

LOST AND FOUND

by Bud Roberts

In 1971, at age 22, fleeing a failed relationship, I responded to a friend's invitation and left northern California for Spokane, Washington. I quickly found a strenuous job framing houses. But my problems followed me, and internally I was an emotional wreck. I missed my ex-girlfriend and was devastated by heart sickness. Having a shy personality, I became lonely, with no friends. In addition, I was heavily in debt, owing \$3,000 while earning \$3 an hour. I was obsessed with finding answers to my life, but my mind floundered in confusing, negative head chatter. I smoked two to three packs of cigarettes a day. Spiritually I was bankrupt, having many years earlier turned my back on God.

Two months later a dispute forced me to leave my friend's house and I ended up in a run-down hotel with only \$50 in my pocket. I barely ate that day. Though quite hungry, I was so depressed that I decided to wait until the next day to eat an early breakfast. The following morning, though, I overslept and wildly dashed to work 12 miles away. At lunch time I ordered a big meal, that I desperately needed. Reaching for my wallet I discovered it was missing. I'd left it in my room in my earlier panic! Starving and now experiencing weakness from hunger, I resumed my physical labor.

At the end of the day I returned to the hotel for my wallet and then food. When I opened the door to my room though, all I saw was blackness; then I fell to the floor from physical and emotional exhaustion. Four to five hours later I awoke very weak and in a cold sweat. I tried to stand up but couldn't. Kicking the door closed I crawled to my bed. I was barely able to turn on the light, then collapsed on the bed, feeling it was all over. I was crushed by hopelessness, the kind suicide is made of. With nowhere to turn I completely and unconditionally abandoned myself to God. In that prayer I remember picturing a 30-mile strip of ocean beach and admitting that I wasn't even as powerful as a grain of sand. I prayed that He would take control of my life, since I hadn't been able to.

I lay on my back, drifting, when I became faintly aware of a ringing sound in my ears. I also began to notice that my entire body was tingling with needle-like pricks, just like when you sleep wrong on your arm and cut off the blood flow. While this was happening, my senses sharpened greatly. My eyesight improved to the point that I could see minute cracks in the walls around me. My ability to think and understand also improved as I reached a heightened sense of "alertness".

I didn't try to move until the increasing intensity of the ringing and the physical tingling became unbearable. Then I got scared and tried with all my might to move my arms, but I couldn't — I was paralyzed. I feared for my life, and couldn't move the slightest bit.

Just then the very essence of the room filled with Power — so awesome and overtaking it defies description. I was completely humbled and scared. This powerful presence moved in a circular pattern within the room, and then compressed into my body, slamming into me. The ringing stopped. The tingling sensation vanished. I began to slowly levitate toward the ceiling. I then discovered that I could see in many directions simultaneously. I viewed in one glance all the walls and the ceiling. And I noticed that my mind had acquired a depth of intelligence and understanding beyond anything I'm in touch with ordinarily. I felt I could write a great philosophic work, with insight like Plato or Socrates. Then I knew I would hit the ceiling and I became frightened again, certain I would die when I did so.

I squinched up my face for the impact, when the total experiences of my life passed in front of me in detail. All conversations and experiences, including the feelings I had had at the time, were there. This included a concept of "time" within the experience, but happened without time as I know it. The clarity of this experience was almost shocking.

But there was no impact. I merely went through the ceiling, and once outside I saw my body on the bed as if by remote viewing. I then saw the hotel building, the alley nearby, my car, the main street, with traffic moving along it, and then going higher still, I saw the whole city of Spokane in the darkness, lights shining.

Then an usual event happened. I heard and felt the sorrow, pain, and loneliness of what seemed like thousands of people all at once, coming from the houses, apartments — wherever people were — below me. There were the anguished sounds of women crying and screaming, the ache of total emptiness and the frustration of those who cause pain but don't know what else to do. I was even able to see into the houses. Heavy with compassion, I was jarred and awed.

I traveled faster; there was no feeling of motion however. Below me appeared the coast of Washington. Then I could see the coastline from Alaska to California. I saw South America, then South and North America, the world — the stars, and I was moving very fast. I have little recollection of what happened out there. The vaguest memory is of feeling lonely and lost. But beyond that I cannot recall. Repeated attempts on my part to bring back detail have failed.

After a period of time I remember wanting to go home. I tried to find earth, but couldn't. Then I must have sighted it because I recall trying to aim myself toward it. I also remember moving around the planet a bit until I identified North America, then the northwest coastline, the eastern part of Washington, Spokane, and so on, until I found the hotel. My main concern was getting back into my room. Somehow I got through the ceiling and saw my body on the bed. The light was on as I had left it. With a struggle I re-entered my body, but I'm not sure exactly how. The ringing in my ears was intense and I was again paralyzed. These sensations gradually decreased just as they had increased.

Then the ringing stopped and my body was freed. I felt complete peace. It was so quiet it almost hurt. Words can't express the peace, the relaxation, the joy I felt. All the noise in my head, the yackety-yak, the confusion I had had about what to do in my life was gone. My gnawing hunger didn't exist. I had no desire for a cigarette. After just losing myself in this beautiful peace for a while, I thanked God, then went out for a cup of coffee, walking very slowly, not that I needed it, but just to walk somewhere. Right away I realized that I was going to join the Air Force. This had never occurred to me before. Yet now there was absolutely no doubt whatsoever in my mind. This simple solution solved many problems. By joining the Air Force I could give back my car, cancel my insurance, pay off my bills and become trained in electronics.

My future path indeed seemed to be ordered from above, my prayer and my cry powerfully answered. In fact "clarity" defined how I now felt toward most everything. I am grateful for this experience and as a result of it don't have to wonder "is there a God?" Nor do I fear death as I used to. I just hope I can do all that I am supposed to do here on earth and that I will be ready when I am called to go home.