

This I Believe
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I believe in human perfection.

By perfection, I do not mean the proportional calculus that defines the beauty of face and form at a particular moment in history. I do not mean flawlessness. I do not mean a particular skin color or hair texture or an epidermis free of spots and stripes. I do not mean perfect health or ability. I believe in human perfection when we understand perfection as completeness.

Where do I find my completeness? I do not believe that I am complete in myself, especially when I understand myself as this body called by a proper name. I am complete when I understand myself as nature. I am the earth and all its waters. I am the air, plants, animals, star shine, moon glow and sun light.

I am complete when my sense of self expands out to include my kin, friends, and neighbors. I am complete when my self becomes the stranger far and near, the weak and the frail, the victims of poverty and disease and war. I am complete when my self is the Other, the opposite Other, the enemy Other, the evil Other. I am complete, I am perfect when I realize that the rich are made perfect by the poor, the young by the old, the strong by the weak. Each completes the other. So each is morally responsible to the Other, responsible with the Other for our perfection.

I am complete, I am perfect when I want for the Other, all the Others, what I want for myself – food, clothes, shelter, health, safety, education, a vocation, laughter, tears, and to quote Langston Hughes: “to dig and be dug in return.”

I believe in human perfection born out of a revolution of values. Martin Luther King JR was right when he called for a value system that puts human relationships, human generosity before the acquisition of stuff. I believe in a human perfection determined according to how much we can give rather than how much we can accumulate. Stuff and things are so easily blown away, washed away, burned away or swallowed up by the earth. I believe that peace would come when humankind rejects militarism, materialism and racism.

I believe in the peace of Jerusalem and peace on the entire earth. John Lennon was right when he sang ‘Imagine.’ We can envision human perfection. We can see peace in our mind’s eye. And when we dare to see it, to write the vision, we can work toward it. We can begin to build it. We can realize our perfection through an ethic of radical love, an ethic where we touch our divine core and overcome the evil in our complete, perfect selves with good.

This I believe.