

Daily Meditation 06/02/2022

Community, Compassion, and Today's Post-Modern Science

Good morning.

This morning we're continuing our meditations on community. And the theme today is community and compassion in today's postmodern science: that science itself -- postmodern science, that is, not modern science; modern science cuts things up into parts -- but postmodern science is returning to the whole again.

And it's almost making a mantra of the words, interdependence -- words that are very important to the mystics, of course -- interdependence and interconnectivity.

Both Hildegard of Bingen and Meister Eckhart talk explicitly about the interdependence of all beings. And now we have science on board. And that is such an important breakthrough. Because so often our culture rests on the foundation of scientific consciousness, language even. And if we can truly agree, begin to agree as a species, that interdependence and interconnectivity lie at the very foundation of how science works, and how nature works, and how science has helped to name this again, in the new context of a postmodern scientific world view.

If we can agree on that, then the door is open for compassion, because as I point out, the basis of compassion is interdependence. I cite Thomas Merton, the Catholic monk, who said,

The whole idea of compassion is based on a keen awareness of the interdependence of all the living beings, which are part of one another, and are involved in one another.

And I cite the work of Meister Eckhart, who says the first outburst of everything God does is compassion.

And he even says -- he tries to find what the name of the soul is; he struggles with it and struggles with it and says, no one can really know what the soul is, it is a great mystery and so forth. Then he ends up saying, "The soul is where God works compassion."

So it is precisely there, at the depth of our interdependence, that Grace flows, that we are touched by the Divine, and the Divine touches us, and we return this energy, this power, this sharing, of both joy and sorrow, and the working of both, working to undo this sorrow, to create justice, to defend against injustice, and to lessen the sorrow in the world. All this is the work of compassion.

And it's also the work of community, isn't it? So, compassion allows the community to thrive. And it is the very energy of interdependence, interconnectivity, that gets celebrated. Malidoma Some, the African teacher, says that "there is no community without ritual." So ritual is a way of celebrating, bringing forth the joy, the common joy, and bringing forth the grief, the common suffering.

And in that process, we've got the power to carry on the work, the work of community, and really the etymological meaning of the word community is *communio*. And that means to share a common task

together...share a common task together. And that task is about survival. And more than survival, we hope, also, it's about thriving.

So as Meister Eckhart says, "what happens to another, whether it be a joy or sorrow, happens to me." That is interdependence, that is compassion.

And also, that's Jesus teaching, too: "when you do it to the least, you do it to me." When you feed the hungry, you feed me. When you visit a prisoner, you visit me. When you heal the sick, you heal me.

So that whole idea of compassion is fleshed out in this notion that everyone is another Christ or everyone is another Buddha. Everyone is another image of God that deserves our respect and our support in efforts at healing and celebrating together. And this is what builds community.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.