**NOVEMBER 2, 2008 THE SKEPTICARENA.COM**

[**Argument # 23: The Dying Brain Hypothesis for Near Death Experiences.**](http://www.victorzammit.com/skeptics/winston.html#top)

**Typical Usage: "Near death experiences (NDE's) are simply hallucinations that stem from the result of a dying brain that shuts down in a way that produces those experiences. They aren't evidence of an afterlife."**

**WINSTON, I COULDN’T HAVE PUT IT BETTER MYSELF.**

**This argument, called the Dying Brain Hypothesis, is purported by many skeptics and materialists. NDE Skeptic and University of London Psychology Professor Susan Blackmore is one of the main proponents of this. Her book Dying to Live argues that the NDE is merely the result of hallucinations from the brain that erupt as it malfunctions and collapses. The main criticism of her work by other NDE experts tends to be that she dismisses the vast data that doesn’t fit into her hypotheses.**

**WINSTON, AS ALWAYS YOU HAVE IT BASS ACKWARDS. AS A SKEPTIC, BLACKMORE IS TRAINED NOT TO DISMISS DATA SIMPLY BECAUSE IT DOES NOT FIT INTO HER HYPOTHESES. BUT THAT IS EXACTLY HOW IRRATIONALS THINK WINSTON. THE NDE “EXPERTS” YOU REFER TO ARE ACTUALLY THE ONES WHO DISMISS DATA IN ORDER TO HOLD ONTO THEIR UNSUPPORTED BELIEFS.**

**Kenneth Ring pointed this out in an article he wrote for the Winter 1995 issue of the Journal of Near Death Studies. Greg Stone, an NDE expert on my discussion list, recently wrote an elaborate critique of Blackmore’s book in his article A Critique of Susan Blackmore’s Dying to Live and Her Dying Brain Hypothesis.**

**WINSTON, WE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN WHAT ANY OF YOUR LITTLE SHOWER-BUDDIES HAVE TO SAY. IT’S WHAT THE SCIENTISTS SAY THAT MATTERS; AND THEN ONLY WHEN THEY BASE THEIR CONCLUSIONS ON THE EVIDENCE.**

**It should be especially noteworthy to skeptics that Ms. Blackmore herself, in response to Greg’s critique of her book, admitted that her theories do not prove the Dying Brain Hypothesis.**

**WINSTON, IT SHOULD BE ESPECIALLY NOTEWORTHY TO YOU THAT SKEPTICS ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO NEVER CLAIM ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY. ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY IS RESERVED FOR RELIGION AND FOR BELIEFS FOR WHICH THERE IS NO EVIDENCE. YOU CLAIM ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY WINSTON, EVERY TIME YOU MAKE A “PROCLAMATION.”**

**This of course, is a big blow to the many Skeptics and CSICOP members who make such a claim on her behalf.**

**NO WINSTON, IT IS NOT. NO SKEPTIC CLAIMS ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY. CSICOP MEMBERS, AS SKEPTICS, ARE ACUTELY AWARE OF THIS.**

**With her definitive statement on the record now, it should no longer be an issue. Here are her words:**

**Blackmore:
I have not claimed that any of my work proves the Dying Brain Hypothesis. In fact no amount of research ever could.**

**THERE YOU GO WINSTON. SHE HONESTLY ADMITS THAT IT CANNOT BE PROVEN. YOU ARE THE ONE WHO CLAIMS TO HAVE ABSOLUTE CERTAIN BELIEF IN THE ANSWER. ONLY IRRATIONALS HAVE ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY.**

**The most I could hope to do, and in fact what I tried to do in Dying to Live, is to show that we can account for all the major features of the NDE without recourse to such ideas as a spirit, a soul, or life after death.**

**WINSTON, THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT SKEPTICS SAY ABOUT RELIGION. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PROVE THAT A GOD DOES NOT EXIST. BUT BELIEVERS HAVE NEVER PROVED THAT GOD DOES EXIST; IN ANY OF THE RELIGIONS. SINCE WE CAN EXPLAIN MOST OF THE UNIVERSE WITHOUT RESORTING TO MAGIC OR GOD TO FILL IN THE GAPS, IT IS UNNECESSARY TO ADD THEM IN. WHERE WOULD YOU STOP? WHY ADD IN ONLY YOUR GOD? WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER GODS? WHAT ABOUT ADDING IN MAGIC?**

**USING THE EXCUSE THAT SCIENCE CAN’T ANSWER EVERYTHING YET DOES NOT PROVE THAT GOD IS THE ANSWER. YOU NEED TO PRODUCE EVIDENCE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE. UNTIL THEN - YOU HAVE NOTHING. UNTIL YOU CAN PROVE IT, THERE IS NO REASON WHY ANY OF US SHOULD BELIEVE IT. THAT DOESN’T MEAN IT DOESN’T EXIST. IT SIMPLY MEANS WE DON’T HAVE TO BELIEVE IT JUST BECAUSE YOU DO.**

**Although many features of the NDE can be explained by neurological or physiological processes, this doesn’t explain the message being sent.**

**WINSTON, WHAT MESSAGE? DID I MISS SOMETHING?**

**In fact, the neurological effects could just be the result effects of the NDE, rather than the cause. Perhaps the TV/radio analogy to the NDE helps explain this best. As NDE researcher and webmaster Kevin Williams relates:**

**"Such reductionism, however, may only be explaining the mechanism of the near-death experience, not necessarily the near-death experience itself. In the same way, it is possible to reduce a television set to its basic elements such as electrodes and tubes, but one cannot satisfactorily explain the television show being played on it using reductionist terms. Concerning the chemical basis of the near-death experience and using this television analogy, if the brain can be thought of as a television set, then the near-death experience can be thought of as the television show being played on it. Science maybe able to quantify everything concerning the television set components (i.e. the brain), but science is unable to satisfactorily quantify the television show being played on it (i.e. the near-death experience)."**

**WINSTON, ALL THAT STILL DOESN’T PROVE ANYTHING SUPERNATURAL.**

**There are several convincing categories of evidence to suggest that NDE’s are not just mere hallucinations caused by a brain that is shutting down. These tend to be ignored or dismissed by Blackmore and others who support the Dying Brain Hypothesis:**

**1) First and most importantly, there are many well documented cases where the NDEer while out of body were able to see specific details and hear conversations in other rooms and far away places that they couldn’t have known about beforehand, and yet upon returning to the body find that what they saw or heard was in fact verified to be accurate and true.**

**WINSTON, YOU ARE SOOOOOO GULLIBLE.**

**This is a phenomena that skeptics and materialists still haven’t been able to explain away no matter how hard they try. Blackmore herself knows about these cases and even mentions them in her book, but she dismisses it simply by stating that she doesn’t believe them.**

**WINSTON, YOU COULD LEARN A LOT FROM THIS LADY AND HER BOOK. UNFORTUNATELY THAT IS VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE BECAUSE THE ODDS OF AN IRRATIONAL MIND LEARNING TO THINK BY USING REASON IS RARE INDEED. MORE LIKELY IS THAT YOU WILL GO TO YOUR GRAVE DEFENDING ALL YOUR UNSUPPORTABLE BELIEFS IN THE FACE OF ANY AND ALL EVIDENCE. YOU WILL DIE WINSTON, JUST AS SMART AS ON THE DAY YOU WERE BORN.**

**This of course reflects the closed mental model of skeptics who dismiss facts and data that don’t fit into their hypotheses.**

**WINSTON, YOU’VE GOT IT BACKWARDS AGAIN. YOU ACCUSE SKEPTICS OF BEING CLOSED BECAUSE THEY WILL NOT ACCEPT YOUR BELIEFS WITHOUT PROOF LIKE YOU DO. THAT DOES NOT MAKE THEM CLOSED-MINDED, IT MAKES THEM RATIONAL.**

**If NDE’s and OBE’s were just dreams or hallucinations, then these perceptions at a distance wouldn’t turn out to be accurate.**

**WINSTON, THEY DON’T.**

**The separation of spirit from body or the mind’s ability to remote view are the best hypotheses that fit this well documented data.**

**WRONG WINSTON. WITHOUT PROOF THEY ARE NOT THE BEST “ANYTHING.”**

**One famous example of this is the case of a nurse named Kimberly Clark. Talbot describes this incident in The Holographic Universe:**

**"Such facts notwithstanding, no amount of statistical findings are as convincing as actual accounts of such experiences. For example, Kimberly Clark, a hospital social worker in Seattle, Washington, did not take OBEs seriously until she encountered a coronary patient named Maria. Several days after being admitted to the hospital Maria had a cardiac arrest and was quickly revived. Clark visited her later that afternoon expecting to find her anxious over the fact that her heart had stopped. As she had expected, Maria was agitated, but not for the reason she had anticipated.**

**Maria told Clark that she had experienced something very strange. After her heart had stopped she suddenly found herself looking down from the ceiling and watching the doctors and the nurses working on her. Then something over the emergency room driveway distracted her and as soon as she "thought herself" there, she was there. Next Maria "thought her way" up to the third floor of the building and found herself "eyeball to shoelace" with a tennis shoe. It was an old shoe and she noticed that the little toe had worn a whole through the fabric. She also noticed several other details, such as the fact that the lace was stuck under the heel. After Maria finished her account she begged Clark to please go to the ledge and see if there was a shoe there so that she could confirm whether her experience was real or not.**

**Skeptical but intrigued, Clark went outside and looked up at the ledge, but saw nothing. She went up to the third floor and began going in and out of pateients' rooms looking through windows so narrow she had to press her face against the glass just to see the ledge at all. Finally she found a room where she pressed her face against the glass and looked down and saw the tennis shoe. Still, from her vantage point she could not tell if the little toe had worn a place in the shoe or if any of the other details Maria had described were correct. It wasn't until she retrieved the shoe that she confirmed Maria's various observations. "The only way she would have had such a perspective was if she had been floating right outside and at very close range to the tennis shoe," states Clark, who has since become a believer in OBEs. "It was very concrete evidence for me."**

**WINSTON, TALBOT’S BOOK IS OBVIOUSLY OF BIBLICAL IMPORTANCE TO YOU SO I DON’T WANT TO HURT YOUR FEELINGS. OH WELL, WHAT THE HELL: WINSTON, YOU SERIOUSLY NEED TO CLIMB THROUGH THE MIRROR AND JOIN THE REST OF US IN THE REAL WORLD. LIVING IN A VIDEO GAME YOUR WHOLE LIFE MAY BE FUN BUT IT ISN’T REALITY.**

**In addition, research studies back up these claims as well. One example is the experiment done by Cardiologist Michael Sabom. Talbot describes this as well:**

**"Experiencing an OBE during cardiac arrest is relatively common, so common that Michael B. Sabom, a cardiologist and professor of medicine at Emory University and a staff physician at the Atlanta Veterans' Administration Medical Center, got tired of hearing his patients recount such "fantasies" and decided to settle the matter once and for all. Sabom selected two groups of patients, one composed of 32 seasoned cardiac patients who had reported OBEs during their heart attacks, and one made up of 25 seasoned cardiac patients who had never experienced an OBE. He then interviewed the patients, asking the OBEers to describe their own resuscitation as they had witnessed it from the out-of-body state, and asking the nonexperiencers to describe what they imagined must have transpired during their resuscitation.**

**Of the nonexperiencers, 20 made major mistakes when they described their resuscitations, 3 gave correct but general descriptions, and 2 had no idea at all what had taken place. Among the experiencers, 26 gave correct but general descriptions, 6 gave highly detailed and accurate descriptions of their own resuscitation, and 1 gave a blow-by-blow accounting so accurate that Sabom was stunned. The results inspired him to delve even deeper into the phenomenon, and like Clark, he has now become an ardent believer and lectures widely on the subject. There appears "to be no plausible explanation for the accuracy of these observations involving the usual physical senses," he says. "The out-of-body hypothesis simply seems to fit best with the data at hand."**

**WINSTON, IF SABOM’S STUDY HAD ANY VALIDITY, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY MAINSTREAM MEDICINE, INSTEAD OF ONLY BEING MENTIONED IN TALBOT’S FAIRY TALES.**

**Also significant are the studies done that support the validity of Out of Body Experiences (NDE’s are considered a type of OBE). Rick Stack describes one notable example of these in his book Out of Body Adventures:**

**"A notable study by Osis and McCormick involved an out-of-body subject trying to view a target that was contained within an optical image device and could be viewed only from a specific location. The target was a picture composed of several elements. These elements were not physically together in any one place within the apparatus. If you looked through the viewing window from a point directly in front of the apparatus, however, the various elements of the final target came together as an optical illusion. The OBE subject, Alex Tanous, was instructed to project into the room with the target, which was several rooms away, and to try to view it. Meanwhile, the experimenters attempted to measure physical effects at the target location (effects that may be caused by the subject's out-of-body presence). They placed sensor plates in a shielded chamber at the viewing location. The sensors were capable of picking very small movements, or vibrations, which would then generate electrical impulses in extremely sensitive strain gauges. These strain gauges, therefore, enabled the experimenters to note very minute changes in the vibration of the sensor plates. Tanous was led to believe that the strain gauges were being used only for a subsequent task in order to reduce the possibility of his deliberately trying to affect the sensors while attempting to view the optical image device.**

**Osis and McCormick thought that the OBE might be a state that fluctuated with respect to degree of externalization; that is to say, there may be degrees of clarity of intensity in the out-of-body state. It may be possible, for example, to be both partially out of and partially in your body. The investigators hypothesized that when the OBE subject was most fully out and, consequently, able to view the target more accurately, there would be greater mechanical (physical) effect caused by the experient's out-of-body presence than there would be when the subject was less out and, therefore, less able to accurately view the target.**

**The results of the Osis-McCormick study supported their hypothesis "that ostensibly unintentional kinetic effects can occur as by-products of narrowly localized OB [out-of-body] vision." In other words, apparently unintentional physical motion or effects can occur when someone sees something at a specific location while feeling that he is out-of-body. The strain gauge activation level that occurred when the subject was viewing the target and scored "hits" was significantly higher than when the subject scored "misses." This finding lends some support to the concept that the greater vibration of the sensor plates was caused by some exteriorized portion of the subject's personality."**

**WINSTON, YOU WOULDN’T BE LOOKING TO BUY A BRIDGE WOULD YOU?**

**HAVEN’T YOU FIGURED OUT YET THAT IF THIS CRAP WERE TRUE THESE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PROVE IT TO EVERYONE BY NOW? IF THEY PROVED IT TO THESE RESEARCHERS, WHY COULDN’T THEY PROVE IT TO THE WORLD? WHY AREN’T THEY WORLD-FAMOUS?**

**EVERY TIME ANY ONE OF THESE CLOWNS HAS EVER BEEN PUT UNDER THE MICROSCOPE THEY HAVE FAILED TO DO WHAT THEY CLAIMED THEY COULD DO. YOU DON’T BELIEVE IN COINCIDENCES, SO HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THAT? HOW IS IT POSSIBLE FOR EVERY SINGLE GIFTED PERSON IN THE WORLD TO FAIL EVERY TIME THEY ARE TESTED FOR REAL? WHY DO SUPERNATURAL POWERS ALWAYS DISAPPEAR WHEN PUT TO THE TEST? YOU SAID YOURSELF IT CAN’T ALWAYS BE COINCIDENCE.**

**Another notable example was done by Charles Tart, where a girl known as Miss Z was able to identify a 5 digit number above her bed in a position that she could only have seen if she had floated up there.**

**OR IF SOMEONE HAD TOLD HER WINSTON.**

**2) Second, NDE’s usually result in permanent life changing effects whereas dreams and hallucinations do not. Usually, real experiences are what cause life changes, not imaginary ones. NDEers usually report that through their NDE they gain valuable insight into the universe, about themselves, what their lives are really all about and how we’re all really connected in a vast superconsciousness, etc.**

**WINSTON. YOU ASSUME THEIR INSIGHTS ARE CORRECT. THEIR VALUABLE INSIGHT WOULD ONLY BE VALUABLE IF IT WERE CORRECT - OTHERWISE, THEY WERE BETTER OFF BEFORE THEY WERE ENLIGHTENED.**

**Many also report life reviews where everything they’ve ever done flashes through in a brief moment and they feel the impact of their actions on others, which allows them to reevaluate their lives from a much higher perspective. As a result, many learn to love more altruistically and be less selfish. In addition, most NDEers lose all fear of death as well, claiming that they’ve discovered that death is just a doorway, not an end.**

**WINSTON. RELIGIOUS BELIEVERS ALSO SEE DEATH AS A DOORWAY AND NOT AN END. SINCE 75% OF AMERICA IS CHRISTIAN, THAT MEANS THAT FEW PEOPLE FEAR DEATH TO BEGIN WITH.**

**SKEPTICS DON’T BELIEVE IN AN AFTERLIFE, YET FEW ADMIT TO FEARING DEATH. WE JUST ACCEPT IT AS THE INEVITABLE END TO LIFE THAT IT IS. IF YOU NEED RELIGION OR A NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCE TO LOSE YOUR FEAR OF DEATH THEN I SAY “GO FOR IT.” AT LEAST SOMETHING POSITIVE WILL COME OUT OF IT.**

**IN OTHER WORDS, IF YOU NEED A CRUTCH TO HELP YOU WALK - THEN GO GET ONE.**

**3) Third, people have had NDE’s while they were declared dead with flat EEG lines on their brain activity. Any activity in the brain/mind, even simple thoughts, results in some EEG activity. Therefore, it should be impossible (according to materialistic science) to have any kind of conscious experience while your brain shows a flat EEG line, yet this has happened with NDE’s.**

**OR SO THEY CLAIM, WINSTON. THE EEG’S PROVE OTHERWISE. IF THEY HAD AN NDE, IT WAS NOT WHILE THE EEG LINE WAS FLAT. WAKE UP WINSTON - USE YOUR HEAD.**

**4) Fourth, some people have NDE’s even when they were not in danger of death. Pediatrician Dr. Melvin Morse notes some of these in his article “Are Near Death Experiences Real?”:**

**"The experiences do not only occur to dying dysfunctional brains. The Journal of the Swiss Alpine Club, in the late 1800s, reported 30 first hand accounts of mountain climbers who fell from great heights and lived. The climbers reported being out of their physical body, seeing heaven, having life reviews, and even hearing the impact of their bodies hitting the ground. They were not seriously injured.**

**WINSTON. IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU ARE DESCRIBING DELIRIUM.**

**Yale University Pediatric Cancer specialist Dianne Komp reports that many dying children have near death experiences, without evidence of brain dysfunction. Their experiences often occurred in dreams, prayers, or visions before death. One boy stated that Jesus had visited him in a big yellow school bus and told him he would die soon. Others heard angels singing or saw halos of light.**

**WINSTON, THERE IS NOTHING STRANGE ABOUT THE STORIES REPORTED BY THE CHILDREN. WHAT DO YOU THINK IT PROVES?**

**The American Journal of Psychiatry, in 1967, reported the experiences of two miners trapped for days in a mine. They were never near death and had adequate food and water. They said that mystical realities opened before them in the tunnels. They also said a third miner who seemed real to them helped them to safety, but disappered when they were rescued."**

**WINSTON, AGAIN EASILY EXPLAINED BY DELIRIUM.**

**In my opinion, the biggest and most comprehensive easy to read book is PMH Atwater’s The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Near Death Experiences.**

**WINSTON, THAT BOOK HAS YOUR NAME WRITTEN ALL OVER IT.**

**In it, she writes of Blackmore’s Dying Brain Hypothesis:**

**A parapsychologist at the time of her original work but now focusing on psychological research, Blackmore has written one of the most influential books on the near-death experience - Dying to Live: Science and Near-Death Experience - in which she presents a detailed version of the dying brain theory. Her aim is to provide a materialistic interpretation of near-death states.**

**Blackmore’s theory is too complex to present in its entirety here, but the following is a summary of it:**

**· Anoxia can cause the occurrences of hearing music (by stimulating the cochlear region of the ear), seeing tunnels, and seeing a light.
· An inordinate release of endorphins at the time of death are the source of the euphoria associated with a near-death episode.
· The actions of endorphins and neurotransmitters cause such cerebral structures as the hippocampus (associated with memory) to release stored memories, resulting in the life review.
· The sense of timelessness is the result of the breakdown of one’s sense of self at death (the self being the basis upon which we distinguish moments of time).**

**To respond to each of these points is not necessary. Instead, we can offer a rebuttal to the whole by quoting Dr. Kenneth Ring’s criticism from his excellent review of Blackmore’s book in the Journal of Near-Death Studies: "Does the brain state associated with the onset of an NDE explain the experience or does it merely afford access to it?" In other words, although many (all?) of the near-death-related phenomena may be traceable to our body’s responses to dying, does that mean that those responses explain the phenomena, or do they simply provide us with an interesting way of talking about them?**

**There is no answer.**

**ACTUALLY WINSTON, BLACKMORE GAVE YOU A WHOLE LIST OF ANSWERS BUT YOUR PRECONCEIVED BELIEFS PREVENTED YOU FROM EVEN CONSIDERING THEM.**

**IT’S ODD HOW YOU CAN POSSESS ONE OF THE MOST CLOSED MINDS ON THE PLANET AND NOT EVEN BE AWARE OF IT. IN FACT, IT IS ONE OF THE ACCUSATIONS YOU THROW AT OTHERS CONTINUALLY. IF YOU WANT TO SEE WHAT A CLOSED MIND REALLY LOOKS LIKE WINSTON - GO STAND IN FRONT OF A MIRROR. YOU’LL NEVER SEE A BETTER EXAMPLE.**

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**THE SCIENCE SEGMENT**

**YET MORE PHYSICS FACTS:**

**Measurements second = the frequency of radiation emitted by cesium atoms.**

**meter = the distance traveled by light (in a vacuum) in 1/300,000,000 of a second.**

 **Femtosecond = 1/quadrillionth of a second**

**(chemical reactions occurring within femtoseconds can be observed using lasers).**

**nuclear power fusion: when nuclei smaller than iron fuse.**

 **it is the source of energy for all stars and nuclear weapons.**

 **fission: when nuclei larger than iron split.**

 **it is the source of all nuclear power plants.**

**neutrino (flavors) 1) electron**

**(each has anti- 2) muon**

**matter partner) 3) tau**

**Particles (basic) 1) Quarks: form protons, neutrons, etc.:**

 **up, down, top, bottom, charm, strange.**

 **(a proton consists of 2 "up" quarks and 1 "down" quark;**

 **(a neutron consists of 1 "up" and 2 "down").**

 **2) Leptons: form electrons, neutrinos, etc.:**

 **electron, muon, tau, + same three as neutrinos.**

 **3) Bosons:**

**photon (carry the electromagnetic force), gluon (mediate the strong force), y & w bosons. (predicted: higgs boson - a force carrying field that provides mass).**

 **Quarks are held together by bosons called 'gluons'.**

 **particles fall into two broad categories: bosons & fermions:**

**if the number of protons, electrons, and neutrons that make up an atom, are even the atom is called a boson; if the number is odd, it is called a fermion. if two fermion atoms form a molecule it will become a boson (two odds = an even).**

 **Average speed of an atom is 2000 mph.**

 **They can be stopped and trapped briefly in a magnetic field.**

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**THE ARENA GOES ABROAD**

**Richard Dawkins’ website blocked by court in Turkey**

 **If you are in Turkey and try to visit Richard Dawkins’ website www.richarddawkins.net, you will currently find nothing but the note: ‘The access to the site has been banned by court order’. Istanbul’s 2nd Criminal Court of Peace ordered the Turkish Telecom to block access to the highly popular website upon complaint by Adnan Oktar alias Harun Yahya who claims that the site contains insulting remarks about him and his work.**

**Harun Yahya is a messianic campaigner for an Islamic version of creationism, who tries to “expose” Darwin’s theory of evolution as the greatest fraud in the history of science. This bustling anti-science-zealot has enormous funds from unknown sources at his disposal. He tries to speard his numerous books, articles and films against evolution in various languages through the Internet. In 2006, he produced a weighty and glossy opus of 800 pages with the name Atlas of Creation and sent 10,000 copies of it to scientists, journalists, media and schools all over Europe. One of the recipients was Prof. Richard Dawkins. The prominent evolution specialist described the book on his website as "preposterous" and noted he was at "a loss to reconcile the expensive and glossy production values of this book with the 'breathtaking inanity' of the content.“ (Richard Dawkins, Venomous-Snakes-Slippery-Eels-and-Harun-Yahya). Oktar filed a lawsuit for the damages of mental anguish in the amount of 8000 YTL (about 4000 Euro) against the Oxford professor.**

**Earlier, Adnan Oktar tried and failed to ban the Turkish version of Richard Dawkin’s famous book The God Delusion. The Turkish publisher was sued and acquitted. Oktar’s claim that the book was blasphemous was rejected by the court. The book became a best-seller in Turkey. Dawkin’s book The Ancestor’s Tale – written before, but in Turkey published after The God Delusion - was released and sold out in a single day.**

**After the enforcement of a new Internet law in May 2008, Internet censorship is rampant in Turkey. More than 850 sites have already been blocked since then. Sites can be banned for various reasons: if their content is deemed to be harmful to children, to encourage use of drugs, gambling, prostitution, pornography or suicide, to support the Kurdish cause or to contain insults against Kamal Atatürk, the founder of Turkey. The video sharing site Youtube for example is banned in Turkey since four months for containing videos allegedly insulting to the memory of Atatürk. For Adnan Oktar and his associates, the new censorship law is a "heaven-sent" opportunity. Before Richard Dawkin's website, they managed already to get Google Groups and WordPress.com blocked with the claim that some groups and blogs on these sites contained libelous material.**

 **Oktar is currently appealing against a three-year prison sentence imposed for creating an illegal organisation for personal gain.**

 **Link: Richard Dawkins: Venomous-Snakes-Slippery-Eels-and-Harun-Yahya: [http://richarddawkins.net/article,2833,UPDATED-Venomous-Snakes-Slippery-Eels-and-Harun-Yahya,Richard-Dawkins]**

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**FAMOUS QUOTES**

**Augustine of Canterbury (born in the first third of the 6th century - died 26 May 604) Lived 71-104 years.**

**He was a Benedictine monk who became the first Archbishop of Canterbury in the year 598. He is considered the "Apostle to the English", a founder of the English Church and a patron of England.**

 **Roman Catholic bishops were established at London and Rochester in 604, and a school was founded to train Anglo-Saxon priests and missionaries. Augustine died in the year 604 and was soon revered as a saint.**

**HIS QUOTE:**

**"What was God doing before the Creation?**

**preparing Hell for people who ask questions like that."**