

# Sex, Violence, Politics, and God

*How They Rule Our Lives*

ED LONG

Author of *Chimpanzees Don't Wear Pants*



*Sex, Violence,  
Politics, and God*

Also by this author:

***Chimpanzees Don't Wear Pants*** — *A Retired Psychiatrist  
Takes a Second Look at Human Nature*

Sex, Violence,  
Politics, and God

*How They Rule Our Lives*

*by*

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*Chimpanzees Don't Wear Pants*

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1. Social Psychology 2. Morality 3. Government  
4. Economics 5. Religion 6. Sexuality

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*For Amelia and Isabella,*

because knowledge is power.

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*A life unexamined is not worth living.*

**Socrates**

## Introduction

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Our genetic strain parted company with our chimpanzee cousins about seven million years ago, probably because it embarrassed us to see them scooting about on all four legs.

We then embarked on a multimillion-year experiment of adding brain cells to our cerebrum. By the time we achieved certification as *Homo sapiens* we had added more than two pounds of gray matter atop our perfectly adequate chimpanzee brain. That point was reached about a hundred and twenty thousand years ago, give or take.

Since that time we have developed symbolic languages that very few of us ever master, abstract thought that is used mostly for considering problems that nobody really cares about, methods of food production that result in enormous surpluses that are fed to automobiles rather than to the billions of humans who are perpetually hungry, and weapons that are capable of blowing us all to kingdom come in the blink of an eye.

Looking on the bright side, it also should be noted that we have conquered nearly all of the microorganisms that cause disease and are now proceeding to mass-produce them for possible use in killing people we have never met.

Twenty-first century science has made it possible for us to communicate instantly with anyone anywhere on the globe even though we rarely have anything worthwhile to say. Computers have made it possible for businesses to exchange information at the speed of light and for entrepreneurs to embezzle unheard of sums of money from banks they have never laid eyes on.

We are truly the masters of all we survey, and are busily paving it over.

\* \* \*

### ***Does any of this matter?***

For readers who are members of the upper middle-class and who live in a community and a country that protects people who are in that economic class or higher, it probably does not matter — *yet*.

When will it begin to matter? Well, of course, it already matters to those who are members of historically disadvantaged cultures and subcultures. It will begin to matter for the more fortunate when downtrodden minorities become majorities or when presently subdued majorities learn how to express their power.

It will matter as awareness of how other people live becomes universal as a result of modern communications, with the result that hatred of the ‘haves’ by the ‘have-nots’ will grow until it begins to erupt in the forms of terrorism and economic sabotage. Dissemination of information in the other direction, that is, greater knowledge on the part of the haves as to the plight of the have-nots, and the apparent indifference of those ‘in power’, may begin to alienate the educated middle class and even the children of the wealthy, as it did during the latter stages of America’s involvement in Vietnam. That may lead not only to civil disobedience, but to loss of respect for society in all its aspects.

The plight of the poor may begin to matter to *everyone* as unpredictable violence and uprisings become a daily concern, or if dread diseases like AIDS, Ebola infection, or even smallpox, make life more precarious, and travel more hazardous.

**Aside from all of that — and aside from the likelihood that the well-off in advanced societies will usually be able to stay out of the way of the chaotic activities of the rabble — it may be asked whether the misery of the many should matter *simply because it is wrong*.**

That question is not likely to be asked by people who are unaware of the problems, their magnitude, or the enormous suffering they cause. It is even less likely that much compassion will be induced without some understanding of the sources of the problems.

A desire to examine some of the inappropriate, unsympathetic, and unthinking behaviors of men and women was, I suppose, one of the three reasons this book came to be written.

A second was to illuminate and enjoy some of the simply silly things we do and feel.

The final and perhaps most important reason was to try to understand myself and my companions a little better before my life had run its course.

*Ed Long* July 31, 2002

***A Preview***

*by*

***Thomas Jefferson***

“Although I do not, with some enthusiasts, believe that the human condition will ever advance to such a state of perfection as that there shall no longer be pain or vice in the world, yet I believe it susceptible of much improvement, and most of all, in matters of government and religion; and that the diffusion of knowledge among the people is to be the instrument by which it is to be effected.”

*(Author of The Declaration of Independence,  
The Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom in the  
Colony of Virginia, and Founder of the University  
of Virginia)*

***“My method is to take the utmost trouble to find the right thing to say, and then say it with the utmost levity.”***

*Ed Long (and George Bernard Shaw)*

Prologue

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## *The Secrets of Happiness*

Scientists are still arguing about whether humans are naturally lovable or naturally hateful.

Some people will argue about anything.

The obvious truth is that we can lean in either direction.

Here's how it works:

If at any given moment everything goes our way, we tend to be lovable.

If anything or anyone gets in our way, or if things don't turn out at least as well as we expected them to, we become hateful.

What this means is that if we want to have a peaceful and harmonious world all we have to do is see to it that everyone has his way at all times.

Conversely, if people all over the world are acting ugly, which usually seems to be the case, all we have to do is figure out what is aggravating them, and then fix it.

That's simple enough, isn't it?

Let's see how things are going at the moment.

CHAPTER ONE

*What Would It Take To Satisfy You?*

In every bookstore there is a section called "Self Improvement". In it you will find three hundred and fourteen books that promise to tell you how to achieve your highest goals and satisfy your deepest desires!

Chances are that in moments of weakness you have bought self-improvement books, but you haven't improved. The reason for this is that none of those books tell you the *truth* about your deepest desires. They would have you believe that what you want most of all in this world is to learn the secrets of Hindu mystics, improve your memory, overcome your compulsions, and cleanse your mind of nasty thoughts.

As soon as you realize such a book must have been intended for someone else, you stop reading—and that is why you never improve. What you need is a book written by someone who knows what your deepest desires really are, lays them out in front of God-and-everybody, and tells you exactly how you will be punished if you try to satisfy them.

Let's think about it. What should everyone want?

- Freedom from pain and discomfort.
- Lots of fatty food and sweets.
- Protection from the cold.
- The ability to move about without difficulty.
- Five senses, seven or eight fingers, and a few teeth.
- The ability to speak.
- Interesting companions with whom to interact and communicate.
- An exciting sexual partner every few hours or so.
- A guarantee that none of those goods will be snatched away by forces beyond one's control.

*What else could anyone possibly require?*

For hundreds of millions of people who live in conditions of poverty or near-slavery in various parts of the world, satisfaction



of those few wants would constitute a paradise, a dream come true.<sup>1</sup>

Why shouldn't the satisfaction of such a list constitute a paradise for *anyone*? Nothing more would be needed to enable one to sit around a fire with his family and friends, enjoy a good barbecue, talk about the events of the day, tell stories, and laugh about life's little surprises.

The group could dance and sing, or sit quietly and gaze upon the beauty of nature. Whenever so inclined, partners could retire to rest or to make love. During daylight hours members of the group could play games with each other as children do, tinker with objects that caught their fancy, dabble in the arts, and wander about the neighborhood exploring and sampling what it had to offer – making new friends, enjoying the mysteries of our planet.

The wants just listed are self-evident and self-explanatory. Their satisfaction leads to immediate personal fulfillment or pleasure.

Most of us, however, seem to have other desires that are not so easy to explain. Foremost among them are the following:

- (1) The desire to have children—healthy, beautiful, strong, successful children—in whom we fancy we can see ourselves.<sup>2</sup>
- (2) A craving to be "important", and to be respected by the people we consider important.
- (3) A wish to be "loved" or "cherished" – first by our parents and later by others whom we learn to love or desire.
- (4) A yearning to feel "close" to someone (or some two or three).
- (5) A longing to "belong"—to feel that one is a member of, and is accepted by, some identifiable subset of humanity—large or small, here or elsewhere, past or present.
- (6) A craving for occasional excitement and variety – in addition to, and sometimes even in conflict with, all of the above.

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<sup>1</sup> But only for a while.

<sup>2</sup> If we are satisfied with our children, it is common for us to want *grand*-children in whom we will see twenty-five percent of ourselves.

- (7) An invincible urge or compulsion *to stay alive* – no matter how unpleasant or painful it may become, and no matter how few of the above desires are being satisfied.

Although particular people may express wants, wishes, and desires that do not seem to be covered by any of the above, a little reflection will reveal that either they are different ways of saying the same thing, or else they are not really "ultimate" wants. Nowadays, most of our wants are intermediate wants (steps in the right direction, they're called) which we hope will facilitate the satisfaction of more fundamental wants. For example, people may wish to be beautiful, clever, or entertaining, in order to win friends or influence lovers. Some people crave to be envied or feared because that makes them feel important. For a number of reasons, most of us would like to be rich. And so on.

What's it all about? Why so many wants? Why shouldn't it be enough to eat, sleep, make love, and sit around the fire, pain-free, enjoying the universe and talking with our friends?

Answers to that intriguing question must be sought in two areas — experiences that we are *designed* to want, and those that we *learn* to want.

\* \* \*

**AXIOM: Our survival as individuals and as a species depends upon our wanting to do and wanting to experience everything that is necessary to satisfy our basic needs.**

Think about that statement for a moment.

First, it should be noted that it is not necessary for us to *know* what we need, or to want precisely that which is needed. It is necessary only that we want that which is likely to lead to satisfying our needs. The most obvious example of this may be found in procreation. An individual man or woman does not need to have children either for personal survival or for physical well being, and many individuals consciously do not want to have children. But they do want to have sexual intercourse – even if they don't *want* to – and sexual intercourse is one of the leading causes of children. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that although some children were unwanted by their parents, their production was mandated by a greater want — sexual desire.

**Because we humans can make conscious decisions about which needs (and whose needs) we will satisfy and which needs we will attempt to suppress, it may have been critically important that our ancestors did not always know which need a given want was designed to satisfy, especially when the need was important to the species but possibly detrimental to the individual.<sup>3</sup>**

For instance, now that birth control is easily achieved we see large numbers of people choosing not to contribute to the continuation of the species. We also see individuals who no longer are thrilled by the idea of dying for their country or rushing unarmed to the aid of a neighbor who is being raped or murdered. No doubt such pusillanimous behavior will gradually disappear, because people who are capable of understanding the consequences of their acts do not breed as luxuriantly as those who are guided by random impulses. Individuals capable of making rational decisions are always replaced by normal people.

Looking beyond the few weirdoes who do not want to be sexually active at all, it is safe to say that all of us wish we could manage our sex lives more prudently. Although such a desire makes for interesting conversation at cocktail parties or on the analyst's couch, it seems to have no effect on our urges or impulses—and very little effect on our behavior.

**Clearly, then, evolution did not always oblige us to *want* the wants we are designed to want.**

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That being said, it should not be necessary to point out that we modern men and women may not *really need* some of the things we *consciously want*. This is especially true in affluent societies. We do not *need* diamond-bracelets or breast-implants, nor is there a vital need for Rolls-Royces or ski-condominiums, but those who can afford them (on credit, of course) often feel that without them life wouldn't be worth living. At first glance, wants such as those do not appear to satisfy any genetically programmed needs – but if

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<sup>3</sup> Scholars who know everything claim that a species can not have wants or needs, because a species is nothing but a large number of self-ish individuals. They should tell that to the ants and bees.

not, where do they come from, and how do they assume such importance?

Those are socially induced wants that are not genetically mandated. Interestingly enough, we also are vulnerable to genetically induced wants that are not socially mandated. For example, we may not, at some given moment, need a second serving of chocolate mousse topped with chocolate rum-flavored whipped cream, but we may want it so badly we can't control ourselves.

In our present society, such behavior could eventually hasten our demise, yet there is reason to believe we are responding in a manner that would have promoted our survival (and reproductive success) in ages gone by. This can be illustrated by a certain behavior of the Kalahari Bushmen. When they make a particularly good kill (of game) it is said that they may consume four or five pounds of meat at a single sitting. Similarly, when Australian aborigines annually return to sites where millions of moths of a certain type can be harvested, each happy camper may consume as many as 300 juicy moths at a sitting. The point is that for three or four million years our mandate was, "eat when you have the chance!"

**Now, what are we *taught* to want?**

Knowing that we have a built-in need to belong, cultures and families invariably teach us that we should want their unconditional acceptance, with the sometimes lamentable result that we learn to place loyalty above personal integrity and to value consensus more than common sense. This phenomenon is a complex sort of quid pro quo.

***In exchange for the group's support and protection we must reciprocate with obedience and conformity.***

This enables other members to trust us and to feel they know what we're going to do in a given circumstance. In addition, it spares them the jealousy aroused by "free spirits" who do as they damned well please and the rage engendered by individuals who point out the stupidity of the group's behavior.

**Most societies also tell us we should want to *resist* one or more of the built-in wants described on the preceding pages.**

For example, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's ass. Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Cultures and sub-cultures also set standards for the personal attributes we should want to acquire or pretend to have. Should we admire big boobs or big brains? Naked sex appeal or an appearance of purity? Urbanity or profanity; ostentation or modesty; cruelty or kindness?

**The superficial aspects of our wants clearly are influenced by ethnic values, social class, and the constant washing of our brains by television, movies, and magazines.**

Nowadays, most of us are taught to want unlimited material possessions, our education in that direction being conducted below the level of our conscious awareness by the advertising geniuses who serve The Producers of Goods.

In America, for example, the current teaching is that we should want to be rich, uninhibited, sexually irresistible, and free of all body hair and natural odors. We want to be recognized as up-and-coming-go-getters and as a good guy or a good lay. We want a new car for every member of the family, each with digital surround-sound and a cellular phone. We want a housecleaner/cook and a live-in Nanny, a six-figured salary and a sex-figured lover, a cottage in Kauai and a yacht on the Cape, a thoroughbred horse and a pedigreed dog, a single malt scotch and a double-thick malt, and an air-conditioned sauna by a heated pool. We want a two hundred watt amplifier, a two hundred gigabyte hard-drive, a two hundred horse outboard, a two hundred dollar briefcase, a two hundred gallon Jacuzzi, and a two hundred pound son two hundred centimeters tall. We want automatic bakers, shakers, wakers, rakers, and espresso-makers. We want diamonds and emeralds, clothes with labels we can't pronounce, membership in all the right clubs, and a house so big we seldom encounter the other folks who sleep there – which is no great loss since we're working night and day to pay the interest on our credit cards.

**To put it plainly,** our primary preoccupations are the pursuit of palpable prestige and preeminent power, presumably promotable by promulgating proper publicity and procuring plush positions, prime properties, and prodigious pelf --- *plus* --- precisely programmed propagation proceeding from pruriently provocative pulchritude, priapic potency, planned pregnancies, painless parturition, and purchased professional parenting, providing us with perfectly proper, precocious progeny.

**By means of those trappings and triumphs, or in spite of them, we hope to impress others and to acquire a good opinion of ourselves — that precious state of mind known as self-esteem.**

So long as our peers admire the same trappings, and interpret them as signs of status and power, it is reasonable to suppose that acquiring them will give us an "edge" in the competition for resources that might promote our longevity, while simultaneously increasing our attractiveness as potential mates. Under ordinary circumstances – which is to say, so long as rearing children is an "in thing to do" – those two advantages should tend to promote our reproductive success, and that, according to the Neo-Darwinians, is the bottom line of natural selection.

**It would appear, then, that the seemingly "unnatural" wants just described might not be so unnatural after all, inasmuch as they seem to promote the fulfillment of our most basic genetic mandate.**

Nevertheless, we still must wonder why so many highly successful people become more and more obsessed with the pursuit of material wealth and the acquisition of luxuries (which they rarely find time to enjoy) long after they have achieved an abundance of both. Why do they so often allow those pursuits to destroy the mating relationships (and the children) that were the "natural goals" of their acquisitiveness?

**Why — despite their ability to purchase playmates as well as playthings — do some of our most successful individuals become so bored with life that they recklessly overindulge in food, alcohol, or drugs?**

Why are so many apparently successful and prosperous people so hungry for "meaning" that they return to religious faiths which they admit are logically insupportable, and others so desperate to find "purpose" in their daily activities that they buy idiotic self-help books such as this one?

***How and why did we become so obsessed with prestige and power?***

Why can't we be satisfied with enough food to eat, friends around the campfire, and someone to love?

## **NOTICE**

At the end of some chapters or sections you may see the following symbol: ►

That symbol indicates that some comments about the preceding material will be found in the APPENDIX, beginning on page 259.

The commentary may be in the nature of a summation, or it may suggest ways that the reader, or our society, might reduce the damage or the unhappiness caused by some of the problems described herein.

CHAPTER TWO

*Let Them Eat Cake<sup>4</sup>*

Perhaps you have a friend who seems irritable or short-tempered.

If not, then perhaps you know someone whose idea of a relaxing day is to shoot cardboard silhouettes with an Uzi. The truth is that a lot of people these days are vaguely discontent.

Folks are finding it increasingly difficult to do what they want to do, be what they want to be, have what they want to have. They feel besieged by too many external forces telling them what they must do and what they cannot do, what they should be or should not be, what's nice and what's naughty.

People feel obligated to husbands, wives, or children, and in many cases to parents who never had the decency to die. Daily, they must deal with ignorant bosses, useless paperwork, bureaucratic bullshit, and the unwritten code that they must sacrifice their personal lives in the interest of the company if they hope to get ahead, or even "stay on board".

There are too many rude customers to please or placate, too many conniving co-workers one must pretend to trust, too many undeserved failures, too little recognition for hard-won successes, too much responsibility with too little authority.

Too much traffic on the streets, too many lines to wait in, too much trouble finding a parking place, too much noise, too many bodies getting in one's way.

There are too many laws restricting too many impulses. Too much red tape and too many senseless contingent demands (if you want to do "that", you first must do "this") even for behaviors that are "permitted" by one or another of our Big Brothers.

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<sup>4</sup> Actually it was "*Let them eat buns.*" It is falsely attributed to Marie Antoinette, wife of Louis XVI. Perhaps it was said by Marie Therese (Louis XIV) or may have been just a slur concocted by J.J.Rousseau.



There are too many new ideas about political incorrectness, bad-taste, offensive jokes, racial slurs, and sexual harassment, enforced by too many self-anointed social watchdogs and self-appointed greedy lawyers. Too much pressure to conform (or bite your tongue and pretend to conform) because of a steadily increasing expectation that you will be sued for any expression of emotion, even in private, even on the telephone to your closest friends, or when recording indiscretions on your own tape recorders or in your own diaries.

Too much taxation without representation. Politicians who don't give a damn about any of us if we aren't major contributors, who never enact the reforms upon which their campaigns were based, who pass laws which *never* mean what we are told they mean, and who don't have the slightest genuine interest in the 'moral principles' about which they endlessly prattle.

Too many Congressmen who openly announce that they have a legal right to accept bribes from the corporations they are supposed to monitor, and who look into the camera's eye and tell such outrageous lies that the intelligent viewer is almost overwhelmed by an impulse to pick up his television set and hurl it through the window.

And then, as if to rub salt in our wounds, our fellow voters (not us, of course) keep re-electing these abominable psychopaths. Governors and Congressmen are elected while they are still serving prison terms, or immediately after being "censured" for complicity in scams that cost the taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars. Then the villains make proud and smiling announcements that they are in favor of curtailing the freedoms of the very people who continue to support them, after which they run for President.

Realities such as those make people angry, even if they must share the responsibility for not trying to correct them. People don't vote because they feel it makes no difference who is elected. People feel powerless, and that of course makes them madder than ever.

Folks who are obscenely rich probably are not as angry as run-of-the-mill clods. Nevertheless, it irritates rich people that the politicians they buy do not stay bought. They resent having to pay lawyers to assure that they won't have to pay taxes. It annoys them that Congress doesn't abolish Labor Unions altogether and be done with them, and it aggravates them that they have to mail in addi-

tional bribes in order to suppress periodic proposals to increase the minimum wage. What really upsets them, however, are the do-gooders who interfere with a businessman's natural right to poison his workers, sell unsafe products, pollute the environment, and promote wars which justify their Defense contracts and expand their opportunities to sell arms and munitions to banana-republics.

Members of the middle class are indignant about CRIME. They are greatly encouraged in this by the public media. The anchorpersons of our television networks (who are scientifically selected for their trustworthy voices and kind but concerned faces) make it clear that crime is synonymous with *violent* crime, and violent crime is committed by ethnic minorities who are members of the lower class. Whether that campaign is the result of a carefully thought out conspiracy, or whether it simply evolved by trial and error because it sold more products, it undoubtedly is one of the most ingenious ploys in the history of perfidy, and vice versa. It also is a world-class example of what psychiatrists call an "over-determined" activity. That is, if it offered only half as many benefits, it still would be a stroke of genius.

If the middle class voter can be convinced that violent crime, all of which is committed by members of the lower class, is the greatest threat to his life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness and, in fact, is the Number One Problem in this nation, then obviously no other problem is equal to it, and no other class of people pose a comparable threat to his happiness.

If the voter can be bombarded with constant assertions (whether true or not) that violent crime is steadily increasing, and is rapidly becoming more widespread as well as more senseless and violent, then clearly no other problem is more urgent.

Until the problem of violent crime (which, when you get right down to it, means murder and mayhem committed by genetically inferior Blacks and Hispanics) is at least partially solved, we must not allow ourselves to be distracted by other problems. That is why all hell broke loose when the Clinton Administration momentarily convinced voters that health was their Number One Concern. The deluge of propaganda necessary to put down that seditious idea was a great boon to doctors and other sickness providers, because it restored them to the list of folks who are officially blameless.

Clearly then, the rich and near rich are not the cause of our problems, and certainly we of the middle class can not be the

source of our own unhappiness. All of our problems arise from the dregs of humanity who are turning our society into a battlefield.

*It is true that we experience momentary confusion when we learn of congressional or corporate boondoggles, but we are unable to hang on to the idea that such activities are actually criminal, because we have been persuaded that crime means hoodlums shooting at middle-class bystanders.*

**Advertising** is at least as big a culprit as political thought-control. Television does almost everything possible to maintain and increase the anger of its viewers, *including* those in the lower economic classes. After all, the poor have to be kept angry at their own kind in order to keep the heat away from the upper crust.

Obviously, the entire thrust of advertising is to convince us that we don't have everything we ought to have and that we would be a lot happier if we did. If we can't afford to buy the wonderful things on our screen, that makes us angry. If we do buy it, we buy it on credit and then we have to pay for it, and that makes us angry. (One of the beauties of the Credit Card is that we forget the particular purchases that are the source of our grief. We get mad at the bills we have to pay, not at ourselves or the advertisers responsible for our individual unwise purchases.)

Having bought something, and having forgotten that it is one of the things for which we are paying, we next get angry because the purchase never delivers all the happiness promised or implied in the ad. By the time we simmer down and try to "make do" with the damned thing, a TV commercial let's us know that a "new and improved version" is available. Understandably, that renews our anger at the old one, and we are tempted to throw it in the garbage. If we don't do that, and if we don't immediately send off for a new one, the old one breaks, as it was designed to do, three days after the "free replacement warranty" expires.

The penalties we are promised if we should fail to buy the products advertised are horrendous. We are shown, graphically, that our present brand of tires will cause us to skid off the road the next time it rains and our children will be permanently killed. Our smoke-alarm will fail and we will be incinerated to the point that nothing remains but our false teeth, which fell out because we weren't using the right denture creme. If, by some quirk of fate, our whole family gets out alive, our second-rate insurance com-

pany will default and we will have to live in a Salvation Army shelter, listening to "Closer My God To Thee".

Our mail-order travelers' checks will not be replaced and we will rot in a dungeon somewhere in the wilds of Afghanistan because we were too stupid or indolent to buy the very best. Our Brand-X deodorant will fail to clog our pores sufficiently, causing our underarms to become damp, and we will wander about friendless for the rest of our lives. Our boss, who never misses a thing, will notice that we have "ring-around-the-collar" and will have us escorted out of the building by the security police, with total loss of our severance pay. When all of our friends are out partying, drinking America's #1 Dry Beer and laughing hysterically at each other's witticisms, we see ourselves at home alone, reading *The Book of the Dead* as we force down some soggy, out-of-fashion beer which is still brewed only because a handful of us are too stupid to switch.

In a sexy, soft-focus ad we are shown that if we buy our wife a 4-carat diamond ring, she will drop twenty years off her age and all the clothing off her body. If we don't buy her a neck-full of diamonds, she'll run off with the next John who winks at her through the window of a Bentley and offers to let her share his Gray Poopoo.

Who can deny that we, of all people, ought to have a new car, a slender figure, permanent relief from our hemorrhoids, a face-lift, a dishwasher that sings a happy little song as it loads and empties itself, and an idyllic cruise around Oahu listening to Don Ho sing, "Tiny bubbles, in your mind; tiny bubbles make you feel fine."

Why shouldn't each of us have as many admirers and lovers as the beautiful androids in "All the Nights of My Life." Why shouldn't we have footmen opening the doors of our limousine (or is it doormen opening the foot of our limousine?) and bowing deeply as we stride into the Chotel Chutzpah? Should we not have teeth that out-sparkle our eyes, and should not everyone say "Wow!" as we walk by? Are we not better suited to have been born rich and royal than wimpy old Prince Hawkface? Why doesn't the world recognize how special we really are?

Knowing that none of that is going to happen, television producers try to appease our shame and our rage in several ways. First, the "family-oriented" situation comedies give us countless opportunities to laugh to our heart's content at people who unques-

tionably are stupider and more inept than we are (and much uglier) and whose families are even more dysfunctional than ours. At best, we know that we are vastly superior to those slobs. At worst, we at least have someone to identify with, a family to belong to.

Secondly, the networks provide us with fantasy-figures into whose shoes we can project ourselves. We can imagine doing what they are doing, and probably doing it a lot better. These people (or idols) may be soap-opera characters, murderers, detectives, cooks, kooks, stand-up comics, lie-down tarts, golfers, baseball players, pass-receivers who catch poorly-thrown passes with one finger, starship pilots, or an infinite array of exhibitionists on talk-shows.

The third way our villainous TV producers try to make us feel better is by giving us unceasing opportunities to kill, crush, torture, and maim deserving victims. We can choose to identify with "enforcers" killing bad-asses, or we can be fearless psychopaths destroying people of whatever sort we particularly love and/or hate. We can relish the rape and murder of beautiful women who have looked down their noses at us, or we can watch the rapist being set afire and falling off a tall building onto the spikes of a wrought-iron fence. We can smash faces with chairs and rifle-butts, or beat someone with our bare fists until his face looks like an uncooked hamburger. Or we can become an ace bomber-pilot and watch our "smart-missile" enter the chimney of an army barracks (or a day-care center) and blow it and all of its despicable inhabitants into kingdom come.

These endless demonstrations of unrestrained violence do more than allow us an opportunity to vicariously vent our pent-up rage. They allow us to identify with someone who has POWER -- and who gets to use it!

Of course, as soon as we come back to earth and realize that we are not allowed to act that way, we get even madder.

***Why do we have to put up with so many problems? ►***

CHAPTER THREE

*The Problem with Problems*

Important problems go unsolved for long periods of time for three basic reasons:

- (1) Nobody wants to solve them.
- (2) Somebody in particular doesn't want them solved by anybody.
- (3) The problems are really solutions in disguise.

**QUESTION:** Why would nobody want to solve an important problem?

**ANSWER:** Because everybody is afraid of making things worse. Take an example: Every government that remains in power for any length of time becomes an enormous problem for the people it is supposed to serve. Since everybody knows that, they also know that if they change governments the new government will become a new problem—and they are afraid the new one might be worse than the old one. Efforts to improve government a little bit at a time are just as unpredictable and discouraging as radical solutions: Install a new Leader and he turns out to be Newt Gingrich or Manuel Noriega; change the electoral system and you merely shift the advantage from one lobby to another—for instance, from the manufacturers to the media or the Mafia. And as our Founding Fathers knew, true democracy (which they called "government by the people as a whole") is a surefire formula for adding chaos to tyranny.

**QUESTION:** Why would somebody in particular want a problem not to be solved by anybody, and how could a mere somebody prevent everybody else from solving it?

**ANSWER:** If just one person or a small class of persons want a problem to remain unsolved it may be, as just explained, because they are afraid of making matters worse for themselves, or it may be because they happen to know that the problem is really a solu-

tion. To illustrate the first possibility: If a dictator is undermining the freedom of his countrymen, he knows that he will be worse off if the problem he has created is solved. An example of the second possibility is the following: Because the U.S. prison system does not accomplish what we would like it to, many Americans think of it as a very expensive problem, but the towns in which prisons are located and the people who work in the prisons know that nothing could be further from the truth. The system is a solution to their local unemployment problems.

As those examples illustrate, the somebody who doesn't want a problem to be solved by anybody might be a dictator who derails attempted solutions by gassing a few million of his own subjects, or the somebody might be hundreds of thousands of ordinary people who get their representatives to tell the rest of us that we'll be sodomized in our sleep unless we have more and more prisons.

**QUESTION:** Is that last one an example of a solution disguised as a problem?

**ANSWER:** I can't believe you asked that! If it were disguised, would hundreds of thousands of people know about it? No, for an example of a solution disguised as a problem we might look at the sorry state of our public educational system.

You may have noticed that people just love to talk about how terrible our schools are compared to those of the Japanese and other infidels, but nobody ever lifts a pencil or spends a shekel to do anything about it.

The reason for this is that the sluggish pace at which our schools proceed in the so-called enlightenment of our children actually solves many problems: It helps to guarantee a supply of incompetent workers who are insecure and compliant, and therefore eager to accept whatever crumbs management feeds them. It reduces the likelihood of people becoming smart enough to turn against the multimillionaires who exploit their labor, the churches that exploit their guilty consciences, or the governments that use them to test defoliants and new sources of lethal radiation.

Most important, and least understood of all, is the fact that by minimizing the intellectual gap between one generation and the next, we moderate the contempt that children feel toward their parents. This allows the parents to feel they still have something to offer.

**Standardized and unimaginative education (which, of course, is mandated by the people) serves to reduce everyone's anxiety level by preventing the society's belief systems from changing too rapidly or too radically.**

John Doe's confidence that he knows everything he needs to know tends to tranquilize him, and the knowledge that the John Does are tranquil is music to the ears of the rich and powerful and to the forces of our political and clerical establishments.

And you can take that to the bank!



### ***What Problem ?***

The other day, a nice looking gentleman on my television screen told me that the only reason poor Americans are unhappy is that they don't know how well off they are. He said that poor people everywhere else in the world would love to be as wealthy as our poor people. He expressed confidence that if that fact were explained to our lower classes they would stop being unhappy.

The man who supplied me with that fascinating information is a former Secretary of the Treasury, no doubt a multi-millionaire. He was well dressed and appeared to be warm and dry and in good health.

He is convinced that poverty in America is a non-issue — a simple misunderstanding. There is nothing wrong with our economic system, he believes, that can't be cured by lowering the tax rate for wealthy people and totally eliminating taxes on investment income. Then everyone would be happy and there wouldn't be any more talk about poverty.

Now, you may think this man is insane, but that is not true. There is nothing wrong with this man that can't be cured by stripping him of all his possessions and giving him tuberculosis.

CHAPTER FOUR

*One Man's Meat*

*Is Another Man's Poison*

If you have ever tried to bathe a cat in a bucket of ice water or take a lamb-chop away from a bulldog, you know that some projects are just not worth the trouble. What may appear to be a simple task does not always have a simple resolution.

If you take a moment to think about it you will realize that many of our efforts to improve our lives only seem to make matters worse. For example, we thought it would be clever to prevent food from spoiling by keeping it cold, but it turns out that refrigerators can kill, and in more ways than one. Freon escaping into the atmosphere destroys the ozone layer, allowing ultraviolet radiation to reach your nose and turn it into a cancerous blob. As if that weren't bad enough, refrigerators are used primarily for storing hamburger meat, mayonnaise, eggs and beer, all of which will give you cancer if you don't have a heart attack first.

Recent advances in medical technology have enabled people to suffer longer than anyone would have thought possible and to run up enormous hospital bills for many weeks after they have died. Air travel gets us where we're going so quickly that we have to lie down for two days to get over the jet lag. Antibiotics foster the development of more resistant strains of bacteria. Low cost housing results in instant-slums. Picture windows make life easier for Peeping Toms. Mini-skirts lead to rear-end collisions.

You could have predicted all of the foregoing, and for all I know you did. But some of the problems caused by solutions are quite wonderful in their subtlety. For example, the invention of the cotton gin and the development of steam-powered textile mills made it possible to produce vast quantities of inexpensive cotton cloth, and that solved another problem without anyone knowing

about it. It helped to eliminate the plagues that had been decimating Europe for centuries.

Bubonic plague is carried by fleas, and epidemic typhus is carried by lice, and fleas and lice are carried by clothing when they aren't being carried by rats and dogs — but of course no one knew about such things until bacteria were invented by Louis Pasteur.

In the days when cloth was hand-loomed from fibers that required lengthy processing, ordinary folks could not afford to change clothes. Either they were wearing everything they owned or they were naked. Furthermore, leather garments and heavy frocks made of wool or linen did not readily lend themselves to washing, and when filthy and crusty they abraded the skin and made it easier for infectious germs to gain entry. This caused people to become so accustomed to itching that they ceased to care whether some other life form was sharing their clothing. Even if that possibility had worried them, they wouldn't have known what to do about it because it was against the law to be naked in the daytime.

As a result of all this, when infected rats died of plague and their lice and fleas hopped onto the nearest humans, no one even noticed.

With the mechanized production of inexpensive cotton fabric it became possible for ordinary folks to own more than one change of clothes — and of a type that could be washed occasionally in the nearest creek. All of a sudden it was less fashionable to be infested with fleas, and in some parts of Europe people actually stopped being lousy.

However . . . the explosive demand for cheap clothing led to sweat shops and child labor in the factories of England, and later in the U.S. In America, the southern states had unlimited land and wonderfully muggy weather for growing cotton but not enough people to fully exploit those blessings, so that situation (along with the need to grow nicotine) led to the rejuvenation and unprecedented expansion of the slave trade.

Slaves had nearly always been a popular solution for all sorts of problems, but after a while cheap labor and easy living in the South began to infuriate people in the North, and that led to a Civil War from which the South still hasn't recovered. After the War, the abolition of slavery meant that Southern aristocrats had to expose themselves to the hot sun, and since they no longer had anyone to wash their cotton clothing everyone began to stink, and

that led to the invention of deodorants and washing machines and synthetic clothing and all sorts of other horrors.

Malaria, which for eons had affected hundreds of millions of people, was (for a while) brought under control almost effortlessly with the use of DDT. As that was going on, other chemicals that are even more hideous were being used to control insects that destroy food crops. With much more food being produced worldwide and a serious shortfall of deaths from malaria and plague, we now have wall-to-wall people. We also have permanently polluted ground water, plants, and animal life — and fish you wouldn't feed to your neighbor's cat.

We shortened World War II by a few weeks with an "atom-bomb" and ushered in a 45-year nuclear arms race that caused people to figure there might not be a tomorrow, "so what the hell does it matter what we do today?" That attitude gave rise to beatniks and hippies who caused all sorts of problems for folks who are fond of conformity, but who later helped to solve another solution-induced problem known as Vietnam.

We finally won the cold war with an arms race that bankrupted the "enemy" and almost ourselves, and as a result, hot civil wars and anarchy have broken out all over the place.

To top it all off, no one has a clue as to how we're ever going to dispose of all the radioactive garbage we have produced!

Such phenomena are neither unusual nor paradoxical. All solutions are temporary. All answers are partial. All "fixes" are illusory. Those facts may be summarized as follows:

**Long's First Law:** All persistent problems are the result of earlier solutions.

**Corollaries:**

- One man's problem is another man's solution.
- Any improvement has the potential for making matters a great deal worse.
- When faced with a solution, you can't be too paranoid.

Will the *Real* Human Please Stand Up?

—

**What *are* we, anyway?**

Are we hairless monkeys driven by primitive forces we constantly try to deny?

Are we victims of a society grown too complex for our own good?

Are we soldiers in a war between an insane god and a conniving devil?

Are we clowns in a theme park created by the little green men who whiz by in saucer-shaped bumper-cars?

*Or are we chimpanzees who just don't give a damn?*

CHAPTER FIVE

*How To Solve A Problem  
Without Making It Go Away*

No one wants to admit that he is too selfish, cowardly, or ignorant to work toward the solution of an important problem. There are three ways of avoiding embarrassment:

- Claim that you're "working on it".
- Solve a surrogate problem.
- Define the problem in terms that defy all understanding.

**The use of avoidance maneuver #1 is almost always a good idea**, alone or in combination with the others. At the family level one hears, "I know I drink more than I should, but I've been trying to cut down. I've already switched from whiskey to cheap wine, and as soon as my system can handle it I'll be switching to beer, etcetera, etcetera." At the national level our Congressmen tell us, "We all know that government spends too much. We've already cut down wherever we could without hurting the corporations that pay us, but we'll continue to talk until we balance the budget, even if we have to borrow to do it." We also are using this technique when we tell the boss, "That's the very next thing on my list, Chief! In fact, I've already got the paperwork in my briefcase, so I can take it home and let my children work on it."

Often it is sufficient merely to recite a list of steps thought to be necessary if the problem is ever to be solved — especially if one knows how to use rhythmic iteration and how to speak with rising emphasis and timbre. "We need more law-enforcement officers! We need stiffer sentences for hardened criminals! We need to make greater use of the death penalty, and we need to carry it out! We need to rid society of riffraff and guttercum! We need to crack down on crime, and we need to do it now!" (Can you count the number of times you have heard that speech?)

Statements such as those will induce tumultuous applause and an immediate jump in a politician's approval rating, but his gain will last only until someone in the opposition party makes an even more melodious or malodorous statement.

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**Solving a surrogate problem** requires a little more ignorance and cunning. The first step is to select a problem that is smaller and less controversial than the real problem. Next, with the help of the media, keep repeating with absolute assurance that the problem selected is, in fact, the only problem. A perfect example can be found in the current hubbub in the United States regarding hand-guns.

The maneuver begins with repetitious announcements that "every day more and more Americans are dying violent deaths, and many of our citizens no longer feel safe on the streets of their cities or even in their own homes." We can probably all agree on that, so let us tentatively acknowledge that violent deaths constitute a real problem—even though we know they must be a solution to some other problem.

Next, it is stated that there are too many guns "in our streets", and that ruthless criminals, drug dealers, and gang members think nothing of using them as the method of choice for solving disputes and gaining their nefarious ends. Furthermore, "More and more teenagers, and even young children, are taking guns to school, displaying them to enhance their status, and using them to settle minor disagreements." (So far, so good; but now comes the old switcheroo!)

Finally, we learn that the cause of the violent-death problem is this:

"It is too easy for criminals to get guns!"

Immediately, we can understand the solutions proffered by our Redoubtable Leaders:

- (1) Make it more difficult for people with criminal records (or a history of mental illness?) to buy handguns legally.
- (2) Protect the rights of law-abiding citizens to buy guns of all sorts and to carry them about concealed, whenever and wherever they please.

Straightforward problem, straightforward solution! What's wrong with it?

Well...everything. Hardened criminals, drug-offenders, and gang members don't particularly want to buy guns legally. Registered guns can be traced. They'd rather buy them from punks who have stolen them.

And kids? Well, kids generally borrow the guns kept at home by their fathers, who often do not have criminal records and may not even be certifiable lunatics.

But those points are trivial. What's really important is the following:

↔ **THE DEADLY FACTS WE KEEP FORGETTING** ↔

Most homicides are not committed by criminals, but by members of the victim's family—or by lovers, ex-lovers, or friends.

The most common precipitating factors are drunken arguments, sexual jealousy, and spousal abuse—not the lures of profit or power.

For every homicide there are 40 cases of aggravated assault, many of which stop short of murder only because of incompetence or fatigue, and the most popular motives for battery are the same as those for murder.

More violent deaths result from suicide than from homicide, and among teenagers it is a much more important cause of death than murder.

The number of automobile-killings that result from the abuse of alcohol is about equal to the number of gun-killings — and many gun-killings also are induced by the use of alcohol.

Twenty times as many deaths are caused by cigarettes as are caused by guns (or by everything related to the use of illegal drugs) and the deaths are much more painful.

**Who wants to deal with all that?** Who wants to accept that the persons most to be feared are not hoodlums and drug-pushers, but your lover, your spouse, your parents, and your drinking buddies? Who wants to mess with family values?

So our fatuous politicians go after a surrogate problem that folks can cope with. "Stop licensing guns to crooks (who don't want to buy them anyway) and sell them instead to simple-minded citizens who don't know how to use them, or how to control their passions or their drinking."

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**The third maneuver—defining problems so that they defy understanding**, is the most widely used, and it is infallible. It can prevent the resolution of a problem virtually forever, and since it requires very little intelligence it can be utilized even by senators and TV anchorpersons. Let's look at an example that uses this maneuver in combination with the surrogate-problem ploy:

Example: Almost everybody thinks we have some sort of problem with respect to illegal drugs.

Politicians win or lose in accordance with how sincere they appear in their promises to solve the problem, and zillions of dollars are spent every year in a Drug War.

The Drug Warriors claim that illegal drugs cause crime. Now, it cannot be doubted that if we pass a law against an activity in which many people just love to engage there's a good chance the law will be broken, and that's what crime is—the breaking of laws. Are we then justified in saying that drugs cause crime, or did the crimes in question come into existence along with the laws? Think of the increase in crime if we outlawed cigarettes and booze!

"But," it is butted by the Drug Warrior, "the traffic in drugs, the buying and selling, leads to murder and thievery." That's true, but the reason such horrors occur is that the street price of illegal drugs is so much higher than the cost of producing them that the potential profits are huge. As any idiot can tell you, people have a tendency to fight over huge profits. At the same time, the high price quickly bankrupts the user and he begins to steal to support his habit.

But the price of illegal drugs is high because the drugs are illegal, a constraint that makes them difficult to import and hazardous to sell. Is it the traffic in drugs, or even the use of drugs, that causes the killings and theft, or are they caused by the laws that make the drugs so expensive?

It would appear that the problems we now attribute to illegal drugs were caused by making the drugs illegal, but at the time that action was taken it must have been viewed as the solution to some earlier problems. The chances are that by now very few people remember what the problems were that led to the solutions that caused the problems with which we now are faced.

**<< The reason we keep losing the Drug War is that we can't decide *who the enemy is*. >>**

We can't keep straight in our minds whether we should destroy the peasants in Colombia who grow coca, the Drug Lords who process and distribute it, the disaffected black men who push it, the middle-class white men who use it, the cops who sell protection to the distributors, the judges who forgive the users, our inadequate Border Patrol, an incompetent A.T.F., a corrupt C.I.A., parents who don't supervise their children, schools that don't teach them the truth, a Government that tells us lies, the preachers who exhort us to blame it on Satan, or the God who must be on vacation in the Bahamas.

We don't seem able to grasp the facts that we are waging a war against our own cravings, that we ourselves are paying the warriors on both sides of the battle, and that the "enemy's" recruits will never cease to be drawn from our own ranks.

It seems beyond our understanding that we cannot legislate goodness. We refuse to understand (even as we sip our cocktails) why some people who feel pressured and unhappy might ingest substances that allow them to feel serene and happy, why men who have been abused and rejected by the mainstream of society would be inclined to reject its rules and standards, or why the lure of great riches would induce desperate people to take calculated risks.

***We are trying to solve solutions, and when you solve a solution, what you have left is a problem.***

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In the chapters that follow, we shall examine a number of 'solutions' that might better be regarded as problems.

We shall begin with a well-known scheme for inducing "right behavior".

We call it "*Morality*". ►

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*Man, proud man, drest in a little brief authority,  
Most ignorant of what he is most assured,  
His glassy essence, like an angry ape,  
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven  
As make the angels weep.*

Shakespeare

CHAPTER SIX

*MORALITY*

**QUESTION:** What is 'Morality' and who needs it? Why does it seem to get in the way every time we try to solve an important problem?

**THE TRUTH IN A NUTSHELL:** Morality is the habit of behaving in ways that please or benefit those who are trying to manipulate us. Morality is *designed* to prevent us from dealing with our problems in a rational manner, because the problems we are likely to want to solve happen to be solutions for the people who are manipulating us.<sup>5</sup>

**THE DISGUSTING FACTS BEHIND THE TRUTH:** You will have noticed that people in the very highest positions of power never have any morals at all. Think about dictators, kings, Presidents, popes, billionaires, televangelists, chiefs of police, commanding generals, and Directors of the CIA. Not one who has ever lived had a moral bone in his body. Yet all of them expound about what is best for the people and for the nation. All of them claim that the only reason they issue their onerous edicts is that they are trying to protect us from ourselves.

All of them, in one way or another, are the Arbiters of Morality. If hypocrisy could kill, all of them would have dropped dead the first time they issued a pronouncement.

Clergymen like to persuade us that we are basically immoral, and because of that we'll never make it to heaven without their personal assistance. We must repent, try harder to do what they tell us, and stop being such skinflints when donations are called for. Their sanctimonious ravings are designed to make us so ashamed of ourselves and so self-conscious, we won't notice that

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<sup>5</sup> For example, slavery may be a problem to a slave, but it's a solution for the slave-owner.

they are steadily becoming richer and more immoral than we ever thought of being.

Parents like to teach their children proper (moral) behavior because that means the children will be less likely to cause embarrassment or legal difficulties for the parents.

If you're a civilian, it is immoral to kill — unless you're the President or the head of the CIA. If you're a soldier, it is immoral not to kill — unless you want to kill the President or the head of the CIA.

If you're a peasant or a junkie it is immoral to steal. If you're a politician or a defense contractor, well ...

Moral behavior is often taught by blows to the side of the head, naked-whippings, solitary confinement, keelhauling, and similar forms of instruction. Sometimes it is necessary to burn people at the stake or electrocute them in order to make sure they have learned their lesson.

**It is best, however, if people can be taught to feel *guilty* whenever they violate a moral precept.**

That way, the gods, which is to say the people in positions of power who interpret for us what God wants, don't even have to catch us, nor do they have to punish us. We punish ourselves.

**Please do not jump to the mistaken conclusion that morality is farcical or unnecessary. Morality is and always has been positively *evil*!**

Does that mean it really doesn't matter how people behave? Absolutely not! It means that the word – morality – has been so misused and perverted in the service of our Manipulators that it must be thrown out completely before we can meaningfully reexamine how people should try to cope with their problems.

*What shall take the place of Morality?*

Be patient; I'm about to tell you.

**FACTS YOU MUST TRY TO MEMORIZE:** A once popular song proclaimed that "what the world needs now is Love, Sweet Love; that's the only thing there's just too little of."<sup>6</sup> Responding to that idea, Kurt Vonnegut expressed the opinion that he

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<sup>6</sup> Burt Bacharach

would settle for just a little more common decency.<sup>7</sup> The same idea was expressed two thousand years ago, when Rabbi Hillel (who taught Jesus in Saturday School) suggested that the entirety of biblical law could be summarized with the maxim, "Do not unto others that which is hateful to thee."

Concepts such as those of Vonnegut and Hillel are attempts to envisage a moral code — a principle or set of principles which might serve as a felicitous guide for people's actions, interactions, and attitudes.

All human cultures have some semblance of widely respected guidelines for what constitutes desirable or acceptable behavior. From time to time, the Arbiters of Morality (the Manipulators) select from those guidelines a small subset that seems best suited to meet their needs of the moment. Then, in serious tones and a spirit of fatherly love, they "remind" the rest of us that the code they have just formulated is and always has been the heart and soul of morality, and that it is our sacred duty to live or die by its maxims.

Think, for example, of how passionately and convincingly we are called upon to display the virtues of patriotism, devotion to flag and country, and a selfless readiness to fight to "the last drop of blood" in wars started by our Manipulators. Or, simply reflect on our "duty" to accept a lower salary so that our corporation may thrive. (Blessed are the meek!)

\* \* \*

**It is important to remember that moral codes differ from culture to culture, from time to time, and even between men and women.**

They also may differ quite markedly among different sub-cultures within a single culture, for example the codes of the very poor versus the middle class, those of different ethnic and racial groups, or even city folk versus rural farmers.

Do those myriad moral codes have some principles in common? That is not easy to say. If we could go back just a hundred and fifty years or so, let us say to merry old England, we would find that it was acceptable for children of six or seven years of age to work long hours in sweatshops, such as those involved in vari-

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<sup>7</sup> This is hearsay. If Vonnegut did *not* say this, my apologies to all concerned.

ous aspects of clothing manufacture. Girls were sometimes chained to their sewing machines, their only relief during a 15-hour day being a 40-minute break for lunch. Orphans might sleep at their place of work, never leaving it unless they died, which was a common occurrence. Brutal whippings were administered for those who failed to meet their quota and sexual abuse was common.

There were several reasons for child labor. It was cheap; the children were easily bullied; and, of course, they came from poor families that could use the money and would not complain.

Little or no attention was given to the possibilities that the jobs might be so exhausting, dirty, or dangerous that the children were left stunted, crippled, or dead. For example, a favorite employment for small boys was that of chimney sweep. The chimney sweep was tied to a rope and lowered without adequate mask and no goggles into a tight, dark chimney from which he would scrape the soot. If he smothered or cooked in the process, the courts considered it an accident. Little girls who did not work as seamstresses or in the mills often were indentured as servants to the upper class, and/or as sexual playthings for perverted nobility.<sup>8</sup>

Do not be too hasty to argue that such work was assigned or permitted by parents and civil authorities only with the utmost reluctance and only when starvation was the alternative; the added income may have merely increased mom and pop's pub allowance. It was not considered that there was anything terribly wrong with such practices. Those who wrote the laws saw no reason to intervene in the "free marketplace", and they certainly were not going to take exception to the sexual behavior of their peers. For many decades no noteworthy crusades were mounted to put a halt to such abuses because no abuses were perceived.<sup>9</sup>

Was immorality involved in the above examples? Well, it certainly gives me an awful feeling to picture a seven year old boy dragging home after dark, coughing and vomiting coal dust mixed

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<sup>8</sup> Studies indicate that, worldwide, at least thirty-five million children and young women live under such conditions of slavery and sexual abuse at the present time.

<sup>9</sup> As I was researching this chapter, I was quite astonished to learn that children were simply not considered to be in any sort of 'special class' in many 'civilized' societies until quite recently — they were simply small adults who generally were considered a nuisance and a burden.

with blood—or an eleven year old girl limping home with a lacerated vagina and a few farthings to compensate for her degradation—both of them too sick and exhausted to eat properly, and neither of them with anything to look forward to but more of the same until they finally achieved an early, anonymous death. (The only other escape was gin or ale.) I also find it extremely difficult to jump from that image to an image of the children of the wealthy—prim and proper in their starched finery, literate and mannered, the girls learning embroidery and etiquette from their governesses, the boys attending fancy boarding schools where they studied religion and the classics. They were the salt of the earth.

The "fancy boarding schools" weren't always that great, however, despite the wealth of the boys' parents. The typical diet was meatless except on Sunday, deliberately monotonous, and just short of the starvation level. (Children often were fed the same way at home, as their parents gorged themselves on beef and pheasant.) Freshmen boys were designated "bitches" by the older boys and forced to furnish sexual favors. Fathers, of course, knew about this, as did the Headmasters, because they had attended the same schools. Some of the Headmasters also exhibited an uncommon fondness for young boys.

Grotesque as it may seem to me or to you, a hundred and fifty years ago most parents in urban England accepted such lives (both the rich life and the poor) as the natural order of things. As already mentioned, the legal system was not neutral in such matters; it came down on the side of the employers and the parents, and showed no concern for the welfare of the children. The Church? It came down on the side of the Law. No doubt many individual parents (particularly mothers) felt compassion for their children. Probably there were individual clergymen who felt uncomfortable with the system. But the culture did not consider practices that we would define as child abuse to be either illegal or immoral.<sup>10</sup>

Throughout much of history, Church and State have been closely intertwined. Before there were any States, the "church" consisted of shamans, seers, witchdoctors, high priests, and God only knows who else. Those "spiritual leaders" generally worked with a strong man and/or some Elders (men, of course) to enact

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<sup>10</sup> Matters were somewhat different in rural areas.



and enforce the laws. In other words, in most places, during most of history, church and state have worked together to decide what constituted proper behavior, a concept which included obligatory behavior as well as permissible behavior, and which therefore embraced all of "moral behavior".

I hear some of you shout, "Baloney! The Church has often been at odds with secular governments! Consider the same England just referred to and think about the struggles between the Church and the Kings." You have caught me in a sloppy statement! I should have said: Secular and religious leaders have worked together to decide what constituted proper and moral behavior for the common people. Those same leaders, however, often jostled with each other in most improper fashion to determine who had or should have the ultimate power. Similarly, there have often been competing churches and, of course, competitors for the throne. To whatever extent such struggles required support from the people, they inevitably have given rise to propaganda campaigns during which the competitors have appeared to hold conflicting views.

Furthermore, it has always been the case that after power-struggles are finally settled political promises are forgotten, especially if they concern only the ordinary, unimportant citizen. I'll have a lot more to say about churches later on, but for the time being I am going to stick to the position that most of the time church and state have supported each other in defining what constituted acceptable behavior on the part of the masses.

Your own imagination and fund of knowledge can conjure up from history more examples of obsolete morality than I have any desire to enumerate, but perhaps it would help if I got you started.

**In various places at various times (not excluding the present) it has been moral, or at least not immoral –**

- to own other people as property, granting them no rights over their own persons, their bodies, their lives, or their deaths,
- to publicly torture or kill an adulterous wife (but never a husband)
- to entomb an entire, living, royal retinue along with a dead ruler, or to cremate a living widow along with her dead husband,

- to slaughter entire villages of women and children in the quest for territorial expansion, for example, as done to native Americans by the U.S. Army,
  - to chain men to the oars of a galley *for the rest of their lives!*
  - to bash in the heads of early Labor Union organizers for trying to interfere with "free enterprise",
  - to bind the feet of young girls in order to enhance their beauty as adults (and render them incapable of escaping) at the expense of their ability to walk,
  - to sacrifice virgins (or brave young warriors) for the appeasement or satiation of various gods (or for the benefit of the Krups family or Boeing Aircraft Corporation)
  - to castrate thousands of boys and men so as to make them useful in the church choir or in the Sultan's harem,
  - to torture and burn to death, by order of church and state, hundreds of thousands of witches, succubi and incubi, and others who flew about in the night frightening the nuns, perverting the priests, or ruining the crops,
  - to mutilate and kill prisoners of war who had merely been doing their "patriotic duty" or acting in self-defense,
  - to publicly flog (or incinerate) people who spoke against the church or refused to obey its mandates,
  - to imprison men who refused to go to work on Sunday (England again)
  - to kill servants who were excessively clumsy,
  - to imprison children who refused to obey their parents,
  - to imprison women who picketed or paraded for equal rights,
  - to eat the brains or genitals of human victims or drink their blood, in order to partake of their strength, virility, or magical powers,
- and on...and on...

***"The times change, and we change with them."*** — An ancient Roman said that.

**SO WHAT?** Must we agree that morality is totally dependent upon when and where we live, and what some strong man or his high priest tells us? Or isn't it true that way down deep all of us really know what is Right and what is Wrong? That's a reasonable question, but let's think about it, anyway:

Did people know at the time that it was wrong for early American settlers to slaughter Indians (or their buffalo food supply) whenever the native inhabitants failed to vacate territory the white man wanted to occupy? Do Americans even now have any feeling – “way down deep” – that the way Native Americans have been treated is morally wrong? If so, why isn't there more public agitation for helping them obtain better housing, running water, protection from corporate swindles, or the honoring of treaties?

Similarly, did Spanish soldiers and their regimental priests really know at the time that it was wrong to obliterate the entire Central American culture and history, along with most of its inhabitants?

Did the white minority in South Africa fully appreciate the immorality of apartheid? Did the white Southerners in the United States?

Even though there were individuals who knew “at the time” that such things were wrong, it would seem that their *cultures* did not condemn the practices, or if they did, the behaviors did not seem sufficiently immoral for the beneficiaries to worry much about it.

Do you understand the morality of jailing a two-bit con-man who tries to deceive the public, but allowing a President who does the same thing to retire on a \$200,000 pension?

Is it clear to you why a pickpocket goes to prison, but a handful of Senators are "censured" for accepting bribes from Savings and Loan lobbyists and as a result costing taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars?

**Morality is behaving in ways that please or benefit the people who are trying to manipulate you, and morality changes when the Manipulators change.**

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I often marvel at how easy it is for many people to establish *degrees* of immorality. For example, a little alcohol is fine; a little marijuana is intolerable! A father who occasionally whips his

children is guilty of a heinous crime. A father who continually disparages his children with hateful assurances that they are stupid and worthless and incapable of ever doing anything right, is not guilty even of a social misdemeanor. Why is that?

Is it fair and just that Iraqi and Cuban peasants should be starved and deprived of medical supplies as a result of a U.S. economic blockade instituted because their totalitarian leaders won't step down? Or to support the killing of Nicaraguan peasants for the same reason? (Who gives a damn about peasants?)

How do people decide that it is wrong to abort a fetus because an unmarried mother fears she will not be able to care for it properly, but it is right to cause the death by starvation and disease of hundreds of already-born children as a result of trade embargoes such as the ones just mentioned?

A "trade embargo" is what used to be called a "siege". The idea is to surround a stronghold (which invariably is controlled by a megalomaniac who holds absolute power over his followers) and then just wait until most of his ignorant followers die of thirst, starvation, and disease. Then make a deal with the Leader.

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As I wrote the preceding lines, the FBI was conducting just such a siege near Waco, Texas. They had surrounded a bunch of religious fanatics who had been stockpiling arms—which, of course, is not only legal in Texas, but damned near mandatory.<sup>11</sup> The siege, however, was initiated because it had been alleged that the so-called "cultists" were in possession of *illegal* weapons.

[Perhaps I should explain what a cult is and why cultists are hateful. A cult is a group of people who live together, comfort each other, follow a charismatic leader, and believe weird things. For example, many cultists (including those in Texas) believe that it is possible for God to visit the planet Earth in the form of a Man! Surely, such people must be crazy!]

The arbiter of morals in such matters is the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. For thirty dollars and a self-addressed envelope the ATF (at that time) would issue a license to sell weapons and ammunition to anyone who was willing to swear

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<sup>11</sup> The gun count in the entire state is six weapons per man, woman, and child.

that he was not a convicted criminal. The reason for such stringent(!) qualifications was that the recipient of such a license was thereby enabled to buy almost unlimited quantities of almost all types of weapons and then sell them to almost anybody who had the money—without meaningful supervision by the Bureau.

There were, however, a few restrictions. When a licensee wanted to buy hand grenades he had to order the explosive charges separately. Anti-tank weapons and the rockets for them could be obtained in the same way. Fully automatic assault rifles were forbidden, but it was legal to buy kits for converting the semi-automatic versions to automatic. It was not legal, however, to use the conversion kits, and that apparently was one of the crimes the cult was believed to have committed.

The siege began when the ATF bungled a commando raid on a building containing not only the sixty or so crazies, but an equal number of their children. Dressed in black and carrying shotguns and assault rifles, agents of the Bureau attacked the sanctuary from all sides, breaking in doors and windows. Not surprisingly, they were met with gunfire. During the raid four agents of the Bureau were killed, and six of the cultists were permanently saved from their own stupidity.

**Now, here is the suspicious part.** More than once in the year preceding the raid, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms had been subjected by one of our television networks to scathing criticism for its incredibly lax policies relative to licensing and supervision of gun dealers. Knowing that few people would have any sympathy for a bunch of hippies, the Bureau just *may* have perceived the situation in Waco as a chance to prove how vigilant and tough it really was, although I must point out that no such motive was ever acknowledged.

The alleged reasons for the raid were twofold: (1) A couple of defectors from the cult claimed that the Leader was sexually abusing children. (Two visits by the Texas Child Welfare Department had found no reason to believe that charge.) (2) There was no way of knowing whether the cult might some day break out of the compound with guns blazing and take over the State of Texas.

The armed raid was considered the best way of preventing the possibility of gunplay and thereby protecting the children of the cultists!<sup>12</sup>

Having botched the job and caused the death of four Federal Agents, there was, of course, no way to forgive the cultists. The FBI was then assigned the task of forcing a surrender (or mass suicide) in order to save our government's "face" and cover its ass.

**I have gone into considerable detail in telling this story because it is such a beautiful example of morality as I have defined it.**

It illustrates both the relativity of morality and the fact that morality has to do with pleasing one's Manipulators. Consider: The cultists were people who saw themselves not merely as moral but as saintly, because after behaving for years in ways which pleased their Seventh Day Adventist Manipulators, they were now bathing in the grace of a charismatic manipulator who claimed to be in direct contact with God. The Bureau of ATF is statutorily moral, because it acts according to law and a pretense of protecting the public, but does so in ways that will please the gun manufacturers who manipulate the American Rifle Association, which manipulates the Congress of the United States—which is surely one of the most moral bodies ever constituted. The public is manipulated by the media into accepting that it is okay (and moral) for the parties of the second part to eliminate the parties of the first part because the parties of the first part are cultists and therefore something crazy and dangerous, "like maybe devil worshippers."

***There are lots of different moralities, but all of them hinge upon pleasing one or another Manipulator—human or imaginary.***

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Shortly after this chapter was written the problem was resolved. The FBI, with the approval of our Attorney General, crashed into the compound with armored vehicles and pumped in tear gas. The cultists committed mass suicide by setting fire to their compound. In the process, twenty-five children were saved from the threat of sexual abuse, forever.

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<sup>12</sup> The Bureau of ATF has other protective responsibilities. It tries to keep alcohol and tobacco manufacturers out of trouble so that they can continue to profit from the half-million deaths they cause each year.

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Can our churches tell us what's right and wrong? Can the Bible? Which Bible? Yours, mine, or the Hebrew Torah? The Book of Mormon or the Koran? (Hey, us boys could have a harem!) How about Jefferson's Bible, which kept the good advice but threw out the miracles and the divinity of Jesus? Or what about the teachings of Confucius—that we should turn to *tradition* for our guidance, and serve the Emperor without thought of personal reward. Or the precepts of Lao Tse, who counseled that the best course of action is no action at all—that one should accept manipulation with grace and serenity.

When Hindus are feeling restless they read sacred handbooks of erotic pleasure which they call the Kamasutras. When Taoists are feeling troubled they read the pattern formed by sticks they have thrown in the air. When Buddhists are feeling anything they read their navels and the feeling goes away. Who is following the right path?

Whatever your persuasion, which clergymen can you rely on to help you understand your sacred reading materials? Joseph Smith and his golden tablets of Mormon? Adventist William Miller, whose revelation that Christ would bodily return some time the following weekend is now a hundred and fifty years overdue? Billy Graham and his highly paid globetrotters? Or can we rely on just any old or young priest, preacher, rabbi, or imam who happens to see a career opportunity in our neighborhood? Can we trust the Televangelists? (Choose one.) Millions of Iranians trusted the Ayatollah Xhomeini. Rasputin was a big hit with the Czarina. Maharishis, anyone?

Each free citizen enjoys an equal right to choose the guardians of his moral code. "But who shall guard the guardians?" It was also a Roman who first wondered about that.

"So, what's the point?" you ask with growing impatience. "If nobody knows anything for sure, and any set of morals is as good as any other, why can't I just stick with the set I have, and go play golf?" The good news is that you can. The bad news is that you must allow everyone else the same privileges.<sup>13</sup>

**If we can just learn to live and let live, we will have taken a giant step toward developing a new kind of morality.**

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<sup>13</sup> How will you ever be able to get a tee-time?

Before we can do that, however, we will have to free ourselves from the old morality, and that means we will have to learn who is manipulating us, and how, and for what reasons.





CHAPTER SEVEN

*Arbiters of Morality:  
The Manipulators*

**QUESTION:** "Why can't we legislate goodness?"

**THE TRUTH IN A NUTSHELL:** The answer is that it is very difficult to know that a person has not done anything good, but it is relatively easy to prove that he has done something bad. It is for that reason that from the very beginning legislation has dealt with trying to reduce badness. "Thou shalt not partake of the knowledge of Good and Evil." "Thou shalt not this; thou shalt not that." No one has ever attempted a code of law that consisted of nothing but shalt. "Thou shalt be friendly. Thou shalt be kind. Thou shalt make love with every possible partner at every opportunity."

**THE FACTS BEHIND THE TRUTH:** If we had just obeyed that first law (the one about the knowledge of good and evil) everything might have been all right. If we didn't know that some things are better than others, we wouldn't have to worry so much about what to do and what not to do. In fact, the only thing we would have to worry about is whether something we wanted to do might make other people so angry they would attempt to beat us up or kill us.

In view of that caveat it may seem strange that some people seem to enjoy making other people angry. The explanation is that there are certain classes of individuals who do not feel vulnerable to being beat up or killed.

Think about it for a few seconds and you will realize that every time you hear about a new world-class uproar your TV screen is filled with pictures of people you would like to beat up or kill. The reason you feel that way is that most 'newsmakers' are people who

specialize in making other people angry. With a few exceptions, they may be divided into two categories: Leaders and Followers.

Leaders like to boss other people around. This makes them feel powerful. The more powerful they feel the more they boss people around and the more they enjoy it.

Followers are people who suspect that anything they try to do on their own will probably just make matters worse, but they can experience a burst of enthusiasm and confidence if a Leader with the right stuff says, "Follow me and together we will do great things. You will be on the winning team. You will be somebody instead of nobody."

**Followers also want to feel they have a purpose in life, to feel a part of things, to belong to some group or movement larger than themselves. They want to have an identity they can be proud of. They want to feel important.**

*Leaders promise to satisfy one or more of those yearnings. Great leaders promise to satisfy all of them.*

It is of the utmost importance for the rest of us followers to realize and to remember that followers marching to the beat of different drums will never acknowledge that they have joined a movement for any of the above reasons. Indeed, the mere suggestion that they have such motives constitutes 'fighting words'. To be a member of a movement requires believing that one is working only for the cause that is formally espoused by the Leader of the Movement, and never for any selfish or egotistic reason. Why people should get upset over the suggestion that they are doing something because it makes them proud of themselves will not be a mystery to readers of *Chimpanzees Don't Wear Pants*. The answer is that it is not considered seemly to be proud of being proud.

Leaders occasionally espouse motives we can understand. For example, they may say they want to reduce violent crime, overthrow a tyrant, stop pollution of the atmosphere, or control the cost of health care. We can relate to motives such as those because no matter how altruistic the Leader may try to make them sound, we can see that they obviously have selfish aspects; success in achieving such motives will benefit the Leader as well as the Followers.

The problem is that the Leaders usually have other benefits in mind, the acknowledgment of which might, they think, be detrimental to their following, even though the general public would

find them perfectly ordinary. For example, early in their careers leaders may dream of boundless wealth, living in luxury, being free to come and go and do as they please, enjoying life's most exquisite pleasures without restriction or restraint. Some leaders achieve all that, but they soon learn it is not enough. They discover that they also want to be respected, admired, envied, idolized. Some of them actually become convinced they "have something to offer" -- they begin to think they can improve the world. At that point they become truly dangerous.

**<< Inevitably, Leaders discover that what they enjoy most of all is power. >>**

Sometimes, always too late, the Followers also catch on that their Leader has become insatiable in his lust for power.

There is more than one way to demonstrate that one is powerful. One can achieve something that has never been done before, create something big and impressive, or lift a 500-pound weight with one hand. People like that should be watched closely, but they are not necessarily harmful.

**Leaders, on the other hand, measure their power in terms of their ability to cause other human beings to do things they normally would not do or to endure experiences they normally would rebel against.**

Leaders achieve one level of power by manipulating their followers; a higher level of power is reached by having their followers manipulate 'outsiders'.

In the latter situation the followers not only benefit from belonging to a movement and basking in the glory of a Leader, but in addition they are permitted to enjoy a measure of power of their own. (Remember this when we talk about the Anti-Abortion Movement.)

Consider, for example, the layers of power and manipulation manifested by Adolf Hitler, his High Command, the SS, the Army, the German people, and the Jews.

Most leaders do not have the opportunity or the ability to become absolute despots. Consequently, in order to maintain their position they must allow their followers to wield some semblance of power, usually in the form of parades, protests, pogroms, or terrorist activities. That way, the followers are able to share in the

pleasure of manipulating whomever the movement manages to dominate, delude, or deceive, and as a result their loyalty and admiration for the leader are increased.

Some psychologists believe that followers who have somehow been led to commit atrocities are then bound to the leader by their own guilt. That may be true of reluctant followers; the idea is to make them feel that their dreadful deeds have effectively excluded them from any other society. I suspect, however, that so long as a leader is winning, he is perceived as being in the right and his followers have no reason to feel guilty. An omnipotent leader is equated with an omnipotent parent, and therefore becomes the voice of the conscience. Only when he has fallen can he be viewed as a false prophet who should not have been obeyed.

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### **Who are these people? Who are the Manipulators?**

*The main Institutional Manipulators are five in number. They may be remembered as the Five R's: the Religions, the Rulers, the Rich, the Rumormongers, and the Rabble.*

The first four aspire to lead; the fifth is their ultimate instrument of power.

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A man or woman, or an institution they represent, may win admirers and sympathizers by cleverness or charisma, but they can have little impact unless their admirers are willing to lend their combined strength to the implementation of the leader's bidding.

**When a leader or an institution has gone further and has won the active support of the Rabble—when it has aroused an emotional commitment from the Great Majority—it is essentially omnipotent and invincible.**

There are no bounds to the enthusiasm of a righteous rabble, especially when it knows that it will be praised rather than criticized for the delicious, intoxicating atrocities it is able to enjoy in the course of its duties. One need only think of the Crusades, the hordes of Genghis Khan, or—in 1993—the Serbian militia in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

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**QUESTION:** How is manipulation accomplished? What are some of the techniques used by various institutions and power brokers?

**ANSWER:** Who said anything about power brokers? I'm the Manipulator here; please don't jump the gun.

**Let us consider the first R: Religion.** The word apparently derives from the Latin *religare*, which meant "to bind or tie up." How does it do that? Men (especially men) have worried about the 'unknown' ever since they ate of that infamous tree. Although they'll never admit it most men realize they need guidance, and for that reason they are vastly reassured if a respected member of their gender tells them what's going on. Since no one *really* knows what's going on, the first man to come up with a theory finds a ready audience.<sup>14</sup>

**Here's how it got started:** One cave-man comes up to another cave-man and he says, "Oog, if we don't kill something today we're going to starve." And Oog says, "You know, Oaff, last night I dreamt I was getting it on with your wife, Lascivia, and at the moment of my climax I was able to see the exact location of every antelope in Ur." "Really?" "It was very real." "You think that could happen?" "Oaff, I can feel it in my bone, uh, bones!" "Well, I don't know, Oog; Lascivia and I are trying to make a baby and I sure would hate for him to look like you." "It could be a girl, you know." "Yeah. Ain't it a shame we can't control things like that!" "Funny you should say that, Oaff, because years ago a sabretooth tiger told me something he said I must keep secret, and now Volupta and I have three boys!" "Really? Listen, Oog, what if we first see if you can find the antelopes, and then I loan you Lascivia?" "You really are an oaf, Oaff! I have to update the vision first, don't I?"

Now, it so happens that at the end of the previous day, when it was too late to mount a hunt, Oog had seen a huge herd of antelope at waterhole #3 and had not yet got around to telling anybody about it. And so it came to pass that he was recognized as a Seer. Oog was delighted with his coup; Lascivia got a little bonus; Volupta got a night off; and Oaff -- well, to avoid being ridiculed by

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<sup>14</sup> Freud thought the reason men are more insecure than women is that a man's most valuable possession dangles in the breeze practically inviting some kind of disaster.

the other boys in the band, Oaff felt he had to talk it up and try to convince everyone that Oog was the real McCoy, not only a genuine prophet but probably a shaman as well.

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*No matter how primitive or how sophisticated a religion may be, it must have Seers or Prophets who claim to understand those forces or events that appear to be random or inscrutable, and it must have shamans or priests who know what must be done in order to control those forces or events.*

Religious leaders always claim that two conditions must be met if they are to be successful in their work. First, the people must *believe* in the religion and have unquestioning faith in the prophets and priests -- because their magic cannot work in the presence of negative vibes. Secondly, the people must generously support the religion and the priesthood in order to demonstrate their gratitude for favors granted by the gods and to enable the priests to attend to their mysterious duties untrammelled by material concerns.

**The fatal flaw of organized religion is that it requires religious organization — and that means people jockeying for position, power, and prestige!**

The priesthood may or may not call upon the followers to play an active role in the rituals required for achieving divine insights or emergency intervention. Generally, the follower's role has been some sort of sacrifice — sometimes a blood sacrifice, more often some sort of penance, or self-abasement and humiliation. In addition, there is almost always an obligatory initiation, usually in the form of doing something incredibly foolish, such as mutilating one's face or penis, swinging on a merry-go-round at the end of a rope threaded underneath one's nipples, submitting to surgical removal of the clitoris, or allowing oneself to be half-drowned in a fecally contaminated river. Here, again, the idea is that, like Oaff, the initiate will feel he must remain an ardent believer and loyal follower in order to explain and justify his stupidity.

The punishment for failing to adhere to the rules of a society's prevailing religion has often been torture or death. At a minimum, it has always included excommunication, which means being isolated from the rest of the tribe. That last threat, to this day, deters people from admitting that they don't believe in a personal god or don't have any "religious preference." To reject any belief cher-

ished by a majority of the rabble is to invite scorn and loss of companionship.

***Morality in the context of Religion consists of Worshipping the Lord; Belonging to His Church; and Supporting His Ministry.***

Oddly enough, that's about all there is to *religious* morality. Read St. Paul if you don't believe me.

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**The second R stands for Rulers**, and under that title we shall include dictators, elected leaders, legislative bodies ranging from town councils to Congress, and the career bureaucrats who survive from one administration to the next.

To be a successful dictator requires little more than a small, well-armed militia that is both loyal to the dictator and utterly ruthless in carrying out his orders. Such a militia may be achieved by following a few simple rules: pay them well; allow them unlimited atrocity privileges; provide them with macho uniforms and weapons; praise them shamelessly; and issue one's orders directly to the troops in the field, bypassing intermediaries entirely. In that way, the glorious Leader establishes a conspiratorial bond with his "Personal Guard" -- they become (they think) his 'buddies'. At the same time, a General Staff must be avoided like the plague. If strategic planning is required, the Leader should meet with one or two officers at a time, in the presence of several members of the Guard.

With such a militia, the Dictator 'governs' or manipulates by means of terror. The militia has no compunctions whatever against opening fire on a crowd of civilians, dragging dissidents out of their homes and killing them along with their entire families, torturing political prisoners endlessly, and breaking heads any time they believe their orders are not being obeyed quickly enough. The Dictator controls any news reports of such activities and if he decides to publish something he will describe the action as the heroic disruption of a plot by scurrilous traitors who were backed by foreign devils. Because no one is clever enough to overthrow such an arrangement, the bulk of the citizenry joins in 'supporting' the Leader and tries to stay out of trouble.



***In a dictatorship Morality consists of Loving the Glorious Leader, Being Willing to Sacrifice for His Mission; and Doing Whatever You're Told To Do Without Question or Complaint.***

\* \* \*

Modern Representative or “Democratic” Governments are really *shadow* governments. No one knows who is actually governing, what sort of people they may be, or what their goals or intentions may be.

**Citizens are permitted to become acquainted only with carefully fabricated images of the putative leaders, hear carefully neutered statements by the bureaucrats, and view televised press conferences conducted in Doublepeak.**

Any high official who is scheduled to appear before the Public (which is to say, the Tube) is powdered, primped, and prepped; coifed, coached, and choreographed; tutored, tethered, and teleprompted; and instructed by the Chief Elocutioner to look straight at the camera and lie, "Your President is not a crook!"

These people, whoever they are, manipulate us by taking a weekly poll to determine what most of us think we want that week, and then telling us that they have just decided that's what the country needs and they're going to see to it that we get it if it's the only thing they do during their term of office -- if the opposition party and the economy will only allow them to get on with the business of governing. That mouthful of gobbledygook is followed by a stark and stentorian warning that unless their legislation is implemented (what legislation, for God's sake?) the world will go to hell in a handbasket, Express Mail and C.O.D. After a can of applause, they repair to the Waldorf for dinner with someone who has promised them billions of dollars and a stable of starlets if they will see to it that the aforementioned legislation dies aborning.

***Morality in a “Democracy” is: Supporting Our Country and Our Boys in Uniform; Paying Our Fair Share of Taxes; Protest-ing any Communist Plot to Reduce the Military Budget; and Bashing any Hippies or Faggots Who Try to Burn the Flag.*<sup>15</sup>**

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<sup>15</sup> Not much different from religious morality: Believe, Belong, Bequeath, Bequiet.

**The third R is for The Rich.** It is a mistake to assume that wealthy Jews, Corporate Executives, or sly little billionaires get together and decide how the world will be run next year. People like that can't get together about anything; they're too busy trying to bankrupt each other. But individually? Wow! Money will buy anybody! You got that? Anybody. It's just a question of how much and how it will affect the cash flow. Now, you may think that you, or someone you met one year at a religious retreat, could never be bought. You may be right; but if you are it's because you have nothing to sell. There may be saints who cannot be bought with money, but how about offering them power — say, the power to do unlimited good?

Bribing politicians who are supposed to be working for the rest of us is not the only way rich individuals can manipulate us. They can media-warp us into feeling we really need whatever it is they're selling, and even admiring them and feeling grateful(!) for the jobs they provide and for their splendid products which, we are assured by Michael McMahon or Ed Jordan, were made with loving care in All-American, environmentally safe, nuclear-powered factories in Korea.

Some rich people become richer by manipulating “outsiders” to buy stock in their corporations. This is done by means of glowing reports about their products or services and fraudulently exaggerated claims about their current profits and future prospects. When their stock prices become sufficiently inflated, and just before their nefarious bookkeeping is exposed, the Officers of the corporation sell *hundreds of millions of dollars worth* of the stock options they had previously given themselves, and then watch the falling stock price wipe out the savings of thousands of small investors. In recent times, an epidemic of such behavior has become evident.

*Morality, as inculcated by the Rich, means, "Work hard, keep your mouth shut, and be grateful that you have something to eat and a roof over your head."*

\* \* \*

**The fourth R, the Rumormongers are a bit different from the other three.** Gossipers, minstrels, traveling actors and troubadours were the rumormongers of yore. As entertainers they were rewarded with food, lodging, and approval. As Manipulators they enjoyed controlling the emotions and opinions of their audiences,

partly because of the celebrity it garnered, but also because of the temporary sense of power derived from their successes. Only after the invention of the printing press did it become possible for rumormongering to become institutionalized. Today the Rabble is palpably manipulated by newspapers, magazines, radio, outdoor advertising, the Internet, and *television*. (The last of those would require a separate chapter to critique.)

I'm sure that many of today's media Rumormongers, especially in the lower echelons, still enjoy shaping emotions and opinions for the fun of it and not necessarily with any long-term goal in mind or any hope of amassing great wealth. Many of them do, of course, enjoy a degree of incidental fame and the minor sense of power one gains from telling strangers what they should be thinking about.

At the top echelons, however, the editors, columnists, and anchorpersons often seem to gain perverse satisfaction from inducing panic, grief, or destructive activities – such as riots and war, or at least the public's willingness to go to war. At the very least, they thrive on worrying the hell out of us because it makes us feel a need to tune in again to see if things are as bad as predicted.

Members and owners of the Media are Major Manipulators, but they do not play any consistent roll in *establishing* a coherent Morality. Sometimes they manipulate the other Manipulators; more often they cooperate with them.

They can placate an abused Rabble just as easily as they can inflame it. Primarily, of course, they work for the Rich. Because their life's blood is advertising, it may be assumed that the morality they espouse consists of,

***“Believe What We Tell You, Stay with the Mainstream, and Buy, Buy, Buy.”***

\* \* \*

**And the Rabble? That Power Behind the Thrones?** The Rabble admires and respects Manipulators! It considers Manipulators to be the smartest people around. Here's what the dutiful citizen says about the rich and powerful:

"They are rich; they can do any damned thing they want to do; therefore they are to be envied! Manipulators must know something or they wouldn't be where they are, would they?"

"They must be on the right track or they couldn't have so many Followers. When you hear those guys talk, it's like they've been reading your mind! No matter what faults they have, you gotta respect people who have come that far, who have scored big time!

"Listen, man! *He's the President!* He's got all these people working for him, advising him — he's gotta have something up his sleeve that we don't know about. He can't be as stupid as he acts."

"Hush; The *Pope* is about to speak!"

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***The power is in the masses. We, the manipulated, are the ultimate Manipulators. ►***

**Most people can be enthralled by anyone who is articulate; a person who can talk fast and long without a visible script is widely perceived as knowing what he is talking about.**

## CHAPTER EIGHT

*Rich Man, Poor Man*

Throughout recorded history, whenever the hunting-gathering life has given way to a "civilized" existence, populations have quickly segregated according to economic wealth — always including a very small number of rich people and a very large number of poor people. The delineation of a "middle-class" has tended to be much more nebulous and variable.

The rich have generally acquired their wealth through seizure by force of arms, taxation in exchange for some "community service", or the gradual accumulation of the tangible means for producing or distributing material goods — for example, farmland, mines, factories, and shipping — sometimes through superior cunning and determination, but often through the largesse of rulers or religious authorities in exchange for continuing loyalty and support. Those three means of acquiring wealth will be seen to correspond to the activities of the first three classes of Manipulators described in the previous chapter. (This is not presented as evidence of "a vast conspiracy" — it just happens to have been the way the world worked, *and the way it still works in underdeveloped countries.*)

Each of those types of Manipulators has always needed its own unique sorts of 'enforcers' — whether they were "knights-errant", priestly acolytes, or a variety of types of foremen. As a consequence, there always have been captains and adjutants who, though far beneath the status of their bosses, nevertheless were a notch or two above the poor.

The size and relative wealth of the middle-class have waxed and waned in response to a number of factors, some of the most important of which are the following:

**(1) The poorer the over-all economy,** the starker the division between rich and poor and the lower the rank and numbers of the middle-class. (The upper classes *like* it that way, because it en-

ables them to feel rich even in a desperately poor country.) Examples of this would include pre-Revolutionary Russia, many parts of present-day Africa, Southeast Asia, Central and South America, and rural Alabama. The “good news” is that when people perceive that “almost everyone is poor” and none of them can remember things ever having been any different, they become accustomed to poverty and assume there is no help for it.

**Religions assist in maintaining such passivity by assuring the poor that God loves them and that He will reward them in the next life.**

(2) The more *primitive* the industrial base of an economy, the less the need for “middle men”. This factor often depends on the simplicity of the product. For example, coal mining or slate mining, especially in near monopolistic settings such as 19th century Britain, might have required little more than miners and a few gang-bosses to make sure the drudges showed up and kept busy, trains to haul the raw product away, and wagons to deliver it to the customers. The same might be said for the production of agricultural products for export, such as sugarcane, pineapples, or rubber. In contrast, an airline industry might require investors, planners, designers, engineers, skilled craftsmen, marketing experts, pilots, airport personnel, travel agents, and so forth, at literally scores of different remunerative levels.

**A “peasant economy” reduces the *value* of the individual worker, thereby enhancing the contrast between the powerful and the powerless. This helps to explain why Dictators of the very poorest countries actively sabotage efforts to modernize their economies.**

(3) The faster a population grows, the more likely it is that the labor pool will outstrip the demand for workers. Steadily increasing numbers of unemployed make it correspondingly easier for employers to pay lower wages to all levels of workers and to ignore working conditions.

**This is why Wall Street becomes alarmed when the unemployment rate drops below five or six percent, and why Dictators of ‘highly religious’ countries encourage Popes, Patriarchs, Ayatollahs, and other religious spokesmen to discourage family planning and birth control.**

(4) The more ignorant and the more immobile a population, the easier it is for the four classes of Manipulators to keep their minions docile and compliant—first, because ignorant people have always tended to feel that their lives are controlled by forces larger than themselves; secondly, because uneducated peasants have only the vaguest conception that other life-styles are possible; and thirdly, because ignorant people are always more fearful of change.

**This is why Manipulators are always against liberal education of the masses, why unalterable "tradition" is so sacred to organized religions, and why society teaches that the most important ethic and surest mark of a moral person is the 'work ethic'. Poor people are taught that it is slothful and ungodly to expect a "hand-out" from the obscenely rich who exploit their labor.**

(5) The more closely the four types of Manipulators cooperate, the easier it is to keep the downtrodden trod down.

\* \* \*

**In summary**, the rich and powerful want you to know that you are dependent on their talents and their largesse, but they don't want you to dwell on the fact that you are poor, for that could cause unrest.

They know (intuitively?) that you will find it difficult to achieve a clear understanding of just how poor you are when you are surrounded by so many different types and degrees of poverty. Whenever feasible, they also like to call your attention to the greater destitution of other countries or regions, in the hope that you will think about how lucky you are to live wherever it is you live.

*In addition, some Manipulators know that by encouraging ethnic prejudices, your ability to stay focused on your own problems will be further impaired.*<sup>16</sup>

**Finally, they (The Manipulators) see to it that you are provided with bread and circuses — or nowadays with hot-dogs and ball-games — and that your Church and the Media re-**

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<sup>16</sup> Again, not a conscious "conspiracy"; Manipulators just know from experience that ethnic hatreds often serve their purposes.



**mind you every week how fortunate you are to be among God's Blessed Poor.**

Now! Why did I tell you all that?

Because I love you, and because it is a matter of deep concern to me that when the revolution begins, you will know who your enemies are.

CHAPTER NINE

*Blessed Are The Poor*

It has been conjectured that not everyone is engaged in a constant struggle for prestige and power.

Many people, for example, make no concerted effort to acquire great wealth. There probably have been times in the lives of such people when they dreamt of becoming rich, but over the years they have lost hope of its happening. They may buy a few lottery tickets now and then, but "just for the fun of it, you understand." Or they may take an occasional trip to Las Vegas, "but it's mostly to see the shows."

Incurable romantics will pick up every likely looking stone that catches their eye when they go walking in the hills. Others fantasize that tomorrow's mail will include a letter informing them that an unknown cousin has just willed them half of Ireland.

The methods for adapting to the lack of riches are so numerous that I will have to tell you about them in a separate book.

Of course, there are people who truly don't care anything at all about material wealth — so long as their basic needs are met, and so long as their unusual philosophy affords them a bit of prestige or power.

A fine example of that kind of person was Mahatma Gandhi.

Another fact worth keeping in mind is that material wealth is likely to preoccupy people only if there are materials to be wealed. If there were a world in which no one owned anything because no one had yet discovered or imagined anything worth owning, then no one would be any poorer than anyone else and "wealth" would not be part of the vocabulary. That probably was the state of affairs among our ancestors before it was discovered that you could cut things if you owned a sharp rock. Then, right away, anyone who had a sharp rock was deemed to be wealthy.

It couldn't have been long, however, before everyone had a sharp rock. And then, once again, no one was poor and it made no

sense to dream of getting rich. That is, until someone discovered that the empty shell of an ostrich egg could be used for carrying drinking water while on a long trek. And that a pointed stick made it easier to dig for food. And that a leopard coat was comfy to lie on at night. And so forth.

Even so, concepts of wealth and poverty could not have maintained anyone's interest for very long. As you now realize, nomads learn at an early age that there is no point in owning more stuff than their women-folk can carry. Accordingly, all the members of a nomadic hunting/gathering society are more or less equally rich, and the pursuit of material wealth, if it should occur, is considered a form of lunacy.

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Just a few centuries ago, when I was growing up in the boon-docks of South Louisiana, it was not easy to gain a clear picture of how people lived in faraway places. No one ever walked up to me and said, "Hi! I'm from Saudi Arabia!" People I knew didn't hop on an airplane and go to London every time they had a long weekend. The only financial newspaper I ever heard of was The Racing Form.

My friends and I didn't read travel magazines. I cannot deny that we would sneak a look through any copy of National Geographic we got our hands on in order to see if there were any new pictures of bare-breasted Bantus, but we really had no idea where Bantu was, or why their women didn't wear shirts, or why ours did.

We knew about people who lived within 15 or 20 miles of us and that was it — pretty much the way it is now in North Dakota or Western Kansas.

As Fate would have it, everyone with whom I was personally acquainted would now be considered lower middle class, underprivileged, or "dirt-poor".<sup>17</sup>

My family was in the upper-lower middle class. We lived in a house that was waterproof and more or less windproof. We had cold running-water piped through the house from a cistern in which my brothers and I used to find the cutest little green frogs. We had a cast-iron wood-stove in the kitchen on which we could

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<sup>17</sup> We didn't have "street people", however, because we had no streets.

heat a bucket of water to add to our bath, and next to which we could warm our pajamas or longjohns on wintry days.

Now and then when our bed-sheets were deemed exceptionally dirty (probably because I had peed on them) they would be placed in a big washtub over a fire in the back yard, and boiled with a liberal dose of "bluing", whatever that was. At other times, the same tub would be used to boil up a big mess of live crabs or crawfish.

We always had all the food we needed. (More than I needed; my only requirements were mashed potatoes and chocolate ice cream.) We had adequate clothing unless it was raining, in which event we would enjoy getting wet. We had a telephone and a radio; we owned an automobile; and we had a maid!

Consequently, it never occurred to me to think of us as poor or underprivileged just because we didn't have hot running water, central heating, a refrigerator, an electric washer or dryer, or more than one indoor toilet. I admit I was not fond of our spider-infested outdoor privy, but I certainly didn't consider it a mark of poverty. In fact, I can remember thinking of it as rather grand, because it was a two-hole privy, and I sometimes had conversations with imaginary companions who were sitting on the other hole.

In the winter, our bedrooms could get quite cold at night, but we figured that's what blankets were for. Although we lived in a part of the world that gets extremely hot and humid during the long summers, we did not have an air-conditioner. We also did not have even one television set. Nobody had those things. They didn't exist.

I did not attend a private school and there were no "enrichment programs" at our public schools. I never heard of anyone who enjoyed such "advantages". Nobody I knew had access to any special activity centers or community recreation programs, but our deprivation never caused us to shoot at passing cars. We did occasionally put objects on a railroad track to see if we could derail a train, but we never really believed it could happen. (With luck, a penny could be squashed just the right amount to use in a nickel slot machine.)

Health care often bordered on the primitive. Our family doctor used his pocketknife to vaccinate us, and my mother thought that castor oil would cure a headache. Mustard plasters applied to the chest were good for pneumonia. My two sisters died in childhood, and I very nearly did, from infections which nowadays would be

cured in three days, but our lack of access to antibiotics didn't make us feel underprivileged and resentful. Antibiotics didn't exist.

I often wore "hand-me-down" clothing, and I can't remember ever owning more than one pair of shoes at a time. Our home did not include a "library", or if it did I never found it. We didn't have a computer with a CD-ROM drive. Not even a Nintendo game.

I never owned a motorcycle and my parents never bought me my own automobile. I had to walk about a mile to elementary school and I generally "hitched a ride" when I wanted to go into New Orleans.

So if I'm deprived, maybe it's on account o' I was deprived, but I certainly didn't know it at the time, and I don't believe it now. I was as well off as any kid I knew, and better off than some. It was Depression Time, the early 1930's. But my family was not poor, and neither was I.

I was aware that our maid was poor (though not "dirt-poor") and I can remember that I occasionally felt sorry for her, but I really can't remember what I thought she might be lacking. I think I felt sorry for her because she had to live with children who must have been very nasty, because my mother never wanted me to associate with them. I knew next to nothing about Rose's personal life, however, because she was black and we were not. I don't know if Rose knew she was poor. I never asked her. I do know that she knew she was black.

Poverty is "relative". You don't know you're poor if you don't know what it's like to be rich. And, sad to say, you don't know you're rich if you never see anyone who is poor.<sup>18</sup>

**Now here's the punch line: Nowadays, everyone knows whether he is rich or poor.**

Because of air travel and international trade that reach into every corner and crevice of the earth, everyone can see – indeed no one can avoid seeing – that material goods exist which he does not yet possess and may never possess. Sooner or later, almost everyone learns that there are valuable or even vital services that

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<sup>18</sup> It's sad because this is the fundamental reason why excessively rich capitalists resist actions that threaten to distribute wealth more evenly. If this is the first time that idea has dawned on you -- that rich people need poor people – it should be worth the price of the book.

are out of his reach, and that there are luxuries and pleasures he may never enjoy.

Magazines and television constantly call to each of us as the Sirens called to Odysseus, assuring us that we need and deserve all of those fabulous goods and services and pleasures, and that we will never truly be happy without them.

Just in case you've never thought about it, let me be the first to inform you that we live in what scholars call "a consumer-oriented society". The basic concept behind that label is a reasonably simple one: If people stop buying things, the entire society will fall to pieces.

You may think that's not so bad. I don't mean the part about the society collapsing. I mean you may be one of those who feel that buying things is half the fun of living! So you're wondering, "What's the problem?"

Well, my little munchkin, there's more than one problem inherent in such a society. There are so many problems, and they are so complex and potentially so horrible, that I tremble at the thought of trying to tell you about them. Let us just touch on a few of them.

If each seductive ad (or each deceptive bit of demagoguery) succeeds in convincing you that you cannot be happy in your present state, then sooner or later you will realize that you are unhappy. Next thing you know, you will resent the fact that you are unhappy. Then you will realize that you are confronted with only two choices: either you must buy (or vote for) whatever is being sold, or you must seethe in the realization (and constantly be reminded) that you are "less rich" and therefore less happy than the people depicted in the ads. You are poor! In fact, you are underprivileged.

As you continue to hear and see that you should have advantages that you believe you cannot afford, you may eventually feel so deprived that you can't stand it. Then you will begin buying luxuries with money you should be using for necessities. Next, you will start borrowing money from credit-card companies and other loan sharks. Then, if you're a law-abiding citizen, you will find that you have to work longer hours, or switch to a job you really don't like, or else you and your spouse will both have to work at exhausting jobs, leaving your kids to be reared by strangers, or keeping them warehoused in your gonads until you're too old to enjoy having them.

If you lack the education or talent required to earn enough to buy all the junk you have been convinced you need, or if your skin is some sort of weird color that makes it difficult for you to earn a lot of money, or if you lack ambition because you have been taught to believe it's pointless—then your respect for the law may be overwhelmed by your imaginary needs. In an effort to accumulate the insignia of a "successful" or "desirable" person, you must resort to stealing, or you must engage in some business that is lucrative because it is not entirely legitimate.

Do I hear some reader object, "No one has to do illegal things! People choose to be criminals!" Quite right! Nothing prevents a person from choosing to admit that he's a failure, accepting the fact that he is a second-class citizen, learning to live without self-respect, and adapting to the feeling that his one and only shot at life is passing him by. No problem.

If you somehow beg, borrow, or steal the money to buy the latest key to happiness, you may for a time be pleased with how "hip" you are, but the odds are overwhelming that the purchase will not make you as happy as the sales-pitch promised – or if it does, your happiness will be short-lived. That's the way it was planned. Successful manufacturers (and demagogues) must be extremely careful not to sell you anything that will bring you lasting contentment, for if you are content, how will they be able to sell you anything in the future?

Therefore, as soon as you and everyone else who can afford to buy Model A has done so, you begin to see ads for Model B, which is larger and stronger, new and improved. By the time you have bought Model C or D, the whole series is rendered obsolete by "a scientific breakthrough", and you suddenly realize that until now your life has been barren, meaningless, and shameful. You are, once again, in danger of being categorized as a failure. You must redouble your acquisitive efforts, even if it means taking your kids out of their ice-skating class and putting them in a cold storage locker.

Periodically, I see reports of surveys claiming that the young adults of today are worse off than their parents were at the same age. Inasmuch as civilization is relentlessly going to hell in a handbasket, that statement probably is true, but not because young people lack for stuff. The fact is that they have more things than their parents had. Nevertheless, they are worse off because they

are aware of many more things that they don't have, including some which their parents may have judged to be the most important of all — owning their own home, for instance, or having time to enjoy it.

What I mean is, it may well be true that their parents had more of what they needed, but they "made do" with a lot less than they should have wanted. The thing is, they never had a chance to want so many things, either because the things did not exist or because no one had yet convinced them that not having all the things they didn't have meant that they were poor.

So, if your parents were better off than you, maybe it's because they didn't know how bad off they were.

\* \* \*

But we digress. It is time to get back to our study of morality.

As we temporarily leave the topic of poverty, let us be reminded of the observation made by *The Fiddler on the Roof*.

“Being poor is no disgrace. But it’s no great honor, either.”



— —

The social, friendly, honest man,  
What e'er he be,  
T'is he fulfils great Nature's plan,  
*And none but he.*

*Robert Burns*  
*(Second Epistle to J. Lapraik)*

## CHAPTER TEN

*A Kind Of Morality That Isn't Evil*

**QUESTION:** Why did Rabbi Hillel say, "Do not unto others that which is hateful to thee."? Why didn't he say, "Do not unto others that which is hateful to them"?

**ANSWER:** He figured you have to start somewhere. It's easier to know what you hate than to try to guess what other people might hate. He might have done better if he had simply said, "Try to put yourself in the other guy's shoes before you do something that will have an effect on him. And try to learn that it isn't necessary to be against others in order to be for yourself."

You're so paranoid you can't wait to ask, "What if others are against us?" Well, I had hoped to have a few moments to savor my lofty phrasing, but you readers are so impetuous! The answer is that if someone else's enmity is in fact doing us harm, or poses an imminent threat of doing us harm, then of course we must do whatever is necessary to protect ourselves.

But being for ourselves in such a case does not require that we be against the others, even if we have no alternative to killing them in order to protect ourselves.

Being *against* others implies malice — wanting to punish them, doing things for the express purpose of making their lives more miserable, more frustrating, and if possible, more painful.<sup>19</sup>

If a person, group, or nation poses a menace to our lives, liberty, or pursuit of happiness, our goal should be to remove the menace, not to torment the menacer. It would be friendly if we first made a genuine effort to remove the menace by honest negotiation, but if the menace can be removed only by destroying its source then that should be done in as businesslike a fashion as possible.

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<sup>19</sup> We will encounter those motives again when we discuss Crime and Punishment.

Now you're wondering, "Should one go out of his way to be for others or to do them good?" That's optional; but remember a couple of admonitions: First, put yourself in the other person's shoes. Does he want your kind of help? Will your help redound to his ultimate welfare *as he perceives his welfare*? Secondly, ask yourself whether your good deed for him may ultimately go against you. Will you later hate yourself for going out of your way, or for going against your own principles or better judgment?

You see, "Live and Let Live" comprises two commands. The first word admonishes you to live your life as you want to live it, but the next phrase reminds you that you must not needlessly interfere with someone else's right and ability to do the same. Nothing tricky is intended by inserting the word "needlessly". It simply takes into account the possibility that the other guy may not believe in the second admonition, and the way he wants to live his life may include raping you. In that case you have not only the right, but the obligation to interfere with his life-style. That's just common sense.

**Needless interference, on the other hand, implies interfering in another person's life even though he does not want you to, and even though his mode of life does not interfere with yours or anyone else's.**

Such gratuitous interference may be caused by failing to put oneself in the other guy's shoes or it may spring from far more complicated motives. In either case your intention to help may do more harm than good.

Of course, we don't always *intend* to be helpful when we interfere in someone else's life. It was not ill advised benevolence when we cleared native Americans from the lands they were occupying, or when we imported slaves from Africa to work our fields.

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**"Decency" is one of the words we might substitute for the clearly discredited term, "morality".**

Decency implies fairness, honesty, and a compassionate regard for the feelings and welfare of others. The decent person is habitually aware of how his actions might affect others, and if harm must be done he tries to do as little harm as necessary to achieve his legitimate ends.

**The decent person is for himself, but against no one.**

If your mind is reeling and your eyes are rolling in your head because you're beginning to suspect you've been wasting your time with another Don Quixote who is lusting after perfection, hold on to your chair a few moments longer; I'm about to come back to Earth.

Whenever I try to summarize the foregoing disorganized ideas and examples, it always seems to boil down to the notion that a truly moral person is little more nor less than a friendly person. That may seem a rather curious notion to some of my readers, but I can manage without them.<sup>20</sup>

As for those of you who are still trying to bear with me, I would like you to ponder the following definition of "friendly", taken from the Unabridged Edition of the Random House Dictionary of the English Language:

**FRIENDLY: Kind; helpful; favorably disposed; inclined to approve, help, or support. Not hostile or at variance; amicable.**

Synonyms include: companionable; neighborly; cordial; genial; affectionate; kind-hearted; benevolent.

Only one Antonym is given: Antagonistic. Which simply means "inclined to be against."

**Look back at that definition of friendly and consider the following question: *If you lived in a world where friendliness prevailed among all men and women, would you feel the need for a greater morality?***

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Note that the definition of 'friendly' makes no reference to being prudent in one's sexual behavior, truthful, or even law-abiding — traits which one might assume are integral to the concept of morality. Does that suggest that morality (as you know it) reaches for higher standards than friendliness?

Well, we will surely agree that no one is perfect and that a generally friendly person can occasionally be unfriendly, just as a generally law-abiding citizen might occasionally fudge on his income tax or fail to report a minor automobile accident. But looking back over the above definition, when a person is in the process of being genuinely friendly can he simultaneously be de-

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<sup>20</sup> A pox on them!

ceitful, unreliable, callous, or criminal? It's a contradiction in terms. Of course, if one is merely pretending to be friendly all bets are off. One can pretend anything.

The friendly person also has not been described as religious or virtuous, two more terms that are often thought of in connection with a moral person. I have never thought that morality depended upon religiosity (or even that the two were easily compatible) but I must admit that I was surprised that the word "religious" does not occur in my dictionary's definitions of moral or morality, nor does the word moral occur in its definition of religious.

Virtuous, on the other hand, does occur in the definition of moral, but only with respect to the sexual behavior of females. To quote: "Virtuous – sexually chaste, as in 'a virtuous young woman!'" Up the page a bit, the noun is defined as follows: "Virtue — chastity, especially in a girl or woman; as in 'to lose one's virtue.'" You may find it even more entertaining to learn that the word 'virtue' originally derives from a Latin word for 'manliness'. (What else would you like to know about male chauvinism?)

It is traditional in many cultures (but not all) to look to a person's sexual behavior as a decisive measure of his or her morality.

That is a non-rational attitude that results from our genetic design, because no evolutionary mandate is more important than the one that commands us to reproduce. Because of that, humans (and chimps) are intensely interested in all aspects of reproduction.<sup>21</sup>

The expression "a woman of loose morals" conveys only one meaning and is unmistakably judgmental, despite the fact that the woman's sexual promiscuity gives us no reliable information about whether she is kind or cruel, generous or selfish, honest or dishonest, friendly or hateful. (If you are inclined to challenge that assertion, imagine that the woman "of loose morals" is a young widow, is unable to have children, and confines her sexual liaisons to bachelors or widowers.)

Heterosexual behavior between fertile adults became an ethical issue as soon as it was realized that it could lead to the production of a child.

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<sup>21</sup> Please note that I did not say that our association of sex with morality is irrational, just non-rational. We feel it, whether we have thought about it or not.

The advantages of monogamous bonding and the dangers of indiscriminate mating may seem adequate justifications for regulating sexual behavior. The more important reason, however, is the fact that men consider being cuckolded the vilest of all offenses — for reasons that will be explained elsewhere in this book. And, of course, men make the rules.

Nevertheless, it is puzzling that charges of immorality should cause so many people to think first, and sometimes only, of sexual misconduct, as if that were all one needed to know in order to judge a person's moral character. That the majority of Americans are prone to think that way is exemplified by the fact that highly regarded politicians may be drummed out of office by the revelation of 'illicit' sexual affairs, while verminous Senators and Congressmen are re-elected after being convicted of accepting bribes.

\* \* \*

**Morality should be about common human decency!**

It would, in my opinion, be even better if the entire concept of morality were replaced (especially during our early training) with a carefully crafted, emotionally meaningful definition of friendliness.

Either of those terms implies placing the other person's feelings almost on a plane with your own, withholding condemnation until you have walked a mile in his moccasins, not casting the first stone, and giving him a fair chance and an even break.

To the concept of common decency, friendliness would add a smile, a pat on the back, a word or gesture that encourages him to feel a little better than he did before you arrived.

Friendliness (or decency) is not about being your neighbor's warden or censor. It is not about revenge and punishment. It is not about trying to legislate goodness! You are not God and neither am I. Neither of us can abolish all Evil and fill the universe with Good. Even if we had the power to do so we would be doomed to failure because neither of us is so omniscient as to know what is best for anyone who resides in a different skull. Indeed, is it almost more than we can cope with to foresee what is best for ourselves?

The concept of decency easily encompasses the commandment, "Live and let live." The concept of friendliness adds: "Let's support each other in our efforts to live and let live."

**QUESTION:** What does all that mean, Massa?

**THE TRUTH IN A NUTSHELL:** It means that if you have a moral code with which you are satisfied, that's fine. It doesn't matter if your code was derived from the way your parents acted, or from a church, a book, a guru, a mushroom, or a blow to the side of your head. Everyone is entitled to his own code of ethics. Everyone is entitled to believe anything he wants to believe, to do anything he wants to do, so long as he doesn't interfere with anyone else who is not interfering with him.

Beyond that minimum level of "live and let live" I am suggesting it would be even better if we could learn to show each other a little kindness, compassion, encouragement, and most important of all — understanding — none of which costs a red cent or an erg of energy.

If you believe in a God, before you condemn or castigate a fellow human being, tell yourself, "*There, but for the Grace of God, go I.*"

If your view of the world does not include a god it might be helpful to ponder the adage, "Be kind to the people you meet on your way up, because you may meet the same people on your way down."

**Being friendly is the simplest way of surrounding yourself with friends.**

Until friendliness becomes the *spontaneous* expression of a prevailing mood, we may begin to acquire the habit of acting friendly by reminding ourselves that it is the best tactic in the service of enlightened selfishness.

Many of life's most satisfying experiences — and nearly all of life's necessities — require the cooperation of other people.

People (and animals) are most likely to cooperate with others who have been genuinely friendly to them.

Dogs understand that. Chimpanzees understand it. Stay with me and maybe you will understand it, too. ►

CHAPTER ELEVEN

*Resisting Evil*

*“Morality, thou deadly bane,  
Thy tens o’ thousands hast thou slain!”*

*Robert Burns*

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**What if you gave a party and nobody came?**

That may seem a frivolous question, but what if you declared a war and nobody reported for duty? Or passed a new law and nobody obeyed it? Would the police or the Army shoot or imprison all of the shirkers? What if the police and the soldiers realized that such action was unconscionable, and threatened to shoot *you* instead?

What if you advertised a defective, unnecessary, or unhealthy product and nobody bought it? Or threatened to excommunicate anyone who failed to obey the doctrines of your Church and nobody cared? What if you spent tons of money running for Senator and nobody voted for you?

What if you proclaimed longer hours and lower salaries for your workers and all of them immediately went on strike – *and your customers threatened to direct their business elsewhere?* Or if you accepted a contract from the government to produce nerve gas and your chemists said, “Forget it.” Or if you ordered the bombing of civilians and your pilots went fishing?

***What if the great majority of people learned to recognize when they were being manipulated, and simply refused to go along with it?***

On at least one occasion that sort of thing almost happened, and it achieved the desired result. It happened in the waning years of America’s military involvement in Vietnam, when it gradually



became clear that a variety of Manipulators had misled us, at great cost to our youth and to our integrity as a nation.

In those years a few ‘agitators’ argued that our government had been lying to us about the nature of the war. Reviled by conservatives and harassed by the FBI, the agitators persisted until their vision began to take hold among our young people — ultimately creating a groundswell of discontent. Finally, our most respected television news reporter admitted that he, too, had been deceived — *and a government came down*.

Unfortunately, the protest lost momentum when it became clear that the successor government was no wiser or more honest, and the carnage dragged on for several more years. But for one brief, shining moment, decency reigned.

There are several reasons why we don’t more often ‘just say No’ to those who would use us for their own selfish purposes. One is the fear that not enough of our fellows will join the protest or stay the course, with the result that the rebellion will not succeed and *we* will be selectively punished. Another is that we often feel that an issue is simply not worth the temporary inconvenience or cost. More often, we are ‘sucked in’ by the propaganda that tells us what we should do or not do, or we yield to the allure of an advertisement because of our insatiable desire to have as many ‘things’ as our friends and neighbors.

***The most important reason, however, is that we have trouble accepting the fact that other people are manipulating our lives. As a result, we either do not notice that we are being manipulated or if we suspect it, we tell ourselves that we must be mistaken.***

We allow ourselves to be manipulated because we are insecure. We fear public disapproval, ridicule, or condemnation as fools and troublemakers. Ultimately, we fear loss of one or more of our basic satisfactions — companionship and belonging, status, financial success, desirability as sexual partners, perhaps even our very freedom.

The fear that we may be *alone*, not only in our willingness to act but even in our appraisal of reality, makes us particularly prone to give up the fight. As tribal animals we are greatly dependent on what psychologists call *consensual validation*, which means that

we find it difficult to maintain a position *if no one else in our group* agrees with us. That is why it is so important that all (or most) of us be able to understand what is and is not at stake in permitting a Manipulator to have his way in a given situation.

*And that is the reason for this book and this chapter.* If we, and a majority of our cohorts, do not acquire a ready understanding of the ways in which we can be manipulated, and the ends for which we are prone to be manipulated, we shall be unable to act with the unity required to change or resist the behaviors of Manipulators.

It should be clear that the problems posed by Manipulators cannot be solved by a single formula. As spelled out in Chapter Three, *The Blind Leading the Blind*, we must learn to ask ourselves “who gains what” by a given course of events.

We must remember that humans were selected for their ability to look after their own needs first and foremost, and therefore we must be wary of leaders of every sort.

***That is to say, whenever anyone, no matter how revered, is attempting to influence us, rather than tending his own garden, we must critically examine his alleged reasons and purported facts. Indeed, we must ask ourselves, “Could this be a lie? And if so, what might he be trying to gain at my expense?”***

I know how that sounds, and in a moment we shall consider whether such an approach to life is unduly pessimistic. But this chapter is about Manipulators, so let us continue with that theme.

\* \* \*

Critics have pointed out to me that *everyone* is a manipulator. Mothers try to shape their little children. Schoolteachers shape their wards in different ways. Wives attempt to manipulate their husbands, both to have their own way and in order to help the husband advance in his career. And men, *the entire male gender*, have always attempted to dominate women and control their lives, often in ways that are quite incomprehensible *except as demonstrations of power*.

So, yes, everyone is a manipulator, with a small “m”. In this book, however, I have chosen to call attention to a different set of Manipulators, spelled with a large “M”. I refer to them as “Institutional Manipulators”, because they are able to influence the rest of

us by virtue of special categories to which they belong, and often without even having to know us as individual persons.

They were described, along with the general influences they have on us, in the chapters dealing with Morality. The principal Institutional Manipulators were categorized as the “**Five R’s**” — **Rulers, Religions, the Rich, the Rumormongers**, and, lamentably, **the Rabble**. In general, Rabble is used to refer not to individual citizens, but to collections of them in crowds, audiences, patriotic organizations, ethnic groups, armies, mobs, and so forth. Their behavior may be thought of as that of the *Least Common Denominator* of humanity — the chimpanzee within us, if you will.

Manipulators are people who have become intoxicated with Power. Because of that, they pursue their aims without compunction. In the process, some of them discover that they enjoy using other people as playthings, pawns, and puppets quite as much as they enjoy attaining their stated goals. Others remain convinced that whatever they do is for the ultimate advantage of the pawns, without ever seriously considering whether the pawns might have different ideas.

Their ultimate measure of power, deny it though they will, is the relative helplessness of those whom their activities influence. In extreme cases, their greatest satisfaction derives from robbing others of their humanity. Their greed knows no bounds, their callousness no restraints.

The time has come to support those allegations.

\* \* \*

Successful Manipulators always occupy positions of power. They usually are clever; they invariably are ambitious and tenacious; they sometimes are brilliant.

**They have caused the deaths of hundreds of millions of peasants, soldiers, children, and slaves, and the hunger, misery, and squalor of billions of their fellow humans.**

In the process, they frequently have gotten their victims to revere them and to go along with their schemes.

**They are the makers of History.** They are Pharaoh, Agamemnon, Alexander, Darius, Xerxes, Genghis Khan, Attila, Napoleon, and Hitler. They are the Caesars, the Tsars, the Kaisers, the Sultans, the Kings, and the Presidents. They are the High

Priests of Amon-Ra and Moloch and Baal and Yahweh, and the Popes, Patriarchs, Prophets, Caliphs, and Imams. They are Columbus, Cortés, Pizarro, da Gama, de Soto, Cook, Tasman, and all the other glorious Explorers who, knowingly or inadvertently, initiated the near genocide of the Caribbean islanders, the Central and South American natives, the North American Indians, the Eskimos, the Hawaiians, the Australian and Tasmanian aborigines, and countless African peoples. They are all the callous and incompetent Generals who orchestrated the battles of Agincourt and Little Bighorn and Gettysburg and the Marne and the Somme and Stalingrad and Vietnam. They are Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller and the Rothschilds and the duPonts, and the Railroad Barons and the Robber Barons and the Krups and the Princes of Araby, and all the other billionaires who buy and sell Congressmen, Kings, and Presidents. They are the criminally irresponsible stockbrokers, analysts, and 'corporate raiders' who steal from the poor and give to themselves and their cronies. They are William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer, and all the dishonest journalists and television anchormen of today, and all the mercenary, cowardly historians who brainwash the untutored with lies, propaganda, and omissions of fact.

They are the people who instigate wars, crusades, Holy Inquisitions, pogroms, slave trading, economic depressions, famines, and the epidemics and plagues that invariably accompany wars and famine.

They strive to preserve the ignorance and poverty of their victims, all the while proclaiming (through their control of the Media) that they are our benefactors, protectors, and saviors.

*They are widely considered the finest examples of our culture.*

They may be invincible.

**They are the Manipulators.**

\* \* \*

People in positions of power refer to any and all of the foregoing accusations as "The Conspiracy Theory". Whether they be political pundits, hard-nosed reporters, ex-politicians, captains of industry, or professors of sociology, they ridicule the theory as childish, crackpot, paranoid, or simply tiresome. Whoever is interviewing such 'authorities' is thereupon too embarrassed to

continue, and the reading or listening public concludes that the theory is tommyrot.

These wise men, who like to think of themselves as realists, aver that it is ridiculous to imagine the billionaires of the world, or the clergy, or the rulers, or the media getting together in the dead of night on some secluded island and deciding what to do with the world and all the people in it. Not only does belief in such events require ignorance of the competitive manner in which such leaders operate (they say) but it implies a mistrust of one's fellows that borders on paranoia. What possible motive could people have to conspire against others whom they don't even know, when they themselves "have made it" and already enjoy all the security and wealth and prestige anyone could want?

When those objections are offered in person by a Manipulator, which is very rare, or by someone in the direct employ of a Manipulator, they can be dismissed without a second thought. But the same argument is often put forth by people who apparently are scholars, are neutral, and who appear to be intelligent. *What does this mean?*

The answer has several ingredients. I shall not trouble myself to belabor the point that Manipulators do indeed meet together in secret and make plans of great moment. Those of you old enough to remember WW-II may recall that Churchill, Stalin, and Roosevelt (later Truman) met in secret at places you scarcely knew existed, and agreed to divide the world into three spheres of influence, dominated by guess-who. The College of Cardinals, as well as the Pope and his personal advisors (presumably including God) occasionally get together to decide how best to control their worldwide flock, and afterwards issue new commandments or reaffirm old ones without allowing anyone to be privy to their reasoning. The Federal Reserve Board meets in secret, as do the Members of the World Bank and the World Monetary Fund, later telling us only what actions they recommend. And have you ever wondered how it happens that when you surf from one network to another during the evening news you discover that they are all saying the same things at the same times?

It probably is true that the billionaires of the world do not get together and openly discuss how they are going to divide among themselves all of the world's money, property, and power. (They already own *half* of it.) They do, however, frequently chat with

each other, because most of them are Board Members of multiple, overlapping corporations and conglomerates. They also have access to the highest levels of government and can tilt it in almost any direction they choose, often by means of surprisingly small donations.

None of that is important, however, because it is not necessary for them to conspire. It also is not important that they often disagree on major issues. It is obvious that each of them has his own goals and his own fish to fry, and that they are not all equally powerful or competent, but none of that matters.

**Here are some realities that most people do not understand about individuals in positions of great power:**

(1) Many of them actually can manipulate us, at least to some small degree, and all of them want to, because it is their measure of success. Media controllers are a prime example. Consider the influence of network news, Presidential press conferences, movie critics, televangelists, or some of the most popular ‘news documentaries’. Or simply consider commercial ads that are repeated over and over.

(2) When one power faction moves us in a new direction, other Manipulators visualize how they can profit from the change and only then do they begin to manipulate us in their preferred directions. Consider the recent growth of gambling casinos in the United States: Gambling syndicates finance a media blitz in order to legalize casinos in a new market. Realtors see a golden opportunity, so they buy up all the likely sites and help finance the media campaign. The State stands to receive a big boost in taxes, so elected officials help to promote an activity that has been illegal for fifty years and will continue to be illegal in other areas of the State! Shuttle buses are organized; the hotel industry moves in and offers “free dinners”. Television commercials assure the gullible that they can’t lose because they are “just naturally lucky.” Vastly expensive highway projects are initiated for the benefit of the casinos at the expense of the general public. After a few years a different gambling location becomes more popular or more convenient and the first area becomes a ghost town. [The foregoing is a true story of recent events in the Central City/Blackhawk area of Colorado.]

(3) Thus, although one set of manipulators may have a very limited ability to manipulate us, in combination (not in collusion) they can have a great impact. Another perennial example of that is the combined impact of lobbyists for the military-industrial complex, politicians, and news reporters in provoking, prolonging, or exacerbating armed conflicts. (Official governmental lies and propaganda concerning said conflicts finally are beginning to be exposed, but always after the fact.)

**As already explained, the most pathetic impediment to understanding the Manipulators is the reluctance to believe that intelligent, well-positioned people could be so completely callous, unprincipled, and insatiable as the facts so often indicate.**

The facts I refer to are usually historical facts (which is the reason almost no one has heard of them) but sometimes they become manifest in "real time". Among the latter examples of "incredible" callousness, one need only point to Stalin's extermination of real and imagined enemies within his own country, Chairman Mao's purge of China's intellectuals, Saddam Hussein's gassing of his own subjects, the calculated (cost-cutting) chemical and radioactive pollution of the environment by many corporations, or the treacherous practice of supplying free baby-formula to poor mothers until they stop lactating, and then offering the formula only at almost unaffordable prices. Or think about the U.S. government's complicity in addicting the rest of the world to nicotine by coercing other countries to allow cigarette advertising (banned in our own country) or risk the raising of our tariffs on their essential exports. Just to please our tobacco lobby.

**Before going any further, let me make clear that it is my lifelong impression that if people are not living under constant oppression or subjugation (and if they have enough to eat and are not dying of a plague) the majority of ordinary folks behave in a decent and friendly manner most of the time.**

That being said, how do we account for neighbors slaughtering neighbors in staggering numbers and with almost unbelievable cruelty, such as we saw toward the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup>, in Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Burundi, Afghanistan, Northern Ireland, Palestine, Rhodesia, Chechnya, Indonesia, and elsewhere? Why is there so much violence and sadism? Why so much preju-

dice and apparent hatred? And why are there so many poor people in a world of plenty?

Those questions *almost* answer themselves. Poverty fosters ignorance, which makes people more susceptible to hatred, which leads to violence. But mass violence rarely occurs without a *facilitator*. And facilitator in that context is just another word for Manipulator.

Manipulators are the source of nearly all the *unnecessary* misery of the billions of people on our planet. I have already named a few of the many villains. But it continues to be almost impossible for rational people to believe that such indifference to human suffering can exist in this enlightened age — in spite of seeing it every day on the television news!

We prefer to believe that maybe we just don't understand, or maybe it's the result of simple incompetence rather than deliberate callousness, or perhaps it is the unfortunate result of a series of "natural" events.

In the next two chapters I have undertaken, reluctantly, to provide two further examples, in a little more detail, of how catastrophes can be (and are) *deliberately* created by otherwise ordinary persons who have become intoxicated by their own power — the people I call The Manipulators.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> You might be interested in some of the writings of Noam Chomsky, or the work of Ralph Nader, each of whom has devoted many years to the task of exposing cheaters and Manipulators, and both of whom are, of course, labeled as “crackpots”.



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*People who are not naturally leaders invariably feel a need to be led — which, of course, they will deny. The same people view “unbridled responsibility for self” as an inevitable precursor to chaos.*

## CHAPTER TWELVE

*“A Splendid Little War”*

First, we shall take a look at the origins of the Spanish-American War

In this story, I have highlighted some of the key Manipulators, both individual and institutional.

In the year 1512 *Diego Velazquez* landed on the Pearl of the Antilles (Cuba) with a few soldiers and two or three priests. He had been instructed to conquer the island because *the King of Spain* had heard there might be gold there. In no time at all he routed the locals and burned their leader, *Hatuey*, at the stake. His number-one priest offered to arrange for the burnee to go to Heaven, but when Hatuey learned that Heaven was where Christians went, he said, "No thanks."

The Spaniards had every right to appropriate the island, because twenty years earlier *Pope Alexander VI* had drawn a crooked line down the ‘middle’ of the Atlantic Ocean and had given the Eastern half of the world (plus Brazil) to Portugal and the Western half to Spain, along with all the people in those respective areas. So the *Conquistadors* branded the foreheads of any natives they had not already slaughtered, just to make sure they understood who owned them.

According to a priest who was an eye-witness and who kept a diary, the conquerors alternately worked the natives to death, used them for bayonet practice, set them on fire, or made wagers with each other to see who could sever both of a native’s feet with a single swish of his sword, after which the victim would be told to run. The diary went on to describe many other games that you don’t want to hear about and I don’t want to tell you.

Now, you must try to understand that those were not the acts of unusually sadistic soldiers and sailors. They had become accustomed and inured to such practices at home, because shortly

before Alexander gave them the Western half of the world, **Pope Sixtus IV** had said it would be okay for Spain to manage its own **Holy Inquisition**, which it did for the next 342 years! In many parts of Spain, torture was simply a way of life.

As you can imagine, the Spaniards were not going to be much kinder or gentler in Cuba. Because the conquerors killed nearly all of the indigenous personnel, they soon began importing African slaves, lest the **Spanish aristocracy** soil its hands with manual labor. Unfortunately, the blacks seemed to die just about as fast as the natives had, so a continually increasing supply of slaves was needed, a problem which greatly benefited North American and English **slave traders**.

It soon was discovered that in addition to having deposits of gold and other metals, the island was an ideal place to grow sugar cane, coffee, and tobacco, and the economy began to flourish — at least insofar as the **landed gentry** was concerned.

**The United States** developed an early interest in the goings on in Cuba. We didn't have any problem with the way the Spaniards were running the island, we just thought it would be better if we were running it. **American corporations** were gradually gaining control of a large portion of the mining and sugar industries and they needed to be protected from interference by the people who happened to live there.

Besides that, we never knew when we might decide to add Cuba to our expanding empire, because there was a growing conviction that it was our "manifest destiny" to control the entire Western Hemisphere—in spite of the Pope's having given it to Spain. Virtually every President since John Adams had offered to buy the island from Spain, and after our Civil War we began to consider the possibility of taking it by force.

After most of the world had abolished slavery, the Cuban slaves, along with some peasant farm-workers and a few **opportunistic revolutionaries**, began to dream of overthrowing the Spanish Colonial Government and creating an independent Republic. Even some of the wealthy Spaniards were getting tired of incompetent colonial rule (and taxes) but they were more inclined toward a possible annexation by the United States rather than a rebellion that might cost them their fortunes. Naturally, the U.S. encouraged both sides of this debate, and around 1890 sustained

insurrection was beginning to make some progress. It is worth noting that until we actually declared war on Spain eight years later, all of the time we were commiserating with the Cuban natives *we were supplying Spain with virtually all of the arms used to suppress the rebellion.*

To squelch this unruly behavior, in 1896 Spain sent over one of its finest generals to do some serious killing. The insurgents began to burn the sugar plantations, so **General Wyler** burned their villages and rounded the inhabitants into concentration camps, where they promptly began to die of disease and starvation.

The rebellion continued, however, and in a short time Wyler had to give up because he had run out of things to burn.

Spain was beginning to make concessions to the locals; there was talk of abolishing slavery; and by 1897 the rebels were very close to achieving their goals. At that point, our leaders (in the U.S.) and our press suddenly began to take a much greater interest in ‘the welfare of the Cuban people’, and sentiments increased that it was time for us to take over and set things straight.

**William Randolph Hearst** discovered that he could sell a lot more papers by publishing stories about imaginary atrocities committed by the Spaniards than he could by reporting on events at home. (**Joseph Pulitzer** soon joined the bandwagon.)

**Hearst also found that a strong patriotic spirit could be aroused by pointing out that Spain's refusal to let us control their island was an intolerable insult to our national pride.(!)**

Having a good eye for a story, Hearst wrote on one occasion that some Cuban women had been stripped naked and searched by Spanish soldiers aboard an American ship, and he asked in a banner headline whether our flag no longer protected women. This idiotic question prompted irate resolutions from **Congress**, urging some unspecified retaliation. It also caused our **Secretary of State** to say that if such atrocities were to continue, our only honorable recourse would be to declare war on Spain!

NOTE: Ninety years later, **President George Bush the First** borrowed that fantastic explanation when he ordered the invasion of Panama, bravely announcing that he was not going to tolerate Panamanian soldiers' detaining one of our officers and uttering

sexual remarks in the presence of the officer's wife! (I am not making this up!)

Interest in our "Manifest Destiny" was steadily mounting, and the newspapers were clamoring for war, mostly "to protect our Honor."

It is at this point that we can gain a little insight into the unbelievable ideas that can run through the minds of Manipulators.

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While Congress was issuing proclamations that it was our duty to liberate Cubans from foreign domination, the **U.S. Undersecretary of War, J.C. Breckenridge**, wrote to **Lt. General Nelson Miles**, Commander of the U.S. Army, as follows:

"The inhabitants (of Cuba) are generally indolent and apathetic ... vulgar ... abject ... and immoral...They are indifferent to religion.. and therefore immoral. Since they only possess a vague notion of what is right and wrong, the people tend to seek pleasure not through work, but through violence. As a logical consequence of this lack of morality, there is a great disregard for life..."

In order to annex such a dissolute and depraved people, he wrote that first "we must clean up the country, even if this means using the methods Divine Providence used on Sodom and Gomorra. We must destroy everything within our cannon's range...We must impose a harsh blockade so that hunger and its constant companion, disease, undermine the peaceful population and decimate the Cuban army. To sum up, our policy must always be to support the weaker against the stronger, until we have obtained the extermination of them both, in order to annex the Pearl of the Antilles." (*The Breckenridge Memorandum*, December 24, 1897 – four months before we declared war.)

Okay, so you figure this guy was just a nut. But then the President of the United States, **William McKinley**, wrote that he favored the war option partly to free America from "European domination", but also because of "the benefit done to our people by giving them something to think of (other than) material gain, and especially the benefit done our military forces by trying both the army and the navy in actual practice."

[NOTE: For the preceding comment by McKinley and the following quotations and excerpts from contemporary sources, I am indebted to the research of G. L. Simons, as published in his splendid book, *Cuba – from Conquistador to Castro*, St. Martin's Press 1996.]

**Senator Thurston of Nebraska** opined that, "War with Spain would increase the business and the earnings of every American railroad, every American factory, and every branch of industry and domestic commerce...In the end every certificate that represents a share in an American business would be worth more money than it is today."

**John Jacob Astor, William Rockefeller, J. Pierpont Morgan**, and other owners of America endorsed that sentiment, and assured **President McKinley** that "the big corporations would welcome war as a relief to the suspense." (*ibid*)

**Secretary of the Navy, Teddy Roosevelt** opined, "Personally I rather hope the fight will come soon. The clamor of the peace faction has convinced me that this country needs a war." (He actually expressed concern that forty years had elapsed since we last had a good war.) Three months later Roosevelt wrote to another friend, "It is very difficult for me not to wish a war with Spain, for such a war would result at once in getting a proper Navy." Overall, Teddy thought the war would be jolly good fun and could scarcely wait to get in it. (A real nut!)

While our leaders were explaining the benefits to each other, Hearst, Joseph Pulitzer, and their competitors continued to inflame their readers until a point was reached that McKinley would have been branded as a coward and traitor if he were to reject the idea of war. Although some of our intelligentsia were against a trumped-up war — some even citing moral objections! — most Americans (*our Rabble*) were in favor of putting the Spaniards in their place. They were outraged by the alleged cruelty being inflicted by Spain on Cuba's natives and underclasses — having completely forgotten that America had a no less horrible track record in its treatment of blacks and 'Indians'.

It must be noted that *Spain's politicians* were in a situation almost identical to that of McKinley. They were frantically seeking ways of appeasing the United States, but they knew that capitulation to U.S. pressure and abandonment of their colony in the

Antilles would lead to a popular uprising against incumbent leaders and a possible overthrow of the monarchy. Although their government was fully aware that Spain could not possibly win in a war with America, *their Rabble* obviously needed to maintain pride in their country, so it was decided that it would be better to fight (i.e., send others to fight) than to appear weak. The Austrian *Queen Regent of Spain, Maria Cristina*, made it clear that she was determined to preserve her son's patrimony, and would rather abdicate and return to Austria than cede any of Spain's possessions.

At this point, the battleship *Maine* conveniently exploded in Havana harbor. Before the smoke had cleared, Hearst, Teddy Roosevelt, and others asserted that the Spanish had torpedoed it. A Navy Board of Inquiry concluded that the *Maine* had been bumped by a drifting mine, but found no basis for assigning blame or intent. No matter, *the Rabble and the Rumormongers* in the U.S. took the event as an act of war by Spain. No one asked what Spain's motive might have been for doing such a thing.

A Spanish Board of Inquiry argued that it was an accidental explosion caused by a fire in a coal bunker that was too close to a munitions magazine. That theory was affirmed in 1976 by Admiral Rickover (an inveterate troublemaker) who re-opened the files and reported that no evidence had been uncovered suggesting that the explosion came from outside the vessel.

The war lasted just a few weeks. At least three thousand Americans died, along with 50,000 Spaniards. As predicted by Breckenridge, nearly 90% of the deaths were from disease—on both sides. Hundreds of soldiers were returned to the States desperately ill with yellow fever, malaria, and dysentery. Few caregivers were available to deal with them, and the government was slow in providing for the veterans' needs. Many of them died of neglect.

*After the war it was decided that the revolutionary leaders who had paved the way for the U.S. takeover were not fit to govern their newly 'liberated' country and that the general population was not ready for participatory democracy. No Cubans were even invited to the signing of the Peace Treaty, which granted the United States the 'right' to intervene in Cuban affairs at any time it saw fit. (The Platt Amendment)*

Eventually we found a group of aristocrats who were eager to follow our lead into commercial riches, and they were duly elected in a vote that excluded Afro-Cubans, women, and people without money.

*Until Castro came along, all subsequent Cuban Presidents served at the sufferance of the United States government, our commercial interests, and the Mafia.*

U.S. Secretary of State John Hay concluded:

**"It has been a splendid little war, begun with the highest motives (and)...favored by that fortune which loves the brave."**

\* \* \*

After our victory, Spain was forced to give up control over Puerto Rico and the Philippines as well as Cuba. The Philippine inhabitants were to be free to govern themselves, but – as in Cuba – only under our tutelage and supervision. After a while the locals got tired of waiting and began to realize that they simply were swapping one master for another, so they started a rebellion against us.

We killed sixteen thousand Filipino soldiers and indirectly caused the death of about a hundred thousand civilians, and we subsequently ruled their islands for the next fifty years.

Oh, and 5,000 American soldiers lost their lives, Plus 3,000 wounded.

None of the foregoing is unusual.



Be Glad You're Human #1

*My Daddy Can Whip Your Daddy*

War is a way for men to scratch an intolerable “itch”. What is that itch? Could it be the ever-nagging mindfulness that one is not all powerful?

Do not all participants in war — from instigator to foot soldier — have, however briefly, uncommon opportunities to exercise uncommon power? When else does the peasant have a chance to feel any power aside from beating his wife and children? How else can the ‘ultimately powerful’ prove that they are ultimately powerful?

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

*The Domino Theory*

**QUESTION:** Was the U.S. pursuit of war in Vietnam an example of morality?

**THE TRUTH IN A NUTSHELL:** Of course it was! Morality is behaving in ways that please or benefit whoever is trying to manipulate you.

Before 1960 not one American out of ten had ever heard of Vietnam. Not one in a hundred could have pointed to it on a map. No individual American had ever been offended by a Vietnamese national, unless he had gone there for the express purpose of harassing them. Few Americans who went there to fight (and possibly die) had ever met a Vietnamese. No American could honestly say he felt threatened by the Vietnamese people, North or South. Yet over the next 14 years half a million Americans were persuaded to go over there intent on killing gooks.

According to the American government, the reason we had to kill Vietnamese was that the Chinese had evil intentions. (And maybe the Russians as well.) The evil Chinese were manipulating the North Vietnamese government, which in turn was manipulating the South Vietnamese people. Therefore South Vietnamese pawns would have to be killed. (Later in the war we had a chance to kill North Vietnamese pawns as well.)

The North Vietnamese had been told that the American people were probably okay but that we were being manipulated by an evil government that was also manipulating the South Vietnamese government. Therefore, it had become necessary for the North Vietnamese pawns to kill the pawns of both South Vietnam and the United States.

And so it came to pass. Sixty thousand American soldiers were killed. About 1.7 million Vietnamese were killed, three million wounded, and eight million uprooted from their homes. Four mil-

lion tons of explosives were dropped on a country somewhat smaller than California, the equivalent of a hundred-pound bomb for every acre of real estate. In addition, 18 million gallons of herbicide (including 'Agent Orange') were sprayed on forests, crops, and peasants.

The Chinese, the alleged villains in the story, could not be touched because we were afraid of engaging them in a full-scale war, just as we had been in Korea, where we had assisted in the killing of soldiers and civilians of all political persuasions.

**The North Vietnamese leader, Ho Chi Minh, died of old age.**

**South Vietnam's corrupt leader, Nguyen Van Thieu, escaped with his nation's treasury.**

**Kennedy and Johnson and Nixon and Dr. Strangelove were heroes.**

**So were the dead.**

It was a perfect example of Morality.

\* \* \*

**MORE FACTS:** In many ways, our intervention in Vietnam resembled our perfidious treatment of Cuba and the Philippines. The most obvious difference is that the colonial power we replaced was French rather than Spanish.

A very brief history of events might go like this:

The Chinese occupied most of the Vietnamese peninsula for a thousand years, but the indigenous peoples never got used to it. In fact, they hated it. In the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> century the Chinese withdrew, and for about 700 years the various native ethnic groups were free to fight among themselves.

Then the French took over. Like the Spanish in Cuba, their reason for being there was to exploit the resources of the country, but unlike the Spaniards, they allowed a local aristocracy to prosper — but they did nothing to prepare the locals for eventual self-rule.

A smoldering rebellion began almost immediately and persisted for a hundred years, becoming coordinated in the 1930's under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh. Ho was greatly admired by the peasants, but detested by the aristocracy. After the defeat of

the Japanese in the Second World War, Ho formed a coalition of local factions that briefly took charge.

The French president, DeGaulle, had no intention of losing his colony, so in due course the French Army returned and proclaimed France's dominion over its former territory. The resistance persevered and eventually defeated the French and drove them out. France's WW-II Allies could not accept this, so they saw to it that the country was divided into North and South, with elections to be held in two years to determine leadership and reunification. The U.S. established a puppet regime in the South, under our complete control. According to Eisenhower, Ho Chi Minh would have been elected by a landslide in any fair nationwide election, so he advised the puppet government to declare that it had not been a party to the agreement and to call off the elections.

Ho saw no alternative but to fight, which he did in a manner that clearly was going to defeat the unmotivated South Vietnamese Army. At that point, the U.S. waded in and killed nearly two million natives of that tiny land.

**Doctor Pangloss would have declared it a masterpiece of reason and justice, except for one fact. We lost.**

After the Second World War—and for the subsequent 45 years—our government maintained that we were constantly under threat by the Soviet Union and its communist allies. So long as Josef Stalin was in power and was amassing advanced weapons with the assistance of kidnapped German scientists, that claim may well have been true, for Stalin was not merely a manipulator — he was an *insane* manipulator. In order to combat that threat it was considered vital that we enlist and maintain as many 'allies' as possible. An ally was any nation that resisted socialist or communist influence and maintained a fiction that it was part of the 'free world'.

It has long been observed that "politics makes strange bed-fellows." Regrettably, the Cold War led the United States into alliances that were more than strange. Totalitarian dictators, who by comparison could make the most depraved Roman emperors seem mild and compassionate, became our friends.

Some fine examples of men we either installed or supported are Pinochet in Chile, Batista in Cuba, 'Papa Doc' in Haiti, Mobutu in Zaire, Saddam Hussein in Iraq, Somoza in Nicaragua, Suharto in

Indonesia, etc, etc. These people were (and in some cases still are) truly disgusting. They are creatures you wouldn't want to meet in broad daylight. With friends like those, God forbid we should ever have an enemy!

The conditions for “friendship” were basically two in number: (1) Friends would spurn the advances of Russia and allow us to use bases in their countries as part of our 'perimeter of defense'. (2) We would give our friends (or sell at a favorable price, payable with money we loaned them) all the arms and advanced weapons they required in order to maintain their local power and satisfy their depraved, megalomaniacal images of themselves.

\* \* \*

Our government habitually considers it unwise to tell our people the whole truth. During the Vietnam War we were told almost none of the truth. We were never told it was a native rebellion against colonialism. We were told it was a brutal communist invasion. We were told repeatedly that the vast majority of the people were against Ho Chi Minh and his party, even though good old Ike knew that those against Ho were almost exclusively the twenty-percent who had profited from the French occupation and from our corrupting largesse.

We were told our national security was at stake.

Well, suppose there was a possibility that somewhere down the line a communist Vietnam could have become a threat to our security. Do possibilities such as that give us the moral right to kill everybody who makes us uneasy? That's what we did with the Indians as we expanded into the American West. Was that also an example of morality? Of course it was!

War has always been considered moral. Until very recently it was considered noble.

If we can't find an excuse for a real war, *military interventions* are a fair substitute. Our “invasions” of Panama and Grenada and our support of guerrilla activities in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua are examples. Despite the fact that nearly all the casualties were civilians, all of those interventions were advertised, and widely accepted, as *moral obligations*.

War unites the people of nations with a common purpose and common identity. Preparation for it is good for the economy. It takes the minds of voters off of other failings of the government.

The military gets a chance to try out its new weapons and give its officers accelerated promotions.

What does it matter if the causes for a war are invented by individual megalomaniacs or by an insatiable military-industrial complex?

Wars are moral because morality is behaving in ways that please or benefit those who are trying to manipulate you.

## **Be Glad You're Human #2**

It would be more difficult to instigate wars were it not for the ability of men to bond with their fellow tribesmen. In that sense, wars (and pogroms and lynchings) would be less likely were it not for our capacity for *love*.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

*I Pledge Allegiance*

If people were not constantly preoccupied with self-esteem they might occasionally exhibit a little common sense.

The fact that we are inclined to believe whatever we imagine will make us feel better and to disbelieve anything we fear might make us feel worse, helps to explain why we are so easily manipulated by unscrupulous leaders.

Take patriotism, for example. Perhaps you will remember that I have established, nine ways from Sunday, that people long to belong to groups. One such group is called Country.

To belong to a country — to be an American, or a Frenchman or an Italian or a Japanese — gives us a personal identity larger than life. If our Country is big and powerful, then so are we. If its power is primarily military in nature, then we are strong; if politically influential, then we are worthy of respect. If our country is considered a cultural leader, we are to be admired; if an economic leader, we are to be envied.

The awareness, however vague, that our country has a long history gives us a feeling of continuity and immortality. If we can be convinced that our history is characterized by righteousness and nobility, then we are ennobled. If there is a record of victories and conquests, that tells us we are a courageous and patriotic people.

Perhaps no other group is capable of providing its members with so many sources of self-esteem. It should come as no surprise, then, that most people place a very high value on their membership, and become dedicated to protecting the reputation of their Country. It follows as the night the day that members who denounce their country, insult it, or in any other way fail to honor it, should be branded as traitors and spoilsports, and be dealt with in the harshest manner possible.

Some people are unusually dependent on patriotism as a source of self-esteem. Their sensitivity to criticism of Country is correspondingly acute. In the United States, this jealous regard for the image of Country can reach such an extreme that a President who suggests that our Country is not perfect has signed his political death warrant.



The French are proud of their debauchery. Italians consider themselves earthy and practical. Germans think they're more intelligent than anyone else. The Japanese like to believe they are shrewd and industrious. All of them are fiercely patriotic.

Americans derive a sense of superiority from the delusion that they live in a democracy and therefore are "self-governed". Those perceptions tend to go by the board during severe economic depressions. During such hard times the people feel no responsibility for the mismanagement of the country. The government is perceived as an alien entity. It is referred to as "they" — "those people in Washington".

Things are not much different in a dictatorship. If a Dictator is guiding his country into economic improvement, military victories, or even if he is merely boasting on behalf of the people and engaging in bellicose propaganda, then he is *our* Dictator — the man we have "chosen" to govern us. If he leads us into economic collapse or embarrassing military defeats, then...what?

Well, then the Dictator intensifies his propaganda campaign. He fans the natural paranoia of the group by accusing foreign groups of espionage, treachery, or unprovoked aggression. He threatens total annihilation of the enemy. He glorifies the heroes and martyrs who have died (or will in the future die) in defense of the fatherland or motherland. Even as he praises the people, he calls for greater sacrifice, and sheds tears on their behalf.

If the Dictator convinces his hapless subjects that he represents the nation, then to be critical of or ashamed of our Dictator is to be ashamed of our country, and that is the same as being ashamed of ourselves.

The worse a Dictator, the more the people profess their love of him. Otherwise, his shame would be their shame.

The principal difference between living in a democracy and living in a dictatorship is this: In a democracy you can openly complain about your government, so long as you don't complain about your country.

To complain about your country is unpatriotic. Being blind to its faults is part of what we mean by patriotism. ►

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

*Is Ignorance Really Bliss?*

The maintenance of some semblance of order within cities inevitably requires that certain types of natural behavior and most types of impulsive behavior be inhibited, curtailed, or ritualized.

The instinctive response of any animal (including *Homo sap*) to impediments or restraint in its quest for immediate gratification is irritability. As irritation increases, it can mount to anger, rage, and fury, and eventually pose the risk of violent conflict. Society has had to try to find ways of minimizing such behavior — without a great deal of success, as you well know.

Many devices have been discovered for leading us away from temptation and delivering us from evil. Unfortunately, nearly all of the methods that work have depended on threats, "brain-washing", fairy-tales, or keel-hauling. Humans have acceded to those measures only with difficulty, and our irritation and resentment have continued to smolder. As almost every solution has given rise to new problems, more and more solutions have been piled on top of each other, gradually rendering civilization's commands, and consequently our individual goals and strivings, more and more remote from our natural inclinations.

There is, in theory, a simple and rational solution for those aspects of civilization that are susceptible to solution, but it seems to be available only to persons of extraordinary insight and self-assurance. That solution, if it were feasible, would be a sort of universal tit-for-tat, or in more familiar terms, the systematic application of enlightened selfishness. Rabbi Hillel, and countless others, have enunciated it in one form or another of the Golden Rule, "Do not unto others that which is hateful to thee." Or as I have put it in my chapter on Morality, "Live and let live, and try to learn the value of friendliness."

It is all too easy to propose explanations as to why such messages seem to fall on deaf ears. One is that resentment and

suppressed rage, once they have accumulated, are not conducive to friendliness. The angry person just doesn't feel like being nice. Frustration makes a person want revenge, an urge that inclines him to be punitive toward others and graspingly selfish whenever he finds an opportunity.

A second impediment to the Golden Rule is the vestigial influence of our tribal instincts. The "others" with whom we are apt to feel even the slightest obligation to play fair tend to be those with whom we identify — those who are "us" — and even with them it is not always easy.

The last obstacle I care to mention with respect to difficulties that stand in the way of universal (or even extra-familial) brotherhood is the presence of cheaters. (In the present context cheaters may be thought of as small-time or garden-variety Manipulators.)

There always have been, and no doubt there always will be, individuals who want more than their fair share of sustenance, sex, security, power, prestige, or whatever.

**As mentioned in *Resisting Evil* (Ch.13) that may, in fact, be true of all of us, but only in a portion of us does avarice appear unbounded, and only in still fewer is that level of greed combined with the determination and talent necessary for achieving dominion over others.**

Cheaters apparently are uncommon among tribal peoples, because as mentioned elsewhere, it is extremely difficult to cheat when one is under constant personal scrutiny, and often within a stone's throw.

Tribes tend to have leaders of various sorts who are respected so long as they deserve respect, and who are followed so long as they can give a convincing rationale for their plans or a consistent record of success. Not so in civilization.

In civilization, leaders are seldom personally known to us. This makes it easier for them to fool us and to convince us that they are on our side. Most profitably for them, they can tap the cumulative resentment and rage of the citizenry that has been engendered by the constraints of our own society and divert those feelings to some outside enemy.

When a leader succeeds in such efforts, he affords his followers an enormous sense of relief, for if the members of the citizen-herd

are unable to blame their discontent on some alien group, they are left with the following choices: (1) They can blame it on their own society, and be motivated to rebel against it. That choice threatens them with the possibility of anarchy and chaos, and therefore provokes great anxiety. (2) They can blame themselves for having allowed their society (or their leaders) to go too far in restricting their freedoms. But the self-esteem of most people is entirely too precarious to be able to accept responsibility for having contributed to the deterioration of their own community.

**To do so would imply not only that they were too weak or stupid to reject poor leadership, but that their tribe is flawed.**

For example, America may not be the best country in the world; Christianity may not be a perfect religion; and the proud history of our tribe may be, as Henry Ford suggested, bunk.

Many of our fictions are designed to help us tolerate the frustration and anger that results from our unsatisfied natural needs.

**To those ends, we are taught to believe that we should *profit* from our misfortunes rather than rebel against them, for this life is but a prelude to a better one, and our misfortunes are being supervised by an omniscient God who is simultaneously loving and inscrutable. (That last word is one we like to use instead of perfidious.)**

→ **We are taught that it is *good*** to be abstemious of corporeal pleasures, that loyalty to any master is a virtue, that it is noble to die for one's country, that it is bravery to stay alive even when no quality of life remains, that adding to an overpopulated earth is a civil right, that it is a sign of love and compassion to preserve every baby at whatever cost no matter how hopeless or painful its inevitable future. We are led to believe that blind infatuation is a form of love, that being proclaimed a priest or preacher automatically elevates a person's character, that one should support his country no matter how foul its conduct, that the President should be respected, and that anyone who speaks against custom or tradition is an enemy of the people. ←

→ **We convince ourselves** that we are not *really* being cheated by our cheaters, that what's good for General Motors really is good for the country, that a show of pi-

ety is equivalent to piety itself, that pious people are more to be admired than rationalists, that intelligence and education are not nearly as important as righteousness, that politicians are what their media campaigns make them out to be, that famous newscasters can be relied on to tell us the truth, that we have a noble history, that mankind is nature's crowning achievement, that the world and all its natural resources are rightfully ours for the plundering, that God loves us, and that any opinion held by "us" is better than any other opinion held by "them". ←

I'm sure you can add to that list. I stopped only because I couldn't remember what I had said.

\* \* \*

People who suffer from intelligence and a predilection for using it often feel alienated from the "citizen herd". Their problem is that unfettered intelligence makes it difficult or impossible to believe in many of society's more preposterous fictions, and that makes it difficult to belong to the society, and that's a shame — because people need to feel they are not alone, even if they are cursed with intelligence.

The inability to delude oneself also makes it difficult to share society's goals and ambitions, to celebrate its paltry triumphs, or to grieve for its absurd disappointments.

Life may not be possible without illusions. I certainly have had my share, some of which I held tightly to my bosom until just a few minutes ago. Foremost was the conviction that there had to be some way to help mankind learn to behave according to the principles of enlightened selfishness.

In weaker moments, I still think I can visualize the keys and the secrets for turning them. The traits that could make man vulnerable to acquiring a modicum of decency are the same two that have gotten him into so much trouble — his craving for prestige and his need to belong.

**The keys would be to teach him, first, that his group is the human group, and secondly, that prestige and belonging will be contingent upon kind and decent behavior toward all the other members of the group.**

Personal selfishness and self-aggrandizement at the expense of others must be advertised as despicable — as it has been in some tribal societies of the past. It should not be applauded, as it has been in recent years in some of the most “advanced” countries.

At the present time, the most promising medium for spreading such a message should be the entertainment industry, because the common herd can no longer be expected to pay attention to anything heavier.

Tragically, no such program is possible until the cheaters are neutralized, and that is not foreseeable because the cheaters are in charge, as they always have been and ever shall be, world without end.

Pitifully, the entertainment industry steadily becomes more dedicated to the promotion of brainlessness. That which passes as comedy consists of little more than one-liners that ridicule everyone the viewer has ever heard of, and sitcoms which demonstrate that “typical families” are even stupider than your own. Programs designed for young people portray other young people tripping over sofas, walking into doors, making totally inappropriate lewd remarks, and inducing laughter with the aid of louder and louder “canned laughter”. Talk shows, which recently have gobbled up half of the available television time, parade an unending stream of weirdoes whose ugliness, naiveté, gullibility, and characterologic perversity cannot fail to make the viewer feel that he is at least “normal”, and quite possibly superior.

**Unprovoked, amoral violence has become the equivalent of a Fourth of July fireworks spectacle, enjoyable because it is spectacular.**

Deteriorating international relationships are analyzed on the “News” without a trace of attention to their underlying historical causes. Recently, movies have been proclaiming, without shame or disguise, that it is good to be stupid and ignorant, and at the moment we seem to be trending toward electing Presidents on that basis.

Many humans *are* too stupid to cope unassisted with modern society, and they seem to be getting stupider every year. The stupider they become, the easier they will be to lead, until eventually they will be herded like sheep, perhaps by a virtual-dog. Even though that means there will be more and more people living on

the edge of poverty, it will still be music to the ears of the cheaters, because nowadays there are so many people, just a dollar or two (or a vote) from a majority of them can bestow fame or fortune.

So what is the intelligent person to do? His task is not simple or easy. He must avoid provoking the herd to turn on him. He must ...

You tell me.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

*Crime and Punishment*

Here's a pretty problem: There are people who commit serious crimes. If they are caught and they fail to pay their lawyers enough money they are sent to prison. In prison they meet a lot of people with personalities and experiences similar to their own and they exchange stories glorifying their stealth and cunning and brutality. They hear of more successful techniques for pursuing their chosen professions and they make valuable business contacts. They learn hilarious new forms of sadism.

They are treated like captive wild animals and every effort is made to confirm their belief that they are not members of the prevailing society. That leaves them no alternative but to identify with each other. They learn that they are members of an ancient and respected fraternity, a guild.

They undergo no other educational, therapeutic, or rehabilitative programs capable of reforming them. If a few of them learn a new trade or skill it often is not applicable to the outside world with which they are familiar, and even if they could make use of it after their release, it is not nearly so lucrative or exciting as their criminal activity.

After a while they are paroled. Most of them return to their former criminal patterns, but as a result of their in-house training they are endowed with even more stealth and cunning and brutality.

In the good ole USA we currently house over a million people in prisons. (This does not count local jails.) There is a constant clamor for more prison beds, and if we were not forced to release prisoners prematurely for lack of space, the present enrollment might approach two million — and that number would increase at a rate of about 50,000 per year. (This chapter was written in 1996.



By the end of 2001 the official figure had already risen above 1.5 million.)

On average, the \$30,000 it costs us to keep someone in prison is about what it might cost to keep him in Yale Law School, and the benefit to society is even smaller.

To put this in perspective, a family of six with an income of \$30,000 would not be considered below the poverty level and could not receive public assistance of any kind. (All of these figures will have to be adjusted for inflation, depending on when you read this.)

Looked at another way, each household in America pays \$25/month for keeping some (and certainly not all) of our convicted felons in jail. But take note: that figure does not include the cost of our city and state police, sheriffs, the FBI, coast guard drug patrols, narcs, prosecutors, judges, public defenders, or parole officers, nor does it include the cost of building prisons and jails.

California alone has been spending a billion dollars a year on new prisons, and it has been said that nationwide we would need to build a new 800 bed prison every week to keep up with our increasing crime rate. An 800-bed prison probably costs about sixty million dollars, plus over-runs and kickbacks. Fifty-two of them would amount to a little more than three billion dollars a year. Add to that the cost of 20,000 judges and well over a million full-time police, and you're up to \$50 per month per household, for a system that doesn't get the job done. Is there something else you would rather spend that money on?

### **PRISONS: A SOLUTION OR A PROBLEM?**

Toward the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, over twenty thousand murders were reported in the United States during an average year, plus at least a hundred thousand indictable cases of rape and more than half a million cases of aggravated assault.

Many cases of aggravated assault should be thought of as unsuccessful murders. For example, our annual 20,000 murders include over 2,000 victims who are bludgeoned to death with hammers, clubs, or fists, or stomped to death, and 3,500 victims who are stabbed or cut or chopped to death. How many more victims do you suppose *survive* similar beatings, stabbings, or stompings, and in what state of health?

The threat of prison undoubtedly plays a role in deterring some people from some types of criminal activity. Without some such threat, conscience would be overwhelmed by impulse or temptation even more frequently than it is now.

Just as obviously, the threat of prison is not a *sufficient* deterrent. In most years, violent crimes increase at a faster rate than the population. In addition, our citizens are continuously inventing new methods of murdering each other, such as neighborhood drive-by shootings, freeway sniping, road rage, and revenge killings in Junior High School.

It is obvious that so long as a particular criminal is kept in prison, the public is protected from repetition of his or her criminal activity, but after release, repetition is the rule rather than the exception.

***No one believes that our prison system rehabilitates criminals.***

Very few criminals are kept in prison until they die, and even fewer are executed, no matter how severe or heinous their crimes. And finally, common sense tells us that it must be almost impossible for an ex-convict to obtain a decent job, and therefore having been in prison virtually mandates a continuing career of crime.

Although most Americans will concede that we need some method for removing criminals from society, most will also agree that despite their enormous cost, prisons do not seem to be an effective solution to the problems caused by crime, especially violent crime. (One reason for that, speaking generally, is that murderers are people who place a low value on an individual life. Not surprisingly, they have very little concern for what happens to them. This was explained in *Chimpanzees Don't Wear Pants* in the chapter dealing with gangs.)

**To say it more emphatically and succinctly, neither the threat of prison nor actual incarceration does much to discourage people who have started on a life of crime or violence. Indeed, it appears that prisons increase the likelihood of their continuing a life of crime. To persist in spending untold billions on such a system is not in keeping with common sense.**

\* \* \*

**QUESTION:** "Why has no one solved this problem before now?"

**ANSWER:** Two reasons: First, we have failed to ask the usual question, which is: What problems are prisons designed to solve? The second reason is that when you're up to your ass in alligators it's hard to remember that you came to drain the swamp.

**QUESTION:** What are we gonna do?

**THE TRUTH IN A NUTSHELL:** First, we must throw out the concepts of "punishment", "retribution", and "criminal justice". The first two are mindless barbarisms and the third is a meaningless fiction.

**IN A NUTSHELL, our swamp-draining assignment is (or should be) the following:**

(1) Reduce or eliminate the likelihood of future crimes by convicted offenders.

(2) Reduce the likelihood of future crimes by new offenders.

In selected cases, punishment and/or imprisonment might be evaluated as possible methods for achieving one or the other of our goals, but they should not be viewed as goals in themselves.

***The goal is to drain the swamp!***

Here is a question all of us must answer before proceeding:

**If people convicted of violent crimes could be rendered harmless without punishing them, would that be acceptable to you?**

For example, if the rapist who kills your daughter could be rehabilitated by paying his tuition to Harvard Law School, would you go along with that? If you think that rehabilitating someone by making him a lawyer is a self-contradiction, what if you knew that the rapist-killer of your daughter or wife could be rehabilitated by a year on the beach at Waikiki, all expenses paid? Would you vote for that?

Of course not!

Well, then, what if it were discovered that a couple of months in Hawaii could change the lives of *would-be* criminals? Suppose unsavory juveniles and adults who are found guilty of misde-

meanors or other antisocial behavior—precursors of more serious criminal careers—were referred by their Mamas, their school-teachers, or by the cops on their beats for temporary banishment to Maui. Suppose the program demonstrated that a year on the beach, partying and learning to surf and sailboard, paid for out of the criminal justice budget, actually caused the crime rate to drop. That is to say, it proved to be a deterrent? Would you go along with that?

No, you wouldn't. You feel that criminals should be punished. You want the scoundrels to suffer!

Why is that? Does it make sense for you to feel that way? Let us see.

### **THE SWEETNESS OF REVENGE**

Because of our accursed ability to visualize events that are not immediately in front of our eyes, primitive feelings and inclinations can be aroused simply by hearing about, or seeing photographs of, the details of certain crimes. Similar emotions can be triggered by learning of the past behavior of certain types of criminals. A child killer, a brutal rapist, a sadist who mutilates his victims, a serial killer of young women, a nut who wipes out an entire family, a drive-by shootist — those are villains who evoke fear and loathing and rage, and our impulse, our gut feeling, is that the villain should be torn to pieces. "Make him suffer the way he made her suffer!" "They oughta kill the bastard!" "Killing's too good for him! Let him rot in a cell for the next forty years. Lock him up where he can't see the daylight, and throw away the key!"

Measures such as those are appropriate if what we want is "justice", which is a word we use when we mean revenge or retribution.

But is it possible that we don't know what we want — or that we're not aware of all the reasons we want it? (Isn't that what this book is about?)

Why should we have a gut reaction as a result of what a stranger does to another stranger? For example, why should those of us who have never met a citizen of Iraq experience feelings of fury toward Saddam Hussein for the way he treats his people? Why should our blood boil (or curdle) when we hear of the antics of a serial killer whose area of operations is thousands of miles

from us? It seems reasonable to conclude that the world would be better off without him, but why should we, personally, want revenge, or retribution? What has he done to us?

Having read this far in the book, you surely must realize that when there are no sensible reasons for something, the reasons must be stupid. Well, maybe not stupid — maybe just reptilian.

I quail to address the reasons why such feelings might be triggered and I'm certainly not going to *explain* them again, because you wouldn't believe me anyway. I'm just going to dump them in your lap.

At the beginning of this book there is a chapter called, "Let Them Eat Cake". In it, I point out a few dozen reasons why civilized people are seething with anger nearly all the time. And that's the first reason why you (or your neighbor) might want to kill the bastard.

Once a person who is not a member of your family has been identified as a villain, he becomes an acceptable scapegoat for your pent-up rage. That is made possible by a Defense Mechanism called "Displacement", which was described in *Chimpanzees Don't Wear Pants* in the chapter called, "*Hiding The Truth, In Nutshells*".

Although the villain is an easy target, he is not necessarily an arbitrary one. The fact is that he has given vent to *his* rage or lust, and that is the second reason why you want him killed. Whether his crime was murder, manslaughter, aggravated assault, rape, embezzlement, grand larceny, or treason, he has chosen to express his impulses, whereas you have grudgingly toed the line. Who the hell does he think he is?

If you're a woman and you learn that a man has killed another woman, you hate him — first, because you already resent men because of their arrogant and detestable domination of women; secondly, because you're afraid he'll kill you if he finds out you hate him; and thirdly, because you know he is a irredeemable scoundrel, because he is a man.

If you're a man and a man has killed another man, you're envious, because you instinctively know what a thrill it would be to kill someone. If you learn that a man has killed a woman, your feelings will depend on whether she was young and sexy-looking or a worthless old hag. It also will depend on how you felt about

your mother. In any event, the killer must be killed, because he is another man.

If a *woman* has killed someone, no one knows what to do. It's assumed that women are nurturers — people who bring life into the world. So if a woman kills, she must have had a damned good reason, or else she must be crazy. Our confusion is especially acute if a woman has killed her own child. We think, "God, the poor woman!" If a man murders a child, we figure killing is too good for him.<sup>23</sup>

If you're still with me, you know what I'm trying to say. People like to punish law-breakers because it feels good. Nobody's thinking about whether it will reduce the crime rate. And for damned sure, no one is thinking about rehabilitating a murderer, a rapist, or a drug-pusher.

Still, it must be admitted that killing the scoundrel would definitely reduce the likelihood of repeat offenses by that same criminal, and it just might cause a few would-be offenders to have second thoughts — though I doubt it. Considering the trouble 'normal' people have trying to think rationally in the face of strong emotion, just try to imagine the emotional forces controlling a rapist-murderer.

If we summarily dispatch (or confine for life) the perpetrators of vicious and bizarre crimes, we might feel a little safer when we walk outside, but the bulk of our problems would remain. We still would have to deal with catastrophic environmental pollution, deadly workplaces, lethal products, vehicular manslaughter, spouse abuse, tobacco, booze, drug trafficking, and all the gentlemanly crimes: fraud, embezzlement, bribery, graft, political malfeasance, and the instigation of wars to be fought by foolish young men and endured by helpless peasants.

In other words, after we've eliminated the fiends who kill or rape for fun or because of mental derangement we would have to start working on the political and corporate felons who commit crimes against persons or property for financial gain or self-aggrandizement, whose actions often directly or indirectly bring pain or death to thousands of hapless victims.

You may ask, "Is there a problem with that?"

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<sup>23</sup> No one thinks much about it if a woman kills her lover. It goes without saying that he deserved it.

Of course! It just won't do! If we extend the range of crimes for which execution or eternal banishment is seemed deemed, uh, deemed seemly, we might eventually catch you or me or one of our children in the net. At that point, all of our careful planning breaks down.

We can enjoy harsh or brutal punishment so long as it is inflicted on strangers or on acquaintances that we have good reason to hate.

But not me, my best friend, or my son or daughter. ►

\* \* \*

***“Poverty is the parent of revolution and crime.”***

Aristotle (*Politics*)

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

*A Capital Joke*

People argue about whether the execution of criminals constitutes cruel and unusual punishment.

I suppose it is cruel if you believe that dying is significantly more horrible than spending thirty or forty years in a cage with a bunch of ignorant, sadistic perverts.

Death is certainly not an *unusual* punishment, however, for it is one that all of us must endure. Everyone is condemned to die. Some of us will be tortured for many weeks before we go. If we're lucky, we will go in our sleep.

Death is not what our founding fathers had in mind when they decided that no one should be subjected to cruel or unusual punishment. They were hoping to prevent the sorts of horrors perpetrated throughout history by tyrants who enjoyed torturing their victims—in order to prove their omnipotence, wreak vengeance, or glorify God. Even torture may not have been considered unusual unless it was a new form of torture.

Mainly, our founding fathers thought it desirable to have a uniform code of justice that would in some measure protect the weak from the strong. That was an admirable goal, but of course they failed to achieve it.

Today, the claim that capital punishment is unusual is just another way of saying we don't do it very often, a fact which gives us no help in deciding whether we should do it more often. And since the relative cruelty of incarceration and execution can be judged only on the basis of individual tastes; little can be gained by debating it.

***Setting all that aside, however, the basic flaw in the argument is this:***

***Both sides insist on thinking of execution as a form of punishment.***



From that point of view, execution is neither cruel nor unusual; it is idiotic.

If you really wanted to punish someone in a cruel and unusual way, you would peel him very slowly and feed the pieces to a chicken, forcing the victim to watch as long as possible. (That sort of thing has been done.) For examples of more lurid ways of inflicting pain, you only need go to any recent movie.

Execution is not an effective means of teaching the culprit a lesson or making him regret his crime. He will not benefit from instruction after he is dead, and we have no reason to believe he will regret what he did as he lies there in his coffin.

The interminable *threat* of execution much more closely resembles torture and therefore should be a much more effective means of punishing him, but it is very expensive, and the only lesson it teaches the criminal is that we are just as mean-spirited as he is. Why should we want to treat someone that way?

What, after all, is the point of punishing someone?

The only rational motive for killing a criminal is to remove all threat of his repeating his criminal behavior, without costing society a zillion dollars.

The true issue is this: If a person has demonstrated he is an unacceptable risk to society, should we accept the fact that there is no corrective value in either punishing or confining him, and simply eliminate him in a quick and painless way — or should we punish him and ourselves "forever", say for 40 or 50 years, at a cost of \$1,500,000 of our tax money?

Once we get away from the "cruel and unusual" idea, the most effective argument against capital punishment is that quite often people are falsely convicted. Once an innocent person is executed, his chances of being exonerated and resuming his prior life are very slim. That is a scary scenario, but the horror of it is somewhat ameliorated by the fact that very few people are truly "innocent".

Taking into account the possibility that a condemned person might *not* be guilty of any *serious* crime, we could make his execution seem less cruel and unusual if we inducted him into the Army, dressed him up in a military uniform, and shot him. Then he simply would be joining countless other innocent young men whom we casually and *routinely* condemn to death.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

*Answers At Last !*

*What To Do About Criminals*

**Dear Dr. Long:** You seem to be saying that crooks and killers should not be executed and should not be put in prisons. Are you going to let them stay with you in your mansion? *Vince*

**Dear Vince:** I'm delighted to learn that you are still awake, even though, as usual, your question is absurd. The truth is that I don't give a damn what happens to crooks and murderers, unless they happen to be good friends or members of my family. Why should anyone care what happens to a stranger?

What I have been trying to say is that we don't punish criminals because we think it will rehabilitate them or deter others from becoming criminals. We punish law-breakers because it pleases us to know that they are suffering for doing what they did and being what they are. And the pursuit of pleasure, as I've told you a hundred times, is what motivates people.

If we were interested in rehabilitating law-breakers, we would not have prisons as we now know them. We would house law-breakers in a model-community and deal with them as if they were human beings. We would treat their alcoholism and their drug habits or addictions. We would expose them to frequent seminars in an attempt to get across the concept of "enlightened selfishness." We would teach them to read and write, and then offer them all the higher education or skills training they could absorb. And then, before their discharge, we would try to place them in suitable jobs.

That would help, but it wouldn't completely solve the problem.

First, in the U.S. and in many other countries an unemployment rate of about 5% is a given. So long as there are lots of people with clean records looking for work, nobody's going to bother to hire an ex-con. Secondly, a disproportionately high percentage of criminals have intellectual impairments of one sort or another. And thirdly, although it is possible to teach an old dog new tricks, *it may not be possible to cleanse his mind of old tricks*. Once the 'reformed' criminal is out of our control, the broader society, which does not know or care what his special needs are, will not be in a position to continue the positive reinforcements that were used to reform him. The ex-con will begin to see his environment as he saw it before his reformation and will revert to old tricks. (Referring to him as an 'ex-con' is an example of the attitudes he will encounter.)

**Everyone who has thought about this knows the answer. Crime must be prevented!**

Is that possible?

Not really, but there are reasons to believe that the incidence of certain *types* of crime could be reduced.

In keeping with the advice offered throughout this interminable book, the first step should be to ask, "The problem of crime evolved as a solution for what other problems?" Clearly, those who repeatedly commit crimes in spite of being "punished" must perceive continued crime as their best course of action under their particular circumstances.

This was explained in great detail in *Chimpanzees Don't Wear Pants*, in the chapter called *What Does This Have To Do With Anything*, and I am not going to repeat it here.

The next question ordinarily would be, "Why do some people commit crimes, whereas other people do not?" That's a good question, but unfortunately it always seems to invite unsupported *opinions* and *theories*, which usually prove to be wrong. A better way to go about it would be to examine *statistics*.

**And here are the first statistics we shall encounter:**

The 1990 Census counted 19 million children in families without fathers. Today that number has increased to some 23 million.

- 85% of all youths in prisons grew up in a fatherless home.
- 63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes.
- 70% of juveniles in state-operated institutions are from fatherless homes.
- 66% of abused children live in fatherless homes.
- 90% of all homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes.
- 75% of all adolescent patients in chemical abuse centers are from fatherless homes
- 71% of all high school dropouts are from fatherless homes.
- 85% of children that exhibit anti-social or behavioral disorders are from fatherless homes.

Those statistics lead many criminologists and psychologists to conclude that the absence of a father is the “root cause” of criminal behavior. That might be true, but it is not a valid conclusion.

**All we can deduce reliably is that there is a very high correlation between fatherless homes and the preceding misadventures. Perhaps there are other correlates. For example:**

The National Commission on Children reports that fatherless children are five times more likely to be poor and ten times more likely to be extremely poor.

In 1993, the median family income for never-married mothers with children under the age of 18 was \$9,292, compared to \$17,014 for divorced women with children.

The breakdown of those figures are: \$11,868 for divorced *black* mothers, and \$18,512 for their white counterparts. **For never-married black mothers the median family income was \$8,744** — and \$10,112 for never-married whites. (And remember that “median” implies that half of the people in the sample had *less* income.)

*So maybe poverty is the root cause of dysfunctional behavior.*

Never-married mothers are on the average 10 years younger than divorced mothers. Never-married mothers are also, on the average, much less educated. Only 61 percent of never-married

mothers have a high school diploma compared to 83 percent of divorced mothers. The 83% would be even higher were it not for formerly unwed mothers who subsequently marry.

*So maybe maternal ignorance and immaturity are also “root causes”.*

**Or maybe, as we might have anticipated, more than one factor is involved in producing behavior that is dysfunctional, sociopathic, or criminal.**

And maybe the few factors just listed combine and interact in ways that both exacerbate each other and generate additional problems. Thus, immaturity and relatively low education give never-married women much poorer job prospects. That handicap tends to be perpetuated because young, single mothers have little chance of completing their education or acquiring job skills while having to care for children.

People who are extremely poor, jobless, and uneducated are apt to find themselves living in poverty stricken neighborhoods, in which their dysfunctional children are more likely to associate with other dysfunctional children, and ultimately become part of dysfunctional gangs or cliques. The children of uneducated mothers are themselves more likely to become ‘school dropouts’ and thus handicap *their* later job prospects.

*Nevertheless*, there are other reasons to suspect that the growing scarcity of fathers is a causative factor that can be considered independently of the many other obvious contributory factors. One reason for suspecting that the presence of a man around the house who accepts his role as father might be of great importance in and of itself, is this: Without assistance, the young, ignorant, destitute mothers we have been describing simply cannot cope with all their handicaps along with the duties of motherhood, and as a result *they tend to give up*. They withdraw any emotional investment they may have had in their children, with the result that their fatherless children *become motherless as well!*

***Few people will doubt that if children were born of mature parents who lived together in a mutually loving and supportive relationship, were taught to place a high value on education, and were not constantly exposed to dysfunctional neighborhoods, they would have a much better chance of becoming responsible, productive, law-abiding citizens.***

Unfortunately, none of that explains why unmarried teenage girls choose, or allow themselves, to become pregnant. Nor does it explain why the young men who impregnate them do not feel a duty to live with them and to act as fathers to their children.

For answers to those puzzles, the reader is referred to *Chimpanzees Don't Wear Pants*. The chapter entitled *What Does This Have To Do With Anything?* speaks directly to those enigmas, but the entire book is background for understanding the differing motivations of men and women, and how they are affected by the forces of destiny.

\* \* \*

If you are feeling exhausted, you may stop here. If not, and if you are ready for some wildly improbable changes that must be made in our society in order to set things straight, you may continue. But, first, it might be a good idea to stretch your legs a bit and then fix yourself a drink before settling back in your chair.

**Some of the aforementioned “forces of destiny” may be deduced from the following.**

Thirty years ago, in the United States, one worker could provide for his family about as well as husband and wife can today.

Thirty years ago 27% of the nation's wealth was in the hands of one percent of the population; today it is 40%. Over half of the people in the U.S. have absolutely no net worth. It's even worse in most other parts of the world.

Such maldistribution of wealth and such deliberate exploitation of workers cannot fail to create an alienated, disaffected minority that feels no loyalty to the "law-abiding" majority. (The law-abiding majority, incidentally, is comprised of the middle-class and the working poor. The obscenely rich don't give a damn about the law.)

Those of us who are exceptionally well-positioned in our society will be horrified by what must be done in order to begin solving this problem, so it goes without saying that we will do everything in our power to prevent its happening—until we are killed in the next rebellion.

The sad fact is that if the unpropertied classes are to be lifted, the upper classes must be lowered. The reassuring theory that a rising tide lifts all boats can comfort only those folks who own boats!

In order for the chronically unemployed and under-employed to become qualified for assuming better and more responsible jobs, several things absolutely must happen.

(1) Schools available to the disaffected must be made *better* than the schools in more prosperous neighborhoods. This means they must be given a greatly disproportionate share of available funds. To attract better teachers it will be necessary to provide better physical plants, smaller classes, much better salaries, more effective security measures, and shorter hours — which means more faculty. As students begin to catch on that decent jobs may be available to them, performance standards for students must gradually be raised. College, trade schools, and on-the-job training must be made available to qualified students, without financially overwhelming their families.

(2) Parents must begin to assume more responsibility for their children. Parents must monitor their child's study habits and performance in school. Fathers who are supporting themselves must pay for the upkeep of children they generate. Willful failure by those able to do so should result in sterilization and banishment to Texas, monitored electronically

(3) Instead of discouraging family planning, contraception, and abortion, we should mandate them. Women who are proven to be unfit mothers should have their children put up for adoption, and in egregious cases such women should be sterilized. Instead of income-tax refunds for each new child, there should be tax surcharges for each child beyond two. People who have more than two or three children should be ridiculed, not celebrated. Yahweh's mandate has been fulfilled; we no longer need to multiply. (Don't forget that He also appointed us as caretakers of the Earth and all the critters in it.)

(4) Provisions must be made for young people who simply cannot benefit from higher education. They cannot be allowed to remain unoccupied. If you've learned anything from my two books, it is that self-esteem must be maintained at an acceptable level or bad things will happen. Self-esteem is impossible if a person feels that he is and always has been useless. Vast armies of the otherwise unemployed could engage in activities designed to protect and improve the environment and perhaps certain aspects of the so-called "infra-structure". This, too, would be at the expense of the excessively affluent.

(Lest the reader conclude that I am placing an impractical financial burden on the wealthy, here are a few interesting tidbits of information: The four wealthiest men in America have a combined net worth greater than the combined Gross National Product (GNP) of the forty-eight poorest *countries* — home to over 600 million people. The annual income of those four Americans can be expected to exceed the annual income of the poorest 1.5 *billion* people. (Worldwide, the wealthiest 200 individuals possess greater riches than the poorest 2.5 billion people.) If the wealthiest 500 Americans were taxed, say, 5% of their net worth each year, they would continue to get richer but the tax revenues would be more than enough to finance all the programs I have thus far suggested.)

(5) The Television and Movie industries absolutely, positively, must be brought under control. Wise men tell us that viewers know that what they're watching is fantasy and that it has no more affect than reading Little Bo Peep. All of those wise men are middle-class or better, have college educations and cushy jobs, and the only time they have ever been hungry was when they were preparing for colonoscopy. These pundits have no reasons to rebel, to seek revenge, to find some way to express their importance or their manhood, to lash out at the forces that have oppressed them, to kill, to rape, to burn. When these wise men do feel oppressed, they can think of sophisticated, legal ways of rebelling and they have the money to afford them.

Blaise Pascal became quite insane before the end of his life, but at an earlier point he opined that "Not to be mad would amount to another form of madness."

I understand that.

For us to suppose that the constant portrayals of violent and sadistic ways of expressing rage or experiencing power, whether by a "hero" or a villain, do not put ideas into the heads of young men and women who have nothing useful or rewarding to do, is surely a form of madness.

To suppose that endless repetitions of graphically illustrated rape and mutilation of human beings (of any age or sex) by persons of a different color or by some hated ethnic or national group (e.g., Nazis, Japs) are not going to stir the pot of racial resentments and hatreds, has to be another form of madness.

To doubt that the glorification of ignorance and stupidity portrayed by dysfunctional families in our sitcoms, and the



trivialization of decency and self-respect illustrated in talk-shows — to doubt that these will tend to "normalize" the abnormal and justify indolence and insouciance, may be the worst form of madness.

Clever Manipulators have known since the time of ancient Rome that the poor and oppressed can be mollified by bread and circuses — and that they enjoy watching strangers smash each other to a pulp or be torn apart by wild beasts, or be set on fire by Caesar. Now we have Hollywood and the TV studios. Are they serving the masses, or Caesar?

Television also bears the responsibility for making us want more than we have and thus always feel deprived. This was explained elsewhere. But until we can increase the wealth of the lowest economic classes, it should be obvious that much of the advertising we see on television is a recreation of the myth of Tantalus, in which goodies are dangled in front of the sufferer, but everything is just out of reach. Constantly making people aware of what they would like but cannot have is a surefire way of increasing their discontent and resentment. "Truth in advertising" must reach a new level!

And now...the inevitable question arrives.

"Who shall watch the watchmen?" In the absence of a benevolent dictator or an honest Supreme Court, we shall have to depend on education, education, education—and try to practice friendliness.

**THE BOTTOM LINE:** If more parents can be made to feel that they and their children are important, if more children can grow up with the conviction that they are first-class citizens, if schools can learn to teach hope and self-respect as well as reeling and writhing, if the wealth of this nation can be more equitably distributed by creating more jobs – even at the expense of lower profits, and if the entertainment industry can be stopped from furnishing us with gladiatorial circuses, we will see a decrease in dangerous crime.

Until new Manipulators find new ways of manipulating.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

*The Abortion Debate*

Every year in the United States several million women become pregnant unintentionally.

Many of them, especially those with husbands, accept their fate in an appropriately submissive manner. They do this even though a pregnancy and a new baby at that particular juncture in their lives might not have been their first choice, had they been offered other options.

**QUESTION:** "Why don't they have other options?" you ask. "Why can't they have an abortion?"

**ANSWER:** Some of them believe it is sacrilegious to have an abortion. They have been taught that God is responsible for their getting pregnant at this particular moment and He will cause them to fry in hell if they go against His wishes. Others know for a fact that their *husband* will punish them for rejecting the fruit of his loins. Women in small towns are sure that their friends and neighbors will strongly disapprove of such an act and won't ask them to go shopping any more. A few belong to anti-abortion groups, and for the sake of consistency they don't dare admit that they really don't want to be pregnant. Perhaps most of the unlucky never even think in terms of options; they figure that such matters are determined by Destiny, and all they can do is play the hand they were dealt.

In recent years, however, large numbers of women who find themselves infested with an uninvited embryo are rejecting the notion that they must grunt and bear it. They are having their pregnancies terminated by legal abortions.

**FOLLOW-UP QUESTION:** "If they didn't want to have a baby, why did they get pregnant?"

**ANSWER:** The truth is, they were screwed.

About a third of them blame it on contraceptive failure; either they or their partner used some preventive measure and it didn't work. Additional thousands of women get pregnant each year as a result of forcible rape, and in that circumstance getting the victim pregnant is part of the fun. Most rape is undoubtedly marital rape or date rape, often as a result of drunkenness on the part of one or both participants. Next in numbers probably would be incest, and lastly, premeditated rape by sadists, redneck supremacists, and other types of regular guys.

**Many men feel it is unmanly to use a condom; it is not macho. They figure that if the female is on the pill, that's cool, but if not, it's her tough luck; let her deal with it. Most husbands (worldwide) probably feel that way also.**

Many young girls get pregnant because they're too ignorant or stupid to take contraceptive precautions, or because their parents won't permit them to do so. The parents don't believe their daughters should have sex until they are married and therefore there's no reason for them to avoid getting pregnant.

Until recently, most applicants for abortion were mature married women who already had a family and did not want, could not afford, or felt they were too old to have another child. Next in line were adult unmarried women who carelessly allowed themselves to be impregnated by someone they had no intention of marrying. A small percentage of pregnancies were terminated because they posed a health hazard or undue physical stress on the woman. And of course, there were a lot of pneumocephalic teenagers who thought it would be "neat" to be pregnant, only to discover that it was a drag.

Maybe that's still the way it goes; I'm too tired to double-check — and it doesn't matter anyway. It's beside the point.

**THE TRUTH IN A BASSINET:** The main reason women get pregnant, with or without conscious intention, is that that is what they were designed to do. It's what their genes want them to do. Likewise, a man's genes direct him to do whatever it takes to impregnate every young woman who comes along. Nevertheless, folks who have not spent their entire life swinging from tree-branches, and folks who want to be allowed to live in an organized society, are supposed to learn that there is a time and a place for

making babies, that the woman should have a vote in the process, and that she should exercise her vote in a sensible manner.

If you have been paying attention, however, you know that behaving in a sensible manner is not mankind's long suit. Although some of the forces that cause women to become pregnant against their wishes doubtless are of great importance, that's not the problem that I want to address at this time. Likewise, the reasons why women seek abortions are of little importance to my discussion. Let's just say they're pregnant and they don't want to be.

***The problem of the moment is this: Some people believe that other people—who are total strangers—should not be permitted to abort their unwanted pregnancies.***

This is truly an extraordinary phenomenon, which we shall now examine in greater detail than you would have thought possible.

\* \* \*

Americans who become emotionally exercised over the legality of "abortion on demand" offer a variety of reasons for their concern.

Anti-abortionists tell us that life and death should be determined by God and not by humans, that all life is sacred, and that the taking of any human life is murder. That has been precisely the position of many of our most respected Holy Men throughout the ages. Surely we can agree that people who believe in the sanctity of human life should be admired and cherished.

Persons holding such views might be expected to have strong anti-war sentiments, to be unequivocally opposed to capital punishment, to insist on the cessation of governmental intrigues in other countries that are causing the death of helpless civilians, to support stringent regulation of the purchase and possession of handguns and automatic weapons not designed for hunting, to be zealous in support of safety regulations in the workplace and on the highways, and to be aggressive proponents of welfare programs designed to combat starvation and illness at home and abroad.

*Oddly enough, the Americans who are most likely to hold those views are the ones in favor of abortion on demand. Those views are most likely to be advocated by so-called "liberals"—whereas*

*Anti-Abortionists generally are found among the ranks of so-called "conservatives".*

Paradoxically, Conservatives claim that government should not interfere with how we live our public lives or how we conduct our economic affairs. They believe we should be allowed to operate our businesses without government regulations, own any kinds of weapons we wish, and choose the schools our children go to without regard to issues of "equality". At the same time, conservatives tend to be suspicious of laws protecting *personal privacy*, such as prohibitions against the tapping of telephones, or restraints against unwarranted search and seizure — apparently feeling that people who are concerned about such safeguards must have something to hide.

Conservatives invariably are strong on patriotism; they generally support any military intervention endorsed by our government; and many of them suspect that the Constitution is too permissive about matters such as freedom to express anti-war sentiments, protection against being incarcerated without due process, or being entitled to a fair trial when the accused is "obviously guilty".

It is the Pro-Choice group that claims government should not dictate matters of *private conscience*. With respect to abortion, their position is that an embryo is not really a person and that it is no more illegal or immoral to kill it than it is to eat an egg. They say a fetus may be thought of in the same way we think of a tumor or a parasite. They probably would agree, however, that a doctor should not remove the unwelcome invader without the mother's permission. It's not that kind of tumor.

The woman who believes in abortion on demand asserts that whether or not she chooses to be a host to the "parasite" is nobody's business but her own. She would, however, recoil in horror if reminded that babies continue to be parasites for some time after they are born, and that by that line of reasoning a mother should have the right to let her newborn die if she does not choose to suckle it or otherwise be burdened by it—particularly if she is a single mother and no "fathers' rights" are involved.

But no, most pro-choicers agree that there is a point at which she loses the right to choose whether a healthy fetus should live or die.

When is such a point reached, and why?

At the time of this writing, the prevailing opinion of the U.S. Supreme Court is that a fetus is definitely not a person for at least its first 13 weeks, and during that period it may be killed with impunity. After that magical thirteenth week, the all-male members of the then Supreme Court did not like to think of a mother (who is, after all, a mere woman) making such a heavy-duty decision all by herself, even though they felt that a fetus probably didn't become a person for at least another 13 weeks. They felt that everyone(?) might be better protected if male politicians provided guidelines to help the woman and her doctor figure out what they ought to do.

The Supremes worried themselves sick over the possibility that after a fetus has passed the age of 26 weeks it definitely might be a person and maybe a court of law ought to decide whether the mother has a right to kill it. On the other hand, the Court was reasonably sure that a fetus wasn't as much a person as the mother, and that if continuing the pregnancy threatened the mother's life or sanity, the fetus could be sacrificed. It is a little difficult to understand why the Court felt a need to cover that contingency, since the 26-week limit was chosen because it is generally agreed that after that point the fetus may be "viable". Why not deliver it then, rather than abort it?

The Court's use of the concept of "viability" in crafting its decisions is as fine a piece of nonsense as you are ever likely to hear. At the time of 'Roe vs. Wade' it is true that the then current state of our nursery arts was such that a fetus delivered before 26 weeks had an extremely poor prognosis. To say that viability began after that point simply meant that the newborn had a reasonable chance of being brought to maturity outside the mother's womb.

Already, at the time of this writing, medical skills and technology have pushed that limit back to about 20 weeks. Eventually, we shall be able to nurture an embryo outside the human mother's womb almost from the moment of conception. Will the Supreme Court be obliged to keep lowering its limits? As I write these words, a fight is going on in England over the proposed destruction of thousands of unclaimed frozen embryos that have been kept in storage longer than is considered safe. These objects are at the 8-cell stage—smaller than the period at the end of this sentence. Pro-Lifers are calling it mass murder!

It should be noted, however, that when we speak of a fetus being viable at 20 weeks (or even at 30 weeks) we mean viable if

and only if it receives optimum medical and nursery care, without regard to expense. Such care may include "space capsule incubators" that carefully stabilize temperature and humidity, a controlled supply of oxygen and other substances that enable the immature lungs to function properly, special non-milk diets and intravenous feeding, and specific diagnosis and treatment of each infant's unique deficiencies and disorders. We do not mean viable if the mother were to deliver a premie at home and proceed to breast feed it. Under those conditions, even the 30-week fetus would have little chance of surviving.

In any case, what is the significance of viability outside the womb? Isn't the fetus viable inside the womb? Viability is an entirely artificial issue—a specious criterion for determining whether we are "taking a life". Is any baby viable unless some adult nourishes it? Is not viability created in countless cases of term deliveries by the timely intervention of physicians or midwives when a temporary emergency arises, for example, a crosswise presentation, or respiratory depression because the mother was over-sedated?

Going back to the frozen embryos in England, would it be a fair test of their viability if we simply let them thaw out, and see what happens?

Round and round the arguments go, and no one seems to notice the absurdities or the self-contradictions.

**THE TRUTH IN A NUTSHELL IS THIS:** A woman's right to have a pregnancy safely aborted will never be settled on the basis of straightforward logic, nor on the basis of some indisputable moral principle. There are no indisputable moral principles.

Abortion can be understood only by acknowledging that it is a form of euthanasia, which by definition is a "good death". Abortion is, or should be, the result of having chosen the best (or the least undesirable) of available options in an unfortunate situation. Policies as to the propriety of euthanasia will always depend on complex considerations of such questions as: Who is hurt? Who is benefited? How much? For how long? (The resulting policies, however, will always be determined by who is in power.)

Nothing is settled by asserting that the taking of any human life is murder, because no thinking person believes that!

No one questions that killing is justified if it is your only means of preventing someone from killing you—assuming you did not

set the process in motion by first trying to kill him. (Why would it not be self-defense for a woman to terminate a pregnancy that is likely to kill her?)

Few people would argue that a confederation of people (a nation or a society) does not have the right to use all necessary means to resist unprovoked foreign aggression, even if it necessitates killing thousands or millions of the enemy, as was the case in World War Two.

**In many states and countries, killing is considered justified if an intruder forcibly or surreptitiously enters your home, regardless of what his intentions might have been. That sort of law is especially championed by many Conservatives, the people who believe that all killing is murder.**

Well then, maybe the Anti-Abortionist meant to say that the taking of any human life is murder except in cases of self-defense. Let's see if that really is the only exception to which they would agree.

In The Gulf War of the mid-1990's it was considered acceptable, especially by Conservatives, to kill Iraqi soldiers and civilians who were following the dictates of a megalomaniac (trained and equipped by us) who invaded another despotic kingdom and in the process threatened the price of oil! By no stretch of the imagination were we killing Iraqi peasants and soldiers in order to save our own lives. (The madman, incidentally, was left in power at the end of hostilities.)

It also was acceptable to kill Panamanian soldiers in order to apprehend a dictator we had helped to install and support, because he ultimately offended us, allegedly because he worked in the narcotics trade, but actually because he didn't want to let us use Panama as a base for invading Nicaragua.

In turn, it was acceptable to a large percentage of Americans (and certainly a majority of Conservatives) to kill Nicaraguan peasants (or Vietnamese peasants) who may or may not have been supportive of a government that did not meet with U.S. approval. And so on.

**THOU SHALT NOT KILL?** In slightly more remote periods of history, God-loving Christians have found it acceptable to burn witches, hang traitors, dump slaves overboard when it became



necessary to lighten the load, whip black men to death if they lusted for a white woman, systematically exterminate the native inhabitants of North and South America, and conduct Crusades that swept through Europe and Asia Minor like hordes of locusts, killing and pillaging everything in their paths. (Our children still are taught to call them "Holy" Crusades.)

Most recently, the more rabid members of the Anti-Abortion Crusade have decided it is acceptable to kill the doctors and nurses who perform legal abortions.

**THE SIMPLE FACTS:** Murder is a concept that is defined by a society according to its current beliefs and circumstances and according to what it perceives to be in its best interests. In a society that adheres to representative, constitutional government, murder is always defined by law, not by any fixed morality or immutable logic. Killing is not always murder. (Killing in warfare is actually celebrated!) Certain types of killing are murder only because they are so defined by a given society at a given moment in its history.

How should a society arrive at such a concept? Why define some killings as murder and allow others to take place with impunity? Killing is likely to be defined as murder if it is perpetrated in such a way, or as a result of such motivations, that the society has reason to fear the perpetrator may make a habit of it, or that his success might inspire others to follow his example. If victims are chosen in such a way that members of the society have to worry that they or someone they love or admire might be the next victims, then everyone's sense of security is undermined.

***It is for that reason that murder is defined as a crime against society. By defining such an act as illegal and making it known that severe punishment will result from violating the law, it is hoped that the danger to society will be mitigated.***

It is difficult to see how having a pregnancy aborted threatens the security of other members of the society. Members of the society do not need to prevent abortion in order to protect themselves

or others close to them — nor, indeed, to protect anyone walking the face of the earth.<sup>24</sup>

Abortion can, of course, be considered sacrilegious, immoral, disgusting, uncaring, or "unnatural", but various combinations of those terms can be applied to many other habits of human beings that are not considered illegal. For example, many would so categorize adultery, homosexuality, fetishism, atheism, gluttony, and farting in elevators.

**On the other hand, a total ban on abortions may pose a risk to society.** Babies vouchsafed to the care of excessively young, ignorant, reluctant, and irresponsible mothers can be expected to suffer a high degree of neglect. Such mothers, who generally are without husbands or other means of support, also place a drain on the public treasury (unless we allow them and their babies to sink or swim) and that inevitably takes money away from other important services. Parents who are vehemently against having another child may pose a greater than average risk of abusing an unwanted child. Abuse or neglect (or poorly suppressed hatred) may also be misdirected to children who result from incest, rape, or adultery. Recent studies prove this.

**Why is it, then, that people go to great trouble, and sometimes considerable expense, in order to take part in demonstrations or riots, and risk being arrested, in an attempt to force total strangers to have babies they don't want or can't afford?**

*Why does anyone do anything?* After the vital needs—air, water, food, shelter, freedom of movement, freedom from pain and fear of pain—what else motivates us? Sex, a sense of belonging, intimacy or love, excitement, power, prestige, and self-esteem. Which of those motivations do you think might apply to the anti-abortionist? How about all of them?

To understand the motivations of a mass-movement we must look separately at the motives of Leaders and Followers.

The leaders of the Pro-Life movement have the same motives that all other leaders have: adoration by their followers; fame or

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<sup>24</sup> Societies with a history of frequent warfare are likely to consider abortion *unpatriotic* because it has the effect of refusing to re-populate the country.

notoriety provided by the media; the power to manipulate their sympathizers and to force opponents to do things against their wishes; wealth from contributions and speaking engagements; influence in political affairs; and sex-ops with members of their entourage.

Followers may have some of those same motivations, plus others that will depend on the particular "hunger" of each individual follower. All adherents to the movement gain a sense of belonging and a new "identity". They, like their leaders, enjoy a sense of power if they can prevent or direct the actions of others. If they participate in rallies or demonstrations they put a little excitement into their lives, something they can boast about to their friends. Their self-esteem is boosted in several ways. They may spot themselves in the crowd shown on television. They can think of themselves as Christian soldiers fighting for the lives of beautiful little babies. (Even if the babies consist of only eight cells.) They become social activists who are "doing something" about a matter which others merely think about. They feel they are scoring Karma points with God. And that's not all!

**What's really important for most female followers is that they are justifying their own subjugation by our male-dominated society.** (Men in the entourage, appropriately enough, are reasserting their domination over women.) If a woman has "bought in" to the social reality that this is a man's world, then it follows that she has abrogated much of her autonomy. Whether she has been constrained by a male god (Yahweh or Christ), by laws made by men, or by a domineering husband or father, the unacknowledged message of the anti-abortionist crusader is that if she cannot direct her own life, then she certainly doesn't want other women directing theirs. This can be looked at in another way that is equally pathetic. If all women are second-class humans by law, then her own submissiveness is not due to her individual lack of spine — she had no choice!

Men have subjugated women since all of us were chimpanzees. It goes against a man's genetic grain to have women asserting themselves, demanding equal pay, voting for Alpha, or telling their husbands what they (the women) will or will not do.

Deciding whether or not they are going to have babies is the last straw. ►

## CHAPTER TWENTY

*The Birth Of The Gods*

Somewhere along the line, one of our ancestors arrived at the following insights — although, of course, he would not have expressed them so eloquently:

- 1) Some events and conditions are caused by prior events.**
- 2) Events that follow the deliberate physical actions of other humans sometimes can be understood in their entirety—that is, with no questions left unanswered.**
- 3) Once a cause and effect relationship is understood, it becomes possible to predict that, should the causative action occur again, the same effect is likely to follow.**
- 4) If causative actions can be prevented, the predictable consequences may be avoided.**

Despite the questions that remained to be answered, a start had been made in the conscious understanding of cause and effect, and it would have been a safe bet that someone was going to follow up on it.

During the millions of years *before* brains became heavy enough to handle such profound insights, hominids and other monkeys had been making some more elementary discoveries. Without doubt, the most important was this:

*Some events are followed by pleasure or satisfaction, and other events are followed by pain or discomfort.*

As soon as Homo developed conceptual thought (or as soon as he ate of that wretched tree provided by Yahweh) he began to make value judgments about 'better' and 'worse', and he quickly realized that events in first category were more desirable than those in the second category.

The desirability of some events would have varied according to each individual's point of view. Different events also might have

been evaluated differently according to the imagined welfare of the tribe. Many events, however, would have been placed in the same category by almost everyone and every tribe. The discovery of a grove of fruit trees or a recently dead elephant would have pleased everyone, whereas a flash flood that carried away all of the women folk probably would have been put on everyone's list of undesirable events.

Gradually, both the individual and his group would have come to believe that, in accordance with whether certain actions seemed to be followed by desirable or undesirable eventualities, they ought (or ought not) to be performed or permitted.

**As groups accumulated such prejudices, systems of “ethics” and “morals” evolved.**

It soon would have been noted that many events (some of which were clearly desirable or undesirable) could not readily be associated with any observable human behavior, nor with any animate or inanimate action that provided an obvious cause-and-effect explanation. Some events seemed to "come out of the blue"; they did not seem to have antecedent causes. (For example, an earthquake.)

*Because a knowledge of causes is the most reliable tool for anticipating and possibly influencing future events, it was desirable (if not imperative) for humans to search for causes of significant events which at first glance appeared to be inexplicable. Searches of that sort doubtless began almost as soon as man developed the ability to wonder about things.*

**Nevertheless, until only seven or eight hundred years ago, the causes of almost all natural phenomena were shrouded in mystery.**

There were no reasonable natural explanations for tornadoes, hurricanes, thunderstorms, or lightning, or for any of the major cycles of weather, such as the changing seasons, monsoons, or droughts. No one could begin to imagine natural causes for comets, earthquakes, volcanoes, or tidal waves.

No one had discovered any natural causes for disease, sterility, spontaneous abortion, stillbirth, or neonatal death. How or why certain adult diseases sometimes caused death, and sometimes not, was equally mysterious. Epidemics and plagues were especially terrifying and inexplicable by observable causes.

**Those were important matters.** People hungered for explanations that would ease their anxieties and help them avoid the adverse consequences of such occurrences.

Gradually, they figured it out.

If an event is not caused in a self-evident manner by some commonplace behavior of a person or other animate being, the possible alternative explanations are quite limited in nature:

- 1) A causative action or agent exists, but is not observable by the ordinary senses.
- 2) The cause is observable, but it is not readily recognizable as the cause, because it is of an indirect or magical nature.
- 3) There is a cause or causative agent, but it is intrinsically unknowable.
- 4) The event is of a sort that does not require a cause.

(1) The first possibility soon led to a search for "extra-ordinary senses" which might reveal the invisible causes of important events. Today we have barometers, seismometers, microscopes, Geiger-counters, and so forth. Most of our modern sense expanders, however, are useful only in the hands of experts. Primitive man would have had to rely on less scientific sense-expanders, such as visions, dreams, hallucinations induced by poisons or physical exhaustion, and culturally endorsed beliefs that 'portents' could be read from occurrences which were in fact irrelevant. (For example, 'reading' the entrails of a sacrificial animal.) Those devices, also, would have been helpful only when employed or interpreted by 'experts'.

(2) Today, the problem of understanding obscure causes is dealt with by means of such abstruse logical techniques as factor-analysis, the positing of theories which then are tested with rigorous scientific method, and 'brainstorming sessions' by diversely trained individuals who function as a team.

Primitive man might well have used the same approaches, but there were very few 'disciplines' from which he could expect informed assistance. In addition, his scientific method tended to be sloppy. He had not yet developed (and could not emotionally afford) a rigorous insistence on the concept of "if and only if", and thus he was much too willing to accept an occasional positive result as proof of his theories. The experts upon whom he relied

would have been diviners and magicians, priests who could communicate with unseen fonts of wisdom, persons of 'proven' supernatural talent or folk-wisdom, and various other bullshit artists.

(3) As we shall explain in a moment, causes that were intrinsically unknowable gave rise to the notion of supernatural forces, which ultimately came to be known as spirits, demons, or gods. When a god was the causative agent, man could not hope to alter the course of events by directly intervening in their sequence. The most he could hope to do was influence the will, or catch (or divert) the attention of the prevailing spirit or god. To this day, even as in prehistoric times, he attempts to do this by praying for mercy or for special favors; by devoting a portion of his time, energies, or wealth to hit-and-miss attempts to ingratiate himself with God; or by trying to do or avoid doing those things which he has been led to believe are either expected or forbidden by God. He is led in his religious beliefs and practices by his parents and kinsmen, the traditions of his culture, and some sort of priesthood which typically is self-proclaimed and self-perpetuating.

(4) The fourth possibility, that some events do not have causes, has been gaining currency in the United States in recent years. It is epitomized by the adage, "Shit happens." That expression implies that no one should feel responsible for what happened; nothing could have been done to prevent it; and nothing can be learned from it. That last conclusion would not have been acceptable to primitive man. He was just beginning to discover that he could alter his fate, and he was eager to learn more methods for doing so. There were many dangers to avoid, some of them as frightening as they were mysterious, and he had many important needs, the satisfaction of which was, until then, quite unpredictable.

**Having learned that some events had causes** (or causative agents) that could be discovered and influenced, he clung to the hope and belief that all important events could be favorably influenced if only he could do the right things or say the right words!

That this has not changed a great deal is attested to by the following few examples: People will 'hope' that a hurricane dissipate or turn out to sea. They 'pull for' a horse they have bet on, and they talk to the dice they are about to throw. They stare intently and keep mumbling to themselves, "Seventeen! Seventeen!!" as they wait for a roulette ball to drop into the slot they have chosen.

They believe they can find (or have found) a 'system' for playing slot machines or selecting likely numbers in a random lottery. They talk to golf balls in mid-flight in order to force a favorable curve or bounce.

Boxers kneel and make the 'sign of the cross' before beginning a contest specifically designed to give each other cerebral hemorrhages. Concerned citizens offer solemn prayers, singly and en masse, that their armies (or basketball teams) will destroy the armies (or teams) of other people who are praying to the same God for the opposite result. They hang a St. Christopher's medal, a rabbit's foot, or a small teddy bear from the rear-view mirror of their automobiles, thereby increasing their chances of being killed by a truck approaching from the right. They pray, when a miner finally has been reached days after a cave-in, "Please, God, let him be alive!" Presumably, if he has been dead ever since the cave-in, God will run the reel backwards and straighten things out. Such a list could be extended almost indefinitely.

If modern man's use of magical or 'religious' rituals for the purpose of achieving his wishes differ from those of contemporary aborigines (or the behavior we impute to prehistoric humans) the principal differences may lie not in his rituals, but in the nature of some of his wishes. As this book has attempted to point out, much of what we do today, and many of the goals for which we strive, are of a symbolic nature — substitutes for more fundamental urges that no longer seem appropriate. For example, instead of praying that a thrown missile will bring down a ten-point buck, we pray that it will bring down all ten pins at the bowling alley.

Primitive men and women would have sought assistance with simpler but more vital concerns; for example, where to find food or water, how to succeed in the hunt, how to avoid predators. They would have wanted to hold on to their mates and lovers while acquiring new and better ones. They would have hoped for healthy children and freedom from disease and injury for themselves. They would have wanted their tribe to prosper, and its power and reputation to grow. They would have sought protection from the forces of nature that frightened them, such as volcanic eruptions, grass-fires, and approaching storms.

And—eventually—they would have wanted protection from death! The mystery of death, and the average person's lack of enthusiasm for partaking of it, is and always has been one of the



most (if not the most) important influences in the evolution of religion. It is so complex and so important that I shall pass over it for the moment, and address it in a separate chapter.

On second thought, maybe I won't put it off, because if I do I'll never get around to it. After all, it can't be that complex!

About all there is to it is that a time finally came when humans began to understand that everyone dies. Some dead people came back occasionally in dreams, but others were simply gone. Folks kept looking over their shoulders to see if they were being followed by some dead person who had unusually good reason to hate them, but they never saw anyone and after a while they quit worrying. Dead people were gone.

But if one were dead, he couldn't go on living. That might be okay if one were totally miserable, but what if he were having fun? Death ought to be optional!

Besides, being dead might be painful. Then again, it might not. And that's the problem: Death and its aftermath are unpredictable—and we don't like our lives (or after-lives) to be unpredictable! That's why we went to so much trouble inventing religion!

We'll have to ask the gods about it.

Meanwhile, I'd like to leave you with something to chew on:

**A VERY BIG NUT, UNSHELLED FOR YOUR  
CONVENIENCE:**

**People invent and cling to religion when they are unable to discover or understand causes, *or when some aspect of “reality” is simply unacceptable.***

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

*Silly Science*

As indicated in the preceding chapter (insight #2) the easiest cause-and-effect sequences to understand were those initiated by other humans. That was so because one human could understand another human's motives, and that answered the question, "Why?"

When wild animals attacked prey, resisted attacks by predators, ran when startled, or attempted to drive off competitors or intruders, it was easy for humans to understand what had motivated their behavior.

Understanding motivation answers one aspect of the question, "Why?" It explains the purpose (or objective) of the action or event. The other meaning of "why" is, "as a result of what antecedent actions or events." That generally could be understood if one were able to observe the entire sequence.

But what about those events that were not triggered by the actions of an animal or another human? During the course of many, perhaps most, natural disasters it would have been quite possible to recognize, and learn to anticipate, what follows what. In other words, it would have been easy to see that the final disastrous consequences were the result of such-and-such antecedent actions or causes, thus explaining the second aspect of the question why.

As examples we might cite the following sequences: (1) Abrupt change of temperature, increasing breeze, the approach of unusually dark clouds, heavy downpour of rain, flooding, injury or death to members of the tribe who are caught in the flood. (2) Wound sustained during an attack by a lion or water buffalo, swelling and suppuration during the next couple of days, mounting fever and gradually increasing weakness, slow onset of death.

Other sequences might include lightning followed by a grass fire, torrential rain and a rockslide, smoke from a mountain top followed by ground tremors and eruption — and so forth.

**Such sequences would have answered the second aspect of why, but not the first, which was:**

Who or what could have brought about the first event in the sequence, and what was its motive?

To put it another way, why should our particular tribe have suffered this particular disaster at this particular time? Why us?

What, if anything, did we do to deserve this, or what did we fail to do which might have prevented it? Why, in the sense of for what purpose, or with what objective in mind, did this event occur?

**If the causative agent of an event has a motive, then it must have an *animus*, a “spirit” that is capable of intelligence and intentions.**

*Thus began the belief systems known as animism, the conviction that virtually everything in nature has powers and desires, just as humans and other animals have.*

Every potentially important event had to have causes, not just in the sense of “as a result of other natural events,” but because it was willed by some “sentient” force or being.

Because such spirits, demons, or gods, had “desires” (intentions) their behavior probably could be likened to that of Man, except that they possessed powers not vouchsafed to the latter. Perhaps they could be appeased with substitute satisfactions. Perhaps the tribe could placate a malevolent spirit in a way that would cause it to be merciful.

For example, if one could discover which spirit might have caused the tribe to be struck with an epidemic disease, there might be a chance of satisfying the spirit by offering it the life of one member of the tribe. (Hopefully the sickest.)

**It could well have been such an “insight” that initiated the practice of human sacrifice, which seems to have been endemic at one time or another to virtually every society.**

The search for reasons and motives inevitably tended to 'personalize' (or animate) forces of nature that otherwise were inexplicable. The conclusion that human destiny could be governed by mere chance was (and is) unacceptable, so it was assumed that there must be a "message" in the episodes of unusu-

ally good or bad fortune. Most people still cling to that philosophy!

It remained a possibility that supernatural forces were called forth by malicious humans, but it was equally possible that the spirits had needs and desires of their own.<sup>25</sup>

We obviously have no way of knowing what names early man gave to those mysterious forces, but today they are still spoken of by millionaire evangelists as "guardian angels" and "evil spirits". (Or saints and demons, or God and Satan.)

Once people started thinking in such terms, it should not be surprising that the number and types of spirits multiplied. For example, is it not 'logical' that the spirit in charge of fire would be different from, and probably opposed to, the spirit that causes rain? If a woman's inability to have children were caused by some demonic force hostile to the welfare of her tribe (or the prestige of her husband) would not a fertility goddess be the logical power to turn to for a cure?

Some spirits eventually would have been viewed as more powerful than others, and those became gods, goddesses, and godlets. Periodically, it would have been found necessary to invent new gods to counteract existing gods and demons, as well as to take over chores which had not yet been assigned. Furthermore, each self-sufficient tribe would, because of its isolation, have evolved its own unique superstitions, gods, and resident spirits.

Tribes that occasionally met in peaceful intercourse would have been eager to hear what each other had discovered about these mysterious forces, and any new rituals for manipulating them. Some of the folkways boasted about by one tribe would have been adopted by another, but each tribe would have kept secret some of its very best and most powerful discoveries.

Men would have assumed that their gods were just as vain as they were, and therefore just as obsessed with rank, power, prestige, and hanky-panky.

It would have been taken as a matter of course that the gods were in competition with each other for Alpha-status. Humans who represented or served particular gods would have wanted to assist their favorites in their quest for supremacy. Hierarchies

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<sup>25</sup> The belief that disasters could be deliberately invoked by malevolent humans persisted in America at least until the Salem Witch Trials.

would have evolved. Threats, as well as rewards, would have been used to win and keep followers.

Gods could have been offended just as easily as they could be propitiated.

All gods are jealous gods.

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### **POST HOC, ERGO PROPTER HOC** <sup>26</sup>

Any close association of an important event with the presence or occurrence of any other phenomenon, however coincidental, might have increased the roster of spirits. If someone had belched just before a meteorite struck, you can bet that no one ever would have belched again. If something really unusual happened in the neighborhood of some particular rock or a tree, it might be declared sacred, and the same could and did occur with respect to lakes, mountains, volcanoes, and rivers. Because of similar coincidences in the waking world or in dreams, animals of all sorts took on personalities, magical powers, and special roles in the scheme of things.

Priests and shamans would have had an interest in promoting belief in a multiplicity of super-human forces, all of which needed to be placated or seduced, for that would have reinforced a fear that the spirit world was too complex for a layman to understand. Experts were required to mediate between the gods and ordinary men. Of course, after a couple of generations, young priests would have lost track of the origin of certain beliefs, and would have come to believe in the inventions of their predecessors just as ardently as the laymen did.

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### **IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY DOES MYSTERY DIE:**

#### **Religion is Science that has gone awry!**

Religion evolved for the same reasons modern science evolved: the craving to understand important natural phenomena and perhaps learn to influence some of them, either for personal gain or for the good of the community. Unfortunately, religion is a science

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<sup>26</sup> If b follows a, then b was caused by a.

that consists of varying sets of theories and postulates that cannot be tested. (And that now seem patently absurd.)

A number of factors caused this pseudo-science to go awry. Some of the phenomena humans wanted to induce or prevent were sources of such intense desire (or fear) that folks were eager to accept almost any explanation or advice that seemed new and intriguing. They were greedy and gullible (as, of course, we still are) and that allowed them to be led astray by anyone who was unusually articulate, who knew a magic trick or two, or who appeared to be 'possessed'.

People lacked not only the wherewithal to conduct scientific experiments, but the means for keeping statistical records. Even if some of them had remembered that a certain action had the desired result in only a small fraction of instances, they would have been loath to give up a belief in any ritual that *ever* had succeeded—at least until someone came along with a new approach that seemed to work more often. "A bird in the hand", "why take chances", "fools rush in", and all that cowardly rot.

Those are some of the reasons why people of today who have little genuine faith or interest in religion will nevertheless give lip service to it, and will expose the next generation to it on the grounds that "it can't hurt!" What they mean by that is that if there is a God and an after-life, then being respectful, and maybe even praying a little, might hold one in good stead. If there is not a God, nothing has been lost but a few minutes of their time.

After it had been surmised that the forces of nature possessed anthropomorphic or animistic characteristics, the next question had to do with Nature itself — the very earth we stand on and the heavens above us. Throughout the ages of human existence, individuals must have looked at the stars and the moon, at the sun and the clouds, and wondered, "What is all that? Where did it come from? Who created it, for whom, and with what goal in mind?"

Many of the natural forces that primitive man could not explain, and which therefore led to fear and confusion, have been robbed of their mystery by modern science. Obvious examples are lightning, earth tremors, eclipses, hurricanes, and the like. But the vastness of the universe, and how and why it came into existence, are just as puzzling and awe-inspiring now as they ever were. For those who read about the universe or watch science documentaries on television, the mystery is far greater than it was for primitive

people, for now we have to account for the origin of enough material to create not just the heaven and earth with which Yahweh presented us, but billions of galaxies, each containing hundreds of millions of stars as large as our sun.

The "Big Bang Theory", even if it continues to be a useful explanation of the expanding nature of the known universe, requires that we accept a "beginning" that is just as implausible and incomprehensible as any other origin ever proposed. In rough everyday language, the big-bang hypothesis asserts that all of this "stuff" erupted from next-to-nothing, located approximately nowhere, in nothing flat, for no good reason.

Physicists tell us that if an electron collides with a positron, both particles vanish without a trace. Then, at a moment when you least expect it, they can reappear out of nothing and fly off in their separate directions. The sudden, seemingly causeless (and senseless) creation of those two tiny particles in nothing flat at a random location within a vacuum, may be an excellent miniaturized example of how a Big Bang could happen, but it still doesn't explain why there is *anything*. Some quantum physicists don't even seem to be sure there is anything.

The bottom line is that we still don't have, and quite likely will never have, an explanation for the existence of a universe — any universe — that is intuitively satisfying.

As pointed out a few pages ago, primitive minds abhor a vacuum, and, alas, our modern minds are still 98% primitive. If we cannot find an answer to a tantalizing question, we invent one.

Creation of a universe obviously is not within the capabilities of humans (unless, as some quantum physicists suspect, the whole thing is a figment of our imagination) so we elect to believe it is the work of a "greater power". We say, "God created the Universe." Now all we have to do is explain the origin of God.

But we don't, do we? God always was, and besides, He is inscrutable.

An astonishing number of educated people manage to dismiss the messages explicit in the historical origins of our organized religions. Most of them manage this by the simple expedient of deliberately remaining ignorant of that history. If intelligent people would but read, they would find it very difficult to fend off the obvious conclusions that all of the anthropomorphic gods of our

major religions are but infantile creations of the primitive human mind, motivated by wishful thinking, a need to know, and the dreadful fear that one is, after all, unimportant.

Still, two permissible questions might remain:

(1) "Could there nevertheless be a God, not of our invention, who is intrinsically unknowable?"

The answer, of course, is "Yes." But that would leave us with nothing to discuss, or even to think about, for an unknowable god is unknowable. Trying to guess correctly what He-She-It might desire or require from us (if anything) would be a matter of sheer chance. And sheer chance is what we were trying to get away from when we invented our gods.

(2) "Then, is there any natural force or entity to which people can turn for comfort? Is there anything we can do to reduce our conflicts and ease our insecurities?"

Yes:

Slip into your genes, and get comfortable.



*Man simply must have some sort of supernatural belief system — even if he has to call it Science.*

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

*The Meaning of Meaning*  
*And Vice Versa*

For forty thousand years before humans became smart enough to worry about the meaning of life, they stared into the void and asked questions that made sense.

They asked, "Why me?" and "Why this?"

"Why are my teeth falling out and why do my knees hurt so bad I can hardly walk? Why did the leopard choose my child to carry off? Why did the flash flood have to arrive just as the women folk reached the bottom of the ravine? Why did that snake strike at me, and why is my foot turning black? Why did my mother get sick and die? For that matter, why does anyone die?"

Well, you know how one thing leads to another. People just had to believe it all made sense.

<=====>

**People I have never seen before come up to me and ask, "Why are we here, what is the meaning of life, and where did all this stuff come from?"**

I am so sick of those questions, I have decided to publish the answers once and for all and for everyone. First, however, I want to make sure you understand the questions.

People who worry about such things are troubled not by one, but by several issues they think might be important. You may not be the sort of person who is interested in life or death, but someone in your family probably is, so it can't hurt you to keep reading.

Here are some of the puzzles that torment these neurotics:

Were we put here for a purpose? If so, what does it mean to say, 'put here'? Who or what could have put us here, and what was His (or its) motivation? Would the reason for our existence (assuming there is one) become apparent if we knew His purpose, or is it possible that the way things turned out was not at all what it had in mind?

What if He or it had no purpose other than to bring our species into existence and then 'let nature take its course.' In that case, if our lives are to have a purpose, then either it must be provided by our society or else each individual must invent his own purpose.

If there is no pre-existing plan whatsoever—no *higher purpose* than the one each individual chooses for himself—then it doesn't make any sense to speak of purpose in the sense of a *reason for being*. The best we can do is manufacture one or more purposes in the sense of objectives or goals. Each person could then hope that the purposes he selects will provide his life with meaning.

*Are you following any of this?*

In that sort of world, there would be no guarantee that the meaning one person creates would be meaningful to anyone else, in which case it's hard to see why anyone should bother. What could be so important about choosing a meaningless purpose or defining a purposeless meaning, that one should feel compelled to strive for one or the other? Why not proceed as our creator evidently did and just let nature take its course?

"But," the puzzled pragmatist perseverates, "how can I know how to plan my life—or even know what to do next, and how can I buoy my spirits in times of misfortune, if there is no purpose in living or if my purposes don't mean anything?"

Highly educated people are the ones most likely to fret over the meaning of life. The most highly educated people ponder "the meaning of meaning." Ignorant people and stupid people always know exactly why they're here, but since you and I don't belong to either of those loathsome classes, we'll postpone discussing them until it's too late.

\* \* \*

Let's consider why knowing the purpose and meaning of one's life might be important. A person might think, "If I had no purpose or reason for living, then any time things got tough I might be in-

clined to stop living; right? And, because things are almost always tough, pretty soon there wouldn't be any people, would there?"

That sounds important, but it is merely silly. I'm sure you have learned by now that it isn't necessary for us to have a reason for living—or to have the slightest idea what it might be. It is important only that we believe there is a reason, even though we know we shall never find out what it is.

Nevertheless, many people do believe they have found both reason and purpose through a belief in God. These people figure we were put here so that we will be able to appreciate how much better off we are after we have died. That's not a bad philosophy if you can hold on to it, but it requires believing that God is insane.

*The sensible solution is simply to tell ourselves there must be a reason, and then try to find a purpose or two.*

\* \* \* \*

Reality is like an onion. When we try to understand it, we find ourselves uncovering layer after layer of insights that make it harder and harder to keep from crying. How much we cry will depend on how much we want to understand.

It's easy to find simple answers based on superficial appearances, and the simple person usually finds the first simple answer more than sufficient for his purposes (whatever they may be) and his attention moves on to something else—like who's going to win the pennant. He looks at the outer skin of the onion and says, "Well, it seems pretty obvious that blah-blah-blah."

If we applied the simpleton's approach to today's assignment, we could say, "You're here because you're not somewhere else." Or as the joke has it, "Everybody's got to be somewhere!"

Or we could say, "You are here (in the sense of being alive) because nothing has happened yet to kill you."

Or we could make up a lot of weird stuff about God and Baby Jesus and loving your enemies unless they burn the flag.

Or we could get down to the nitty-gritty. And here it is:

The reason you're here is that your biological father, whoever he may have been, injected two or three hundred million spermatozoa into your mother's vagina at the worst possible moment. If she had held your father at bay for just another forty-eight hours, the egg could not have been fertilized and you would have been spared having to spend all these years wondering why you

are here. But as fate would have it, one of your mother's ovaries had just released, or was just about to release, a ripe egg about the size of a pinhead.

Once the dastardly deed was done, the spermatozoa started wriggling frantically in search of the egg, which they knew was somewhere around because they could smell it, but which, unbeknownst to them, was taking a leisurely cruise down a fallopian tube. A few hours later, several dozen of them reached the egg more or less simultaneously, but just one of them was sucked through the cell wall, probably because the ovum liked its taste.

After a male suitor was selected, its nuclear material (DNA) mingled with that of the ovum, giving the egg the ability to divide and multiply, which on its own (being female) it would have been unable to do. For a long time, the arithmetical urge was self-sustaining, and after some 56 consecutive divisions a viable human baby was born.

That explains why your mother had a baby, but it doesn't completely explain why you are here and not someone else. If at that critical moment nine months earlier, your mother had yielded to a different man (say, for example, her husband) a radically different sperm would have fertilized that particular ovum, with the result that you might look more like your sister and less like one of the other kids in your neighborhood.

Alternatively, if your father had stayed out of town with his mistress for another four weeks before getting back home to your mother, he would have fertilized a different egg, and you might *be* your sister.

But think of this: No matter who the sperm donor was, if the one particular sperm-cell which did in fact fertilize the ovum had, instead, got its tail caught in a crack while wriggling around in the dark, with the result that your mama's egg had been fertilized by any one of the other 300 million contestants, your bedroom mirror would be reflecting quite a different face and body. Is that luck, or what?

If that hypothetical other sperm, which might have got there first (but didn't) had contained some genes that didn't match well with those in the egg—or if your mother had failed to sober up until she was three months pregnant—you might be even dumber and uglier than you are, or the would-have-been-you might have been expelled in a spontaneous abortion. On the other hand, given a different sperm or next month's egg, you might have looked like

Errol Flynn or Marilyn Monroe, and be headed for an equally tragic conclusion.

But all of that relates only to appearances—or, more precisely, to the physical equipment and potential abilities with which you entered the world. What about the molding of your personality?

Suppose your parents had separated (or one of them had died) when you were a mere tad, and you had been reared by a step-parent who never liked you, or by your grandparents who lived in a gingerbread house deep in the solitude of an enchanted forest? Would you be the same person?

What if your parents had converted to Judaism and you had been born while they were living in Nazi Germany? Would your life have turned out differently? Would you be standing in a bookstore reading these lines and trying to decide whether to buy this book?<sup>27</sup>

Aside from all the accidental events and circumstances that kept you from being someone else, you are, at least superficially, what you were told you were when you were very young. Chances are you think you would have been an ever-loving bundle of joy and inner beauty no matter who had raised you, but we're not going to deal with that now.

Anyway, that should be enough for you to figure out why you're here rather than someone else. We have just begun to peel the onion, but I know you'd like to get away from it for a while to see if you can stop crying, so let's leave the "reason for your existence" and think about the purpose for which you were "put here".

There was indeed a pre-ordained purpose—in the sense of "goal" or "objective"—for which you were designed. It is inscribed in the aforementioned "nuclear material". (The stuff in the egg and sperm, remember?)

Not everyone has exactly the same marching orders, but for nearly everyone—and probably for you—the main purpose is expressed in the commandment, "Be fruitful, and multiply."

The compulsion to obey that commandment is mediated by genetically determined urges that arise from our lizard-brain. The urges push us hither and thither and willy-nilly, with or without our permission or conscious awareness.

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<sup>27</sup> Go ahead; buy the damned thing or you'll be late for your next appointment!

It was in response to those urges that your mother, and perhaps your father, engaged in that fateful act which is the reason you are here.

So now, at last, you have it:

The purpose for which you were created is to create others, who will create others, who will create others, and so forth.

Aren't you glad you're human?

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

*May I Rattle Your Chain?*

"You shall know the Truth,  
and the Truth shall drive you mad."

Aldous Huxley

Why do people get so upset if you argue against the validity of their religion? You can argue without fear of social ostracism that Aristotle was a fool, Columbus was a villain, Newton was lacking in common sense, Thomas Jefferson was a hypocrite, Picasso was a charlatan, and all Congressmen are crooks. But you dare not say that Yahweh is either a fiction or an incompetent, sadistic, male-chauvinist autocrat.

You can get agreement, at least in principle, that history books are not completely reliable, that interpretations of past events are influenced by personal and national bias, that many of the portrayals historians reconstruct are based on very fragmentary evidence, that each generation builds upon what has been written by previous generations rather than starting from original documents, and that many of even the earliest written accounts were based on hearsay and anecdotal reports rather than events that the writers had witnessed with their own eyes.

All of that can be discussed without alienating your listeners, but fundamentalist Christians, Jews, and Muslims become incensed at the suggestion that similar sources of distortion and invention could have played a part in the construction and multiple redactions of their holy scriptures.

Few if any Yahwists or Christians will be insulted if you theorize that the various Creation-myths widespread among Native Americans are merely allegories, and that the stories they tell of the attributes and exploits of gods and spirits and heroes, are no more than naive but harmless fairy-tales spawned by an unenlightened and barbarous people. But woe upon you if you suggest that



the same might be said about Bible stories that were transmitted over scores of generations by word of mouth, among cultures that still practiced human sacrifice, carried their god around in a box, and read their future in the intestines of a sheep.

Well-read acquaintances might be willing to argue with you about whether the legends of mythical heroes such as Hercules, Odysseus, and Achilles had their origins in earlier real-life heroes, or whether the Aztec myth of a white-skinned god who would someday return and balance the scales of justice could have been based on a visit by some unknown European explorer. Or they might fantasize about whether the appearance of a deity such as Krishna, the widely adored god who did not join the Hindu pantheon until two thousand years after the religion had become popular, could have been rooted in the amorous antics of a handsome and promiscuous young prince who so captured the hearts of the maidens in his kingdom that the tales of his exploits were told and exaggerated all over India.

But those same acquaintances may find it unseemly or offensive if you should try to draw them into a consideration of the possibility that Jesus was a legendary figure, or even a purely fanciful one, whose godhood only gradually evolved from successive elaborations and embellishments of the trance-induced apocryphal visions of Paul of Tarsus.

For the people I have just described, comments or questions about either the historical validity or the theological tenets of their religion are considered unseemly and provocative, regardless of how well-grounded the comments may be and how earnestly the questions may be posed.

And yet, a religious person may feel justified in making the most scurrilous or condescending remarks about a person who attempts to teach atheism, and is outraged to the point of violence should anyone suggest that the atheistic position be offered in our higher centers of learning as an alternative to wishful thinking.

All of this is as it should be. The atheist has nothing to lose; the believer has everything to lose.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

*Déjà Vu — All Over Again*

Chances are you believe in the existence of Mars, Venus, and Jupiter, but do you believe in Apsu, Mummu, and Tiamat?

What about Thoth, Ptah, or Temu?

Ishtar? Asherah? Anat?

Surely, you believe in Set!

No? Then how about Mithra, Mazda, or Marduk?<sup>28</sup>

Those questions are designed to let you know how I feel when people ask me if I "believe in God".

What god, for god's sake? All of the foregoing are the names of gods, yet they comprise only a few of the deities who were feared or worshipped in the same small part of the world that spawned Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Historians are aware of the names of hundreds of other gods dating back nearly six thousand years—to a time when there were no Jews, no Old Testament, no Judaism (or Judah) and, of course, no Christianity.<sup>29</sup>

There were significant differences in the behaviors attributed to those gods. They differed in terms of their powers, the extent to which they interfered in natural phenomena, their feelings about mankind, their involvement in his daily affairs, and the types of tribute, ritual, adoration, and obedience they expected or demanded.

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<sup>28</sup> My wife believes in Mazda, the manufacturer of her favorite automobile.

<sup>29</sup> There were, of course, people whose descendants would become Jews, but in the oldest records of Mesopotamia and Egypt there is no mention of the "Chosen People".

The point I wish to make, however, is that these were not different names for the same God; they were different gods, who fulfilled different needs.

You are free to believe that all those Gods were "real" — that is, that they actually existed somewhere other than in the minds of men and exercised their powers in observable ways — or you may chose to believe that they were purely "imaginary", having been invented by ignorant, superstitious, and misguided humans.

Most present-day folks in the English speaking world would opt for the second theory: "People of long ago were ignorant." Modern, highly educated people would not hesitate to dismiss those gods of yesteryear as false gods, were it not for the fact that they have never heard of them because they never read anything but underwear ads and baseball results.

History indicates that people of long ago were so ignorant they were willing to accept any new god who came along. As proof of that, it is documented that when the first Christians started talking about their Gods, the pagans welcomed the whole bunch of them into their pantheons — including Jehovah, Jesus, the Holy Ghost, the Virgin Mother of God, and, of course, Satan.

Conversely, the promoters of Christianity found it useful to enlist the aid of pagan gods and Hebrew demi-gods, but they brought them into the fold in the guise of angels and saints, so as to maintain the fiction that the new faith believed there was only one God. (Not counting Satan, whom they explained as nothing more than a fallen angel. And not counting the Holy Trinity, which clearly was just one Being because it had been so ordered by the Emperor Theodosius.)

Some of the more famous pagan gods who achieved saintly status include the Egyptian Osiris (St. Onuphris), Dionysus (St. Dionysus), and Artemis, who became St. Artemidos. It soon was realized that the Roman statues of Jupiter and Apollo really represented St. Paul and St. Peter, the latter of whom also was also a pinch-hitter for the god *Mithra*, whom the Greeks called *Petra* — a rock. ("Thou art Peter, and upon this rock...")

In a similar fashion, it became official church opinion that paintings of the Egyptian goddess Isis holding the baby Horus, actually were advance advertisements for Mary and Jesus.

There's a good chance that you believe in the god who began his career under the name YHWH, generally thought to have been pronounced Yahweh or Yahway, though it could just as well have been Yoohwho, since Hebrew was written without vowels, and ordinary Jews weren't supposed to pronounce it anyway.

You are more likely to recognize him by the name, Jehovah.

You rarely think of Him as having a name, however. He is simply God. If you believe in God at all, you tend to take it for granted there can be only one God, and that He (or She or It or They) is the same god to whom everyone refers when it is asserted that one does or does not "believe in God". But of course, that isn't so.<sup>30</sup>

In the first place, only about a fourth of the earth's population claims to be Christian or Jewish, and many of them don't really mean it. Admittedly that's an awful lot, but it clearly is not everyone. If we assume that Islam's Allah is really the same god (a dubious assumption) then it may be true that almost half of the people on Earth think they believe in the same deity to whom you refer when you say God. But such a statement has almost no meaning — for reasons I am about to offer, to wit and tuwoo:

There are hundreds of Christian sects, plus a wild variety of Muslims and a soupçon of Jewish persuasions. Each of them believes in a God who is at least slightly different from all the others.

If that were not so, there would have been no justification for the establishment of the different sects. It certainly is true that many of those splinter groups came into existence primarily because of the ambitions of clever or charismatic would-be Alphas who didn't want to compete within the existing institutional frameworks, but such opportunists could not have succeeded without pointing convincingly to errors or abuses in the churches from which they urged separation. By definition, an opportunist is a person who recognizes and seizes upon an existing opportunity.

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<sup>30</sup> Actually, it doesn't make much sense to say, "I do not believe in God," because that statement implies the existence of some one particular God. If such an entity exists, how can a rational person not 'believe in it'? For those who claim to be atheists, it might be more meaningful to say, "I do not believe there is any supernatural intelligence that influences or is influenced by the affairs of humans."

Inasmuch as each church believes that its way of serving God is in some way more correct than that of other sects, it follows that its members must perceive God's wishes and commandments, and therefore the nature of God, somewhat differently.

Consequently, we find among Christians alone, sects that are differentiated not only by major doctrinal quarrels ("God is One" versus "God is Triplets") but by differences of emphasis on minor passages within the 'Holy Scriptures' (whether frothing at the mouth and "speaking in tongues" should be understood as absolute prerequisites for salvation), disputes in matters of "morality" (whether it is or isn't a mortal sin to try to avoid having more children than one is able to feed), philosophical arguments (whether a child with appendicitis should be treated with surgery or with prayer), and intense concern over a vast array of other important issues, such as whether God is keeping track of every word and every thought of each of his six thousand million subjects, in addition to all of his housekeeping chores such as directing hurricanes, earthquakes, plagues, and famines.

Serious students of Christianity worry about whether the communion biscuit is actually the flesh of Christ or merely a symbolic form of cannibalism; whether a newborn should be denied entry into Paradise if it dies before being immersed in holy water; and whether the day the Lord rested (some 6,000 years ago) was Saturn's Day or the Sun's-Day.

Whether such issues are adjudged weighty or trivial, whether they are seen as central or peripheral, they nevertheless tell us something about the Gods different people carry about in their heads. They furnish clues as to whether the Gods they "believe in" are rigid or flexible, punitive or forgiving, loving or domineering, concerned with the larger issues of life on this planet or with the minutiae of ritual and pretense.

Different subcultures as well as different sects help determine what an individual believes, or thinks he believes. To some, God is childlike and fun-loving, pleased when his followers sing, dance, drink, and fornicate. To others, God is straitlaced and disapproving, controlling his followers with the threat of eternal damnation to a nether world of unimaginably cruel tortures. Still others figure that God is just like any other boss; if you do your job, follow the standard operating procedures, help the company grow, and stay out of jail, your future will be secure.

A One-and-Only-God should not have so many contradictory personalities. If He is generally tolerant, then He is not generally intolerant. If He is generally kind and forgiving then He is not generally cruel and wrathful. If He exists to help us then He does not exist to hurt us. If He is mostly concerned with the *significance* of our behavior then He is not primarily concerned with the *form* of our behavior.

So if you've been waiting for the chance to pin me down by asking me, not "Do you believe in God?" but "Do you believe in the Judeo-Christian God?" -- I still would be obliged to respond with the question, "Which God?" The God in the mind of the Hasidic Jew or the Reformed Jew? The Shiite Muslim or the Sufi? The God of the Roman Catholic, or those of the Mormons, Baptists, Christian Scientists, or Seventh Day Adventists? And – regardless of sect – are you asking about my faith in the God of the illiterate peasant or the college professor, the second-generation millionaire or the kindergarten teacher, the Bryn Mawr coed or the black girl in rural Alabama?

Any of those Gods can differ from some of the others as much as they do from Wotan or Baal, Shiva or Zeus. So my answer is, "Sure, I believe in god! I'm just not going to tell you which one. Now can I marry your daughter?"

Why does the Lord's prayer begin with "Our Father," instead of "Our Mother," or simply, "Great Spirit"? Is it because we picture our God as a formidable old man? Does he have a white beard and wear a flowing robe? (Be honest, now!) Or is he more like a cloud or a bright light? Moses saw him as a volcano. A lot of people think He looks like George Burns. Some feminists want "equal time", and demand that every second reference to God should be to 'Her' or 'She'. Have you ever wondered whether God has sexual organs? Could S(He) be bisexual or hermaphroditic?

Where does God hang out? In the "heavens"? Is Heaven inside or outside our galaxy? Or is God to be found only in our minds or in our hearts? Think about that last phrase. What does it mean? What are we trying to say when we say, "in our hearts"? What happens to a person's heart-felt convictions when he receives a heathen's heart in a transplant procedure? Whatever you decide about this is okay with me, just so long as you think about it.

Will God punish me for making fun of him? Is he not responsible for my having a sense of humor? Doesn't he play jokes on people all the time, as he did with Job and Abraham and the folks in Hiroshima? Does he insist that I fear him? Is he so vain that he created all of us just to have us worship Him? If so, why does he allow so many of us to rebel or to worship false gods? Why are many called, but few chosen? Are we characters in some sort of video-game God enjoys playing with his old buddy, Satan, just to see how many of us he can cause to jump the way he wants us to and thereby reach the Promised Land, and how many of us will jump the 'wrong' way and fall into Satan's Pit?

Who designed such a game, God or Satan? Is not Satan also a God? Since God admits that few of those whom He calls make it to the Promised Land, does this not indicate that Satan is a better player?

Why should Satan punish and torture those who join his side? Is it not more likely that Hell is a place whose inhabitants perpetually defy God by engaging in unrestrained carnal pleasures and general irresponsibility?

On our money we have printed "In God We Trust". Will God remember that the next time we're broke? Is America on safer ground now that we've added the phrase "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance? In spite of that sign of respect we lost a war in Vietnam to a bunch of Godless communists. Whose side will Jehovah take if the U.S. ever goes to war with Israel?

What will be the reward for those who make it to the promised land? Some say they will enjoy the ecstasy of sitting forever at God's feet and gazing upon his glorious countenance. The same people are filled with fury and hatred when they encounter trippies sitting around peacefully enjoying their drug-induced hallucinations. Why is it bad to enjoy Heaven right here on Earth? Did not Jesus indicate that "the Kingdom of Heaven is within us?"

Many of my friends assume there will be beautiful golf courses in heaven. The Great Golf Pro in the Sky will correct their tendency to slice, the sun will always shine, and voluptuous young

angels will glide around the course in winged golf-carts delivering cold draught beer.<sup>31</sup>

Most Christians are adamant that the God in whom they believe is the Only True God, yet scarcely one of them can clearly define what he means by God or what it means to "believe in Him".

Therefore, if you ask a person if he or she believes in God (or has been saved) and the answer is, "Well, of course!" — what do you know about that person that you didn't know before you asked the question?

You have learned that the person is not an outspoken non-conformist. That's about all you know "for sure".

Maybe the person truly believes in some sort of God, but you have no way of knowing which one, even if you inquire, because any description he offers of his God will be subject to change or hedging at the slightest challenge or demand for more details. He eventually will explain that his description was simply a convenient way of picturing or trying to think about an entity that is fundamentally unknowable. That of course provides you with no way of comparing his God to yours or your neighbor's.

On the other hand, a person who dispatches your query with a perfunctory assent may secretly be quite indifferent to such matters, but has learned that it doesn't pay to admit it. Maybe he is an atheist but is lying to you because he does not want to be rejected or branded as a vile or sinful person.

In a different scenario, if your companion had been an outspoken non-conformist, he or she would have realized there was no short way of providing a meaningful answer (and that you weren't looking for one anyway) and might have responded in one of the following ways:

"Sure! I believe in Baal and Frigga. Hahbotchew?"

"If I tell you the truth, do you promise not to ask me if I believe in The Tooth Fairy, Santa Claus, and the Easter Bunny?"

"I used to believe in Him, but He died. Hadn't you heard?"

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<sup>31</sup> And that cannot hold a candle to the Paradise imagined by Muslim males!



Or your new acquaintance might ask, "What God do you have in mind?"

The first three answers obviously are 'put-downs', and you might be justified in feeling anger. But what about the last; should you be insulted? Must your respondent pretend that your question can be answered meaningfully?

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It is a little known fact that a non-conformist can be deeply concerned with questions regarding ethics and morality. Such a person might give any of the first three insulting responses as a way of trying to call attention to his belief that your question is irreligious — that you are "taking the name of the Lord in vain". In common usage, the questions, "Do you believe in God?" or "You do believe there is a God, don't you?" serve the same function as passwords. During the days of Prohibition one might be stopped at the entrance to a "speakeasy" and asked, "Who sent you?" The password might be "Coolidge" or "Harding". (Or whatever.) If the visitor did not recite the correct password he would be denied entrance to the club.

The goal was to make sure the customer was not a trouble-maker. Many social and civic clubs of today have rituals or badges that are designed to insure that everyone in attendance is a bona fide insider and "believer". These are ways of asking, "Are you one of us?" "Are you willing to follow our customs?" "Have you been reared as I was, or are you some sort of obnoxious foreigner or anti-social spoilsport?"

"Do you love your country? Will you respect its flag? Don't you think we ought to send all them Mexicans (or Chinks or Jews) back where they came from? Do you believe niggers should be allowed to touch white women? You're not a communist, are you? Do you like baseball? Are you a Bronco fan? Don't you think it's possible for people to become too educated? What church do you go to?"

"You do believe in God, don't you?"

The wrong answers to such questions can lead to being shunned and reviled, being investigated by a Congressional Committee, being rejected in your bid to be elected Dog-Catcher, and — most assuredly — being denied the hand of a bigot's daughter.

Many people would be scandalized or outraged by any sort of flippant answer to any question concerning God, and you might be one of them. Have I offended you? Will you forgive and forget if I recite the password? Most Christians seem mollified when one of our cynical and self-serving politicians concludes a speech by saying "God bless you, and God Bless America!" immediately after he has explained why it is necessary to eliminate free school-lunches for poor children, and why it is desirable to support one dictator and starve the followers of another. You elect people like that President; why can't I marry your daughter?

If you were to ask a stranger, "Do you believe in evil spirits?" you might not be insulted by a derisive answer, unless you live in Louisiana or in darkest Africa. If your question had been, "Do you believe that Jupiter is the greatest of the gods?" the same might be said unless one of you had just arrived from ancient Rome in a Time Machine. If you ask an Iranian whether he believes in God, he might just attack you with a scimitar. Why the difference in responses?

Going back to the original question (your request for the prevailing password) let us suppose that your companion replied to your question by saying, "No; I guess you'd say I'm an agnostic."

Your new acquaintance is (at least in this one instance) both outspoken and non-conforming, but it would seem that he does not choose to flaunt his differentness at the present time or place. His choice may result from fear of ostracism, a reluctance to disturb your equanimity, or a wish to avoid a discussion which experience has taught him will lead nowhere.

If you're a good Christian, you will pity his unenlightenment and pray for him.

## NOTICE

The next three chapters are so explicitly factual that they are apt to stimulate venomous reactions, if not hysteria, in readers who are pleased to believe in some of our Judeo-Christian fairy tales.

Because of that, my wife thinks I should supply references to substantiate some of my more lurid revelations.

That goes against my grain, first because it is tiresome, and secondly because by now you should realize that I'm not going to tell you something that isn't true.

Nevertheless, to reduce the likelihood of a book burning, the querulous reader is referred to the following sources.

- (1) *A Study of History*, by Arnold Toynbee, particularly the sections entitled *The Configuration of Syriac History* and *The History and Prospects of the Jews*. (Oxford University Press, 1961)
- (2) *The Power of Myth*, by Joseph Campbell (Doubleday, 1988)
- (3) *Man and His Gods*, by Homer Smith, particularly the chapters called *The Earth Is My Footstool* and *The Resurrected God and the Clever Ghost*. (Little, Brown, and Company, 1953)
- (4) *The Golden Bough, Abridged Edition*, by Sir James Frazer, (The Macmillan Company, 1958)
- (5) *Letter to the Romans*, by Paul of Tarsus.
- (6) *The Old Testament*, by God, any fifty pages chosen at random.
- (7) Your common sense.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

*YaHWeH*

Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About God  
But Were Afraid To Ask, For Fear Of Being Zapped

**QUESTION:** Did God choose the Jews — or vice versa?

**JUDAISM IN A NUTSHELL:** About 4000 years ago the writings of the Babylonians and Egyptians began to make occasional references to a people variously known as the Apiri, Habiri, or Habiru. These were nomadic goat-herders who were beginning to come in out of the wilds of the Arabian peninsula and take up residence in the cities of Mesopotamia and Syria. They spoke a Semitic language akin to modern Hebrew. They were an excitable and uninhibited people, probably as a result of having spent so much time around goats. Accordingly, their women came to be valued as dancers and concubines, and their men found employment as mercenary warriors.

Scholars who can read clay tablets suspect that before the Hebrews came in out of the heat and began to associate with civilized people, the only semblance of 'religion' they had was a sort of totemism, similar to that of the Australian aborigines. The evidence for this is weak, but who cares? Suffice it to say that their tribes were named after animals, such as Dog (Caleb), Ewe (Rachel), Wild Cow (Tesh), and Hyena (Simeon).

Other know-it-alls believe that the desert-dwelling Habiru had a matrilineal society not unlike that of the macaque monkeys of Japan. The women lived with their children and brothers, and they were periodically inseminated by roving bands of men who visited from God-knows-where and then went away. In between visits, everyone was celibate. In such a society it is assumed that the highest deity would have been a Goddess, and certain of our Seers claim to know that she was called something like Ashtar or Ash-toreth but, of course, they are wrong. Such names can only be

conglomerations of the Canaanite Asherah and the Babylonian Ishtar, both of whom you will read about in a moment, and both of whom were the mother of the Greek Astarte and first cousins to the Egyptian Isis. It doesn't matter.<sup>32</sup>

Everywhere the Hebrews went they purloined the more sophisticated deities of the countries they infiltrated. Among the places they went were the areas we now know as Syria, Israel, and Palestine, parts of which were inhabited by people called Canaanites. The Canaanites had an interesting collection of gods for which the god-starved Hebrews developed a great fondness, later claiming them as their exclusive property. The Chief God was known as El. El had a wife named Asherah and together they spawned a host of gods, including Baal, Yam-Nahar, Mot, Anat, and a number of others nobody really cares about.

El was also referred to as Elohim (High God) and as such was Chairgod of the Council of Gods. He and Asherah had their hands full trying to maintain a semblance of order (if not decorum) as their offspring constantly quarreled and jockeyed for position. Baal, for example, had a habit of dying every year and falling into the clutches of Mot, who took his cadaver down to Hell to play with, but then Mot was seized by Baal's lover Anat who revived Baal and cut Mot into a jillion pieces and scattered them around the earth—a story closely akin to that of the Egyptians' Isis and Osiris, and to Little Red Riding Hood and The Big Bad Wolf.

After the same fashion, it can safely be assumed that Habiru nomads arriving in Mesopotamia would have been very interested in (and wary of) Babylonian gods, and in the local fairy tales that eventually came to be known as religion. In those days, all gods were considered dangerous, but they also were considered potentially useful, so long as appeasing them was not too expensive or tiresome.<sup>33</sup> It is certain that the Old Testament version of the Creation, as well as the story of Adam and Eve and their 'Fall', were heavily influenced by myths then prevalent in the lands "between the thighs" of the Tigris and Euphrates. Indeed, The Book of Genesis cites that location for the Garden of Eden.

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<sup>32</sup> Ashera, by the way, means "poles", and poles were sacred to Ishtar. Furthermore, Aphrodite was the mother of Priapus. There's a message in there somewhere.

<sup>33</sup> One had to consider the 'cost-benefit ratio.'

The favorite deity of the Babylonians was the Goddess Ishtar. Her temples were staffed by prostitutes and divorcees who preferred that existence to life in a harem. The Greek historian, Herodotus, who knew everything, tells us that in lands enamored of Ishtar, the custom was as follows: Every woman, at some time in her youth, was obliged to go to the Temple and make herself available to passing men. The first man to toss a silver coin in her lap had to be accompanied into the temple and accepted as a lover. Once that chore was over, the woman returned home and lived a pure life forever after. The Hebrews thought it a charming custom, and they continued to worship Ishtar until last Thursday. Except for Isis (who also was a goddess of love and maternity) Ishtar was worshipped longer than any other deity ever conceived by mankind.

Legend has it that the Hebrews went to the Canaan by way of Mesopotamia, but probably it was just the losers who emigrated. One of those who began his career in Babylon and later moved west is known to you as Abraham, though his name was Ibram. El had been vacationing in Babylon and one day He met Abe at the local pub. He took a liking to him and suggested that if Abe would abandon his clan and move to the Canaan, El would arrange for him to found "a new nation," and naturally Abraham couldn't resist. When Abe told his wife about it, Sarah reminded him that she was post-menopausal, but Abe said he would think of something. Sure enough, in the fullness of time Sarah was delivered of a son whom they named Isaac, which was sort of a family joke because it meant, "Ain't that a laugh!"<sup>34</sup>

Somewhat later, El had an even funnier idea. He told Abraham that he should kill Isaac as a sign of his love for El.<sup>35</sup> Without hesitation, Abe gathered up some firewood and headed for the nearest sacred mountain. At the last moment, as Abraham was about to plunge a knife into his only son, El relented and told Abe it was all a joke. This caused Abraham to place even greater trust in his new god — and El, of course, was delighted to discover that Abraham was such an imbecile.

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<sup>34</sup> No kidding.

<sup>35</sup> A popular doctrine held that since children could occur only by the grace of god, the firstborn should be thought of as god's child and given back to Him, usually by tossing it into a fire.

Isaac begat Jacob, and when the time came to take a wife Jacob traveled back to Mesopotamia where the rest of his people still lived. During Jacob's sojourn, El walked along with him a ways and repeated the promise He had made to Abraham, telling Jacob that his descendants would number as the sands of the sea and would form a great nation that would destroy lots of other nations. This so impressed Jacob that he renamed himself Isra-El, which means "wrestler with God", or something equally childish.

On his return to the Canaan, Isra-el (Jacob) was accompanied by another wave of emigrants, no doubt because of assurances he gave his relatives concerning his special relationship with El, and stories he told of what a character El was.

Israel re-settled in Shechem, which was in the northern half of the Canaan, and proceeded to beget a dozen sons who would ultimately generate the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

The descendants of the Habiru still hadn't fully recovered from nomadism, and many of them continued to wander all over the Middle East. A lot of them gradually accumulated in Egypt, which had a thriving economy in those days.

For a while, Abraham himself sojourned in Egypt. While there, he pretended that Sarah was not his wife and loaned her to Pharaoh, in the hope that Pharaoh would look upon him with favor. The ruse worked out so well that Abe subsequently made a habit of loaning his wife to men who frightened him.

A time came, however, when Egypt experienced a recession, and Pharaoh needed a scapegoat – so he told the Jews they would have to leave. This infuriated the God of the Hebrews (whoever He was at that time) and He played a lot of dirty tricks on the Egyptians.

One thing He did was cause all the first-born of all the Egyptians to die or be born dead, including cattle as well as people. Humorless humanists have suggested that this was a cruel and irresponsible way for a God to behave, but the Jews loved Him for it. Not surprisingly, Pharaoh immediately set out to kill all the Jews he could catch, but they saw it coming and fled back to the Canaan.

Along the way, the tour-guide of one bunch of refugees, a man by name of Moses, had a personal encounter out in the desert with a god who later came to be known as Yahweh. Yahweh appeared in the form of a volcano and told Moses that He, Personally, had

been responsible for their miraculous escape from Egypt. He went on to say that He was a very bad God, indeed, and that if Moses' people would adopt Him and listen to what He had to say, He would guarantee their future, especially when they were surrounded by enemies. On the other hand, if they spurned Him or failed to follow His rules, He would make them wish they were Egyptians. Since the Habiri had always managed to be surrounded by enemies everywhere they went (a talent they have retained to this day) Yahweh's offer seemed worth considering.

Moses asked the volcano what his name was, but being no fool, Yahweh said, "I am who I am," which is the Jewish way of saying, "It's being your business who I am?" It's a wonder Moses wasn't incinerated where he stood, because asking such a question was a very rude thing to do. Everybody knew in those days that if you learned a God's secret name He became your slave, somewhat like a genie in a bottle. On the other hand, you can't be famous if nobody knows who you are, so in the end Yahweh whispered His name into Moses' ear and told him never to repeat it, thus assuring that everyone would find out by nightfall. His indiscretion had the predictable result; the Jews locked him up in a box they called the Ark and carried Him about in the scorching desert for years and years.

But before that happened, Moses had asked Yahweh to tell him what his people would be expected to do, and that led to the Ten Commandments, which at that time were very different from the Ten Commandments brought to us by Charlton Heston. Being like all of us men, Yahweh desperately wanted to be an Alpha, so His first and most important commandment was that henceforth the Jews would put no other Gods above Him. It was understood that they should continue to exercise prudence in their contacts with other gods, but they were to remember at all times that Yahweh was the Boss. (Indeed, it would have been foolish of Yahweh to deny the existence of other gods, for then he would have had no rivals over whom to triumph.)

After letting it be known that He was Alpha (and Omega!) He reinforced that message by ticking off eight more commandments specifying what sorts of tributes, sacrifices, and celebrations He expected in His honor, and then, whammo!—He let Moses know what sort of moral behavior He expected of His followers. In His Tenth Commandment (in the original version) He flatly stated, "Thou shalt not seethe a lamb in its mother's milk!"



When Moses came down from the volcano, the tourists naturally wanted to know what was up there, but Moses was a shrewd dude, so he told them only what he thought they needed to know, and warned them that they would be burnt to a crisp if they tried to go see for themselves. While he was up there, his fellow travelers had been busy making a golden bull from part of the loot they had smuggled out of Egypt in their teeth. They were preparing to offer thanks to El for their deliverance. You can imagine how Moses reacted to that, but you'd be wrong. Yahweh had gone to great pains to convince Moses that He was the same God who had walked and talked with Abraham, and that Yahweh and El were one and the same.

Some say that the object in the Ark was a phallic stone. In olden times, phallic stones could be found standing erect all over the Middle East. People would rub them with oil and pray for something. Other experts say the Ark contained a golden serpent, which is the same thing. No matter; the important point is that the Israelis thought of Yahweh as a god of power who would be particularly helpful in war. That's what they needed most of all, because they knew that for the finer things in life they could continue to count on Ishtar.

Because of their confidence in Yahweh, when they got back to the Canaan they began killing everybody in the neighborhood. They won a series of battles and eventually established a strong but brutish kingdom under extravagantly polygamous leaders with names like Saul and David and Solomon.

By that time, the Habiru had begun to believe they were the "Chosen People". That caused their kingdom to split in two, and in 722 B.C. the Assyrians sacked the northern kingdom and carried off ten of the original twelve tribes, who were never heard from again.<sup>36</sup>

Word got around the southern kingdom, which was known as Judah, that the northerners had still been worshipping El and his gang instead of Yahweh (who was favored in the South) and maybe that's why the Northerners had been punished. Imagine their surprise, when in 600 B.C. the Babylonians sacked Judah, destroyed the Temple, and carried off everyone who had any talents.

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<sup>36</sup> Although some people believe they ended up in Mexico.

After the destruction of Israel, somebody decided that all of this was so interesting it would make a good historical novel, so he started writing it down. Until then the legends of Abraham and Moses and so forth had been passed down orally for nigh on 1200 years from man to boy without changing a single word. Writing it down became a sort of cottage industry, and a number of conflicting versions were spawned by different would-be authors. But after only another 800 years the law suits were settled; the contradictions were pulled together; and the inspired version of the Old Testament (or Covenant) was finally published.

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The surviving version of "The Book" tells us that in the beginning, God created Heaven and Earth. As soon as the waters settled down God elected to live in Mesopotamia, so He fashioned a nature preserve for Himself, which He called Eden, near a place the Mesopotamians called Paradise. After furnishing his estate with trees and flowers and babbling brooks, and populating it with deer and hippos and birds and fish and butterflies and serpents, He looked around and saw that everything He had done was "exceeding good". He was too vain to leave well enough alone, however, so on the sixth day He created Man and Woman "in His own image".

Even so, He thought that Adam and Eve also were good works, so He told them to enjoy themselves, "but don't start thinking about good and evil." Naturally, that's all they could think about from then on, and as soon as they had it worked out they realized they were naked, which you would have supposed was on the 'good' side of the ledger, but you'd have been wrong. So God told them what wretches they were, made them dress up, and threw them out of Eden. He told them they were so hateful that henceforth they would have to grub in the dirt for a living. But then, evidently in some sort of Self-punitive rage, as He stood at the gate watching them leave, He shouted at them to be fruitful and multiply!

After Adam and Eve had multiplied two sons-worth, there were four people on Earth, which was one too many to live in peace, so one of the sons murdered the other. For some reason, this made God even more unhappy, despite the fact that He, Himself, had brought it on by praising Abel for giving Him a present of choles-

terol-laden meat, and cursing Cain for suggesting it would be better for His heart if maybe He ate more fruit and vegetables.

Things went from bad to worse, and after only eight more generations God had had his fill. He finally realized He had screwed up horribly and He decided to destroy His creation and all the people in it, along with all the deer and birds and so forth.

Now, you need to know that in olden times, many of God's sons had been in the habit of coming down to Earth and mating with human females, all of whom they found absolutely irresistible, and the offspring of those unions accounted for the giants and other men of great renown who ran things in those days, so you'd think God would have realized that the mess down on earth was largely due to members of His own family.

That's not the way Grand-Fathers think, however, so He opted to go ahead with His plan. Someone, probably Satan, suggested that it might be sufficient to wipe out everyone and everything except one family of humans and one boatload of critters. Noah was recommended as being of sterling character, and—God's Will being weak—that's the way it came down. Yahweh caused it to rain and rain, day after day, week after week, until all the humans and all the animals went absolutely bonkers and rushed with the lemmings out into the sea... except for one ark-full.

After the flood Noah planted a vineyard and became an alcoholic. One night he was too drunk to put on his pajamas and his youngest son saw him lying there naked. He told his two brothers about it and they managed to cover Noah with a cloak by backing into his tent in such a way that they would not look upon his nakedness, apparently because the whole bunch of them were latent incestuous homosexuals.

The next morning Noah cursed his youngest son roundly, made him a slave of the others, and banished him. It was through the descendants of one of the flakier sons that Abraham finally came onto the scene, and that gets us back to Canaan and Babylon and the so-called Captivity.

The Judean prisoners of war remained in Babylon for sixty years or so, operating pawnshops and men's clothing stores. Then Babylon was conquered by the Persians or somebody and the Jews went home, considerably more civilized than when they had been kidnapped. In addition to a lot of neat new theological ideas, they had picked up some of the latest Babylonian science. They now

knew, for example, that if you really wanted a Temple to last, the trick was to seal a young girl into the cornerstone.

At the urging of sun-crazed prophets, the returning POW's vowed to worship Yahweh harder than ever, and to that end they re-instituted live sacrifice, preferably using babies, who could be tossed into the fire with impunity because babies were not protected by The Law. Of course, they also continued to slaughter goats and sheep and oxen and burn them within the Temple, as they stood ankle-deep in blood, singing psalms.

After a while Yahweh became sick of it all and allowed His chosen people to be conquered by the Romans. The Romans found them so irritating that they finally destroyed The New Temple, razed Jerusalem to the ground, and scattered Jews to the four corners of the empire.

That was not the last that would be heard of them.

Or of Yahweh.



We currently have the choice of believing that God created the Universe in three or four days, or that it created itself in a trillionth of a second — in both cases out of nothing, no place in particular, and for no discernible reason.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

*Portrait of God As A Young Man*

"Think not I am come to change the Law; but to fulfill it."  
 (Maybe so, young feller, but that's not the way it turned out.)

It all began as a run-of-the-mill, trumped-up political incident. The Sadducees and some other high rollers in Jerusalem had been taking heat from the media because of their steadily increasing excesses in the sale of religious trinkets, indulgences, blessings, and curses. The Pharisees, a fundamentalist sect not unlike today's Jehovah's Witnesses or Seventh Day Adventists, saw the public unrest as an opportunity to advance their prestige and power and maybe take over some of the franchises. Both sides had been doing their best to rile the rabble, and as Easter approached, tensions were reaching such a dangerous level it was feared that violence might erupt, and depress the holiday sales.<sup>37</sup>

As luck would have it, a poverty-stricken faith healer and amateur magician, who had absolutely no political clout, had just arrived in Jerusalem to enjoy his first Passover in the Big-J. To his utter surprise and dismay, he hated it. Banners were flying and trumpets blaring; the city was crowded and dirty; prostitutes were walking the streets and drunks were lying in them; and the Temples were a mess! Money-changers were short-changing their

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<sup>37</sup> The Jews didn't call it Easter in those days. Actually, what they were celebrating was a vestigial hangover of the Rites of Spring, which had been an occasion for joy and rowdiness ever since sex and farming were invented. The Jews probably picked up the habit while they were in Egypt, but not being a farming people and not having enjoyed their visit with Pharaoh, they kept the holiday but renamed it Passover, in memory of YHWH's having passed over the homes of Jews as He went about murdering all the first-born children and goats of the evil Egyptians. The early Christians came to have hard feelings about Passover, but everywhere they went people were still celebrating the Spring Equinox, so they kept the holiday and renamed it Easter, after a bunny of that name.

customers; hawkers were selling love potions and aphrodisiacs; the inner sancta of the temples reeked of blood and guts; and the incense burned his eyes.

After a day or two of this he freaked out and started screaming at everybody, pushing the hawkers around, overturning the money-changers' tables and throwing their money into the streets where it was picked up by the prostitutes and drunks, who became even rowdier.

This dude's name was Joshua, or maybe Yeschu, but his gay little band of followers had nicknamed him Jesus — a droll allusion to the expressions of amazement regularly evoked by some of Joshua's magic tricks.

Anyway, Joshua never met anybody he liked in Jerusalem, and in his excitement he castigated and reviled both the Pharisees and the Sadducees, although (during the subsequent cover-up) the latter group managed to have their names expunged from the record, and "Scribes" inserted in their stead.

Ignoring the entreaties of his disciples that he should "cool it", Jesus managed to alienate just about everybody in town, going so far as to call them "an evil and perverse generation." You can imagine how the home-towners felt about some hick from Nazareth coming in and calling them perverts.

Before he had begun making such a spectacle of himself, the Pharisees (who were heavy-duty traditionalists) had hoped they might have an ally in Jesus, but after listening to him for a while they realized he was far too soft on adultery and prostitution. And, of course, if it's really true that he started wishing "woe" to the Pharisees, and comparing them to "whited sepulchers full of all manner of filth and corruption", it's no wonder they wrote him off.

Consequently, reaffirming the adage that politics creates strange bed-fellows, the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees<sup>38</sup> all got together and hatched a conspiracy to use Jesus as a scapegoat for diverting the emotions of the rabble, after which they hoped to calm things down with a nice public execution. They easily gained the support of the Roman Governor, whose job was on the line because his constant whining about how hard it was to govern Judea was beginning to give the Emperor a headache.

So Pontius Pilate paraded Joshua before the rabble and he said, "Hey, paisanos! Yous'a "holy men" (Mama, mia!) they givuh me

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<sup>38</sup> And money-changers.

dissa pazzo<sup>39</sup> and they say I shoulduh kill him! What you tinkuh, paisanos?" As expected, the Rabble shouted back, "Hell, yes! Crucify him!"

Now, if there was anything the Romans were good at, it was knowing how to please a crowd. So they dressed Joshua up to make him look ridiculous and then forced him to lead a big parade through the streets and alleys on the way to the execution grounds, and there they nailed Joshua onto a pole, as was their wont (the idea of a cross came later), until everyone in town had had a chance to laugh at him or spit on him. As was the custom, when it was time to knock off for the day, one of the Roman soldiers finished Joshua off with a jab of his sword.

Naturally, it was hoped that a satisfied and exhausted rabble would then go home for supper—or "Seder" as it was known to the Jews—but before the revelers could disband, a cold-front suddenly moved through the area. As the sky became very dark and the thunder started booming some of the spectators began to recall Joshua's having warned them, "Apres moi, le deluge!" As a wave of fear rippled through the crowd, the disciples, assisted by a local entrepreneur who thought there might be a shekel in it somewhere, hustled Joshua's body away from the scene before the Romans had time to close their umbrellas.

Later on, remembering how shook up people had been by the thunderclap, the disciples sent up a trial balloon in the form of a rumor that Joshua had come back from the dead after being buried in a cave for three days.<sup>40</sup> The rabble went for the story hook, line, and sinker (especially the women) so some of Joshua's followers announced that they would be willing to furnish details of this miraculous story for a modest consideration. They began calling themselves "Apostles", and most of them managed to carve out undistinguished careers appearing on talk-shows in the synagogues and preaching to slaves and beggars that they should repent their greed and other transgressions.

The cover-up that followed that obscure assassination was even more complex than the ones following Watergate, Irangate, and the shooting of JFK. Before Joshua had stopped breathing, Peter

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<sup>39</sup> Crackpot.

<sup>40</sup> This was not an arbitrary time period. The Jews had known for centuries that it was unwise to try to raise the dead after 72 hours.



(and probably anyone else who was questioned) took an oath that they never knew the Man. Later, when they were grilled about Jesus' whereabouts, they claimed he was dead. When asked what they had done with the body, they swore it had risen up to heaven. Ultimately there wasn't much the authorities could do — even if they had been capable of understanding how such a con-game could be made to pay off — because as the Romans had been the first to realize, "no corpus delicti, no crime."

The Procurator, Pontius Pilate, tried to wash his hands of the whole affair, and went back to Roma in disgrace. The Press continued to hound him until he finally committed suicide, or so it was reported in the tabloids.

Although the Sadducees had claimed they weren't even in town for the Passover, and spread enough money around to keep their names out of the papers, rumors and accusations persisted for another forty years. Finally, to put an end to the legend once and for all, the Romans destroyed not only the Temple but the entire city of Jerusalem.

The Sadducees were never heard from again, an outcome which so delighted the Pharisees that they tore a live goat to pieces and drank its blood.

Unfortunately, the Romans were too late to suppress what they called "a new and maleficent superstition", for the story had already spread to the Jewish expatriate community in Greece, where it caught the attention of a fellow named Paul of Tarsus.<sup>41</sup>

Having been a Pharisee, Paul initially ridiculed those who believed that Joshua had risen from the dead, but after having an unusually severe epileptic seizure out in the desert one day, he figured he might be on the wrong side.

The only time Paul ever saw Joshua was during the hallucinatory "aura" which accompanied that seizure, but the experience so startled him that he fell off his ass and never got over the shock.

Paul never heard Joshua preach, and if he had heard about the Messiah's *moral* teachings he must not have been greatly impressed, because in his epistles he never discussed any of Jesus' parables or commandments. He somehow convinced himself that he knew all he needed to know. (Indeed, there is a fairly convinc-

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<sup>41</sup> People didn't have last names in those days. They usually identified themselves as the "son of So-and-so". If they were in doubt about that, they took the name of their hometown.

ing body of evidence that Paul wasn't talking about a "man" at all, but a mystical entity known as the Son of Man, which had been prophesied in the Old Testament.)

Paul began wandering all over Greece and Turkey, arguing with both Jew and Gentile about how and why they should change their ways. Every time he reached a new city, he would think of all the things he should have said to the people in the town he had just left, especially about how stingy they had been, and he would immediately send them an Epistle, which is the Greek way of saying "mailed them a letter". That way he couldn't be interrupted during his tiresome harangues, nor could any of his brilliant arguments be thrown off course by some trifling point of logic.

And so it came to pass that about twenty years after Joshua's death, somebody finally put down in writing some details concerning the alleged mission of that enigmatic figure — as revealed to the writer during a convulsion.<sup>42</sup>

Paul's message was simple and straightforward:

(1) The One and Only God of the Whole Universe had decided that the time had come for Him to descend to Earth and personally take over all the governments of mankind.

(2) Inasmuch as His first act in establishing the "Kingdom of God" would be to destroy practically everybody and everything, He thought it fitting (and more than fair) to send down a "herald" who would announce the plan and give sinners a last chance to repent and perhaps even save themselves. After allowing His herald to preach that dreadful warning to approximately one-tenth of one percent of the population of the planet, largely in the form of ambiguous parables, the Holy Script called for the messenger's life to be sacrificed, painfully and ignominiously, as a gesture of atonement for mankind's abominable behavior.

(3) This messenger was the long awaited Massiah (or Mashiah or Messiah, Hebrew for "Anointed One" — which translates as "Christos" in Greek) had in fact been Iesous (Greek for Joshua, or

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<sup>42</sup> It's also possible that his hallucination was caused by "sun-stroke", a condition that seems to afflict a majority of Middle-Easterners on any given day.

Yeschu, as the case may be) and he had already come and gone — having been hanged from a pole by the Romans in Jerusalem.<sup>43</sup>

(4) After his execution, Iesous had risen from the dead and ascended (bodily) back into the Heavens, once more to sit at the right hand of the kind and loving Father who had just caused him to be tortured, humiliated, hanged, and stabbed.

(5) If for some strange reason a human wished to be saved from the impending holocaust (which Paul had been assured would arrive during his own lifetime) the Messiah's demands were few, and they required little effort or intelligence, and no education. They were as follows:

Believe that Jesus was the Messiah. Repent your sins, and then have them all washed away by letting Paul or one of his assistants try to drown you in the nearest river. Participate in a "Eucharistic meal", which meant eating a little piece of Jesus' flesh and drinking a glass of His blood. (To minimize nausea and vomiting among the ladies, those victuals would be transformed so as to resemble a chunk of pita bread and a cheap domestic retsina.) After those purifying experiences, one should refrain from sinning and should love his brothers and sisters — but he should curse anyone who refuses to believe as he does, and any former believer who has gone astray. Finally, one should spread the joyful tidings to all his neighbors that the world is about to end in a horrible fire— if not this week, then surely the next.<sup>44</sup>

As any marketing expert can tell you, the foregoing is the sort of story that the average listener will readily understand and accept. Nevertheless, Paul thought it wise to add a few details that made it even easier to sell. First of all, since Paul was a Jew and most of his earliest customers (and erstwhile opponents) were expatriate Jews, it was bound to help if the story conformed to some of the ancient prophecies that his listeners had memorized relative to the coming of a Messiah.

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<sup>43</sup> Ancient Hebrew was written without vowels, which were to be supplied by the reader, sort of like filling in a crossword puzzle. Jews wrote that way because it made it easier to argue over the terms of a contract.

<sup>44</sup> It also was okay to advise the not-yet converted that just moments before the holocaust, Paul and all other true believers (living and dead) would be lifted into the sky, while everyone left on earth (living and dead) would be fried to a crisp. Then a New Jerusalem would descend from the heavens, filled with exuberant Christians who would live happily ever after.

Foremost among those was that the messenger would have to be a descendant of King David. That posed no problem; Paul had it on the best authority that Jesus was "of the seed of David, begat (via Joseph) in the manner of the flesh". (See Letter To The Romans.)

Secondly, although a Messiah might exhibit supernatural abilities, he had to be a man and not a God, because by that time, for the Jews, there could be no God but Yahweh. Furthermore, if Jesus and Yahweh were one and the same, then how could Jesus have been God's Anointed One? So Paul carefully referred to Jesus as "our Lord" (in Greek, of course) which was not exactly the same as calling him "God", though it was close. Had he strayed from that narrow path, he immediately would have lost his Jewish converts. On the other hand, if he had made it a point to purge Jesus of any hint of divinity, he would have lost his pagan recruits.

Finally, because of an obscure line in a poem by a mad prophet named Micah, it was widely held that the Messiah would be born to the "Tribe of Bethlehem", a detail about which Paul couldn't care less, and had no reason to challenge.

Actually, Paul's writings show a surprising lack of curiosity about the "biography" of Jesus. As far as Paul was concerned, all he or anyone else needed to know was that the Messiah (or Son of Man) had come, given his message that the Kingdom of God was at hand, been hanged for his troubles, and gone back whence he came. Paul probably figured that in view of the fact that the world was likely to burst into flame at any moment, details about Jesus' birthday, what side of the family he resembled, and whether he had had all of his shots, weren't terribly important. Naturally, things would have been different had Paul been a woman.

In the light of subsequent developments, the manner of the Messiah's birth proved to be a matter of the utmost importance. Because Jesus was a man, born of the seed of David, it was pretty much unavoidable that he begin life as a baby. That meant that he had to hang around for twenty years or so, doing odd jobs, studying the Torah, and learning how to irritate people with his parabolic manner of speaking.<sup>45</sup> Naturally that made it much harder for people who had watched him grow up to suddenly accept the claim that all along he had been YHWH's Right Hand Man. The town-folk were accustomed to thinking of him simply as

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<sup>45</sup> He actually wasted thirty years. God knows why!

"Joseph's boy", a rather inept and unambitious carpenter. As a result, they really couldn't vouch for him when he started his ministry, which is why Jesus complained that "a prophet is not without honor except in his own land."

Now, it may have occurred to you once or twice that if Yahweh had really wanted to get a message across, and especially if He had wanted everyone on Earth to have a chance to hear it, He could simply have announced it over the intercom. Or if He just liked the idea of delivering it with a "personal touch", He could have dressed His messenger in a gold tunic emblazoned with the emblem, "Yahweh Saves!", placed him in a golden chariot, and had him circle the globe a few times announcing his schedule of appearances.

But when we recall that this was the same fun-loving God who had drowned almost everyone on the planet just because He was in a bad mood, had chosen a post-menopausal woman to found a new nation—and then tricked her husband into almost slitting the throat of their only begotten son, and had put Job through the tortures of the damned just to win a bet with his buddy Satan, we should not be surprised that He would want to make some sort of game out of the "redemption thing." Why make it easy?

Paul's Jewish converts were not troubled by such paradoxes — first, because they knew from long experience what a whacko Yahweh was, and secondly because they had a ton of holy scripture which kept them from being surprised by anything. The problem Paul encountered with his fellow Jews was that after he had told them about his vision that the Messiah had come and gone, there wasn't much else he could tell them to sustain their interest.

The baptismal frolic in the river was fun, especially when some young women were being dunked, but you were only supposed to do it once. The thrill of eating Jesus and drinking his blood was kind of neat, but after a while folks began to have trouble remembering that it wasn't just stale bread and a sip of wine that tasted like pinesap. They kept asking Paul, "So where's the Apocalypse awreddy?"

Former friends who had remained orthodox accused the converts of being heretics, which of course they were, and their young folks were not allowed to intermarry. Gradually, the converts began to miss sitting around on the Sabbath letting their wives do all the work, and their taste buds began to yearn for matzo-ball soup

and chicken livers braised with kumquats. Initially, the renegades had imagined they would enjoy not having to obey the 650 rules and rituals of the Torah, but when the Promised Day failed to come week after week, they began to remember some of the horrors Yahweh had inflicted on wayward Jews in the past. By the end of the first century, Jewish Christianity had died out.

For the gentiles (or pagans as they preferred to be called) Paul had a lot more to offer.

First of all, everyone was being promised a life after death—a privilege previously available only to wealthy Egyptians, highly placed Pharisees, and people who were too good to be true. Never before had poor people been given any reason to anticipate personal immortality—or even to want it, considering how miserable life had always been here on Earth.

Another big plus for recruitment was that women could participate in the sacraments. They could even attend meetings at the synagogue so long as they kept their mouths shut, and so long as they scrupulously obeyed Paul's orders to keep their heads covered while in holy places—a measure designed to prevent evil spirits from becoming entangled in their hair or entering their empty heads by way of their ears.

Although Paul frequently reminded slaves who had accepted Christ that they should continue to respect and obey their masters, he promised that they would be freed as soon as they were dead. Paupers could look forward to a land of milk and honey, where wives were subservient to their husbands and there were no tax collectors.<sup>46</sup>

But the best part of Paul's message was that you didn't have to do anything in order to enjoy the fruits of paradise, at least nothing terribly onerous. All you really needed was love and faith—and anyone could fake that! You didn't have to become a Jew and obey all of their zany rules and you didn't have to be circumcised, because the Messiah's sacrifice had superseded the Law. (Joshua must have fallen out of his chair when he heard that, because if there was one thing he had made perfectly clear, it was that he had not come to change the Law.)

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<sup>46</sup> We'll never know how the peasant classes interpreted Paul's repeated urging that they should all love one another.

Furthermore, you didn't have to prove that you had lived a life of good works; in fact, it was to your advantage if you had been a world-class sinner before accepting Christ. Other than believing everything Paul told you, the only significant requirement was that after your baptism you had to keep your nose clean until Doomsday, which most converts figured they could do standing on their heads, inasmuch as Doomsday was next Saturday.

Nevertheless, as time went on without any showers of fire and brimstone, people began to become restive. Those already baptized began to wonder if they had been taken in by some sort of con game.<sup>47</sup> They kept telling each other that they probably shouldn't begrudge Paul and his assistants the free food and wine they seemed to take for granted when they visited, but they began to fret about the collections of "spare cash" the preachers regularly demanded "for the relief of our poor brethren in Jerusalem". When did Paul ever have time to go to Jerusalem? In addition, Paul had begun to tell tales of countless other places he had visited, shipwrecks he had survived, persecutions he had endured, and much more — until he began to sound like Ulysses.

The rush to become Christians began to wane. Young girls wanted to get married and have babies. Young men wanted to help them. Family businesses were going bankrupt (and insurance companies closed down completely) as people waited for the holocaust that never came.

Poor people and slaves were living out their lives in the same old painful and dreary ways, and then dying as poor people had always died, to be buried and rot in anonymity. Evidently, the Kingdom of God was not at hand. If so, then why should Jesus (or Paul) be trusted? Why should one accept the word of a mere man that the poor were to enjoy immortality, and not just the rich as it had always been?

Jesus was losing his sex appeal. Something had to be done to make Him relevant to a world that had not changed noticeably since his arrival. He had to be given a larger mission than that of a mere messenger.

If Jesus were to regain his box-office ratings, He had to become a god!

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<sup>47</sup> The one that the Romans had worried about but had been unable to visualize.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

*The Anointing of Joshua*

"If there were no God,  
it would be necessary to invent one."

*Voltaire*

Pagan converts had always assumed that Paul's "Messiah" was actually some sort of god. They were not accustomed to hearing about somebody spending half a lifetime as just some ordinary Joshua and then suddenly becoming divine without any convincing explanation. They expected to hear some juicy little secret about Jesus' family tree, and to learn that his birth had been accompanied by signs and cymbals. In short, if your average pagan was going to maintain interest in a savior-hero who seemed to have dropped out of sight, the congregations needed something to gossip about.

Especially the women.

As you know from your study of chimpanzees, primates are strangely fascinated by any new arrival into the troop. Everyone wants to know whether it's a boy or a girl; they want to check the color of its eyes and hair; they're interested in learning how long Mama was in labor; and they're especially curious about who the baby's father might have been.

Eventually, all of those questions had to be answered if the pagans were going to give Jesus a permanent place in their pantheons. Fortunately, there was a formula for such things.<sup>48</sup>

Most people feel better if they know that more than one supernatural being is looking after their interests. A single god can get so busy he might forget something he was supposed to do. Also, it's bound to be safer to have experts one can turn to—a god to help with childbirth, another for protection on the road, one to bring fame and fortune, and so forth.

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<sup>48</sup> Without the problem of Baby Jesus, Christianity would have been a much simpler religion, but it never would have caught on.



Probably only two religions have made it big-time without taking such needs into account. One is latter-day Judaism, as practiced by Jews who became scattered around the globe after the destruction and disappearance of the homeland they had so savagely wrested from the Canaanites. As a result of the horrors they suffered before and after their several diaspora, there was no way that Jews could doubt the existence and power of their beloved but erratic Yahweh, and no sane reason why they would have wanted any more gods. The other exception appears to be Islam, which was largely modeled after Judaism.<sup>49</sup>

In contrast, the major religions of other advanced cultures have tended to posit a Chief God and one or more "anti-gods" (such as Satan), along with a pantheon of lesser gods and divine figures to be used only for special purposes. In many cases, subordinate divinities have been the children of a higher god and goddess, while mythical heroes often have been the progeny of a male god and a human female.

Zeus comes to mind as the archetype of lusty miscegenators, but he was by no means unique. In India, Krishna was the darling of all the ladies in both that world and the next. Every Pharaoh's mother was inseminated by Amun-Ra. Apollo secretly fathered Julius Caesar and Augustus. And, as you now know, before the biblical Flood "the Sons of God" had been in the habit of coming down to Earth to mate with the daughters of men, whom they found absolutely delicious.

In order to remove any doubt that a hero carried the DNA of his or her God-Father it was desirable that the human mother be a virgin at the time her god-mate "came into her", or at least that precautions be taken to preclude any contamination of the divine conceptus with mundane semen. And so it was that Adonis was

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<sup>49</sup> Before they were scattered to Kingdom Come, Jews behaved like most people, showing respect to whichever indigenous gods seemed most promising, but always acknowledging that Yahweh was their very own special God. Since the Diaspora, Jews have survived as a "nation without a homeland," because their "religion" really has had more to do with faith in themselves as a "people" than with the mere worship of a God. That perception of themselves as a blood-brotherhood— members of an indomitable tribe whose roots go back to the very origins of civilization explains why Judaism has never been able to recruit converts as readily, or as comfortably, as did Paul's version of Christianity, and why it lost out as the world's dominant religion in spite of the fact that YHWH had priority as the one and only God of all Creation.

born of the virgin Myrrha, Plato's mother Amphictione was impregnated by Apollo during a time when Ariston had been forbidden to have intercourse with his wife; and Juno, the wife of Jupiter and mother of gods, became a virgin all over again each new year.

In all of Greek mythology, however, only one child of a human mother and a Great God-father actually ended up in Heaven (Olympus) as a full-fledged god in his own right. That divine man was Herakles, better known to you and the Romans as Hercules.

Zeus, who was God Almighty in those days, impregnated a woman named Alceme by taking on the appearance of her betrothed, who was away on business at the time. When Zeus' wife, Hera, learned of the prank she tried to kill baby Herakles by tossing a couple of serpents into his crib, but the baby strangled them. As a young man Herakles visited Hades, where he wrestled with evil spirits and emerged unscathed. Thereafter, his life was spent in a struggle against twelve malign forces that had been tormenting mankind, all of which he overcame through miraculous deeds and clever ruses. He was proclaimed King by a grateful people. Ultimately, Hera (not Herod) arranged for him to be betrayed by a loved one. Realizing he was doomed, Herakles threw himself onto a funeral pyre. As the fire burned, his body ascended to Mount Olympus, where he would reside forever more as a god.

***Herakles was admired and worshipped by the Greeks as a model of virtue who had sacrificed both his personal comfort and his life in order to save his fellow men.***

Both Sophocles and Euripides wrote plays about Herakles, and folks never got tired of hearing about him. Because of the death-and-rebirth motif, his legend became associated with the Rites of Spring, and was often re-enacted as a sort of sacrificial "passion play". One version of it was regularly performed in Paul's home town of Tarsus, just as countless other cultures have celebrated the rebirth of the world by the sacrifice (symbolically or in fact) of a mock-king, after which the true king would be 'resurrected from the dead' to resume his crown.

As time went on, other favorite stories were modified and woven into the legends of Jesus. The god Mithra, who was extremely popular at the time, had been born in a cave of a virgin mother, had been killed and resurrected, his birthday was cele-

brated in late December, his followers partook of eucharistic meals, and his priests baptized with holy water.

It was routine for the birth of heroes (for example, Alexander and Augustus) to be accompanied by meteor showers or other spectacular portents — and a star was one of the symbols of both Ishtar and Astarte. Because various kinds of crosses had had magical significance from time immemorial (paleolithic cave etchings, the Egyptian Ankh, etc.) it was bruited about that Jesus had been nailed to a cross, rather than hung by his hands from a pole or a tree as was the usual practice.

Gradually, then, the pagan proselytes had a fable they could enjoy telling their children about, and a god they could admire and love, as exemplified by the following summary:

Mary, whose role as the Mother of Jesus gradually allowed her to replace Ishtar, Asherah, Astarte, Isis, and/or Aphrodite as Queen of the Heavens and Mother of God, had scarcely been betrothed before a winged-messenger arrived and informed her that the God of the Whole Universe would like to impregnate her before her husband had a crack at her. This was not the kind of offer a poor girl could refuse, so after the angel left(?) she was visited by a "holy spirit", which (according to some) appeared in the form of a dove, a symbol that just happened to be sacred to Ishtar. On discovering that she was pregnant, her husband Joseph should have cut off her nose and returned her to her parents, but before he could do so, the angel appeared to him in a dream and told him what was happening.

It is said that Joseph took the story in stride, but nevertheless he and Mary decided it would be best if they got out of town and went to Bethlehem, so that the prophecy of Micah might be fulfilled. There the baby Joshua was born in the humblest of circumstances—variously in a cave or a stable—even though the event had been heralded by the appearance of a super-nova immediately over the kid's cradle.

King Herod (not Queen Hera) got word that a new King of the Jews had just been born, so naturally he tried to have the baby killed, but once again an angel appeared and warned the parents to flee to Egypt, a place where Jews were especially hated. Eventually, Herod died; the Holy Family returned; and Jesus could get on with his Father's work.

We learn that by the time Joshua was twelve he was wise enough to discourse with the rabbits in the synagogue. Later, when

He allowed his cousin John (whose mother also had been visited by that mysterious angel) to baptize him, the sky opened up and a big voice proclaimed, "This is my own, my beloved son!"

Joshua went into the wilderness to think about that message, and in a slight variation on the Herakles theme, He was taken up onto a mountaintop for His battle of wills with Satan rather than going to hell, which took a lot more guts. Thereafter He devoted his life to performing miracles, curing the sick and lame; and asking nothing in return for himself. His followers proclaimed him (spiritual) King of the Jews. Finally, in keeping with the Heraklian theme, he was betrayed by a member of his beloved Gang of Twelve, allowed Himself to be sacrificed, and rose bodily up to Heaven.

Critics of early Christianity often pointed out to the Fathers of the Church the unoriginality of the Christ story, but eventually the Fathers thought of a perfect answer. They explained that the pagan rites and legends were clearly the work of the Devil, who had hoped to discredit Christianity by imitating it in advance.

The authors of the Jewish Talmud (Pharisees who probably were still smarting from having been called "whited sepulchers") told a completely different story. They recorded that Joshua was the illegitimate son of a hairdresser named Miriam; that he grew up to become a heretic (if not a complete lunatic) who announced that he was above the Law and claimed that he, himself, was God—a blasphemy for which he was fairly tried and then stoned to death, at a place called Lydda. The Talmud denies that the Romans had anything to do with his execution.

As had occurred in the writing of the Old Testament (and the stories about Herakles) dozens of aspiring novelists tried to make capital of this growing legend by publishing what came to be known as "gospels". None of the writers whose work has remained in print ever met Joshua, all but one of them having been born after the alleged crucifixion. Some scholars have speculated that the earliest of the authors, Mark, might have been a professional playwright, and that his gospel actually was a script for a passion play, patterned after those of Euripides and Sophocles.

With its more appealing mythology the new faith grew, but not nearly as rapidly as you might expect. Two possibilities stand out as probable explanations for its sluggish growth.

One is that the gospels, unlike Paul's earliest message, revealed that henceforth it would be necessary to earn one's salvation. The New Jesus made it clear that "not everyone who cries, 'Lord, Lord!' shall be saved, but those who do my word." He demanded that one must love not only his friends but also his enemies; turn the other cheek when slapped; allow thieves to take whatever they needed; let adulteresses go unpunished; and go to the aid not only of sinners but of lepers and other contagious persons.

One should judge not and should forgive all that others may do, but at the same time the true believer himself must abstain from all sin and iniquity; indeed, he should strive to be perfect. Even then, aspiring worshippers were told that many might be called, but few would be chosen, "for narrow is the gate and strait the path whereby one enters the Kingdom of God."

The second stumbling block was that, as Paul had feared, every preacher who came along proclaimed that his version of the message was the only accurate one. Each was jealous of increasing his following; and all of them wanted to be Bishops. Following Paul's example, the more successful Bishops threatened their followers with eternal damnation if they should let themselves be deceived by his guileful competitors. In ever more general ways, a promise of everlasting hellfire for the slightest transgression began to supplant the joyous promise of an immediate paradise that could be had virtually for the asking.

Many people were turned off by the new and more demanding Christianity, but those who went along with it became irretrievably trapped in a vicious cycle of sin and absolution, the first of which was unavoidable and the second of which was now in the hands of the priests. (As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be.) Still, for many of the downtrodden, for invalids and cripples, for slaves and women, the hope of a happy and pain-free after-life must have seemed better than nothing.

The Romans had always had a tough time tolerating Jews. The dogged belief of the Hebrews that theirs was the one and only god was more than merely insulting. It also meant that they refused to worship the Emperor, to observe Roman holidays, or to serve in the military. Christians were even worse. They could not be satisfied merely by their "right" to worship no God but their own. They figured everyone else should follow their example—just as they do today. They felt it their duty to proselytize among the pagans, to teach that all the Roman gods were false gods, and proclaim

that anyone who paid homage to them was doing the work of Satan.

More than once they were outlawed in Rome and in other parts of the empire. More than once they were executed for "treason against the state". Some of them apparently sought to be killed in the gladiatorial arena, because a gruesome and painful martyrdom was viewed as a sure sign of sublime devotion. So far did they go out of their way to incur the wrath of the government that, in Antioch, the Proconsul Antonius was prompted to ask, "Have they no ropes with which to hang themselves or cliffs to jump from?"

Ultimately, they were held in such general contempt that it was relatively easy for a fiend such as Nero to herd them into the arena as scapegoats for the burning of Rome, and at the end of the day set fire to a pile of them to furnish illumination during the night. Such treatment only served to confirm in the minds of survivors that they must be on the right path.

Despite such enthusiastic governmental support, and despite the ceaseless squabbling among the bishops, it is estimated that three centuries after the death of Joshua, only about 5% of the population of the Empire considered itself Christian. Those who did, however, quite literally belonged to the church. That was an almost unique feature of both Judaism and Christianity. Generally speaking, pagans did not 'belong' to a religion, nor did they have churches or synagogues to which they went for philosophical teaching or for a sense of brotherhood. Their religions consisted of propitiating the gods with offerings and sacrifices in times of trouble, and praying to the appropriate gods for special favors. Their priests served as paid intermediaries for seeing to it that the gods were made aware of the requests and offerings, for maintaining a home for the gods (the temples) and for keeping the gods well fed and oiled. The supplicants had to know which god to appeal to and how, and how to avoid angering some other god. None of that meant that they "belonged to" a particular faith, or that they owed allegiance to one particular God or fraternity.

Christians, however — like the Jews from whom they evolved — comprised a nation of spiritual patriots, who felt they owed allegiance to no other nation. Although that was the principal cause of the persecutions they suffered it also was their principal strength. As a nation they could exert power—and they could be manipulated. And so it came to pass.

In the year 313 A.D., the Emperor Constantine found it expedient to issue The Edict of Milan, which called for religious tolerance, and declared all religions equal under the law. Though he was at the time a worshipper of the sun god Apollo, he soon began to show an interest in Christianity, possibly because he recognized in its hierarchical organization a potentially useful source of power. Just ten years later, when his Co-Emperor, Licinius, initiated a minor persecution of Christians, Constantine came out foursquare on the side of the Christians and began to pass laws that favored them over other religions.

Having grown tired of the power of Rome, he decided to establish himself in the East, and to that end planned and built Constantinople on the shores of the Bosphorus, to serve as his new capital. With promises of support from the Bishops in his court, he formally converted to Christianity and almost immediately declared it the official state religion, although for political reasons he continued to have his image put on coins honoring Apollo, Mithra, Mars, Herakles, and Zeus. Having been advised that he could be saved through the ritual of baptism only once, he wisely postponed it until he was on his deathbed.

Constantine celebrated his conversion to the loving religion of Jesus and Paul by murdering his wife and his son, along with a nephew he just didn't like. He promised safety to Licinius if he would cede his power, and then promptly had Licinius and his son strangled. The Bishops were delighted. Things were beginning to go their way.

Up to that time (and beyond) the leaders of the church had never stopped arguing and fighting over the critical issue of whether the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost represented one, two, or three entities. Their behavior seemed so absurd that they had become the laughing stock of the pagans, who thought them either mad or drunk. So Constantine locked them in a room and told them they couldn't come out until they had reached an agreement. When that maneuver failed, the Emperor made it clear that in the future, he would decide matters of faith as the need arose, and anyone who contradicted him would be executed. That helped a little, but not much.

After Constantine died, his son Constantius murdered his two brothers and declared himself "Lord of the Universe", as well as "His Eternity". Constantius was successfully courted by the bishops and he soon decreed that Christianity was the only acceptable

religion. He ordered that all pagan temples be closed, and that performing any acts of piety therein would be punishable by death. The bishops continued to argue with each other, despite being banished, tortured, or executed by Constantius.

There followed a brief reign by the Emperor Lucian, who tried to reestablish both religious tolerance and public education, which probably would have been the end of Christianity. Unfortunately, Lucian was killed in battle after only twenty months in office and was succeeded by a Christian officer of the Guards. Following him, Theodosius the Great set in stone the future of Christianity and the Western World. He coaxed the bishops into line (more or less) by proclaiming in 380 A.D. that Yahweh the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Ghost were one and the same, and that anyone who thought otherwise was in serious trouble. Pagan temples were demolished and their earthly wealth and properties were seized by the Official Church. Anyone not embracing the Christian faith was to be put to death, and Theodosius conferred upon the bishops the authority to execute that penalty as they saw fit. They immediately slaughtered 3,000 pagans.

All of this gave the fledgling church a considerable boost, especially with respect to its recruitment programs. On one occasion 30,000 pagans simultaneously saw the light and were baptized in a single day. (Probably at the Circus.) The church's wealth and power began to rival that of the Egyptian priesthood. At last it was in a position to do the work that Jesus had intended when he assured Peter that "whatsoever you bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven."

Some of the first perils to be bound were the public schools, which had existed in every town of any size since the early days of the Empire. Their support was withdrawn and they were allowed to disappear. Soon, no schools existed other than seminaries.

Next came the books, all of which except the Testaments obviously being the work of pagans, if not Satan himself. Philosophy, history, medicine—none were to be trusted. In the East, it was decided that even the reading of the Holy Book could not be entrusted to the uninitiated.

Next came the Roman baths, and the whole concept of cleanliness, which were seen as self-indulgent, vain, and lascivious. Then came all remaining efforts at rationality and independent thought.

At last, the Kingdom of God was at hand. ►





## CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

*Enuf, Awreddy !*

Our politicians – and would be politicians – really should stop using "religious" issues in an effort to further their careers. Our first colonies started off as theocracies, and there's nothing to keep it from happening again. We could become another Iran.

Until now it has been easy enough for candidates to make radical promises to the religious right, because they knew they would not be able to keep them even if they tried. Lately, however, religious zealotry is becoming so popular that politicians may soon be hard put to find an excuse for not delivering on some of their promises.

You know the issues I mean: school prayer, religious clubs in schools, decoration of public buildings with Nativity scenes or other specific references to Christian traditions, tax-exempt status of churches, vouchers to help with tuition to religious schools, and so forth.

The zealots want to retain, reinstate, or expand all of those displays of religiosity; the Supreme Court has thus far taken a dim view of them, but it is beginning to lean a bit to the right.

Each side defends its position in the name of Freedom. Who is right?

If one reads editorials in the newspapers or listens to debates on television, he is apt to gain the impression that these are very difficult issues and that the positions government should take are not easy to decide. Advocates who are quite articulate, and who appear to be reasonably intelligent and well-educated people make it appear that equally cogent arguments can be made for either side. Among the electorate, arguments erupt, friends have fallings out, riots and fire-bombings occur. Government's role with respect to religion seems fraught with ambiguities.

The truth is quite the opposite. The answers to all of the arguments are childishly simple — and yet they almost never are mentioned in public debate. The reason for this paradox is that the people who engage in public debate are interested in capitalizing on the disputes, not resolving them. They wish to fan the emotions of the contestants, not calm them. They are, with rare exceptions, self-serving demagogues.

Unfortunately, once their followers become "invested" in one position or the other, it is not easy to admit that they have been misguided. Hence, they don't want to hear simple explanations that suggest the uproar has been much ado about nothing. And yet there is no other way of putting an end to these arguments—which, as I have said, are potentially very dangerous.

So let us look at some "simple" answers—with the full expectation that they immediately will be obfuscated in a dozen ingenious ways, until no one can remember that they ever were given voice.

What could be wrong with government supporting religion? It's as simple as 1, 2, 3.

**(1) Unbeknownst to a large number of Americans, Christianity is not the only religion.**

Which religion(s) shall government endorse? To which god(s) shall we all pay homage? Shall schoolchildren be encouraged to stop what they're doing five times a day, face Mecca, and get down on the floor and pray? Shall Native American schoolchildren be allowed to conduct Rain Dances in the school playground, or offer prayers to the Yei-People as they compose sandpaintings on the classroom floor? Shall the Drama Club be allowed to perform Hindu morality plays featuring the god Vishnu's incarnation as the amorous and erotic Krishna, darling of the milkmaids? Shall Buddhist monks come into the schools to conduct chants, explain why it is folly to long for individual immortality, and teach that the first task of an adult is to lose all desire for material possessions?

No. The assumption is that this is a Christian nation.

Well, anyway, we all believe in the same God, right?

Christians are, by definition, people who believe that Jesus Christ was a manifestation of God.

Muslims believe that Jesus was a prophet but not an incarnation of God, and they have a different bible and follow a different prophet.

Jews believe that Jesus – if he existed at all – was neither God nor the Messiah, but a heretic.

And, although the numbers may be small, our fellow citizens in the United States include Buddhists, Hindus, Unitarians, Native Americans, Agnostics, and Atheists.

Well, those people be damned! They don't have to take part in our prayers and ceremonies if they don't want to.

"Our?" Who does that word exclude? Which Americans are not part of "us"?

The point is that not all religious people believe in or care to believe in the divinity of Christ. This nation is not the private property of Christians.

**(2) We do not live in a democracy, and you should thank your God (whoever He is) that we don't.**

The Christian fundamentalist tends to think that anyone who is not a Christian is an atheist, or perhaps a Jew, which he figures is pretty much the same thing. But even if there are non-Christians who think of themselves as religious, their presence should not deter "us" from promoting Christianity, for each non-Christian group comprises a very small minority, and after all, is this not a Democracy? Should not the majority rule? Should not the minorities accept the will of the majority or go find a country more to their liking?<sup>50</sup>

No. This is not a Democracy, nor was it meant to be. This is a Constitutional Republic. It is true that the officers of our government are elected in accordance with how many votes they receive, but it is the duty of elected officials to respect and protect the rights not only of minorities, but of each individual. What are those rights? Why, quite simply, they are the same as all the rights enjoyed by members of the majority.

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<sup>50</sup> Just before this went to press a Federal Court found in favor of a self-styled atheist that school prayer was unconstitutional. A woman wrote to the atheist, saying, "You communist bastard; get out of *my* country."

Look at it this way. Suppose you have a nice home and a good job that promises a bright future. You are an engineer at a large oil refinery. An Arab conglomerate buys out your firm and begins to replace the leadership and many other positions with Arabs and Arab-Americans. Your community is a small one and in a few years a majority of the residents are Muslims. The community has long had a tradition of including religion in the school curriculum. The new majority decides that those teachings should be in accordance with Muhammad and the Koran.

Meanwhile, a recession has fallen on the land; unemployment is way up, job opportunities are way down. You have children in the Muslim dominated schools. What do you do?

If your children participate in the Muslim teachings, their adherence to your faith is threatened. If they do not participate, they are shunned and ridiculed, possibly threatened.

(As I wrote this, I was aware that somewhere in Mississippi a young boy was being taunted as a "devil-worshiper" and "atheist". Violent threats were being made against his mother because she had permitted her son to decline to participate in prayers or other religious activities supported (illegally) by the community's Baptist majority. This young boy and his mother professed to be Christians, but in fact they are *Lutherans*—clearly some sort of heathen cult so far as Mississippians are concerned.)

In your case, what do you do? Let your kids become Muslims? You can move; you can give up your life's work; you might send your children to live with a relative, or to a boarding school. But is it fair that you have to take those steps? Should your government have allowed this to happen to you?

**The point is, there can be no freedom of religion unless there is freedom *from* religion.** That is why the Constitution forbids any laws respecting the establishment of religion—that is to say, no State Religion, which implies no State endorsement or selective support of any religion.

You have been taught that this country was founded by people who were fleeing persecution because they were members of religious minorities. That's partly true. The full truth is not taught because textbook writers still are afraid of defaming God or Country. The truth is that the Pilgrims, who leaned in the direction of Calvinism rather than Anglicanism, were ridiculed and publicly castigated (like that young boy in Mississippi) but not otherwise

persecuted. Some of the Puritans *were* physically persecuted, but less for their Calvinist views than because of their political activities. They had agitated for the removal of Queen Elizabeth — who apparently did not wish to be removed.

Anyway, part of the reason the Pilgrims and Puritans came to the New World and established settlements in New England is that they wanted to practice their religion without governmental interference.

***But in no way did they long for religious freedom. From the very beginning, they established "theocracies"—such as exists today in Iran.***

In some of the colonies, the de facto leader of each community was the Preacher. It was taken for granted that there would be only one religion. No other profession of religion was allowed. Citizenship was limited to members of the one and only Church. Blasphemers were severely punished or banished. Members of alien faiths (such as Quakers) were not allowed to enter such colonies, and if they returned after being twice expelled, they were *executed*. Witches were hunted and burned. You can imagine what they would have done to a Roman Catholic priest.

Those situations prevailed in Massachusetts and Connecticut for more than fifty years. Further south, the *Anglicans* ruled in Virginia and the Carolinas, but their condemnation of religious freedom was exactly the same, and it lasted twice as long. The only difference was that in Virginia, it was understood that Episcopalians were the only true Christians.

It can happen here. It did. Do you want to see it repeated?

Those were reasons 1 and 2. Here is Number 3:

**(3) Religion in the United States is thriving; it does not need State support. If something is not “broke”, don’t try to fix it.**

**When a government selectively supports one religion, or one God, it has begun to support tyranny.**

*I have sworn upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man.*

*Thomas Jefferson*

That sentence is from a letter sent to Benjamin Rush, in which Jefferson was railing at the behavior of certain religious zealots, and explaining his antipathy to the establishment of a “State religion”.

The quotation is now inscribed in the cupola of the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C.

As visitors to the shrine gaze admiringly at those words, it is unlikely that very many of them realize that Jefferson was thinking of *religion* when he referred to “tyranny over the minds of men.”

## CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

*So Help Me, God*

Religion ought to be good for people. It can pardon the unpardonable, console the inconsolable, explain the inexplicable, promise the impossible, and afford regular opportunities for meeting members of the opposite sexes.

Actually, it offers benefits much more important than any of those, and if you had been paying attention you'd know what they are.

1. It affords a tribal sense of identity — "I am a Jew; I am a Muslim; I am a Born-again Hottentot."
2. Each time the believer attends a meeting at one of God's Houses or hears a sermon by a Revered Beta, he is reminded that he is a member of an exalted group, a Chosen People. Not only does he belong, he belongs to the best!
3. If he is lucky, he may enjoy a few moments of "camaraderie" with other members of the congregation.
4. The true believer gains a "portable" sense of security, because each religious tribe is blessed with an infinitely wise and powerful Alpha who will protect His followers from demons and other predators. He will see to it that they never go hungry and always lie down in the pasture on the greener side of the fence. In times of danger, He will bring all other tribes to their knees.
5. Each believer feels that he has a special relationship with Alpha. God is an intimate friend who reassures him that he is not alone, not unloved, not abandoned. God loves him!
6. God's love (or even His rage) is proof of the believer's significance and importance. Why else would an Omnipotent Ruler be so concerned with the intimate details of his life?
7. If the believer's life (until now) has been characterized by pain, penury, and misfortune, that is only temporary — for no Alpha worth his salt would allow a loyal follower to go unrewarded. Valhalla is just around the corner.



8. As the evidence becomes undeniable that many loyal believers go to their graves unrewarded, the only logical conclusion is that the reward must come after death. So much the better; it is worth putting up with misery here on Earth if that will achieve an escape from death.

***Prestige and power, membership in a select tribe, camaraderie, intimacy, love, and life ever-lasting! What can be wrong with that?***

Maybe nothing. As I said at the beginning, religion ought to be good for people.

So what if the ultimate promise cannot be kept? No one will ever know about it, and as they say, what you don't know can't hurt you. That's why proponents of religion keep saying that faith is a "win/win situation".

But that's only true if your only interest in life is death. Does the believer always win in the life that precedes death? And if so, what does he win?

If his faith is strong enough and deep enough, he will always know that every detail of his life has a purpose. If he is born into wealth and power in a world where others are sick and starving, then that is God's will. If he is a penniless, misshapen peasant with no chance of advancement, that, too, is God's will. If the rich and the poor are separated by an unbridgeable chasm, has it not always been so, and must that not be the way God ordained it?

If his children die of malnutrition during an endless war, or if they die because of a toy the manufacturer knew was dangerous, the child's death had to be part of God's plan. If everything the believer owns is taken by fire or by a swindler, God was trying to tell him something.

If his nation is ruled by a demented, demonic Ayatollah who decapitates those who sin against his vision of the righteous path, then surely the Learned Holy Man must be obeying the Word of God. If the Pope blesses a Crusade or an Inquisition, or the Patriarch blesses a pogrom against the Jews or gypsies, why should the believer lose sleep over it?

Should beliefs such as those be viewed as costs or as benefits? Surely the believer is spared the anguish of grieving over life's inevitable horrors — but is it possible that his beliefs are part of the reason some of those horrors are inevitable? Is it possible that

his faith-induced tranquility gives license to the Manipulators who try to rob others of their fair share of life's beauty and bounty?

There probably are varieties of religious experience that would, in a state of nature, come naturally. Some of those experiences would occur only in the mind of the individual. Others might be shared with close friends or within the "tribe". But if more than one tribe is to share a belief system for long periods of time, if some "ultimate truth" is to be preserved and propagated, someone must monitor the system. Someone must teach the new initiates what they must believe.

An organized religion requires leaders, and those leaders must be granted the power to do their jobs. And therein lies the rub, for corrupt people will always be among those who seek great power, and good people will always be corrupted by it. The latter phenomenon is certainly another expression of God's will.

*If a Leader is to lead in a Great Cause, it becomes his sacred duty to see to it that "no jot or tittle of the law go unfulfilled." If followers begin to stray from the path or from the flock, the Leader must do whatever is necessary to bring them back, for the price of perdition is too high!*

Once a flock becomes very large, a Leader can lead only if the followers are taught, and then teach each other, to follow willingly.

As Albert Einstein put it, "To be an immaculate member of a flock of sheep, one must – above all – be a sheep."

Finally, it must be admitted that a good shepherd will generally take good care of his sheep, but when it pleases him he also may give them a painful screwing, and when all is said and done he invariably uses them for his own personal satisfaction.

That's the sort of thing a devout believer simply cannot believe. ►

The person who delegates all of his power to someone else simultaneously renounces all *responsibility*. Therein lies our attraction to tyranny — and it helps to explain the passivity so often displayed in the face of it.

CHAPTER THIRTY

*Gimme That Ole Time Religion*

The Original Morality, of course, would have been The Gene Commandments. These are few in number and easy to remember, because they are burnt into our DNA.

At the most basic level, there are only two:

- (1) Stay alive.
- (2) Have as many descendants as you can.

Ah, if only things could remain that simple! Immediately, we are confronted with conditions, exceptions, and caveats.

First of all, you can see that there will be times when those two commandments conflict with each other. If that should occur, the second commandment should take precedence. Descendants are the bottom line, so save your children even if it costs your life. That is, if you're a woman or a very old man. (It is not economical for a young man to sacrifice himself for one or two of his children, because he still has time to produce a much larger number.)

Secondly, you will recall that it is not possible for our genes to explain to us the ultimate objectives or 'purposes' of the drives they activate within us — mainly because they don't know.

Because our genes are brainless, an instinctive morality could not be predicated on what we thought we were trying to accomplish. It had to be reduced to "do this" and "do that", without a thought for long-term objectives. For example:

- Do whatever you have to do to avoid pain.
- Do whatever is required to relieve thirst and hunger, preferably before they become painful.
- If you're a Man, copulate with as many mature females as you can. If other men are in the neighborhood, do not allow them access to your females.

- If you're a Woman, try to maintain the interest of any men you find attractive or believe to be potentially useful, but do so in ways that will not provoke the fury of other males who think you belong to them.
- If you have young children or if you're pregnant, do whatever you have to do to seduce one or more males (or your tribe) to help support you and your children.
- If you deliver a live baby, allow it to suckle, and protect and nurture it as best you can.
- Man or Woman, strive to belong to a 'tribe' and develop a 'tit-for-tat' relationship with its members, or at least with the 'important' members.
- Identify with your Tribe; help protect it; and be wary of other tribes.

\* \* \*

As you can see, it's already becoming tedious, and we still haven't offered any practical guidelines for achieving all those goals.

**Here are eight helpful hints:**

- (1) Be patriotic, and you will be rewarded with pride and a sense of belonging.
- (2) Be provincial and clannish, and you will be rewarded with a sense of security.
- (3) Fight for what you want, both as part of your tribe and as an individual within it.
- (4) Compete within your tribe for power and prestige, preferably by fair means. (Use trickery and deception only when you're sure it won't be discovered.)
- (5) Strive to be (or seem to be) whatever the opposite sex cannot resist.
- (6) Produce children, and urge them to produce children.
- (7) Be greedy. Eat more than you need whenever you have the chance, because the time may come when you go hungry.
- (8) Have fun! Groom and be groomed, hug and kiss, tease and play, scuffle and tussle, but make up with your friends and allies before going to bed.

**QUESTION:** "But what about The Ten Commandments?"

**ANSWER:** Eight is enough.

**FOLLOW-UP:** "No, no! Moses' Ten Commandments! What's wrong with them as a moral code?"

**ANSWER:** Well, in the first place, ten is too many to remember.<sup>51</sup> Nobody can keep that many rules in his head. I find, for example, that I have to go back and re-read them almost every time I need a loophole to excuse some wretched deed I've just committed, and half the time I can't even find my Bible.

Secondly, some of Moses' commandments are either obsolete or unenforceable, and a number of them are clearly unconstitutional. For instance, we now know that the world was not created in six days, so keeping the seventh day holy in a pretense that it was seems vaguely dishonest. Commanding that no work be done one day a week exposes doctors and hospitals to unacceptable levels of liability, and being held accountable for work done on the Sabbath by your son or daughter, a visitor within your gates, and even your cattle, is an excessive burden.

Honoring one's father is becoming increasingly difficult because so few people know who he is. Placing "other gods" before (or besides) Jehovah is moot, inasmuch as there are no other gods. The prohibition against making graven images or likenesses of anything "above or below" constitutes an obvious restraint of trade with respect to graphic artists.

Forbidding people to "covet" is a blatant attempt at thought control, and executing people for coveting is cruel and unusual. Anyway, it is impossible to enforce a law against wishing.

"Visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third or fourth generations" may have made some kind of sense to someone three thousand years ago, but today it is a clear violation of the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Fourteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution.

The biggest problem with The Ten Commandments, and with the entire Old Testament for that matter, is that all of it was written by and for a small group of males who were even more unbearably

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<sup>51</sup> The eight I just listed do not have to be 'remembered'. All you have to do is slip into your genes and get comfortable.

arrogant, chauvinistic, sexist, self-serving, and superstitious than the guys you went to school with.

For example, they agreed (tongue in cheek, I'm sure): "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife." How come nothing was said about a woman coveting her neighbor's husband?

"You must not permit your son, daughter, guest, or servants to work on the Sabbath." Hey, what about your wife?

All of those self-styled holy men habitually thought of women as chattel. Females were unclean, inferior beings. God had no interest in their prayers, and it was quite out of the question for them to be allowed to enter the temple or participate in religious affairs.

Every morning, a properly religious Jewish man was required to say a little prayer to "thank God for not having made him a Gentile, a slave, or a woman." I mean, those guys probably banned the eating of pigs because it felt too much like cannibalism.

Immediately following the Ten Commandments, we read the following filth:

If a man gives his slave a wife and she bears him children, the wife and the children shall remain the property of the master when the slave has earned his freedom.

"When a man sells his daughter as a slave," and her new master is not pleased with her, the customer has a right to demand his money back, but he is not allowed to sell her to a foreigner.

If a woman is injured by another man, her husband will be paid a penalty!

"If a man seduces a virgin," he is obliged to buy her and keep her as a wife, whether she likes it or not. But if her father doesn't approve of the marriage, then the seducer pays Daddy the going price for a virgin bride and the two men call it a deal.

On the other hand, "Whoever curses his Father or Mother shall be put to death."

The morality of the Old Testament should induce nausea in all but idiots, sadists, and attorneys. Aside from its world-beating male sexism and ethnic arrogance, its prescriptions reek of blood-letting, genocide, mayhem, slavery, child sacrifice, and assorted war crimes.

Business law is spelled out in great detail and a different fine is specified for every violation, but the punishment for almost any deviation from religious ritual is death.

And yet, after forbidding the making of graven images (which traditionally were designed to help people remember who they were worshipping) God spent a couple of hours in the role of interior decorator, telling Moses exactly how to build and decorate a Temple — listing all the rare and expensive woods to use, describing the rich fabrics and colors for the drapes, specifying precisely how to make a throne for God to sit on and an Ark in which to store his ridiculous tablets, weighing out the amount of gold to use in lining those objects and in making handles for them, naming the brand of olive oil that must be used in the lamps, and detailing what sorts of raiment, jewelry, and armor must be provided for the High Priest and his sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

Warming to His subject, God further requested that rams, lambs, and bulls be gutted, dismembered, and burned on the altar, but only after first using some of the blood to paint the tips of the right ears, right thumbs, and right great toes of Aaron and his sons, and then "throwing the rest of the blood against the altar round about."

The fat of the kidneys and of the entrails, the lobe of the liver, and the dung from the intestines were to be burned separately, praise God.

Nevertheless, to the everlasting credit of those sun-crazed barbarians, it must be noted that they were required to wash their hands and feet before toting sacrifices into the Lord's Tent — under pain of death.

Naturally.

Twentieth century folk are too busy for that kind of stuff. I mean, morality can be overdone. People nowadays realize they need to lighten up.



*“I think that I had better bathe before I drink the poison,  
and not give the women the trouble of washing my body.”*

***Socrates***

## CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

✠ *GHOST STORIES* ✠

The wish to "lighten up" (religiously speaking) might explain why 69% of modern Americans believe in angels. Angels are airy, insubstantial beings who are forever young and beautiful, and they hardly ever have a heavy or negative thought. Lucifer was an angel.

Originally, angels came in all sizes and shapes, and some of them were formidable and demonic in nature. They were nearly always masculine, and in the early eons of the world's existence they were best known for their habit of descending to Earth to mate with human females, "whom they found fair". It was only during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance that artists, some of whom had a thing about fairies and others of whom were closet pornographers, began to portray angels as small boys and pre-pubescent girls who were completely naked.

The type of angel most people believe in is the guardian angel. When you notice what's going on around you every day, it's easy to understand why most people would want to believe that somebody is watching over them, protecting them from their own incompetence and clumsiness.

In some ways, angels are even better than shamans, because you're unable to see their feet of clay. On the other hand, you can't punish or kill your guardian angel the way you could a real-life shaman—although until very recently many people tried.<sup>52</sup>

The reason I bring this up is that one of my Editors keeps nagging me to say something about the immortal soul. I have not been anxious to do this, because I feel that far too much has been said

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<sup>52</sup> Simple folk in Europe (Catholics, mostly) occasionally remove the statues (effigies) of their patron saints from their accustomed places in the church and dunk them in the river, clap them in irons, or otherwise torture them when the saints have fallen down on their jobs—for example, during an extended drought.

already about so nebulous a topic. Nevertheless, I cannot deny that our study of evolution would be incomplete without considering the development of souls.

No one knows for sure at what point souls evolved during the two billion years of life on our planet. It is, however, an issue that presents almost limitless opportunities for conjecture.

Do oysters have souls? If so, what happens after we eat them?<sup>53</sup> Do spiders have souls, and do poisonous spiders go to hell if they bite someone? What about sharks and mosquitoes, and the amoebae that cause dysentery — do they have souls?

It has been calculated that there are nine hundred quintillion ants in the world (of at least 1400 different species). Does each individual ant have a tiny little soul, or — since thousands of them live in total symbiosis — is only one soul allotted to each nest? Or none of the above?

Of course, most true-blue Christians believe that only humans are blessed with an immortal soul, except for Christian dogs and cats who live indoors.<sup>54</sup> I personally find that position much better than having to imagine three or four billion insect souls going to heaven or hell (or somewhere) every day and maybe three or four trillion bacteria and viruses giving up their ghosts.

And that reminds me! I suppose I should differentiate souls from ghosts, spirits, and shades, but I haven't the foggiest idea how to do it, so we will forget that idea and proceed with others that are even more preposterous.

If only people have souls, then we still are faced with a puzzle. At what point during human evolution did we acquire them?

Did souls evolve slowly over many thousands of years, or did a sudden mutation occur in one individual?

If the latter, its rapid spread indicates it must have been carried by a dominant gene, but that leaves us to wonder why much of the Orient is still unsouled. Another interesting question is whether the soul-gene was originally located on the Y-chromosome, thus ac-

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<sup>53</sup> An oyster spawns 500 million babies a year. Although all but a few are devoured in no time at all, each of the 500 million must have had a soul for that brief moment. Is there a limbo for baby oysters?

<sup>54</sup> Alley cats and stray dogs do not have immortal souls. Whether they or other creatures have mortal souls is of no interest to anyone.

counting for the widespread perception that until recently only men had souls.<sup>55</sup>

If souls evolved gradually, one would like to know if the very earliest versions were truly immortal or merely endowed with a substantial half-life.

Were those immature souls equally vulnerable to eternal bliss or damnation, or were they dispatched to some neutral ground, taking cognizance of their lack of sophistication?

We know that Cro-Magnon had a soul because he placed flowers in the graves of the deceased, and the fact that Neanderthal Man removed the bone marrow from his beloved before burial tells us something. But going further down our family tree, what can we say about *Homo erectus*, *Homo habilis*, *Australopithecus*, and so on, back to the very moment our line split off from the one, which led to the chimps?

And do chimpanzees have souls — even though they don't wear pants? Or is that an absolute prerequisite?

Then there are questions as to where souls come from and where they go. If a soul is destined to live forever and ever, can it have had a beginning? Some say no; they argue that every soul has existed within God since the beginning of time. One assumes that a soul (or perhaps a fragment of some conglomerate super-soul) is inserted by God into each new human being at some critical juncture after the union of two germ cells. Whether that occurs immediately, or only some weeks or months later, was the subject of hot debate during the closing years of the Twentieth Century, *Anno Domini*.

Does God select a soul randomly from the top of the pile, or does He choose each new soul in accordance with some overall plan, or perhaps with some inscrutable case-by-case objective? Are all souls initially identical, or is there a cafeteria of souls of infinite variety and quality, from which God methodically selects

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<sup>55</sup> Female souls first appeared among the followers of Joshua of Nazareth, and rapidly spread among Christians. No doubt the soul-gene had become unlinked from the Y-chromosome during the process of germ-cell recombination -- starting, of course, with just one woman. (Mary Magdalene?) However, until just twenty or thirty years ago, the gene seemed to exhibit reduced expressivity in individuals who lacked a Y-chromosome, thus accounting for the persistence of second class souls in women.

in order to reward or punish the parents of each new child, or contrariwise, from which he arbitrarily or perversely selects, in order to avoid any semblance of logic or method and thereby keep mankind off-balance and baffled? Do identical twins have to share a soul?

Most Christians believe they will be happy after they die, but surprisingly, most are not eager to die, even though they may rue the day they were born. (Muslims are different in this regard.)

Odder still, most will say they are happy to be alive — even as they admit that their lives are not happy. Some lives, however, are made happy by the faith that happiness will come when it's finally over.

The Pleasure Principle — which is based on the indisputable tendencies of all sensate beings to seek pleasure and avoid pain — should guarantee that if an individual learns that life is fraught with pain, whereas death is a source of unceasing pleasure, the individual should seek death and avoid life. For thinking animals (which may include some humans) that would appear to be the intelligent course of action. Astonishingly, it is ordinarily judged to be just the opposite. On the rare occasions that humans voluntarily end their lives because of mere unhappiness, their decisions are viewed as stupid, senseless, or insane.

***Either the Pleasure Principle is flawed, or there is some secret pleasure in being alive that outweighs the net pain involved in living.***

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The fact that pleasure is evolution's way of rewarding (and thereby assuring) the satisfaction of vital needs should help us solve this puzzle.

We learned in *Chimpanzees Don't Wear Pants* (in fact, you figured it out on your own) that people have a need to like themselves — or failing that, at least to value themselves. We saw that if they did not care about themselves, they would not be inclined to care for themselves as diligently as persons who esteemed themselves more highly, and consequently would be at a competitive disadvantage in the struggle against genetic extinction.

The practical advantages that can accrue from high self-esteem, elevated status vis-à-vis one's fellows, and the power to control

one's fate, are self-evident. But as we have reminded ourselves over and over, our genes cannot guide our behavior by dangling in front of us distant objectives and ultimate purposes.

Therefore, self-esteem, prestige, and power, must be their own reward! That is to say, they must bring immediate pleasure, of and by themselves, irrespective of their end effects.

**You knew this all along — but I must tell you again, anyway:**

- **To hold oneself in high esteem is intensely pleasurable.**
- **To fall into a state of extremely low self-esteem is intensely painful.**

By definition, people who do not esteem themselves do not value themselves, do not consider themselves important, and do not greatly care what happens to them. In a last ditch struggle to avoid that unbearable state, they may be driven to desperate measures to prove their value – such as suicide. (They will be "missed" after they're gone.) Alternatively, they may commit acts of violence against others in order to demonstrate that they are important. (Hitler exercised both those options.) Or, if they are beyond caring, they may just sit and stare at the floor, fail to eat or sleep, or allow themselves to be housed in mental institutions.

Before reaching such points, the techniques which may be used to enhance or maintain self-esteem are generally much less sensational. You will recall that one may actually achieve the objective characteristics of lofty status or merely cultivate an image of being a lofty person. Consequently, whether in the eyes of others or in his own eyes alone, one may hope to enhance his self-esteem by being physically strong, beautiful, sexy, or clever ... knowledgeable, politically powerful, sexy, or clever ... reliable, resourceful, sexy, or clever ... brave, generous, fearless, sexy, or clever ... or demanding, ruthless, homicidal, and psychotic.

Oddly enough, people can also score esteem-points by feeling misunderstood, misjudged, neglected, abused, or self-sacrificing.

High on the list of proofs of one's importance is the knowledge that one is liked, loved, or respected — and that's where souls come in.<sup>56</sup>

The fact that one has been "endowed" with something (anything) suggests that he must have a role to play.

To be endowed by an almighty God with an immortal soul indisputably indicates that one is of great personal significance. To believe that one's soul will someday be judged on its merits by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Universe is awesome in its implications.

One must have been "put here" for a purpose! There had to be a very important reason for being granted not just a life, but two lives, one of them actually interminable. For better or for worse, each soul will have an impact in that Great Spiritual Gathering Place in the Sky. When we have shuffled off these mortal coils, the role each person has played will be revealed as having been just as important as anyone else's.

People are heard to say, "The fact that I cannot guess what God's purpose is for me, my life, and my immortal soul, is all the more reason to believe He has one. God would not have caused me all this trouble unless He needed something from me. I feel certain that when I die He will want to hear some sort of report from me. Because my soul came from heaven, God will take it back to heaven, just as we return a rental car to the airport. God is counting on me!"

Most devout Christians believe, in their secret heart-of-hearts, that they will go to Heaven after they die. And that's what is so nice about having a soul; it is the soul that makes it possible for us to go to heaven.

Going to Heaven is considered a privilege and an honor, and by most it is thought of as a "reward". It signifies that God appreciates all the neat things we have done during our lifetime and all the good times we have missed out on in our efforts to please Him.

Fortunately, we don't really have to do a lot to earn a spot in Heaven. It is generally sufficient merely to *be* certain things, that

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<sup>56</sup> Gotcha! You were sure that this time I had forgotten what I was supposed to be talking about. But I hadn't; I had just temporarily lost interest. Anyway, we're still talking about souls.

is, to be characterized by certain attributes — whether we were blessed with those attributes or acquired them through indolence. For example, it is widely considered advantageous to be poor, ignorant, simple, meek, obedient, and faithful.

**The bottom line, however, is this: Any person important enough to have his personality preserved for all eternity, and good enough to bask in the company of the God of The Entire Universe, must be an extremely important and valuable person!**

To deprive the world, or oneself, of the presence of such a treasure would be unthinkable, to say nothing of the fact that it would be against God's wishes and might hurt like the devil.

No matter how insignificant a person's life may appear to be, no matter how wretched his circumstances, no matter how great his pain, he can find solace in the existence of his soul. If he also has a Guardian Angel, so much the better.

One should not conclude, however, that souls are sought after and cherished only by individuals who are unable to *earn* their self-esteem, prestige, and power. Quite the reverse. The rich and powerful, the famous and talented, the self-enamored of all sorts, have much more at stake; they have much more to lose by being dead. And if their leadership, wealth, or wisdom has created a sufficient degree of fear or dependence in their followers, the latter also may dread to hear that "the King is dead!"

The fact is, souls were invented by and for the most powerful members of society.

When a hotshot stopped moving, people were afraid to believe that the venerable (and supposedly invulnerable) Leader of the Clan had really died. That anxiety later was made use of by subsequent Chiefs, Kings, Pharaohs, and other psychopaths.

Men who possessed neither title nor talent, who were neither worshipped nor held in awe, had to await the invention of money before they could aspire to joining the company of the immortals. Women had to wait a great deal longer. As common people learned to worship gold, individuals who had acquired uncommon wealth found that an immortal soul came with it. All they needed to do was provide for its care and feeding after they were gone — or as our modern cemeteries promise, in perpetuity.



Although ordinary mortals in ancient Egypt and other places of antiquity may secretly have dreamt of their own personal immortality, it was not until Christianity was well entrenched that every man and woman was issued a soul—except for pagans and aborigines, who would not receive a soul until they were converted.

And so it has come to pass that, in our own era, anyone who isn't frightened by the thought of having an immortal soul, has available to him a marvelous source for adding to his self-esteem, his sense of security, and the illusion that he, or she, is loved.

That's hard to beat. Being loved, I mean.

Some say that love makes the world go 'round. To see if that's an exaggeration, we shall now turn our attention to LOVE.

## Introduction to Part Five

*SEX is a Four-Letter Word*

We customarily refer to it as LOVE.

When we speak *of making love, falling in love, having a Lover*, what we're really talking about is SEX.

On the other hand, LOVE is not *always* a three-letter word. We can love our children, love our parents, or love an old friend, without necessarily experiencing sexual desire.

In highly informal situations, we also may speak directly about sex. Someone can be perceived as sexy, give good sex, dream of sex, be sex-starved or sex-crazed.

Our obsessions with sex and love can manipulate us in several ways. Most commonly, the manipulative force originates *within* our own bodies and minds. The desire for sexual satisfaction (*or for a sense of "conquest"*) can cause us to throw caution to the winds and engage in conduct that we know we may later regret.

Furthermore, when we perceive (or imagine) that we are desired by another, we become much more vulnerable to flattery and deception, making non-rational behavior virtually inevitable.

Obviously, the decisions we make as a result of such events can have lasting effects on our lives — marriage, divorce, children, disease, damage to our reputations. The following chapters examine why we are so easily led astray.

**In addition, our cravings for sex and love allow us to be manipulated by others for commercial purposes.** Advertisements for cosmetics, clothing, weight loss formulas, and chemical aphrodisiacs are obvious examples. But images of 'beauty' and 'manliness' (and downright sexual displays) are used to sell virtually *everything* — from apples to automobiles.

And yet, within our capacity for *compassion* (another form of love) may be found our best hope for reducing some of the ills examined in this book. We are, after all, *social animals*. We still yearn to belong to a 'tribe', and we still are capable of altruistic

acts that we think will benefit the tribe and — just incidentally — enhance our prestige and self-esteem.

The ‘trick’ will be to teach our children that everyone in the world is a member of our tribe. This was discussed at length in *Chimpanzees Don’t Wear Pants*.

For the moment, however, we are going to discuss “one-on-one love”, if you will excuse that expression.

If it be true that love makes the world go ‘round, *then love must be the ultimate Manipulator!*

— - —

***“And love is a thing that can never go wrong —  
And I am Marie of Romania.”***

Dorothy Parker

## CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

☺ *Love, Love, Love* ☺

Everybody wants it; almost every popular song claims to be about it; poets and novelists are obsessed with it; and nowadays scientists are trying to analyze it chemically. But what is it?

By and large, what these people are searching for is a delicious, delirious, and delusional state of mind and body more accurately referred to as "falling in love". It seems to come about in several different ways. Some of the possibilities are these:

(1) You make eye contact with a person you scarcely know, and your imagination tells you he or she is admiring you. Naturally, that raises your opinion of the other person, and a cycle of mutual admiration sets in. His or her eyes seem to say, "My God; it's you; you are the one! You were made for me and I for you, and at last we have found each other. You are so gorgeous I could just eat you up!" The two of you know absolutely nothing about each other's cultural backgrounds, irritating habits, criminal records, or degree of infectiousness. All you know for sure is that you're falling in love. What has happened is that you have caught sight of a person who looks the way you would like to look if you were of the opposite sex. Or maybe he or she reminds you of something about your Mama, your Papa, your pet dog or cat, or your favorite food.

(2) You are feeling mellow one day and you get to talking to a total stranger who seems to listen to every word you say. He or she (henceforth known as 'they') actually seems to find you fascinating! They smile warmly in response to your attention, frown sympathetically at the sad parts of your story, laugh engagingly at your little witticisms, and urge you to tell them more. They move closer so as not to miss a word, and seem to grow steadily more relaxed and entertained. None of that has ever happened to you before in your life, so of course this must be love. Then you notice

how beautiful the other person is, what fine principles they have, and how many other things the two of you have in common.

(3) After work one evening, you're feeling so horny you're almost afraid to go out on the street. Riding down on the elevator, a perfect doll belonging to one of the opposite sexes makes bodily contact with you somewhere in your lower regions. You almost move away, but then you realize that they don't seem to mind. You notice that your touch-mate smells just wonderful, and you fear you're going to faint. As the lift stops, he, or she, turns toward you and says, "Has your day been as bad as mine?"—accompanied with a smile that clearly communicates, "Wouldn't you like to go somewhere cozy and have a couple of drinks?" So you suggest it and he/she accepts. You are about to fall in love.

(4) You bump into each other on a Caribbean cruise, and there can't be more than twenty years difference in your ages. Surely, destiny has brought you together, because although you're the only two singles on the boat, it's simply weird how compatible you are. A similar miracle may occur in the following fashion: You work on a project for many months with just this one other person of an appropriate gender. Gradually, during idle moments, you begin to share some of your deepest thoughts and feelings. You begin to comment on the amazing fact that there you are, thrown together by sheer chance, and yet you're so sympatico it's as if you've known each other forever! As you recount to each other the little weaknesses and faults of your spouses or current steadies, it is so fantastic that your listener has none of those traits. "I'll bet you're also great in bed!"

Pseudo-scientists say that by the time the above scenarios have evolved, your body and brain are awash in natural amphetamines, opiates, oxytocin, testosterone, and/or estrogens. I wouldn't doubt it; your genes (and your Id) are so determined that you copulate as often as your Super-Ego will allow, they certainly are not going to balk at narcotizing your Ego if that's what it takes.

**As your temperature rises, your genes are trembling in your jeans, just dying to start a whole new life!**

**SO HERE'S WHY YOU FALL IN LOVE:** Mother Evolution found it a fantastically effective method for getting you to make babies, so she made it intensely pleasurable! It feels so good you can hardly stand it. That's why you do it.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

*Cat Tales*

When a pussycat is in heat she behaves as if she were not merely uncomfortable, but insane. She drags her bottom along the ground and caterwauls — whence cometh that expression.

The pussy cat may or may not know that she craves sexual union with a tomcat, but she almost certainly does not know that she is about to launch an initiative that will result in two months of pregnancy, followed by more kittens to suckle. If she were aware of those facts she would go hide in a garbage dump until she's out of the mood.

It's like a bad dream. As the pussy goes into heat she produces an aromatic substance, called a pheromone, which tomcats can smell from as far away as Kansas. The first two toms to arrive at the source of the perfume will fight until one of them hurts so bad he can't stand it, after which he will limp all the way back to Topeka, unless he is diverted by a different pheromone.

The victorious tomcat will ignore his own wounds long enough to couple with the female, who — in spite of her sense of urgency — will test his sincerity by alternately running, screaming, and ripping his face open. The tom will hang around as long as he can maintain an adequate blood pressure, but the female soon tires of his lovemaking and sends him packing.

We assume the tomcat does not understand that his bittersweet ordeal will lead to the production of several new cats. If he were capable of understanding that fact he would come back after they were born and kill them, because all of them will become competitors for the available mouse supply, and the males will become competitors for the available pussy supply.

Because we are sentimentalists, we imagine that Old Tom is proud of the number he did on the other tomcat, and that he remembers what a rollicking good time he had with the pussy, but it is more likely that the only thing on Tom's mind is trying to get

back home before he's run over by a truck or faints from loss of blood.

The point I'm trying to make is that cats are impelled to engage in their rutting ritual without understanding the forces that impel them, and without any conscious realization of what their actions are likely to achieve, or conceive.

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Cats are not alone in such ignorance. Male staghorn beetles grapple with each other for hours, until one of them falls on his back and can't roll over. Neither of them realizes he is trying to prevent the other from fertilizing a she-beetle that neither has ever met.

Salmon swim upstream in the river of their birth until they're eaten by a bear or die of exhaustion, surely without the foggiest idea of why it's so important to produce baby salmon.

*Male cuttlefish (squid) fight over females just as tomcats do, but the victor then uses his water-propulsion device to flush out any semen that may have been deposited in the female by a previous suitor!*

A male "silverback" gorilla will rush menacingly toward any strange male who comes too close to his harem. He usually succeeds in frightening off the intruder, but if that does not happen he may fight to his own death, in which case the intruder takes charge of the females and summarily kills all nursing infants. It is possible that the new harem-keeper understands that interrupting lactation will cause a female to resume her estrus cycle, but it doesn't seem likely. African lions do exactly the same thing.

Although humans are not guided by instinct(?) men are ten times more likely to kill their stepchildren than their natural children, even though the human female can be sexually receptive and responsive in spite of lactation. It's just something that stepfathers do.

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### **People Do Things That Critters Don't How To Do**

Women as well as men commonly idolize tyrants whose actions keep them poor, ignorant, unhealthy, and insecure. Women stay with men who beat and humiliate them, while others allow

themselves to be impregnated over and over by husbands who manifest no concern or compassion either for them or for their children. Hundreds of millions of people of both sexes worship and adore religious leaders who seek to defend and perpetuate wife-abuse by denigrating the notion of "women's rights" and condemning divorce, family planning, contraception, and abortion.

Beautiful young women marry ugly, despicable old millionaires who thereafter hold them in contempt for allowing themselves to be bought with money. Those same millionaires, however, will continue to plot and scheme until the day they die in an apparently pointless struggle to become billionaires.

Young men can scarcely wait to "do their bit" in wars they don't understand in places they can't point to on a globe, and when ordered to charge up a hill occupied by total strangers armed with machine guns and flame-throwers, they will do so without hesitation. Sometimes they will even be accompanied by the man who gave the order!

Black men express their burning hatred for white people by killing other black men and by periodically torching their own neighborhoods.

People who are in constant pain and unable to move, nevertheless cling to "life" and are admired for their courage.

Overweight people continue to eat; cachectic young women continue to fast.

And I continue to hope.



**Bengal tigers are beautiful, graceful, and competent,  
but that doesn't make them fit to *live* with.**

## CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

*The Chemistry of Love*

Various surveys have found that the average man thinks about sex once every four minutes. (As usual, women need a little more time.) Now, you and I know that neither of us is average in any sense of the word, but surely a lot more than four minutes have elapsed and I can't seem to get it off my mind.

If you read *Chimpanzees Don't Wear Pants* you probably noticed that I glossed over a couple of important topics. I'm sorry if I worried you, but I knew I'd be coming back to them sooner or later.

*One is that people are very interested in sex, and the other is that sex has something to do with reproduction.*

The time has come for me to explain those two facts.

The truth is that all animals and most plants need to produce offspring if their respective species are to survive for long periods of time.

Being a thoughtful person, you probably have wondered why it had to be that way. Instead of reproducing generation after generation, why not just live forever?<sup>57</sup>

**QUESTION:** Do animals and plants realize that they need to reproduce their kinds? Do they know that sex leads to young 'uns?

**THE TRUTH IN A NUTSHELL:** I do not know what other animals know and neither do you, but I can give you a couple of clues. There are people living on some of the Pacific islands who still don't know that pregnancy is the result of sexual intercourse, and it's obvious that teenage girls in America do not become aware of that fact until after they have had their second or third baby. So you figure it out.

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<sup>57</sup> When you're tired of wondering about that, perhaps we can resume our discussion.

**THE FACTS BEHIND THE TRUTH:** The truth is that when a male frog hops on the back of a female frog, neither one of them realizes that he is about to fertilize her eggs. It is even less likely they are aware that fertilized eggs are vitally important to the perpetuation of frogdom. It is quite possible that adult frogs don't even know that tadpoles are a phase that frogs go through, and some skeptics suggest they may not even recognize that they themselves are frogs. (The frogs, that is, not the skeptics.)

Now, if a teenager is not aware that the purpose of sex is to perpetuate the species, then reproduction cannot be what he has in mind when he responds to the itch we call sexual excitement.

That being the case, it doesn't make sense to say that reproduction is the purpose of sex, and in fact most adult humans don't really think of it that way—although a lot of Catholics try real hard.

**FOLLOW-UP QUESTION:** So what does motivate sexual behavior?

**ANSWER:** I wish I could explain that to you in detail, but for all I know your parents are sitting there in the same room with you and if you don't know the answer to that question it must be because they don't want you to know. The best I can do is give you a scientific answer; that way, your parents won't know what we're talking about.

### **Sex is motivated by chemistry!**

**SOME NEAR-TRUTHS BEHIND THAT FACT:** Plants go through endless cycles of growth, relative quiescence, and reproduction, in accordance with subtle changes in the internal chemistry of their various organ systems. The basic chemistry differs somewhat from plant to plant in accordance with its unique genetic instructions. The cycles, however, are triggered by changes in light, temperature, moisture, and available nutrients.

Some combination of those factors sets in motion chemical changes that spur the maturation of the plant's gametes, or sex cells. Male and female gametes arrange to get together and a new generation begins. The gametes are transported by the wind or water—or, as you were taught, by the birds and bees.

By and large, it is the responsibility of the male gametes (which botanists call sperm) to track down and invade the female

ovum, although in some cases the sperm is assisted in its search by a chemical attractant somehow exuded by the ovum.

Believe it or not, the sperm of some plants have tails, which enable them to wriggle about, just as human sperm do. In other cases some of the protoplasm that accompanied the sperm on its odyssey will cause a tube to grow toward the egg (no doubt under her guidance) and the sperm will arrive for its nuptial celebration via its own individual tunnel of love.

In a very small nutshell that's more than enough for you to know about sex, plant-style.

The vast majority of animals operate in a very similar fashion. Some internal or external event triggers a chemical change that causes either the male or the female to initiate a 'firing sequence' that will culminate in the fertilization of one or more eggs.

The trigger may be entirely internal and therefore unrelated to the environment, as it is in female mammals that have regular estrous cycles throughout the year — such as bats, whales, and women. The cycles are governed by feedback mechanisms involving hormones, which, of course, are chemicals.<sup>58</sup>

In other animals, the triggers may be similar to those affecting plants, such as seasonal changes that alter the temperature, or the length of day, or the supply of food. (Owls and many other birds may or may not raise a brood depending on the abundance of food in their environment. Young women may stop cycling or fail to start if they get too skinny.)

As soon as one gender experiences the first twinges of excitement it starts working on some means for passing the urge along to the opposite gender. There are so many ways of doing this that my mind reels at the thought of telling you about them.

Suffice it to say that inducements are exchanged through signals that may impinge on any of an animal's five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. Picture, for example, a fiddler crab holding up a large claw until some female notices how big and strong he is, a male songbird serenading all the ladies in the neighborhood, a female dog exuding an aroma that attracts every

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<sup>58</sup> Internally regulated cycles are not necessarily unrelated to external events. Many male animals, including men, exude odors which can cause females to initiate, shorten, or regularize their cycles.

male dog within two miles, mammals of every description tasting each other's genitals, seals nuzzling each other for hours, and giraffes lovingly intertwining their necks, which you thought was something Walt Disney made up.

Reproduction cannot take place unless the female puts one or more eggs some place where the male's sperm can get at it. In other words, the female must be ready; her internal chemistry must be such that she is able to release mature eggs.

In most mammalian species the males are ready any time the females are.

Accordingly, it is the responsibility of the female to give the male some sign that she is ready to mate. Except for humans and a couple of very close relatives, females ordinarily do not lie about this important matter, at least not to members of their own species.

Most commonly, for most mammals, the signal is an odor, or pheromone. Because hormones and their by-products are excreted in the urine it is perhaps the most revealing messenger, but chemical aromas are also produced by a bewildering assortment of glands, which, depending on the animal, might be found almost anywhere on the body.<sup>59</sup>

Pheromones may carry any one of a variety of messages, but two of the most important are, "I'm ready for love, or close enough for all practical purposes," and, "Don't waste your time; I'm already pregnant." At the peak of estrus many females produce vaginal secretions which are not notably airborne but which, when tasted or sniffed at close quarters send a message that causes the male to lose all control of himself and forget any promises he may have made to someone else.

Human females, at least in affluent societies, give so many mixed signals I just don't want to talk about it. Men, on the other hand, are unambiguous; blow in their ears and they'll follow you anywhere. ►

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<sup>59</sup> Anal glands in the mongoose, salivary glands in pigs, underarm glands in humans, and glands from stem to stern in the hamster.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

*Female Adultery — The Male View*

Lately it has become impossible to pick up a magazine or turn on the tube without seeing something about adultery. More and more plagiarists of my book are announcing to an unsuspecting world that humans are naturally inclined toward sexual infidelity.

I have not yet heard any of them say that we should be glad we're adulterous. They are merely saying that we should not be pilloried for wanting to slip into the jeans of people we've scarcely met, because adultery is programmed into our genes—a theory supported by the fact that we are going to be tempted to engage in it no matter how many times we tell ourselves not to.

Scholars who have just written a book on the subject try to assure us that discovering we have just committed adultery is no reason to rush to a marriage counselor before putting our pants on, but of course the marriage counselors see it differently. Most of these Rip van Winkles admit that breaking our vows may not always be the wisest thing we can do, but they all agree it should not be viewed as a capital offense.

All of that trivia is harmless enough until these people start saying it is just as acceptable for a wife to be adulterous as it is for a husband. That simply is not true.

As a result of millions of years of natural selection, 72% of a man's brain — including all of his emotion-centers and the entire right half of his cerebrum — have no known function other than trying to understand and manage his sex life. Fully half of that brain power is dedicated to guarding against the possibility that his wife will trick him into paying for the upkeep of genes that have emanated from some other man's jeans.

A woman is immune to that particular form of paranoia because she knows that when she gives birth to a baby the odds are overwhelming that she is the mother. Not having to worry about that detail has allowed women to devote parts of their brains to

other functions. This explains why women appear to be more 'right-brained' than men, and why they are better at humming lullabies, arranging flowers, and throwing tizzies.

Judging by what's being said on the talk shows, neither the hosts nor their viewers had any idea before my manuscript was leaked to the press that genes play a role in human affairs.

On the other hand, everybody has always known that any normal man will instantly slip his moorings if he learns his wife has enjoyed sex with another man. Although that has been common knowledge for about three million years, there was no way until very recently for anyone to understand why such a behavioral oddity had evolved — and if more than a week has elapsed since you read my first book, I'm sure you've forgotten.

As I explained over and over in *Chimpanzees Don't Wear Pants*, your genes have no idea where babies come from, so there certainly is no way they can guess why it should matter who a baby's father is. Until animals became smart enough to think about such things, they had to be guided by non-rational motivations.

Now, before you do another thing, I want you to go find your notebook and write this down:

"Because we humans evolved from non-rational animals, we inherited motivations that are non-rational, and that is why we do so many things that don't make any sense at all."<sup>60</sup>

The point I'm making right now is that men don't really have anything sensible in mind when they react as they do over their wives' infidelity; it's just something that happens to them.

You may not believe that. You may think it is rational for a man to balk at raising a child sired by another man. If so, I want you to try to explain it to the next person you meet. Folks both smart and stupid can offer a bunch of alleged reasons, but — alas! — none of them is rational!

If a man who has been cuckolded does not make a fuss about it, no one will know for sure who sired the kid, and the little bastard will be legitimized by being born into a lawful marriage.

The "sucker" will now have a legal heir to whom he can leave his money-laundry, a concern that has been worrying him for

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<sup>60</sup> If you and your lover would repeat that about five times while looking each other in the eyes, you might be able to forgive each other -- and maybe even yourselves. After all, you're only human.

years. He will have a kid he can play with and teach to say dirty words. The child also can be taught (as well as any other child) to be proud of Daddy and to become a "chip off the old block" — which simply means sharing most of Daddy's prejudices and bad habits. So what if the block he was chipped from looks a little like Mama's tennis pro?

Unless Mama tells the brat he is a love-child, he probably has as good a chance as any certified child of growing up to be a devoted offspring, and a better than average chance of becoming a good tennis player. The kid may produce lots of grandchildren to amuse grandfather in his dotage, and may even see that Daddy is provided for when he develops Old-timers' Disease, if it's not too much trouble. So what's the problem?

Can men actually be concerned about the immortality of their genes, even though to this day, very few men know what genes are? Is that what a silverback gorilla is thinking about when he rushes to drive off an unauthorized intruder, even at some risk to his own life? No, my child; that makes no sense. Gorillas are not aware of their genes, any more than genes are aware of gorillas.

Furthermore, if a man's principal concern is the possibility his wife will present him with another man's product, why would a modern man get upset even though he knows for a fact that his wife is on birth control pills or is beyond menopause?

Does a woman's vagina become less comfortable or less functional because an unauthorized penis has occupied it for a couple of minutes?

If a man's fear is that his wife will be less receptive to him after a liaison, a dubious assumption at best, should he still get upset if she follows such pursuits only when he is on extended trips out of town and engaging in a little hanky-panky of his own?

Why is it any of a man's business how his wife secures pleasure at no expense to him?

Having read this book, you now are one of the very few humans who know the answers to those questions. Is that a good feeling, or what?

\* \* \*

Before our ancestors developed a form of language that enabled them to talk about things that weren't "real" — i.e., things they had not personally seen or experienced — sexual jealousy or rage would have tormented them only when an act of debauchery



took place before their very eyes, or under their noses. Having once witnessed such an outrage, those with better than average memories might have felt vague twinges of paranoia as they returned from brief absences, but there wasn't much they could do about it, because they didn't know what to say.

As soon as speech developed, it became possible to question each other, thereby opening the door to doubt and misery.<sup>61</sup>

The returning hunter and his mate could be regaled by their closest friends with rumors or outright lies about each other's behavior during the separation. Because of Homo's newly evolved imagination, the ability to "see with the mind's eye" situations that truly existed only in the form of words, it became possible to witness acts of infidelity without actually being present when they took place, and witnessing it is what rattles our genetic chains. As previously explained with respect to gorillas, it is irrelevant whether or not men understand the ultimate significance of a wife's infidelity, it just bugs us male animals to sense another male in our nuptial neighborhood, especially if our mate seems to look upon him with favor.

We don't react that way because we have a conscious awareness that we must guarantee the immortality of our genes; we act that way because the genes of men who were less sexually possessive and aggressive simply were not perpetuated in the course of evolution. *Res ipsa loquitur*.

Now, having demonstrated to our mutual satisfaction that men have an innate and totally non-rational tendency to go ape if they discover (or imagine) that their wives have been unfaithful, several questions arise:

- (1) Can we defend your belief that there also exist some rational justifications for a man's sexual possessiveness and jealousy?
- (2) If not, is there some way you can overcome your irrationality?
- (3) Would your wife's infidelity indicate some failing of yours?

The answers to those questions are no, no, and maybe.

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<sup>61</sup> Back to Eden, and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

With regard to the third question, it seems clear that you have failed to keep her from being penetrated by another male. You should have barred all the doors and windows and chained her to the kitchen stove. For a paltry \$20 or \$30 you could have purchased some handcuffs for claspng her to you when you went out together, even if it meant that neither of you could use the public restrooms. But no, you trusted her!

Of course, one reason your wife might cheat on you is that you did keep her chained to the kitchen stove and that caused her to hate you and want to hurt you, and then one day you failed to secure the padlock. Another possibility is that you made no effort to discover or do whatever was likely to give her sexual pleasure, and you added insult to injury by telling her that you thought you could have more fun sleeping with a three-toed sloth.

The truth, however, as you know from *Chimpanzees Don't Wear Pants*, is that those are merely excuses for what she would have longed to do anyway.

Now, with respect to question #1, let's see if we can figure out why a rational man should care if his wife enjoys a little extra-marital ecstasy behind his back? Well, certainly a husband does not want his wife picking up any venereal diseases that he doesn't already have. We cannot argue with the rationality of that. It cannot fully satisfy us, however, because it does nothing to explain the behavior of our ape cousins, nor that of the males of 300,000 other species. (But the whole point is to determine whether humans are unique, isn't it?) It also leaves us wondering how sexual possessiveness could have existed before Louis Pasteur discovered germs, enabling us to understand that sexually transmitted diseases are transmitted sexually.

Here's a better answer: If a man knows (a) that he is in all important ways a better man than other men, and (b) that all of his best characteristics will be transmitted to his offspring, it is easy to find logical reasons for his wanting to assure that any children his wife (or wives) present to him are indeed his genetic heirs.

We know that the first of the above conditions is a given. Deep in his heart of hearts, every man knows that he is better than any other man. If he doubts this from time to time, it is only because he is depressed. The second condition also may be taken for granted, because he knows that all of his characteristics are better than average.

Thus, our subject may feel justified in assuming that any child who was germinated in one of his own testicles is bound to be more handsome, talented, and competent — that is, more like him — than any brat sired by some scumbag his wife met at a bar. His own child will be more pleasant to look at, easier to indoctrinate in father's beliefs and behavioral patterns, and (as an adult) more capable of contributing to the family's income, status, and prestige. Q.E.D.

That argument is a powerful one if a husband happens to know that his wife is habitually attracted to idiots and ne'er-do-wells. The argument loses much of its punch for the rest of us, however, because we cannot help wondering if that is why the wife was attracted to him. Furthermore, what if it is clear that wife is doing her best to 'up-grade' her amorous experiences? What if she's sleeping with the President, the Chairman of the Board, or Tarzan of the Apes?

All of these arguments are absurd. The plain truth is that we don't like other men approaching our wives with lustful intentions because we can see their intentions in their faces, in their posturing, in the way they move their bodies, in the tones of their voices, and in the way they smell. All of those perceptions are transmitted through genetically engineered neuronal conduits to tiny centers deep in our brains, which have existed unchanged since we were lizards. (They're located in the 'reptilian' part of our brains.) When those primitive nuclei light up, they trigger hatred, fear, and loathing. Period.

Because we don't like to think of ourselves as lizards (or snakes in the grass) — and because we are in fact humans with a thick overlay of gray-cells doing their best to smother our reptilian-brain — evolution has provided us with a multitude of supplementary motivations and explanations<sup>62</sup>.

As you learned in *Chimpanzees Don't Wear Pants*, male chimpanzees do not attempt to win the hearts of estrous females by beating up on them, except as a last resort. They go to a lot of trouble to establish dominance over other males in the community, in order to prove to the females that they are the best candidates for producing and fostering healthy chimplings and grandchimplings. Having established dominance among their male peers,

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<sup>62</sup> A euphemism for 'rationalizations'.

they want to be respected and admired by the females, not merely feared. That is why they assume such grandiloquent poses, perform *les beaux gestes*, and attempt to comport themselves as Lords and Gentlemen. They want to be sought after and submitted to because they are the best, not merely because they are the 'baddest'.

Men are no different from chimps. What's the use of risking your neck or busting your butt to prove that you are the star of the team if the girls prefer the new rookie, or the water-boy? (That last possibility is a real problem in baboon troops.)

Most men, deep down in their macho little souls, believe that they have leaned over backwards to earn the allegiance of their women-folk. They like to think they have worked their fingers to the bone, sweated blood, gone out on a limb, suffered the slings and arrows of outrageous employment, and denied themselves perks and privileges that would have made their lives a lot more fun — all in order to protect and provide for wife and family.

In spite of all that, they have the feeling that ever since they were little boys (which can't have been all that long ago) they have been putting up with women's bitching, catering to their childish and impractical demands, and suffering through their emotional hysterics — generally without resorting to mayhem and often with the most commendable self-restraint and stoicism. As a result, men figure they deserve a little gratitude.

So what do they ask of their women folk?

"Don't humiliate me; that's all!"

You wouldn't think they'd have to spell that out, and it doesn't seem to accomplish much when they do, but some men nevertheless try. They say: "Don't criticize me in front of other people. Don't make me the butt of your jokes. When I say we're leaving, don't argue with me — just say goodnight. Don't give every guy at the party a rub-job. And don't talk about our sex life!"

There's your next clue. As just mentioned, much of the courting routine of the amorous male chimp is designed to convince the female that he is a fine fellow. That is why he tries not to bully her, why he waits patiently, why he offers her a banana, and why he refrains from dismembering her five-year-old who has just bitten him on the scrotum. But you also will recall that Mr. Chimp understood that simply being a nice guy was not enough to inflame his intended. For that, he had to display his magnificent

physical equipment, and he had to do it in a way which left no doubt that consorting with him would be an experience the female would never forget.<sup>63</sup>

Suppose she had laughed at him?

Suppose she had summoned to her side some young adolescent who was sporting his first erection, taken it in her hand and wagged it at Sitting Bull, and then sat on it, with a big grin on her face? Would Alpha have been amused? Would you?

How many reasons does a guy need to justify getting a little upset? We met this sort of thing once before: some behaviors are over-determined. That is to say, we can find more explanations for them than we really need. Think about all the forces impinging on a man's poor little unilateral brains.

To wit: Genetically evolved fear and loathing at the mere appearance (or smell) of an adult male stranger. Innate anger when such a male directs his attention to the genitalia of a female one wants to think of as his personal property. Rage at the effrontery of the female who encourages such an intruder. Humiliation at the implied disparagement of one's sexual adequacy. Shock at the repudiation of one's rightful dominance over a mere female. Fury triggered by the other male's challenge to one's territorial superiority. Disappointment. Embarrassment. Loss of face.

What is there left to lose, other than our old friend, self-esteem? But self-esteem must be preserved at all costs; it must be the last to go.<sup>64</sup>

To lose esteem for oneself is to stop valuing oneself, to stop caring for oneself. Such an attitude can ultimately undermine both the will to live and the will to procreate.

Our genes won't stand for it.

This is a terrible problem, and men have discovered only one way to solve it. Unfortunately, women's genes won't stand for it.

So now we must look at it from their point of view.

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<sup>63</sup> Chimps are a proud people.

<sup>64</sup> That's what my previous book was about, in case you hadn't noticed.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

*Male Adultery — The Female's View*

Nothing is more irritating to man or chimp than having to deny himself access to an attractive and willing young female because of the antics of some other, jealous female. Like a wife, for instance.

It just doesn't make any sense. A man can't get pregnant. Very little effort is required to prevent 'catching something', and as luck would have it, the same precautions will avoid the complications that can result from an inadvertent pregnancy. If a husband exercises just minimal discretion he can escape being shot by his lover's owner. If his judgment is too poor for that, he deserves what happens to him, and his wife can use his life insurance (double indemnity) to begin having some fun of her own.

A man has no difficulty understanding why other *men* might wish to stand in his way, and he is prepared to adjust his behavior accordingly. But his wife clearly stands to lose nothing as a result of his casual dalliances. And if the "other woman" is unmarried, surely a man's adulterous activity should be considered a victimless crime.

Nevertheless, under certain circumstances some women do indeed take a dim view of their husbands' philandering — namely, every time they find out about it. What can this mean?

\* \* \*

Women in different cultures exhibit a wide range of attitudes toward the extra-marital affairs of their husbands. Many accept it as inevitable. Of those, some find it depressing and degrading; others seem to find it amusing and of no great consequence. Some cultures attempt to teach both men and women that adultery by either partner constitutes not just a grave violation of trust, but a serious breach of religious morality, whatever that is. Women in that sort of society will feel (or pretend to feel) inconsolably

shocked and disappointed, humiliated, and deserving of a large financial settlement.

Such variation clearly must be attributed to cultural differences, thereby calling into question whether it is as "natural" for a woman to react with anger toward a philandering husband as it is for a man to get upset over an adulterous wife or her male lover.<sup>65</sup>

The selfish-gene hypothesis explains on the genetic level why a husband would be reluctant to contribute to the maintenance of a child who harbors another man's DNA, but it does not help us understand the anger of a wife whose husband is fond of women. That is, after all, why she married him. At least, it should have been one of the reasons she married him.

A woman can produce only one child a year, or if she's a chimpanzee, only one every three or four years. The fact that during her impregnable periods her husband is broadcasting his seeds like a Kansas wheat farmer does not alter in one direction or another her ability to propagate her own DNA — unless, of course, her husband stops bringing home the bacon.

To hold an abiding hatred for a philandering husband who has not abandoned her, and especially one who has never displayed any intention of abandoning her, would seem to be just as non-rational as the insane response of a man who knows for a fact that his wife can not be impregnated as a result of her recreational activities. We must search elsewhere for an explanation.

**THE ANSWERS YOU THOUGHT I WOULD NEVER FIND: The two principal explanations for this preposterous state of affairs are these: (1) Women are sore losers, and (2) Women do not sufficiently appreciate the absurdity of life.**

As you know, a woman is conceivable just three days out of thirty, roundly speaking. Therefore, when a man and a woman play French roulette, the odds are 10 to 1 that the man will lose and 10 to 1 that the woman will win. One might suppose that men would resent such an unfair arrangement; but no, it is the woman who gets upset when she loses!

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<sup>65</sup> To take a more balanced view (which, in general, I find counter-productive) it must be noted that in different cultures, men also exhibit a variety of attitudes and responses toward the transgressions of their women folk. With just a few exceptions, however, the variations tend to range from bad to worse.

A man can blow 300,000,000 of his precious sperm in two or three minutes of play. Does he react to this prodigious loss with fits of rage or depression? Of course not! He figures, "What the hell, no pain, no gain!" The woman, on the other hand, is risking one measly little egg no bigger than a gnat — or, if she's a high roller, maybe two or three gnats.

Her wager, of course, is that her tiny ovarian spaceship will make it through her uterus and into the light of day without being brought down by ejaculatory flak. When she wins, which she usually does, she smiles in triumph and relief, and a lip-reader will see that she is whispering, "Missed me, you little bastards!" But when she loses, does she accept the consequences with the grace and good sportsmanship exhibited by her lover?

No, indeed! When she loses, she demands that she be reimbursed!

She whines about the extra thousand calories she will have to consume daily for the next two or three years, nourishing an abdominal parasite and later a screaming infant. She expects the man not only to pay for her food, but to stand guard over her and the baby.

Now, no one can fault her for wanting such an outcome — but, hey, nobody made her play, and the price for losing is why the odds were stacked so heavily in her favor! I mean, let's not forget the poor guy! By the time a man finally gets a woman pregnant he may have sacrificed billy-yuns and billy-yuns of valiant little explorers who entered the maw of creation without a glance backwards, wagging their tails behind them!

Nevertheless, I can see it from the female's point of view. A man spends a couple of minutes or maybe even a couple of months or years with her, and then he leaves her in charge of a selfish, starving, unruly brat. She feels this is profoundly unfair, and she wishes she could circumcise the happy vagabond at some level reasonably close to his pubic bone. That's understandable. But ladies, you reveal your naiveté when you speak of our reproductive division of labor as "unfair".

A more objective evaluation will reveal that everything associated with the reproduction of man and beast is simply and absolutely absurd. It is a tale told not by an idiot, but a madman. The absurdity of sexual reproduction can be seen in almost every form of life. For example—



**IT'S A MAD, MAD WORLD:** Migrating salmon kill themselves for the privilege of releasing clouds of semen or hundreds of eggs, from which abundance a mere handful of new salmon will survive to maturity. Oysters spawn billions of young every year, almost all of which will perish within hours. The female mantis devours her mate even as he does his best to satisfy her. Male wasps with rape on their tiny minds, frantically dig newly hatched females out of the ground. A queen-to-bee emerges first from her cell and immediately kills all of her less punctual sister-competitors. Dragonflies climb down a reed into a pond in order to attach their eggs underwater. Cuckoos hatch in the nest of an alien species and immediately push the eggs of the host over the side. Female vampire bats share blood with their sisters and cousins until their joint progeny can find no place to hang. Lemmings reproduce until in their frenzied search for food they push each other into the sea.

People are reproducing like lemmings, depleting and polluting the earth, while their spiritual leaders decry the use of family planning, contraceptives, and abortion. Poor women are smothering their newborn; rich women are renting other women's wombs in order to have a baby. Millions of babies are starving for want of a hundred dollars worth of food per year, while hundreds of babies born without kidneys or livers are kept alive with millions of dollars of surgery per year.

Songs of love, films of sex, cosmetics and wrinkle surgery, bikinis and uplifting bras, injected boobs and suctioned buns, mini-skirts, nude beaches, upwardly mobile marriages...more babies, more babies.

**Life as we know it is not unfair; it is a lunatic asylum.**

The sooner that fact is grasped, the easier it will become to appreciate the absurdity of any serious approach to it.

Men seem to have some unconscious understanding of all this, which probably explains why they can enjoy a good war, rape "enemy women", bayonet "enemy babies", and die with smiles on their faces. Women take life seriously. They think the goal is to nurture it and keep it going. That's why they get so upset when husband or father takes a walk — just as if his family's survival did not matter.

Anyway, that's how women react at their lizard level. But women are also human, and so it is safe to assume that they also are concerned with our old friends — prestige and power.

Power has become something of a dirty word. If, for example, we hear that someone somewhere has "seized power", we assume he is a villain and we start looking for a place to hide. This is easy to understand when one considers the countless examples of abuse of power throughout history. (You know what I mean: dunking recalcitrant subjects into molten lead, gouging out their eyes, that sort of thing.) Our fear of power is summed up in the widely accepted notion that power invariably corrupts those who achieve it in excess of the norm, no matter how noble their intentions might have been before they achieved it — a bit of folk-wisdom that seems depressingly close to the truth.

But power of a more normal sort is absolutely essential to every living creature. Quite simply, power enables us to do the things we need to do. To be completely without power is to be at the mercy of our environment and our competitors, and that includes not just other people, but all the animate and inanimate forces of the universe that are poised to do us harm, such as spiders, hurricanes, rotten oysters, and unscrupulous Investment Bankers. Without personal power, we can be locked away in a dungeon, allowed to starve, or forced to parade around town stark naked with a big scarlet "A" painted across our tits.

We hate it when things like that happen. Hence we hate to feel powerless, and we hate it when anyone else reminds us that we are powerless with respect to him. In short, no one likes to be pushed around, suppressed, or told what he or she can or can not do. Nevertheless, in order to live in any sort of society, we must submit to certain restraints, delays, and even self-deprivations. We never enjoy compromising our wishes or impulses, but we learn to accept it (more or less) so long as we feel we are getting a fair shake. In other words, we will go along with the game so long as it is played according to the rules of tit-for-tat, which were described earlier.

So now you should be able to see one reason (at the human level) why a woman might become enraged as a result of her husband's carousing — even if she knows he is just fooling around. What's bugging the lady is the existence of the "double standard". Hubby wants it to be accepted that he has a right to sexual free-

dom, but his wife does not. What's sauce for the gander is not an acceptable sauce for the goose. Turnabout is not fair play.

In many cultures, men do a lot more than merely tell their wives they must adhere to the double standard; they try to enforce it. They verbally castigate the errant wife in the cruelest terms; they confine her to quarters; beat her to her knees; sew up her vagina; or destroy her treasured belongings — including, perhaps, her clitoris. They humiliate her in front of her family; cast her into outer darkness; or simply torture her to death.

Not every woman enjoys that sort of thing. She resents being powerless, a second-class citizen, an unequal partner. Her genes tell her that tit-for-tat evolved as a two-way street, but her husband wants to play tit for tit, while restricting her to tating. Under such circumstances, how could she fail to resent her husband's selfish pleasures? She hates him because she feels she has been rendered powerless. Remember that!

There are a few societies that try to accept the fact that adultery on the part of both sexes is simply "human nature". (France, for example.) In such a setting, women will be treated less harshly and they will take a correspondingly more tolerant view of their husbands' peccadilloes. Nevertheless, both sexes will be prone to experience discomfort with adultery, for a very particular reason. Once again, it has to do with self-esteem.

In the last chapter we pointed out that a man wants to be admired and respected because he is "the best", and not merely tolerated by women because they are afraid of him.<sup>66</sup>

We also pointed out that he feels he deserves some gratitude for "all the sacrifices he has made in the past." Why should we suppose a woman's longings are any different? Being forced to conclude that her mate finds another female more desirable and/or a more entertaining partner deals a crushing blow to her self-esteem. She also dreads humiliation, and she, too, resents the lack of respect and gratitude she imputes to her husband's infidelity.

All of the foregoing explanations and variations would have been just as applicable to women half a million years ago as they

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<sup>66</sup> I know, you're thinking that a lot of men greatly prefer being feared. Those men are losers. In part they are using the only talent they feel they have for holding a woman, and in part they are 'getting even' for their losses in the past.

are to women of today. But modern women in economically developed societies have acquired a number of new reasons for being both possessive of their husbands and resentful of their propensity to roam.

Foremost among these is the fact that a high percentage of women live long past their childbearing capacity. That is to say, they are capable of living many years after menopause. Chimpanzee females do not experience menopause. They seem to retain the ability, albeit diminished, to ovulate, to display their fertility by pinking-up and by emitting the proper aromas, and to conceive, bear, and nurse so long as they live. As a result, they never completely lose their attractiveness to males, nor do they lose the periodic resuscitation of their status that results from bringing a new member into the troop.

**In hunter/gatherer societies, women who lived long enough to become post-menopausal, and those who had been widowed or abandoned by their husbands, might have experienced difficulty in acquiring a new full-time mate, but the rest of their social support structure would have remained intact.**

As members of a small, cohesive tribe, their dealings with life-long friends and co-workers would have been undiminished. They still would have gone a-gathering and a-gossiping with the other women. They might have been honored as grandmothers or "Aunties". They would have retained any other role-identity they had acquired (potter, tanner, healer, etc.) and the prestige provided by that role. Hence, they would not have been in danger of starving; their self-esteem would not have been demolished; and they still could have enjoyed the protection of the group and the camaraderie around the campfire.

In contrast, today's post-menopausal woman feels she has much more to lose when her husband abandons her for a younger female. Her marriage may have taken her far away from her own relatives, who in turn may have separated and scattered from each other. She can expect to lose contact not only with her ex-husband's family, but also with about half of their mutual friends. Very often, the home she and her 'ex' shared will be sold as a consequence of the divorce and she will have to move away from the neighborhood with which she has identified for the past several years, and the ladies with whom she has gone a-gathering. If she is not a career woman and has never earned a living outside the

home, she will be hard-put to provide for herself and her children in the manner to which they are accustomed.

**She will have no tribe to help her.**

If she is pre-menopausal, the fact that her children will remain dependent at least twice as long as they do in tribal cultures will discourage many men from considering her an appealing marriage prospect.<sup>67</sup>

Even if she acquires a desirable new mate, she is likely to find herself "starting life all over again" in an unfamiliar land, among strangers who do not know her history and whose ways of life may forever seem somewhat alien to her. Finally, the older she appears to be, the more difficult it will be for her to find sexual partners in our beauty-obsessed society — although why she should want another mate, considering what a wretch her husband was, is something of a puzzle.

Having said all that, it remains likely that much of the distressing and disruptive emotional experiences associated with having a wayward husband is the damage it does to a woman's vanity — the perception of a threat to her good opinion of herself. To that extent, a woman's feelings about adultery are not much different from a man's, and are just as devoid of rationality.

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In the last two chapters we have attempted to uncover the roots of the emotionality associated with breaches of sexual fidelity. We have found some of them embedded in our DNA's tendency to propagate itself, and others nurtured by mores and traditions that vary from culture to culture. To complete our understanding, however, we had to turn once again not only to power and prestige, but to our old friend, self-esteem. Woe to the individual who robs us of any of those three!

The fact is that adulterous activities can be (and frequently are) conducted with such discretion that the 'innocent' partners never learn of them, and no other consequences ensue to compromise anyone's health or marital relationships. Despite the victimless nature of the crime, and even in cases where the extra-marital excursion was of a casual nature and is now a closed affair, if the dalliance should somehow come to light, the wounded partner is

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<sup>67</sup> Some of her suitors might actually lust for her daughters.

apt to react to it about the way they would if they had had a bowl of sulfuric acid thrown at them. This is not rational, and much of the time it is self-destructive.

One of the hallmarks of enlightened selfishness is the ability to avoid behaviors which ultimately are apt to be self-defeating. In the context of marriage and divorce, if one or both partners have thought through the entire history of their relationship and can clearly visualize how their lives might be improved by dissolving their union, then divorce may be a rational option.

But a marriage is (or should be) more than a bilateral contract to deny each other as much as possible of life's most exquisite pleasures. A satisfactory marriage means having a reliable partner in the business of everyday life and in dealing with the stresses and strains of civilization. It generally means producing and caring for children, which now takes three times as long as it did in tribal days. It means mutual emotional support between partners who have had a chance to learn each other's strengths and weaknesses and know that both are doing the best they can. And it means having someone with whom to celebrate in times of triumph and to lean on when one is too tired or discouraged to stand.

We are designed to have promiscuous sexual impulses, even as we also are designed with the ability to consciously try to constrain them. As with all natural urges, a too rigorous repression is likely to exact an unacceptable price. Some people can restrain themselves with apparent equanimity; others become mean and irritable. As this treatise has attempted to explain on many occasions, we tend to be enraged by any impediment that stands between us and our natural impulses. It is possible to strive so rigidly to be a saint in one aspect of a marriage that we become a demon in some other.

If pride or vanity propels a couple into dissolving their relationship for no reason other than an inability to keep their sexual instincts in chains, the ultimate gain or loss to either partner (and their children) is almost totally unpredictable.

The one exception to that forecast is that it is predictable that their newfound freedom will not magically enable either of them to find the "perfect" partner.

*Give me protection, encouragement, intimacy,  
tenderness, cooperation, and pleasure,  
and I can do without your love.*

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

*Pacem in Terris*

I recently received this comment from Vince, one of my most loyal readers:

"Dr. Long, my mama always told me that if I couldn't say something nice about a person, I shouldn't say anything at all. Why don't you ever say anything nice about people? *Vince*"

Well, Vince, I thought I had, but I guess it got lost in the words.

People have the ability to smile at each other in a way that can make the whole world seem a brighter and prettier place. A friend can put an arm around one of our shoulders and with just the briefest squeeze let us know that in his book we are still okay — and thereby lift an awful weight of self-blame and regret — without a word.

A gentle embrace, intense eye contact, and a brief kiss can say, "You know, you're really a nice person. In fact, I think you're a beautiful person," and our self-esteem soars heavenward. Alternatively, we can make each other feel important and valued with a big "bear-hug" that communicates, "God, how I miss you when you're not around!"

A passionate kiss and four hands reaching every which way to pull two bodies closer and closer together can cause an ever-accelerating and deliciously maddening desire to fuse with each other. Pulses quicken, body surfaces become exquisitely attuned to sensory pleasure, breaths come faster and hotter, sexual organs find each other, and we know that this is what we were designed to do.

Without a word.



People often play with their children, pick them up when they fall, hold them when they're frightened, guide them when they're confused, nudge them reassuringly when they're timid, comfort them when they're wounded, feed them when they're hungry.

Sometimes people can share their bounty without having tit-for-tat in mind, be generous or magnanimous without a thought about what it will do for their image, be kind without a reason.

People are alert to unusual misfortunes everywhere in the world, and they can rejoice when even a stranger succeeds in extricating himself.

People are fine when they're acting like chimps. It's when they start thinking that you have to watch your step.

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

## *Puppy Love*

You have heard it said that the dog is man's best friend. What can that mean?

For one thing, it means that dogs are not pets. You can own a pet canary, a pet frog, or a pet gerbil, but a dog is a companion. People don't say, "Do you own a dog?" They say, "Do you have a dog?" You don't own friends; you have friends—if you're nice.

Many people become very attached to their dogs. The truth is, they love them. And love is the subject of this chapter. We're going to try again to figure out what love is. Isn't that exciting?

When your dog dies, you feel sad. You might even cry. Then, for a while, you "miss him", and that's an interesting expression. It means you frequently notice his absence. You miss his enthusiastic greetings, his tail-wagging expressions of joy when you play with him, his doleful expression when you reprimand him, his concentrated attention when you talk to him or try to teach him something, and the contentment he seems to feel when you scratch his jaw and tell him what a good dog he is.

After your dog dies, you miss his love of you.

Are we going in a circle? Do you love your dog only because he loves you? Does your dog love you only because you love him?

I don't think so. Your dog worships you. He idolizes you. He needs your approval and he fears your disapproval. You are his pack-leader; you are his Alpha. That's not the way you feel about him.

Your dog's genes tell him that you, as his pack-leader, will approve of him only if he is loyal to you. To be loyal means that he will not abandon you for another leader, will always look up to you for guidance, will never deliberately hurt you, will come to your defense if you are attacked by others, and will yield to you or share with you whatever you say you need — even his food.

Isn't that also what we expect from a person who truly loves us?

There must be more. What is this thing called love?

Does love require hugs and kisses? Dogs eagerly furnish both. Reassurance? Dogs have a limited vocabulary, but they whine sympathetically when we are hurt or sad, and may try to snuggle against us, lick us, or "flea us".

Do we associate loving relationships with mutual activities that bring us pleasure, amusement, and mirth? Dogs are almost always ready to play with us until we drop from exhaustion.

We enjoy bringing happiness to those we love, and though we cannot know that our dog feels that way about us, he gives a good imitation of such a feeling.

Is there no difference in the love our dog shows us and the love we receive from human lovers?

One difference comes to mind. After short absences, the people who say they love us only *occasionally* greet us with the extraordinary enthusiasm that is *regularly* exhibited by our dog.

*Except when two of us humans are "in love".*

Is that why we refer to our earliest experiences of falling in love as "puppy love"? Is falling in love something that should only happen to a dog?

Tune in tomorrow.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

*Devotion*

As the puppy idolizes and ‘worships’ its master, so can a person idolize another. The prototype of that sort of love is that which a young mother feels for her first baby. A reasonably healthy and contented mother may exhibit a similar intensity of devotion for the next child or two, but after a while it becomes wearisome unless there is a four or five year interval between babies.

The infant’s feelings toward mother are a mixture of adoration and rage. Adoration when it gets everything it wants – immediately – and rage when it doesn’t.<sup>68</sup>

Ideally, parents should be nice to their children, but not too nice. Mean or cruel parents instill fear and anger. Parents that offer nothing but praise instill an intolerable sense of guilt and shame, because the child knows it is not nearly as nice as parents think it is, but rather is frequently beset with horrible wishes, not to mention sneaky deeds that its parents choose not to see. If a successful middle path is adhered to, child and parents may learn to admire each other for valid reasons, above and beyond the call of duty.

A child may develop feelings of devotion toward one or both parents based on the gratitude (and awe) it may feel for a parent (or leader) who (it wants to believe) has protected it, led it along the right path, and ultimately helped it to esteem itself — even perhaps at some expense to the parent. People who never overcome the need for guidance and protection often transfer that sort of devotion to their god — who, in most religions, has made a supreme sacrifice for the good of his followers. Christians are devoted to Jesus because he gave his life so that they might enjoy life everlasting.

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<sup>68</sup> See page 3.

\* \* \*

**Another type of devotional love is one which evolves from many years of “tit-for-tat”.**

Family members (and marital partners) who enjoy a kind of mutual interdependence tend to be those who have nurtured each other, helped each other, consoled each other, praised each other, and tried to protect each other. They become devoted to each other in large part as a function of gratitude and admiration. They may, of course, also love each other in other ways, but because of the long years of mutual reliance and tit-for-tat they feel “beholden” to their partners.

At first glance, it may be difficult to understand the love of parent for child in terms of tit-for-tat, for it seems that the parent must give more than he takes.

Just the reverse is true. Under normal circumstances, a child gives us much more than we can possibly return. First, it gives us immortality. Further, it is living proof that we have fulfilled our primary genetic mandate. As a result, our genes reward us with pleasure, and with pride in our creativity. Our self-esteem is elevated.

A child gives us the opportunity to feel powerful and wise and competent. A child's adoration, described a moment ago, can make us into Alphas. Finally, loving our children — who are either our "spitting image" or "a chip off the old block" — is a bit like loving ourselves, and as I've said before, that's hard to beat.

Family members for whom we have such feelings become a part of us, and when one of them dies, a part of us dies with them. Mourning often takes a long time because we must bury not just the one whose body has stopped moving— but also the one inside us.

## CHAPTER FORTY

☺ *True Love* ☺

Despite what you may have heard from some of the cynics who abound these days, it is not impossible for people who have fallen in love to learn to love each other. But it's not easy.

You see, the problem is that falling in love is so intoxicating it cannot possibly last. Our bodies and brains gradually develop a tolerance for almost any intoxicating chemical — as you well know if you are a serious drinker or pill-popper. At the same time, intoxicants tend to be addicting. The result is that we want to continue the high, but to do so requires ever-increasing doses of the intoxicant. Unfortunately, it's difficult to keep increasing the dosage of a lover — for a whole bunch of reasons I'm sure you can figure out.

The result, unless you have an uncommon amount of common sense, is that as you sober up, you gradually come to the conclusion that the other person has changed. He or she is not the person you thought they were. Your previously inflammatory lover has become cool to you. Not only has the zip and zest gone out of the relationship, but you choose to believe the reason for it is that the other person has quit wanting to please you. (In addiction terms, you go into “withdrawal”.) Eventually you realize that the only way to recapture the marvelous high you felt so long ago is to change intoxicants, which of course means to change lovers. (You need a “fix”.)

As you know, some people do this over and over. Aside from the facts that it can be very expensive and that they have to switch partners at ever-shorter intervals, they seem to get a big kick out of it. They also suffer a lot, but they seem to enjoy the suffering also. These folks are addicted to falling in love. If you must be a junkie, falling in love is one of the more exciting addictions.

Learning to love someone is a lot slower and gentler. For one thing, you have to get to know each other.

It's easy to love an imaginary person of your own creation, but you can't love an actual person unless you find out who he is.

Therefore, you must get to know each other's family histories, cultural backgrounds, formative experiences, remembered joys and heartbreaks. Admiring everything you hear isn't essential. More important is that you feel compassion for the other person's history. Upon "putting yourself in the other person's shoes" you find that you can understand his mistakes and misfortunes, and you can see that chance alone, or the accidents of birth, could have reversed your roles.

Although you don't have to like everything you hear, you do have to like and respect the person you are beginning to know.

A big factor in reaching that point is the ease with which your partner reveals himself or herself to *you*.

It gradually dawns on you that he/she feels he/she can trust you and rely on you. This elevates your opinion of yourself, making it easier for you to feel that he/she is basically a nice person. That in turn makes it easier for you to trust her/him, and round and round it goes.

For two people to love each other — the real others — they must reach the point that they are willing to unveil their vulnerabilities, their weaknesses, their fears. They must trust each other enough to reveal some of their most secret wishes and regrets.

**In other words, they must become good friends.**

To be accepted as worthy of such inordinate trust, both participants must meet two tests: They must not use what they learn in ways that harm the other, and it must become clear that they do not feel any temptation to do so. That is, it must be clear that each party genuinely enjoys safeguarding the other.

When two people are able to share themselves with each other to that extent they have achieved an uncommon relationship, which, in my earlier book, I described as *intimacy*. (See the chapter on *Mental Health & All That Jazz*.)

Intimacy is the only relationship in which two people can relax with each other. Only then can they remove their masks, drop their defenses, and stop dealing in images. Kids, say from the ages of

about 10 to 12, often have a "best friend" with whom they achieve a level of intimacy they will never again match, because they have not yet learned how important it is to pretend that one is greater than one really is.

***For adults, status is a matter of life and death. To risk our reproductive success on the nuances of a mere relationship is the last thing our genes want us to do. Unfortunately, to the extent intimacy is limited, love is limited.***

\* \* \*

### A Thing of Beauty Is a Joy Forever

People who demonstrate their love and affection for each other over long periods of time tend to become beautiful in the eyes and minds of each other, and they will remain so despite the cosmetic ravages of time.

These are people who have not only a long history of "tit-for-tat" but who have, for the most part, lived up to the definitions given earlier for *friendliness*. (See *A Morality That Isn't Evil*)

They have been comforting, helpful, emotionally supportive, kind, considerate, generous, and empathetic — in addition to furnishing the chimpanzee pleasures of physical contact, touching, grooming, hugging, and lovemaking. They exhibit unambiguous expressions of joy and relief on occasions of unexpected or overdue reunions or surprises. Like their Bonobo cousins, they also enjoy gazing quietly and lovingly into each other's eyes, and, as you know, the eyes have it.

In my earlier book I attempted to explain a psychoanalytic concept known as the Ego-Ideal. Loosely speaking, it is an image of the kind of person one would like to become. The Ego-Ideal has strong roots in childhood and in the formation of the Super-Ego, but it continues to change (however slightly and gradually) as we go through life, live a little, learn a little, and encounter new and admirable "Ego Models". It seems likely that we must also construct images of "ideal others" — images which can play important roles in our lives.

***Perhaps a loved one becomes more beautiful as he or she approximates one of those ideals, and, if so, then the loved one will surely further define the ideal.***



The partners I am describing have not achieved perfect love or constant friendliness, nor will anyone else ever do so. They will stray from the true path, hurt each other, disappoint each other, argue and become angry. At those times and for a while thereafter, they will cease to be beautiful. But, for the most part, they will remember that they are friends. They will know when and how to apologize. And like the chimps, they will usually “kiss and make up”— if not that night, then at least before it is too late.

Long-time lovers and loving friends become beautiful because they behave beautifully toward each other.

They walk in beauty.

And a thing of beauty is a joy forever.

Appendix Follows

It is the customary fate of new “truths” to begin as heresies  
and end as superstitions.

*Thomas Henry Huxley*

If you enjoyed reading this book, you should also enjoy my earlier book, *Chimpanzees Don't Wear Pants*.

Best wishes,

*Ed Long*

Contact Ed at: <http://www.google.com/profiles/edglong>

## APPENDIX

### Comments, Summaries, and Conclusions

**Ch 1 & 2** Some of the *root causes* of our irritations and discontents are these:

*Overpopulation* in general, and overpopulation of cities in particular. Cities should pass ordinances limiting their rate of growth and the types of new construction that will be permitted. Church and State interference with Family Planning could be countermanded by a properly informed electorate.

*Public Schools* could (in theory) begin to teach people how to think. No one can think clearly “in the heat of passions” such as desire, anger, or grief, but in our calmer moments it would be helpful if we could recognize blatant lies and logical fallacies.

*Television* (and whatever may succeed it) is a scourge. A host of Nobel Prizes should await the person who finally thinks of a cure.

**Ch 3, 4, & 5** The basic reason that we are so reluctant “to take arms against a sea of troubles” is that rebellious behavior induces *anxiety*, a feeling we abhor. In addition, never having been taught that we should always “question authority”, we tend to believe the propaganda we are fed. We must *always* assume that those in authority have self-serving motives. Whether we can or cannot figure out what their motives are, we must learn to dismiss the “hype” completely – and ask ourselves if the action proposed by the authority is one that we would have chosen *on our own* as a means of improving our own situation.

**Ch 6 and 7:** Manipulators are not superhuman; they are *people* just like you and I — with two exceptions: They are more *ambitious* and they are more *tenacious* with respect to achieving their ambitions. Unfortunately, those two traits often lead to *unscrupulous* behavior. Manipulators may not be consciously aware that their behavior is cruel, callous, or deceitful. All of us have an *astonishing* ability to convince ourselves that our actions are either justified or harmless. Therefore, we need not waste our emotions hating Manipulators, but neither can we safely worship them or follow them blindly. Many leaders begin with good intentions, but

to the extent they become *powerful* they also tend to become “corrupt”. From that point on, they *always* are working toward their own advancement, whether that be in terms of money, authority over others, sexual favors, or glory. We must devise methods for “reining them in”. All of this is amplified in Chapter Eleven.

**Ch 10** Are you teaching *your* children a morality that is not evil? If *you* don’t, who will?

**Ch 14** It must be asked, “If patriotism did not exist, what would happen in the event that one’s own country is attacked by a foreign power?” My answer is that patriotism, in the sense of a zealous regard for “national honor”, is not a prerequisite for a sense of responsibility for self and others. When a genuine need arises for defense of family, friends, and countrymen, *or for the defense of freedom*, the responsible person will feel a compulsion to join the effort in whatever way he can best serve. He will not rejoice in declarations of war, nor will he support a tyrannical or belligerent government when his own immediate interests are not at stake, nor will he regret that he has but one life to give to his country.

**Ch 16** In wondering what to do about crime, we must remember Tom Jefferson’s comment at the very beginning of this book. We are not going to achieve such perfection as that there shall no longer be pain or vice in the world. Jefferson thought, however, that those realities could be reduced and that *education* was the way to accomplish it. It’s not that simple. Different criminals have different motives. Some are seeking status, or perhaps just a ‘fast buck’. Some are seeking revenge. Some don’t know *what* they want, but they feel suppressed, *and when they get drunk* they “act out” in any way that comes to mind. Some have actually been *taught* to be criminals and are merely doing what their parents wanted them to do. Education is a good first step, but it must deal with more than “matters of government and religion”. It must promote self-esteem, and the ability to earn a decent living, and an understanding of the adage that, “Living well is the best revenge.”

**Ch 19** The last sentence in this chapter should not be considered a joke. Men, and male animals of all sorts, were selected for their ability to propagate their kind without hindrance and almost without discrimination. Men may not consciously think about that, but that is about as basic a genetic mandate as evolution has come up with. It is, from a propagation point of view, much more impor-

tant than a woman's urge to reproduce, because the male can, if necessary, impose his will on the female. **That's exactly what the male anti-abortionist preachers are doing.**

You would think that women could be awakened to this, but, as I have explained, to do something about it would require becoming "feminists" and they are afraid that men will reject them if they do that, maybe even beat the hell out of them.

**Ch 27** I have scarcely touched on the atrocities that have been and still are committed "in the name of God", but I'm trying to keep this light-hearted. It is my belief that the best argument *for including religion* in the curricula of our public schools is that only by teaching *the history of religion* will significant numbers of our population begin to realize that none of our gods has ever demonstrated much concern for our welfare, and our convictions that any one religion is more 'authentic' than any other has always been one of the most popular excuses for war and genocide.

**Ch 29** When I wrote about the shepherd's giving them "a painful screwing" I fretted about whether that was a bit too crass an image. After subsequent revelations about the extent of sexual abuse of members of the "flock" – young and not so young – by the Catholic priesthood, I realize that, as usual, I was too kind in my appraisal of our Manipulators.

**Ch 34** The point of the three chapters dealing with the 'chemical basis' of love is not that sex is 'bad'. Quite the contrary, the erotic feelings induced by our hormones are possibly the most exquisite sensations a human can experience. The point, simply, is that a wildly intoxicating passion should not be interpreted as an infallible harbinger of the sort of love that is likely to result in a lasting, mutually satisfying relationship. (On the other hand, it *could* be the start of something wonderful.)

**The Book as a Whole:** "*What you don't know can hurt you!*" If this book can help the reader keep that one idea in mind, it will be sufficient justification for my having written it.

No one can provide a "cook book" for correcting all of the world's ills, or even for guaranteeing improved behavior on the part of humans. As explained in some of the early chapters, every 'solution' is apt to cause new problems that are even worse.

All that can be said with some degree of confidence is that we are more likely to make sound decisions if we have all of the facts

— *and the courage to face them* — than if we act in ignorance or self-delusion.

Two of the facts that must be faced were specified by Thomas Jefferson: People must be educated with respect to Government and with respect to Religion. At the present time, probably in all countries and certainly within America, government is controlled by the major Manipulators. It serves the interests of the majority of the people only when those interests are compatible with the wishes of the Manipulators. The people — that is, the voters — are not in a position to choose the sorts of candidates who might be truly interested in — and *qualified* to serve — the best interests of their constituents, because voters have access only to “fabricated images” and “poll-determined opinions” of candidates who are nominated by moneyed interests.

American politicians prattle endlessly about reforming the electoral system, but no one has ever suggested a workable, meaningful reform that would begin to cure all of the problems discussed herein. Perhaps we can get a discussion going on my website that might make some sense.

*Religion* is more than simply “one of the Manipulators”. The notion of “Divine Providence” tends to inculcate a faith that the mediators of that providence — the clergy — will lead the way. But the clergy, at all levels, has proven over and over that it cannot be trusted. In their role as Manipulators, the Religions are supported in many ways by the other three deliberate Manipulators, and that support must be reciprocated. The reciprocation is largely in the form of sedating the multitudes with bromides such as, “Forget about worldly things and devote yourself to saving your soul!” And, of course, that most beloved of biblical quotations, “*Blessed are the meek.*”

And the Rabble? Education, along with economic advancement, can do a lot, but the power of emotions and of the instinctual needs of our “inner chimp” cannot be expected to diminish.

And yet, it would be foolish for us to be ashamed of being animals, for we have no choice. Rather, we should keep in mind that animals can be trained, and people can be taught, and although our emotions will always try to dictate our actions, we can at least *hope* that Freud was right when he opined:

***“The voice of intelligence is weak, but it is persistent.”***



*The End*

**"From now on, history will be a race between education and catastrophe." H.G. Wells (1918)**

The author's previous book, *Chimpanzees Don't Wear Pants*, explained the evolutionary origins of the basic needs and pleasures that motivate human behavior. This volume describes how our needs and pleasures may be frustrated and how we react to those frustrations.

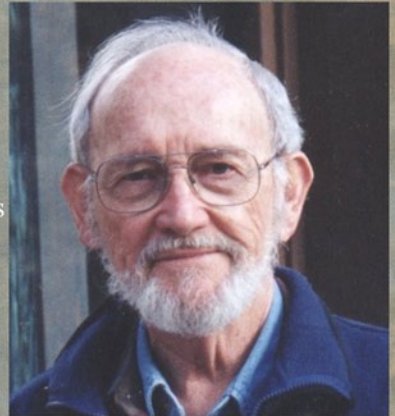
**Most importantly, it shows how an understanding of our emotional needs enables ambitious individuals to manipulate our beliefs, our wishes, and our very lives.**

It explains shooting wars and drug wars, crime and punishment, and why the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

It elucidates not only the inevitability of corrupt and incompetent governments, but why we put up with them.

**Indeed, it will clarify why we put up with anything, and why so many of our 'solutions' immediately lead to new problems that are even worse.**

The book also provides hilarious new insights about love and sex, and some sobering thoughts about adultery and divorce. Finally, it offers some extremely unorthodox views of *morality* and a merciless examination of the uses and abuses of religion.



*Before his retirement Ed Long had worked as psychotherapist, teacher, court consultant, and psychiatric hospital administrator. He and his wife now live in a forest in Colorado, where they are visited by birds, squirrels, bears, bobcat, elk, deer, raccoons, and an occasional human.*

**If *Chimpanzees Don't Wear Pants* made you laugh, *Sex, Violence, Politics, and God* will have you talking in your sleep!**