

There are some books that you can just sit back and enjoy, just let the authors words wash over you and, most importantly, you don't have to think. And then there's Daniel Quinn's Ishmael. The novel Ishmael, "an adventure of the mind and spirit," opens with a disillusioned and depressed man in search of a teacher, and not just any teacher. He wants someone to show him what life is all about. And so he finds Ishmael, a meiotic teacher (one who acts as a midwife to his pupils, in bringing ideas to the surface), who turns out to be a large telepathic gorilla of extraordinary intelligence. The largest part of the book consists of their conversations, in which Ishmael discusses how things go to be this way (in terms of human culture, beginning with the agricultural revolution). Ishmael shows the narrator exactly what doesn't work in our society: the reasoning that there is only one right way to live, and that that way is with humans conquering the planet. Daniel Quinn points out that many other cultures, most notably those who have a tribal lifestyle, work, in that they do not destroy their resources, have no need for crime control or other programs, and do not have population problems. He insists that our culture is not based on humans being human, it is based on humans being gods and trying to control the world. Ishmael has a habit of raising questions and ideas. The gorilla Ishmael not only brought out thoughts and questions in the narrator, he brought up a lot of questions and ideas in Coast to Coast 2000. Ishmael took us all aback. Although many of us questioned some of Daniel Quinn's minor points, we all agreed on one of his main points: that there is no one right way to live. The Bushmen of Africa are living in a way that is just as right and works just as well as ours, and possibly even better, as they are capable of living without destroying everything in their paths. These "Leaver" cultures are in no way inferior to ours though we consider them to be uncivilized. In fact, Ishmael says that it is "Taker" civilization itself, the hierarchical structure that locks up food and spreads through the idea that people must live the same way, that is actually inferior. Why? To put it simply, we grow more food than we need, which causes our population somewhere on the Earth to increase. Now we need to grow more food, which means we clear-cut a forest or plow up a prairie to grow it, but that only causes more people to survive and reproduce. This puts us back in the same situation we were before, and causes the diversity of the world to be diminished. Why? As any farmer knows, anything that eats or competes with the crop needs to be controlled or eliminated. As any rancher or shepherd knows, anything that competes with or eats the herd or flock must be controlled or eliminated. This process, occurring for thousands of years since the agricultural revolution in the Fertile Crescent, all over the world, has caused the reduction or elimination of countless species. So is there a solution? Yes, there is. It has nothing to do with sacrificing our lifestyles or going back to being hunter gatherers. Rather, it deals with leaving, with walking away from the hierarchical structure of civilization. We must stop repeating the process begun by the ruled masses of ages past, who hauled stones that built pyramids and temples, just so they could eat. We must stop building the pyramids of today and make a living, not a killing, in groups. These groups, which Ishmael calls tribes after the traditional form of human organization, would exist to provide for its members through a group business. An example is the traditional circus, with everyone pitching in to help out. Tribes could run small newspapers, restaurants, nearly anything. To say that these ideas have not had an impact on our group would be like saying that the weather does not affect how one chooses their clothes for the day. The awareness that we are in a hierarchical system called civilization which, by its very existence, is declaring the control of humans over the Earth, is eye-opening. The challenge that Ishmael leaves the reader with is not to sit with this knowledge and do nothing, but to teach others what we have learned. Ishmael is not a program, it is not a call for an armed revolution, it is a compilation of ideas. These ideas are the only thing that will change our situation: not legislation, not the sainthood of humanity, not the halting of our population. No, it will be these ideas, the ideas that we have been challenged with, that will change things, and change minds. And so, the challenge of the gorilla is in our laps. If we want to see change, WE must spread the ideas, WE must invent ways for tribes to work, and WE must, to quote Ghandi, "be the change you seek." This is the lesson of the gorilla: this is the lesson of Ishmael. There are some books that just back enjoy just authors words wash over most importantly have think then there daniel quinn ishmael novel ishmael adventure mind spirit opens with disillusioned depressed search teacher just teacher wants someone show what life about finds ishmael meiotic teacher acts midwife pupils bringing ideas surface turns large telepathic gorilla extraordinary intelligence largest part book consists their conversations which discusses things this terms human culture beginning with agricultural revolution shows narrator exactly what doesn work society reasoning that there only right live that with humans conquering planet daniel quinn points many other cultures most notably those have tribal lifestyle work they destroy their resources have need crime control other programs population problems insists culture based humans being human based humans being gods trying control world habit raising questions ideas gorilla only brought thoughts questions narrator brought questions ideas coast coast took aback although many questioned some daniel quinn minor points agreed main points right live bushmen africa living right works well ours possibly even better they capable living without destroying everything their paths these leaver cultures inferior ours though consider them uncivilized fact says taker civilization itself hierarchical structure locks food spreads through idea people must live same actually inferior simply grow more food than need which causes population somewhere earth increase need grow more food which means clear forest plow prairie grow only causes more people survive reproduce this puts back same situation were before causes diversity world diminished farmer knows anything eats competes crop needs controlled eliminated rancher shepherd knows anything competes eats herd flock must controlled eliminated this process occurring thousands years since agricultural revolution fertile crescent over world caused reduction elimination countless species solution nothing sacrificing lifestyles going back being hunter gatherer rather deals leaving walking away from hierarchical structure civilization must stop repeating pro

cess begun ruled masses ages past hauled stones built pyramids temples they could stop building pyramids today make living killing groups these groups calls tribes after traditional form human organization would exist provide members through group business example traditional circus everyone pitching help tribes could small newspapers restaurants nearly anything these impact group would like saying weather does affect chooses clothes awareness hierarchical system called civilization very existence declaring control over earth opening challenge leaves reader knowledge nothing teach others what learned program call armed revolution compilation thing will change situation legislation sainthood humanity halting population will been challenged will change things change minds challenge gorilla I aps want spread invent ways tribes work quote ghandi seek lesson lesson Essay, essays, term paper, term papers, term papers, book reports, study, college, thesis, dissertation, test answers, free research, book research, study help, download essay, download term papers