

Daily Meditations 03/26/2022

Origins of Evil: Denise Levertov & Otto Rank on C...

Good Morning.

We're discussing in our meditation today, the relationship of evil and creativity: how creativity is that Divine Presence of the image of God in us that makes us creators and co-creators on the one hand, but also this very same power can be demonic, if you will. Because instead of bringing forth the beauty and the healing and the joy and the forgiveness and the insight that creativity speaks to, it can also bring forth death, destruction, and suffering, as we are witnessing today in Ukraine.

So I call on two wonderful thinkers. Denise Levertov, the poet who has something very profound to say about man's capacity for evil, it being a failure to develop our most human function, the imagination, to its fullest, she says. And its fullest would be compassion.

And I share the teachings of Otto Rank, who has so much to say about our need as human beings to bring forth our creativity in a balanced fashion, or otherwise we destroy ourselves, and even others.

But I'd like to invoke a third thinker. And this is my good friend, M.C. Richards, who wrote classic work *Centering*. She was a great potter and took up painting at the age of 70. And one of her books has this wonderful title. It is called *Imagine Inventing Yellow*.

Imagine inventing yellow...I invite you to just sit with that meditation for a bit; it's just full of meaning and surprise: imagine inventing yellow. And she says this is "a book of poems celebrating what imagination is"...what imagination is. I think the very title says a lot about what imagination is. Have you stopped to imagine inventing yellow?

And in fact, she talks about not just imagining inventing yellow, but "imagine inventing the curve on a cherry"...the curve on a cherry. She says "imagining is participating in"... imagining is participating in. She goes on:

Imagination means singing to a wide audience, a wide invisible audience. It means receptivity to the creative unconscious, the macrocosmic mind, the artistic mind. It makes erotic philosophers of us,

she says,

...as we imagine the world in images that make whole. To reimagine is to give birth, to embody the spirit and word and picture and behavior.

But that's a point she makes in her book on centering too, because she talks at length about "moral imagination"...moral imagination. That's a very rich phrase: that our imagination is meant to lead us into authentic

morality, authentic living, authentic behavior. She says "the world will change when we can imagine it differently" ...the world will change when we can imagine it differently.

"And like artists, do the work of creating new social forms"...new social forms, like artists. Call this social art.

This is what Gandhi did in India. He created new social forms to overthrow the colonialism, the British Empire.

So Dr. King did in the South to overthrow the Jim Crow world of segregation. He created new social forms and it was not easy.

M.C. Richard says, "Beholding is also a way of imagining"

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...and when heart and throat open, song arises. As simple as breathing, so spontaneous, it's organic, to praise, to celebrate when heart and throat open. Behold, a spring comes, a god falling into life.

So all these teachings are a wonderful way to nurture our own imaginations about moving beyond our capacities for evil, and into a realm of...well, where the kingdom and queendom of God are alive and play out their good news of Imagine... imagine inventing yellow. Imagine inventing the curve of a cherry.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.