

Daily Meditation 06/13/2022

Becoming the Light, Digging for the Ground of Our Being

Good morning.

We're continuing our meditation on the seventh chakra, and the story of light, and the spark of divine nature that in all of us.

I bring in today a wonderful poem by Mary Oliver, from the major collection of her works, which she put together near the end of her life, called *Devotions: The Selected Poems of Mary Oliver*.

And I especially invoke the prayer that she lends us from the story of the death of the Buddha. She's shared with us a beautiful poem called "The Buddha's Last Instruction." And I want to share that poem with you, "The Buddha's Last Instruction," on pages 314 and 315 in her book.

*'Make of yourself a light'
said the Buddha,
before he died.*

...make of yourself a light.

*...I think of this every morning
as the east begins
to tear off its many clouds
of darkness, to send up the first
signal - a white fan
streaked with pink and violet,
even green.
An old man, he lay down
between two sala trees,
and he might have said anything,
knowing that was his final hour.
The lake burns upward,
it thickens and settles over the fields.
around him, the villagers gathered
and stretched forth to listen.
Even before the sun itself
hangs, disattached, in the blue air,
I am touched everywhere,
by its ocean of yellow waves.
No doubt he thought of everything*

*that had happened in his difficult life.
And then I feel the sun itself
as it blazes over the hills,
like a million flowers on fire -
clearly I'm not needed
yet I feel myself turning
into something of inexplicable value.*

...I feel myself turning into something of inexplicable value.

*Slowly beneath the branches,
he raised his head.
He looked into the faces of that frightened crowd.*

That is how the poem ends. And to me it returns to his beginning: "make of yourself a light," said the Buddha before he died; those seem to have been his final words. And Mary Oliver does a great service, I think, by creating this poem that sets the whole scene of this old man lying down on the ground to die. Many choices he had to speak his final words, but the words he chose, "make of yourself a light," he addressed directly to faces in that frightened crowd.

And for her, the whole experience she's writing about builds up to this: "clearly, I'm not needed, yet I feel myself turning into something of inexplicable value."

And the Buddhist teachings, not unlike those of Jesus and those of Meister Eckhart and others, bring alive that truth that we are of an inexplicable value....we are of inexplicable value. That is the light in all of us. That is the divine presence in us. That is that spark of God in all of us. And it deserves to be fed and nurtured. So it becomes a flame, so that we partake in the fire that divinity is, and the fire that we are, and the fire that love and compassion are.

Thank you, we'll see tomorrow.

And thank you to Mary Oliver, and to the Buddha.