

Daily Meditation 08-12-22

Merton & Eckhart on Nothingness & Solitude

Good morning.

Today's meditation returns to Meister Eckhart and Thomas Merton, and the theme of nothingness and solitude, that Eckhart has as a very, very important teaching when he says:

We must learn an inner solitude, wherever, or with whomsoever we may be. One must learn to penetrate things and find God there.

And things can include history, and the news, and everything else. And here's another passage from Eckhart that elaborates on what he just said. He says:

When one has learned to let go and let be--

...and that is the key to Eckhart, learning to let go and be...

...then one is well disposed and is always in the right place, whether in society, or in solitude. Now one who has rightly disposed has God with one in actual fact in all places, just as much in the street, as in the midst of many people, as in church, or the desert, or a monastic cell.

So all of that is an elaboration of what he says in the essay about learning an inner solitude: inner silence is something you carry with you everywhere.

Now Merton practically echoes those words from Eckhart, so clearly, these ideas following from Merton were really born out of his interaction with Eckhart. He says,

As soon as a person is fully disposed to be alone with God, he or she is alone with God no matter where they may be: in the country, the monastery, the woods, or the city. The lightning flashes from east to west, illuminating the whole horizon and striking where it pleases. And at the same instant, the infinite liberty of God flashes in the depths of that person's soul, and he or she is illumined. At that moment, one sees that though one seems to be in the middle of one's journey, one has already arrived at the end, for the life of grace on Earth is the beginning of the life of glory: although one is a traveler in time, one has opened his or her eyes for a moment in eternity.

So both these teachers are reminding us that solitude is possible, that solitude is necessary, that solitude carries us to a deep place where wonderful things happen, including this lightning, this divine lightning, which is another way of talking about the spark of the soul coming alive, isn't it? Kind of a dramatic way of naming the spark of the soul as lightning.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.