

Daily Meditation 11/30/2022

Bucko & Fox on Practicing Spiritual Democracy

Good morning.

In the meditation today, we are sharing the teachings from Adam Bucko and myself about spiritual democracy, that spirit of Walt Whitman. But also we find it in the spirit of Howard Thurman, in his powerful statement that is quite well known. He says,

It is my belief that in the presence of God, there is neither male nor female, white nor black, Gentile nor Jew, Protestant nor Catholic, Hindu, Buddhist, nor Muslim, but the human spirit stripped to the literal substance of itself before God.

Powerful, powerful teaching from Howard Thurman not to over-identify ourselves within one particular religious tradition: that God sees us in a more naked way: stripped to the literal substance of ourselves before God.

And this echoes for me a teaching from Lorna Byrne, who is a peasant Irish woman. From the age of two, she had visitations and visits from angels, right up to today in her 60s. And she said to be once,

You know, angels do not care about religion, what religion one is in.

She said,

When I go to mosques, I see angels. And when I go to Jewish temples, I see angels in the synagogues. When I go to synagogues, I see angels, and when I go to churches, I see angels.

And she stressed that while she herself belongs to the Catholic tradition of Christianity, she does not think that that's the bottom line in religion at all.

And that, of course, was Walt Whitman's experience and teaching too. He says -- and this is page 210 of our book *Occupy Spirituality* -- he says,

The true Christian religion consists neither in rites, or Bibles, or sermons, or Sundays, but in noiseless, secret ecstasy and unremitting aspiration, in the Universal Church, in the soul of man invisibly rapt, ever waiting, ever responding to universal truths.

So this naming of noiseless, secret ecstasy, and unremitting aspiration is, of course, an effort to name the inner life, to name spirituality, in favor of just religion.

And I think this is what a lot of people are undergoing today, especially a lot of young people are not being attracted to institutional religion, but nevertheless, are searching for this aspiration and this silent ecstasy that Whitman and other mystics talk about.

And this is why I think the whole work of the mystics today is so important: to call us forward to the essence of religion, which is about gratitude and generosity, about silence, and about undergoing honestly the grief and the loss in life, but also about birthing a new vision, a new era in new Christ, a new Buddha, a new image of God, in history, and in ourselves.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.