

Jared Osborne is lost in his own philosophy. He has questions, but who doesn't? He met a mysterious man. A man with new but old ideas. He decided to follow him. To explore his ideas. To learn from him. He struggled with what he should name him. He calls him B. Jared Osborne is the main character in a profound book, "The Story of B". He is a Roman Catholic priest who learns from B about the social aspects of life, especially in the areas of **environmentalism**, **neotribalism**, and the critique of **modern agricultural practices**. He spends his time with B until he starts to question his own beliefs. His own self! One of the central themes in the book is to reflect and challenge the standard assumptions that we all have. We should question anything that has been told to us.

The purpose of this blog post is to delve into Jared's mind as he learns from B. **It aims to provide a practical summary of the main teachings of B that Jared has learned the hard way.** We will attempt to dissect the book's key themes, original philosophies, and translate them into everyday language. Who knows, we might also have our own presumed assumptions, just like Jared. The goal is to be like Jared, learn from B, and apply these lessons in our own life.

1-Minute Summary

"The Story of B" is a philosophical novel by Daniel Quinn that follows the journey of Father Jared Osborne, a Roman Catholic priest. Jared is tasked with investigating a man known as "B", whose radical ideas challenge societal norms and beliefs. B's teachings, which include critiques of modern agricultural practices and advocacy for neotribalism, lead Jared to question his own beliefs and the status quo.

The novel explores themes of environmentalism, sustainability, and personal transformation, prompting readers to reconsider their assumptions and explore alternative ways of living. The narrative unfolds as Jared delves deeper into B's philosophies, ultimately leading to a dramatic turn of events that shakes his religious foundations to their core.

This novel offers us with valuable lessons to apply in our own lives. It encourages us to foster a deeper understanding of our relationship with nature and society. The novel is a thought-provoking exploration of societal norms and personal beliefs, making it a must-read for those seeking to broaden their perspectives.

In this blog post, we will go over:

- 1-Minute Summary
- Background of the Book
- Overview of the Plot
- Key Themes and Philosophies
- Practical Implications
- Final Thoughts

- Actionable Summary

Background of the Book

“The Story of B” is a *philosophical novel* written by Daniel Quinn and published by Bantam Publishing in December 1996. It is the second book in the Ishmael series, following the success of the first book, “Ishmael”. The novel expands upon many of the philosophical ideas introduced in “Ishmael”, and acts as the spiritual successor to both this book and “My Ishmael”, also written by Quinn.

The narrative is presented as a *diary* of the protagonist, Father Jared Osborne, a Roman Catholic priest of the fictitious Laurentian order. The Laurentians have traditionally made it their duty to be the first group to recognize the Antichrist. Jared is personally tasked with investigating an itinerant American lecturer, Charles Atterley, known as “B”, whose ideas the Laurentians consider a potential danger to humankind.

The novel is praised for making readers rethink their own beliefs and philosophies.

Quinn, who left a successful corporate career to become a writer, won the prestigious Turner Tomorrow Award for “Ishmael”, the first book in the series. “The Story of B” continues the exploration of societal norms and personal beliefs, challenging readers to question their assumptions and consider alternative ways of living.

Overview of the Plot

“The Story of B” is built around **two main characters**. A revolutionary teacher named Charles Atterley, known as B to his followers, spreads previously unthought ideas such as modern methods of farming being not just ineffective but damaging. The other character is the Roman Catholic priest, Fr. Jared Osborne, who we mentioned before. As a lost young man seeking mentorship, Jared comes across the teachings of Atterley, finding them surprisingly powerful yet unheard of before. He started to question his ideas, himself, he started to question everything.

Jared has tasked himself to question the ideas of B, his teacher. While B’s ideas were aboriginal, controversial, and sometimes hated, they were gaining popularity. This raised a question in Jared’s mind. *Who is this man? Who is B?*

These questions set the stage for a deep exploration of societal norms and personal convictions. In his endeavor, Jared traveled to Europe to meet this unorthodox teacher. He was excited yet careful. He took notes like an excellent student and sent these notes back home. His journey takes a dramatic turn when he is pressed to make a judgment on whether B could be the Antichrist. This leads him to penetrate B’s inner circle, where he finds his religious foundations shaken to their core.

Key Themes and Philosophies

B's main controversial yet viral philosophy in life was the Great Remembering. Jared kept hearing two ambiguous words from B's lips and he was left wondering. Remembering what? And what is so great about remembering anyway? These were the questions swimming in Jared's mind. As he delved deeper into B's philosophy, it became clear to him. ***B's main point is his belief that humanity has forgotten its roots as hunter-gatherers, a lifestyle that was sustainable and in harmony with nature.*** B was always encouraging his people to return to this natural way of life or at least to recognize its value. He argues that our current societal structures, particularly our agricultural practices, are unsustainable and damaging to the planet. He refers to modern farming as "totalitarian agriculture" because it operates on the premise that all resources are for human use and all competition must be eliminated. B's teachings challenge modern minds to reconsider these practices and explore more sustainable ways of living.

B's attack on the concept of **totalitarian agriculture** comes from his belief that natural resources should be shared with other species. He claims that modern farming practices see all resources for human use and that all competition with other species should be eliminated. B believes that these practices lead to an imbalance in the ecosystem and contribute to environmental degradation. He believes that this form of agriculture is unsustainable in the long run and advocates for a more balanced and respectful relationship with nature.

What surprised Jared more than the agricultural concept, was the strong belief that B has in human nature. A central concept in B's message refers to a term called **Neotribalism**, which is the idea of returning to a way of life similar to that of ancient tribes. B believes that this lifestyle, characterized by small, self-sufficient communities living in harmony with nature, is more sustainable and environmentally friendly than our current societal structures. He suggests that adopting elements of neotribalism could help address some of the environmental issues we face today, such as global warming and greenhouse gases. This includes reducing our consumption of resources, promoting biodiversity, and fostering a deeper connection with the natural world.

Three Valuable Lessons

From B's philosophy and Jared's reflections, we can learn three strong lessons that we can apply in our lives today:

- **Questioning Established Norms:** B's philosophy encourages us to question established societal norms and beliefs. It suggests that progress and wisdom often come from challenging the status quo and being open to new ideas, or perhaps, ancient ones!
- **Sustainability and Respect for Nature:** The attacks on "totalitarian agriculture" and the promotion of neotribalism underscore the importance of sustainability and respect for nature. The book suggests that modern practices are often unsustainable and that there is much to learn from our hunter-gatherer ancestors about living in harmony with the environment.
- **Personal Transformation through Learning:** The journey of Fr. Jared Osborne illustrates the power of learning and personal transformation. His character evolves significantly through his exposure to B's teachings and philosophy, demonstrating that

it's never too late to change our perspectives and grow as individuals. This reinforces the main concept Adam Grant was concretizing in his bestseller book, "Think Again".

Practical Implications

Embracing the **sustainable philosophies** presented in "The Story of B" can help us lead a sustainable life and live in harmony with nature. These philosophies can be applied in our daily lives in several ways. We can strive to consume less and recycle more, reducing our ecological footprint. We can opt for public transportation or cycling over driving, promoting sustainability. One option is to practice community living, sharing resources and fostering cooperation over competition. We can also make conscious choices about our diet and consumer habits, considering their impact on the environment. By integrating these practices into our lives, we can embody the principles of neotribalism and contribute to a more sustainable future and a more protected nature.

We can make small changes in our daily life to use fewer resources. This could be recycling, using less water, or turning off lights when you leave a room. You could also try to share more. This could be carpooling with a friend, sharing tools with your neighbors, or donating things you don't need anymore. And you can think about how your choices affect the world. This could be eating less meat, buying less plastic, or choosing to buy from companies that are good for the environment.

Final Thoughts

Personally, I find the book to be a thought-provoking exploration of societal norms and personal beliefs. It challenges us to question our assumptions and consider alternative ways of living. If these themes resonate with you, I would recommend exploring the other books in the Ishmael series or other works by Daniel Quinn, which delve into similar concepts and philosophies.

Actionable Summary

Here are some **actionable steps** that readers can take from the teachings of "The Story of B":

Question Established Norms: Start by questioning the societal norms and beliefs that you've always taken for granted. This could be as simple as asking yourself why you believe what you believe, and whether there's another perspective you haven't considered.

Embrace Sustainability: Look for ways to make your lifestyle more sustainable. This could involve reducing your consumption, recycling more, or choosing products with less environmental impact.

Respect for Nature: Spend more time in nature and learn to appreciate its value. This could involve going for walks in the park, gardening, or even just observing the wildlife in your area.

Community Living: Consider the benefits of community living. This could involve sharing resources, cooperating with others, and fostering a sense of community in your neighborhood or city.

Conscious Consumerism: Be mindful of your consumer habits and their impact on the environment. This could involve eating less meat, buying less plastic, or choosing to buy from companies that are environmentally friendly.

Personal Transformation: Just like Jared, allow yourself to grow and evolve through learning. Be open to new ideas and perspectives, and don't be afraid to change your beliefs if you find a better way.

Read More: If the themes of "The Story of B" resonate with you, consider reading other books in the Ishmael series or other works by Daniel Quinn. This will allow you to further explore these concepts and philosophies.

These steps are not meant to be followed in order. They are simply suggestions based on the teachings of "The Story of B". Feel free to adapt them to your own life and circumstances. ***The most important thing is to start questioning, learning, and growing.***

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