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I am one of those who are firmly convinced that, at creation, THE CHIEF MECHANIC installed a vital part in our “body-machines” which makes us want to please. Wanting to please must therefore be a good thing but, UNFORTUNATELY, de palava, just like many other God-given emotions and endowments, has the potential to “turn ngando”, as in develop “K LEG” if misinterpreted, misapplied, and abused! There’s no arguing that God would like us to please - Our Parents (“Honor thy father and thy mother ...”); Our Children (“Do not provoke your children to wrath ...”); Our rulers and leaders (Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s ...”); Our husbands (“Wives, follow the lead of your husbands ...”), and Romans 12:18 says:

<sup>18</sup>If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, **live at peace with everyone.**

That said, there is definitely a CAVEAT in this whole “pleasing others” deal; Here it is:

**PLEASING GOD TRUMPS PLEASING ANYONE ELSE!!!**

In “ohda werds”, if what you have to do to please someone else – NO MATTER WHO THAT PERSON IS - is displeasing to God or runs contrary to His Word and His plan for your life, FORGET IT!

When I look at the narrative surrounding **THE FALL OF MAN** in Genesis, it seems to me that “The Serpent”, aka Lucifer, (whom the Bible does not call “Cunning”, “Crafty” and “Subtle” for nothing), zeroed in on this specific “desire to please” thing we’ve all got going, to cause Man’s downfall! Bôbô slithered his way over to Eve (NOT Adam), knowing full well that if, by appealing to Eve’s ego (wanting to be like God), he could get her to sink her teeth into the forbidden fruit, then getting Adam to “chop flop sotey e belch” would be a walk in the park because he would stop at nothing – including displeasing his Creator, to please his “Nyango”! (Talk about “BUY ONE, GET ONE FREE” – as in killing 2 birds, actually the whole human race, with 1 stone!) By the way, Adam is certainly not the only man who became a “victim”, against his better judgment, of this “wanting-to-please-itis” disease:

- Samson wanted to please Delilah, so he wound up revealing the source of his strength to her and orchestrated his own undoing!
- Abraham decided to listen to Sarah and “hook up” with Hagar instead of waiting on God to fulfill His Promise to him, thereby causing all de unsolvable wahala in the Middle East sotey today!

- Herod had poor John the Baptist murdered, to please the wicked Herodias who demanded the latter's head on a platter!

Few men had the spine that Job had, who, when his wife asked him to "Curse God and die" said "NO WAY, MA'RRAM"!

Besides the hilarious case recorded in Genesis 12:11-20, of Sarai who agreed to play along with her "fear-fear" husband Abram and lie to poor Pharaoh that she was her husband's sister, and that of "dumb" Sapphira who joined her Oga Ananias in cheating God and lying to the apostles, I do not recall too many instances in the Bible where women were struck by this "eager to please" affliction. HOWEVER, the fact that there aren't that many incidents on record in the Bible in no way means that women are immune to this "disease". **AU CONTRAIRE!!!!**

We try to please the Boss who makes us put in unbelievable unpaid overtime hours, even when it means poor Junior will have to do without our consoling words when his team loses for the 5<sup>th</sup> time!; When "Kwakou" says he doesn't want to ever catch us talking to Philo (our "best boh" since Infants 1) who, incidentally, is the one person who sees him for the creep he really is, we comply and sever all ties – going as far as placing her name on our "REJECT CALL" list along with the IRS and the Credit Card Company! (Never mind the fact that when "Kwakie" finally shows his true colors and sends us packing, na straight for Philo e front door wey we go go, titi pail for hand, chakara matobo for head, black eye, cut-cut for skin and all!); When the In-laws come a-visiting we turn into "Aunty Kate" or "Ms Williams", pounding, "grater-ing", "sesseh-ing" and "shifter-ing" everything in sight, even with a DOLIPRANE-defying headache! (Never mind the fact that all the pounded yam, grated coco (turned into Ekwang), and "sesseh-ed" planti will not stop them from moving your carko to the guest bedroom and bringing 16 year old "Bih" from deh village to replace you "as wey you dey ovah stay for born"; We end up on a slab in Hôpital Laquintinie's Morgue because we were "borning" our 10<sup>th</sup> child, NOT because we belong to some radically "orthodox" denomination which bars ANY form of contraception, (including the "counting your menses on deh calendar" and the "JUST SAY NO" methods), but because Oga wanted a "Chop Chair" and stubbornly refused to understand that his 9 girls were a Blessing from God! (Let us not even allow ourselves to think that that one boy may turn out to be the town's most notorious "banga"-smoking, tiffing bolo boy that Kumba Motor Park ever saw!) And the list goes on and on ...

They say "life begins at 40" but I can boldly declare that **MY** life really began when I finally got it through my "tanga" skull that God did not create me to seek to please ANYONE but Him, and that was, (PRAISE JEHOVAH), waaaaay before I got to 40! Talk about "NKOH CUTTING ROPE"!! This realization is one of the most freeing – as in liberating - things that could ever happen to anyone who FINALLY learns to ask "**AND SO ...?**", when "JACKA" comes running to "report" one of her "**DEM** DEY TALK SAY" stories, most of which she has either hatched and cooked up

herself, or sprinkled with plenti curry and Hausa pepper on the way to “deliver the news”!!!! Don’t get me wrong though! We *should* strive to have good reputations; Peoples’ opinions and judgments are valuable, and ought to be taken into consideration when we make decisions. BUT, we certainly do need to know how, where, and when to draw the line, and I believe that it is in everyone’s best interest to realize that there are times when you just have to shrug, and let ONLY GOD, and a Holy Spirit-trained CONSCIENCE BE YOUR JUDGE! Why? Because you just can’t, (as in NEVER), win in a court run by “**DEM**”; you go only craysse waka naket for public; and then guess who will be the first to laugh at you?? “**DEM**”!!!!

For those who are not already familiar with it, bear with me as I retell the GREAT story of “DE OGA, E BOY PIKIN, and DEIR JACK-ASS”!

**ARABIAN NIGHTS**!!!! I hope y’all halla-ed “**ENTERTAINMENT**”!!!! and went, “Clap! Clap! Clap-clap-clap! CLAP!!!!

No be some Oga and e boy pikin dem don wake’ up one day for OMBE sey dem dey go MUYUKA market? Dem no be want make deir jack-ass leff for back dey cry so dem sorry e take e go de waka. Dem waka soffly sotey dem reach for MOLIWE. Na for dey de cosh start:

“Wuna see me dis bush, “stooptit idiet” dem; What is a donkey for, but to ride upon?”

So Oga put his son on the donkey, and they went on their merry way. Dem waka go reach sotey for MUTENGENE JUNCTION. Dem onley wan hear some Aunty dem for corner road:

“Hmmm! Kontri don spoil! Wuna cam see some pikin wey e liver big pass deh Boma Tree!! E really balance on top jack-ass, leff e Papa wey born e make e waka for foot!??”

So the man ordered his boy to get off, and got on the donkey himself, but the peace only lasted till they got to MILE 17! Sugar Cane Mammie dem wan just craysse! Dem halla “CHILD ABUSE!! “**DEM**” talk say de Papa over wicket! (Wicked) How a whole “trong kanda”, full of “ngum” man like e so go leff e tender pikin make e waka wit foot?

As “**DEM**” talk so, no be de Oga jerk de pikin for up, put e on top de jack-ass, make dem 2 dem ride?? Dem dey go: Jiggy-djim; Jiggy-djim: Jiggy-djim!!! As dem entah MUEA so: Total May hem! Pandemonium! Chaos! Outrage! De Muea branch of PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), dem comm’ot wit cutlass dem, very prepared to kill the 2 HUMAN BEINGS, for maltreating de BEEF!!!! (What irony!) “**DEM**” say:

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself for overloading that poor donkey of yours -- you and your bôbôlô pikin?"

No be dem cam down? Dem check, check, check de palava soteeeeeey! Dem finally cut some stick, tie de jack-ass e foot dem to de stick, then dem carry de stick for deir shoulders. All 3 of them were happy. In fact, I am pretty sure they were singing:

“Slowly says the donkey at the break of day; if you do not see me this is what to say: HEE-HAW! HEE-HAW! HEE-HAW, HEE-HAW, HEE-HAW!!!!” But that happiness was short-lived!

As deir foot dem touch MUYUKA so! No be laugh dis! “**DEM**” laugh de man, e pikin and de jack-ass sotey! E bad sotey Principal for World Wide Mission give all students, (from Form 1 to Form 5), outing make dem go enjoy de “ridiculous sight”!!!! Now, ah no know me wehda na shame and embarrassment from all de laugh make de jack-ass e one foot make e loosen. All me ah know na sey de foot loosen; de jack-ass, (wey e be don surely vex by now), give de boy some Bruce Lee Kung-Fu kick for e banja; as de boy bend for hol(d) e banja, no be de whole pole comm’ot for e shoulder fall down? Next thing you know, na jack-ass dat don fall inside wata drown, as wey na on top bridge dem be dey, without even a chance for Oga and e pikin to sing a decent “Yondo szwé lé lé”!!

**MORAL OF THIS TALE: Try to please everyone, and you will please no one!**

Sometimes, I just want to slap my own self for the years I wasted worrying, fussing, fretting, and being overly concerned about what “**DEM**” had said in the past, what “**DEM**” were currently saying around “Obili” or “Biyem-Assi”, and what “**DEM**” might say tomorrow!!! If that is not a sure fire way to guarantee yourself a GASTRIC ULCER, please tell me what is????!!

Here’s the question I should have asked myself ‘ere long:

O SELF!! WHY, FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, ARE YOU “KNACKING YOUR SKIN” TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING A WHOLE PERFECT AND SINLESS JESUS HIMSELF COULD NOT????!!

He did EVERYTHING right; did NOTHING BUT GOOD to others; Yet, he was so misunderstood, criticized and vilified that a whole MOB – not just a few negligible “**DEM**”, screamed and clamored for his death; and not just ANY kind of death oh! Death by crucifixion, which was, (and probably still is), the cruelest form of execution! Then na you “**DEM**” go spare??? For seka weti????!!

Lie no sweet: It does hurt like heck to be misunderstood, misquoted, slandered, accused of any and everything under the sun, etc. with motives and intentions “pinned on your head” to such a point and degree that you cannot help but realize that THERE **CAN BE** SMOKE WITHOUT FIRE – as in “woosai dis kind storey com’ot e own eh”???!! However, we all have to remind ourselves – if we plan on staying sane, that the only PERSON we really answer to is our CREATOR!! He ALONE sees our hearts and knows our true intentions and motives and if palava no dey between you and Him, then you are BLAMELESS, even if the Buea High Court “begs to differ”!! So, what do we do about “**DEM**”??? Buy voodoo dolls in their likenesses and spend night after night “chooking” them with a safety pin?? DEFINITELY NOT!

Here’s St. Paul’s advice as recorded in Romans 12:

<sup>14</sup>Bless those who persecute you; **bless and do not curse ...** <sup>17</sup>**Do not repay anyone evil for evil...**

<sup>19</sup>**Do not take revenge, ...** <sup>21</sup>**Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**

And what did Jesus do with His own “**DEM**”?

“Father forgive them (“**DEM**”) for they know not what they do.”

Tough as nails, but man get to try dassoh!

PEACE!!

Egbe Mbiwan Monjimbo.

