

Daily Meditation 03/09/2023

Eckhart, Suzuki, Merton on Truth, Formlessness & Original Mind

Good morning.

Today we continue our meditations with Dr. Suzuki and Thomas Merton and Meister Eckhart on truth. Specifically, using Dr. Suzuki's term, the formless, original mind, this is what we sink into. This is what we encounter, when we go through a deep place: the formless, original mind.

What does that mean to us? When we hear that that phraseology, it's probably quite foreign at first. Then of course, Suzuki says it's the original face - a Zen teaching, direct grasp of one's original face.

And Merton makes a connection with St. Paul, talking about the attainment of a Buddha nature or Buddhahood, which is the original face that Merton compares this to: the Christian expression, "having the mind of Christ." Paul writes about that in Corinthians, and being at one spirit with Christ: "And he who is united with the Lord has one spirit"—all this is treated in 1 Corinthians.

And Meister Eckhart talks about our original mind when he says,

I am unborn, and following the way of my unborn being, I can never die. Following the way of my unborn being, I have always been, I am now, and shall remain eternally. In this breakthrough, I discover that I and God are one.

So there is that return to the beginning, to our pre-existence even, in the Godhead, that we do encounter. This is the original face, the original face that Suzuki is talking about, and that Paul was talking about in his own way.

I tell the story of the dream I had during my operation on my back, when I was walking with Eckhart on the beach...it was a very transcendent dream. But it was formless, he was formless. I knew it was him, but he did not have a face as such; he had just as the capuce, the hat, like this [raising his hood], of a Dominican. And we walked in silence, but it was a very profound encounter with a formless and original mind.

And then I recall that Eckhart says "The truth--" because we're talking about truth these days in our meditations -- "the truth does not come from outside in, but from the inside out, and passes through an inner form."

That is why art as meditation is so valuable, a way to deepen our journey, because in creativity and in art you are giving birth from the inside out. You're not taking in someone else's point of view, you are birthing from the inside out. In that way, you're sharing your encounter with your original face, and you're sharing that with others, like the artist did over my shoulder here.

That's what makes art original, isn't it? That it's unique. We can recognize the story here, Miles Davis, but the picturing of it is unique and special. And that's what all our self-expression is about, because we're all artists.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.