

Dialogue with the Devil

Enlightenment for the Unwilling

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Introduction

From the practical point of view, my life was perfect. I was a successful and popular physician, born into a wealthy family. I had an attractive, intelligent wife and three charming children.

Still, over the years a bitter suspicion had crept into my life, and eventually I came to the frustrating conclusion that I probably belonged to the species of the chronically discontented. While other people could not contain their enthusiasm about me and my life, all I could muster was a weary smile, while thinking to myself: “So—that’s all, folks?”

All my life I had been searching for ways to gain more—experience, success, enjoyment—and I had found them. But now I had reached a point where nothing could really stimulate me any longer. I had everything one could aspire to with reasonable ambition, everything one could achieve with hard work. Life somehow had turned tepid and trite.

So I lived my life with this dark cloud above my head—up to that unforgettable day, which would dramatically change my life forever.

The conversation came very unexpectedly. On August 21, an unusually cold and rainy summer day, I had said goodbye to my last patient around 6 p.m. I scribbled a few notes in my files, shut down the laptop on my desk and closed the lid. Then, in the meditative silence of my practice I brewed myself a fragrant cup of Darjeeling tea, as I did every evening, and mentally went through the day’s events. Part of the routine after the tea was to make the rounds through my office before leaving—checking that all the windows were closed, the lab machinery shut down, and the lights switched off. For a reason that I couldn’t quite explain I looked into my consultation room one more time—and stopped dead in my tracks. The laptop on my desk had been flipped open and booted up again! Bewildered, I approached the electronic tyrant. Humming softly it stood on the desk as if awaiting me. I felt my heart beating a little harder. Of course I couldn’t rule out the possibility that I had pushed the “reboot” button instead of the “power down” key—but how the hell had the lid flipped itself open?

Frowning, I approached this patiently purring object . . . then it happened—the event that would sound the bell for a new chapter in my life. Eyes wide open, I stared at the screen. A bombastic 36-point font said:

IT'S MY TURN TO SPEAK!

My back broke into gooseflesh that spread over my arms until all the hair stood erect. My legs turned to jelly. A strange atmosphere permeated the room, like some foreboding presence. With a queasy feeling I sat down at my word processor and stared at these words. Who the devil would write such a thing? And how? The sense of imminent disaster turned into a haunting premonition when I realized that the Internet connection was disengaged. Spellbound, I was staring at a flickering Word file, which meant that nobody was pulling off a stupid joke via the World Wide Web—but that someone had been sitting at my laptop! But when? While I was making the rounds through the seven rooms of my practice? I probably hadn't left my consultation room for more than three minutes. Feverishly, I tried to imagine the absurd scenario of a lightning fast burglar with a twisted sense of humor dashing to my computer just to leave me a note—an ominous line that didn't mean much more to me than the Heisenberg uncertainty principle or a Japanese instruction leaflet.

I looked around. Everything seemed to be in its place. No signs of burglary, no evidence of vandalism, no stolen drugs or prescription pads. A spell of superstition made me pull out the wireless card that connected my laptop to the Internet. I wanted to be 200 percent certain that no hacker could have caused this inexplicable situation, some wacky PC pro who from a distance was taking me for a ride. Then I pushed the power-down button once more. I waited for the screen to turn dark. That's when things really became spooky. The screen had turned dark all right, but the computer kept humming—and suddenly those eerie words—IT'S MY TURN TO SPEAK!—were written in red letters on a black background. My apprehension changed to terror. What the hell had gotten into my computer?

I pressed the delete key and waited. The words disappeared at once. A few seconds later new ones appeared in crimson letters:

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION NOW?

Bewildered, I stared at the blood-red line that seemed to float above the dark screen. As a psychologically trained physician, I knew at once that the best explanation for this uncanny occurrence was that I had just lost my mind. I tried to imagine a life where I'd have to swallow a red pill in the morning, a green one for lunch, and a yellow one at night just to keep from hearing voices or seeing alien texts on my computer screen.

The screen flickered, and three new lines popped up:

YOU'RE NOT PARANOID. I JUST WANT TO CHAT WITH YOU FOR A WHILE. BUT IF YOU'RE NOT WILLING—THERE ARE MORE THAN ENOUGH SOULS WHO'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM ME.

I had gone crazy! With this thought, a nauseating hodgepodge of emotions descended upon me. Fear, incredulity, tension . . . and, surprisingly, a considerable share of curiosity. If I had gone bonkers or someone had slipped some LSD into my tea, why shouldn't I just go for it, enjoy the ride? Most probably I'd either wake up screaming in my bed, or someone would lead me away drooling in a tightly secured straight jacket. All right, I said to myself, let's see where this is going! With this thought I put my hands on the keyboard and typed with clammy fingers:

Who are you?

Once more, a soft humming went through the computer. The screen flickered, and with a sudden chill in my heart I read:

SATAN!

1.

I've never been a cold-blooded person—a trait that probably would have helped in such a situation—but I tried to keep a level head as best I could. The wireless card lay next to the computer. As a consequence, it was impossible for some unwelcome invader, some seedy “chatter” to have gotten in touch with me via the Internet. I wondered if there were viruses that could smuggle this kind of program into one's computer like a cuckoo's egg, a program that would activate itself in due time. But that still wouldn't explain the flipped open laptop, with the power on. Since in my nervousness I couldn't think of anything more intelligent, I wrote with an anxious heart and unimaginative mind:

Prove it! If you're Satan, you can surely see what kind of clothes I'm wearing!

The answer came without hesitation.

YOU'RE WEARING A PEACH-COLORED SHIRT, FADED BLUE JEANS, AND A RATHER UGLY SCUBA SWATCH THAT RUNS FOUR MINUTES LATE. YOU'VE GOT STUBBLES ON YOUR CHIN AND BAGS UNDER YOUR EYES. YOUR LEFT ELBOW ITCHES.

With my mouth wide open and a vacant expression I scratched my left elbow, then I looked up and down at myself. He was right in every detail. I wondered if a voyeur with field glasses had taken a position in the neighboring house, but the blinds were rolled down. No one could possibly see me. My conscious mind desperately tried to take evasive action against the unthinkable. My pulse was racing. There was a foul taste of wet cotton in my mouth. With tremulous fingers I typed:

Whoever you are, if I find that you're spying on me, you're asking for trouble with me and with the police. I advise you to quit this game or you'll soon be sorry!

DO YOU NEED MORE PROOF? ASK ME ANYTHING—I KNOW ALL THE ANSWERS!

All right: what were the names of Emperor Nero's first and second wife?

OCTAVIA AND POPPAEA SABINA.

Right, you've got a good grasp on history. What's Thyreotropin?

A GLYCOPROTEID OF THE HYPOPHYSIS THAT REGULATES THE IODIDE INTAKE OF THE THYROID GLAND AND STIMULATES THE RELEASE OF THYROID HORMONES.

I see, you must be a physician. Probably one who knows me. Which doesn't mean you know everything. What's the difference between red heat and white heat?

RED HEAT LIES BETWEEN 700 AND 900 DEGREES CELSIUS, WHITE HEAT IS OVER 1300 DEGREES HOT. THE COLOR OF THE BLAZE CAN BE USED TO DETERMINE THE TEMPERATURE.

What is Stannum?

THE LATIN NAME FOR TIN.

What an educated fellow! What's my favorite drink?

MOJITO, WITH LOADS OF LIME AND VERY LITTLE SUGAR.

I'm really impressed. What kind of unhealthy habit did I have as a child?

YOU USED TO NIBBLE THE HEADS OF BURNT MATCHES—A QUESTIONABLE HABIT, FROM THE CULINARY POINT OF VIEW.

I see. You're someone who knows me damned well. Presumably somebody who saw me today, in my practice, which explains why you know about my clothes. I have no idea how you got into my office and at my laptop or how you're answering my questions right now, but maybe this is all a prank, and yes, perhaps my assistant left the back door open before she went home. I am far from convinced. Can you see into my soul?

OF COURSE.

What kind of crazy picture is my frantic mind conjuring up right now?

YOU'RE VISUALIZING A NEON-GREEN WHALE WITH BRIGHT RED BALLERINA SHOES AND GOLD TEETH, WHILE YOU'RE SIMULTANEOUSLY THINKING THAT YOU MUST HAVE GONE COMPLETELY MAD.

Touché. That's stupefying! What's the thing I'm mostly concerned about these days? Which sore subject haunts my dreams?

YOU'VE LOST THE MEANING OF LIFE. YOU'RE A SUCCESSFUL PHYSICIAN, BORN INTO A WEALTHY FAMILY. YOU'VE GOT AN ATTRACTIVE, INTELLIGENT WIFE AND THREE CHARMING CHILDREN. BUT NOW YOU HAVE REACHED A POINT WHERE NOTHING CAN REALLY STIMULATE YOU ANY LONGER. YOUR LIFE HAS TURNED TEPID AND TRITE.

My jaw went slack. Powerless, I fell against the backrest of my office chair. This guy could see directly into my heart! I tried to control my mounting panic by changing subjects.

How did you link up with my computer? I've pulled the wireless card! Theoretically a connection should be impossible.

I AM EVERYWHERE AND NOWHERE . . .

Very amusing. Come on, tell me.

I AM ALSO IN YOUR HEAD. IF YOU PREFER WE CAN HAVE A CHAT IN THERE.

For God's sake no! Keep your fingers off my head and stay in my computer! At least I can chuck that one out of the window if necessary.

THEN MY WORDS SHALL APPEAR BEFORE YOUR WINDOW IN BLAZING LETTERS . . . OR IN YOUR BEDROOM MIRROR . . . OR IN YOUR DREAMS.

Am I dreaming right now? Is this all a delusion, or a spell of schizophrenia, or are you nothing but a goddamned hacker?

YOU ARE USING THE MAKER'S NAME IN AN IRREVERENT MANNER. ARE YOU NOT A GOD-FEARING PERSON? OF COURSE I KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION TOO—OTHERWISE I WOULDN'T HAVE CONTACTED YOU.

What the hell do you want from me???

AH, THAT'S THE WAY I LIKE IT! WELL, HERE IS THE SITUATION: ALTHOUGH I HAVE BEEN AROUND FOR ALMOST AS LONG AS YOUR CREATOR, EVEN AFTER TWO THOUSAND YEARS OF CHRISTENDOM PEOPLE GET ME WRONG, MISINTERPRET AND DEMONIZE ME ON A GLOBAL SCALE. SOME YEARS AGO A BOOK NAMED *CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD** CREATED A SENSATION. ALL OF A SUDDEN, MILLIONS OF PREVIOUSLY NON-RELIGIOUS PEOPLE STARTED TO BELIEVE IN A DIVINE POWER—WHILE SINCE THE DARK AGES FEWER AND FEWER PEOPLE BELIEVED IN ME! I AM AT

* *Editor's Note: Neale Donald Walsch, Conversations with God: An Uncommon Dialogue, Book 1, New York: Putnam, 1996.*

RISK OF DROWNING IN A SEA OF OBLIVION, TO FADE INTO THE REALM OF MYTHS AND LEGENDS. THOSE WHO CALL ON ME ALWAYS WANT ONE THING: A DEAL WITH THE DEVIL. AND INVARIABLY, FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL, IT IS ABOUT POWER, MONEY, ABUSIVE SPELLS OF LOVE, SEX, ETERNAL YOUTH, AND HEALTH. BUT NOBODY EVER UNDERSTOOD ME. ACTUALLY, NOBODY EVEN TRIES TO UNDERSTAND ME. NOBODY COMPREHENDS MY REAL ROLE ON THIS PLANET. THAT'S WHY I WANT TO REACH OUT TO HUMANITY THROUGH YOU. TOGETHER WE SHALL WRITE A NEW BOOK!

A new book? What kind of book?

DIALOGUE WITH THE DEVIL!

You're kidding me, right?

NOT IN THE SLIGHTEST. I AM DIABOLICALLY SERIOUS. AND BE AWARE THAT NOBODY SHOULD DENY THE DEVIL A WISH.

Listen, I'm still far from convinced. I don't really believe in God, nor in the devil. Why should I believe you? I heard about something called "automatic writing," about people spontaneously communicating with the Dalai Lama, Elvis, or Churchill without remembering any of it later on—or so they claim anyway. Maybe I'm having a nervous breakdown right now, which would explain some of this monkey business.

YOU'VE READ THE BOOK *CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD*, AND WHILE YOU READ IT, PART OF YOUR SOUL BELIEVED THAT THERE *COULD* BE SOMETHING TO THAT GOD. WHY SHOULD I, LUCIFER, BE LESS REAL OR PLAUSIBLE?

2.

Well, because the devil doesn't effectively exist, not in a real way. God at least could be seen as an abstract concept, a symbol for all those aspects of creation humanity can't understand. Some people believe in a God in human form, others in a diffuse ancient power, others still in an all pervading matrix, a never-ending, morphogenetic field, or a universe full of ghosts and forces. All of this could be subsumed under the notion of "God." But the devil . . . well, wasn't he always just the bogeyman, humanity's indispensable symbol for evil? The devil is a monument to our approach to life, which implies that for all things negative on this earth "there is always someone else to blame."

Furthermore, the devil is necessary as a confirmation for the duality of things. Hence, the devil is an ideogram, "danger incarnate." What I mean is, the devil is the standard instrument of power for the Catholic Church, a fearsome being that brings both children and adults into obedience. But nobody truly believes in a real, living devil who logs himself into strangers' computers as a distinct entity!

WOULD YOU RATHER HAVE ME LOGGED INTO YOUR SOUL?

Don't you dare!

THEN LISTEN UP—BECAUSE IT'S MY TURN TO SPEAK!

What is it you want to tell me so urgently? And, why me?

BECAUSE YOU'RE A DOUBTING THOMAS, A SKEPTIC, A NON-BELIEVER—BUT STILL A SEEKER. AND EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE ALL OF THE ABOVE, AT SOME POINT YOU ACCORDED CREDIBILITY TO GOD. BECAUSE OF THE AFOREMENTIONED BOOK, MILLIONS OF PEOPLE HAVE TURNED TO GOD, AND THAT'S THE POINT WHERE I HAVE TO SAY: ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! THE TRADITIONAL MINDSET

OF GOOD AND EVIL IS AT STAKE, AND THIS MAKES ME EVEN MORE MELANCHOLY THAN I USUALLY AM ANYWAY.

Why are you writing all this in capital letters?

Well, I thought it might look more imposing; more majestic somehow, if you get my meaning. Is it better like this?

Actually, yes.

All right, listen. The God you found so remarkable in that other book is in fact quite a show-off. I won't deny he was the chief architect of the universe. Or let us say, he designed the blueprints, I did the finishing. Without me, nothing much in the universe works. What impudence to brand me as the symbol of the "wrong way," without acknowledging my positive—if not to say, my essential, my vital—aspects.

Wait a minute. Since I'm obviously dreaming, and since for reasons that are beyond me I'm playing along with this mind-blowing game, let me ask you the following: assuming that you indeed exist—would you really have the nerve to pretend the world needs you?

Yes.

Yes?

Certainly.

And why, if I may ask?

Because the universe, the cosmos, the whole creation needs an equilibrium. Good and evil. Up and down. Yin and yang. Constipation and diarrhea. Humanity in its unlimited ignorance still knows way too little about this universal law. Do you know who keeps that balance steady?

Well . . . nobody! The universe stays poised all by itself!

Wrong.

God, in that case?

Completely wrong.

So who is it?

Me.

You? Are you saying you're in charge of the cosmic equilibrium? Well, I'll be a monkey's uncle!

You can hang around with monkeys till you're infested with fleas; *I* am the one who maintains celestial stability! For I, too, am a god. Only that your “good Lord” took up a new job as a spectator; he gave up his function as creator, supervisor, and manager ages ago.

Supervisor? Manager? What do you mean?

Well, he designed the universe, shaped me as he did all of creation, and ever since he's been leaning back in his rocking chair, contemplating the chaos of his handiwork with a smug smile—all the while smoking a Cohiba of the most expensive kind and sipping Chivas Regal.

God smokes and drinks???

That was a joke. Did you listen to what I said?

Of course. Only it looks to me as though you're focused on the hackneyed tactic of polemics. To drag God through the mire seems a bit cheap for an allegedly great sovereign like yourself.

I have nothing against him! It only saddens me that humanity wants to blame all of its vices on me, while failing to acknowledge my achievements as regulator of the cosmic balance. But the reason we're talking and I'm telling you the plain truth has nothing to do with offended pride or the need for appreciation. The point is that I finally want humanity to understand my actual function. Only when humanity comprehends my true role, will it perceive the higher, divine connections in a different light. You can't read a book without learning the ABCs first.

I shall get lectured about "divine connections" by Satan, the Prince of Darkness? If that isn't the paradox of the century!

Stop vituperating and listen. Since the dawn of humanity I was closer to you than your so-called creator. I was always there when you called for help, and I delivered my help promptly, without phony promises of paradise, life after death, and such. All I asked of my clients was the insight that everything has its consequences. With every deal, I guided my clients closer to the great principle of cause and effect. That's why every bargain with me had its price. My service was beyond reproach. But at the behest of God I tested his creatures—i.e., you folks—day and night, with no pause for a breath. I kept leading God's most faithful followers into temptation, constantly subjugating them with new fears, afflicting them with dreadful losses and calamities—all on behalf of God!

Of course, I always called on those who seemed "ready" for such experiences, those with the right resonance for me. By proxy of the Lord I tested them and let them suffer in my kingdom until they were ready to walk the path to Ultimate Unity. God's gift to man—*free will*—is simultaneously your greatest hurdle and your trickiest stumbling block.

I don't quite follow you.

I am the god of entropy. The law of entropy implies that everything strives for disorder, for chaos. In *Conversations with God* your Creator explains that he wished to experience himself, quasi as his greatest gift to himself. But within the scope of this self-experience, humanity has to wade through *my* chaos first! Without the experience of hate, jealousy, bloodlust, envy, pain, depression, and fear, humanity won't be able to accomplish this divine task!

So I am asking you: *who* offers humanity the opportunity to have all of these experiences and eventually reach the goal? Maybe God?

Well, since he created everything, I assume

Wrong! *I* am the one who offers humanity the unique opportunity to have all of these experiences here on earth! And right away: by consistently leading you guys into temptation, you won't waste precious time searching for chaos. That's *my* divine gift to humanity, and I think I deserve appreciation and worship just like God. Without me you'd never reach the kingdom of heaven, because God's unfathomable rules practically impede it. Yes, humanity should worship me, just like they worship God!

That's blasphemy!

No. Nothing but poetic justice. I am the god of compensation and balance.

You're quite a cynic, aren't you?

Sometimes I am. But in this respect my sense of humor fails me. I am God's left hand, his antagonist and his mirror. From the photo-mechanical point of view I'd be his negative image. Of course we could meet on a regular basis to make plans about humanity's fate, but that wouldn't meet the law of free will. Humanity *has* a free will, at the Lord's behest. But without me, humanity would be groping in the dark, straying aimlessly on this earth until perchance, after myriad incarnations, it could fulfill its duty. In a way, I am the cosmic catalyst. With my help, you all get cut and polished like a diamond in a highly refined factory, until you shine and sparkle.

Sounds too good to be true. Are you really pretending to be an honest-to-goodness altruist, a true philanthrope?

Yes! Twice and thrice I say YES! I might be the last humanist on earth! I help humanity, but you are—sorry to say—going in the wrong direction. You invoke representations of hell and eternal torture, which I could never have cooked up myself! Do you know the *Divina Commedia*, the Divine Comedy?

The one by Dante Alighieri?

Precisely that one. Dante Alighieri was a genius, albeit only human. His greatest ambition was to see his most majestic work go down in the history of literature. We made a deal, and his wish came true. I won't amplify what the poor bugger had to go through for that. Anyhow, he found the right path after all. On the whole, the paradoxical thing is that he supplied me with a vision of hell with its nine rings, which up to this day is one of the most popular ones.

So hell really does exist? The very thought makes me a little queasy.

Yes, hell exists indeed. But not the way you imagine—and at the same time *exactly* the way you envision it!

Again, you're too nebulous! For ordinary people, please?

Hell is not a place on earth, or in the hereafter. Hell is no figment of the imagination, made from volcanic rock, wrought-iron chains, torrid rivers of lava, and sulfurous vapors. Hell is always within your own soul, and it is always exactly the way you're picturing it in that very moment.

Are you saying hell is not your own creation?

By no means. Hell is a purely human invention. However, as an intelligent god I quickly learned I could very well use humanity's self-forged idea of

purgatory as a means to an end, and you know the end justifies the means. You see, the concept of eternal torture and never-ending agony is a perfectly human model. Since the dawn of time, humanity has—by its own volition!—established an effigy of what causes fear and pain. As always, I only met your desires. I perfected and commissioned what his misguided mind had already conceived and summoned.

Objection! Just because one fears something doesn't mean one summons that thing!

Unfortunately it does. Even if you refuse to believe it: you are creators yourselves! You're constructing your own reality, at every moment, with every breath you take. It's all a question of resonance. As you learned in *Conversations with God*, we're all part of creation. We're divine and thus capable of originating things. Well, human beings have proven themselves to be relentless creators of evil and negativity. Their crazy inclination to misuse their power, to extort love, to obtain obedience through oppression, their insatiable desire for eternal life by striking a deal with the gods . . . at long last called me on the carpet. I am humanity's most obedient servant. All I ask for my faithful service is one gratuity: insight, which is what my services are all about. Worship me for the rightful reason of my existence, and I'll be by your side forever—until Judgment Day!

Isn't judgment day simply another old wives' tale? Just another nightmare scenario, crafted by the Catholic Church to keep its little sheep under control?

Oh, not at all! But Judgment Day isn't a ghastly moment in a distant future. Judgment Day is happening perpetually, at this very moment.

Everybody judges *themselves* at every moment, may it be in this world or in the afterlife.

I don't get it.

It is very simple. If the “judge within” decides that the path taken is the wrong one, the person in question suffers. I make sure of that. If that person now chooses a change of course, he will be rewarded immediately with good feelings. God will see to that. If that person is reluctant to change his ways, though—and most people are, out of a vague sense of fear—he suffers, and the suffering will take on larger and larger dimensions. I will personally see to that. I am the one who helps you to choose a change of course. Ultimately I’m the one who shows you the divine path. As soon as you die, your soul judges itself anew in the afterlife.

What is this often-quoted “afterlife” anyway?

The “afterlife” is nothing but a dimension, which for most people during their lifetime, is only tangible in a limited way. In your dreams you experience some of these otherworldly dimensions. The “hereafter” is no geographical site; just like this world it is everywhere. “Afterlife,” as you so dramatically put it, is simply a further, higher level of consciousness—and it’s only a thought away. Afterlife is simultaneously on Times Square in New York, on the rice fields of Bali, on Jupiter’s northern hemisphere, and at the other end of the universe. That’s a contradiction in terms, by the way, for the universe has no end.

However—after your physical death, the soul judges itself anew in the afterlife. As one might say it goes through a process of self-assessment. In most cases, the soul realizes that it’s still a damn long way from wading out of the swamp of humanity’s petty desires and expectations—which is my domain. So eventually the soul decides to take on a human body once more, to reincarnate, and to keep walking the path to higher evolution. From the physical point of view, the soul instinctively strives for a higher, more enlightened vibration. In this process the soul keeps returning to earth—and to *me*. Because I am the god of *this* world.

3.

You bring in the topic of reincarnation. Does it really exist? Who is right: Christians, with their dogma of heaven and hell, or the followers of the reincarnation theory, Buddhists, and Hindus? I've always been dying to learn more about that subject!

Read the Holy Scripture. In the New Testament you will find many allusions to reincarnation. The early Christians were followers of this faith. The Essenes, who lived in the desert near the Dead Sea, already believed in it. The Dead Sea Scrolls bear witness to that. Gradually two groups of Christians arose. One of them believed in reincarnation, the other didn't. But it was emperor Justinian—largely inspired by his wife Theodora, who feared penitence for her evil deeds in the afterlife—who campaigned for a prohibition of the belief in reincarnation. He succeeded in outlawing it during the two Councils of Constance in 543 and 553 A.D. An anathema—i.e., excommunication—was proclaimed for anyone who kept insisting on having had a “former life.” Pope Virgilius, who believed in reincarnation, was put behind bars for flimsy reasons, just to make sure he couldn't contribute his vote.

So the disappearance of the tenet of reincarnation—as is so often the case—was due to a shady conspiracy, a trivial abuse of power?

Definitely! The truth, dear mortal, as ever lies before your very feet—and I guess that's why you keep kicking it around. Humanity's problem is not a lack of information, but its self-determined, selective blindness.

Unbelievable! What happened next?

Around 1100 A.D. the Cathars, a Christian community, spread across the South of France and Lombardy. They were vegetarians and proclaimed reincarnation. Around 1200 A.D. the Cathars already had 200,000 to 300,000 followers. Pope Innocence III fought them because they refused to acknowledge

him and to pay church taxes. He declared the first crusade against Christians! Anyone who had committed a murder could partake in that crusade for a month in order to receive mercy before the Almighty. And eventually the Cathars *were wiped out with sword and fire, along with their belief in reincarnation.*

During the following centuries, the Greek philosophers' knowledge about reincarnation was reserved for the upper class. Only in the 16th and 17th centuries did the concept of reincarnation resurface, coming back from Asia to Europe through maritime trade. The Freemasons made a dash for the theory of reincarnation, and by the 18th century every person of distinction believed in this concept—Mozart, Schiller, Novalis, Goethe, to name just a few.

But enough talk of history. Reincarnation is a fact. It is your playground where you can vent your fury, the school where you learn to remember yourself and your divine core. Unfortunately, humanity at its present level of awareness is still light-years away from comprehending the deeper meaning of divine purpose. That's why we—God and I—invariably convey our messages through the language of symbols, feelings, and dreams. Due to their abstractness, those three information carriers reach further into your soul than intellectual or rational knowledge. Intellectuality and rationality are the domain of the ego—that strange entity within that makes you what you are.

Can you explain that more fully?

I will give you a simplified version of the truth, because most people can't grasp the concept of timelessness and multiple dimensions. The thing is that in the hereafter, each soul whose mortal "garment" dies looks back upon the life it just spent on earth. The soul's positive thoughts, those addressed to God, deeds of love and connectedness, fill the soul with an inkling of paradise. Negative thoughts and deeds, those addressed to me—those which leave a foul aftertaste of hate, greed, fear, jealousy, megalomania—in short: *ego*-thoughts—bring great sorrow to the soul . . . like a whiff of hell.

So one could look at all of these reincarnations as a long, chronological chain of continual lives?

Not really. Time, the way you perceive it, doesn't exist. But with his limited senses you can only distinguish "before" and "after." The concept of "all happening simultaneously" overtaxes his mind. The allegory of all souls being "splinters" of a Great Oneness is only one possible metaphor. De facto one cannot split up the great unified field, for everything is eternal, never-ending, and all is one. Seen this way, everything is happening in oneness and at the same time.

That beats me.

I know. You humans aren't ready for this yet. But you can work it out, and you better try. If you don't, I shall help you, even though my help might seem unpleasant to you.

Do all souls come back to earth umpteen times?

Most of them. Jesus was your most prominent exception. He was perfect even before his manifestation on earth. But his mission wasn't to cleanse humanity of its sins—at least not in the way you wished for. Since the beginning you have been longing for the enlightened one who'd iron out all of his problems in a most comfortable way. But that is not in the spirit of God's wish for self-awareness through personal experiences. Each one of you, each "God particle," must experience *itself*. Jesus merely came as a particularly remarkable guide to the divine principle. He did a perfect job, but humanity incorporated only fragments of his message. Blind are those who don't want to see. Many people keep overlooking what can't be ignored and keep failing to hear what should be heard until they don't know what hit them. That's why I cannot overemphasize the importance of this: Don't wait for someone to solve your problems, for that would be like pissing in the wind. The way scores of people waste their life waiting for the Messiah is pathetic!

What do you mean? Are you saying that Jesus is not coming back?

Exactly.

Wait a sec! How would you know? You belong to the opposing team!

From the human point of view—yes. From the divine perspective—no.

Explanation please!

On the divine level—the level where everything is one, and all is united—there is no such thing as an “opposing team.” All is oneness. Unfortunately, this spectrum lies beyond the human cognitive faculty. You’re only just “on your way” to this cognition, and as long as you’re willing and wanting to suffer you will have time aplenty for the process of self-awareness as God particles.

You said that Jesus isn’t coming back. Why then do millions of Christians still believe in the return of the Messiah?

Because most Christians—like most people in general—carve out a miserable existence in victimhood. They desperately cling to the completely illusionary hope of seeing the Messiah come down to earth a second time to cleanse them of their sins. They believe they can linger right by the front door of the slaughterhouse as passive as lambs, waiting for a wondrous illumined being to deliver them from evil.

Millions of Muslims are waiting—equally in vain—for the return of Mohammed. At times, I roll with laughter over humanity’s naiveté—just so that God won’t have to do it.

But if Jesus really walked the earth to deliver you from your suffering why shouldn’t he do it a second time, if only to act as a guide to God once more?

If you didn’t understand him two thousand years ago, you won’t understand him today either! Jesus’ teachings contained deep, sublime wisdom; a smack of heavenliness in its very own shape. And what have you done with his doctrine? You dragged it through the mire, manipulated it, and started a grotesque misuse of power that’s lasted for two thousand years. Over countless generations you

deceived your brothers and sisters—gutted, abused, and killed them—and all of this in the cloak of religion, under the guise of Jesus’ word! Not by any stretch of the imagination could I think of a reason why Jesus should suffer for you once more.

Maybe out of compassion . . . ?

Oh, he had more than enough compassion! What I keep trying to ram down your throat is this: free will is yours, and so is the agony of choice. Either you ride the silver bullet of cognition, or you walk my pathway of insight through suffering. All roads lead to Rome, only some involve unpleasant detours. My pathway is by no means contrary to the heavenly master plan, but if you walk down my lane some optimism is advisable indeed—along the lines of: “If life hands you a lemon, turn it into a thirst-quenching lemonade.”

Jesus was quite disenchanted when he realized that humanity usually prefers to learn things the hard way. And that’s what I’m here for—to be your unyielding teacher and master on earth!

But we don’t seek out evil! We’re searching for love, peace, and harmony!

Oh yeah?

Well, I mean, we’re searching, but regrettably many of us go astray.

Exactly. And I am here to give you a hand doing just that.

To go astray?

Yes.

So you are evil after all?

At my level there is neither good nor evil. But I kick ass with great delight if that gets you to walk the path. I help you to escape from the eternal and disastrous woe of stagnation.

Stagnation?

Man wants this and that. Volition is your nature. Wanting more and more is your passion and religion. So far, so bad. But here comes the truly unpleasant part:

‘To reach my goal I must deliver a performance!’—how tiresome!

‘I could fail in my endeavor!’—how sad!

‘Someone else could beat me to the punch or cut a better figure!’—how scary!

Most men get stuck in the swamp of fear. Fear of effort, fear of failure, fear of withdrawal of love, fear of loss, fear of pain, fear of life, fear of emptiness, fear of death. Well, where do these fears come from?

From you?

Let me enlighten you: fear comes from your own *ego*! Your ego is the demon within, the demon who has you believing that you are disconnected from the unified field, that you must protect yourselves from a thousand dangers and death, the fiend that trots out the lie that others are responsible for your destiny! Your ego keeps pulling you back into the past and thus conditions you to think and act in certain patterns, and it constantly pushes you into the future, urging you to work on it so it’ll be rosier than the present. But your ego knows *nothing* of the present. It lives in the past and the future only, trying to convince you that the present is never good enough. Your ego is the great illusion within, the profane element that brings you all suffering and *fear*! And what does fear do, pray tell?

It paralyzes us?

Bravo! It paralyzes! It paralyzes the will, the body, the spirit, and the soul! And that's where I enter the stage: I act as a godlike catalyst, even though I may appear diabolical to you. I boost your fears day by day, year by year, generation by generation.

And that's what you call a helping hand? Is this devilish sarcasm?

Not at all! Listen carefully. I increase your fears up to the "point of no return"—up to the point where something's *bound* to happen! By tormenting you I make sure that your life and your development are not arrested. When fear grows too big, there are only two alternatives left: you either confront life bravely, step ahead—or you lie down and die. Many people are dead throughout their lives. Remember Jesus' words:

"Let the dead bury the dead." But when you die physically, you'll make a fresh start in your next incarnation, and the university of life goes on. You won't be spared anything—certainly not insight—for that's what enlightenment is all about!

If you confront life bravely, you will scale the next summit step by step, like a keen mountaineer—according to God's master plan. For courage is faith's kid brother. As long as you lack courage, you'll be in the dark, bump your head against invisible obstacles countless times, and you'll keep suffering. It's as simple as that.

4.

Do you actually enjoy torturing and tormenting us humans?

Of course.

Of course?! You're saying that as if it were in apple pie order!

Everything on earth is in apple pie order. There can't be any other way. And since I carry out my task as the archenemy perfectly, that's in order too. Each time I put my paw on someone's shoulder, each time I breathe my sulfurous breath down someone's neck, each time somebody wakes up screaming from a nightmare, and each time someone in total despair finds himself between a rock and a hard place, I feel joy and satisfaction.

Because you're evil incarnate, the tormentor of humanity and a sadist?

Sure enough! Not in vain am I called the Prince of Darkness! And not even God would begrudge a colleague who toils day and night, the enjoyment of his efforts.

But joking aside . . . the main reason for my joy lies here: By tormenting you I serve the master plan! With my help, my infiltrating emotions, you gain self-awareness in multiple ways. You escape the dread of stagnation, the dullness of rigidity.

What's so awful about stagnation anyway?

It goes against the divine plan. God wants to experience himself. To experience oneself, something has to *happen*, it requires some dynamics. I'm not talking about the silence of meditation, which generates its own virtuous circle. I am not speaking of patience. Patience is a virtue, but a lot of virtues are just as taxing as vices, and most people shun every exertion.

Your nature is a not a patient one, which hampers your development just as much as your fierce tendency to fearfully cling to everything. Yes, humanity needs to learn to be patient. You all seem to have time for nothing. Well, as I like to say: you've got the watches, God and I have the time.

But let us get back to the subject. I was talking about the stagnation of the soul and your regrettable inclination for that. Humanity tends to be afraid, and fear is the most powerful soul-laming poison. In alchemy and also in Chinese medicine there exists the principle of transformation: when one particular characteristic becomes too strong, it transforms itself into its opposite and thus becomes its own antagonist. Too much heat transmutes into cold, too much black into white, too much hate into love. It is the alchemy of the metamorphosis of Saul to Paul.

Saul? Paul?

It seems pretty twisted if I, the Devil, have to tell you a Bible story! Saul was a bitter enemy of the arising Christian Church, which he considered a Jewish sect that revolted against the law and therefore had to be stamped out. Due to an epileptic seizure—which I sent him—Saul fell off his horse on his trip from Jerusalem to Damascus. He remained blind for three days. During those days of blindness he had a vision of Jesus, regained his eyesight, and became one of the most fervent heralds of Jesus' teachings. A beautiful anecdote of transformation!

By catalyzing your fear, by stimulating and multiplying it, I make sure it eventually turns into its own antagonist: *courage*. Only with courage will you get ahead, only with courage can you learn to trust, to let yourselves be guided by us, the higher powers and good spirits on your path to the Great Oneness. Never forget that you are a part of those higher powers—just like we are a part of you.

I'm confused. I still don't understand why you have chosen me of all people to write such a book. If you really are the devil you could just as well write it with one of your own disciples—or pen it yourself.

That wouldn't be the right way. I need the dialogue with a doubter, so that we can sweep away all imaginable doubts with this book.

By the way, do you perceive the divine paradox? I, the Diabolus, who carries falsehood—the mother of doubt—in my very name, simultaneously am the one to eradicate all doubt.

And you can't do that all by yourself?

By myself, I wouldn't be objective enough. Even dialogue with a disciple of God or a die-hard Satanist wouldn't do. Both would only be grist for God's or my mill—without asking the relevant questions or broaching the essential doubts. Have you noticed something?

What? I'm so bewildered I can't seem to notice anything anymore!

Pay attention to your gut feeling. From the moment you read my first words on the screen your gut feeling told you I'm really "Satan"—and yet not the beast you expected me to be. Your mind is doubtful and bickering, but your deepest instinct knows exactly whom you're dealing with.

You're right—and that's exactly why my mind keeps insisting that I've gone insane, and that's really scary. At some point this conversation will be over, and then I'll just be crazy . . . alone and crazy!

No. Soon this *tête-à-tête* will be over and you will know the whole truth. You will be an enlightened one. As you know, some people call me Lucifer—the Light Carrier. I bring you and humanity enlightenment. Your only mission is to make my message public.

End of text sample