

Daily Meditation Transcript 08/22/2021

On Being More at Home with the 'Within'

Good morning.

Our essay today invites us to examine more, spend some time more, about the whole concept of 'within.'

'Within.'

And I begin by citing Meister Eckhart, remembering yesterday's meditation on how God is creating the whole universe right now, inside our souls. And Eckhart asks the question, 'Why don't you notice anything about this? Because you are not at home there. So, he's urging us to become 'at home' with the vast goings-on in our souls. And we talked about some of them yesterday. How do we learn to be at home there? Well, 'stillness' is part of that learning, learning 'stillness.' Some may call that meditation...or mindfulness.

It is about being silent and being still, being at home with solitude, and more silence. Eckhart says, "Nothing in all creation is so like God as silence." And stillness and silence are found, and felt, not just by emptying our minds, in that kind of meditation, but also when you're struck by awe, you go silent. There's a kind of experience of being thunderstruck and reduced to silence.

Job had that experience at the end of his trials, when God reminded him that he was not there when the goats gave birth, and when the contours of the oceans and the waters were settled against the land, and so forth. And Job puts his hand over his mouth and goes silent. It's a sign of humility.

Awe, itself, renders us silent. Often, we don't have a voice for it. We don't have language for it. This is one reason why many mystics turn to poetry, turn to music, turn to dance, and art to express the wonder, and the awe, and the beauty that they have received, and been struck by.

So, all that is about examining the 'within,' if you will. 'Within' being our deepest feelings of awe, and wonder, and joy, and of silence...and of also coming face-to-face with grief, and suffering. Not running from it. If you lack 'within,' if you lack a 'within,' you often run, not only from the suffering in life, but from the joy in life. You cover it up. You don't have to deal with it, and that's what addiction is often so much about.

Addiction is often a cover-up of the deepest experiences of our lives, the suffering, the brokenness, the horrors, but also, even, we can cover up our deepest joy, because we're not at home with the 'within.' That's why Eckhart says, "Why don't you notice anything about this? Because you're not at home there."

So, we want to reach out to others, to elders, to storytellers, to great spiritual teachers, who invite us into that place of 'within,' to novelists, to playwrights, and people of all gifts. Musicians take us to a place 'within,' don't they? Mozart takes you to a place 'within.' Bach takes you a place 'within.'

The 'within' is not necessarily inside us. Remember, if the soul is as big as the universe, as big as our searching for the universe, then the 'within' is everywhere in the universe. But every being has a 'within.' Every being has a 'within.'

Hildegard of Bingen says, "There's no creature that lacks an interior life." And so, to be with other creatures, to study them with our hearts not just our heads is to ... strengthen your tuning powers for 'within-ness,' to understand your children, to understand your pet, your dog, or your cat, and their interior life, their personality, their choices, their likes and dislikes, their loves. All that's part of the 'within.'

And all art takes us on a journey 'within.' All art that's worthy of the name. So, these are all examples of how we are a species that has an interior life, we have a 'within.' Traditionally, we've called that soul. It's amazing that our culture has wanted to throw out the word 'soul,' the *dominant* culture...which is, I think, another way of saying, 'We're going to throw out the 'within.' Let's just live lives of externality, externality of success, as defined by external things, like how much money you have in the bank, or how many stocks you're sitting on, or what your latest golf score is. So there, there needs to be a choice to explore the 'within.'

That's what Eckhart is saying: Go for it! Learn about your 'within-ness,' your deepest feelings, your deepest values, and your deepest desire to give birth. And that's where creativity gets truly exciting. Thank you, we'll see you tomorrow.