

From: exsa_usa@yahoogroups.com [mailto:exsa_usa@yahoogroups.com] **On Behalf Of** Egbe Monjimbo
Sent: Monday, September 13, 2010 4:59 PM
To: exsa_usa@yahoogroups.com
Cc: EX-SakerUSA@yahoogroups.com; exssa_mal@yahoogroups.com
Subject: [exsa_usa] CARPE DIEM!!! (FOOD FOR THOUGHT)

My dear Sisters,

I cannot think of a pleasant or more roundabout way to ask this “sensitive” question so I’ll just ask it bluntly:

Have you ever stopped to wonder what will **TRUTHFULLY** be said of you when you leave this world?

I don’t mean what the officiating Pastor will say at your funeral, or what will be read out from a beautifully scripted eulogy, or what will be printed in the Funeral Program between 2 big-big cross dem! We all know that, “according to we culture, dem no dey talk bad about person when e die” – at least not openly, which is why the question I just asked refers more to what you think will be whispered and thought deep inside by those who knew us well, (“haters” excluded), after our demise.

Sadly, we all know a Mammy EMMEH (as in Emmerencia) or 2 who, on the day of their funeral, no one onions no be leff for Victoria market because they had all been purchased by “mourners” who were in dire need of a “potent external stimulant” (subtly wrapped in a “HANKACHIEF” – as in “hankie”) to be able to produce even a thimble full of wall gecko, - not even crocodile tears!! The sighs (of relief) were many, and instead of the usual “MAKE E GO REST YAH!”, there was a whole “MAKE E TRY GO; MAKE MAN REST” Committee, volunteering their grave-digging services pro bono! Hard to blame anyone for this show of “insensitivity” when “Dear Old Mammy EMMEH was well known to be the “MAMMY PALAVA” everywhere she set foot, such that when she left “BATOKE” on transfer to “MUDEKA”, de whole BATOKE be leff for back dey sing:

“We are happy since our burden rolled **AHWAY!** We had carried **HER** for years night and day! Then we asked our Blessèd Lord and He transferred her away, then **AT LAST** all our troubles rolled away! **ROLLED AHWAY, ROLLED AHWAY ...**

Need I mention that all over “MUDEKA” (where she was headed), before de tipper wey e dey transport Mammy e mattress, e Vono bed and de rest of e carko wan even reach Half Mile, de whole town dey sing:

“Troublesome times are here; Filling our hearts with fear; Peace that we all held dear, now is at stake ...”

Mammy go shiddon for “varandah” dey “take French air”; Small innocent pikin pass salute Mammy say “GOOD MORNING, MA!” with the broadest, sweetest “Tiko-Douala Road” smile (as wey de poor pikin e teet(h) dem don comm’ot all); Mammy answer de poor pikin back say:

“SEE YOUR BIG HEAD FOR DEY LIKE GOOD MORNING! WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT DE MORNING???”

AH NGANA!!!!

In contrast to this set up, let’s take a look at Acts 9:36-40, where the amazing and challenging story of DORCAS, (also known as TABITHA), is narrated. Here’s what was said of her:

... **She was always doing good and helping the poor.** ³⁷About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. ³⁸Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, “Please come at once!”

³⁹Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. **All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.** ⁴⁰Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, “Tabitha, get up.” She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up.

Notice WHO the most distraught mourners that were crying their eyes out (no onions needed) in the story are! It was not Dorcas’ “Best Bohs”, relatives or Kontri Meeting /Njangi Members even oh! (Even though I am sure they too cried their “lass beleh”); it was the WIDOWS; a very neglected, undermined and helpless bracket of that day’s society, (which is why both the Old and New Testaments specifically call on believers to assist them)! This woman clearly had a huge positive impact on her community – Just like our Aunty Meg, I must add!

This may sound morbid or “twisted” but I firmly believe that we would all live far better lives if we thought of our dying day a little more often than we tend to do. Seriously, I am convinced that if we lived our lives “preparing” for our death, (Death being practically the only thing that is GUARANTEED to occur in our lives once we are born), then, not just we ourselves, but those around us would be better off. Needless to say, when I talk of “preparing for our death”, I am NOT talking about going “coffin shopping” in NKOULOLOU once a month “while waiting”; choosing “die songs” from **SS&S and Myenge Ma Bosangi** to be sung at our wake and Funeral Service; or ordering the “material” we would like our mourning family and friends to wear from **R & W KING!!!** Not at all! I am thinking more along the lines of the psalmist’s plea (in Psalm 90:12) that we learn to “NUMBER OUR DAYS” so that we may “APPLY OUR HEARTS UNTO WISDOM”.

“CARPE DIEM”, the title of this email, is only part of this longer phrase that is featured in Horace’s Latin Poem: **Carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero** – “**Seize the day, trusting as little as possible in the future**”, and even though it has been used more to advocate the “CHOP BEFORE YOU DIE” (epicurean) philosophy, there is still a lot of

sense behind it. For me, the reminder that “Tomorrow May Never Be Mine” pushes me to make an effort to use the “balance” of the time I have left to:

1. **FOCUS ON THINGS THAT MATTER:** I cannot think of any Scripture that gives us better counsel in this area than Paul’s advice in Philippians 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Before, I used to wonder why Paul “limited” his advice to just “THINKING” on these things, but when I look at what Jesus Himself says in Matthew 12:34 which (in the New International Reader’s Version of the Bible) BLUNTLY states:

... Your mouths say everything that is in your hearts,

I understand Paul’s reasoning completely! Here’s the whole statement Jesus made:

Your mouths say everything that is in your hearts. ³⁵ A good man says good things. These come from the good that is put away inside him. An evil man says evil things. These come from the evil that is put away inside him. ³⁶ But here is what I tell you. On judgment day, people will have to account for every careless word they have spoken.

It stands to reason therefore, that I have to work on my thoughts and the kinds of things I DWELL on and ALLOW TO TAKE ROOT IN MY HEART, if I expect good things to come out of my mouth. Simply put: Garbage In; Garbage Out! Scripture In; Scripture Out! Easier said than done, but I have to make the effort, and beg God, (through His Holy Spirit), to help me!

I have heard many people who’ve had a close brush with death talk about seeing their whole life flash before them. I have also read many records of deathbed thoughts, reflections and regrets. I am yet to read or hear any accounts where the dying person said they wished they had borne many more grudges, held on to them longer, gossiped a little more, slapped, bitten and kicked a few more people, and broken many more friendships!!!! I think the reason why is obvious!

2. **ENJOY THE JOYS OF LIFE:** The “hoarder” that I am used to keep perfumes given to me as gifts so they de whole bottle evaporate; keep the handbag I got on Christmas Day 2001 still inside de wrapping, to be worn for the first time only to Church Service on Christmas Day the following year! Some of us were given China on our wedding day more than 2 decades ago and we have still not found any occasion that we consider worthy enough for “the set” to finally grace our Dining Table, and at the rate we are going, we go surely die go leave’am all to our kids who are much more into “Made In China CHINET”, (as in disposable plates), than they are into all this “expensive china” we make such a fuss about!!! In fact, if we calculate de money wey we don spend onley for buy “Tarnex” for polish we silverware, we for fit sponsor a whole pikin from Form 1 to Form 5 for Saker! Bottom line, I am just NOT as staunch an advocate of “De Sunday Sheemee” (as in waist slip), and “De undah/lass box Lappa” as I used to be!

3. **SAY WHAT I NEED TO SAY:** I am determined NOT to be responsible for someone sitting straight up from inside their coffin just to clap their hands 3 times and halla: “MASSA!! NO TELL ME! AH NO BE GET ME IDEA OH!”), in reaction to a speech I am reading that expresses what they meant to me while they were alive!!!! In my opinion, “NOW” is the time to let them know, so that they are aware of my gratitude and appreciation, they get a chance to know that their hard work has not been in vain and they understand that their kindness hasn’t gone unnoticed.

Case in point: (used here without her permission, first of all because, as wey e be Common FOX, weti e fit do me? And second of all, she deserves to be “punished” for that SHOW-SHOW PASS MARK” style wey e sew e MAL Uniform Skirt and Blouse ☺) CAROLE BAMU ABAM! She took the time to go over to Aunty Meg during the Convention, “snaff” with her, and thank her for the wonderful job she did as her Lycée Bilingue Essos Chemistry Teacher, telling her that her work back then is what influenced her to pursue the career that she is now very successfully established in! Had she put it off till “later”, we all now know she would have missed what has now turned out to be that one last GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY!!

More than enough Food For Thought if you ask me!

SHALOM!!!

Egbe Mbiwan Monjimbo

(Determined to try and cut back on de plenty “ah go...” and “pRostpone” dem!)