

Daily Meditation 05/13/22

Julian of Norwich on Evil & the Supreme Torque/Court

Good morning.

In today's meditation we're meditating with Julian of Norwich, amazing figure for the 14th century, who is, I think finding her voice in the 21st century. Being pre-modern, like indigenous people are, and like her predecessors, Hildegard of Bingen, Francis of Assisi, Thomas Aquinas, Mechtild of Magdeburg, Meister Eckhart were before her, she is creation-centered and begins her view of the world from the perspective of the goodness of all of creation, just as Genesis 1 talks about: the goodness, indeed, the "very goodness" of creation. And that word in Hebrew can be translated: the creation, all of creation is very beautiful, as well as very good.

And one of the dimensions to Julian's deep philosophy and theology that takes her far beyond patriarchy -- and remember that patriarchy really took hold in the modern era; at least in the pre-modern era, there was a sense of cosmology, a sense of the whole.

And the Divine Feminine made its way in from time to time, often in the Christian church in terms of the person/persona of Mary, or the Black Madonna. And the architecture, the architectural revolution, of the 12th century, that brought Gothic architecture into the picture.

Otto Rank, the great psychologist, and founder of humanistic psychology, says that if you want to know the soul of a culture, go to its architecture first.

So the passage from the patriarchal period of Romanesque architecture that was squat, thick-walled, small-windowed -- that passage to the Gothic, which was the opposite: tall, graceful, light-filled, and thin, that is very much inspired by the Divine Feminine; the Goddess came roaring in in the 12th century. Julian lived, of course, two centuries after that.

But one of her teachings that is very central to her worldview, and is not to patriarchy, or fascism, which is deeply aligned with patriarchy, is the theme of compassion, and of course, the motherhood of God. You will not find fascists or fascist-aspiring theologians, deliberating on the Divine Feminine, the Goddess or the motherhood of God, but you do find it in Julian.

She says, "Compassion is a kind and gentle property that belongs to the motherhood in tender grace."

...kind, gentle, tender grace. You can see those words of kindness, of gentleness, of grace, are very appropriate for an important dimension of the Divine Mother.

She says, "We ask, What does compassion do? Compassion protects, increases our sensitivity, gives life and heals."

So compassion is about protection. It is about increasing of sensitivity, which would include empathy, of course; that it gives life and it also heals. Healing, giving life, growing in sensitivity, and protecting: those are motherly characteristics for Julian because they are characteristics of compassion. And of course, men are capable of compassion as well as women.

And women, I'm sorry to say, are capable of choosing patriarchy as a worldview, instead of the balance, the healthy masculine with the divine feminine.

And then she adds, "Compassion, the ground of compassion --"

...the ground of compassion...

"...is love. And the working of compassion keeps us in love."

So, compassion and love are twins. They are kin, and love forms the ground of compassion. And to work compassion is to be in love. And finally she teaches,

Compassion is the sweet gracious working in love, mingled with abundant kindness, for compassion works at taking care of us and makes all things become good.

...makes all things become good.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.