A Few Words Dedicated to the Other Guy (s)

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Well it is official. Now most of us do not have to flee our beloved land and Tina Fey will not have to flee planet Earth.

Last Tuesday was a heady day for many obvious reasons, but the surprises just kept on coming. The first one was that Obama (my man, please refer to the article Barack and Me where I outline our rather tempestuous ideological relationship early on) took Ohio, a swing state, North Carolina, traditionally known as a swing state for a different reason (many an innocent black man was lynched thereI know, I know, but I am feeling like I now have been given back the right as an American to say any damn thing I please), and Pennsylvania, where Puritanical America was invented or maybe that was Massachusetts, who has redeemed itself by consistently voting Democratic. I have a registered Republican friend who went down to PA to campaign for Mr. Obama; so much has the tide turned.

But I think the most gratifying surprise of the day was the eloquent, gracious, expansive, and unifying concession speech given by John McCain. When his supporters booed, he quieted them down at once and set about the task at hand, which was to remind the American people who we were and why we were powerful. He outlined the historic, symbolic significance of Obama's win, what it meant for our children and for those who fought and died protecting the very freedom we exercised on that soggy (In Connecticut), but jubilant day. Gone was the cheek nodule ridden, angry, condescending, and dare I say it, bigoted, man we saw in the debates. He was humbled, almost abashed as he quietly accepted the loss as his failure and not his supporters. It was the classiest moment of the entire McCain campaign. The actual failure, in my unschooled opinion, lies with the brain trust that advised him to take on Ms. Palin as his running mate but as usual no one bothered to ask me. But I am being ungracious about Sarah, and I should not be. The country will now ride the transition trail and that must be done with forgiveness, magnanimity and delicacy. Qualities that stand all human beings in good stead. Especially for those of us who have been watching the past eight years in horror and wondering why the universe had forsaken us. We need to do this in order to heal and shed the accumulated bad karma that has settled like a shroud over this great nation of ours. I can say that now, great nation, though I know we still have a long way to go. And I found myself doing just that, being generous with the other guys and gals. With McCain it was easy, but you know what? I even did it with Dubbya! I did! I admit it.

When I told my friend in Dhaka about Bush's generous speech congratulating Obama and his family, and how I actually bought it, she was surprised. I told her that he talked about the "little boy" raised by his grandparents and single mother and how proud they would have been to see him become our leader. He uttered these words without missing a beat, and I have to tell you, I believed him. Maybe I am being too maudlin and caught up in the moment, but I do feel that the manner in which Obama ran his campaign and what he symbolises in part created the generosity we saw from both McCain and President Bush. They are now forced to acknowledge that the American people have spoken loudly and bravely and they rose to meet those voices. As leaders should do. Conversely, our Mrs. Clinton, if you recollect, was not as gracious in her concession speech at times.

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