

The Purpose and Reality of Man

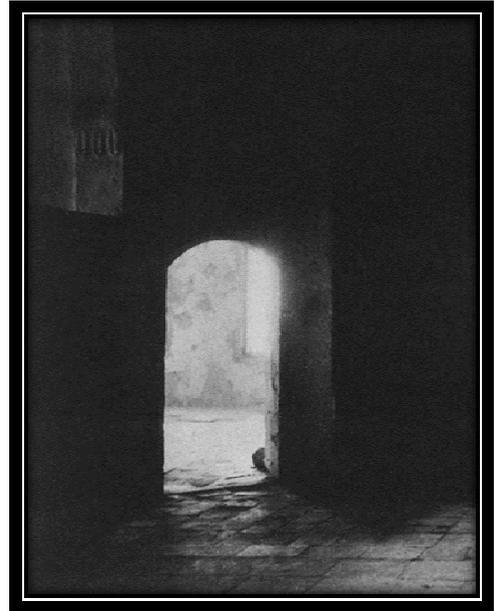
INTRODUCTION: *Approaching the threshold...*

Who are we as human beings? What is the purpose of our lives? Where did we come from and why are we here? What are we supposed to be doing in this world? Is there life after death? Are there consequences to this life in the next? Are there heaven and hell? If so, what are they like? Does it really make a difference how we behave? Will we be judged after death for our behavior here? How do we know what is true? These are questions that nearly everyone asks at some point in their life.

The sole source of information concerning these questions is found in religion and revealed confidently by the Manifestation of God, Bahá'u'lláh. Science may tell us *how* things happen; however, the why, the purpose, and the meaning of life and death cannot be explained by science. And, in this age of recognized diversity, neither tradition nor culture provides adequate explanations.

These questions, as difficult as they may be, find answers in the Bahá'í Writings that move the soul to rejoice, to practice righteousness, and to seek spirituality, while avoiding those damaging and meaningless pursuits that lead to sorrow, grief, confusion, sadness, despair and pain. To know one's reality, and to pursue the purpose for which we were created, give direction and meaning to life in all its aspects.

This study on the purpose and reality of humankind helps to answer questions that have perplexed people for ages, and sets one out on the true and intended path.



Entrance to Bahá'u'lláh's prison cell in 'Akká

"My body hath endured imprisonment that ye may be released from the bondage of self."

— Bahá'u'lláh

OBJECTIVE: *A look to the horizon...*

Facilitator

Review the following objective with the participants:

The objective of this study is to understand the fundamental verities or basic truths regarding our purpose and our reality as human beings.

THE STUDY PROCESS: *Attaining the water of life...*

Facilitator

Review the following study process with the participants. Then study the numbered quotations on the following pages, one at a time as described below.

1. **READING:** *A drink from the cup of guidance...*

Have two participants take turns reading the quotation out loud so that it is read twice.

2. **CONFIRMING MEANING:** *A spray from the fountain of light...*

- A. If anyone would like to have better understanding of a word used in the quotation, now is the time to look up its substitute phrase, definition or synonym, which can be found in the boxes below each quotation. Read the substitute phrase, definition or synonym out loud so everyone can hear.
- B. Read the sentence again that contains the word you looked up, while **substituting for that word**, its given phrase, definition or synonym from the box below the quotation.
- C. If anyone would like a better understanding of another word, repeat the process above until everyone is satisfied with their understanding of the words.

3. **FINDING VALUE:** *Mining the gems of truth...*

Take turns stating each basic fact or truth you can find in the quotation about our purpose or our reality as human beings.

QUOTATIONS: *Within the meadows of Thy nearness...*

1. In man there are two natures; his spiritual or higher nature and his material or lower nature. In one he approaches God, in the other he lives for the world alone. Signs of both these natures are to be found in men. In his material aspect he expresses untruth, cruelty and injustice; all these are the outcome of his lower nature. The attributes of his Divine nature are shown forth in love, mercy, kindness, truth and justice, one and all being expressions of his higher nature. Every good habit, every noble quality belongs to man's spiritual nature, whereas all his imperfections and sinful actions are born of his material nature.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 60)

approaches: draws near unto
aspect: view of circumstances
attributes: ascribed features or qualities
born: brought into existence
Divine: God inspired; holy; sacred
expresses: manifests or displays
expressions: actions representative
habit: unconscious and frequent behavior acquired from repetition
higher: more supreme, superior, or noble
imperfections: undeveloped or incomplete attributes
lower: more inferior

material: physically or worldly oriented
nature: inborn character or disposition
natures: inborn types of character or disposition
noble: superior in excellence or value [kind of]; honorable
outcome: result or consequence
quality: distinguishing trait or characteristic
sinful: violation of moral principle or divine law [kind of]; vicious; wicked
spiritual: higher, divine, or heavenly oriented
world: concerns, affairs, pleasures etc. of the material existence

2. As for the spiritual perfections they are man's birthright and belong to him alone of all creation. Man is, in reality, a spiritual being, and only when he lives in the spirit is he truly happy.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 72)

being: living entity
birthright: privilege or entitlement as a person
happy: consciously enjoying the feeling of well-being, peace, and contentment
perfections: moral qualities or acquirements of complete excellence; virtues

reality: the true existence
spirit: heavenly, divine, or higher orientation
spiritual: higher, divine, or heavenly oriented
truly: without false assertion, truthfully and factually

3. *From among all created things He hath singled out for His special favor the pure, the gem-like reality of man, and invested it with a unique capacity of knowing Him and of reflecting the greatness of His glory. This twofold distinction conferred upon him hath cleansed away from his heart the rust of every vain desire, and made him worthy of the vesture with which his Creator hath deigned to clothe him. It hath served to rescue his soul from the wretchedness of ignorance.*

This robe with which the body and soul of man hath been adorned is the very foundation of his well-being and development.

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 77-78)

adorned: enhanced in appearance by having something beautiful added
capacity: receptive power and potential
clothe: invest or endow
conferred: granted graciously
deigned: graciously conceded
development: gradual improvement, advancement, or growth
distinction: special characteristic
favor: privilege or right granted out of kindness
foundation: underlying base or support for establishment
gem-like: highly prized or well-beloved
glory: distinguishing splendor and radiant beauty
heart: nature that becomes attracted, loves, and grows attached
ignorance: the absence of knowledge and awareness
invested: by right, furnished or endowed
knowing: recognizing, being informed, and ⇨

becoming familiar with
reality: true existence
reflecting: mirroring forth an image or likeness of
rescue: save from eminent danger or set free from confinement
robe: "...robe of divine bestowal..." (Bahá'u'lláh, *TOU*, p. 73, ¶ 5.6)
rust: injurious influence
singled: selected and separated
soul: immortal essence of the rational, spiritual, and emotional self
twofold: two-part
unique: unequaled; matchless
vain: worthless; meaningless
vesture: spiritual adornment of divine gift or favor
well-being: state of being physically and morally well and happy
worthy: of sufficient value, deserving
wretchedness: low state of extreme distress, grief, and misery

4. *Having created the world and all that liveth and moveth therein, He, through the direct operation of His unconstrained and sovereign Will, chose to confer upon man the unique distinction and capacity to know Him and to love Him — a capacity that must needs be regarded as the generating impulse and the primary purpose underlying the whole of creation.... Upon the inmost reality of each and every created thing He hath shed the light of one of His names, and made it a recipient of the glory of one of His attributes. Upon the reality of man, however, He hath focused the radiance of all of His names and attributes, and made it a mirror of His own Self. Alone of all created things man hath been singled out for so great a favor, so enduring a bounty.*

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 65)

attributes: inherent qualities
bounty: generous gift
capacity: receptive power and potential
confer: grant graciously
distinction: special characteristics
enduring: lasting and unyielding in hardship
favor: privilege or right granted out of kindness
focused: caused to be concentrated
generating: stimulating into existence [kind of]; originating; initiating
glory: distinguishing honor and admiration; splendor; radiant beauty
impulse: motive or incentive
inmost: deepest within
know: recognize, become informed and familiar with
light: emanating illumination

love: have feelings of warm attraction, strong affection, and adoration for
mirror: true representation or reflection
must needs: of necessity or requirement
names: glorious spiritual perfections
operation: exertion of power and influence
primary: most important
radiance: emanating energy, light, and love
reality: true existence
recipient: receiver
regarded: considered or thought of
shed: divided and poured forth
singled out: selected
sovereign: supreme and independent
unconstrained: unrestricted or unlimited
underlying: upon which everything is based [in]
unique: unequaled; matchless

5. *From the exalted source, and out of the essence of His favor and bounty He hath entrusted every created thing with a sign of His knowledge, so that none of His creatures may be deprived of its share in expressing, each according to its capacity and rank, this knowledge. This sign is the mirror of His beauty in the world of creation. The greater the effort exerted for the refinement of this sublime and noble mirror, the more faithfully will it be made to reflect the glory of the names and attributes of God, and reveal the wonders of His signs and knowledge. Every created thing will be enabled (so great is this reflecting power) to reveal the potentialities of its pre-ordained station, will recognize its capacity and limitations, and will testify to the truth that “He, verily, is God; there is none other God besides Him.” ...*

There can be no doubt whatever that, in consequence of the efforts which every man may consciously exert and as a result of the exertion of his own spiritual faculties, this mirror can be so cleansed from the dross of earthly defilements and purged from satanic fancies as to be able to draw nigh unto the meads of eternal holiness and attain the courts of everlasting fellowship.

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 262)

attributes: inherent qualities
bounty: generous giving
capacity: receptive power and potential
consciously: deliberately; intentionally
consequence, in: as a result
courts: abode or surroundings
defilements: things that corrupt, violate, or desecrate the sacred
deprived of: hindered or withheld from
draw nigh: move steadily or gradually near
dross: worthless impurities
earthly: non-spiritual, physical, or tangible [type of]
effort: conscious and serious attempt
enabled: provided the means and opportunity
entrusted: with confidence and hope, provided
exalted: highly praised, elevated, and glorified
exert[ed]: [is] put forth energetically
expressing: reflecting and showing
faculties: abilities or powers
fancies: unreal and unreasonable notions invented in the mind
favor: aid, assistance, and leniency
knowledge: understanding of, or acquaintance ↗

with [Him]
limitations: prescribed bounds or limits
meads: meadows
mirror: true representation or reflection
names: glorious spiritual perfections
noble: superior in excellence or value; honorable [kind of]
potentialities: abilities that can be developed or brought into existence
pre-ordained: already determined
purged: made free of guilt or moral defilement
rank: relative standing or position among others
refinement: improvement and perfection
reveal: show forth
satanic: selfish, wicked, or evil [type of]
sign: indication of the presence or existence
source: origin of supply
spiritual: higher, divine, or heavenly oriented
station: position or rank
sublime: awe inspiring because of supreme spiritual, intellectual, or moral worth [type of]
testify: serve as evidence; solemnly declare
wonders: causes of astonishment and admiration

6. *If it [the soul] be faithful to God, it will reflect His light, and will, eventually, return unto Him. If it fail, however, in its allegiance to its Creator, it will become a victim to self and passion, and will, in the end, sink in their depths.*

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 159)

allegiance: devotion or loyalty to that which is entitled
depths: intense states
eventually: at an unspecified later time
fail: falls short, becomes neglectful or deficient
faithful: steadfast in belief, firm in allegiance to the Covenant, and true in affection
light: emanating illumination
passion: deeply stirring or ungovernable emotions

reflect: mirror forth an image or likeness of
return unto: go back to concern and purpose in
self: “...the ego, the dark, animalistic heritage each one of us has, the lower nature that can develop into a monster of selfishness, brutality, lust and so on.” (Written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, cited in *Living the Life*, p. 18)
sink: become immersed or absorbed
victim: living-being sacrificed

7. *The purpose of God in creating man hath been, and will ever be, to enable him to know his Creator and to attain His Presence. To this most excellent aim, this supreme objective, all the heavenly Books and the divinely-revealed and weighty Scriptures unequivocally bear witness. Whoso hath recognized the Day Spring of Divine guidance and entered His holy court hath drawn nigh unto God and attained His Presence, a Presence which is the real Paradise, and of which the loftiest mansions of heaven are but a symbol. ... Whoso hath failed to recognize Him will have condemned himself to the misery of remoteness, a remoteness which is naught but utter nothingness and the essence of the nethermost fire. Such will be his fate, though to outward seeming he may occupy the earth's loftiest seats and be established upon its most exalted throne.*

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 70-71)

attain(ed): succeed(ed) in reaching
bear witness: serve as evidence and proof
condemned: sentenced or convicted
court: membership of those who have exhibited favorable conduct
Day Spring: Manifestation of God [in this day Bahá'u'lláh]
Divine: holy; sacred
enable: provide the means and opportunity for
essence: ultimate and essential qualities
established: confirmed beyond doubt
exalted: highly praised, raised to an elevated state, and glorified
fate: inevitable and misfortunate final outcome
fire: consuming passions
heaven: the spiritual sphere and dwelling place of God, his angels, and the blessed souls who have passed on
know: recognize, become informed and familiar with
loftiest: greatest and highest
mansions: dwelling places

misery: sorrow, unhappiness, and distress
nethermost: farthest down or lowest
nigh: near
nothingness: insignificance or worthlessness in state or quality
occupy: hold or possess
Paradise: state of bliss, happiness, and delight
Presence: close company; nearness
purpose: reason or intention
recognize(d): formally accept(ed) and acknowledge(d)
remoteness: (a) condition of seclusion that is separate and distant
Scriptures: Writings considered holy and/or authoritative
seats: official positions of status
symbol: sign or emblem to represent it
throne: supreme position of power and dignity
unequivocally: clearly, sincerely, and unquestionably
utter: absolute or total
weighty: serious and greatly important

8. *It is clear and evident that all men shall, after their physical death, estimate the worth of their deeds, and realize all that their hands have wrought. I swear by the Day Star that shineth above the horizon of Divine power! They that are the followers of the one true God shall, the moment they depart out of this life, experience such joy and gladness as would be impossible to describe, while they that live in error shall be seized with such fear and trembling, and shall be filled with such consternation, as nothing can exceed. Well is it with him that hath quaffed the choice and incorruptible wine of faith through the gracious favor and the manifold bounties of Him Who is the Lord of all Faiths....*

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 171)

bounties: generous gifts
choice: superior or select
consternation: amazed terror, causing feelings of confusion and helplessness
Day Star: Manifestation of God
deeds: actions or activities performed
depart: go or pass
Divine: God's
error: failure or deviation from the right course or proposed standards
estimate: form an opinion or judgment of
evident: easy to understand; obvious
faith: unquestioned belief in God and His Revealed Word

favor: privilege or right granted
followers: ones that attach themselves to the teachings
gracious: kind and merciful
horizon: limit of human experience or perception
incorruptible: incapable of perversion or being defiled [type of]
manifold: numerous and varied
quaffed: taken in deeply
realize: become fully aware of
seized: suddenly and forcefully overwhelmed
wine: spiritual ecstasy
worth: value in respect to the moral qualities
wrought: worked or performed

9. *And now concerning thy question regarding the soul of man and its survival after death. Know thou of a truth that the soul, after its separation from the body, will continue to progress until it attaineth the presence of God, in a state and condition which neither the revolution of ages and centuries, nor the changes and chances of this world, can alter. It will endure as long as the Kingdom of God, His sovereignty, His dominion and power will endure. It will manifest the signs of God and His attributes, and will reveal His loving-kindness and bounty. The movement of My Pen is stilled when it attempteth to befittingly describe the loftiness and glory of so exalted a station. The honor with which the Hand of Mercy will invest the soul is such as no tongue can adequately reveal, nor any other earthly agency describe.*

(*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 155-56)

adequately: with sufficiency for the requirement
agency: person or thing
ages: periods of time in the life of mankind
alter: vary or modify
attaineth: comes to the end of its development [in]
attempteth: makes the effort
attributes: inherent qualities
befittingly: suitably or accurately
bounty: generous giving
chances: unpredictable or unknown happenings or forces
condition: set of circumstances effecting one's being
describe: relate in words
dominion: independent right of possession, use, and control
endure: continue in the same state without yielding or perishing
exalted: highly praised, raised to an elevated state, and glorified
glory: distinguishing honor and admiration
Hand of Mercy: kindness and compassion of God toward the condemned, the distressed, and the unfortunate
honor: high regard, esteemed position, and ☞

distinguished decoration
invest: confer upon
Kingdom of God: eternal kingship of God
loftiness: impressively high status
loving-kindness: tender regard; mercy; favor
manifest: exhibit or display plainly and clearly
Pen: refers to the instrumentation of the Manifestation of God
presence: immediate closeness, nearness, or company
progress: develop to a more advanced state
reveal: make known
revolution: regular succession
separation: disconnection or withdrawal
signs: indications of the presence or existence
soul: immortal essence of the rational, spiritual, and emotional self
sovereignty: supreme and independent authority
state: manner, nature, or form of existence
station: rank or position
stilled: caused to become inactive
survival: continuation in life or existence
tongue: expression through speech
world: domain of existence; state of being or reality

10. *The Prophets and Messengers of God have been sent down for the sole purpose of guiding mankind to the straight Path of Truth. The purpose underlying Their revelation hath been to educate all men, that they may, at the hour of death, ascend, in the utmost purity and sanctity and with absolute detachment, to the throne of the Most High.*

(*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 156-57)

absolute: complete, perfect, or pure
ascend: proceed from an inferior to a more superior or noble degree
death: the end of physical life
detachment: indifference to worldly concerns
educate: instruct, train, and develop morally
guiding: giving direction to
hour: fixed time
Most High: God
Path of Truth: way of living spiritually right
purity: freedom and cleanliness from fault, blame, or sin

purpose: goal to be attained
revelation: Communication of God and His Will to man
sanctity: sacredness; holiness
sole: one specified and limited
straight: conforming to justice, rectitude, virtue, and uprightness [kind of]
throne: supreme position of heavenly power and dignity
underlying: upon which everything is based [in]
utmost: greatest or highest degree of

SHARING: *A breath from the spirit of inspiration...*

Facilitator

Ask the participants to complete the statements below. When everyone has finished, have each person share, in a round, the one thing that was most outstanding or inspiring and how it made him or her feel. Please remind everyone not to remark on the comments of others.

The one thing from the quotations that was the most outstanding or inspiring to me was _____

It made me feel _____

Explain _____

SOME QUESTIONS: *A gentle breeze from the testing winds...*

Facilitator

Ask the participants to answer the following questions. They can usually find answers in the quotations just studied or in the introduction. When everyone has finished, review the questions, then share and discuss the answers.

- 1. The Bahá'í Writings tell us our purpose in this life is to
 - a. reflect the greatness of God's glory.
 - b. satisfy the lower or material nature.
 - c. know God.
 - d. compete for social status.
 - e. love God.
 - f. make lots and lots of money.
 - g. own lots and lots of things.
 - h. recognize His Manifestation for the day in which we live.
 - i. attain the Presence of God.

- 2. Recognizing Bahá'u'lláh as the Manifestation of God for this day and following His teachings is the same as attaining the Presence of _____, which accomplishes one of the purposes for which we were created.

- 3. `Abdu'l-Bahá was asked, "What is the purpose of our lives?" He responded, "To acquire virtues."¹ Acquiring virtues is the way we reflect the greatness of God's glory. Name some virtues that we should strive to acquire as spiritual beings. _____

- 4. A human being can be truly happy only when he lives
 - a. alone.
 - b. in the spirit.
 - c. without suffering.

- 5. All human beings have two opposing natures. What are they? _____

- 6. "Upon the reality of _____ ...He hath focused the radiance of all of His names and attributes, and made it a mirror of His own Self."

- 7. The greater the _____ the more we can develop our spiritual potential.

Continued on next page...

¹ PT, p. 177

8. `Abdu'l-Bahá said, "Man is, in reality, a _____ being..."
- a. peculiar c. passionate
 b. spiritual d. human
9. The human being expresses untruth, cruelty and injustice because of the _____ nature.
10. The human being expresses love, mercy, kindness, truth and justice because of the _____ nature.
11. If one's soul is _____ to God, it will reflect His light, and will, eventually, return unto Him.
12. If one's soul fails in its _____ to its Creator, it will become a victim to self and passion, and will, in the end, sink in their depths.
13. After our death who will evaluate the worth of our deeds on this earth? _____
 What are the two possible consequences of that evaluation? _____

14. Bahá'u'lláh wrote: "All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization."¹ How does this relate to your day-to-day life? _____

15. Why each one of us was created is revealed in *The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh*: "O SON OF MAN! Veiled in My immemorial being and in the ancient eternity of My essence, I knew My love for thee; therefore I created thee, have engraved on thee Mine image and revealed to thee My beauty."² Why did God create you? _____

APPLICATION: *Showing forth divine light...*

Facilitator

Read through the following paragraph together and proceed as stated. Then take time for the participants to write out their individual plans for action. When everyone has finished, move on to the closing reading.

Bahá'u'lláh wrote: "It is incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding to strive to translate that which hath been written into reality and action...." Imagine how the Bahá'í Teachings in this study class could be translated into reality and action. Take turns sharing the possibilities. Begin your statements with: "**One could....**"

From your experience in this study class on the purpose and reality of man, describe what **you** are inspired to put into reality and action. **I will make conscious efforts to...** _____

¹ *GWB*, p. 215
² *HW*, Arabic #3

In the world of existence man has traversed successive degrees until he has attained the human kingdom. In each degree of his progression he has developed capacity for advancement to the next station and condition. While in the kingdom of the mineral he was attaining the capacity for promotion into the degree of the vegetable. In the kingdom of the vegetable he underwent preparation for the world of the animal, and from thence he has come onward to the human degree, or kingdom. Throughout this journey of progression he has ever and always been potentially man.

In the beginning of his human life man was embryonic in the world of the matrix [womb]. There he received capacity and endowment for the reality of human existence. The forces and powers necessary for this world were bestowed upon him in that limited condition. In this world he needed eyes; he received them potentially in the other. He needed ears; he obtained them there in readiness and preparation for his new existence. The powers requisite in this world were conferred upon him in the world of the matrix so that when he entered this realm of real existence he not only possessed all necessary functions and powers but found provision for his material sustenance awaiting him.

Therefore, in this world he must prepare himself for the life beyond. That which he needs in the world of the Kingdom must be obtained here. Just as he prepared himself in the world of the matrix by acquiring forces necessary in this sphere of existence, so, likewise, the indispensable forces of the divine existence must be potentially attained in this world.

What is he in need of in the Kingdom which transcends the life and limitation of this mortal sphere? That world beyond is a world of sanctity and radiance; therefore, it is necessary that in this world he should acquire these divine attributes. In that world there is need of spirituality, faith, assurance, the knowledge and love of God. These he must attain in this world so that after his ascension from the earthly to the heavenly Kingdom he shall find all that is needful in that eternal life ready for him.

That divine world is manifestly a world of lights; therefore, man has need of illumination here. That is a world of love; the love of God is essential. It is a world of perfections; virtues, or perfections, must be acquired. That world is vivified by the breaths of the Holy Spirit; in this world we must seek them. That is the Kingdom of everlasting life; it must be attained during this vanishing existence.

By what means can man acquire these things? How shall he obtain these merciful gifts and powers? First, through the knowledge of God. Second, through the love of God. Third, through faith. Fourth, through philanthropic deeds. Fifth, through self-sacrifice. Sixth, through severance from this world. Seventh, through sanctity and holiness. Unless he acquires these forces and attains to these requirements, he will surely be deprived of the life that is eternal. But if he possesses the knowledge of God, becomes ignited through the fire of the love of God, witnesses the great and mighty signs of the Kingdom, becomes the cause of love among mankind and lives in the utmost state of sanctity and holiness, he shall surely attain to second birth, be baptized by the Holy Spirit and enjoy everlasting existence.

Is it not astonishing that although man has been created for the knowledge and love of God, for the virtues of the human world, for spirituality, heavenly illumination and eternal life, nevertheless, he continues ignorant and negligent of all this? Consider how he seeks knowledge of everything except knowledge of God. For instance, his utmost desire is to penetrate the mysteries of the lowest strata of the earth. Day by day he strives to know what can be found ten meters below the surface, what he can discover within the stone, what he can learn by archaeological research in the dust. He puts forth arduous labors to fathom terrestrial mysteries but is not at all concerned about knowing the mysteries of the Kingdom, traversing the illimitable fields of the eternal world, becoming informed of the divine realities, discovering the secrets of God, attaining the knowledge of God, witnessing the splendors of the Sun of Truth and realizing the glories of everlasting life. He is unmindful and thoughtless of these. How much he is attracted to the mysteries of matter, and how completely

unaware he is of the mysteries of Divinity! Nay, he is utterly negligent and oblivious of the secrets of Divinity. How great his ignorance! How conducive to his degradation! It is as if a kind and loving father had provided a library of wonderful books for his son in order that he might be informed of the mysteries of creation, at the same time surrounding him with every means of comfort and enjoyment, but the son amuses himself with pebbles and playthings, neglectful of all his father's gifts and provision. How ignorant and heedless is man! The Father has willed for him eternal glory, and he is content with blindness and deprivation. The Father has built for him a royal palace, but he is playing with the dust; prepared for him garments of silk, but he prefers to remain unclothed; provided for him delicious foods and fruits, while he seeks sustenance in the grasses of the field.

Praise be to God! You have heard the call of the Kingdom. Your eyes are opened; you have turned to God. Your purpose is the good pleasure of God, the understanding of the mysteries of the heart and investigation of the realities. Day and night you must strive that you may attain to the significances of the heavenly Kingdom, perceive the signs of Divinity, acquire certainty of knowledge and realize that this world has a Creator, a Vivifier, a Provider, an Architect — knowing this through proofs and evidences and not through susceptibilities, nay, rather, through decisive arguments and real vision — that is to say, visualizing it as clearly as the outer eye beholds the sun. In this way may you behold the presence of God and attain to the knowledge of the holy, divine Manifestations.

You must come into the knowledge of the divine Manifestations and Their teachings through proofs and evidences. You must unseal the mysteries of the supreme Kingdom and become capable of discovering the inner realities of things. Then shall you be the manifestations of the mercy of God and true believers, firm and steadfast in the Cause of God.

Praise be to God! The door of divine knowledge has been opened by Bahá'u'lláh, for He has laid the foundation whereby man may become acquainted with the verities of heaven and earth and has bestowed the utmost confirmation in this day. He is our Teacher and Adviser; He is our Seer and the One clement toward us. He has prepared His gifts and vouchsafed His bounties, revealed every admonition and behest, prepared for us the means of eternal glory, breathed upon us the life-quickening breaths of the Holy Spirit, opened before our faces the doors of the paradise of `Abhá and caused the lights of the Sun of Truth to shine upon us. The clouds of mercy have poured down their precious rain. The sea of favor is swelling and surging toward us.

The spiritual springtime has come. Infinite bounties and graces have appeared. What bestowal is greater than this? We must appreciate the divine generosity and act in accordance with the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh so that all good may be stored up for us and in both worlds we shall become precious and acceptable to God, attain to everlasting blessings, taste the delicacy of the love of God, find the sweetness of the knowledge of God, perceive the heavenly bestowal and witness the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is my advice, and this is my admonition.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 225-28)

ANSWERS: *Affirming treasures...*

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a, c, e, h and i 2. God 3. all answers are valuable 4. b 5. the spiritual or higher nature, and the material or lower nature 6. man 7. effort exerted 8. b 9. material or lower | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. spiritual or higher 11. faithful 12. allegiance 13. I will evaluate the worth of my deeds; experience such joy and gladness as would be impossible to describe, or, shall be seized with such fear and trembling, and shall be filled with such consternation, as nothing can exceed. 14. all answers are valuable 15. anything similar to: "I knew my love for thee, therefore I created thee..." |
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