

Screaming and Bowing

Russell Delman June 2020

We live in two worlds that are ultimately one world – the everyday life of linear time, which includes thoughts about the past and future, memories and plans, hopes and dreams, comparisons, judgments, fears AND the timeless world of Being in which we are simply alive in this moment, free from time, from particular self-identities and any need for life to be different than “what is”.

World #1

Something in me is screaming as I watch the video of the horrific, inhumane murder of an African-American man by a white police officer. Once again, my country expresses its original sin of slavery through these specific human beings.

So many voices arise:

- I am this police officer - we share a common heritage and indoctrination.
- I am George Floyd - a man going about his day.
- I am the voice that says you have no right to identify with an African-American; you have no idea what it is like to live in this world with this skin color.
- I am the protester burning buildings and automobiles in angry desperation.
- I am the voice saying destroying property is not helpful.

And on and on... Is there anyone who is not living in me also?

There is rightness to the outrage, to the anger, to the guilt, to the shame, to the hopelessness and to the fear. What can I do? How am I complicit? How does this change?

World #2

Life IS! Reality is the occurring of life, beyond my preferences and opinions, beyond ALL right and wrong.

“Who am I to argue with Life/reality” or you might say,

“Who am I to argue with God”?

To bring true peace to this world, we must start with the humility of placing reality above our ideas/ideals. We must bow with radical acceptance to “is-ness” as our ground state. We do not know the infinite causes and effects of any moment. Without justifying or condoning any action, we can also acknowledge that great positivity sometimes arises from the negative and we all have seen negativity follow from the apparent positive.

The truest we can say is –

We just don’t know, so:

We bow...

...And we scream.

How can a true human being not scream at blatant, incessant injustice?
How do we bow in humility and gratitude for Life as-it-is, because this is the only life we actually know and live in (everything else, including our thought-created world of positive ideals, is a virtual reality) AND still stand up for our strongly held values, our imagination of a future filled with Justice and Love? As Martin Luther King said: ***“never confuse the ‘is-ness’ of an old order with the ‘ought-ness’ of a new order”***

Therefore, this is my (our?) challenge in this moment:
Screaming and Bowing with unbridled caring, unconditional loving, complete acceptance of my personal and cultural inadequacies, and undaunted commitment to change, all with head-lowered humility.
Because I don’t know how to do this, I walk the path...

SURJ is a helpful organization supporting white people in effective allyship around racial justice.

<https://www.showingupforracialjustice.org>