

## Daily Meditation 06-10-22

### Eckhart on the Spark of the Soul, continued

Good morning.

Yesterday we talked about how Eckhart is playing with language like all poets do. But specifically to name this experience of the spark of the soul that we all carry within us. And one of his images is, of course, that this is the Holy Spirit that's always alive in all of us.

And I talked about how he uses paradox, and all, seriously mystical traditions use paradox, and to beware, be very aware of literalism.

Now, in today's meditation, this follows very organically from what we spoke on yesterday, because here he talks about ineffability. And remember that William James, when he talks about mysticism, he offers four marks of mysticism; one of them is ineffability. So our experiences of God are bigger than words. And this is why I often say that the proper response to our mystical experiences is one of two things. First, silence, which is not words, or secondly, art, whether it be theater, or dance, or music, or clay, or painting, or movies, and so forth.

This is where art comes in. Art is the language for responding to mysticism. And notice that what he is saying is so powerful, that he's saying, "God is without a name, and has no name, is ineffable." Those are words from Eckhart. So this is the apophatic divinity, God without a name.

And in another place, he says, God is superessential darkness, who has no name, and will never be given any. But then he says something shocking: "And the soul in its ground is likewise ineffable, just as ineffable as God is."

That means your own personhood, your own selfhood, is also without any, it's a mystery, therefore. And this is one reason why we spend our lifetime birthing ourselves, and standing back perhaps, and learning what it is, we are saying, who it is we are, what we are learning through our actions.

And he says, "he who wants to name the soul such as it is in itself in its simplicity, its clarity, its nakedness, will find no name to fit--"

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This is, among other things, a reminder of how big we are. We are unnameable in our depths, ineffable, like God is. This is another dimension to our divinity, that we don't often talk about or think about. And so he goes to the conclusion that, as he says, "when we speak of divine things, we have to stammer, because we have to express them in words."

So we stutter and we stammer in an effort to name the divine. And in an effort to name our deepest selves.

And then he goes on again to talk about that spark that is the image of God that the mind is. Again, by mind he does not mean a Cartesian, rational, modern version of mind. Mind in the Middle Ages included creativity and imagination, and our entire capacity for the universe, as Aquinas said: every human being is *capax universi*, capable of the universe -- all of our thoughts, all of our dreams, all of this is mind at work.

And so, there is something like a spark of divine nature, a divine light, a ray, an imprinted picture of the divine nature in our souls. And all this is the divine spark.

And I think this can be understood in today's parlance as intuition and the root of creativity, the creative fire that is in all of us. And Eckhart also calls it the ground of freedom: in other words, the ground where our choices come to the rise.

And this is where ethics and morality are so important, because it is about choosing wisely. And it's about the choices we make, and the choices we don't make.

And how do we get there to this divine spark, to this divine nature, that's in all of us? Eckhart says it happens by letting go: empty yourself and learn to let go. "If you want to be the same Christ, and God, empty yourself," he says. This is how you grow. In another place, he says "The soul grows by subtraction, not by addition," and that's why emptying is so important to him. It's also very important, of course, in the Buddhist tradition: emptying meditations.

Then he says, "This spark is so closely related to God, there is a unique and indivisible unity." Notice the unity itself is unique and indivisible. It bears within us the images of all creatures, image without image and image above image. So again, he's naming where the spark is: it's the imagination isn't it? The images and yet beyond the images.

And ultimately, he ends reminding us: "God is the ground of the soul with all the divine, with all divinity." And here in the depths where the spark hangs out, God's ground is my ground, and my ground is God's ground.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.