THE BICENTENNIAL QUESTIONS FOR AMERICA

AN OPEN LETTER JULY 1, 1976 - ROSA BELLE KEITH

MR. PRESIDENT, CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE POWERS THAT BE:

THESE ARE SOME OF THE MOST PROFOUNO QUESTIONS THAT SHOULD BE ANSWERED NOW, AFTER HAVING WATCHED THAT GREAT, BEAUTIFUL AND CHARMING LADY, BETTER KNOWN AS THE STATUE OF LIBERTY, STANDING WITH HER ARM OUTSTRETCHED, HOLDING HER LIGHT HIGH, BECKONING TO RICH AND POOR, HIGH AND LOW, FRIEND AND FOE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD WITH A WELCOME SMILE SAYING, "GIVE ME YOUR TIRED, YOUR POOR, YOUR HUDDLED MASSES YEARNING TO BREATHE FREE, THE WRETCHED REFUSE OF YOUR TEEMING SHORE"... YES, GIVE ME YOUR TIRED, YOUR POOR HUDDLED MASSES. SO THEY CAME KNOWING THAT THEY WOULD HAVE A BETTER LIFE IN THIS GREAT COUNTRY OF OURS. SOME TO HELP BUILD AND SOME TO TEAR IT DOWN. YES, THIS IS TRULY THE LAND OF THE FREE AND THE HOME OF THE BRAVE. THEY ALSO HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT IF THEIR BOAT LANDS ON ELLIS ISLAND IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK SATURDAY NIGHT THEIR CHILDREN CAN GO TO ANY PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE UNITED STATES FREE OF COST MONDAY MORNING AT 9:00 O'CLOCK SHARP. THEY CAN LIVE ANYWHERE, WORK ANYWHERE AND GO ANYWHERE THEY WISH AND THAT IS THE WAY IT SHOULD BE.

LISTEN, AMERICA. THESE ARE SOME OF THE QUESTIONS THAT SHOULD BE ANSWERED BEFORE THE SUN GOES DOWN ON THE FOURTH OF JULY IN 1976.
(1) What about those slaves that were brought to America screaming, kicking and wrapped in chains?

(2) What about those slaves who nursed your great, great, great grandparents from their breast because their mothers were not able to nurse them? Many would not be here today if it weren’t for the nourishment that came from Aunt Minnie’s and Aunt Mary’s tits.

(3) What about those children and great, great, great grandchildren whose ancestors worked and helped build this country without money, education and without love with nothing to console them as the sweat rolled down their backs on the plantations, in homes and in fields? But a prayer, a sigh and a song and being afraid to say the words they hummed. Yes, it was “Go down, Moses. Tell Ole Pharaoh to let my people go.”

(4) What about those who bled and died in every war whose bones lie bleached on foreign soil? Although they had paid their dues and were promised forty acres and a mule, why is it against the rule for them to go to certain schools?

Now, my fellow Americans, this is the big bicentennial question. Wouldn’t this be the most glorious Fourth of July the world has ever known, when Liberty Bell starts ringing, people shouting, dancing and singing, TV’s blasting, radios too, newsboys screaming.
"Yes, it's true. Music playing in the street, hugging and kissing those they meet. Way up on mountains high some will laugh and some will cry. When little children ask them why some will breathe a prayer and sigh. And all of this will be happening because the President of the United States, with great courage, without fear in this bicentennial year had just signed the proclamation with his official pen, and stamped it with the gold seal of the United States saying to whom much is given much is expected. Therefore, I, Gerald Rudolph Ford, President of the United States of America, with the power that is vested in me have declared from this day forward in the year of our Lord 1976, there will be no more fussing and cussing about bussing in these United States, because I have just promoted twenty million blacks, hundreds of thousands of women and minority groups to first class citizens of the United States with all the privileges it enjoys. Yes, a Ford had finished what a Lincoln started. Now, can't you just imagine seeing President Abraham Lincoln and Dr. Martin Luther King way above the celestial sea, marching through eternity with the Father and the Son shouting, "Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, 'tis done."

Composed by
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