

Daily Meditation 06-21-23

Generosity, Extravagance, Health Care, Compassion

Good morning.

Today we carry on our meditations about generosity. And about extravagance, and also, interdependence. Of course, it sometimes takes generosity to live out our interdependence.

And we're discussing the whole issue of health care, Medicaid, and so forth in America, and about the massive amount of profits that the industry of pharmaceuticals is making in our current system. We recall that they made \$112 billion last year, this is at the top pharmaceutical companies.

And, as was pointed out, in previous generations in America, this was not always the case. For example, when the inventors came up with insulin in 1923, they sold their patents for \$1.

In other words, the bottom line was not shareholders investments, and making money on money. It was not raw capitalism. The bottom line was, the inventors were happy to share something they'd come up with that would heal others, heal the sick.

The same was true in 1953, when Dr. Jonas Salk invented the vaccine for polio. He could have sold a patent for billions of dollars, but he did not.

And this was especially meaningful to me, in looking back on it, because I had polio in 1952. And also, actually, our family doctor knew Dr. Salk and had worked with him on the discovery of a vaccine for polio.

So polio was kind of personal in my story, and also my grandfather had polio, and was committed to a wheelchair for the rest of his life because of that, when he was a young man.

But today in America, drug companies have determined that their primary reason for existence, I guess, is to make money, and not to alleviate pain and not to serve the sick, as such.

So a lot of people, as pointed out in my essay, are going without health care. Because of this, one out of four Americans cannot afford the cost of medication. And many states are expelling Medicaid, which is a national program, that can help people like that.

So within this big context of interdependence, interconnectivity, it's our rules of wisdom in the universe, that we have every right to question how well we're doing as a society and taking care of those who need the most care.

And that's the reason why Bernie Sanders calls it a horrifying, barbaric and dysfunctional system built more on greed than on caring.

And there is this tremendous link between interconnectivity and compassion. That is what compassion is. It is living out our common joy, and our common suffering. And with the latter, we hope to relieve the pain. And with the former, we hope to celebrate together. That is compassionate work then, in the human societies, among humanity.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow