

Daily Meditation 10/15/2021

Cusa on Multiple Names for God

Good morning.

We're continuing to meditate on the rich mysticism of the humanist Nicolas of Cusa in the 15th century: really one of the launchers of the humanism of the Renaissance of the 15th-16th century.

Nicolas says "divinity is the enfolding of the universe"...the enfolding of the universe "...and the universe is the unfolding of divinity"...the enfolding and the unfolding.

Now this phrase is very rich and it is the reason why David Bohm, the recent physicist, now deceased, fell in love, if you will, with Nicolas of Cusa, and actually said -- and this is a late 20th century physicist -- said "I owe more to Cusa than I do to Albert Einstein."

That's just shocking! So interestingly, Brian Swimme, the cosmologist, picks up this same teaching about the implicate and explicate order of the universe:

"Individual things -- houses, trees, people -- exist in the explicate realm of the universe, but these structures have unfolded from an invisible, atemporal, implicate realm."

So we all come from this invisible place, if you will, and to me this very much parallels Meister Eckhart's teaching about the Godhead.

He says, you come from the Godhead, but when we enter the world from our mother's womb, then we're entering history. And the mystery of the Godhead, our origins, takes second place, you might say, as we live our our lives in the presence of history. That, and God is a god of history and the God of creation. The Godhead is a god of mystery and the God of being.

So in many ways Nicolas says something very similar: that we come from this place where the universe is the creature. He says:

"Divinity is the enfolding and unfolding of everything that is. Divinity is in all things in such a way that all things are in divinity."

Well, that's panentheism straight and simple: divinity is in all things in such a way that all things are in divinity. That's panentheism: everything in God, God in everything.

"Mind itself, supposing itself to encompass, survey, and comprehend all things, thus concludes that it is in everything and everything is in it: that our minds are in everything and everything is in it." Another word would be consciousness: the consciousness is everywhere; it is in us and we are in it.

Here's Nicolas of Cusa again: "I return again to the divine enfolding and unfolding; returning I go in and out of divinity"...returning I go in and out of divinity.

"When I find the divine as the power that unfolds, I go out. When I find the divine as the power that enfolds, I go in. When I find the divine as a power that enfolds and unfolds, I go in and out simultaneously. I go in passing from creation to creator; I go out passing from creator to creation."

So these are some of Nicolas of Cusa's very powerful teachings about what's going on in our world, about where matter comes from, and about how we're all on this journey of in and out.

And I'm reminded of what Buckminster Fuller said in a talk I heard him give years ago. He said, "Anyone who's still using the words up and down is 500 years out of date." He said, "Airplane pilots do not call to the control tower, 'Now I am flying up and now I'm flying down.' Their language is 'Now I'm flying in and now i'm flying out,' because on a curved surface there is no up and down; there's in and there's out."

Well here's Nicolas of Cusa celebrating that same energy of in and out and he's connecting it to the implicate and explicate order. He says, "The divine word enfolds all things and each single thing."

So there's a greatness, a kind of cosmic greatness to what's going on, but there's also something very personal that's going on. divine word enfolds all things and each single thing. So these things are happening on a cosmic scale, but also on an individual scale, an intimate scale.

And all this, I think, is to reawaken us to the wonder of our existence, and the wonder of all our relations, and of our amazing minds and hearts: our consciousness therefore.

Thank you, we'll see you tomorrow.