

LIBERATION

THE PULSE OF SPIRIT
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I'd like to talk about liberation in every sense of the word. Here are lyrics from a song written by Tom Glazer to Bach's "St. Matthew's Passion Chorale":

*My brothers and my sisters, forever hand in hand
Where chimes the bell of freedom, there is my native land
My brothers' fears are my fears, yellow, white or brown
My sisters' tears are my tears, the whole wide world around.*

*Let every voice be thunder, let every heart be strong
Until all tyrants perish, our work will not be done
Let every pain be token, the lost years shall be found
Let slavery's chains be broken, the whole wide world around.*

Passionate words! They're relevant from a

political perspective but not only from that perspective. The goal of my life is to bring liberation to the world, knowing that liberation starts in consciousness; knowing that people who are in bondage in consciousness can't be free in the living of their life. There has to be freedom inside before there can be freedom outside.

So many people are not empowered in their life. Their will to live a creative life has not been set free. Their sense of possibility is not set free. Even the great promise of the Declaration of Independence hasn't fully taken shape in the mind of the person, whether they're American or not: *Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness*. So the real, earnest pursuit of happiness in a person's life is so often given up.

Liberation comes because we're empowered as a person. When we are empowered personally we are ready to be empowered collectively with other people—because we're not afraid of our light individually or together. And if our light is

shining, it is an encouragement for others to shine their light, too, and to be a collective light.

We live in a world where it's so evident, looking across America particularly, that there's been a loss of common will. Think about the tremendous common will that began this country. The founders of America felt their freedom so strongly, and they saw clearly the opportunity that they had to live a fulfilled and happy life. The ideals of freedom had so ripened in their minds that they knew that the only way to fulfill that will was together. So there was great common will in the initiation of America. Even though the moneyed interests of Europe were resisting that liberation, and even though those same interests carried over into the new nation, still there was great common will amongst people that allowed for a new beginning.

So how about today? There is huge corporate will around the world. There is the huge will of moneyed interests that are affecting our society on every hand. And then there is great suspicion about any attempt to galvanize the common will from the people at large.

More and more in America, individuals and the population at large are disenfranchised politically. It's hard to get an intelligent voice into the national debate the way the media is set up, the way elections are set up, and with the great part that money has to play in those elections. More and more, we get the sense that elections are bought and paid for, and the

people who run for office know that they can't get elected unless they concede to big-money interests.

I'm not speaking radical politics here. I'm speaking what I think anybody with a clear-eyed view of the situation would have to admit and acknowledge. Even people in the political world who have something creative to offer and an unselfish vision to bring to the country end up making great concessions to the deep pockets that got them elected, so that their brilliance has a hard time finding its way into the public square, and so that the common will that they represent is hardly represented. Despite that, there is a great distinction between a politician who has a clear and genuine vision and desire to be of service to this country and one who is only in it for other reasons.

In the face of the political situation in America and in other parts of the world, how is the individual supposed to live an empowered life, to live a free and liberated life, to break the chains that are present? These words from the song interest me:

Until all tyrants perish, our work will not be done.

I've seen a few tyrants fall in my lifetime. There are the more well-known tyrants: the dictators of the Second World War; Saddam Hussein and the Shah of Iran. There are other tyrants, seen and unseen, that persist in the world today.

Did you hear the person who said *it's not so bad*

that there are enemies out there all around me; it's just that they have secret agents in my own mind?
 And of course, the human mind itself is the tyrant. It is the human mind detached from any sense of ethical orientation or true moral context that is the tyrant. It is the self-will of the human mind that is the tyrant, along with the hungry human heart. They go together. The hungry human heart and the tyrant mind rule people's lives and keep them from being liberated, from being empowered, from knowing the truth that's presented in this song so beautifully. Behind what you might see as a 1960s leftist, radical, unionist color to the song, there is something very beautiful that's being said:

*Because all men are brothers, wherever men
 may be
 And women all are sisters, forever proud and
 free....*

*My brothers and my sisters, forever hand in
 hand
 Where chimes the bell of freedom, there is my
 native land.*

The song goes on to say how the songwriter realizes that his destiny is tied up with the destiny of humanity. Early on in my life, I thought long and hard about whether I could be happy, knowing that the rest of humanity was not. I concluded that there are levels of joy and happiness to be known in living that I want to embrace. But I also knew that as long as people are starving, as long as there are people who are not free, as long as tyrants rule the earth, some

part of me will not be happy. Sitting in a big old house someplace worth hundreds of thousands of dollars really wouldn't change that hole in the human heart that comes from the state of humanity as it is. No, my brother *is* all others; my sister is all others. Our own personal destiny is tied up with the destiny of others. That truth has immediate, daily, practical application in our living. Any word that we offer to another, any light that we can shed for another, is our part of our responsibility for the whole body of humanity.

There are so many things that happen in a human life that can overtake that immediate sense that we're here to be of service to others. When I first heard this song, I had not yet turned twenty years old. Peter, Paul and Mary sing a fabulous version of it, by the way. I think about all the things that have happened in my life that could overtake that sense of service, that desire to live a liberated life, that sense of responsibility for the world as a whole, and the knowing that whatever it is that we have to do is something that we're going to do together. There's so much that has happened in my life that could overshadow a strong spiritual compass with personal concerns.

Yet I find my life keeps coming back to an essential truth, an essential reality. It's a reality of oneness. I found this song in my favorite songbook, *Rise Up Singing*. It's under the category "Unity." *Unity* is another word for *oneness*. It has implications from a labor-union standpoint or a leftist political standpoint. But I'm thinking about the truth and the reality of

what the word means. Indeed we are one with our brothers and sisters throughout the world. We're living in *one* world, after all—pretty hard to argue with that. There's one Reality that we are sharing. And what happens to you makes a difference to me, and what happens to me makes a difference to you.

Our fate is tied together. And if we ever doubted it, just let the temperature of the planet continue to increase, and we'll understand ever more vividly that what they're doing over there in China with their coal-fired furnaces is making a difference to you and me, and our automobiles are making a difference to them.

But the oneness of the world as it is and the common fate of humanity doesn't necessarily give us an answer to the problems that we face today as humanity. Just realizing that we're facing one problem and that we have one common goal doesn't necessarily give us the enlightened consciousness necessary to change this world. We need a liberating spirituality that is relevant to today, relevant to this situation, and is true to the Truth of who we are.

Some attempt has been made to do that from a Christian standpoint. They call it Liberation Theology. I don't know how much it has helped to address the situation we are facing worldwide.

I had someone make a comment on my Facebook page, saying that she was a newly converted Christian and was glad to find my

Facebook page. I agonized with how to respond to her. Because who knows what strange beliefs may come along with a person who identifies themselves as a Christian.

In the truest sense, I consider myself a Christian. In the truest sense, I know that Jesus brought liberation for individuals and for humanity. He talked about the truth that sets people free. And certainly he was a threat to the powers of his day, which warms my radical heart. But more than that, he brought a transcendent Truth. That Truth had implications politically and socially, but it was clear that the Truth that he brought wasn't about the social or political conditions of the day, particularly. He was encouraging anyone who would listen to him to embrace the liberating Truth of their own Being, of what was inside them.

He talked about oneness. His fervent prayer was "that they all may be one." You might say the truth was that all people were one already, so he was talking about something more than that. I believe, to understand the truth of his words, we have to understand that he was praying that we would *know* that we are one. "That they all may be one," that they may *know* that they are one. He was praying to the Reality of Oneness, the source of *all* oneness, the source of all Being, within himself and within all people.

But when I read this woman's comment on my Facebook page, I shuddered to think what she might believe it means to be a Christian, with all the false beliefs around about who he was

and why he came into the world. It's enough for me to know that he was a beautifully noble man, a beautifully noble Being, a Being of Love, who brought liberation—the liberation of the Truth of Being. And he brought that liberation for anyone who would listen and take him seriously and embrace his message. But he was also calling to all humanity to come together in that Truth that he shared, knowing that the powers of the world, all tyrants, would be vanished from the earth as oneness is known.

This is what the founder of the Emissaries knew. He considered it a failure of Christians throughout the world that communist Russia was so powerful in its day. He believed that if Christians—or anyone else—would truly embrace the message of Love that Jesus brought and the message of Truth that Jesus brought, the tyrants of the world would have no chance.

We here at Sunrise Ranch have our own way of bringing liberation to this world. We've decided that the most powerful way to liberate the world is to be an example ourselves of being a liberated person, and then an example of a liberated people. Just like anyone, we have the opportunity of demonstrating the creativity of a liberated person. We do so with the belief that if this is done among a group of people, both right here at Sunrise Ranch and with people connected to us globally, there is tremendous power for transformation brought to the world. It's the power of a liberated culture of people. It's the power of the example of people living a liberated life.

Here at Sunrise Ranch, it's the power of people who are living on the earth in an enlightened way, not in a tyrannical way. We could protest on the steps of the Capitol but we have come to believe that the most powerful thing that we could do is to be, personally and individually, a teaching and demonstration site as a liberated person, and then collectively that we could be a teaching and demonstration site of liberated *truthful* people. We've found a profound trust and a profound faith in the reality of God that's within us and within all people and within all of Creation. We take that profound trust and that profound faith and bring it to another person as an act of *positive* trust and *positive* faith.

Relationship is an act of trust and faith. I have trust in my relationship with you, not because I've decided you're a good person and you're worth it but because I've decided that life is trustworthy—that I trust the Reality of Life itself. I trust the God that's within you and the God that's within me and within all people. I know that as we liberate ourselves from the tyrant of our own mind, we can find our oneness, our unity, the love that we know together—not love that we have to try to produce but the Love that we're made of, that connects us, that is our oneness.

So this is what I would say to anybody who would listen:

Leave the God of your ideas, whether they be religious or otherwise, and find that Reality of God within yourself, in which things are already whole and they're already solved and they're already one.

*Find that Reality of Being within yourself
that already includes all people in Love, even
your worst enemies.*

*Find that Reality of Being in which global
warming is already solved, in which all
human problems are in essence already
solved. And embrace that Reality within*

*yourself; that creative intelligence, that
creative knowing.*

*Embrace that highest Love within yourself
and give that expression. Trust that God. Be
vulnerable to that God, that Reality of
Being.*

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