

Daily Meditation 04/16/2022

Holy Saturday and the Shamanic Descent...

Good morning.

In today's essay we're meditating together on Jesus' descent, that is spoken of after he died, and before the Easter resurrection.

And I refer you to a workshop that I did with Isa Gucciarde, who is a Buddhist teacher, but also a student of shamanism. She's written a fine book on shamanism. And she offers certificates on shamanism at her Buddhist center in Berkeley, California.

So we did this workshop together on shamanism, seeds of shamanism, in Buddhism and in Christianity. And I'd like to just share with you a few of the teachings that went on there. She has an interesting statement: that "shamans are those who listen to the earth."

...Shamans are those who listen to the earth. And this would include plants and animals, crystals and minerals. And I think the drumbeat of the earth and the drumbeat of the universe, and going into altered states. Mircea Eliade says the shaman has techniques to go into altered states of consciousness.

And clearly Jesus listened to the earth. If you check out his parables, they're all about the soil and the trees and the mustard seeds and the animals and the birds and Mother Earth and the creatures that live on Mother Earth, including, of course, human beings.

So the idea that a healing comes from the earth and from below. And the wounded healer, that whole tradition, and the story I tell today about Navajo painter, David Paladin, reminds us that shamanistic practices and visions often come through strong dreams and through illness and calamities and upheavals, deep wounding trauma.

And, of course, Jesus himself -- how traumatic was it when his mentor, when he was a young man, had his head cut off: John the Baptist, by the Empire? I mean, that was not a mild event in Jesus's life! And furthermore, John the Baptist himself, gives lots of evidence of being a shaman, working so close to the Earth, and remember, living in the desert where Jesus joined him.

The desert in Jesus' day included wild lions...wild lions! Jesus came of age, learning to live with wild lions in the desert.

And all these realities, these truths, are frequently covered over by the urban scholars, who live in certain kinds of academic towers, more than Jesus, who lived and listened to the earth. And we see this reflection in many, many of the Creation mystics, as well: that they too carry definite shaman stories with them, and influences.

I have a whole chapter in my most recent book on Hildegard of Bingen, on Hildegard and shamanism and her interest in science, and the earth, and healing from the earth, but also in her interest in things that come from the

earth, the minerals, and the crystals and so forth. She goes on about that, or what's within Mother Earth and examining it, and that too, is often a part of shamanism and shamanic healing.

Now, Thomas Berry, the geologist, had a lot to say about shamanism. One thing he says is that the shaman is more interested in the cosmology, in the big picture, than in individualism.

And this is really reflected in Hildegard, because in her theology of Mary, for example, she doesn't she's not interested in the personality of Mary and so forth. She's interested in what really would be the cosmic Mary, the divine feminine, that is incarnated in Mary as Mary becomes an archetype for the divine feminine. So the theophany of motherhood and of the divine feminine is very strong in Hildegard.

And I alluded to the Aramaic translation of Jesus' Our Father, that if you read his real writings from the original Aramaic, it's far more playful, and earthy, and rich in its mysticism, and cosmic than is the Our Father that we've memorized in English or German or Latin.

Here's just a few examples.

"O Birther, Father, Mother of the cosmos, you create all that moves in light."

So that is the first line we often translate as "Our Father who art in heaven."

And the line "Hallowed be thy name" --

"Focus your light within us, make it useful, as the rays of a beacon show the way."

And "Thy Kingdom come" can be translated this way.

"Create your reign of unity now, through our fiery hearts, and willing hands."

And "Thy will be done on earth as in heaven" --

"that all wills move together in your vortex as stars and planets swirl for the sky."

The heaven and nature form a new creation and so forth: much more earthy, much more cosmic, much more mystical, is the way of the shaman, and the real words of Jesus because he spoke Aramaic, not Greek, not Latin, not English, and not Hebrew, but Aramaic, which is, of course, part of the family of Hebrew.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.