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Subject: Re: When did you become a Insert-Religion-Here?

Posted by [Starbuzz](#) on Sun, 16 Jan 2011 05:02:40 GMT

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I was born, raised, and lived the first 8 years of my life in a remote town in south India. These were the most precious untainted era of my childhood because it was a time before the religious lessons started. The family is extremely conservative super-disciplinarian Christians. And despite the rampant poverty surrounding me, I was purely fortunate to be born into such a very affordable family: very big house, colour TV, best food, best clothing, expensive imported toys.

So I should have been a spoiled brat...but I am happy today that it didn't work out that way cos I guess greed wasn't in my genes. I just loved the world around me too much. It was this curiosity factor, the "nature gene" that kept me going. The most expensive toy planes I had couldn't compare to watching a long line of black ants marching in the lawn carrying food particles. I was fascinated by life. I watched the birds and thought they too were like humans "that they fell in love and married, and that's why many of them are flying in pairs!"

There was a lot of children in the home; Indian families are huge and all live together. But while the rest of my cousins were usually busy doing something inside, I was most of the time outside in the terrace or in the lawn chasing cats, buring paper with a magnifying glass using the Sun light, watching the clouds (I would just stand there for literally hours watching the shapes change), watch the distant palm treelines shake in the wind, collecting smooth stones, trapping ants inside a few of my toy planes and giving them a "ride" (Imfao!), catching dragonflies looking at them and releasing them, and one of the most enjoyable: watching the stars at night while I lay on the cool terrace floor (it was pure bliss). But the really best part were the monsoon storms! Total darkness without light; the white sillhoutte of the house will stand out ghostly in the dark night with scary rains and floods all around. It would be a moment of pure terror...but I enjoyed the adrenaline rush a lot!

While most folks here grew without having exposure to other religions, I had plenty. Growing up in India, the main religion is Hinduism. I must admit that before I enjoyed watching insects, I loved killing them. All that changed when I was at the neighbour's house one day. He was Hindu and right in front of him, I crushed a tiny black butterfly. He became so upset (not angry) and he asked me, "why did you have to kill that? what did it do to you?!" I was shocked. I was never told by my Christian family not to kill insects (cos abraham's god obviously allowed humans to have dominion, pfft). But that was the lesson I learned from a Hindu person.

I quickly learned not to hurt anything that moved...but only that they must be admired and taken care for in need. So there was no need to kill at all. The seeds of compassion to life were sown in me by, not a Christian, but by a Hindu!

I only say all this because it is such a mental foundation as this that got the "atheist gene" planted in me that would manifest itself later.

So now here comes the really REALLY wicked part: so how exactly do we take a kid such as above with a brilliant intellectual curiosity (I claim nothing more of myself but that I was way too curious about nature than the rest of the kids in my house) and reduce him to a mere fearful slave? Someone who will be scared of a force allegedly watching him all the time, constantly

monitoring, punishing, and judging? Why, religion of course. A religion that has crippled many people on the intellectual level by brutally crushing promising young minds into life-long slavery. I still feel extremely resentful about the religion taking a huge chunk of my life wasting it away with dogma.

And so the usual indoctrination process began in church. I already said this before: bible readings, a "reenactment" movie of hell, verse memorizations, crayon colouring of bible scenes...indoctrination pure and simple in every shape and form. And so I "became" a Christian...or to be more accurate, I was "moulded" into a Christian thru religious education. That will be right term really considering I had no other powers of reason to resist; I was only a child. Religion's conquest of my young promising mind was complete.

And so as I grew as a Christian, everything I yearned to know about before religion was swept away and I lost interest. After all, "God" made the ants, dragonflies, clouds, trees, thunder, lighting and rain. Why should I care, right? "God" is more important and we have to see "Him" everywhere (a judge to be respected and loved). "God" is love...those who accept him will reach him, those who don't will go to hell. Those who are different (in other religious) are unlucky at birth and after being told the Gospel and if they still reject it, hell awaits them. As a child I saw no problem with this, nobody told me there was something as torture and this was totally unfair. Hell was just control thru fear. I got the same lessons that Christian children no matter where they were on the planet, got.

As usual, I brought my A-game. Finished reading the Bible cover to cover by 12 and at that age could even preach. I would stand alone in the living room couch and preach to an empty room pulling verses left and right from all parts of the Bible! By 15, I made it known I could go as a minister. My overjoyed parents told this to the church and the in front of all the congregation, I was called up and told "here is a young man for God" and given a book that was entirely about the principles of the Baptist denomination (it was a Baptist church). But by 18, I lost interest in preaching and organized church attendance was a routine chore I just had to do. It was around this time that I began to go lonewolf with religion; the spiral down to a radical intolerant hateful zealot didn't take too long after that.

But by the time I was in my late 20th year, I was getting sick of Big Brother. The first signs of rebellion showed up then. I TRULY mean it when I say it. I just wanted to wake up, enjoy the sunshine, and go about my day. I didn't want to wake and speak out some words to Big Brother above or feel guilty about not doing so. I was growing sick of him and my slavery to him. I asked myself: who is this being that I have to answer to? What has he done? Is he even listening? Is he is just in my head?

It is EXACTLY akin to growing up in a country where your people are under enemy occupation. When you are a child, it really didn't matter. You even played ball with the enemy soldiers! Since you were a child, you didn't realize these pricks were in your land using force and intimidation. But when you grow up and wisen up, when the sacred thoughts of sovereignty and identity develop, you realize your destiny to free your people! The power of reason awakens...you don't wanna play ball anymore with the enemy...you want to kick their asses.

This was EXACTLY what happened to me in relation to leaving religion for good. Except here, my OWN mind was the territory illegally occupied by Big Brother. As I said before, this didn't matter

when I was a child. But it sure did when I grew up. So the war was on and the first rumblings of battle over my OWN mind's sovereignty began.

And that was exactly when the blocks started to fall back into place. All my previous blissful Big-Brother-free childhood experiences came back to me. I didn't want to look at the sky and see a colossal prick to who I was permanently enslaved to, I wanted to look up at the sky and enjoy watching the clouds again. I want to watch the birds again and enjoy their collective little social structures...so remarkably similar to our own. I wanted to enjoy storms once again! I wanted to stand outside in the heavy pouring rain and feel like a kid again. I was sick of Big Brother and his lies and false promises and the extreme miserable false guilt and fear that came upon me whenever I "disobeyed" him. Show yourself!

It wasn't easy at all. As right in the middle of it all, I got fearful of hell and went back to being a radical zealot. I had every reasoning power to connect the dots but couldn't. I needed help. I am glad this setback happened though as that basically set me up with an awesome life-changing collision course with a person called Spoony. Slowly and systemically, he reasoned with me...I disliked him greatly but never hateful. Just frustrated that he was tearing me down while all the time, he was only helping me. After almost a year, I just connected the dots. If it weren't for him to help me out and if it weren't for my curious answer-seeking background (which kept me curiously challenging him), I would still have been stuck. After my mom and sister, there is Spoony. I feel extremely fortunate to know him; I love the humanity! And to make a long story short, I finally became atheist sometime in May 2009. I just woke up at around 3 AM and the thought just came to me; the dots were all connected and I said, "holy crap, hell is not real!" The entire religion came crashing down.

Since then, a horde of seminary educated evangelists were brought in by my family to "fix" me; they have all repeated the same rubbish over and over again. For example, to my questioning of how other religions originated, one of em replied in a serious tone "you do know that the fallen angels made the other religions, right?" I couldn't believe such feeble attempts to convince me back.

I won the battle over my mind and drove away the occupied enemy forces from it thanks to a timely intervention by a vastly superior allied force (Spoony!). My land (mind) was free and I realized true intellectual freedom. The enemy was driven away and Big Brother has disappeared like the morning mist as it meets the rising Sun. Amazing how another caring human being from a internet forum is able to touch another person's life in such a great way. The debates, no matter where they are, the important part is the exchange and discussion of ideas. I feel I owe so great a debt I can never repay to him.

Despite "problems" with family, I am a very very happy person now. I am in love with life and nature. I am the 8 year old Starbuzz once again. I am just happy to be alive and enjoying every moment. I see myself like this for good.