

TEACHING, UNDERSTANDING THE MANIFESTATIONS, and THE ONENESS OF RELIGION

1 *"Say: Beware, O people of Baha, lest the strong ones of the earth rob*
2 *you of your strength, or they who rule the world fill you with fear.*

3 **Put your trust in God, and commit your affairs to His keeping.** He, verily, will, through the power
4 of truth, render you victorious, and He, verily, is powerful to do what He willeth, and in His grasp
5 are the reins of omnipotent might."ⁱ

6 *"It is better to guide one soul than to possess all that is on earth, for as long as*
7 *that guided soul is under the shadow of the Tree of Divine Unity, he and the one*
8 *who hath guided him will both be recipients of God's tender mercy,*

9 **whereas** possession of earthly things will cease at the time of death. **The path to guidance is one**
10 **of love and compassion, not of force and coercion.** This hath been God's method in the past, and
11 shall continue to be in the future! He causeth him whom He pleaseth to enter the shadow of His
12 Mercy. Verily, He is the Supreme Protector, the All-Generous."ⁱⁱ

13 "Exultest thou over the treasures thou dost possess, knowing they shall perish? Rejoicest thou in
14 that thou rulest a span of earth, **when the whole world, in the estimation of the people of Baha,**
15 **is worth as much as the black in the eye of a dead ant?**"ⁱⁱⁱ

16 *"...What "oppression" is more grievous than that a soul seeking the*
17 *truth, and wishing to attain unto the knowledge of God, should*
18 *know not where to go for it and from whom to seek it?*

19 For opinions have sorely differed, and the ways unto the attainment of God have multiplied. This
20 "oppression" is the essential feature of every Revelation. Unless it cometh to pass, the Sun of
21 Truth will not be made manifest. For the break of the morn of divine guidance must needs follow
22 the darkness of the night of error. For this reason, in all chronicles and traditions reference hath
23 been made unto these things, namely that iniquity shall cover the surface of the earth and
24 darkness shall envelop mankind..."^{iv}

25 **"I now assure thee, O servant of God, that, if**

- 26 • thy **mind become empty and pure** from every mention and thought and
27 • thy **heart attracted** wholly to the Kingdom of God, **forget all else besides God** and come
28 in **communion with the Spirit of God,**
29

30 **then the Holy Spirit will assist thee with**

- 31 • a **power** which will enable thee to penetrate all things, and
32 • a **Dazzling Spark** which enlightens all sides,
33 • a **Brilliant Flame** in the zenith of the heavens,

34 **will teach thee that which thou dost not know** of the facts of the universe and of the divine
35 doctrine.

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Verily, I say unto thee, every soul which ariseth today to guide others to the path of safety and infuse in them the Spirit of Life, the Holy Spirit will inspire that soul with evidences, proofs and facts and the lights will shine upon it from the Kingdom of God.

Do not forget what I have conveyed unto thee from the breath of the Spirit. Verily, it is the shining morning and the rosy dawn which will

- impart unto thee the lights,
- reveal the mysteries and
- make thee competent in science, and

through it the pictures of the Supreme World will be printed in thy heart and the facts of the secrets of the Kingdom of God will shine before thee.^v

"O ye friends of God! Today is the day of union and this age is the age of harmony in the world of existence.

"Verily, God loveth those who are working in His path in groups, for they are a solid foundation."

Consider ye that he says "in groups," united and bound together, supporting one another. "To work," mentioned in this holy verse, does not mean, in this greatest age, to perform it with swords, spears, shafts and arrows, but rather with

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|------------------------|----|------------------------------------|
| • sincere intentions, | 61 | • educating the public, |
| • good designs, | 62 | • guiding the souls of mankind, |
| • useful advices, | 63 | • diffusing spiritual fragrances, |
| • divine moralities, | 64 | • explaining divine illustrations, |
| • beautiful actions, | 65 | • showing convincing proofs and |
| • spiritual qualities, | 66 | • doing charitable deeds. |
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When the holy souls, through the angelic power, will arise to show forth these celestial characteristics, establishing a band of harmony, each of these souls shall be regarded as one thousand persons and the waves of this greatest ocean shall be considered as the army of the hosts of the Supreme Concourse."^{vi}

One of the holy Manifestations, addressing a believing soul, has said that, if a person become the cause of the illumination of one soul, it is better than a boundless treasury.

"O Ali! If God guide, through thee, one soul, it is better for thee than all the riches!"

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76 ... It is also mentioned in the Gospel: Travel ye to all parts of the world and give ye the glad tidings
77 of the appearance of the Kingdom of God”^{vii}

78 “O KING! I was but a man like others, asleep upon My couch, when lo, the breezes of the All-Glorious were
79 wafted over Me, and taught Me the knowledge of all that hath been.

80 *This thing is not from Me, but from One Who is Almighty and All-Knowing. And*
81 *He bade Me lift up My voice between earth and heaven, and for this there befell*
82 *Me what hath caused the tears of every man of understanding to flow.*

83 The learning [sciences] current amongst men I studied not; their schools I entered not. Ask of the city
84 wherein I dwelt, that thou mayest be well assured that I am not of them who speak falsely.

85 *This is but a leaf which the winds of the will of thy Lord, the Almighty, the All-*
86 *Praised, have stirred. Can it be still when the tempestuous winds are blowing?*

87 Nay, by Him Who is the Lord of all Names and Attributes! They move it as they list. The evanescent is as
88 nothing before Him Who is the Ever-Abiding. His all-compelling summons hath reached Me, and caused
89 Me to speak His praise amidst all people.

90 *I was indeed as one dead when His behest was uttered. The hand of the will of*
91 *thy Lord, the Compassionate, the Merciful, transformed Me.*^{viii}

92 Gleanings from the Writings of Baha’u’llah

93 **“Nor does the Bahá’í Revelation, claiming as it does to be the culmination of a prophetic cycle**
94 **and the fulfillment of the promise of all ages, attempt, under any circumstances, to invalidate**
95 **those first and everlasting principles that animate and underlie the religions that have**
96 **preceded it.**

97 The God-given **authority, vested in each one of them**, it admits and establishes as its firmest and
98 ultimate basis. It regards them in no other light except as different stages in **the eternal history**
99 **and constant evolution of one religion, Divine and indivisible**, of which it itself forms but an
100 integral part.

- 101 • It **neither seeks to obscure** *their Divine origin*,
 - 102 ○ **nor to dwarf** the admitted magnitude of *their colossal achievements*.
- 103 • It can **countenance no attempt that seeks to distort** *their features*
 - 104 ○ **or to stultify the truths** which they instill.
- 105 • Its teachings **do not deviate a hairbreadth from the verities they enshrine**,
 - 106 ○ **nor does the weight of its message detract** one jot or one tittle from the
107 influence they exert or the loyalty they inspire.

108 **Far from aiming at the overthrow** of the spiritual foundation of the world's religious systems, its
109 **avowed, its unalterable purpose is**

- 110 • to **widen** their basis,
- 111 • to **restate** their fundamentals,

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- to **reconcile** their aims,
 - to **reinvigorate** their life,
 - to **demonstrate their oneness**,
 - to **restore** the pristine purity of their teachings,
 - to **coordinate** their functions and
 - to **assist** in the realization of their highest aspirations.
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These divinely-revealed religions, as a close observer has graphically expressed it, "are doomed not to die, but to be reborn... 'Does not the child succumb in the youth and the youth in the man; yet neither child nor youth perishes?'"

"They Who are the **Luminaries of Truth** and the **Mirrors reflecting the light of Divine Unity**," Bahá'u'lláh explains in the Kitáb-i-Íqán, "in whatever age and cycle they are sent down from their invisible habitations of ancient glory unto this world to educate the souls of men and endue with grace all created things, are invariably endowed with an all-compelling power and invested with invincible sovereignty..."

*These sanctified **Mirrors**, these **Day-Springs** of ancient glory are one and all the exponents on earth of Him Who is the central Orb of the universe, its essence and ultimate purpose.*

- **From Him** proceed their knowledge and power;
 - **from Him** is derived their sovereignty.
 - The beauty of their countenance is but **a reflection of His image**, and their revelation a sign of **His deathless glory**...
 - **Through them** is transmitted a grace that is infinite, and
 - **by them** is revealed the light that can never fade...
-

Human tongue can never befittingly sing their praise, and human speech can never unfold their mystery." "Inasmuch as these Birds of the celestial Throne," He adds, "are all sent down from the heaven of the Will of God, and as they all arise to proclaim His irresistible Faith,

- they therefore are regarded as
 - **one soul** and
 - the **same person...**
 - They all
 - **abide** in the **same tabernacle**,
 - **soar** in the **same heaven**,
 - **are seated** upon the **same throne**,
 - **utter** the **same speech**, and
 - **proclaim** the **same Faith...**
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- **They *only* differ in**
 - **the *intensity* of their revelation and**
 - **the comparative *potency* of their light...**

That a certain attribute of God hath not been outwardly manifested by these Essences of Detachment doth in no wise imply that they Who are the Day-Springs of God's attributes and the Treasuries of His holy names did not actually possess it."

It should also be borne in mind that, great as is the power manifested by this Revelation and however vast the range of the Dispensation its Author has inaugurated, it emphatically repudiates the claim to be regarded as the final revelation of God's will and purpose for mankind. To hold such a conception of its character and functions would be tantamount to a betrayal of its cause and a denial of its truth. It must necessarily conflict with the fundamental principle which constitutes the bedrock of Bahá'í belief, the principle that religious truth is not absolute but relative, that **Divine Revelation is**

- *orderly,*
- *continuous* and
- *progressive* and
- *not spasmodic or final.*

Indeed, the categorical rejection by the followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh of the claim to finality which any religious system inaugurated by the Prophets of the past may advance is as clear and emphatic as their own refusal to claim that same finality for the Revelation with which they stand identified.

"To believe that all revelation is ended, that the portals of Divine mercy are closed, that from the daysprings of eternal holiness no sun shall rise again, that the ocean of everlasting bounty is forever stilled, and that out of the tabernacle of ancient glory the Messengers of God have ceased to be made manifest" must constitute in the eyes of every follower of the Faith a grave, an inexcusable departure from one of its most cherished and fundamental principles."^{ix}

"Give heed to my warning, ye people of Persia," He thus addresses His countrymen, **"If I be slain at your hands, God will assuredly raise up one who will fill the seat made vacant through my death; for such is God's method carried into effect of old, and no change can ye find in God's mode of dealing."**

"Should they attempt to conceal His light on the continent, He will assuredly rear His head in the midmost heart of the ocean and, raising His voice, proclaim: **"I am the lifegiver of the world!"**... And if they cast Him into a darksome pit, they will find Him seated on earth's loftiest heights calling aloud to all mankind: **"Lo, the Desire of the world is come in His majesty, His sovereignty,**

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His transcendent dominion! And if He be buried beneath the depths of the earth, His Spirit soaring to the apex of heaven shall peal the summons: ***'Behold ye the coming of the Glory; witness ye the Kingdom of God, the most Holy, the Gracious, the All-Powerful!'***

"Within the throat of this Youth," is yet another astounding statement, "there lie prisoned accents which, if revealed to mankind to an extent smaller than a needle's eye,

- **would suffice** to cause
 - every mountain to crumble,
 - the leaves of the trees to be discolored and
 - their fruits to fall;
- **would compel**
 - every head to bow down in worship and
 - every face to turn in adoration towards this omnipotent Ruler Who, at sundry times and in diverse manners, appeareth
 - as a devouring flame,
 - as a billowing ocean,
 - as a radiant light,
 - as the tree which, rooted in the soil of holiness, lifteth its branches and spreadeth out its limbs as far as and beyond the throne of deathless glory."

Anticipating the System which the irresistible power of His Law was destined to unfold in a later age, He writes:

"The world's equilibrium hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this most great, this new World Order. Mankind's ordered life hath been revolutionized through the agency of this unique, this wondrous System -- the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed." "The Hand of Omnipotence hath established His Revelation upon an unassailable, an enduring foundation. Storms of human strife are powerless to undermine its basis, nor will men's fanciful theories succeed in damaging its structure."

In the Suratu'l-Haykal, one of the most challenging works of Bahá'u'lláh, the following verses, each of which testifies to the resistless power infused into the Revelation proclaimed by its Author, have been recorded: **"Naught is seen**

- in My **temple** but the Temple of God, and
- in My **beauty** but His Beauty, and
- in My **being** but His Being, and
- in My **self** but His Self, and
- in My **movement** but His Movement, and
- in My **acquiescence** but His Acquiescence, and
- in My **pen** but His Pen, the Mighty, the All-Praised.

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- 226 • There hath not been in My **soul** but the Truth, and
227 • in **Myself** naught could be seen but God."

228 **"The Holy Spirit Itself hath been generated through the agency of a single letter revealed by**
229 **this Most Great Spirit, if ye be of them that comprehend."...** "Within the treasury of Our

230 Wisdom there lies unrevealed a knowledge, one word of which, **if we chose to divulge it to**
231 **mankind,**

- 232 • would cause every human being to recognize the Manifestation of God and to
233 acknowledge His omniscience,
234 • would enable every one to discover the secrets of all the sciences, and to attain so high a
235 station as to find himself wholly independent of all past and future learning.

236 *Other knowledges We do as well possess, not a single letter of*
237 *which We can disclose, nor do We find humanity able to hear even*
238 *the barest reference to their meaning. Thus have We informed you of*
239 *the knowledge of God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise."*

240 "The day is approaching when God will have, by an

241 act of His Will, raised up a race of men the nature of which is inscrutable to all save God, the All-
242 Powerful, the Self-Subsisting."^x

243 **"This is the state of manifestation:**

- 244 • it is not sensible;
245 • it is an intellectual reality, exempt and freed from time, from past, present and future;
246 • it is an explanation, a simile, a metaphor and is not to be accepted literally;
247 • it is not a state that can be comprehended by man.^{xi}

248 **"The Reality of all is One. Truth is one. Religions are like the branches of one Tree.** One branch
249 is high, one is low and one in the centre, yet all draw their life from the one stem. One branch
250 bears fruit and others are not laden so abundantly. All the Prophets are lights, they only differ in
251 degree; they shine like brilliant heavenly bodies, **each have their appointed place and time of**
252 **ascension.**

- 253 • *Some are like **lamps,***
254 • *some like the **moon,***
255 • *some like distant **stars,** and*
256 • *a few are like the **sun,** shining from one end of the earth to the other.*

257 **All have the same Light to give, yet they are different in degree.**^{xii}

ⁱ (Cited in Shoghi Effendi, "The Advent of Divine Justice" p. 82)

ⁱⁱ The Báb, Selections from the Writings of the Báb, p. 77

ⁱⁱⁱ (Baha'u'llah, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 56)

^{iv} (Baha'u'llah, The Kitab-i-Iqan, p. 30)

^v (Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 369)

^{vi} (Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 401)

^{vii} (Abdu'l-Baha, Tablets of the Divine Plan, p. 11), .[2] [1 Qur'án 1:6.] [2 Cf. Mark 16:15.]

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^{viii} (Baha'u'llah- Provisional Translations, Lawh-i-Sultan (Guardian-Browne))

^{ix} (Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Baha'u'llah, p. 115)

^x WORLD ORDER OF BAHAUULLAH, PG 113

^{xi} [Baha'u'llah- Extract from the letter to Násiri'd-Dín Sháh.]

^{xii} (Abdu'l-Baha, Abdu'l-Baha in London, p. 62)