

Daily Meditation 05-21-22

Origins and Nature of Hatred

Good morning.

We continue our meditations on hatred. And today on the origin of hatred...the nature of hatred. Again, we offer a mirror to reflect on its opposite.

Again, I call on Rabbi Heschel. He says that the sublime and the awesome are starting points for our spiritual journey, as in the phrase "awe is the beginning of wisdom." They are like the finger pointing at the moon, they are not the moon itself in his own words,

The grandeur of nature is only the beginning. Beyond the grandeur is God. The Sublime is powerful, because it reveals the presence of God. It is never an ultimate aspect of reality. A quality meaningful in itself, it stands for something greater. The Sublime is not a thing, or quality, but rather a happening, an act of God, a marvel.

Of course, "marvel" is the root meaning of the word "marvelous," or miracle. Miracle is that which is marvelous. Heschel says:

The roots of existence are never plain, never flat. Existence is anchored in depth. Being is mysterious, the self did not originate in the self. We are witnesses rather than authors of birth and death.

...We are witnesses rather than authors of birth and death. And certainly we are not meant to be takers of life.

Both Meister Eckhart and Heschel talk about life being a loan. Eckhart said,

God gives nothing good to creatures but only lends it. The sun gives air heat, but the light is loaned. And so as soon as the sun sets, the air loses the light, but retains the heat. For this is given to the air as its own.

And Heschel sees life as being on loan.

I am endowed with a will but the will is not mine. I am endowed with freedom, but it is a freedom imposed on the will. Life is something that visits my body, a transcendent loan. I have neither initiated or conceived its worth and meaning. The essence of what I am is not mine. I am what is not mine. I have not brought my being into being.

And he talks about the presence revealed by Glory. "Glory is the presence of God," he says. "Shekhina" is the name in Judaism for this glory.

"The whole earth is full of God's glory," says the prophet Isaiah. Yet although the Shekhina, the presence is everywhere, the experience of the Shekhina is always somewhere. The presence is everywhere, but the experience

is particular. It is somewhere. It is true of all the people we encounter and all the gifts of creation that we encounter.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.