

Daily Meditation 02/16/22

Bede Griffiths on the Sacred Marriage of East and West

Good morning.

We continue our meditations this morning with Father Bede Griffiths and his book on *The Marriage of East and West*, the sacred marriage, and what he tells us about getting to the deepest levels of our consciousness, that includes the issue of gender.

As he says, the "encounter between the two fundamental dimensions of human nature, the male and female -- the masculine, rational, active, dominating power of the mind, and the feminine, intuitive, receptive power," and he thinks this clash is one of the deepest struggles and most important struggles of our time.

And of course, the feminine intuitive receptive power, that deep listening, is what we mean by contemplation. And women and men need to participate in that. The East may call it mindfulness, and mind emptiness that precedes the mind fullness.

But he calls, as he says, "for the churches to turn to the religions of the East, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and the subtle blend of all these and oriental culture, and the deep intuitions of tribal religion, Africa and elsewhere."

So he's including certainly indigenous wisdom. That's been my experience too: that working with Native Americans, and especially their healing ceremonies, sweat lodges and Sundances, and vision quests and powwows, was that there is a profound connection to nature, to Mother Earth, Father Sky, that happens in these practices. And it's not a lot of talk. It is a lot of deep practice. And from these experiences our intuition and imagination grow, as Bede says.

And of course, the Celtic tradition too, is of this ilk. It too is an indigenous religion, based more on experience than on dogmas, and an experience that ignites imagination and intuition, so that dogmas get softened, and they become part of the imaginative process. Whether you're talking about the idea of Trinity, which is found not only in a council decree of the Christian church, but also in nature and in the processes of our lives: life, death and resurrection, and regeneration.

As he says, "intuition belongs not to the sunlight surface of the mind, but to the night and the darkness, to the moonlit world of dreams and images before they emerge into rational consciousness."

Here too, you can feel the Black Madonna being invoked: the moonlit images.

And he says that "the source of intuition comes from the experiences of the body, the senses, the feelings, and the imagination." All this is celebrated in indigenous practice, when you pray by dancing, not by reading pages from a book.

And he says, "you can't cut one sensation from another: there's no such thing as a mere sensation or feeling or thought," he says. "Every sensation, every feeling, every imagination, affects my mind, modifies my being. I live and act as a whole, we all live and act as a whole, not in pieces."

So this is another invitation to move from the modern to the post-modern, but also the pre-modern consciousness, where we are microcosm of a macrocosm, as Hildegard of Bingen put it.

So, this invitation to expand our consciousness is echoed in pre-modern thinkers like Hildegard, but also Thomas Aquinas, who said "we are all, all of us *capax universi*," (capable of the universe), and that psyche and Cosmos come together; they are meant to marry.

This is another sacred marriage: the human psyche and the cosmos. And this is what a deep spiritual thinker and practitioner like Bede Griffiths is inviting us all to do: to grow our little selves to connect to the great self, of the universe, the Cosmic Christ therefore, or the Buddha nature, or the image of God, that the universe is.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.