

# duaa

## ਘੋੜ ਘੋਲਾਵੇ ਘੋੜ

ਟਰਲੇ, let us join our hands in prayer.  
ਘੇ, who can not remember the exact ritual  
ਘੇ, who, except the passion and fire of love,  
ਦੋ ਨਹਿ ਰਹਿਐ ਕੁਝ ਭਰਮ, ਘੋਲਾਵੇ ਨਹਿ ਘੋਲ.

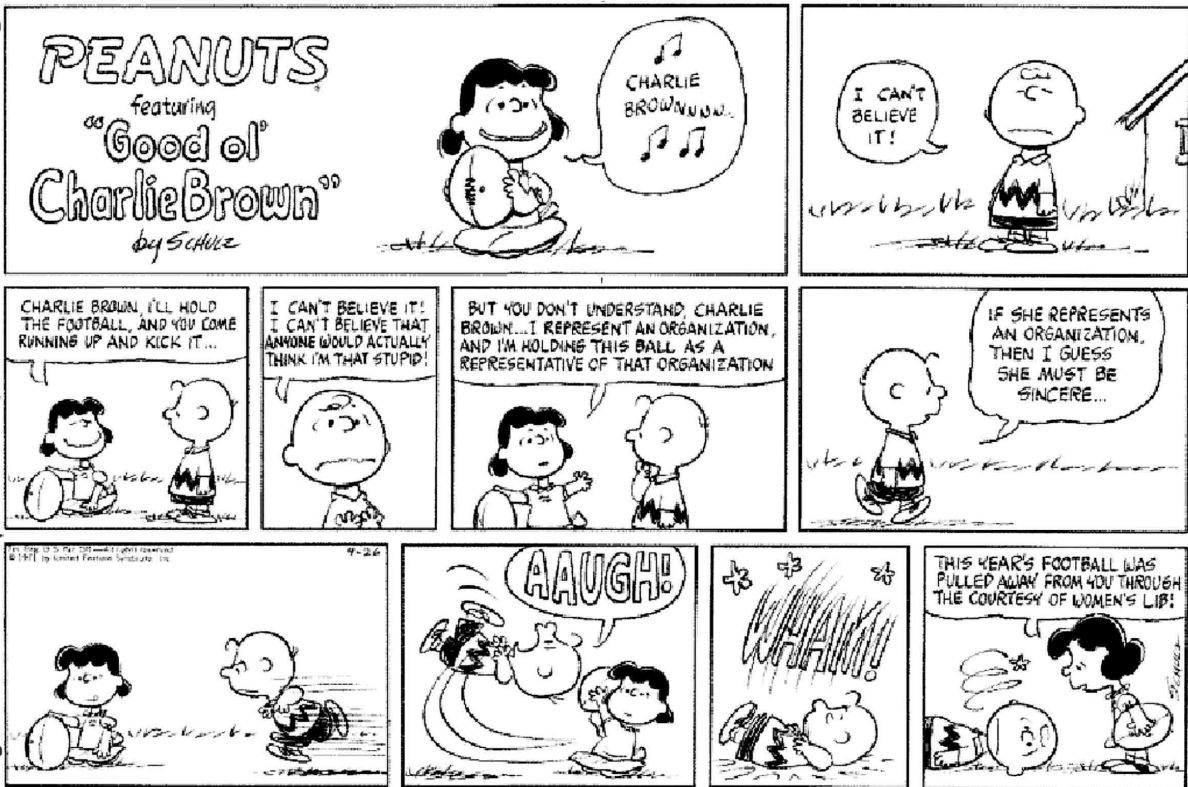
let us beseech, that may the divine sketcher  
pour the wisdom of the future in the present's poison  
for those who can't bear the burden of time,  
may he lighten the days and nights on their eyelids.

ਥੋੜੇ, ਘੋੜੇ ਘੋੜੇ don't have in their fate, the rosy cheeks of dawn  
may he let for them some flame light in their nights.  
for those, ਘੋੜੇ ਘੋੜੇ know no path  
may he show them a vision of some direction to take.

ਲਾਘ ਥੋੜੇ ਘੋੜੇ faith is following falsehood and dishonesty  
have the courage to deny, - the boldness to discover.  
ਲਾਘ ਥੋੜੇ ਘੋੜੇ heads wait for the oppressor's sword  
have the ability to push away the hand of the executioner.

ਥੋੜੇ ਘੋੜੇ of love, which has put the soul on fire,  
may we accept today and the burning may end  
ਥੋੜੇ word of truth that prickles the core of the heart like a thorn,  
may we express today and the itching be gone.

Remembering Schulz



## **Bride and Groom Lie Hidden for Three Days**

By

Ted Hughes

She gives him his eyes, she found them  
Among some rubble, among some beetles

He gives her her skin  
He just seemed to pull it down out of the air and lay it over her  
She weeps with fearfulness and astonishment

She has found his hands for him, and fitted them freshly at the wrists  
They are amazed at themselves, they go feeling all over her

He has assembled her spine, he cleaned each piece carefully  
And sets them in perfect order  
A superhuman puzzle but he is inspired  
She leans back twisting this way and that, using it and laughing  
Incredulous

Now she has brought his feet, she is connecting them  
So that his whole body lights up

And he has fashioned her new hips  
With all fittings complete and with newly wound coils, all shiningly oiled  
He is polishing every part, he himself can hardly believe it

They keep taking each other to the sun, they find they can easily  
To test each new thing at each new step

And now she smooths over him the plates of his skull  
So that the joints are invisible

And now he connects her throat, her breasts and the pit of her stomach  
With a single wire

She gives him his teeth, tying the the roots to the centrepin of his body  
He sets the little circlets on her fingertips

She stitches his body here and there with steely purple silk  
He oils the delicate cogs of her mouth

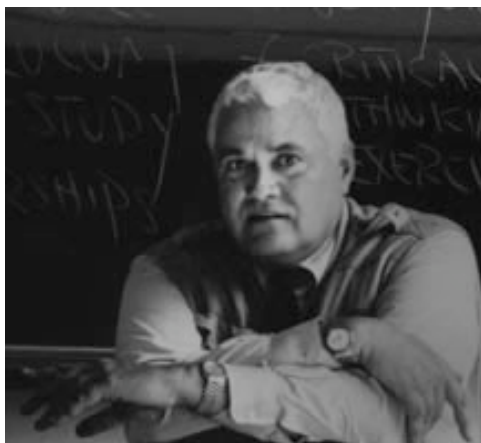
She inlays with deep cut scrolls the nape of his neck  
He sinks into place the inside of her thighs

So, gasping with joy, with cries of wonderment  
Like two gods of mud  
Sprawling in the dirt, but with infinite care  
They bring each other to perfection.

## *I Quit, I Think ...*

by John Taylor Gatto

In the first year of the last decade of the twentieth century, during my thirtieth year as a school teacher in Community School District 3, Manhattan, after teaching in all five secondary schools in the district, after crossing swords with one professional administration after another as they strove to rid themselves of me, after having my license suspended twice for insubordination and terminated covertly once while I was on medical leave of absence, after the City University of New York borrowed me for a five-year stint as a lecturer in the Education Department (after the faculty rating handbook published by the Student Council gave me the highest ratings in the department for its last three years), after planning and bringing about the most successful permanent school fund-raiser in New York City history, after placing a single eighth-grade class into *several thousand* hours of volunteer community service, after organizing and financing a student-run food cooperative, after securing over a thousand apprenticeships, after directing the collection of tens of thousands of books for the construction of private student libraries, after producing four talking job dictionaries for the blind, writing two original student musicals, and launching an armada of other initiatives to reintegrate students within a larger human reality  
..... *I quit!*



I was New York State Teacher of the Year when it happened.

An accumulation of disgust and frustration which grew too heavy to be borne finally did me in. To test my resolve I sent a short essay to *The Wall Street Journal* titled "*I Quit, I Think.*"

In it I explained my reasons for deciding to wrap it up, even though I had no savings and not the slightest idea what else I might do in my mid-fifties to pay the rent.

In its entirety it read like this:

*Government schooling is the most radical adventure in history. It kills the family by monopolizing the best times of childhood and by teaching disrespect for home and parents. The whole blueprint of school procedure is Egyptian, not Greek or Roman. It grows from the theological idea that human value is a scarce thing, represented symbolically by the narrow peak of a pyramid.*

*That idea passed into American history through the Puritans. It found its "scientific" presentation in the bell curve, along which talent supposedly apportions itself by some Iron Law of Biology. It's a religious notion, School is its church. I offer rituals to keep heresy at bay. I provide documentation to justify the heavenly pyramid.*

*Socrates foresaw if teaching became a formal profession, something like this would happen. Professional interest is served by making what is easy to do seem hard; by subordinating the laity to the priesthood. School is too vital a jobs-project, contract giver and protector of the social order to allow itself to be "re-formed." It has political allies to guard its marches, that's why reforms come and go without changing much. Even reformers can't imagine school much different.*

*David learns to read at age four; Rachel, at age nine: In normal development, when both are 13, you can't tell which one learned first — the five-year spread means nothing at all. But in school I label Rachel "learning disabled" and slow David down a bit, too. For a paycheck, I adjust David to depend on me to tell him when to go and stop. He won't outgrow that dependency. I identify Rachel as discount merchandise, "special education" fodder. She'll be locked in her place forever.*

*In 30 years of teaching kids rich and poor I almost never met a learning disabled child; hardly ever met a gifted and talented one either. Like all school categories, these are sacred myths, created by human imagination. They derive from questionable values we never examine because they preserve the temple of schooling.*

*That's the secret behind short-answer tests, bells, uniform time blocks, age grading, standardization, and all the rest of the school religion punishing our nation. There isn't a right way to become educated; there are as many ways as fingerprints. We don't need state-certified teachers to make education happen — that probably guarantees it won't.*

*How much more evidence is necessary? Good schools don't need more money or a longer year; they need real free-market choices, variety that speaks to every need and runs risks. We don't need a national curriculum or national testing either. Both initiatives arise from ignorance of how people learn or deliberate indifference to it.*

*I can't teach this way any longer.*

*If you hear of a job where I don't have to hurt kids to make a living, let me know. Come fall I'll be looking for work.*

## **The Dead Little Girl**

by

Nazim Hikmet

*Written on Hiroshima's Tenth Anniversary*

It is me knocking at your door.

At how many doors I have been  
But no one can see me  
since the dead are invisible.

I died at Hiroshima;  
that was ten years ago.  
I am a girl of seven -  
dead children do not grow.

First my hair caught fire,  
then my eyes burnt out,  
I then became a handful of ashes  
blown away by the wind.

I don't wish anything for myself,  
for a child who is burnt to cinders  
cannot even eat sweets.

I'm knocking at your doors,  
aunts and uncles, to get your signatures,  
so that never again will children burn,  
and so they can eat sweets.

## Messengers of Bad News

Anand Patwardhan

Keynote Address, June 16, 2004

Silverdocs Seminar (co-sponsored by the World Bank, Washington DC)

When I was invited to make this keynote presentation, the most daunting but also the most tempting circumstance was the nature of the audience I would be addressing. It isn't every day that someone like me gets to speak to decision makers and gate keepers from the North and the South, as well as filmmakers and film users from across the world.

I won't dwell on things like High Definition, as I'm convinced that people from the developing world take no time to catch up with new technologies once these become affordable, as we witnessed with the DV revolution. The real issues of the information gathering and disseminating systems have more to do with what kinds of programs are made, who makes and airs them and what impact they have.

The role of the developed world as consumer and the role of the developing world as the consumed may now be complicated as the latter yields its own voracious elite, but the former continues to determine taste.

In all this, those who originally set out to highlight and try to undo the injustices of the world find themselves marginalized and out of date unless they have the chutzpah and the marketing genius of a Michael Moore.

In many parts of the world, including I am afraid in America, these woes are further compounded by censorship, both overt and covert, and its more insidious sibling: self-censorship. And, yet, the voices of resistance have not altogether disappeared. My keynote will discuss the need to bring them out of the margins.

Let me be frank. For many years now whatever I've experienced on the ground - and all the reading and research I've come across - leads me to the belief that I stand right now in the camp of the enemy.

Of course, the fact that I am here at all must mean that within the enemy camp there are obviously some friends. In any case I am an unworthy but ardent admirer of Gandhi. And so cannot see individuals, but only institutions, as the enemy. And believe that enemies need not be forever. And that dialogue is the way forward.

So here is the attempt at dialogue, illustrated by a few film clips and photographs. The material isn't representative or comprehensive as my time slot prevents a more detailed approach and my access is limited by the same global forces that prevent all of us from seeing more such images in the normal course of our lives.

The first clip is from a film we began in 1983. At that time India was just opening its doors to foreign capital. The city of Bombay was on a beautification drive and the first victims were the homeless.

*4 mins excerpt from "Bombay Our City" (1985)*

In the clip a slum-dweller whose home has just been demolished accuses the filmmakers of exploiting images of poverty and injustice without being able to alter conditions in any way

I chose this clip in part to reassure those who may have been upset at being addressed as the enemy that I was referring also to the enemy within. As a member of the Indian intelligentsia I know that all my good intentions don't, by themselves, ensure that my work rises above voyeurism and becomes useful to the people I filmed. *Bombay Our City* made its share of noise in India and even won a national award for Best Documentary but the huts of the homeless continued to be demolished. We joined a movement for the Right to Shelter. After one of the slums we had filmed in was razed, some slum-dwellers and myself went on an indefinite hunger strike to demand resettlement. The following day a famous Bollywood star Shabana Azmi who had seen *Bombay Our City*, joined our hunger strike. We became front page news overnight. Five days later the government gave in and granted an alternate site for the evicted.

Later we took Doordarshan, our national TV, to court for refusing to telecast *Bombay Our City*. After 4 years the Bombay High Court upheld my right to freedom of speech and the public's right to information and ordered the national channel to screen the film. Over the years we won four more court cases to get my films screened on national TV. They were shown unannounced and grudgingly, but it was symbolically important and aroused hope at the time.

Today this hope feels like a mirage. The logic of globalization - the empowerment of the elite and the pauperization of the poor has ensured that today's India is even less hospitable to the working poor than before.

By the mid 80's our focus on the rights of workers shifted to the task of combating fundamentalism. The end of the Cold War should have ushered an era of peace and prosperity. Instead we saw the USA increase its militarist posture and we also saw a global increase in religious fundamentalism. If you stop to think about it, the two things are not unconnected --- but that's another story.

Meanwhile in 1992 in Ayodhya in Northern India, Hindu fundamentalists tore down a 16th century Muslim mosque, claiming it as the birthplace of the Hindu God Ram. It led to nation-wide carnage and the tremors from this act still reverberate.

*4 mins excerpt from "In the Name of God" (1992)*



In the clip a Hindu militant en route to demolish the Babri Mosque justifies the murder of Mahatma Gandhi "because Gandhi had betrayed" the cause of the Hindu majority.

Our film was made before the demolition of the Babri mosque and should have alerted the nation to the hatred and carnage that would inevitably follow. But films like these remain grossly under-utilized in a nation torn apart by the politics of hate.

The 80's and 90's not only brought us religious violence, they also brought the dream of development. It was a dream that would carefully hide from everyone, except from its immediate victims, the price of this development. It was a dream that came wrapped in the flamboyant and seductive rhetoric of a free world economy that was neither actually free nor actually democratic.

*6 mins excerpt from "A Narmada Diary" (1995)*

In the clip "The Narmada Bachao Andolan" (The Save Narmada Movement) confronts officials of the World Bank and asks them to stop funding mega dams on the river Narmada.

To be fair, the World Bank, having kick-started the Sardar Sarovar Dam, did attempt to rectify its mistake. The independent Morse Commission paid heed to the voices of the displaced and finally the Bank pulled out. But the damage had been done. Today in the face of mounting evidence that this dinosaur is completely unsustainable, the Indian government continues to finance its folly. The only lesson our politicians and project builders have learnt is that 'large projects mean large kickbacks'. So now the great new game in India is a multi-billion dollar, thoroughly improbable project to inter-link our rivers.

How could all this happen?

My view is that it has to do with the near absolute ideological control that is exercised over the global media. The images the world needs to see, the facts it needs to hear, are often doctored or suppressed. Let us look at some:

## Images

### 1. Tiannamen Square

Images of an unknown Chinese student stopping tanks during the pro-democracy movement at Tianamen Square in 1989 were flashed all over the world and rightly became one of the most famous symbols of heroic non-violent resistance.

### 2. Rachel Corrie

These images show Rachel Corrie, a 23 year old American peace activist, trying to stop an Israeli bull-dozer from demolishing Palestinian homes. Unlike

the tanks of Tiananmen, the bulldozer did not stop. It crushed Rachel Corrie to death.

Unlike the images of resistance of the Chinese student, images of Rachel Corrie's heroism and sacrifice were never highlighted long enough to register on the conscience of the world.

Let us move from an act of omission to an act of commission.

### 3. Saddam Statue close up

These close up and mid-shots of jubilation in Baghdad during the famous toppling of Saddam's statue were globally broadcast giving the world the visual impression that Saddam was hated by the general population of Iraq and American troops were widely welcomed as saviours.

### 4. Saddam statue long shot

A much less publicized long shot of the same sequence gives the real story. The square is almost deserted. The statue is being pulled down not by ordinary Iraqi citizens but by ropes attached to an American armored car. The handful of people at the square are mostly directly connected to the Occupation forces.

There is another great lie embedded in the incident of the Saddam statue. The US flag that was draped over the face of Saddam's statue was the flag that purportedly fell from the World Trade Center. Thus although no proof of any connection between Saddam and Al Qu'aeda or any of the suspected perpetrators of 9/11 has ever been furnished, a non-verbal connection was established by the US army and the media. Such subliminal messages go a long way to explain why 80% Americans still believe that Saddam was directly or indirectly responsible for 9/11.

When I spoke of the enemy it was not because of race or culture although racism and civilizational arrogance remain alive and well in the corridors of power and in the media.

A few obvious examples:

Hollywood - in the name of historic authenticity - recreated every lash and gash suffered by Jesus Christ but neglected to nail the lie that Jesus was a white man.

It remains hard to switch on my TV screen without spotting Anglo Saxons traipsing through Africa or Asia, explaining to me its dark secrets. In contrast, despite the fact that there is no shortage of cinematic and intellectual competence in the developing world, parachute reporters from the North still dominate the spaces where our stories are told.

The truth is that not only is the North not letting us tell our own stories, it is not letting anybody tell the stories that matter.

Like the story of why Rachel Corrie died. Or why Mr. Kelly, the British arms expert died. What happened to the weapons of mass destruction? Where are the stories about War and Oil and the 20,000 tons of Depleted Uranium that have been dropped on Iraq?

During the Cold War it was said that an iron curtain prevented information from getting in or out of the Communist Bloc. Today a velvet curtain of mindless infotainment envelops the globe enforcing a strict censorship of the vital stories of our times.

In the face of this disconnect many people and institutions genuinely believe they are bringing development to the world - in the same way perhaps that the USA believes it is bringing democracy to Iraq. Both these sets of beliefs are possible because of the circuitous nature of the information paradigm. You hear what you want to hear. Your filters are clogged with the residue of the horrors they have filtered out. Once in a while the flash of an American soldier gloating over the mutilated corpse of a prisoner shocks the nation and the world into questioning its core beliefs, but soon the spin doctors are back in action. Soon we are told that what we thought of as torture was only "prisoner abuse" done after all for "enduring freedom".

Whom does this filtering process hurt the most?

Who will pay the price of killing the messenger of bad news?

Who will remain bewildered by the fact that increasing numbers of people in the world no longer believe in the good guys?

If international bodies, like the World Bank and the United Nations, continue to remain so eternally grateful that their head offices are located on the soil of America that they find it impossible to hold the USA responsible for any wrongdoing, how can they retain credibility in the eyes of the world?

I was lucky to have studied in America in 1970. The anti-Viet Nam war movement was at its peak. I saw a people full of hope and passion for peace and justice and was infected. I see young Americans today who still retain these values. There are many but I will single out someone I have never met - William Rivers Pitt.

Pitt started a website called Truthout.org that tells you Everything You Wanted to Know About the War on Iraq but Were Afraid to Ask.

He said this in a recent article: "Our corruption is the absolute triumph of image over reality, of flash over substance, of the pervasive need within most Americans to believe in a happy-face version of the nation they call home, and to spurn the reality of our estate as unpatriotic."

His statement does not apply only to Americans. Surely, all of us have to put our heads down to the task of respecting the first principles of democracy. A Free Press. Respect for the whistle-blowers of the world. Finding institutional and legal ways to keep corporate and militarist interests at bay. Giving

space to the voices of the powerless and the marginalized, the hungry and the dispossessed, the vilified and those earmarked for massacre.

Not for their sake, as much as for our own.

I will end with an old song and some new images.

*Keynote concludes with a music video: "Images from the Internet" (5 mins)*

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**Footnote: An excerpt from "Cold Turkey" by Kurt Vonnegut**

About my own history of foreign substance abuse I've been a coward about heroin and cocaine and LSD and so on, afraid they might put me over the edge. But I'll tell you one thing: I once had a high that not even crack cocaine could match. That was when I got my first driver's license! Look out, world, here comes Kurt Vonnegut.

And my car back then, a Studebaker, as I recall, was powered, as are almost all means of transportation and other machinery today, and electric power plants and furnaces, by the most abused and addictive and destructive drugs of all: fossil fuels.

When you got here, even when I got here, the industrialized world was already hopelessly hooked on fossil fuels, and very soon now there won't be any more of those. Cold turkey.

Can I tell you the truth? I mean this isn't like TV news, is it?

*Here's what I think the truth is:*

We are all addicts of fossil fuels in a state of denial, about to face cold turkey.

And like so many addicts about to face cold turkey, our leaders are now committing violent crimes to get what little is left of what we're hooked on.

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**THE VIDEOS REFERRED TO IN THE PRESENTATION ARE OFTEN AVAILABLE AT VARIOUS VIDEO STORES**

## **The Watchers**

by  
Lord Dunsany

The world of old in its orbit moving  
    Chanced to pass (if there's chance at all)  
Near to the path of two Spirits' roving,  
    Who stood and looked at the large green ball.

Morning flashed upon tusk and pinion,  
    Tooth and talon, of tribes at war.  
"Who, we wonder, will win dominion?  
    Which will rule in the little star?"

Little scope there appeared for wonder:  
    The mammoth strode from the forest's dusk.  
Who but he, with his hooves of thunder?  
    Who but he, with his lightning tusk?

Yet there seemed in his monstrous striding,  
    Heaving weight and enormous ears,  
Something gross. So, before deciding,  
    "Come again in a million years."

Through the vault where the stars are sprinkled  
    Ages passed from the world away.  
All of that time Orion twinkled:  
    Nothing changed in the Milky Way.

Again they stood where the world was rolling,  
    Again they watched, and saw, this time, Man,  
Heard the roar of his engines coaling,  
    Scanned his cities to guess his plan,

Peered through clouds that his smoke turned sour,  
    Even spied on his hopes and fears.  
"Yes," they said, "he has surely power.  
    But come again in a million years."

## In Praise of Idleness

[Abridged]

by Bertrand Russell

*Those of you who have shied away from the works of Bertrand Russell, thinking a philosopher is someone who writes dry, boring stuff, are in for a great surprise. No one has quite ever matched his lucid style combined with the beauty of simple language and logical reasoning. — Zakintosh*



Like most of my generation, I was brought up on the saying: 'Satan finds some mischief for idle hands to do.' Being a highly virtuous child, I believed all that I was told, and acquired a conscience which has kept me working hard down to the present moment. But although my conscience has controlled my actions, my opinions have undergone a revolution. I think that there is far too much work done in the world, that immense harm is caused by the belief that work is virtuous, and that what needs to be preached in modern industrial countries is quite different from what always has been preached.

Everyone knows the story of the traveler in Naples who saw twelve beggars lying in the sun (it was before the days of Mussolini), and offered a lira to the laziest of them. Eleven of them jumped up to claim it, so he gave it to the twelfth. This traveler was on the right lines.

But in countries which do not enjoy Mediterranean sunshine idleness is more difficult, and a great public propaganda will be required to inaugurate it. I hope that, after reading the following

pages, the leaders of the YMCA will start a campaign to induce good young men to do nothing. If so, I shall not have lived in vain.

Before advancing my own arguments for laziness, I must dispose of one which I cannot accept. Whenever a person who already has enough to live on proposes to engage in some everyday kind of job, such as school-teaching or typing, he or she is told that such conduct takes the bread out of other people's mouths, and is therefore wicked. If this argument were valid, it would only be necessary for us all to be idle in order that we should all have our mouths full of bread. What people who say such things forget is that what a man earns he usually spends, and in spending he gives employment. As long as a man spends his income, he puts just as much bread into people's mouths in spending as he takes out of other people's mouths in earning.

The real villain, from this point of view, is the man who saves. If he merely puts his savings in a stocking, like the proverbial French peasant, it is obvious that they do not give employment. If he invests his savings, the matter is less obvious, and different cases arise.

One of the commonest things to do with savings is to lend them to some Government. In view of the fact that the bulk of the public expenditure of most civilized Governments consists in payment for past wars or preparation for future wars, the man who lends his money to a Government is in the same position as the bad men in Shakespeare who hire murderers. The net result of the man's economical habits is to increase the armed forces of the State to which he lends his savings. Obviously it would be better if he spent the money, even if he spent it in drink or gambling.

But, I shall be told, the case is quite different when savings are invested in industrial enterprises. When such enterprises succeed, and produce something useful, this may be conceded. In these days, however, no one will deny that most enterprises fail. That means that a large amount of human labor, which might have been devoted to producing something that could be enjoyed, was expended on producing machines which, when produced, lay idle and did no good to anyone. The man who invests his savings in a concern that goes bankrupt is therefore injuring others as well as himself.

If he spent his money, say, in giving parties for his friends, they (we may hope) would get pleasure, and so would all those upon whom he spent money, such as the butcher, the baker, and the bootlegger. But if he spends it (let us say) upon laying down rails for surface cars in some place where surface cars turn out not to be wanted, he has diverted a mass of labor into channels where it gives pleasure to no one. Nevertheless, when he becomes poor through failure of his investment he will be regarded as a victim of undeserved misfortune, whereas the happy spendthrift, who has spent his money philanthropically, will be despised as a fool and a frivolous person.

All this is only preliminary. I want to say, in all seriousness, that a great deal of harm is being done in the modern world by belief in the virtuousness of work, and that the road to happiness and prosperity lies in an organized diminution of work.

First of all: what is work? Work is of two kinds: first, altering the position of matter at or near the earth's surface relatively to other such matter; second, telling other people to do so. The first kind is unpleasant and ill paid; the second is pleasant and highly paid. The second kind is capable of indefinite extension: there are not only those who give orders, but those who give advice as to what orders should be given. Usually two opposite kinds of advice are given simultaneously by two organized bodies of men; this is called politics. The skill required for this kind of work is not knowledge of the subjects as to which advice is given, but knowledge of the art of persuasive speaking and writing, i.e. of advertising.

Throughout Europe, though not in America, there is a third class of men, more respected than either of the classes of workers. There are men who, through ownership of land, are able to make others pay for the privilege of being allowed to exist and to work. These landowners are idle, and I might therefore be expected to praise them. Unfortunately, their idleness is only rendered possible by the industry of others; indeed their desire for comfortable idleness is historically the source of the whole gospel of work. The last thing they have ever wished is that others should follow their example.

From the beginning of civilization until the Industrial Revolution, a man could, as a rule, produce by hard work little more than was required for the subsistence of himself and his family, although his wife worked at least as hard as he did, and his children added their labor as soon as they were old enough to do so. The small surplus above bare necessities was not left to those who produced it, but was appropriated by warriors and priests. In times of famine there was no surplus; the warriors and priests, however, still secured as much as at

other times, with the result that many of the workers died of hunger. This system persisted in Russia until 1917, and still persists in the East; in England, in spite of the Industrial Revolution, it remained in full force throughout the Napoleonic wars, and until a hundred years ago, when the new class of manufacturers acquired power. In America, the system came to an end with the Revolution, except in the South, where it persisted until the Civil War. A system which lasted so long and ended so recently has naturally left a profound impress upon men's thoughts and opinions. Much that we take for granted about the desirability of work is derived from this system, and, being pre-industrial, is not adapted to the modern world. Modern technique has made it possible for leisure, within limits, to be not the prerogative of small privileged classes, but a right evenly distributed throughout the community. The morality of work is the morality of slaves, and the modern world has no need of slavery.

It is obvious that, in primitive communities, peasants, left to themselves, would not have parted with the slender surplus upon which the warriors and priests subsisted, but would have either produced less or consumed more. At first, sheer force compelled them to produce and part with the surplus. Gradually, however, it was found possible to induce many of them to accept an ethic according to which it was their duty to work hard, although part of their work went to support others in idleness. By this means the amount of compulsion required was lessened, and the expenses of government were diminished. To this day, 99 per cent of British wage-earners would be genuinely shocked if it were proposed that the King should not have a larger income than a working man.

The conception of duty, speaking historically, has been a means used by the holders of power to induce others to live for the interests of their masters rather than for their own. Of course the holders of power conceal this fact from themselves by managing to believe that their interests are identical with the larger interests of humanity. Sometimes this is true; Athenian slave-owners, for instance, employed part of their leisure in making a permanent contribution to civilization which would have been impossible under a just economic system. Leisure is essential to civilization, and in former times leisure for the few was only rendered possible by the labors of the many. But their labors were valuable, not because work is good, but because leisure is good. And with modern technique it would be possible to distribute leisure justly without injury to civilization.

Modern technique has made it possible to diminish enormously the amount of labor required to secure the necessities of life for everyone. This was made obvious during the war. At that time all the men in the armed forces, and all the men and women engaged in the production of munitions, all the men and women engaged in spying, war propaganda, or Government offices connected with the war, were withdrawn from productive occupations. In spite of this, the general level of well-being among unskilled wage-earners on the side of the Allies was higher than before or since. The significance of this fact was concealed by finance: borrowing made it appear as if the future was nourishing the present. But that, of course, would have been impossible; a man cannot eat a loaf of bread that does not yet exist. The war showed conclusively that, by the scientific organization of production, it is possible to keep modern populations in fair comfort on a small part of the working capacity of the modern world. If, at the end of the war, the scientific organization, which had been created in order to liberate men for fighting and munition work, had been preserved, and the hours of the week had been cut down to four, all would have been well. Instead of that the old chaos was restored, those whose work was demanded were made to work long hours, and the rest were left to starve as unemployed. Why? Because work is a



duty, and a man should not receive wages in proportion to what he has produced, but in proportion to his virtue as exemplified by his industry.

This is the morality of the Slave State, applied in circumstances totally unlike those in which it arose. No wonder the result has been disastrous. Let us take an illustration. Suppose that, at a given moment, a certain number of people are engaged in the manufacture of pins. They make as many pins as the world needs, working (say) eight hours a day. Someone makes an invention by which the same number of men can make twice as many pins: pins are already so cheap that hardly any more will be bought at a lower price. In a sensible world, everybody concerned in the manufacturing of pins would take to working four hours instead of eight, and everything else would go on as before. But in the actual world this would be thought demoralizing. The men still work eight hours, there are too many pins, some employers go bankrupt, and half the men previously concerned in making pins are thrown out of work. There is, in the end, just as much leisure as on the other plan, but half the men are totally idle while half are still overworked. In this way, it is insured that the unavoidable leisure shall cause misery all round instead of being a universal source of happiness. Can anything more insane be imagined?

The idea that the poor should have leisure has always been shocking to the rich. In England, in the early nineteenth century, fifteen hours was the ordinary day's work for a man; children sometimes did as much, and very commonly did twelve hours a day. When meddling busybodies suggested that perhaps these hours were rather long, they were told that work kept adults from drink and children from mischief. When I was a child, shortly after urban working men had acquired the vote, certain public holidays were established by law, to the great indignation of the upper classes. I remember hearing an old Duchess say: 'What do the poor want with holidays? They ought to work.' People nowadays are less frank, but the sentiment persists, and is the source of much of our economic confusion.

Let us, for a moment, consider the ethics of work frankly, without superstition. Every human being, of necessity, consumes, in the course of his life, a certain amount of the produce of human labor. Assuming, as we may, that labor is on the whole disagreeable, it is unjust that a man should consume more than he produces. Of course he may provide services rather than commodities, like a medical man, for example; but he should provide something in return for his board and lodging. To this extent, the duty of work must be admitted, but to this extent only. I shall not dwell upon the fact that, in all modern societies outside the USSR, many people escape even this minimum amount of work, namely all those who inherit money and all those who marry money. I do not think the fact that these people are allowed to be idle is nearly so harmful as the fact that wage-earners are expected to overwork or starve.

If the ordinary wage-earner worked four hours a day, there would be enough for everybody and no unemployment -- assuming a certain very moderate amount of sensible organization. This idea shocks the well-to-do, because they are convinced that the poor would not know how to use so much leisure. In America men often work long hours even when they are well off; such men, naturally, are indignant at the idea of leisure for wage-earners, except as the grim punishment of unemployment; in fact, they dislike leisure even for their sons. Oddly enough, while they wish their sons to work so hard as to have no time to be civilized, they do not mind their wives and daughters having no work at all. The snobbish admiration of uselessness, which, in an aristocratic society, extends to both sexes, is, under a plutocracy, confined to women; this, however, does not make it any more in agreement with common sense.

The wise use of leisure, it must be conceded, is a product of civilization and education. A man who has worked long hours all his life will become bored if he becomes suddenly idle. But without a considerable amount of leisure a man is cut off from many of the best things. There is no longer any reason why the bulk of the population should suffer this deprivation; only a foolish asceticism, usually vicarious, makes us continue to insist on work in excessive quantities now that the need no longer exists. In a world where no one is compelled to work more than four hours a day, every person possessed of scientific curiosity will be able to indulge it, and every painter will be able to paint without starving, however excellent his pictures may be. Young writers will not be obliged to draw attention to themselves by sensational potboilers, with a view to acquiring the economic independence needed for monumental works, for which, when the time at last comes, they will have lost the taste and capacity. Men who, in their professional work, have become interested in some phase of economics or government, will be able to develop their ideas without the academic detachment that makes the work of university economists often seem lacking in reality. Medical men will have the time to learn about the progress of medicine, teachers will not be exasperatedly struggling to teach by routine methods things which they learnt in their youth, which may, in the interval, have been proved to be untrue.

Above all, there will be happiness and joy of life, instead of frayed nerves, weariness, and dyspepsia. The work exacted will be enough to make leisure delightful, but not enough to produce exhaustion. Since men will not be tired in their spare time, they will not demand only such amusements as are passive and vapid. At least one per cent will probably devote the time not spent in professional work to pursuits of some public importance, and, since they will not depend upon these pursuits for their livelihood, their originality will be unhampered, and there will be no need to conform to the standards set by elderly pundits.

But it is not only in these exceptional cases that the advantages of leisure will appear. Ordinary men and women, having the opportunity of a happy life, will become more kindly and less persecuting and less inclined to view others with suspicion. The taste for war will die out, partly for this reason, and partly because it will involve long and severe work for all. Good nature is, of all moral qualities, the one that the world needs most, and good nature is the result of ease and security, not of a life of arduous struggle.

Modern methods of production have given us the possibility of ease and security for all; we have chosen, instead, to have overwork for some and starvation for others. Hitherto we have continued to be as energetic as we were before there were machines; in this we have been foolish, but there is no reason to go on being foolish forever.

[1932]

## America's Gift: A New Tradition In Islamic Thinking

*By Muqtedar Khan*

*Published on alt.muslim, this article has enraged many. Post your comments at <http://tinyurl.com/3xy2fv>*

American foreign policy sins are numerous, and some are even unforgivable - like the invasion of Iraq, based on false accusations, which has resulted in much death and destruction.

But to judge America by its neo-conservative foreign policy would be like judging Islam by what some radical, violence-prone Muslims have done around the world - it would be grossly unfair.

There is more, much more, to America than its imprudent foreign policy in the Muslim world.

America contributes to maintaining the global order and has created and sustained some of the most important institutions of the international system, such as the United Nations and the World Bank. In recent years, US foreign policy has resulted in billions of dollars of tsunami relief in Southeast Asia, earthquake assistance in Pakistan, and economic and development aid across Muslim lands. The United States is the biggest foreign aid donor to the Muslim World.

In the past, the United States has also intervened militarily on behalf of Muslims in Bosnia, Somalia, Kosovo and Kuwait.

On the domestic front, the United States is one of the best places to live on the planet, according to many. People from all over the Muslim world apply, in the millions, for visas to come to the US - even after 9/11 - in search of a better future. Yet hardly any indigenous American Muslims are seeking to migrate to predominantly-Muslim countries to improve their lives. The United States, and not any one of the fifty five Muslims nations, is the number one choice of Muslims for permanent relocation.

I have been living in the United States since 1992, when I arrived here from India. America took in a young man from a developing nation and after eight years of schooling, graduated an active Muslim scholar who has testified to the US Senate on foreign affairs, debated Bill Clinton in person and Vladimir Putin in writing, advised Prince Charles, held prolonged chats with Sadiq Al Mahdi, shaken hands with King Abdullah and Emir Hamad bin Khalifah, and had dinner with Benazir Bhutto. This afternoon, I had lunch with the

grand Mufti of Egypt, Shaykh Ali Gomaa, in a castle in the south of England. Even when I was a poor graduate student, and now as an active scholar, I have been truly living my dream.

Because of the political and religious freedoms I enjoy in the United States, I am able to practice Islam at the highest level ñ that of fikr, or reflection. I publish extensively, lecture and communicate my ideas widely through the media. Muslim scholars have always maintained that true happiness comes from the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge and I found this to be the case in America.

My life as a public intellectual is enabled by America's intellectual environment, its great universities and, above all, its open public sphere in which I participate wholeheartedly, without fear or hesitation.

I am neither alone nor the most important beneficiary of American culture. America has in recent years produced and/or nurtured many good and extraordinarily insightful Muslim thinkers like Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Fazlur Rahman, Ismael Farruqi, Khaled Abou el Fadl, Sherman Jackson, Asma Af-saruddin, Sohail Hashmi, Azizah al Hibri, Taha Al-Alwani, Sulayman Nyang, Louay Safi, Akber Ahmad, Maher Hathout, Abdullah an-Naim, Ingrid Matt-son and Amina Wadud, to list but a few whose names come to mind readily.

America has also produced noteworthy Muslim spiritual leaders who enjoy widespread appeal, way beyond America's borders. The likes of Shaykh Hamza Yusuf are creating a uniquely American tradition in Islamic spiritual-ity. American Muslim initiatives such as the American Journal of Islamic So-cial Sciences have not only inspired research in the Muslim world but have become the gold standard in Muslim scholarship.

Today, one can talk about an American tradition in Islamic thinking. Like America itself, it may be short on history but it is also rich, powerful, with global reach and profound impact.

American foreign policy may have perpetrated many injustices against Mus-lims, but its gifts of scholars and scholarship to Islam and Muslims that has allowed Islamic thinking to re-emerge and thrive is indeed priceless.

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*M. A. Muqtedar Khan is Assistant Professor at the University of Delaware and a Senior Non-Resident Fellow with the Saban Center at the Brookings Institution. He is the author of "American Muslims: Bridging Faith and Freedom" and his website is [ijtihad.org](http://ijtihad.org). This article is distributed by the Common Ground News Service (CGNews), and can be accessed at [www.commongroundnews.org](http://www.commongroundnews.org)*

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from the "IMPORTANT FORWARD" of

# **GODS OF THE NEW MILLENIUM**

The Shattering Truth of Human Origins

by Alan F. Alford

Around 200,000 years ago, the hominid known as Homo Erectus suddenly transformed itself into Homo Sapien with a 50 per cent increase in brain size, together with language capability and a modern anatomy. How could this have happened so suddenly after 1.2 million years of no progress at all? It is anomalies such as these that have caused considerable discomfort to highly respected evolutionary scientists such as Noam Chomsky and Roger Penrose. When state-of-the-art evolutionary principles are applied to Homo sapiens, the logical conclusion is that we should not be here! The religious view of Divine Creation suffers from equal scepticism. Who can take the Garden of Eden story seriously? Science and Religion are driving round in circles in a cul-de-sac. But mankind is here, and that fact needs to be explained.

The evolution of mankind is only one of the many mysteries that conventional science cannot explain. In recent years, the best seller lists have featured an increasing number of popular books which have dealt with these mysteries. One of the factors behind this trend has been the series of discoveries coming out of Egypt. The discovery of a secret doorway inside the Great Pyramid and the independent dating of the Giza Pyramids and Sphinx to the era 10500-8000 BC have captured the public's imagination. But these historical anomalies are not just confined to Egypt. All over the world we find sites such as Stonehenge, Tiwanaku, Nazca and Baalbek that do not fit the historical paradigm. A shadowy prehistory seems to exist as a legacy in the form of stone, maps and mythology, which our twentieth century technology has only just allowed us to recognise.

Against this background, many writers have grasped at the straw of Atlantis, and can be excused for doing so. But in fact the advanced knowledge of the Maya and the Egyptians can be traced back to the first civilisation of the Sumerians which suddenly and mysteriously emerged 6,000 years ago. The Sumerians claimed that their culture was a gift not from Atlantis but from the gods! In view of the physical evidence all around us, can we afford to dismiss what the Sumerians said?

The scientific establishment has an in-built aversion to the idea of "gods", but this is simply a problem of terminology and religious conditioning. The fact is that man now possesses the genetic technology to create "in his own image". The beings we created might well call us "gods". The Sumerian and Mesopotamian texts, discovered and translated only in the last one hundred years do indeed credit flesh-and-blood gods with the creation of man. These texts parallel the Biblical account of Genesis, although the latter has been towards a monotheistic interpretation.

Gods of the New Millennium is literally about the gods who created us; thus in complete contrast to other books which embellish their titles with the "gods", whilst continuing to treat those gods as mythology. Those others have often been researched and written in less than a year by authors with experience in the field. It is not surprising that such "band-

wagon” authors simply rehashed existing material and offered only superficial explanations of high technology which was used in ancient times.

This book, in contrast, is the product of a ten year personal quest, to motivate a pursuit of truth rather than a pursuit of short-term gain. During this time, I personally visited the many anomalous places described in this book, rather than relying on second-hand reports, as many other authors have done. I have also time to carry out a thorough review of existing literature myself, as compare others who have had to use research assistants to meet tight publishing deadlines. The result is a book which at last provides some answers to the questions everyone is asking.

Scientific progress is rarely possible without building upon the previous words other scholars, and Gods of the New Millennium is no exception. In particular, I am indebted to an American scholar, Zechariah Sitchin whose first book, *The Twelfth Planet*, I happened to discover in 1989. Sitchin’s contribution to proving intervention of flesh-and-blood gods in the creation of mankind cannot be overstated. His first book, the culmination of thirty years’ research, not only explained who these gods were, but where they came from and why. Sitchin amassed so much supporting evidence that much of it had to be held back, subsequently published in four further books, referred to collectively as “*The I Chronicles*”. Why have Zechariah Sitchin’s books had such limited impact? The first reason his overwhelming attention to detail, which can be off-putting to many readers. The second reason is the immense scope of his research which has created a virtuous monopoly of knowledge.

Put simply, Sitchin is a difficult act to follow. By leaving so few stones unturned, he has placed other writers in a quandary. If they recognise his contribution, there is little they can add or amend, but if they ignore his theory! they are guilty of intellectual neglect at best, a betrayal of truth at worst. Sadly few of the recent best sellers have made more than a passing mention of Sitchin and some would appear to have gone to extreme lengths not to mention him, ever to the point of crediting his ideas to someone else!

In contrast, my own research has been aimed purely at establishing the truth for my own personal curiosity. There was therefore no temptation for me to ignore Zechariah Sitchin; on the contrary, I embarked upon an exhaustive, perhaps unprecedented, critique of his theory. It quickly became apparent that there were several areas where his ideas needed to be revised. In addition, I began to examine how Sitchin’s chronology - a central plank of his theory - could be reconciled to the Biblical time scales of the patriarchs. This was the “holy grail” that would, to my mind, offer irrefutable proof that Sitchin was right. To my great disappointment, however, I was unable to reconcile his time scales to the Bible, no matter how I tried... It was then that I discovered the simple mathematical key which solved the problem, and forced me to completely revise Zechariah Sitchin’s chronology. As a result of my breakthrough, we now have for the first time a chronology which:

- matches the creation of mankind with the most recent scientific estimates;
- reconciles the arrival of the gods and the creation of mankind with the independently verifiable date of the Flood
- reconciles the dates of the Biblical patriarchs from Adam to Noah;
- reconciles the dates of the later patriarchs from Noah to Abraham; and
- reconciles with the infamous Sumerian Kings Lists of pre-Flood rulers.

This breakthrough forced me to tackle head-on the rather unsettling question of the legendary life spans of the patriarchs (numbering hundreds of years each), and the Sumerian kings (numbering thousands of years each!). Fortunately, my research coincided with some equally dramatic breakthroughs in the field of genetic science, which enabled me to explain the longevity of the patriarchs, and indeed the gods themselves, scientifically. It was becoming apparent that I had some important new material, which ought to be published.

Because my new chronology is such a vital part of the argument (and indeed central to any historical analysis), I decided to set out *Gods of the New Millennium* as a one-volume scientific proof of the ancient flesh-and-blood gods. The discipline of writing down such a proof, without leaving any loose ends whatsoever, led me into a number of areas where I surprised myself by being able to throw new light on ancient mysteries. I am delighted to share with my readers my explanations of the Nazca Lines, Easter Island and the lost city of Petra, and most importantly the Great Pyramid. My study of the Pyramid, contained herein, is aimed at validating what the ancient texts said about it - that it was designed by the gods as a multi-functional device. My analysis offers the first ever convincing explanation of its passages, chambers and shafts from a purely functional perspective, and thus represents a major scientific breakthrough.

At the heart of this book is a new theory on the importance of the 25,920-year precessional cycle. Other writers have touched on the possible links between the Sphinx and the precessional era of Leo 13,000 years ago, but the full significance of these links runs far deeper than the Sphinx. During the writing of this book, the British authorities released new information on the dating of Stonehenge, and this proved to be highly significant. I am now able to offer a comprehensive solution to the Stonehenge mystery, tackling the fundamental question of why its design was so complicated if it was "simply" a solar and lunar calendar, as is generally claimed. Armed with this new insight, I made a visit to Machu Picchu in Peru, and was able to confirm that this sacred site was used for exactly the same purpose as Stonehenge, both sites being connected to the precessional change from the era of Taurus to Aries over 4,000 years ago!

The conclusions of this book will undoubtedly prove controversial, since they challenge the established views of science. Cynics will ask how hundreds of years of establishment thinking can possibly be wrong. I need only point out that Ptolemy located Earth at the centre of the Solar System for 1,300 years before Copernicus corrected him. Unfortunately, one of our greatest weaknesses as a species is our tendency to rush into the construction of paradigms which are then defended at all costs.

The evidence contained in this book comprises scientifically verifiable facts.

The scope of this evidence is world-wide (and indeed Solar System wide) and the science is multi-disciplined, covering fields as diverse as, Geology, geography, astronomy, mathematics, anthropology and genetics. I have linked together all of the mysterious places in the world as part of one integrated approach. There are no loose ends and no contradictory facts that are swept under the carpet. As I mentioned earlier, my study of the gods indicates that the precessional cycle was symbolically important to them. One of the implications of this conclusion is that present millenarian expectations (in their many varied forms) may, for once, have some scientific basis, since the imminent arrival of the new

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millennium coincides approximately with a change to the precessional era of Aquarius. I am sure my readers will be as fascinated as I am by the prospect of major changes being directed on Earth at that time.

So much for science, but what about our established religious institutions?

Western religions may well be somewhat sensitive to my conclusion that the Hebrew “God” of the Bible was a flesh-and-blood god. As to the question of a Supreme Being, it is not my intention that intervention by flesh-and-blood gods should detract from anyone’s belief in a supernatural divinity whom we might call God with a capital “G”.

The creation of the Universe is still shrouded in mystery, and the question of the creation of man needs to be redirected to the seed of the gods themselves. These mysteries, along with paranormal matters such as reincarnation and UFOs, are outside the realm of this book, which deals with the knowable, not the unknowable. Nevertheless, I believe that, by stripping away the prevailing myths of science and religion, we will all benefit from a clearer perspective on the yet greater mysteries of our existence.



## No Contest

By Alfie Kohn

*[This is a slightly expanded version of the original article.]*

Long before anyone was talking about team-building or Theory Z -- less than a decade after World War II, in fact -- a sociologist named Peter Blau compared two groups of interviewers at a public employment agency. Those in the first group competed fiercely to fill job openings. In the second group, interviewers worked cooperatively, making sure to tell each other whenever a new position opened up.

Which interviewers filled significantly more jobs? If you guessed the second group, it may be because you're already aware that cooperative effort is the key to productivity. You may also know that since Blau's report was published, a pile of other studies have proved this principle again and again. Some of that research has filtered into real-world workplaces, and some managers have seen for themselves how much sense it makes to have people working *with* each other rather than against each other.

Still, old myths die hard and the idea persists that competition promotes excellence. I've been studying the subject for the last five years, weighing the research from many different fields, considering the impact of competition not only in the workplace but also in the classroom and on the playing field. My conclusion is that optimal productivity not only doesn't require competition; it seems to require its absence. The best amount of competition in your company is none at all.

Notice that I'm not complaining about excessive or inappropriate competition. I'm saying competition itself -- which simply means requiring one person or group to fail in order that another can succeed -- is *inherently* counterproductive. Similarly, I'm not offering a "soft" argument against competition, basing my objection solely on its destructiveness to us as human beings. I'm saying that competition also makes no sense from the perspective of the bottom line. It holds people back from doing their best.

Look at it this way: if so many Americans regard work as a chore (as is suggested by such recent bumper stickers as WORK SUCKS BUT I NEED THE BUCKS and I OWE, I OWE, SO OFF TO WORK I GO), an environment that pits us against one another might just have something to do with it. In many workplaces, each employee is led to regard everyone else as obstacles to his or her own success. In place of companionship and collaboration, there is only suspicion and rivalry. Can it really be surprising that the same rat race that feels so unpleasant also translates into reduced productivity?

Surprising or not, here's what the research makes clear:

\* **Competition creates anxiety.** Even when the tangible stakes (salary and promotions) aren't high, the prospect of winding up a loser is extremely distressing. The unique pressure produced by having to defeat others -- and risk being defeated -- tends to inhibit performance.

\* **Competitors can't exchange ideas or share skills.** Let me in your office for a few days and I can destroy your employees' ability to communicate effectively. I can replace their trust in each other with hostility. I can make sure their work is redundant, with each one tackling problems that someone else has already solved. How can I do all this? By making them compete against each other.

\* **Competition distracts people from the task at hand.** Although our society often confuses them, victory and excellence are actually two very different ideas. They're even experienced differently. To focus on winning, on beating out a colleague, is often to divert attention from the work itself. Optimal performance depends on finding that work satisfying and challenging in its own right -- not on seeing the work as a means toward some external goal such as being Number One.

If contests and other forms of competition are still utilized by managers, it may be because of the old canard that motivation will dry up without the inducement of victory. But the desire to push oneself to succeed rarely comes from having to defeat someone else. It comes, ideally, from intrinsic interest -- being in love with the challenge itself. Failing that, it can come from comparing one's performance with some absolute standard or with how one did last year. It also can be inspired by the fulfillment of cooperative work. In any case, competition is at best unnecessary and at worst a serious impediment to quality work.

David and Roger Johnson, professors of education at the University of Minnesota, have performed 26 separate studies to determine whether competition or cooperation is more conducive to learning. The results: cooperation promoted higher achievement in 21 of the studies, while two had mixed results and three found no significant differences. That should be of interest to any manager whose employees spend part of their time learning skills and absorbing information.

Better performance was not the only advantage of cooperation, the Johnsons found. Freed from the pressure of having to beat each other, students developed higher self-esteem. Their enjoyment of the subject matter increased, and they came to accept each other more readily -- even those with different backgrounds and abilities. These findings, of course, have profound implications for the workplace.

The research does suggest that competition on a temporary basis can sometimes be an adequate motivator for simple, rote tasks. But when higher level problem-solving or creativity is involved, there is no surer way to undermine quality than to set up a contest.

The problem isn't just with competitive structures. It's also with competitive individuals -- particularly managers. A 1983 study of 310 laboratory technicians by Dean Tjosvold of Simon Fraser University and his colleagues found that subordinates who worked for a competitive leader were largely dissatisfied with their jobs; the happy, motivated employees were those whose bosses were cooperatively inclined. That finding nicely complements Tjosvold's other research, which has shown repeatedly that cooperation in the workplace translates into much better decision-making and higher productivity. It's not only more humane to work together but more efficient as well.

Does this mean that a manager need only circulate a memo reminding people that “we’re all in this together”? Hardly. A manager’s job -- and it may well be his or her most important job -- is to structure cooperation by creating a supportive climate and carefully building teams of people that produce better work collectively than any team member could turn out individually. “Creative, independent geniuses do not drive innovation in organizations; invigorating, supportive teamwork does,” says Tjosvold. And developing that teamwork is the responsibility of managers, who are “the architects of cooperation through which things get done.”

The foundation of cooperation is what social scientists call “positive interdependence”: a cooperative group sinks or swims together. In practice, that means all group members work for the same goal and use the same resources. The result is a shared group identity and a sense of accountability that comes from having others depend on you – a powerful motivator indeed. (In a competitive environment, the only stake others have in your performance is a desire to see you fail.)

Cooperation should not be confused with a state of perfect harmony where everyone thinks alike. Conflict is both inevitable and desirable; disagreement produces change and challenges mistaken decisions. The question is not whether conflict will exist, but whether it will take place in the context of competition, where people are trying to score points and beat each other, or cooperation, where everyone has the same goal of reaching the best possible solution. Cooperative conflict involves what the Johnsons call “friendly excursions into disequilibrium.”

Some managers have understood the need for teamwork but persist in hanging on to competition by forcing the *teams* to compete against each other. The research suggests that competition among groups, like competition among individuals, is both unnecessary and undesirable. Working against a common enemy isn’t necessary for success or for camaraderie. It just creates warlike hostilities and closes off the possibility of sharing ideas and talents with others in the company. Real cooperation doesn’t require triumphing over another group.

Of course, not all sorts of competition can be eliminated immediately. The race for promotion results partly from the pyramid-like structure that defines most American corporations. Competition *among* corporations, meanwhile, is, for better or worse, central to our economic system. But other sorts of rivalry can be ended with surprisingly little effort. By allowing for cooperation to replace needless competition, an office full of unhappy, anxious, unproductive people who are required to struggle against each other can be transformed into a productive, happy place to work.



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## **Mad Girl's Love Song**

by  
Sylvia Plath

I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead;  
I lift my lids and all is born again.  
(I think I made you up inside my head.)

The stars go waltzing out in blue and red,  
And arbitrary blackness gallops in:  
I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead.

I dreamed that you bewitched me into bed  
And sung me moon-struck, kissed me quite insane.  
(I think I made you up inside my head.)

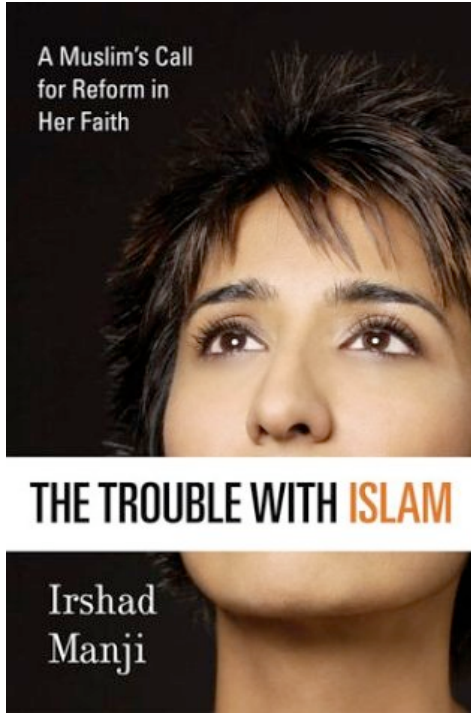
God topples from the sky, hell's fires fade:  
Exit seraphim and Satan's men:  
I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead.

I fancied you'd return the way you said,  
But I grow old and I forget your name.  
(I think I made you up inside my head.)

I should have loved a thunderbird instead;  
At least when spring comes they roar back again.  
I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead.  
(I think I made you up inside my head.)

# The Trouble With Irshad Manji

By Zakintosh



آج اسلام میں مسائل  
دیانتداری اور تبدیلی کیلئے ایک پیغام  
ارشاد مانجی  
ترجمہ: طاہرہ اسلم گورا

*This article is a composite of two posts from the author's blog, Windmills of My Mind.*

## Blogpost #1

Irshad Manji's name first caught my eye rather late, since her book was - *surprise, surprise* - not sold in most Pakistani bookstores. Bookshop owners are, naturally, afraid of possible book-burning mobs - not a farfetched fear given the hooliganism previous protestors have displayed. Her comments on the Jalalabad Riots ([url](#) appears later in this article) were emailed to me.

This summer, particularly after a 'nonversation' with 2 young Hijab-clad Pakistani girls, back from their North American colleges, who said many negative things about Ms Manji but had not read a word by her or could even quote anything they had heard, I decided to read the much acclaimed and hated book myself.

The Urdu edition, my first choice for various reasons, is made available on the website as a FREE download - along with the Arabic and Persian editions - on the reasonable premise that the book is unlikely to be sold openly in countries where these languages are generally spoken. Although the site does show a Pakistan edition under 'Buy the Book', the link leads only to the online version. As for the other versions, it is unclear whether it is to boost sales that some editions conveniently drop the 'Today' - adding a different shade to the title - or whether to tone matters down. I found the Urdu downloadable and online editions difficult to read as the scan resolution was too

low to enlarge without horrible jaggies and my eyes can no longer cope with the original size. So I finally obtained a print edition from India a month ago.

Intrigued by her, I *had* occasionally been following many of her articles and interviews with amusement and amazement. While admiring her courage to challenge traditions and ideas forced upon her, to be accepted without question, I increasingly began to feel that she plays to the gallery and, in doing so, fails to pay heed to a wonderful bit of old advice about how to act when confronted with subjects one has little knowledge of: *It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak up and remove all doubt.*

Unfortunately, her misinterpretations and misunderstanding do more harm than good to her own causes (such as *Project Ijtihad* that, with a little refinement and practicalities, could provide much-needed support to Muslim women). Most times, her genuine, often sensible and well-meaning advice or criticism is lost on Muslims who do not wish to hear anything she says, because of the way she says them. As my friend Isa said in another context, *"If the idea is to convert people to your way of thinking then it helps to be heard."* On the other hand, were she to just shrug away these people, she'd be left with an audience for whom these issues are of no deep interest.

There are bound to be Muslims (and even neutral non-Muslims) who find some of her ideas and ways of expression downright insulting. Visit <http://tinyurl.com/3b3qwg9> for one example. Others find her claiming to be a Muslim itself odd, especially when she denies some of the very basics of their beliefs, such as the purity of the Qur'an as an unaltered word of God, as she does in the Jalalabad post mentioned above, which can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/3xl7sp>

Surely, among Muslims there are people who can engage her in a debate and, as always happens in such encounters, provided both sides come with open minds, each could learn much from the other. I am, quite obviously, not talking about those who indulge in vulgarisms and character assassination, on her site and elsewhere, on matters that are neither the topic of her writings or her lectures on Islam but are only of her personal concern.

Irshad Manji's *The Trouble With Islam Today* has been quite a roller-coaster of an experience. I would certainly recommend the book to all but the easily inflamed. But recommendation does not mean approval for all she says.

## **Blogpost #2**

There's stuff in Manji's book, *The Trouble With Islam Today* (check out <http://www.muslim-refusenik.com/thebook.html>), that's worth paying serious attention to. It makes a good case for Ijtihad. It demonstrates amply that Muslim leaders, both political and religious, have failed their people miserably. It holds a mirror to the Ummah and calls for reform. It points out, correctly, that literalism is going mainstream among Muslims. It speaks out against the deplorable lot of women in Muslim countries - a matter that

needs far more attention by the 'moderately enlightened' than their bellowing about the so-called hijacking of Islam by the Fundamentalists.

On the other hand, there's also plenty in it to want to just cast the book away as her personal diatribe that, at best, has resulted from a specific upbringing and environment coupled with the reaction of other Muslims to her own beliefs and way of life. At worst, however, it sounds like the work of a publicity-seeking opportunist (as one comment on my blog post stated), cashing in on the Islamophobia of today. The long sections on her Israeli trip and the comparisons of Jews with Muslims, with the former being held in high regard - even when the point being made is a bit of a stretch - is hardly likely to convince her opposition of any other viewpoint.

Much has already been written about her book, which has received lavish praise - often quite a bit over the top, such as Charles Hill's quote: "Some of the greatest world-historical changes have been sparked by one person with a love of humanity, a big idea and a commitment to see it take hold. That describes Irshad Manji." It is obvious that despite his vast experience (see <http://www.hoover.org/bios/hill>), his view of 'big ideas' seems rather myopic. Then, there's criticism - overwhelmingly by Muslims - a lot of which seems aimed more at her person than at the contents of this bestseller. In view of this, I would only wish to reiterate what I have said elsewhere: She has lost an opportunity -- through a very confrontational approach and, frequently, through dishing out misinformation -- to communicate to the audience that most needs to understand the justifiable parts of her criticism. Of course, that's assuming that she genuinely wanted that audience to understand and engage with her views and was not merely after cheap publicity and book-sales.

The book can roughly be divided into three themes. The first part of the book is mainly a critique of the absence of Ijtihad from the currently dominant Sunni Wahabi Islam that is (rightly) blamed for a major part of the mess that Muslims find themselves in. That is not to say that things are any better in the Shia lands, despite the presence of Mujtahids. The third is dedicated to her philosophy and activism focusing upon Operation Ijtihad - a commendable but, IMO, not-yet-well-thought-out idea that, one hopes, people will help her flesh out. (Visit <http://www.muslim-refusenik.com/ijtihad.html>, if you'd like to help out).

The second (or middle) part is rather ill-conceived. It reads at times like the literature El-Al could do with to promote tourism in Israel. Although I may not subscribe to such an idea, I would not be surprised if Muslims, ready at the drop of a praying-cap to pin everything on a Zionist Conspiracy, don't start alleging that this portion was added at the behest of the Jewish Lobby or suggested by Jewish Publishers to guarantee higher return on investment.

I shall not go into the middle portion at all — (<http://tinyurl.com/2bzug7> offers a better take on that, anyway) — with its fallacious logic and a decidedly anti-Palestinian bias. If I did, I'd be billed, at the slightest slip of pen, a typical Muslim anti-Semite which I am decidedly not. In fact, I am as happy about my Turkish-Jewish ancestry (my Muslim ancestors had to convert into Islam from *something*!) as others are of their Rajput origins or the Syeds of theirs. And, unlike the latter's, mine's not even manipulated. ;-)



Before approaching the contents of the book, itself, I need to take one paragraph to point out that the absence of an Index in such a work (or the absence of Footnotes on the poor excuse of their being disruptive in the flow of the narrative) makes citation or quoting, and the verifications of 'facts', very difficult. Although there is a printer-friendly notes section, divided by chapters at <http://www.muslim-refusenik.com/sources.html>, there is no way to find out whether the specific portion one wishes to check up on has been addressed through a notation or not. For example, in the prologue Prophet Mohammad is quoted as having defined religion as 'the way we conduct ourselves towards others'. I wanted to know which Hadith or source Ms Manji got this from (I was sure she did not make this up - but I needed a reference for some other reason). So: shut the book; get up from the chair I am cuddled in; get to the computer in another room; open Browser; get to her website (luckily bookmarked); link to the 'sources' section; click 'Prologue'. Oops! No references. The 3 that are there, deal with matters I would have found no reason to check up on. Even armed for the future, with printouts that avoid the 'delay', this kind of referencing is a poor, if not outright useless idea. And what do the numbers in these reference sections denote, anyway, since no corresponding numbers are found in the text?

To begin with, it is clear that Irshad Manji's view of Islam and the Muslims she grew up with - some in Africa - is based (naturally) on an amalgam of life within her own home and (not so naturally) on a rather simplistic assessment of local conditions. Citing her father's penchant for beating the local servant as an example, Manji concludes, "The Muslims of East Africa treated Blacks like slaves". While I agree that her father was not unique in his attitude or behaviour, this was not necessarily a Muslim-only trait. Reading the sentence again, one wonders, "Were there no Muslims among Blacks?" I knew a few. "Did the Hindus treat Blacks as equals?" Many did not. I knew a few of those too. "Did White Christians?" Errr - next question!

This reaching of broad conclusions, based purely on personal experiences or flimsy evidence, persists throughout. Islamic Society is portrayed as anti-curiosity and development, as opposed to Christian Society. I agree with her wholeheartedly ... that is the fact when one looks at most Muslim-majority countries as opposed to most Christian-majority countries. But to reach this conclusion because her Madressah didn't allow questioning and her Convent did is hardly worth a consideration. I studied in a Convent school, as did many others who have had to stand in corners, or on benches, or had our backs whacked, if the questions were the kind we were not supposed to ask. Specially in relation to the Holy Scriptures.

An aside: My own encounter with a priest's wrath came after I brought up the likelihood of the Bible being written by polytheists and mythologists as I felt by reading this:

*And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters*



*of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. (Genesis 6:1-4)*

I got hit even before I had time to question why most humans did not (in accordance with God's promise or intent) live to be 'an hundred and twenty years'. Those looking for possible explanations to that verse may want to visit a site <<http://tinyurl.com/3bywqb>> that claims to offer God's POV :-)

Back to Ms Manji's book. One of the biggest problems - and I offer it not as a criticism of her view but an explanation of why an overwhelming majority of Muslims disagree with her vehemently - stems from her claiming to be a Muslim but wanting to define 'true' Islam as *she* wishes. There's no doubt that there need be no *mulla* to define the Truth for a people who are being addressed by a Divine Being, via a Messenger. The Divine Being has sanctioned no other intermediary (although where Ms Manji places her Shia Imams is unclear). And there's a lot to be said for a 'personal' interpretation of religion. But there *are* certain basic tenets, such as the Oneness of Allah (*Tauheed*), and recognition of the Prophethood (as embodied in the *Kalimah* or *Shahaadah*) that cannot be denied if one wishes to remain in the Muslim fold. Among other, generally accepted, beliefs is also one that holds that the Qur'an has not been altered (and that other religious books *have* been tampered with). Ms Manji's disputing this (and stating the possibility that, perhaps, not all of the Qur'an is of Divine Origin or has been altered, since) casts her outside the pale of Islam in the eyes of almost all Muslims.

Yet another problem is created by the fact that Muslims view the similarities in the Old Testament and the Quran (and, thus, between Judaism and Islam) as being a result of emanating from the same Divine Source. Ms Manji's statement that much of Islam is "a gift of the Jews" and that "the biggies of monotheism came to Muslims via Judaism" has very different connotations.

The book is also sprinkled with 'observations' that state the obvious, leaving one looking for a deeper meaning or conclusion to be derived from their inclusion. Take, for example, "Most of us Muslims aren't Muslims because we think about it, but rather because we're born that way." --- Not profound, by any measure. So, upon reading this, are we to conclude that it's different in the case of people of other faiths?

Though there is much to dispute, in closing I shall confine myself to just 2 examples of misrepresentation and misinformation, which I earnestly wish had not been part of the book, for they have taken away from what - despite its tone and anger - could have been a text demanding attention of the younger and more liberal Muslims who do not share the prejudices of their elders. However, because of these 'discrepancies', just as a confirmed perjurer is not really acceptable as a witness again, her subsequent claims begin to sound suspicious, even if true, and her credibility sinks.

(The page numbers below refer to the Indian *imprintOne* Edition of 2005)

(1) Page 73: *"In the Hadiths...nearly all mentions of black dogs appear alongside degrading references to women and Jews."*

An extreme case of exaggeration: Googling 'hadiths black dogs' didn't turn up several such instances. In fact not even one turned up on the first few of the sites that Google threw at me. I gave up after that, since if it were 'almost all', surely some would have turned up in the first 4 pages. This is not to deny that a Hadith of such nature will be found among the thousands of the ridiculous ones that have been collected (Read 'made up'! Some, even in the sources considered genuine, such as Saheeh Bukhaari, are so peculiar as to be absolutely unbelievable. Additionally, many not only frequently negate each other, some even negate the Qur'an!)

(2) Page 139 presents a modern day item and, therefore, easily verifiable. Referring to Prof Abdul Salam's Nobel Prize in Physics, she writes: *"You'd think his country would have feted him. Instead rioters tried to prevent him from re-entering Pakistan. An act of parliament even took away his citizenship."*

Stuff and nonsense! True that - mainly as a result of Mr Bhutto trying to save his political power and position by bowing to the wishes of the murderous mullas - the treatment of Ahmadis in this country is disgusting and, shamefully, has legal cover. Also true: no official welcome or acknowledgement was made, nor the great professor officially feted, although private institutional meetings were held to honour him. The press carried the news with a mixture of pride, embarrassment, and fear (one Urdu paper even finding it necessary to save its ass by including the statement that Prof Salam was born into a Sunni family).

However, contrary to Ms Manji's misstatement, designed - it seems - to raise the worst reaction from her gullible readers, no riots occurred to prevent him from re-entering! No such act of Parliament was passed! Professor Salam remained a 'dedicated Pakistani' (his own words to me at one of the celebratory functions) to the very end. Think: Had his citizenship been taken away, why would a controversial non-citizen's body have been allowed to be flown in for burial in this country? Surely the bloody mullas would have tried to use legal pressure and their nuisance value (all they had, prior to Musharraf) to prevent this.

*[Note: Just to make sure that memory was not playing tricks on me, I cross-checked this with Dr Pervez Hoodbhoy, a student and close associate of Dr Salam. His response: "No, its absolute bullshit!"]*

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Further reading: *The Multifaceted Fraud*

Part 1: <http://tinyurl.com/2tofxe>

Part 2: <http://tinyurl.com/2wcwlh>

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Zakintosh is the 'blogging nick' of Zaheer A. Kidvai, the CEO of b.i.t.s. & an active member of *The Second Floor* team.

## **Middle Aged Lovers, II**

by  
Erica Jong

You open to me  
a little,  
then grow afraid  
and close again,  
a small boy  
fearing to be hurt,  
a toe stubbed  
in the dark,  
a finger cut  
on paper.

I think I am free  
of fears,  
enraptured, abandoned  
to the call  
of the Bacchae,  
my own siren,  
tied to my own  
mast,  
both Circe  
and her swine.

But I too  
am afraid:  
I know where  
life leads.

The impulse  
to join,  
to confess all,  
is followed

by the impulse  
to renounce,  
and love--  
imperishable love--  
must die,  
in order  
to be reborn.

We come  
to each other  
tentatively,  
veterans of other wars,  
divorce warrants  
in our hands  
which we would beat  
into blossoms.

But blossoms  
will not withstand  
our beatings.

We come  
to each other  
with hope  
in our hands--  
the very thing  
Pandora kept  
in her casket  
when all the ills  
and woes of the world  
escaped.

## All Dressed Up and Nowhere to Go

*by Sabeen Mahmud*

The hype was true. It just needed to be seen to be believed.

What is common between India and Pakistan is merely the fact that there has been an InfoTech boom in both countries. That's all. Similarity ends. India has chosen to leverage the power of the Internet for boosting the economy and creating wealth and has gone about doing so in a focused and intelligent manner. Pakistan has single-mindedly decided to churn out OCPs and MCSEs that run off to Canada and America, first chance that they get.

I just attended India Internet World 2000 in Delhi and was truly astounded at the sheer energy and force generated by over 1800 young Indians delegates. Intelligence, business savvy, technical knowledge and passion was bursting out of every square inch of space at Pragati Maidan. It was an inspiring spectacle. On the flip side, it was a terribly frustrating and painful experience for me as a Pakistani. The Indians look like us, talk like us and suffer the same bureaucratic nightmares and hurdles as us ... the difference is that they are now major players in the New Economy.

This is not about Bangalore and its vast reserves of world-class software developers. This is about the dotcom revolution in India. From companies like eGurucool.com (eLearning) to razorfinish.com (reverse auctions for hotel reservations), the dotcom scene is explosive and the spirit of entrepreneurship is alive and kicking.

It all happened one day last year when a search engine called khoj.com was bought by Satyam InfoWay. Across India, the collective pulse of approximately 50% of her educated population quickened. Until then, they had been closely observing how young college students all over America were becoming millionaires overnight. Now, with eyes open wide, they saw how their own children could join the fray. Some even went so far as to pull their kids out of school and to get them enrolled in web development courses. Young entrepreneurs saw massive opportunities to convert their dreams into

cash. And so, the dotcom/infotech wave spread across the nation, especially Mumbai, forever changing the way business is conducted in India.

India gets it. We don't. These days, eCommerce is the buzz. One hears lectures about supply chain management, streamlining of back-end processes, B2B and B2C and on and on. So what? How many dotcom companies have been formed in Pakistan? How many traditional companies have decided to embrace the Internet to enhance their bottomline? How many advertising agencies know about digital branding and how to track visits to a web site. How many business schools have altered their curricula to empower future professionals to compete in the New Economy? (A recent graduate of a prestigious, local business school did not even know what a startup was). How many ISPs are even thinking about broadband? How many of us "enlightened" individuals have done anything to change the "state of IT" in this country? In the grand scheme of things, Zero on most counts.

Young Pakistanis: This is a unique opportunity for us - the Internet is a level-playing field. Let's develop some focus and learn some REAL lessons from across the border. Those guys know what they are doing (over US\$ 400 million worth of business deals were sealed over just 3 days at India Internet World 2000 alone), they are willing to allow their brains to be picked, and are willing to share their experiences and many among them genuinely enjoy meeting Pakistanis.

The mantra of the New Economy is P2P: Path to Profitability. To get in on the action, we have to develop a new strategy - Vision, Content, Branding. We have to respect our own language, culture and indigenous talent and exploit it to the maximum. We can make a difference and we can start now.

Carpe Diem - Seize the Day!

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Read more by Sabeen Mahmud at

<http://www.bitsonline.net/sabeen>

## The Tenants

*by William Tenn*

When Miss Kerstenberg, his secretary, informed Sydney Blake over the interoffice communicator that two gentlemen had just entered and expressed a desire to rent space in the building, Blake's "Well, show them in, Esther, show them right in" was bland enough to have loosened the cap on a jar of Vaseline. It had been only two days since Wellington Jimm & Sons, Inc., Real Estate, had appointed him resident agent in the McGowan Building, and the prospect of unloading an office or two in Old Unrentable this early in his assignment was mightily pleasing.

Once, however, he had seen the tenants-to-be, he felt much less certain. About practically everything.

They were exactly alike in every respect but one: size. The first was tall, very, very tall—close to seven feet, Blake estimated as he rose to welcome them. The man was bent in two places: forward at the hips and backward at the shoulders, giving the impression of being hinged instead of jointed. Behind him rolled a tiny button of a man, a midget's midget, but except for that the tall man's twin. They both wore starched white shirts and black hats, black coats, black ties, black suits, black socks, and shoes of such incredible blackness as almost to drown the light waves that blundered into them.

They took seats and smiled at Blake—in unison.

"Uh, Miss Kerstenberg," he said to his secretary, who still stood in the doorway.

"Yes, Mr. Blake?" she asked briskly.

"Uh, nothing, Miss Kerstenberg. Nothing at all." Regretfully, he watched her shut the door and heard her swivel chair squeak as she went back to work in the outer office. It was distinctly unfortunate that, not being telepathic, she had been unable to receive his urgent thought message to stay and lend some useful moral support.

Oh, well. You couldn't expect Dun & Bradstreet's best to be renting offices in the McGowan. He sat down and offered them cigarettes from his brand-new humidor. They declined.

"We would like," the tall man said in a voice composed of many heavy breaths, "to rent a floor in your building."

"The thirteenth floor," said the tiny man in exactly the same voice.

Sydney Blake lit a cigarette and drew on it carefully. A whole floor! You certainly couldn't judge by appearances.

"I'm sorry," he told them. "You can't have the thirteenth floor. But—"

"Why not?" the tall man breathed. He looked angry.

"Chiefly because there isn't any thirteenth floor. Many buildings don't have one. Since tenants consider them unlucky, we call the floor above the twelfth the fourteenth. If you gentlemen will look at our directory, you will see that there are no offices listed beginning with the number thirteen. However, if you're interested in that much space, I believe we can accommodate you on the sixth—"

"It seems to me," the tall man said very mournfully, "that if someone wants to rent a particular floor, the least a renting agent can do is let him have it."

"The very least," the tiny man agreed. "Especially since no complicated mathematical questions are being asked in the first place."

Black held on to his temper with difficulty and let out a friendly chuckle instead. "I would be very happy to rent the thirteenth floor to you—if we had one. But I can't very well rent something to you that doesn't exist, now can I?" He held his hands out, palms up, and gave them another we-are-three-intelligent-gentlemen-who-are-quite-close-in-spirit chuckle. "The twelfth and fourteenth floors both have very little unoccupied space, I am happy to say. But I'm certain that another part of the McGowan Building will do you very nicely." Abruptly he remembered that protocol had almost been violated. "My name," he told them, touching the desk plate lightly with a manicured forefinger, "is Sydney Blake. And who, might I—"

"Tohu and Bohu," the tall man said.

"I beg your pardon?"

"Tohu, I said, and Bohu. I'm Tohu." He pointed at his minuscule twin. "He's Bohu. Or, as a matter of occasional fact, vice versa."

Sydney Blake considered that until some ash broke off his cigarette and splattered grayly on his well-pressed pants. Foreigners. He should have known from their olive skins and slight, unfamiliar accents. Not that it made any difference in the McGowan. Or in any building managed by Wellington Jimm & Sons, Inc., Real Estate. But he couldn't help wondering where in the world people had such names and such disparate sizes.

"Very well, Mr. Tohu. And—er, Mr. Bohu. Now, the problem as I see it—"

"There really isn't any problem," the tall man told him, slowly, emphatically, reasonably, "except for the fuss you keep kicking up, young man. You have a building with floors from one to twenty-four. We want to rent the thirteenth, which is apparently vacant. Now, if you were as businesslike as you should be and rented this floor to us without further argument—"

"Or logical hairsplitting," the tiny man inserted.

"—why then, we could be happy, your employers would be happy, and you should be happy. It's really a very simple transaction and one which a man in your position should be able to manage with ease."

"How the hell can I—" Blake began yelling before he remembered Professor Scoggins in Advanced Realty Seminar II. ("Remember, gentlemen, a lost temper means a lost tenant. If the retailer's customer is always right, the realtor's client is never wrong. Somehow, somewhere, you must find a cure for their little commercial illnesses, no matter how imaginary. The realtor must take his professional place beside the doctor, the dentist, and the pharmacist and make his motto, like theirs, unselfish service, always available, forever dependable.") Blake bent his head to get a renewed grip on professional responsibility before going on.

"Look here," he said at last, with a smile he desperately hoped was winning. "I'll put it in the terms that you just did. You, for reasons best known to yourselves, want to rent a thirteenth floor. This building, for reasons best known to its architect—who, I am certain, was a foolish, eccentric man whom none of us would respect at all—this building has no thirteenth floor. Therefore, I can't rent it to you. Now, superficially, I'll admit, this might seem like a difficulty, it might seem as if you can't get exactly what you want here in the McGowan Building. But what happens if we examine the situation carefully? First of all, we find that there are several other truly magnificent floors—"

He broke off as he realized he was alone. His visitors had risen in the same incredibly rapid movement and gone out the door.

"Most unfortunate," he heard the tall man say as they walked through the outer office. "The location would have been perfect. So far from the center of things."

"Not to mention," the tiny man added, "the building's appearance. So very unpresentable. Too bad."

He raced after them, catching up in the corridor that opened into the lobby. Two things brought him to a dead stop. One was the strong feeling that it was beneath a newly appointed resident agent's dignity to haul prospective customers back into an office which they had just quit so abruptly. After all, this was no cut-rate clothing shop—it was the McGowan Building.

The other was the sudden realization that the tall man was alone. There was no sign of the tiny man. Except—possibly—for the substantial bulge in the right-hand pocket of the tall man's overcoat ...

"A pair of cranks," he told himself as he swung around and walked back to the office. "Not legitimate clients at all."



He insisted on Miss Kerstenberg's listening to the entire story, despite Professor Scoggin's stern injunctions against overfraternization with the minor clerical help. She cluck-clucked and tsk-tsked and stared earnestly at him through her thick glasses.

"Cranks, wouldn't you say, Miss Kerstenberg?" he asked her when he'd finished. "Hardly legitimate clients, eh?"

"I wouldn't know, Mr. Blake," she replied, inflexibly unpresumptuous. She rolled a sheet of letterhead stationery into her typewriter. "Do you want the Hopkinson mailing to go out this afternoon?"

"What? Oh, I guess so. I mean, of course. By all means this afternoon, Miss Kerstenberg. And I want to see it for a double-check before you mail it."

He strode into his own office and huddled behind the desk. The whole business had upset him very much. His first big rental possibility. And that little man—Bohu was his name?—and that bulging pocket—

Not until quite late in the afternoon was he able to concentrate on his work. And that was when he got the phone call.

"Blake?" the voice crackled. "This is Gladstone Jimm."

"Yes, Mr. Jimm." Blake sat up stiffly in his swivel chair. Gladstone was the oldest of the Sons.

"Blake, what's is this about your refusing to rent space?"

"My what? I beg your pardon, Mr. Jimm, but I—"

"Blake, two gentlemen just walked into the home office. Their names are Tooley and Booley. They tell me they tried unsuccessfully to rent the thirteenth floor of the McGowan Building from you. They tell me that you admitted the space was vacant, but that you consistently refused to let them have it. What's this all about, Blake? Why do you think the firm appointed you resident agent, Blake, to turn away prospective tenants? I might as well let you know that none of us up here in the home office like this one little bit, Blake."

"I'd have been very happy to rent the thirteenth floor to them," Blake wailed. "Only trouble, sir, you see, there's—"

"What trouble are you referring to, Blake? Spit it out, man, spit it out."

"There is no thirteenth floor, Mr. Jimm."

"What?"

"The McGowan Building is one of those buildings that has no thirteenth floor." Laboriously, carefully, he went through the whole thing again. He even drew an outline picture of the building on his desk pad as he spoke.

"Hum," said Gladstone Jimm when he'd finished. "Well, I'll say this, Blake. The explanation, at least, is in your favor." And he hung up.

Blake found himself quivering. "Cranks," he muttered fiercely. "Definitely cranks. Definitely not legitimate tenants."

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When he arrived at his office door early next morning, he found Mr. Tohu and Mr. Bohu waiting for him. The tall man held out a key.

"Under the terms of our lease, Mr. Blake, a key to our main office must be in the possession of the resident agent for the building. We just had our locksmith make up this copy. I trust it is satisfactory?"

Sydney Blake leaned against the wall, waiting for his bones to reacquire marrow. "Lease?" he whispered. "Did the home office give you a lease?"

"Yes," said the tall man. "Without much trouble, we were able to achieve a what-do-you-call-it."

"A meeting of minds," the tiny man supplied from the region of his companion's knees. "A feast of reason. A flow of soul. There are no sticklers for numerical subtleties in your home office, young man."

"May I see the lease?" Blake managed to get out.

The tall man reached into his right-hand overcoat pocket and brought up a familiar-looking folded piece of paper.

It was the regulation lease. For the thirteenth floor in the McGowan Building. But there was one small difference.

Gladstone Jimm had inserted a rider: ... the landlord is renting a floor that both the tenant and landlord know does not exist, but the title to which has an intrinsic value to the tenant; which value is equal to the rent he will pay ...

Blake sighed with relief. "That's different. Why didn't you tell me that all you wanted was the title to the floor? I was under the impression that you intended to occupy the premises."

"We do intend to occupy the premises." The tall man pocketed the lease. "We've paid a month's rent in advance for them."

"And," added the tiny man, "a month's security."

"And," finished the tall man, "an extra month's rent as fee to the agent. We most certainly do intend to occupy the premises."

"But how"—Blake giggled a little hysterically—"are you going to occupy premises that aren't even—"

"Good morning, young man," they said in unison and moved toward the elevators.

He watched them enter one.

"Thirteen, please," they told the elevator operator. The elevator door closed. Miss Kerstenberg walked past him and into the office, chirping a dutiful "Good morning, Mr. Blake." Blake barely nodded at her. He kept his eyes on the elevator door. After a while it opened again, and the fat little operator lounged out and began a conversation with the starter.

Blake couldn't help himself. He ran to the elevator. He stared inside. It was empty.

"Listen," he said, grabbing the fat little operator by one sleeve of his dingy uniform. "Those two men you just took up, what floor did they get off at?"

"The one they wanted. Thirteen. Why?"

"There isn't any thirteenth floor. No thirteenth floor at all!"

The fat little elevator operator shrugged. "Look, Mr. Blake, I do my job. Someone says 'thirteenth floor,' I take 'em to the thirteenth floor. Someone says 'twenty-first floor,' I take 'em—"

Blake walked into the elevator. "Take me there," he ordered.

"The twenty-first floor? Sure."

"No, you—you—" Blake realized that the starter and the elevator operator were grinning at each other sympathetically. "Not the twenty-first floor," he went on more calmly, "the thirteenth. Take me to the thirteenth floor."

The operator worked his switch and the door moaned itself shut. They went up. All of the McGowan Building elevators were very slow, and Blake had no trouble reading the floor numbers through the little window in the elevator door.

... ten ... eleven ... twelve ... fourteen ... fifteen ... sixteen ...

They stopped. The elevator operator scratched his head with his visored cap. Blake glared at him triumphantly. They went down.

... fifteen ... fourteen ... twelve ... eleven ... ten ... nine ...

"Well?" Blake asked him.

The man shrugged. "It don't seem to be there now."

"Now? Now? It's never been there. So where did you take those men?"

"Oh, them. I told you: the thirteenth floor."

"But I just proved to you there is no thirteenth floor!"

"So what? You got the college education, Mr. Blake, not me. I just do my job. If you don't like it, all I can say is I just do my job. Someone gets in the elevator and says 'thirteenth floor,' I take—"

"I know! You take them to the thirteenth floor. But there is no thirteenth floor, you idiot! I can show you the blueprints of the building, the original blueprints, and I dare you, I defy you to show me a thirteenth floor. If you can show me a thirteenth floor ..."

His voice trailed off as they realized they were back in the lobby and had attracted a small crowd.

"Look, Mr. Blake," the elevator man suggested. "If you're not satisfied, how's about I call up the delegate from the union and you and him have a talk? How's about that, huh?"

Blake threw up his arms helplessly and stamped back to his office. Behind him he heard the starter ask the elevator operator, "What was he getting in such an uproar about, Barney?"

"Aa-aah, that guy," the operator said. "He was blaming me for the blueprints of the building. If you ask me, he's got too much college education. What have I got to do with the blueprints?"

"I don't know," the starter sighed. "I sure as hell don't know."

"I'll ask you another question," the operator went on, with a little more certainty, now that he saw his oratorical way, so to speak. "What have the building blueprints got to do with me?"

Blake closed the office door and leaned against it. He ran his fingers through his thinning hair.

"Miss Kerstenberg," he said at last in a strangled voice. "What do you think? Those cranks that were here yesterday—those two crazy old men—the home office went and rented the thirteenth floor to them!"

She looked up from her typewriter. "It did?"

"And believe it or not, they just went upstairs and took possession of their offices."

She smiled at him, a rapid woman-smile. "How nice," she said. And went back to her typing.

The morning after that, what Blake saw in the lobby sent him scurrying to the telephone. He dialed the home office. "Mr. Gladstone Jimm," he demanded breathlessly.

"Listen, Mr. Jimm. This is Sydney Blake at the McGowan. Mr. Jimm, this is getting serious! They're moving in furniture today. Office furniture. And I just saw some men go upstairs to install telephones. Mr. Jimm, they're really moving in!"

Gladstone Jimm was instantly alert. He gave the matter his full attention. "Who's moving in, my boy? Tanzen Realty Corporation? Or is it the Blair Brothers again? I was saying only last week: things have been far too quiet in the real estate field; I've felt in my bones that last year's Code of Fair Practices wouldn't be standing up much longer. Try to raid our properties, will they?" He snorted long and belligerently. "Well, the old firm has a few tricks up its sleeve yet. First, make certain that all important papers—tenant lists, rent receipts, don't overlook anything, son—are in the safe. We'll have three attorneys and a court order down there in half an hour. Meanwhile, you keep—"

"You don't understand, sir. It's those new tenants. The ones you rented the thirteenth floor to."

Gladstone Jimm ground to a full stop and considered the matter. Ah. He understood. He began to beat swords into ploughshares.

"You mean—those fellows—um, Toombs and Boole?"

"That's right, sir. There are desks and chairs and filing cabinets going upstairs. There are men from the telephone and electric companies. They're all going up to the thirteenth floor. Only, Mr. Jimm, there isn't any thirteenth floor!"

A pause. Then: "Any of the other tenants in the building been complaining, Blake?"

"No, Mr. Jimm, but—"

"Have Toot and Boob committed any sort of nuisance?"

"No, not at all. It's just that I—"

"It's just that you have been paying precious little attention to business! Blake, I like you, but I feel it is my duty to warn you that you are getting off on the wrong foot. You've been resident agent at the McGowan for almost a week now and the only bit of important business involving the property had to be transacted by the home office. That's not going to look good on your record, Blake, it's not going to look good at all. Do you still have those big vacancies on the third, sixteenth, and nineteenth floors?"

"Yes, Mr. Jimm. I've been planning to—"

"Planning isn't enough, Blake. Planning is only the first step. After that, there must be action! Action, Blake: A-C-T-I-O-N. Why don't you try this little stunt: Letter the word action on a sign, letter it in bright red, and hang it opposite your desk where you'll see it every time you look up. Then, on the reverse side, list all the vacancies in your building. Every time you find yourself staring at that sign, ask yourself how many vacancies are still listed on the back. And then, Blake, take action!"

"Yes, sir," Blake said, very weakly.

"Meanwhile, no more of this nonsense about law-abiding, rent-paying tenants. If they leave you alone, you leave them alone. That's an order, Blake."

"I understand that, Mr. Jimm."

He sat for a long while looking at the cradled telephone. Then he rose and walked out to the lobby and into an elevator. There was a peculiar and unaccustomed jauntiness to him, a recklessness to his stride that could be worn only by a man deliberately disobeying a direct order from the reigning head of Wellington Jimm & Sons, Inc., Real Estate.

Two hours later he crept back, his shoulders bent, his mouth loose with defeat.

Whenever Blake had been in an elevator full of telephone linemen and furniture movers on their way to the thirteenth floor, there had been no thirteenth floor. But as soon as, a little irritated, they had changed elevators, leaving him behind, so far as he could tell, they had gone right up to their destination. It was obvious. For him there was no thirteenth floor. There probably never would be.

He was still brooding on the injustice of it at five o'clock, when the scrubwomen who were coming on duty bounced their aged joints into his outer office to punch the time

clock. "Which one of you," he asked, coming at them suddenly with an inspiration, "which one of you takes care of the thirteenth floor?"

"I do."

He drew the woman in the bright green, fringed shawl after him into his private office. "When did you start cleaning the thirteenth floor, Mrs. Ritter?"

"Why, the day the new tenants moved in."

"But before that ..." He waited, watching her face anxiously.

She smiled, and several wrinkles changed their course. "Before that, Lord love you, there was no tenants. Not on the thirteenth."

"So ...," he prompted.

"So there was nothing to clean."

Blake shrugged and gave up. The scrubwoman started to walk away. He put his hand on her shoulder and detained her. "What," he asked, staring at her enviously, "is it like—the thirteenth floor?"

"Like the twelfth. And the tenth. Like any other floor."

"And everyone," he muttered to himself, "gets to go there. Everyone but me."

He realized with annoyance that he'd spoken too loudly. And that the old woman was staring at him with her head cocked in sympathy. "Maybe that's because," she suggested softly, "you have no reason to be on the thirteenth floor."

He was still standing there, absorbing the concept, when she and her colleagues bumped and clattered their way upstairs with mops, brooms, and metal pails.

There was a cough and the echo of a cough behind him. He turned. Mr. Tohu and Mr. Bohu bowed. Actually, they seemed to fold and unfold.

"For the lobby directory," said the tall man, giving Blake a white business card. "This is how we are to be listed."

G. TOHU & K. BOHU  
Specialists in  
Intangibles  
For the Trade

Blake struggled, licked his lips, fought his curiosity, and lost. "What kind of intangibles?"

The tall man looked at the tiny man. The tiny man shrugged. "Soft ones," he said.

They walked out.

Blake was positive he saw the tall man pick up the tiny man a moment before they stepped into the street. But he couldn't see what he did with him. And then there was the tall man walking down the street all by himself.

From that day on, Sydney Blake had a hobby. Trying to work out a good reason for visiting the thirteenth floor. Unfortunately, there just wasn't any good reason so long as the tenants created no nuisances and paid their rent regularly.

Month in, month out, the tenants paid their rent regularly. And they created no nuisances. Window washers went up to wash windows. Painters, plasterers, and carpenters went up to decorate the offices on the thirteenth floor. Delivery boys staggered up under huge loads of stationery. Even what were obviously customers went up to the thirteenth floor, a group of people curiously lacking characteristics in common: they ranged from poor backward folk in their brogans to flashily dressed bookmakers; an occasional group of dark-suited, well-tailored gentlemen discussing interest rates and new bond issues in low, well-bred voices would ask the elevator operator for Tohu & Bohu. Many, many people went to the thirteenth floor.

Everyone, Sydney Blake began to think, but Sydney Blake. He'd tried sneaking up on the thirteenth floor by way of the stairs. He had always arrived on the fourteenth floor or the twelfth completely winded. Once or twice, he'd tried stowing away on the elevator with G. Tohu & K. Bohu themselves. But the car had not been able to find their floor while he was in the elevator. And they had both turned around and smiled at the spot where he was trying to stay hidden in the crowd so that he had gone out, red-faced, and the earliest floor he could.

Once he'd even tried—vainly—to disguise himself as a building inspector in search of a fire hazard ...

Nothing worked. He just had no business on the thirteenth floor.

He thought about the problem day and night. His belly lost its slight plumpness, his nails their manicure, his very trousers their crease.

And nobody else showed the slightest interest in the tenants of the thirteenth floor.

Well, there was the day that Miss Kerstenberg looked up from her typewriter. "Is that how they spell their names?" she asked. "T-O-H-U and B-O-H-U? Funny."



"What's funny?" He pounced on her.

"Those names come from the Hebrew. I know because," she blushed well below the neckline of her dress, "I teach in a Hebrew School Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday nights. And my family is very religious, so I had a real orthodox education. I think religion is a good thing, especially for a girl—"

"What about those names?" He was almost dancing around her.

"Well, in the Hebrew Bible, before God created the Earth, the Earth was *tohu oobohu*. The *oo* means and. And *tohu* and *bohu*—gee, it's hard to translate."

"Try," he implored her. "Try."

"Oh, for example, the usual English translation of *tohu oobohu* is without form and void. But *bohu* really means empty in a lot of—"

"Foreigners," he chortled. "I knew they were foreigners. And up to no good. With names like that."

"I don't agree with you, Mr. Blake," she said very stiffly. "I don't agree with you at all about those names being no good. Not when they come from the Hebrew." And she never showed him any friendliness again.

Two weeks later, Blake got a message from the home office of Wellington Jimm & Sons, Inc., Real Estate, that almost shoved his reason off the corner of the slippery throne it still occupied. *Tohu & Bohu* had given notice. They were quitting the premises at the end of the month.

For a day or so, he walked around talking to himself. The elevator operators reported hearing him say things like: "They're the most complete foreigners there could be—they don't even belong in the physical universe!" The scrubwomen shivered in their locker room as they told each other of the mad, mad light in his eyes as he'd muttered, with enormous gestures: "Of course—thirteenth floor. Where else do you think they could stay, the nonexistent so-and-so's? Hah!" And once when Miss Kerstenberg had caught him glaring at the water cooler and saying, "They're trying to turn the clock back a couple of billion years and start all over, I bet. Filthy fifth columnists!" she thought tremulously of notifying the FBI, but decided against it. After all, she reasoned, once the police start snooping around a place, you never can tell who they'll send to jail.

And, besides, after a little while, Sydney Blake straightened out. He began shaving every morning once more and the darkness left his nails. But he was definitely not the crisp young realtor of yore. There was a strange, skirling air of triumph about him almost all the time.

Came the last day of the month. All morning, load after load of furniture had been carried downstairs and trucked away. As the last few packages came down, Sydney Blake, a fresh flower in his buttonhole, walked up to the elevator nearest his office and stepped inside.

"Thirteenth floor, if you please," he said clearly and resonantly.

The door slid shut. The elevator rose. It stopped on the thirteenth floor.

"Well, Mr. Blake," said the tall man. "This is a surprise. And what can we do for you?"

"How do you do, Mr. Tohu?" Blake said to him. "Or is it Bohu?" He turned to his tiny companion. "And you, Mr. Bohu—or, as the case may be, Tohu—I hope you are well? Good."

He walked around the empty, airy offices for a little while and just looked. Even the partitions had been taken down. The three of them were alone, on the thirteenth floor.

"You have some business with us?" the tall man inquired.

"Of course he has business with us," the tiny man told him crossly. "He has to have some sort of business with us. Only I wish he'd hurry up and get it over, whatever it is."

Blake bowed. "Paragraph ten, Section three of your lease: ... the tenant further agrees that such notice being duly given to the landlord, an authorized representative of the landlord, such as the resident agent if there is one on the property, shall have the privilege of examining the premises before they are vacated by the tenant for the purpose of making certain that they have been left in good order and condition by the tenant ..."

"So that's your business," said the tall man thoughtfully.

"It had to be something like that," said the tiny man. "Well, young fellow, you will please be quick about it."

Sydney Blake strolled about leisurely. Though he felt a prodigious excitement, he had to admit that there was no apparent difference between the thirteenth and any other floor. Except—Yes, except—

He ran to a window and looked down. He counted. Twelve floors. He looked up and counted. Twelve floors. And with the floor he was on, that made twenty-five. Yet the McGowan was a twenty-four-story building. Where did that extra floor come from? And how did the building look from the outside at this precise moment when his head was sticking out of a window on the thirteenth floor?

He walked back in, staring shrewdly at G. Tohu and K. Bohu. They would know.

They were standing near the elevator door that was open. An operator, almost as impatient as the two men in black, said, "Down? Down?"

"Well, Mr. Blake," said the tall man. "Are the premises in good condition, or are they not?"

"Oh, they're in good condition, all right," Blake told him. "But that's not the point."

"Well, we don't care what the point is," said the tiny man to the tall man. "Let's get out of here."

"Quite," said the tall man. He bent down and picked up his companion. He folded him once backward and once forward. Then he rolled him up tightly and shoved him in his right-hand overcoat pocket. He stepped backward into the elevator. "Coming, Mr. Blake?"

"No, thank you," Blake said. "I've spent far too much time trying to get up here to leave it this fast."

"Suit yourself," said the tall man. "Down," he told the elevator operator.

When he was all alone on the thirteenth floor, Sydney Blake expanded his chest. It had taken so long! He walked over to the door of the staircase that he'd tried to find so many times, and pulled on it. It was stuck. Funny. He bent down and peered at it closely. It wasn't locked. Just stuck. Have to get the repairman up to take care of it.

Never could tell. Might have an extra floor to rent in the old McGowan from now on. Ought to be kept up.

How did the building look from the outside? He found himself near another window and tried to look out. Something stopped him. The window was open, yet he couldn't push his head past the sill. He went back to the window he'd looked out of originally. Same difficulty.

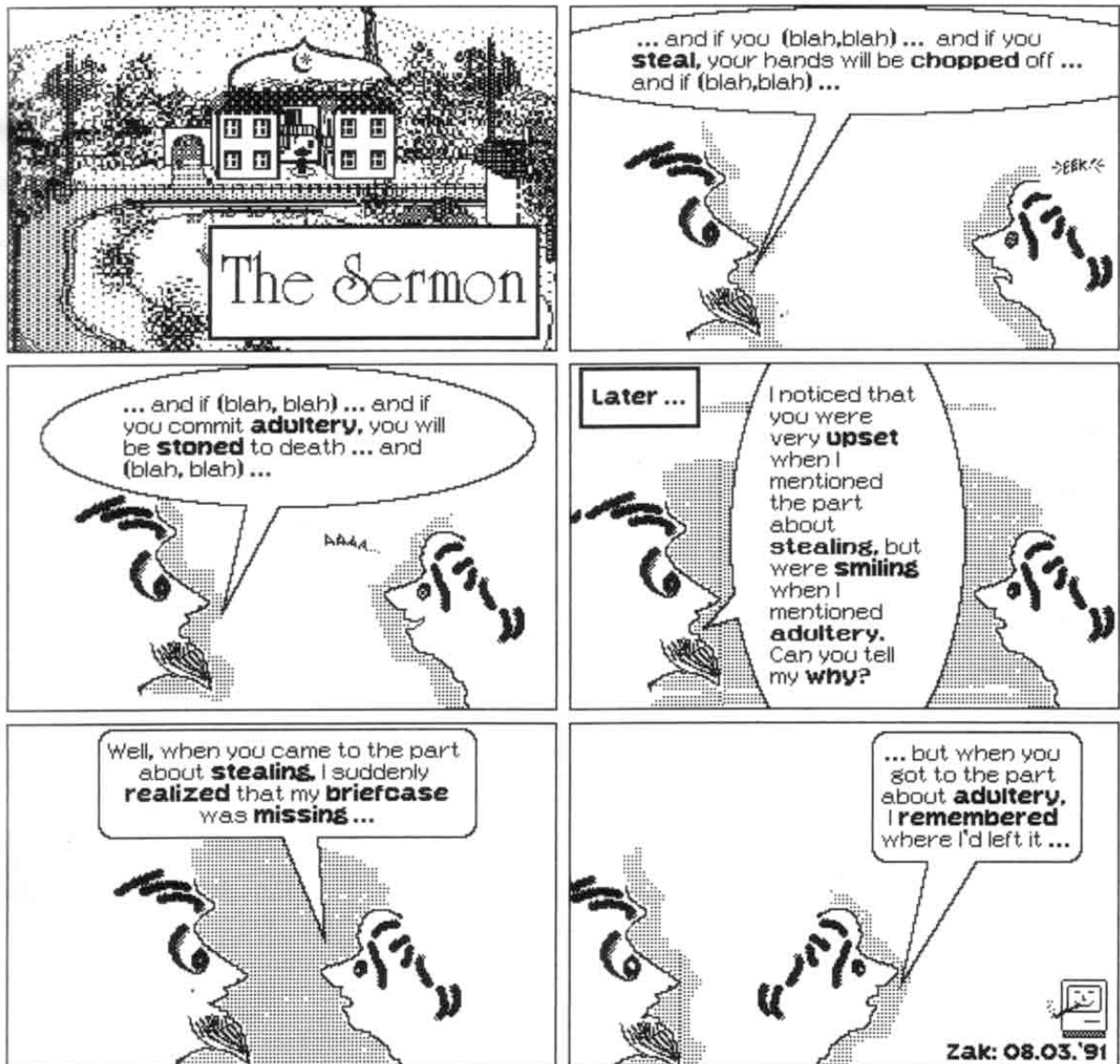
And suddenly he understood.

He ran to the elevator and jabbed his fist against the button. He held it there while his breathing went faster and faster. Through the diamond-shaped windows on the doors, he could see elevators rising and elevators descending. But they wouldn't stop on the thirteenth floor.

Because there no longer was a thirteenth floor. Never had been one, in fact. Who ever heard of a thirteenth floor in the McGowan Building? ...

•

from  
**SIGNS OF THE TIMES**  
a comic strip by ZAK that appeared in TFT



## **Phenomenal Woman**

by

Maya Angelou

Pretty women wonder where  
my secret lies.  
I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion  
model's size  
But when I start to tell them,  
They think I'm telling lies.  
I say,  
It's in the reach of my arms  
The span of my hips,  
The stride of my step,  
The curl of my lips.  
I'm a woman  
Phenomenally.

Phenomenal woman,  
That's me.

I walk into a room  
Just as cool as you please,  
And to a man,  
The fellows stand or  
Fall down on their knees.  
Then they swarm around me,  
A hive of honey bees.  
I say,  
It's the fire in my eyes,  
And the flash of my teeth,  
The swing in my waist,  
And the joy in my feet.  
I'm a woman  
Phenomenally.

Phenomenal woman,  
That's me.

Men themselves have wondered  
What they see in me.  
They try so much  
But they can't touch  
My inner mystery.  
When I try to show them  
They say they still can't see.  
I say,  
It's in the arch of my back,  
The sun of my smile,  
The ride of my breasts,  
The grace of my style.  
I'm a woman  
Phenomenally.

Phenomenal woman,  
That's me.

Now you understand  
Just why my head's not bowed.  
I don't shout or jump about  
Or have to talk real loud.  
When you see me passing  
It ought to make you proud.  
I say,  
It's in the click of my heels,  
The bend of my hair,  
the palm of my hand,  
The need of my care,  
'Cause I'm a woman  
Phenomenally.

Phenomenal woman,  
That's me.

## No More '404' (or other stupid messages)

*Wouldn't it be wonderful if they replaced impersonal and unhelpful computer error messages with Haiku\* verses. Here are some:*

(\*Haiku verses are used to communicate a timeless message often achieving wistful, yearning and powerful insight through extreme brevity - the essence of Zen. Each Haiku poem has only three lines, 17 syllables: Five syllables in the first line; Seven in the second; Five in the third.)

Your file was so big.  
It might be very useful.  
But now it is gone.

-----  
The Web site you seek  
Cannot be located, but  
Countless more exist.

-----  
Chaos reigns within.  
Reflect, repent, and reboot.  
Order shall return.

-----  
Program aborting:  
Close all that you have worked on.  
You ask far too much.

-----  
Windows NT crashed.  
I am the Blue Screen of Death.  
No one hears your screams.

-----  
With searching comes loss  
And the presence of absence:  
"My Novel" not found.

-----  
Stay the patient course.  
Of little worth is your ire.  
The network is down.

-----  
A crash reduces  
Your expensive computer  
To a simple stone.

-----  
Three things are certain:  
Death, taxes and lost data.  
Guess which has occurred.

-----  
You step in the stream,  
But the water has moved on.  
This page is not here.

-----  
Serious error.  
All shortcuts have disappeared.  
Screen. Mind. Both are blank.

## Can One Be Christian Without Being a Theist?

By **Bishop** John Shelby Spong

As one who lectures extensively across this nation and the world, I have been asked questions by my audiences that have ranged from the naive to the profound, from the obvious to the obtuse. Some have been hostile, designed to embarrass, attack, and minimize. Some have been seeking in the wasteland some hint that the living water of faith might yet be available. No one, however, has ever confronted me with a question at once so penetrating and yet so devastating as the one with which I began this column.

It was articulated several years ago not by a critic of the Christian Faith but by a deeply committed layperson who had even thought for a time about seeking ordination. It went to the very core of the contemporary theological debate and forced me to think in a brand new direction. Theism is the historic way men and women have been taught to think about God and most people think it is the only conceivable way to think about God.

The primary image of God in the Bible is surely the theistic image; that is a God conceived of as a Being, supernatural in power, external to this world but periodically invading it to answer prayers or rescue a person or nation in distress. This theistic Being is inevitably portrayed in human terms as a person who has a will, who loves, rewards, and punishes. Although one can find other images of God in the scriptures, this is the predominant and the most familiar one.

Theism is also the understanding of God revealed in the liturgies of the Christian churches where we meet God as one who desires praise, elicits confession, reveals the divine will, and calls us into the spiritual life of communion with this divine Being.

So dominant is this definition of God that to reject theism is to be an atheist. *An atheist is one who denies the theistic concept of God and, since theism exhausts most peoples' definition of God, that is heard to be saying there is no God.* So when one is confronted with the question, "Can one be a Christian without being a theist?" the door is opened to much theological speculation. This question can only be asked when one lives in a world where the traditional theistic view of God has become inoperative because of the explosion in human knowledge over the last five hundred years.

We once attributed to the will of this deity everything we did not understand, from sickness to tragedy to sudden death to extreme weather patterns. But today sickness is diagnosed and treated with no reference to God whatsoever. Tragedies like the attack on the World Trade Center, tornadoes, floods and tsunamis are investigated by this secular society without much reference to the will of God. That was certainly not the case when things like the Black Death or the bubonic plague, swept across the world. When death strikes

suddenly today, we do autopsies that reveal a massive coronary occlusion or a cerebral hemorrhage as the cause. We do not speculate on why this external Deity might have wanted to punish this particular person with sudden death. Even what the insurance companies still call "acts of God" are today thought to be completely explainable in nontheistic language. We chart the formation of hurricanes from the time when they develop as low pressure systems in the southern oceans and we mark their paths until these weather systems are broken up. No meteorologist I know of refers to these phenomena of nature as divinely caused to inflict godly punishment upon a wayward region, people, or nation.

One English priest and theologian, Michael Goulder, became an atheist when he decided the way he had traditionally conceived of God was nonsensical since, in his words, God "no longer has any work to do." This God no longer cures sicknesses, directs the weather, fights wars, punishes sinners or rewards faithfulness. The idea of an external supernatural deity who invades human affairs periodically to impose the divine will, though still given lip service in worship settings, has died culturally. If God is identified exclusively with the theistic understanding of God, then it is fair to say that culturally God has ceased to live in our world.

If the theistic understanding of God exhausts the human experience of God, then the answer to the question of the layperson is clear. No, it is not possible to be a Christian without being a theist. But, if God can be envisioned in some way other than inside the theistic categories of our religious past, then perhaps a doorway into a new religious future can be opened. To make that transition is what I regard as the most pressing theological issue of this generation.

Christianity has been shaped by traditional theistic concepts. Jesus was identified in some sense as the incarnation of the theistic God. It was said that he came to do "the Father's (read: the external supernatural supreme Being's) will." Indeed, Jesus was portrayed as a sacrifice offered to this God to bring an end to human estrangement from the Creator. Theologians talked of original sin and "the fall," to which, it was asserted, the cross spoke with healing power and in which drama of salvation the shed blood of Jesus played a central role. But in a world that has abandoned any theological sense of offering sacrifices to an angry deity, what could this interpretation of the cross of Christ possibly mean?

In a post-Darwinian world, where creation is not finished but is even now ongoing and ever expanding, the idea of a fall from a perfect world into sin and estrangement is nonsensical. The idea that somehow the very nature of the heavenly God required the death of Jesus as a ransom to be paid for our sins is ludicrous. A human parent who required the death of his or her child as a satisfaction for a relationship that had been broken would be either arrested or confined to a mental institution. Yet behavior we have come to abhor in human beings is still a major part of the language of worship in our churches. It is the language of our ancient theistic understanding of God. It is also language doomed to irrelevance and revulsion.



At this point the real question thus becomes, "Can Christianity be separated from ancient theistic concepts and still be a living faith?" That is why this inquiry from this layperson was such a threatening, scary question. Once it is raised to consciousness, it will never go away and will destabilize forever the only understanding of God most of us have ever had.

The "religious right" does not understand the issues involved here. On the other hand, the secular society where God has been dismissed from life has also answered this question by living as if there is no God. Only those who can first raise this question into consciousness, and who then refuse to sacrifice their sense of the reality of God when all theistic concepts fail, will ever entertain or address these issues. This debate already rages in the theological academy where God has not been spoken of as an external, supernatural Being, periodically invading the world, in decades. Yet the experience of God as divine presence found in the midst of life is all but universally attested. Jesus as a revelation of this divine presence is at the heart of the Christian claim, but the way it has traditionally been processed and transmitted is now all but universally rejected by the academy.

So perhaps the major theological task of our times is to seek a new language in which to translate the premodern theistic categories into the postmodern, nontheistic language of tomorrow. The religious leader who does not address these issues offers little more than an unbelievable 'opiate for the people.' I cannot begin to say how much the posing of this frontier question about the relationship between the Christian faith and the theistic language of the past encouraged me from that day to this. It is the crucial concept in developing a revolution in theological inquiry. Most Christology seeks to explain how the external theistic deity could be met in the person of Jesus. Most moral theology is based on the assumption that a theistic deity will dispense reward or punishment. Most prayer is addressed to an external theistic deity who has the power to answer those prayers with an act of miraculous intervention.

Most liturgy is directed toward this external theistic deity. Theism is therefore the lynchpin that, once pulled, brings the traditional formulations of the Christian faith crashing down. Reformation and the future life of the Christian church depends on the ability of the contemporary Christian to dismiss theism as an adequate explanation of God, without dismissing the God experience, and even the God experience in Jesus, as unreal. It is no wonder this debate scares so many.

The present split in the developed Christian world between fundamentalism and a growing secularity rises out of this very issue. The fundamentalists (who come in both a Protestant and a Catholic version) refuse to engage the issue because they see no way out. The secular humanists embrace the debate but see no value left in traditional Christianity. My vocation has become to dismiss the theistic explanations without dismissing the God experience. Check with me in fifty years and I will tell you whether or not I have succeeded.

## The Nine Billion Names of God

*By Arthur C. Clarke*

This is a slightly unusual request," said Dr. Wagner, with what he hoped was commendable restraint. "As far as I know, it's the first time anyone's been asked to supply a Tibetan monastery with an Automatic Sequence Computer. I don't wish to be inquisitive, but I should hardly have thought that your- ah - establishment had much use for such a machine. Could you explain just what you intend to do with it?"

"Gladly," replied the lame, readjusting his silk robes and carefully putting away the slide rule he had been using for currency conversions. "Your Mark V Computer can carry out any routine mathematical operation involving up to ten digits. However, for our work we are interested in letters, not numbers. As we wish you to modify the output circuits, the machine will be printing words, not columns of figures."

I don't quite understand...."

"This is a project on which we have been working for the last three centuries since the lamasery was founded, in fact. It is somewhat alien to your way of thought, so I hope you will listen with an open mind while I explain it."  
"Naturally."

It is really quite simple. We have been compiling a list which shall contain all the possible names of God."

"I beg your pardon?"

"We have reason to believe," continued the lama imperturbably, "that all such names can be written with not more than nine letters in an alphabet we have devised."

"And you have been doing this for three centuries?"

"Yes: we expected it would take us about fifteen thousand years to complete the task."

"Oh," Dr. Wagner looked a little dazed. "Now I see why you wanted to hire one of our machines. But exactly what is the purpose of this project?"

The lame hesitated for a fraction of a second, and Wagner wondered if he had offended him. If so, there was no trace of annoyance in the reply.

"Call it ritual, if you like, but it's a fundamental part of our belief. All the many names of the Supreme Being—God, Jehovah, Allah, and so on—they are only man-made labels. There is a philosophical problem of some difficulty here, which I do not propose to discuss, but somewhere among all the possible combinations of letters that can occur are what one may call the real names of God. By systematic permutation of letters, we have been trying to list them all."

"I see. You've been starting at AAAAAAA . . . and working up to ZZZZZZZZ...."

"Exactly - though we use a special alphabet of our own. Modifying the electromagnetic typewriters to deal with this is, of course, trivial. A rather more interesting problem is that of devising suitable circuits to eliminate ridiculous combinations. For example, no letter must occur more than three times in succession."

"Three? Surely you mean two."

"Three is correct: I am afraid it would take too long to explain why, even if you understood our language."

"I'm sure it would," said Wagner hastily. "Go on."

"Luckily, it will be a simple matter to adapt your Automatic Sequence Computer for this work, since once it has been programmed properly it will permute each letter in turn and print the result. What would have taken us fifteen thousand years it will be able to do in a hundred days."

Dr. Wagner was scarcely conscious of the faint sounds from the Manhattan streets far below. He was in a different world, a world of natural, not man-made, mountains. High up in their remote aeries these monks had been patiently at work, generation after generation, compiling their lists of meaningless words. Was there any limit to the follies of mankind? Still, he must give no hint of his inner thoughts. The customer was always right....

There's no doubt," replied the doctor, "that we can modify the Mark V to print lists of this nature. I'm much more worried about the problem of installation and maintenance. Getting out to Tibet, in these days, is not going to be easy."

"We can arrange that. The components are small enough to travel by air - that is one reason why we chose your machine. If you can get them to India, we will provide transport from there."

"And you want to hire two of our engineers?"

"Yes, for the three months that the project should occupy."

"I've no doubt that Personnel can manage that." Dr. Wagner scribbled a note on his desk pad. "There are just two other points - "

Before he could finish the sentence the lame had produced a small slip of paper.

"This is my certified credit balance at the Asiatic Bank."

"Thank you. It appears to be - ah - adequate. The second matter is so trivial that I hesitate to mention it - but it's surprising how often the obvious gets overlooked. What source of electrical energy have you?"

"A diesel generator providing fifty kilowatts at a hundred and ten volts. It was installed about five years ago and is quite reliable. It's made life at the lamasery much more comfortable, but of course it was really installed to provide power for the motors driving the prayer wheels."

"Of course," echoed Dr. Wagner. "I should have thought of that."

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The view from the parapet was vertiginous, but in time one gets used to anything. After three months, George Hanley was not impressed by the two-thousand-foot swoop into the abyss or the remote checkerboard of fields in the valley below. He was leaning against the wind-smoothed stones and staring morosely at the distant mountains whose names he had never bothered to discover.

This, thought George, was the craziest thing that had ever happened to him. "Project Shangri-La," some wit back at the labs had christened it. For weeks now the Mark V had been churning out acres of sheets covered with gibberish. Patiently, inexorably, the computer had been rearranging letters in all their possible combinations, exhausting each class before going on to the next. As the sheets had emerged from the electromatic typewriters, the monks had carefully cut them up and pasted them into enormous books.

In another week, heaven be praised, they would have finished. Just what obscure calculations had convinced the monks that they needn't bother to go on to words of ten, twenty, or a hundred letters, George didn't know. One of his recurring nightmares was that there would be some change of plan, and that the high lame (whom they'd naturally called Sam Jaffe, though he didn't look a bit like him) would suddenly announce that the project would be extended to approximately A.D. 2060. They were quite capable of it.

George heard the heavy wooden door slam in the wind as Chuck came out onto the parapet beside him. As usual, Chuck was smoking one of the cigars that made him so popular with the monks - who, it seemed, were quite willing to embrace all the minor and most of the major pleasures of life. That was one thing in their favor: they might be crazy, but they weren't bluenoses. Those frequent trips they took down to the village, for instance . . .

"Listen, George," said Chuck urgently. "I've learned something that means trouble."

"What's wrong? Isn't the machine behaving?" That was the worst contingency George could imagine. It might delay his return, and nothing could be more horrible. The way he felt now, even the sight of a TV commercial would seem like manna from heaven. At least it would be some link with home.

"No - it's nothing like that." Chuck settled himself on the parapet, which was unusual because normally he was scared of the drop. "I've just found what all this is about."

What d'ya mean? I thought we knew."

"Sure - we know what the monks are trying to do. But we didn't know why. It's the craziest thing\_\_"

"Tell me something new," growled George.

" - but old Sam's just come clean with me. You know the way he drops in every afternoon to watch the sheets roll out. Well, this time he seemed rather excited, or at least as near as he'll ever get to it. When I told him that we were on the last cycle he asked me, in that cute English accent of his, if I'd ever wondered what they were trying to do. I said, 'Sure' - and he told me."

"Go on: I'll buy it."

"Well, they believe that when they have listed all His names - and they reckon that there are about nine billion of them - God's purpose will be achieved. The human race will have finished what it was created to do, and

there won't be any point in carrying on. Indeed, the very idea is something like blasphemy."

"Then what do they expect us to do? Commit suicide?"

"There's no need for that. When the list's completed, God steps in and simply winds things up . . . bingo!"

"Oh, I get it. When we finish our job, it will be the end of the world."

Chuck gave a nervous little laugh.

"That's just what I said to Sam. And do you know what happened? He looked at me in a very queer way, like I'd been stupid in class, and said, 'It's nothing as trivial as that.' "

George thought this over a moment.

"That's what I call taking the Wide View," he said presently. "But what d'you suppose we should do about it? I don't see that it makes the slightest difference to us. After all, we already knew that they were crazy."

"Yes - but don't you see what may happen? When the list's complete and the Last Trump doesn't blow - or whatever it is they expect - we may get the blame. It's our machine they've been using. I don't like the situation one little bit."

"I see," said George slowly. "You've got a point there. But this sort of thing's happened before, you know. When I was a kid down in Louisiana we had a crackpot preacher who once said the world was going to end next Sunday. Hundreds of people believed him - even sold their homes. Yet when nothing happened, they didn't turn nasty, as you'd expect. They just decided that he'd made a mistake in his calculations and went right on believing. I guess some of them still do."

"Well, this isn't Louisiana, in case you hadn't noticed. There are just two of us and hundreds of these monks. I like them, and I'll be sorry for old Sam when his lifework backfires on him. But all the same, I wish I was somewhere else."

"I've been wishing that for weeks. But there's nothing we can do until the contract's finished and the transport arrives to fly us out.

"Of course," said Chuck thoughtfully, "we could always try a bit of sabotage."

"Like hell we could! That would make things worse."

"Not the way I meant. Look at it like this. The machine will finish its run four days from now, on the present twenty-hours-a-day basis. The transport calls in a week. O.K. - then all we need to do is to find something that needs replacing during one of the overhaul periods - something that will hold up the works for a couple of days. We'll fix it, of course, but not too quickly. If we time matters properly, we can be down at the airfield when the last name pops out of the register. They won't be able to catch us then."

"I don't like it," said George. "It will be the first time I ever walked out on a job. Besides, it 'would make them suspicious. No, I'll sit tight and take what comes."

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"I still don't like it," he said, seven days later, as the tough little mountain ponies carried them down the winding road. "And don't you think I'm running away because I'm afraid. I'm just sorry for those poor old guys up there, and I don't want to be around when they find what suckers they've been. Wonder how Sam will take it?" "It's funny," replied Chuck, "but when I said good-bye I got the idea he knew we were walking out on him\_and that he didn't care because he knew the machine was running smoothly and that the job would soon be finished. After that - well, of course, for him there just isn't any After That...."

George turned in his saddle and stared back up the mountain road. This was the last place from which one could get a clear view of the lamasery. The squat, angular buildings were silhouetted against the afterglow of the sunset: here and there, lights gleamed like portholes in the side of an ocean liner. Electric lights, of course, sharing the same circuit as the Mark V. How much longer would they share it? wondered George. Would the monks smash up the computer in their rage and disappointment? Or would they just sit down quietly and begin their calculations all over again?"

He knew exactly what was happening up on the mountain at this very moment. The high lame and his assistants would be sitting in their silk robes, inspecting the sheets as the junior monks carried them away from the typewriters and pasted them into the great volumes. No one would be saying anything. The only sound would be the incessant patter, the never-ending rainstorm of the keys hitting the paper, for the Mark V itself was utterly silent as it flashed through its thousands of calculations a second. Three months of this, thought George, was enough to start anyone climbing up the wall.

"There she is!" called Chuck, pointing down into the valley. "Ain't she beautiful!"

She certainly was, thought George. The battered old DC3 lay at the end of the runway like a tiny silver cross. In two hours she would be bearing them away to freedom and sanity. It was a thought worth savoring like a fine liqueur. George let it roll round his mind as the pony trudged patiently down the slope.

The swift night of the high Himalayas was now almost upon them. Fortunately, the road was very good, as roads went in that region, and they were both carrying torches. There was not the slightest danger, only a certain discomfort from the bitter cold. The sky overhead was perfectly clear, and ablaze with the familiar, friendly stars. At least there would be no risk, thought George, of the pilot being unable to take off because of weather conditions. That had been his only remaining worry.

He began to sing, but gave it up after a while. This vast arena of mountains, gleaming like whitely hooded ghosts on every side, did not encourage such ebullience. Presently George glanced at his watch.

"Should be there in an hour," he called back over his shoulder to Chuck. Then he added, in an afterthought: "Wonder if the computer's finished its run. It was due about now."

Chuck didn't reply, so George swung round in his saddle. He could just see Chuck's face, a white oval turned toward the sky.

"Look," whispered Chuck, and George lifted his eyes to heaven. (There is always a last time for everything.)

Overhead, without any fuss, the stars were going out.



## **Statistical Projections**

by

Salman Tarik Kureshi

Ideally we consider every figure  
reality expressed in simple terms.

Each simple symbol has in it the germs  
of all its prototypes;  
it is the trigger  
to some small term of life that we may face.

We know, because we've seen it all before.

When every probability is traced  
and planned for action, then the either/or  
of strategy takes over; then we act.

We move and counter-move our plan of being.  
And each new action breeds a newer fact;  
and each new fact a newer way of seeing,  
of looking at the means and at the end,  
and then agreeing  
to alter this a bit and that amend  
and meet these halfway. And what we had planned  
(so nicely, so precisely)  
no longer is.

So, quietly we stand  
aside and watch things flow and watch things blend,  
as each step alters more than we can mend.

## The Roger Schank Spot

### 1. Does the Business Community Give a Damn About Kids?

A wonderful article that tells you all there is to know about why we can't fix education in this country came out recently: <http://tinyurl.com/2gmr89>

It identifies the hot areas upcoming in *education technology*. This is what investors in education will invest in.

1. User-created content;
2. Social networking;
3. Mobile phones;
4. Virtual worlds;
5. New scholarship and emerging forms of publication; and
6. Massively multiplayer educational gaming.

Yet, again the trend is clear. Money will be spent on things that actually have nothing to do with education in the hope to make a buck by calling it education. The whole mobile phone thing fascinated me so I read more. This seems to be a way to help kids do their homework!

The most deceptive one is multi-player games. In principle these really could be great educational devices. An entire year in a virtual world could be a very exciting way to learn. But these games are expensive to build, so what will be built are ones that are commercially viable not educationally valid. But, they will be touted as being of educational value the way educational toys are sold as educational – they entertain and maybe you could learn something.

Yet again we have money for education from the business community not even considering building an alternative to school as it exists now. Why can't business people (or politicians) ever ask about what and how kids learn in school, and try to change both so school actually works? The answer is easy enough. *They just don't care enough to risk their money fighting the system.* Better to build more toys!

### 2. Never Discussed

I was having dinner last night with a couple who were telling me about the wonderful school their granddaughter went to. I said it wasn't so wonderful and they were shocked. What did I know about that school? Nothing. I was just listening to what they had been saying.

They were excited that their granddaughter knew songs from Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanza and discussed with them the attributes of all these traditions. What about the atheist tradition I asked? Did she learn about that as a possibility? No, of course not they said.

But here is the point. The people I was dining with are atheists and quite vocal about it. Yet they accepted without question that their point of view would never even be brought up.

We are all so complacent about education that we easily accept that it is actually a place for indoctrination, even when we don't agree with anything that is being said.

Here are some other things that are never discussed.

*Democracy may not actually be working in the U.S. Have you ever noticed that our presidential choices are nearly always between very wealthy men who come from a long line of patricians? Are Bush, Gore, and Kerry representative of the general population? Never discussed.*

*The U.S. is a very warlike nation. Have you ever noticed how happily we jump into wars in far off regions of the world? Should we have been in World Wars I or II? Korea? Never discussed.*

*Keeping drugs illegal supports an enormous number of criminals. If drugs were made legal how much less crime would there be? Never discussed.*

Please do not write to me about these issues. I am simply pointing out that school is a place of indoctrination and that points of view that do not support the standard orthodoxy are never discussed. We readily accept that these points of view, and many others, should never be mentioned in school because no one really sees school as a place where children learn to think for themselves.

That's why there is such a fuss about teaching evolution. The fuss is about whose indoctrination will win. The fuss should be about letting children learn to evaluate evidence and come to their own conclusions, But that would mean there wasn't a right answer and schools always know the right answer. Wrong answers are never discussed.

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*Dr. Schank was the Founder of the renowned Institute for the Learning Sciences at Northwestern University, where he is the John P. Evans Professor Emeritus in Computer Science, Education and Psychology. He was Professor of Computer Science and Psychology at Yale University and Director of the Yale Artificial Intelligence Project. He was a visiting professor at the University of Paris VII, an Assistant Professor of Computer Science and Linguistics at Stanford University and research fellow at the Institute for Semantics and Cognition in Switzerland. He also served as the Distinguished Career Professor in the School of Computer Science at Carnegie Mellon University. He is a fellow of the AAAI and was founder of the Cognitive Science Society and co-founder of the Journal of Cognitive Science. He holds a Ph.D. in Linguistics from University of Texas.*

*In 1994, he founded Cognitive Arts Corporation, a company that designs and builds high quality multimedia simulations for use in corporate training and for online university-level courses. The latter were built in partnership with Columbia University. In 2002 he founded Socratic Arts, a company that is devoted to making high quality e-learning affordable for both businesses and schools.*

*He is the author of more than 20 books on learning, language, artificial intelligence, education, memory, reading, e-learning, and story telling.*

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Read more by Roger Schank on many websites, including

<http://www.districtadministration.com/pulse/default.aspx>

## The Green Door

*By O'Henry*

Suppose you should be walking down Broadway after dinner, with ten minutes allotted to the consummation of your cigar while you are choosing between a diverting tragedy and something serious in the way of vaudeville. Suddenly a hand is laid upon your arm. You turn to look into the thrilling eyes of a beautiful woman, wonderful in diamonds and Russian sables. She thrusts hurriedly into your hand an extremely hot buttered roll, flashes out a tiny pair of scissors, snips off the second button of your overcoat, meaningly ejaculates the one word, "parallelogram!" and swiftly flies down a cross street, looking back fearfully over her shoulder.

That would be pure adventure. Would you accept it? Not you. You would flush with embarrassment; you would sheepishly drop the roll and continue down Broadway, fumbling feebly for the missing button. This you would do unless you are one of the blessed few in whom the pure spirit of adventure is not dead.

True adventurers have never been plentiful. They who are set down in print as such have been mostly business men with newly invented methods. They have been out after the things they wanted--golden fleeces, holy grails, lady loves, treasure, crowns and fame. The true adventurer goes forth aimless and uncalculating to meet and greet unknown fate. A fine example was the Prodigal Son--when he started back home.

Half-adventurers--brave and splendid figures--have been numerous. From the Crusades to the Palisades they have enriched the arts of history and fiction and the trade of historical fiction. But each of them had a prize to win, a goal to kick, an axe to grind, a race to run, a new thrust in tierce to deliver, a name to carve, a crow to pick--so they were not followers of true adventure.

In the big city the twin spirits Romance and Adventure are always abroad seeking worthy wooers. As we roam the streets they slyly peep at us and challenge us in twenty different guises. Without knowing why, we look up suddenly to see in a window a face that seems to belong to our gallery of intimate portraits; in a sleeping thoroughfare we hear a cry of agony and fear coming from an empty and shuttered house; instead of at our familiar curb, a cab-driver deposits us before a strange door, which one, with a smile, opens for us and bids us enter; a slip of paper, written upon, flutters down to our feet from the high lattices of Chance; we exchange glances of instantaneous hate, affection and fear with hurrying strangers in the passing crowds; a sudden douse of rain--and our umbrella may be sheltering the daughter of the Full Moon and first cousin of the Sidereal System; at every corner handkerchiefs drop, fingers beckon, eyes besiege, and the lost, the lonely, the rapturous, the mysterious, the perilous, changing clues of adventure are slipped into our fingers. But few of us are willing to hold and follow them. We are grown stiff with the ramrod of convention down our backs. We pass on; and some day we come, at the end of a very dull life, to reflect that our romance has been a pallid thing of a marriage or two, a satin rosette kept in a safe-deposit drawer, and a lifelong feud with a steam radiator.

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Read the full story at [http://www.literaturecollection.com/a/o\\_henry/38/](http://www.literaturecollection.com/a/o_henry/38/)

## **TWO BY LARKIN**

### **Annus Mirabilis**

Sexual intercourse began  
In nineteen sixty-three  
(Which was rather late for me)-  
Between the end of the Chatterley ban  
And the Beatles' first LP.

Up till then there'd only been  
A sort of bargaining,  
A wrangle for a ring,  
A shame that started at sixteen  
And spread to everything.

Then all at once the quarrel sank:  
Everyone felt the same,  
And every life became  
A brilliant breaking of the bank,  
A quite unlosable game.

So life was never better than  
In nineteen sixty-three  
(Though just too late for me)-  
Between the end of the Chatterley ban  
And the Beatles' first LP.

### **Money**

Quarterly, is it, money reproaches me:  
'Why do you let me lie here wastefully ?  
I am all you never had of goods and sex.  
You could get them still by writing a few cheques.'

So I look at others, what they do with theirs :  
They certainly don't keep it upstairs.  
By now they've a second house and car and wife :  
Clearly money has something to do with life

In fact, they've a lot in common, if you enquire:  
You can't put off being young until you retire,  
And however you bank your screw, the money you save  
Won't in the end buy you more than a shave.

I listen to money singing. It's like looking down  
From long french windows at a provincial town,  
The slums, the canal, the churches ornate and mad  
In the evening sun. It is intensely sad.

## BORN AGAIN

*By V. Radhika*

**Rebirth, one of life's deepest mysteries, compels awe among believers and invites scorn from sceptics. Researchers try to probe the phenomenon.**

It was a dull summer afternoon in the sleepy hamlet of Rayra in Rajasthan. Farmer Roop Singh watched helplessly as the recently acquired water pump in his field spluttered and fell silent. Suddenly, Singh's three-year-old son Mahendar, who was standing nearby, remarked, "You have bought a useless machine. Back home, I had to just press a button and whoosh, the water would gush out." A startled Singh muttered, "But this is your home." The child nodded and said, "Yes, but I am talking about my other home in Raipur."

Leave alone owning a house, Mahendar had never been to Raipur - a good 10 km from Rayra. Battling the urge to dismiss the boy's statements as ramblings of a hyperactive mind, Singh indulgently popped the question, "Where is your home?" Prompt came the reply: "You take me to the police station and I will take you to my house."

The conversation ended there. Or so Singh thought. But from that day in 1998, Mahendar started talking about his life as Ogad Ram in Raipur. He said he belonged to the mali (gardener) caste, was married with four children, had two brothers and two sisters, one of whom was dead. And that he (Ogad) had died in an accident. Singh and his wife Rupni Devi noticed that several English words such as tape, cell, cassette and pen - commonly used in small towns but unfamiliar to natives of Rayra - had inexplicably crept into Mahendar's vocabulary.

News about the boy soon reached Ogad's family. Ogad's mother Sayar Devi went to Rayra and took the three-year-old to Raipur where a stunned gathering watched him point to the spot where Ogad had met with an accident, where his two-wheeler was hit by a truck, identify Ogad's house, recognise the members of his family leaving no one in doubt that Mahendar is indeed Ogad reborn.

Ogad's mother watched in contentment as Mahendar distributed a packet of sweets to Ogad's children. (Mahendar, who accompanied The Week to Raipur, had stopped the car midway, saying "Let's buy sweets for my children.") The old mother is glad that her 27-year-old Ogad has returned, albeit in a different home and with a different name.

How far is this woman's belief in her dead son's rebirth justified? Do the dead return? And if so, do they remember their past lives? It seems right in Mahabharata when Amba is reborn as Shikhandi to avenge her humiliation by Bhishma and paves the way for his death. And ditto for other characters dotting the Hindu mythological map who complete the unfinished tasks of

present birth in their next avatar. And it is fascinating to watch Madhumati, Karz and Prem films with reincarnation theme which draw crowds to the cinema halls as honey draws bees. But fables and fantasies do not make up the matrix of life in its stark reality.

That some children aged three to five not only remember a previous existence, but can identify loved ones from it, strikes many as so bizarre that it compels disbelief. None the less it has been an idea that has been discussed, debated - often bitterly - for centuries now.

At one end are the skeptics who rubbish rebirth claims, arguing that these are cases of coincidence at best and tutored at worst. At the other end are those who, by virtue of being rooted in a culture which believes in reincarnation, do not think it necessary to find an objective basis for their beliefs. But positioned between these diametrically opposed views are a few researchers who have analysed the claims of rebirth and attempted to lift the phenomenon out of the realm of anecdote to responsible scientific inquiry.

One of those is Satwant K. Pasricha whose name has become synonymous with research on rebirth cases in India. Additional professor in the department of psychology at the National Institute for Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) in Bangalore, Pasricha has worked with Ian Stevenson of the University of Virginia (regarded as the world's foremost investigator of rebirth phenomenon) and investigated nearly 500 cases in India in the past two decades. In these cases young children have astonished their parents with precise details about the people they claim to have been. They have recalled events in their previous lives, including their often violent deaths. Sometimes their birthmarks resemble scars that correspond to wounds that led, they claim, to their deaths.

Inquiries to these claims include recording statements of informants (in many cases as many as 25 people or more from both families), delving into police and medical records, and meeting the subjects over regular intervals to assess the consistency of their statements. The phenomenon of rebirth can also be studied under controlled situations such as under the administration of drugs like LSD and hypnosis. Pasricha's studies have led her to declare that most claims of rebirth are authentic. But an answer to why only a few persons remember their past lives has eluded the researcher so far.

Ladali Saran and Hansmukhi Devi of UP's Chaumuha village were distraught when their only daughter Krishna fell into a village well and died in 1965. Three years later Manju was born to Tej Pal Singh and Ram Siri who lived a few kilometres away in Pasauli village. When Manju was about two, says Ram Siri, "She said her name was Krishna and that she belonged to Chaumuha. She also said that her father had a shop, her house had a tiled floor. She would not touch dry chappatis insisting that she used to have only parathas (butter-layered bread) in Chaumuha. Manju also narrated how she drowned to death." Disbelief in the child's version coupled with the fear of losing her (four older daughters had died) kept the parents quiet. However,

one day when a resident of Chaumuha came to Pasauli on some business, Manju recognized him. He informed Krishna's parents and Ladali Saran visited Pasauli with his son Kalicharan. The villagers gaped as the girl wept bitterly on seeing her (Krishna's) father and brother. Subsequently "we took her to Chaumuha where she identified our house, the spot where we used to keep money and the well in which she drowned," Kalicharan told *The Week*. With both families convinced that Manju was Krishna in her previous birth, the girl divided her childhood between Pasauli and Chaumuha.

Lugdi Devi died during childbirth and returned as Shanti Devi to create what is the most extensively documented rebirth case in this century. Born in 1926 into Babu Rang Bahadur's family, Shanti was just like any other girl till she turned four. Then she started talking about her husband Kedarnath Chaube and family in Mathura. Lugdi's son Navneet Chaube vividly recalls the day he met the frock-clad girl who claimed to be his mother! "I was ten and she was nine. She blushed on seeing my father and looked at me fondly. I could not believe that she was my mother Lugdi who died during childbirth. But then, when the committee (a group of eminent people had studied her case) brought her to Mathura, she sat alone in a horse carriage and led the rest of the people to our house. She even gave exact details of where we used to keep our money, and told my father the intimate details about their marital life. She also remembered how much money some of our neighbours had borrowed," Chaube said. Shanti never married and used to regularly visit her Mathura home till her death in 1987.

Researchers have found that memories of past lives are most active during childhood, mainly between the ages of three and five. But there are exceptions. Uttara Huddar of Nagpur began to be aware of her previous life as Sharada when she was in her early 30s. The memories changed her personality and she spoke a language unfamiliar to her during her normal state. (The phenomenon is known as *xenoglossy*.) On the eighth day of waxing or waning moon Uttara, who was unmarried, assumed the personality of a married Bengali woman who called herself Sharada and spoke only Bengali. During her Sharada phase, Uttara could not recognise her own relatives and spent her time in religious rituals and devotional songs. She showed complete unfamiliarity with modern gadgets such as gas stoves, electrical appliances or fountain pens. Her remarkable knowledge of places in undivided Bengal as well as of Bengali food and customs impressed investigators. Equally impressive was her knowledge of the early 19th century genealogy of the Chattopadhyay family into which Sharada said she was born. The case, reported in Pasricha's book, *Claims of Reincarnation: An Empirical Study of Cases in India*, was unusual in many ways. Uttara went into a trance while narrating her past experience - a phenomenon not observed usually. It is also rare for a person to be taken over completely by a previous personality. Moreover, the intermission between the death of a person and the rebirth usually does not exceed four to five years but Uttara was born 110 years after Sharada's death.



An interesting phenomenon cited by researchers in many rebirth cases is the appearance of birthmarks similar to the marks of injury suffered at the time of death. Meenu, an 18-year-old girl who said she was Sudha in her previous birth, had a scar on her forehead. Sudha had been murdered by her doctor husband in Kanpur. Sudha's family and an independent investigator of rebirth cases, Dr Kirti Singh Rawat, claim that Meenu's scar is exactly at the same spot where Sudha was hit by her husband. Rawat, who has also worked in collaboration with Stevenson, heads the International Centre for Survival and Reincarnation Research and claims to have set up the first Web site on reincarnation research in India. He has detailed dossiers on 600 cases and can be contacted at [ksrawat@vsnl.com](mailto:ksrawat@vsnl.com). Rawat, who would snatch time off his teaching job at Rajasthan University to pursue his "passion", says two very important features that have emerged from these cases are violent deaths, and birthmarks.

However, researchers like Pasricha do not rely on superficial appearances alone. "The corroboration of birthmarks," she says, "is done thoroughly to the point of getting autopsy report to see the correspondence with marks, injuries inflicted in past life." Apart from birthmarks, persons who remember their past lives have certain behavioral traits and phobias which correspond with their previous lives. For instance, Meenu whose obsession with cleanliness—using a separate towel, etc., baffled her parents, but was perfectly in tune with Sudha's nature.

In an article in the NIMHANS journal, Pasricha states that an analysis of 387 cases showed phobias occurred in 141 children, most of which corresponded closely to the mode of death of the person whose lives they claimed to remember. But the evidence marshalled by researchers does not impress sceptics such as Dr D. Mohan who heads the department of psychiatry at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS). "Existing scientific knowledge does not have any way of either explaining such phenomenon whenever they are reported, or establishing their validity," he says. Mohan attributes rebirth claims to an attempt to break the monotony of daily existence. "Anything out of the usual makes the life more exciting." Incidentally, Stevenson who advanced reincarnation as the "most plausible hypothesis for understanding" some of the cases he has investigated, has also said that reincarnation has not been proved as there is no "perfect case." In a paper presented at a conference on 'Science for the Benefit of Mankind' held in Washington last year Rawat argued that the search for a "perfect case" is a futile one, because there can be no consensus on what is "perfect."

"On the basis of the impressive evidence collected we can take reincarnation hypothesis as scientifically acceptable and conduct further research to explore 'how' and 'why'," argues Rawat. "And the most important area for research in my mind would be the doctrine of karma which ordains that what a man does, to such an existence he attains."

Running alongside the road connecting Kanpur and Unnao districts is the rail bridge. The Ganges flows below. Meenu sitting near the window of the car tries not to look sideways. She peeps out but she cannot bring herself to see the bridge, and her eyes prefer to watch the people standing on the river bed instead. "Nearly 16 years ago Meenu, who was then two and a half years old, had cried out from this bridge: "There, that is the spot where Vinay threw my body." Tears welled up in Sukhdeo Rai Sinha's eyes as memories of his 25-year-old daughter Sudha's body lying on the tracks flashed across, while Dhunni Singh stared at his little daughter Meenu in disbelief. All those statements Meenu had made over the past few months flashed in his mind. The first was the day his wife was wearing a sari for a puja. Meenu said, "Your sari is very dirty. I have many saris in my suitcase in Kanpur." Then, her demand for olive oil to massage her doll (Sudha used to massage her year-old daughter with olive oil) "because Vinay used to get that oil."

Could it be possible that his Meenu was Sinha's Sudha in her previous birth, he wondered? This question was on Sinha's mind too. He had heard of the child in Bethar who claimed to have been a resident of Kanpur in her previous birth and that she had been murdered by her doctor husband. The man immediately set out for Bethar. Meenu's family had no inkling of his visit. "But that morning Meenu said 'my babuji (father) is going to come today.' We did not pay heed and in the afternoon Sinhasaab came," says her mother. The girl wept on seeing him and was subsequently taken to Kanpur. It was during that journey that she showed the spot where Sudha's body had lain. She identified her house and other relatives. Says Sudha's brother R.D. Rai Sinha, a scientist with the Defence Research Development Organisation: "I saw a gathering outside my house when I returned from work. I did not believe in rebirth. The moment I stepped into the house Meenu recognised me. I still did not believe her. She saw the photo album and recognised everyone. The moment she saw Vinay's photograph she pulled it out and hugged it." The details given by Meenu of private conversations with Sudha's family members convinced them that she was Sudha. Says Sudha's sister-in-law Kiran, "Sudha and I had given a toe-ring for repair at a jeweller's in Kanpur and never collected it. After Sudha's death I forgot about it. Meenu reminded me about it."

Meenu had fielded questions as she provided details about Sudha's murder. A radiologist in the government hospital in Hardoi in UP, Vinay, who was allegedly having an affair with a nurse in the institution, had murdered Sudha, packed her body in a trunk and flung it from a moving train on the bridge above Ganges in Kanpur. However the trunk's lid came off and the body fell on the track. Vinay was sentenced to life imprisonment; he died a few years ago. Sudha was murdered on October 25, 1978 and Meenu was born 13 months later. Meenu has a birthmark on her forehead which corresponds to the wounds Sudha had sustained. Incidentally, the Dalai Lama, after hearing about Meenu, went to Kanpur to meet her and "blessed her" that she would forget her past life as she grew older. Meenu, who is now studying in college, has forgotten her previous life. That she has also made a conscious effort to do so is evident when she says, "it is very painful to remember the past life." However, relationships from the past continue. The

two families visit each other. Meenu is particularly attached to Babuji (Sudha's father) who visits her even now.

Her weather-beaten face, hunched frame and fading eyesight bear testimony to the ruthless conquest of age over Mainfuli. But it has not wrenched away a few memories. Particularly of that day when nearly 25 years ago she was walking past the marketplace with her mother and a threeyear- old boy shouted, "There go my wife and mother-inlaw." The boy was Raghunath Singh and he was perched on his father Mithu Singh's shoulder. Mainfuli's husband Ahmad Cheeta's mutilated body was found along the road near Sendra village in Rajasthan's Pali district on January 14, 1973. Cheeta's two wives Mainfuli and Amrao used to eke out a living by selling vegetables at Sendra. It was during one of these visits that Raghunath recognised her.

Breaking into a coy toothless smile, Mainfuli says, "I was walking in the market when the boy recognised me ... I was stunned. But he narrated everything about me." If Mainfuli was stunned, Mithu Singh was horrified. Raghunath was his only son and hitherto he had dismissed the boy's statements about his previous life as Ahmed and that he was a resident of Kesarpura village who was killed in an accident. Singh, who knew Ahmed well, was aware of the accident and also that Raghunath was born exactly nine months after Ahmed's death, but did not encourage the child for the fear of losing him. But subsequently Raghunath was taken to Kesarpura where he identified Ahmed's house, his children and friends. Raghunath was Ahmed reborn. The boy would often run away from school to meet Mainfuli. "The school was very close to the market. He would come to me. I used to draw a long veil and he used to lift it always to look at my face," she says. In fact, Ahmed's children used to address Raghunath as father. Raghunath, now 26, does not have any recollections of his past life. The memories, he says, faded as he stepped into his teens. But he does remember that whenever he saw his (Ahmed's) children, "a strange feeling would overcome me. I felt they were my children, even though they were older than me!" Raghunath is married with three children. He does run into Mainfuli at the market occasionally, but they do not exchange glances. "Whenever he bumps into me, he just lowers his head and walks away," says Mainfuli. Does she feel hurt? "Well, he will care for the woman he has married in this birth. Why should he care for me?" she philosophises.

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ENDNOTE  
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**Satwant Pasricha's** name is synonymous with research on rebirth cases in India. The Week caught up with the additional professor in the department of psychology at National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences in Bangalore and asked a whole lot of questions:

*Why is it that only a few remember their past lives? Most cases investigated by you and others are from north India; Why? Do children who remember past*

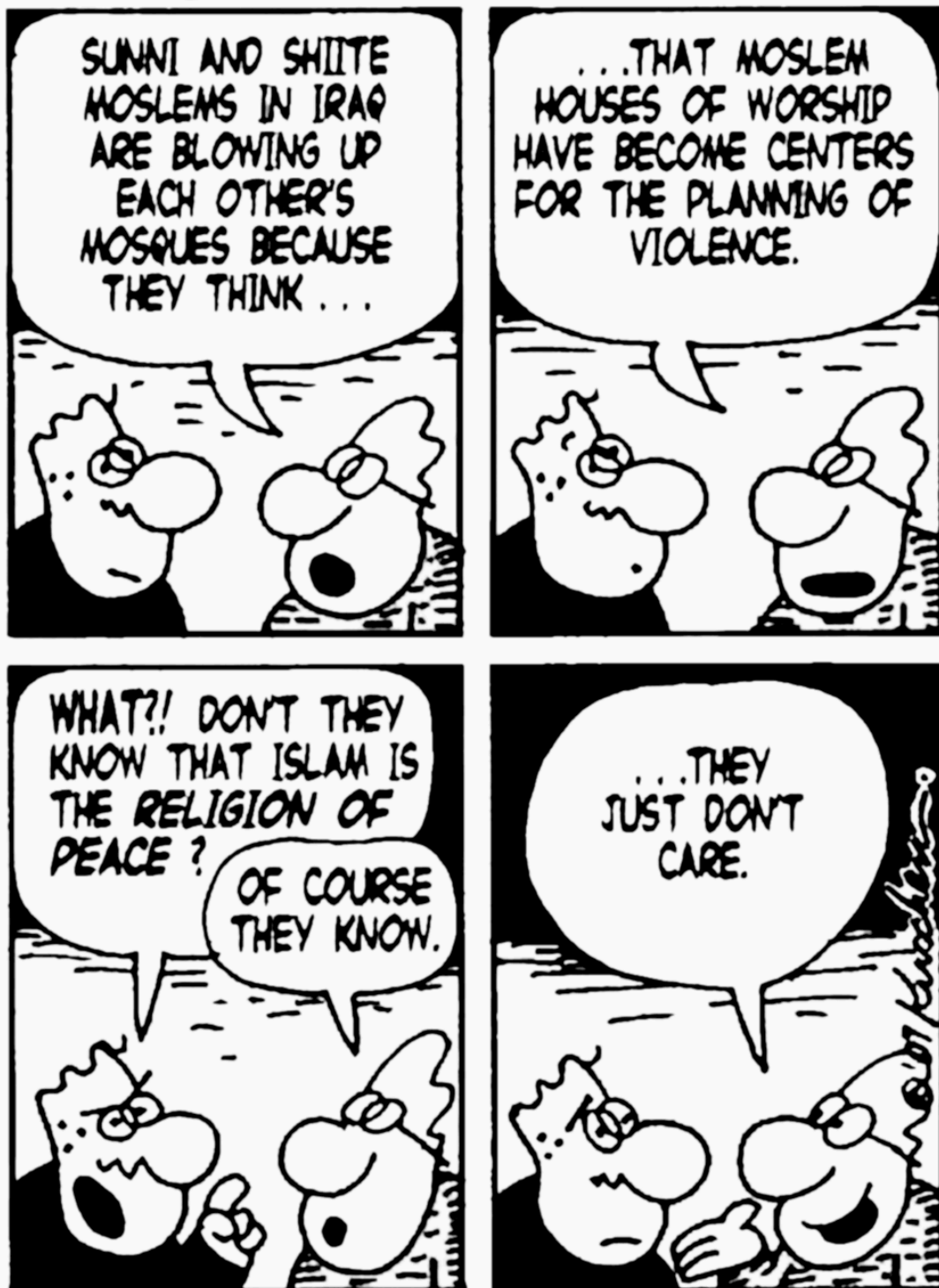
*lives have problems adjusting in their present surroundings? Any cases of sex change? Have there also been cases of change in religion? Does the violent nature of death and memories of a past life affect the psychology of a child in the next life? Is there any difference in the way boys and girls cope with memories of their past life? Finally: How do you respond to the charge that rebirth claims are tutored?*

***Excerpts from the interview:***

There could be some factors that we have not been able to pin down yet. Violent death could be one of the several factors that could facilitate the memories. The basic question is not why some people remember their previous lives but what they say is authentic or not. We have found that in most cases the claims were authentic and the stronger cases can be interpreted in terms of reincarnation hypothesis. Now we are focusing on specific type of cases such as twins, childhood phobias, birthmarks and birth defects. One of the main reasons I concentrated in the north was that I did not want to use an interpreter that would have contaminated the data. I have come across some cases in the south but the occurrence is not as frequent. In some cases it has been noticed that if the circumstances of the present life are very different from the previous life, the child may have adjustment problems. These circumstances could pertain to the difference in economic status of the two families, caste differences, food habits, etc. But this phenomenon does not carry on. The memories generally fade away in early childhood while behavioral features persist a little longer. Yes, one case is particularly vivid in my memory where a female child had difficulty in adjusting to her present anatomical sex even into the later life. This woman, as a child, recalled a previous life of a male. By and large these children get adjusted to their present sex. I have investigated a few cases where the subject's religion has changed from Hindu to Muslim and vice versa. There was a case in Lucknow where the Hindu child was insistent on going back to his previous family which was Muslim. In some cases, children do speak of taking revenge upon a person who was responsible for his or her death. In other cases, children develop phobias of weapons that terminated their previous lives. However, memories of past lives do not generally affect their lives for long because they fade away with age. Both generally forget by the time they are adolescents. However, the associated emotional status of boys and girls may differ. For instance a girl remembering children of her past life will display emotions of affection and would treat her toys very affectionately. On the other hand, a boy remembering having been murdered would display anger or vengeance. The number of boys who recall their previous lives is far greater than girls. One of the reasons could be that parents hush up the case for fear of damaging marital prospects of a girl. Also, it can be hypothesized that men lead more eventful lives and face greater occupational hazards. They also settle quarrels by adopting more violent means. But there could be other reasons for this lop-sided reporting. How can you teach a small child and what could be the motivation for doing it? Money? In most of the cases the family has not gained monetarily. The publicity, too, is momentary. Moreover, one cannot tutor a child to have birthmarks or birth defects.

## Touché

How the world sees us ...



## WHAT IS CREATIVITY?

*from <http://tinyurl.com/3dfpbh>*

Creativity has been considered in terms of process, product or person (Barron and Harrington, 1981) and has been defined as the interpersonal and intrapersonal process by means of which original, high quality, and genuinely significant products are developed. In dealing with young children, the focus should be on the process, i.e., developing and generating original ideas, which is seen as the basis of creative potential. When trying to understand this process, it is helpful to consider Guilford's (1956) differentiation between convergent and divergent thought. Problems associated with convergent thought often have one correct solution. But problems associated with divergent thought require the problem-solver to generate many solutions, a few of which will be novel, of high quality, and workable--hence creative.

For a proper understanding of children's creativity, one must distinguish creativity from intelligence and talent. Ward (1974) expressed concern about whether creativity in young children could be differentiated from other cognitive abilities. More recent studies (for example, Moran and others, 1983) have shown that components of creative potential can indeed be distinguished from intelligence. The term "gifted" is often used to imply high intelligence. But Wallach (1970) has argued that intelligence and creativity are independent of each other, and a highly creative child may or may not be highly intelligent.

Creativity goes beyond possession and use of artistic talent. In this context, talent refers to the possession of a high degree of technical skill in a specialized area. Thus an artist may have wonderful technical skills, but may not succeed in evoking the emotional response that makes the viewer feel that a painting, for example, is unique. It is important to keep in mind that creativity is evidenced not only in music, art, or writing, but throughout the curriculum, in science, social studies and other areas.

Most measures of children's creativity have focused on ideational fluency. Ideational fluency tasks require children to generate as many responses as they can to a particular stimulus, as is done in brainstorming. Ideational fluency is generally considered to be a critical feature of the creative process. Children's responses may be either popular or original, with the latter considered evidence of creative potential. When we asked four-year-olds to tell us "all the things they can think of that are red," we found that children not only listed wagons, apples and cardinals, but also chicken pox and cold hands.

For young children, the focus of creativity should remain on process: the generation of ideas. Adult acceptance of multiple ideas in a non-evaluative atmosphere will help children generate more ideas or move to the next stage of self-evaluation. As children develop the ability for self-evaluation, issues of quality and the generation of products become more important. The emphasis at this age should be on self-evaluation, for these children are exploring their abilities to generate and evaluate hypotheses, and revise their ideas based on that evaluation. Evaluation by others and criteria for genuinely significant products should be used only with older adolescents or adults.

## WHAT AFFECTS THE EXPRESSION OF CREATIVITY?

For young children, a non-evaluative atmosphere appears to be a critical factor in avoiding what Treffinger (1984) labels as the "right answer fixation." Through the socialization process, children move toward conformity during the elementary school years. The percentage of original responses in ideational fluency tasks drops from about 50% among four-year-olds to 25% during elementary school, then returns to 50% among college students (Moran et al., 1983). It is important that children be given the opportunity to express divergent thought and to find more than one route to the solution.

Rewards or incentives for children appear to interfere with the creative process. Although rewards may not affect the number of responses on ideational fluency tasks, they seem to reduce the quality of children's responses and the flexibility of their thought. In other words, rewards reduce children's ability to shift from category to category in their responses (Groves, Sawyers, and Moran, 1987). Indeed, any external constraint seems to reduce this flexibility. Other studies have shown that structured materials, especially when combined with structured instructions, reduce flexibility in four-year-old children (Moran, Sawyers, and Moore, in press). In one case, structured instructions consisted only in the demonstration of how to put together a model. Teachers need to remember that the structure of children's responses is very subtle. Research suggests that children who appear to be creative are often involved in imaginative play, and are motivated by internal factors rather than external factors, such as rewards and incentives.

## HOW CAN ADULTS ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY?

- ☒ Provide an environment that allows the child to explore and play without undue restraints.
- ☒ Adapt to children's ideas rather than trying to structure the child's ideas to fit the adult's.
- ☒ Accept unusual ideas from children by suspending judgement of children's divergent problem-solving.
- ☒ Use creative problem-solving in all parts of the curriculum. Use the problems that naturally occur in everyday life.
- ☒ Allow time for the child to explore all possibilities, moving from popular to more original ideas.
- ☒ Emphasize process rather than product.

## CONCLUSION

Adults can encourage creativity by emphasizing the generation and expression of ideas in a non-evaluative framework and by concentrating on both divergent and convergent thinking. Adults can also try to ensure that children have the opportunity and confidence to take risks, challenge assumptions, and see things in a new way.

## **Back to the Drawing Board**

by

Geoff Barnbrook

it was nice to think our children might be born;  
it would have been nice.  
Now all our possibilities have resolved inevitably into  
sterile dust  
and our ashes settling after the fireball;  
Perhaps one day  
the odd viruses that survived will start again;  
perhaps one day  
there will be new lovers  
under new trees  
breathing new wishes  
for their coming children;  
and perhaps, next time, again, they'll be ignored

## **Poem**

by

Richard Sylvester

This morning,  
Beneath the cracks  
In the kitchen ceiling,  
Watched by the stains  
On the walls,  
In spite of coffee  
Spilled on the table cloth,  
And burnt toast,  
And broken promises ...  
In spite of  
Many other reasons  
Too numerous to mention,  
And while a smashed chair  
Looked on morosely,  
You said you loved me.

Tonight I shall fly to Rome  
To have you declared  
A bona fide  
Miracle.



# STEVE JOBS

## THE STANFORD ADDRESS



### **Steve Jobs' Commencement address**

*One of the most inspiring straight-from-the-heart speeches of all times*

I am honored to be with you today at your commencement from one of the finest universities in the world. I never graduated from college. Truth be told, this is the closest I've ever gotten to a college graduation. Today I want to tell you three stories from my life. That's it. No big deal. Just three stories.

The first story is about connecting the dots.

I dropped out of Reed College after the first 6 months, but then stayed around as a drop-in for another 18 months or so before I really quit. So why did I drop out?

It started before I was born. My biological mother was a young, unwed college graduate student, and she decided to put me up for adoption. She felt very strongly that I should be adopted by college graduates, so everything was all set for me to be adopted at birth by a lawyer and his wife. Except that when I popped out they decided at the last minute that they really wanted a girl. So my parents, who were on a waiting list, got a call in the middle of the night asking: "We have an unexpected baby boy; do you want him?" They said: "Of course." My biological mother later

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found out that my mother had never graduated from college and that my father had never graduated from high school. She refused to sign the final adoption papers. She only relented a few months later when my parents promised that I would someday go to college.

And 17 years later I did go to college. But I naively chose a college that was almost as expensive as Stanford, and all of my working-class parents' savings were being spent on my college tuition. After six months, I couldn't see the value in it. I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life and no idea how college was going to help me figure it out. And here I was spending all of the money my parents had saved their entire life. So I decided to drop out and trust that it would all work out OK. It was pretty scary at the time, but looking back it was one of the best decisions I ever made. The minute I dropped out I could stop taking the required classes that didn't interest me, and begin dropping in on the ones that looked interesting.

It wasn't all romantic. I didn't have a dorm room, so I slept on the floor in friends' rooms, I returned coke bottles for the 5¢ deposits to buy food with, and I would walk the 7 miles across town every Sunday night to get one good meal a week at the Hare Krishna temple. I loved it. And much of what I stumbled into by following my curiosity and intuition turned out to be priceless later on. Let me give you one example:

Reed College at that time offered perhaps the best calligraphy instruction in the country. Throughout the campus every poster, every label on every drawer, was beautifully hand calligraphed. Because I had dropped out and didn't have to take the normal classes, I decided to take a calligraphy class to learn how to do this. I learned about serif and san serif typefaces, about varying the amount of space between different letter combinations, about what makes great typography great. It was beautiful, historical, artistically subtle in a way that science can't capture, and I found it fascinating.

None of this had even a hope of any practical application in my life. But ten years later, when we were designing the first Macintosh computer, it all came back to me. And we designed it all into the Mac. It was the first computer with beautiful typography. If I had never dropped in on that single course in college, the Mac would have never had multiple typefaces or proportionally spaced fonts. And since Windows just copied the Mac, it's likely that no personal computer would have them. If I had never dropped out, I would have never dropped in on this calligraphy class, and personal computers might not have the wonderful typography that they do. Of course it was impossible to connect the dots looking forward when I was in college. But it was very, very clear looking backwards ten years later.

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Again, you can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something — your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life.

My second story is about love and loss.

I was lucky — I found what I loved to do early in life. Woz and I started Apple in my parents garage when I was 20. We worked hard, and in 10 years Apple had grown from just the two of us in a garage into a \$2 billion company with over 4000 employees. We had just released our finest creation — the Macintosh — a year earlier, and I had just turned 30. And then I got fired. How can you get fired from a company you started? Well, as Apple grew we hired someone who I thought was very talented to run the company with me, and for the first year or so things went well. But then our visions of the future began to diverge and eventually we had a falling out. When we did, our Board of Directors sided with him. So at 30 I was out. And very publicly out. What had been the focus of my entire adult life was gone, and it was devastating.

I really didn't know what to do for a few months. I felt that I had let the previous generation of entrepreneurs down - that I had dropped the baton as it was being passed to me. I met with David Packard and Bob Noyce and tried to apologize for screwing up so badly. I was a very public failure, and I even thought about running away from the valley. But something slowly began to dawn on me — I still loved what I did. The turn of events at Apple had not changed that one bit. I had been rejected, but I was still in love. And so I decided to start over.

I didn't see it then, but it turned out that getting fired from Apple was the best thing that could have ever happened to me. The heaviness of being successful was replaced by the lightness of being a beginner again, less sure about everything. It freed me to enter one of the most creative periods of my life.

During the next five years, I started a company named NeXT, another company named Pixar, and fell in love with an amazing woman who would become my wife. Pixar went on to create the worlds first computer animated feature film, Toy Story, and is now the most successful animation studio in the world. In a remarkable turn of events, Apple bought NeXT, I returned to Apple, and the technology we developed at NeXT is at the heart of Apple's current renaissance. And Laurene and I have a wonderful family together.

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I'm pretty sure none of this would have happened if I hadn't been fired from Apple. It was awful tasting medicine, but I guess the patient needed it. Sometimes life hits you in the head with a brick. Don't lose faith. I'm convinced that the only thing that kept me going was that I loved what I did. You've got to find what you love. And that is as true for your work as it is for your lovers. Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it. And, like any great relationship, it just gets better and better as the years roll on. So keep looking until you find it. Don't settle.

My third story is about death.

When I was 17, I read a quote that went something like: "If you live each day as if it was your last, someday you'll most certainly be right." It made an impression on me, and since then, for the past 33 years, I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: "If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?" And whenever the answer has been "No" for too many days in a row, I know I need to change something.

Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything — all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure - these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.

About a year ago I was diagnosed with cancer. I had a scan at 7:30 in the morning, and it clearly showed a tumor on my pancreas. I didn't even know what a pancreas was. The doctors told me this was almost certainly a type of cancer that is incurable, and that I should expect to live no longer than three to six months. My doctor advised me to go home and get my affairs in order, which is doctor's code for prepare to die. It means to try to tell your kids everything you thought you'd have the next 10 years to tell them in just a few months. It means to make sure everything is buttoned up so that it will be as easy as possible for your family. It means to say your good-byes.

I lived with that diagnosis all day. Later that evening I had a biopsy, where they stuck an endoscope down my throat, through my stomach and into my intestines, put a needle into my pancreas and got a few cells from the tumor. I was sedated, but my wife, who was there, told me that when they viewed the cells under a microscope the

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doctors started crying because it turned out to be a very rare form of pancreatic cancer that is curable with surgery. I had the surgery and I'm fine now.

This was the closest I've been to facing death, and I hope its the closest I get for a few more decades. Having lived through it, I can now say this to you with a bit more certainty than when death was a useful but purely intellectual concept:

No one wants to die. Even people who want to go to heaven don't want to die to get there. And yet death is the destination we all share. No one has ever escaped it. And that is as it should be, because Death is very likely the single best invention of Life. It is Life's change agent. It clears out the old to make way for the new. Right now the new is you, but someday not too long from now, you will gradually become the old and be cleared away. Sorry to be so dramatic, but it is quite true.

Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma — which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary.

When I was young, there was an amazing publication called The Whole Earth Catalog, which was one of the bibles of my generation. It was created by a fellow named Stewart Brand not far from here in Menlo Park, and he brought it to life with his poetic touch. This was in the late 1960's, before personal computers and desktop publishing, so it was all made with typewriters, scissors, and polaroid cameras. It was sort of like Google in paperback form, 35 years before Google came along: it was idealistic, and overflowing with neat tools and great notions.

Stewart and his team put out several issues of The Whole Earth Catalog, and then when it had run its course, they put out a final issue. It was the mid-1970s, and I was your age. On the back cover of their final issue was a photograph of an early morning country road, the kind you might find yourself hitchhiking on if you were so adventurous. Beneath it were the words: "Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish." It was their farewell message as they signed off. Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish. And I have always wished that for myself. And now, as you graduate to begin anew, I wish that for you.

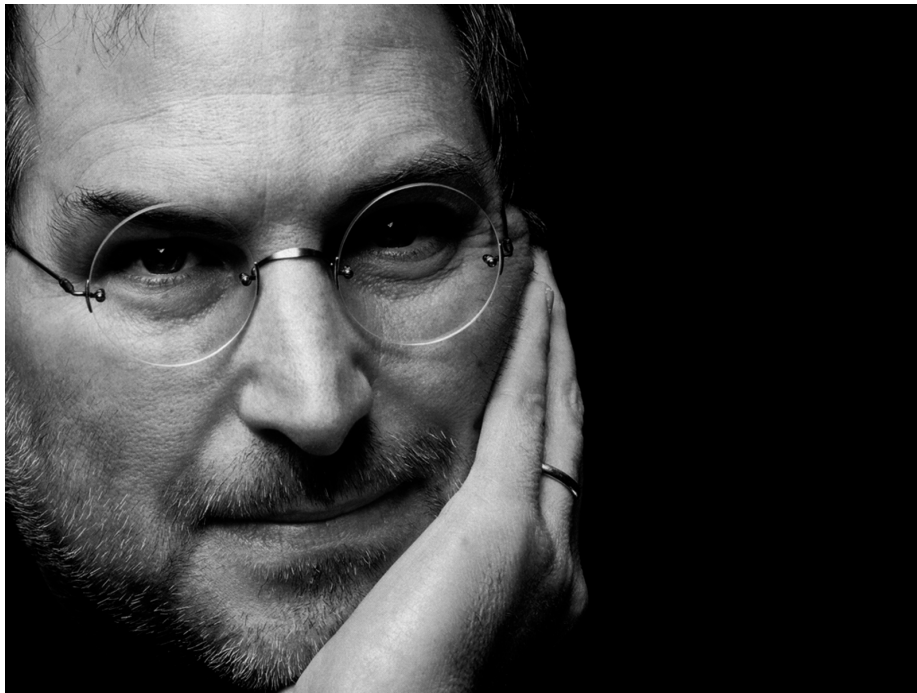
*Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish.*  
Thank you all very much.

*June 12, 2005*





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*"I would trade all of my technology for an afternoon with Socrates."*

**Steve Jobs**

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