

# Interfaith Leadership Council: Divine Belonging in a Divided World

## DATE

February 22, 2020

## PRESENTER

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Othering & Belonging Institute

## AUTHORIAL SUPPORT

Othering & Belonging  
Institute



# 2020: Trauma & Broken Containers

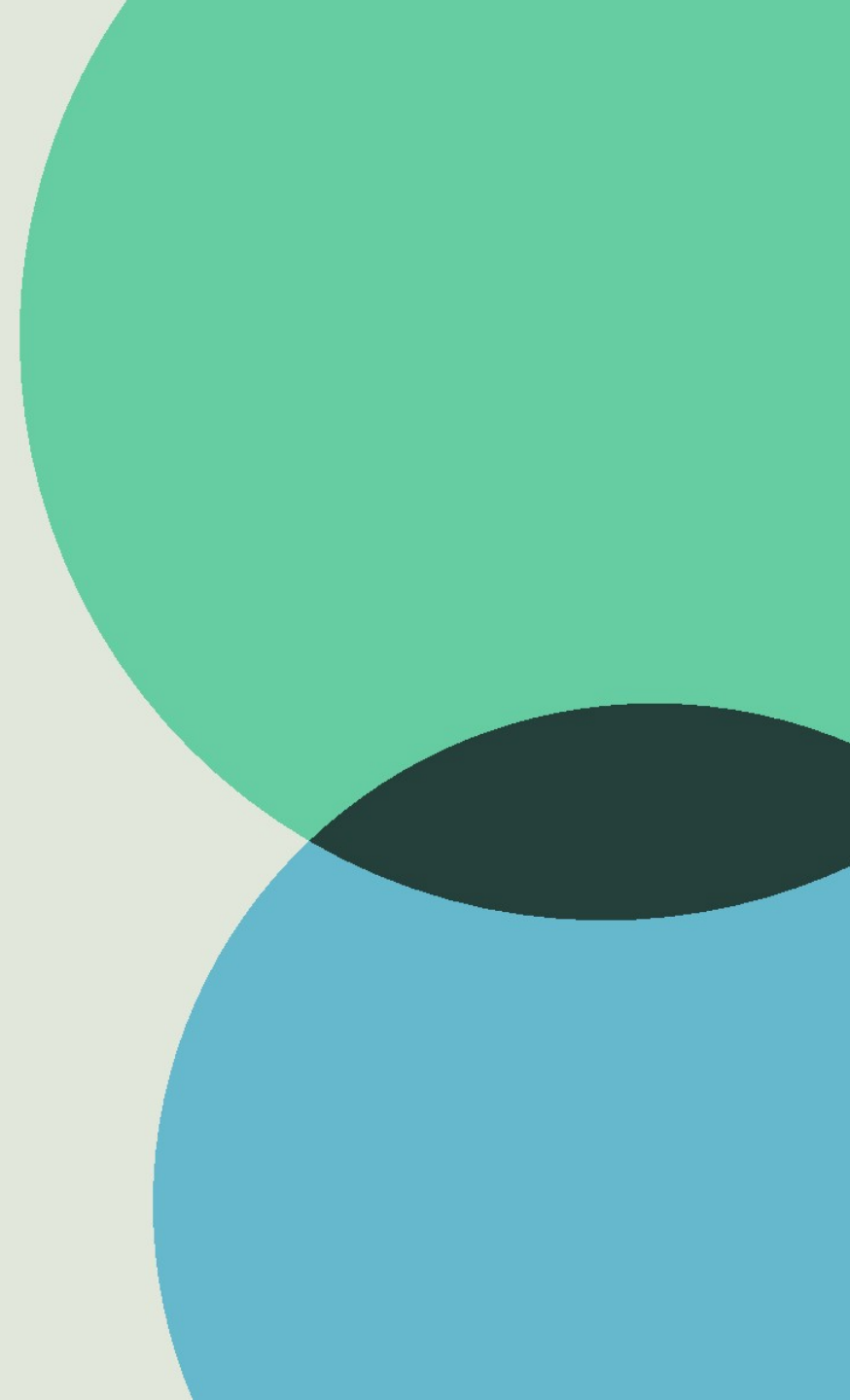
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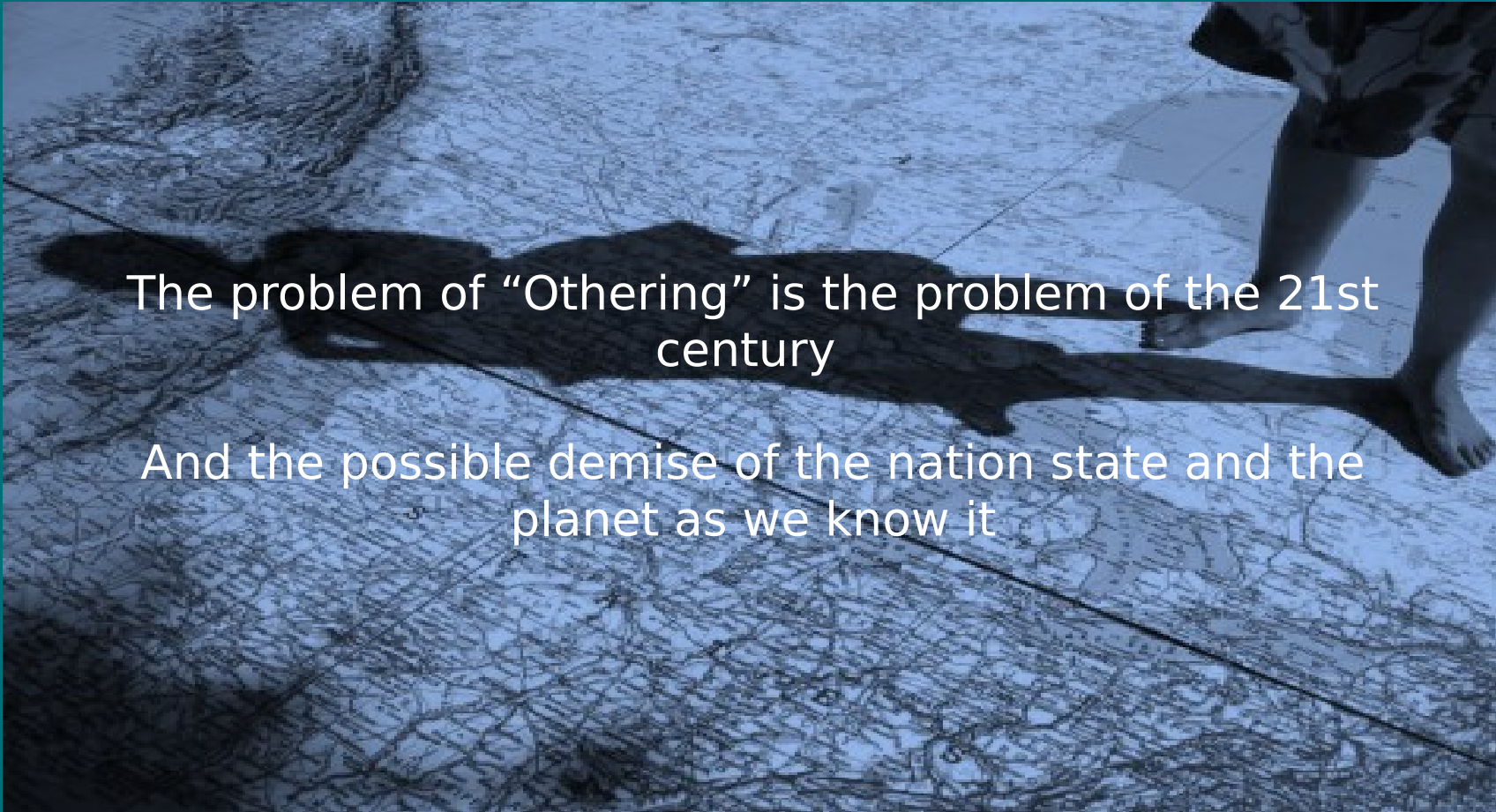
# We are “meaning people”

Our identities are forged by stories. One of the reasons why we are in crisis right now is that the narratives and stories we tell no longer fit the world we live in.

“...life in the age of bewilderment, when the old stories have collapsed and no new story has emerged so far to replace them. Who are we? What should we do in life? What kinds of skills do we need?”

—Yuval Harari, 21 Lessons for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.  
Religion offers profound opportunity for belonging and for division

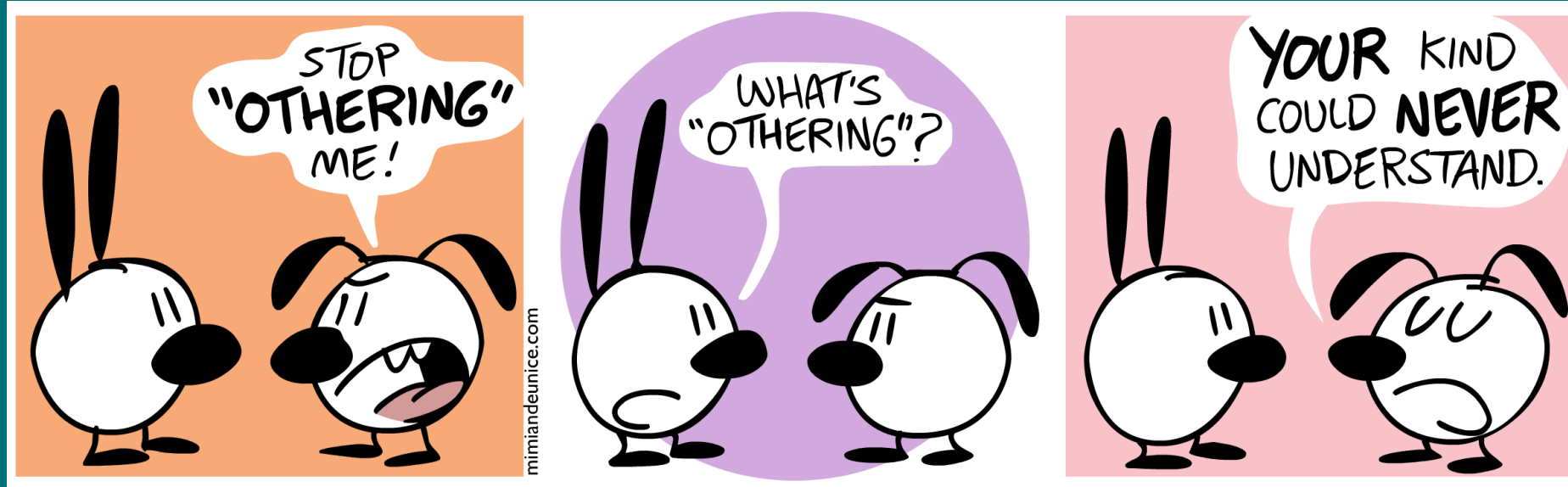


A photograph of a person's legs and feet standing on a large, detailed map. The person is wearing patterned shorts and is barefoot. Their shadow is cast onto the map, appearing as a dark silhouette of a person lying down. The map shows geographical features like rivers and coastlines.

The problem of “Othering” is the problem of the 21st century

And the possible demise of the nation state and the planet as we know it

# Othering



**Othering** is a generalized set of common processes that denies someone's full humanity based on them being less than and/or a threat to the favorite group.

# As change increases, so does anxiety...



# Four separations:

**From God or the Divine**

**From Nature/Earth**

**From each other**

**From self**

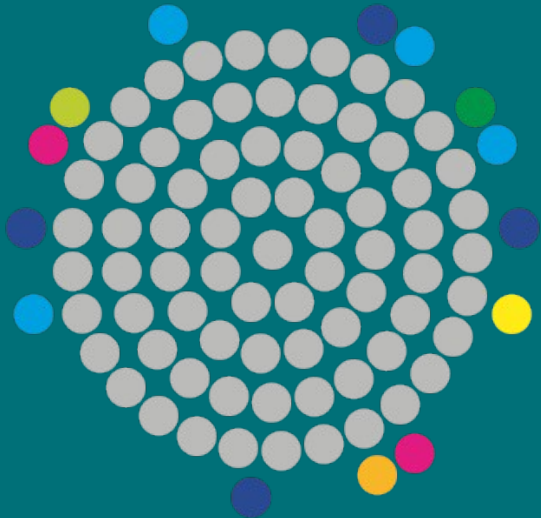


The background of the image is a dense field of red spheres, each with a dark, textured band across its middle. The spheres are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and perspective, receding into the distance. A single blue sphere is positioned slightly to the right of the center, standing out prominently from the sea of red spheres.

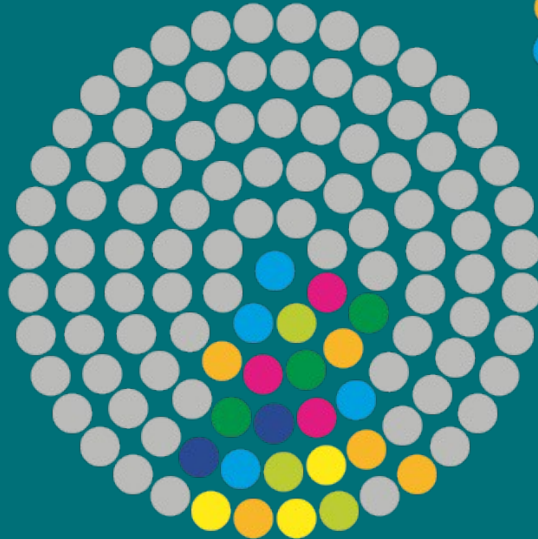
The opposite of Othering is *not*  
sameness but belonging.



# Bridge — Listen, engage, organize, love



EXCLUSION

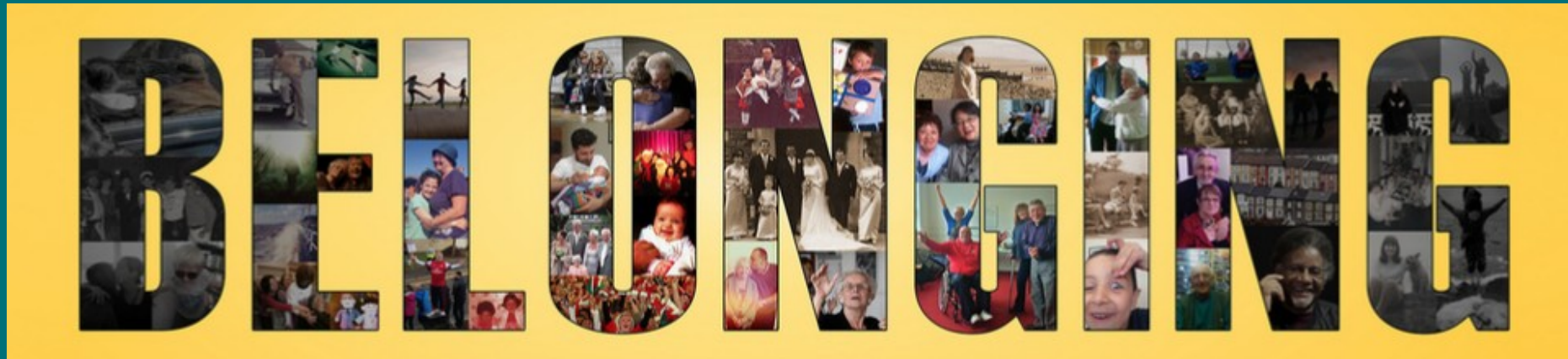


INCLUSION



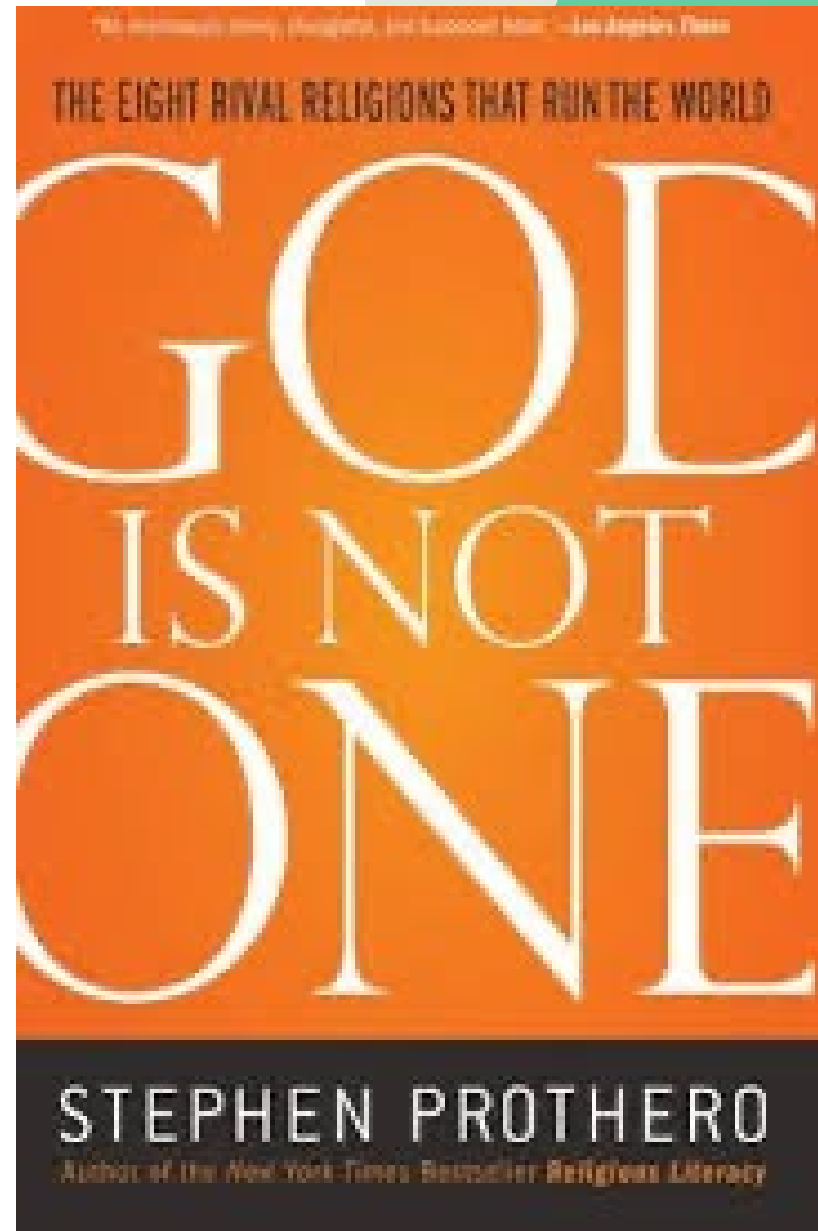
BELONGING

**Belonging** or being fully human means more than having access. Belonging entails being respected at a basic level that includes the right to both co-create and make demands upon society.



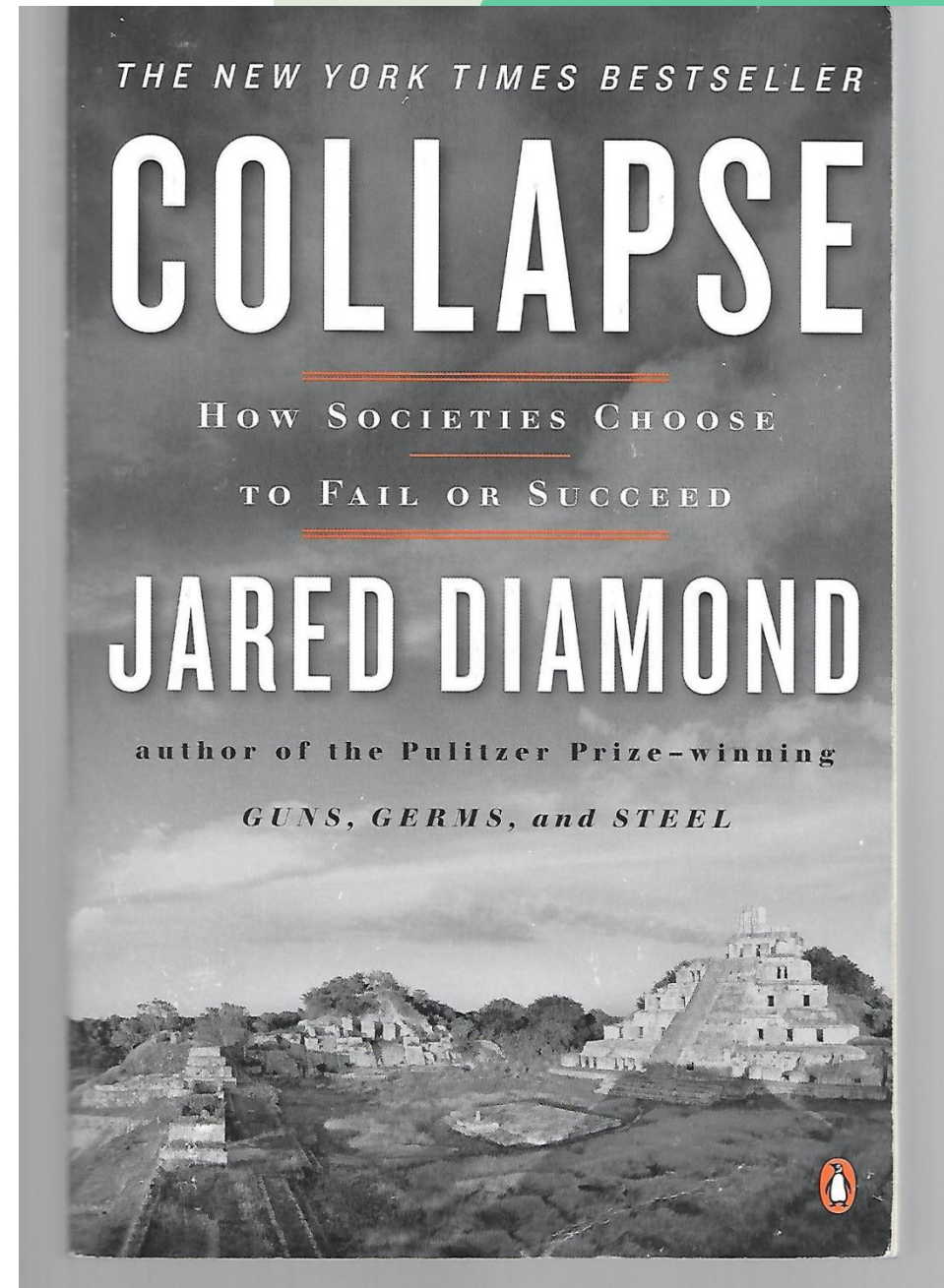
The term belonging reflects an objective position as well as the inter-subjective nature of group-based identities. In that respect, the process of othering and belonging are deeply relational and important in forming group identities and the self.

Religion provides meaning & purpose





Religious community can increase resilience and adaptability



Will we choose to  
adapt to the  
changes?



“

Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next.

We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it.

ARUNDHATI ROY



# Message s of Bridging in Religions



- that you yourself would find hurtful.” –  
Udana-Varga 5:18
- **Islam** – “None of you [truly] believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself.” — An-Nawawi's Forty Hadith 13 (p. 56)
  - **Hinduism** – “This is the sum of duty; do naught unto others what you would not have them do unto you.”  
*Mahābhārata*
  - **Judaism** – “The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself.” - Leviticus 19:34
  - **Baha’i** – And if thine eyes be turned towards justice, choose thou for thy neighbour that which thou choolest for thyself. — Bahá'u'lláh
  - **Sikh** – “I am a stranger to no one; and no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all.” – Sikh Guru Granth Sahib
  - **Christianity** – “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Galatians 5:14

# The Big Picture

Two of the greatest human needs are to make meaning and to belong.

How can religion and interfaith community help us create belonging in this stage of our spiritual, social, and scientific evolution?

What do religion and interfaith community teach us about how we can strengthen narratives of bridging and belonging?