

Daily Meditation 01/14/2023

## Authentic Mysticism as an Antidote to Patriarchy

Good morning.

In today's meditation we are calling on the wisdom of Dorothee Soelle. And she identified as a feminist, and as a liberation theologian, and as a teacher of mysticism and the mystics, and she was especially strong on Meister Eckhart and also the Beguine movement, the women's movement of the Middle Ages.

We are blessed that she came to our school to lecture, both in Chicago and in Oakland, California, the Institute of Culture and Creation Spirituality.

Now, she really saw, she was explicit, which is clear in the essay in the meditation for today, about how mysticism is capable of deconstructing the mindset, the consciousness of dualism, of patriarchy, of control, of power for power's sake. I would even say of our reptilian brain, which is invariably about being number one and winning and being over others, not with others.

So, this is what she says: that "authentic mysticism comes closest to overcoming the hierarchical masculine concept of God" and it is about a thirst for real liberation.

This is important, because mysticism has been grossly undertaught in our culture; it has been ridiculed; it has been distorted (Theodore Roszak says that mysticism was considered the worst possible offense against a scientific consciousness).

And yet, Einstein, in fact, talks favorably about mysticism. And many scientists today call themselves mystics.

So we're living in a world where religion seems to have lost touch with mysticism in many respects. And in the so-called secular world, many bright people and seeking people are seeking for that experience of oneing which is Julian of Norwich's name for mysticism - oneing - or the experience of ecstasy, which is Thomas Aquinas' name for our encounters with the divine, and which is Rabbi Heschel's name for the beginning of wisdom, or *durchbruch*, breakthrough, that is Meister Eckhart's naming of the mystical experience. In Buddhism, it is called *satori*.

So, mysticism is a gathering place for those who have experienced the divine, and my whole life's work is to show the democratization of mysticism, that mysticism and mystics are not people sitting up in a tower someplace or doing fantastic ascetic practices or something like that.

I think the word "mystic" can be summarized in one word, "lover" -- it is our capacity for love. William, James, a psychologist, says it is our Yes faculty; he means our Yes to life, and it is a deep Yes, it is our capacity for falling in love with life itself and with all beings that interact with us in life. It is what the Lakota people say when they pray "All Our Relations." It is the taste of the sacred...the taste of the sacred that is made available to us.

And the mature mystic turns to sharing their joy and experience with others and that is the path of the prophet and sacred activist. "The prophet is the mystic in action," says William Hawking.

And this is what we find in so many of these great souls that we've been praying with in our daily meditations. Dorothee Soelle is certainly one of them. And so are we, potentially at least.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.