

# If God Went to B-School

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BOP.Forever.

*Dedicated to our families,*

*our friends*

*and*

*our enemies*

# Prologue

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As I stepped out the gate, I looked back at the red brick building I was seeing perhaps for the last time. I wondered what life would have been had I not come here- had I not met the people I met, had I not seen humanity- naked & primordial and been simultaneously enchanted by its beauty & repulsed by its unsightliness; had I not lost so much to find myself.

My name is Hari Parmeshwar. This is my story. And if you have ever thought of or heard of or done an MBA, this is your story too.

# The Interview

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*“So, why do you want to become God?”*

*He paused a little before answering, as if to give it some thought.*

*“Because it can’t be without God.”*

*“It?”*

*No pause this time.*

*“It... Life, Death- the whole bloody business.”*

“HARI PARMESHWAR!”

I found myself on a termite infested stool, doodling on a sheet of paper, with ten pairs of eyes staring at me. A searing pain rose through my upper arm where Mr. Anchor Shaped Goatee (I realized I had nicknamed him before embarking on the daydream) was elbowing me continuously, in harmonic motion. “Oye, isn’t your name Hari?”

“HARI! HARI PARMESHWAR! Has he left?”

I closed my eyes and opened them again and as my grey cells flickered to life, remembered that my name, as Mr. A. S. Goatee so eloquently put it, was indeed Hari Parmeshwar. I got up, blinked, stretched, yawned, straightened my tie, located the file housing my CV<sup>1</sup> (& some other documents), yawned again and drank a deep breath of the real world. I then found my way to the scrawny male uttering my name with genuine passion. “ARE YOU HARI PARMESHWAR?” he shouted as if I were at the other end of a long tunnel. I made a sound that approximated the affirmative and told him that he was blocking my way. I came across a knob that (compared to its fixture) seemed to have rusted prematurely, most likely from the sweat of several nervous pre- interview hands over the years. I pushed open the forbiddingly huge polished doors and stepped into a world of what seemed to be infinite bright.

Eyes blinking, heart racing, I took the four steps to the empty chair placed in the centre of the room. I wished the interview panel “Good Afternoon”. The human being (christened Human

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<sup>1</sup> Curriculum Vitae

One for hereafter) seated in the centre of the five member panel smiled and asked me to sit down. I placed my butt on the chair graced by hundred odd buttocks before me on the day; perhaps, even the same chair (considering the so called infrastructure constraints) on which the buttocks of the now rich & famous rested for 20 odd minutes of mind picking & verbal volleying. I tucked in my gut and smoothed my tie, hoping that it would hide the very recently acquired Sambhar stain on my shirt.

Human One: *(Without ceremony)* So, why do you want to become a Manager?

Me: *(Caught off guard & on Auto Pilot)* Because it can't be without a Manager.

Human One: *(Puzzled)* It?

Me: *(Still on Auto Pilot)* Life, Death... *(Voice in Head to Me: WAKE UP ASSHOLE!)* Business... Um, I mean every... every functioning process in the world needs to be managed... And managers um... manage things.

Human Two: What kinds of things?

Me: *(After some thought)* All kinds of things.

*At this point, Humans Two & Four started laughing openly. Humans Three & Five- women, gave the kind of dignified smile only women can manage. Human One's facial expression was inscrutable.*

Human One: *(Sighing and looking at a piece of paper before him)* So what kind of "things" did you do in your four years at ABC InfoTech?

Me: Um...

*I had done nothing worthwhile at ABC InfoTech... My career started on the bench where I did next to nothing- getting paid for just showing up and marking my attendance or writing oddball reports that nobody would read. Then, work hit me with full force. I was taken off the bench and ensnared by the banking services division to serve the remainder of my sentence, writing mindless code.*

Me: I started off as a consultant, reviewing departments and their performance for ABC. *(In truth, I had written one very shitty report on the payroll division.)* Then I moved on to the BFSI *(Banking & Financial Services)* division of the business, where I worked on designing applications...

*I will not bore the reader with the details of my career at ABC, not because of an inherent lack of sadism in my core but because the reader will have most likely lived or have had friends who have lived the IT<sup>2</sup> life- nay IT existence.*

Human One: *(Looking at his watch)* Mr. Parmeshwar, to me, you look something of a rich man- maybe... a billionaire. So your topic for the extempore is... "Billionaire". You may start speaking.

*Human Four gave a dilapidated looking stopwatch a theatrical bang and gestured for me to start. I began racking my brains for anything remotely related to billionaire but came up with nothing but a very inexplicable & disturbing image of a fat cow with a monkey's head. Unable to shake the hitherto unseen image from my head, I sputtered and managed to utter a few unintelligible noises, in what must have sounded like ParseITongue<sup>3</sup>. At this point, Human One (clearly the Ringmaster of the circus) ordered me to "START NOW!"*

*This sudden & incredibly loud utterance acted almost like a gunshot. Threatened and intimidated, my grey matter finally got into the act and my adrenaline stores relented, pumping the much needed drug through my veins. Consequently, I managed to utter a minute's worth of all the crap I could muster, on the subject of billionaire.*

*A few questions on all things IT followed. I realized that Human Three was conversant in every kind of plantation on Planet IT and challenged my diminished intellect to an extent. However, thankfully still a little high on adrenaline, I managed to muster a response for every query thrown at me.*

Human Four: *(Speaking for the first time)* So son, why FMS? Why not the IIMs? Or XL?

Me: Because FMS is the only call I have.

Human Four: *(Smiling kindly)* Well, that makes matters incredibly simple, doesn't it?

As I stepped out of the Room of Infinite Bright- the room I would later learn was called Sem Hall (Seminar Hall), I felt more alive and awake than I had ever in my life. Answers to questions I could not answer popped up in my head, names of billionaires I didn't utter in the extempore flashed before my eyes and better sounding ripostes- dripping with easy wit and political correctness, jingled in my ears. Freeing myself from the milling crowd begging me for a ball-by-ball of the interview, I descended down the stairs into a pall of gloom & Delhi's mad roads. I was sure that I had screwed up my only worthwhile B- School call in 5 years of giving CAT, XAT, MAT, SAT, FAT...

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<sup>2</sup> Information Technology

<sup>3</sup> Snake Language

Even to this date and perhaps till the day I die, I will always recall with striking clarity two things about the interview.

One- the perennially pained weary expression on Human One's face.

And Two- that in my trance, I had doodled six very odd sentences on the CV I was carrying and as if to needlessly mock the uncanny seriousness of those weird sounding sentences, given my photo (on the CV) an Anchor Shaped Goatee.



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