

## **NKARC Letter: August 2012**

2 contributions - Myth-makers as story tellers by Dick Preston and poem "Asheya was killed" by Sumeet Grover

Dear friends,

I received last week an interesting paper from colleague Prof. Richard Preston that he had written for the 2012 commemoration of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, August 9, to be given at Hamilton City Hall, Council Chambers in Hamilton, Canada. Anthropologists come closest in social sciences to be able to describe and understand how cultures are formed. I was not surprised to see the title of Dick's short paper to be: "Never Again: How do we build a belief in a culture of peace?" It is in this context I thought as a NKARC member, you may find the attachment of interest, especially the potential role of myths in building a Nonkilling Culture.

In Dick's words:

"The myth-makers and myth-tellers create by taking stories or pieces of stories from here and there to build a narrative - a work of art - that people will recognize and feel a deep emotional relation to. In a real sense, they will "get it." It may be a sudden epiphany or it may be a more gradual awakening where you perceive cumulatively until you "get" the whole in a way similar to "getting" any other work of art." He adds: "Finding our myths of peace is a fundamental way of orienting us to a hopeful way of life: living well together in a society that we respect and cherish, with nonkilling politics, ecologically sustainable and fair-sharing economics, and inclusive spirituality."

We had a three-way conversation on this, including Glenn Paige. Dick's summation of exchange with Glenn is insightful in what we in CGNK Research Committee's have been trying to accomplish. In his note to Glenn, he writes:

"As I see the difference between us at this point, we are in a complementary relation: you serve as a passionate messenger for the necessary and (I believe) sufficient argument that nonkilling is the rational intellectual statement of reality that must guide us; I serve as a passionate messenger for the profound spiritual guidance that we could have in a much strengthened mythology. So, we are intellectually and spiritually on the same path, in my opinion.

Myth has been my career focus as an anthropologist, and part of my personal myth is experience I had in Korea in 1951-52. I freely admit that I am not clear what the word 'myth' or the word 'spiritual' means - that is a part of my quest. But I have some faith in the power of myth. A recent addition is the novel "The Cellist of Sarajevo" - in which a musician offers the only

skill he has to respond to the killing of civilians by the Serbian army - a very powerful, persuasive nonkilling answer."

Dick found the exchange helpful. Insights from Glenn were important and with hard data could help to develop a basis for a Global Nonkilling Ethic, and that he would in the next version of his paper focus on, "The Need for a Planetary Nonkilling Peace Mythology".

I am copying Dick on the message, he would welcome your comments.

Thank you, Dick.

Nonkilling Regards,

Bill

Bill (Balwant) Bhaneja

Coordinator/Facilitator

Nonkilling Arts Research Committee

Center for Global Nonkilling

[www.nonkilling.org](http://www.nonkilling.org)

"Nonkilling is THE measure of human progress."

----- Original Message -----

**From:** [Bill Bhaneja](mailto:Bill.Bhaneja@nonkilling.org)

**Sent:** Friday, August 03, 2012 8:45 AM

**Subject:** Nonkilling Arts Research Committee: Poem for Iran

Dear friends,

I am forwarding a poem from our new NKARC colleague, Sumeet Grover. See attachment. The poem entitled, '**Ayesha was killed**' is dedicated to "the young men and women executed in Iran against human rights and democracy." When I read it, I felt that Ayesha could be from anywhere, anyone -- man or woman demanding respect, freedom and human dignity. Stories of oppressors and oppressed transcend cultures, and the oppressors need not be just a State or a group of people, it could be an individual. In the case of women who are targets of oppression, the oppressor is often a male - father, husband, in-laws, neighbour, intruder etc. I am sure Sumeet looks forward to your response to his work.

Sumeet based in the UK, is Coordinator of Global Poetry, Transcend: Art and Peace Network ([www.globalpoetry.org](http://www.globalpoetry.org)). His short bio as follows:

"Sumeet Grover is a writer from London, UK, and he grew up on the Indian sub-continent. He graduated with a BSc (Hons) from Oxford Brookes University with three scholarships, and then an MSc from the [University of the West of England](http://www.westofengland.ac.uk)....As a poet and humanist, he passionately believes that human beings are the most important and central force for building relationships, societies, institutions and nations where conflicts are transformed with creativity, wisdom, dialogue and dedicated efforts.

He firmly believes in poetry and the arts to be very powerful tools for pressing for change at different levels. His work is dedicated to nurturing the human potential as well as to call out for a change, employing the psycho-dynamic as well as subconscious

impact of poetry to initiate dialogue and re-thinking of conflicts. His first book, 'Change: An Inner Transformation Leading to Human Triumph' was released in 2011."

Thank you, Sumeet.

Nonkilling Best,

Bill

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----- Original Message -----

**From:** [Sumeet Grover](#)  
**To:** [Bill Bhaneja](#) ; [Glenn Paige](#) ; [Joam Evans Pim](#)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 01, 2012 4:25 PM  
**Subject:** Poem for Iran

Dear Bill / Joám / Prof. Paige,

I just finished editing my poem for Iran several times, and I am emailing it to you. The poem, as it says, is dedicated to the young men and women of Iran who were executed when they spoke out for democracy and human rights. It's based on a true story of a woman I met in London a month ago. She was fund raising amongst other things to hire lawyers for 4,000 Iranian people currently in Ashraf, Iraq, who could be deported back to Iran any time and many of them can face execution. She also told me about her daughter who was executed.

I firmly believe in the power of words and what they can do, so I hope I did justice to her story by writing this poem. I would be keen to know your thoughts. Please find the poem attached.

Thank you very much.

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