

## **Poor, Nasty, Brutish and Short**

By Musafir

We are human animals. We are inherently bad. Therefore, we have rules, laws and codes of conduct to abide by. Our thoughts, feelings and behavior, if good, are shaped by our individual experiences and environment. Good behaviors are learned behaviors. They are not innate.

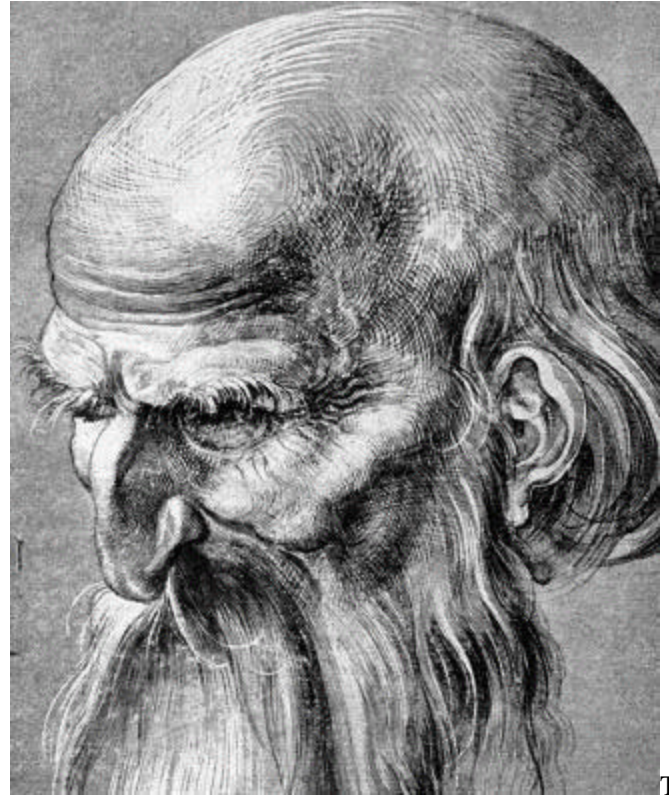
Human nature tends to be evil in a 'state of nature.' It can be virtuous and moral only in a controlled environment. Basically, all humans are evil. If left alone, evil is inescapable and will turn everyone evil. This is evident in mob tendencies where law and order fail. This is evident among powerful people because 'power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.' This is evident among people who can get away unpunished.

Therefore, in his book, *Leviathan* (1651), Thomas Hobbes talked about the need of a social contract and an absolute sovereign. Chapter XIII of *Leviathan* is an exposition "Of the Natural Condition of Mankind, as concerning their Felicity, and Misery" and contains the famous quotation describing life in the state of war of every man against every man: "the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short."

This is because of the social contract that we refrain from battering the innocent, robbing someone's livelihood and betraying our adopted country. But because of human nature we find loopholes to go back to the 'state of nature.' We think that it is acceptable to be evil, nasty and brutish as long as we can go unnoticed or unpunished.

For the past few weeks, we've spent countless hours focusing on the ills of the Big Three automakers. Those adamantly opposing the bailout happen to be Republicans, many of whom have foreign automakers situated in their own backyards. Unlike what we believed initially, this fight was not about the quality of U.S. vehicles or Detroit's inability to shift to fuel-efficient vehicles at the height of the gas crisis this past summer. It's really about red states vs. blue states. Yes, it's about politics – Republicans vs. Democrats and their personal ties to the auto industry. Evil in disguise – back to the state of nature!

I voluntarily retired from General Motors just as I turned 62. That had been my long term plan because I wanted to pursue various interests for the remainder of my days. My phone line is abuzz with folks who always wanted to see my family and me in dire straits. They tried to do everything that would have hurt my employment status while sucking every ounce of benefit from my company. They did that with subliminal messages designed to pass below the normal limits of perception. Nasty – back to the state of nature!



The other day a journalist in Baghdad, Iraq hurled a pair of shoes at the President of the United States of America. I happened to go to a party of immigrants who came to this country for the good life for their children and themselves. Shockingly, many of the same immigrants were rejoicing at the incident calling it the 'shoes flying into history.' "If the United States wants to be regarded as a dignified global leader, it should act like a caring global leader," remarked one of them. Whether you love Bush or hate him, any American must see that we can't have anyone throwing things at the President. The question that any patriotic American should be asking is, "Where were the guys who are supposed to be ready to take a bullet for the President. Not one of them could catch up to the shoes. Brutish – back to the state of nature!

Going back to the 'state of nature' is 'poor, nasty and brutish.' We must do the right things even when no one is watching. Of course, that is a learned behavior that can be acquired through independent thinking. Independent thinkers feel the need to make sense of the world based on personal observations and experiences rather than just going along with the thoughts of others. Thinkers understand that we will reap what we sow. Just thinking!