

Daily Meditation 2-23-26

Gifts From Today's Science that can Grow the Soul by Awakening Awe

Good morning.

It is our privilege in today's daily meditation, and tomorrow's also, to travel with Joel Primak and Nancy Abrams with their book, *View from the Center of the Universe*.

I think it's a wonderful book, a very important book about the new cosmology, the new science, our place in the universe, our place in our world. But for this video today, I would like to share with you their second book, which they wrote together, called *The New Universe and the Human Future: How a Shared Cosmology Could Launch a Global Society*. It's a very solid book, and I think of it in terms of human behavior. It's kind of a translation of cosmology into the choices we make, the values we make, and how we make them. It's a wonderful way, I think, of bringing together cosmology and ethics. What are the implications for our survival from the new science and the new cosmology?

So let me begin by sharing with you, a few points they make in the introduction, which is something of a summary of the book. They say,

There's a gaping hole in modern thinking that may never have existed in human society before. The hole is this: We have no meaningful sense of how we and our fellow humans fit into the big picture. Are we the handiwork of a loving God who planned the universe? Are we insignificant motes marooned on a lonely rock in endless space? In every culture known to anthropology, people could have answered questions like these with confidence, even though their answers would probably seem quaint or absurd to us now. They knew what the cosmos was like, because they lived in a world where everyone around them shared it. We don't.

So, a very important setting up of the problem, that we have split our cosmologies, and of course, we're getting closer together as human beings. And our creation stories are so diverse, if present at all. So much of consumer capitalism isn't interested in the least, in how the universe got here, or what "here" is, where "here" is. And this seems to dictate most of our education. So we're left quite ignorant of our relationship to the whole. "We have no big picture," they say. "Without a big picture, we are very small people." Without a big picture, we are very small people.

Many religious believers are convinced that the Earth was created as is, a few thousand years ago, while many who respect science believe the Earth is just an average planet and a random star in the universe, where no place is special. Neither is right. Neither is right. Both groups are operating within mental pictures of the universe that we now know scientifically are wrong. Furthermore, there's a wrong connection between our lack of a shared cosmology and our increasing global problems. How are we going to solve these global problems? Getting from here to there is what this book is about.

So it's a very rich introduction, and there's a lot more to it, but I think I'll end there for now. And then I'm going to go to the back of the book, where there are 41 questions asked, that they feel a lot of people are asking today about the new universe story.

Here are a few. Number 41 in fact, this is the last one. "What role does progressive, enlightened religion have in your idea of a cosmic society? Do you value religion at a'l?" Now they are placing this question to themselves.

We value it very highly. Some of the greatest and most important discoveries made about how human beings can relate to each other, how we can love each other, how we can bond, how we can build communities and civilizations, how we can live lives with principle above ego, and how we can feel ourselves connected to the larger, invisible universe, however we may conceive of that universe. All of these things were discovered by religions. In other words, it's religion's job, when it's doing its job well, to assist us in creating a picture of the whole. And of course, it's going to evolve as science and civilizations discover more about the whole.

And of course, obviously, today, we're in an explosion, absolute explosion, of new awareness of our place in the universe and what the universe is. And yet, we know very little about the universe, but we know a lot more than we knew previously. We know it is 13.8, billion years old, and as of just a year or two ago, we know it's 2 trillion galaxies, each with hundreds of billions of stars. So that's what makes this book so pertinent. You know, what are the implications of this for our religions, for our morality, for our ethics?

And they go on and say, *But in every religion, there are also mistakes, which have developed over time as different people's experiences, beliefs and opinions got embodied in the history of the religion. Some of these mistakes are very serious indeed, and potentially fatal. We need to lead to a more broadened and purified religion, of which we hope we can be purified of mistakes, of the parts that don't serve us as human beings.*

Here's an example. The idea that the cosmic society can be an ark is very important. That's a metaphor: the Ark. It doesn't mean that we believe Noah saved two of every

animal or seven of the green ones, if you read other parts of Genesis. Doesn't mean that at all. *We don't need to take these stories literally. But we need to look for the meaning of the stories that speak across the ages, and ask each other, what can we learn from this? Because the fact is, religious imagery has more resonance than anything else. Religious imagery, metaphors and the stories, the myths by which we live, by which communities are kept together, you can't invent such a potent language. Our language has to rise from human experience. If we don't use religious imagery, then our pedestrian descriptions of the universe are probably going to be as successful as Esperanto. No one can invent a whole new series of images to connect us to the universe, because we don't feel anything. We won't feel anything. We need to build on the best of our cultures. If religions hold tightly to literal understandings of scriptures, they cannot serve the cause of world peace, or the spiritual needs of an emerging global civilization. But if enlightened religions are willing and able to expand to encompass new knowledge, then there is a tremendous role for them, and they can be an irrepressible part of the long-term solution.*

And of course, one of the points that I would emphasize, and it is a point that Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry very much emphasized in their work together on the new universe story, is the role of ritual. That we can bring this story into worship, into ritual. That's why we call our our mass, the Cosmic Mass. It's meant to bring alive, our place in the universe. And of course, what's the real key to us in the universe? Our bodies. Our bodies. 60% of your body is hydrogen and helium, which were cooked in the original fireball 13 billion years ago. So it is our bodies that have been carrying the history of the universe forever. Therefore we should invite our bodies to worship, to prayer in all seven chakras.

And this is where the indigenous people know this: They pray by dancing. And dance connects us to the Earth, the first chakra. And it's about vibration, so it also connects us to the universe, because every atom in the universe is dancing.

So that's just one example, of how we can and need to revitalize religion by incorporating some of the insights of contemporary science, along with some of the insights of our ancestors, who were not stupid, who had a lot of intuition and ran on it, about how we relate to the universe as a whole. And it is by bringing our bodies "to church," if you will, or to temple or to mosque — that, and by connecting us to nature itself. Just today, I heard an African philosopher and musician from Ghana speak, and he said that what we have forgotten is that the first church, first temple, first mosque, is nature itself. We have to get back to that, because he says,

I am witnessing in Africa the destruction, the sacredness of the streams and the trees, which had their own names. We give them names, we've personalized them. And I've seen

that destroyed overnight by a rapacious, greedy system that looks at them and sees only how much money and cash you can get from them and not how they are integral to our spiritual lives.

He was speaking pure creation spirituality, from Mother Africa.

Thank you. We'll see you next week.