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BETWEEN THE BARS

## 'JUST A PHRASE'

"NOW WHAT THE HECK IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?"

IT WAS 'LIGHTS OUT' ON THE CELL BLOCK, BUT MY 'CELLIE' WAS ONCE AGAIN TRYING TO GET A QUICK ANSWER TO AN AGE OLD QUESTION.

"WHY YOU ALWAYS GOTTA TALK IN PREAMBLES?"

"YOU MEAN PARABLES."

"WHATEVER."


"I'M TRYING TO PAINT A PICTURE FOR YOU - WITH WORDS."

"PAINT A PICTURE, EH?" HE SAID, YOU MUST BE PAINTIN' ONE A THEM PICASSOS - BECAUSE YOU DON'T MAKE NO SENSE."

"WHAT I'M TRYING TO TELL YOU," I SAID, "IS THAT THIS 'SENTENCE' - THIS LITTLE 3 YEAR BID THAT YOU HAVE TO DO IS JUST A PHRASE MAN - JUST A BIT O' DARKNESS THAT YOU HAVE TO GO THROUGH ... BUT YOU HAVE TO KEEP MOVING TOWARDS THE LIGHT. DON'T LET THE DARKNESS SWALLOW YOU UP ... IF YOU LET THIS 'TIME' FEED THE SEEDS O' BITTERNESS, THEN THAT'S THE FRUIT YOU'LL CARRY THROUGH THOSE GATES WITH YOU WHEN YOU LEAVE HERE."



"And what's that got to do with flowers in the sky?"


I had to smile... if someone overheard this conversation, we wouldn't sound like 2 peas in a pod - more like two nuts in a shell.  What I had said was:

CRASH INTO DARKNESS, YET NOT DISMAYED,  
SOON THE FLOWERS BEAUTY WOULD BE DISPLAYED

I WAS TRYING TO USE THE ANALOGY OF A FLOWER HAVING TO GO THROUGH A PERIOD OF DARKNESS - AND MAKE ITS WAY THROUGH SOON "DIRT" BEFORE REACHING FOR ITS CORNER OF THE SKY.

"LET ME ASK YOU A QUESTION," I SAID. "HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A BEAUTIFUL FLOWER BEFORE IT'S BEEN PLUCKED? WHILE IT WAS STILL IN THE GROUND?"

"OF COURSE," HE SAID.

"WELL, DID YOU SEE ANY DIRT OR UM... CR-R-R... FERTILIZER () ON ITS PETALS?"

"NO - I DIDN'T... YOUR POINT?"

"MY POINT IS THAT IT DID HAVE TO GO THROUGH THAT DIRT AND DARKNESS BEFORE IT COULD REACH FOR THE SKY - WHEN YOUR SENTENCE ENDS, YOU DON'T HAVE TO CARRY THE BITTERNESS THAT PRISON CAN PRODUCE WITH YOU



When you walk through those  
GATES - DON'T LET THIS "TEMPORARY  
DARKNESS POISON YOUR SPIRITS BRO...  
REACH OUT, IN FAITH, FOR THE LIGHT.  
USE THIS "TIME" AS A PERIOD OF  
PERSONAL GROWTH, AND PLANT SEEDS  
OF HOPE IN YOUR MIND. - YOU HAVE  
THE POWER TO DECIDE WHICH FRUIT YOU  
WILL BEAR WHEN YOU FOLLOW THE LIGHT  
TO FREEDOM."

"WOW!" HE SAID "THAT WAS MORE  
LIKE A REMBRANDT... DEEP 'DOE,'  
DEEP."

I SMILED IN THE DARKNESS AND SAID:

"ONCE A TRAIN OF THOUGHT HAS LEFT THE  
STATION - IT'S CARGO CAN MOVE  
THE MINDS OF MEN."

"NOW WHAT THE HECK IS  
THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?"  
HE ASKED.

"O BOY!" I SIGLED.  
L.O.L.

WITH THE GRACE  
THAT WE'VE BEEN GRANTED,  
LET US BLOOM  
WHERE WE ARE PLANTED.

