

Response 14 (to Rifat, C50 to TA38, and Horgan, C24 to TA 51)

CONVERSION, G. WALTERS, MY MISSION by Glenn C. Wood 26 July / 5 Dec
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Sometime back I brought to your attention a comment (routed July 26, 02) that wasn't posted, and could not be rerouted to you for it seemed it had been deleted from my files. It was found and is attached here as a Response to Petkov's recommended posting of "John Horgan's C24" (which was posted under TA51). (It was one of the last comments to Rifat while assuming he was still alive.)

It seems appropriate here as one of the concluding responses to comments to TA51. It has to do with questions addressed by Mr. Horgan and involves the salvation of humankind, thus deserving of the "attention" referred to in C24.

By "one of the concluding comments" I mean to keep open addressing certain other heretofore and hereafter TA51 comments, and matters such as a critique of a work done by Gregory J. Walters: Karl Jaspers and the Role of 'Conversion' in the Nuclear Age. Though I've not read the book -- and in principle refuse to buy it (but would accept with gratitude a copy) -- disagreements are easily predictable, e.g. the quotation marks on conversion as though questioning how a "Protestant" could know anything about conversion, suggesting conversion could only be a "Catholic" matter. It's mentioned here now only to show the relevance of the conversion 'constant' and as a reminder that conversion is the essence of TA51.

<1> I'd like here to repeat my mission: Because this forum is captioned as a Karl Jaspers Forum I want to present a fair ... re-presentation ... of Karl Jaspers' views on pertinent matters especially those that seem to differ from his Existenz philosophy. This means I've attempted to appropriate his way of thinking but while being faithful hopefully to the better side of individualized experiences, which of course color or qualify interpretations. Unlike some notables, Jaspers has no heirs or organizations to defend him -- as far as I know -- which stands to reason for he leaned toward anti-institutionalism in many ways, and his works are his heirs, for he and Gertrude had decided against having children for special reasons.

<2> If I understand correctly Mr. Rifat supports, by apparent quotes, an apparent conviction that nine keys are needed to open nine doors simultaneously and that it is essential to a "superior" analytical thought -- polythought. It appears Mr. Rifat has left the weathered field of reality and retreated to the doors of an inner sanctum where imagination can take subjective flights and only

the sanctus bell's polyringing remains.

<3> His comment offers an opportunity to present Karl Jaspers' five keys in answer to an important question from the inclimate field of humanity. He doesn't call it a superior way, or the only way, nor does he limit the keys to five, that is, there may be more or less to others. He simply says it's his way of handling the encompassing situation.

<4> In his *The Future of Mankind* (1961 University of Chicago Press, paperback) he gives five answers to one who might ask the question: What can an individual do to assure the future of mankind in view of impending worldwide destruction? "What must I do here and now?" (Ibid., 325)

<5> The first of 5 responsible acts, Jaspers says, is to honestly hear the symbols of existence. In this way one becomes aware of the ultimate existential situation.

<6> Second, one must actually believe by distrusting the world and self; it means believing in something that is not in need of that which is not possessed. "...[T]ruthfulness calls for distrust, but for a distrust arising from trust in the possibility of freedom." (Ibid., p. 326).

<7> Third, one must repent now: "I am to change my life. Without this change I cannot be worthy of trust and capable of unreserved communication." (Ibid.) It is urgent and of universal necessity that this change occur, for, "without this change in countless individuals, mankind cannot be saved either." (Ibid.)

<8> Fourth, wherever I stand, says Jaspers, " ... I am to make my own choices." (Ibid.) To decide now -- for eternity is now -- means to shatter self-images and unload a racked conscience. Whole concepts are to be put off, if we are addicted to them. "What must be done is not set in motion by general precepts; it needs a substantial foundation in the historic existence of every individual." (Ibid.) One must be immersed, the Existenz must re-enter, or dare to founder in immanence -- the flux and infinity of the finite -- into the world where self must die through sacrifice, though use. This is a constant immersion, it's the baptism, the total involvement of the great reformers.

<9> Five, "... I am to realize that my purpose -- saving the life of mankind -- cannot be attained as a purpose, only as a result." (Ibid.) That is the great commitment to good works, the results of the conversion process. In other words, without confessing the ground and medium of change -- Transcendence and the Encompassing -- we can do nothing. The transformed person is the result, not the purpose. "If those who determine the course of events have changed their lives to accord with the encompassing reason, their activities in the world -- in pursuing material interests, in personal intercourse, in everyday

living -- will preclude actions that lead to general ruin and will facilitate actions made for a common human ground." (Ibid., p. 326)

<10> Jaspers says that "Jesus told his disciple: 'Behold the kingdom of God is within you' -- it is here." (Ibid., p. 342) "What counts is the reality of the eternal, the way of life and action, as an encompassing immortality" (Ibid.) and for Jaspers the presence of the eternal may result in mankind's salvation.

<11> Those could be considered five keys, and of course there's simultaneity, a oneness-like participation, like the five fingers of the one hand.

<12> It reminds me of a Scottish preacher named Walter Scott who during the early eighteenth century would go to schools and teach -- rather than confuse -- the children these five biblical keys: Hearing, faith, repentance, confession, and immersion as he would point to each finger of one hand. These and Jaspers keys are not ... the ... keys because of some authority that excludes reason. They are simply the simple ways things appear to be best ... handled. Honesty of thought determines the maturity of thought and one experiences the five simultaneously. It is biblical, but what makes it functional is its correctness, its reasonableness.

<13> There are five ultimate situations for Jaspers too: the limitation of the mind which is a realization as general as one can get; three particular ultimate situations: death, suffering, struggling, and guilt (there are four ways of approaching guilt: criminal guilt, political guilt, moral guilt, and metaphysical guilt which results in "a transformation of human self-consciousness before God," a modesty before God where arrogance is impossible even for one having a more complex feeling of superiority as a defense: a Gnostic-like cosmological set of keys [see his *The Question of German Guilt*]). The particular ultimate situations experienced wholly or all together constitute the universal ultimate situation.