

Daily Meditation 02-11-23

Divinity is “Wrapped in a Robe of Light” per the Scriptures

Good morning.

Today we celebrate Psalm 104, which is the oldest creation story in the Bible as I understand it. And I really recommend that you go to it, it's a long psalm, relatively speaking, but it is a wonderful telling, of how we all got here. And it begins as Genesis does, pretty much, with the reference to light. But it's really worth reading in its entirety. I will just bring you in at about verse 20... 19, actually.

Thou hast made the moon to measure the year, taught the sun where to set.

Notice that Judaism is based not on the sun, the solar calendar, but on the moon calendar, lunar calendar.

When thou makest darkness and it is night, all the beasts of the forest come forth. The young lions roar for prey, seeking their food from God. When thou makest the sun rise, they slink away and go to rest in their lairs. But man comes up to his work and to his labors until evening.

Countless other things thou hast made, O Lord. Thou hast made all by thy wisdom, and the earth is full of thy creatures, beasts great and small.

Here is the great immeasurable sea in which move creatures beyond number. Here ships sail to and fro. Here is Leviathan, whom thou hast made thy plaything for sport with. All of them look expectantly to thee to give them their food at the proper time. Which thou givest them they gather up; when thou openest thy hand they eat their fill. When thou hide thy face, they are restless and troubled.

When you take away their breath, they fail and return to the dust from which they came. But when you breathe upon them they recover. You give new life to the earth.

May the glory of the Lord stand forever; may he rejoice in his works. When he looks at the earth, it quakes; when he touches the hills, they pour forth smoke [a reference to the volcanoes].

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; all my life I will sing psalms to my God. May my meditation please the Lord and I show my joy in him.

Away with all sinners from the earth and may the wicked be no more.

Bless the Lord, my soul; praise the Lord.

A powerful poem, a powerful song to the variety and wonderfulness of creation and how beings are eating and being eaten. And so food plays a very significant role in this entire beautiful poem that begins of course with a statement about light that

O Lord my God, thou art great indeed, clothed in majesty and splendor, wrapped in a robe of light. Thou hast spread out the heavens like a tent --

So it begins with that cosmology, as does Genesis one. But this one phrase is especially powerful, I think:

When you mark the sunrise they sink away and go to rest in their lairs, but man comes out to his work, to his labors, until evening.

That line about humans coming to work until evening was John Henry Newman's -- now, St. Henry Newman's - favorite line in the scriptures, I think he says. He just loved how our work is contextualized within the work of the lions, who sleep during the day and work at night, and all the other images of work and eating.

We all have to eat, and to eat means you've got to work, whether you're a plant or an animal or human.

And so the dignity of work and the beauty of work, the spirituality of work, I think, is very much embedded in this consciousness that the sacredness of creation, the sacredness of our survival, sacredness of feeding one another, and work, and bread, go together. Work and food go together. Work and light go together in photosynthesis.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.