

The silence of the prison tombs: Bad Wayz

By Joe ^{A'Jene} Valentine

February 6, 2015 at 3:45 am, I awoke to the usual dead SILENCE which the environment that I am in is errily – CRUEL. The environment that I speak of is given the official designation of ... PRISON. Of course, being immersed in such quiet, one is left alone in time that seems to crawl at a snail's pace and one's innermost reflections – wishes, memories, hopes, doubts, fears, sorrows and yes, deep regrets. In certain religious traditions, the value of "silence" as a practice is encouraged as it is discerned as a vehicle for spiritual illumination and thus this meditative approach offers a rich path towards arriving at intangible dimensions where greater understanding is rewarded.

However, in contrast the silence in which I have in mind here and have endured for nearly four arduous decades is the type that weighs heavy on the human soul like a crushing boulder as it is the result of ALIEN IMPOSITION and as such the silence of this domain of pain that is drowned in alcohol and evaded by escaping into distractive NOISE (e.g. TMZ, Sports, soap operas, Springer, nihilist forms of Rap, empty talk, et al), is purposely geared towards our emotional and psychological ... TORTURE. It's the reality of being confronted with the daily routine of grinding torment and the cruelty of a manufactured estrangement, i.e. the too distant tombs of gloom that needlessly conspires to ensure our doom in monotonous fracture.

What's infuriatingly pathetic of it all is that the entire insane design behind the construction of these "de-worlded" usually cruel penal systems is that these are maliciously engineered towards human destruction in our repressive control as the ... perceived disposables of a society that elevates material acquisition over human beings since, after all, is it not a fact that one important function of the Prison Racist Industrial Complex – a genocidal machine – is to create the conditions for employment for especially white rural Amerika and profit accumulation for corporations? Yes, year in and year out, many across this "caring Christian nation" are literally suffering a death each day by the incessancy of being subjected to the merciless chokehold of totally apathetic social and business forces whose policies serve to feed the monster, that is, the STATE; the bodies of the colonial oppressed and have-nots as our containment is the order of the day by virtue of an imperial and white supremacist reckoning that treats us as obsolescent, i.e. expendable as merely more of Amerika's waste.

WE CAN'T BREATHE

There is a legal term referred to as "cruel and unusual punishment" that bespeaks to how certain policies or practices via representatives of the state – e.g. politicians, judges, Wardens, directors, et al – can be extreme in nature or so excessive to "shock the conscience." Conditions involving such a level of inhumanity are regarded as unconstitutional and viewed as an abhorrent deviation of the "norm" or in conflict with that type of treatment, society is prepared to bear. In my mind, "cruel and unusual punishment" has been and indeed remains the reality for New Afrikans (i.e. the misnamed "African Americans") and people of color in general from the inception of this "Great democracy."

Yes, repressive domination in our case is actually standard procedure and as such our punitive treatment is "usually cruel," since in fact this approach is the result of a brutal calculus motivated by a punishment-oriented regime, i.e. the arbitrary and authoritarian hand of those

who govern on the basis of advancing and securing their invested interests in the systems of capitalism-imperialism and internal colonialism. Our cruel treatment is usual and is callous in its deliberate scientific and mechanized application stemming from their "think tanks," judicial bodies, commissions, law enforcement agencies, politicians, psych-techs, etc. on down to gravely impact our lives immeasurably and conveniently outside the watchful eyes of those who might care to give a damn about our devalued and demonized wellbeing as the country's "scum."

"I woke up this mornin' screamin'
fuck tha world"

-- Tupac Shakur

Surviving under this cruel and thoroughly hypocritical mendacity call^{ed} the "United" States can induce one caught in the unforgivable grips of ghetto-hells to develop a completely fatalistic and negative outlook regarding maintaining any positive or hopeful prospects about life. And in turn this leads to the extraordinary level of onslaught and criminality afoot in poor working class communities. The realization for so many of my mode, as something else which Tupac stressed, is quite telling in terms of the underlying implications involved – "I was given this world; I didn't make it!" Oh, how so sadly true ... Nihilism is a reactionary force born by the hand of the oppressors who desire that the oppressed be so.

"Not me ... no mo'"

Sometimes when I gaze out the small crack of a window of a Pelican Bay cell I tell myself: "This world ain't shit!"

I say this in a manner to where I swear I am eager as hell to make my departure from a life that has been filled with something else Tupac said – "so much pain." Then, I remind myself of the fact that NO, it's not hardly "this world" that's the source of "so much pain," but in truth it is US, i.e. it is due to our relations of the impoverished nature of interactions toward each other. In a word, it's actually the selfish-motivated aims of misguided human affairs rooted in power-wealth interests that is the ultimate problem as expressed in racism, patriarchy, colonialism, sectarianism, militarism, etc.

Those at the apex of this social "order" – there is no true order in ALIENATION – cannot be excused since "THEY KNOW WHAT THEY DO!" When I woke this early morning absorbed in the silence of the imposed alienation, the thought that consumed me was the depth of terrible pain and hopelessness that I finally truly grasped ("felt") that has a literal stranglehold on a dear and special young brother who I view to be the "son I never had" – "Bad Wayz." Naturally, the sentiments I feel in his case and the realization I came to applies to folks entombed across this country – the world.

Bad Wayz and I were cellmates for seven months (his absence has left a void of energy) and that lil-brotha stole my heart and did much to raise my radical spirit after six years in the SHU. As his family isn't well-to-do he really doesn't have anyone to count on for outside support with the exception of a damn good uncle who lends what help that he can since he has many kids to care for. What I observed about Bad Wayz is how LONELY and DEPRIVED he felt and often would express on those occasions when we'd observe other's receiving food packages and canteen, and who were able to call home – he has no phone contact with his family since they simply cannot afford for him to call and as a result he's not spoken to his mother since 2010 and of course nor can the family afford to travel so far to visit, as with most here.

Is that fact enough to make a person of his age (23) desperate, and will AT&T, et al – which makes a "killing" off of captive customers – arrange for him to contact his loved ones without the "profit motive" overriding our natural concern to maintain family ties? Yes, he did a pretty good job at "masking his pain" and the strong sense of estrangement from his family by laughter and being "the life of the party" to the benefit of those around. Yet, being amidst his space on an intimate level (i.e. the sharing of personal stories, aspirations, bad experiences, play, joking, etc.) I was able to discern that burning grief, but my hardened attitude – merely as "a strategy for psychological survival" in this house of horrors – was that "he needs to get over it" and just "move on with his life" by making the best of our fucked up situation or finding creative ways to make one's time here meaningful, since what real control do we have from in prison over circumstances in society?

You see, that's been the approach I've taken in order to endure this prison-hell, so I guess that impeded my ability to empathize with others who I felt were incapable of enduring the "bitter fruits of life." This morning, however, that attitude was forever abolished since "reality hit me in the head" – no person should be forced to endure the nature of such a punitively geared reality as that of what is designed to be usually cruel as in jails and prisons.

The purposeful manufacturing of environments that induce profound and in some cases paralyzing estrangement – "I don't want to live any more" – from one's natural bonds is cruelty in the extreme as it goes against who we are as social creatures. It is unnatural and ruinous. Bad Wayz once expressed to me that "I thought about committing suicide as a way out of this daily pain." Okay, granted he (we) managed to get ourselves in the terrible predicament which we're in due to doing the wrong thing, but does that then mean that we must endure a form of incessant persecution for the mistakes we made – even as so many, as in Bad Ways' case, were but immature adolescents without the benefit of a stable home and direction of a father as is the reality for so many?

Yes, we should pay for our infractions but the philosophy of "tough on crime" (i.e. "flesh for flesh," "eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth") without regard to socio-economic factors that drive the bulk of the confined have-nots to engage in drug dealing, robberies, gang activity, car-jacking, theft, etc., cannot be responsibly nor morally ignored if true justice is to reign in this society. I've met brothers who took their own life, and I know more who are walking on these dead yards or stuck in the SHU/Ad-Seg who've had such desperate thoughts. If we existed in an environment which had as a premium our healthy development, via programs conducive towards a crucial purpose, and those which function to create a restitutive orientation as opposed to an orientation on the part of the state – which is retributive or punitive based – there wouldn't be the depth of acute despair so prevalent here.

"They gotta nigga trapped"

– Tupac

I once heard Dr. Phil say that "one of the major tools of an ABUSER is ... ISOLATION." Now, who doubts that, as in the case of Native Americans forced onto isolated reservations, New Afrikans forced onto slave plantations, rural slums and ghetto-hells, Jews and Japanese forced onto concentration camps, Arab-Muslims forced into Abu Ghraib and Gitmo, et al, that those of the lower class – especially people of color – who've been forcibly ISOLATED to far off penal colonies out of range of concerned eyes, aren't the definite result of a so-called "public policy," i.e. the deliberate deployment of the state as our major abuser?

Upon reflecting on the very real pain that I experienced on "my son's" face that dark silent morning of drenching rain and yelling thunder, I began crying lying in my cell ALONE and I swore that to my last dying breath I'll do all I can to aid in the total abolishment of what are inherently cruel toms. No, for our crimes we are surely not "pure" nor just, but neither is the damn state's draconian approach and surely not those atop this snake pit as it is THEY who've constructed a system-scheme that requires and thrives off the unjust suffering of MILLIONS here and in the Third World. Like us, millions (e.g. immigrants on farms, prostitutes, sex slaves, miners, factory workers, refugees of wars, the poor trapped in shantytowns, et al) are forcibly ISOLATED by abusers referred to as corporations, industrialists, police, Border Patrol, client regimes, Intelligence agencies, politicians, bankers, militaries, etc.

This hood game / is pain and its ah damn shame /

This fo' my niggaz in the ghettos who lost everythang

-Lil-Keké

There was a time I felt that most in this world were "born only to be punished!" However, for some time now I've believed and committed myself to ensuring that those who manufacture our punishing conditions in order that they might prosper by our pain (as they party in the ruling class) become the punished by removing the responsibility of governing society from their abusive hands, and aiding to put that responsibility in the hands of US ALL, as is our right and sane duty to assume if we're to ever remove ourselves from the "usually cruel" social order of abusers of exploited wealth and imposed corrupt power. We can and must do better.

Well, its' 10:30 am and noisy ("ALIVE") now on this Feb. 6, 2015 day and I can breathe the fresh air that the pure rain brings to our natural-world. Although the sunlight is nowhere to be found, my pain filled eyes can see a "ray of hope" as far as the potential of us all finally one day being let FREE of these cells in which the Bad Wayz of this country idly rot in alienation of our loved ones.

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