

Meister Eckhart

Born 1260-c , died 1329

Described as a mystic, a prophet, a feminist, a philosopher, a preacher, a theologian, an administrator, a poet, a spiritual genius and a declared heretic!

All reputable scholars agree he was unjustly condemned. His condemnation bears all the earmarks of the church's attempt to silence him because of his prophetic preaching on behalf of the poor people of his society.

His way of spirituality is not that well known in the West.

Hindus and Buddhist say the Eckhart is one of their own.

Psychologists like Jung and marxists like Bloch and Fromm learned from his teachings.

His spiritual teachings center on Creation-Centered Spirituality. This spirituality begins with the human potential to act divinely both by ways of compassion and of beauty-making and sharing. To begin with sin and the idea that all humans are sinful from birth is not Good News.

Creation-Centered Spirituality looks at the wonder of creation, the unimaginable love of God and the divine that is in each one of us. Remember when Meister Eckhart was alive the Roman Catholic Church was the leading western religion. With it came power with the hierarchy and the absoluteness of its teachings, The educated were in the church. The western world was led by the very affluent clergy and land lords. The extremely poor people of the land lived subsistent lives. These people, the surfs, had no control over their lives. What the Church and /or the Land Lords said was law.

Eckhart was highly educated, a professor, a clergyman, yet his profound spirituality did not occur in academia but by being with the people. He said, "The most noble kind of knowledge is learned by living." This was said contrary to the learned men who found comfort and refuge in academia. Eckhart learned to trust life and his own life experiences. He taught other to do the same. He knew that knowledge was important but the way of the spiritual life begins with the heart. He said, "Where should we begin? Begin with the heart. For the spring of life arises from the heart and from there **it runs in a circular manner.**"

For Meister Eckhart to be spiritual is to be awake and alive; the holiness of life itself absolutely fascinated him; creation itself was for him the primary sacrament and for this reason he informs us that the spiritual life begins where life does: from "the spring of life" or the heart.

His four steps:

1. Creation
2. Letting Go and Letting Be
3. Breakthrough and Birth of Self, God and Self as child of God
4. The New Creation: Compassion and Social Justice.

Or summarized:

Via positiva
Via negativa
Via creativa
Via transformativa

These steps are in opposition to the path of Neo-platonism which influence the Western Church. Those steps are; Purgation, Illumination, and Union.

Note that via Positiva is totally missing from the Neo-platonism path.

Read passages from each step.

Note: All quotes come from:

***Meditation with Meister Eckhart. the path is beautiful and pleasant and joyful and familiar.* by Matthew Fox, Bear and Company, Santa Fe, New Mexico
ISBN 0-939680-04-1**

Via Positiva:

**“ Now the moment I flowed out from the Creator all creatures stood up and shouted; ‘Behold, here is God!’
They were correct. For you ask me Who is God? What is God? I reply: *Isness*.
Isness is God.
Where there is *Isness*, there God is. Creation is the giving of *Isness* from God.
And that is why God becomes where any creature expresses God.**

Isness is so noble. No creature is so tiny that it lacks *Isness*. If a caterpillar falls off a tree, it climbs up a wall in order to preserve its *Isness*. So noble is *Isness*.

If you were able to deprive God of *Isness*, a stone would be more noble than God, for a stone has *Isness*. What is God? God is!”

Via Negativa:

“God is a being beyond being and a nothingness beyond being. The most beautiful thing which a person can say about God would be for that person to

remain silent from the wisdom of an inner wealth. So, be silent and quit flapping your gums about God.

God is not found in the soul by adding anything, but be a process of subtraction.

How should you love God? I will tell you. Love God as God is - this means: Love God as God is; a not-God, a not-mind, a not-person, a not-image.

More than this, love God as God is; a pure, clear One who is separate from all two-ness.”

Via Creativa:

“Pay attention now to exactly where this birth takes place: this eternal birth takes place in the soul totally in the manner in which it takes place in eternity, neither more nor less-- and this birth takes place in the being and in the ground and core of the soul.

This birth takes place in darkness. And not only is the Son of the heavenly Creator but you too are born there as a child of the same heavenly Creator and none other. and the Creator extends the same power to you out of the divine maternity bed located in the Godhead to eternally give birth.”

Via Transformativa:

“God has been the common savior to the entire world. And this fact delights me much more than if God had saved only me.

This salvation: When we marvel at the beauty of created things and praise the beautiful providence of their Creator, or when we purchase heavenly goods by our compassion for the works of creation.

By compassion the soul is made blessed.

When Moses descended from the mountain and came announcing a land flowing with milk and honey; that milk and honey was humanity and divinity. Compassion flows when humanity and divinity flow.