

Dancing on a Stamp

Introduction

In 2007, my life was mostly on track. I was happily married to a remarkable woman who was a loving and devoted wife and mother. We had two bright and talented sons, both nearing the completion of their college degrees, and we took great pride in watching them mature into adulthood. I had a successful career as a corporate lawyer with a major law firm while my wife cheerfully embraced all the challenges and rewards that arose from her profession as a public health nurse. We lived in a nice house in an upscale neighborhood and enjoyed the material comforts of life that came with financial prosperity. We were happy, healthy, and blessed with many good friends.

Despite all of this good fortune, however, I yearned for something which had eluded me to that point in my life. I wanted the answers to all the big questions about life and death, which all too often roiled my mind, leaving me unsettled and dispirited.

Why am I here? I wondered. What, if anything, am I supposed to accomplish in my life? Did God select this life for me, or did the Universe assign it by chance? Is all the stuff I learned in Sunday school about God and the afterlife the real truth, or just a lot hooey? Will God judge me when I die and send me to heaven or hell, based on how I lived my life? Does God really exist? Is it possible that when I die I will simply cease to exist—disappearing into nothingness?

When I recalled my upbringing in a very religious Roman Catholic family, I remembered the answers to these questions that the Catholic Church had taught me when I was a child: God put me in this life to serve His purpose (which was not apparent to me) and to live my life according to all the rules of the Catholic Church, including those which dictated when, where, and how I was supposed to worship God. When I died, I would appear before God to receive His judgment based on what I did or did not do while on Earth. If I had been good, God would let me enter a wonderful place called heaven where I would enjoy nothing but happiness and bliss for eternity. If I had been bad, God would send me to hell to suffer in its burning fires forever. Or if I had been only semi-bad, I would have to serve time in purgatory until my Soul had been cleansed of my sins, whereupon I would be allowed into heaven.

The Catholic Church's explanation for all this did not sit well with me. Although I had swallowed all of its dogma as a child, I had realized in my twenties that much of what the Church preached to its members did not make any sense when held up to the light and examined with a critical eye. For many years after that, I drifted in no-man's land—not accepting the Catholic Church's dogma but not finding another paradigm to replace it.

At the other end of the spectrum, I knew that many atheists denied the existence of God and believed that we were slotted into our lives on this planet randomly, without any

particular purpose, by an impersonal universe. Furthermore, death would be the end for us—we would not continue to exist in an afterlife of any kind. We would simply disappear into the void as our physical bodies returned to dust.

This belief did not feel right to me either although I had no rational explanation for this feeling. My gut reaction was that we all had higher selves or Souls that survived our physical deaths although I wondered sometimes if this was just wishful thinking on my part. Intuitively, I sensed that my life and all other life on this planet was not the result of a series of random events in the universe—that there was a guiding hand of some kind behind it all. I did not subscribe to the Catholic Church's depiction of God as a regal man sitting on a gold throne and dispensing rewards or punishment to the Souls who had finished their lives on Earth. It seemed illogical to me that God, the all-powerful, all-knowing Supreme Being who had everything and lacked nothing, would display many of the negative emotions that are common to humans, such as vanity, jealousy, and anger. *If God had everything, I wondered, why did He need to be worshipped by humans in special ways or at all? And why would God give humans free will to live their lives on Earth when it was obvious that this would enable them to breach the rules that He expected them to follow? As well, how do we know that all of "God's rules," dictated to us by the religious holy men who claimed to be speaking for God, actually came from God? Was it possible that these holy men were just following their own personal agendas when they created these rules?*

These questions swirled around in my mind for many years as I searched in vain for the "right" answers that would satisfy my mind and my heart.

Then one sunny afternoon in May of 2007 I took a stroll on a pedestrian mall near my office, and a homeless man stepped out of the shadows and offered to answer all of my vexing questions. I had encountered homeless people on this mall many times before, and I had become quite deft at executing a quick side step to detour around them. But this homeless man was different—his amazing blue eyes penetrated my whole being, right down to the depths of my Soul, and I was riveted to the spot, unable (and unwilling) to move.

This book is based on a series of conversations I had with this homeless man over the next few years. During the course of our discussions, I discovered that this man, whose name was Albert, was not really a homeless person, but was my Spirit Guide in disguise. He told me, much to my surprise, that he and I were old friends who had known each other for a long time although I had no recollection of our previous association. Our conversations were informal, like two friends chatting over a beer, and Albert did his best to give me answers that I could understand and easily communicate to others. Albert had a sharp wit and keen sense of humor, and he was not above using sarcasm to chide me for my many human foibles. My dialogue with Albert was an unforgettable, exhilarating experience, and I am confident, without any doubt, that everything that Albert told me was the "real" truth.

I wrote this book to fulfill Albert's desire that everyone should have the opportunity to read and understand his message to mankind. I find Albert's revelations to be comforting and inspiring and hope you will as well.

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