



## ***A Conversation On Intelligent Design***

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I am going to let you eavesdrop on a conversation I had with a relative recently. For the sake of this article, we will call him “Richard,” since that is his name. Richard's spiritual beliefs will become evident as you read the exchange.<sup>1</sup>

I find that I can learn a lot by listening to other people articulate arguments in defense of a position. Whenever I have been engaged in a Q&A, witness encounter, or discussion with someone, I always take the time to review it in my mind, evaluate it, and try to learn something from it which might serve me well in the next encounter.

I thoroughly enjoyed the encounter you are about to read, which took place through email. You may find that you would have handled the exchange a little differently, and maybe rightly so. I offer it here in hopes that it can serve to sharpen some iron.

Richard first emailed me a video clip of a dolphin playfully blowing bubbles in the water. It was titled “*Dolphin Rings*”<sup>2</sup> and contained the following description:

**“The attached video is of dolphins playing with silver-colored rings which they have the ability to make under water to play with. It isn't known how they learn this, or if it's an inbred ability.**

**As if by magic the dolphin does a quick**

**flip of its head and a silver ring appears in front of its pointed beak. The ring is a solid, donut-shaped bubble about 2-ft across, yet it doesn't rise to the surface of the water!**

**It stands upright in the water like a magic doorway to an unseen dimension. The dolphin then pulls a small silver donut from the larger one. Looking at the twisting ring for one last time, a bite is taken from it, causing the small ring to collapse into thousands of tiny bubbles which head upward towards the water's surface. After a few moments the dolphin creates another ring to play with. There also seems to be a separate mechanism for producing small rings, which a dolphin can accomplish by a quick flip of its head.**

**An explanation of how dolphins make these silver rings is that they are 'air-core vortex rings.' Invisible, spinning vortices in the water are generated from the tip of a dolphin's dorsal fin when it is moving rapidly and turning. When dolphins break the line, the ends are drawn together into a closed ring. The higher velocity fluid around the core of the vortex is at a lower pressure than the fluid circulating farther away.**

**Air is injected into the rings via bubbles released from the dolphin's blowhole. The energy of the water vortex is enough to keep the bubbles from rising for a reasonably few seconds of play time.”**

<sup>1</sup> I have edited out some personal statements in the correspondence to protect Richard's privacy.  
<sup>2</sup> You can view this video online by searching either YouTube or Snopes.com.

That email resulted in the following conversation:<sup>3</sup>

Richard. . .

And the Darwinian Evolutionist has the gall to say that that skill, those abilities, all came about as a product of random chance and mutation! No evidence of Intelligent Design there, eh?

Jim

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Jim. . .

*Mind you, there's nothing to say that the "Intelligent Designer" didn't use the Darwinian model of evolution to make our Creation, either... Hmmm???*

Richard

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Richard. . .

Of course, if there is an Intelligent Designer who has all the creativity, intelligence and personality to design that, then it makes sense He would also design us. Having designed us, we might suspect that He would try to communicate to us through, say, a book, or something like that. If He is powerful enough to design us, then we could also conclude that He is powerful enough to communicate to us exactly how He accomplished this creation thing.

Jim

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Jim. . .

*Possibly...but that would mean that we expect that the Designer must think and act within our own frame of reference and that that action must be understandable to us. If there truly is a Designer, that's being pretty presumptuous on our part, don't you think? We as humans have this wonderful ability to imagine an omnipotent being and then to turn around and impose a very human persona on this entity. Can we have our cake and*

*eat it too? Either the Designer is omnipotent and beyond all human understanding, or else not. Are you trying to say that we "understand" this Designer and the plan?*

*As far as the communication in a "book" is concerned...again, we're making a presumption. I have a hard enough time understanding people (especially women)...so I'm not about to say that I'm prepared to say with certainty that I understand exactly what is being said in a book... especially one that I know is, at best, coming to me through an intermediary, who I would say is no more equipped to understand and write down the thoughts of an omnipotent entity than I am. And if you're going to try and tell me that this intermediary's hand was guided by the Designer...well, who's to say that the Designer didn't guide Darwin's hand and writing? Are we in a position where we can say, with certainty, that any particular person must have been "guided", while saying with equal certainty, that another's wasn't? On whose say-so?*

*Personally, I think the disagreement between creationists & evolutionists is really more a fight about controlling peoples' right to think for themselves than it is about which way our existence came into being. I don't think that there is anything in either way of thinking that would necessarily have to completely exclude the other side's world view. The "intelligent design" side could concede that the Designer might work in ways that are WAY beyond their understanding and reasoning, and the "evolutionist" side could concede that there actually might be an entity (Designer) that has some plan and a hand in what has happened. Both sides happy???*  
*Probably not...*

*It's an interesting discussion. I'm sure I haven't convinced you of anything, but I respect your belief and your conviction.*

*Still friends? Hope so.*

*Take care,*

*Richard*

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<sup>3</sup> Toward the end of the conversation, you will notice the discussion of justice and people getting what they deserve is raised. This came out of a situation Richard was facing and so it was very timely and personal. I have edited the reference to make them generic.

Richard. . .

First, regarding offenses and friendships: just because you think I am wrong doesn't mean I'm offended. You won't offend me. You won't hurt my feelings. I'm not a liberal, so I won't play the passive aggressive tolerance trick on you and say, "Oh, you think I'm wrong. You're judging me. That is so mean. We can't be friends." Not from me. I'm a big boy.

Second, regarding presumptions: we all make them. So, yes, I do bring certain presuppositions to the table. Everyone does. Nobody can avoid it.

So, on to my response, and I'll try to keep it real brief. Of course, you are presuming that the Designer would not act within our frame of reference or that He could not act within that frame of reference. I am presuming that if the Designer wants to communicate to that which He designed that He would design the project in such a way that communication between that infinite being and His creatures would be not only possible, but reliable. If He cannot, then He truly is not infinite at all, but limited.

I am not asserting that I can understand all of the aspects of an infinite being. But I have no problem asserting that I can understand all that He has determined to reveal about Himself. I would suggest He has communicated with the intention of us understanding about Him what He has revealed. He hasn't revealed it all. For no human could understand infinitude.

As far as evidence for the book goes: each claim to inspiration must be judged on its own merits. I can't assert that the Bible comes from God and then look to the Bible as proof that it comes from God. That would in a limited sense be a circular argument. What we must do is ask, "Does this book give evidence of supernatural origin?" That is a fair question to ask of Darwin's book, the Koran, Book of Mormon or any other writing. So, the Bible must be judged by the same criteria with which we would examine any book to see if it bears evidence of Intelligent Design. Funny, how we come back to that! So it is not you or I who gets to decide which book the Designer

wrote, but ask, "If the Designer wanted to communicate to that which He designed (and I don't think it is a jump to suggest that He would), what would that communication look like?" That is an objective test, or at least one of many objective tests that need to be applied.

Could Creationists and Evolutionists ever happily coexist? Only if truth doesn't mean anything at all. They both make mutually exclusive claims. It is like saying, "Can't Jews and Christians both find a common ground on the issue of the identity of Jesus without excluding the other?" Well, Jews say Jesus was a deceiver and a fraud. Christians assert that He is the long-awaited Messiah. It is the logical law of excluded middle. Either Jesus is the Messiah, or not. But He can't be both. Evolutionists are asserting that certain things are true - those things being so much the antithesis of any type of Creationism or belief in Intelligent Design that they can't both be harmonized. Darwinian Evolution has, as its core belief, atheism. Now, there are theistic Darwinists, but they are not consistent Darwinists. Just like there are "Christian Evolutionists" but I can't say they would be consistent Christians. At best, they have an incoherent or inconsistent worldview.

Wow! That is enough head-stretching thinking for one day. Thanks for the interaction! I enjoy the mental jousting! I'm heading out to meet Diedre. Later.

Jim

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Jim . . .

*I'm glad that we can remain friends and still hold discussions of this nature (pun sort of intended)...right now I feel like I need as many as I can get. (Just my "poor, little old me" mood peeking out.) And just to make sure you know, I don't "think" or "know" that you're wrong. I don't know who's right or wrong. My philosophy tends to the agnostic, which as far as I know means a recognition that I don't know anything. (please don't tell anyone I said that...or use it against me in any future discussions). I can't even*

say that I like to play “devil’s advocate” since that suggests a certain belief, too. Let’s just say that I’m the questioner. I expect that I may, or may not, have my questions answered when I die.

I have also enjoyed the “joust” and we’ll have to have another one, some day. Right now I have other head-stretching projects to work on.

Talk to you again, my friend.

Richard

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Richard. . .

Allow me one more thrust in the mental joust: Let’s assume there is a Designer (as the presence of design would demand) and let’s say that His image is reflected in us (though in a very limited and even marred way). Let’s also assume that we as designed creatures have a sense of moral outrage and justice. We feel slighted when justice is not done. When we look at things that people do, we feel a morally appropriate outrage and long that “right” would triumph and “justice” would prevail. It seems that in our conscience we know that crimes should be punished appropriately. Where did this sense of “justice” come from if not a reflection of the Designer in his design?

Of course I do believe there will be a judgment day on which the books will be opened and the Designer will judge all men according to their deeds and justice will be served. That is a scary thought.

Thanks for the friendship.

Jim

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Jim . . .

Well, first...assuming the Designer exists and that we were designed to reflect that image...I’d say that I’m extremely disappointed in the way that certain people were designed...I’m thinking that there was more than a major flaw there and quality control should be fired.

Humor aside, whether we were designed to have a sense of morality or justice, or whether it

is something that has developed over time, the difficulty for me is that I want to be front and center (and enjoying it immensely) when “justice” for others prevails. I get no satisfaction from the idea that it might be meted out on “judgment day,” especially given that I’m not certain that that is what will happen. It’s quite galling to me to think that they could just die without having received their “judgment” in their lifetime and that they have nothing to worry about. But, I’m not about to become a “believer” just so I can have the satisfaction of expecting that they will receive their just desserts in the after-life.

I guess that the bottom line in our discussion of the past couple of days is that you believe that our “creation” couldn’t exist without a Designer having been the instigator and continuing player. I don’t either believe, or disbelieve, in a Designer. I just don’t know, and to be honest, don’t really care either way. I’m OK with what is, and I’m not concerned about whether it happened by Design or by evolution. I’m just going to lead my life in such a way that, at the end, I’ll be reasonably satisfied that I did the best I could to have people be honestly sorry when I die.

Thanks for your friendship, as well.

Richard

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Richard. . .

I would never want you to become a believer just to receive satisfaction in believing that someone will receive justice in the end. I became a “believer” because I could not escape two haunting realities.

First, a creation rationally and logically points to a Creator. So your assessment is right on the money. I do believe that a Designer was responsible for the design and that He is in some measure seen in what He has designed.

Second, it is not just others who have done wrong and deserve judgment but me. I am the one who deserves justice. I’m the lawbreaker. I have lied, stolen, lusted, coveted, gossiped, hated, and a host of other things and my conscience testifies

against me that my deeds are evil. I know that if I get justice on the Designer's judgment day, I am in big trouble. I mean BIG.

That being the case, I was unable to come to the conclusion that I would wait till I die to figure out what might happen and what might the truth be. I think the issue is too big. Too much is at stake.

Whatever you do, don't try to give justice yourself. Then I'll have to be visiting you in prison!

Jim

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As you probably noticed, there were many issues raised and questions asked which could have taken us in many different directions. You may wonder why I didn't deal with those things. I was selective in what issues I answered since I had an objective in view.

Now, go out and start your own conversations!

Without Wax -

