

MYSTERIOUS PRECOGNITIONS

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Editor's Note: The following logological recreations are taken from a forthcoming book by Gardner entitled The Mysterious Precognitions of Swami Picanumba. For answers, see Answers and Solutions.

IN THE BEGINNING

Select any of the ten words in the first verse of Genesis. Count the number of letters in the word you choose. For example, suppose you select BEGINNING which has nine letters. Count ahead nine words, starting with the next word in the text, which brings you to THE, the second word of verse 2. This word has three letters, so you count ahead three more words to end on WITHOUT.

- In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
- And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
- And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

Continue in this manner until your count enters the third verse. What is the word on which the count ends?

NATION, ANIMAL, FRUIT

Write down the following words:

- The name of a nation that begins with D
- An animal that begins with the second letter of the nation
- The color of the animal
- An animal that begins with the last letter of the nation
- A fruit that begins with the last letter of the animal selected in the preceding step

What five words did you write?

IN PRAISE OF RED

Red is the color of sunsets and fire,
 And red is our blood when it flows,
 A beautiful red are the lips of my love,

They rival the red of a rose.
 We thrill to the red of a cardinal's wings,
 But not to a boozier's red nose!

Roll one of your dice on the table; let n be the number it shows. Check the n th line of the above poem, and count to that line's n th word. What is it?

A GENESIS TEST

Shake and toss two dice. If they show a total of 6 or 8, toss again. When you get a total not 6 or 8, turn to the chapter in Genesis (King James version) that has a number the same as the total on the dice. Now turn each die upside down. Their total tells you the number of the verse to locate in the chapter you have selected. Check the first word of the verse selected by the dice after you have reversed them. What is it?

WHAT'S THE WORD?

Fold a sheet of paper so that it has one horizontal and three vertical creases in it. Letter the top four cells A,B,C,D and the bottom four, E,F,G,H. Fold the sheet into a packet eight leaves deep by folding it any way you like along the creases. After you do this, some cells in the packet will face one way, and others will face the opposite way. Because you made the folds at random, there is no way to know which cells face which way.

Trim the four sides of the packet with scissors, so that no cell is attached to any other cell. Spread the pieces on the table. Can you arrange the face-up pieces to spell a common English word? If you cannot, can you arrange the face-down pieces to spell a word after turning them over? You are sure to succeed--what word do you spell?

THE SIX GLASSES

Arrange six drinking glasses in a row. Assume they are numbered 1,2,3,4,5,6 from the left. Drop a penny into glass 1. A move consists of pouring the penny from one glass to the nearest glass on either side. Spell the letters SWAMI by making a move for each letter. When you finish, take away glass 1. Now spell PICANUMBA, and take away glass 2. Spell your last name twice, and take away glass 6. Make one final move. In what glass is the penny?

IN PRAISE OF BLUE

Barbara's eyes are a beautiful blue,
 On a bluebell, a blue butterfly,
 I seldom am blue in December,
 Though frequently blue in July.

A blue cheese is tasty on salads,
 Blue berries are great in a pie
 But the most wonderful blue of all
 Is the blue of a cloudless sky.

Roll a die. The number that comes up indicates a line in the above poem. Now look at the bottom face of the die. This tells you how to count to a word in the selected line. What word do you reach?

NINE-CARD SPELL

Remove nine cards from the deck. Shuffle them, then hold them face down in your left hand. Reverse the third card from the top of the packet. Spell the name of the reversed card as follows (let's assume it is the queen of hearts):

- Spell Q-U-E-E-N by dealing five cards to the table, one card for each letter. Place the remaining cards on top of the five just dealt.
- Pick up the packet. Spell O-F by dealing two cards to the table. Again, put the remaining cards on top of those just dealt.
- Now spell H-E-A-R-T-S. Put the cards in your hand on top of the tabled pile.

Follow this procedure, using the name of the card you have reversed. Note that the number of letters in the name can vary from 10 (ace of clubs) to 15 (eight of diamonds). After spelling the name of the reversed card, how far down is it from the top of the packet?

TWINKLE TWINKLE

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
 How I wonder what you are
 Up above the world so high.
 Like a diamond in the sky.
 Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
 How I wonder what you are.

Select any word in the first two lines. Count the number of its letters, and count forward in the manner described in the first problem. Keep going until you can't continue any farther. On what word does the count end?