

----- "THOUGHTS FROM THE HEART" -----

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MY CHILDHOOD CALLS ME TO REMEMBER
WHAT INNOCENCE AND PURITY WAS BEFORE
I WAS EXPOSED TO EVIL, HATE AND VIOLENCE
OR CUNNING OR DOMINATION IN FULL FORCE.
BEFORE I MYSELF LEARNED TO SCHEME OR
HURT.

~H~
I DO NOT MOURN THE LOSS OF INNOCENCE.
I AM MORE INCLINED TO MOURN THE
LOSS OF THE SELF I WAS BEFORE I
BEGAN TO FULLY RECOGNIZE THESE THINGS,
EITHER IN MYSELF OR IN FAMILY AND FRIENDS,
OR OTHERS.

I HAVE COME TO UNDERSTAND THAT
IT IS NOT THE UNKNOWING OF THESE
THINGS THAT IS VIRTUE. VIRTUE COMES
ONLY AFTER WE HAVE CONFRONTED AND
WRESTLED WITH EVIL, HATE AND VIOLENCE,
AND FINALLY, CONSCIOUSLY TURNED FROM
THEM.

~H~

So, I still smile at images of innocence. There is really no such thing. There are only more or less stages of awareness. I was not innocent; [MEANING]-UNAWARE OR UNTOUCHED BY THE VIOLENCE AROUND ME AS A CHILD - THE BEATING OF MY MOTHER - BY MY SO CALLED CARING - LOVING FATHER; THE NAMES I ENDURED FROM BOTH BLACKS AND WHITES BECAUSE I WAS A PRODUCT OF A JEWISH MOTHER AND BLACK FATHER;

~H
THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA, WHEREAS A RACE OF PEOPLE WAS DENIED THEIR BASIC CONSTITUTIONAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS; [THE BEATINGS, LYCHING - RAPE, AND VIOLENCE BROUGHT AGAINST THEM AS A RACE,] "BECAUSE OF THEIR" [SKIN COLOR].

~H
I WAS NOT "INNOCENT", I WAS NOT "UNAWARE" OR "UNTOUCHED" BY THOSE EVENTS; "I WAS ONLY [POWERLESS] TO STOP" ~~THEM~~ "THEM"

~H
I WAS NOT INNOCENT, UNWARE, OR UNTOUCHED - BY THE UNWANTING TOUCHING

OF A "TEACHER" AND "FAMILY MEMBER" AS A CHILD. GROWING UP DURING MY ERA - YOU DID NOT QUESTION OR TALK BACK TO AN ADULT - MORE - LESS A TEACHER. PLACES I SHOULD HAVE NOT ONLY FELT SAFE IN; I SHOULD HAVE "BEEN SAFE" TO BE IN, BUT I WAS NOT - I WAS ONLY "POWERLESS" TO STOP IT FOR ALMOST 20 YEARS - UP UNTIL I PUT BY AGE OF A 16TH AND JOINED THE MILITARY;

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I AM NOT INNOCENT NOW OR UNAWARE OR UNTOUCHED BY THE VIOLENCE AROUND ME NOW; OF THE HATE - EVIL AND SICKNESS IN OUR CITIES, STATES AND WORLD AGAINST EACH OTHER;

✓

I AM NOT INNOCENT NOW OR UNAWARE OR UN-TOUCHED BY THE DAILY NIGHTMARES, SLEEP-LESS NIGHTS - AND QUESTIONS ABOUT MY OWN MANHOOD - I STILL ENDOURE AS AN ADULT - BECAUSE OF THE UNWANTED TOUCHING AND OTHER THINGS I UNDOURED AS A CHILD; AND BEING, AND FEELING, UN-SAFE - AROUND THOSE WHO WERE TO PROTECT ME;

✓

I AM ONLY STILL POWERLESS TO CHANGE THEM. AND YET, I HAVE COME TO UNDERSTAND THAT EVEN AWARENESS IS ITS OWN KIND OF POWER, ITS OWN KIND OF INNOCENCE. REAL INNOCENCE IS THE CONTINUING BELIEF THAT HUMAN BEINGS— WE OURSELVES— ARE MORE INCLINED TO CARE ABOUT— ~~THE~~— INTEGRITY THAN WE DO FOR "MONEY OR VENGEANCE OR THE FURTHER EXPLOITATION OF THE REST OF THE HUMAN RACE".

✓
IT IS A COMMITMENT TO THE NOTION THAT, IN THE END, THE GOOD IN ALL OF US WILL, EVENTUALLY— OUTWEIGHT EVERYTHING ELSE

✓
I CAN, AFTER ALL, WHATEVER THE ATTEMPT TO CONVINCE ME OF THE RIGHTNESS OF AIL; HATE; AND VIOLENCE IN ANY OF ITS FORMS, SIMPLY REFUSE TO ACCEPT IT.

✓
REAL INNOCENCE STILL LIVES IN US AS LONG AS WE "GET UP"— THINKING THAT TODAY— THIS DAY— OF-ALL-DAYS— SOMETHING WONDERFUL MAY BE ABOUT TO HAPPEN TO US.