Daily Meditation 01-26-26

Witness & Response to the Rampaging Evil in American Society

Good morning.

Today, I'm recording this video on Saturday afternoon, because the techie help we have is on the East Coast, and they are expecting an immense storm tomorrow, the electricity may be out. So, not thoroughly up to date. This is 48 hours before our usual Monday video.

But one point I'd like to raise about the sad and disturbing and dangerous news in Minnesota, and today, we just learned that another innocent person was killed by ICE in Minneapolis, a 37 year old man who is a nurse — was a nurse, and the reports I have is that they do have a video, and he was beaten by a number of ICE agents, and then shot 10 times. That's what reports are saying. To really probably to get all the facts straight, or whatever they are, it's just immensely disturbing.

One question I want to raise, that has been treated in the *USA Today* newspaper, is the cost, the economic cost, of this invasion of Minnesota. Here are the facts as I see them, as I've been told that there are 2,400 federal agents currently in Minnesota (and that is in comparison to just 600 police In Minneapolis), that the overall bill will be between $150 and $170 billion dollars. This is three times the state budget. Three times the state budget, including education, health care, roads, infrastructure.

And also $45 billion for detention centers, where the people who are being deported will be housed until they are sent away. And the average housing is 47 days. That'' $7,000 per person, $7,000 per person just for temporary housing. In contrast, the average cost in Minneapolis for rent is $1,600 per month. So that amounts to over four months of rent for each of these individuals.

So you start adding up these bills, and you can see that this cost of the ICE invasions of our cities and states, blue cities and blue states, in 95% of the cases, is immense in itself. And that's not counting the loss of businesses that are shut down, or people are afraid to visit, and the loss of working hours because people are afraid to go to work, etc.

So this entire operation is very, very expensive: First because it's ending people's lives, and second, because it's interrupting schools and ordinary business, ordinary work in

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these cities. Those costs have not been factored in yet. But thirdly, the facts I just gave, that to house all of these ICE officers is itself very expensive, an expensive project.

And all this raises the bottom line question, which is really what immigration and the policing of immigration is meant to be about? Is the medicine worse than the disease? And is it far more expensive?

I'd like to share with you now another but related topic. There is a philosopher living in Germany, he's been there for 60 years, I believe — oh no, over 40 years — who is originally from Korea. His name is Byung-Chul Han, born in 1959. Again, he's from South Korea. He came to Germany without knowing any German, in his young 20s. But he's been writing a number of books. I have recently come across his work and found it very, very inviting. And his books tend to be very small, but very rich and very poetic, really. And here is one of his books. It's on information, the information mania of our time. He calls it *Infocracy,* infocracy instead of democracy. But it's a society of information. Of course, that's what so much of the social media is about today, and so much of internet and our computers are being filled up with information.

I love that statement by Rabbi Heschel, that "information will not save humanity, but rather appreciation will save humanity." Appreciation, the Via Positiva. Appreciation is in a different place than information is. Information is about facts or supposed facts, because there's false information too, a lot of it. Misinformation.

So in the final chapter of this very fine book, and short book called *Infocracy,* the final chapter is called "The Crisis of Truth," the crisis of truth. And I think this writing is very, very pertinent to everything that's going on in the current Trumpian MAGA moment of history. He begins it by saying,

A new nihilism is spreading. A new nihilism. *This nihilism is not a result of religious articles of faith, or traditional values losing their validity. That nihilism of values, which Nietzsche expressed when he said God is Dead, we've already left behind. The new nihilism is a phenomenon of the 21st Century. It is part of the pathological fault lines of the Information Society.* Pathological fault lines of the information society. *This nihilism emerges when we lose faith and truth itself.* When we lose faith and truth itself. *In the age of fake news, disinformation and conspiracy theories, we are losing our sense of reality and its factual truths. The circulation of information is completely decoupled from reality. The belief in facticity is lost.* The belief in facticity is lost, such that there are facts. There's a difference between truth and lies, between reality and imagination. *We therefore live in a de-facticized universe.* A de-facticized universe. *Ultimately, the loss of*

factual truth means the loss of a shared world as a framework for our actions. The loss of a framed world.

So this gives us understanding about why people are feeling isolated and alone, especially young people today, and the yearning for belonging, because we live not in a shared world any longer. And he quotes Nietzsche on how important truth is for social instruction, for communal life. Nietzsche said,

The drive for truth begins with a keen observation of the opposition between the real world and the world of lies, and how all human existence becomes uncertain, if conventional truth is not unconditionally binding. It is a moral conviction about the necessity of a rigid convention, if any human society is supposed to exist.

So society cannot exist without truth, and certainly not a democracy, without the basis of truth. Nietzsche actually talks about our total loss of the drive for truth, the will to truth. And the author Han goes on in this chapter, to talk about what was at the heart of Hitler's project. He says,

According to Hannah Arendt in her book, The Origins of Totalitarianism, Hitler was not a conventional liar. He was capable of a kind of lie whose enormity and totality produces a new reality. Someone who invents a new reality does not lie in the conventional sense.

And he does talk about what's going on in America today, and Trump. And this connects directly, I think, to the recent witness of Mr. Smith that I mentioned in the essay today: his testimony about the Big Lie, about how it went out that Trump, who lost by 7 million votes, actually won the election, and it was that Big Lie that drew the thousands of people to the Capitol on January 6th (2021), and made people so super-angry that they killed and maimed over 200 policemen, and seven policemen ended up dead, several by suicide.

So this is undergirding everything currently in our politics. And as Smith points out, he has proof that Trump did know the truth of election, his closest advisors, his attorney general, Barr, who is no left-wing Democrat in anyone's imagination, told him the facts, but others did too, and he pretended that he didn't know. So I think this is extremely important information to understand the net, if you will, the matrix behind what we are suffering today as a nation.

Thank you. We'll see you next week.

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