

Daily Meditation 09/28/2021

Encountering the Divine Feminine—Have Churches Assisted or Obstructed?

Good morning.

In today's meditation we're reflecting on the divine feminine again, and its role in the churches, or the lack of role in the churches.

What we have to remember is that the Protestant movement arose at the time of the invention of the printing press, and therefore the launching of modern consciousness.

The modern consciousness, especially if you look back on it, is extremely patriarchal. And it shows in religion, and also in education, that the feminine was thrown overboard, that wisdom was thrown overboard, in favor of knowledge

So I tell about this woman who was raised Protestant, about how upset she was and angry when she discovered the wisdom scriptures later in her life: she felt cheated by her experience in her church.

So here is a beautiful naming of Wisdom in the scriptures -- this is from the book of Wisdom, chapter 7, verses 17 to 22:

"Simply I learned about Wisdom,
the design of the universe --"

Notice the first thing is the cosmos --

"...the design of the universe,
the force of its elements --"

again, more details about the cosmos --

"...beginning and end of time" --

time is part of cosmology, time and space --

"...changes in the sun's course, variation of seasons,
cycles of years, positions of stars --"

All that is cosmology. First interest of Wisdom, who is feminine, is the whole, the universe and all these parts: the sun, the seasons, the cycles, years, the stars, beginning and end of time, the elements of the universe, and it goes on:

"...natures of animals,
tempers of beasts,
powers of winds,
thoughts of humanity --"

Now notice how late humanity shows up. First it's all about the cosmos, but then it's about ecology: it's about animals on the earth, beasts, and animals, and the power of winds, and then come the thoughts of humanity. Humanity requires all this cosmology and ecology, not only to get our thoughts going, but even to provide objects of our thoughts. We're now at the eco level, the local level of interacting with animals and beasts.

"...the uses of plants,
the virtues of roots --"

So plants and roots, which are of course our food, and also our medicine -- all this is included in thoughts of humanity. So clearly the ancient poets were bringing together cosmology, ecology, human being. We could ask -- why was this rent asunder? Why did humanity go along for several hundred years without cosmology and ecology and spirituality together, with no plans except to rape the earth and people close to the earth, indigenous people? Well because we were so in love with greed, and with power, and with arrogance and superiority, feelings of superiority over other peoples.

And then the beautiful poem ends:

"...Such things as are hidden I learned,
for Wisdom, the artisan of all, taught me."

Wisdom, the artisan of all, taught me. Wisdom is a creator, and Aquinas says God is the artist of artists, But here we hear Wisdom is the artisan of all. So Wisdom is really the name given the creative side of divinity; you might say, the motherly side.

So all this has been missing from Protestantism and from education, from western culture, for centuries, because we have been so anthropocentric, so narcissistic. Of course now we're at this place of paying the bill on all this, paying the price for our narcissism. That's what climate change is, wildfires and the rising of the oceans, the hurricanes, the floods, the droughts -- all of this is part of the price we're paying for ignoring the whole. And for allowing patriarchy to dominate so thoroughly that wisdom has been banished, as if knowledge is going to save us.

It helps, certainly, it's necessary; but it's not the whole picture. And that's why mysticism is important at this time... and mysticism does have this feminine side to it, this side of intuition and wisdom.

I have a number of stories to tell about that, about the banishment of mysticism from seminaries. And it's a pity that even our religious leaders have gone through school, because the nature of academia in the West is without an understanding, a deepened understanding of their own role as mystics, and in training others to be mystics.

If you tap into our capacity, which is common to everyone, to fall in love with creation, and with life -- this is what sustains us in our struggles.

Now there was a reference in the essay today to Otto Rank -- excuse me, not to Otto Rank, but to the Virgin Mary -- and people ask the question what's this thing about the Virgin Mary; why is that necessary, why is that important? And Otto Rank, who was not Christian, but Jewish -- he had this brilliant observation about the Virgin Mary.

He said that in the time of the early Christians, when these stories were developed, that the Goddess was the dominant religion in the Mediterranean, practically, and that the Goddess was often pictured as being in a relationship with her divine son. And so he says he thinks that the Christians really embellished the story of the Virgin Mary to depict Jesus as very different from these other sons, who are in a relationship with their mother. Because the Jewish tradition, from which Mary and Jesus derive, has the son leaving home: that's a prophetic vocation, to leave home.

And these other stories about the Goddess, many of them, did not have the divine son leaving home, but rather sticking around. So he thinks that that's the main reason for the development and the emphasis put on the Virgin Mary in the early Christian theologizing: that Jesus and the whole tradition was a goddess religion,

he says Christianity was, but it was of a different ilk, because it included that prophetic aspect of the son, even the divine son, leaving home.

Thank you, we'll see you tomorrow.