

## Daily Meditations 07-14-22

### Ecstasy, Drunkenness on the Universe, Idolatry on Earth

Good morning.

We are continuing to celebrate the news of the Webb Telescope's first pictures, beaming back to us events from 13 billion years ago, and more, regarding the first galaxies, the first stars, and much more.

Scientists are saying that this event could revolutionize human understanding of the universe. And again, that a whole new chapter is opening up about the universe. As one scientist put it, a new era of astronomy has begun.

Now, when you turn to the mystics, they clearly have something to contribute here, very much. So. Rabbi Heschel says,

*Awe enables us to perceive in the world intimations of the Divine --*

*...intimations of the divine...*

*...in the world. What we cannot comprehend by analysis, we become aware of in awe.*

So, the new creation story is awesome. It moves everyone, when you hear about it, about how 13.8 billion years made our existence possible, made this earth possible as we know it with all its wonderful creatures. And it puts our entire story into obviously, a much bigger context, a context of 2 trillion galaxies, hundreds of billions of stars in each, and of 13.8 billion years.

Now, the same tradition that Heschel represents also says that awe is the beginning of wisdom. So an event like this triggers awe and triggers intimations of the divine in nature, in the world, and in history, nature's history; in creation, therefore. It brings awe alive and it brings a sense of the sacred alive.

As Thomas Berry once said, "When we lose a sense of the sacred, we recover it by returning to the universe."

So the universe is speaking to us in a new language. And that new language is the Webb telescope, with the amazing pictures and stories that will follow from it, for scientists can analyze these pictures, and learn a lot more from the universe than we knew before.

And so we can expect maybe an avalanche of awe...a Niagara.

And we need this kind of awakening at this time, obviously; our species is drooping, it's tired. It's morally compromised, is not in good shape. And of course, it is facing its own extinction brought on around by its own excess through climate change: what we're doing to bring that about and what we're not doing to turn it around, to slow it down.

So if awe is the beginning of wisdom, and this new influx of beauty and information is coming to us from the journey of the universe right up to today, well surely there is some hope here, that the intimations of the Divine that accompany awe and the wisdom that accompanies awe might actually seep through and actually get through some of our defenses in denying war making and forgetting that dominate so much of human consciousness today.

So I think that this is a moment where hopefully, humans will be shaken up anew, not only by the dangers that we face, but by the beauty that has brought us this far.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.