

# THE AKHI CONTROVERSY

## Ask Akhi

*Akhi, the beggar-sage of Damascus, sits in the market square gathering coins and wisdom and instructing all in the dance of life.*



This letter was left in a box at Beacon Street during the recent Open House: "Oh great wise one, riddle me this ... 'Why is the sky blue?'"

I.M. Blue in Cleveland

Oh, Akhi was delighted to find that someone, anyone, had written to him. It is comforting to know that there are still those who look to the left and to the right for knowing eyes as they enter the city gate. But Akhi is humbled that someone should address me as "great." Indeed, I am a simple beggar, and my wisdom comes from beyond my reach and only finds a home within.

So, U. R. Blue? Is it because of the sky? Is not your sky mostly gray in Cleveland? Oh, may Allah bring Cleveland more blue sky!! Alas, it is a mystery to Akhi why this sky, or any sky is blue. It is likewise a wonder to me why it is, at times, brilliant yellow, red, orange, and even pink. Indeed, when I gaze upon the horizon, I can behold more colors than I have names to describe them. There is a constant dancing in the sky that lifts me to my feet and my hands into the air. I give praise to the maker of this sky, this boundless sea of color. I marvel at the artist's touch, as new brush strokes create a canvas unlike any other every day.

So, are you amazed, Mr. Blue? I. M. 2.

*O Seeker of Wisdom, send your questions to "Ask Akhi" c/o Beacon Street 3570 Rocky River Drive Cleveland OH 44111*

## AKHI: WILL HE STAY OR WILL HE GO?

For a year Akhi, the beggar-sage of Damascus, has dispensed his unique brand of wisdom to the readers of *The Beacon Street Beacon*. In his regular column, "Ask Akhi", he has answered questions on topics ranging from the nature of the cosmos to the color of olives. Now, the future of his column is in jeopardy.

Justin Case, editor of *The Beacon*, has notified Akhi that the column will be discontinued unless he begins to receive more letters from readers. "To my knowledge, only one letter for Akhi--the one about the olives--has ever been received through the mail at our offices," says Case. "I don't know where he got the other ones, but I suspect he just made them up. What's the point of an advice column when nobody wants your advice?"

Case says this issue's column may be Akhi's last opportunity to prove himself. "I was ready to cancel 'Ask Akhi' in March, but he begged me for another chance," says Case. "It was against my better judgement, but I gave it to him. I've got to hand it to him: the man knows his job."

Akhi believes an outpouring of reader response will save his column. "Dear Abby went through the same thing," he says. "Akhi will manage." It is believed that *The Beacon* is Akhi's only regular source of income, which, like any money he receives, he throws from the Holy Mountain.

Readers wishing to save Akhi from journalistic extinction may send their questions to "Ask Akhi" c/o Beacon Street, 3750 Rocky River Drive, Cleveland, Ohio 44111.



**Occupation** - Beacon Street Office Manager  
**Other Occupations** - writer, cartoonist, musician, raconteur, roustabout, gourmet  
**Birthday** - September 7, 1961  
**Home** - Wherever I hang my hat  
**Marital Status** - Married (2 years, 8 months)  
**Favorite Holiday** - Groundhog Day

**Books I'm Reading** - James Joyce's *Ulysses* (since around 1987) and Neil Gaiman & co.'s *The Sandman* (until around 1996)  
**Personal Heroes** - William Faulkner, Bob Dylan, J. R. R. Tolkien, Jonny Quest, and just about any member of the Justice League of America  
**Motto** - Time spent sleeping is never wasted  
**Other Motto** - You can never have too much cheese  
**The Best Part of My Job Is** - Get to work for friends  
**Folks who don't know me think I'm** - St Peter or Charles Manson  
**Three Words That Best Describe Me** - not good at math