

A Special Letter of Reflection

WAGING A WISDOM JIHAD

A Personal Reflection

Along with millions of others in our nation, I felt the triumph of Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton in our general elections like a cataclysmic earthquake. It rolled and rocked through my system, my psyche, my being. It was an enormous emotional tsunami followed by tidal waves of sorrow, grief, confusion and nausea. For hours and hours I was completely disoriented, my world, my expectations were suddenly and unexpectedly upended. It took at least twenty-four hours to even begin to regain any sense of orientation from out of the fog of confusion and despair. Slowly I began to right the ship and find my feet again. I have begun to process without the sudden sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach every time I became aware of the current events swirling around me.

Given another 48 hours, I have slowly picked myself up again, and have begun to recover some semblance of balance as well as a way to assess the damage and find a fresh orientation in a world that has now been turned on its head. Truly and suddenly, without warning, I am in a world that no longer seems either safe or secure in the ways I had come to accept as normal. I am in the process of finding both hope and focus again. A sense of fierce urgency has replaced what I am sure was complacency--with what I had falsely assumed was to be its normal contours. Though my immediate world still continues to look ordinary, now it is shot through with a sense of foreboding. I keep grasping at whatever straws of normalcy are blowing by, but the last 19 months have taught me to distrust that there is anything normal about the President Elect, though wisdom counsels me to give him (at least for now) the benefit of the doubt, and to practice the same compassion that must be afforded every sentient being.

So where am I? And what are we to do? The analysis of what has befallen us and the damage that it has already and will inevitably cause has only just begun. However, some degree of clarity is returning. We are clearly a divided nation with different world views and perhaps completely different states of consciousness. My response? I feel I am personally being set out upon a path that, very provocatively, I am calling a "wisdom jihad." I cannot call it a "holy war" because Islam has taught me that this term should be reserved for the battle within--to gain ground for the Superior Angel of my own being--a personal war that only I can wage inside myself and against no one or nothing else. But I now begin to see more clearly that I must begin to walk more deliberately upon a sacred wisdom path, and participate with you in a "wisdom jihad" where the true, the good, and the beautiful assert themselves against what is false, corrupt and ugly. Courageously I must set aside my own complacency (my timid and often faint-hearted apprehensions), and embrace what I am sure must now become a sapiential struggle for our future and perhaps our very survival as a species on a very troubled planet. It is time. This is our time. No one else can do it for us.

As Alison Hine said to me in a cogent morning message, "the response to apocalyptic times must be beyond political affiliation." It matters not whether we may have had Democratic or Republican affiliation, or whether we see ourselves as progressive or conservative, or if our own personal identities are tribal or ethnic, the time has come to set all this aside in favor of a common objective and concerted effort to put forward a sapiential agenda that will address the common crisis that is looming over us.

Either in person or through further written messages, I very much want to strengthen you (you who are both wisdom's students and its teachers). I want to affirm what we already know, and learn what we don't yet know

but must learn together. This election event is a shock and wake-up call. Many realizations have started to flood into my own awareness and understanding. Either I must be (as we all must be) guided by higher Angels, or I will perish by falling prey to lower forces that look more and more like prodigies of those angels who have fallen. Regardless of how we describe the entities and forces now unleashed upon our world, they appear to be both toxic and blinding. False prophecy is just as potent as the true prophetic word, perhaps even more powerful, especially for those who hear it's siren song but live in a wisdom-desert in desperate search for living water.

~~ Lynn Bauman (Abbot)