

Daily Meditation 09/20/2021

Father Bede Griffiths on a 'Fundamental Defect' in Western Consciousness

Good morning. Good morning.

In today's meditation, I invoke the insight of Father Bede Griffiths, a wonderful monk who lived for over 50 years in an ashram, a Christian ashram in southern India. And he was very outspoken about what he calls the fundamental defect in western consciousness, and that is the leaving out of the feminine.

And one of his observations develops this idea. He says there is an activity of the mind which is grasping and, quoting from my Christian Mystics book, page 242: "There is an activity of the mind which is grasping, achieving, dominating. But there is also an activity which is receptive, attentive, open to others. This is what we have to learn. The classical expression of this intuitive wisdom is to be found in the Tao Te Ching, which speaks of the spirit of the valley and the mystic female."

So, another word for this reception would be deep listening. And still another word would be contemplation. Lectio divina is meant to be a practice of deep listening, and it is receptive, attentive, and open.

Says Bede, "The limitations of western science and democracy have become more and more evident. The disastrous effects of western industrialism--physical, social, and psychological, polluting the world and threatening to destroy it--are only too evident. But this is not an accident. Due to the misuse of science and technology, it is due to a fundamental defect in western man. The balance can only be restored when a meeting takes place between East and West.

"This meeting must take place at the deepest level of human consciousness. It is an encounter, ultimately, between two fundamental dimensions of human nature: the male and the female. The masculine, rational, active, dominating power of the mind, and the feminine, intuitive, and receptive power."

Now this may help to explain why so many people in the West are drawn to the East today, because there is more of an explicit presence of the feminine energies of contemplation, intuition, and reception. It does not say we don't have it in the West, but it's been in many ways covered over by the race in the modern era to get to knowledge, knowledge, knowledge, knowledge. And just look around. Where are the schools to give you a PhD for intuition, and receptivity, and contemplation, and spirituality?

All, practically all, of our academic machinery and money and talent is invested in a masculine version of knowledge, not in a feminine understanding of wisdom. That's one reason, the main reason, our earth is dying today. Because wisdom is not permeating our professions, whether you're talking science, engineering, law, economics, politics, media, or religion. They are so indebted to patriarchy.

I've been saying for years, "You need wisdom schools and fewer knowledge factories."

One more contribution by Bede: "Intuition," he says, "cannot be produced. It has to be allowed to happen. But this is just what the rational mind cannot endure. It wants to control everything. It's not prepared to be silent, to be still, to allow things to happen.

"It is a state of receptivity that is needed."

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.