

Daily Meditation 10/24/2022

Wisdom from Indigenous Teachings and Tibetan Buddhism

Good morning.

This morning, it is my pleasure and honor to share with you two sources of wisdom: one from an indigenous poet, our friend Rafael Jesus Gonzalez, in a bit of a poem he sent this morning, actually, called "Lord Ganesh under the Moon."

And remember that Ganesh is the elephant god who removes obstacles. Before trucks and cranes, we had elephants. But I love how he talks about the cosmic elephant of the three heads, three gunas-- creation, preservation, destruction. Threads that weave the tapestry of our fates: creation, preservation, destruction.

And to talk about preserving creation, is of course, caring about the good, caring about what's healthy, caring about what's beautiful, not ripping the top off of mountains to get at coal, to make money for a few while poisoning everyone else. And destroying the beauty and the health and the being of the mountain, refusing to preserve the mountain because of our rapacious greed.

And he ends his poem: "And may the moon lend her soft light of compassion so that justice be illumined."

A wonderful, wonderful way in which he marries justice and compassion. Like Meister Eckhart does when he says, "Compassion means justice," which is the biblical teaching.

And then we hear from Lama Tsomo, who is also a psychotherapist, in her fine new book, *Ancient Wisdom for Our Time, Book 3: Deepening Wisdom, Deepening Connection*.

And it's got wonderful pictures, which are beautiful in themselves, and send a message them in themselves. Some of them are of the land where she lives in Montana. Some of them are of Tibetan photos. She's got some photos from the Webb telescope. But it's just a beautiful book just to open up and meditate on the pictures. And there's a great picture of herself, happy, and one of the Dalai Lama as well.

And she wrote a previous book with a wonderful title called, *Why is the Dalai Lama Always Smiling?* That's a wonderful title for a book.

And it's true. I've met the Dalai Lama on numerous occasions, and he was always smiling. Even when he was busy working, shaking hands and interacting with people, he had a wonderful joy about him. And that is always a good sign. As Jesus said, "By their fruits, you will know them." I think he is a joyful human being and that is a fine advertisement for Buddhism, if you're looking for advertisement.

But here are some of the titles of the chapters of Tsomo's book to give you a feel of where she is going and where a reader would be going.

There's a chapter on equanimity, followed by a chapter on boundless loving kindness. Boundless loving kindness. Do we all have that in us? Practicing boundless loving kindness.

In a Chapter about "What about those who have hurt me?" In that chapter is forgiveness. And "Somata, the boundless qualities in the brain." There is a chapter following on boundless compassion. And, interestingly enough, comes a chapter on "Boundless immeasurable, sympathetic joy." And then a chapter on "Near and far enemies."

Equanimity, near and far enemies, loving kindness, near and far enemies, compassion, near and far enemies, sympathetic joy, near and far enemies.

And then the six paramitas: transcendent generosity, transcendent discipline, transcendent forbearance, transcendent joyful effort, transcendent concentration, and transcendent wisdom.

All of this alerts us to, not only the depths of the Buddhist tradition, but how that seeps out to the rest of us who do not necessarily identify as Buddhists. And how it challenges us to find the same dimensions within our own traditions. because invariably they are there.

But we spend so much time talking and arguing about religion and doctrine that we ignore the wells of wisdom in practice and spirituality that are meant to be the essence of religion. Religion is not a thing in itself. It is not for itself. It's meant to be a place and a space where we can encounter our own deepest joy, generosity, compassion, courage. Put that to work in the world, and especially in a time of elections.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.