

Daily Meditation 11/10/2021

The Deep Ecumenism of Bede Griffiths

Good morning.

We're continuing to meditate on Father Bede Griffiths, a wonderful pioneer and deep humanist.

And in today's meditation, I listed a number of his books, all of which I have here at my home. And I'd like to talk about one, called *The Marriage of East and West*. And he carries a lot of his perspective on how it is that the West has a lot to learn from the East.

Just the table of contents is interesting. And by the way, the Dalai Lama wrote the foreword to this book. The book came out in 1976. So, the Dalai Lama was quite young back then.

The book is divided into four parts. The first part is the discovery of India. The second part is the Vedic revelation. Third part is the Judaic Revelation, the Hebrew Bible. And fourth part is Christian Revelation, the rebirth of the myth.

And many of the chapters are about myth: the Vedic myth, the cosmic vision, then the mythology of the Old Testament, the myth of the new creation, the myth of Paradise Lost, Promised Land, Exodus, Messiah, and his kingdom, the myth of the New Jerusalem, the city of God, all that is under the Judaic revelation.

And, of course, he stresses that, he says, when we speak about God -- these are his opening lines and last section on the Judaic revelation -- when we speak about God, or the absolute or the ultimate reality, we must always remember that we're using terms of analogy.

This is a law of all religious discourse: no words can ever express what God is; what is the nature of the ultimate truth. We can only use images and concepts drawn for human experience, which always fall short of the ultimate truth.

This is a very important consciousness that Father Bede insists on. It is the way of the apophatic divinity, the god of darkness, the God that we cannot hold and grasp and control.

And then in the final part on the Christian Revelation, the rebirth of the myth -- again, the word, "the myth" is important -- but he has three chapters.

One, the way of intuitive wisdom: that's a very important phraseology for him, wisdom and intuition. And we all develop that more in subsequent meditations. But of course, it is about the feminine, isn't it, the divine feminine wisdom and intuition.

Secondly, the myth of Christ and thirdly, the myth of the church.

So again, for Father Bede working in the arena of spirituality and world religions, the word "myth" is a very important word, very important concept. It's not a negative one that we often hear about in the West, as if and when we pit science against religion.

But myth is the great stories that move us. And to throw myth out the window to erase it, is very dangerous, because then you don't have a common language. You don't have a common imagination. Because that is what myth is.

And also, you don't have a common ethics. Remember that Rollo May, the great psychologist, says that myth is the basis of ethics.

So if we've diluted this, or if we've thrown it out the window, it's very likely that we don't have a common ethic anymore. We don't have a shared morality or aspiration.

All this Father Bede speaks to in many of his books. And it's a refreshing voice, because he's speaking to some very solid stories that human beings need to stay alive, east and west, north and south. We depend upon the stories of our ancestors, and they guide us and help us through the most difficult of times...like the kind of times we're living through today.

Thank you, we'll see you tomorrow