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BILL ZEDLER, CREATIONIST LEGISLATOR FROM TEXAS

Recently, journalist Josh Harkinson wrote about an unusual piece of legislation in Texas that would ban workplace discrimination against creationists. HB 2454 would make it a crime to "discriminate against or penalize in any manner" a professor or student based on his or her "conduct of research relating to the theory of intelligent design." The author of the bill, Republican state Rep. Bill Zedler of Arlington, called Harkinson to defend it. Here's an excerpt from their conversation:

REPORTER: Are you a creationist?

LEGISLATOR: Evolutionists will go "Oh, it just happened by chance."

BILL, HE DIDN'T ASK YOU HOW IT HAPPENED. HE ASKED IF YOU ARE A CREATIONIST. IT WAS A SIMPLE, YES OR NO QUESTION. AFTER ANSWERING YES OR NO, YOU THEN COULD HAVE ELABORATED ON YOUR RESPONSE. I'M HOPING THAT I'M NOT ASSUMING TOO MUCH BY INTERPRETING YOUR ANSWER AS "YES."

ALSO BILL, EVOLUTION HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH CREATION. THEY ARE TWO SEPARATE SUBJECTS. YOU ARE CONFUSING CREATION WITH ABIOGENESIS. THOSE WHO WORK IN THE FIELD OF ABIOGENESIS ARE USUALLY REFERRED TO AS BIOCHEMISTS.

Today we know that’s false.

BILL, HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT'S FALSE? ARE YOU A BIOCHEMIST? IS ANYONE IN YOUR FAMILY A BIOCHEMIST? IS YOUR BEST FRIEND A BIOCHEMIST? IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO ANY OF THOSE QUESTIONS, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CONSIDER ADVISING THEM TO SEEK A NEW PROFESSION. THEY OBVIOUSLY AREN'T ANY MORE QUALIFIED TO BE WORKING IN THAT FIELD THAN YOU ARE TO BE REPRESENTING PEOPLE WHO MUST LIVE AND WORK IN THE REAL WORLD.

Today we know that even a single-celled organism is hugely complex.

BILL, SINGLE CELLED ORGANISMS ARE THE LEAST COMPLEX FORMS OF LIFE ON EARTH. IF YOU WANT TO FIND AMAZEMENT IN COMPLEXITY, AT LEAST PICK SOMETHING THAT IS MORE COMPLICATED THAN THE STUFF THAT DRIPS OUT OF YOUR NOSE.

When was the last time we’ve seen someone go into a windstorm or a tornado or any other kind of natural disaster, and say "Guess what? That windstorm just created a watch."

BILL, I HAVE NEVER SEEN ANYONE GO INTO A TORNADO AND SAY THAT. HAVE YOU?

SINCE WE AGREE THAT NO ONE HAS EVER BEEN DOCUMENTED TO HAVE DONE AND SAID THAT, WHY DON'T WE MOVE ON BEFORE YOU SAY SOMETHING EVEN MORE STUPID.

REPORTER: Are you saying a windstorm is like the Big Bang?

LEGISLATOR: It has to do with things occurring by chance.

SO BILL, WHAT MAKES YOU THINK A WINDSTORM OCCURS BY CHANCE? WHEN YOU WERE IN SCHOOL, WAY BEFORE YOU BECAME A STATE REPRESENTATIVE, DIDN'T YOU EVER STUDY ABOUT THE WEATHER? IF YOU HAD YOU MIGHT HAVE LEARNED ABOUT THE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE FORMATION OF WINDSTORMS.

AND BILL, CAN YOU NAME ONE SCIENTIST WHO CLAIMS THAT A WINDSTORM COULD CREATE A WATCH BY CHANCE? THE REASON YOU CANNOT IS BECAUSE NO SCIENTIST HAS EVER SAID THAT. YOU HAVE CREATED A STRAW MAN ARGUMENT. NOR CAN YOU NAME ANY SCIENTIST WHO SAID THE BIG BANG HAPPENED SOLELY AS A RESULT OF CHANCE. SCIENTISTS BELIEVE THAT CHANCE MAY HAVE PLAYED A ROLE, BUT THE BIG BANG COULD NOT HAVE OCCURRED UNLESS CERTAIN NATURAL LAWS PERMITTED IT TO OCCUR.

REPORTER: Ok. [Long pause]. Is a windstorm analogous to a genetic mutation?

LEGISLATOR: Well, not really. I don’t want to go that far. Let me put it to you this way: When we talk about people with faith, there is no greater faith than that life began by chance, with the amount of knowledge that we know now.

JOSH, NOW YOU'VE GOT HIM. ASK BILL IF HE KNOWS THE DEFINITION OF FAITH. THEN WHEN HE MUFFS IT, EXPLAIN TO HIM THAT FAITH IS WHAT IS REQUIRED WHEN ONE HAS NO EVIDENCE FOR THEIR BELIEFS. SINCE SCIENTISTS *HAVE* PROVEN THAT LIFE COULD HAVE BEGUN BY A COMBINATION OF CHANCE AND THE PHYSICAL LAWS OF NATURE, NO FAITH IS REQUIRED.

REPORTER: I thought people doing work on the science of evolution typically don’t weigh in on what caused the beginning of life.

GOOD POINT JOSH. THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I POINTED OUT AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS INTERVIEW.

LEGISLATOR: I wonder why?

WELL BILL, MAYBE IF YOU ACTUALLY STUDIED SCIENCE INSTEAD OF REPEATING THE LIES YOU HEAR AT SUNDAY MORNING SERMONS, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TO WONDER WHY.

REPORTER: They say they don’t know the answer.

LEGISLATOR: If somebody does decide to weigh in, why should they be discriminated against?

BILL, FOR THE SAME REASON THAT ASTROLOGERS ARE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST WHEN THEY TRY TO WEIGH IN ON ASTRONOMY. KIDS ARE CONFUSED ENOUGH WITHOUT BEING TAUGHT NONSENSE AS FACT.

REPORTER: Because they don’t have the scientific evidence to substantiate their views.

LEGISLATOR: The debate ought to be: “How did it happen?”

BILL, GREAT WAY TO DODGE THE REPORTER'S POINT. IT'S EASY TO SEE WHY YOU CHOSE POLITICS AS A CAREER.

But we’re not gonna allow that one to be brought up!

BILL, THE SCIENTIFIC THEORIES FOR THE BEGINNING OF LIFE ON EARTH ARE NOT BROUGHT UP BECAUSE OF THE INTENSE RELIGIOUS INTERFERENCE CURRENTLY OCCURRING IN OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM.

THE REASON CREATIONISM IS NOT BROUGHT UP IS BECAUSE OUR COURTS HAVE DETERMINED THAT THERE IS NOT ONE SPECK OF SCIENCE TO BE FOUND IN ANY OF YOUR FAIRY TALES.

I don’t think they oughta be thrown off campus if they come up with it.

I AGREE BILL, THEY SHOULDN'T BE THROWN OFF CAMPUS; BECAUSE THEY NEVER SHOULD HAVE BEEN THERE, TEACHING THAT USELESS CRAP, IN THE FIRST PLACE.

REPORTER: The bill basically deals with the treatment of creationists as a matter of workplace discrimination. It got me thinking about other efforts to deal with that issue, such as legislation that prohibits workplace discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation, or marital status. A lot of states have laws outlawing that type of discrimination, but Texas doesn’t. Do you think that it should?

JOSH, TEXAS IS THE BUCKLE OF THE BIBLE BELT. WHY WOULD YOU EVEN THINK THAT SUCH A DEVOUTLY CHRISTIAN STATE WOULD OUTLAW DISCRIMINATION AGAINST 3 OF CHRISTIANITY'S LONGTIME VICTIMS: GAYS, SINGLES, AND WOMEN. CHRISTIANITY IS FOR WHITE, HETEROSEXUAL MARRIED MEN, WHO USUALLY HAVE 50-INCH WAISTLINES, AND IQ'S TO MATCH.

LEGISLATOR: Gender identity? You know, yeah, before I authored the bill I would have to think about it a little bit.

BILL IS PROBABLY TRYING TO THINK ABOUT HOW HE IS GOING TO EXPLAIN AWAY HIS CABANA BOY.

REPORTER: Do you see a reason to protect creationists but not. . .

LEGISLATOR: Here’s the deal: We have college professors that will defend Hugo Chavez, ok? You have college professors that will espouse communism despite all the evidence of its overwhelming failure. And yet they are tolerated, but someone who even dares to mention intelligent design or who questions the idea that life could begin by chance, they are kicked out, lose their tenure, all kinds of discrimination working against them. I think that flies in the face of academic freedom.

BILL, THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT NONE OF THE EXAMPLES YOU USED INVOLVED SCIENCE. PEOPLE ARE ENTITLED TO HAVE DIFFERING OPINIONS ON GOVERNMENT LEADERS (LIKE CHAVEZ) OR ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS (LIKE COMMUNISM), BUT IN SCIENCE, WE TEACH PROVABLE, TESTABLE FACT.

IF BELIEVERS HAVE A HYPOTHESIS (CREATIONISM), THEN THEY MUST DO WHAT EVERY OTHER SCIENTIST MUST DO: GO OUT AND GATHER EVIDENCE, CONDUCT TESTS, AND PROVE THAT THEIR THEORY HAS SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE TO WARRANT CONSIDERATION. TO THIS POINT IN TIME, THAT HAS NOT HAPPENED.

BILL, REMEMBER EARLIER WHEN YOU SAID COMMUNISM WAS AN OVERWHELMING FAILURE? WELL COMPARED TO YOUR BELIEFS, EVEN COMMUNISM SEEMS LIKE A RAGING SUCCESS.

You know what, we are willing to sit there and tolerate the ideas of Hugo Chavez and the ideas of communism and stuff like that, we oughta be able to tolerate somebody else that questions the idea of life beginning by chance.

BILL, I JUST EXPLAINED WHY WE SHOULDN'T. JOSH, ASK HIM A QUESTION BEFORE HE REPEATS HIMSELF AGAIN.

REPORTER: Do you really think that scientists are arguing that life began by chance, or are they just declining to weigh in on what initially caused life to begin?

JOSH, COME ON. BONE UP ON THE BASICS BEFORE YOU INTERVIEW BOZOS LIKE THIS GUY.

NO SCIENTIST CLAIMS THAT LIFE BEGAN "ONLY BY CHANCE." CHANCE WAS A SMALL FACTOR THAT WOULD NOT HAVE EVEN MATTERED IF THE LAWS OF PHYSICS AND CHEMISTRY DID NOT PERMIT THE ASSEMBLING OF NON-ORGANIC ELEMENTS INTO AMINO ACIDS.

AND SCIENTISTS ARE NOT DECLINING TO WEIGH IN ON ABIOGENESIS. THERE ARE MANY COMPETING THEORIES INCLUDING WARM PONDS, HYDROTHERMAL VENTS, CLAY, PANSPERMIA, AND MANY OTHERS.

LEGISLATOR: Maybe the reason they aren’t willing to weigh in is because they are afraid of the repercussions.

JOSH, SEE WHAT I MEAN? NOW BILL ASSUMES THAT SCIENTISTS AREN'T WILLING TO WEIGH IN ON ABIOGENESIS, WHEN IF FACT, THERE ARE THEORIES ALL OVER THE PLACE INCLUDING SOME I DIDN'T MENTION.

REPORTER: What evidence do you have that scientists are suppressing scientific evidence that substantiates a creationism perspective?

LEGISLATOR: Let me tell ya, I have had people already contacting me as far as they would be willing to get lots of people to come down and testify when the bill goes before committee regarding the discrimination and persecution that they have already faced. So there won’t be any problem there. . .

NICE DODGE, BILL. BUT THE ANSWER YOU GAVE, WAS NOT TO THE QUESTION HE ASKED.

IN REPLY TO THE ANSWER YOU DID GIVE, I WOULD STATE THAT KEEPING RELIGIOUS NUTBAGS FROM VIOLATING THE CONSTITUTION DOES NOT EQUATE TO DISCRIMINATION AND PERSECUTION.

I don’t believe that political correctness should play any part in the academic arena.

BILL, THAT'S TOO BAD BECAUSE THAT IS THE ONLY WAY YOU ARE EVER GOING TO GET AROUND THE CONSTITUTION AND HAVE YOUR BELIEFS TAUGHT TO KIDS IN SCHOOL.

REPORTER: Is banning discrimination “political correctness”?

LEGISLATOR: Not at all.

REPORTER: So banning discrimination against gay people, in your view, is not a reflection of political correctness?

LEGISLATOR: Well, here’s the deal, all we are saying is that you should be able to debate it. There is a difference between having a law to do something and a law where we ought to be able to at least discuss it.

BILL, DEBATE BELONGS IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, IN THE SENATE, AND EVERYWHERE THAT FREE SPEECH IS ALLOWED. IT DOES NOT BELONG IN THE SCIENCE CLASSROOM. KIDS ARE THERE TO LEARN, PRECISELY BECAUSE THEY DON'T YET HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE TO DEBATE. AND AS LONG AS GHOST WORSHIPPERS CONTINUE TO PUSH THEIR MAGICAL BELIEFS ONTO IMMATURE MINDS, MOST PROBABLY NEVER WILL.

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THE SCIENCE SEGMENT #1

ACUPUNCTURE FOR PAIN NO BETTER THAN PLACEBO AND,

IT IS NOT WITHOUT HARM

ALTHOUGH ACUPUNCTURE IS COMMONLY USED FOR PAIN CONTROL, DOUBTS ABOUT ITS EFFECTIVENESS AND SAFETY REMAIN. INVESTIGATORS FROM THE UNIVERSITIES OF EXETER & PLYMOUTH AND THE KOREA INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL MEDICINE IN SOUTH KOREA, CRITICALLY EVALUATED SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS OF ACUPUNCTURE AS A TREATMENT OF PAIN IN ORDER TO EXPLORE THIS QUESTION. REPORTING IN THE APRIL 2011 ISSUE OF PAIN, THEY CONCLUDE THAT NUMEROUS SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS HAVE GENERATED LITTLE TRULY CONVINCING EVIDENCE THAT ACUPUNCTURE IS EFFECTIVE IN REDUCING PAIN, AND SERIOUS ADVERSE EFFECTS CONTINUE TO BE REPORTED.

MANY SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS OF ACUPUNCTURE FOR PAIN MANAGEMENT ARE AVAILABLE, YET THEY ONLY SUPPORT FEW INDICATIONS, AND CONTRADICTIONS ABOUND. ACUPUNCTURE REMAINS ASSOCIATED WITH SERIOUS ADVERSE EFFECTS. ONE MIGHT ARGUE THAT, IN VIEW OF THE POPULARITY OF ACUPUNCTURE, THE NUMBER OF SERIOUS ADVERSE EFFECTS IS MINUTE. RESEARCHERS COUNTER HOWEVER, THAT EVEN ONE AVOIDABLE ADVERSE EVENT IS ONE TOO MANY. THE KEY TO MAKING PROGRESS WOULD BE TO TRAIN ALL ACUPUNCTURISTS TO A HIGH LEVEL OF COMPETENCY.

RESEARCHERS CAREFULLY IDENTIFIED AND CRITICALLY EXAMINED SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS OF ACUPUNCTURE STUDIES FOR PAIN RELIEF AND CASE REVIEWS REPORTING ADVERSE EFFECTS. REVIEWS WERE DEFINED AS SYSTEMATIC IF THEY INCLUDED AN "EXPLICIT METHODS" SECTION DESCRIBING THE SEARCH STRATEGY AND INCLUSION/EXCLUSION CRITERIA. SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS HAD TO FOCUS ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ANY TYPE OF ACUPUNCTURE FOR PAIN. OF THE 266 ARTICLES FOUND, 56 WERE CATEGORIZED AS ACCEPTABLE SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS.

THE AUTHORS OBSERVE THAT RECENT RESULTS FROM HIGH-QUALITY RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED TRIALS HAVE SHOWN THAT VARIOUS FORMS OF ACUPUNCTURE, INCLUDING SO-CALLED "SHAM ACUPUNCTURE," DURING WHICH NO NEEDLES ACTUALLY PENETRATE THE SKIN, ARE EQUALLY EFFECTIVE FOR CHRONIC LOW BACK PAIN, AND MORE EFFECTIVE THAN STANDARD CARE. IN THESE AND OTHER STUDIES, THE EFFECTS WERE ATTRIBUTED TO SUCH FACTORS AS THERAPIST CONVICTION, PATIENT ENTHUSIASM OR THE ACUPUNCTURIST'S COMMUNICATION STYLE.

IF EVEN SHAM ACUPUNCTURE IS AS GOOD AS OR BETTER THAN STANDARD CARE, THEN WHAT IS THE HARM? THE ANSWER LIES IN THE ADVERSE EFFECT CASE STUDIES. THESE STUDIES WERE GROUPED INTO THREE CATEGORIES: INFECTION (38 CASES), TRAUMA (42 CASES) AND OTHER ADVERSE EFFECTS (13 CASES). MANY OF THESE ADVERSE SIDE EFFECTS ARE NOT INTRINSIC TO ACUPUNCTURE, BUT RATHER RESULT FROM MALPRACTICE OF ACUPUNCTURISTS. THE MOST FREQUENTLY REPORTED COMPLICATIONS INCLUDED PNEUMOTHORAX, (PENETRATION OF THE THORAX) AND BACTERIAL AND VIRAL INFECTIONS. FIVE PATIENTS DIED AFTER THEIR TREATMENT.

IN AN ACCOMPANYING COMMENTARY, HARRIET HALL, MD, STATES HER POSITION FORCEFULLY: "IMPORTANTLY, WHEN A TREATMENT IS TRULY EFFECTIVE, STUDIES TEND TO PRODUCE MORE CONVINCING RESULTS AS TIME PASSES AND THE WEIGHT OF EVIDENCE ACCUMULATES. WHEN A TREATMENT IS EXTENSIVELY STUDIED FOR DECADES AND THE EVIDENCE CONTINUES TO BE INCONSISTENT, IT BECOMES MORE AND MORE LIKELY THAT THE TREATMENT IS NOT TRULY EFFECTIVE. THIS APPEARS TO BE THE CASE FOR ACUPUNCTURE. IN FACT, TAKEN AS A WHOLE, THE PUBLISHED (AND SCIENTIFICALLY RIGOROUS) EVIDENCE LEADS TO THE CONCLUSION THAT ACUPUNCTURE IS NO MORE EFFECTIVE THAN PLACEBO."

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THE SCIENCE SEGMENT #2

STUDY SHOWS THAT TOBACCO SMOKING IMPACTS TEENS' BRAINS

TOBACCO SMOKING IS THE LEADING PREVENTABLE CAUSE OF DEATH AND DISEASE IN THE U.S., WITH MORE THAN 400,000 DEATHS EACH YEAR ATTRIBUTABLE TO SMOKING OR ITS CONSEQUENCES. AND YET TEENS STILL SMOKE. INDEED, SMOKING USUALLY BEGINS IN THE TEEN YEARS, AND APPROXIMATELY 80 PERCENT OF ADULT SMOKERS BECAME HOOKED BY THE TIME THEY WERE 18. MEANWHILE, TEENS WHO DON'T TAKE UP SMOKING USUALLY NEVER DO.

WHILE STUDIES HAVE LINKED CIGARETTE SMOKING TO DEFICITS IN ATTENTION AND MEMORY IN ADULTS, UCLA RESEARCHERS WANTED TO COMPARE BRAIN FUNCTION IN ADOLESCENT SMOKERS AND NON-SMOKERS, WITH A FOCUS ON THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX, THE AREA OF THE BRAIN THAT GUIDES "EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS" LIKE DECISION-MAKING, AND THAT IS STILL DEVELOPING STRUCTURALLY AND FUNCTIONALLY IN ADOLESCENTS.

THEY FOUND A DISTURBING CORRELATION: THE GREATER A TEEN'S ADDICTION TO NICOTINE, THE LESS ACTIVE THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX WAS, SUGGESTING THAT SMOKING CAN AFFECT BRAIN FUNCTION.

THE RESEARCH APPEARS IN THE CURRENT ONLINE EDITION OF THE JOURNAL NEUROPSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY.

AS THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX CONTINUES TO DEVELOP DURING THE CRITICAL PERIOD OF ADOLESCENCE, SMOKING MAY INFLUENCE THE TRAJECTORY OF BRAIN DEVELOPMENT AND AFFECT THE FUNCTION OF THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX.

IN THE STUDY, 25 SMOKERS AND 25 NON-SMOKERS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 15 TO 21 WERE ASKED TO PERFORM A TEST THAT ACTIVATED THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX AND REQUIRED THEM TO INHIBIT RESPONDING.

THE TEST, CALLED THE STOP-SIGNAL TASK, WAS DONE WHILE THE PARTICIPANTS WERE UNDERGOING FUNCTIONAL MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING. THE STOP-SIGNAL TASK INVOLVES PRESSING A BUTTON AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE EVERY TIME A LIGHTED ARROW APPEARS -- UNLESS AN AUDITORY TONE IS PLAYED, IN WHICH CASE THE PARTICIPANT MUST PREVENT HIMSELF FROM PRESSING THE BUTTON. IT IS A TEST OF A PERSON'S ABILITY TO INHIBIT AN ACTION.

PRIOR TO THE TEST, THE RESEARCHERS USED THE HEAVINESS OF SMOKING INDEX (HSI) TO MEASURE THE LEVEL OF NICOTINE DEPENDENCE IN THE SMOKING GROUP. THE HSI TAKES INTO ACCOUNT HOW MANY CIGARETTES A TEEN SMOKES IN A DAY AND HOW SOON AFTER WAKING HE OR SHE TAKES THEIR FIRST SMOKE.

THE RESULTS OF THE TESTS WERE INTERESTING -- AND SURPRISING. AMONG SMOKERS, THE RESEARCHERS FOUND THAT THE HIGHER THE HSI -- THAT IS, THE MORE A TEEN SMOKED -- THE LESSER THE ACTIVITY IN THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX. AND YET, DESPITE THESE LOWER LEVELS OF ACTIVATION, THE SMOKING GROUP AND THE NON-SMOKING GROUP PERFORMED ROUGHLY THE SAME WITH RESPECT TO INHIBITION ON THE STOP-SIGNAL TASK.

THE FINDING THAT THERE WAS LITTLE DIFFERENCE ON THE STOP-SIGNAL TASK BETWEEN SMOKERS AND NON-SMOKERS WAS A SURPRISE. THAT SUGGESTED TO RESEARCHERS THAT THE MOTOR RESPONSE OF SMOKERS MAY BE MAINTAINED THROUGH SOME KIND OF COMPENSATION FROM OTHER BRAIN AREAS.

PROTRACTED DEVELOPMENT OF THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX HAS BEEN IMPLICATED AS A CAUSE OF POOR DECISION-MAKING IN TEENS, CAUSED BY IMMATURE COGNITIVE CONTROL DURING ADOLESCENCE.

SUCH AN EFFECT CAN INFLUENCE THE ABILITY OF YOUTH TO MAKE RATIONAL DECISIONS REGARDING THEIR WELL-BEING, AND THAT INCLUDES THE DECISION TO STOP SMOKING.

THE KEY FINDING IS THAT AS THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX CONTINUES TO DEVELOP DURING THE CRITICAL PERIOD OF ADOLESCENCE, SMOKING MAY INFLUENCE THE TRAJECTORY OF BRAIN DEVELOPMENT, AFFECTING THE FUNCTION OF THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX. IN TURN, IF THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX IS NEGATIVELY IMPACTED, A TEEN MAY BE MORE LIKELY TO START SMOKING AND TO KEEP SMOKING -- INSTEAD OF MAKING THE DECISION THAT WOULD FAVOR A HEALTHIER LIFE.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THE FACT THAT ADOLESCENT SMOKERS AND NON-SMOKERS PERFORMED EQUALLY WELL DURING A RESPONSE-INHIBITION TEST SUGGESTS THAT EARLY INTERVENTIONS DURING THE TEEN YEARS MAY PREVENT THE TRANSITION FROM A TEEN SMOKING AN OCCASIONAL CIGARETTE IN RESPONSE TO PEER PRESSURE TO ADDICTION IN LATER ADOLESCENCE.

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FAMOUS QUOTES

ABRAHAM KOVOOR (1898 - 1978) 80 YEARS.

HE WAS AN INDIAN PROFESSOR AND RATIONALIST WHO GAINED PROMINENCE AFTER RETIREMENT FOR HIS CAMPAIGN TO EXPOSE AS FRAUDS VARIOUS INDIAN AND SRI LANKAN "GOD-MEN" AND SO-CALLED PARANORMAL PHENOMENA. HIS DIRECT, TRENCHANT CRITICISM OF SPIRITUAL FRAUDS AND ORGANIZED RELIGIONS WERE ENTHUSIASTICALLY RECEIVED BY AUDIENCES, INITIATING A NEW DYNAMISM IN THE RATIONALIST MOVEMENT, ESPECIALLY IN SRI LANKA AND INDIA.

"HE WHO DOES NOT ALLOW HIS MIRACLES TO BE INVESTIGATED IS A CROOK,

HE WHO DOES NOT HAVE THE COURAGE TO INVESTIGATE A MIRACLE IS GULLIBLE,

AND HE WHO IS PREPARED TO BELIEVE WITHOUT VERIFICATION IS A FOOL."