

Daily Meditation 04/01/2022

Eckhart on the God of Creation and the Nameless God of Mystery

Good morning.

We continue our meditation today with Meister Eckhart and "the word" of God. I know every creature is a word of God. And therefore, we are all invited to encounters with the Divine on a daily basis.

And, as he says elsewhere, "Relationship is the essence of everything that is." So we're being called into relationship with creation in a deep way. But he also advises us, in today's meditation, that there are limits. It's a both/and experience. On the one hand, every creature is a word of God. And he says today:

"All creatures want to express God in all their works. Let them all speak, coming as close as they can, yet still they cannot speak him."

So, there are limits to our ability to speak the Divine. And, of course, all creatures in all their works--and talk about humans, too, in all our works--we are here to speak the Divine. But there are limits.

"Whether they want to or not, whether it is pleasing or painful to them, they all want to speak God, and still, God remains unspoken."

So there's this dialectic. The Via Positiva is the speaking of the Divine, in the right. Via Negativa is the unspoken, that which cannot be spoken because this mystery is so deep it's beyond words.

Silence is one way we speak God. And also art, which goes further than words, in naming the beautiful and the profound and the truth.

"The brightness of the divine nature," he says, "is ineffable."

The brightness of divine nature is ineffable.

"God is a word but an unexpressed word."

Ineffability, as William James says, in his classic work, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, ineffability is a sign of a mystical experience. When you've been touched so deeply that words cannot really tell the story. Beyond words. Our deepest experience is beyond words.

That's what I often tell students: that the two responses to a mystical experience are:

#1. Silence.

And #2. Art.

That we're kind of driven to music, to dance, to poetry, to theater, to film, to painting. To utter what we have touched, what has touched us, what we have experienced.

So. to introduce the Via Negativa, as Eckhart does, as naming the limits of human talk, is of course, to put forward the mystery of mystery. The mystery is a real reality for us. And it goes beyond words.

So we want to learn to be at home with mystery, as well as with history, and as well as with creation. That there are angles on existence, and on feelings, deep feelings, that are diverse--just like if you shine light on a diamond, you get different angles on the radiance of the diamond.

So it is with nature and creation itself. That each one has its own radiance, but sometimes it's beyond words. It truly is mystery.

And we can learn to be grateful for that, too.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.