

Daily Meditation 12/23/2022

Apophatic Divinity: God as Nothingness

Good morning.

Today, on the eve of Christmas Eve, we're pretty much winding up our reflections on the apophatic divinity, that began with speaking about repose and Advent and the Godhead and silence, and now God as nothingness.

Thich Nhat Hanh, speaking from a Buddhist perspective, says,

It is impossible to use our concepts and words to describe God.

...It is impossible to use concepts and words to describe God.

It's very wise not to say anything about God. To me, the best theologian is the one who never speaks about God.

Meister Eckhart says something very parallel:

The most beautiful thing which a person would say about God would be for that person to remain silent from the wisdom of an inner wealth. So be silent, and quit flapping your gums about God.

The Tao te Ching says,

The Tao is seamless, unnameable. It returns to the realm of nothing: form that includes all forms, image without an image, subtle beyond all conception.

See what a universal agreement here there is among mystical traditions of the world. And in the West, we have not been making room for silence. Good heavens you go to most worship services, and so many words, so many words, so many

Of course, Meister Eckhart says,

God is a not-God, a not-mind, a not-person, a not-image. Rather God is a pure clear one who is separate from all twoness.

And he says,

Maintain total silence about that which is the source of all things.

And Rumi from the Sufi tradition of Islam says,

Secretly we spoke, that wise one and me. I said, 'Tell me the secrets of the world.' He said 'Shh. Let silence show you the secrets of the world.'"

Hawaiian elder Nana Veary says she conducts retreats in silence.

Silence means no repetitions, no affirmations, no denials, only a conscious acknowledgement of God's allness. In the silence, one is beyond words and thoughts.

A brain researcher named Andrew Newberg has demonstrated that in deep states of meditation we go beyond thought and drop into what he calls "an experience of boundlessness."

...an experience of boundlessness.

And Estelle Frankl responds to that, she says:

Evidently our brains are hardwired to experience the mystical state of oneness, that we call God and Kabbala referred to as Ayin or Ein Sof, which literally means 'without end.' Ein Sof is a boundless and transcendent aspect of divinity that is beyond all form.

...beyond all form.

When we emerge from such states of grace, our inner being opens more fully; new layers of soul are revealed to us.

Hopefully that is what this Advent season has been: a state of grace for all of us. And with the coming of the Christmas event, new layers of soul are not only revealed to us, but we are more ready for them because we have been emptied. We have learned from Silence.

Bring it on! ...Christmas, that is.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.