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My disbelief before Islam

When I married my Portuguese wife, Anabela, I had a philosophy which, though I believed in God as the Creator and Power that drove the universe, did not acknowledge that I was obliged to worship Him (I conceived the Power as It – that is, sexless).

I had been born a Roman Catholic, and brought up believing in Jesus as my God and Mary as my God's mother – but this did not sit well with me. Rather, I saw Jesus and Mary as a **means through** which to reach God, who was the God of the Old Testament.

As I grew older, I began to despair at understanding vast tracts of the Old Testament. The material was dense, and so called 'prophetic' passages appeared to be in the present tense – addressed to those people thousands of years ago, as happening to them or in their lifetimes. More confusion arose because personal addresses or actions sometimes seemed to be assigned or directed not to people, but to cities and nations. God, for example, seemed to regard Jerusalem as his wife, and the actions of her people congruent with her actions. God called her a whore, and appealed frequently for her to repent and turn back, and become His queen again. The same was true of people, such as Jacob, who assumed the name of a nation, so passages addressed to Israel sometimes meant Jacob. Jacob often symbolized his descendents, which were split into two camps: the camp of Ephraim and the camp of Judah. Again, the names of these descendents of Jacob reflected the split in the children of Israel, between the city state of Zion and Samaria.

Other passages seemed to refer to supernatural events, and supernatural encounters. The raising up of Elijah and the appearance of God before Israel seemed to describe events that could be explained as meetings between races of advanced technologies and simple, non technological, men. Given that many other religions described the same kind of encounters with their 'gods', I began to suspect these stories of the Bible were but legends, gathered together, and made to seem coherent for the sake of a constructed hierarchy, the Church.

On top of this suspicious view I had begun to hold, I also learned of the historical persecutions that took place during and since mediaeval times, particularly the events of the crusades and the inquisition, which followed them. In fact, the ethos of the inquisition was exported to the New World by Spanish and Portuguese 'Conquistadores', and the Roman Popes manoeuvred to establish riches and power in Europe by a reign of Machiavellian terror. *The Family of Borgia*^[1] were particularly exemplary figures in this respect.

Finally, I learned of the attempt of the Church to stifle and deny scientific advancement well into the reformation, and that change only manage to establish itself through the renaissance at a later date.

All these factors led me to believe that the God of the Bible and the descriptions of Heaven and Hell taught by the Church were forgeries, designed to subjugate and pacify the vast majority of the population under the rule of a minority elite.

Tortuous Confusion

There is a primal urge in men to worship that which created them, and turn to Him when in need and nothing but Him can be appealed to sort out ones peril or confusion. I have heard people exclaim *in extremis*, "For the Love of God," "Oh, God!", "For God's sake," and the like, appealing for succour. Yet when aid comes, and they feel secure again, they thank the living agents who helped them in this world, or their favourite deities in the world of the unseen. In my own sense trackless waste, my lack of orientation, I took refuge in the concept of the **Force**, or **Power** I described earlier – the **single** and **non-material Creator**, whom men (**individually**) interacted with at a personal level, **with** neither **mediation** from **unseen agencies**, nor **help** from other **human beings**.

The route took in coming to this conclusion was long and tortuous, concepts building on one another from my reading of science fiction and primitive conspiracy theories. I read, for example, Erich Von Däniken's "[Chariots of the Gods?](#)"^[2] and "[The Philadelphia Experiment](#)"^[3] by Charles Berlitz and William Moore, the first of which gave credence to religion being 'made up', and the second of which opened my eyes to what can be covered up by the elite society and their governments in the world. However, not every nation and government can be in on the grand conspiracy, if such a thing exists, so the natural place to look for confirmation or contradiction was other religions. To me, the 'other religions' were Hinduism and its offshoots, in particular Buddhism, so I sought to find out more about them from the inside.

The most visible of the branches of Hinduism in London, where I lived, was the orange coloured monks from *the temple of Krishna*^[4], so I duly found myself recruited into their sect. Although the ritual meditation felt good, its wide use definitely provided a calming effect on the devotees – confirming that it preached a kind of placation of the people. Its creation story was also rather repulsive; who wants to acknowledge the origin of the world being a vast, but dead, cosmic cow, or that we evolved from her excretions? I soon left the sect as abruptly as I entered it, and read up on Buddhism. I knew the latter was an offshoot of the mother of the other, so I wasn't tempted to try and practice

Buddhism. Instead I tried to discover its key concept of life and life after death. I soon discovered that, like Hinduism, the hereafter was conceived to be a series of reincarnations, and that we were bound to our lives on the wheel of fate. However, instead of seeking unity with the cosmic mind of God, the perfection of Nirvana, the Buddhist seeks to attain enlightenment and freedom from the cycle of birth and death. This enlightenment negates the ego because it must surrender its jurisdiction over time to achieve it and let the infinite and unknowable take over. Strictly speaking, Buddhism is a religious philosophy, taking the human ego as the only god that dominates life, whose way is to a Godlessness goal in the afterlife.

Again, in seeking to eliminate ego orientation, Buddhism can be seen as the Marxist concept of “*opium for the people*”[\[5\]](#). It makes them tractable and controllable by the elite in society; but what about ways of ‘bucking the system’? What about, pre-historical religions, or religions that had died out? One of the earliest forms of religion I learnt about is *totemism*[\[6\]](#). Totemism postulates the existence of a spirit equivalent to a sign in the real world, usually an animal. A whole tribe can have a collective spirit totem, such as the cave bear, whilst individuals may possess an individual totem, such as the grey wolf. Furthermore, if one is seeking help in a particular endeavor, such as hunting, the totem of the hunted animal can be consulted for signs of where the quarry might be.

There is a clear connection to magical oracles in the use of totemistic rituals, pointing to the existence of unseen forces existing in the world. There are also other avenues to these forces, such as astrology and nature worship. One of the latter means of worship envisages the earth as *Gaia*[\[7\]](#), the mother of everything in nature, and the patterns of interaction between creatures of the ecological system. I rather liked this idea that earth was a viable individual who must be respected, and was capable of guiding us and protecting the guided, while punishing those who work against her and will not take guidance. Not long ago, a man named James Lovelock was able to express how I felt then in a book called “*The Revenge of Gaia*”[\[8\]](#), which he published in 2006.

However, the earth is too narrow a canvass for a universal creator, so the second avenue was even more attractive to me. It pertains to the heavens, and the heavens are much wider. *Astrology*[\[9\]](#) assigns meanings and influences to celestial bodies and their position in the skies at the time of birth to determine the fate of an individual being. They also rely upon the position of the celestial sphere at any given point of time and space on the earth’s surface to venture predictions of what might occur on the path of fate, and therefore give advice on decisions of the people within the sphere of influence from those predicted events. For a while, I became an amateur astrologer, because I felt I was in touch with a universal, rather than local, force.

Then I met a man who turned me back towards my religion of birth in order to seek universal answers. I can’t remember his name, unfortunately, but his origin was Ireland, and his religion Roman Catholic, as I had been. His outlook, however, was not as hidebound as some staunch Roman Catholics I would meet later. He happened to meet me while I was reading a book called *Omega by Stewart Farrar*[\[10\]](#), which gave me an insight into witchcraft and the religion of Wicca. We had a huge discussion that lasted nearly a day, while sitting on a beach in the Algarve, Portugal. He was trying to describe

the concept of God, and readily agreed with me that Jesus was not God. God was something immaterial and invisible power and Lordship over everything. With the input I had from Stewart Farrar, I described what I felt was the essence of Divinity and my relation, or the worlds relation, to it. I felt that “God” was the Devine initiator, whose “way” was the Laws of the natural world. I said I believed that every world was different and behaved after its own proper laws, but that there was a general guiding Law of the Universe, which was God and His Guidance: working ‘with the flow” signified “good” while working across the flow signified evil. Examples of working “with the flow” is using nature’s medicines for healing, whilst “across the flow” is manufacturing chemical agents that mimic the effect of nature’s medicine; working with the flow would be environmentally friendly whilst across the flow would cause pollution; etc.

This was my state when I married my Portuguese wife. She was Roman Catholic, but largely non-practicing. Before long, she was pregnant, and my first child came into the world.

Footnotes:

[1] (<http://www.reformation.org/in-the-pillory.html>)

[2] (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chariots_of_the_Gods%3F)

[3] (<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0449214710/stevejacksongame>)

[4] (<http://www.iskcon-london.org/temple.html>)

[5] (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opium_of_the_people)

[6] (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/totemism>)

[7] (<http://www.pantheon.org/articles/g/gaia.html>)

[8] (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Revenge_of_Gaia)

[9] (<http://www.scribd.com/doc/2578598/Encyclopedia-of-Astrology-Nicholas-deVore>)

[10] (<http://www.fantasticfiction.co.uk/f/stewart-farrar/omega.htm>)

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