

Mr. President

Written by Mossa Barandao

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The unlikely event in our life time has come to past. The United States of America and its citizenry have voted in large numbers to entrust the leadership of the nation to an unlikely individual -a man, who less than 50 years ago would not had the rights to participate in the idealism of democracy.

At approximately 11:04 pm on November 4th, 2008, this man, Barack Obama, became President-Elect of the United States of America. This was a choice made by 53% of the voting body and by an overwhelming electoral victory -365 of the available 538; an unprecedented feat, since the target number was 270.

This clearly signifies a true embodiment of change -as was the theme of his campaign. Barack Obama argued relentlessly for 21 months that he represented change. Though, many would have seen, heard and even believed Obama's argument -of change, from many different prisms, I argue that the real change will not be measured on the basis of policies or tangible national or global actions (though not to speak little of these forthcoming policies and actions), but that the measure of this change will be on the psychological impact of the idea of his election.

Allow me to strengthen my argument on this psychological impact.

Obama is a black man. Though he is of a multi-racial pedigree -a white mother and a black father, if the circumstances were different and if he were of lesser influence then current, he surely would be recognized as a black man with no reservation. This is based on the very definition of one's racial identity as defined by these United States of America -"The One Drop Rule, meaning that a single drop of black blood makes a person black". In this respect, Obama is black! This explanation is necessary because there are those who argue that technically Obama is not black because of his multi-racial make-up.

Now, with an understanding of the nearly half of a millennium history of blacks in America, we thus can understand the significance for the need to perpetuate the marginalization of blacks. This history which starts with the barbaric capture of Africans; then with the transatlantic voyage and arrival to Jamestown in 1619; to the slave capitalism in the Americas which sold these captured Africans as subhuman properties for the slave labor -a labor force that was to carve the proverbial stones that is the foundation of this nation.

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In the end, this system and its gatekeepers managed to psychologically deplete the character of blacks; this, on the pretext that blacks were of an inferior breed. This idea has since been impregnated in the minds of many in this world -to include blacks themselves. It is an idea that is commonly and subliminal thought of as "the stigma of blackness"; whereas, ignorance, laziness, anger, violence, incompetence, ugliness and many other stereo-typical social ills are directly associated with those of the black race. This has been an idea -or strategy, that has literally crippled a group of people for over 389 years. It is rightly what I call one of the greatest psychological tyrannies in human history. Alas, this has been the condition under which those of black heritage -to include those of mix racial make-up- have existed. To this, we have our brethren of the colonial powers to thank.

To the point of the historical event of November 4th, 2008, the election of Barack Obama, (a man who is of the group described above) as the leader of the very nation that has for nearly 400 years, stripped -with great success- all those that look like him of any existentialism; indeed, will forever be one of the greatest moment in the history of this nation and most importantly of the world. It marks the great turning point where a clear acknowledgement of the creed that is the bedrock in the birth of this nation -"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness"; Furthermore, this event is a symbolic utterance that maybe the idea of "the stigma of blackness" -that has been perpetuated since those early days, 389 years ago- either no longer exists or was in fact untrue. For such belief could not be true, yet elect one who is purported to epitomize such characteristics to be the leader of that very system. This symbolic utterance, I believe to have its physical representation as the psychological impact to which I earlier referred.

In an article entitled ["Obama vs Clinton and McCain: an epochal contention"](#) (6/01/08), I made the argument that should Obama be elected president of the United States of America, the world's most powerful and wealthiest country, the reverberating message world wide would be exponentially powerful and positive; inasmuch, that the world would see that America -with her many past ills, has embarked on a real road of change with the potential of living-up to her true greatness. Even more substantially, the image which Obama represents -that of a black man and of the black race- would begin to be seen in a different prism. Consequently, this new revelation would provide hope -from a psychological standpoint- to a group of people who have been marginalized for nearly 400 years. Caution, this is in no way to suggest that the nation's entrenched predispositions of fear, prejudice injustice, inequality and hatred will magically disappear, but that a seed of hope would have been planted, so that the many I believe to need that little bit of help can begin to think, see and even react to things differently, thus being constructive, rather than deconstructive -as many of us have been.

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The task is Herculean. Barack Obama has now become the "Atlas" of our today - the metaphorical bearer of the weight of our world. Upon him rest the hopes and expectations of many. But it is important that all of us understand that such expectations and hopes are unattainable unless we do our part to therefore bring about the change that is so desperately needed. Barack Obama has inspired and given hope to many. His success in convincing over 66 million Americans to entrust him with the presidency was the first step. In subsequent, those of us who dwell on the peripherals of either the leftist or the rightist isms should begin to move closer to the center. Those of us who fear "the others" -as in those that are different from us, should begin to develop a greater surplus of empathy; for in truth, we are all in it together.

In the preceding respect, I hold to be true -irrespective of any-one's political philosophy, that the election of Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States of America is a victory for humanity; such a victory is critical, as we continue our quest for a more perfect society!