

Daily Meditation 01/27/2023

More of Teilhard's Non-Dualism

Good morning.

We begin today's meditation with a statement from Thich Nhat Hanh, the wonderful Vietnamese Buddhist monk, saying "the valuable jewels in the Christian tradition will be rediscovered" when we discover "non-duality." And then I go on and talk about Julian of Norwich and Rosemary Ruether and Martin Luther King, and of course Teilhard de Chardin and Father Chenu and his mentor, Thomas Aquinas.

And Teilhard says some powerful things about how he learned. And this is something he did not know at first, because he had been taught in the dualistic fashion that a lot of religion in the West has been teaching for centuries. But he learned that matter and spirit are

...no longer two things, but two states or two aspects of one and the same cosmic stuff. Matter is a matrix of spirit. Spirit is a higher state of matter.

What I'd like to do is just share with you a little more about what Thich Nhat Hanh says, because I really think he has a perspective as a Buddhist upon the West, upon our western teachings, that is very refreshing and assists us to move out of dualism. For example, he says (and I'm citing from my book on Meister Eckhart because one of my chapters is on Eckhart meeting Thich Nhat Hanh)...he says:

You do not have to abandon this world. You do not have to go to heaven, or wait for the future to have refuge. You can take refuge here and now. You only need to dwell deeply in the present moment.

...dwell deeply in the present moment.

So it's about how fully present we are. And therefore, how we can dwell deeply. He says:

The seed of mindfulness is the presence of the Buddha in us, called Buddha nature, the nature of enlightenment, the Holy Spirit --

...now he's switching to our language in the West.

...the Holy Spirit can be described as being always present in our hearts in the form of a seed.... the kingdom of God is in us as a seed, a mustard seed.

So notice, he talks about the Eastern language of the Buddha and enlightenment, the Buddha nature. Then he talks about the Holy Spirit, the kingdom of God. Indeed,

...everything and everyone is dwelling in Nirvana, in the kingdom of God.

So he identifies kingdom of God with Nirvana. I think this is a wonderful way of showing the non-dualism between Buddhism and Christianity, between East and West, that we can understand one another's vocabulary in terms of our own. He says,

Touching the present moment, we realized that the present is made of the past and is creating the future. When we drink a cup of tea very deeply, we touch the whole of time. To meditate, to live a life of prayer, is to live each moment of life deeply.

And of course, when he talks about the Buddha nature, I talk about the Cosmic Christ: the Buddha Nature dwells within us; so does the Cosmic Christ at our deepest level.

And Meister Eckhart absolutely echoes what Thich Nhat Hanh just said. And he says:

I've often said that God is creating the entire universe fully and totally in this present now. Everything God created 6000 years ago [we would say 13.8 billion years ago], and even previous to that, as he made the world, God creates now all at once. Now consider this: God is in everything, but God has nowhere as much as God is in the soul. There, where time never enters, where no image shines in, in the innermost and deepest aspect of the soul, God creates the whole cosmos. Everything in the past and everything in the present, and everything in the future, God creates in the innermost realms of the soul.

That's exactly what Thich Nhat Hanh had said: the future and the past come together in this moment: the future is not here, the past is gone. But in this moment, we live deeply and we can taste the future, as well as the ancestors in the past and the community of saints.

A wonderful way to be alive.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.