ISBN 0-7449-0129-4 pp220,
price GBP14.99

Reviewed by Simon Bell.

About the Author

John Papworth grew up in an orphanage in the east End of London and studied at the London School of Economics. He was active in the colonial Freedom Movement and stood for Parliament in the 1950s as a Labour candidate before becoming disillusioned with mass Politics. For many years he acted as the advisor to Kenneth Kaunda. he was founding associate editor of "The Ecologist" and founding editor of "Resurgence", which published Schumacher's "Small is Beautiful" before it was accepted by Blond and Briggs. A resident of London, he divides his time between his duties as an Anglican priest and editing the journal "Fourth World Review".

It is the virtual eclipse of localised power, Papworth argues, that has led to the emergence of modern man and woman as "isolated, alienated, manipulated, disoriented, disempowered and debased, at the mercy of the giant forces they can in many ways neither comprehend nor control".

The answer, the author demonstrates, is to reinstate human-scale communities and thereby avoid the nemesis now looming upon the human scheme.

John Papworth certainly seems to have an uncanny, yet frank approach when he makes his observations on the various factors which are destabilising our communities. In view of the author's current standing and previous background, it is hardly surprising the work has a moralistic feel, which is well balanced by a strong Liberal bent (sic)

He competently navigates through many issues; from unification of minor states without consultation with those at the grass roots level, through the effects of television - leading to a friendless community of screens and monitors - to the unintelligent, fast buck money markets which disregard the needs of the community. "Gold standards to God Standards" as Richard Kirby aptly points out. His most damning overview deals with the loss of the small service branch lines on the railway system which is ruining communities. His views are, in the main, accurate, poignant social statements. Environmentally, expansion in the latter field (railways) would be a commonsense future option. War/Peace studies clearly identifies our lack of concern for fellow beings as a cause of the depersonalisation of targets.

Sadly those who should read this work probably won't, and if they did would take little note. You can lead a horse to water but can't make it drink!

However with enough pushing and pulling even the wildest stallion can be broken to serve! David Alton MP's book, "Faith in Britain", is along very similar lines, but "SMALL is Powerful" develops in a more substantial overview, grasping the sociological and psychological implications.

His observations are worth purchasing the book for. His sentiments lie dormant within most of us, but are not the stuff of substantial and complex future studies. (Incidentally, I hope he considers developing his thoughts in a similar format, with his vision of the future, in a second volume). I would recommend him to read Dr Richard Kirby's book "The Temples of Tomorrow". John Papworth makes no pretence that "SMALL is Powerful" is a major future study but I would certainly recommend the read. Perhaps it's the catalyst for change and planning so many need.

CYBERJEW

by Moshe Dror

Shalom -

Hello, greetings ,and welcome.

There have been about fifty (50) people who have contributed to this CYBERJEW list so far, either by sending in e-mail messages or attending the meeting at Ben-Gurion University in Beer-Sheva, Israel. The following is a digest of the more interesting ideas grouped around the triad of: Jewry-Judaism-Israel. These are provided to act as a beginning

catalyst for further discussion. To all of those who took the time to make a contribution, my thanks.

1. Jewry

1.1. One of the most important values in Judaism is the significance of community. Cyberspace will certainly be a major factor in re-thinking what and how community might look like on a global scale in the next 20-30 years.

1.2. The current uses of e-mail and the Internet will clearly develop dramatically into a host of community empowering systems. How can the diverse Jewish communities be linked into some form of virtual-kehilah on the emerging information superhighway.

1.3. Is there some aspect of cyberspace that might be regarded as uniquely Jewish, or is it just Jews who use it?

1.4. Is most of the talk of cyberspace just hype that will have little impact on Jewry. All of the traditional Jewish community building systems are based on face-to-face, personal meeting and interactions. So, no matter what high-tech is developed, it will be only interesting but never a critically significant dimension of authentic Judaism. Jewry is basically a high-touch community and high-tech might be a nice but not transformational.

2. Judaism

2.1. Can cyberspace be a site for developing a sort of cyber-

Sanhedrin where input from all streams of Jewish thought can be represented and contribute to a global Jewish consensus? Is it desirable?

2.2. Basic human nature has not changed in thousands of years. So too, Jewish values have remained stable since Biblical days and will not change in the future. All of this cyberstuff is primarily cosmetic and will never be essentially transformational within Judaism.

2.3. It is suggested by many that cyberspace can and will transform the very nature of what it means to be human. If that is so, how might it impact on what we know as the Jewish response to being human.

2.4. In the world of global cyberspace, is Judaism in danger of being watered down and its unique system of values lost. Or – will its uniqueness be more emphasized along with its participation in the emerging cyberculture?

2.5. High tech is not the messiah and it will not bring the geulah (salvation) on any level. If anything, it is closer to a cyber Tower-of-Babel than the End-of-History in the Prophetic sense.

2.6. Many futurists speak of an emerging age of DIScontinuity with the past and Judaism is primarily a tradition of continuity. How might these work out in the next 20-30 years?

2.7. If there is a possibility of a cyber-kehilah (community), what kind of Rabbi would be needed to relate to it? How would the Rabbinical seminaries train an emerging Cyber-Rabbi. How does one minister to a virtual-kehilah?

2.8. As virtual communities develop, will virtual-cyber-Synagogues also develop alongside them?

2.9. It is suggested by some futurists that it is precisely the information age that will herald a renaissance in religion and the spiritual quest. Is this likely to happen in Judaism as well?

3. Israel

3.1. Is it the case that classical political Zionism is based on the Center-Periphery model where Israel is the center and all other places are the Diaspora. Cyberspace is based on the idea that there is no center, hence no periphery; but rather a model based on nodes in a global network. If that is so, what is the role of Israel? Are we in for a Post-Zionist world or a Neo-Zionist world with a redefinition of the role of Israel?

3.2. Israel has the highest ratio per population of students in colleges, universities, and yeshivot of any country in the world. In other words, Israel has the highest level of knowledge brokering of any nation. How might this impact on Israel as a significant knowledge broker to the world?

3.3. Can cyberspace act as sort of cyberbridge to more closely connect the communities in the Diaspora with Israel?

3.4. As information/knowledge is the new currency of the cyberworld can a person make a sort of cyber-aliyah while staying in the Diaspora and sending his/her knowledge to Israel as the previous generation sent its money.

Your comments and ideas are welcome. Thanks for your interest

Dr. Moshe Dror

The Eurasian Director's Report

by Simon Bell.

Japan

Through the World Future Society, contact was made with Professor Tae-Chang Kim of "The Institute For The Integrated Study of Future Generations" based in Kyoto, Japan. Tae-Chang graciously sent me some information on their organisation and two of their published works, 'Thinking About Future Generations', and 'Creating a New History For Future Generations'. Both proved challenging, and an excellent read. I can recommend both. Please contact me for the address of the Institute if you wish to acquire copies.

Unfortunately Professor Kim and I were due to meet at Heathrow Airport on the 14th September but due to the wonderful design of terminal 1 we totally missed each other, wasting a great deal of time,

but worse still the opportunity for discourse.

I would very much relish the opportunity to commence in depth dialogue with both Professor Tae-Chang Kim and Master Kido Inoue at the earliest opportunity and thank them for their gracious goodwill card at the New Year. Perhaps we will meet in the near future, possibly allying the trip to an Australian visit.

Australia

I have been corresponding with two people in Australia, Colin Ward of Ward Holdings, and David Keane of the EAST - WEST NETWORK.

Colin has sent two publications dealing with 'Mary - Lady of Light'. I am indebted to him for these. I hope we will see some of Colin's material in Global Visions, and I look forward to reading it.

David's EAST - WEST NETWORK, works towards linking servers for good-will and global unity all over the world. It is an educational organisation inviting people all over the world to communicate with each other and to participate in a meditation and experience of unity and synthesis, expressing itself through compassionate service'. we are grateful for his interest in the WNRF and will continue to talk to him.

Nigeria

In the latter part of the summer I had a meeting with Doctor Goodluck Akhabue Christopher. Unfortunately due to both our schedules we have yet to have an official meeting to discuss the appointment of a

co-ordinator/ Director for WNRF, and Astrala's World Academy, in Nigeria.

I am hoping to hear from him in the near future but due to postal problems with Nigeria, even from Lagos state we have no way of knowing when. Until that time he and his people remain in our thoughts and prayers.

Convocations of Wisdom Schools

I hope to be working with Tom Daffern, Director of the International Institute of Peace Studies & Global Philosophy and Secretary General of The World Conference on Religion and Peace.

To remind our members and those interested these convocations are the joint initiative of the Sancta Sophia Seminary, Oklahoma, USA and the WNRF. At this time there are three convocations in hand, India, United Kingdom, and USA with a possible fourth venue in Israel coordinated by Rabbi Dr. Moshe Dror.

Afghanistan

It is with great pleasure I can introduce Shapur Amini, Director of a London-based Afghan organisation called "Afghanistan, The Centre for Research & Development of Thoughts". He has agreed to be the WNRF representative for the Afghan people in exile. By way of an introduction to Shapur, he arrived in the UK as a refugee in 1980. He has completed his BA (Hons.) in Photography, Film and Television, and recently, his three year post-graduate Masters in Religious Studies in London.

He has been running the Centre, formerly known as "Afghan Link", since 1989. His wife Assiya Majgan Amini, has been instrumental in setting up and running the Centre, drawing on her experience as a BA (Hons.) in Design and Media Management.

A project they are currently working on is the "International Peace Mission", and I am pleased they have prepared the following item for Global Visions on this initiative.

"The people of Afghanistan have a long history of suffering and pain which, together with the civil wars in the country, dominates every town, city and village. The people of Afghanistan are left with a civil war which is ruining both their country and their individual lives. If the unresolved conflict in Afghanistan is left to run its course, it will completely ruin the country and bring more destruction and death.

The call for "Peace through prayer and dialogue" is the only possible saviour for the future of Afghanistan and her innocent inhabitants. It is time for an urgent call for peace to be brought by scholars and thinkers who could sit and find a solution to this desperate problem. Much wider media coverage is an important element towards understanding the causes of conflict and will enable the formation of a united voice for peace and stability in Afghanistan throughout the World.

With the help of scholars and peace-making bodies (national and international), we can bring stability and order to Afghanistan's affairs and gen-

erate positive thinking among Afghans as well as other peace-loving nations. The task is important and feasible, but needs support and prayer from each one of us.

The Centre will hold seminars and national and international symposia in order to achieve these objectives. The entire work, through educational planning, aims to build a bridge over which every man and woman of goodwill can pass to rescue the country and stop the killings of innocent people.

For its significant educational aims, the Centre will invite, attract and challenge those who think and are prepared to take positive steps towards this call. The participation and involvement of scholars and people of goodwill in this matter has its own merits which in practice will result in positive solutions and outcomes. We believe it is an important task and the duty of all who witness the present situation in Afghanistan to cooperate.

Sri Sathya Sai Organisations

I have just begun communication with Aime Levy of the above organisations and hope to have a fuller report in the next issue of Global Visions.

Finally, my personal congratulations, which I am sure my colleagues world wide share, to Barbara Marx-Hubbard, on her being awarded the Earl Award for the Religious Futurist of the Year, 1994.

SIMON P. BELL
Director, Eurasia.

Footnote:

I have been talking to Colin Ward about his notes on Mary for some time. These notes are fascinating, but their format is very different from GV. In order to make them fit, I would have to do a complete redraft, something which I do not feel would be right here. The notes refer to visions of Mary which have occurred over the last 400 years, and include both what Mary has done, and her predictions of the future. To quote Colin's preface:

“As a Protestant, I had little knowledge of ‘Mary’ or her heavenly roles and I ignorantly believed that she solely belonged to the Catholic Church, who were devoted to and worshipped her, sometimes at the expense of Jesus. My research clearly indicated Mary has an ongoing spiritual mission... and [Catholics] certainly don't place [Mary] above [Jesus] in any form of devotion. Mary is the very heart of the ecumenical movement, and she is chosen by her Son and Lord - Jesus - to fulfil that role... I invite all people of all persuasions to read these notes with an open mind and heart, rediscovering the truth about ‘Mary’ as it was in the beginning when Jesus, dying on the cross, said to John (standing in for all mankind) ‘Behold your mother.’”