

My Awakenings

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We often encounter YHWH in some unexpected places. The appearance may not be when or where we would not expect. We may not even know we are reaching out.

The same is true for non-believers. Such was the case when I last bumped into YHWH unexpectedly. I share my story of metanoia, my turning to YHWH, to encourage all of us to allow our belief in a Creator to be a visible part of our daily lives. I also wish to remind us that YHWH is active within some places many believers seem to 'write off' as 'lost'.

The Choice

As a young boy, I became aware of God [not YHWH] and the deification of Jesus. In Sunday school I learned that we should live a life "like Jesus". However, I never thought I saw anything "like Jesus". God was not a topic of discussion at home. Those I knew at church were no different than anyone else. As for the teachings of Jesus? Well, I could only "hear" them during Sunday school. I never did "see" them.

By the time I was eleven years old, I sensed that I had to make a choice. If I was to choose God and Jesus, I knew I would have to try and live up to His standards. But, I was certain that all I saw of religion in my church, or at home, was hypocrisy. I knew I did not want to live as a hypocrite.

My choice seemed clear. I abandoned God and Jesus. I saw no reason to strive for the unattainable, alone, in a world that did not seem to really acknowledge God.

The Darkness

After that point, I no longer gave God much thought. Of course, we all must place our belief in something. Some time during high school I chose the "obvious" choice.

I accepted the concept that humankind was advancing and improving in all ways. With our advancing knowledge, we would someday "know it all". My years in college could only further my preconceptions. We just had to "work it out".

As I became more committed to this concept, I also became more uncomfortable with any religion. Religious people were, at best, "saps". At their worst, they were "hypocrites".

This was the late 60's, and we were on the verge of changing the world, it seemed, by forcing the end to the Vietnam war. Surely other equally sweeping social/political improvements would follow.

But, the murders at Kent State and the following months of political jockeying severely damaged my faith in humankind's "ultimate good". But, I still believed there was no limit to what people would learn. We were advancing. We were on the verge of completely understanding life processes.

After college I became interested in medicine. I got involved in medical research. I was excited. Here I was, actually working to advance human knowledge! After several years, the grant money for my position ran out. So, I went back to school. I had a taste of the potential for human achievement, and I wanted to get even more involved in that quest. I got a Master's degree in physiology and became accepted as an electron microscopist. I was actually looking at the pieces that make up a cell's internal parts!

There I was, a person sitting at the "cutting edge" of advancing human knowledge. After a couple more years, I was convinced by others to return to school (again!) to get my doctorate in anatomy. Then I would know all there is to know about life. Then, I would, at last, be fulfilled.

My first year's courses were taken with medical students. We began with a course in Biochemistry. This is a "cornerstone" topic for medicine. Biochemistry studies the processes that are the basis of life itself.

I knew this experience would show how "life" actually comes into being. I would learn all the ways that these processes are regulated. I was actually to see the "state of the art" in human understanding of those biological processes that constitute life. I would learn the "concrete fact" about life from this "ultimate human knowledge".

You can image my excitement. I was about to taste the limitless scope of knowledge! I was receiving the most intimate of views into life itself.

As the course progressed, I was also getting restless and I could not put my finger on what was bothering me. I assumed it was just the stress caused by the demands of my studies and the uncertainty Diane and I faced, since we were newly married, newly moved to the "big city" of Indianapolis, newly into graduate school, and newly into Diane's first "real job," I was a first-time EM consultant for a major hospital. It was obvious -- these factors must be causing the sense of uncertainty I was feeling. Besides, nothing could be done to change these "stressors", so I tried not to think about it.

The Light

One afternoon I was searching through the anatomy department looking for another microscopist. I had been through most of the offices and laboratories on our floor with no success. I was becoming "pissed".

In my anger I swung open the door of yet another office. I burst into a small meeting. I startled everyone, including myself. As quickly as I burst in, I backed out and closed the door. I am not sure how I knew it, but I had interrupted, of all things, a bible study!

My life has not been the same since. YHWH seemed to use my angry quest for another non-Christian to bring us face-to-face. Even as I started to walk down the hall, a thought was rapidly emerging. A new perspective was formulating in my mind. I began to see that the unrest which had been plaguing me was the result of something quite different than the stress of all the "new" in my life. There was something else more disturbing.

I was realizing that my "obvious" choice was unsubstantiated. I had chosen to believe in our human ability to know ALL things. I had chosen to base my faith on a sort of "ultimate human knowledge". For years I had been reading descriptions about how life processes came into being. However, what I was learning about these descriptions was quite different. The basis of all these descriptions was not provable fact, but pure probability!

What a blow! All the explanations of life processes were based on theories, not actual fact. Theories that cannot be tested. In biochemistry we had to learn theories to explain observed biological processes. Why? Because no one theory was patently true.

My "obvious choice" was not the "concrete cornerstone" I had come to accept, but merely a collection of integrated theories and extremely high probabilities. My sense of being, my reason for existence was not centered in "fact". It was simply centered in faith.

Metanoia

This realization was the lifting of "the log" in my own eye that opened me to YHWH/God's light "on the hillside". If I allowed for the simple belief of YHWH's existence and activity, the theories for biological processes no longer needed to answer the question of creating life. The theories could now do what they were intended to do.

They need only explain how this entity called life operates in the universe as we know it.

I became aware that the basis for my faith should begin with life itself. Life is the "concrete cornerstone" I thought I had found in human achievement. It exists. No longer is it just random interactions. It is focused, self-sustaining, and self-reproducing. It is all that humankind cannot do with its own hands. Life can mean YHWH.

The Creator was all around me, but I had closed my eyes to this. I had chosen to put my faith in pure, esoteric human knowledge, while abandoning the concrete- the witness of life.

The point of my initial metanoia occurred as I left that bible study. Virtually all the realizations I have tried to describe to you poured into my mind as I walked down the

hall. The resulting assembly of those new "blocks" was my revelation. It was as if the other "wall" of my belief in human achievement was suddenly pushed down. For almost 20 years I had been virtually without thought of YHWH. Simply walking into that bible study- [into YHWH's presence-] cast out my blindness. My eyes have been opened.

I thought myself separated from the Creator, as I forged ahead in my blindness. I struggled to get as far away as could, only to find YHWH there, at the point of no return.

Be a Shining Light

I was a traditional humanist in a humanist institution. I was a "lost person" in a place "written off" by many persons. YHWH used believers/monotheists visible pursuit of God to bring me out of my wilderness. Once I opened up, others started me on the "path" as a believer.

I hope this story will help us all to remember that we know not when we may be acting as agents of Light in another's life.

The way you express your faith- your belief and commitment- lights up your light in your daily life.

We must be "the light of the world".

Be like a "city on a hill" that "cannot be hidden." (Mat 5:14-16).

YHWH may want to use you to 'crack' another's hardened heart. YHWH may want to use your 'light' to shine into the spirit of another.

Do not hinder this work by assuming that a place or a person is "totally lost". Strive to always be that shining light.

My metanoia continues, day by day. That is another, ongoing story.