

Suggestions for Independent Study

Begin each study by reading through the **INTRODUCTION** and **OBJECTIVES**. It can be more meaningful if you read everything out loud. In Bahá'u'lláh's Writings, He repeatedly instructs the believers to *recite* the verses or to *utter* the prayers. Reading the material out loud will help you understand it better and retain the information longer.

Once you have read through the introduction and objectives, proceed with the selected quotations:

1. **READING:** Read the first quotation out loud in its entirety.
2. **CONFIRMING MEANING:** If you would like to have a better understanding of a word used in the quotation, you can refer to its substitute phrase, definition, or synonym in the boxes below the quotation. Read the substitute phrase, definition, or synonym out loud. These are here to help clarify and confirm the true meaning and intent of the author of the quotation. Now read out loud the sentence, or part of it, that contains the **word** you selected, **while substituting for that word**, its given phrase, definition, or synonym from the boxes below the quotation. This step is very important, so take your time and enjoy it. If you would like a better understanding of other words, repeat this process until you are satisfied with your understanding of the words.
3. **FINDING VALUE:** Now, read the quotation out loud again in its entirety. The instructions then say: "Take turns stating each basic fact or truth you can find in the quotation about..." You will replace this statement with the question: "What basic facts or truths can **I** find in the quotation about..." While browsing through the quotation, try to identify facts, truths, or important points about the subjects outlined in the objectives. Either state each one out loud or write them down.
4. Proceed in this same way with each of the numbered quotations.

The **SHARING EXERCISE** is very significant as it allows you to identify and speak about those very special spiritual feelings generated by reading and studying the Bahá'í Writings. You will have no one to share with if you study alone; however, just going through the exercise, writing it out, and stating your feelings verbally is still meaningful and can be especially moving.

SOME QUESTIONS: Answer the questions in this exercise as directed in the facilitator's instructions. When you have finished, you will find the answers at the end of the study.

APPLICATION EXERCISE: First, ask yourself the following question: How *could* the Bahá'í Teachings in this study class be translated into reality and action? Begin your answers with: "*One could...*" Think of as many possibilities as you can.

Complete the exercise by writing out how you will make conscious efforts to translate what you have learned from this study class into reality and action. (NOTE: The first three lessons have no application exercise.)

Finish the study by reading through the **CLOSING MEDITATION**.

All His blessings,

Steve