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- A Prisoner's Essays -
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INTRODUCTION

COMPREHENDING THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL EXPERIENCES OF A PERSON INCARCERATED IN THE AMERICAN PRISON SYSTEM HAS SIGNIFICANT WORTH FOR ANYONE INTERESTED IN GAINING INSIGHT ON PRISON CONDITIONS, THE IMPACT PRISON CONDITIONS HAVE ON HUMANITY, THE ROLE PRISONS PLAY IN SOCIETY, AND WHETHER OR NOT THE CURRENT PRISON SYSTEM OPERATES RATIONALLY.

THROUGH THOUGHTFULNESS, I WILL DEVELOP ESSAYS ABOUT MY EXPERIENCES, OPINIONS, AND BELIEFS ACQUIRED AS ONE CONFINED AT A VARIETY OF PRISON SETTINGS. I WILL OFFER MY IDEAS ON HOW CURRENT PRISON MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS COULD BE ADDRESSED TO EFFECTUATE HEALTHIER AND WISER COURSES OF GOVERNING INDIVIDUALS WHO BECOME PRISONERS AND HOW PRISON-EMPLOYEE PERCEPTION OF THE OVERALL SPIRIT OF THEIR SUPPORTING ROLE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PRISONERS IS KEYSTONE TO THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF PRISONER RESTORATION TO SOCIETY.

CRIME PREVENTION CAN BE GREATLY AUGMENTED

IF THOSE THAT VIOLATE THE LAW AND ARE THEN IMPRISONED, ARE TRULY TURNED FROM BELIEVING CRIMINAL ACTS ARE WORTHWHILE WAYS OF ACCOMPLISHING HAPPINESS AND COMFORT.

INVENTING AND IMPLEMENTING POLICIES THAT JUSTIFY THAT AMERICAN PRISONS ARE NOT AT THE TOP OF THE LIST OF "THE MOST UNSUCCESSFUL INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS OPERATING IN AMERICAN SOCIETY" IS AN ACHIEVEMENT THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED ALONG WITH THE EMANCIPATION OF THOSE OF THE PAST.

* [ESSAY ONE] *

PSYCHOLOGICAL GET BY :
PSYCHOLOGICALLY MAKING ENDS MEET

ALMOST ANYWHERE WE GO AND WHATEVER WE DO EXERCISES US PSYCHOLOGICALLY. PHYSICAL EXERTION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EXERTION ARE ALIKE - ENDURING UNTIL WE CHOOSE TO REST OR TOLERATING UNTIL WE GIVE WAY. KEEPING OUR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL MUSCLES FIRM AND FLEXIBLE IS MOST ADVANTAGEOUS AND EFFECTIVE FOR MEETING EVERYDAY LIVING DEMANDS.

(ESSAY ONE CONTINUED) PSYCHOLOGICAL GET BY:
PSYCHOLOGICALLY MAKING ENDS MEET

PRISON LIFE, THOUGH, PRESENTS THINKING-DEMANDS UNLIKE THOSE WE ENCOUNTER AS FREEMEN. A PRISON ENVIRONMENT IS A DIFFERENT SORT OF SERIOUS ONGOING PROVING-GROUND FOR ONE'S MENTAL CONSTITUTION. IT TESTS ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CALL OF EVERYDAY CIVILIAN LIFE. JUST THE SHIFT FROM PUBLIC LIVING TO THE CLOSED AND DEEPLY REGULATED LIFE A PRISON ENVIRONMENT POSES IS A SHIFT BROUGHT WITH SEVERE INNER CHALLENGES REQUIRING MUCH UNCHARTERED THOUGHT-WORK.

THE FIRST IMPORTANT TASK A PERSON NEW TO PRISON LIFE NEED ACCOMPLISH IS "GETTING YOUR HEAD OFF THE STREETS". BASICALLY, THIS MEANS: STOP REFLECTING / ABONIZING ABOUT YOUR LIFE AS IT WAS IN THE "FREE-WORLD" AND START EARNESTLY BECOMING ACCUSTOMED TO YOUR NEW, DISTINCTIVE-NATURE PRISON LIFE. THE QUICKER YOU REALIZE YOU ARE A PRISONER, THE SOONER YOU WILL GAIN THE STRENGTH TO BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH THE HARDSHIPS PRESENTED BY THE PRISON ENVIRONMENT. AND BE SURE THAT THE HARDSHIPS ARE MANY. ADJUSTING TO PRISON LIFE IS LIKE BEING A FISH MADE TO HIKE THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL.

IMAGINE, ALMOST ALL THE CHOICES YOU WERE MAKING AS A "FREE-CITIZEN" CEASED BEING.

AVAILABLE, FROM THE BRAND OF TOILET PAPER YOU CHOSE TO THE CHOICE OF WHEN AND WHERE TO HAVE SOME ALONE TIME, IS NO MORE. YOU ARE NOW NEARLY CHOICELESS. CONTROLLED, AS THOUGH YOU ARE A MECHANISM. YOUR HUMANISM IS BROUGHT TO A SUBNORMAL STATE. YOU ARE, NOW, SUB-HUMAN. YOU ARE LIVESTOCK. YOU ARE PROPERTY. YOU ARE PREFERENCELESS.

MOST CONFINEMENT FACILITIES DICTATE WHAT YOU WEAR, HOW YOU WEAR IT, WHERE YOU WEAR IT, WHEN YOU WEAR IT, WHY YOU WEAR IT, AND THE AMOUNT OF WHAT YOU WEAR YOU MAY POSSESS. THIS SAME TYPE OF DICTATING APPLIES TO MOST EVERYTHING YOU DO. (EATING, SLEEPING, BATHING, EXERCISE, ETC., ETC.) THE BEST WAY I CAN CHARACTERIZE THE CHOICELESS LIFESTYLE OF A PRISONER IS: A DICTATORSHIP. DESPOTISM. OPPRESSION. AND LIVING IN THAT ARENA, MOMENT BY MOMENT, DAY BY DAY, YEAR BY YEAR, IS SOMETHING TO CHEW OVER. SOMETHING CREEPY TO CONSIDER.

TO PSYCHOLOGICALLY CONTEND WITH BEING TREATED LIKE A DOMESTIC ANIMAL IS TO LEARN TO COPE WITH CONSTANT FRUSTRATION. ONE WAY OF ACCOMPLISHING THAT IS BY LOWERING ONE'S EXPECTATIONS OF ANY TYPE OF FORTUNE.

THE PROCESS OF SELF-NEUTERING YOUR ENTHUSIASM
REQUIRES A PROCESS OF GETTING INDIFFERENT TO
LIFE. BECOME INSENSITIVE TO YOUR STATE OF
WELL-BEING AND CONTENTMENT.

ANOTHER DISTINCT PSYCHOLOGICAL BURDEN
IS THE ABSENCE OF INTIMACY. THE LACK OF EVEN A
TWINKLE OF TIME SPENT WITH A LOVED ONE IS AN
AWFUL POSITION TO LEARN TO ACCEPT. YOU ARE
REALLY ON YOUR OWN AS A PRISONER. SURE, YOU
CAN FORM FRIENDSHIPS, BUT THOSE FRIENDSHIPS
ARE GENERALLY SHORT-TERM AND SUBJECT TO BEING
CUT-AWAY AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE.

HOW ABOUT NOT HEARING ANYONE
SPEAK YOUR NAME FOR SIX MONTHS. YOU ARE
REFERRED TO BY GENERIC LABELS OR ONLY
YOUR LAST NAME. EVEN YOUR FIRST NAME
IDENTITY IS FOR THE MOST PART, LOST.

AND, THEN, THERE IS NO SUPPORT FOR
SOMETHING YOU DO. NO ONE TO FAVOR YOU.

HOW ABOUT NOT RECEIVING MAIL
FOR MONTHS AND EVEN YEARS ON END.

BARRIERS. ONE IS FORCED TO BUILD
BARRIERS AROUND THEIR FEELINGS, ACT AS THOUGH
EVERYTHING IS "FINE". SLOWLY AND STEADILY
A PRISONER CREATES A FIGMENT OF THEMSELF,
A SORT OF NOBODY-ANYBODY STATUS. A

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TRADEMARKLESS BEING. A PUPPET-ZERO.

IT IS A SEA OF MOTIONLESS WAVES
THAT YOU REST ~~UPON~~ UPON IN YOUR DINGY.
STAGNANT, MONDAY COULD BE WEDNESDAY,
MORNING COULD BE EVENING. THE REpetition
OF DULLNESS. WASHED-OUT COLORS. NUMB
IN SPIRIT.

FORTUNATELY HUMAN BEINGS ARE RESILIENT
AND CAN TOLERATE TERRIBLE DEMANDS ON THE
PSYCHE. ~~BUT THAT DOES NOT SAY THAT A~~
~~CERTAIN AMOUNT OF DAMAGE DONE IS~~
~~DAMAGE THAT CHANGES A PERSON FOREVER,~~
~~AND THUS, CHANGES THE WORLD FOREVER.~~
~~IT IS A SHOW OF GREATNESS WHAT A SOCIETY~~
~~DOES TO ITS CITIZENS THAT STRAY FROM THE~~
~~RULES OF SOCIETY, AND IT IS A SHOW OF~~
~~WEAKNESS WHAT A SOCIETY DOES TO ITS~~
~~CITIZENS THAT STRAY FROM ITS RULES.~~
BUT TREATING PRISONERS LIKE SUB-HUMAN BEINGS
MAKES NO LOGIC. THERE RESTS NO ADVANTAGE IN
DEMEANING PEOPLE. AND THOSE THAT TREAT PEOPLE
UNJUSTLY AND WITH MALICE WILL SURELY REAP
WHAT THEY SOW. AND SO SHALL SOCIETY
FEEL THAT HARVEST.

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