

Daily Meditations 03/09/22

War as Rupture of Relationships

Good morning.

We reflect this morning together on the theme of war, war as a rupture to relationship. And as I point out, when you see these refugees from war piling into these trains, and so forth, leaving loved ones behind and loved relationships behind, even with animals, homes and neighborhoods and jobs and workers, co-workers, and pets, and the older people and all the rest, of course, is extremely sad, and brings up a lot of grief.

And the reason it does, as I point out, is that as the Lakota pray, All Our Relations. That's what the sense of the sacred is, it's relating to the whole, it's relating to individuals. It's both intimate and it's cosmic.

And as Eckhart says, relation is the essence of everything that exists, and this is what is being ruptured in war, and so violently so, and so suddenly overnight.

So it is kind of unbelievable to imagine what these people are going through, and what so many generations of human beings have gone through over the centuries, because of war.

So there is some teaching from Howard Thurman, who I think is very profound and useful at a time like this. Here's what he teaches. And this is taken from my book on the Christian Mystics, page 211.

The profoundest disclosure in the religious experience is the awareness that the individual is not alone. What one discovers as being true and valid for oneself must at last be a universal experience, or else it ultimately loses all of its personal significance. One's experience is personal and private, but in no sense exclusive. All the vision of God and holiness which one experiences, one must achieve in the context of the social situation by which one's day by day life is defined.

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"What is disclosed in this religious experience, one must define in community."

So it is precisely this day by day life by which we define our identities, that is called Community; finds its outlet in community. And this is the ultimate religious experience for Howard Thurman. And it is again a reminder of the tragedy, the unspeakable tragedy of the kind of war that we're experiencing nightly and daily on our television screens and social media.

It raises a question we will deal with tomorrow. Is it possible that Ukraine could be the last of the wars, because it is the first that's being universally live streamed?

Maybe these lessons can get to all of us. Maybe they have to, if our species is going to survive.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.