

Sensual Wounding

Then I passed by and saw you kicking about in your blood, and as you lay there in your blood I said to you, “Live!” I made you grow like a plant of the field. You grew and developed and entered puberty. Your breasts had formed and your hair had grown, yet you were stark naked. ‘Later I passed by, and when I looked at you and saw that you were old enough for love, I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your naked body. I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign Lord, and you became mine. “‘I bathed you with water and washed the blood from you and put ointments on you. I clothed you with an embroidered dress and put sandals of fine leather on you. I dressed you in fine linen and covered you with costly garments. I adorned you with precious jewels: I put bracelets on your arms and a necklace around your neck, and I put a ring on your nose, earrings on your ears and a beautiful crown on your head. So you were adorned with gold and silver; your clothes were of fine linen and costly fabric and embroidered cloth. Your food was honey, olive oil and the finest flour. You became very beautiful and rose to be a queen. And your fame spread among the nations on account of your beauty, because the splendour I had given you made your beauty perfect, declares the Compassionate One.

Ez 16:614

- The divine tears—divine vulnerability
- Intimacy
- An Incarnational God, God is in our sensuality, image of God-image of self, integrating masculine and feminine
- Wounded desire, sexual wounding,
- Becoming lost in abandonment
- Embracing and holding memories
- Power: abuse – oppression, victim language
- Spiritual violence, soul rape



Christ says to Mechthild of Hackeborn,

“When you are sick, I embrace you with my left arm, and when you are well with my right. But you should know when my left arm embraces you, my heart is joined to you more closely.”

Mechthild of Hackeborn, *The Book of Special Grace*, 2.32

My Suffering is God



The seventh point about the saying that God is with us in suffering and suffers with us is, we should be profoundly comforted by the fact of God's being purely One without any adventitious quantity of difference even in thought, so that everything that is in Him is God Himself. And since this is true, I say, whatever a good person suffers for God's sake, s/he suffers in God, and God is with her/him in his suffering. If my suffering is in God and God suffers with me, how then can my suffering be painful when suffering loses its pain, and my pain is in God and my pain is God? In truth, as God is truth and wherever I find truth I find my God, the truth - so likewise, neither more nor less, whenever I find pure suffering in God and for God, there I find God, my suffering. Whoever cannot understand this should blame his own blindness, not me or God's truth and loving-kindness.

The Complete Mystical Works of Meister Eckhart, Maurice O'C. Walshe, ed. Revised by Bernard McGinn. A Herder and Herder, The Crossroad Publishing Company: New York, 2009, 549.

"My suffering is in God, and my suffering is God." God is not only our fellow sufferer but our very suffering somehow becomes divine. This paradox places Eckhart's art of suffering and consolation squarely within his metaphysics and mystical theology; for Eckhart frames this declaration in terms of divine unity. He refers to "God's attribute, that He is the purely one, without any accidental admixture of distinction, even in thought; that everything that is in Him is God Himself." Therefore, since I suffer "in" God, Eckhart says, "my suffering is God. Truly, as God is Truth and as I find the Truth, I find my God, the Truth, there; and too, neither more nor less, as I find pure suffering for the love of God and in God, I find God my suffering". Divine unity is among Eckhart's most pervasive themes. In the tradition of Neoplatonism he conceives divine unity as prior to all distinction and opposition, and as enfolding all multiplicity in its simplicity. In virtue of this ontological priority "God is one in Himself and separated from everything else," radically other than finite, distinct beings; yet this very difference simultaneously tenders the one God "indistinct" from all things, because all opposites so coincide in divine unity that "everything that is in God is God Himself." The Book brings this unity metaphysics to bear upon the pastoral work of consolation. Eckhart claims that the sons and daughters of God are strangers to goodness, truth, and everything that tolerates any distinction, be it in a thought or a name, in a notion or just a shadow of a distinction. They are intimates of the One that is bare of every kind of multiplicity and distinction. In the One, "God-Father-Son-and-Holy-Spirit" are stripped of every distinction and property, and are one. And the One makes us blessed. The closer we are to the One, the more truly are we God's child and Daughter or Son, and also the more truly does God the Holy Spirit flow from us.

In this drive toward the radical unity prior to the Trinity itself, all distinctions are overcome. Here suffering and consolation, pain and joy coincide; for since God suffers so willingly with us and for our sake, if we suffer only for the love of God, God suffers without suffering (*lidet sunder liden*). Suffering is for God so joyful that it is for God not suffering. And therefore, if we thought rightly, suffering would not be suffering for us; it would be our joy and our consolation. Divine unity thus underlies the psychological coincidence of suffering and comfort. Because delight and suffering are one in God, we too "suffer without suffering" as we penetrate to divine unity.

Donald F Dulclow, "'My Suffering is God': Meister Eckhart's Book of Divine Consolation," *Theological Studies* 44 (1983), 576-577.

Passivities of Diminishment: Teilhard de Chardin



...If I seal up the entry into my heart

I must dwell in darkness —

and not only I, my individual soul,

but the whole universe...

After having perceived you as he who is a greater myself grant, when my hour comes, that I may recognise you under the species of each alien or hostile force that seems bent upon destroying or uprooting me. When the signs of age begin to mark my body (and still more when they touch my mind); when the ill that is to diminish me or carry me off strikes from without or is born within me; when the painful moment comes in which I suddenly awaken to the fact that I am ill or growing old; and above all at that last moment when I feel I am losing hold of myself and am absolutely passive within the hands of the great unknown forces that have formed me; in all those dark moments, God, grant that I may understand that it is you {provided only my faith is strong enough) who are painfully parting the fibres of my being in order to penetrate to the very marrow of my substance and bear me away within yourself.

The more deeply and incurably the evil is encrusted in my flesh, the more it will be you that I am harbouring— you as a loving, active principle of purification and detachment. The more the future opens before me like some dizzy abyss or dark tunnel, the more confident I may be — if I venture forward on the strength of your word — of losing myself and surrendering myself in you, of being assimilated by your body, Jesus.

You are the irresistible and vivifying force, Lord, and because yours is the energy, because, of the two of us, you are infinitely the stronger, it is on you that falls the part of consuming me in the union that should weld us together. Vouchsafe, therefore, something more precious still than the grace for which all the faithful pray. It is not enough that I should die while communicating. Teach me to treat my death as an act of communion.

Divine Milieu, 89-90

It was a joy to me, Lord, in the midst of my struggles, to feel that in growing to my own fulfillment I was increasing your hold on me; it was a joy to me, beneath the inward burgeoning of life and amidst the unfolding of events that favored me, to surrender myself to your providence. And now that I have discovered the joy of turning every increase into a way of making— or allowing — your presence to grow within me, I beg of you: bring me to a serene acceptance of that final phase of communion with you in which I shall attain to possession of you by diminishing within you. Now that I have learnt to see you as he who is "more me than myself," grant that when my hour has come I may recognize you under the appearances of every alien or hostile power that seems bent on destroying or dispossessing me. When the erosions of age begin to leave their mark on my body, and still more on my mind; when the ills that must diminish my life or put an end to it strike me down from without or grow up from within me; when I reach that painful moment at which I suddenly realize that I am a sick man or that I am growing old; above all at that final moment when I feel I am losing hold on myself and becoming wholly passive in the hands of those great unknown forces which first formed me: at all these somber moments grant me, Lord, to understand that it is you (provided my faith is strong enough) who are painfully separating the fibres of my being so as to penetrate to the very marrow of my substance and draw me into yourself. The more deeply and incurably my ills become engrained in my flesh, the more it may be you yourself that I am harboring as a loving, active principle of purification and of liberation from possessiveness. The more the future lies ahead of me like a dark tunnel or a dizzy abyss, the more confident I can be — if I go forward boldly, relying on your word — of being lost, of being engulfed, in you, Lord, of being absorbed into your Body, Lord Christ, you who are divine energy and living, irresistible might: since of the two of us it is you who are infinitely the stronger, it is you who must set me ablaze and transmute me into fire that we may be welded together and made one. Grant me, then, something even more precious than that grace for which all your faithful followers pray: to receive communion as I die is not sufficient: teach me to make a communion of death itself.