

Station of the True Believer

INTRODUCTION: *Approaching the threshold...*

The station of the true believer is portrayed by Bahá'u'lláh in the most descriptive imagery and eloquent language. He describes to the individual Bahá'í the handsome gift of his own unique station, and depicts the real standing of those with whom we associate in tender affection, our fellow believers.

In exploring the glorious station of the true believer, let us first recall what Bahá'u'lláh said to His followers, about His followers: *“Be thankful to God for having enabled you to recognize His Cause. Whoever has received this blessing must, prior to his acceptance, have performed some deed which, though he himself was unaware of its character, was ordained by God as a means whereby he has been guided to find and embrace the Truth.”*¹

Let none of us, then, underestimate the exalted quality of one another's station, neither by employing common standards of judgment, by expecting a spirituality from one another that is unrealistic, nor by emphasizing one another's perceived deeds of error. Nor would we want to impose such erroneous judgments on ourselves. For even the lesser prophets of old *“not endowed with constancy”* frequently succumbed to the temptations of the lower nature.

Nor should we *glory* in the high-ranking station conferred upon us by Bahá'u'lláh. For He has repeatedly written that *“no one should exalt himself over the other.”*² Rather might His depiction of the true believer give us clarity and understanding of our own unique station, that we may not become intimidated by the largeness of the task before us, or the seeming magnitude of the forces arrayed against us. Instead, may it empower us to fulfill our magnificent destiny. For He has written: *“These few,”* that is, those believers who have *“been found willing to cleave to His Cause, or to become the instruments for its promotion”* ... *“have been endued with the Divine Elixir that can, alone, transmute into purest gold the dross of the world, and have been empowered to administer the infallible remedy for all the ills that afflict the children of men.”*³

Some idealistic philosophies suggest that in a fair and just world, where all human beings are considered equal, degrees of rank and station have no place. `Abdu'l-Bahá refutes this theory saying: *“The Manifestations of God affirm that differences are demonstrably and indisputably innate, and that ‘We have caused some of you to excel others’*⁴ is a proven and inescapable fact. It is certain that human

(Orion's Horsehead Nebula)



“Ye are the stars of the heaven of understanding...”

— Bahá'u'lláh

¹ DB, p. 586

² HW, Arabic, p. 68

³ GWB, p. 183

⁴ Qur'an, 17:22

beings are, by their very nature, different one from the other.”¹ First and last, greater and less-than, are realities inherent in both the material and spiritual worlds. Let us come to understand, then, that degrees of rank and station can, and do, perfectly co-exist in reality with equality, fairness and oneness.

In recognition of the beautiful diversity in our rank and station, our characteristics and personalities, our qualities and attributes, may the Bahá’í community gladly present the divine mosaic that is humanity, while demonstrating a vibrant unity, exemplified by harmony, agreement, peace and accord in all our relations—free of conflict, dissension, contention and strife. And may we all attain those glorious spiritual stations destined for the true believer.

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

Facilitator

Review the following objective with the participants:

The objective of this study is to acquire some understanding of the exalted station of the true believer, and thereby become empowered to fulfill our glorious destiny.

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 refer to 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 selected, 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 in the quotation.
 - D. Have the quotation read one more time by one of the participants.
3. **FINDING VALUE:** *A breath from the spirit of inspiration...*
In the tradition of the “talking circle” ask the participants to take turns sharing, one at a time, in a round, **WHAT WAS PERSONALLY MOST MEANINGFUL FROM THE QUOTATION AND WHY**. Remind the participants that *whatever* is shared should be considered as a valid perspective, and that in this *exploratory study* there are no right or wrong perceptions and no lesser or greater understandings. All are therefore asked to avoid comments, corrections, or judgments on the perceived insights of others. If someone proposes a question, the participants are asked to humbly defer to the facilitator for answers.

¹ COC, Vol. I, p. 258

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

1. ...how superior must be the destiny of the true believer, whose existence and life are to be regarded as the originating purpose of all creation. Just as the conception of faith hath existed from the beginning that hath no beginning, and will endure till the end that hath no end, in like manner will the true believer eternally live and endure. His spirit will everlastingly circle round the Will of God. He will last as long as God, Himself, will last. He is revealed through the Revelation of God, and is hidden at His bidding. It is evident that the loftiest mansions in the Realm of Immortality have been ordained as the habitation of them that have truly believed in God and in His signs. Death can never invade that holy seat. Thus have We entrusted thee with the signs of thy Lord, that thou mayest persevere in thy love for Him, and be of them that comprehend this truth.

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 140-41)

destiny: foreordained future condition
endure: continue in the same state without yielding or perishing
entrusted: for care and keeping, trusted
eternally: continually exist and everlastingly
habitation: dwelling place
immortality: unending existence
invade: encroach upon, affect injury, or conquer
loftiest: greatest and highest
mansions: dwelling places

ordained: destined by divine power
originating: definite source or starting point [of the]
persevere: continue a given course with grace and persistence against difficulties
purpose: aim, reason, or intention
realm: place or sphere of reality
seat: official position of status
We: used by one in authority to denote himself

2. ...ye are the first among men to be re-created by His Spirit, the first to adore and bow the knee before Him, the first to circle round His throne of glory. I swear by Him Who hath caused Me to reveal whatever hath pleased Him! Ye are better known to the inmates of the Kingdom on high than ye are known to your own selves. Think ye these words to be vain and empty? Would that ye had the power to perceive the things your Lord, the All-Merciful, doth see — things that attest the excellence of your rank, that bear witness to the greatness of your worth, that proclaim the sublimity of your station! God grant that your desires and unmortified passions may not hinder you from that which hath been ordained for you.

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 317)

adore: with profound reverence, worship
attest: affirm as true and genuine
bear witness: serve as evidence and proof
desires: cravings for enjoyment or satisfaction
greatness: marked superiority in character and quality
hinder: hold back or slow
inmates: souls occupying the single place of residence
ordained: predestined by divine power

passions: strong, intense, and nearly ungovernable emotions and feelings
rank: degree or position of dignity and eminence
re-created: given new life
sublimity: awe inspiring spiritual, intellectual, and moral worth
unmortified: failure to subdue, deaden, or destroy
vain: worthless; meaningless
worth: substantial or significant value

3. “O friends! Be not careless of the virtues with which ye have been endowed, neither be neglectful of your high destiny.... Ye are the stars of the heaven of understanding, the breeze that stirreth at the break of day, the soft-flowing waters upon which must depend the very life of all men, the letters inscribed upon His sacred scroll.” “O people of Bahá! Ye are the breezes of spring that are wafted over the world. Through you We have adorned the world of being with the ornament of the knowledge of the Most Merciful. Through you the countenance of the world hath been wreathed in smiles, and the brightness of His light shone forth. Cling ye to the Cord of steadfastness, in such wise that all vain imaginings may utterly vanish. Speed ye forth from the horizon of power, in the name of your Lord, the Unconstrained, and announce unto His servants, with wisdom and eloquence, the tidings of this Cause, whose splendor hath been shed upon the world of being. Beware lest anything withhold you from observing the things prescribed unto you by the Pen of Glory, as it moved over His Tablet with sovereign majesty and might. Great is the blessedness of him that hath hearkened to its shrill voice, as it was raised, through the power of truth, before all who are in heaven and all who are on earth.... O people of Bahá! The river that is Life indeed hath flowed for your sakes. Quaff ye in My name, despite them that have disbelieved in God, the Lord of Revelation. We have made you to be the hands of Our Cause. Render ye victorious this Wronged One, Who hath been sore-tried in the hands of the workers of iniquity. He, verily, will aid everyone that aideth Him, and will remember everyone that remembereth Him. To this beareth witness this Tablet that hath shed the splendor of the loving-kindness of your Lord, the All-Glorious, the All-Compelling.”

(Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, pp. 75-76)

adorned: enhanced in appearance by having something beautiful added
All-Compelling: One solely and completely able to overcome resistance or unwillingness by irresistible force
All-Glorious: sole One completely splendid and magnificent
beareth witness: serves as evidence and proof
beware: be on guard and cautious
breeze: figuratively — exciting force that awakens from spiritual sleep
Cause: zealously advocated and upheld System of belief [the Bahá'í Faith]
cord: alluring moral influence by which one is caught, drawn and held
countenance: bearing, expression, or demeanor
despite: in defiance of
destiny: foreordained future condition
eloquence: moving and persuasive force of speech or writing
endowed: furnished, gifted, or provided
hands: means or instruments of assistance
hearkened: given careful attention or consideration in order to comply
heaven: exalted or highest condition
horizon: greatest perceptual extent
imaginings: plans, schemes, or beliefs formed in the mind
iniquity: wicked injustices
inscribed: written, or engraved, as a lasting record
lest: for fear that
letters: figuratively — individual believers with great spiritual capacity for knowledge; “Ye are the letters of the words, and the words of the Book...” (Bahá'u'lláh, *ESW*, p. 25); “He hath declared Knowledge to consist of twenty and ☪

seven letters...” (Bahá'u'lláh, *KI*, pp. 243-44)
light: emanating spiritual knowledge and goodness
loving-kindness: tender regard; mercy; favor
neglectful: careless to give due attention or respect
ornament: addition of the luster, grace, and beauty
Our: used by one in authority to denote himself
prescribed: laid down as a guide, direction, or rule of action
quaff: drink deeply
render: cause to become
river: “...this evanescent soul seeking the river of everlasting life from the hands of Thy bounty.” (Bahá'u'lláh, *KA*, p. 95)
sore-tried: tested and proven through affliction, difficulty, trouble, and grief
sovereign: supreme and independent
spring: figuratively — the beginning of spiritual growth and development
stars: outstanding and excellent ones; “...shining like stars in the heaven of guidance...” (Abdu'l-Bahá, *SAQ*, p. 68)
steadfastness: firm belief and determined constancy
stirreth: brings to notice and rouses activity
tidings: message
vain: worthless; meaningless
virtues: commendable qualities, traits, or moral excellence
wafted: caused to move lightly
waters: “The sincere among His servants will regard the precepts set forth by God as the Water of Life to the followers of every faith...” (Bahá'u'lláh, *KA*, p. 29)
We: used by one in authority to denote himself
wreathed: circled and adorned

4. *“Blessed are the people of Bahá! God beareth Me witness! They are the solace of the eye of creation. Through them the universes have been adorned, and the Preserved Tablet embellished. They are the ones who have sailed on the ark of complete independence, with their faces set towards the Dayspring of Beauty. How great is their blessedness that they have attained unto what their Lord, the Omniscient, the All-Wise, hath willed. Through their light the heavens have been adorned, and the faces of those that have drawn nigh unto Him made to shine.” “By the sorrows which afflict the beauty of the All-Glorious! Such is the station ordained for the true believer that if to an extent smaller than a needle’s eye the glory of that station were to be unveiled to mankind, every beholder would be consumed away in his longing to attain it. For this reason it hath been decreed that in this earthly life the full measure of the glory of his own station should remain concealed from the eyes of such a believer.” “If the veil be lifted, and the full glory of the station of those who have turned wholly towards God, and in their love for Him renounced the world, be made manifest, the entire creation would be dumbfounded.”*

(Bahá’u’lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, pp. 76-77)

adorned: enhanced in appearance by having something beautiful added
ark: The “*Crimson Ark*” refers to the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh. His followers are designated as the “*companions of the Crimson Ark*”, lauded by the Báb in the ‘*Qayyúmu’l-Asmá’*. (Notes of *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 216)
blessed: highly favored with spiritual happiness and bliss
consumed: destroyed and wasted
Dayspring of Beauty: Manifestation of God, Bahá’u’lláh
decreed: divinely determined or ordered
dumbfounded: caused to become speechless with astonishment
embellished: made beautiful by adding something

glory: distinguishing honor and admiration
heavens: exalted conditions of utmost happiness
independence: freedom from the control and influence of others
light: emanating spiritual knowledge and goodness
manifest: evident or obvious
omniscient: One having infinite awareness, understanding, insight, and knowledge
ordained: by divine power predestined
Preserved Tablet: all Truth and Knowledge which is with God, some of which is revealed by the Manifestations
renounced: withdrawn from worldly concerns or activities or from engrossment in them
solace: source of relief from trouble, loss, or grief
veil: covering; disguise

5. *Glorified art Thou, O Lord my God! Thou hast, in Thine all highest Paradise, assigned unto Thy servants such stations that if any one of them were to be unveiled to men’s eyes all who are in heaven and all who are on earth would be dumbfounded. By Thy might! Were kings to witness so great a glory they would, assuredly, rid themselves of their dominions and cleave to such of their subjects as have entered beneath the shadow of Thine immeasurable mercy and sought the shelter of Thine all-glorious name.*

(Bahá’u’lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, pp. 209)

assigned: given by appointment
cleave: strongly, loyally, and unwaveringly cling
dominions: supreme power and authority
dumbfounded: caused to become speechless with astonishment
glory: distinguishing honor and admiration

kings: the rulers of the countries
mercy: kindness and compassion toward the condemned, the distressed, and the unfortunate
stations: ranks or positions
subjects: citizens
unveiled: divulged; revealed

6. The station which he who hath truly recognized this Revelation will attain is the same as the one ordained for such prophets of the house of Israel as are not regarded as Manifestations “endowed with constancy.”

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, quoted by Shoghi Effendi in *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 111)

constancy: a stable, uniform, and permanent firmness under suffering; “...men endued with mighty valour, who will magnify My Name with such constancy that neither will they be deterred by the evil suggestions of the divines, nor will they be kept back by the insinuations of the sowers of doubt. With their own eyes will they behold God, and with their own lives will they render Him victorious. These, truly, are of those who are steadfast.” (Bahá’u’lláh, KA, pp. 78-79)
endowed: furnished, gifted, or provided

Manifestation: great Prophet; chosen Messenger
ordained: established by divine command
prophets of the house of Israel: divinely inspired authors of the books of the old testament of the Bible
recognized: formally accepted and acknowledged
regarded: considered or thought of
Revelation: Communication of God and His will to man by Bahá’u’lláh
station: position or rank
truly: in a sincere and truthful manner

7. Therefore, those who in every subsequent Dispensation preceded the rest of mankind in embracing the Faith of God, who quaffed the clear waters of knowledge at the hand of the divine Beauty, and attained the loftiest summits of faith and certitude, these can be regarded, in name, in reality, in deeds, in words, and in rank, as the “return” of those who in a former Dispensation had achieved similar distinctions. For whatsoever the people of a former Dispensation have manifested, the same hath been shown by the people of this latter generation. Consider the rose: whether it blossometh in the East or in the West, it is none the less a rose. For what mattereth in this respect is not the outward shape and form of the rose, but rather the smell and fragrance which it doth impart.

(Bahá’u’lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 158-59)

certitude: a condition of unflinching certainty and sureness; “With a certitude that none can question, all men would cleave to His commandments, and would scrupulously observe them.” (Bahá’u’lláh, *GWB*, p. 117)
Dispensation: religious System that regulates human affairs under divine authority
distinctions: special quality that sets [them] apart with recognition and honor
embracing: taking to heart and accepting readily and gladly
loftiest: greatest and highest

manifested: exhibited or displayed plainly and clearly
preceded: went before
quaffed: drank deeply of
rank: degree or position of dignity and eminence
regarded: considered or thought of
return: “...the ‘return’ of the self-same determination, the self-same constancy and renunciation...” (Bahá’u’lláh, *KI*, p. 160)
subsequent: following or succeeding
summits: topmost levels attainable

8. Ye are the angels, if your feet be firm, your spirits rejoiced, your secret thoughts pure, your eyes consoled, your ears opened, your breasts dilated with joy, and your souls gladdened, and if you arise to assist the Covenant, to resist dissension and to be attracted to the Effulgence!

(Tablets of `Abdu'l-Bahá, Vol. 1, p. 145)

angels: spiritual or heavenly beings considered superior to man in power and intelligence
breasts: center of emotion and thought
consoled: free of grief, trouble, or a sense of loss
Covenant: binding agreement between God and mankind, and between both Bahá'u'lláh and `Abdu'l-Bahá and the believers
dilated: increased in capacity
dissension: difference in opinion, causing separating or opposing groups
ears: figuratively — attention or awareness

Effulgence: radiance, splendor, and brilliance that is Bahá'u'lláh
eyes: figuratively — way of regarding or perceiving things
feet: figuratively — beliefs upon which you stand
firm: certain and unchangeable under pressure
if: on the condition that
opened: more accessible, discerning, and responsive
pure: free and clean from fault, blame, or sin
rejoiced: feeling joy and great delight
spirit: dispositions, outlooks, or attitudes

9. *Cling, O ye people of Bahá, to the cord of servitude unto God, the True One, for thereby your stations shall be made manifest, your names written and preserved, your ranks raised and your memory exalted in the Preserved Tablet. Beware lest the dwellers on earth hinder you from this glorious and exalted station. Thus have We exhorted you in most of Our Epistles and now in this, Our Holy Tablet, above which hath beamed the Day-Star of the Laws of the Lord, your God, the Powerful, the All-Wise.*

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 62)

beware: be on guard and cautious
cling: hold on tight
cord: alluring moral influence by which one is caught, drawn and held
dwellers: residents with their attention directed
Epistles: Letters
exalted: highly praised, elevated, and glorified
exhorted: advised and encouraged
hinder: hold back or make slow and difficult
lest: for fear that

manifest: known or evident
Our: used by one in authority to denote himself
Preserved Tablet: all Truth and Knowledge which is with God, some of which is revealed by the Manifestations
servitude: a devotion in which one voluntarily gives up the freedom to determine one's course of action or way of life to be of service
We: used by one in authority to denote himself

APPLICATION: *Showing forth divine light...*

Facilitator

Read the first paragraph and ask the participants to state their ideas out loud. Then, read through the last paragraph and allow time for the participants to write out their plans for action. These plans are not shared.

IMAGINING POSSIBILITIES: *Visions of radiant lights...*

How **could** the concepts in this study on *The Station of the True Believer* be applied in a person's life in these modern times? Begin your answers with: **"One could...."** Suggest as many ideas as you want.

DECIDING ACTION: *Mirroring a beam of light...*

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...."* From your experience in this study on *The Station of the True Believer*, describe what **you** are inspired to put into reality and action. **I will make conscious efforts to...** _____

A Closing Prayer from the Pen of Bahá'u'lláh...

All praise, O my God, be to Thee Who art the Source of all glory and majesty, of greatness and honor, of sovereignty and dominion, of loftiness and grace, of awe and power. Whomsoever Thou willest Thou causest to draw nigh unto the Most Great Ocean, and on whomsoever Thou desirest Thou conferrest the honor of recognizing Thy Most Ancient Name. Of all who are in heaven and on earth, none can withstand the operation of Thy sovereign Will. From all eternity Thou didst rule the entire creation, and Thou wilt continue for evermore to exercise Thy dominion over all created things. There is none other God but Thee, the Almighty, the Most Exalted, the All-Powerful, the All-Wise.

Illumine, O Lord, the faces of Thy servants, that they may behold Thee; and cleanse their hearts that they may turn unto the court of Thy heavenly favors, and recognize Him Who is the Manifestation of Thy Self and the Day-Spring of Thine Essence. Verily, Thou art the Lord of all worlds. There is no God but Thee, the Unconstrained, the All-Subduing.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Prayers and Meditations, pp. 94-95)