

Daily Meditation 09/16/2022

Our Times as an Age of Reckoning

Good morning.

In today's meditation, I raise the question about whether ours is an age of reckoning...an age of reckoning.

I think that's a pretty good term by which to name a lot of things that are going on: the Black Lives Matter movement, a response, of course, to the insanely severe experience of police people killing a citizen when he was telling them he could not breathe. With a video showing that slow death occurred over a 9-minute period. And with onlookers, one of whom took the video, and all that transpired from that.

And then the backlash to Black Lives Matter and to those who are concerned. And that is people of many, many races, who marched all over the country and all over the world, about that horrible event of a police team murdering a citizen in broad daylight, and with video watching. But the backlash about schools in the South, Florida and so forth, wanting to forbid the discussion of race or discussion of slavery, the teaching of slavery in schools, because it disturbs people. Just one example after another, and the examples I give in the short essay of the treatment of Indian children and schools, so-called Christian schools, as well as state-sponsored schools in Canada and the United States.

So the horrors and the traumas that have lasted for centuries, around the genocide of indigenous people And the fact that they were are treated so horribly, often in the name of religion. And being told they had to yield in the name of religion. So many examples.

Now, David Bohm was a very special scientist, deceased now. And one thing was special about him was he made this statement, a brief statement, but it's powerful. He says, "Science is not enough."

Science is not enough. In other words, humans need meaning. And they need coherence, as he says, for society to thrive. Here are some teachings of his on this very subject.

A society is a link of relationships that are set by people in order to work and live together: rules, laws, institutions, and various things. Behind that is a culture which is shared meaning--

...shared meaning.

Even to say that we want to set up a government, people must agree to a common meaning and what kind of government they want, what's good government, what's right and so on. Different cultures will produce different functions of government. And if some people don't agree, then we have political struggle. When it goes further, it breaks down into civil war. I am saying society is based on shared meanings, which constitute the culture.

...shared meanings constitute a culture.

If we don't share a coherent meaning, we do not make much of a society. At present the society at large has a very incoherent set of meanings.

Now he wrote this essay some time ago. I don't see a date on it, but he's deceased now. So my guess would be about 20 years ago.

And so he talks about how we recover a shared meaning when a culture is breaking down.

If you make a building with very low quality cement, it cracks and falls apart," he says. "We really need right cement, the right glue, and that is shared meaning.

So this is why a materialistic culture on the one hand, that doesn't have meaning other than more and more and more, and a culture we are living in, are undergoing a great differentiation, a great collapse, really. We see it in all our institutions: politics, government, law, religion and the rest.

So, I do think we have to do some serious dialogue together about this age of reckoning. It's one thing to point out the sins of our fathers, which is happening and will happen, but it's another thing to come together on shared values and shared meanings.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.