

Daily Meditation 11-29-22

Heartbreak, Grief Work and Engaged Contemplation, continued

Good morning.

We continue to meditate with Adam Bucko and his book, *Let Your Heartbreak Be Your Guide: Lessons in Engaged Contemplation*.

One thing I like about Adam's work is that he draws on many sources from many traditions. He himself has been nurtured by the Hindu tradition and by his time spent in India; by the Buddhist tradition; and certainly by the biblical tradition, Judaism and Christianity, and many other traditions.

In the chapter on "Going into the Desert of Our Hearts" in his book, *Let Your Heartbreak be Your Guide*, he begins with a quotation from Alice Walker, who says,

Some periods of our growth are so confusing, that we don't even recognize that growth is happening.

So confusion is part of the via negativa, too. It's that experience of not knowing, things being so confused, so out of order, so chaotic, we don't know how it's all going to end. She goes on:

We may feel hostile, or angry, or weepy, and hysterical. Or we may feel depressed.

There's plenty of that going around today: hostility, anger, weeping, and hysteria, and depression.

It would never occur to us, unless we stumbled on a person who explained to us, that we were in fact in the process of change, of actually becoming larger spiritually than we were before.

That's a wonderful observation by Alice Walker, of course, that change is confusing, and it brings up things, but in fact, we're growing. It's like Meister Eckhart says, "The soul grows by subtraction, not by addition."

When loss and subtraction happens to us there is confusion, there is anger, there is grief, there is depression. But it doesn't mean we're not growing. Joanna Macy says that when the heart breaks the whole universe can pour through. So that is a wonderful telling of the story of how we grow in times of depression.

Now, in this short essay on "Going into the Desert of Our Hearts," Adam Bucko draws on the Christian tradition of Christ being the living bread that comes down from heaven. And the Eucharist, is the taking in of that bread. And interestingly enough, he quotes Thich Nhat Hanh, who, of course, is not a Christian, but a Buddhist, whosays this about the Eucharist for people.

In depression, (he says) when we look around, we see many people in whom the Holy Spirit does not appear to dwell. They look dead, as though they were dragging around a corpse, their own body. The practice of the Eucharist is to help resurrect these people, so that they can touch the kingdom of life.

...the kingdom of life. That's a beautiful observation by Thich Nhat Hanh, that the very meaning of the Eucharist for Christians, and he sees this as a Buddhist, is to resurrect people who are walking around like they're dead, or are feeling dead inside.

And why? "So they can touch the kingdom of life." That's a beautiful phrase, "The kingdom of life," in particular.

So this is just an example of some of the wisdom that Adam Bucko has gathered in his book. And it's practical wisdom, it's useful wisdom, and it's very ecumenical wisdom. I really respect that. Adam Bucko is a deep ecumenist, and I think all of us are called to that kind of place today, where we draw on the wisdom deep within our own traditions, but recognize it in others as well. Just like Thich Nhat Hanh did.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.