

# Daily Meditation 04-22-24

## Earth Day, Passover & the Cost of Climate Change

Good morning.

In today's meditation and in Saturday's, we have been celebrating Passover and Earth Day, because they happen to occur on the same date: today, Monday. So blessed Passover and Earth Day, to everybody.

I showed a study that has just come out, on the situation of Mother Earth today. This particular study addresses it from the point of view of finances. And the scientist in charge, Leonie Wenz, says that what clearly is demonstrated is that protecting our climate is much cheaper than not doing so. Because, as pointed out, \$38 trillion a year will be lost in the global economy by the year 2050, if we don't shift gears very rapidly.

So I brought out some of the facts and figures in the meditation, but there are more. And we're told, for example, that strong income reductions are projected for North America and for Europe, as well as South Asia and Africa. Agricultural yields, labor productivity, and infrastructure all affected. The wealthiest countries in the Global North, the U.S. and German economies, shall shrink 11% by mid-century. In France, it will shrink by 13%, and in the U.K. by 7%. But in the southern countries, for example in Iraq, income will drop by 30%, Botswana 25%, and Brazil 21%.

So what the studies indicate, is the inequity of climate impacts. There's damage everywhere but especially in the South. Because of course, it is warmer down there to start with. Then of course, the South is far less responsible for the climate change, than is the North. One commentator says the inequality dimension was really shocking.

*It is on us to decide: Structural change toward a renewable energy system is needed for our security and will save us money. Staying on the path we're currently on, will lead to catastrophic consequences. The temperature of the planet can only be stabilized if we stop burning oil, gas and coal.*

Bill McKibben, a very prophetic figure in the ecology movement, says that "the findings should persuade major companies to embrace climate action, for self-interested reasons. Corporate emissions come from how company money is invested in banks, and in the continued exploitation of fossil fuel resources." He says if Apple and Amazon and Microsoft want to make money at the end of the century, people are going to have 60% less money to spend on their goods, unless they put some muscle into making a change that has to be made. He says "they should be putting pressure on their banks to stop making the problem worse," and to demand climate action from Congress as well.

He says "these people are supposed to care about money. And this would help them if they actually did care. Stop putting out ads about how green your products are, and start making the system that you dominate actually work." Work for the Earth, work for all people on the Earth.

Now I want to share a few selections from the great prophet, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. I was struck recently when I discovered this teaching from Bob Schwartz about Heschel. This is a letter that Heschel wrote President Kennedy, in June of 1963. (Kennedy, of course, was murdered in November of 1963.)

He says he's looking forward to the privilege of meeting him at the White House tomorrow. Then he says, "the likelihood exists that Negro problems will be like the weather. Everybody talks about it, but nobody does anything about it. Please demand religious leaders' personal involvement, not just solemn declarations." This is Heschel writing President Kennedy about civil rights.

*We forfeit the right to worship God, as long as we continue to humiliate Negroes. Church and synagogues have failed. They must repent. Ask of religious leaders to call for national repentance and personal sacrifice; that religious leaders donate one month's salary toward a fund for Negro housing and education. I propose to you, Mr. President: Declare a state of moral emergency. A Marshall Plan for aid to Negroes is becoming a necessity. The hour calls for high moral grandeur and spiritual audacity.*

I think that it's very likely that some of President Johnson's efforts to beat poverty and invest in that, which did have some substantive results, grows from that same vision that Heschel was offering. Heschel also wrote in a book of his: "Never once in my life, did I ask God for success, for wisdom, for power, or fame. I asked God for Wonder. And he gave it to me."

Wonder. Awe. The Via Positiva. A gift far greater than fame, or power, or things. If we all were filled with wonder, the appropriate wonder at our existence at this Universe where lives our Mother Earth, with her fecundity and imagination and beauty, all the animals and beings that we live with -- we would not have the Earth crisis that we're involved in today. If we all tasted that wonder, and spent time with it, and with a sense of reverence, that is born of wonder and awe and the sense of gratitude.

This is a spiritual foundation for the movement, the equal balance and sustainability, that is calling us, in this generation. Calling all of us: all ages, races, all ethnic groups, all parts of the world, all countries, all religions, and those with no religion -- all human beings called to contribute to saving Mother Earth as we know her, on this day, Earth Day 2024, and Passover, a sign and symbol and memory of redemption and of liberation. Today, liberation for all beings.

Thank you. We'll see you next week.