

QUAKERS ON THE ATTACK

Imagine a female Quaker comedian standing for Parliament. She made her name at the Edinburgh Fringe. The Guardian reporter gave her five stars. She out-bremners Rory Bremner. She debates on BBC Radio 4 and she is regularly heard on the Wake Up to Wogan morning two hours' worth on BBC Radio 2, on the 'Pause for Thought' slot. She is outrageous and gets away with it. No one frightens her. She is popular with children. She is never vulgar but can handle vulgarity. She not only speaks her mind, she speaks *our* mind. She knows her Quaker Faith & Practice and can put it across, with jokes. She is spot on with current affairs. She quotes the Advices & Queries without seeming pompous, preachy, priggish or smug. When quoting she drives the point home with a light touch and issues a challenge to anyone who maintains the contrary. She lives simply, dresses simply, and can act the clown when the occasion demands. "What's wrong with morality?" she asks. She is the voice of the open-minded do-gooder who is often the butt of sophisticated humour, and she can do that too, laughing at herself and putting it all in perspective -- a Quaker perspective. She makes goodness not just respectable but infectious. At all levels of society and affluence. And not just 'goodness' in the negative do-no-harm sense, but goodness that brings into play all the qualities of brain and brawn and the readiness to cooperate.

Where is such a person to be found? Not my problem. It's yours. But we shall return to the question when we conclude.

A single day's news offers targets in plenty, proving that what we are looking for is in the air, all around us. Excessive bonuses, salaries and pensions presented to bankers, offend. Where is the poll informing us what percentage is offended and what not? Simple. Put a ceiling of £50,000 p.a. in the advertised search for a C.E.O. (Chief Executive Officer) or appointment to a management board and select the best of the applicants. Is there a major ('leading'?) company that will set an example? Go further. Devise a performance contest between '£50,000 ceiling' managers (or directors or board members -- no one is excused). Include moral qualities in job vacancy advertisements. At the same time let's have a patron saint of whistle-blowers, with our comedienne sticking up for them, no doubt with full theological backing. Find more examples from your newspaper. Today.

Sniff out common-sense and persistent investigative reporting. Uncover the cover-ups. Go political. Go international. Because a Quaker spokesperson is talking, There is no newspaper circulation to boost, no hidden agenda, and no axe to grind -- unless Quaker testimonies to truth and integrity are 'axes'. On 1st September 1983 Korean Air Lines flight 007 was shot down over Soviet air space after encroaching on it. The plane crashed into the sea. None of the 269 people on board survived. The plane should not have been where it was. So why was it there? Eventually, but not immediately, a list of those on board was published. But the list was incomplete. It still is. One need only to think of the U2 spy plane flights (in particular the case of May 1960 over the USSR, piloted by Gary Powers) or of the fact-based fiction of the overflight with which John le Carré begins his novel *The Looking Glass War*, to make an intelligent guess. A United States senator was warned not to travel on KAL 007, ignored the warning, and paid the ultimate price. It is not difficult to develop a nose for such matters. When in July 2009 the Russian-crewed Arctic Sea cargo ship 'vanished' in the Baltic after leaving a Finnish port

(Jakobstad, apparently), but having previously made a call of several weeks at the Russian Kaliningrad enclave, rumours started. The vessel was eventually (on 17 August) located by a Russian frigate off the Cape Verde Islands in the Atlantic, and boarded. There had been a 'hi-jack' in the Baltic, we were told. Then there was silence. Prolonged silence. What was the vessel carrying, apart from timber? Where was it bound? Who was the captain (Sergei Zaretsky it later emerged), and what did he have to say? He has never been interviewed for public consumption. In November 2009 there is still no clarification. It is crystal clear that 'decisions' had to be made about what 'information' was to be 'released'. Over 40 Russian investigative journalists are reliably reported to have met violent deaths since 1992, that is, in the last 17 years.

Let us turn our attention to the testimonies. Should they not apply to groups as well as to individuals? Early in the nineteenth century the time was right for the likes of the Frys, the Rowntrees and the Cadburys to mount their commercial ventures. They succeeded. Two centuries later the time could be right again, if for different reasons.

Over 60 years ago my granny, reacting to the news of some dreadful international conflict, blurted out, "Why can't people just be nice to one another?" Well, the less unsophisticated of us -- and the naive amongst us have, like anyone else, a right to be heard -- know about poverty, pollution, inequality, war, cruelty, hunger, famine, religious intolerance, bigotry, envy, greed and lust for power, not to mention tranches of sheer bad luck or fate. But granny's question won't go away. Why *do* people, who *do* behave nicely to their neighbours (or, when they don't, some part of them recognises this), behave worse in a crowd? Kristallnacht. Football gangs. Why should bad behaviour drive out good? Why does evil fascinate so? Whatever the answer -- and the question is ancient -- the top priority is to acknowledge the fact. We each have traces of violence in us. Violence is natural. It has to have a safety valve with a regulator, one of those pressure-release pop-up thingies on the steam engine, the three pawnbroker's balls that whirl around and a whistle that blows. If only we can 'blow our top' and understand others when they blow theirs in our faces, and forgive afterwards, then maybe, only maybe, we won't misbehave en masse. As a lovely lady said in our local meeting the other day, "When someone hurts me I want to understand why they did what they did, and when I understand, then I can forgive. Then I thought -- why don't I forgive them anyway?"

Is it possible to be a moral leader of a nation? When, all too rarely, someone like Barack Obama is elected, a surge of hope swells far and wide. It's obvious why this is: we yearn for less strife, less injustice, more harmony. So what stops this happening? We won't repeat the list, the ten horsemen of the apocalypse. It's a vicious circle, but definition can help face a problem.

What is meant by a sense of proportion? Is your sense of proportion the same as mine? Naturally not. At the centre are values. Values are both mysterious and important. But *if* they are both mysterious and important, then where they come from, how we acquire them, are questions demanding answers. The Quaker answer -- and not only the Quaker answer -- is that they come from something *outside* us that is also *inside* us. It is a something that can be neither weighed nor measured. No species of materialism or hedonism satisfies. It is a sad historical fact that didactic spiritual answers have led to conflicts such as the Crusades and religious wars of the Middle Ages. The Quaker answer is to accept the mystery and to use the gathered meeting for worship as a principal channel for accessing this mystery. May our strengths be strengthened and our

weaknesses weakened. Which the reader may think has an 'Irish' flavour -- but my father *was* born in Killarney.

I shall now make a significant digression. It will be serious and may not be so much of a digression, because both healing and hatha yoga figured in the 2009 Yearly Meeting Gathering in York . It belongs here because hypnotic healing, for certain situations, has its place and, as the reader will see, survives critical analysis when the ostensive evidence convinces.

In his autobiographical *The Unending Quest* (Cassell, 1950) by Sir Paul Dukes (d.1967), who was a civilian knighted in 1920 at the age of 30 for his spectacular spying in Petrograd and Moscow immediately following the Bolshevik 'October Revolution' of 1917, relates, not his espionage exploits, but his inner search for, well, the meaning of life, his spiritual quest. One 1913 encounter in St Petersburg, which he had reached four years earlier after running away from a well-meaning but claustrophobic home environment and crossing Europe teaching English here and there as he worked his way east, left a deep impression. The encounter, which is taken, with minor omissions, from chapter five, was incidental to his ambition to become a musician: he had on merit won entry to the prestigious St Petersburg Conservatoire for a course of four years. Until the outbreak of World War I in August 1914 burst his life apart, revealing his talent for espionage, he had acquired the post of répétiteur with the Imperial Mariinsky Opera and Ballet Theatre (where he encountered Chaliapin, Scriabin, Rachmaninov....) situated across the square from the Conservatoire. Dukes was an extraordinary man.

To the encounter.

Invitations to attend spiritualist séances in St Petersburg showed Dukes, if anything, the existence of evil spirits. But then he was told of a certain Lev Lvovitch, the 'Lion' who healed using hypnotism but was called a quack. One of Dukes' piano pupils, a 12-year-old boy named Serge, had lost the use of his left leg through an accident. Serge was crippled, but could still use his right foot to work the piano pedal. His parents had tried every treatment on the market, including expensive patent medicines, to no avail. Should they call in the Lion, they wondered? Uncertain, they asked Dukes for advice. Not knowing anything about the Lion Dukes was non-committal, simply saying with a shrug that if nothing else had done any good....

Dukes was present when the quack arrived. Dukes now takes up the tale.

He greeted me affably. 'How is your pupil today? Thoroughly mischievous, I hope' -- and seeing mama bristle because she had strict notions of propriety -- 'all children should be mischievous, madam, there's something wrong with them if they aren't.'

'Perhaps you'll take Lev Lvovitch into the Music room, Pavel Pavlovitch,' said mama rather stiffly.

I caught a look in the eye of the 'quack'. I understood it, and he saw that I understood. A bond of sympathy was established between us.

'Be so kind,' he said.

Serge was still at the piano. The 'quack' approached from behind on tiptoe and covered the boy's eyes with his hands.

'Who is it?'

'I don't know,' said Serge, sitting still.

'Guess. Big man? Little man? Fat man? Thin man? White man, yellow man, black man, green man?'

Serge giggled. 'Nice man,' he said without moving.

The 'quack' removed his fingers and held out his hand. 'Good afternoon,' he said. 'Good afternoon,' said Serge, shaking hands.

'What's your name?'

'Serge.'

'And I'm called Lev -- (which, besides being a Christian name also means lion) -- because I roar like one.'

'You don't,' protested Serge.

'I can though. Would you like me to?'

'Yes.'

Whereupon the Lion opened his jaws and roared -- realistically enough to bring the horrified face of Serge's mama to the doorway. But neither of them noticed her. The Lion was too busy roaring and Serge too busy laughing. I ran over to reassure her and she discreetly withdrew, though with grave misgiving.

'I bet you can't play that piece,' said the Lion, pointing at the music on the piano.

'I can,' said Serge with assurance.

'Have a bet on it? How much?'

Serge weighed the matter.

'Look here,' said the Lion, sitting down. 'We'll have a sort of bet. If *you* can play that piece, *I'll* make your bad leg move. All right?'

'Can you?' said Serge, wide-eyed.

'Yes,' said the Lion, 'if you can play that piece.'

(Of course, I said to myself, he knows he can play it because he heard him from the other room.)

Very solemnly Serge played it through from start to finish.

'Very, very good,' said the Lion. 'Now I must keep my part of the bargain.'

Serge made a gesture towards his crutches, but Lev Lvovitch stopped him. 'No, no, the piano stool will do,' he said, swinging it round. The boy sat, back to the piano, his right leg bent, his left leg stiffly extended.

The 'quack' pulled off the stocking and looked at the leg, taking the bare knee in his hands and stroking it. 'All around us,' he said, in a rich, suddenly serious voice, 'in the air, in this room, and close to us now though we can't see them, are good spirits, friendly spirits, trying to help us.'

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'Are there?', said Serge.

'Yes, I can feel them coming closer and closer.'

Cupping the knee in his palms he began to chant in a low, singing tone. 'Good spirits, come and help. You *must* help. You *will* help. Serge's knee must move -- it must shake -- vibrate!'

He continued his invocations in a voice that gradually grew louder and more authoritative. In a few moments he was no longer inviting or appealing, he was commanding, addressing his orders to the knee as if it were alive and could hear.

‘Move! Move!’

Repeatedly he passed his hands up and down the paralysed limb, every now and then cupping the knee and shaking it gently. After a while he got up. ‘They are working on it now, little son. They are working inside it, and when the right moment comes your knee will move.’

He went to the window, lit a cigarette, and looked out into the street.

I sat still and waited. Serge looked up at me and smiled. In the timeless moments of silent waiting, disturbed only by the sound of a vehicle now and then passing in the street below, an atmosphere of extraordinary power seemed to grow, warm and penetrating.

‘Lev! Lev Lvovitch!’

He turned.

‘Well?’

‘I can feel something!’

The Lion squashed his cigarette and came back to his patient. ‘Of course,’ he said, as if it were the most natural thing in the world. ‘What did I tell you?’

He knelt again and looked closely at the knee. ‘What is it you feel?’

‘A sort of tingling -- inside.’

‘Of course,’ he said again. Then, abruptly and in a loud voice: ‘Shake! Vibrate!’

The boy shivered and his eyes opened wide. ‘It shook!’

‘Didn’t I say it would?’ The Lion continued to look fixedly at the limb. ‘It will again -- it must -- it can’t help it! Go on -- vibrate -- vibrate!’

Again the leg jerked slightly, rather as one’s limbs do sometimes between waking and sleeping. The spasm was repeated at short intervals.

‘I feel tired, Lev Lvovitch.’

‘Enough then.’ The Lion took the knee in his hands again and bent over it, muttering something I couldn’t catch. ‘That’s all for the day,’ he said finally, helping the boy on with his stocking. ‘Next time it will shake more. And in a few weeks we’ll have you skipping!’

Same proceeding at each visit, beginning by making the boy laugh. The adventures of a fly in a snoring man’s mouth or an ant in a fat man’s pants were subjects that appealed to them both. He brought funny pictures and comic toys. And at each treatment the leg loosened more and more. Sometimes the boy’s whole frame vibrated, quivering like a leaf in the wind. The child had no control over the movement. It started of its own accord, always quite suddenly, and he was powerless to stop it. In a few days the boy limped without crutches, and the Lion suggested that from now on Serge should go to his house. As he went out he said to me: ‘Would you like to bring him yourself? The boy likes you, and I would prefer not to have his parents -- I think you understand why. Let him walk. It’s not far.’

It was the furthest the boy had walked since his accident, but he hobbled along bravely, even down one flight of stairs and up another.

Several people were seated round the walls of the room into which we were shown by a young lady secretary who wrote our names at a table in the hall. I planted my ward in a vacant chair and looked round. The people were mostly of the poorer class. Some of them were chatting, one or two sat silent. Shortly after our arrival a man entered carrying a boy of about Serge’s age on his back. They were greeted by those present, who had evidently seen them before.

Peculiar sounds emanated from behind the closed doors of a neighbouring room. The Lion's resonant voice could be heard, saying 'Go on -- more -- more!' In response to his promptings there were noises that might be taken for sighing or groaning if they hadn't been accompanied by laughter. Someone in our room laughed too and said: 'There they go.'

A little woman dressed neatly in black sitting next to me asked what was the matter with Serge. I told her and she said, jerking her head towards the neighbouring room: '*He'll* cure him. He's a miracle worker. Christ sent him. That's what we all think.'

'Has he helped you?'

'My dove, after three doctors could do nothing he stopped my pains at once. He's told me if I come ten times I shall never have them again.'

'Can you afford it?' I was thinking of the fee the Lion charged Serge's parents.

She looked surprised. 'He doesn't charge anything. Didn't you know? You just put what you like in a box at the door. Some can't afford to put anything. It doesn't make any difference.'

The door opened and the Lion appeared. He looked round and said in a tone of feigned severity: 'What's this mean? Have you come to a funeral? Why do you wait for me before you begin work?' He nodded to Serge and me, and went on: 'Well? What about it? Now! All together!'

An astonishing scene ensued. Rather shamefacedly everyone began to yawn and giggle, but when the Lion said 'All together' they yawned more daringly -- brazenly, one might say -- stretching their arms overhead, and either yawning naturally or doing their best to simulate, ending their efforts with spontaneous laughter.

To say that I was taken aback by this strange spectacle would be putting it mildly. But I realized at once that both the laughter and the stretching were designed for a purpose -- to break down any stiffness or embarrassment the patients might feel in each other's company or that of strangers, and to put everyone at their ease. It certainly achieved this purpose, for the laughter was infectious. When I had got over my astonishment I joined in heartily with the rest. Serge, too, was busily imitating the others. 'Stretch yourself, little son,' urged the Lion. 'Like this' -- and he stretched his arms overhead and opened his mouth in a gaping yawn, bursting into merry laughter at the end of it.

'Doesn't it make you feel good?'

'Oh, yes,' said Serge with tears in his eyes.

The Lion allowed the merriment to continue for a few moments, then said to Serge:

'Watch me now. I'll do this other boy first. He's got a leg like yours, only worse. One leg was shorter than the other, but the good spirits are making it grow.'

An atmosphere of carefree gaiety had been created, and this feeling remained, though voices subsided as treatment began. The boy who had been carried in after us was sitting on a chair in the middle of the room, still chuckling. The Lion knelt on the floor before him and began to stroke and pat him from head to foot.

'Have you prayed night and morning as I told you to? Have you asked the good spirits to help?'

'Yes, I have.'

The Lion said something in a low voice, then sat back on his heels as I had seen him do with Serge. 'The good spirits *will* come and help. You will shake. It will begin the moment it has to.'

He got up, leaving the boy sitting quite still, and asked the woman sitting next to me how she was. She leant forward and whispered.

‘Just go into the next room.’

He turned to the next patient, a working man. ‘With you it’s indigestion. Is it any better?’

‘Not yet.’

‘It will be. Have you laughed as much as I told you to?’

‘I’ve tried.’

‘Laugh more. Laugh at yourself trying to laugh. Isn’t that funny enough? Do it in a mirror.’

There was a broken exclamation from the boy in the middle of the room. ‘It’s b-b-beginning!’

The lad was quivering from head to foot so that he had to hold on to the chair.

‘Spirits working,’ said the Lion in a matter-of-fact tone, as if it were the most natural thing in the world. ‘Let them work.’

He turned to the next patient, leaving the boy to shake in his chair. Soon another woman was sitting with an arm outstretched, and a man with a leg extended, both quivering in the same way. ‘You call it rheumatism,’ he was saying to them, ‘but I’m telling you it’s evil spirits; and the shaking, that’s the good spirits fighting to throw them out.’

‘I’m -- g-g-getting tired,’ stammered the boy, quaking in his chair, red in the face and perspiring.

‘All right. *Shtob perestado* -- let it stop!’ the Lion turned and called loudly and commandingly from where he was kneeling in front of another patient. The movement ceased at once. The boy sank back in his chair, exhausted.

‘Rest a bit.’ The boy’s eyes closed. He apparently fell asleep immediately.

When all the other patients had been treated Lev Lvovitch came to Serge. ‘Now it’s your turn, little son.’

It was very quiet in the room by contrast with the boisterous opening. The Lion knelt in front of my ward and stroked him, and the child shook as he had done at home -- as the other boy had done -- and dropped off into a coma when the vibrations were ordered to cease.

Lev Lvovitch turned to me. ‘What do you think of it?’

I said I thought it was very extraordinary and that there were many questions I wanted to ask.

.....an hour later I found Lev Lvovitch having tea. With him were the secretary who had marshalled the patients, another young lady serving the samovar, and a young man in student uniform, whom the Lion introduced as his niece and nephew.

I wanted to bombard him with questions, and not knowing where to begin plunged in bluntly: ‘It seems to me like a miracle. What is the secret behind it?’

He was clearly amused by the question, and replied provocatively (as I soon discovered was his manner): ‘You call it a miracle? Isn’t everything in the world a miracle? Have some tea and cake -- in an hour it will be talking. Aren’t you and I what was yesterday in the grocer’s shop? Isn’t that a miracle? Why look further for miracles?’

I tried another approach. Having in mind the biblical phrase ‘Virtue is gone out of me’, I asked if it took much energy to give the treatments.

To my surprise he answered: ‘None at all. The good spirits do all the work.’

‘Where are the good spirits?’

'Everywhere -- all around us -- in us... Like the evil spirits, too, of course,' he added waggishly.

I was not to be put off. 'All mixed up?' I persisted.

'Yes.'

'Then how do you pick out the good ones from the bad?'

'You've got to know how to call them out.'

His secretary announced that another patient was waiting

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..... the Lion had a good many clients among society people, but they came surreptitiously, and wouldn't join the crowd. The Lion charged them very high fees, and sometimes refused to take them at all, but he treated the poor for nothing.

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To my many questions the Lion sometimes gave direct but more often evasive answers. For instance, he kept putting me off every time I asked: 'What *really* made Serge's leg vibrate?' There was a queer oddity in some of the things he said. When I asked if he could cure all complaints he replied that he could cure nothing that was already dead -- 'and more people are walking about dead and rotten than you would believe.' Again: 'The number of people who don't want to be *healed* but merely *treated* is legion -- doctors would starve without them.' And again: 'I can help nobody whom I cannot turn into a child.' And when I asked for explanation -- 'Don't you know the saying, "Except you turn and become as little children you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven"?' I can only take people as far as the gates of the kingdom of heaven. When they peep in they get cured. That's why I make them laugh. Then they forget for a moment who they are and become children again. Every child stands at the gates of the kingdom of heaven until parents or teachers drag it away.' And further: 'There are many gates, as there are many mansions. I just prefer the gate of good humour.'

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'You see, Serge's leg was only on strike.'

'On strike?' I couldn't understand what he was getting at.

'On strike,' he repeated.

'Like a worker in a factory?'

'Yes -- or a rebellious member of a family.'

It was a novel idea which took some getting used to.

'Think of it this way' -- and he launched into a picturesque presentation of the human body as constituting a family of members, each possessing its own personality, consciousness, and even conscience. If the link between any member and the rest becomes deranged -- as in Serge's case had happened as a result of his accident -- then the part-personality may go off on a tack of its own. 'Either it does nothing -- that's what the doctor's call paralysis -- or what it does is not in the family interest. It has to be brought back into the fold.'

'How?'

'Well, how would *you* deal with strikers?'

'Force them back?'

'The very worst thing you could do. Don't you know the proverb, *V chuzhoi monastir s svoim ustavom nie vkhodish?*' (which means, 'when you visit another monastery than your own you don't insist of introducing your rules').

'How then?'

'Don't you send someone to reason with them? *I* call in the good spirits.'

'Could anyone call them in?'

'If they learn the call. But that's not so easy.' He became rather metaphysical. 'You must find the right approach to them, he said, and the right approach lies in the kind of sound you make -- with your voice -- and sometimes other kinds of sound.'

'Do you mean you, so to speak, pronounce "charms", or weave "spells"?'

'If you like to put it that way.'

'Isn't that sorcery?'

'Call it what you like -- the name doesn't matter.'

Sorcerers usually had a bad name, I observed.

He readily agreed. 'Of course. The priests and politicians saw to that. In the old days they always burnt sorcerers out of spite, just as the frock-coated pundits would do with me today if they could.'

'But the sorcerers call up evil spirits,' I argued.

'That's what the priests and politicians said. And, of course, there were bad sorcerers as well as good ones, just as in any profession. The good sorcerers called up good spirits, as I do, but the priests and politicians persecuted them just the same.'

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I left the Lion's house in the small hours of the morning Lev Lvovich had been on military service in Central Asia ... fallen victim to an obscure malady from which he had been cured by the medicine men of some nomadic tribe. ... when he came back it was with the mission to heal the sick as he himself had been healed.

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'The psychic world is as proper a field for scientific research as any other, but as in chemistry or physics it may be very dangerous to make haphazard experiments. If communication at spiritistic séances is with the dead, then either you have to assume that in the post-mortem existence the personality remains fixed, which would mean stagnation, and in that case why have anything to do with it if you yourself hope to progress during this life? -- or else you must assume that it continues to develop in some way, and in that case why molest it by dragging it back to contacts it has discarded? How do you know you may not be doing irreparable harm for which you may have to answer when you yourself arrive at that state?' I had the feeling that the Lion really knew very much more about this subject than he was willing to put into words, or than I perhaps was then capable of grasping. For he appeared to believe in 'guardian angels' -- but they must be trusted to know their own business best. 'Live one life at a time,' he used to say, 'and worry about the next when you get to it.'

Before saying au revoir to Dukes -- we shall meet him again under Further Reading -- we may note that he spent maybe twenty-five years of his life developing a mastery of yoga, especially hatha yoga, and introducing it to the West. Although not a Quaker he presented a philosophy that was not far from Quakerdom when he wrote: We come into this world having received two gifts, namely our body (including all that goes with it) and *time*: we are in duty bound to make the most of both.

Now for a ‘worked example’ of our own.

Singing, painting and physical exercise are rightly major features of teaching in our primary schools. What is lacking is an activity to encourage, and make the most of, innate intelligence. The activity proposed here is sudoku. Sudoku is the popular puzzle -- examples are in most newspapers -- that is simple to grasp but has a broad spectrum of difficulty. All that is required is to complete a nine-by-nine grid diagram such that each of the presented nine rows, nine columns, and nine three-by-three boxes, contains the digits 1 to 9. The puzzle has been mathematically solved so that millions can be devised, each one guaranteed to have a single solution. The range of difficulty is achieved by varying the number of ‘clues’ -- digits already inserted -- and in more subtle ways.

Sudoku is not mathematical. The sole pre-requisite is familiarity with the digits 1 to 9. If eight of them are written on the blackboard, in any order, every child will spot the one that is missing, but some will find it faster than others. Even this simple and very brief activity has a family of benefits: the teacher learns about the children; the children enjoy it; they compete with each other; the ones that lag will be motivated to catch up; there will be shouting of answers, leading to better discipline as the teacher handles this; and the familiarity with the digits will soon be put to good use. Moreover, the exercise requires no special equipment, though later it will become indispensable to use an electronic display with manipulation on a large screen.

Solving sudoku is a matter of patterns. It is entirely relevant that there is no satisfactory definition of a pattern. Patterns are useful throughout life. An analogy is a pattern. Jokes are patterns. Good poetry, nursery rhymes included, is rich in metaphor, which is another species of pattern. You can’t start too early. Patterns and imagination overlap. The importance of patterns can hardly be exaggerated.

Despite this lack of a good definition it will be useful, for purposes of this exposé, to identify *patterns* with a left-brain hemisphere activity and *imagination* with a right-brain hemisphere activity, taking advantage of the commonly accepted simplification that reason and emotion are opposite neighbours in the brain’s topology.

Let us stay with sudoku in the primary school. Children will take puzzles home and bring others to school. Rivalry will be productive. But what about those that lag? The teacher will observe and try to identify talented left-brain problem-solvers and talented right-brain children good with words. Soon there will be a need in the class for the left-brain whizz-kid to explain to the rest why a particular digit is unique. The child will find this difficult. This is where team-work and co-operation enter the picture. Names, *terms*, will be needed, in the first place so that the whole class will know which cells (‘cell’ is likely to be an early term) in the nine-by-nine diagram are being addressed, and later to refer to specific patterns. Adoption of a term should be the business of the group. The class should decide, and in so doing learn about consensus and each other. It is likely that right-brain children will lead in name-invention. We must beware of stereotyping, but perhaps the puzzle-solvers will be boys and the word-choosers girls, suggesting that working in pairs will be productive. Awareness of the talents of others, and of one’s own limitations, will be

a corrective to big-headedness -- and useful in life. This applies also to the teacher, who will regularly be 'trumped' by the quickest problem-solvers. This is as it should be.

Examples of pattern-spotting and pattern-naming in solving a sudoku puzzle follow. Most should be within primary school potential.

1. A 'set' will be a completed run of nine.
2. An 'un-set' might describe an incomplete set. A right-brain child might propose 'sunset' for this. Adopted by the class, this would build morale and group identity -- it's 'ours'.
3. Each placed digit affects three sets (or *sunsets*), namely one of each type -- row, column and box. If found useful (by the teacher) this characteristic might be christened too, though this may well prove too abstract for a junior class.
4. If seven cells in a *sunset* are decided, the two missing digits, if they overlap (a useful concept) another *sunset*, can be eliminated from all missing choices in the latter. This pattern is powerful, clearly requiring a name.
5. The same logic can apply when more than two digits are missing from a *sunset*.
6. If two either/or alternatives are provisionally inserted in a cell, then when, later, one is eliminated, a pattern which failed earlier could well become valid.
7. A tough puzzle may well include no clue for a particular digit. The question can be put to the class: is it possible for *two* digits to lack a single example? The answer is 'no', because then the puzzle's solution would not be unique. An interesting exercise is a class discussion about this, testing everyone's vocabulary, powers of expression, communication, and discipline.
8. Mistakes, and mistaken corrections, will be made. Excited discussion will arise, which will have to be controlled, with long-term lessons for everyone. The penalty for guessing is to wear a cap with a big 'G', to be passed on to the next culprit.
9. The 'spot-the-missing-digit' warm-up exercise may apply to a *sunset* at any moment. To be alert for this situation, which has the fun of an ambush, is a suitable responsibility for children who may not be as forthcoming as the sharpest.
10. The teacher is in a unique position to observe behaviour in repetitive situations. A child that makes the same kind of error, such as proposing a digit that is already present in a row or column, may have an eyesight defect.

That was an example from education. Other topics for the Quaker mouthpiece are suggested below. Any daily newspaper will provide candidates. Before being raised in public each can and should, indeed must, be worked on and prepared, always with Quaker testimonies in mind.

1. The use of the Millennium Dome was long debated while it was being built. An ideal use would have been -- and might be again -- as a showcase for European culture. As far as the writer knows this was never seriously proposed.
2. A memorial to the innocent victims of wars world-wide.
3. Decisions based on so-called 'league tables' are often suspect. A league table measures at best what is measurable, and almost invariably only a selection of measurables, often selected by design, to argue a case. What is not measured, or is not measurable, could well be more important.

4. Spirituality has a poor, even a non-existent, press. Arguments from experience need to be developed and persuasively presented, with public debate encouraged.
5. Unpalatable truths, even, or especially, when put forward by narrow, unpopular, minority political groups, should be evaluated. What, in practical terms, is the upper limit of population that Great Britain can maintain?
6. Lines of reasoning followed in speeches, including political speeches, may need to be logically dissected, with a view to pin-pointing fallacies and cover-ups. A current bone of contention is the word 'choice', used to argue for privatisation. The Quaker contribution has to be well researched and deeply thought out without ever being political, while always having some popular appeal. That is a real challenge.
7. Alternative medicine for certain types of treatment or cure, as illustrated by the Sir Paul Dukes extract above, is not to be condemned simply because it is unscientific according to contemporary accepted knowledge. The originator of the Alexander Technique, an Australian actor, was castigated by a prestigious academic noted for his expertise in anatomy and physiology, but the latter, Professor Sherrington, lost the argument when Alexander drew attention to Sherrington's poor posture that proclaimed how little the professor had benefited from his own knowledge.
8. In the present climate of ecological awareness, a compulsory test of any decision involving the significant allocation of resources is: *does the decision take fully into account the effects and the costs, both in the longer term and in the wider context?*
9. Start a debate on 'where' the values that are important to us originate. Are they eternal, and if so, in what sense?
10. Darwinian natural selection seems to explain physical characteristics of species. But is less satisfying at explaining animal *behaviour*. A particular behaviour may be vital to the survival of a species, but if this is so then it is at least a good question why the behaviour that preceded it did not bring about the disappearance of the species. Common sense tells us that Darwinian natural selection may be *necessary*, but not *sufficient*.

Access to the media is critical. The way in is via a-political celebrities. On 18th December 2009 Sir Terry Wogan 'retired' from his two-hour slot on BBC Radio 2. Responsible for raising millions of pounds for Children in Need, 'Wake up to Wogan' combined all the required ingredients: humour, charity, millions of listeners, and a 'Pause for Thought' daily interlude when another personality contributed a few minutes, this time from a religious viewpoint. If Sir Terry could be induced to make an occasional comeback appearance in a good cause, that would attract great publicity and attention -- and would be the next best thing to a female advocated in our very first paragraph. That said, perhaps the ideal spokesperson would be Jo Brand or Sandi

Toksvig. Male candidates might include Michael Frayn, Jonathan Miller, Lenny Henry and Michael Palin.

Quakers have a wide reputation for being trustworthy and for setting high standards. The year 2010 is Friends' opportunity to 'go public', to come out of their collective shell, and to build on that trust. The time is ripe for Friends to go on the attack. This paper suggests not only a strategy for doing so, but steps towards implementation.

Further Reading

Sir Paul Dukes: *The Story of ST 25* (Cassell, 1938); *An Epic of the Gestapo* (Cassell, 1940); *Secret Agent "ST 25"* (Cassell, 1949); *The Unending Quest* (Cassell, 1950); *The Yoga of Health, Youth and Joy* (5th edition, Cassell, 1965). All carry illustrations. The first, third and fourth are hard to find. The third is an updated, slightly shortened, version of the first. Dukes wrote little else and apart from the entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* there is no independent account of his life. He was married twice and had no children.

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