NORTH TOWARD HOME

From here in Central America, you can’t see America’s “shining city on the hill,” but you can smell the dead in Gaza.

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WRITING WORTH READING FROM AROUND THE WORLD

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OPKINS VILLAGE, BELIZE: I watched Obama’s inaugural speech over a plate of rice, beans and tortillas eaten with my fingers, in a thatch roofed joint in Belize. Which is organic and ethnic as hell, but I’d be the first to admit that a bucket of hot wings and a cold sixer would have been far preferable to this slob. And right along with the Garifunas, Mestizos and Creoles there watching Obama, I had my choked up moments. After all, I’m still an American — albeit a reluctant one, and (despite the opinions of a couple of ex-wives) a human being.

But unlike most of the other villagers present, I also understood that I was watching a $40 million media production in which the highly paid meat puppets at the microphones spoke in a continuous tape loop … lip synching the lyrics of the national sing along, pointing out for the thousandth time that our new president is black, and going into detail about such things as Obama and Biden stepping out of their limos simultaneously. Wow! For the most part it was the Rose Bowl Parade, but with a speech and a dance party replacing the football game.

Obama, like any president, was fully aware he had to speak to all the people, not to mention the rest of the world, and his speech was about as good as it gets in that respect, with its necessary crimes of omission, such as mention of our long-standing global criminality both military and financial, and their remedy. But let’s face it, the subject of war reparations to Iraqi families is not a good opener for a guy about to pour most a trillion Somolians into the pockets of the financial masters of failed American capitalism in order to buy a couple of years of public goodwill, so that he may (hopefully) accomplish something more substantial. For instance, he could provide free bread, water and toilet paper for every homeless street person. Don’t laugh. No American is guaranteed even that. Also we must remember that it doesn’t take much these
Nations are essentially armed turf gangs and the most heavily armed – America at the moment – is no more likely to apologize to anyone than the LA Crips are for the latest drive-by shoot-up of a Blood Tupperware party.
week long genocidal attack on the Palestinians. The genocide was downplayed, avoided and/or suppressed by Western media, and purposefully twisted against the Palestinians in what scant American coverage it did manage to get. I won’t go into the boundless horrifics regarding the Israelis’ purposeful killing of women and children, targeting of international humanitarian medical workers, radiological weapons (DU), the flesh searing white phosphorus explosives that are illegal as hell to use against humans by world agreement … or the newest American supplied explosives that blast thousands of very tiny metal shards deep into civilians, whereupon the victims die slowly of hundreds of small inoperable internal bleedings.

It’s all out there on the net, on sites such as Counterpunch and Aljazeera English and a hundred others for anyone who cares to know the truth. There are far more serious events on this planet than the newest American to be elected ringmaster for six percent of the planet that takes itself very seriously as God’s anointed and armed City On The Hill, and is usually willing to the messenger who says otherwise.

But still… but still… there is something mesmerizing in that damned City on the Hill ideation of ours. That relentless notion of perfection. Even if it has been hopelessly perverted into a shopping expedtion for perfect commodities, the notion of a perfect society and personal perfection still haunts Americans, though the rest of the world has pretty much opted for something a bit more workable.

Perfection necessarily implies some ultimate rightness, allegiance to highest truth available, and acknowledgement of even the most brutal ones … such as Gaza and our functional support of those mass murders. The truth, especially for Americans living inside a deadly media illusion of our own making, is the new frontier. We can blame the media snake charmers all we want, and the soulless corporations they serve, but our seduction has been a willing one.

The truth was always the only frontier and it has always been an inner one about seeking and unflinching acknowledgement of what one discovers – which in the end inspires universal compassion. Looking upon the world with eyes as cold as ashes but with a heart like a furnace. And that makes it spiritual. Not religious, not esoteric, not mystical, not cosmic, not New Age, but utterly and humanly spiritual. We are not and never were individuals, but merely brief swimmers in the river of flesh called mankind. Yet inside each frail sentient being there is that small bead of light, of self, of the truth of pure existence. It can guide us in those right things before us, that we either will or will not rise to doing. That is its purpose, if it can be said to have one.

Now that Cotton Mather’s City On The Hill has proven a vapor, there are worse things we could attempt than fix upon that light as a beacon for crossing our spiritual Jordan’s turbulent waters, toward some more perfect inner shore.

Perfection, whether of the stripe sought by socialists, Christians, atheists, Buddhists or Muslims, is within each of us. It’s unhip, unscientific, archaic, politically incorrect and guaranteed to hurt. But it’s the truth.
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