

The Lie

by David Jamison

*Go, soul, the body's guest
Upon a thankless errand;
Fear not to touch the best;
The truth shall be thy warrant.
Go, since I needs must die,
And give the world the lie.*

— Sir Walter Raleigh

1582

About 10,000 years ago, a remarkable story began to be told on the planet Earth. It was the story of an amazing species and how they had been designated by God to serve as the next rulers of the world. For the first time in earth's history she would be overseen by a benevolent master species who would ascend the food chain through labors of the brain, not the brawn. And it was a story for the ages — full of kings and queens, lusty exploits, and noble intentions. This species would be inventive where the dinosaurs were powerful, as cunning as the leviathan was dominant, and as ruthless as the proliferate algae.

But very early on, a disturbing trend arose. The story was being repeatedly rewritten by warlords and conquering princes. With each

successive generation, the story was being modified, codified, coddled, and reshaped to fit the interests of whatever group was telling it. One need only look at the story of Moses. Hebrew lore is founded upon his heroic exodus out of Egypt, and yet Egyptian historical records show no trace of a mass exodus of Jews from their empire. Two vast cultures of enduring legacy, and yet they differ on whether a crucial historical event ever even happened. The story of man began to have several different versions, depending on who you were talking to.

At any rate, the story went on harmlessly for years with its various allegations and obfuscations, always linking our destiny to that of our planet, our gods, our benevolence to the world around us. But at some point a big lie began being told in the story, and this lie changed the way we started telling it. Where once our intelligence promised a bright and beautiful future that would lead to unheard-of evolutions, now we started to believe that it was our destiny to burn ourselves out; to flash brightly against a starry night and then fade away, ashes to existence. We started to tell ourselves that we were TOO intelligent to coexist peacefully for very long, and so our best option was to aspire to the heights of our potential now, before we killed ourselves in the exigencies of survival. It was a portentous and rancorous lie borne out of paranoia and fear – but people started buying into the lie for that very reason, because it played right into their nightmares, right into what man most feared would happen if

our worser nature ran unchecked into the slipshod future: a bloody conflagration of fire and brimstone, with only a jurisprudent God left to sort out the moral men from the fools. Also, the lie gave the race of man an out – if we did destroy ourselves, it was an imperator of God Himself, who never planned on us making much of a run of it. But mostly the lie was just an excuse we gave ourselves to run rampant over the earth and each other, without a nod to natural instinct or rationale. And eventually the lie became Our Destiny, and our destiny became inescapable. But this interpretation of reality is a stinking filthy lie, friends and neighbors, and I urge you to reject it.

*Say to the court it glows
And shines like rotten wood;
Say to the church, it shows
What's good and doth no good.
If church and court reply,
Then give them both the lie*

The lie first probably began being told around 1400 B.C. That's when an Iranian prophet named Zoroaster (or Zarathustra) first gave a powerful message to the people who would soon comprise the Persian Empire. As the story goes, the great prophet Zoroaster was conceived of a virgin by the god Mazda. Zoroaster preached that Mazda alone ruled the universe, and that all other gods were just manifestations of Him. He said that Mazda had created all things,

including the forces of good and evil, who were in a perpetual battle for the fate of the world. And as he told it, at the end of time all of mankind would be resurrected, and Mazda would judge all based on what side they fought, the evil being consigned to an eternity of darkness and misery, the good being sent to Mazda's kingdom free of decay, old age, death. In this fight, man was aided by guardian spirits to help him make the right choices through good words, thoughts, and deeds. When he died, Zoroaster was consumed in a flash of lightning. Whoosh.

Any of this sound familiar? Of course it does. When Persia swept through Mesopotamia between the years 547–517 BC, they liberated the Jews from the nasty clutches of the infamous Nebuchanezzar of Babylon. The Persians were the only other religion at the time to be claiming monotheism, and so were forever linked in Jewish favor. The Jews adopted and converted many Persian beliefs, including the one about a coming apocalypse, believing that they were getting a fuller picture of the whole story. Before this time, there were no traditions in Jewish theology regarding the hierarchies of angels, Satan as an independent force of evil, reward and punishment after death, the soul's immortality, or a day of final judgment. Christian tradition went on to ascribe much of Zoroaster's legend to Jesus of Nazareth, and Muslim theology to that of Muhammad (both of whom were said to be products of miraculous births).

But the combination of the Persian and Hebrew nations created a dangerous coda to the story. Soon the idea got around that “the world was coming to an end.” And here’s where the story digresses and where the lie gains credence: At the time, man had a very narrow idea of what “the world” was. Not only did Zoroaster not know that Persia was only a miniscule part of a vast globe, neither did the Hebrews, the Babylonians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Muslim Empire, nobody. And yet, all that time, the story that “the world was coming to an end” kept being told, even as “the world” was getting bigger and bigger, and even as the story was gaining influence in the Middle East and Far East because of the spread of communication and goods between different pockets of civilization. So, traders spread the lie to Chinese harbors, African villages, and even used it as an excuse to abolish indigenous pagan faiths around the world, sparing their practitioners from the hellfire of heathenism. “At least,” we told them (“we” because we are all complicit in the lie), “you’ll have a fighting chance . . . when the world comes to an end.” The lie was told to everybody. And, again, people bought into it because it confirmed all our worst fears. But it is now time to reject this stinking fallacy. For our sakes and for the sake of our children. It is corrupting our vision of the future with bright streaks of blood.

*Tell potentates they live
Acting by others’ action;
Not loved unless they give,*

Not strong but by a faction.

If potentates reply,

Give potentates the lie

There is another version of this story, and it has been manifesting itself around the world right alongside the lie, though it has never been as popular. This version was told by many of the peoples of the world who were swept up in the lie, the “pagan” cultures that centered on a reverence for the earth and for nature. In this story, man wasn’t so much the master of the earth as the caretaker of it. See life as more of a cosmic gardening job, with your shift lasting about 75.6 years and retirement consisting of reincarnation into a simpler life form – no longer even born with the capacity to worry about age, death, or decay. In this story, there was no apocalypse or day of judgment, but rather individual accountability and a personal relationship with God through a connection with all His creations. In this version, GOD WAS IN ALL OF US, and so all the judging was done inside the consciousness, where God communicated with each of us through dreams, visions, and an innate moral sense. The obviation of that sense leads to spiritual damnation.

The restorative beliefs of some of these religions were brought back to the fore of the Western world in the middle of the 20th century by the writings of Aldus Huxley. In a panic to experiment with the Native American spiritual drug peyote, Huxley’s findings began a

stunning reanalysis of the Western world that resulted in the hippie movement of the late '60s. An alternative to the apocalyptic future ahead soon grew in prominence. Western man began exploring the idea of a "new age," one in which we transcended the need for conquest and plunder and refocused on values such as enlightenment and inner peace. This version of the story went that, before catastrophe, a growing wave of self-reflection inspired by a few enlightened beings worldwide would lead man to reconsider how he was living his life and change the definition of society. And it was through this evolution of thought that man would go on to the next "world." This version maintained all the elements of the previous predictions, but replaced the violent end with mass enlightenment.

Even in the three major world religions, this New Age view has found favor with the Sufi mystics of Islam, the Gnostics of Christianity, and the Kabbalists of Judaism. And all three have at one time or another been branded heretic or fanatical, and have thereby never been given worldwide exposure. But Huxley's experiments encouraged exploration of those ancient beliefs, as well as the transcendent faiths of Asia – Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, to name a few – which all espouse New Age ideals in social conduct.

In the mid-1970s a group of British spiritualists claimed to have made contact with a race of other-dimensional teachers who were being

sent to guide humans into this new phase of evolution. In 1962, a woman in Scotland began to hear a voice telling her to create a garden in a windy and bleak city called Findhorn in the northeastern part of the country. The voice said that the New Age had already begun, and that the cosmic power released by it had been felt by her and many others. And while Hindu's 5,000-year-old sacred text *The Upanishads* predict a "Machine Age" in which mankind would invent the means of their own destruction, it also foresees the coming of "avatars of love" – prophets sent to help us make a peaceful transition into the next age. Two of those prophecies – through the births of Muslim saint Shirdi Sai Baba (another Sufi) and love guru Sathya Sai Baba – are widely believed to have been fulfilled. India's Mother Meera claims that she is another avatar sent to help bring about man's spiritual transformation.

Astrologers have long posited the theory of the precession of the equinoxes. The theory goes thus: Since the earth's axis wobbles, it is continuously giving us a new fixed northern point every time it comes back around the sun. How long does it take a wobble to make one full rotation? About 26,000 years. Babylonians and Egyptians corresponded the imaginary circle the wobble makes in space with the twelve signs of the zodiac, since they also shift slightly with each year (to the tune of about 1° every 72 years). As such, the earth has moved through four 2,100-year ages since the beginning of recorded history: Gemini, Taurus, Aries, and Pisces. We are currently moving

out of Pisces and into Aquarius, which is where the term “New Age” comes from. Owing to the nature of the Aquarian, this age is supposed to be one of widespread knowledge and peace.

Sound like a fairy tale? Of course it does, because that’s exactly what the lie has told you it is. It, in fact, tells us that exactly so we can make that future impossible. And while the lie mostly allows for the fact that you as an individual can overcome these temptations, it tells you that, generally, the race of man cannot, and so you might as well not even try. Again, it is the lie giving you an out. Reject that claptrap with extreme prejudice.

*Tell wit how much it wrangles
In tickle points of niceness;
Tell wisdom she entangles,
Herself in overwiseness.
And when they do reply,
Straight give them both the lie.*

When we talk about ancient prophecies of the “end of the world,” we really have to be careful about what we’re talking about. The “end” of what? What “world?” When the Iroquois said “the world,” they meant from the Atlantic Ocean to just east of the Mississippi River. When Moses said “the world,” he meant West Asia and North Africa. In fact, the story of the biblical flood said to have “covered the earth”

mostly likely referred to an actual flood that actually happened, but certainly didn't cover the world. There is evidence to suggest that there actually was an epic flooding of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in ancient times. The Sumerian fable *The Epic of Gilgamesh* later tells of a great flood that covered the earth. Widely considered to be the inspiration for the Noah story, this flood killed thousands of Sumerians and Canaanites, but most likely didn't harm any Nubians or Olmecs, budding peoples on other parts of the Earth.

In the Bible, the creation of "the world" was likewise simply the creation of the civilized world in the Near East. The biblical date of creation, about 6,000 years ago, corresponds exactly to the time that that part of the earth was transitioning from a hunter-gatherer existence to a settled, agricultural existence. What knowledge were Adam and Eve banished for? Most likely the knowledge of the domestication of animals and farming – they would thenceforth be forced to till the earth for subsistence.

And how did this "creation" come about anyway, considering homo sapien was entering his 94,000th year on earth? Well, actually, God WAS responsible for that, rolling back the polar ice caps around 10,000 BC to find a world with most of man's natural predators – woebegone, ye woolly mammoth! So long, yon sabretoothed tiger – nice and extinct. We no longer faced the danger of one our

settlements being turned into a Pleistocene buffet. The stage was set for the era of man. And lo, what we have wrought. A fat stinking lie.

And, self-absorbed as we are, we have also interpreted the lie to mean that we will make this “end of the world” come about. As a result, CIVILIZATION HAS BEEN ENACTING THIS STORY for nearly 3,000 years, now. We have determined ourselves to be a divine race, and too intelligent to be allowed to exist. We have caught ourselves up in our own grandeur, and given ourselves a death sentence to punish ourselves for all of evils we have practiced on the earth and each other. And what’s more, we’re doing everything in our power to carry this sentence out.

*Tell men of high condition
That manage the estate,
Their purpose is ambition,
Their practice only hate.
And if they once reply,
Then give them all the lie.*

So how does a story keep being told when it ensures destruction for the storyteller? Well, we start pretty early on. Look at the stories we tell our children about the god-like accomplishments of man, and then the ones about beings who aspire to godhead and are banished to eternal hellfire. We tell them to share and to respect others, and

then as a society we flout these ideals in the manic need to continue enacting our story. Look how we praise the winners and pity the losers. We set a perfect prototype for not living up to expectations. Look at the fathers “toughening up” the sons. Look at mama critiquing daughter’s posture, or make-up, or hair, or everything.

And kids fight the lie. They first question your integrity, then silently protest your injustices, and eventually throw rocks and bricks at your chain stores. And why don’t we listen them as the truth comes spilling out of their mouths? In truth, we knew the key to happiness most clearly the day we were born, and the lie started giving us excuses to sell out our beliefs. So-called warmongerers and imperialists are not evil, they are only concluding the final acts of the story exactly as they were taught to them by their dads in sandboxes: Crush the Enemy. Also, the Enemy is You.

Here are some fun facts about the lie:

The lie tells you that the point of the game is to get On Top. And it also tells you that it is acceptable to lie, cheat, and steal to get there. Indeed, it tells you that’s the ONLY way to win. Don’t fall for that crap. One game of dodgeball and you know that a victory means nothing if you don’t play by the rules. But remember, the lie never asked you to do what was acceptable TO YOU, it only told you to do what was acceptable WITHIN THE LIE.

The lie tells you that the sublimation of the female is the natural way for humanity. Accept the truth. Wholeness is the key. The masculine and the feminine, embraced by everybody, is the only key to enlightenment. How 'bout this? Your God reflects You. Points off for being a burnt witch.

The lie tells you your gods are male. This allows you to assume “masculine” qualities when you are playing the game – i.e. aggressiveness, power, ruthlessness. The Judeo-Christian tradition adopted this bizarre specification, making possible a slew of injustices done to the remaining nature-based religions of the world.

The lie makes you self-satisfied. The lie tells you that your worth as a person corresponds to your accumulation of material goods. So that as you look around at your stuff, and feel the weight of your bankbook, you feel “secure” and “confident.” The lie has given you self-esteem. Again, I implore you to reject this ridiculous resolution.

The lie makes you seem wise. It tells you that kids “don’t know what they’re talking about.” It repeatedly tells you that your youth was rambunctious and rash, and that you ought to forget all your childish idealism. But do you REMEMBER childhood? Remember when you KNEW the truth? And how from day one people started telling you how the world “really was?” And that you had to sell

yourself out to get anywhere in the world? Again, I beseech you not to listen to this nonsense.

The lie tells you that you aren't as smart or attractive as the people around you. This will make it impossible for you to really fall in love, because you will always loathe whomever has either the poor taste or pity to fall in love with you. Also, this makes it difficult for you to get the confidence to demand people to stop giving you the lie. It would be impossible to get a race of people to kill themselves if they loved themselves and each other. The lie is trying to hurt you. The lie is the enemy. You must fight it.

*Tell arts they have no soundness,
But vary by esteeming;
Tell schools they want profoundness,
And stand too much on seeming.
If arts and schools reply,
Give arts and schools the lie.*

So whom to believe? We have throughout history been told the story of man by someone who says the knowledge was a gift from God. We've got more prophets than we know what to do with and a whole bunch of interpretations of their words. And this essay is by no means an indictment of humble Zoroaster. In truth, he was a remarkable visionary, who was responsible for man's evolution from

worshipping the creations of God, to worshipping the Creator Himself. This was revolutionary, because God deserves mad props. The trouble happened when the stories surrounding these revelations grew fanciful and neurotic. No, I say all the prophets have been right. Furthermore, I say we are all prophets of God because God is always speaking to ALL of us. You know that voice in your head, that “conscience” telling you the difference between right and wrong, always prescient that you have the free will to heed, or not, Its will? The only difference between you and your Muhammad, your Buddha, is the listening and then the doing. It’s not that He only gave His message to a scant few, it’s that they paid attention better, and then tried to pass the message on. The reason religions get so popular is that they basically reflect the same message we always hear in our minds, the “divine voices.”

It is up to us, then, to choose which path to take—just like Zoroaster said, just like Jesus said, just like Muhammad said—good or evil. Evil has to do with destruction and grief, the good has to do with enlightenment and peace. Every religion in the world agrees with that. As such, whether or not we continue to enact the lie completely depends on us. The lie began as a story we started telling ourselves, and will continue to be until we play out its inevitable conclusion. Or we could simply not. We could simply choose to enact the more transcendent story, the one of self-affirmation and courage—but it will take an amazing leap in self-esteem. We have to actually believe

we are beings of actual light, and that evil is not an inherent force of mankind, but rather an outside influence – like Baba said, like Krishna said – that we can simply will out of existence. And, as you might expect, the ultimate choice is up to us, up to the godhead in us, exactly as the Judeo Christian version has it. In the end, man WILL choose between good and evil, and that choice will result in either heaven or hell.

*So when thou hast, as I
Commanded thee, done blabbing –
Although to give the lie
Deserves no less than stabbing –
Stab at thee he that will,
No stab the soul can kill.*