

Annual Darwin Awards?  
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Darwin Awards usually refer to those whose decisions are so stupid that they remove themselves from the gene pool by dying. My annual survey uses a slightly different definition: those whose decisions are so flawed that the consequences of their actions reduce the global IQ.

Religious Wisdom. A senior Iranian cleric, the ever dazzling Hojatoleslam Kazem Sedighi, who leads Friday prayers at Tehran University, knows whom to blame when Tehran has a huge earthquake. This city of 12 million is overdue, and it will be devastating. But have no fear; this cleric knows that it is \223immodestly dressed women who lead young men astray, corrupt their chastity, and spread adultery in society\224 who cause earthquakes. \223What can we do to avoid being buried under the rubble?\224 Sedighi asked. \223There is no other solution but to take refuge in religion and to adapt our lives to Islam\222s moral codes.\224 After an earthquake, will he recommend lynching young women? I wouldn\222t be surprised.

Astonishing Yemeni Mothers. Hundreds of women cheered a proposed law to ban child marriage in Yemen on March 22. I would hope so. However, although I can understand men whose sexual taste runs to young girls opposing this law, I do not understand mothers doing so. Even more women than the supporters demonstrated (of course hiding their faces in full veils) against this measure, citing the Koran itself\227in which the Prophet Mohammad took to wife a little girl.

What sort of unenlightened thinking makes them support Yemen\222s hideous culture, placing them last of 134 countries in the latest Global Gender Gap Report? How do they justify the death of a 13-year-old bride whose wedding night rape made her bleed to death? Were these women themselves married off as children and that is good enough for their daughters too? Or is the appalling fertility rate of that country making them eager to get rid of too many female mouths to feed? They seem incapable of thinking that raising the marriage age and providing girls with education could avert much that is wrong with Yemen\222s march to destruction.

African Selective Amnesia. According to the Economist, Mbombo Ibrahim Moubarak, Cameroon\222s leading cleric who runs the country\222s Islamic humanitarian assistance program, has a dream that \223Turkey must reclaim its mantle as leader of the Islamic world.\224 This notion was spurred by a visit of Turkey\222s president Abdullah Gul, who espouses \223moderate Islam\224 (like moderate pregnancy?) and is drumming up trade with West Africa.

Cleric Moubarak suffers from the usual Muslim amnesia about colonialism. Everybody decries European colonialism of 150 years, but fail to remember the Ottoman Turkish colonialism that lasted for 500 years and contributed mightily to the corruption and bad local governance of all the countries under their sway. But then fantasies and dreams do not match enlightened self-interest in making decisions about the future. The Christian Lebanese and Syrians, who provide all the transportation and mercantile services to West Africa, do not have such a rosy picture of a resurgent Turkish empire. Their memories are not quite as amnesiac as those of the good cleric.

Domestic Awards. To say that government is the source of all evil is to encourage the few crackpots among us to take violent action. If we want services but object to paying for them, we are lowering the universal IQ. Imagine a society without government. Somalia, anybody?

Next are those Congressmen who shout out nasty comments in Congressional hearings. Apparently their mothers never taught them not to foul their own nest. Their incivility in our halls of government may well promote the same when they are in the majority.

Finally, UC Santa Cruz students held their annual Pot Smoke-out in which they defied the law and fouled the air of an otherwise pristine meadow. I would question the IQ of the student who said that smoking pot helps him to \223focus.\224 Focus on how many of his brain cells he killed, perhaps?

656 words

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