

## I Dreamt of Billions

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

I dreamt that I was Bill Gates living in a big mansion. I had chuffers and chaperons, butlers and gardeners, cooks and maids. I could dole out billions to the nations around the globe and was privy to free admittance to any functions, concerts, conventions, carnivals, parties and people's lives. I was a tomato that could be sliced into any salad.

I dreamt that my rebukes were taken as lessons of life and sneers as blessings by the recipients. My sneeze could be heard around the world resulting in an overwhelming response of get-well cards. I could be abrupt with anyone without endangering my bond and friendship with them. I had hundreds of nieces and nephews at my beck and call. My beautiful wife was everyone's sister-in-law or aunt and I was everyone's dearest uncle, cousin or brother-in-law. Women took my misconducts as innocent shows of affection and men took my insults as words of wisdom.

I dreamt that my distant cousins came to me from distant places only to keep in touch with me. "I was certain of nothing but the holiness of their heart's affection." Many of them told me the tales of their misfortunes. I made sure to take care of their monetary problems. After all, it was only money. One can return money and gold, but sympathy and goodwill cannot be paid back. That's what I was told. People were refreshing like the breeze of autumn.

I dreamt about my childhood friend, Charley who came all the way from Seaport to Seattle just to meet me. He reverberated at least 100 times, "My friend, I always wanted to go on an Alaskan cruise that starts from Seattle, but never mind, at least I came here and saw you. That is all that matters. Don't feel bad if I do not go on the cruise."

"How moving and selfless," I thought and sent his entire family on the Alaskan cruise.

I dreamt that all my relatives bought only Microsoft products and made sure to use 'Explorer' and 'Bing' instead of 'Mozilla Firefox' and 'Google' so that I remained the richest person in the world. They always defended my company in person, in parties and in media and never wished any ill-will

towards me or bankruptcy for my company. "They knew, 'Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.'"

I dreamt that the lionesses were offering their udders to feed the fawns and the snakes were protecting birds' eggs. Criminals were punished and the victims were protected. Men of clothes were considerate to each others' faith. The immigrants were flocking to America for the love of the country not the dollar.

I dreamt that ever since Obama placed traffic lights on Wall Street, the financiers were avoiding hit-and-run. Americans were making a living for themselves and not for big government. The Republicans were living on little and the Democrats gave to people what they promised.

All of a sudden my phone rang. It was already 8 in the morning. It was a rude awakening. It was my second cousin on the other end. She was visiting Olympia, Washington on a business trip.

"So near and yet so far! You must visit me. Seattle is only a 90-minute drive from Olympia," I said.

"I can't; I don't have time to visit you. Moreover, my company is taking care of my boarding and lodging so I don't need you this time," she answered.

"Then why did you call me?"

"I don't burn bridges since hell sometimes does freeze over. The Sun may rise from the west and pigs may fly over the crest. What happens after the rain if it dries or from the ashes should Phoenix rise?"

