

Ham Seok-heon was a notable figure in the Religious Society of Friends (Quaker) movement in Korea, and was nicknamed the "Gandhi of Korea." Ham was an important Asian voice for human rights and non-violence during the 20th century, despite numerous imprisonments for his convictions, and a leader in the successful non-violent movement to liberate Korea from Japan. He concluded that all religions are on common ground in terms of human beings, having encountered the Non-Church movement, an indigenous Japanese Christian movement that had no liturgy, sacraments or ordained clergy, during his study in Japan. This movement spoke out against social injustices and advocated pacifism. He wrote:

“The big meaning of resurrection is that Life is immortal; that Life not only is immortal, but grows. The spring of this year is not a return of the spring of last year. Rather, it is another step forward in history, an evolution.”

Our first hymn is in the green book #120, “Fairest Lord Jesus”

Our first reading is from the Gospel of Matthew 27:50-53. “And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus’ resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.”

Our second reading is from the mystical poet Mewlana Jalaluddin Rumi:

“When I die
when my coffin

is being taken out
you must never think
i am missing this world

don't shed any tears
don't lament or
feel sorry
i'm not falling
into a monster's abyss

when you see
my corpse is being carried
don't cry for my leaving
i'm not leaving
i'm arriving at eternal love

when you leave me
in the grave
don't say goodbye
remember a grave is
only a curtain
for the paradise behind

you'll only see me
descending into a grave
now watch me rise
how can there be an end
when the sun sets or
the moon goes down

it looks like the end
it seems like a sunset
but in reality it is a dawn
when the grave locks you up
that is when your soul is freed

have you ever seen
a seed fallen to earth
not rise with a new life
why should you doubt the rise
of a seed named human

have you ever seen
a bucket lowered into a well
coming back empty
why lament for a soul
when it can come back
like Joseph from the well

when for the last time
you close your mouth
your words and soul
will belong to the world of
no place no time ”

Our final reading comes from the Gospel of Luke 24:1-35 about later on Easter day: “Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them, but they were kept from recognizing him. He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?” They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, Cleopas, asked him, “Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?” “What things?” he asked. “About Jesus of Nazareth, “ they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this

took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, "It is true! The Lord has arisen and has appeared to Simon." Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread."

Our second hymn is Red #133 "Joy Dawned Again on Easter Day"

Joys and Concerns---then music interlude

Dear Friends—Let us listen, observe, and see that this earth is a place of constant resurrection, that while life is constantly ending, it is also constantly being reborn, constantly rising. Let us also see in the season of Easter, and the life and resurrection of Christ, the blessed redemptive message of falling judgment and rising Love. This universe of entropy and regeneration, of decay and creation, of the wonder of black holes and light that travels billions of years

to reach us, to be seen, fills us with wonder and awe. So too, do the infant, the seedling, the smile, the touch, and every small and large redemptive blessing. May we each fully see the blessings in our days and years. Restore our hearts, roll our stones away, reveal to us the eternal essence of Truth and Light. Amen.

Our third hymn is found on the handout “Pass It On”

Children may now head downstairs for time with each other.

Message: Dear friends—One element of Easter that is common in the U.S., and that we look forward to after meeting, is hiding eggs, or candy, or Easter baskets, and then finding them. Peek-a-boo, Hide-and-seek, scavenger hunts, there are many ways that people find great fun in hiding and finding. Of course, when it is your car keys and you're late, the game is not so entertaining, though the relief, the finding, is still rewarding. The disciples, the devoted women on that morning, thought they had lost their teacher, their loving and kind healer, as did the travelers on the road to Emmaus. But that love, that teaching, that insight was not lost—the Light was not gone, the teacher had not departed. It is still not lost, but found in the inner Light, in our inner Teacher, in the loving insight and quiet voice, in the silence of our hearts and the testimony of our lives. When we find the Easter basket or treat under a bush or in the back of the closet shelf, in the grass or the kitchen cupboard, by the garage window sill or in the piano, or three months later under the radiator, we are reminded to continue to look, to keep our eyes open, to be ready for the treasures all around, both hidden in plain view, and hidden in secret shadows. Christ was hidden away, sealed in the tomb, and some feared, perhaps, his body was taken away, but then they all discovered he was very near and unexpected, unknown sometimes, but welcomed, obscured and then recognized, in an unexpected place, but at home. In the breaking of bread, the Passover, the nourishment, the family.

Today, I feel led to speak of the many Christs, all the holy people who rose from the dead and spoke on Easter, as Matthew's Gospel attests, the many perceptions of Truth and Love, of inner Light and sacred plan, of the Word that was in the beginning long before the historic time of Jesus, as stated in John's gospel, and long into our scientific age. The historical figure of Jesus is one manifestation, one concrete example of great meaning to many, but certainly not the limit to the sacred, not at all a sensible way to periodize or contain God. Jesus both spoke in parables and is a parable in the sense of providing meaning, advice, comfort, direction, mystery, symbolic power, and a compelling story.

Friday night I attended the 80th anniversary celebrations of the American Moslem Society in Dearborn, Michigan. There were celebrity speakers like congresswoman Rashida Tlaib, but what was most striking was the profound sense of peace and joy, an enduring community that spoke of their proud success with inclusion, as being the most diverse religious group racially and ethnically in the United States, and where no one subgroup has a majority. They viewed themselves as a model for the soon-to-come days when this country has no one racial or ethnic majority. The largest group of American Moslems are African American, and they also made up the main early 18th century Moslems in America from before the revolution, when it is estimated about 30% of those Africans who were enslaved in what became the U.S. were Moslems. And Christ was there last night, not only in the wishes of Happy Easter to those present who might celebrate that holiday, but in the regular repetition of Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed as forebears and prophets. That illumination of all that had come before, as was the teaching on the road to Emmaus. There was a treasure there to be found in the prayers and blessings, the hopes and the memories, the love and community. In a community that in Dearborn contains large numbers of generations of refugees, most recently Yemeni, the dedication to peace and hopes for peace came from every speaker.

On Thursday, I attended on the campus of Central Michigan University the raising of the peace flag that was developed by the large international peace movement that rose after world war one. It came from a resurrection of hope and ideals after the terrible suffering and death of that global war. The ceremony placed an emphasis on the successful non-violent movements for dramatic liberation in India with Ghandi and in Korea with Ham Seok-heon. A student read a quote from Ham Seok-Heon, with whom I was unfamiliar, and I asked her about it after the ceremony to share with you today, only to find that he considered himself Quaker. I was learning a lesson about an historic journey to peace, and his inner light and teaching was revealed.

We are all on the road to Emmaus this Easter day, and every day is Easter according to early Friends. Speaking to us through this world and through our encounters with nature and one another, in stories and songs and words, just as on Easter, judgement is falling and Love is rising. The curtain in the temple is torn in two, and we can see and meet God. Love the many Christs you meet, the many ways the sacred rises to meet you, out of death, life springs anew.

Closing hymn is Green #118 "Praise and Honor Jesus' Name"

Again, a bit more from Ham Seok-heon: "Resurrection did not begin with Jesus. Rather, since resurrection is a fact in this world and since Life is not mortal, there was Jesus' experience...The big meaning of resurrection is that Life is immortal; that Life not only is immortal, but grows. The spring of this year is not a return of the spring of last year--Rather it is another step forward in history, an evolution." Or as Rumi observed:"have you ever seen
a seed fallen to earth
not rise with a new life
why should you doubt the rise
of a seed named human"