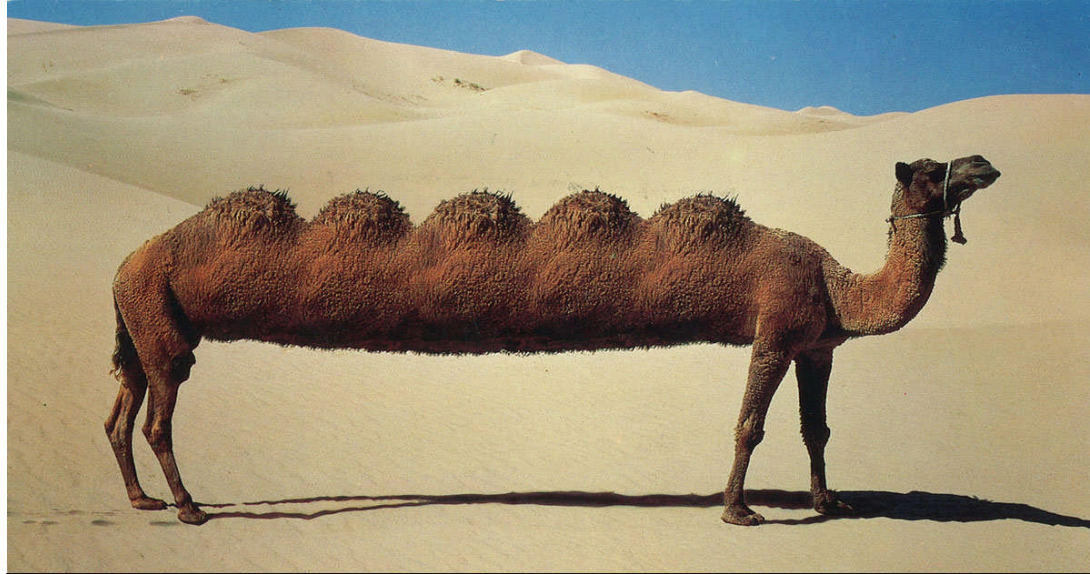


# Laksheesh



Akbar was an inveterate tinkerer. He always seemed to be able to make something out of nothing. Give him a broken toaster and four inches of copper tubing and he'd come back with a solar-powered mechanical heart pump. One time his brother, Bert, presented him with a wallaby, a voltmeter, and eight ounces of muscle relaxant. After tinkering in his garage for a week, Akbar emerged with Laksheesh, the world's first five-humped camel. The creature at first repelled Bert, as its very existence clashed with his fledgling creationism beliefs. But when customers began to flock to his heretofore flagging desert taxi service, he welcomed it with open arms – arms full of dates and wheat, which Laksheesh eagerly consumed. By month's end, business had quadrupled, and Bert asked Akbar for more of the modified animals. He couldn't get his hands on another wallaby, so he substituted a bag of macaroons and a book on the history of molybdenum. The result was – well, it sure didn't do Bert's business any favors, especially after a terrified Laksheesh summarily lit out for the mountains and disappeared for good. However it, "Kamacurus," was a big hit at the Flederer Family Circus' Sideshow of Abnormalation, where it wound up after a series of interconnected adventures ... which is, of course, another story.