

## Daily Meditation 06-13-23

### Generosity and Nobility: Intrinsic to All, Basic to Worship

Good morning.

We're continuing our meditations on the word and the practice of generosity.

Yesterday we were dealing especially with the word "kinship," and kindness that derives from generosity and genus, being of a kind together.

And today we're dealing with the dimension of nobility that is intrinsic in the concept of generosity.

As I pointed out, the English tradition, the word in English, "generous," had the implications in its archaic use of being high-born, characterized for noble or forbearing spirit. And the mystics, like Meister Eckhart, were busy democratizing nobility.

He did a whole treatise on what he called the aristocrat, in which he says we're all aristocrats, we're all noble. And he gave this as a sermon as well, at the great cathedral in Cologne when it was being built in the 14th century, in the style that they call Gingerbread Gothic.

It still exists in Cologne. But it was half-finished when he was there, and he got up in the pulpit and said, "The only temple that counts is a temple of the human soul."

Now, this did not endear him to the bankers and the bishops, and the hoi polloi of the culture who were so beaming with pride at their achievement. But he was pointing out that humans don't exist for great buildings, the great buildings exist for humans. And that's what he means by the temple of the soul: that we have our work to do, and our beauty and nobility to express.

Of course, art and architecture, such as Gothic cathedrals, can express that. But his whole point in that sermon, and he makes it explicit, is that we are all born as prophets, and we're all born as noble people. Aristocrats are not just a class that humans denominate. Rather, we are, as he says, born out of the deepest, deepest nobility of all, which is that we come from the Godhead.

So this really throws a monkey wrench into those who want to build a society on hierarchical classes, one class having more power than the other. And Eckhart was famous, in fact notorious in his day, for preaching to the poor and the peasants in their own language. That's what the German language was, in his day, it was a series of dialects of the poor and the peasants. And he was really the first great theologian and intellectual to speak in that language and preach to them.

And he's also playing with the words that mean "Eagle." And he said, "we are like the eagle that soars." And of course this is an image in the Scriptures themselves, that the prophets are eagles, because they have the wisdom that the eagle sees, seeing things in perspective, and they fly near to the heavens.

And so they are linking Father Earth and Mother Sky, and the macrocosm of the universe to the microcosm that is the human person.

So all this energy is being shared by Meister Eckhart in his declaration, that we are all noble people. But interestingly, that is another meaning to the word generous in English, in that it includes all of us. We are all capable of generosity; therefore we are all noble.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.