

Daily Meditation 12/11/2021

Silence Along the Desert Journey

Good morning.

Part of the *via negativa* is of course, silence. And this essay today, of course, deals with the silence, and calls upon the teachings from the African spiritual tradition that urges us to slow down in times of urgency, in times of chaos. And not to lose our heads therefore, and not to get caught up in too much panic. Panic does not solve anything.

So that's a deep part of the *via negativa*.

And I also cite elder Nana Veary from Hawaii, who, especially in the last years of her life, was running retreats based entirely on silence. She has a lot to say about silence. In addition to what I have in the essay, she also says that the deeper the silence, the more powerful the meditation. When spiritual experience and the silence are to be kept holy and sacred, the greater the power. And there you have the mystic: when we keep secret, things secret and sacred, there we have the mystic, she says.

So I refer you in the notes to Meister Eckhart's teachings on silence, and he has a lot of them. But the whole sermon in my collection of his sermons, *Passion for Creation: The Earth-Honoring Spirituality of Meister Eckhart*, sermon number 27, is called "How All Creatures Experience the Divine Repose"

... how all creatures experience the divine repose. Humans aren't the only ones who appreciate silence and go into it. And he begins his sermon with a quote from the book of Sirach:

"In all things, I saw it rest."... in all things, I saw it rest.

And he says,

"If I were asked to give valid information concerning what the Creator's aims were, when God created all creatures, I would say, Repose. If I were asked for a second time, what the Holy Trinity was seeking in all its deeds, I would say, Repose. If I were asked for a third time, what the soul was seeking in all its motions, I would answer, Repose. If I were asked for the fourth time, what all creatures were seeking in all their natural efforts and motions, I would answer, Repose."

In other words, he is saying that rest, and quiet, and solitude, and silence, are built into all of our aspirations, all of our intentions, all of our attractions. And he of course goes on, and elaborates on this. And he says that our origins are repose that we began in the post in the Godhead, and when we flowed out into this world, into the world of God, or the Creator, and creation, still, our origins were repose.

And this is why we seek repose on a regular basis in our lives as we go along. The busier they get, the noisier they get, the more we need to repose, but he says that God is the ultimate repose. God is the origin, the Godhead of repose, and the return. So he elaborates on all of this in his sermon, and he ends up this way:

"All creatures seek repose from their efforts, whether they know it or not. They prove this to their deeds. A stone will never be deprived of its drive to fall constantly to the earth, so long as it is not right on the earth."

In other words, gravity brings a stone to repose.

"Fire acts in the same way: it strives to rise. And every creature seeks its own place according to its nature."

So fire, he's saying, is at home, is at rest and repose, when it rises: that's what it wants to do.

"In this, all creatures reveal similarity with the divine repose that God has allotted to all creatures."

So we all take divine repose with us wherever we go, it's in all of us. And of course, another word for that is Sabbath. The Sabbath is about repose, about taking rest. And he says in this last sentence of the sermon:

"God help us to seek the divine similarity of divine repose, and to find it in God."

So, he has a lot to say on repose, silence, and, again, not panicking in difficult times, but getting back to that place of origin and repose, and thereby clearing our minds and our imagination so that we can contribute, that we can work out of repose and not out of action/reaction response. Repose will guarantee a deeper response.

And, as Meister Eckhart says, out of that nothingness, God will be born.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.