

Thoughts from THE HEART  
Smith, Joseph  
2012 December 17  
0300hrs - 0700hrs:

"WORDS THAT COME FROM THE HEART  
WILL RETURN TO THE HEART"

DURING THESE WRITINGS, I HAVE SHARED MY STORY, DESCRIBING THE ALIENATION FROM MY MOTHER'S FAMILY TOWARD HER AND US, CAUSED BY HER INTERFAITH, AND INTER RACIAL MARRIAGE AND THE GRIEVOUS EFFECTS THAT ALIENATION HAD WROUGHT ON OUR LIVES. I SOON FOUND OUT THAT I WAS NOT ALONE IN THE PAIN AND SHAME I HAD SUFFERED AT BEING AN OUTCAST, NOR IN THE DEEP YEARNING FOR CONNECTION THAT HAD ULTIMATELY MOVED ME TO REPAIR MY BROKENNESS. THESE WRITINGS HAS BECOME THE TURNING POINT, TELLING THE TRUTH BECAME AN IMPERATIVE FOR ME, NOT ONLY FOR ITS PERSONAL CURATIVE EFFECTS BUT ALSO FOR THE HEALING IT PRODUCED. MORE DISTINCTLY THAN EVER BEFORE, I HEARD A COMPELLING INNER CALL, PRODDING ME TO WRITE, AND FURTHER, TO WRITE ABOUT ISSUES RELATED THAT TOO OFTEN HAVE BEEN OBSCURED FROM THE PUBLIC EYE: THE POVERTY OF SPIRIT THAT OCCURS WHEN OUR RELIGIONS BECOME RIGID OR EMPTY; THE DANGERS THAT ARISE FROM A TOO-DESPERATE LONGING FOR TRANSCENDENCE; THE TRIALS AND AGONY OF INTER-MARRIAGES, THE FEAR THAT COMES WITH SPEAKING

OUT AS A CHILD CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE. THESE WRITINGS IS THE PRODUCT OF MY INNER DIRECTIVE TO TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT ALL OF THESE THINGS, HOWEVER PAINFUL THEY MAY BE. I WAS A THOUGHTFUL YET WILD CHILD, RUNNING HARD FROM ALL FORMS OF AUTHORITY. LIKE SO MANY OTHERS IN MY GENERATION, I HAD BECOME DISENCHANTED WITH THE CONVENTIONAL MODELS FOR LIFE THAT I INHERITED, WHICH IN MY CASE WERE THE MIDDLE-CLASS VALUES OF AN ORTHODOX JEWISH & CATHOLIC FAMILY IN NEW YORK. THERE WERE NINE CHILDREN IN MY FAMILY, I BEING THE ONLY MALE CHILD, AND OUR PARENTS RAISED US WITH AN IRON HAND, RIGID NOT ONLY IN RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE BUT IN METHODOLOGY. THIS MEANT THAT, QUITE ASIDE FROM LIVING RITUALLY OBSERVANT LIVES, AND PERSONAL CHOICES OUTSIDE OF MY PARENTS' PRESCRIBED MENU WERE MINIMAL. MY SIBLINGS AND I GREW UP WITH AN EVER-PRESENT TENSION, AN ALMOST FANATICAL INJUNCTION TO LIVE CORRECTLY AS DICTATED BY OUR PARENTS AND THEIR DOGMATIC RELIGIOUS APPROACH. IN THE END, THE JEWISH HERITAGE OF MY MOTHER, WE RECEIVED WAS, SADLY, NOT ENRICHED BY THE INTENSITY WITH WHICH WAS TRANSMITTED, BUT RATHER DRAINED OF ITS INTRINSIC JOY AND GOODNESS, AS WAS THE SAME OF THE CATHOLIC HERITAGE OF MY FATHER. AT THE YOUNG AGE OF SIXTEEN, I TOOK FLIGHT FROM MILITARY SCHOOL, AND FROM EVERYTHING I KNEW IN ORDER TO FIND

MYSELF, FREEDOM AND SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT. IN THE DRAMA THAT ENSUED, I TRAVELLED AS FAR AWAY FROM JUDAISM, - CATHOLICISM - , AND ANYTHING REPRESENTING MY PARENTS' VALUES AS POSSIBLE. BY PUTTING MY AGE UP, AND JOINING THE MILITARY. IN THE PROCESS, BOTH MY PHYSICAL LIFE AND MY SOUL'S VERY BALANCE WERE SEVERELY THREATENED. BUT EVERY JOURNEY HAVE A SECRET DESTINATION, AND THE DESTINATION THAT AWAITED ME REQUIRED EVERY STEP I TOOK ALONG THE WAY, HOWEVER MAD OR DANGEROUS. FORTUNATELY, I ACQUIRED SOME TOOLS ON MY JOURNEY, THE MOST VALUABLE OF WHICH WAS THE UNDERSTANDING THAT JUDAISM INTRINSICALLY SUPPORTS THE UNFOLDING ON ONE'S UNIQUE SELF. THE SAME GOD WHO INSPIRED THE JEWISH PROPHETS AND SAGES THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES WAS NO DIFFERENT, I REALIZED, THAN THE GOD TALKED ABOUT IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS. THIS SAME GOD BECKONS EACH ONE OF US THROUGHOUT OUR LIFE TO DISCOVER THE FULLNESS OF OUR BEING, TO ARRIVE AT OUR OWN SECRET DESTINY. WHETHER OUR JEWISHNESS, ECUADOREANNESS, BLACKNESS, OR SCOTTISHNESS, ALL OF US ARE ON A JOURNEY TO OUR OWN SECRET DESTINATION. I NEVER SUSPECTED THAT MY JOURNEY WOULD ONE DAY BRING ME FULL CIRCLE, BACK TO THE HERITAGE OF MY BIRTH. I HAD NO FINKLING THAT ALL OF THE DISPARATE TEACHING I SOUGHT OUT ALONG THE WAY WERE, IN FACT PREPARATION FOR

THIS REVIEW. EACH ONE IN TURN DEEPENED ME SO THAT I COULD RECEIVE WHAT I HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO RECEIVE, SHATTERED ME SO THAT I COULD FINALLY LOVE WHAT I HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO LOVE. PERHAPS THE INTERNAL VOICE THAT GUIDED ME BACK TO JUDAISM IS THE SAME VOICE THAT IS GUIDING SO MANY OF US NOWADAYS TO EXCAVATE AND BRING TO LIFE THE ANCIENT SPIRIT OF OUR TRADITIONS, TOO LONG BURIED. WHEN I CAME BACK, I WAS NOT ALONE. GOD SPEAKS TO US IN MANY VOICES. ONE OF THESE VOICES COMES IN THE FORMS OF DREAMS. EVERY SINCE I WAS A YOUNG BOY, I HAVE FELT THE POWER OF MY DREAMS AND SCRIBBLED THEM INTO MY JOURNALS WHEN I WAKE UP EACH MORNING. OVER THE YEARS OF MY LIFE, THESE DREAMS HAVE PROVED TO BE LIKE SO MANY CLUES SPARKLED ON MY LIFE'S TRAIL, CORRECTING AND DIRECTING MY JOURNEY. THE TALMUD TELLS US, THAT DREAMS ARE LIKE LETTERS FROM GOD, WHICH REQUIRED US TO OPEN. BECAUSE THESE MESSAGES SERVED TO LEAD ME FURTHER AND FURTHER IN UNLIKELY [DESTINATION]. FOR ALTHOUGH IT IS DISTINCTIVE, MY STORY IS NOT MINE ALONE. IN IT ARE THE ELEMENTS, SYMBOLS, AND LONGINGS NOT OF ONE INDIVIDUAL BUT OF AN ENTIRE GENERATION. THOUGH MY PERSONAL STORY IS PECULIAR IN SOME ASPECTS, I BELIEVE IT ALSO EXEMPLIFIES AN APPROACH

UTILIZED BY MORE AND MORE PEOPLE IN OUR TIME  
LIVING LIFE BY FOLLOWING ONE'S INNER CALLING.  
SIMPLY FOLLOWING WHAT FEEL RIGHT IS NOT ENOUGH  
LIKE MANY OF US WHO HAVE MADE IT THEIR  
PRIORITY TO FOLLOW THE INNER VOICE, I EVEN-  
TUALLY FELT THE NEED FOR SOMETHING MORE,  
TO INFORM MY INNER WISDOM WITH WHAT WAS  
ANCIENT AND WOULD LINK ME TO MY ANCESTORS ON  
BOTH SIDE OF THE FAMILY. YET AS I HUNGRILY  
SOUGHT OUT THE RITUALS AND PRESCRIPTIVE WISDOM  
OF MY RELIGIOUS HERITAGE, I WAS ALSO WAARY OF THOSE  
VOICES IN THE TRADITION THAT WOULD NEGATE MY  
INNER SENSIBILITIES. THESE WRITINGS IS ABOUT THE  
DIALOGUE BETWEEN ONE'S INNER GUIDANCE AND THE OUTER  
TRADITIONS, BETWEEN THE POWERFUL WISDOM GLEANED FROM  
OUR LIFE EXPERIENCE AND THE VENERABLE WISDOM OF AN  
ANCIENT RELIGION- THIS DIALOGUE IS GOING ON FOR MANY  
PEOPLE NOWADAYS, AND IT IS AS CRUCIAL TO US AS INDIVIDUALS  
AS IT IS TO THE EVOLUTION OF OUR RELIGIONS  
RELIGIONS WERE CREATED TO SERVED THE EVOLVING "HUMAN  
SPIRIT", NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND. BUT MANY OF  
US HAVE FORGOTTEN THIS, FALLING INTO THE MISTAKEN THINKING  
THAT OUR RELIGIONS ARE IMMUTABLE AND MUST BE SERVED  
AT THE COST OF OUR SOULS. THOSE WHO ARE RETURNING  
TO THEIR RELIGIONS TO NOURISH THEMSELVES, AS I DID,  
MUST REMEMBER THAT OUR RELIGIONS ARE ALSO IN NEED  
OF NOURISHMENT. THEY NEED TO BE REPLENISHED WITH  
OUR JOY, VIGOR, AND THE BROAD VISION WE HAVE

GAINED FROM OUR OWN SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS. THE WRITER FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT AS WE REPLENISH OUR RELIGIONS, SO WILL WE AS A SOCIETY BE REPLENISHED. THESE WRITINGS ARE NOT TO BRING HARM, NOR DO I BEAR ANY MALICE TOWARDS ANYONE. THESE WRITINGS OF 2012, WERE INSPIRED BY A DEEP INNER CALLING, WHICH I TRUST, COMES FROM A SOURCE BEYOND ME. IN ANY CASE, MY INTENTION IS TO HELP MEND WHAT HAS BEEN BROKEN IN MYSELF AND OTHERS BY BEARING COMPASSIONATE WITNESS TO THE TRUTH. IF THESE WRITINGS HAVE TOUCHED YOUR HEART, IF IT REINSPIRES YOUR DEDICATION TO YOUR OWN <sup>"LIFE"</sup> CALLING, HELP YOU BUILD A MENTAL BRIDGE OR BEACH ON YOUR LAND TO ANOTHER HUMAN BEING, THEN IT'S PURPOSE HAS BEEN FULFILLED. THIS WILL BE MY LAST WRITING FOR 2012, MAY THE SPIRIT OF THE HOLIDAY'S BE WITH YOU AND FAMILY. SEE YOU IN THE NEW YEAR 2013 — J

B'EZRAJ Hashem (with God help)

17 Kislev-Tevet 5773

17 December 2012