

PROFOUND HUMANNESS AS EVENT

Global Priors Council 7/24/77

In these lectures that we are trying to build together over the next five or six days, we are dealing with the power beyond our own power that we've experienced in our engagement this year. It's far beyond what can be accounted for by the simple expenditure of our lives. We are trying to describe what we have discovered about profound humanness.

These talks are really for us who are here, but in the second instance they are not for us. A man in India comes to my mind in terms of these talks. Some months ago, someone visited his village and said if they sent ten people to a school in Maliwada that their village could be renewed. He went to the school and when he finished, he went home, got his wife and three children, closed up his house and left the village. He turned his farm over to the auxiliary to use as a demonstration farm and went to another village, Tasgaon, to work as an auxiliary to two years. He has been in Tasgaon for five months now and he is one of the auxiliary priorship. He speaks a little English ? but not enough so you can talk to him. He is literate, but his wife is not. He has never been out of Maharashtra and his wife has not been to the Human Development Training School. Now, he hadn't been through the last thirteen years of the religious mode, the Other World, and everything else, but, this past year he had happen to him exactly what we have had happen to us. He hasn't even had RS-I where he could take the poetry he has in his head and learn how to get hold of that in terms of his own experience. So these talks are for this Indian who is one of us and yet is different.

These lectures are about an invention in our age called profound humanness. If you took all of history and all the wisdom of the globe and brought it to bear on what at this moment people talk about as profound humanness, then you would come up with what's in this chart. This is not an attempt to gestalt all the charts of the spirit dimension that we've built over the years. This is not an attempt to secularize any categories. It's an initial attempt to name the twelve arenas or twelve categories by which our time is able to grasp profound humanness. Once that is done, the profound humanness present in this moment of history has to be held in tension with and called into question by the experience and thinking of humanness throughout the ages, whereby it doesn't simply get trapped in our age but relates us to all of history.

This chart of twelve categories is called "Qualities of Profound Humanness." The most helpful image we have used for that is the image of a touchstone. A touchstone looks like an ordinary rock or piece of dirt, but there is a difference. If you take your spoon and touch it to a touchstone, your spoon is no longer iron, but gold. Now, these twelve things are touchstones. That is, if you take a hunk of protoplasm and you touch it to integrity, then it begins to become a

profound human being. If you took the coffee pot in front of you and touched it with one of these touchstones, then it would become a profound human being. That's what these are. These are not qualities, in the first instance, that you or I have. They're parts of life which, insofar as you participate in those, you find yourself participating in or being a profound human being.

Another image we've used is that of a twelve faceted diamond where looking through one facet finally, all you see is the sparkling of the other eleven facets from behind. You can't pull Event and separate it from these twelve. These twelve serve as one Jewel, one diamond, with twelve facets.

This also represents a web. Profound humanness, when you participate in it, is like a web; a fishing net. It's so intermeshed, interrelated and intertangled in your day to day and minute by minute experiences, there's no way to fall out of it. Once you fall into profound humanness, you're trapped and cannot get out.

I feel as though I never knew profound humanness before this past year. I don't know why profound humanness has come into being at our time in history or where it has come from. I do not know how profound humanness works, and I do not know what the appearance of profound humanness means for the future of this nation or any nation, for the future of the globe and for history. But I do know what I have seen. What I have seen is profound humanness. Or, what I have seen is what I call profound humanness, and it's something I never believed existed until I saw it.

Profound humanness is itself an event. It's an event in time and space. It's not my qualities. It is something that has happened to me and as something that has happened it is available to any human being. It is an objective reality. Profound humanness is something humans participate in when they practically find themselves at the apex of history where they are engaged in concrete service to mankind that is objective to their own life. There is where profound humanness is to be found.

Maliwada was such an objective reality this past year. The Nava Gram Prayas in India was that this past year. The situation in India is obvious to anyone there. To alter the life in the villages is to alter the shape of that nation's future and to change its history. The auxiliaries in India are standing at the apex of history and they are engaged in concrete service. They are digging drains, teaching preschool, and putting on roofs. It is at that point that profound humanness occurs.

The event of profound humanness picks you up, consumes you, chews you up and then spits you out, leaving you with the decision about your participation in history. It leaves you changed

forever. In another time when you could talk about history as something substantial and didn't talk about life as dynamic and relative, the category of event would not freight the significant role it plays in our own grasp of humanness. But

to talk about human life is to talk about event. To talk about history is to talk about the events which change history. To grasp what your life is all about is to understand the happening in the happening in the

happenings that make up your existence. We've talked about this for a long time.

Now, in the midst of the day by day events of history, there is another kind of happening: the happening of profundity. Kazantzakis begins his book by saying, "We come from a dark abyss, we end in a dark abyss, we call the luminous interval life." There are only three happenings in life for any human being. There's the happening of his birth, the happening of his death, and then there's the happening that profounds him. In this happening his eyes are opened wide. He sees the depth of being a human being and he grasps his participation in all of history. The event of birth is filled with pain and wonder. The event of death is filled with pain and wonder. The event of profundity is also filled with pain and wonder. However, that event of profoundedness, of awakenment, is the key, for without that event, the other two are meaningless. Without that event in which a human being comes to consciousness as a human being, the other two come and go.

It's interesting to listen to people in the school, when they are given a chance to stand up in the morning and give a witness at breakfast. They all pick some event. A young man from Daulatabad stood up and said, "One day I was riding in a bus. The bus ran into a truck, went off into a ravine, and that's when I lost my arm. From that moment on, I knew I had to be about something in life." Another fellow said, "I remember one time in our village there was a huge crash. We found two trucks had run into each other and one fell into a ravine. It was the rainy season, the ravine was full of water and there were people trapped in the cab. I could hear them screaming but there was nothing I could do. From that moment on I knew that my life was going to be different." Another said, "I remember, when I was six years old, sneaking out of school. The teacher, who was a very mean man, caught me. He took a stick and he beat me and beat me. From that moment on I've taken my life seriously." They tell stories about a situation in which something beyond themselves broke into their lives, making that happening unforgettable in their experience.

Some people tell story after story about this happening and it gives them a new consciousness, a new grasp of their own humanness. Some of them talked about struggling for a year or two years with hating the fact they had only one arm, or facing the reality that they could not save those people in the truck before they were able to make a decision to

appropriate and to operate. Several people talked about their experience on a trip to Bombay during the school with that kind of passion.

Once this profounding event happens in history, you can never go back before it. You have no home any more. A lot of the women in the Human Development Training School, are widows, or women whose husbands have left them. If you're a woman in the village of Maharashtra, you don't have much of a role to play, once that happens to you. It's a traumatic experience, because people's marriages are arranged by the time they are thirteen or fourteen. The home is the only life that a woman knows and the only security is in herself and her children. There is no social security structure there. It is these restless people who have had something happen to their lives, which they know that forever after sets them apart from any other kind of human being who comes to the school. Profound happening of humanness is once and for all.

But, you have to say more to explain what you mean by profound humanness as event. It is not just that profound humanness has happened in our time. It's not just that there's a happening that happens once in every man's life which makes a man different, which he must forever after deal with that wakens him to be a human being. The eventfulness of life creates profound humanness and human beings ever and again. For once the profound happening of humanness has happened, once you have awakened, then every event that happens to you is a recreation of your profound humanness.

Every event brings with it unexpected intrusion. Every time you do a talk, dig a ditch, or go on a development nail, the unexpected breaks in and squashes your decision again. The anticipation that you had is brutally thrust aside. You find you either have to hold onto your models or deal with the situation. That intrusion of the unexpected squashes your decision over and over again. It chews you up and calls you to engage and participate in the real world. It brings to people a sense of humiliation, the realization of their own contingency. Indeed, it throws them over against their own contingency. People ask me, "What did you do to lose 60 pounds in the past year?" I tell them, "Nothing." They say, "Were you sick?" I say, "No." They say, "Did you diet?" I say, "I am incapable of dieting." I say to you that I have lived the past ten months in profound humanness, and that experience has taken 60 pounds off me, 40 pounds or more off some other colleagues, and I ace it's put some weight on some of you.

Living in the eventfulness that is profound humanness means that you are always living in the midst of changed reality. It means the security of what worked yesterday is never appropriate for today. It means you never repeat a maneuver. It means you always have to look to the future, to undergo the suffering that happens day by day when you win or lose in the real world.

Living in the eventfulness of profound humanness means that each event demands your

expenditure. Each event means you must do something. If you have ever tried to hold an ITI or a training school in a village, you know that in that situation nothing is secure. If there is a roof on the building, it may blow off and it may not. The food may come or it might not come. The food may be eaten up by the first three people on the row and not get to the next four people on the row, or it may not. The person assigned to give the lecture may come to do the lecture or may be down with dysentery. You just do not know. The students may cheer when the lecture is over, or they may just walk out. You never know. None of your anticipations are true. You send word for every village to send ten people to the Human Development Training School. Some villages send ten people, and others do not. You find that you have a bunch of people who thought they were going to get a stipend to live on. Then you find that they are not going to get a stipend. When you begin to deal with that situation, you do not know whether the students are going to leave or stay. Each one of those demands your concrete expenditure. There is no telephone in the community center in Maliwada, so when the toilets get dirty, there is no one to call. You have to clean the toilets yourself. In fact, you have to build the toilets in the first school before you begin. Then you have to build a new one because you have more students. The event that happens in the midst of profound humanness demands depth expenditure that reminds you of your weakness and your contingency.

Last, the eventfulness that creates profound humanness leaves a hollowness in you being there you must fill, or have it be filled with resentment. Living in the midst of the intense engagement of profound humanness, standing at the apex of history, drains you. It leaves you empty time and time again. It shows you up and spits you out every day.

It chewed up one student in the last school. He is big and husky and has never done a day's work in his life. The third day of the school, which was a work day, we worked on the bund. We were using picks and shovels to loose the hard dirt and fill up baskets, then passing the baskets from one person in the next up the hill and finally dumping it down a deep gully at your feet. You keep doing that for eight hours. Each one of those baskets weighs 30 pounds or more.

I had never worked like that in my life. I had a difficult time passing baskets hour after hour, minute after minute. The guy next to you turns around and when you go to pass him the basket, he's not there. The person behind you isn't looking either, so as you are passing one basket the next one hits you in the back. You get tired and the next is oppressive. It's over 100 degrees and the sun is straight down over your head, and you sweat. You realize not that you are tired, but that you might die! You know about sunstroke and overwork.

After the first two hours of the work day, this one student snuck out and spent the rest of the day lying in bed moaning with diarrhea, nausea, chills and fever. He had a vacant look in his eyes that you could not describe. For the first time in his life he had experienced profound

humanness. For the first time, he had the experience of taking: the sweat of his body end contributing it directly to history. We were not filling the gully with dirt; we were building a bund, a dam to store water in an area of India which has been without water for a long time. This was at a time when half the people-at the school were sick from drinking water that 'was unclean. All this was at the:foot of Deogiri fort, which is a symbol that 900 years ago there was glory in Maliwada.

This was what gave him the shakes and the vacant look in his eyes. This drove people to be consumed with resentment. You should have heard one of our staff after the first work day of passing basket after basket, hollering and screaming that a bulldozer could build that bund in one day, maybe a half a day. But we didn't have a bulldozer; we had baskets, and those baskets were the same thing that people 5,000 years ago used to build earthen dams. There we were, going through that expenditure. It produces a hollowness in you that can be filled only with an acknowledgement of the wonder and the glory and the awesomeness of what has been produced. Othe-rise, it-is filled with resentment.

Living in the eventfulness of profound humanness does things to people. It transforms their lives, gives them a new consciousness, calls forth a new kind of decision and demands that ever after, they operate a different way in life.' When the students came out of the school, all they wanted was to participate in history. Somone on the assignment commission asked, "Are these 197 people who have been through the Human Development Schooi globally assigned?" Well, I don't know, but 1 do know they will go anywhere in the world. All they want is for someone to tell them where to go. All they want is to participate in history.

I was working on the assignments for the last school. Somebody brought a young man up who didn't speak any English. He was having problems with his assignment and his family. I thought, Oh, boy, you can really do short courses with these young innocent students about what it means to really give your life, and be a sign, and how you have to say 'no' to your family, etc. I asked this man what the problem was with his family, and it turned out that he wanted to be assigned nearer his own village because his mother has leprosy and cannot work anymore because she cannot hold anything in her hands. She lives in empty houses around the village and does clean up work or takes care of children so she can be fed. But he was concerned about being close enough to take care of his mother when there is no work. He had no problem with going to another village. His only problem was being able to meet all the care that he had to face.

At the end of the second school we tried to keep a balance between the people who returned to their own villages and those who went to another village. We wanted to maintain good public relations with the villages by not taking ten people out who were never seen again by their own village. So we assembled the people and recommended that half of them go back to their own

village. Their response was, "If we go back to our own village, we will be lazy. We will be tied up with all kinds of relationships we had with our families and our responsibilities, and we don't want that. We want to give our whole life to this effort."

The second result of participating in profound humanness has to do with developing positive thinking. It means developing the capacity to trust the events in life that happen. I've not learned how to do that. Every time something happens that is not according to the way I planned it, I am consumed with anxiety. I am overwhelmed. I am negative. Nothing will do in those situations except standing up and loudly voicing my protest that this is not going according to plan. But, living in the midst of the eventfulness of profound humanness means that you develop trust in the events of life. One Gram Sabha was held in the school with the students and some people from Maliwada participating. The next day we reflected. Their two insights were: 1) we know that you can do nothing in the village without unity and now we know how to get unity; and 2) after seeing this done once, we can now do it ourselves. So, now we are ready to work in any village anywhere.

Participation in profound humanness requires that you trust the events of your life. You trust those events to sustain you. What sustained me this past year in Maliwada? We didn't have daily office. We had a morning ritual. Its main function was to remind us that we weren't doing the daily office but a ritual instead. The event of the first training school, the event of the second school and the event of the third school sustained me. There was no sophisticated reflection of those events but rather those events themselves that kept me together as a human being and sustained my efforts and energy.

Third, you learn to live with the awful tension and anxiety that causes your blood pressure to shoot up and down. You know that once you have lived in the eventfulness of profound humanness, that nothing is as it seems. Every situation has the capacity to bring forth the new. You live in the midst of the tension, never knowing what might come next.

Fourth, it means that your life is concerned with only one thing: the next event, the next situation you have to deal with. Two years from now becomes unimportant. What might or might not be happening somewhere else in the world becomes unimportant. You see life in terms of the next event and its importance. The past is used only to keep you going. We tried to reflect and it didn't work.

Finally, an event is the totality of profound humanness. Event is the mundane, ordinary, day by day happening that relates you to the Mystery and calls you to consciousness. It is the event which gives the opportunity to action and calls forth totality and dramatizes one's relatedness to others. It is event that quickens one's integrity and focuses one's care and overwhelms one with effulgence. It is event that allows your declaration, demands your creativity and calls forth from

you the presence that changes the situation. Event is the profound happening in humanness that once and for all relates man to his profound humanity and that ever and again beckons him to profoundly human participation in history.