

## Broken by the Light by Daniel Rosenblit

In high school I was a gifted athlete, and as a result was very popular among my classmates. I considered my friends and myself to be superior people, while I looked down upon what I perceived as the weaker elements of school with contempt. Some of my crueler friends joked about the mentally retarded and physically handicapped students, and although I never laughed at these unfortunate kids to their faces, I did laugh with the crowd behind their backs. I also considered what I thought of as ugly or fat girls to be utterly useless, and I thought physically weak boys were wimps and nerds. In short, I had completely dehumanized these souls. There were winners and losers...and I was a winner.

When I enrolled at the University of Florida I hung out with new friends and tried to squeeze the most fun and pleasure I could out of life. On campus, we had Christian students that everyone called "soul-talkers." They would diligently encourage us to go to their Bible study meetings. My friends and I used to make fun of them while we were drunk or stoned, thinking they were brainwashed fanatics. During my first two collegiate years I also witnessed, on several occasions, a shaved-headed Hare-Krishna devotee who used to chant and dance ecstatically all alone in front of the campus library. Most of the students (including myself) openly mocked him. I figured this guy absolutely had to be the most whacked-out individual I had ever encountered in my life! I was genuinely afraid of this person.

I judged a lot of other people and things I didn't understand. I considered all religious people to be weak. I remember thinking that people who lived in communes were big suckers because they worked for free. This was also a time when the ancient healing art of acupuncture was becoming well known. I thought acupuncturists had to be a bunch of quacks since they were claiming to heal people by sticking needles in them! In short, I used to laugh at just about everything I didn't understand or that made me uncomfortable.

By my senior year, I had transferred to Florida State University, and had stumbled across a health book that convinced me that I was suffering from dietary deficiencies. Virtually overnight I switched from a typical American diet to one consisting of raw foods. I was unaware of the dangers of such a radical change, even to something as healthy as uncooked vegetables, and my body weight plummeted from 145 to 105 lb. After more study I realized I needed to add wheatgrass juice to my regimen, and sent away for an extractor. The downward spiral continued. One day, feeling totally fatigued, I looked at myself in the bathroom mirror and suddenly reality hit me! For the first time I took notice that my body was almost skeletal. Both my skin and the whites of my eyes had turned yellowish. When I looked at my hand I was shocked to see that my fingernails were purple! I couldn't urinate as my abdominal region was so full of liquid that I was barely breathing. Then I realized that my kidneys were backed up and that I was drowning in my own toxins. At that moment, a deeper reality hit me, and I fearfully exclaimed to myself, "Oh no! I'm dying!!"

Much of what occurred next may not make sense because many of these experiences seemed to happen simultaneously. I looked up and I saw God. At that very moment, I knew that even an atheist would recognize Him immediately. I saw what appeared to be a great ball of fire in the clouds come down and descend upon me. The light was so bright that it totally blinded me. I tried to shut it out by putting my hands over my eyes, but this brilliant light just couldn't be blocked out! I still remember being on my knees, while this blinding light broke and crushed my false ego (the prideful nature that predominated in me). This "breaking" process was extremely painful!

Then I "saw" that it was as if I had been living behind a curtain my whole life. This veil/curtain was the illusion that I was this physical body, and that this world is only matter devoid of spirit (God). Then this veil of illusion was lifted and in Divine Light I saw that everything that appeared physical was really veiled spirit. I realized that death is an illusion. At that moment, when I died, it was as though my consciousness never left me, but moved into another dimension.

Every thought, word and deed I had ever lived, everything I had ever done in secret, was now brought into light for review. Something came out of myself (I believe it was my soul) and sat in judgment of me. I had never recalled ever being in touch with this aspect of myself before. "It" knew perfection, which was God's standard (by "perfection", I mean pure love), and all of my actions were compared to this standard. I was shown that pure love was serving God and others without having any self-centered motives at all. Therefore, if part of a person's motivation for doing a good deed was to feel good about oneself, or to earn some spiritual reward, the act was tainted. Until this point in my life, I had thought of myself as being basically a good person. After all, I hadn't ever robbed, raped, or killed anyone! God showed me that throughout my life I had occupied the throne (center-stage) of my life. I had lived for and had served myself foremost. Either I wanted money, sex, a pat on the back, a wink, or a smile. Now I searched feverishly for one pure act of love. There were none. All my acts had been polluted by selfish motives to varying degrees. I was shattered, spellbound, speechless and panic stricken all at the same time. In my mind I cried, "I can't believe it! I've wasted my entire life!"

God showed me that if I had put Him on the throne of my life I would have created the foundation for a successful life. Previously I had thought that people who lived like that were fanatics, but now I saw that this was only first base! Then I saw that actions motivated by pure love for God are holy deeds that have the power to be felt clear up in heaven. I was shown that this whole system was like a rigged roulette wheel in a casino. As much as one tried, one could never fully satisfy one's selfish desires. It's virtually impossible because it's a rigged game! I was shown this! I was also shown that if I had put forth only 25% of the effort I spent pursuing pleasure into serving or meditating on God, I would have already found Him! At this point, had I had been in touch with my body, I would've pulled out all of my hair in anguish.

In high school I considered my friends and myself to be the best of the lot. But in the Divine Light I saw that we were among the lowest of men because of our prideful preoccupation. I was shown that the handicapped and mentally retarded people were exalted above the masses of people because they were humble and innocent. Above them were the "soul-talkers", the "brainwashed religious fanatics" I had mocked so often in college. I saw that these people were exalted because they were consciously using their free will to seek out and serve God. What surprised me the most was that the Hare-Krishna guy with the shaved head who danced and chanted God's holy names on the college campus was actually the most exalted in God's eyes! It wasn't that his religion was superior to Christianity, but it was that he as an individual had loved God the most. He loved God so much, in fact, that he was continually willing to publicly display his praises to Him alone in the midst of faithless people, like myself, who continually ridiculed him. I was shown that this man was so much in