

Daily Meditation 10/29/2021
Deep Ecumenism: Work

Good morning.

We're dealing with deep ecumenism and with the topic of work, because my book on *The Reinvention of Work: The New Vision of Livelihood for Our Time*, very much follows a methodology of deep ecumenism.

And I emphasize that word, methodology: it's a way of doing our study, and a way of learning, and a way of teaching, that we look not just at our own tribe, but call on the wisdom of other traditions as well, especially when there's a common theme such as work.

And again, I was so struck in writing this book, how much mystical spiritual traditions around the world have to say about work. I was really kind of surprised.

So here's another example: the Tao te Ching, the wonderful ancient Chinese wisdom text, says:

"Each separate being in the universe returns to the common source. Returning to the source is serenity --"

But that's really what meditation is. Certainly Western teachers say that: it's a return to the presence of God, the deep presence of divinity. And the Tao te Ching goes on:

"If you don't realize the source, you stumble in confusion and sorrow. When you realize where you come from, you naturally become tolerant, disinterested, amused, kind-hearted as a grandmother, dignified as a king, immersed in the wonder of the Tao --"

...which is where we come from, the source...

"...You can deal with whatever life brings you, and when death comes, you are ready."

Beautiful, beautiful ancient teaching on returning to the source.

Now the West has something very parallel. Meister Eckhart says:

"Our work draws all its being from nowhere else but from and in the heart of God."

...Our work draws all its being from nowhere else but from and in the heart of God. Notice first of all: our work has being. We're bringing being into the world when we bring our work into the world. It's an act of the *via creativa*, we are birthing our work; you're birthing a being like birthing a child.

And where does it come from? "Our work draws all its being from nowhere else but from and in the heart of God." That is so powerful and beautiful, that our work emerges from the God heart.

And of course cosmology is another way of talking about the source of all things, including ourselves, including our work. That science is telling us our work, our source therefore, has a 13.8-billion-year history and it has brought us into being

Eckhart concludes from this that -- he puts it this way:

"When we are united with God and embraced by God, grace escapes the soul, so that it now no longer accomplishes things with grace, but divinely in God. Thus the soul is in a wonderful way enchanted and loses itself --"

..enchanted and loses itself...

Do you get enchanted and do you get lost when you're doing your work? He's saying that work can be ecstasy, work can be a mystical experience. That's what a mystical experience is, being enchanted and losing oneself, being lost in one's work.

I know painters, for example, who stay up all night, not looking at their watches, because they're just on a ride, being taken along by the spirit of creativity doing their work.

I've often told my students: If you can say, "Where did the time go?" you've just had a mystical experience, because a mystical experience takes us beyond time and into another realm, another space, where the flow takes over.

So these are just a few examples of the East and the West again agreeing on the value of work by reading the spiritual experience that our work can be: a truly mystical experience at times

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.