

The Transforming Power

INTRODUCTION: *Approaching the threshold...*

The spiritual forces latent in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, which stand prepared to transform the soul of every would-be believer, are of such magnitude as to be utterly indescribable. Bahá'u'lláh Himself chose to illustrate this transforming power primarily through the use of metaphors.

Most of the verses we are about to study were selected by Shoghi Effendi to inspire every believer to “discharge more effectively your divinely appointed, continually multiplying duties.” May each one of us take to heart the opportunity of spiritual rebirth offered by the Pen of Bahá'u'lláh, and with fearless faith, arise to receive the transforming power generated by the Word of God.

(White Peacock Butterfly)



“And yet, is not the object of every Revelation to effect a transformation in the whole character of mankind...”

— Bahá'u'lláh

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 transforming power of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation.

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

Facilitator

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

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

A. **Read the quotation** out loud in its entirety.

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

To better understand certain words used in the quotation, take turns with the following:

A. Each participant **choose a word** from the quotation and **state it** for the whole group to hear. (Like a fun game – pick a word!) Then...

B. Read out loud the sentence that contains the **word** you selected, **while substituting for that word**, its given phrase, definition, or synonym from the boxes below the quotation.

- C. Repeat A and B above until everyone is satisfied with their understanding of the words.
D. Read the quotation out loud again in its entirety.

3. FINDING VALUE: *Gem-like discoveries...*

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.** (Remember show and tell?) 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. This is not a time for questions and answers, it is an exercise for the purpose of bonding hearts by sharing and receiving personal heartfelt perspectives without discussion.

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

1. *The vitality of men’s belief in God is dying out in every land; nothing short of His wholesome medicine can ever restore it. The corrosion of ungodliness is eating into the vitals of human society; what else but the Elixir of His potent Revelation can cleanse and revive it? Is it within human power, O Hakim, to effect in the constituent elements of any of the minute and indivisible particles of matter so complete a transformation as to transmute it into purest gold? Perplexing and difficult as this may appear, the still greater task of converting satanic strength into heavenly power is one that We have been empowered to accomplish. The Force capable of such a transformation transcendeth the potency of the Elixir itself. The Word of God, alone, can claim the distinction of being endowed with the capacity required for so great and far-reaching a change.*

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, p. 200)

alone: exclusive of anything or anyone else
capacity: receptive power and potential
constituent: parts that form, compose, or make up
converting: producing a spiritual change [of]
corrosion: weakening and destructive nature
distinction: special characteristics
effect: cause to come about
Elixir: potent single essence capable of causing a conversion from one thing to another
empowered: given the faculties and abilities
endowed: furnished, gifted, or provided
Force: divine power that can overcome all resistance
heavenly: a holy and sacred
matter: the substance things are made of
medicine: “...medicine of the heavenly Teachings...”, (*Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 275*)
minute: very small
potency: capacity and ability to achieve or bring about particular results

power: substantial spiritual force
restore it: bring it back to its former or original state
Revelation: communication of God’s will to man by Bahá’u’lláh
revive it: return it from suspension and neglect to activity and life
satanic: selfish, wicked, or evil
strength: powers to use or resist force
transcendeth: extends far above and beyond
transformation: change in form, character, and function
transmute it: alter or change it to the higher form
vitality: life-giving power
vitals: essential parts
wholesome: morally sound and vigorous
We: used by one in authority to denote himself
Word of God: Revelation of God, today Bahá’u’lláh’s Writings

2. *It behooveth thee to exert thine utmost to attain unto this Elixir which, in one fleeting breath, causeth the west of ignorance to reach the east of knowledge, illuminates the darkness of night with the resplendence of the morn, guideth the wanderer in the wilderness of doubt to the well-spring of the Divine Presence and Fount of certitude, and conferreth upon mortal souls the honour of acceptance into the Ridván of immortality.*

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 157-58)

acceptance: being received willingly and favorably
behooveth: is advantageous and necessary for
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.”* (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 117)
conferreth upon: gives graciously to
darkness of night: figuratively — absence of spiritual knowledge and goodness
Divine: relating directly to God's
doubt: faithlessness in God
east: figuratively — farthest reaches
Elixir: potent single essence capable of causing conversion — the transforming power of the Word of God

exert: energetically put forth
Fount: sustaining source
illuminates: gives intellectual and spiritual enlightenment, insight, and knowledge to
immortality: unending existence; eternal life
morn: figuratively — dawn of spiritual knowledge and goodness
mortal: subject to death
Presence: *“By Presence, therefore, is meant the Presence of the One Who is His Viceregent amongst men.”* (Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 118)
resplendence: great brilliance
Ridván: paradise
utmost: able best
well-spring: source of a continual supply
west: figuratively — farthest reaches
wilderness: empty or pathless region

3. *Through the movement of Our Pen of Glory We have, at the bidding of the Omnipotent Ordainer, breathed a new life into every human frame, and instilled into every word a fresh potency. All created things proclaim the evidences of this worldwide regeneration.*

(Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 80)

bidding: expressed order
breathed: instilled or infused
created things: *“I testify that no sooner had the First Word proceeded, through the potency of Thy will and purpose, out of His [the Báb's] mouth, and the First Call gone forth from His lips than the whole creation was revolutionized, and all that are in the heavens and all that are on earth were stirred to the depths. Through that Word the realities of all created things were shaken, were divided, separated, scattered, combined and reunited, disclosing, in both the contingent world and the heavenly kingdom, entities of a new creation, and revealing, in the unseen realms, ↻*

the signs and tokens of Thy unity and oneness.” (Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 295)
instilled: imparted gradually
Omnipotent: infinitely powerful and influential
Ordainer: One who destines things to be; God
Pen: refers to the revelation of the Word of God
potency: capacity and ability to achieve or bring about particular results
proclaim: give outward indications of
regeneration: spiritual awakening or rebirth
We: used by one in authority to denote himself
word: expressed idea or concept of the Revelation
Writings of Bahá'u'lláh (Bahá'u'lláh, *Fountain of Wisdom*, p. 220, ¶17.44)

4. *Every single letter proceeding from Our mouth is endowed with such regenerative power as to enable it to bring into existence a new creation — a creation the magnitude of which is inscrutable to all save God. He verily hath knowledge of all things.*

(Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 80)

enable: provide the means and opportunity for
endowed: furnished or provided
inscrutable: not comprehensible or understandable
letter: expressed idea or concept of the Holy Word; *“One single letter of Thy Book is the mother of all utterances...”* (Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 245)

magnitude: great importance or value
creation: character or spiritual attire
Our: used by one in authority to denote himself
regenerative power: great ability to effect spiritual awakening or rebirth
save: except; but

5. *It is in Our power, should We wish it, to enable a speck of floating dust to generate, in less than the twinkling of an eye, suns of infinite, of unimaginable splendor, to cause a dewdrop to develop into vast and numberless oceans, to infuse into every letter such a force as to empower it to unfold all the knowledge of past and future ages.*

(Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, pp. 80-81)

dewdrop: figuratively — one with the smallest amount of divine knowledge; “*Wert thou to attain to but a dewdrop of the crystal waters of divine knowledge, thou wouldst readily realize that true life is not the life of the flesh but the life of the spirit.*” (Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 120)

empower: give the faculties or abilities to

enable: provide the means and opportunity for

generate: bring into existence

infuse: put new life and significance

letter: individual believer with great spiritual capacities — “*Bless Thou, moreover, O my God, them Who are Thy Words and Thy Letters...*” (Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 223); ☞

an expressed idea or concept of the Holy Word
oceans: figuratively — divine understandings; “*...the oceans of inner meaning and explanation...*” (Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 147)

Our: used by one in authority to denote himself
speck of floating dust: figuratively — one with virtually no spiritual qualities; “*...whosoever Thou dost abase is made lower than dust, nay, less than nothing.*” (Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 10)

splendor: figuratively — illuminating spiritual knowledge and goodness

We: used by one in authority to denote himself

6. *By the righteousness of the one true God! If one speck of a jewel be lost and buried beneath a mountain of stones, and lie hidden beyond the seven seas, the Hand of Omnipotence would assuredly reveal it in this Day, pure and cleansed from dross.*

(Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 80)

buried: concealed or covered from view
Day: specified time, age, or period
dross: figuratively — worthless impurities of “*earthly defilements*” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 262), “*sins and transgressions*” (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Bahá’í Prayers*, p. 153)

jewel: figuratively — “*The light of a good character surpasseth the light of the sun and the radiance thereof. Whoso attaineth unto it is accounted as a jewel among men.*” (Bahá'u'lláh, *Fountain of Wisdom*, p. 30 ¶4.12)

lost: unable to find the way

mountain: vast number

Omnipotence: unlimited power and authority; God

pure: free and clean from fault, blame, or sin

reveal it: by divine means make it known

speck: very small sample

stones: figuratively — “*...stones of idle fancy...*” (Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 11, and *Fountain of Wisdom*, p. 128 ¶9.7)

the seven seas: figuratively — all that has been navigated by man

7. *How great is the Cause! How staggering the weight of its message! This is the Day of which it hath been said: “O my son! verily God will bring everything to light though it were but the weight of a grain of mustard seed, and hidden in a rock, or in the heavens or in the earth; for God is subtle, informed of all.”*

(Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi in *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 107)

Cause: Faith of God

Day: specified time, age, or period

earth: figuratively — wisdom of the heart; “*...by the term ‘earth’ is meant the earth of understanding and knowledge...*” (Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 48)

grain of mustard seed: “*...a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh* ☞

greater than all herbs....” (Jesus, Mark 4.31-32)

great: markedly superior in character and quality

heavens: “*By ‘heaven’ is meant the heaven of divine Revelation...*” (Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 44)

light: a clear and understandable knowledge

rock: firmly established belief

staggering: astonishing and overwhelming

subtile: keenly perceptive

weight: mass, seriousness, and importance

8. *Say: The springs that sustain the life of these birds are not of this world. Their source is far above the reach and ken of human apprehension. Who is there that can put out the light which the snow-white Hand of God hath lit? Where is he to be found that hath the power to quench the fire which hath been kindled through the might of thy Lord, the All-Powerful, the All-Compelling, the Almighty? ... Say: The fierce gales and whirlwinds of the world and its peoples can never shake the foundation upon which the rock-like stability of My chosen ones is based.*

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 341)

All-Compelling: One solely and completely able to overcome resistance or unwillingness by irresistible force
apprehension: comprehension or understanding
based: founded and supported
birds: chosen believers
chosen ones: the followers of a Manifestation during the time of His Dispensation
fire: figuratively — liveliness, passion, and enthusiasm
foundation: underlying base for establishment and support
gales and whirlwinds: *“He hath protected you from the mighty winds of misbelief, and the tempestuous gales of impiety...”* (Bahá'u'lláh, 2)

Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 25)
ken: range of perception, understanding, or knowledge
kindled: stirred up, excited, or aroused
light: emanating spiritual knowledge and goodness
quench: reduce or put out
shake: weaken from mental or emotional disturbance
snow-white: purely sacred, hallowed, and holy
source: ultimate origin of supply
springs: ultimate sources
stability: firmness in purpose and resolve
sustain: uphold and maintain
world: material existence; state of reality

APPLICATION: Showing forth divine light...

Facilitator

Read through #1 together and proceed as stated. Then take time for the participants to write out their individual plans for action in #2. (these are not shared) When everyone has finished, move on to the closing reading.

1. IMAGINING THE POSSIBILITIES: Visions of radiant lights...

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....”** Suggest as many ideas as you want.

2. DECIDING ACTION: Mirroring forth a beam of light...

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

My next step will be... _____

CLOSING MEDITATION: A heart song...

A Prayer for transformation – by the Báb.

Glorified be Thy Name, O Lord! In whom shall I take refuge while Thou art in truth my God and my Beloved; unto whom shall I turn for shelter while Thou art my Lord and my Possessor; and towards whom shall I flee while Thou art in truth my Master and my Sanctuary; and whom shall I implore while Thou art in truth my Treasure and the Goal of my desire; and through whom shall I plead before Thee, while Thou art in truth my highest aspiration and supreme desire? Every hope hath been frustrated save the yearning for Thy heavenly grace, and every door is barred except the portal leading to the well-spring of Thy blessings.

I beseech Thee, O my Lord, by Thy most effulgent splendour, before whose brightness every soul humbly boweth down and prostrateth itself in adoration for Thy sake — a splendour before whose radiance fire is turned into light, the dead are brought to life and every difficulty is changed into ease. I entreat Thee by this great, this wondrous splendour and by the glory of Thine exalted sovereignty, O Thou Who art the Lord of indomitable power, to transform us through Thy bounty into that which Thou Thyself dost possess and enable us to become fountains of Thy light, and graciously vouchsafe unto us that which beseemeth the majesty of Thy transcendent dominion. For unto Thee have I raised my hands, O Lord, and in Thee have I found sheltering support, O Lord, and unto Thee have I resigned myself, O Lord, and upon Thee have I placed my whole reliance, O Lord, and by Thee am I strengthened, O Lord.

Verily there is no power nor strength except in Thee.

(Selections from the Writings of the Báb, p. 179)