

Daily Meditation 04/29/23

Holiness and Moving beyond Evil, continued

Good morning.

We continue, today, our meditations on holiness: "Holiness and Moving beyond Evil." Citing Rabbi Heschel: "The Holy is an attempt to raise humanity to a higher level of existence."

And I point out that one of the expressions for the higher level of existence is joy. And we listen to some Hindu scriptures in the readings this morning and some Buddhist teaching and even practices from Thich Nhat Hanh.

But let me share with you some teachings from Judaism--from the Kabbalah, the medieval, mystical work:

When you eat and drink, you experience enjoyment and pleasure from the food and drink. Arouse yourself every moment to ask in wonder: What is this enjoyment and pleasure? What is it that I am tasting? Answer yourself: This is nothing but the holy sparks from the sublime holy worlds that are within the food and drink.

Now that is very much buttressed by today's science. The food we eat is the sun, really. It's the process of photosynthesis that makes plants happen. And even the animals who eat the plants, including ourselves. So again, this is where science and religion coming together make a stronger appeal.

The issue at hand: There's nothing but the Holy sparks from the sublime holy worlds that are within the food, the drink.

Rabbi Heschel says, "Joy is a way to God. And all joy comes from God." Sounds like a translation from the Hindu scriptures that we read.

He goes on:

The experience of bliss and doing the good is the greatest moment that mortals know. The discipline, sacrifice, self-denial or even suffering, which often are involved in doing the good do not vitiate the joy. They are its ingredients.

So notice, there really isn't dualism between the joy and the suffering. That, as he says, They do not vitiate the joy; they are its ingredients. It's a part of the joy to gather in the sweat and tears and suffering as that part of the gift that we're giving.

And he says that the prophets were joyful people.

"Prophets face God and to sense the living God is to sense infinite goodness, infinite wisdom, infinite beauty. Such a sensation," says Heschel, "is a sensation of joy."

So, the goodness, the wisdom, the beauty that is integral to the struggle and the vision and the hope in prophetic consciousness is itself a sensation of joy.

Zohar, again a mystical Jewish work of the Middle Ages:

Your ears should be tuned to hear the good. Your mouth should produce nothing but good. Speak positively always with benevolent words. Your face should always be shining. Welcome each person with a friendly countenance.

The psalmist saying: "Shout for Joy to honor God, our strength. Shout to acclaim the God of Jacob. Start the music, sound the drum, the melodious harp. Sound the new moon trumpet!"

At the Full Moon on our feast day.

May every day be a feast day.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.