



*What a curious phenomenon it is  
That you can get men to die for the liberty of the world  
Who will not make the little sacrifice  
That is needed to free themselves  
From their own individual bondage.*

— BRUCE BARTON

## The Ultimate Proposition



Larry sat in thought, his head spinning. Junie's words had opened up a completely new perspective on history. The world was little more than a vast edifice of pseudogeometry built on false axioms. The very pillars that supported societies and systems of belief lay crumbled at his feet. "That explains so much," Larry said. "All the wars throughout history . . . the Crusades . . . the Inquisition . . . the Salem witch hunts . . . the McCarthy hearings . . . the constant ethnic bickering. Bloody conflicts alive for decades, flaring for a while, then lying low, smoldering, like underground fires."

Larry paused for a long while as a map of the world gradually formed in his mind. One by one, portions of the map were engulfed by a blood-red ooze that bubbled up from beneath the surface of the outlined territories. He slowly pronounced the name of each country as its color changed. "Northern Ireland, Spain, Kashmir, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Indonesia, Israel, Palestine, Cyprus, Iraq, Macedonia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Kurdistan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Russia, Chechnya, Serbia, Colombia, Ecuador, Albania, Algeria, Tunisia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Egypt, Mauritania, Zimbabwe, Côte d'Ivoire, Rwanda, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, Sudan, Burundi, the Congo, South Africa, East Timor, Tibet, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh. . . . My God, does the list ever end?"

“It seems like the dark side has always been well entrenched. And we—who claim to wear white hats as we sit in judgment and dispense retribution in the name of God and decency and democracy—are we any different?”

“You always ask interesting questions, Larry. I’ll let you work that one out for yourself. Just keep in mind that, at the egoic level, righteous indignation is the most powerful and damaging force of all. Both sides draw on it to feed their frenzy. The illusion you experience is dualistic in nature; polarity is the basis of its existence. So where’s the gain in deciding someone is right in an ideological dispute? Polarity and peace, like two solid objects in your world, cannot occupy the same place at the same time. The current state of affairs is the only possible outcome.”

“Then how do we get out of this mess?” Larry asked.

Junie chuckled at the seriousness of Larry’s tone, “An inspiring inscription printed on a T-shirt—one of your more expressive art forms—says, ‘Fighting for peace is like fucking for virginity.’ The problems you’ve outlined are momentous. They’re also so hopelessly entangled that they can no longer be resolved at the level at which they were created. Every conceivable solution has been attempted on political, diplomatic, economic, social, military, religious, and humanitarian fronts. Yet the situation only grows more critical. Remarkably, despite the obvious failure of all previous efforts, the collective response is to throw even more gasoline on the blaze, hoping that the sheer fury of effort will drown the fire.

“If you expect to lead the world to greener pastures, you might consider a different approach.”

“I’m definitely open to suggestions,” Larry said.

“Good. Let’s open up another avenue of exploration. A world in tension is no more than a planet-sized expression of the same phenomenon in microcosm—you know, ‘as above, so

below.’ Nations are at war because their ideologies conflict. Ideologies draw fuel from the fear engendered by the gulf separating the haves from the have-nots. This fear drives individuals into protective factions—gangs, cults, and paranoia. The paranoia springs from growing up in unstable families, where children are subject to abuse or—even worse—neglect. And what do you suppose is the underlying cause of the breakdown in modern families?”

“I don’t know.”

“Of course you do. Just go deeper. Follow the trail to the lowest common denominator.”

“The individual?”

“Not *the* individual, Larry, *an* individual—*you*. For this planet to progress beyond the energetic cesspool created by its collective unconscious, *you* have to move past your concept of ‘us and them.’ Problems created by separation are not resolved by more separation. It’s time to move in the opposite direction and embrace unity. Humans unfortunately think they can look to others for their own completion. They wish for perfect relationships, failing to realize that neither party can possibly give more to another than it first gives to itself.

“With this fact in mind, I’d like to introduce you to another region of your inner world. The powerful parts of yourself who dwell there are the ones you’ll need most for the next stage of your journey. But before we invite them in, tell me, what strikes you as the most remarkable common quality of the parts comprising your shadow?”

The encounter with his dark side was still fresh in Larry’s mind. The answer was not difficult. “Three things, actually: their destructive nature, their ability to focus on an objective with absolute certainty, and—maybe the most impressive—their sheer power.”

“Excellent answer,” Junie said. “Imagine what would happen if you allowed them free rein.”

“My God,” Larry gasped. “I’d be in jail—or dead—within a week.”

Junie laughed at his vehemence. “Don’t worry, I’m not suggesting you do it. I just wanted to underscore what you said. If you can move past the view of your shadow parts as negative, you will see them for what they really are: vast reserves of untapped energy. Once you embrace them and reclaim them, they will willingly share their assets. Just imagine the possibilities!”

“No way, José! Forget about it. Those bad dudes stay under lock and key. I make no pact with the devil.”

“Listen to that,” Junie said. “Such intensity. Good. I’d like to meet the part of you who just appeared.” She asked Larry to choose a spot from which it would like to speak. Without a moment’s hesitation, he went right to where his Witness/Protector had sat earlier. “Ah, welcome back. I see you have some strong views on this matter.”

“First of all, I’m not *back*, because I never left. There’s no way I’d leave Larry alone for a minute. And what’s this crap about asking Larry to cozy up to his dark side?”

“Thank you for reminding me of the important role you play in Larry’s life. What do you think might happen if Larry embraced some of his shadow?”

The Witness/Protector personality took over Larry’s body completely. It glared defiantly at Junie as if challenging her for control of Larry’s psyche. “You don’t make my job easier by opening up this can of worms. When his Playful Rebel called Larry a ‘woosie-wimp,’ it wasn’t far off the mark. Larry’s got a lot of wonderful qualities, but I don’t think managing a herd of wild, angry horses is one of them. He’d get sliced and diced so

completely, you wouldn't be able to reassemble the pieces. When it comes to his disowned parts, we're best off letting sleeping dogs lie."

Junie thanked the Witness/Protector for its input and its intense loyalty to Larry. She then had Larry move back to his Aware Ego's position and experience the powerful, shielding energy of the Witness/Protector from there. Following Junie's instruction, Larry moved the energy of this dominant, primary part of himself into his Aware Ego, then away. Within a few minutes he fully identified its signature so that he would be able to recognize its presence whenever it appeared. It became clear to him that this voice, in the absence of an active Aware Ego, was the prime arbiter of many of his preferences and avoidances. "Larry, how do you think your Witness/Protector keeps your shadow side in abeyance?"

"It jumps in whenever I get too close?"

"Yes, it does do that!" Junie said "But I'm asking about something else. Given their sheer collective power, what does your Witness/Protector have to do to keep them from breaking free and overwhelming you?"

"I don't know. But it sure must be a full-time job."

"That it is. Because you have not yet found a safe way to own these personalities, your Witness/Protector must be on guard even when you sleep. This is exhausting and expensive work."

"What do you mean by 'expensive'?" Larry asked.

"Interesting question. It requires us to delve briefly into the nature of your existence. Let's keep it simple and say that at the very core of your being, you consist of particles of Awareness. Awareness is subject to the laws of the illusion in which it resides, and thus these particles are subject to the filters of viewpoint. The more you move toward the soul and God levels of your I's,

the more Awareness particles you regain. The lower you go in the egoic realm, the less Awareness you have to work with. That's why so many people on your planet appear to be living day to day without purpose, as if they're sound asleep.

“If you accept reality as it appears on your side of the Veil, your Awareness must bow to the constraints of space and time. The phenomenon this causes is the root of much of the mischief and anguish on the Earth.”

“*What? What? . . . What? What?*” It was inevitable, Junie thought. Both she and Larry burst out in laughter.

“Thanks, What-What,” she said, “let me try to do better. Sometimes using words is like trying to empty the ocean with a thimble.”

“*What? What? . . . What? What?*”

“Oops! I've just done it again,” Junie said. “I think I understand the source of your confusion. What do you know about the Veil?”

Larry was stuck for an answer. Junie was absolutely right—Zeus had talked about the Veil but not explained it, leaving him to guess its nature.

“I see,” Junie laughed. “It seems I've struck another tender spot. The Veil is no more than a barrier that filters out particles of Awareness so that those who choose to experience the lower densities can do so fully. It's like your comic-book hero Superman deciding to live on Earth without his super powers so he can fully experience the human condition. When beings incarnate on this planet from the higher dimensions, they simply check a major part of their Awareness at the entrance, before entering through the Veil.”

“I think I get it,” Larry said. “It's the lower levels of Awareness that cause people to behave so destructively. But I still

don't understand what that has to do with my Witness/Protector and it's role in keeping me safe."

"Let me explain." Junie said. "I was alluding to the mechanism humans use to avoid pain and suffering. Let's say someone suffers a major traumatic event."

"Like being sexually abused as a child?" Larry asked.

"That will work as an example. In fact, because it's on the increase, child abuse has become a major metaphor for your planet's condition. What do children usually do with their memories of abuse?"

"They bury them somewhere so they don't have to deal with it."

"Yes," Junie said. "However, only a few victims succeed in hiding the incident so deeply that they cannot access it. Most bury it partially. They keep the memories out of their Consciousness by sublimating them into feelings of shame, guilt, isolation, powerlessness, and so on. They may even blame themselves for the abuse. This constant avoidance and denial is precisely what I was referring to. How do you suppose it's possible to keep something unavailable to the conscious mind twenty-four/seven?"

"I don't know," Larry responded. "It seems almost paradoxical, like trying not to think of a pink elephant. If you are aware of something, how can you pretend to be unaware?"

"Imagine a cork bobbing on the surface of the ocean. Let's say the cork is the trauma, the surface is your conscious mind, and the water beneath the surface is your unconscious. If you wanted to hide the cork in the depths, what would you do?"

"I'd tie a heavy weight to it," Larry said.

"Exactly. It's Awareness particles that make up the weight. The child has to tie enough particles to the unwanted thought

so it stays deeply buried in the unconscious. The more painful or shameful the incident, the more Awareness is required. The child's Witness/Protector doesn't want a random trigger, like a news story or a movie, to bring the unwanted thought to the surface, so it heaps on more than enough layers of Awareness particles.

"As a person's life continues, more and more particles are spent keeping unwanted memories and potentially dangerous subpersonalities at bay. It's a costly undertaking because every unit of Awareness used means one less unit available for the ongoing process of conscious exploration.

"This mechanism is in play at all levels of human society—from individual infants to blocs of nations. Given this extraordinary expenditure of your collective Awareness, is it surprising that so many decisions—personal as well as global—are destructive?"

"My God," Larry said. "It's a wonder we can operate at all!"

"Now look into the way this process plays out for you," Junie urged, "and tell me what you see."

Larry sat silently with his eyes closed for several minutes as he reflected on the new perspectives this wise juniper had shown him. When he was ready, he lifted his head and turned toward Junie. "What I see is a whole new way of seeing what I see. I'm defined not so much by what I've consciously chosen to be but what I've unconsciously chosen *not* to be. I'm the offspring of avoidance. I settle for anything that doesn't rock the boat or get me into hot water. But by not owning my full potential, I'm sacrificing the spice of my life."

"Don't stop there, Larry. Relate this new insight to your disowned parts. Tell me how they might react to this treatment and what your Witness/Protector needs to do to keep them contained."

“No wonder they’re pissed! I’d be too, if I were imprisoned like that. I can see them pressing harder and harder against the lid—like Pandora’s box—trying to get out, and my Witness/Protector having to use more and more Awareness particles to keep them locked away. If it relaxed, even for a second, they would break loose and cause havoc.”

“Interesting that you chose the metaphor of Pandora’s box,” Junie said. “There are riches in that myth worth exploring in light of our work here. Why don’t you go deeper and connect with the reason your subconscious chose that particular phrase? I’ll assist you by providing an energetic overlay again.”

Junie directed Larry to select a new location for this exercise. When he had settled into a comfortable position with his back supported by the gentle curve of a boulder, she plunged him into a deep, altered state where he could see several layers of reality beyond the usual third-density perspective. When he spoke his voice seemed trancelike, as if coming from far away.

“According to this ancient Greek story, before humans had fire they lived an idyllic life, free from heavy labor, sickness, and evil—not unlike life in the biblical Garden of Eden. Then the Titan Prometheus gifted humankind with fire. At a deeper level, ‘fire’ refers to passion, an intense hunger for experience, expression, and experimentation. However, Zeus, king of the gods, felt that fire should have remained a power for immortals only and that humans would misuse it.

“Zeus confronted Prometheus and told him that as a price for fire he would bestow them with another gift that would enchant their hearts, minds, and bodies. He directed Hephaestus to mix earth and water and shape it into a maiden whose face resembled that of a goddess. Athena was commanded to teach this creature skills and weaving; Apollo, to confer the skill of music; Aphrodite, to infuse her with breathtaking beauty,

unbridled sensuality, and the arts of sparking conversation and divine grace. Hermes was directed to imbue her mind with a treacherous nature. Hermes was instructed to add lies, flattery, and disloyalty in the depths of her heart. It was Hermes who named her ‘Pandora,’ an elusive word that can mean ‘she is the giver of all gifts,’ ‘she who was given all gifts,’ and also ‘the gift of all the gods.’

“The gods did their work well. Zeus sent Pandora, endowed with every imaginable charm, including curiosity and deceit, to Epimetheus, Prometheus’s simple brother, to be his wife. Thus the first woman was introduced into the paradise of man. And before she departed, Zeus gave her a box that he forbade her to open. Counting on her curiosity, the crafty god packed the box with all the unexpressed shadow voices destined to destroy the seemingly idyllic civilization.

“Of course the inevitable happened. One fateful day, Pandora cracked open the lid, unleashing all the ills that have plagued the world since. As soon as she realized what she had done, she slammed the lid closed, keeping only one voice, Hope, inside the box.

“The simplistic interpretation of this myth would have us believe that the world is a sinful, evil place and that we cling only to Hope, awaiting a better life in the hereafter. Other facile explanations caution us not to go against the injunctions of angry, vengeful gods, or suggest that women were sent by the heavens to bring men down. However, the myth has a deeper, more powerful message. Pandora’s box contained the virtual template of the Grand Third-Density Experiment—the matrix of the illusion that we, on this side of the Veil, call reality. When she opened it, men were allowed—for the first time—free access to their shadow. Thus were born duality and the tension between

opposites. This is what allowed the Consciousness game to begin.

“Pandora let loose the means for humankind, now infused with the fire of passion, to experience the full spectrum of emotions that shattered man’s paradisiacal lethargy. In time, man will learn to hold separate the great opposing forces of duality and, succumbing to neither, transcend this density and rise to the level of the gods. Pandora brought with her the sacred wood with which to build the fire that consumes the Phoenix. She is the destruction and death that must precede rebirth.”

Larry slowly emerged from his trancelike state and faced Junie with an impish grin. “Without her gifts, a Paradise entropies over time into a ‘pair of dice,’ and as you know. . . .”

Junie fell into laughter and joined Larry in completing the sentence with Einstein’s famous rebuke, “God doesn’t play dice with the Universe!”

“Well done, Larry. And what have you just learned from this myth?”

“For one thing,” Larry quipped, “it’s evident that anyone can bend and twist a myth into whatever interpretation validates his agenda.”

“Very funny,” Junie said. “Get serious.”

“Actually, I wasn’t trying to be cute—entirely. Images conveyed through language—no matter how precise—are open to endless interpretation. For a theologian, the myth validates his belief in original sin. A psychologist might say the story reinforces the patriarchal belief that women are merely objects of beauty to be coveted and used. A child, focusing on the obvious, might tell you Pandora was a bad lady who caused a lot of trouble because she didn’t do what she was told. Sometimes I wonder if all the symbolism just gets in the way of a good yarn?”

“I’ve never much liked the common interpretation—that humankind is blessed because Hope remained in Pandora’s box. Logically, if Hope is still trapped inside, we can’t access it. Hope is presented as the great balancer—the ultimate gift to offset life’s tragedies. What utter nonsense! Hope is what my Playful Rebel would certainly call a ‘woosie-wish’ made by a gelded castrato crooning to a tone-deaf God. Asking people to hope separates them from their power and their innate exquisite nature.

“Wow, listen to me,” Larry said, surprised by his own vehemence. “This must be another disowned part of my self I’m allowing to emerge.”

“Indeed,” Junie said. “And what more do you know about your disowned parts in the light of Pandora’s myth?”

“I’m beginning to see that my shadow voices are integral parts of me. And I see that not having access to them is like playing a Beethoven symphony without percussion or brass. They hold most of my power, including the ability to focus with real intensity of purpose. They also hold the seeds of destructiveness. This—the potential to inflict death and chaos—is what I think I resisted most. But now I see that even destruction has a place in my orchestra. Given the choice, I’d opt for the post-Pandora era every time.

“What happens next?”

“You must ask your Witness/Protector for permission to proceed,” Junie said. “He’s your gatekeeper for this part of the journey. Please return to his place among the boulders.”

Junie waited for the energetic signature of Larry’s Witness/Protector to emerge completely before beginning. “Thank you for being here again. As you can see, much has transpired in the short time since we last spoke. Larry seems to have significantly shifted the point from which he views and is requesting your permission to carry on.”

This time the Witness/Protector was noticeably less hostile. It seemed to take comfort that its authority was not threatened and that it was being consulted. “I understand. I was present during the Pandora analysis and was impressed with Larry’s perceptions—they certainly reached a deeper level of Awareness than I’ve noted previously. However, they were done with the help of powerful energetic overlays. How do I know whether these insights came from him or you?”

“I assure you, the insights were purely Larry’s,” Junie said. “The energetic overlay was no more than an artful device to part the Veil so Larry could contact the parts of himself that embody higher states of knowing. I understand your concern, but rest assured that, unlike psychedelics and other mind-altering substances, overlays are quite safe. They’re also permanent. Larry can access those parts of himself whenever he chooses.

“Now, with your permission, I’d like to introduce him to some subpersonalities hidden on the side of his psyche opposite the shadow. They have been waiting in the wings until Larry was ready to invite them to join his orchestra.”

The Witness/Protector agreed—with the caveat that it could intervene whenever it felt Larry was getting into dangerous waters.

Junie had her pupil return to the place of the Aware Ego before continuing. “We’re about to meet the cavalry. These are the guys in the white hats, who are more than a match for the power and intensity of your dark side. Find a place representing the part that assisted you in penetrating the deeper meaning of the Pandora myth.”

Instinctively, Larry chose a spot on the bowl’s sunnier side with an overview of the entire setting. He climbed atop one of the largest boulders and sat motionlessly, eyes in soft focus, looking in the general direction of Junie.

“Welcome and thank you for coming. Who are you?”

The voice spoke with soft precision. “I am Larry’s higher Consciousness, his expanded, aware presence. I hold the overview of his essential nature and purpose. It would not be inaccurate to call me Larry’s Higher Self.”

“Well, what about me?” a little voice brazenly interrupted. “What am I, chopped liver?”

The unexpected voice startled Larry. Junie took it all in stride. “Hi there. Exactly who are you?”

“Why, Larry’s Body Elemental, obviously!” replied the voice.

Junie welcomed the Body Elemental into the circle, and at her request Larry shifted a few feet to the right, selecting a somewhat smaller rock to accommodate this new personality, who was clearly not shy. “I’m a major player in Larry’s life, but until this very moment he didn’t even know I existed! I’m glad he’s finally shed enough of his armor so we can meet.”

The Body Elemental turned out to be androgynous, though it held a distinctly female orientation. Her name, she said, was Kiyoura, which meant “beautiful song of the sky.” Larry asked if he could call her “Kichi”—a name she absolutely adored. She worked together with Larry’s Higher Self, she said, to carry the vital life force, or pranic energy, from the God-source, the I AM Presence, down through an invisible gold cord into every cell of Larry’s body. This duo continually monitored and regulated Larry’s mind/body/emotion/spirit complex. They also facilitated the development of spiritual wisdom by advising, counseling, and teaching when Larry requested their help—which, she commented, was not as often as it could be.

Kichi knew the entire blueprint of Larry’s physical structure right down to its DNA and RNA. She was the master librarian, able to locate every memory stored anywhere within his cells. With her help—providing he asked, of course—any of this infor-

mation could be instantly retrieved, brought forth into Consciousness, and healed.

Kichi was prepared to be Larry's staunchest companion as he proceeded through successively expanding layers of Awareness, she said, but bound to honor the Law of Free Will, she could not interfere with Larry's egoic dictates. She explained several ways Larry could access her, including focusing his inner knowing, meditating, and using the muscle-testing techniques of applied kinesiology. For the last, all he had to do was hold the thumb and little finger of each hand together and interlink the two circles. Then, using a moderate amount of pressure to keep his two left digits together, he was to try pulling the right-hand loop out of the left-hand one. He could use this technique in conjunction with any "yes/no" question. If his right hand broke away easily, the answer was no; if the two loops remained strong, the answer was yes. If he connected with her via this muscle-testing technique, he should ask, "Kichi, are you there?" Not only should the finger circle remain strong, but he should also experience the "giggly sensation" that is her signature. Just before leaving, Kichi chided Larry like a good Jewish mother: "So now that you have my number, I don't expect you to be such a stranger. Would it kill you to call once in a while, just to say hello and see how I'm feeling?" Her accent, to Larry's amusement, was perfect.

At Junie's behest, Larry returned to the higher boulder to accommodate the voice of his higher Consciousness. "Sorry about the interruption," Junie said. "She was quite something, wasn't she?"

The unmistakable elegance of the Higher Self's energetic signature was fully present. "Kiyoura is always a delight. Although she loves to be playful and a little mischievous, she is a tireless worker and totally devoted to Larry. She was being modest. She

is far more than a librarian able to access data. Kiyoura was also part the design, engineering, and programming team that built the library, Larry's physical body. Don't treat this fact lightly. If asked, she can assist Larry in assuaging unwanted thoughts or physical conditions. He would do well to take her advice and call upon her often."

"I'm certain Larry has absorbed every word." Junie said. "Why hasn't he used her wisdom before now?"

"The simplistic answer is that he did not consciously know of her existence—or mine—until a few moments ago. However, I suspect you are asking a deeper question: 'What kept him from knowing before now?' The answer lies in Rocky's injunction to look into the I's of infinity. As long as Larry chose to remain in the egoic I, he unconsciously blocked both Kiyoura and me.

"It is, as she so wisely suggested, a matter of Free Will. Beings within the illusion are allowed to experiment in whatever manner they choose. For the most part, they elect to restrict the points from which they view to those within the lowest aspect of the ego/soul/God continuum. Paradoxically, this appears to confer a sense of power and security, reinforcing the fantasy that they are in charge. Unfortunately, they rarely examine the obvious question: 'In charge of what?'

"In seeking solutions to the mystery of life—not to mention personal relationships and the broader issues of war, ecology, overpopulation, and disease—humans create for themselves a quandary that recalls the words of Einstein you referred to earlier: 'No problem can be solved from the same level of Consciousness that created it.' When seeking understandings or attempting to resolve conundrums, it is always beneficial to elevate the point from which one views—in other words, to shift from the lower-self I into the one of the higher perspectives on

the infinite continuum of I's. However, this requires the ego to relinquish control—the one act it fears most.

“Isn't it interesting, the number of times the myth of the Phoenix has appeared in Larry's life? Hasn't it been a consistently recurring signpost along his current avenue of exploration? Nothing in the universe is random, as Dr. Einstein so correctly indicated. When words or symbols, messages, feelings, or people present themselves again and again, one profits by taking notice and giving them deeper examination. We will revisit the Phoenix allegory once Larry has absorbed certain insights into impediments that he—and many of his fellow Light Workers—have encountered during their incarnations within the space/time continuum.”

“Thank you,” Junie said. “You clearly speak from a perspective well beyond the illusion of the third density. How would you describe your relationship to Larry?”

“A simple question, though the answer is nearly impossible to express through the sound complexes you call words. That said, I will endeavor to be as clear as possible.

“Like the other voices Larry has been meeting, I am a part of him. Some of us live within Larry's persona in what he might call present time. Others, like myself, transcend the limitations of this illusion and are not bound by linear time. You might say I am Larry's future self, having already experienced the lessons he is now learning. I've come to assist him on his journey into the Great Mystery.”

“Will this be a difficult process for Larry?” Junie's tone was concerned, almost motherly.

“Let me begin by assuring Larry that the road to higher Awareness is not nearly as daunting as it is made out to be. From my perspective, it is an instantaneous event requiring only the

decision to make it so, reinforced by full application of the three components of manifestation: intention, attention, and love. In worldly terms, the process is comparable to climbing a ladder. It requires the intention to do so and attention on the activity at hand, and one must trust in the grace of Love sufficiently to release the rung where you are presently.

“This last requirement, letting go of the current rung, or belief system, appears to be more challenging than those at my level of Awareness could have imagined. To appreciate this more fully, I will provide Larry with one of the golden keys with which to unlock the portals through the Veil. Consider how the vast sea of information constantly suffusing each entity is processed through the four conduits available to each point along the I-continuum: belief, thought, knowing, and faith.

“The lower egoic level is driven primarily by belief; thought is used only to rearrange one’s presuppositions in new permutations. This is the realm of judgment, where a concept—like the rung of a ladder—is held to desperately as truth. Many in the illusion would argue that belief underpins moral, ethical, and political structures. In reality, belief has proved to be the most difficult obstacle to higher Awareness and is the denominator common to most ills on the planet today. Rather than encouraging individual exploration and innovation, belief draws the believer closer to a predetermined group mentality.

“Consider a simple illustration. A man has lost his car keys. He panics as he envisions himself missing an important engagement. Racking his brain, he searches every drawer in the house, and at the last possible moment, finds the keys in his coat pocket. What is the very first thing he does when he finds them?”

Larry’s Higher Self paused for a long moment, letting his question swirl in rhetorical eddies. “Typically, third-density beings offer answers related to their psychological or religious

beliefs. For example, ‘He gave thanks,’ implying the assistance of a higher power. Or, ‘He felt immediate relief knowing he would not miss his appointment.’ Or, ‘He berated himself for forgetting that he’d put them in his pocket.’ However, none of these answers matches the pure simplicity of the question. Such responses would all be afterthoughts—secondary reactions to the emotional content of the event.

“The answer is hidden so cleverly in plain view that it is nearly always overlooked. The very first thing the man did when he found the keys was to *stop looking*. This illustrates the lamentable legacy of religious doctrine. When one is given answers as if they carry the imprimatur of the Word of God, what incentive is there to look further?

“As one ventures higher in the egoic realm, one is freer to use thought to probe the intellect and the environment. This is the domain of curiosity, of the arts and scientific exploration. Even so, at this level of the I’s, belief still predominates and thought is ultimately influenced by it. An amusing example is the way scientists define life. From our perspective, they suffer from CMS, chronic myopic syndrome—‘chronic’ referring to the acronym for carbon-hydrogen-oxygen-nitrogen, CHON. That is, in their view, if it isn’t organic, it isn’t alive. Based on limits they themselves have set, the scientists then proffer a list of conditions that define ‘life’ as the ability to be cellular, to metabolize, to tend toward homeostasis, to respond to stimuli, and to reproduce.

“Larry should recognize this situation as a variation on the parable of the missing keys. By creating a set of self-limiting definitions, the scientists miss the obvious. Their definition of life in fact delineates one tiny example of the diverse expressions of intelligent Awareness found throughout the Universe.

“Consider another demonstration of narrow thinking: Human beings throughout their history have believed the human

form was created in God's image. In reality, it is just the opposite. Humans have created their deity in human image, then cast him onto a throne in the heavens, imbued him with the psychogenic panoply of human histrionics, and proceeded to cower before him.

“Scientists searching the galaxies for intelligent life practice the same manner of thinking. They, too, look for other forms of themselves while missing the essence of their own Consciousness—too close for their eyes or intellect to perceive. No telescope, no matter how powerful, can reveal what they seek if it is pointed in the wrong direction.

“Having experienced the events of these two days, can Larry possibly doubt the immeasurable intelligence contained in plants and animals, not to mention every other form of matter and thought throughout the many Universes?”

The Higher Self allowed its question to remain hanging—a small tear in the Veil inviting later exploration. “This brings us to the domain of soul Awareness, which offers a markedly broader perspective than the egoic level. Here one experiences at the level of knowing. Knowing in this sense differs from intellectual activities such as perceiving, understanding, grasping, comprehending, and the like. It is closely allied with intuition and is the subtle force behind hunches, premonitions, and gut feelings. Larry has used this mechanism often without realizing it. In fact, if he scanned through his life dispassionately, he would see how often this kind of knowing has shaped his actions—from the dissolution of his marriage to his acquisition of Zeus to the uncanny way he was led to this spot so we could have this dialogue.

“Knowing is a powerful tool. However, it comes at a price. To reach the rung of knowing, one must let go of the rung of belief. If Larry wishes to do this, Kiyoura and I can assist him.”

Junie could see Larry was mesmerized by this previously unknown part of himself. She wisely said nothing, allowing his Higher Self free rein, fully aware of the importance of the connection being fashioned between disparate bands of the I-continuum.

“The last element we’ll explore is faith. Faith operates at all levels of the I’s as the force impelling every portion of the intelligent Awareness to seek reunion with the One Infinite Creator. Faith is analogous to the ocean’s attraction to the moon, which causes the tides. Each domain responds to this call in its own way. At the egoic level, religion directs that faith be expressed as faith *in* something—in a system of belief, an entity, or divine teachings. In the realm of the soul, faith is simply a spiritual pursuit along the infinite path. It is not bounded by the egoic need to name, measure, and understand.

“Both religion and spirituality allow exploration of the deeper mysteries. Religion might be termed the outer path, spirituality the inner. Both paths require surrender. The outer path, based on belief, dictates ‘giving oneself’ to the Lord or the guru or the dogma as an act of faith. Faith here means trusting, without supporting evidence, that the Word written in the holy book or spoken by the cleric or master reflects the ultimate truth, the Word of God or the Universe. ‘My will is Thy will, and Thy will be done’ is a prime example of the individual’s surrender to the collective self of a particular belief system.

“The inner path also demands surrender in the absence of material substantiation. However, this act of faith cannot originate in the mind or ego. It can only come from an inner knowing that no matter how chaotic a situation may seem, everything in Creation is exactly as it should be. Perfection pervades All That Is, and *everything*—including the seeker—is part of that perfection. This faith is symbolized by the Fool in the tarot, who

blithely steps off the cliff, unaware that the hand of God awaits to steady and guide his next step.

“Surrender on the inner path is akin to death. It is represented in mythology as the Phoenix, which is also the noble Bennu of the Egyptians, the shimmering Feng of the Chinese, and the Thunderbird of Native America. The Phoenix story speaks of a great, magical bird so rare that only one of its kind exists at a time. This sacred bird, being linked to the cycles of Creation, has a fixed lifespan, the length of which varies greatly from culture to culture, though five hundred years would be typical.

“When the Phoenix feels the end of its cycle is at hand, it builds its own funeral pyre of aromatic wood, which it sprinkles with rare spices and exotic herbs. The pyre bursts into flames, and the bird is entirely consumed. After the embers have cooled, a new, reborn Phoenix rises from the ashes, embalms the remains of its predecessor in an egg of myrrh, and places it on the altar of the sun god.

“Like the Phoenix, Larry has now reached the end of his present cycle. He, too, is being presented with the ultimate choice. His decision can be guided not by the Trojan horse of reason but only by faith. The proposition being offered is simple: Surrender everything he believes and he will receive absolutely nothing in return. Should he elect to accept this offer, I promise he will have the better of the bargain.”

With these words, Larry’s Higher Self fell silent.