

# The Paramount Importance of Teaching

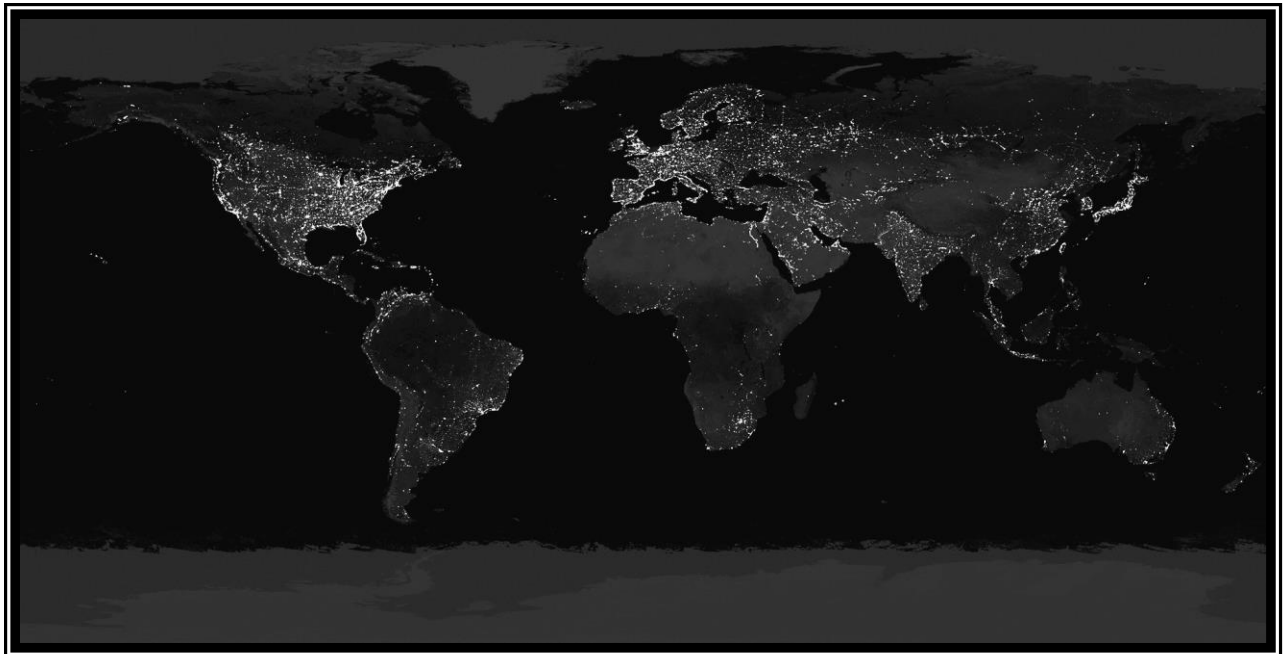
## INTRODUCTION: *Approaching the threshold...*

What else can we do, once God so generously confers upon us the honor of recognizing His Manifestation for this Day, than share this wondrous gift with our fellow-man? To magnify Him and His Way, to recite His Word, to give vision, comfort, and hope to the people—this is our task. To help rescue the souls from the “*slough of impending extinction*” and to help bestow upon them the great gift of “*everlasting life*” to which Bahá’u’lláh calls us, is a privilege, an honor, and an obligation to which we dare not deprive ourselves.

Teaching the Faith is therefore paramount in importance. It is necessary for our own spiritual growth, the salvation of the peoples, and the coming of God’s kingdom on earth. For it is not only *our* great honor to know about this Revelation, it is also the right and privilege of all the inhabitants of the earth.

No doubt, the following Words of Bahá’u’lláh, have inspired, and will continue to inspire, such heroic efforts as to transform the entire world. May these blessed Words inspire each one of us to arise in our turn and partake of the generous gift of teaching.

(Earth at Night: Made from a composite of hundreds of satellite images)



*“It is better to guide one soul than to possess all that is on earth...” — The Báb*

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

### Facilitator

Review the following objective with the participants:

The objective of this study is to become informed, inspired, and strengthened, by understanding the paramount<sup>1</sup> importance of teaching the Faith.

## 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.

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<sup>1</sup> superior to all others

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

1. *If it be Our pleasure We shall render the Cause victorious through the power of a single word from Our presence. He is in truth the Omnipotent, the All-Compelling. Should it be God's intention, there would appear out of the forests of celestial might the lion of indomitable strength whose roaring is like unto the peals of thunder reverberating in the mountains. However, since Our loving providence surpasseth all things, We have ordained that complete victory should be achieved through speech and utterance, that Our servants throughout the earth may thereby become the recipients of divine good. This is but a token of God's bounty vouchsafed unto them. Verily thy Lord is the All-Sufficing, the Most Exalted.*

*(Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, pp. 197-98)*

**All-Compelling:** One solely and completely able to overcome resistance or unwillingness through irresistible force

**bounty:** generously bestowed gift or favor

**Cause:** Bahá'í Faith; zealously advocated and upheld System of belief

**celestial:** heavenly

**divine:** God given

**forests:** figuratively — great quantity

**good:** desirable qualities and benefits

**indomitable:** unconquerable; undefeatable

**lion:** ferocious, courageous, dignified, and dominate one

**Omnipotent:** infinitely powerful and influential  
**ordained:** destined by divine power

**Our:** used by one in authority to denote himself

**peals:** loud succession of sounds

**providence:** power that sustains and guides human destiny

**recipients:** receivers

**render:** make

**roaring:** loud proclaiming utterance

**token:** expression given or shown as a guarantee

**utterance:** oral or written expressions

**victory:** conversion of souls to faith in God

**vouchsafed:** given or bestowed out of graciousness

2. *This is the day in which to speak. It is incumbent upon the people of Bahá to strive, with the utmost patience and forbearance, to guide the peoples of the world to the Most Great Horizon. Every body calleth aloud for a soul. Heavenly souls must needs quicken, with the breath of the Word of God, the dead bodies with a fresh spirit. Within every word a new spirit is hidden. Happy is the man that attaineth thereunto, and hath arisen to teach the Cause of Him Who is the King of Eternity.*

*(Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi in The Advent of Divine Justice, pp. 82-83)*

**arisen:** actively come forth

**attaineth:** has reached or achieved

**breath:** life giving inspiration

**Cause:** zealously advocated and upheld System of belief [the Bahá'í Faith]

**day:** specified time, age, or period

**dead:** "...the dead of the valley of self and desire...." (Bahá'u'lláh, KI, p. 209)

**forbearance:** leniency, generosity, and consideration when provoked or offended

**incumbent:** imposed as a duty

**Most Great Horizon:** figuratively — greatest extent of perception; the Manifestation of God, Bahá'u'lláh

**must needs:** of necessity or requirement

**patience:** calm endurance under suffering or provocation

**people of Bahá:** Bahá'ís

**quicken:** bring to [spiritual life]

**spirit:** activating or vital force giving life to the soul

**strive:** devote serious energy or effort

**teach:** impart knowledge that causes others to learn

**utmost:** greatest or highest degree of

**word:** expressed idea or concept [of the Revelation Writings of Bahá'u'lláh] (see TOB, p. 242, ¶ 3)

**Word of God:** Revelation of God, today Bahá'u'lláh's Writings

3. *Proclaim unto men the Message of thy Lord, that it may haply deter them from following the promptings of their evil and corrupt desires, and bring them to the remembrance of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Great.*

*(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 276)*

**corrupt:** morally degenerate or perverted  
**desires:** cravings for enjoyment or satisfaction  
**deter:** discourage, prevent, or turn  
**evil:** morally wrong, reprehensible, sinful, or wicked

**haply:** perhaps  
**Message:** Divine Revelation  
**proclaim:** declare publicly and formally  
**promptings:** inciting or suggestive feelings  
**remembrance:** thinking and mentioning

4. *Let your principal concern be to rescue the fallen from the slough of impending extinction, and to help him embrace the ancient Faith of God. Your behavior towards your neighbor should be such as to manifest clearly the signs of the one true God, for 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.*

*(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 316)*

**adore:** worship with profound reverence  
**ancient Faith of God:** “*This [Bahá'í Faith] is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future.*” (Bahá'u'lláh, KA, p. 85)  
**concern:** interest or matter of importance  
**embrace:** take to heart and accept readily and gladly  
**extinction:** dying out  
**fallen:** morally ruined, defeated, or degraded  
**impending:** threatening to occur very soon [type of]

**manifest:** make known  
**principal:** highest ranking  
**re-created:** given new spiritual life  
**rescue:** save or liberate  
**signs:** indications of the presence or existence  
**slough:** figuratively — state of moral degradation or spiritual dejection from which one cannot free oneself

5. *Say: O servants! The triumph of this Cause hath depended, and will continue to depend, upon the appearance of holy souls, upon the showing forth of goodly deeds, and the revelation of words of consummate wisdom.*

*(Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi in The Advent of Divine Justice, p. 83)*

**consummate:** complete and perfect  
**depend:** be subject to or conditioned  
**depended:** relied upon for support

**revelation:** making known through communication  
**triumph:** success and victory  
**wisdom:** suited and timely disclosure of knowledge

6. *O ye beloved of God! Repose not yourselves on your couches, nay bestir yourselves as soon as ye recognize your Lord, the Creator, and hear of the things which have befallen Him, and hasten to His assistance. Unloose your tongues, and proclaim unceasingly His Cause. This shall be better for you than all the treasures of the past and of the future, if ye be of them that comprehend this truth.*

*(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 330)*

**assistance:** “*To assist Me is to teach My Cause.*” (Bahá'u'lláh, TOB, p. 196)  
**befallen:** happened by fate or destiny to  
**bestir:** rouse to action  
**hasten:** move swiftly  
**if:** on the condition that

**proclaim:** formally and publicly declare  
**recognize:** formally acknowledge and accept  
**repose:** be at rest without activity  
**tongues:** expressions of speech  
**treasures:** things of great value or worth  
**unloose:** release from restraints and set free

7. *“The movement itself from place to place, when undertaken for the sake of God, hath always exerted, and can now exert, its influence in the world. In the Books of old the station of them that have voyaged far and near in order to guide the servants of God hath been set forth and written down.” ... “I swear by Him Who is the Truth! Ere long will God adorn the beginning of the Book of Existence with the mention of His loved ones who have suffered tribulation in His path, and journeyed through the countries in His name and for His praise. Whoso hath attained their presence will glory in their meeting, and all that dwell in every land will be illumined by their memory.”*

(Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, pp. 83 & 84)

**adorn:** add splendor and attractiveness to  
**exert:** bring forth  
**glory:** feel distinguished and honored  
**illumined:** given spiritual knowledge and insight  
**influence:** outpouring of spiritual or moral power without direct force

**journeyed:** traveled by any means  
**movement:** changing of one's location or residence  
**sake:** good advantage or enhancement  
**station:** position or rank  
**undertaken:** putting one's self under obligation

8. *If any man were to arise to defend, in his writings, the Cause of God against its assailants, such a man, however inconsiderable his share, shall be so honored in the world to come that the Concurrence on high would envy his glory. No pen can depict the loftiness of his station, neither can any tongue describe its splendor.*

(*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 330)

**arise:** actively come forth  
**assailants:** aggressive opponents in controversy  
**Cause of God:** today, the Bahá'í Faith  
**Concourse on high:** souls gathered together from the higher spiritual realm  
**defend:** maintain support in the face of argument or hostile criticism; prove the validity of  
**depict:** describe  
**envy:** strongly desire to possess the same advantage [of]

**glory:** distinguishing honor and admiration  
**honored:** regarded as an esteemed and distinguished soul  
**inconsiderable:** unworthy of any attention or formal respect  
**loftiness:** impressively high status  
**man:** human individual  
**share:** allotted amount  
**splendor:** brilliance, magnificence, and glory  
**station:** rank or position

9. *Vie ye with each other in the service of God and of His Cause. This is indeed what profiteth you in this world, and in that which is to come. Your Lord, the God of Mercy, is the All-Informed, the All-Knowing. Grieve not at the things ye witness in this day. The day shall come whereon the tongues of the nations will proclaim: “The earth is God's, the Almighty, the Single, the Incomparable, the All-Knowing!”*

(Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 83)

**Cause:** zealously advocated and upheld System of belief [the Bahá'í Faith]  
**day:** specified time, age, or period  
**grieve:** distress, suffer, and sorrow  
**profiteth:** is of use or advantage [to]

**service:** performance of beneficial deeds or works; “*To assist Me is to teach My Cause.*” (Bahá'u'lláh, *TOB*, p. 196)  
**tongues:** expressions of speech  
**vie:** strive to equal or excel

10. Please God ye may all be strengthened to carry out that which is the Will of God, and may be graciously assisted to appreciate the rank conferred upon such of His loved ones as have arisen to serve Him and magnify His name. Upon them be the glory of God, the glory of all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth, and the glory of the inmates of the most exalted Paradise, the heaven of heavens.

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 197)

**arisen:** actively come forth  
**conferred:** bestowed from the position of authority  
**glory:** distinguishing honor and admiration  
**inmates:** souls occupying the single place of residence  
**magnify:** cause to be held in greater esteem and respect

**please:** by the will or pleasure of  
**rank:** degree or position of dignity and eminence  
**serve:** perform beneficial deeds or works [for]  
**strengthened:** caused to have added power, effectiveness, and vigor  
**Will:** choice and desire

### 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 Paramount Importance of Teaching* 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 Paramount Importance of Teaching*, describe what **you** are inspired to put into reality and action. **I will** make conscious efforts to... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## *Bahá'u'lláh's Record of the Voice that Spoke to His Heart...*

*O Tongue of this Temple! We, verily, have created thee through Our name, the All-Merciful, have taught thee whatsoever had remained concealed in the Bayán, and have bestowed upon thee the power of utterance, that thou mayest make mention of Mine exalted Self amidst My creatures. Proclaim, then, this wondrous and mighty Remembrance, and fear not the manifestations of the Evil One. Thou wert called into being for this very purpose by virtue of My transcendent and all-compelling command. Through thee have We unloosed the Tongue of Utterance to expound all that hath been, and We shall again, by My sovereign power, unloose it to speak of that which is yet to come. Erelong shall We bring into being through thee eloquent tongues that will praise and extol Me amongst the Concourse on high and amidst the peoples of the world. Thus have the verses of God been revealed, and thus hath it been decreed by the Lord of all names and attributes. Thy Lord, verily, is the True One, the Knower of things unseen. Nothing whatsoever shall prevent these tongues from magnifying their Creator. Through them, all created things shall arise to glorify the Lord of names and to bear witness that there is none other God save Me, the All-Powerful, the Most-Glorious, the Best-Beloved.*

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 11)

## *A Closing Prayer...*

*Magnified be Thy name, O my God, for that Thou hast manifested the Day which is the King of Days, the Day which Thou didst announce unto Thy chosen Ones and Thy Prophets in Thy most excellent Tablets, the Day whereon Thou didst shed the splendor of the glory of all Thy names upon all created things. Great is his blessedness whosoever hath set himself towards Thee, and entered Thy presence, and caught the accents of Thy voice.*

*I beseech Thee, O my Lord, by the name of Him round Whom circleth in adoration the kingdom of Thy names, that Thou wilt graciously assist them that are dear to Thee to glorify Thy word among Thy servants, and to shed abroad Thy praise amidst Thy creatures, so that the ecstasies of Thy revelation may fill the souls of all the dwellers of Thine earth.*

*Since Thou hast guided them, O my Lord, unto the living waters of Thy grace, grant, by Thy bounty, that they may not be kept back from Thee; and since Thou hast summoned them to the habitation of Thy throne, drive them not out from Thy presence, through Thy loving-kindness. Send down upon them what shall wholly detach them from aught else except Thee, and make them able to soar in the atmosphere of Thy nearness, in such wise that neither the ascendancy of the oppressor nor the suggestions of them that have disbelieved in Thy most august and most mighty Self shall be capable of keeping them back from Thee.*

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, pp. 117-18)