

## **Daily Meditation 10/28/2021**

### **Deep Ecumenism, Climate Change, COP26**

Good morning.

This morning we're talking about deep humanism again, especially in the context of the upcoming COP26 gathering in Scotland about climate change -- so important.

And of course it's important that all the religious and spiritual traditions of the world get behind the major transformation that has to happen if we're going to save the planet as we know it, save our species as we know it, and millions of other species, many of which have already disappeared.

I tell the amazing story about these young Sikh men who saved a person's life -- two people's lives -- recently in British Columbia by tying together their turbans.

I think one reason this story hit me so hard -- this parable, as I call it -- is that when I was a teenager I lived with a Sikh and his turban, insofar as our family rented out a room every year to a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin when I was growing up in Madison.

And as my brothers went away to school, there was a room next to mine that was open. And then my parents very wisely chose to rent the room to someone from another culture, so I spent a lot of time with a variety of students, house guests, if you will.

There was a communist from Yugoslavia who was an architect; and there was an ex-bull fighter from South America who would pull up his shirt to show everybody where he was gored once by a bull -- he was very proud of that. And there was this Sikh fellow.

And when I was a senior in high school, I took a class in speech, and one of the tasks for one class was to do a demonstration. So I asked my Sikh friend, a student at university, to teach me how to tie a turban. So he did, and so I did this in class, and I think rather intuitively chose kind of the most popular guy in class, and had him sit up on a chair, and I tied this turban on, all the time talking about what the turban meant in the religious consciousness of the Sikh... and I got an A-plus for it! So that made an impression on me, one way or the other. The students liked it too.

So when I heard this story of these young men tying their turbans together, it really struck home: a new use for a turban! But one thing that the story tells, if you go to the original article, is that they were criticized from their fellow religious members for taking their turbans off in daylight and in front of people. It's not supposed to be a public thing; you only take it off privately, and so forth.

But they fought back to the criticisms: this guy was dying! And yet there are some religious orthodox Sikhs who felt it was irreligious to do that. And it really struck me, the criticism Jesus got for healing people on the Sabbath -- absolutely parallel! And of course many Jews of that period and today would say Jesus did the right thing... but some said no, you should not heal people on the Sabbath.

So I think that's part of deep ecumenism, you see, to realize the conflicts within religions -- they're there, everywhere. And thank God these young men put saving people's lives ahead of fulfilling their religious rules.

Another lesson I get from that story is how natural compassion is to human beings. And of course I talk a lot -- and Julian of Norwich talks about how compassion is the primary work of the mother, and so what it shows is that men have a mother inside of them.

You see that men can mother, men can be compassionate, and they were being compassionate. And probably only men could have pulled off that rescue, because it was pulling other men up over a dangerous rock and all the rest. It took all their energy as young men to do that, and they pulled it off. So I think it's another wonderful story of how compassion is everywhere, the mothering element is everywhere, in women and men, and the feminine is everywhere, in women as well as men.

So I hope you enjoyed the parable as much as I did. But I do think that it's striking and right to apply it to the other issues of our time, including how we define masculinity. And I think these young men give us a wonderful example of what healthy masculinity is all about.

Thank you; we'll see you tomorrow.