

Psalm 19:ⁱⁱⁱ A Hymn to the Universe

¹The heavens declare the glory of God, *
and the firmament shows his handiwork.

²One day tells its tale to another, *
and one night imparts knowledge to another.

³Although they have no words or language, *
and their voices are not heard,

⁴Their sound has gone out into all lands, *
and their message to the ends of the world.

⁵In the deep has he set a pavilion for the sun; *
it comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber;
it rejoices like a champion to run its course.

⁶It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens
and runs about to the end of it again; *
nothing is hidden from its burning heat.

⁷The law of the LORD is perfect
and revives the soul; *
the testimony of the LORD is sure
and gives wisdom to the innocent.

⁸The statutes of the LORD are just
and rejoice the heart; *
the commandment of the LORD is clear
and gives light to the eyes.

⁹The fear of the LORD is clean
and endures for ever; *
the judgments of the LORD are true
and righteous altogether.

¹⁰More to be desired are they than gold,
more than much fine gold, *

sweeter far than honey,
than honey in the comb.

¹¹By them also is your servant enlightened, *
and in keeping them there is great reward.

¹²Who can tell how often he offends? *
cleanse me from my secret faults.

¹³Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins;
let them not get dominion over me; *
then shall I be whole and sound,
and innocent of a great offense.

¹⁴Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my
heart be acceptable in your sight, *
O LORD, my strength and my redeemer.

iii About Psalm 19

The psalmist celebrates God's revelation, expressed universally in creation and especially in the law. Pagan nations acclaimed the divinity of certain elements in nature (sun, moon, fire, etc.). Here the psalmist counters those claims by boasting that all of nature declares the glory of Israel's God, the Creator. Then the psalmist extols Yahweh's perfect law. Five synonyms for law call attention to the many-faceted virtues of God's calling.

[The psalm contains a grand cosmological vision of a vast universe, alive, and full of the divine Presence. It is clear that the psalmist sees the universe as a multi-dimensional realm of interpenetrating energies and realities, and that the divine world and life are at the center.]

For the psalmist the natural order of the universe is the great metaphor pointing towards another transcendent reality which interpenetrates the physical world. God is alive and is speaking in and through the universe, teaching us and using the natural order as part of the teaching. We the students exist through time in the school of wisdom. Life-experience is the classroom of instruction, and the living mind or word of God which fills all things and

instructs those whose hearts and minds are open to it.] Words taken from page 46 of Lynn C. Bauman' translations called "Ancient Songs Sung Anew"