Apr 8, 2003

Human Rights in the Time of Trial

War in Shades of Grey

crash of computer and clash of wars- embedded UU theologian

Dis Orientalia

closely reasoned and documented test G Assembly n/a

DisOrientalia

topsy-turvey world: precision/humanitarian war, spin, sanitized war coverage - share not just w/ embeds by w/ those civilians too easily called 'collateral'

different worlds: corpses, and their meaning in HR work

humiliation and bad luck; versus horror and disgust

different worlds of value of human life, female or young:

Saving Private Lynch versus women and children as human shields

But what about Mohammed? Compare best to best, not best to worst

Is this the only choice for children of the poor? ringing school bell for weaning a child

There is always a saving remnant, a beacon of hope for a totally different world order even in the dark smoke of war:

images: woman on a bridge

family walks away: chicken or beef

marines and children

UU and HR Work: why we are inevitable and irreplaceable

Seven Principles relation to UN Dec of Universal Human Rights

Second International Conference on Conflict Resolution last week NYC

Mormons and Priest agree and become suddenly philosophical and universalist

All glad to ditch holy war

'Biblically informed' UUs–didnt just fall off th e Torah Truck yesterday

Same time: antiwar in the streets,

nourishment in museums: transforming role of beauty in remembering the human past—not just wars and invasions

HR embedded in primate empathy, not male philosophy or culture

we know pain when we see it

we stop it as part of the social contract of shared humanity

we must extend that sense of embeddedness to the ecosystem and species of Planet Earth if we care to survive

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British Find Hundreds of Boxes of Remains

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Apr 5, 11:08 AM (ET)

By PATRICK McDOWELL

KUWAIT CITY (AP) - British forces in southern Iraq have found hundreds of boxes containing human remains in a warehouse near Zubayr and are investigating how they got there, military officials said Saturday.

(AP) A British soldier holding a catalogue of photos of dead people walks through a warehouse where...
Full Image

"Obviously, it's an unusual find," said Maj. Mike Edwards, a British military spokesman in Kuwait City. "Who they belonged to or how they got there is under investigation."

There was no immediate indication of the nationalities of the dead, and it appeared they had died some time ago - not in the current fighting.

Southern Iraq has been the site of bloody battles for over the past two decades, with heavy casualties in the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war; the 1991 Gulf War; and in the Shiite Muslim uprising that followed the Gulf War.

The estimated 200 coffin-sized boxes "contain bags, each labeled, and there's human remains inside the bags," said Capt. Jack Kemp of the Royal Horse Artillery. He told reporters at the scene that the remains were found by British forces who were searching the area within a half mile of one of their artillery pieces.

"I really wouldn't like to speculate on where the bones have come from," Kemp said. He said the remains were decomposed, and thus were not casualties of the current war.

Lt. Col. Ronnie McCourt, a spokesman for British forces in Doha, Qatar, confirmed that British troops found some bodies between

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Basra and Zubayr.

Associated Press Television News video showed the boxes stacked five high on one side of the warehouse, and other boxes were lined up on the other side. The video showed one skull that was missing front teeth and had a large hole in the nasal area. A British soldier held up folders containing lists written in Arabic.

British soldiers also discovered a catalogue of photographs of the dead. The relationship between the photographs and the remains was not immediately clear.

Faces in the photographs were burned, mutilated or scarred by grotesque wounds, according to Vanessa Allen, a reporter for Britain's Press Association news agency. Some apparently had been shot in the head, she added.

After permitting some journalists to look around the warehouse, British forces sealed the facility, Allen reported.

"We have placed it out of bounds to all personnel and we will treat it as a mass grave," Kemp said.

Zubayr is about 10 miles southwest of Basra, Iraq's second-largest city with a population of 1.5 million. British forces are seeking to root out resistance in Basra but have refrained from a direct assault.

- Broken photo
- The Latest Week in the War in Iraq
- Some in Baghdad Struggle to Keep Routine photo
- U.S. Declares Near Chokehold on Baghdad photo
- Families Mourn Dead Found in POW Rescue photo
- U.S. Iraqis Can't Contact Kin in Baghdad photo
- Bomb Hurts Five at McDonald's in Lebanon photo
- Quick Questions and Answers on the War
- Israeli Troops Kill Palestinian Intruder
- America Is Latest to Try Mideast Remake photo
- Postwar Iraq May Be Hard on Public Order
- Baghdad Doctors Low on Medical Supplies photo
- Blast Rocks Central Baghdad Near Hotel photo
- U.S. Troops Captured, MIA, Killed in Iraq
- Some Voices From the War on Saturday
- Military Releases Details of POW Rescue photo

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Are You Ready?
Rev. Martha Niebanck
April 6, 2003

Reading: "Healing Terrorism Sickness": Clarissa Pinkola Estes

Terrorism is willful psychological assault; a conscious and planned assault against the minds and hearts and spirits of a large group of persons. . . . In terrorism, murder and mayhem are secondary to this primary goal of ruining the hearts and hopes of others. . . .

(T) errorists seek to cast their net of "sickness" over all survivors and victims, over the living – by trying to deprive you of esperanza, fullest and freely felt Hope. By trying to limit your libre, your Freedom, your living life as a completely free person, shoulders proud, head up, mind on goodness and love for all and pleasures that bring peace and happiness.

Meditation Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in
me and I wake in the night at the least sound in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be, I go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds. I come into the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with fore-thought of grief. I come into the presence of still water. And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting with their light. For a time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Reading: "Making Ready" from *Seasons of Our Joy: A Celebration of Modern Jewish Renewal* by Arthur Waskow

Preparations for Pesach are the most elaborate of all the Jewish year. They take place in both the physical realm of preparing the household by removing leaven, and the spiritual realm of clearing away deadliness and idolatry by means of prayer and Torah study. We act in the two realms simultaneously in parallel; (Let's look at the physical first)

Renewal of the body can begin on the New Moon of the month of Nisan for that is when the reordering of the house and the cleaning out of last year's leavening can start. The Torah's command is that no *chametz*, leavening or souring agent, shall remain in one's house during Pesach.

. . .There is also a mystical outlook on the meaning of the removal of *chametz* that can be kept in mind. According to this view, *chametz* is what lifts us up throughout the year—leads to our working harder, searching deeper, loving more. It is the *yetzer*, or swelling-impulse, of the soul. But allowed to swell and grow without restraint, it becomes *yetzer ha-ra*, the evil impulse. It impels us not only to productivity, but to possessiveness; not only to creativity, but to competitiveness; not only to love, but to jealousy and lust. So once a year we must clean out even the uplifting impulse; we must eat the flat bread of a pressed-down people.

. . . The two weeks between the New Moon and Pesach can be a time for serious exploration of the meaning of freedom, creativity, the birth and rebirth of identity. What *mitzrayim*, what tight spot, do I need to leave this year? What buds and sprouts of change to I see in myself and in the world around me? What questions do I need to ask? What tales do I need to tell? What songs do I need to sing?

Sermon

Are you ready? Are you ready for the jump up and down joy of spring? Do you have the *oomph* required to want to save the earth on earth day and every day?

If you want to celebrate the resurrection of the earth on Easter or the pure joy of freedom on Passover will you be ready?

If this were any other year I would be able to stand here and tell about the Jewish and Christian spiritual of preparation that build capacity for holding spring joy. But here and now we are in the midst of war and terrorism. Does the warmth, the energy, the radiance, the joy of Spring seem like just too much to ask. Are your arms as tired as mine?

Clarissa Pinkola Estes writes: "Ours is a time of almost daily astonishment and often righteous rage over the latest degradations of what matters most to civilized, visionary people. . . The lustre and hubris some have aspired to while endorsing acts so heinous against children, elders, everyday people, the poor, the unguarded, the helpless, is breathtaking."

As we collectively imagine the bombs and the terrorists and the lost paychecks and the collapsing health care system and the worries about our children and another night's lost sleep are we just too tired for Spring this year?

Advice from Estes arrived via e-mail from a friend just the other day:

We have been in training for a dark time such as this, since the day we assented to come to Earth. For many decades, worldwide, souls just like us have been felled and left for dead in so many ways over and over brought down by naivete, by lack of love, by being ambushed and assaulted by various cultural and personal shocks in the extreme. We have a history of being gutted, and yet remember this especially - we have also, of necessity, perfected the knack of resurrection. Over and over again we have been the living proof that that which has been exiled, lost, or foundered can be restored to life again.

In an earlier article from just after September 11, Estes advises a "post-trauma recovery list" that contains the central ways to proceed in a time of fear and lost hope. Here are some of her suggestions for this time:

1. Refuse to dwell on what psychically depletes you of hope, contentment and ease. During post-trauma times, sometimes an extremely difficult or disheartening set of thoughts attach themselves to us; almost like a gang cruising around looking to harass someone. Terrorists are counting on this to happen to many. Refuse this set of thoughts. Use the discipline of your mind.
2. Dwell in what strengthens you. For some it is reading, others physical activity, others, crafts. There are so many things and combinations of things. Remember, what brings you peace tends to be the same as what strengthens you.
3. Clean up your kitchen around food especially, (time to give your body what it needs for its equilibrium and best strength now). Do not assault your own body by making it work extra hard to throw off toxins now.
4. Rest (real rest, even if only a few hours at night, even if, like many are, awakening many times in the night, do not entertain "bad thoughts," do not allow yourself to fall into a pit of them. .

As I read this list I can see parallels to the disciplines of Lent and the preparation of Passover. The control of appetites and the literal and spiritual housecleaning of Lent and Passover preparation are resonant with the spirit of discipline.

Getting ready for the celebration of resurrection of hope and the invitation of freedom is grounded in self control and discipline. **But, are self control and discipline enough to prepare us for joy?** (I have some pretty tightly wrapped relatives that run their world with what they call discipline. I haven't noticed anything like *joy* in their vibe.)

Estes implies, in a sort of new agey way that our souls have *assented* to be here, that we have already been in training for the work of transformation. Like Moses and Jesus we have a part to play in the mythic work of redeeming the world. I don't know if that is true. Perhaps we are all just bozos on a bus going in circles.

But just pretend for a moment that you and I have a role to play in the unfolding of the universe. When I imagine that radical possibility I notice how exhausted I feel. I am bone tired just from the work of from staying civilized in community.

I need to find a source of ***zeal***. I don't use that word often and yet I know zeal is exactly what I need to add to the process of healing myself into joyful participation in this drama of life and death, rebirth and resurrection.

Self discipline need zeal. Zeal needs self discipline.

The medicine of zeal heals the spiritual disease of inertia. Thomas Aquinas teaches that zeal comes from an *intense experience of the beauty of things*. We must fall in love again and again with the beauty of the earth if we are to engage the story of our lives with zeal.

If UU's were to create a book of authoritative texts like the Bible or the Koran, Walt Whitman would certainly be included as a prophet of zeal. Listen to the way Walt Whitman discovers that life energy is born out of encounter with the natural beauty.

Put your ear the pulse of this poem and know that the earth penetrates all beings:

> There was a child went forth every day, and the first object he looked upon and received with wonder or pity or love or dread, that object he became, and that object became part of him for the day or a certain part of the day…or for many years or stretching cycles of years.
> The early lilacs became part of this child, and grass, and white and red morning glories, and white and red clover, and the song of the phoebe-bird, …And the field-sprouts of April and May became part of him and the apple trees covered with blossoms, and the fruit afterward…The streets themselves…the village on the highland seen from afar at sunset-the river between,
> Shadows, aureola and mist, light falling on roofs and gables of white or brown three miles off,
> the hurrying tumbling waves and quickbroken crests and slapping, the horizon's edge, the flying seacrow, the fragrance of saltmarsh and shoremud;
> These become part of that child who went forth every day, and who now goes and will always go forth every day, and these become of him or her that peruses them now.

The images of our experiences on this earth are written on our bones. Would you take a moment right now to remember some place on earth that you fell in love with as a child or young person? Perhaps there was a wise old tree, or the feel of being taken up by the swell of ocean wave, or a sparkling stream on which you floated sticks and leaves, or a certain pitch of bird song that always stopped your breath. Take a moment to return there in your imagination. Notice the earth that is alive in you-like a sibling, or a cousin, or a grandparent. Know that you *are* an earthling, and that you are connected heart to heart with the earth always. You belong here. This is your place always.

In my person collection of prophetic poetry I would follow Whitman with the Welsh poet R. S Thomas, *The Bright Field*:

> I have seen the sun break through to illuminate a small field for a while, and gone my way and forgotten it. But that was the pearl of great price, the one field that had the treasure in it. I realize now that I must give all that I have to posses it.
> Life is not hurrying on to a receding future, nor hankering after an imagined past.
> It is the turning aside like Moses to the miracle of the lit bush, to a brightness that seemed as transitory as your youth once, but is the eternity that awaits you.

We need the continuing community of the earth as a living source of zeal. We will find true community when we turn aside from the incomplete images on the TV and our worst imaginings. As we prepare for the season of rebirth we need to turn aside like Moses to the miracle of the lit bush-the life we carry with us in living memory of intense beauty.

When we know how to use discipline to not only calm ourselves *but also to* feel totally alive we are able to stand up and show our souls. We can sing "This Little Light of Mine" and know that the light we shine is like a signal fire for other souls. Somebody is lost and trying to get home. We can make a difference with a blazing and fierce serenity.

I hope that you will discover in yourself that 'pearl of great price,' that 'bright field', that 'fragrance of salt marsh', each a burning bush that welcomes you into relationship with the earth, forever turning.

Your soul will light *our* way home.

hokma@attbi.com

From: <RevMFN@aol.com>
To: <Riverviews@aol.com>; <hokma@attbi.com>; <cfontaine@ants.edu>
Sent: Friday, April 04, 2003 8:17 AM
Subject: Order of Service with detail for participants

Dear Carole and Ron,
Thanks so much for doing these good works for the people of FP. If you HATE a hymn or something else about it you have until about 10 AM to call Natalie (781-893-6240) to make the changes. Below please find the details you'll need for Sunday's worship. Plan to meet each other in my office no later than 10 AM to review the details.

Prelude
Bell
Welcome: Ron will let folks know that Martha is preaching in Sharon and introduce Carole Fontaine. Then he'll say something brilliant that leads into the first hymn. Ron Adams
Hymn: #1 May Nothing Evil Cross This Door

Chalice: Ron will ask someone at church to come forward and light the chalice while he says these words or words of his own choosing: "We ight this chalice with reverence for the inherent dignity and worth of every human being. May this flame remind us of who we are."

Covenant

Candles of Joy and Sorrow : Ron will lead the candles with grace.(remembering the responsive reading at the end) You'll need a lapel mic.

Music 1
kids leave: Ron will invite the kids to leave
Meditation Carole will come to the lectern and say : " I invite you to join me in a time of prayer, meditation and silence. Then say some words to invite folks into the prayer by Ellen Bass. At the end of the spoken prayer say something that invites everyone into a time of silence (eg. "we rest in the rythmm of our breathing together as we join in silent meditation. . .") Let the silence last at least one minute as you stand, sit when it "feels" right. That is the signal for the musician to begin.
spoken Ellen Bass Dr. Carole Fontaine
silent
Musical Response: music 2 Carole offers an "Amen" after the music

Reading: Carole, you did not indicate a reading, but I left it in the service in case. If you do not have a reading please invite the congregation to share in a responsive reading # 465: The Wisdom to Survive by Wendell Berry. I will let you and Ron decide who will read. Whoever reads introduces the next hymn.
Hymn: #164 Peace Not Past Our Understanding
On the middle verse of this hymn, Carole takes her place in the pulpit

Sermon: Human Rights in the Time of Trial Dr. Fontaine
At the end of the sermon Carole invites the congregation to sing the hymn.

Hymn:#207: Earth Was Given As A Garden

Ext/Chalice: Ron comes to the chalice at the end of the hymn and invites the singing of the doxology as he ext. the chalice. (lapel mic)

Benediction: Ron (or Carole?/Both?) come to the chancel steps and offers the benediction.
May the Love which overcomes all differences,
which heals all wounds,
which puts to flight all fears,
which reconciles all who are separated,
be in us and among us
now and always Fred Gillis

Postlude