

Daily Meditation 09/02/2021
Acedia, Energy Loss, and Zealotry

Good morning.

We continue to meditate on acedia, the first of the capital sins, that links to the first chakra, because the first chakra is what grounds us. And this first chakra is about listening to the vibrations of the universe, the cosmic symphony that Hildegard talks about, the music that all beings are making, because all beings are giving off vibrations, and music is vibrations.

So that's a healthy first chakra. So it is about about the Whole. Therefore it's about cosmos, and falling in love with the universe, and the stories that we get of the universe coming to be. These stories that we now have from science, which fill us with awe and wonder, and hopefully the reverence of gratitude that follows from that.

But also the ancient stories of how we came here: to cite one example, Genesis 1, which is this entire cosmology in that first chapter of the Hebrew Bible and it ends with the story that God looked out and saw that all of creation is good. And that word "good" can also be translated as all of creation is beautiful.

And from that beauty and goodness, God took a day off, the sabbatical, from which you get the word Sabbath. But again, it was triggered by the wonder and the awe of what had been created and is still being created every day.

So the first chakra taps into vibration when it's healthy and well. And when it's not, it closes in on itself; it does not listen to the bigger world. And that is when not only acedia happens - a loss of energy - but also arrogance happens.

Traditionally we've heard the word pride as being one of the capital sins, but I reject that: pride is a virtue. It's a parent's job to to teach pride to their children of a healthy kind. It's the school's job to do the same, of a healthy kind of pride.

But arrogance is an affront to the first chakra, because it narrows our world. So white supremacy is an ultimate in arrogance: it says that only whites have power or rights and so forth. So all forms of racism and ethnicism are a part of the sins, if you will, against the first chakra: against the power to hear and take in all the wonders and beauty and sounds of the universe.

Now another dimension of that is zealotry: if acedia is lack of energy, zealotry is too much energy directed to our causes of narcissism, our causes of tribalism. And so a lot of whipped-up nationalism and ethnonationalism, or white supremacy too, of course, you can whip that up into mobs of anger. And that is very much an affront to a healthy first chakra, because it's an affront to everyone who is not of your particular tribe.

And patriarchy is this way too. It is an affront to the rights and dignity of women and for women to be heard. So all our isms, racism and so much else, are traceable to a misuse of the first chakra.

And oh, zeal can be a good zeal: Aquinas says zeal is a medicine to acedia, because acedia is lacking energy. And he says zeal comes from an intense experience of the beauty of things, so healthy zeal is that which gets us up in the morning to persevere in our good work and in building community and building healthy families and healthy education and all the rest, a healthy culture.

All that comes from a healthy zeal. But there's healthy zeal and then there's zealotry, which is very scary, because in the context of zealotry people put aside their intelligence, their left brains, their powers of judgment and discernment, and just get on board with a movement that is on fire with zealotry.

There's a lot of zealotry going around in the world these days so again we have to raise our consciousness, become more and more aware of these energies. They're around us and come through us or come at us.

It's important that we begin to develop a language whereby we can see where zeal becomes zealotry and where acedia becomes a drain for that powerful energy and passion that is a response to beauty in our shared lives on this endangered planet.

Thank you; we'll see you tomorrow