

One

What can you make of a dream within a dream? We say two wrongs don't make a right, but in math two minus signs multiplied gives you a plus. And does who that anyway? I mean a dream within a dream? How that worked was like this. I was asleep and had just awakened enough to realize I was dreaming. But that was the dream. Yes. I was dreaming that I was aware of dreaming and in this double dream state, I told myself this was weird. That I can remember what happened next is spooky. I don't usually remember my dreams and if I do, they are not remembered in detail. And they usually don't make much sense. I can dismiss those things as the random firing of neurons, but this was different.

I was in a black hole, and I was alive to tell about it. That is not supposed to be possible. As you get drawn into a black hole, you are supposed to be ripped apart as you are stretched into your individual atoms. All this shredding happens at the event horizon or outer edge of the black hole. Somehow, I was in the center, the singularity. A place where time stands still, and gravity is so strong that even light can't escape. I thought, "How can this be?" And a voice answered, "It is only possible in a metaphysical state and that is where you are." Wow. Socrates would be so proud of me. I'd entered a metaphysical state. That was what the ancient Greeks though was the ideal realm. It was where Socrates thought he would go when he died. At least that was his hope and to some extent, his expectation.

I realized I had no idea what a metaphysical state was or whether one could return from such a place to what passed for normal existence. And then I wondered what was that voice that told me I was in a metaphysical state? "Who are you?" The answer was, "That information is not why you are here, and you wouldn't understand anyway." My lack of understanding was about the only thing I was sure of and that meant the voice was spot on. I tried to take in my surroundings. My foot and my head were touching each other from the inside. All of me was touching all of me. I was one. But one what? Had gravity compressed me into an infinitely small mass? It would seem so, but somehow, I was still in possession of a mental existence somehow apart from and simultaneously coexistent with that point mass. I wondered if I had somehow sensed my predicament correctly. The voice said, "Yes."

The voice knew what I was thinking without my verbalizing, but how could I verbalize when my mouth, lungs, and vocal cords were part of that mass smaller than an atom? My mental existence was in the same realm as my physical subatomic density, but it was not constrained by the gravitation force of the black hole. "The spirit essence is not affected by gravity," said the voice. Ah. My mind/body bond had been severed without my mind suffering any ill effect. Was I now what they call a soul? Was I a ghost or some other form of spirit? I heard no answer from the voice.

I continued to observe my surroundings. I was inside a black hole. There was no escape according to science. But science couldn't study this separate existence that I'd become. I was in some meta place. A place where gravity didn't exist or if it did, it had no effect on my new form of being. But wait. Now I'm thinking of myself as wholly separate from my subatomic density and I don't know if that's right. I'm still aware of that density and how all of what I think of as me is now in contact with every other part of me. All at once. Again, no answer from the voice.

I looked around at my surroundings and I wondered what I was using for vision as my eyes were in that subatomic mass and somehow, I was seeing. The voice said, "You are sensing, not seeing." I sensed I was surrounded by vibrating strings. And they all looked alike. I couldn't tell them apart. The strings seemed to hum, and they all sounded like they were tuned to hum exactly the same. I had heard of string theory and how vibrating strings were the fundamental substance from which all matter is formed, but now I was immersed in a sea of such strings. At this level, everything was the

same. The voice said, “You sense the plasma from which a universe can be made. I am the source of the energy that animates the strings. I can and at some point, will create an entire universe out of this plasma. You have come from such a universe. What can you conclude about a universe composed of what you sense?”

The voice had put me on the spot. This was a pop quiz. I’d been challenged with a direct question. Break the question down and maybe there is an answer. I sense only one thing and that is the utter sameness of all the strings in the plasma. I sense all must be one and the energy for all that flows from the plasma must fundamentally remain as one. No matter the form. All must be animated by the same energy, once again one. Animate forms and inanimate forms composed of the same strings imbued with the same energy. All is one and any appearance that suggests something different would only be a misunderstanding of what is fundamental. How could we not realize this? The utter oneness of all that is and will ever be. The voice responded to my thoughts. I was unaccustomed to the notion that my thoughts were so transparent. It said, “You have learned the lesson I brought you here for. It is time for you to wake up.”

Someone was shaking me. My spouse was saying, “Hey, it’s time for you to wake up. It’s not like you to oversleep, and please turn your alarm clock off. That buzzer is driving me nuts.” I turned off the alarm clock and sat up. “I had the strangest dream. It was so vivid that I could have sworn it was real. It was a singular experience. What an odd choice of words. Singular. I was inside the singularity, and all was one. What. You’re looking at me like I just said something really crazy.” My spouse just said, “I just had that same dream, too.”

Submitted by Robert Rietschel, April 21, 2023
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