



## Thursday, March 17th, 2005

Switched the Squawkbox commenting system to Blogger's thingy today. Pooley. Obviously lost all my old comments and am not altogether thrilled with this new deal. Squawkbox was definitely dodgy and creaky but, but, but, whatever ...

## Friday, March 18th, 2005

A few days ago, everything went right. We had a hat-trick of approvals all in one day and I was deliriously happy! Bought a tub of bubble mixture to celebrate. Bubble blowing is a low maintenance, high impact methodology to bring about instant pleasure and peace. All you need is Rs. 10 and a few minutes.

## Friday, March 18th, 2005

### One Hour To Madness And Joy

*Excerpt from a poem by Walt Whitman*

O something unprov'd! something in a trance!  
O madness amorous! O trembling!  
O to escape utterly from others' anchors and holds!  
To drive free! to love free! to dash reckless and dangerous!  
To court destruction with taunts - with invitations!  
To ascend - to leap to the heavens of the love indicated to me!  
To rise thither with my inebriate Soul!  
To be lost, if it must be so!  
To feed the remainder of life with one hour of fulness and freedom!  
With one brief hour of madness and joy.

## Saturday, March 19th, 2005

As part of a series to celebrate its 75th anniversary, Fortune magazine, in its latest issue, presents “The Best Advice I Ever Got” - 27 or so luminaries talk about the people who most influenced their business lives.

Here’s what Peter Drucker had to say - he’s 95!!!!!!!

### ***Get good - or get out.***

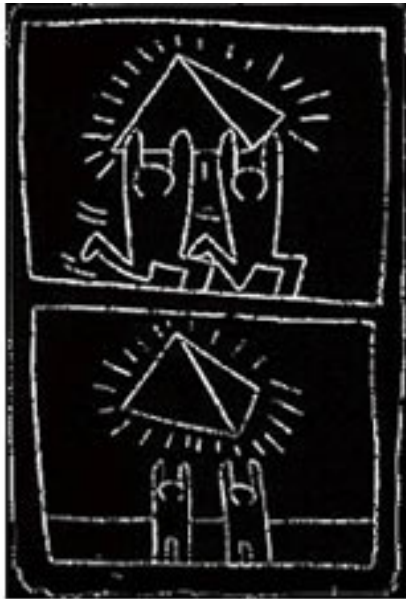
*“The most important instruction I received was when I was just 20 and three weeks into my first real job as a foreign affairs and business editor of the large-circulation afternoon paper in Frankfurt. I brought my first two editorials to the editor-in-chief, a German. He took one look at them and threw them back at me saying, ‘They are no good at all.’ After I’d been on the job for three weeks, he called me in and said, ‘Drucker, if you don’t improve radically in the next three weeks, you’d better look for another job.’*

*For me, that was the right treatment. He did not try to mentor me. The idea would have been considered absurd. The idea of mentoring was post-World War II. In those days (before World War II), you were hired to do your job, and if you didn’t do it, you were out. It was very simple.”*

Hmmmm. All this mentoring and nurturing that we do these days for kids who think it’s their birth right to be molly-coddled ... wonder if it isn’t time to go back to the basics and remind people that they get paid to do their jobs and the very least they can do is get it right.

## Sunday, March 20th, 2005

Keith Haring, a 1980s New York based graffiti and visual artist, said, “The best reason to paint is that there is no reason to paint. I’d like to pretend that I’ve never seen anything, never read anything, never heard anything - and then make something.”



## Tuesday, March 22nd, 2005

A typically George Carlin(ish) takeoff on a famous Shaw quote:

Some people see things that are and ask, Why?

Some people dream of things that never were and ask, Why not?

Some people have to go to work and don't have time for all that crap!!

## Wednesday, March 23rd, 2005

It's 12:58 am. Want to go home. Will need to be back at work in a few hours anyway. Have started reading Nudist on the Late Shift again. Feel mono-syllabic. Realize I have said this before, many, many, many times, but really, Windows is truly awful. Practically got hypnotized watching a colleague install IIS on a laptop. Alert Sound, Error Message, Enter, Alert Sound, Error Message, Enter, Run, Alert Sound, Shit, Enter, Run, Error Message, Kiya Museebat Hai!, Alert Sound, Error Message, Run, Laanat Ho, Enter, Dialog Box, PING, TING, ZING, DUH, CAN YOU PLEASE HIT THE MUTE BUTTON!!!!!!!!!!

Wish we could get a Dual Apple Xserve G5. What a beauty!



And please don't miss what we are actually stuck with!



People who think Macs are expensive, which they aren't anymore, have not figured out how much peace of mind is worth.

Am dreaming of strawberries and icecream.

Need to renew my passport but can't figure out when I can waste an entire day at Awami Markaz. Moan, groan, bleah - nothing in this landscape is changing.

### **Wednesday, March 23rd, 2005**

Just testing the e-mail2blog facility. If this works, it's pretty neat-o!

### **Saturday, March 26th, 2005**

*Anonymous asks: "Vaisy what you think is the best way to keep your workers motivated and have a low employee turnover?... keeping in mind you are a struggling company with bright future but can't pay big money for the time being.... any bright idea?"*

There is no formula answer for motivating workers. The first thing is to not view them as workers - rather as partners who are going to help you achieve that "bright future".

Ask yourself, everyday, if you still believe in the dream. Sell the vision to your team and push them to tap into the energy source that powers you and your passion.

Stretch your pennies. Look for young, excited, turned on kids who maybe aren't even through college yet - give them a chance to work with you and become part of something huge.

While growing up, the general refrain one heard was that in order to be successful, all you need to do is work hard and be honest. Well, luck and timing are also absolute essentials and are phenomena that you can't control. So, you have to be tough as nails and keep plugging away until you think you've got to where you wanted to be.

It's very important also, to define "success" and "failure". Our society has a very narrow view of failure and success is measured by your bank balance and the car you drive. This is the biggest crock of shit ever. Of course, money puts bread on the table and the car gets you from Point A to Point B but what really matters, is the clarity of your vision, the quality of your work, the integrity with which you conduct transactions, the chances that you give others to grow, how you respond to a crisis situation, etc. Doing all this costs money and if it diminishes your bank balance and sets you back another couple of years from being in the black, do it. Don't take the easy way out and just do something boring, dishonest, and BLAH, because you can't figure out where next month's salaries will come from. Entrepreneurship is not easy - nothing will be handed to you on a platter. But, the ecstasy you will feel when a client says, "WOW, that looks great" will make the pain worthwhile.

Your core values should drive everything you do and you have got to make Employee #1 through #5 at least, believe in those values. Make them understand that you folks are in this together and that the going will get tough and everyone should be ready to face the highs and lows together. When you achieve something, share the credit with everyone. Make people feel valuable.

I hope this doesn't sound like esoteric bullshit - just sharing my own experiences.

## **Wednesday, March 30th, 2005**

... and people say that Macs are no good for serious stuff! Well, eat this!

**Virginia Tech gained international honors for building the fastest supercomputer at any academic institution in the world. And they did it using Power Mac G5s. From that milestone, Virginia Tech has moved ahead again with System X, a new cluster using 1,100 Xserve G5s.**

Ranking seventh in the Top 500 list of the world's most powerful computer systems, System X was built at a fifth of the cost of the second-least expensive system in the top 10.

"When we built the first supercomputer from Power Mac G5s, we proved that a radically-different communications technology could be used to create a large-scale computing platform," says Dr. Srinidhi Varadarajan, director of the university's Terascale Computing Facility and the system's lead designer.

“We’re recognized for knowing how to build these terascale computing machines and with very good price performance. But the measure of the facility is the kind of science it produces.”

... and did someone say that Macs are only used for graphics and video???

### **Computational Science Applications at Virginia Tech**

Molecular modeling

Numerical algorithms and software for mathematics Quantum chemistry

Molecular static and dynamics

Computational geophysics

Biophysics

Computational fluid dynamics

Air quality simulations

Computational biology

Plasma and gas physics

Weather prediction

Read the whole article: <http://www.apple.com/science/profiles/vatech2/>

**Sunday, April 17th, 2005**

Stunning logo!



## **Sunday, April 17th, 2005**

The Mideast Hospital in Clifton has been sold to Mr. AKD. He shall tear it down and build a shopping centre in its place. Doctors have been served notice and have until the 15th of May to clear out. Just what this city needs - another mall! Mr. Dedhi, thank you!

Meanwhile, Exxon Mobil has a huge problem to deal with.

*The soon-to-retire CEO suddenly has a new anxiety: how to spend the windfall wrought by \$55-a-barrel oil. By the end of April, Exxon will have a cash hoard of more than \$25 billion.*

Lee Raymond doesn't like splurging on one-time dividends and he isn't fond of mega acquisitions. So, the poor sods can't figure out how to spend all that money and are getting headaches.

## **Tuesday, April 19th, 2005**

### **Nike Releases Gloomy Labor Report ...**

Nike Inc. has just done it.

Almost 10 years after allegations first surfaced that Nike's contractors were exploiting workers in Asian sweatshops, the world's biggest athletic-shoemaker has responded, and how.

In a 108-page report last week, the Beaverton, Oregon-based company presented a surprisingly frank audit of labor conditions at 569 of 830 factories worldwide where Nike-branded footwear, apparel and sports equipment are made.

Nike's "corporate responsibility" report doesn't make for a pretty picture. From excessively long workweeks and wrong wage calculations to verbal abuse and curbs on toilet visits, the findings confirm a pervasive culture of exploitation.

At risk are as many as 650,000 workers in factories located from Australia and China to the U.S. and Vietnam. A majority of them are women between the ages of 19 and 25.

So has Nike scored a self-goal by publishing the report? Isn't Chairman Philip Knight running the risk of alienating at least some customers who might now



want to buy their sneakers from niche competitors who wear their ethical credentials on their sleeves, such as Boston-based No Sweat Apparel, whose goods come with flyers stating the wages paid to the Indonesian workers who made them?

Knight's candor is probably backed by sound business acumen. An honest acknowledgement of lax labor standards is a much required first step to make labor-rights activists and the media appreciate the sweatshop problem for what it is: an industry-wide menace that was neither created by Nike nor can be solved by it in isolation.

[Read the entire Bloomberg article](#)

## Saturday, May 21st, 2005

So much for my decision to blog at least once a day! Am writing today only because I love my new Apple Wireless Keyboard and I can't keep my hands off it!

Upgraded seamlessly to Tiger (Mac OS X - 10.4.1) two days ago. Am a bit disappointed with the Widgets but anyway, this is what my Dashboard looks like ...



Spotlight is a marvel of software engineering and there are also a bunch of other Finder-level improvements and rewrites that are great! Am also evaluating Apple's Mail software and have until tomorrow to decide whether I will ditch Eudora or not. Eudora has announced that they are converting the application from Carbon to Cocoa and will deliver a new version in Fall 2005, featuring Spotlight integration, WebKit HTML display/authoring, and other cool stuff.

Finished reading Kamila Shamsie's "Broken Verses" a few weeks ago and am now in the middle of "The Turning Point" by Fritjof Capra, and "The Elephant and the Flea" by Charles Handy.

Was invited to a reading by Zehra Nigah a few weekends ago - just a handful of people at someone's house. Was phenomenal to sit at her feet and listen to her recitations as well as some great stories about Jon Elia and other poets. Had a blast. Then, a few days ago, had dinner with Ardeshir Cowasjee and discussed the curse of the Clifton Cross, urban planning, architecture, media, politics, etc. He's a real character and it was a pleasure spending a few hours with him.

NEVER FOLLOW THE HERD!

## Wednesday, May 25th, 2005

Visited Warid Telecom's site today (I hate their ad campaign and their agency doesn't know how to use apostrophes) and clicked on Privacy Policy ...

A lot has been written about long URLs by usability specialists ... please look at the URL for Home >> Privacy Policy:

**[http://www.waridtel.com/cgi-bin/warid/dev1/warid/program?BV\\_SessionID=@@@@1344277484.1117063603@@@@&BV\\_EngineID=ccccaddejmfilhcfkgcefkdfhdfn.0&channelId=-14223&programId=39900&menuChannel=-14223](http://www.waridtel.com/cgi-bin/warid/dev1/warid/program?BV_SessionID=@@@@1344277484.1117063603@@@@&BV_EngineID=ccccaddejmfilhcfkgcefkdfhdfn.0&channelId=-14223&programId=39900&menuChannel=-14223)**

What in %\$\*#'s name is being processed just to serve up a few paragraphs of text that tell you about cookies and stuff? Is it because of the silly news ticker that I just noticed right at the bottom of the page? Jeez!!!! Wouldn't [http://www.waridtel.com/privacy\\_policy.html](http://www.waridtel.com/privacy_policy.html) or php or aspx or whatever have been more appropriate?

UGH, I think it is definitely because of that "What's New" ticker!

Will wonders never cease? Mobilink has finally launched GPRS services for its “family”. First reaction: the flat rate of Rs. 500 per month is ridiculous since not all users are created equal. However, to expect Mobilink to figure that out is ...

I come in to the office at 9:00 or so every morning and get connected to an always on WiFi network until around 8:00 pm. Then I go home and get connected to another WiFi network. Why would I want to use the Internet off my phone which has a dinky little screen unless it is absolutely imperative? Why can't there be a per minute or per megabyte usage plan for people who will use this service occasionally but would like the security of knowing that they have access whenever they may need it?

Mucked about with Tiger's new Automator application yesterday. Have set up two really cool actions. One of them finds people in the Address Book with birthdays, creates a new Mail message with text that I specify, attaches a birthday image from a selection, and sends it off! Cool. The other one resizes a screenshot in PNG format (Tiger's default format for screenshots) to 480 pixels in width, saves it as a JPEG, and opens it in Preview. This is especially useful for images that I need to upload to my blog. This takes place at the OS level and no external applications are opened, other than Preview for viewing - which is something I set up as a non-essential option in the workflow.

Here's what the Send Birthday Greetings workflow looks like: Automator workflows can be saved as plugins or as Applications. Have thrown mine into the Dock and now drop files over the icons to resize them or save them as JPEGs, etc.

My favorite Project Management software, Merlin, will be “scriptable” by the end of the year and I'll hopefully I'll be able to make actions for all sorts of repetitive tasks, like fitting timelines to a single page, generating PDFs and sending them to specified clients, etc.

## **Monday, May 30th, 2005**

Yipeeeeeeee! Just got my copy of iCon - Steve Jobs, The Greatest Second Act in the History of Business.

*Thank you, JA!*

When Wiley and Sons, the publishers, sent the book to Apple for a pre-publication review, Steve got really pissed off with the iCon part of the title ...

Apple asked the author to change the title but he refused. Apple has now removed all Wiley and Sons books from Apple Stores across the US.

Marketing stunt?

## **Tuesday, May 31st, 2005**

“Don’t let the bozos grind you down. Because the bozos will try to grind you down, they’ll tell you that you can’t do something, that something won’t work, or that something isn’t needed. The only thing worse than a bozo is a person who listens to a bozo.”

*Guy Kawasaki - the purest Macintosh evangelist!*

## **Monday, June 6th, 2005**

In June 2003, the Economist published an article entitled [Women - Be a Man](#). Someone sent me a copy of the article and I remember being disgusted by it. Was going through ancient e-mail, looking for something, and came across my response:

Why should we be like men? Economist, for all its good stuff is also a highly chauvanistic magazine. The outrageous title was followed by “Men compete harder than women. That is why they do better at work”. OK!!!! Define “better”. Who sets the benchmarks and the yardsticks? Men! Why should we accept them? I am not saying this just for the sake of being rebellious but look at the world we live in today - a world that has been shaped by men - it’s a melting pot ruled by semi-evolved, macho bullies. The competitive streak that you strongly believe women should inherit, will lead to a fundamental change in what makes women, women. If the 21st century is the century of the woman, why must we play by your rules?

Any discussion about competition has to take into account Early Childhood Development and the gender biases that set in from the time a baby is born. Pink clothes and dolls for girls and blue clothes and guns for boys. Parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles start creating the mess when they often unknowingly/inadvertently set children up against one another, getting them to

compete for all sorts of things ranging from love to lollipops. It's pretty frightening.

Competition has infiltrated every aspect of our lives; school, family, sports, business ... success is inevitably achieved at the expense of another's failure. Of course women should demand what is due to them but this can be done in many ways. Our institutions need to be restructured in a way that competition is replaced by cooperation. According to the American dream - competition is the only normal and desirable way of life but actually, it is counterproductive - poisons relationships, fosters anxiety and takes the fun and magic out of work and play. It does not build character and self-esteem and in fact makes people highly insecure.

Here is a link to an unpublished article I wrote a couple of years ago:

### *Competition - The New Fanaticism*

I tried to look for the article but couldn't find it.

Spoke to Mimi, but she didn't have it, either.

We thought we'd ask people if anyone has it to send it to me or post it online.

Then I went to bed.

At 3:00am I awoke, realising that I had sent Sabeen a copy of Alfie Kohn's article on the subject.

I could have left her article in his collection ... since she mentioned him.

Got up and looked — *and there it was!*

A pdf link to Sab's article will be added at the end of this blog.

Yayyy!!!

ZAK

## **Saturday, June 11th, 2005**

A couple of days ago, I received an invitation from the Dawn Group of Newspapers to attend a symposium on Kashmir. Leaders of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) are on their first, "historic" visit to Pakistan and were to address Karachi's "intellectuals" within the confines of the Sheraton Hotel.

I used to be one of those "25 year olds" that Hameed Haroon, CEO of the Dawn Group of Newspapers, referred to yesterday. I looked at the invitation and thought "what a waste - why bother with this on a working day". References to our "Kashmiri brothers" and yearly holidays to celebrate "solidarity" with the disputed territory, have caused exasperation and I used to wonder why we expend so much energy on the Kashmir issue.

Yesterday, all that changed. I ended up going to the symposium and it was one of the better decisions I've made in my life. Kashmir, for the first time, became real. It was the same old story but it was told by the actual protagonists - the people who have watched Kashmir shed red hot blood for decades. Dr. Eqbal Ahmad's article, [Kashmir - India's Nemesis](#), is a good 101 on the history of the conflict.

Yasin Malik was the hero of the day. A victim of years of brutality and torture, deaf in one ear, and barely able to walk, he stood proud, dignified and defiant.

Yasin said, "when two elephants fight, it is the grass that gets crumpled. When two elephants make love, it is still the grass that gets crumpled". He urged us, for once, to get off our intellectual high ground and be "stupid" for it is the stupid who go against the current.

Yasin began his freedom struggle in 1984 at the age of 18. Having been beaten mercilessly, intensely interrogated and thrown into every jail in the valley, he took up the gun. In his defense, he says, "I came to the conclusion that there was no space for a non-violent political movement." Yasin is now the Chairman of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and an Executive Member of the APHC. The JKLF is a nonviolent movement struggling for the independence of Jammu & Kashmir and a just and sustainable peace in South Asia. In 2002, in a bid to silence the voice of Yasin, the government of India accused him of blatantly false charges and put in place a new draconian law - POTA. The law allowed the Indian government to hold Yasin Malik without trial or hearing. Over 100 Indian police officers used naked force to arrest Yasin Malik while he was addressing a press conference in Srinagar, Kashmir. Yasin Malik now suffers from chronic health conditions as a result of previous torture and imprisonment.

It's easy for us, who watch from the sidelines, to condemn Yasin Malik and his colleagues for losing faith in peaceful resistance. Nothing is so black and white and convenient.

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Chairman of APHC's moderate faction is merely 28 years old and has a magical aura about him. WOW!! He said "we desire to be citizens of the United States of Kashmir and we want India and Pakistan to give a free hand to the Kashmiri leadership to come up with new proposals". It is the first time that the Indian government has allowed Kashmiri leaders to visit Pakistan. The Mirwaiz also stated that he did not want to take the bus 20 years down the line and wanted to fly to New Delhi, Islamabad or Tashkent, clearly hinting at the future status of Kashmir. Apparently, the Internet is his hobby and he wanted to

become a software engineer but the assassination of his father threw him, prematurely, into politics and religious leadership.

An extract from a Rediff interview:

Coming back to your combined role as the Mirwaiz and the Hurriyat chairman, has there been any conflict between the two?

*No, not at all. Our politics, like I said, is not the politics which extremists or other political parties practice. It is not a politics of vote. It is the politics of the destiny of a nation. And as such, my politics and religion are one and the same. What I preach as the Mirwaiz is what I practice as a politician. Our struggle is based on justice, we are on a righteous path. So there is no conflict.*

•

There was one major problem with yesterday's symposium. There were very few young people there. Kashmir is inextricably linked with the history and future of the sub-continent and Yasin Malik's and Mirwaiz Umar Farooq's appeals were addressed to an insignificant group.

The jaded, "me-too" activists, politicians, and elite of our society don't give a rat's ass about the people of Kashmir, or about anything for that matter. All they are interested in is global acknowledgement that Pakistan has suffered along with the Kashmiris, that Pakistan has fought wars in the name of freedom for Kashmir, and that the collective Pakistani heart beats in the same rhythm as those nameless, faceless sufferers in the valley.

Where were the students, the youth, the "20 somethings" who could have been inspired into action by Yasin and the Mirwaiz?

We have no heroes to look up to and dusty volumes chronicling the exploits of Jinnah just don't cut it for us. Fiery speakers like Tariq Ali are not welcome or safe here and Dr. Eqbal Ahmad is dead. The organizers may have been concerned about safety - but how could a bunch of kids have posed a threat to people who have experienced nothing but oppression, violence and destruction from the time they were born?

## **Monday, June 13th, 2005**

After being bowled over by Yasin Malik and Mirwaiz Umar Farooq in Karachi, I was delighted to see an ad in Sunday's Dawn announcing that Aaj TV would run a live transmission of the Kashmir symposium being held in Islamabad.

UGH! Apologies for that hideously long sentence.

I spent about 15 minutes in a solitary corner of the house considering whether I should fly to Islamabad for two hours in the hope of meeting Yasin and the Mirwaiz. Aaj TV's live transmission made me decide not to go. BAD MOVE. There are times in one's life when it is unhealthy for better sense to prevail.

The live transmission was meant to begin at 5:30 pm. Several of us parked ourselves in front of the TV in anticipation ... Until 6:30 pm, we were treated to the Sindh Budget Speech, mindless advertising, and YET ANOTHER SHOW ABOUT MEERA. I looked up Aaj TV's number online and got on the phone. While I was on hold, listening to bubblegum music, Hameed Haroon popped up on the screen, and I hung up the phone.

The programme was delayed by an hour but Aaj TV did not think it was necessary to inform its viewers that something was up. They have a persistent ticker running at the bottom of the screen and any idiot could have typed in one sentence informing viewers about the delay. This is way too much to ask for, as in Pakistan, the consumer is the advertiser, not the viewer. When the show finally got off the ground, Professor Abdul Ghani Bhat and Yasin Malik were interrupted, mid- sentence, every few minutes, by the following:

1. SunSip Timechecks
2. News Breaks with several headlines and earth-shatteringly important announcements about Pakistan's 18 member junior hockey squad (every single name was read out, s l o w l y), and something about PTCL's ongoing saga
3. An Aaj TV logo animation
4. An Aaj TV exclusive presentation animation
5. Advertisements

The show ended abruptly after exactly 58 minutes. Aaj TV did not even bother to announce that the "live transmission" had ended. We kept sitting there like idiots, thinking that the drama that was now on air was merely a trailer.

I called "Recorder House" again, consumed with rage and asked to speak with the Head of Programming at Aaj TV, who of course, wasn't in as it was a Sunday. Got connected to some juvenile character who said that he had orders from above, and that the satellite time had ended. Tough luck for all of us losers who tuned in to watch something meaningful and got nothing but grief. I ranted and raved until the guy finally handed over the cell phone number of the Director, Programming. Decided to wait till the morning to call him ...



Did so at 9:00 am today. The Director Programming was patient and listened quietly. He said that he agreed with most of what I said but I was still fed some nonsense about the trials and tribulations of running a TV channel. My bone of contention is that there are times when you HAVE to sacrifice commercial interests to do the right thing. And forget the ads, there weren't that many of them anyway ... who in \$!&@'s name decided that the 18 member hockey squad was more relevant than Yasin Malik talking about the Kashmiri freedom struggle?

Why couldn't the hockey news and the PTCL news have waited until later? THE KASHMIR TRANSMISSION WAS THE NEWS, DAMMIT. What better content could Aaj TV have hoped for? The Kashmiri leadership is in Pakistan on an historic visit - someone PLEASE explain to me, like I'm 5 years old, the logic behind Aaj TV's disruption of their speeches, mid-sentence, every few minutes to regale us with "news" that every other channel was broadcasting?

Yes, I know that Pakistani media is financed through advertising and I also understand that a lot of stuff goes on at a TV channel, and I also know that there are infrastructure constraints, and blah, blah, blah. What *prevented* Aaj TV from updating their ticker to keep their viewers informed, and from putting a stop to the internal Aaj TV adverts, and mind-numbing news, in the light of the ongoing situation?

It is alarming that a heavyweight media enterprise could not respond in a more appropriate manner. TV stations should not run live transmissions until they can learn to handle less than perfect circumstances.

UFFFFFFFFF! The answers, as usual, are blowing in the wind ...

## **Wednesday, June 15th, 2005**

*Kiya baat hai ...*

Listened to an old Lok Virsa interview of Munshi Raziuddin yesterday - he was his usual naughty, wonderful self.

### **Aaj TV/Kashmir Update**

Aaj TV had promised to let me know when they'd air the Kashmir show again - they SMS'd yesterday to say that it would be on from 4:00 to 5:00 - my response

was that the working class works at that time. Khair, it was good of the chap to let me know. Wonder what got left out as it was a two hour show.

## **Friday, June 17th, 2005**

“Paul Rand’s (1914-1996) stature as one of the world’s leading graphic designers is incontestable. For half a century his pioneering work in the field of advertising design and typography has exerted a profound influence on the design profession; he almost single-handedly transformed “commercial art” from a practice that catered to the lowest common denominator of taste to one that could assert its place among the other fine arts. Among the numerous clients for whom he has been a consultant and/or designer are the American Broadcasting Company, IBM Corporation, and Westinghouse Electric Corporation.”

*John Maeda*



## Thoughts on Paul Rand by John Maeda

**Sunday, June 19th, 2005**

City FM 89 - how could you????????? It seems that cutting off content is all the rage these days. I can't believe what they just did. I was waiting for Cloud 89 to begin at noon - Mirwaiz Umar Farooq is going to be on the show today (SWOOOON).

At about 11:55 am, Mary Lou and Leon (I think) put on Stairway to Heaven. I wondered how the track would end by 12:00. WELL, IT DIDN'T.

Yaar, khudaa ka vaasta, why put on a l o n g Led Zeppelin song, which you claim you haven't played, ever, in the year that you've been doing your show, when you don't have enough time left? So, of course, the ultimate rock anthem, Stairway to Heaven, got chopped off by a Telenor Time Check.

The show began with the Red Baron ticking Talha off for wearing shorts in the presence of the Mirwaiz who, in addition to being the Chairman of the APHC, is a religious leader.

Najam Shiraz is now singing “Hum Dekhain Gay”, after which a Kashmiri folk song will be aired, as a tribute to the mighty Mirwaiz. *He has spoken 4 sentences so far compared to the Red Baron’s 18.*

“He is the man who CAN deliver” says Umar, about our General. What on earth is up with the General these days? Shooting his mouth off about Mukhtaran Mai in New Zealand, threatening to slap Asma Jahangir, and just generally “going berserk” in the words of the New York Times.

Excerpt from a News Editorial:

*“The truth is finally out. It was none other than President Pervez Musharraf who ordered the travel ban on Mukhtaran Mai, as he himself told members of the Auckland Foreign Correspondents Club.*

*Wire services reported him as saying that he had placed Mukhtaran Mai’s name on the Exit Control List to prevent her from proceeding abroad, in an effort to protect Pakistan’s image. The President said that Mukhtaran Mai was being taken to the United States by foreign non-government organisations “to bad-mouth Pakistan” over the “terrible state” of the women in the country.*

*In the same breath, he described the NGOs as “Westernised fringe elements” that “are as bad as Islamic extremists.”*

Who advises this man? And, even if he has retarded, dim-witted advisors, has he stuck his own brain and morality into cold storage?

Uffff, there’s way too much Nokia advertising, mindless bantering, and bad remixes happening on the show. No *tasalsul* ... more talk, less music, fewer interruptions, pleeeeeeeeeeeze.

Just learned that when his father, the Mirwaiz Maulvi Farooq, was murdered, Umar was 16, and had to deliver the Friday sermon to 200,000 people at the Jamia Masjid in Srinagar. He said he was a typical teenager, not in the least bit bothered about what was going on around him and suddenly had to take on the responsibility of being the 14th Mirwaiz (Head Preacher).

## Wednesday, June 22nd, 2005

یہ وقت کس کی رعونت پہ خاک ڈال گیا  
یہ کون بول رہا تھا خدا کے لہجے میں

*Iftikhar Arif - On Zia ul Haq's Death*

## Friday, June 24th, 2005

Good Morning Pakistan!!

### **LAHORE: GROOM LETS HIS FRIENDS RAPE BRIDE AS REVENGE ...**

In an act of revenge, a woman was gang-raped with the consent of her in-laws by three people on her wedding night in Dera Ghazi Khan town in central Pakistan, police said. Ghulam Hussain, the father of the victim Kaneez Kubra, said his daughter was married to Mujahid Hussain on April 28, as ordered by a panchayat (local jury) under the *wani* custom since her brother Abdul Majid had sexual relations with Mujahid's sister Sumera.

After the wedding, Kaneez went to the groom's home. Her husband stayed with her in their room till 11 pm and then left. Afterwards, Mujahid's grandfather Shahroo Khan and his mother Mukhtar came in and told the bride that the wedding was just an excuse to exact revenge on Majid for outraging Sumera's modesty. Mujahid then invited his three friends Muhammad Rafiq, Shabbir Muhammad and Abdul Majid Almani, who gang-raped the bride. The next day, Mujahid took her to the house of his friend Ghulam Mustafa, who also assaulted her.

On April 30, when Ghulam and other relatives arrived to take Kaneez back as per tradition, she related the story to her father. Investigation Officer Zulfikar Ali Qureshi said the police were making raids to arrest the accused but they had left the area and gone into hiding after the case was registered against them.

*Comments from colleagues ...*

1. What concerns me most is it's becoming 'just another news' these days ... One of those that raises another what-are-we-becoming question ... and then we'll get back to work and will look for updates on what's happening with the lady and her family and what the police are doing and what not ... another lunch hour discussion topic.

Qs: What if the lunch hour discussion focused on what can be done?

Ans: Yes, but I get the strong feeling that the authorities are making sure whatever can be done is NOT done ... do we really have a say? Will we be heard at all?

2. Don't know what to say and feel; this is a barbarian act - what the hell is going on around us? Where is the humanity? Can we call ourselves "HUMAN"? I really doubt it. Can we do something about this? Can we set up a website to narrate these truths which don't even make it to the so-called daily newspapers?

3. Oh god, my head is spinning and am feeling like I am going to throw up

*My highly judgemental and possibly obnoxious responses*

To Person 3: This is not about you.

To Person 2: Feel violated. Feel angry.

Pissed off people change the world (*Tom Peters*).

Those of us who are human can do our little bit. Yes, you CAN set up a website and although you have amazing programming capabilities, I'd suggest you expend your energies on research and awareness building rather than on building a site. Go to [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com) and set up a new blog. It takes three steps. Speak up, write, say something. Document and archive news that does get published - at least it will serve as a resource for activists and journalists. Use the Internet and the momentum it can create for something more than helping corporations sell ice-cream and tea.

To Person 1: While I agree that the "authorities" ride rough shod over most things, do we actually say or do anything? To pre-determine that nothing can be said or done, or rather, that anything we say or do will have no impact is a total cop-out. What kind of impact are you expecting? Do you think that speaking out

publically, or writing a letter to the editor of a newspaper, or marching for peace will put an end to global warfare? And if it won't, does it necessarily follow that we should not bother doing any of the above and more? It is this attitude that has contributed to Pakistan having no civil society: *Meray kuch karnay ya bolnay say kiya farq paray ga? Chorro yaar, kuch naheen badlay ga, yay mulk hee baykar hai.*

Macro-level, seismic change will not be visible for decades but "if we don't change our direction NOW, we will land up exactly where we are headed". Margaret Mead's words, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has", are really cool to have as an e-mail signature, but it would help if people really believed in the power of one.

## **Sunday, June 26th, 2005**

Turned 31 (aaaaagh!!!) on the 20th of June. Had a Farid Ayaz and Abu Mohammad qavvali session to celebrate on the 19/20th and it rocked, despite the debilitating heat. My 4 requests were amazingly performed:

1. Ze Rahmat Kun Nazar
2. Teri Yaad Hai Mun Ka Chayn Piya
3. Khabar-e-Tahaiyyur-e-Ishq Sun
4. Aashiq Na Shuddi Jalva-e-Jaan Che Shanaasi

Every year I give myself another year to make it to the cover of Fortune - somebody, PLEASE call them and tell them to come and interview me! I promise, I am a real entrepreneur, really!!

## **Sunday, June 26th, 2005**

Went to get my Passport on Saturday 25th June. The Passport Office in Saddar Karachi is open from 9:00 am till 2:30 pm, all days except Friday, when they close at noon. I got there at 8:30 am so I could be amongst the first in line. If you are male, you should definitely go early. They ushered us in at 8:55 am. There are two lines for men, one for ladies, and one for senior citizens (60 and above).

I got my new Machine Readable, RDIF-enabled Passport at 9:27 am. The famed “religion column” is on the Annotations page along with the previous passport number. The passport also contains a letter, sans punctuation, from the Ministry of Interior:

You can collect a passport for an immediate family member as long as you have their original ID card and the all important TOKEN Signatures at the back of the token are mandatory.

The “brokers” outside charge Rs. 200 to retrieve passports. My poor mother has still not gotten her passport, even though it is ready. They have misplaced her datasheet (the printout with all her information and signature) and can't locate it anywhere. They have looked everywhere, including at Awami Markaz. Why can't they just print another copy?

## **Monday, July 4th, 2005**

### **Shame Karachi Shame**

According to all the advertising, The Bombay Rockers, Fakhir, and Atif were meant to Rock Karachi on the 3rd of July. The hugely publicized event was in the frickin' boondocks, way inside the Steel Mill, and we had been asked to come early to avoid long queues and inconvenience. The concert was to start at 8:30 and end by 11:30 pm. We got there at 8:00, always hopeful, that one day, someone would shock us and begin on time. We were greeted by Mr. Fakhr-e-Alam informing us to eat, drink and piss, before entering the gates as we wouldn't be allowed out, once in. The food hadn't arrived at the time and only some ridiculous energy drink brand was on display. The “gate” was a space that allowed a single individual to squeeze through at a time. After having our passes scanned by fancy bar code scanners and computers, we got through and parked our butts on the grass of the Arabian Sea Country Club.

From 8:00 to 9:30, we were treated to Sony Ericsson advertising pumped out of 50+ speakers. A few RJs from City FM 89 did their damndest to keep the crowd entertained but for fuck's sake, no one had paid 1500 bucks and driven for hours to listen to Talha and Masooma play pre-recorded noise. Meanwhile, the people of Karachi kept arriving in dribs and drabs and there were no signs of the show beginning. The crowd outside kept being assured that the concert wouldn't begin



without them. CHARMING. The message here is, don't fucking bother to be punctual, we'll wait for you, even if you're two hours late.

By 11:00 pm, Mr. Junaid Mumtaz's "sufi techno music", (it wasn't music and it wasn't even vaguely spiritual) had numbed our brains to a pulp and we decided to leave. We were then treated to a spectacle at the "gate". The scanners had long been discarded, and there were hundreds of people outside, including families with little children, practically climbing on top of each other, trying to get in. **There were no exits and we couldn't get out!!!!!!**

It took shmoozing with an Intelligence Officer and 3 guards and 30 minutes to get the hell out of that nightmarish place. There were still hundreds of people pouring in and even more at the Steel Mill entrance about 5 km away from the venue. Thanks to them we left without having heard a single note of music from the performers of Rock Karachi Rock.



Live 8, a musical extravaganza that took place in 10 countries across 4 continents kicked off on the dot of 1:00 pm on the 2nd of July, as announced, in London's Hyde Park with Sir Paul McCartney and U2. Folks, we're just not ready ... for anything.

## Tuesday, July 5th, 2005

Sir Bob Geldof: We salute you! May the force be with you, eternally.

2nd July 2005 was the day that LIVE 8 rocked the world in 9 countries across 4 continents. 20 years after Live Aid, Bob Geldof demonstrated, yet again, the true power of one. Around the world, an estimated 3 BILLION PEOPLE tuned in to

watch LIVE 8, the greatest musical show ever. The concerts took place in London, Paris, Philadelphia, Berlin, Rome, Barrie (Canada), Tokyo, Johannesburg, and Moscow. The artists included U2, Annie Lennox, Sir Elton John, Sir Paul McCartney, Sting, Madonna, REM, The Who, Roxy Music, Andrea Bocelli, Cold Play, Bon Jovi, Dido, Bryan Adams, Green Day, Youssou N'Dour, Sheryl Crow, and, and, and ... **PINK FLOYD**.



Some words from Sir Bob Geldof:

*“This is not Live Aid 2.*

*These concerts are the starting point for The Long Walk To Justice, the one way we can all make our voices heard in unison. This is without doubt a moment in history where ordinary people can grasp the chance to achieve something truly monumental and demand from the 8 world leaders at G8 an end to poverty.*

*The G8 leaders have it within their power to alter history. They will only have the will to do so if tens of thousands of people show them that enough is enough. By doubling aid, fully cancelling debt, and delivering trade justice for Africa, the G8 could change the future for millions of men, women and children.”*

We never, ever, thought this would happen but “pigs flew”!

David Gilmour, Roger Waters, Nick Mason, and Rick Wright reunited, after 20 years, for LIVE 8!!!!!! They performed Breathe, Money, Wish You Were Here, and Comfortably Numb - it felt as if they'd never been apart. I couldn't stop shivering the entire time. At the beginning of Wish You Were Here, Roger Waters said, "It's actually quite emotional, standing up here with these three guys after all these years, standing to be counted with the rest of you. Anyway, we're doing this for everyone's who's not here, particularly, of course, for Syd" [Barret]. When he started singing the second part of Wish You Were Here (... and did they get you to trade your heroes for ghosts, hot ashes for trees, heartache for a cool breeze, cold comfort for change, did you exchange a walk on part in the war for a lead role in a cage?), I fell off my bean bag. Pink Floyd, without a doubt, is the best rock band in the world and even though they're old and grey, they are simply spectacular.

U2, Pink Floyd, Sting, Madonna, Elton John, Robbie Williams, Annie Lennox, Sir Paul McCartney, Dido, Green Day, and REM turned out magical performances. The superstars, the real rockstars of the day were the old folk, the icons. The pathetic, mindless creations of corporations, acts like Destiny's Child, were pitiful. However, apart from a few idiotic performances, including Mariah Carey, LIVE 8 was, beyond a shadow of a doubt, the most phenomenal experience imaginable. Fuck the cynics who question whether any of this will make a difference. "NOW IS THE TIME, THIS IS THE YEAR - OUR LEADERS HAVE THE POWER TO END POVERTY - BUT WE HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE THEM USE IT."

**G8: THE WORLD IS WATCHING!**

Sting sang a fantastic, reworded version of Every Breath You Take ... "Every single day, every word you say, every game you play, every night you stay, WE'LL be watching you. THIS TIME WE'LL SEE, IF OUR DEMOCRACY, IS JUST A GAME YOU PLAY, NO MATTER WHAT WE SAY!"

I want to say a very special thank you to ARY Digital and The Musik for broadcasting LIVE 8 absolutely live for 10 hours and 25 minutes. Of course, the advertising was extremely disruptive and ill-timed and could have been handled more sensitively, but that's a topic for another day. After 1:00 am, the advertising disappeared, so another round of applause for ARY.

Will any of this matter to the 8 chaps getting together at GlenEagles, Scotland? We'll find out soon enough ... but in the meanwhile, the least we can do is support the cause without cynicism.

Visit [live8live.com](http://live8live.com) and BBC's detailed coverage of the LIVE 8 event for more information.

## **Friday, July 8th, 2005**

The leaders of the world's eight richest nations have concluded their summit with the promise of a package of measures including a \$50bn (£28.8bn) boost to aid, and debt-cancellation for the poorest nations. They also plan to forge fairer trade deals in the future, to increase access to Aids treatment and to provide a \$3bn aid package to the Palestinian Authority.

### **Responds to G8 Communique**

*Make Poverty History* has become an unprecedented movement of passion, energy and solidarity. Never before have so many people in the world come together, fully united in demanding action to end poverty, with a roar for justice that they felt was impossible to ignore.

Today the G8 have chosen not to do all that campaigners insist is necessary to free people trapped in the prison of poverty. Important steps have been taken - steps that will bring hope to millions. But more action is urgently needed if they are to play their role in bringing about real change for the world's poorest people and consigning extreme poverty to the history books. To secure a deserved place in history, the G8 must go a lot further and secure real change by working with other world leaders at the UN summit on the Millennium Development Goals and talks around the World Trade Organisation. The people of the world are already on the road to justice. They expect their leaders to be with them. Today's announcement has shown that the G8 need to run much faster to catch up.

*Read more on the [Make Poverty History website](#) ...*

Rock musicians Bob Geldof and Bono, who have spearheaded a global push to tackle African poverty, broadly welcomed a pledge on Friday by the Group of Eight (G8) nations to double aid to Africa.

**“The people have roared but the G8 has whispered,” said Kumi Naidoo, chair of the Global Call to Action against Poverty.**

### ***Sir Bob Gedolf's Reaction***

“To save lives is never a whisper.

People were screaming before, a whisper is not a bad thing.

Please, perspective!

Never before have so many people forced a change of policy onto a global agenda.

If anyone had said eight weeks ago: ‘Will we get a doubling of aid? Will we get a deal on debt?’ People would have said ‘no’.

I would have said no.

Today is a great day for those ten million people (who will be saved).”

### ***Bono's Reaction***

“Six hundred thousand people will be alive to remember this G8 in Gleneagles who would have lost their lives to a mosquito bite,” Bono said, referring to the difference he thought the extra aid would make to fighting malaria.

*Read more reactions on BBC's website ...*

## **Friday, July 15th, 2005**

Disclaimer: This is going to be a very “random”, stream of consciousness post as I am feeling totally fragmented. It is also important to justify the lack of titles on this blog.

Green Day is a politically aware, in your face, musically correct band. They were part of Live 8's global concerts and performed in Berlin. Listen to American Idiot, Holiday, Time of Our Lives, and Boulevard of Broken Dreams.

Anything I say about the London bombings and the arrests of Muslims of Pakistani origin will be trite. Some express outrage, others wonder why the world reacts so strongly when 50 people die in Europe, and overlapping groups question the motives of the fundamentalist, religious right. I am currently uncomfortably numb.

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“Cause it's a bittersweet symphony, this life. Trying to make ends meet, you're a slave to money, then you die.” *The Verve*



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Spent three days in Dubai. Bigger, Better, Brighter, Taller, Longer - More is More!

Watched Mr. and Mrs. Smith. Don't attempt to analyze this movie. It's popcorn Hollywood at its best and totally rocks. It's all about chemistry and Ms. Jolie and Mr. Pitt make the screen sizzle. Damn that blasted PG13 brigade.



Apple's iTunes Music Store is counting down to 500 Million Songs. The lucky sod who downloads the 500 millionth song gets:

- 10 iPods
- A Gold 10,000-song Gift Card for the iTunes Music Store
- 10 additional 50-song gift cards to go with the iPods
- Four Coldplay Tickets with front-row seats
- Coldplay "Back-stage? Passes for a meet 'n' greet with the band

WOW! I'd sell the iPods as I already have three and save the cash for Apple's first Intel-based Powerbook. I haven't commented on Apple's massively publicized, highly dramatic ditching of IBM for Intel - was too emotionally drained after following a live blog of Stevie J's keynote address to the faithful in San Francisco and then watching a webcast a few hours later.

To all the sorry people out there who think Apple will suffer from the Osbourne effect, get your facts straight. It's a bold, risky move and that's the Macintosh Way. If Steve hadn't thrown out those hideous floppy drives when the first iMac was launched, (yes, I did hate him for a few days), there would be 3 and a half USB devices in the world today.

More Power To Those Of Us Who Dare to Dream!

This post is being interrupted by the Bangladesh consulate - have applied for a business visa and they wish to interview me.

Peace!

## **Tuesday, July 19th, 2005**

To those who haven't been to see War of the Worlds yet, DON'T!!!! The movie was a 116 minute special effect. Yes, the special effect was stunningly good but then, if a movie is being made in the 21st century, with Steven Spielberg directing it, would you expect anything less? After the initial "wow, how cool is that" - a feeling that lasted all of 15 seconds, the crowd at Nishat Cinema ended up being more entertaining.

On a much, much happier note, I have just discovered Coldplay. It feels like an eternity since a contemporary band produced a decent album. Almost all the songs in X & Y are listenable but particularly appealing are Fix You, Speed of Sound, and Swallowed in the Sea. YAY!!!!!!!!!!!!

Meanwhile, half a billion songs have been sold and legally downloaded from the iTunes Music Store.

If you are an aspiring activist and are looking for inspiration and ideas for direct action, get hold of 'We Are Everywhere - The Irresistible Rise of Global Anticapitalism.'

"We Are Everywhere is a book of stories written by activists from the front lines of resistance against capitalism and economic globalization, tales of struggle and rebellion from participants in a movement of movements that is gaining ground on every continent. These stories, told with both words and pictures, have been collected over the past three years by a collective of activists, writers and artists, all of whom have deep connections to the movement."

"It is not only by shooting bullets in the battlefields that tyranny is overthrown, but also by hurling ideas of redemption, words of freedom and terrible anathemas against the hangmen that people bring down dictators and empires ...?"

*Emiliano Zapata, Mexican revolutionary, 1914*

## Tuesday, August 30th, 2005

Ever since my ill-fated trip to Dhaka, I haven't had the energy to write and have been, perhaps, trying too hard to think of profound things to say. Attempts at intelligence have failed so am going to blab away for a bit just to break the silence.

Got infuriated at an article about the G8 Summit/Live 8/Bob Geldof in the Herald a couple of months ago. The writer "slammed" Bob Geldof and said something like, while Live Aid was very successful, Sir Geldof has made a fool of himself with Live 8. Raising money is a lot easier than raising consciousness and awareness. And besides, he did his bit, in the way that he knows best. What did we do?

Lovely little excerpt from Winnie the Pooh: "Poetry and Hums aren't things which you get, they're things which get you. And all you can do is to go where they can find you." - *Winnie*

Bought a tub of Hico vanilla icecream the other day and the lid looked like this:





Lots of possibilities, depending on which way you look at the shape ...

Dhaka was very trying - it's a poor, filthy, hot, humid, over-crowded city and very different from how my mother remembers it. However, meeting Shahidul Alam again, as well as all the *Drik* people, was hugely inspiring.

Shahidul took us on a boat ride on the *Boorhi Ganga* river and encountering Haroun the Boatman was one of the few highlights of my trip.



Haroun is 40 and has been transporting people back and forth, across the river, for the last 25 years. He used to sell pots and pans but gave it up after he realized that the only way to survive in that business was by being corrupt. He wasn't willing to do so and switched careers after a 5 year struggle with the pots and pans mafia. Heard lots of other horror stories about how the poor are exploited - such as the ex-army officer who has "qabza karoed" a water pipe and sells dirty water to slum dwellers and makes Rs. 40,000 a month. Obviously, he has many other "enterprises".

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A few weeks ago, a tiny bird got stuck inside my lounge. She was really cute but completely devoid of brain cells. It took her over 12 hours to get out.



Later ...

## Friday, September 2nd, 2005

*What say you?*

A South African inventor, Ms. Sonette Ehlers, has created a device to snare rapists. South Africa has the world's worst sexual assault record and the former medical technician contends that the rape problem is so severe that women cannot wait for male attitudes to improve.

The 'rape trap', trademarked 'Rapex', is a condom-like device bristling with internal hooks and is concealed inside a woman's body. It hooks onto a rapist during penetration and must be surgically removed. The inventor claims that "the rape trap would be so painful for a rapist that it would disable him immediately, enabling his victim to escape; but would cause no long-term physical damage and could not injure the woman".

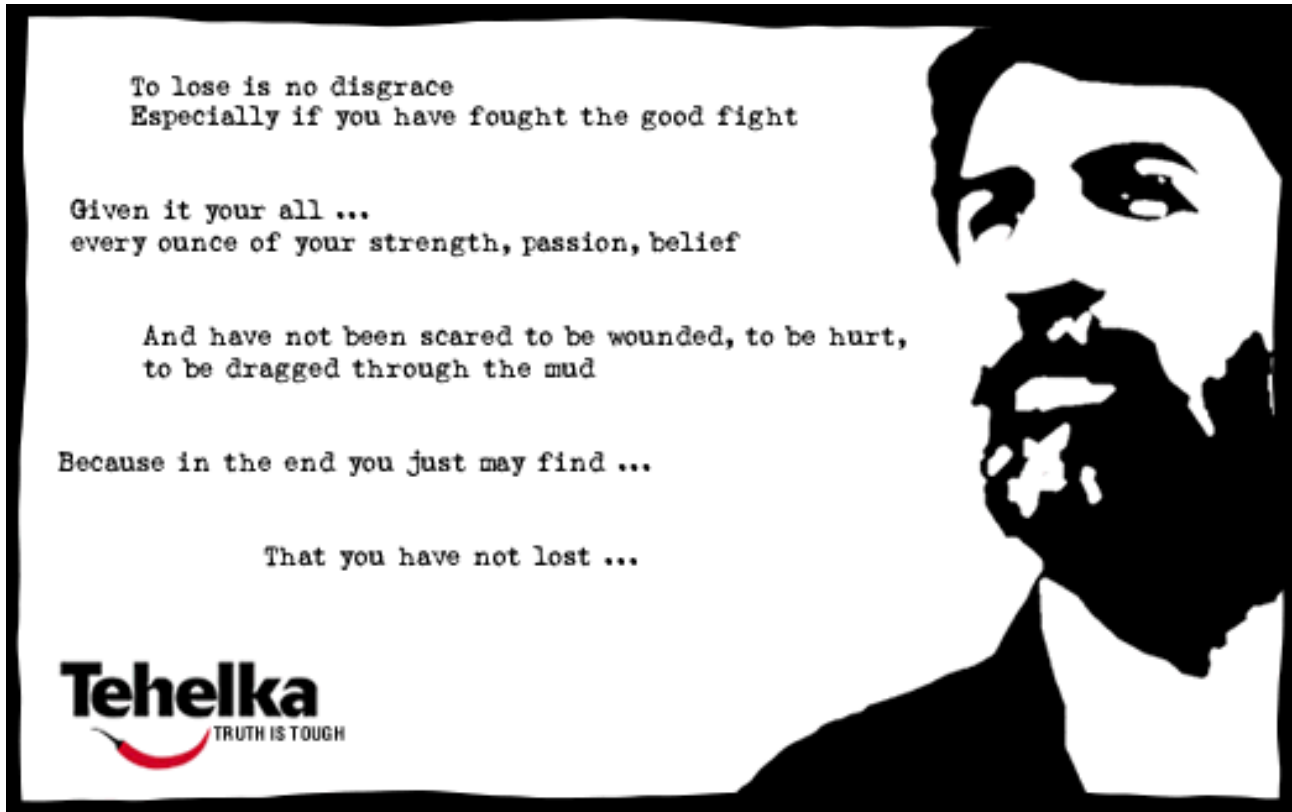
The device has caused considerable controversy in South Africa and some say that Ms. Sonette Ehlers deserves a medal, while others say that she needs help.

The Complete Article ...

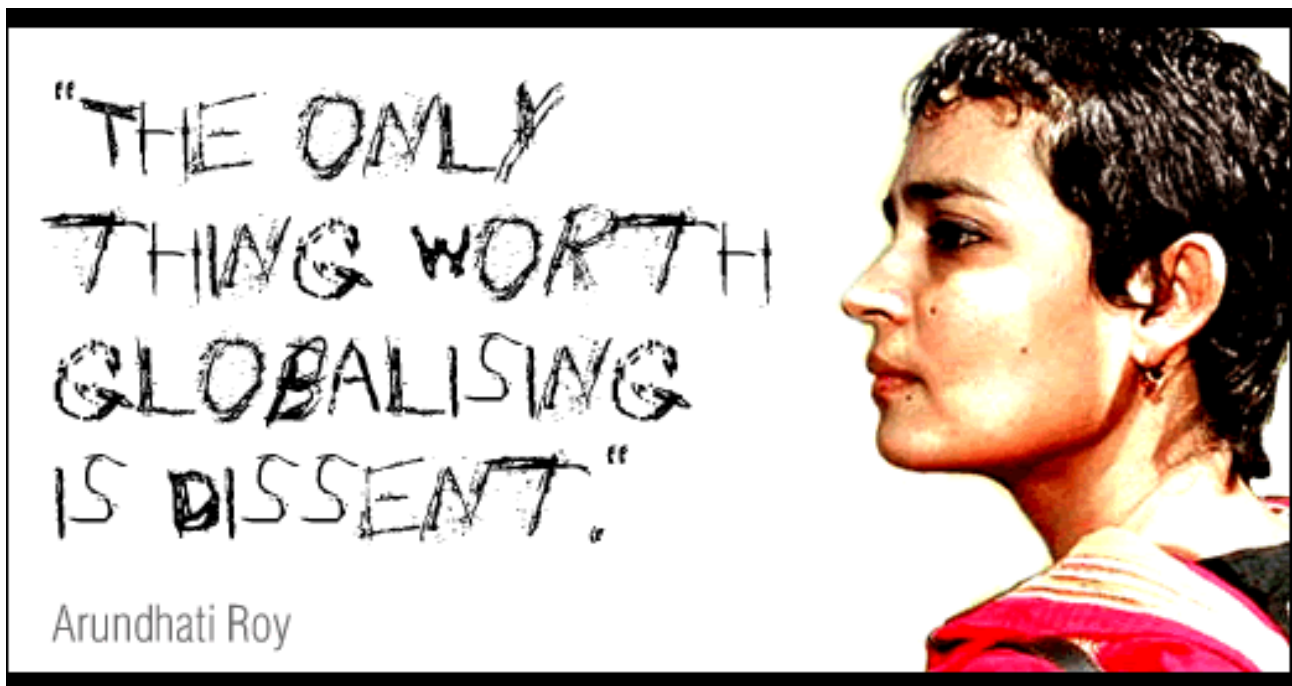
*(The full article about the Controversy that Sabeen mentioned was not available on any link ... but I have a copy of it in my mail. I will post it after the end of Sab's blog.)*

## Monday, September 5th, 2005

Tarun Tejpal (Tehelka) has been to hell and back - in the name of the truth. These words help me get through the worst days ...



**Tuesday, September 6th, 2005**



“She drives me crazy ...”  
(in a nice way)

**Wednesday, September 14th, 2005**

I won't cry for yesterday  
There's an ordinary world that  
Somehow I have to find  
And as I try to make my way  
To the ordinary world  
I will learn to survive ...

*Ordinary World - Duran Duran*

egalitarian *li,galə'terēən* adjective of, relating to, or believing in the principle that all people are equal and deserve equal rights and opportunities.

But - are people really equal? Morally, emotionally, intellectually? And if not, then why should everyone be treated equally? What happens when someone kicks

you in the backside? What is “correct” and “appropriate” for one usually doesn’t make sense to another. Do you continue to be a “chay” and go out of your way for them and treat them as equally as you would someone who hasn’t YET kicked you in the backside? Vaisay, it’s all merely a matter of time - sooner than later, everyone WILL kick you in the backside. It’s all about timing and learning to sidestep the really brutal kicks.

Do your kids a favour ... don’t teach them that honesty, goodness, patience, and hard work pay off. This is a fairytale. I am not suggesting that lies, nastiness, and slacking off are the way to go - however, if you plan to be decent and reside on the “stupid” side of the moral twilight zone, please don’t expect life to work out for you - it just doesn’t.

## **Thursday, September 15th, 2005**

The President of Pakistan has a *website* through which you can send messages to him. The Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) office reads the messages and routes them as they see fit. I beseech everyone who reads this blog to PLEASE go to the *Write to the President* section and express your views about the recent statements the General has been making about rape whilst on his grand trip to New York.

Also, please can we brainstorm ways to protest meaningfully? Standing outside the Press Club is going to achieve zilch. What can we, as a connected, articulate, media/net savvy community do to make our voices heard? We need a new movement. C’mon people! Let’s move our backsides.

*Here is what I have just sent in ...*

This is with reference to the statement made by President Musharraf regarding rape:

*“You must understand the environment in Pakistan. This has become a money making concern. A lot of people say if you want to go abroad and get a visa for Canada or citizenship and be a millionaire, get yourself raped.”*

Messages expressing shock and horror after reading this “gem” are pouring in from all over the world. However, for the most part, we feel utterly helpless. It’s one thing to aim to project a “soft image” of Pakistan but making ruthless,

inconsiderate, chauvinistic, and totally untrue statements like this doesn't help our cause.

Claiming that rape is an issue all over the world doesn't justify the actions of those who victimize and torture other human beings and nor does it eliminate the need for the Pakistani Government to repeal unjust laws or take action against those who commit heinous crimes in the name of religion and honour.

I want to know exactly what this statement means. Would whoever answers these letters please deconstruct it for me and "explain it to me like I am 5 years old". Does the President really believe this? Does he genuinely believe that women who get raped are "in it for the money"? Are people so desperate to go abroad that they'd willingly allow themselves to be violated in the most horrifying fashion? If this is what Pakistani society has come to, why are we bothering to try and change anything? The sheer obnoxiousness and crassness of this statement still hasn't sunk in and a lot of us hope that the General has been misquoted.

I live in a city beset by crime and violence - every women runs the risk of getting raped - now we know, of course, that no one stands a chance of recourse to the law. The highest authority has spoken - it's all about the Canadian visa. Mr. President, the least you can do now is to apologize and assure us that you didn't mean what you said. The damage has been done, but, please, tell us you're sorry and that you made a BIG, FAT mistake by making that hideous, shameful statement.

## **Friday, September 30th, 2005**

### **s u b c o n s c i o u s**

i feel surreal, trapped in a post gen X, geeked out haze. i want to be in london in a gap store. this doesn't imply desire for or dependence on the machine that churns out uniforms for misguided wretches stuck in a capitalistic world they helped create

linearity sucks. deadline this, client that.

transcendental

transatlantic

trance

transvestite  
transcribe  
translate  
transaction  
transmute  
transsexual  
translation (lost in)  
transmit

Seems like i am trying to make a statement but really, all i want is to be free

the jazz rendition of bolero is superb

the body doth protest  
we are not the same, equality is a myth

i am totally inefficient today, and that, in a way, smacks of conformity to an established situation

what shall i drink? what can i drink at 11:27 in the morning

money, cars, penthouses, suits, bling bling - you know where to run, i've got a story like everyone

barbie dolls, pink walls - decay

does everyone have problems with apostrophes?  
i know someone who spell checks instant messages

send me an SMS expands into "send me a short message service"  
- which is dead wrong

chaste  
cannabis  
delete  
trivia  
exalt  
mindfuck  
ideology  
luther  
clockwork orange  
in transit  
immortal



shehzad roy's saali number is a pr stunt to get attention. it's working baby - the nation has gone apoplectic ...

The most famous example of barter was peter minuit's swap in 1626 of \$24 in beads and trinkets for the island of manhattan. its property value in 1993 was assessed at \$50.4 billion

ufffff is a sub-continental expression that simply cannot be explained to those who don't get it

getting it is a complex thing. what is "it"?

caps lock

shift

control

tick tock tick tock tick tock - are we living in a box?

tech monoculture

wasteland

creaky bones

bollocks

grandiose

gosht ka lothra

mao

che

toynbee

dateline london

rocket seeds

feta cheese

widgets

the shit has missed the fan

## **Monday, October 10th, 2005**

Full marks for inappropriateness - this Dairy Queen sign was put up today!!

Have also just received a note from a friend who is appalled by the City FM 89 branding on the wristbands. I think they had already been produced for something else. Would anyone from the station care to comment?

## **Mobilink Earthquake Relief Fund**

Contribute Rs. 10 + tax to the Mobilink Earthquake Relief Fund by sending a blank SMS to 180.

## **City FM 89 Wristbands**

We just received our bands - they're pretty cool. Wasn't expecting them to be this decent. Send for your band today. They are available in red, white, and black.

Rs. 100 only!

Contact [insiya.syed@cityfm89.com](mailto:insiya.syed@cityfm89.com)

## **Wednesday, October 12th, 2005**

While I had made a conscious decision not to criticize anyone's earthquake relief efforts, KFC's advertisement in today's Dawn newspaper is abhorrent.

*The quarter page ad says:*

Let's make a difference - Join hands with KFC in supporting the Earthquake victims. As a small gesture, KFC Pakistan will donate Rs. 10 on every Combo sold in October, 2005 towards this cause.

It is absolutely pitiful. "small gesture" is spot on. In fact, they should have said, "miniscule, meaningless gesture". It's Ramzan. It's already the 12th of October. Only on Combos. How much money do they expect to raise with this disgraceful non-effort? WTF???

The ad agency, brand manager, and senior management should die of shame. I am so glad KFC is not my client.

## **Wednesday, October 12th, 2005**

Earthquake updates, news, resources, initiatives, stories have been shifted to *Earthquake 2005 - Get Involved*. Send messages about anything to do with the earthquake and relief efforts to [sabeen@bitsonline.net](mailto:sabeen@bitsonline.net)

Please add this banner to your blog or website and spread the word.



It is amazing how Pakistanis all over the world have come together in an unprecedented manner in response to earthquake relief initiatives. It just shows that people can mobilize and act when there is direction. Karachi's citizens, especially, have outdone themselves.

While we have heard countless stories about transporters and cloth manufacturers exploiting the situation to make more money, as well as news about greedy looters, there are innumerable people, companies, associations, NGOs, etc., who are out there making a difference.

Some people think the Government is not doing enough. I think they are doing the best they can. That may not amount to a lot because of inherent inefficiencies but I don't think it's for lack of trying. President Musharraf cannot afford to drag his feet on this ... especially after his disastrous rape-related faux pas. Let's quit complaining and questioning agendas - well, other than KFC's - and do something for the victims.

To everyone who is raising funds, organizing relief supplies, conducting rescue efforts, and rehabilitating survivors: may the force be with you.

Peace!

## Wednesday, November 23rd, 2005

OH WOW. I can publish posts again.

Haven't blogged in ages because every time I'd try and publish a post, Blogger would say "Error: Broken Pipe". Things seem to be resolved now. OK, this is a selfish, just-for-me post.

Finished Tarun's book a few weeks ago. If you haven't read or heard of "Alchemy of Desire", go to <http://taruntejpal.com> for details. Have always loved T's political writings but MY GOD, his first piece of "fiction" just blew me away. It's a big, fat, arm breaking hard-back but it is totally un-put-downable. I was happily reading every comma, fullstop and semi-colon, and was expecting to finish the book over the Eed holidays.

Hmmm ... the book suddenly went into overdrive and inadvertently, helplessly, I went on an 8.5 hour marathon and finished the book a day before Eed, at 6:00 am. I felt so cheated - suddenly it was all about finding out what happens in the end. Will they, won't they and a hundred other questions. Will need to read at least a quarter of the book again and savour it properly.

Tarun, you are a rockstar, boss, and I love you. "Sub theek ho jaey ga".

Am reading Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason* and a Stanford University piece on *Game Theory* (latest fascination).

Saad Haroon, a dear friend, who started Black Fish, has launched a new initiative called Open Mic Nite, designed to provide a platform for aspiring comedians, musicians, poets, etc - everyone gets 5 minutes at the mike. Great fun and lots of good stuff. Black Fish is also back in action and lots else is happening on the stand-up comedy scene in Karachi. Great! We all need to laugh.

More in a bit ...

## Friday, November 25th, 2005

It's good to be back, and thank you all for the warm welcome

Off I go now on one of my random streaks ... btw, the reason my blog posts don't have titles is that I find it too constricting to talk about any one thing in a post. Occasionally I can focus but don't want to be tied down. *Jakob*, chill out and learn to relax for a change.

Zakintosh and I have been talking about earthquake donations and he raised the highly important issue about corporate accountability. Everyone is extremely concerned, rightly so, about government transparency, especially with reference to the President's Earthquake Relief Fund. What about all the corporations that claim they will match customer donations and do all sorts of noble things with the money we give them? How do we know where the money is going and whether they are actually doing what they have pledged to do? I am not a hopeless cynic, and hopefully, they are doing "the right thing". However, anyone who has donated has a right to know where their money ends up. Corporations and their marketing/PR departments have a warped sense of ethics so it is in everyone's best interests to demand corporate accountability.

I now look forward to being flamed.

There is a new movie out called *Wal-mart: The High Cost of Low Price*. CEO, Lee Scot and top Wal-mart execs started getting frantic months before the movie's release. The company's voluntary response to Katrina earned them some brownie points and according to Geoffrey Colvin of Fortune, the "giant retailer isn't evil - just caught up in the global economy". Hmm... He goes on to say that the movie is a "ham-handed snore with none of the humor, craft, or story sense that made Moore's film (anti-GM rant - *Roger & Me*) so engaging."

Is Wal-mart helplessly caught up in the "global economy"?

Countless large corporations, in collaboration with academia, governments, the military, the church, and the media, have created and tweaked the global economy to gain total control over the hearts and minds of "consumers". Yes, of course consumers have choices. They can switch off the TV, they can choose the corner grocery store over Wal-mart and they can say NO to McDonalds. But when there is a grand, synchronized plan, deployed and managed by faceless behemoths, consumers don't stand a chance. The rot sets in early, when children start going to school. That's when the "dumbing down" process begins and it's all downhill from there ...

Yes, I am in a bad mood.

## Saturday, November 26th, 2005

My mother, who works at the *Teachers' Resource Centre*, told me a peculiar story yesterday. TRC recently launched a certificate course on *Early Childhood Education* for in-service teachers and my mother has been going on evaluation visits to the schools of the course participants.

One of the private schools she went to yesterday has just taken in a fresh batch of three year olds and it was their second or third day at school. My mother was wandering around with a notebook and a pencil and each time one of the girls would see my mother and that pencil, she'd come up and stick her hand out and say "star". This happened three of four times!! This is no reflection on the school really, because the child has just joined. But what kind of reward-oriented, stick and carrot home does this poor kid come from? She's three for god's sake!!!!!! She's probably rewarded with "stars" in the form of material goods as well, each time she eats her food without fussing, goes to bed without howling, performs for guests by rattling off the alphabet in 30 seconds, or whatever it is that makes parents proud these days.

When my mother used to teach at the Karachi Grammar School's Kindergarten section, she rebelled against the system and never gave stars to any of the kids. Lest anyone think she was mean and cruel for not dishing out gold stars to three year old babies, all the children she taught still remember their Auntie Mimi fondly, as do their parents. What she did, in lieu of the artificial, destructive reward system, was to pique the natural curiosity of children, give them a chance to ask questions, express themselves, help them make decisions, listen to them and their ideas (something teachers never do), give them the confidence to explore uncharted territory, not brand them as "difficult" or "slow", not tower over them as adults tend to do, not sit behind a teacher's desk - the list is endless - and the children have not forgotten - even though most of them are over 25 years old now. Yes, yes, I am very proud of Auntie Mimi and wish she could spend most of her time with children rather than mean, power-hungry, agenda-toting adults.

"Rewards" are extremely dangerous when used thoughtlessly and indiscriminately. It's just that they're very convenient and people can't be bothered to think of less damaging ways to let someone know that they've done a great job. First! Second! Third ... and, oh, the remaining 27 kids: You can just go home and try harder next year, but remember, because you aren't very bright, we

can't waste any time on you. We have to get our A-grade students into Harvard and Yale and that's going to keep us quite busy.

Please try and read Alfie Kohn's fantastic book: *Punished by Rewards - The Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, A's, Praise, and Other Bribes*. It is an eye-opener and extremely relevant.

## Tuesday, November 29th, 2005

We got a new HP laser printer yesterday and I have fallen in love with the double-sided printing feature. The unit is neat, compact, and Ethernet enabled. Mac OS 10.4 comes with pre-installed drivers for almost all HP printers so no installation was necessary. The Windows folk needed to install all sorts of stuff off the CD. Hah! Would rather have spent the money on having the office painted but our previous printer just dropped dead. Well, there is pleasure and pain involved in being in perpetual bootstrap mode but give me this over complacency any day.

Abu Mohammad, Munshi Raziuddin's son, came over this afternoon to pick up a fax and to have a chat. They will be touring India soon and after that, will jet off to California to perform at Stanford and then New York. I think I should become their manager - will get to tour the world, listen to great music, and learn Farsi from Farid Ayaz.

In other mundane news, I hate the fact that Flash-powered sites totally kill a web browser's built-in functionality. Obviously, if you "right-click" on a Flash-based navigational object, you get the Flash menu which allows you to do a bunch of useless things like "Zoom In" and "Print". DUH. I don't hate Flash any more, but I wish its contextual menu would incorporate things like, "Open in New Tab", "Add Link to Bookmarks", and "Copy Link Location", etc. After Adobe and Macromedia merge, we'll probably be inundated with Flash-enabled PDFs and the World Wide Web will sink.

Apple's new product, *Aperture*, is now shipping. The screenshots look gorgeous. An Adobe employee (!!!) , John Nack, writes: "Aperture is a cool product, no question. Apple's designers have a great aesthetic, and their marketing is second-to- none." Was pretty impressed to read this kind of stuff on a corporate Adobe blog.

Finally found a nifty product for downloading complete websites and viewing them offline. *Site Sucker* for the Mac is tiny, does what it says, and it's totally free. Oh, also found *Broadband Optimizer* ... maybe it's my imagination but my

broadband connection is definitely more sprightly now. Even if nothing has actually changed, perception is truth, so I am pretty pleased. Oh, absolute favourite software discovery for this quarter: [Flying Meat's VoodooPad](#). It's a must-have for anyone who misses Apple's original Notebook and Scrapbook and loves wikis. *FlySketch*, also written by Gus Mueller, Flying Meat's founder, is also awesome. Gotta love this new breed of Mac developers who write real-world *Cocoa* applications and keep the spirit alive. THANK YOU!

Am reading a whitepaper entitled (oh, how I hate that word) "Information Objects: Applying Cognitive Load Theory and Object-Oriented Thinking to Information Design". Feel like I am at school. At least I don't have to feel terribly guilty printing such stuff out now thanks to the new duplex printer.

Read an interesting article over on Wall Street Journal's Online Edition: *Some Students Find Themselves In Principal's Office Over Blogs* - "As parents wring their hands about Internet predators, many teens are worried about a different kind of online intruder: the school principal". The disruptive effects of social networking tools, portable media, file-swapping, instant messaging, are mind-boggling. The establishment is scrambling to figure out the new game in town and just can't churn out rules fast enough. WE ROCK!!! Check out another great article over at Slate: *The Rules of Distraction*.

"There is nothing stable in the world; uproar's your only music".

*Keats*

## **Wednesday, November 30th, 2005**

Testing the new version of *Firefox* (1.5 for Mac and Windows). Not blown away yet - was hoping it would look and feel more like a *Cocoa* app but it doesn't. There are a lot of under-the-hood improvements, apparently but I don't use it that much so can't really tell the difference.

## **Sunday, December 11th, 2005**

It never pays to be macho and think that the elements can't get to you just because you're guzzling multi-vitamins. Us Karachi vaalas simply cannot deal with temperature change and so, have been fighting the flu for a week. To make



matters worse, I was forced (I swear) into eating a big Mac and somehow, my stomach found out how my head and heart feels about McDonalds (basically, that it's amongst the nastiest corporations on earth and should be exterminated with immediate effect), and I threw up violently, after which my tummy has been dodgy for days.

Attended the Beaconhouse Conference in Karachi and was on one of the panels. Shireen Naqvi asked me about one of my favourite topics: Competition. I had about 2.5 minutes to talk and spoke about how competition creates angst and why cooperation is a far better approach, m.e.g.a. (mutually exclusive goal attainment), the role of parents in creating little monsters, the Karachi Grammar School -> Harvard -> Citibank cycle of life, the need for creating supportive environments where everyone succeeds, and the misguided notion that competition is an inherent, human condition. Pro-social behaviour is consistently observed in toddlers and infants, who share toys and take turns in the playground so that lays to rest the idea that human beings are born with a competitive streak. More on this later ...

I am a big fan of *Six Apart*, founded by the husband and wife team of Ben and Mena Trott. Their company develops the way-cool publishing platform, Movable Type and they also do TypePad and LiveJournal. Anyway, a while back, they had some server troubles and customers faced difficulties in publishing their blogs. Here is how *Six Apart* dealt with the problem:



We at Six Apart understand that you pay for TypePad and expect to receive superior performance in return. At times over the last several weeks, we have not provided that type of experience. We also know that some customers have been more heavily impacted than others. Therefore, we want to give you the choice of how Six Apart should compensate you for any inconvenience we have caused.

- While the performance issues caused me some inconvenience I mainly found the service acceptable last month.  
**Give me 15 free days of TypePad.**
- The performance issues made it very difficult for me to use the service on multiple occasions during the month.  
**Give me 30 free days of TypePad.**
- The performance issues affected me greatly, making my experience unacceptable for most of the month.  
**Give me 45 free days of TypePad.**
- I really wasn't affected at all and feel I got the great service I paid for last month.  
**Thank you for your offer, but please don't credit my account.**

Customer service on high-intensity steroids!

Now if only Mobilink could learn from this and actually do something tangible about its core offering, i.e. providing cellular services to customers, instead of palming off last year's stock of Blackberrys to wannabe business folk, life would get a whole lot better.

I met someone last night who was admiring the Indian kurta I was wearing. I promptly started raving about one of my favorite Indian retail outlets, *FabIndia*, and she said, oh, the next time you send for things from there, get me a few blah blah whatevers. So I said, well, you should go yourself and check out the place. She said, array bhai, never. There are too many Hindus in India and I can't deal with them. There are a few living in my apartment block and I tell you, it's such a problem. What if they touch your clothes or come into direct contact with you? Naheen, naheen, I really can't cope with them.

Ok, I know that there are people like this in the world. However, it is absolutely traumatic to come into contact with them. I moved away from her, frothing at the mouth, but uncharacteristically, said nothing. The least I should have done was to ask her how her ridiculous morality, or whatever it is that gets these people's groove on, permits her to consider using products produced by Hindus. Anyway, she is not welcome in my house, EVER.

AAAAAARGH.

Am too livid to think coherently any more.

## **Wednesday, December 28th, 2005**

I was chatting with Zak today and was moaning about the fact that I have lost my blogging spontaneity. In 2003, there was no pressure. Blogs were not cool and no one knew I existed. I used to write for me. Now I worry all the time about whether I am making sense or not. WTF! As Zak pointed out, I have an Articles section and rants about competition and corporations and human rights can go in there.

OK, so I had a divine Almond Magnum last night. How's that for mundane fluff? Unilever Pakistan got sued last year by a local ice-cream company that claimed there is no cream in Wall's products so they can't be referred to as ice-cream!

They won the case and all the Wall's products now carry the label of "Frozen Dessert".

My mamoo just arrived from London and brought me the Live 8 DVD set. Haven't had a chance to sit down and watch 10 hours of content at a stretch but have managed to check out Pink Floyd's rehearsal, Richard Ashcroft and Coldplay doing Bittersweet Symphony, U2 and Sir McCartney's Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, U2's Beautiful Day, Vertigo, and One, as well the backstage action at London's Hyde Park. So amazing to be able to relive those Live 8 moments without Nestle's orange juice ads. The DVD packaging is lovely.

Check out [http://www.backingblair.co.uk/london\\_underground/](http://www.backingblair.co.uk/london_underground/) for a really funny and mean song about the London Underground.

Am totally and utterly impressed with the work of 26 year old Jonathan Harris. Do have a look: <http://www.number27.org/index.html>

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Just saw a couple and a child go by on a motorbike. The child was the only one who had a helmet on. So, god (?) forbid, if they get into a nasty accident, the parents could potentially die owing to lack of head protection. The child might survive but he'll be a 5 year old orphan. Does that make any sense?

## **Friday, December 30th, 2005**

Espresso 2.0 has finally opened its doors. Located on Khayaban-e-Shahbaz (Defence, Karachi), Espresso's new branch has the same funky vibe as the Zamzama outlet but is much bigger. People of Karachi: Boycott Costa Coffee and help develop local enterprise.

Went to the Canvas Gallery yesterday - it's a truly wonderful space, featuring an eclectic mix of paintings and even some photographs by Arif Mahmood. If you haven't been yet, do check it out - it's in one of the Hasan Homes townhouses, opposite the Ganda Nala in Clifton.

*"To stay quiet is as political an act as speaking out."*

*Arundhati Roy*

