Daily Meditation 11-23-2026
Redeeming Eros

Good morning.

In today's meditation, we're talking about Eros, and I cite the Book of Ecclesiasticus, part of the wisdom literature of the Bible, the Hebrew Bible. And in it says, "This is wisdom to love life." So, this can be translated, I think, as eros. Eros is a love, a passion of love of life in all its dimensions.

So, let me share with you a few more insights from the book of Ecclesiasticus about loving life. In chapter six, it's talking about wisdom, and it says,

Go, court her with all your soul, with all your might. Keep her, keep in her ways. Go after her and seek her. She will reveal herself to you. Once you hold her, do not let her go. For in the end, you will find rest in her, and she will take the form of joy for you.

Notice that wisdom is of course feminine: Hochmah in Hebrew, as she is in Greek as well, Sophia. And around the world, Quan Yin, for example, who is over my shoulder, not visible in this in this picture. Quan Yin from the East is also a feminine.

If you love listening, you will learn. If you lend an ear, wisdom will be yours. Attend the gathering of elders. If there is a wise person there, attach yourself to that person.

In chapter 24, there is a very profound discourse on wisdom:

Wisdom speaks her own praises in the midst of her people. She glories in herself. She opens her mouth in the assembly of the Most High. She glories in herself in the presence of the mighty one. I came forth from the mouth of the Most High, she says, and I covered the earth like mist.

Notice the sense of cosmos of the whole.

I had my tent in the heights, my throne in a pillar of cloud. Alone, I encircled the vault of the sky. I walked on the bottom of the deeps.

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Again, all these images of cosmology and wisdom. Wisdom is interested in the whole, in cosmology.

Over the waves of the sea and over the whole earth and over every people and nation, I have held sway. Among all these, I search for rest, and look to see in whose territory I might pitch camp.

That idea that wisdom must pitch her camp in a particular place, is brought up in John I, where we're told that the Word pitched its tent where it did.

From eternity, in the beginning He created me, and for eternity I shall remain. I've spread my branches like a terebinth, and my branches are glorious and graceful. I'm like a vine, putting out graceful roots, shoots. My blossoms bear the fruit of glory and wealth. Approach me, you who desire me, and take your fill of my fruits.

Notice this is very erotic. It sounds like the Song of Songs.

For memories of me are sweeter than honey. Inheriting me is sweeter than the honeycomb. They who eat me will hunger for more. They who drink me will thirst for more. Whoever listens to me will never have to blush. Whoever acts as I dictate will never sin.

And the poem, this beautiful poem on wisdom, ends by saying,

I shall make discipline shine out. I shall send this light far and wide. I shall pour out teaching like prophecy. So the connection between wisdom and prophecy is reinforced here again, *as a legacy to all future generations. Observe that I have not told for myself alone, but for all who are seeking wisdom.*

It's an invitation to be a wisdom seeker. So there's great beauty and great wisdom in these teachings.

And now I want to turn to the topic of acedia, which I bring up in this meditation also. I propose that Eros is almost the opposite of acedia, and acedia is often called sadness, deep sadness. Sadness is Aquinas' "being cut off from the divine," and that is why it can be a birthplace of despair and of depression.

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And one resolution, one medicine for acedia is this: Aquinas says "zeal comes." Zeal is the opposite of acedia. If acedia is a lack of energy to begin new things, then its opposite would be zeal. Zeal is about energy, isn't it?

And Aquinas says "zeal comes from an intense experience of the beauty of things." Intense experience of the beauty of things.

And right there too, you can see what the Book of Ecclesiasticus has just talked about, that you get this perspective on the cosmos, the beauty of the cosmos, and we're we're immersed in a whole new moment, of taking in the beauty of this vast cosmos, thanks to technology and science for just pouring it our way on a regular basis.

So, looking for the beauty of things, one way you might turn that into a practice is, as Thich Nhat Hanh suggests, breathe in gratitude and breathe out a smile. Take gratitude in, and give birth to a smile.

The whole notion of gratitude is an acknowledgement of the beauty of the world, beauty of the 13.8 billion years that have brought us here, the beauty of these galaxies that may number 2 trillion, each with hundreds of billions of stars. All that is something we can take in, and then in another breath, let out as a smile, as an antidote to sadness, to be open to the the big picture of our lives.

Of course, there's plenty of negativity. There's plenty of pain and brokenness along the way. But that is not the last word.

And acedia therefore is, as Aquinas says, is kind of a "shrinking of the soul," shrinking of the mind, not from any spiritual good, but from the goodness of God, the goodness of the world.

Again, go back to Genesis 1 that the universe is good, and altogether, even with humans here, it is very good. That's what original blessing means. That's what the term original goodness means, which is a term that Aquinas uses on several occasions. We are to fill ourselves up again with that beauty, with that goodness, in the midst of darkness, in the midst of sadness.

And so this is where the first chakra is so important, because it grounds us. It connects us to the universe because it is about vibration, and vibrating -- all the atoms of the universe are vibrating.

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So it connects us to the whole that way, and not just in our heads, but through dance, through music, through poetry, through beat, through the drum. All that the Native American practice of the drum is the heartbeat of the universe that we are getting in tune with, we are tuning ourselves to.

So all these are practices of moving beyond the shrinking of the mind, sluggishness, rancor, pusillanimity, despair, ignorance. All these are called “daughters of acedia.” This is what acedia can do to us.

But this is where Eros comes in: That we fill up with the beauty and the goodness of life, and of the universe. Connect to that at the deepest level, at the very first chakra. And we're off and running with gratitude.

Thank you. We'll see you next week.

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