

## Truth to Oneself

An excerpt from the teachings of Eugene Halliday

Our title "Through the Bible" may have two meanings. Firstly it may mean that the Bible can be read through in the order in which it is printed, book by book, from beginning to end. Secondly the word "through" may be taken as equivalent to "by means of". We have used this second meaning, not going in order from beginning to end of the whole Bible, but taking from it a given important idea which had some relevance to a given problem presented to us, and following this idea's implications wherever it may have led us.

To read the Bible through from beginning to end, without missing out any part of it, might give us some idea of a line of historical development, but it would involve reading many things for which we could find no immediate application in our daily lives. For instance, there are many long lists of names of individuals who gave birth to other individuals, as when we read that a certain family or tribe descended from an original ancestor considered to be of special importance. For example, from Jacob descended twelve sons who became fathers of twelve tribes, as we see named in the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis.

In the Bible **names of persons** are very important, because they bear meanings which indicate their **particular characteristics and probable behaviour**, as we see in this same chapter, where Jacob says of his first son, Reuben, that he shall not excel, that he is as unstable as water, and of his sons Simeon and Levi, that in anger they slew a man, and had instruments of cruelty in their habitations. Jacob foretells what shall befall his sons in the last days. To understand such things we must go deeply into the meanings of names given by parents to their children, for in the ancient world every name given signified some characteristic or quality of action-probability. Study of the meaning of names is very rewarding if done thoroughly, but it is very time-consuming, far more than most of us these days can afford.

Even today we tend to choose carefully the names we give to our children, for we feel this or that name more or less suitable for each individual. "Christian" names are given to Christian children in the hope that some of the qualities of the original bearer of the name will appear in the child so named. Most Jewish children are given a Hebrew name to continue a line of development of certain characteristics of a certain ancestor, and also a non-Hebrew name for use amongst non-Jews, to make it easier to relate to them. A large number of people are made uncomfortable by what they call "foreign-sounding" names. Feelings may run high when the question arises of how to name a new baby, and emotional bias against certain names may give rise to strong disagreement among people. In Hitler's Germany, to bear a Jewish name might lead to one's death. In England today racist feelings may be triggered by names of Hindu, Muslim and other origins. Most people's minds are reactive to words, and of words names are very important

A lesson we can all afford is that behind all the various names of different nations stands the fact of the **common humanity of all**. In the ancient world travel was very slow, largely on human feet, or perhaps on donkey or camel. Few people could afford a chariot, which was a possession rather like a Rolls Royce today. Slow travel meant sparse inter-communication of peoples, so there was little need to understand different languages. Apart from governments there was hardly any communication between one nation and another. But travel today is not slow. We can have breakfast in one country, lunch in another and dinner in another. Language differences today are in the melting pot. Almost everyone has a smattering of other languages, and most people who holiday abroad acquire at least a working vocabulary of a language other than their native one.

More and more it will become necessary for all nations and peoples to realise their common humanity in order to make possible their working relationships in a continually accelerating world. Those who fail to make this adjustment will find that they have dropped out of the general mode of intercommunication of whole-world conscious individuals.

In the first chapter of the Book of Genesis, God says "Let there be light". "**Light**" is the Bible symbol for **consciousness** and **understanding**. Therefore we can translate these words, "God said, let there be conscious understanding". Light is not that which comes to us only from the sun or stars or various burning materials. It is also that which comes to us as a gift from the Divine Universal Mind, to enlighten us, to enable us to comprehend the meaning of the things of the world in which we live.

In the first verse of the Gospel of St John, it says, "In the beginning was the Word" and "The same was in the beginning with God". It is by means of **words** derived from the First Word that we are enabled to **order** our thoughts and so banish **chaos** from our minds. The first man named the animals and other things around him, and so began the ordering of them. The last man will likewise name and order the things in the Universe in which his larger life will be spent. Only insofar as he does this will chaos be kept at bay, for without words we cannot **differentiate** good from bad, the helpful from the unhelpful, the valuable from the worthless. Hence today there is a tremendous interest among the great thinkers in the study of words and their meanings. Finally only the **Hermeneut**, the true **interpreter** of words will be honoured above other men.

To become a true Hermeneut, a true interpreter of **words** and of the **things** and **events** and **relationships** these signify, one must **be true to oneself**. One cannot afford to misrepresent things to oneself. Misrepresentation is falsehood and lies, and these introduce chaos into our mind and soul.

"**To thine own self be true**" is the best advice anyone can give or receive. "Love God and thy neighbour as thyself" can be obeyed only if we tell ourself the truth about ourself. To tell ourself the truth, we first **see** the

truth in ourself. To tell the truth we must **observe** how we think and feel and will. We must **think truly**, that is, accurately and logically; logically because we must use **words** to tell ourselves what we are thinking. What we do not accurately put into words, we are not yet clear enough about. Also we must **feel sensitively** about what we are thinking. Feeling tells us whether a thought is **pleasant** or **unpleasant**, likeable or unlikeable. Feeling can tell us whether we have had pleasant or unpleasant experiences of the things we are thinking about. Feeling can leap in a moment over years of experience and find similar experiences in other times and places. Feeling can enslave us or release us, according to our degree of sensitivity. We need to remain in touch with our feeling sensitivity to be able to evaluate our experiences in terms of life-worthwhileness or the opposite. Also, when by feeling and thinking we have disclosed what is valuable in life, we need to exercise our capacity for **willing**. We need to be able to make ourselves **do** what we have discovered to be **most valuable**. This is less easy than at first sight may appear, for we have an **enemy**, the **inertia of our old established behaviour**. **Habits** sit very heavily on us, and often break our will to reform our actions. Special efforts are needed, or our old behaviours will persist.

It is clear that being true to oneself is not easy. In the world in which we live we are surrounded by untruths, from advertisers of commodities, from biased party politicians, and so on. We need to correct the untrue statements that we hear, **at the moment that we receive them**, or they may lodge in our mind and distort our own thinking. If we cannot correct them immediately, we should do so as soon as possible. It is a good practice at the end of the day to run over again in our mind the statements made to us during the day and check them for truth or falsity. This practice helps us to free our mind from misinterpretations, and so increases our capacity for being true to our own selves. **Truth to oneself is the precondition of truth to any other being**, whether a creature or the Supreme Creator Himself.

**Perfect interrelation** of one being with another depends on **each being true to the other**, and this **depends firstly on truth to oneself**. Without truth to oneself, truth to another is impossible, for what is misrepresented to oneself will be misrepresented to the other.

The world of Mammon, of materialistic greed, into which we are born, and in which we must spend our lives, is said to be in the grip of the devil, who is described as the adversary of God and Man, and as a liar and father of lies. The confidence trickster who tricks the unwary of their money or goods is a devil's disciple, doing the devil's lying work. Today most people doubt the existence of the devil as a definite person devoted to lies and evil deeds, but few have gone through life without encountering a liar or his works of misrepresentation.

People in general do not like to be lied to. We say people **in general, because professional liars and confidence-tricksters do not believe anything said to them by others**. They assume that, like themselves, most people tell lies, either consciously or unconsciously. They know that most people have **a self-image which they protect in any way available**, and they play on this untrue self-image, boosting it, lifting it as high as possible to unbalance the judgement of its owner. **Self-imagery is man's biggest enemy, for it causes him to hide himself from the knowledge of his real state of being**.

The books of the Bible have been written and collected together in order to show man, as in a mirror, what kind of being he is, and what kind of being he may become. If we were to take all the characteristics of all the people in the Bible, and say that all these are in each of us, we would not be wrong. Human beings are capable of all deeds of good and evil. The first human being, whom the Bible calls Adam, contained in himself a Godgiven **free will**. Contrary to God's advice, Adam **chose to know evil as well as good**, and from that **choice** humanity has been **committed to the path of knowledge of good and evil**.

Today we are still in the choosing position. There is evil in the world, and there is good. We need to become more conscious of this fact. Having been committed to the path of choice, we must teach ourselves to know more and more clearly what is good and what is evil. The **good** is that which leads us towards more **wholeness**. The **evil** is that which leads us to **disintegration**, in our own being and in our relations with every other being. Disintegration is corruption, the way to final and **total death**. **Wholeness is that state of perfect and complete integration of all parts of our being** which will confer on us the power to stand in all eternity in the state of the immortals, the great ones who, by their total committal of their souls to the truth, have earned for themselves, by divine grace, the ability to stand in the presence of their Creator in **perfect love** for Him. These are the undying Ones, the immortals whose souls **internally** ever sing the praises of their mighty, glorious Creator and Heavenly Father.

Whatever purposes God may have in His eternal Wisdom, whatever worlds He may in the future bring to be, these immortals will be with Him as His chief instruments and wise executors of His Divine Will. To become one of the band of immortals, one thing is needful; **true love of God and His children**. It is within each one of us to join the immortals; whether we do so **depends on what we choose for ourselves, life or death**. God recommends life. It is for each one of us individually to accept fully His Divine Offer and so to receive the promised reward of our acceptance. Then Jesus will not have died for us in vain.

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