

**Encounters with the philosophy of the "Watchtower Bible and Tract Society" -
"Jehovah's Witnesses" by Steve Day 1996**

The first problem to be encountered in the JW philosophy, is their denial of the existence of the eternal soul or spirit that God implanted within each one of us. This denial can be seen to be in direct contradiction with the Holy Writings of the Bible.

Job 32.8 It is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that makes him understand.

1Cor 3.16 Do you not know that you are God's Temple and that God's spirit dwells in you.

20. O SON OF SPIRIT!

My claim on thee is great, it cannot be forgotten. My grace to thee is plenteous, it cannot be veiled. My love has made in thee its home, it cannot be concealed. My light is manifest to thee, it cannot be obscured.

19. O SON OF THE WONDROUS VISION!

I have breathed within thee a breath of My own Spirit, that thou mayest be My lover. Why hast thou forsaken Me and sought a beloved other than Me?

Baha'u'llah

2Kgs 2:2-4 The Lord liveth as thy soul liveth. (Elisha to Elijah).

Luke 17.20 The Kingdom of God is within you.

James 4.5 He [God] yearns jealously over the spirit which He has made to dwell in us.

2Tim 1.7 God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love, and of self discipline.

1Cor 13:8 Love will never come to an end.

1Pet 3.3 Let not yours be the outward adorning...but let it be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit.

Pslms 31.6 Into Thy hands I commit my spirit.

Gen 35:18 As her soul was in departing (Rachel - Jacob's wife), for she died.

These, and many more like them, are one and all references to that unfading inner self, the unseen soul or spirit, which does not perish along with the physical body. This is the

life which Jesus told us, cannot be killed by the sword.

This unseen reality; this person within; this breath of God's spirit; this spirit of love which God has placed within each one of us, is an unseen reality, and as the scriptures themselves testify, "...the things which are unseen are eternal."

2Cor 4.16 Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day...for the things that are seen are transient, but the things which are unseen are eternal.

Ad to this the statement - by Moses - in the book of Deuteronomy, which in unambiguous language states that He lives forever.

Deut 32.40: For I lift up My head to heaven and swear as I live forever.

And in the book of Psalms:

Psalms 22.26: Your heart shall live forever.

It is quite apparent, that we all possess a certain non-physical-something, which is our very being, something which is above and beyond any physical injury we may incur, or temporarily suffer. How often have we seen the character, personality and spirit of a person strengthened by a disabling physical injury.

Will this unseen self perish along with my body? What will become of My feelings, my hopes, my dreams, my knowledge, the love I feel for humanity, the love I feel for my Creator, my yearning to reach for Him and my hunger for unity peace and justice?

It is totally against the Scriptures, not to mention human reasoning, to suggest that life is concerned only with the physical reality alone. Indeed the Scriptures themselves are totally concerned with the development of this spiritual, "unseen" life and the attainment of spiritual attributes. How totally illogical then to suggest that this unseen reality, this spirit of man, will be extinguished at his physical death.

1 Cor 4:16...What is seen is transient, what is unseen is eternal.

1 Cor 13:8 Love will never come to an end.

As the J.W.s have not - within their teachings - placed any emphasis on the all important eternal life of the spirit, they have misconstrued the Biblical terms "Life" and "Death" to be referring to a "physical" life and death. If the Holy Scriptures are scanned with the eye of discernment, it will be clearly seen that, "Life" refers to an individual acquiring the goodly attributes of a spiritual existence; being "born again" , not into the physical world,

but into the eternal "unseen" Kingdom of God. "Life" in this sense denotes nearness to God.

"Death", in the Bible, signifies one who is distanced from God and His Prophets; one who disregards the goodly attributes and prefers the transient pleasures of the physical realm.

The Baha'i Scriptures amply explain that the human spirit within all is eternal. Even those who are far removed from God have an existence and will continue to exist. However, in comparison with the spiritually alive and near ones, they can be termed "dead".

When Jesus referred to the relatives of one of His would be followers as, "the dead burying the dead", He clearly refers to death in the spiritual sense. For these people were engaged in the physical act of burying and were, therefore, very much alive - in the physical sense! There can be no doubt whatever that Jesus intended the term "death" to be seen as an indication of their spiritual separation from the "living ones" - their distance from God.

Had they possessed the necessary wisdom, compassion and humility of the spiritual "life", they would have recognised Him for Who He was, and followed Him, whilst relinquishing their concern with this material world.

It is essential, if we are to fully understand the beautiful symbolic language of the Bible, to develop (by means of an individual investigation of the Scriptures, coupled with the invaluable assistance of prayer) an insight into the use and meaning of these terms and allusions. We must not allow ourselves to be lulled into a literal and shallow acceptance of a profound and beautiful subject.

The J.W.s will often quote the following passages in support of their argument that the individual does not possess an immortal spirit, and that nothing of man exists beyond that which is physical.

Eccl 9.5: The living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all.

The meaning of this is as follows:

Those who are spiritually alive are conscious that their physical bodies will decay and cease to function, but as Paul states in his second letter to the Corinthians:

2Cor 4.18: We know that if the earthly frame that houses us today is demolished we possess a building which God has provided in a house not made by human hands, eternal and in heaven.

This knowledge of the eternal life of the spiritual kingdom of God is not given to the spiritually dead. Therefore it is said: "but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all." That is to say, they have no knowledge of the life of the spirit.

When Jesus referred to the learned of His Day, the Pharisees and Sadducees as "the blind leading the blind", He was referring to just this inability to see anything beyond a literal interpretation of the Holy Writings. Even though they had studied the Scriptures for many years, and held themselves in great esteem regarding their knowledge of symbolic meanings and prophecy, yet still they were blind to the real inner meanings of God's Word. This blindness led them to deny Jesus, and eventually crucify Him.

Another oft quoted passage is:

Ez 18:4 The soul that is sinning - it itself will die.

Once the obvious meaning of such terms as, "life" and "death" - as mentioned within the Holy Scriptures - is understood to be referring to the comparative life and death of the spirit, then the meaning of the above passage is clear and obvious.

The soul that is "sinning" refers to an individual who distances himself from God by committing that which God has ordained as unworthy. Such an individual will experience a spiritual death. However, the soul that remains firm in God's Covenant and obeys His teachings will never see such a death, as Jesus Himself explains. "If anyone obeys My teaching he will never see death.....My sheep listen to My voice give them eternal life, and they shall never die.....No-one who lives and has faith in Me shall ever die.....In very truth I tell you whoever heeds what I say.....has already passed from death to life. "

Those who choose to follow the teachings and admonitions of God have passed from death to life, they will never see death. Once again it should be clear that this is not a reference to the death of the physical body, which needs must will perish and will see death. No! Jesus is clearly referring to the unseen soul or spirit that dwells within each one of us.

The next obstacle we encounter in the J.W. philosophy is the literal interpretation of such Biblical terms as: "Eternal life" and "Resurrection" as meaning a resurrection of the physical body of man to eternal physical life, and this upon a perfect material earth after the destruction of the old world at, "Armageddon".

This is quite an extraordinary claim when you consider the whole underlying purpose of the Holy Writings would appear to be a "denouncing" of the physical world. And quite contrary to attaching any importance to physical reality, the Holy Writings teach detachment from the physical world, denies the importance of the flesh, and states unambiguously that the physical seen aspect of man is transient - not eternal!

1Jn Do not set your affections on this world.

1Cor 7:31 For the fashion of this world passeth away.

Jms 4:4 Surely you know that love of the world means enmity to God? Whoever chooses to be the worlds friend makes him-self God's enemy.

Jn 6.63 The flesh profits nothing.

1Cor 15.50 Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, How can the perishable inherit the imperishable.....What is seen is transient, what is unseen is eternal."

Again and again the emphasis is on the eternal spiritual world and away from this transient material world. How could the purpose of the Bible be interpreted to mean we should look forward to a physical life in a physical world, when all the time the scriptures urge detachment from this world and attachment to the unseen spiritual Kingdom of God?

Indeed the Bible, and every major religious writing, urges us during our relatively short life on this planet, to acquire spiritual attributes: knowledge of God; kindliness; compassion; justice; peace. We are urged to shed our allegiance to the physical world and the physical body, that we may pass unhindered from this troublesome abode and step into the eternal and luminous spiritual kingdom of love.

And now we arrive at a very difficult crossing on the path of our investigation, for here we confront an issue which has been an instrument of much bloodshed and argument throughout the long history of our development. An issue which has ingrained itself, to some extent, within the conscious mind of each and every one of us, and that is the issue of Satan -the Devil.

Whether we refer to Satan, Lucifer, Old Nick or Beelzebub, we are personifying evil, that is, we are attributing all the evil thoughts and deeds that exist in the world, to one being.

It is a popular notion, and has been for many thousands of years, that a sinister and scheming beast is in existence, who has pledged an unremitting war against our Creator and all His people. It has even been suggested that God Himself created this heinous beast to tempt and distract the people.

If we are to establish, for ourselves, the reality of this concept, then once again we must place aside those preconceived opinions, myths, legends and traditions, and with an uncluttered mind and free from bias, examine the substance of these ideas as they appear in the Holy Text.

The first thing we should note, and this runs contrary to our acquired notions of evil

spirits, is that God created no thing, being, or substance that could enter into a person and defile their thoughts, character and deeds. This idea is supported by Jesus Himself in the New Testament in the following manner.

Mk 7:15 There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

Matthew 9:4: And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?

Mark 7:18-23 And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, [it] cannot defile him; And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

Matthew 15:19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

Matthew 12 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

We are going to have to face up to it! If we attach any credence to what is being stated in the Bible, there is no external manifestation of evil responsible for our evil thoughts and actions, rather it is from our own hearts that such thoughts and deeds spring.

Romans 8:6: To be controlled by human nature results in death; to be controlled by the Spirit results in life and peace. And so a person becomes an enemy of God when he is controlled by his human nature.

Romans 8:13: For if you live according to your human nature, you are going to die.

It can be seen from the above, that the enemy of God is he that remains attached to the prompting of his own desires. The evil are they who, controlled by their human nature, shun the spiritual attributes of the children of God.

There is also a popular notion amongst J.W.s and other Christian sects, that "Satan", "Lucifer" or "the Devil", is a god, in his own right, at war with the God of creation and His people. Once again this idea has little or no grounding in scripture.

Isa 43:10 Before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me.

Isa 44:6 I am the first, and I am the last; and beside Me there is no God.

Isa 44:8 Is there a God beside Me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.

Isa 45:22 Look unto Me, and be ye saved...for I am God, and there is none else.

And in the New Testament.

Mark 12:32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:

Ephesians 4:6 One God and Father of all, who [is] above all, and through all, and in you all.

No! There is no other God in existence. There is no evil entity, no beast or dragon or hoard of demons waiting to possess us. The enemy is our own human nature and attachment to this physical world. This theme is explained extensively in the Baha'i Writings of which the next page is but a few selected extracts.

BAHAI WRITINGS

All the sorrow and the grief that exist come from the world of matter - the spiritual world bestows only the joy!

`Abdu'l-Baha

Every good thing is of God, and every evil thing is from yourselves.

Baha'u'llah

Know verily that knowledge is of two kinds: Divine and Satanic. The one welleteth out from the fountain of divine inspiration; the other is but a reflection of vain and obscure thoughts. The source of the former is God...the latter the whisperings of selfish desire.

The evil spirit, Satan or whatever is interpreted as evil, refers to the lower nature in man. This baser nature is symbolised in various ways...God has never created an evil spirit; all such ideas and nomenclature are symbols express-ing the mere human or earthly nature of man.

`Abdu'l-Baha

Know verily that the purpose underlying all these symbolic terms and abstruse allusions, which emanate from the Revea-lers of God's Holy Cause, hath been to test and prove the peoples of the world; that thereby the earth of the pure and illumined hearts may be known from the barren and perishable soil. From time immemorial such hath been the way of God amidst His creatures and to this testify the records of the sacred Books.

Baha'u'llah

Wert thou to cleanse the mirror of thy heart from the dust of malice, thou wouldst apprehend the meaning of the symbo-lic terms revealed by the all-embracing Word of God made manifest in every dispensation and would discover the mysteries of divine knowledge.

Baha'u'llah

As to the question, "That `Abdu'l-Baha hath said to some of the believers that evil never exists, nay rather, it is a non-existent thing": This is but truth, inasmuch as the greatest evil is (man's) going astray and being veiled from Truth. Error is lack of guidance; darkness is lack of light; ignorance is lack of knowledge; falsehood is lack of truthfulness; blindness is lack of sight; and deafness is lack of hearing. Therefore, error, blindness, deafness, and ignorance are non-existent things. If we say that according to the text of the Bible, "God hardened Pharoeh's heart that he might not believe in Moses", this signifies that, verily, He did not soften his heart. And when we wish to say that God hath not guided a certain one of His servants, that this would be interpreted (by people) that God led him astray. The darkness spoken of in the Bible as being created by God signifieth that, verily, God hath not caused light to shine; inasmuch as there is no light, there will be darkness; where there is no sight, there will be blindness; where there is no life, there will be death; where there is no riches, there will be poverty; and where there is no knowledge, there will be ignorance.

Consequently, it is proven by indisputable argument and clear explanation that, verily, evils are non-existent, but people have not understood the meaning of the verses of the Bible

`Abdu'l-Baha