

Akhi, the beggar sage, sits at the city gates, instructing all in the dance of life.

Ask Akhi...



Dear Akhi,

I would have e-mailed or faxed this letter to you, but the editor of this newsletter had no address or number to give me. So I don't even know if this letter will get to you. I just wanted to take a minute out of my busy schedule to tell you how lucky you are that you don't have to do anything, that you don't have to drive in traffic to get to work, and you don't have deadlines to meet.

-- Exasperated.

Dear Ex,

Nothing to do! Every day I must greet travelers at my gate and take coins to the mountain for Allah. Daily I must pray and eat and rest and take shelter from the midday sun. Akhi has a full life. But I must admit, I am grateful I do not have to drive to work. I just come and sit.

I sit at a busy gate. Many vehicles would try to enter the city through my gate. Their drivers were often angry and there was much noise and smoke. You see, they shared the road with camels and carts and thousands of people on foot (pilgrims and tourists taking photos right in the middle of the road.) The road at my gate is narrow and is not kind to autos and trucks.

Recently there was a commission established to address vehicle traffic, congestion at the gate, and the safety of those who travel on foot. Wonder of wonders, they came to Akhi and asked what I thought. I closed my eyes and prayed for wisdom. Praise be Allah, I saw the solution before me. With my eyes still closed, I told the members of the commission what I saw. When I opened my eyes, they were gone.

Do you know what, Mr. Ex! Just last week there were some changes at my gate. To my amazement, the commission put Allah's wisdom into practice. Now, on either side of the narrow gate, there is a huge stone pot with a fig tree and some colorful desert flowers. They are so beautiful. But the best part, my friend, is the road is now too narrow for autos and trucks. They must go to the Great Gate on the far side of the city. Camels are welcome and carts can get through and people on foot all stop to admire the pots.

Nothing to do? Now Akhi has one more thing to do each day. I must smell the flowers.

Spotlight On: Maria Livers A Beacon Street co-founder



Involvement with Beacon Street: Founding member and performer for 10 years, Winter Dinner Committee, currently helping with a Beacon Street promotional video.

Occupation: Senior Editor, Gateway Communications Group, Inc.

Preoccupation: Remembering to breathe

Family members: Mom, Chris; Dad, Fred; Our 30-year old pony, Tami; several feline companions* (*Please call or write for a complete list of names).

Favorite books or authors: Walter Macken's Rain on the Wind; John Irving's A Prayer for Owen Meany .

Favorite movies: "The Green Mile" and "The Empire Strikes Back" – still has the best one-liners.

Hobbies: Music; Working on the Young Adult Conference for the Diocese (Oct. 14, 2000); Cleveland Aboriginal Americans Baseball; Painting; Theatre.

Best thing about working with Beacon Street: Working with my friends.

Favorite Mottos: "Courage is fear that has said its prayers"; and "The position of God has already been filled" (compliments of Kim Manning).