

Daily Readings

INTRODUCTION: *Approaching the threshold...*

One of the greatest pleasures for a human being is to commune intimately with loved ones. This can be a cause of great joy and happiness.

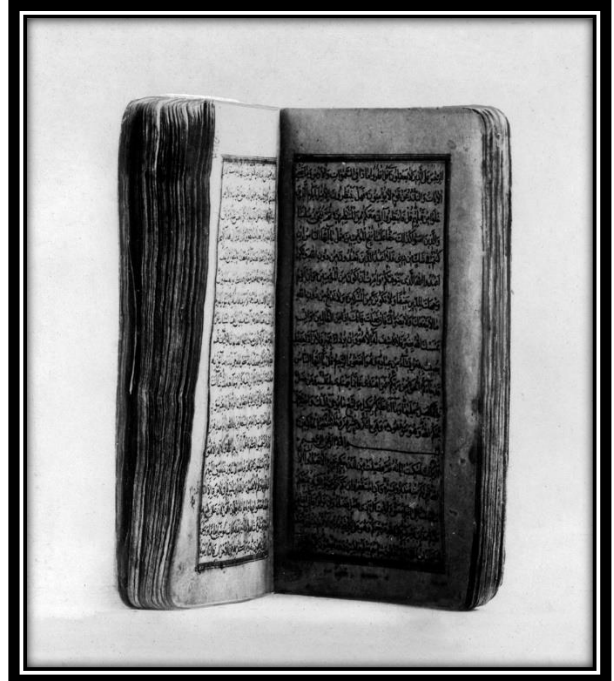
The same is true when we commune with God. We do so through prayer, which is speaking to God, and reading from the *Divine Verses*, which is listening to God. As we are about to discover, this intimate communication with God is the sole cause of spiritual transformation, and the most sought-after goal of all...true happiness.

Bahá'u'lláh established an important requirement to help us with our spiritual communion. This requirement is to recite the “verses of God”, which are the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh,¹ each morning and evening with joy and radiance. This twice-daily discipline is considered necessary for the nourishment and health of one's very soul. As the body requires nourishment at least twice daily, so it is for the soul if it is to be blessed with spiritual vitality.

The Guardian wrote that this spiritual requirement was *not* met by reading his writings, or those of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, however, their writings may be read after the required reading.²

The Universal House of Justice was asked if the Writings of the Báb or those of earlier manifestations of God may be included as “verses of God” for the daily readings. The reply was that the believers are free to reach their own understanding on this question.³

Reciting the verses of God each morning and evening may be performed either silently or out loud.⁴



Qur'án Belonging to The Báb

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 the spiritual requirement to read or recite from the verses of God both morning and evening.

¹ *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book*, pp. 126-27 #68

² *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book*, Notes, p. 236 #165

³ Email to the author from the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice, 4 March 2002

⁴ Email to the author from the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice, 4 March 2002

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.
3. **FINDING VALUE:** *Mining the gems of truth...*
 - A. Read the quotation out loud again in its entirety.
 - B. Take turns **stating each basic fact or truth** you can find in the quotation about **reading the verses of God**.

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

1. Bahá'u'lláh has stated quite clearly in His Writings the essential requisites for our spiritual growth, and these are stressed again and again by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Talks and Tablets. One can summarize [one of] them briefly in this way: ... [1] The regular reading of the Sacred Scriptures, specifically at least each morning and evening, with reverence, attention and thought.

(Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1963-1986: The Third Epoch of the Formative Age, p. 589, #375.5)

attention: mindfulness, concentration, and interest
essential: most important and necessary
reading: taking into the mind out loud or silently
requisites: requirements needed
reverence: profound respect mingled with love and awe
Sacred Scriptures: Writings of Bahá'u'lláh; [The “verses of God” to be recited each morning ☞]

and evening refers to “*all that hath been sent down from the Heaven of Divine Utterance,*” which does not include the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá or Shoghi Effendi. (see *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book*, p. 236 #165)
specifically: clearly and precisely stated
stressed: marked with importance; emphasized
thought: reflection and consideration

2. ...*recite the verses revealed by the merciful Lord. By so doing the doors to true knowledge will be opened to your inner beings, and ye will then feel your souls endowed with steadfastness and your hearts filled with radiant joy.*

(Bahá'u'lláh, cited in The Compilation of Compilations, Prepared by the Universal House of Justice, 1963-1990, Vol. I, p. 188, #364)

endowed: furnished or provided as a gift
recite: read out loud or repeat from memory
steadfastness: firm belief and determined constancy in faithfulness and devotion
verses: Writings of Bahá'u'lláh; [The “verses ☞]

of God” refers to “*all that hath been sent down from the Heaven of Divine Utterance,*” which does not include the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá or Shoghi Effendi. (see *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book*, p. 236 #165)

3. *Recite ye the verses of God every morn and eventide. ... Pride not yourselves on much reading of the verses or on a multitude of pious acts by night and day; for were a man to read a single verse with joy and radiance it would be better for him than to read with lassitude all the Holy Books of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Read ye the sacred verses in such measure that ye be not overcome by languor and despondency. Lay not upon your souls that which will weary them and weigh them down, but rather what will lighten and uplift them, so that they may soar on the wings of the Divine verses towards the Dawning-place of His manifest signs; this will draw you nearer to God, did ye but comprehend.*

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book*, pp. 73-74 ¶149)

Dawning-Place: One where first appears the reflection of the light of God [Bahá'u'lláh]
despondency: the uselessness and hopelessness of continuing
eventide: the time of the evening
faileth: falls short and neglects
faithful: true in affection and firm in allegiance
Help in Peril: God; One Who helps when in danger of injury, loss, or harm
joy: feelings of gladness, pleasure, and delight
languor: weakness or weariness of body or mind
lassitude: lack of emotion, interest, or concern
man: person
measure: an adequate or regulated amount
multitude: very large number
pious: devout, dutiful, or virtuous

pride not yourselves: do not assume self-importance above others
radiance: lively and beaming happiness, hope, and love
Self-Subsisting: God; One able to be and exist without the aid of another
recite: read out loud or repeat from memory
verses: Writings of Bahá'u'lláh
verses of God: Writings of Bahá'u'lláh; [The “verses of God” refers to “all that hath been sent down from the Heaven of Divine Utterance,” which does not include the writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá or Shoghi Effendi. (*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book*, p. 236 #165)]
weary: spiritually or mentally exhausted or fatigued

4. *They who recite the verses of the All-Merciful in the most melodious of tones will perceive in them that with which the sovereignty of earth and heaven can never be compared. From them they will inhale the divine fragrance of My worlds—worlds which today none can discern save those who have been endowed with vision through this sublime, this beauteous Revelation. Say: These verses draw hearts that are pure unto those spiritual worlds that can neither be expressed in words nor intimated by allusion. Blessed be those who hearken.*

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book*, p. 61 ¶116)

allusion: implying or suggesting in a figurative or indirect way
All-Merciful: sole One completely full of kindness and compassion towards the suffering or condemned; God
beauteous: brilliantly attractive, and intellectually and morally pleasing
blessed: granted joy, prosperity, happiness, and bliss
discern: perceive, recognize, or make out clearly
divine: God inspired; holy; sacred
endowed: furnished or provided as a gift
fragrance: pleasant and favorable impression
hearken: give careful attention or consideration in order to comply
inhale: take in eagerly
intimated: communicated indirectly
melodious: sweet succession of sounds pleasing to the ear; tuneful

perceive: become aware and understand
recite: read out loud or repeat from memory
Revelation: Communication of God and His Will to humanity [by Bahá'u'lláh]
sovereignty: supreme and independent authority and rule
sublime: awe inspiring because of supreme spiritual, intellectual, or moral worth
tones: accented sounds or inflections expressing the mood or emotion of the speaker
verses: Writings of Bahá'u'lláh; [The “verses of God” refers to “all that hath been sent down from the Heaven of Divine Utterance,” which does not include the writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá or Shoghi Effendi. (*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book*, p. 236 #165)]
worlds: domains of existence; states of being or reality

5. ...converting satanic strength into heavenly power is one that We have been empowered to accomplish. ... 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
converting: producing a spiritual change [from]
distinction: special characteristics
endowed: furnished or provided
empowered: given the faculties and abilities
heavenly: a holy and sacred

power: substantial spiritual force of influence
satanic: selfish, wicked, or evil
strength: powers to resist or use force
We: used by one in authority to denote himself; Bahá'u'lláh referring to Himself
Word of God: God's Revelations to humanity, today, Bahá'u'lláh's Writings

6. Give ear unto that which the Spirit imparteth unto thee from the verses of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting, that His Call may attract thee to the Summit of transcendent glory and draw thee nigh unto the Station where thou shalt behold thine entire being set ablaze with the fire of the love of God in such wise that neither the ascendancy of the rulers nor the whisperings of their vassals can quench it, and thou wilt arise amidst the peoples of the world to celebrate the praise of thy Lord, the Possessor of Names. This is that which well beseemeth thee in this Day.

(Baha'u'llah, *Fountain of Wisdom*, pp. 242-43 ¶17.120)

ascendancy: controlling influence; domination
beseemeth: is worthy and proper [for]
give ear: listen and heed as advise
glory: emanating brilliant and splendid divine light
Help in Peril: God; One Who helps when in danger of injury, loss, or harm
imparteth: communicates the knowledge
Names: glorious spiritual perfections and qualities
nigh: near
quench it: reduce or put it out
rulers: those who exercises power over others as in government or religion

Self-Subsisting: God; One able to be and exist without the aid of another
station: condition of reality
Spirit: Holy Spirit
such wise: such a way
summit: highest point attainable
transcendent: a state beyond ordinary limits [of]
vassals: ones in subservient or subordinate positions
verses of God: the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh as inspired by God

SHARING EXERCISE: 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, one thing that was outstanding or inspiring and what spiritual feelings it enkindled. Please remind everyone not to remark on the comments of others.

One thing from the quotations that was outstanding or inspiring to me was _____

It made me feel _____

Explain _____

SOME QUESTIONS: *A cup from the showers of confirmation...*

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. What single thing can claim the distinction of being empowered to convert satanic strength into heavenly power? _____

2. Reciting the verses of God can “...draw hearts that are pure unto those spiritual _____ that can neither be expressed in words nor intimated by allusion.”

3. Bahá'u'lláh instructs the believers in *The Most Holy Book*: “Recite ye the verses of God every morn and eventide.”¹ When asked whether it fulfils this responsibility if the individual listens in the morning or evening to the reading of Sacred Writings in a group, such as during family devotions, a Nineteen-Day Feast, or other devotional gatherings, the Universal House of Justice wrote: “It is left to the individual to determine the manner in which he can carry it out.”²
 - a. How will you put these instructions into practice? _____

 - b. Reciting the verses of God every morning and evening will be of what value to your soul? _____

4. Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá have made it clear that the regular reading of the Sacred Scriptures, specifically at least each morning and evening, with reverence, attention and thought, are essential requisites for spiritual growth. Can spiritual growth be maintained or developed without doing this?
☐ Yes ☐ No Explain: _____

5. To read each morning and evening from the “verses of God”, means to read silently or out loud from...
 - ☐ a. the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh.
 - ☐ b. the writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
 - ☐ c. the writings of the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi.
 - ☐ d. the writings of the Universal House of Justice.

6. The reading of the Sacred Scriptures morning and evening are best fulfilled in the spirit of...
 - ☐ a. languor
 - ☐ b. joy
 - ☐ c. despondency
 - ☐ d. radiance
 - ☐ e. eagerness
 - ☐ f. lassitude
 - ☐ g. love
 - ☐ h. your pajamas

¹ *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book*, p. 73, #149

² Email to the author from the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice, 14 May 2002

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 "Daily Readings", 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...

From a prayer by Bahá'u'lláh.

I beg of Thee, O my God, by Thy most exalted Word which Thou hast ordained as the Divine Elixir unto all who are in Thy realm, the Elixir through whose potency the crude metal of human life hath been transmuted into purest gold, O Thou in Whose hands are both the visible and invisible kingdoms, to ordain that my choice be conformed to Thy choice and my wish to Thy wish, that I may be entirely content with that which Thou didst desire, and be wholly satisfied with what Thou didst destine for me by Thy bounteousness and favor. Potent art Thou to do as Thou willest. Thou, in very truth, art the All-Glorious, the All-Wise.

Happy is the man who hath recognized Thee, and discovered the sweetness of Thy fragrance, and set himself towards Thy kingdom, and tasted of the things that have been perfected therein by Thy grace and favor. Great is the blessedness of him who hath acknowledged Thy most excellent majesty, and whom the veils that have shut out the nations from Thee have not hindered from directing his eyes towards Thee, O Thou Who art the King of eternity and the Quickener of every moldering bone! Blessed, also, is he that hath inhaled Thy sweet savors, and been carried away by Thine utterances in Thy days. Blessed, moreover, be the man that hath turned unto Thee . . .

Praised be Thou, the Lord of the worlds!

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 54)

ANSWERS: *Affirming treasures...*

1. the Word of God (Bahá'u'lláh's Writings)
2. worlds
3. all answers are valuable
4. no, because it is an *essential requisite*
5. a
6. b, d, e, and g

This study guide and many others are available as free downloads at www.baha essentials.com