

0200HRS

Thoughts From THE HEART

By Joseph Smith

2012 November 24

THE LONG JOURNEY BACK HOME - PART I:

THE JOURNEY THAT WE ALL MAKE THROUGH LIFE IS GUIDED BY FORCES FAR BEYOND OUR CONSCIOUS KNOWLEDGE. WE ARE LIKE TRAVELERS WHO INNOCENTLY BUY OUR TICKET FOR A TRIP, NEVER QUITE KNOWING WHERE THE JOURNEY WILL END OR HOW. THE DESTINATIONS OUR LIVES AND THEIR MEANINGS ARE REVEALED ONLY LATER ON. ONLY AFTER WE ARRIVE AT OUR STOP, "SHAKE" OFF THE DUST, AND LOOK BACK AT THE DISTANCE MAY WE SAY "OF COURSE! THIS MAKE PERFECT SENSE." LIKE ALL OF US, I TOO BEGAN MY TRAVELS THROUGH LIFE UNWARE OF THE SECRET DESTINATIONS AT WHICH I WOULD ARRIVE. LIKE MOST OF US, I AM WISER NOW THAN WHEN I BEGAN. WHERE MY JOURNEY WILL END, I CANNOT SAY. THE FINAL DESTINATION OF OUR LIVES IS DETERMINED BY AN INSCRUTABLE INTERWEAVING OF THE MYSTERIOUS FORCES THAT GUIDE US AND THE POWER OF THE CHOICES WE MAKE, BIG AND SMALL, THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES. ONE OF THE BIGGEST CHOICES FOR ME CAME IN THE YEARS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING MY RETURNING HOME TO MY JEWISH ROOTS.

THAT DIDN'T ACCEPT ME. BEING THE MISTAKE OF AN FORBIDDEN LOVE OR INFATUATION BETWEEN MY ORTHODOX JEWISH MOTHER AND BLACK CATHOLIC RAISE FATHER, WHO BOTH PARENTS WERE FINALLY FED UP WITH THE DISILLUSION OF BOTH FAITHS, FOLLOWED THEIR HEARTS, THUS JESSICA AND I WAS PRODUCE BY THIS MIXED-FAITH & RACE MARRIAGE. BLESSED FRUITS?? OR INNOCENT PIONEERS IN THIS VAST EXPERIMENT OF MIXING RACES AND CREEDS?? IN JEWISH LAW, HALACHA, THE CHILD DRAWS FROM THE MOTHER'S LINEAGE. ITS CALLED MATRILINEAL DESCENT. WHICH MEANS THAT, I AND MY TWIN SISTER ARE JEWISH UNDER JEWISH LAW THAT WILL NEVER CHANGE WHEN I HAD TRIED MY HARDEST TO PUT MY JEWISH ROOTS ASIDE, I HAD BEEN SIGNALLED BY MY UNCONSCIOUS THAT IT WOULD NOT BE DONE WITH ME SO EASILY, I HAD TRIED TO CUT MYSELF OFF FROM ANY CONNECTION WITH JEWS AND THE JEWISH CYCLE OF HOLIDAYS, BUT FOR YEARS I AWAKE ON YOM KIPPUR OR PASSOVER MORNING WITH HEBREW PRAYERS AND MELODIES RINGING IN MY HEAD, WHEN I WOULD TRAVEL TO CHECK THE THE CALENDAR, I WOULD REALIZE THAT INNER CLOCK OF MY BEING WAS STILL SET ON JUDAISM. I REMEMBER COMING ACROSS OLD LETTERS WRITTEN TO MY MOTHER FROM MY GRANDMOTHER IN THE ATTIC, HOUSED IN A OLD LOCKER CHEST ALONG WITH OTHER JEWISH ITEMS. ONE LETTER I'LL NEVER FORGET. IT SIMPLY READ: INTERMARRIAGE

is the one Boundary which, when crossed, cuts a Jew off from the people of Israel, "IMMEDIATELY", AND WITH NO RECOUSE, ESPECIALLY AN INTER RACIAL MARRIAGE OR RELATIONSHIP. THE CONTINUATION OF THE Jewish people is simply not possible when INTER-MARRIAGES OCCUR. You CANNOT LIVE WITH A GOY (NON Jewish person) ESPECIALLY A SCHVARTZE (BLACK PERSON; OFTEN USED DEROGATORILY) AND DELUDE YOURSELF INTO THINKING THAT YOU ARE ADHERING TO YOUR PEOPLE AND REMAINING A LINK IN THE GREAT CHAIN OF THE Jewish GENERATION! AND WE CANNOT ACCEPT HIM, NOR YOU FOR MARRYING THIS GOY YOU ARE DEAD TO US, WE WILL SAY AND SIT SHIVA FOR YOU. (SHIVA: SEVEN DAYS OF Jewish RITUAL MOURNING PRESCRIBED TO THE NEXT OF KIN OF THE DECEASED). I WAS ELEVEN WHEN I CAME ACROSS THIS LETTER. I DID NOT NEED MUCH MORE PROOF THAT THE Jewish WORLD WAS UNINVITING. I REGISTERED THIS LETTER IN MY MIND AS EMBLEMATIC OF THE GIANT OBSTACLE THAT BARRICAD MY WAY FROM RECONNECTING WITH THE Jewish TRIBE. BAFFLED, I WONDERED AT THE NATURE OF THIS STRANGE LETTER, WAS IT A TRAGEDY OR COMEDY?? I FIGURED THAT ONLY TIME WOULD DETERMINE THAT. I INFORMED MY MOTHER I WOULD NO LONGER BE Jewish - SHE NEVER KNEW THAT I HAD FOUND THE LETTER AND MORE ALIKE THEM FROM MEMBERS OF MY MOTHER'S TRIBE. THE WRECHING THAT FOLLOWS A DISAPPOINTED RELATIONSHIP, WHETHER IT BE A BETRAYAL, ABANDONMENT, OR A SIMPLE PARTING OF THE WAYS, IS ONE OF THE MANY TIMES OUR

Egos will die as we travel through our lives. Each death seems to shatter us anew, but buried in our ego's wreckage lies the seeds of our own next blossoming. If we can allow ourselves to be true to our pain, neither distracting ourselves from it nor ameliorating it with some new fancy, the pain can guide us back to ourselves and a higher voice of wisdom. The act of returning to ourselves and to the voice of our own *"Neshama Elohit"*, is known in the Jewish tradition as *Teshuvah*: the cycle of Jewish holidays particularly the High Holidays in the autumn, are specifically designed to help us do the work of introspection and coming home to ourselves. But we do not have to wait for the holidays; life presents us with ample opportunities to return to the self all the time. The process of returning to this larger self is something like trying to see in one's own blind spot. It is ever so close yet inscrutable. In trying to know that which is us but is just out of our range of vision, it is very common to project the self onto the screen of others, as I had done with my other siblings, investing them with the wisdom and the answers that we have inside ourselves but cannot yet access on our own. The process of projecting self onto others is universal. It usually begins with our parents and continues with friends, lovers, and teachers throughout life. It is the ego's way

of growing, modeling itself on those that reflect back its own dormant qualities. Problems occur only when we remain ignorant that the projection is going on and, more important, when we do not eventually "reclaim our projection". This means realizing that the people upon whom we have projected our wisdom are more mortals, making their own way through life in the best way possible for them. The growth and empowerment that occurs for us after we have reclaimed our projection comes by the way of loneliness. With our self no longer projected outwardly, we are thrown back on our own resources, which are usually greater than we give ourselves credit for. Then we must realize that ultimately there is no map to follow but the one we ourselves compose. So it was for me. My parents marriage had begun to fail, the strength and clarity I had projected upon them had shattered, and it was upon me to find these qualities within. But it was not only my parents, siblings that ceased to provide me with guidance and safe refuge. Judaism itself, (at least my mother's family version of it) had sorely disappointed me, too. I had seen how their Judaism had treated my mother and I. In God's Book was it ever correct to hurt outsiders, as my father had been hurt?? I began to ask myself questions about my own allegiance to this heritage of mines.