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Finding the Sacred, Facing Hatred: The Buffalo Racial Massacre

Good morning.

After meditating for several days on the sacredness to be found around the Earth, and in our own backyards, we are now taking up the subject of hatred.

And Rabbi Heschel has a powerful teaching about evil, and about overcoming evil. And we can hold it up as a mirror to what happened in Buffalo, and continues to happen around the world. He puts it this way:

Human life is holy, holier even than the scrolls of the Torah. Reverence for God is shown in reverence for man. An act of violence is an act of desecration.

Notice that word, "desecration," the opposite of sacralization, the opposite of the sacred. He goes on:

To be arrogant toward man is to be blasphemous toward God.

So those few sentences, I think, really wrap it up: the medicine of holiness. He says that we have to get in touch with the sublime to become human. The responsibility humans are called to, the biblical command to "do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God" (the prophet Micah 6:8) cannot happen without a deep sense of reverence. And this comes from an awareness of the sublime.

And here is how Heschel puts it:

There is no sense of responsibility without reverence for the sublime in human existence. And humans themselves are meant to be a unique symbol of the Divine.

He says,

The symbol of God is man, every man, every human person. God created humans in the divine image and in the divine likeness.

That is medicine to hold up against hatred and violence, murder and racism. Words worth meditating on and repeating and living out.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.