

Letters to my Grandfather

“In The House Of The Living”

Stan Ovshinsky III

1966

Dear Great-grandfather [*sic*],

I am writing to you because I feel that you have an honest desire to understand. You lived in a time of much confusion and you felt the need to seek new solutions to many problems. You sought your own solutions to your own problems so you must realize that you could only find your own answers.

Let us begin then with an understanding; we are each on separate paths—each on his own trip. I recognize my questions as mine and my answers as being valid only for me, but I insist that you do the same. Recognize the overwhelming presence of the self in what any man says or does.

All this must sound strange to you Sir, for we are at vastly different positions. We have different prophets. Are yours more valid than mine? Who were your prophets?—Locke, Rousseau, Marx, Jefferson? I really don't know, but I give them as much validity for you as mine have for me. Mine are people like Christ, Buddha, Gurdjieff, Bergson, de Chardin and Hesse.

Which of my prophets was unconcerned with “poverty, death and disintegration?” They understood these things only too well and spent their lives trying to improve their fellow man.

This is where I'm at Sir. Not in the drug stupor that your ignorance fantasizes. We both seek a better world, but we have different ways.

I sit and look back at you from 100 years in the future and can tell you that your way of thinking shall be obsolete. I don't criticize you and I hope you don't feel criticism. Your tower of logic and consistency is wonderfully well constructed. You weave a web of logic that is indestructible. No tower of Babel is yours. It is too well built to crumble and the foundation could never weaken. Your tower will live forever—but the world that gives it meaning is disappearing.

I would like also, dear Great-grandfather, to tell you that I am truly sorry that you “have never worshipped at any shrine.” To never know the joy of worship is sad, to never feel the ecstasy of finding God in a flowing stream or a fallen leaf, to never see yourself in perspective to the macrocosm. All these things are sad, but sadder still is that you have never worshipped at the holiest shrine of all—your own self -God.

You choose to shout and criticize. You take sides in any issue. Defender of the people. Hate Johnson and love the Viet Cong or vice versa—it is the same thing.

Psychedelic Prayer VI-2

As you return

Remember

Choose beauty... so you define ugly,

Select good, so you create evil,

As you choose your joy, so you design your sorrow,

The coin you are now imprinting has two sides,

Better to return in the flow of the Tao,

For indeed,
The opposites exist for you alone,
Beyond your heads and tails,
Dances the unity,
All sounds harmonize,
All games end in a tie,
Your God stands on the pitcher's mound and nods to his catcher and winds up and throws a shoulder-high fast ball,

POP!
Right into your Devil's glove.

—T. Leary

(adapted from the *Tao Te Ching*)

The answer, Sir, must come from loving Johnson and the Viet Cong, but this won't occur in your day. Then the world was only beginning to get a glimpse at what the word "peace" really meant.

It took the generation after you to realize that peace couldn't be built on hate or bigger bombs. That we couldn't have peace as long as we rejected another man's ideals.

The hardest lesson of all was to learn not to hate the haters or the bomb droppers either, but to extend our love to all men. This is what you find so difficult to understand.

I also must remind you that you envision things like "LSD," "drug," "hallucination," etc., from the mind of Stan Ovshinsky and all your preconceptions and your prejudices go into it. Again, I am not criticizing, but I recognize these qualities in what I say and I ask that you do the same.

You would warn me against "investing substantial meanings in hallucinatory visions" and I would agree, but I am less hasty to decide wherein the illusion lies.

Imagine yourself driving to work along the expressway one morning and the world disappears. You reappear in a topsy turvy universe where you have two heads and three feet and speak a new language. You look around and you are surrounded by beings exactly like your new self. One kindly creature comes up and kisses you on the cheek—

"Welcome Stan Ovshinsky, you have existed long enough in the pre-birth world of illusion."

Love and Peace

Stan III

(Sheil Salasnek)

fifth Estate

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