

Daily Meditation 01/22/22

Sky & Earth, the Clash of Awe and Awful

Good morning.

We've been meditating lately on the experience of Father Sky, the Webb Telescope, the opening up of Awe, and what the implications are for healing the human soul, for healing our culture, for healing the rupture between joy and our souls.

And in today's meditation, we were discussing the clash of the Awe, and the awful, the Awe and the awful. There's plenty of awful being reported in the media these days.

I write about that; I offer a list of all those things. But again, I returned to the topic of Awe. Maybe there's so much awful, because we're so out of touch with Awe and everything that Rabbi Heschel and Meister Eckhart agree on there.

What I'd like to do with you, is to share with you this wonderful poem from Mary Oliver, in her last book, *Devotions*, which is really a collection of her poetry that she herself put together, near the end of her life. And Mary Oliver calls herself a praise poet...praise poet. That's the work of the via positiva, of the mystics. And she is surely that, 90% of the time she is that. But she also does talk about suffering, and the via negativa, and the via transformativa, injustice, and the need for social transformation.

And I want to share with you this one poem she wrote called "Of the Empire," which is very much, I think, if you will, telling the story that we're living through today, and that I touch on in today's meditation on the awful. Here's what she says, of the empire:

*We will be known as a culture that feared death
and adored power --*

Just yesterday, we were dealing with power, in Heschel's and Eckhart's understanding.

*...that tried to vanquish insecurity
for the few and cared little for the penury of the
many --*

Great gulf between the rich and the poor today, this growing every day.

*...We will be known as a culture that taught
and rewarded the amassing of things--*

...taught and awarded the amassing of things.

*...that spoke
little if at all about the quality of life for
people (other people), for dogs, for rivers.*

Oh, climate issue. Ecology.

...All the world in our eyes, they will say was a commodity.

...All the world in our eyes, they will say, was a commodity. Even truth has become a commodity (those are my words).

*...And they will say that this structure
was held together politically--*

It was held together politically, because a lot of politicians are bought and sell themselves and are bought and sold. That's me again speaking.

"...Which it was," she says,

*and they will say that this structure
was held together politically, which it was. And
they will say also that our politics was no more
than an apparatus to accommodate
the feelings of the heart, and that the heart in those days
was small, and hard, and full of meanness.*

...Our hearts in those days were small and hard and full of meanness. That is her poem entitled "Of the Empire." It's very, very deserving of meditation, long and deep in silence. That leads to action. Action, action.

Can we move from being frozen in hearts that are small and hard and full of meanness? Thomas Aquinas says love melts the heart. The first effective love, he says, is melting. So the love that comes, the love of creation, the love of existence, the love of the universe, the love of the Earth, our home, the love that is lit by Awe -- can this move us from what the Empire has taught us, small souls, small hearts, cold and full of meanness?

Can the Awe disperse the awful?

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.