

READINGS SACRED MOVEMENTS RETREAT CLAYMONT 2017

I need stillness and great sensitivity to have a sensation of a Presence in my body. This sensation comes not from tension but from a contact that is revealed to me. My body is centered, not tensing in any direction. It does not tend upward; this is not its nature. It does not pull me. I do not pull it. There is no tension. I feel free. My totality is no longer threatened. I see that sensation is like an act of obedience to this Presence. The need to open is what we call prayer. (65)

Each person has an ideal, an aspiration for something higher. It takes one form or another, but what matters is the call to this ideal, the call of his being. Listening to the call is the state of prayer. While in this state, a man produces an energy, a special emanation, which religious feeling alone can bring, These emanations concentrate in the atmosphere above the place where they are produced. The air everywhere contains them. The question is how to enter into contact with these emanations. By our call we can create a connection, like a telegraph wire, which links us, and take in this material in order to let it accumulate and crystallize in us. We then have the possibility to manifest its quality and help others understand – that is, to give it back. True prayer is establishing this contact and being nourished by it, nourished by this special material, which is called Grace. (198/199)

EXCERPTS from *THE REALITY OF BEING* by Jeanne de Salzmann

The Peace of Wild Things

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 forethought
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.

Wendell Berry

What does it mean to “remember oneself”? It is not to remember the person I represent – my body, my position in life, my obligations. It is to become conscious of my inner being. I wish to be whole, unified, *one*, what I essentially am. When I feel this wish, it is as though my whole orientation changes. In all the parts of myself, freely and without my doing anything, a movement takes place toward a certain Presence. For this movement to follow its course I have to obey and be wholly attuned. Its force depends entirely on the tranquility of all my centers and on the freedom of my attention. I need to feel that this Presence forms itself in me...

I learn to purify my power of seeing, not by dismissing what is undesirable or turning away and settling on the agreeable. I learn to see everything without refusing the details. I learn to see clearly. I see that all things have the same importance, and I accept failure as good for me. I

begin again a thousand times. Everything depends on this seeing. (41/42)

EXCERPT from *THE REALITY OF BEING* by Jeanne de Salzmann

Let me explain to you what prayer is.

It is not something that you do; it has nothing to do with doing. It is something that you become, by and by. It is something that you live; it is something that surrounds you like a climate. It is something like a deep gratitude. Looking at the trees, or looking at the sea, or looking at the grass, a tremendous urge arises in you to say thank you. That is prayer.

Not that you say it. It is not in the saying but in the very urge, in the very mood that you would like to say, unconditionally: "Thank you." Not knowing to whom your thank-you is addressed... not knowing who is the creator of the morning, and the evening, and the stars, and the moon, and the sun... not knowing whose hands are hidden behind every grass-leaf and who is smiling in every dewdrop -- not knowing at all.

Knowledge is ugly; not knowing is beautiful. Remember, not knowing is not ignorance. Not knowing is ultimate knowledge. It transcends even what you call knowledge. Not knowing is innocence. In deep innocence, a thank-you arises; unaddressed, not knowing to whom you are addressing. But that is not the point. Deep within your being, in your depths, you feel gratitude.

Prayer is the feeling of the unknown presence. That feeling of the unknown presence becomes reverence. And prayer has to be just like breathing. It is not that you do it and you are finished with it. It is something that goes on and on and on like breathing. Awake or asleep, it surrounds you; it

throbs within your heart. It becomes almost YOU; there exists no separation.

A life of prayer is what I call a good life. A life of gratitude is what I call a religious life.

Osho, Come Follow Yourself, Vol 2, Chapt. 9

Navajo Prayer For Beauty

Watch over us,
Your hand before us, protect us,
Heal us, make us well.
As you speak to us, we speak to you:
May it be beautiful before us.
May it be beautiful behind us.
May it be beautiful below us.
May it be beautiful above us.
May it be beautiful everywhere.
Restore us in beauty.
Restore us in beauty.

Grace

For food in a world where many walk in hunger
For hope in a world where many walk in fear
And for friends in a world where many walk alone
We are grateful

Mercy is the opposite of judgment. It is a heartfelt opening rather than a mindless closing. It affirms a sense of the appropriate. Mercy is the essence of responsibility, a broad firmament from which to respond as opposed to the narrow

ledge of life-limiting reaction. To re-act is to act out, again and again, our inner pain with the same old suffering. Mercy unites; judgement separates. Mercy is the voice of the unitive, of our "natural goodness." judgment is the cold wind in the abyss between the heart and the mind. Mercy does not judge it's own absence. It is open even to our closedness. Judgment regards everything with an equal mercilessness. Judgement wounds; mercy heals. Stephen Levine

“Prayer of an Anonymous Abbess:

Lord, thou knowest better than myself that I am growing older and will soon be old. Keep me from becoming too talkative, and especially from the unfortunate habit of thinking that I must say something on every subject and at every opportunity.

Release me from the idea that I must straighten out other peoples' affairs. With my immense treasure of experience and wisdom, it seems a pity not to let everybody partake of it. But thou knowest, Lord, that in the end I will need a few friends.

Keep me from the recital of endless details; give me wings to get to the point.

Grant me the patience to listen to the complaints of others; help me to endure them with charity. But seal my lips on my own aches and pains -- they increase with the increasing years and my inclination to recount them is also increasing.

I will not ask thee for improved memory, only for a little more humility and less self-assurance when my own memory

doesn't agree with that of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be wrong.

Keep me reasonably gentle. I do not have the ambition to become a saint -- it is so hard to live with some of them -- but a harsh old person is one of the devil's masterpieces.

Make me sympathetic without being sentimental, helpful but not bossy. Let me discover merits where I had not expected them, and talents in people whom I had not thought to possess any. And, Lord, give me the grace to tell them so. Amen" — **Margot Benary-Isbert**