

July 9, 2026 The Sunflower



***“You will not be punished for your anger; you will be punished by your anger”. -Buddha***

I struggle with moral outrage. Well, more accurately I struggle with my conscience over the fact that my moral outrage is weak, anemic, and rather fleeting – it lacks passionate commitment. I’m not talking about anger, agitation, or impatience at times; for of those I give full servings. No, I’m talking about gross and systemic injustices, the tolerated (and all too often abetted) existence of cruelty, hunger, violence, abandonment, poverty, abuse, greed, war, and hatred. I feel disgusted, disheartened, saddened, powerless when confronted with these conditions or news of them, and I condemn them and those who foster, perpetuate, or deny their existence. But then I turn away...mostly silent, mostly despairing, mostly turning to comfort, distraction, or some fig leaf of busyness. Mostly excusing myself from the burdens of outrage.

I scratch, a bit, to gain some insights and understandings of how and why things have come to be. Maybe I’m just hoping Tolstoy’s observation is enough- *“Tout comprendre, c’est tout pardonner.”* [To understand all is to forgive all.] Understanding and forgiveness are good things, and I do reach for them and they have helped me often in jobs, relationships, and circumstances that trigger agitation, impatience or anger in me. Although, I regret that too frequently that old pity party-pooper, Tolstoy, shows up late to my grumpy galas. On the other hand, there are moral offenses that should not be tolerated or forgiven at all...where moral outrage and action is the higher path. Or perhaps it’s that understanding and forgiveness might only be possible after justice and kindness is restored and healing begins.

A recent (re)reading of Simon Weisenthal’s 1969 book, “The Sunflower” triggered my consideration of these limits and possibilities of forgiveness, but it also raised for me questions of committed action. The lack of either of these can be outrageous.

**Happy Thinksday.**