

Daily Meditation 01/30/2023

Happy (Belated) Feast Day of Thomas Aquinas!

Good morning.

Today, in honor of Thomas Aquinas's recent feast day, I'm sharing with you a poem that he created, insofar as he wrote all the words in the poem. But I co-created it insofar as I put them together, created a form and a poem in itself.

But again, it's a poem by Thomas Aquinas because each of these sentences in the poem is a sentence from him. And each is a chapter in my book, *The Tao of Thomas Aquinas: Fierce Wisdom for Hard Times*. Fierce Wisdom for Hard Times.

So let's just comment a bit on a few of the lines in the poem.

The first one: "The experience of God must not be restricted to the few or to the old."

Experience of God. That's what spirituality is about. And it's not as esoteric as some people think. You don't have to be a monk in a cloister for 20 years to have an experience of God, experience of ecstasy. This is what Thomas Aquinas is teaching, that ecstasy is an experience of God. And he makes a big point about he's not talking about something like supernatural ecstasy, but everyday ecstasies.

He says, "*Amor facit ecstasim*." Love makes ecstasy.

In that term love, *amor*, is not a spiritualized term at all. *Amor* is love of anything--love of a tree, love of a sunset, love of friendship, a friendship, love in poetry, love in music. You say 'I love music. I love good company.'

Amor facit ecstasim. This is the democratizing of mysticism that is part and parcel of Thomas Aquinas's worldview, that we're all here to experienced love and joy!

In the seventh stanza of the poem: "Joy is a human's noblest act." Joy is a human's noblest act.

So, joy is also available to all. And this is part of love. Thomas Aquinas emphasizes that -- that love, that joy comes from love. And so if we are experiencing the beauties and the goodness of life, of nature, of one another, even oneself, there's joy in that. There's peace in that.

"Joy is a human's noblest act."

And that's related to another teaching of Aquinas when he says that "God is supremely joyful, and therefore supremely conscious."

God is supremely joyful, and therefore supremely conscious. So, consciousness actually increases the sense of joy. That joy brings about consciousness as this wonderful dance between the two. That joy opens us up. And in that process, when you are in an open state of joyfulness, you not only want to celebrate, but you also want to connect, you want to share. And this alerts our minds and hearts to be more aware of the beauty in the world. When you're in a state of joy, you see beauty everywhere.

So these are just a few of Aquinas's teachings.

And his second stanza... "They should be drunk with the beauty of thy house, that is the universe."

And he takes that phrase of "getting drunk" directly from the Song of Songs in the Hebrew Bible, where the lovers talk about being drunk on love. And that's what Aquinas is talking about. We're here to get drunk from the universe itself. The wonder, the beauty, the joy of being here, and the beauty of the universe itself.

We are all here to get drunk.

"They shall get drunk in the plenty of thy house." That's a statement from the psalmist, meaning God's house, the universe.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.