



A JOURNEY INTO THE ABYSS

THE CASE OF THE
MISSING MESSIAH

Prologue

The German philosopher Nietzsche once wrote that if you look into the abyss long enough, the abyss ... looks back. This is the story of what happened to me when it did.

I've used what I was taught by the abyss to create vibrant paintings rich with colour and insight. All the artwork is original - created by techniques no one has discovered yet. I seem able to consistently cause the phenomenon of spontaneous apparition occur on over 90% of my paintings. I personally regard them as physical evidence that the abyss is conscious and capable of communication.

The Abyss takes many forms in my paintings. He is sometimes a traditional Christian God, sometimes a Goddess; he's been buddha a number of times. Here are some of the forms these apparitions have taken:



The Beloved



Close up



Close up



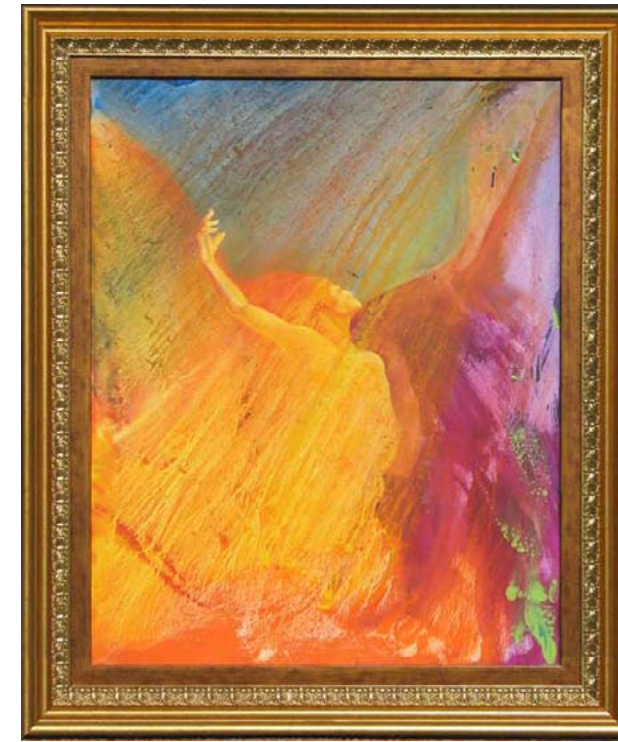
A Journey into the Light



Close up



Close up



The Case of the Missing Messiah

Chapter 1 - The Metaphor

The first thing I should mention is that nothing I am going to say is to be taken as the Truth in any absolute way. I don't think it is possible to encompass the truth in words. Words are signposts we assign meanings to and are subject to an inordinate number of inaccuracies and misinterpretations. What I am going to say is to be taken as a metaphor - a literary device that encompasses the truth or, more accurately, points in the direction of the truth.

For those of you looking for facts, this may be a difficult journey. For one, the truth does not lie in the answers I have come up with. You can take them with a grain of salt or not even believe them at all. In a way, the answers don't really matter. They are conclusions I came to based on experiences I had. You could come to different conclusions. The important thing is that I tell you what the experiences were so you can draw your own conclusions. This is one occasion

where the journey is vastly more important than the destination I arrived at.

If I were to say, "The point of life is such and such", you would probably say "Hmmm ... very interesting," and think nothing more of it. If I told you of all that I went through to arrive at that truth, the direct physical and metaphysical experiences, you might become aware of a process that exists in the universe which YOU can take advantage of to answer your own questions directly. Cut out the middle man, so to speak, and get it from the source.

This is my point in writing this book - not to tell you what is Truth or what is real or how we should conduct our lives but to bear witness to what I have experienced in order to make you aware of a phenomenon I encountered that I believe is universal. The answers I have come up with to man's age-old questions are a side show and unimportant in comparison to this.

We live in a cynical age. I think Cancer Man from the X-files puts it best. "Man does not believe in God because he does not supply him with miracles to justify his faith." I see people all over the world making daily decisions based on this cynicism. Nobody really knows what we are doing here. All of us seem to be caught up in the daily minutia of life - lost in our thoughts, our jobs, our preconceptions - and now, the war. If you asked someone, I don't think anybody could say they knew what the point of life is or even that life had a point at all.

Well, my life hasn't been like that. I'm reminded of what Rutger Hauer, the Nexus 6 replicant, said just before he died in front of Harrison Ford. "If only you could see the things these eyes have seen - all those moments lost now". I don't think I am any different than anyone else, really. The only thing I can think of is that I can take things at face value. Being an artist I have an inordinate ability to see what is in front of my face. I have also learned to step out of my own way.

One might at first think these simple tasks but, as it turns out, they are among the greatest challenges man has to deal with here ... now.

My fear is that you will not believe me - that you think I am lying or that I am crazy. I have no defense against that. Personally, I think the closer you get to being crazy without actually going overboard, the closer you are to the truth. The world is a wild, wild place - far wilder and stranger than most of us can imagine. We impose order onto this wildness in an attempt to understand it or control it because we fear its wildness but I'm not sure we really need to. We are ourselves wild creatures well equipped to soar into the wildest of life's mysteries.

I have witnesses for pretty much all of the events that took place. I've lost touch with all but one but I believe most are still alive. For those of you with an endless need for proof, this can be provided if it becomes important. Sooner or later, however, you are just going to have to face the fact that what one believes is largely an act of faith - even if you are talking about the laws of physics.



Chapter Two - The Bridge

For those of you who have read *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, some of this may seem familiar. My experiences were somewhat like Phaedra's - except I remember everything.

For those of you that haven't, Phaedra was a philosopher who started out with a seemingly insolvable problem - define the word "Quality". In attempting to do so, he runs across an idea of such magnitude that it completely blows his mind. He is ultimately able to define God - a realization that shatters him completely. The author of the book writes from the perspective of someone recovering from a schizophrenic episode so severe it breaks his personality and sunders him from memories of his own past. What he is left with are fragments of the idea that he pieces together to show how we create the world around us - how what we feel inside of us as we work makes its way into the physical products we create so that they are of good "quality" or bad depending on what were feeling at the time of their creation. It's more complicated than that, of course. We build flaws into the world we create at a subconscious level and this accounts for a lot of the problems we have as human beings. This was a wonderful book and I'm not really doing it justice here.

My point in bringing it up is to describe the experiences I had and show how they evolved from a seemingly unsolvable thought experiment.

If there is a god, how could one communicate with him?

I am using the word god in lower case and in the male form for now but will be switching frequently depending on the flavour of the idea I am trying to convey. Sometimes it is just easier to envision things if we conceptualise the goddess as a woman or as a benign flow of energy or as a gestalt that rises from life itself. All of these are just words, however. They are signposts that point to an underlying reality and none are meant to define God in any way.

For some reason, unlike Phaedra, I wasn't the least bit perturbed by the idea that I could personally communicate with a god on a conversational level. I was young, fresh out of university, had an ego the size of a planet and a sense of humour to match. The idea of impish little me talking to the almighty creator of the universe struck me as ludicrous enough to entertain a god and thus attract his attention - much as we ourselves are intrigued by the thought of communicating with ants as children.

A bit about the circumstances ... I was twenty-six and was living in Lethbridge, Alberta. I had gone out west to pay off my student loans in '78. This was just before Trudeau had created the National Energy Policy - basically a cash grab that simply crushed the economy of the prairies - before that money was still everywhere out west and easy for students to acquire. I had been wonderfully well educated - Concordia university double-honours program (English and History). All the lovely supporting 'ologies (Psychology, sociology, biology, theology; philosophy was interesting. The Jesuit High School I went to before that (Loyola) showed me nothing but the finest in human beings. The clergy in that school were dedicated, altruistic, hard-working young men who believed in what they were doing. I was well versed in formal logic, the sciences and humanities and was quite proud of my education. Ah, what young man of that age doesn't think he knows everything!

Anyway, circumstances had brought me low. I was despairing and lonely and basically didn't know what to do with myself so I did an extraordinary thing. I sat in my bathtub and cried ... and with all my heart I gave my life away. I asked that someone take it and do something worthwhile with it. Thus began a journey that has lasted my lifetime.

I've gone over in my mind the events that occurred after this but I'm not sure I really know what happened. I know I can envision the events in a way that communicates what it felt like, but again what follows here is just a metaphor - a story, if you will, that might allow you to feel what I felt.

Imagine a spaceship circling the earth - one of "theirs", not ours. Imagine also that the creatures inside were as intelligent as accomplishing the task of voyaging to another planetary system in one lifetime would indicate they were. Curious about us and aware of the fact that we were not using any more than 2 - 3 percent of our mind's capabilities, imagine that they decided to conduct an isolated experiment - accelerate a remote community to find out what really made us tick - you know, kick up their IQs and allow them access to those parts of themselves they had never used and see what they do with it. I think dumb luck played a part in picking the location for the experiments - that and the fact Lethbridge made its own beer. (Human communities had been known to survive in isolation quite wondrously well as long as a constant supply of beer is at hand).

The first thing I noticed was that everyone around me - everyone I had known for the year or so I had been in Lethbridge - seemed to become more intelligent. Problems started to become remarkable easy to solve. People who I thought were brain dead or at least "intellectually challenged" started coming up with really deep insights into the world around them. It was a bit like a Stephen King novel, except it wasn't really spooky. Another thing was that everyone had a dead-pan acceptance of what was going on. No one seemed all that surprised or freaked out - as if we were hypnotised or, more accurately, as if we were waking up from a deep, hypnotic sleep. It started very slowly at first but it accelerated - especially toward the end.

I applied my new-found intelligence in a way nobody else did (I guess they had their own questions). You see, I decided to figure out everything ... starting from why are we here - what we are supposed to be doing here. It was way easier than I thought which is why I use the spaceship metaphor to describe what it felt like. The space ship wasn't really there ... at least I don't think so. Remember, it's just a metaphor I'm using to describe what my experiences FELT like.

Another thing that happened was that we all began acting as if we were one being. At work people would wander around as if they were in a very pleasant daze and then, by some coincidence, always coalesce at the time required so that tasks that took many hands would suddenly be accomplished with many hands that, quite coincidentally, just happened to be there at the right time.

Imagine, if you will, a world as wild and unlimited as you could possibly think. Imagine being given the ability to shape the fundamental nature of reality - to make the world in your own image. In a way, this is the story of what happened to a small city in Alberta during the summer of '78, '79 and part of '80. In another way, it is about madness and the search for the Missing Messiah. You know the guy I'm talking about - the one that is supposed to show up and save all our butts. It could be that what happened only happened to me but I don't think so because other people talked to me about their experiences and they were remarkably similar to my own.

A few days after I got out of the bathtub I was sent a teacher, the first of what turned out to be many. She came in the form of a beautiful Indian girl - straight out of a fairy tale. Lia was her name and witch woman of the Blood tribe of the Blackfoot nation was she. I didn't know it at the time I met her. To me she was just unbelievably exotic! I knew Lia for almost three years. I had some hard lessons from her. She was as wild as we all think Indians are and had the morals of an alley cat but, by god, she knew a thing or two. She was a wonderfully intelligent woman with virtually no formal education so she had focused her intelligence on the world immediately around her. She sensed things the way we say animals sense things. She could smell the thoughts right out of your head. She could listen to the wind and tell you what was coming. In short, she was ... just like a woman!

Some of the hard lessons, of course, had to do with other men. You all have imaginations so I don't have to spell out the circumstances. The lesson I came away with was that man (especially Western Man) has a tendency to impose order on top of chaos. This order is not necessarily native to the world around us. Morality is an example. I think we impose moral values on our behaviour because we cannot handle the level of emotional turmoil that occurs when people behave "badly". In emotionally immature beings it leads to murder. I don't think what we call morality has anything to do with God. We use Him as a means to lend weight to our system of moral beliefs. We create this system of morality because we cannot handle the pain involved in dealing with reality. We go nuts and the social fabric that binds us as a culture is endangered by violent responses to this pain.

I'm not saying it is wrong to create a set of moral values and link them to an all-powerful god. On the contrary, it is a very effective way of getting people to go along with your set of values and thus strengthen cultural bonds and create a sense of safety in which a community can survive. Besides, as you'll find out, there might be some reason to think it true.

The point in this is that she came to me with a perspective totally outside of the Christian scientific rationalism I had been brought up with. She experienced the world as something full of magic - magic that was everywhere, in everything - surrounding us and binding the universe together. (Remember, Star Wars came out a year or two later. "The Force" almost perfectly describes the world she experienced). She seemed able to communicate with this "magic" and manipulate it in some ways. I could call her a Jedi Knight but that would just be a silly metaphor. Let's just say she was very charismatic.

I was still reading voraciously then. I had read Jane Robert's "Seth Speaks" in university and ran across some

writings by Paul Twitchell, the founder of a movement called Ekancar, which dealt with some of these alternate visions of reality. Everyone, of course, had read the Carlos Castaneda books. I had studied the Eastern religions that were spreading into our culture during the seventies, enriching it with a myriad of spiritual concepts I now found practical use for so I had a contextual background that allowed me to deal with these phenomena without losing a sense of perspective. Christianity also speaks of these forces in different terms. God is spoken of as a being everywhere, in everything - pervading and binding the universe together. The Christian concept of Grace is not a lot different from magic if you think about it and not a lot different from Lucas' concept of the Force. All these different religions and philosophies I took to be rich cultural metaphors that pointed to an underlying reality. Like all metaphors they weren't necessarily meant to be taken literally but the message contained in the metaphor was.

Perhaps I should explain the concept of metaphor a bit. It is important that we both have a similar understanding of it because I may use it in a slightly peculiar way and I don't want any misunderstandings to begin at this early stage. I will harken back to the days of old - to the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates and his parable of the man trapped in a cave who knows nothing of the world. He is tied to a post with the entrance to the cave behind him and has never been able to turn around. From time to time, people in the "real" world cross the threshold of the cave and cast their shadows onto the wall in front of him. All he knows about the world is what he learns from the shadows on the wall.

Socrates likened our lives to a man trapped in a cave. What we see all about us are shadows cast on a wall. They are illusions or, more accurately, illusory manifestations of underlying realities which exist at some other level beyond our perception. This is what I mean by the word metaphor. It is not just a literary device used to describe a concept (as in: "Life is a bed of roses"). Life itself is a metaphor used to communicate something else. When I say Lia was a witch I don't mean that literally. I mean that the being I interrelated with in Lethbridge had unusual capabilities that didn't really fit into what was then my conception of the universe.

Life with Lia became a wonderful learning experience. We fell in love and shared the things most intimate to each of us.

One of the things Lia did was show me a game she used to play. At first I didn't see the point. She would tell me to ask myself a question (silently - in my mind) and then she would turn over a card from a shuffled deck. That was it! Some game! It took me forever to figure out what was going on. Part of the process of me learning from her was for her not to tell me anything. I know it sounds strange but this part is very important. By telling someone something, you are imposing your view of reality on him. What she did was just show me the tools and wait till I figured out how to use them. This way I learned how to figure things out for myself.

It took me months to figure out the thing with the cards. The line of reasoning went like this:

If you want to figure out what everything means you have to start out with some basic assumptions. This is where the term "leap of faith" comes in. First of all, you have to assume that it is possible to figure out what everything means. If you don't, it just mucks up your thought processes. Faith allows you to make logical connections between events that occur in your life which lead to certain conclusions. It allows you to find out how something could be possible. A lack of faith has a tendency to make you think of how something is impossible. It exerts some level of control over the direction of your thoughts. Most people think it is impossible to find answers to life's deepest questions and that it is arrogant of man to think he can fathom deep cosmic mysteries. A mystery is something we are never meant to know but forever meant to pursue. No wonder none of us can figure things out. NONE OF US THINK IT IS POSSIBLE!! The answers could lie in plain sight all around us but if we assume it is impossible to see them, we will not see them.

For some reason, perhaps because I was young and monumentally stupid, I didn't think to stop at this point - I

made the assumption it was possible.

The second thing I did was try to imagine how it would be possible to figure out everything. I made no attempt whatsoever to be critical of the answers I came up with. I just came up with the simplest way something could be possible and went from there.

The simplest way I could think of finding everything out would be if someone just came right out and told me the answers. The thought processes I went through are actually quite funny so I'll try to recreate them by enacting a conversation I remember having with myself. Please forgive me if it sounds like some kind of "Bob and Ted's Excellent Adventure". I was twenty-something years old. Think of the whole thing as a kind of Einsteinian thought experiment.

Me - Ok, self, what would be the simplest way to find out something?

Self - Why find someone else who knew, of course, ya doughhead.

Who is going to know an answer to a question as big as this?

Hmmmm ... wouldn't it be convenient if there was, like, a god or something you could just ... ask.

Ok ... so let's assume there is this God I can talk to who, by definition, knows everything. Logically, because he knows everything, he can tell me the answers, right?

Ok ... if you say so.

All right, we assume that God exists. Let's define him.

Why bother? Why recreate the wheel when it already exists. Why not just take an off-the-shelf idea and run with it. Religions have defined god since the beginning of time. They all pretty much say the same thing so just pick one.

OK, well ... they all say God is all-powerful ... so let's run with that. Our God is all-powerful. That means he can do anything he wants to right?

Right.

OK, he's all-powerful and knows everything and can answer all my questions. Why would he bother?

Hmmm ... tough one that. The simplest reason is that he feels like it. He's all powerful, can do anything he wants so ipso facto what he does is what he wants to do and he wants to do what he does.

Why would he want to talk to me?

Hmmm ... lets keep this really simple. Let's just say that for whatever reason, he loves us to little wee bits and just wants us to be happy!

Ok, I can run with that ... so he's all-powerful, can do what he wants, loves me and will answer my questions. How do I communicate with him?

Well, if he knows all, then half the job is already done. By definition, he knows everything so he already knows

what you are thinking. If you want to get an answer all you have to do is ask. You know, just formulate a question in your mind.

Kool! Wait a minute. That was the easy part. How do I know when He is speaking to me? It's not as if I speak Goddeese, you know. I mean, how would a god communicate?

Any way he wanted.

Oh yeah, that tells me a lot!

Yes it does, bonehead. You have a god that knows what you think. All you have to do is TELL HIM WHAT YOU WOULD ACCEPT AS A COMMUNICATION PARAMETER.

Holy crap, you're right! Ok, what would I accept as a communication parameter? That part is trickier than it sounds. If someone came up to me and said "Hi Des, I'm God. Ya wanna go for a beer and chat?", I would give him a quarter if I wasn't feeling stingy that day and send him on his way. I would not believe him. Come to think of it, I wouldn't believe God was God if he came up and bit me on the ass. I wouldn't believe Jesus Christ himself if he were standing in front of me.

Well, what would you believe? How can he talk to you if you aren't listening?

OK. Well ..., my god would have to do cool stuff like ... make me Vice-Lord of the Wind and Weather ... you know - when the real Lord was on vacation ... or form the Aurora Borealis into the shape of an eagle ... make me telepathic ... bring me wine, women and lots of money.

OK, now we have some communication parameters. In order for your question to be answered you want him to shape the aurora borealis into a bird. So, lets practice. Ask a question and I'll pretend I'm God.

Ok. So what's the point, you know, of life, the universe and everything?

Great, now let's assume I've just shaped the aurora into a bird. What does that tell you?

Diddly squat!! How am I supposed to know what that means?

Remember, you have a god that knows what you are thinking.

Oh yeah, you mean I tell HIM what it means. I tell him not only how to communicate with me but what his response would mean - like a sign that means yes or another one that means no? Binary communication!

Hmmm ... that would work.

Hey, wait a minute, that means I would have to think up an answer and ask him if it is correct. Move that mountain a bit to the left if it's true and blow up Somalia if it's false.

Hoo ahh! A bit extreme there, but essentially correct.

Well, that sucks. That means I have to figure out everything myself. What do I need him for?

To tell you if you are correct. Hey, it's not perfect but it's a start! Look, you said you wouldn't accept anyone coming up to you, telling you he was god and then giving you the secrets to the universe so what's left?

Hey, you know what I just thought?

What?

Another thing religions say is that god is everywhere but that we can't see him. He is everywhere around us, pervades us, binds us together, allows us to exist. Yet he is somehow hidden to us. This com channel ... it fits that kind of definition.

What do you mean?

Well, it's not really there. It's all just coincidence. I ask him a question and say I will accept the mountain moving as a yes and Somalia blowing up if it's no but who says there is any causal connection here? I'm the only one that knows about it. The connection only exists in my mind.

Yeah, like nobody would notice Somalia blowing up every time you asked a question!

Ok, point taken. Well, how about something less severe, something no one would really notice - like a card flipping over (thought I'd never get back to that, eh?). Let's say black cards mean no ('cause everyone knows black is evil) and red means yes (because it stands for passion and love).

Ok, that's cool. We wouldn't have to limit it to cards - just things that nobody would notice. That way it wouldn't really be there and would thus fit our definition of god. Something tells me we shouldn't tell anyone about this.

How come?

Think about it.

Oh yeah, people would look at us funny if we told them we were talking to god.

What would really pop their noodle was that we were getting answers.

Ok, Mum's the word. One more question: If this com channel exists, why hasn't anybody else discovered it? If it is this easy to communicate with a god, then why isn't everybody doing it?

Think you're a smart ass don't you.

Hee Hee.

If you were God, why wouldn't you answer a question?

Because it was a silly question?

I like that one. Ok., we'll go with that. Silly questions do not get answered. Hmmm ... that would imply that there is a kind of hierarchy in the quality of the questions that get asked - as if important questions have more weight or pack more energy. If you ask something like, "Oh Lord, why don't you buy me a colour TV?", you're going to get ignored. For one, it's not subject to a binary answer (yes or no). For another, it's a silly question.

Exactly.

If you asked, "Is the point of my experience here with Lia to learn about the side of life scientific rationalism does not deal with?", you have a better chance at getting answered. It fits a binary answer and I think it might be important.

Great, I'm almost ready to start. Something is bothering me about causality, though. Let's say I ask a question, flip a card, it turns out to be the three of clubs. How do I know that the answer to my question is really no? I mean, this is really stretching it. How am I going to base my life on the turn of a card? ...and don't give me any of that "leap of faith" crap.

Ooh ... I hadn't thought of that. Ok, here's one. What's the best way man has evolved to prove something?

Beats me.

What about the Scientific Method?

Oooh, your good! Ok, let's define it and use it:

- 1) Formulate a question
- 2) Create a hypothesis (a possible answer)
- 3) Conduct experiments to see if your answer is correct.

The experiments have to be repeatable. The hypothesis must make certain predictions that we can go out and test.

Ok ... we'll go with that too!

Hmmmm ... what experiments can you conduct to test a spiritual/metaphysical precept? It's not like a precept has molecules or physical properties or anything else we could conduct experiments on.

Well, imagine all of life being "Normal", that is existing within normal parameters [as Data would say]. Something which is always "normal" can be likened to a crystal. All the little elements are in their place forming a perfect matrix of undisturbed sameness. What goes up always comes down, Jonathan Bailey always gets to the office at 9:01 A.M., squid always meet in the South Pacific once a year to mate, etc. One way an exterior force could make known it's presence without really breaking the laws of physics would be to disturb this uniform sameness in a patterned way. I mean, a crystal would make an excellent communication medium - even a data storage medium. All one would have to do to form an intelligent communication or to store data would be to disturb the uniform molecules in a patterned way - much like information is stored on a CDROM. On a CDROM, the metallic surface is left alone for ones and disturbed (burned away till it is shallower) for zeroes [could be vice versa but you get the point]. In a crystal the molecules can be left alone for ones and disturbed (a small area burned completely away by intersecting lasers) for zeroes.

Before I get lost in this metaphor, let me get to the point. If you are intellectually toying with a spiritual precept and want to find out if it is true or false (a binary answer), you can ask for the normalcy of your life to be undisturbed for no and disturbed for yes. A disturbance could be anything that seems "unusual". Coincidences are an example of something unusual happening without breaking the laws of physics. Luck is a very similar example. Coincidences can be used as a communication medium showing you the direction of the truth.

How convinced you would be of your answer's verity would depend on how dramatic the break in normalcy. How great the break in normalcy would depend on the importance of your question - its ability to attract the energy necessary to generate the events you require as proof of your answer's verity. Asking a question and turning over a black card, for example, would be a slight coincidence. You couldn't put much credence into it. Turning over a black card five times in a row is more of a coincidence. Turning over 5 consecutive clubs is even more.

Blowing up Somalia would be a monumental proof implying a staggering importance to your question. Personally, I can't think of a question important enough to justify the loss of life but I think you are beginning to understand the principle here.

Hmmm ... yeah, whatever. It sounds to me as if you're just praying for an old fashioned miracle - a "sign" from the gods.

Well ... essentially yes. The only difference between myself and the countless millions who have asked in the past is that I am specifically defining what would constitute a miracle to me. Furthermore, I'm not asking for a miracle for its own sake. I am asking that this miracle become a medium of communication. The miracle itself is unimportant compared to the answer that it communicates to me - its just a medium, not the message.

Perhaps this binary form of communication could not only answer your question but also give you some indication about how important your question was.

So, the answer has to be repeatable. If I ask the same question, the same colour of card should always come up.

I think there is a limit to how much energy a question can have and I don't think god wants to be at your beck and call forever so let's just set an arbitrary limit - say 5 times in a row - and then just conclude that there is strong possibility that your answer is correct. Ask similar supporting questions if you like.

A hypothesis often implies certain predictions - if this is true, then that implies that this other thing must be true. If you find out this other thing is indeed true, then that supports your hypothesis. The more experimental evidence you acquire, the more your hypothesis evolves into a full-blown Scientific Theory. You don't actually have to prove anything conclusively for a theory to work. Einstein's Theory of Relativity predicted the existence of Black Holes. Astronomical observations have indicated most galaxies have black holes in their cores. This doesn't mean that Einstein's theory is correct. It's just a fact that supports his theory. It is a little known fact that scientific theories are not proven facts. They are just theories - ideas about how things work.

... so that was largely the thought processes that led me to the idea that coincidence (a card turning over, etc) could be used as a communication medium between man and ... God? ...Goddess? ...Spirit? ... the Abyss?



Chapter 3 - The Abyss

I need to explain something about why I sometimes use the word Abyss instead of God or Allah or something more traditional. There are quite a few reasons. For one, I'm honestly trying not to offend all the atheists out there. I like atheists and owe them a great debt of gratitude. I think the idea of God angers them and scares them. They see all the war and hatred stirred up by our human obsession with the Divine or more accurately our obsession with defining God in our own image and crucifying anyone who doesn't go along with our definition.

They have a point.

It took me many years to realise that religion and spirituality were, in fact, two different things. Spirituality is the underlying truth of religion. It is their reason for existence. Religion can be loosely defined as a particular flavour of spirituality - an interpretation of underlying spiritual truths. Yes, I believe there is truth underneath all the dogma religions throw at us yet we mustn't mistake the medium for the message. Dogma points AT the truth but is NOT the truth itself. Religions point AT the truth but are not the truth itself. They are all just imperfect signposts - metaphors as that word was defined earlier. They can lead us to truth but the truth itself (God) must be directly experienced. Religions can be of enormous help (or hindrance) but in reality, there is no need of a priest class to come between man and God. I have nothing against a priest class, by the way. Yet any one of us can cut out the middle man and have direct access to the Source. All it takes is to open up your heart and get rid of all the crap stopping us from believing in ANYTHING.

I thank atheists for leading me to those truths. I became an agnostic and then an atheist in university many years ago. The experience helped me get rid of my preconceptions.

Atheism left me open to have a direct experience of God.

So ... what was this experience like? Things get a bit tricky when I try to describe it. In many ways it was incredibly simple - God was my drinking buddy. He was my pal. We called each other by our first names. It was hilarious. It was fun beyond my wildest dreams of what could be fun. It was touching, meaningful, friendly, light and yet deep - most of all it was incredibly intimate.

I can hear those beloved atheists screaming from here, “You delusional idiot. You invented God in your own image again!” Yes, I made my God in my own image - in the image of what I wanted my God to be but he didn’t care. He let me. He became whatever I wanted him to be.

A reminder: The truth isn’t in these imperfect words you are reading. Remember what I said in the beginning of this book: “... nothing I am going to say is to be taken as the Truth in any absolute way”. When I say “I was made aware of certain rules right off the bat”, I don’t mean there were any rules at all. For all I know, I invented them on the spot. Nevertheless, to say, “I was made aware of certain rules right off the bat” does express what the experience I was going through FELT like.

I was made aware of certain rules right off the bat.

1.) I couldn’t take anything too seriously. If things got too serious, that was a sign I was getting lost in my ego or whatever. Reality (God) is full of humour and joy. If it ever stopped being fun, I wasn’t dealing with God but something else.

2.) I could NEVER get addicted to anything I was experiencing. To paraphrase E.M. Forster, I had to be able at any time to “cast off the mantle of civilization and walk in the naked majesty of my own being“. As soon as I got addicted to anything, that thing or that ability began to leave me and my power began to lessen.

3.) I had no power. Everything that was done was done THROUGH me. I existed at the utter whim of a god.

4.) I always had to be stronger than the “the Force” I manipulated. My center could never be outside of myself.

5.) I could use this “magic” or “power” for my own personal gain but there was a consequence to doing so. When I used this power to fulfill the purpose of my greater self, I grew stronger. When I used it to fulfill my ego’s purpose, I became lessened somehow.

6.) whatever “powers” I had were absolutely inconsequential in comparison to the importance of this line of communication I had. They were like breathing - they came naturally, were largely automatic and I wasn’t supposed to get all weird and uppity about them (like “I’m so special because I have superpowers“).

7.) I should shut up about this - keep it secret. This was the seventies. Yes things were opening up but I would still have been thought mad to say what was happening to me. Another reason was that this communication was something incredibly intimate to myself alone. It was my own channel to god and it didn’t need mucking about with by outsiders with an agenda. A third reason was rather peculiar ... as soon as I begin talking about something, I remove myself from the experience - I make it abstract. Me writing this book to you removes me from the experience of being in these miracles, of being in the flow. I’m talking ABOUT them - not experiencing them directly. As soon as I start talking about these things, they stop happening.

[Section withdrawn for further development]

....
I think you have an idea about what this book is about. I want to bear witnesses to the events that have happened to me that others may gain strength and faith in their own lives. Life with an AbyssGodThingy is WAY more fun than life without one.

Encourage me to finish the book by emailing me – desmond@desmondtonnelly.com.

As for how this relates to my artwork:

[Many years after these experiences I began to paint in a way that utilised everything I had learned about the nature of reality. I believe there is something out there - something alive, something that has purpose and with whom it is possible to communicate. Coincidence is one of the many languages of what I will for lack of a better metaphor call God.

I allow and encourage coincidences in my paintings using a great many techniques no one has ever thought of. In addition, I do an hour of yoga and an hour of meditation before approaching a canvas so the mind is quiet. I then simply ask God what colors he wants me to use by lifting my eyes up and expanding my arms. When I look down, there is an energetic signature around certain colors which I choose immediately and without thought. If I wait longer than one second, the mind kicks in and tries to “figure out” what color to use. The same goes for my choice of brush. After mixing the color, that brush is dipped and already on the canvas before I have any time to think about what I am going to do. There is no mind in what I create. Instead, I feel whatever I FEEL and from within that feeling I move by arm or my body at the end of which is my paintbrush. If I feel joy, I dance and the brush moves with me. If I’m nervous, the brush flits about nervously. It doesn’t matter. Everything seems to work perfectly no matter what I am feeling.

The work is effortless. I don’t judge what I do or feel like an idiot. I just feel and the doing takes care of itself. After this first stage, I use a number of patented techniques to further randomize the painting. This stage is often quite dramatic. There is one point where the entire canvas is slowly shifting all by itself and I dance in and out doing whatever comes to mind - boldly dabbing a rag, flickering a brush, touching it with my fingers, crying on it - a delightful, expressive kind of madness that is usually very emotional and extremely spontaneous.

What I am left with at this point is a boldly dramatic abstract painting with the most marvellous textures. After this I meditate on the painting for a month or as much as two years till I begin to see shapes in it. When I see these shapes I do whatever it takes to bring those shapes out.- usually by adding a small bit of colour around the shape. Sometimes I don’t do anything as the shapes need no input from me to be seen.

Many times a coherent pattern emerges with a distinct theme and message. None of this is my own doing; it just shows up on the canvas - by coincidence. Its spontaneous apparition on a consistent and rather grande scale. When I see an image or, as in the case of Journey into the Light, an array of images with a complete theme, only then do my skills as a craftsman come into play.

I regard my paintings as physical evidence of the existence of god because I have seen how they were created. Some of the most complex imagery – large and impossibly detailed areas – were created in moments through techniques I have discovered.]