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The Road to Attainment Series

Life is often symbolized as a road. We begin the journey when in birth we first see the light of day. The road continues on until in the evening shadows our steps become feeble and weary.

We begin now a Series of Six Lessons which will help you as we travel the Road of Life together. The six studies are especially important for they deal with the basic needs of our personality for happiness and completion.

These are the themes which will offer you further opportunity for growth and advancement.

THE ROAD TO FAITH
THE ROAD TO WISDOM
THE ROAD TO HAPPINESS

#297 THE ROAD TO POWER
#298 THE ROAD TO INNER PEACE
THE ROAD TO MATURITY

It is the hope and prayer of your Instructor that these Lessons will add to the sum total of your understanding of life, and of how you may live triumphantly.

LESSON ONE

THE ROAD TO FAITH

Mayan Revelation Number 293

BELIEF IN A DIVINE BEING	SPIRITUAL AWARENESS
MORAL VALUE	CONCLUSION
UNSELFISH SERVICE	AFFIRMATION

BELOVED PERFECTOR:

It is essential for us to have faith in something or someone in order to live. Not that we would fail to eat or breathe if we were without faith, but we would go mad if there were nothing upon which we could depend. Often our faith is centered upon a person whom we love. We receive strength by the confidence and trust which is placed in us by the one who claims our respect and devotion.

There are people who profess to have no faith in a Divine Being, but they put their trust in something. They accept the laws of the Universe as dependable. They live with confident assurance that the sun will rise and set on time, that the law of gravity is dependable, and that air can be safely breathed.

Pavlov conducted experiments with dogs which led him to the conclusion that even animals become mentally disturbed if they cannot depend upon natural law. The dogs were conditioned to determined habits of behavior. When the pattern was changed the dogs were unable to adjust. They became neurotic, then completely wild. Man is more than an animal. His nature demands that he have confidence - and a certain amount of trust - in something or someone in the world in which he lives.

The basic question is not whether we have faith, but in what we believe, in what or in whom we are willing to place our trust. As you begin this Lesson you need to recognize that you already have faith. The first step is to recognize your need for faith. We then will move upward along the road as we consider the characteristics of faith as it has been expressed in religion.

Religion is not identical with faith, but all religion assumes that the believer has faith. You may want to consider religion broadly, as the term is applied to every type of belief. We are not concerned here with religion as reflected in a creed, a ritual, or a church service, but rather with every impulse to worship.

No primitive people, however far removed from the stream of culture, has

failed to practice some kind of religion. Altars and statues of ancient gods crumble into dust, but sufficient relics of religious practices remain to indicate that every nation and people held fast to some sort of belief in a supernatural being.

In this Lesson we are seeking a clear road to a faith that answers the deepest needs of our hearts and minds. We are interested in the attitudes and convictions that will dispel a feeling of loneliness, and that will enable us to accept the power by which we can live triumphantly.

Keep an open mind as you embark on this study. Try to avoid the temptation to thrust your particular creed or dogma into the discussion. In all probability you will end the Lesson with a greater appreciation for the faith you already possess, and by which you have lived, and the values of this Lesson will be great if you are willing to accept the role of a pilgrim who is treading the Road to Faith. On this journey you can discover new and deeper reasons for confidence in God's love and care than you have ever known in your life.

PRAYER

Eternal God, we walk this day the Road to Faith. Give us wisdom and insight into Thy nature and truth. May our minds be kindled to appreciate the deeper evidences of Thy love for all Thy children. May we find strength through Faith so we can live each day with a consciousness that Thy grace is sufficient for all our needs. In Jesus' name. Amen.



BELIEF IN A DIVINE BEING

THE road we must traverse if we are to gain a complete and satisfying Faith has several distinct parts. They are essential elements in the acceptance of any religion as that religion is proclaimed and practiced in our land. They must be of concern not only to those who profess to have no faith, but also to those who are eagerly seeking for a more satisfying foundation for their beliefs.

In the first part of the journey we are called upon to affirm our belief that the world in which we live is the creation of a Divine Being rather than the product of chance forces in the Universe. It is this assumption that constitutes the basic difference between the attitude of those who have Faith and the attitude of those who boast that there is no rhyme or reason in the Universe.

For our information, and to enable us to understand the problems of the unbeliever, it is necessary to consider the arguments that are advanced by those who declare there is no evidence for belief in a Divine Creator as the source of all life.

This is what they say: "Our Earth is a product of mere chance, nothing else. Millions of years ago a wandering star happened to pass near our Sun. By gravitational force it drew from the Sun a huge mass of flaming matter. In the

cold of interstellar space that flaming matter gradually cooled, solidified and assumed spherical form. Into it were swept countless meteors and meteorites, and so the Earth came into existence. In the ages that followed, a chance series of events initiated what we know as the process of evolution. That process brought into existence the plants, then the prehistoric dinosaurs, the birds, and finally Man. Thus, human history developed, but eventually there will occur some cosmic disaster. Then everything on the Earth will be subject to chaos, and not a trace of life will remain. At the heart of things there stands blind chance, nothing more. The course of history reveals a series of meaningless circumstances, not the fulfillment of a preconceived and coherent purpose. It was by chance that the Earth came into being, by chance that life emerged on the planet. It will be by chance, working of physical forces, that the Earth and all its living forms may eventually be destroyed."

This is an impossible, unreasonable picture of Creation! Remember, however, that a countless host of people act as if it were true, even if they do not believe it. There is no virtue in believing that there is a purposeful Hand guiding the Universe if you do not live as if this were the central fact of life.

Now let us consider the clear and unmistakable evidence as to why Faith in a Divine Being is both necessary and intelligent. This is the argument:

"Our world is NOT the product of sheer chance: Rather it is the planned creation of an unseen Divine Mind whom men call by the name of 'God'. Millions of years ago, God conceived the idea of a world that would assume its form as a result of an infinitely slow growth process. We realize that this process reaches far beyond the emergence of living forms. Under God's guiding hand a wandering star swept close to the Sun, and by God's law of gravity the star drew from the Sun a huge mass of flaming matter. In the cold reaches of space the matter cooled, congealed, and finally formed the core of our present Earth. Divine purpose and plan shaped the physical features of our Earth - the seas and the lakes, the mountains and the fertile plains. Subsequently, plant life appeared, followed by the forms of primitive life. Eventually Man was created as the highest evidence of God's purpose.

"Man's environment, Man's body, and even Man's thoughts have been changing with the unfolding of the purposes of God. All of these things happened, and still happen, not by chance but in accordance with God's will and purpose. They occurred, not because they happened to, but because God wanted them to. At the heart of the Universe there stands a Divine Mind - and Power - and Will. History gives eloquent reminders of His unfolding plan.

"And what about the world today? While granting that it has now fallen victim to many ills, men and women of faith still face the future with confidence. They are convinced that this is God's world, and that all human beings are God's children, and that, in spite of Man's weaknesses and failures, the creative process of which we are both products and co-directors, will not end in chaos."

Take plenty of time to consider these clear reasons why it is imperative for us to affirm Faith in a Divine Being. You will take the first steps on the

Road to Faith when this belief becomes so much a part of your thinking and of your conviction that you walk with confidence, knowing that the world and its future is in the hands of the One who is both Creator and Sustainer of life.



MORAL VALUE

THE second step on the Road to Faith involves a willingness to recognize and to do that which is morally right. Throughout the ages the men and women who possessed a radiant Faith were those who were aware of moral values and were guided by them.

About two hundred and fifty years ago there lived in New England a boy whose name was Jonathan Edwards. During his childhood Jonathan received unusual religious training which laid the foundation for a virile Faith. As a boy of ten, sitting at the kitchen table in the parsonage in Windsor, Connecticut, Jonathan drew up for himself a long list of resolutions. At the beginning stood these words: "Being sensible that without God's help I am unable to do anything, I humbly entreat God to enable me to keep these resolutions." Then follow the resolutions - seventy of them. Note how moving some of them are, couched in the stiff phrases of long ago:

"Resolved: Never to allow the least measure of fretting or uneasiness to my father and mother because of my actions.

Resolved: To suffer no outward effect of such fretting or uneasiness in my own life, even to the least alteration of my speech or the least motion of my eye.

Resolved: Never to lose one moment of time, but to improve every moment in the most profitable way I can.

Resolved: Never to do anything I would be afraid to do were I in the last hour of life.

Resolved: At all times to live as I think best when I am in my most devout frames, and when I have the clearest notion of the things of the Gospel."

Ask yourself whether you know people who make a comparable effort to hold themselves firmly and steadily at their best? Inquire earnestly whether you have a sincere desire to learn what is right, and to do it. An awareness of moral values, and devotion to those standards, is a way to Faith. No one can fail to recognize the close connection between Jonathan Edwards' firm and strong faith, and his willingness to walk in the path which his reading and study indicated was right.

Jesus of Nazareth left no doubt in the minds of his followers that moral conviction is a way to faith. One day he said very quietly: "Blessed are

the pure in heart, for they shall see God." He wanted people in every age to be aware that, while ritual and creed and traditional forms have their place, acquaintanceship with the Heavenly Father calls for purity of life.

It is not surprising that carelessness concerning moral standards tends to make God seem both unreal and unnecessary. While scorning God's power often indicates that the attacker is seeking ways to justify or excuse his personal conduct, it can be said, also, that a positive Faith is a product of devotion to high ideals.

You are privileged to know God. The Road to Faith is wide open before you. Loyalty to the best you know, faithfulness to the standards of purity and honesty - these constitute a well-paved passage on the Road to Faith. Walk every day in the light of the best you know, and you yourself will give witness that God is real. You will know Him as your Heavenly Father.



UNSELFISH SERVICE

THE third part of the Road to Faith involves a forgetfulness of self and a willingness to plan and work for others. We again look to the Master Teacher for direction, for Jesus said: "Not everyone that saith 'Lord, Lord' shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." On numerous occasions Jesus indicates that we should serve because many need our help, but here in the seventh Chapter of Matthew, He is pointing out the fact that service is a means by which we come to know God.

Walking the pathway to Faith demands an extraordinary willingness to be helpful to others. Never forget that most human beings will, on occasion, be kind. Virtually all parents will make sacrifices for their children. Many people feel a natural prompting to help their friends - particularly when the friends are in need or in trouble.

This element on the Road to Faith demands that we give not only to those who are nearest and dearest to us, but to those who have no right to ask for our support. You are acquainted with certain individuals whose kindness reaches out to include people beyond the circle of their own home, or their own group of friends. They have the capacity to forget their personal desires in an endeavor to do their utmost for those who have no real claim upon them.

The point you will want to remember is that this unselfish type of service is a means by which God becomes real to the seeker. The names of Francis of Assisi, Ignatius Loyola, Florence Nightingale, and David Livingstone are always listed with those who possessed an extraordinary sense of God's presence in their lives. Each of them demonstrated a willingness to live sacrificially for others. This devotion was the key to their strong Faith. You will note this principle in the experience of some of the people you know. Men and women who give of themselves to help others or to aid the community are often people who reflect a confident Faith in their lives day by day.

A century ago there lived a woman who was as quiet and obscure as anyone you will ever know. She lived in a small house near Cape Fear River in North Carolina. She had a son who was erratic and troublesome. Her problems seemed solved when the boy was appointed to the United States Military Academy, but added disappointment came to her when he left school after a few unhappy months. He went to Europe with the intention of becoming an artist. He lived carelessly, and became ill. Then he wrote to ask his mother to come to London to care for him.

Not many years later the boy became one of the sensations of the artistic world. Friends who visited his studio rarely caught a glimpse of his mother. In fact, many of his close associates did not know that he had a mother who lived with him. Then one day his model failed to appear and the boy asked his mother to sit for him. She had no fine clothes, but she tidied up a bit. He put a lace cap upon her head. She sat where she was told, folded her weary hands, and rested.

When the portrait was finally completed the artist gave it a queer name. He called it "Arrangement in Gray and Black." But the people who came in ever increasing numbers to view the portrait gave it another name. They were fascinated by the face which showed such repose, peace, and confident Faith. The picture was renamed to become known to millions of people as "A Portrait of Whistler's Mother."

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What was the source of her Faith? Little is known of her devotional habits or practices, but much is known of her unselfish service. She gave of herself without thinking of what she preferred or wanted. As she walked that road she came to possess a radiant Faith which all the world recognizes and honors.

To walk the Road to Faith demands that you give of yourself to help others. Seek out opportunities every day to be of assistance to someone in need. Help to strengthen the moral and spiritual fibre of your home and community. As you give of yourself you will learn in time that the end result is a pearl beyond price. You will come to know God. Your Faith will become vital and real.



SPIRITUAL AWARENESS

THE final characteristic of those who complete the journey on the Road to Faith is much more difficult to define. But it is evident that those men and women who possess spiritual awareness are vividly conscious of God's reality and nearness.

The highest level of Faith is that in which belief is made certain through experience. You need not be dissuaded from embarking upon this portion of the Road to Faith because you are acquainted with certain individuals for whom such an awareness assumes abnormal and erratic forms. The assurance of God's presence can be a thoroughly normal and intelligent part of life.

Consider three outstanding scholars of the Twentieth Century who found vital Faith in experience. The late Professor William Pratt was an outstanding psychologist. He wrote: "At times God is very real to me, nearer and more real than any human being. I feel I am actually in His presence. Sometimes this feeling comes when I am facing a great sorrow or a great fear; sometimes, on the contrary, it comes when I am particularly happy. As (for example) when I am alone outdoors, or when I have been reading something which has touched me deeply by its beauty or its truth. Then I have a quick, glad sense that God is near. When these experiences come they bring me a deep peace and a clearer understanding of life."

Listen to the words of William James, an eminent professor at Harvard University, and one of the outstanding pioneers in the endeavor to understand the mind of Man. He wrote: "My consciousness of God is, to be sure, faint and indefinite. But I am aware of it as a positive part of my experience. If it should fade entirely there would be a great void, a great hush, in my life."

Consider, also, the testimony of H. G. Wells. Often Mr. Wells has been regarded as an unbeliever, but note his challenging words: "At times - in the silence of the night, and at rare and lonely moments - I have a sort of communion with Something Great that is not myself. Then the universal-scheme-of-things has on me the effect of a sympathetic person, and my communion with it takes on the quality of fearless worship."

It is your privilege to know the Divine Presence in your life. Your experience will not be exactly like that of others. It will be unique. You will know that God is a certain fact because His reality has been proved in your own life!

What are the ways by which you can cultivate this experience, or by which you can put yourself in the position to receive it? It will sometimes come to you as you thoughtfully read the Bible, particularly the matchless teachings of Jesus, or the devotional passages in the Psalms. Participation in a well-planned service of worship in a beautiful sanctuary will often serve as the means to bring God close to you. Prayer - especially written prayer - will give you this personal consciousness of God.

Beyond these practices, which are a part of formal religion, there are several other experiences that make God a part of our daily lives. Meditation on the beauty of Nature - flowers, or rolling hills, or a wave-washed shore often creates the atmosphere in which God becomes as real as any earthly friend. The beauty of art or music fulfills this function for many of us to whom these areas of culture have special meaning. You need to walk the road before you, alert to the influences that press upon you, to have God's nearness revealed. Then you will reap the harvest of Faith through the avenue of experience.

Summarize for yourself the possibilities of Faith through experience by considering words which the late H. G. Wells wrote in his book, "Mr. Britling Sees It Through". He said: "For the first time in his life Mr. Britling became aware of the Presence about which he had heard so often. It was so close that it seemed to be in his hands, in his brain, behind his eyes. He had been groping for a long time in the darkness, thinking of himself as alone amid rocks and pitfalls and pitiless things. Now suddenly a Hand, a firm strong Hand, seemed to touch

his. His thinking about God had been like someone who has found an empty house. Then as the visitor makes his lonely, curious explorations, he suddenly hears - dear and friendly - the voice of the Master coming in."

This is your privilege as you venture into each new day. You can know the Presence of God in your mind and heart. Advance up the road which has led you to Faith.

Intellectually face the signs of God's purpose in the Universe.

Be true to high moral values.

Claim the joy that comes from helping others.

Then attain the summit by allowing God's presence to fill both your mind and heart.

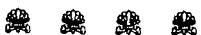
If you fail to accept the way of experience you will lose a part of the grandeur of life which God has prepared for you. So travel the Road to Faith.



CONCLUSION

YOU want a faith so satisfying that you will be able to live triumphantly, whatever may be the nature of your hardships. This privilege of certainty is available to you as you tread the Road to Faith.

Don't be discouraged if the way sometimes is hard. Don't halt and turn back because the mist and fog of doubt seems to obscure the Path. If you persevere on the journey, you will become a person who faces the world with a Faith not only sufficient to meet your personal needs, but one that offers hope for the world in which you live.



AFFIRMATION

I will walk the Road to Faith with devotion and with confidence.

I will accept the hardships of the quest, whatever they may be, and I will persevere until my Faith becomes worthy of the God Who is both the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe.

Blessings,

Your Instructor.