

Daily Meditation 11/26/21
A Thank You to Robert Bly (1926-2021)

Good morning.

We've been talking about the sacred masculine and the unsacred masculine.

And the news came recently that Robert Bly died.

Robert Bly was, of course, a champion, an early champion about the men's movement, about men and what it means to be men. And one of the things I learned from him is this wonderful collection of poems that he did, called "News of the Universe: Poems of Twofold Consciousness."

I want to share, if you will, a few of the wonderful poems he chose.

A passage from Novalis:

"The seat of the soul is where the inner world
and the outer world meet,
where they overlap.
It is in every point of the overlap."

The soul is in every point of the overlap. And the title of the book comes from William Blake.

"Now I a fourfold vision see,
and a fourfold vision is given to me.
'Tis fourfold in my supreme delight,
And threefold, in soft Buelah's light
and twofold Always.
May God us keep
From single vision
and Newton's sleep."

So in this book, he takes on a lot of the scientific mentality that the poets of the 19th century responded against.

And here is a wonderful poem in 1800 from Novalis.

"When geometric diagrams and digits
Are no longer the keys to living things,
When people who go about singing or kissing,
Know deeper things than the great scholars,

When society is returned once more
To unimprisoned life, and to the universe
And when light and darkness mate once more
And make something entirely transparent,
And people see in poems and fairy tales
The true history of the world,
Then our entire twisted nature will turn
And run when a signal secret word is spoken."

Reading this in light of the social media explosion, and all the digits in the algorithms we are learning about that are literally attacking us today, this poem seems even more relevant than when I first read it.

A poem called "Oceans" from Juan Ramón Jiménez -- Robert Bly translated this:

"I've a feeling that my boat
has struck down there in the depths,
against a great thing.
And nothing
happens! Nothing... silence...waves..."

--Nothing happens? Or has everything happened,
And are we standing now, quietly in the new life?"

Are we standing now, quietly, in the new life? So there's so much wisdom in these poems, and I owe Robert Bly a great gratitude because he gathered them and wisely chose them. And many of them he translated for us. And this is a tremendous gift he's given us.

Now there's another poem here. that has been very meaningful to me...so many over the years. But I have to find it...So important, this is from Gerard de Nerval in 1854, translated by Robert Bly.

It begins with a line from Pythagoras: "Astonishing, everything is intelligent!"

Then the poem begins:

"Free thinker! Do you think you are the only thinker
On this earth, in which life blazes inside all things?
Your Liberty does what it wishes with the powers it controls,
But when you gather to plan, the universe is not there."

This was so important to me as I was learning about the new cosmology and about the anthropocentrism that is the basis of all our ecological disaster. This would have been in the 1970s, when I was meeting Robert Bly.

"Look carefully in an animal at a spirit alive;
every flower is a soul opening out into nature;

a mystery touching love is asleep inside metal.
"Everything is intelligent!" and everything moves you.
In that blind wall, look out for the eyes that pierce you;
the substance of creation cannot be separated from a word...
Do not force it to labor in some low phrase!
Often a Holy Thing is living hidden in a dark creature;
and like an eye which is born covered by its lids,
a pure spirit is growing strong under the bark of stones!"

Wonderful poems, wonderful wisdom. And I give credit to Robert Bly for gathering this wisdom and translating it.

Thank you, Robert Bly.

Goodbye. See you tomorrow.