

Daily Meditation 11/28/2021

Bly and Kabir on Panentheism

'Morning.

Today we're celebrating the work of panentheism, that way of seeing the world in a mystical way, which is a way of seeing divinity in things, and things in divinity. It's a non-theistic way, really, of seeing the world. It's fuller and more delightful.

And I begin with that wonderful sentence from Kabir, the Eastern poet from India, whom Robert Bly translated wonderfully, and whom Robert Bly quoted this one sentence from Kabir about two days ago in one of the videos that we offered you.

Kabir says, "I laugh at the fish in the water who tells me he is thirsty."

So, panentheism is like our being fish in the water, that we're the fish that is in the water, and the water is in the fish. And that's how I see grace; that's how I see divinity. That we're in the Divine; the Divine is in us. That's panentheism. All things in God; God in all things.

And this, for a lot of people this sounds new. But in fact, this is what all our mystics write about. And what's new is, what makes this sound new is, our religions have utterly failed to teach mysticism and spirituality. And the journalists follow suit, with the notion that God is up in the sky someplace and there's this distance between us.

But here's what the first epistle of John says, 4:16: "God is love and anyone who lives in love, lives in God and God in her."

So, there's this "in-ness" going on, you see. We are in Divine; Divine is in us. That's to be found everywhere in the mystical traditions and in the Bible. Like this: here's Paul speaking in the book of Acts, chapter 17:28: "It is in God that we live and move and have our being."

So again, this "in-ness."

And, of course, scholars have counted, I think over 140 times in Paul's letters, that he talks about we being in Christ and Christ being in us. So that's what I call Christological panentheism.

And Meister Eckhart says, "God created all things in such a way that they are not outside to God's self, as ignorant people falsely imagine." (Those ignorant people include a lot of priests and ministers.) "Rather all Christians flow outward, but nonetheless remain within God."

That is panentheism. Things are not outside God.

And Mechthild of Magdeburg, the great 13th century Beguine mystic--the Beguines were the feminist movement 13th of Middle Ages--says, and I quote: "The day of my spiritual awakening was the day I saw, and knew I saw, all things in God, and God in all things."

That was her step into spiritual maturity, for growing up. And I think we all need to grow up like that.

And that's why that wonderful sentence from Kabir is so appropriate. "I laugh at the fish in the water who tells me he is thirsty."

In John's Gospel 15: 4-5: "Make your home in me as I make mine in you. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, with me in him or her, bears plentiful fruit."

So again, an invitation from Christ and John's Gospel to make yourself at home in the vine and the branches. "Make your home in me as I make mine in you. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, with me and him or her, bears plentiful fruit."

So out of this union, the creativity happens.

So, all these quotes are found in my book, *Original Blessing*, the chapter six on panentheism. And I end that chapter with a discourse, really, on the meaning of Kabir's panentheistic theology, and how it applies today. Because religion that is only preaching theism is not a religion, and a lot of people find it very, very boring. And that is not what the mystical path is about.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.