

GOD BACKWARDS

Whenever I hear talk of reincarnation, I am reminded of a dog. This particular dog is the star of a German TV series. I say, German, but I'm not actually sure, because the way their mouths moves never coincides with what is being said on screen. This has something to do with the dubbing process, but the effect is to be staring into another dimension, as if those people lived on Mars, or under an ocean somewhere.

This dog is easily the most talented canine on the planet. To begin with he is able to communicate with human beings, his masters, the rather clumsy and inept detectives, who were clearly chosen simply to provide something attractive of a human nature for those viewers who tune in for that kind of thing. The dog acts the pants off them all. He can run rings round them, literally and metaphorically. When he bares his teeth, you know he is just raring to sink them into the leg of some devious criminal. Not that the bad guys on this show are particularly scary, and it is a credit to the dog that he manages to put so much soul into his performance, considering the lacklustre amateurs he is up against.

So when I see this marvellously talented creature it makes me wonder about the whole idea of a grand plan, of an intelligent force at work in the universe. Why should a benign, or not so benign, creator condemn an animal of such remarkable skills to squander his abilities in front of an afternoon audience, dozing away their lives in front of a flickering screen, when he should be up there on the podium with the greats. Not Rintintin or Lassie, not even Yogi Bear, who is not even real, but Marlon Brando and Gary Grant, Lauren Bacall and Laurence Olivier.

What kind of devious act did this poor soul perform in a previous life to deserve such a fate? Or is this is a secret message, hidden in plain sight? An indication of what awaits us light years from now in a parallel universe. That in future lives, after we have gone through successive episodes of rebirth we shall all have four legs and a tail. When you look at it like that things begin to make perfect sense. In the end we shall all wind up out there in the dark at midnight, howling at the moon.

A story by **Jamal Mahjoub**