

1 HUMOR DISCLAIMER

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3 Some of this sounds a little strange, so I'm making a
4 disclaimer that this email has no joking, sarcasm,
5 facetiousness, or anything else like that, lest the power
6 of the spiritual occurrences be misunderstood. Should I
7 also say: no drugs or alcohol were involved.

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11 Anyway:

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14 I always thought there was a God, but thought of "Him"
15 more like a divine Principle... how life works.
16 Visualizing seemed to work. and there were other life
17 lessons I understood about life that seemed to prove
18 themselves over and over. I have always had a keen sense
19 of intuition, so I believe I was merely trusting my
20 intuition.

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23 At the end of 1986, I discovered this fellow who paid for
24 time to have his own talk radio show. His name was Roy
25 Masters and he had originally been a hypnotist, but over
26 time realized that the constant state of all our lives is
27 that we are living in a trance, created by fight-or-flight
28 reactions to trauma, and sustained through the subtle
29 emotion of resentment. He articulated a whole lot about
30 life that I knew in my heart, but did not have words for
31 myself. He also offered a recording of mediation...
32 designed to separate you from the chatter of verbiage and
33 thought that goes on in our minds incessantly. So, having
34 listened to him for months, I ordered these recordings.
35 (He also gave them away free to people who could not pay.)

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38 In 1987, Monday, February 9, about 3:30 p.m. -- I was 24
39 years old -- I listened to my first recording. He did not
40 say anything about finding God, he merely talked about
41 observing your thoughts and, in particular, your
42 resentments, to not struggle through love (ego-approval
43 love) or hate. This had to do with concentrating on the
44 middle of your forehead, while letting your arm dangle to
45 the side, feeling the blood in your fingers. About midway
46 through the recording, when he said, your hand MIGHT want

47 to float and you can let it do so, if you want to.... At
48 that instant, my arm moved, seemingly by itself, till the
49 back of my hand was pressed against my forehead. I began
50 hyperventilating, overwhelmed by something -- by the sense
51 that there was a giant huge Being in the room with me, and
52 I knew that this Being was God. He was all around me,
53 surrounding me. For the next 15 minutes I continued
54 hyperventilating, my hand pressed against my forehead.

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57 Note that none of the recording told me any of this. It
58 simply talked about observing your own thinking and
59 learning not to resent. When the experience was over, I
60 remained in an alternate state of consciousness, akin to
61 an out-of-body experience. Also, life seemed to switched
62 in quality -- I thought of it like this: everything black
63 had become white and all things white now seemed black.
64 Not actual colors or even morality, per se, but just the
65 nature of how we normally look at the world.

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68 This detached, out-of-body thing -- it was more like my
69 consciousness was above and behind my head and everything
70 I said, did, thought, was something I could observe from a
71 distance, as though watching myself in a movie. My real
72 self, my mind, had no thoughts... I just observed life
73 from a distant present-moment awareness. I believe the
74 hyperventilation was partly because, as I became free of
75 my mind. While my observant, detached self was free of
76 thought, I could see my body, my brain, thinking... but it
77 was just the thinking we all do each day, the normal
78 chatter of our ego-minds.

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81 This led to me wanting to know what the heck happened to
82 me. It was a state of intense awareness and clarity And as
83 I asked myself what had happened and, of necessity,
84 employed my intellect to understand it all better, it was
85 like I was losing the detachment and clarity. I was aware
86 that any attempt to use my reason to understand it would
87 kind of suck me back into my head and I would not have
88 this new, tremendous freedom of consciousness anymore.
89 Yet, it was impossible just to float slightly outside of
90 myself and watch my life go by. Eventually,
91 (compulsively?), I continued to try to understand and I
92 began to return to normal. This whole fight about being

93 objectively conscious versus back in my head went on for
94 at least two or three weeks.
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97 Even though my awareness was not like it was at the
98 beginning of this journey, the ability to detach, to step
99 outside of myself, remains to some degree, even to this
100 day... but I am also very normal -- lots of time in my
101 head, sometimes striving for lucidity, often struggling
102 with the same emotions we all struggle with. Bottom line,
103 this state of consciousness is what many experience by
104 practicing the "Present moment," connecting to the real
105 self, the part of ourselves that is spirit, and , these
106 days, it marketed under the name of "mindfulness."
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108 So, in trying to understand it all I was drawn to all
109 sorts of spiritual literature...Bhagavad Gita, Lao Tzu,
110 New Age crap of many kinds... (I especially liked Jane
111 Roberts who "cnanneled" a spirit who called himself Seth).
112 And, also, I began reading the Bible... along with C.S.
113 Lewis's "Mere Christianity." (There is another amazing
114 story about how I happen to even own a copy of this.)
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116 I first read a Bible In One Year of the New Living
117 Translation paraphrase. After that I began reading through
118 a translation I thinks was the Modern English Version. As
119 I read, I noticed an important difference between the
120 Bible and all other spiritual books. The other books and
121 philosophies were all about how you could fix yourself,
122 how you could be happy, how you could create a better
123 life. The Bible on the other hand, did not seem to give a
124 damn about ME at all. It was all about how great God was,
125 and how are lives are all about pleasing God or failing
126 God. And it was not always an easy road. Sometimes serving
127 God totally blows cookies! And this is what made the Bible
128 credible to me.
129
130 Jewish background: I am born and raised Jewish. My mom's
131 father was Orthodox. Any of the grandchildren who married
132 a non-Jewish woman would be disinherited in the will. If
133 my grandfather knew I had become a Christian, he would
134 quite literally rip his clothes, say the prayer for the
135 dead, and never speak to me again. My mom is not as
136 Orthodox, but being raised under that mentality, my
137 conversion caused a great deal of visceral discomfort
138 between myself and my mom. Since my dad was kind of mean

139 when I grew up and I am an only child, my relationship
140 with my mom has always been a close one. This has been so
141 difficult on both of us and lasted more than a decade.
142 (Things are better now, but she is getting older, too...
143 so she is letting go of some of those knee-jerk reactions.)
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145 I used to wish I was not Jewish, so I could just "get
146 religion" and be a weirdo. But being a Jew, I am a traitor
147 in the eyes of other Jews, and the Hebrew word for traitor
148 is much harsher than it is in English. It is almost the
149 same sentiment of Paul (Saul) giving his approval of the
150 stoning of Stephen in the book of Acts. "Traitor" is, in
151 Jewish culture, like being one guilty of treason.

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153 The Jewish explanation is important for understanding this
154 crucial moment: About my second time through the Bible, I
155 realized that I became more and more agitated at the
156 thought of whether this Jesus thing was real. I could not
157 decide. After a couple times through the whole Bible,
158 though, it was hard to escape a few basics and their
159 inevitable conclusion. God is holy and sovereign. No human
160 in his right mind would presume he could have a
161 relationship with God. We are too filthy, sinful, hard-
162 hearted, and stiff-necked. The sacrifices which allowed
163 the priests to approach God were foreshadows of what Jesus
164 allowed to happen to him. And, finally, Paul put this all
165 together, to explain what Christ was all about: only His
166 sacrifice was sufficient for a relationship with God. But,
167 of course, I also believed that I ALREADY had a
168 relationship with God, because of my enlightenment
169 experience.

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171 So, was Jesus the reason why I could have a relationship
172 with God? The Old Testament and New Testament had
173 "interlaced" themes much more consistently than did the
174 Old Testament and the Judaism I had grown up with -- the
175 Judaism that exists in the world today.

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177 But still if I believed all that, that would make me a
178 Christian. How could I tell people this ludicrous claim,
179 much less ever expect my mom to accept me this way? It is
180 all just a story, after all. Yet, it was a story about
181 glorifying God, not boosting my self-esteem or making a
182 how-to-be-happy deal with me. Again, if there is a God,
183 that is exactly what I would expect from His plan... not
184 some gooeey emotional trade-off where I happily live for

185 myself, but rather a plan about how I can be reconciled to
186 Him and satisfy Him with my life, (happiness not
187 necessarily part of the picture).

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189 This back and forth debate went on in my mind for several
190 weeks at least, (maybe a couple months, though I don't
191 really remember). And then finally the truth hit me.
192 (Don't you just hate it when that happens!?) I REALIZED
193 that the only reason I was fervently persisting in
194 debating the truth claims about Jesus was because,
195 somewhere in my seeking, I had ALREADY come to the
196 conclusion that it was all truth. Of all the ideas that
197 exist about this life, this was the only thing that made
198 sense of everything! FURTHERMORE, the God that I discerned
199 in Scripture was the only portrayal of God, in all
200 spiritual writing, that seemed to be of the same type and
201 magnitude of the Person in that room with me, when I was
202 hyperventilating in the presence of a huge Being, who I
203 knew to be God. The "Guy" in that room was the same God in
204 the Bible. The other descriptions of God in other writings
205 didn't really capture His Character and Nature at all!
206 The God of the Bible I recognized as the God who had
207 brought me to spiritual consciousness in that first
208 meditation experience. The God of the New Age or
209 psychological self-esteem models seemed to me to be
210 something else entirely... a bunch of nice sounding ideas,
211 at best.

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213 IN SUM: somewhere in my reading, I concluded that Jesus
214 was the Christ, and the Savior. And to avoid admitting
215 this to myself -- because of its inherent cost to me and
216 what my life would become -- I argued for WEEKS about
217 whether Jesus was or was not who people said He was. I
218 didn't want to deal with the truth that I believed it
219 ALREADY.

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221 When I realized this, I ceased the debate in my mind. Yet,
222 I cannot pinpoint the moment I believed. It was all a
223 process and it sneaked in under the radar. God must have
224 known that the only way for it to get deeply inside me was
225 by throwing me a curve ball so I could not see my faith
226 coming.

227

228 There are many other amazing things before, during, and
229 since the above story. But this is, as best I can relate,
230 how my come-to-Jesus moment went down.

231
232 Looking forward to more stories!
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234 Blessings in Christ,
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236 Brian
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