

Michael Jackson 'the forgotten humanitarian'

In Mahavanain Buddhism, there is an enlightened existence known as the 'bodhisattva' who decides to postpone attainment of nirvana in order to alleviate the suffering of others. Patrick Treacy explains how this applies to Michael Jackson

June 27, 2010 - [PRLog](#) -- In Mahavanain Buddhism, there is an enlightened existence known as the 'bodhisattva' who decides to postpone attainment of nirvana in order to alleviate the suffering of others. In my own lifetime, I have been fortunate to have met some of these visionaries, Nelson Mandela, Mother Theresa, Bono, John Lennon and Michael Jackson.

Only five people in nearly half a century, just enough to count on the fingers of one hand. Each of them, intrinsically motivated by a sense of great compassion, generating bodhicitta for the ultimate benefit of all sentient beings. Of course, there have been others, circulating on the peripheries of my own dharma. I knew Lady Diana Spencer during the mid nineties in a medical sense and I had been in the presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama without having actually met him. All of these people, hugely influential, global messengers using their powers to try and make the world a better place for each of us to live in. Nelson Mandela stood against the injustice of apartheid, Mother Theresa and Bono against the injustice of poverty, John Lennon against the injustice of war but Michael Jackson went further. His body of artistic work carried a spiritual message for these and all of the other injustices of the human race...those of racism, inequality, disease, hunger and corruption. His song 'Man in the Mirror' makes us realise that the path to Nirvana starts within ourselves through meditation and self reflection.

"I'm starting with the man in the mirror; I'm asking him to change his ways; no message could have been any clearer; if you want to make the world a better place, take a look at yourself and make a change." If Nirvana can be loosely described as an idealised state free of worries, pain and mental anguish, we all know that Michael never achieved this state, seemingly forever trapped in a state of the 'bodhisattva' with the temporal green grasses and sundials of Neverlands becoming its earthly substitute. His efforts at generating bodhicitta however are unfortunately rarely mentioned any more. Few people remember that he donated all of the money from the song we just mentioned above to charity. Following the 1984 Victory Tour, he donated his \$5 million share from the tour's profits to charity. In 1985, he co-wrote the single "We Are the World" with Lionel Richie and donated all of the proceeds to help the needy in Africa. Almost 20 million copies of "We Are the World" were sold, making it one of the best-selling singles of all time. The project raised millions for famine relief.

In fact, the first time I met Michael, his opening words to me were "Thank you for all you are doing for the people of Africa". He then proceeded to take out an old magazine from his pocket, which had an article I had written back in 1992 called 'The Silence of the Savannah'. The article detailed my experiences of coming across empty villages on route through Africa to Capetown and it predicted the eventual rise of HIV in sub-Saharan Africa. It began...

"Evenings in Kenya are enchanting. It is then that the sun takes on a light of deep red before setting, and barefooted women clothed in loose kangas stir up a light murram dust as they meet us on their way homeward for the night. As dusk falls the swollen rim of the sinking sun runs rivulets of scarlet colour into the skyline and silhouettes the acacia trees on the hillsides around us. This is the unchanging magic in the landscape of Africa, and it is our signal we have travelled enough for the day. We turn into the bush to find some shade and set up camp. In the distance we can hear some voices from a nearby 'manyatta', and the sound of barking dogs disturbs the stillness of the dusk.....

...later, we pass many empty villages, abandoned stores and vacant huts that are a testament to the destructive power of the plague whose path we follow. There is an eeriness about these deserted hamlets, and in the restless winds that stir the blue savannah grasses I listen expectantly to hear the noise of barking dogs, or the distant sounds of children playing but no sound comes!

'You know I cried when I read that' he continued.

"We must do something together for the people of Africa"

And his humanitarianism did not stop on the African continent. In 1984, Michael donated his out of court \$1.5 million settlement to the Brotman Medical Centre in Culver City, California. This facility was later renamed the "Michael Jackson Burn Center" in honour of his donation. Using this money the facility was able to get the best available technology for treating burn victims, especially children. In 1993, he gave all the profits from 67 concerts over eighteen months on the Dangerous World Tour to the Heal the World Foundation. In 1999, he organised a series of benefit concerts with Mariah Carey, Slash, Andrea Bocelli and Luciano Pavarotti in Germany and Korea. He donated the total proceeds to the "Nelson Mandela Children's Fund", the Red Cross and UNESCO. After 911, he helped organise the 'United We Stand: What More Can I Give' benefit concert at RFK Stadium in Washington, D.C. He also was given a special award from President Ronald Regan for his support of American drug and alcohol charities.

His last album, Invincible has a song called Cry. It is a song about the collective humanity of the earth. It carries a mission to change the world and create a better version of the human. It is a cry from another world.

"You can change the world

(I can't do it by myself)

You can touch the sky

(Gonna take somebody's help)

You're the chosen one

(I'm gonna need some kind of sign)

All cry at same time tonight"

That is how I will remember Michael Jackson on his anniversary and maybe in the evening sun as the restless winds stir the blue savannah grasses of far away Africa;this is the way his ancestors might also!.

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