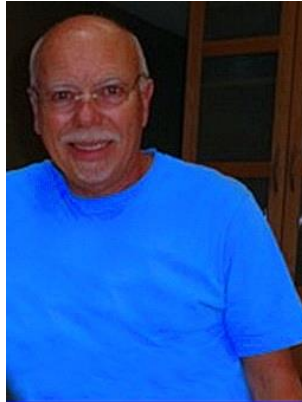


# **Khanabad, June 5, 1969**

**by Greg Kopp, October 2017**



***NOTE: This is not a FFW story; I decided to include it here because the events took place on my 23rd birth-day, and now that I've had 47 more birthdays, I can tell you with surety that this was my best one, bar none! This is taken verbatim from my journal at the time. I had been in Afghanistan for less than 3 months. Don Baird, who arrived there a year before me, was stationed in Khanabad also. I lived with him in his house for a few months before finding my own place. Afzal is Don's live-in cook.***

June 16 (1969): "Well, it's been over a month since I've written in my book. The main reason is that I haven't had the energy to do anything. After my 5-6 hours of struggle at school everyday, I go home, into the seclusion that is behind my compound walls, to decompress. I sleep, or waste my time with an occasional student who comes here. But very seldom do I do anything constructive.

There have really been some interesting things happening, though. For example, on my birthday, all sorts of things happened. First, Afzal was in one of his lazy moods, and Don got very pissed at him. He al-most fired him. Well, of course, Afzal started bitching to me that Don was very unreasonable. While that was going on, Al and Carol Koslofsky arrived from Teliqan for the weekend. They were really happy to be here, because they've been so depressed and lonely in Teliqan.

Khalil, the neighbor student, came over to tell us that there was a snake charmer just around the corner in the bazaar. We all went to see him with his 7-8 snakes wrapped around his neck. It looked so simple that we thought that anyone could handle those snakes. I was talking to Don about it, and he suddenly stuck his hand out to pick up a snake. Of course, he got bitten on his hand. The snake was still attached when Don snapped his hand back behind him, and that threw that snake to the ground near a crowd of people. The people ran away so quickly that a gaudi (carriage) horse nearby got frightened also, and took off, galloping through the bazaar without a "gaudiwan" (driver.) It seemed like all of this happened in just 3 or 4 seconds. Immediately Don began to complain of pain, and blood was pouring profusely out of his wound. His face had turned very white. He asked the snake charmer if it was poisonous, and his response was to blow on the bite and pray to Allah. We decided that the best thing to do was to go home and let him rest. At least we could think things through that way, without all the chaos around us. Meanwhile, the word was spreading fast that a snake bit the foreigner.

When we got back to the house, there was a large crowd of people gathered at the front door. I immediately assumed that they were there because of Don's snake bite. Sitting on the ground in front of the door were 3 of the hippest looking people I have ever seen. Three French hippies had just arrived from Faiza-bad and wanted a place to stay. They had asked around town if any foreigners lived in Khanabad, so they were taken to our door. I was afraid that they were almost too much for such a conservative town as Khanabad to tolerate, and they might affect how we were thought of in the town. We whisked them inside to some peace and privacy. Once inside, Don went one way with his snake wound; the Koslofsky's went in another direction with the French hippies; and I went to find Afzal, who had just come out with a new string of oaths against "Mr. Don" and his job. I tried to placate Afzal by telling him that I didn't want to get involved in his quarrels with Don; but, right now, so many things were going on that his cooperation was mandatory. Afzal settled down. In the meantime, Don had disappeared. I was concerned about him, so I went looking for him. I finally found him outside talking with the neighbors. He decided that the snake wasn't poisonous, because he hadn't died yet. (About 30 minutes had passed.)

I went back into the house to join our French guests. They decided they wanted to smoke, but said they had some "work" to do first. I learned that they were shooting heroin, so I asked if I could watch. They had no problems letting me see the process. First they melted down the heroin in a large spoon to a liquid state, and mixed it with water. Then they each put tourniquets above one elbow and gave themselves injections. When they took off the tourniquets, I saw the "rush" as it affected them, how they turned beet red all over, and then I noticed the tracks on their arms from previous injections, the small welts. After the intense rush passed, in just a few minutes, I watched them smoke "charse" (hashish) and saw how a real expert operates a hookah. They inhaled so deeply directly into their lungs until they could take in no more, and then col-lapsed into a coughing fit. The exertion from coughing sends the drug to the brain very quickly and soon they are gone.

Afzal managed to fix a fantastic dinner for us, and all but the hippies enjoyed it tremendously. The Koslofosky's were relaxed finally. The three hippies weren't heard from again until the next morning, when they took off to some place else. All in all, it was the most interesting birthdays I have ever had. It turned out well, in spite of the potential for disaster all around.

### **A riddle in the back pages of my journal:**

**Saool: Cheston chi ast, maubine du koh**

**Se maw ob, wa noh maw goh?**

**Juwab: Dariye Kabul**

**Translation.**

**Question:**

**What is it between two mountains. That has three months water and nine months of shit?**

**Answer: The Kabul River**

**Also, a recipe in the back of the journal:**

## **Kadu Burani**

### INGREDIENTS:

1. 1 kadu, 4 pounds
2. About 2 cups grease
3. 3 large onions
4. Spice as desired
5. Salt
6. Water, enough to cover kadu in pot
7. Sour cream or yoghurt with garlic, about 4 good-size pieces

### DIRECTIONS:

1. Chop up garlic finely, preferable in mortar and pestle. Mix with sour cream and set aside.
2. Cut skin off of kadu, and cut it into 2" squares.
3. Chop up onions finely with grater, and put into melted grease in a large pan on stove. Cook onions about 15 minutes until nice brown color.
4. Put kadu pieces in and turn for another 10 minutes or so, 'til a cooked color appears. At this point, put in spices and salt. (Afghans use a red spice that smells like mustard powder. My cook said it's not absolutely necessary.)
5. Add water until the top pieces of kadu are 1/2 covered. Pt lid on pot and let boil for 5 minutes. Remove lid and stir. Put lid back on, and so on at 5-minute intervals. Cook until kadu becomes soft.

Lyrics from a popular song I learned by hearing it broadcast on Radio Kabul from a loudspeaker "sare chouk" (on the town square) in Khanabad:

<b>"Biya ke borem, ba Mazar Mullah Makhmad jan Syle gule lalazar Wa delbar jan</b>	<b>"Come let's go to Mazar Mullah Makhmad dear Look at the yellow poppies Wa (sounds expressing beauty) my dear heart</b>
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<b>Syle gule lalazar Wa delbar jan"</b>	<b>Look at the yellow poppies Wa, my dear heart"</b>
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**Another favorite song:**

<b>"Chesme siyo dori..... Qurbonet shaum mon..... Khona kujo dori?..... Memonet shaum mon.".....</b>	<b>"You have black eyes I will be your lover Where is your house? I will be your guest."</b>
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