

Well over 3000 years ago some of the best thinkers of the day crafted how our world came about. Brian's meditation on the *miraculous creation of the cosmos and everything in it* is why we suggested that you consider spending some time each day with the meditations:

The first and greatest surprise—a miracle, really—is this: that anything exists at all.... The first pages of the Bible and the best thinking of today's scientists are in full agreement: it all began in the beginning, when space and time, energy and matter, gravity and light, burst or bloomed or banged into being. In light of the Genesis story, we would say that the possibility of this universe overflowed into actuality as God, the Creative Spirit, uttered the original joyful invitation: *Let it be!* And in response, what happened? Light. Time. Space. Matter. Motion. Sea. Stone. Fish. Sparrow. You. Me. Enjoying the unspeakable gift and privilege of being here, being alive....

Genesis means “beginnings.” It speaks through deep, multilayered poetry and wild, ancient stories. The poetry and stories of Genesis reveal deep truths that can help us be more fully alive today. They dare to proclaim that the universe is God's self-expression, God's speech act. That means that everything everywhere is always essentially holy, spiritual, valuable, meaningful. All matter matters.

Through the book of Genesis we encounter a story of goodness and interconnectedness.

Genesis tells us that the universe is good—a truth so important it gets repeated like the theme of a song.... Every river or hill or valley or forest is good. Skin? Good. Bone? Good. Mating and eating and breathing and giving birth and growing old? Good, good, good. All are good. Life is good.

The best thing in Genesis is not simply human beings, but the whole creation considered and enjoyed together, as a beautiful, integrated whole, and us a part. The poetry of Genesis describes the “very goodness” that comes at the end of a long process of creation ... when all the parts, including us, are working together as one whole. That harmonious whole is so good that the Creator takes a day off, as it were, just to enjoy it. That day of restful enjoyment tells us that the purpose of existence isn't money or power or fame or security or anything less than this: to participate in the goodness and beauty and aliveness of creation....

According to the first creation story, you are part of creation. You are made from common soil ... *dust*, Genesis says; *stardust*, astronomers tell us ... soil that becomes watermelons and grain and apples and peanuts, and then, they become food, and then that food becomes you.... Together with all living things, you share the breath of life, participating in the same cycles of birth and death, reproduction and recycling and renewal. You, with them, are part of the story of creation—different branches on the tree of life. In that story, you are connected and related to everything everywhere. In fact, that is a good partial definition of God: *God is the one through whom we are related and connected to everything.*