

14th January 2022

Open-eyed

“Be not blind, but open-eyed, to the great wonders of Nature, familiar, everyday objects though they be to thee. But men are more wont to be astonished at the sun’s eclipse than at its unfailing rise.”

Orchoth Zadikim,

Jewish Ethical Work (‘The Ways of the Righteous’) 15th Century

I don’t know whether my friend had read *Orchoth Zadikim* or not, but marvelling at a sunset over the Fife coast on an evening walk recently, she remarked, “That’s exciting enough, but even more exciting is that the same sun will rise in the East for you again tomorrow.” She’s right! While we marvel at a beautiful sunset or are “astonished at the sun’s eclipse”, should we not be equally amazed at the same sun’s “unfailing rise”?

We get excited about remarkable things, the special, amazing, unique. But should we not be equally aware of, and excited by, the ordinary and mundane? Should the routine and humdrum that are our “everyday objects” not also be worthy of our astonishment and wonder?

William Blake invited us in *Auguries of Innocence* in 1803 ...

*To see a world in a grain of sand
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour.*

And in *The Brothers Karamazov*, Fedor Dostoevsky wrote in 1879:

*Love all God’s creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of God’s light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything.
If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things ...
Begin to comprehend it better every day and you will come at last to love the whole world with an all-embracing love.*

Today I take up a challenge and invite you to join me: to be open-eyed; to see beauty in the ordinary as well as the special; to see the wonder of the whole world in a grain of sand; to love all creation, especially the things we take for granted. “Be not blind, but open-eyed” with me today, and together we’ll find all the astonishment and divine mystery we’ll ever need.

A prayer for today

*If I close my eyes to beauty and wonder, how much will I miss today?
If I take things granted, help me to stop, and appreciate, and give thanks. Amen*