

Study Guide for Chapters 6 and 7

The Tears of Things: Prophetic Wisdom for an Age of Outrage By Richard Rohr

Discussion Questions

Chapter 6 — Unfinished Prophets: Elijah, Jonah, and John the Baptizer

Elijah: Stuck in Spectacle

1. If Elijah was an “unfinished prophet,” what did he need in order to be “finished?”

Jonah: Stuck in Reward-Punishment

1. Have you ever imitated Jonah’s reward/punishment, good guy/bad guy, thinking? If so, how?

The Curious Case of John the Baptizer

1. Rohr seems to be saying that John the Baptist is an unfinished prophet because he operated out of his head instead of his heart. How do you understand this?

Job: Embodying the Full Journey

1. What is the main quality/virtue/attitude that makes Job a true, mature prophet according to Rohr? Does that ring true for you?

Chapter 7 — The Alchemy of Tears: How We Learn Universal Sympathy and Grace

1. Rohr says that sadness and tears are a divine evolution of anger. How do you understand that?

Collective Sadness – and Redemption

1. When have you shed tears (or have been tempted to) over collective evil?
2. How do tears and sadness break us out of anger?
3. Rohr says “The body of Christ is one great and shared sadness and one continuous joy, and we are saved just by remaining connected to it.” How do we do that?

Cosmic Suffering and Cosmic Hope

1. Have you experienced the healing effects of bearing pain together?
2. Rohr says grief does not have to be passive, but can be a necessary stage of entering stage of “going into,” on the way to “going through,” and then coming “back home.” Does that ring true in your experience?

Heaven all the Way to Heaven

1. Rohr says that the journey to wholeness is facilitated by conflicts, training us to hold the tension of opposites. Does this/how does this make sense to you?

Alchemy: the Process of Whole-making



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1. Why does Spiritual/psychological change through alchemy challenge the usual idea of making changes?

The Prophetic Arc

1. How have you “cooperated with grace?”



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