

## The IF Conference

Your Holiness, your Majesties, your Excellencies, my dear Friends, I feel greatly honoured to welcome you at the U3A 2014 conference. This year, we'll address the theme of IF: I.F., two letters leading to infinite possibilities. Before we start diving into our topic, I've got a question and I'll go into this question by telling you a story, a story inspired by a famous character of the Sufi tradition, Nasrudin.

One day, Nasrudin was travelling by train, in the Sydney - Brisbane regional train. He was sitting by a window and vaguely looking at the landscape when the young man next to him asked "Excuse me mate, what time is it?". Nasrudin kept his gaze fixed on the outside and didn't answer.

After a few minutes, the young man patiently repeated his question, a bit louder. Nasrudin looked at him with absolute indifference.

Once again, the young man took another try, much more loudly. Apparently Nasrudin had been listening, but he was still persisting in his silence.

The young man became nervous: "You heard me, didn't you? Why can't you answer me?"

At last, Nasrudin opened his mouth and said:

"I was just wondering what would happen if I answered. We might begin talking, then we might discover that we both live in Brisbane and maybe in the same street. Then as I am a friendly person, I would invite you home. Then, I would introduce you to my daughter who is a beautiful girl. Then, as you are a good looking young man, you might fall in love with each other. Now, listen to me carefully. Do you think I would ever give my daughter in marriage to the kind of man who can't afford a watch?"

What an instructive story! Well, now, your Holiness, your Majesties, your Excellencies, my dear Friends, please look at me. First, as you can see, I am a good looking young man. Second, I am single. Third, I am pretty sure that many of you have wonderful daughters. Fourth, I don't wear a watch. Fifth and not the least, the conference organizers only gave me 2 minutes for this talk, so please:

"What time is it?"

Chantal Ménissier  
20/10/2014, 21h05

TO BE READ BY DAVID FERHON (IF CHOSEN)  
Chantal will be overseas.

2½ MINUTES