

GLEANINGS

#11

Introduction

Whenever we are studying the Word of God, that is, the revelations of the Manifestations of God, there are some principles derived from the Writings of Baha'ullah that we might keep in mind. These were cited in the first lesson, repeated in the second lesson, and will remain in this position in case you need reminding:

The first is...

“The understanding of His words and the comprehension of the utterances of the Birds of Heaven are in no wise dependent upon human learning. They depend solely upon purity of heart, chastity of soul, and freedom of spirit.” (Kitab-i-Iqan)

In other words, you don't need an academic degree or the equivalent to understand the Writings of Baha'u'llah.

The second is...

“...in every age, the reading of the scriptures and holy books is for no other purpose except to enable the reader to apprehend their meaning and unravel their innermost mysteries. Otherwise reading, without understanding, is of no abiding profit unto man.” (Kitab-i-Iqan)

In other words, you do need to know how to read, and to make the effort to understand what you are reading...because reading without understanding is of no value.

The third is...

“It is evident unto thee that the Birds of Heaven and Doves of Eternity speak a twofold language. One language, the outward language, is devoid of allusions, is unconcealed and unveiled...The other language is veiled and concealed, so that whatever lieth hidden in the heart of the malevolent may be made manifest and their innermost being be disclosed...None apprehendeth the meaning of these utterances except them whose hearts are assured, whose souls have found favor with God, and whose minds are detached from all else but Him. In such

utterances, the literal meaning, as generally understood by the people, is not what hath been intended.” (Kitab-i-Iqan)

*In other words, the Manifestations sometimes intend for their words to be understood literally, and in other cases to be understood symbolically. We can do both, as long as we are “**detached from all else but Him**”, that is, not assuming that our prior knowledge will enable us to understand what He is saying. We need to be prepared to learn something new, all the time.*

The fourth is this...

“Know assuredly that just as thou firmly believest that the Word of God, exalted be His glory, endureth forever, thou must, likewise, believe with undoubting faith that its meaning can never be exhausted.” (Gleanings LXXXIX)

In other words, the words revealed by the Manifestations, in this case by Baha’u’llah, have many meanings, not just one meaning.

A fifth principle, which will be readily recognized as we read GLEANINGS, is no doubt found in the Writings of Baha’u’llah, but is best known as it is described in a letter written on behalf of the Guardian:

“One might liken Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings to a sphere; there are points poles apart, and in between the thoughts and doctrines that unite them.” (Shoghi Effendi, 5 July 1947, Scholarship, p. 2)

In other words, we need to keep the big picture in mind as we read and think about the Baha’i teachings, rather than looking at every teaching in isolation.

A participant in this course recommended the following:

Immerse yourselves in the ocean of My words, that ye may unravel its secrets, and discover all the pearls of wisdom that lie hid in its depths. (Kitab-i-Aqdas #182)

A similar and complementary verse is this:

Recite ye the verses of God every morn and eventide. Whoso faileth to recite them hath not been faithful to the Covenant of God and His Testament, and whoso turneth away from these

holy verses in this Day is of those who throughout eternity have turned away from God.
(Kitab-i-Aqdas #149)

If you would like to bring up other principles, please email me at peterry19@gmail.com so that I can share them with everyone taking this course.

TENTH WEEK'S SELECTIONS (C-CXII)

The principal themes in the twelve excerpts from the Writings of Baha'u'llah collected here are the qualifications of the teacher of His Faith [C]; the high station to which man is called in this Day [CI]; the hearts of men are the possession of God and His Manifestation and believers in God are enjoined to be obedient to government [CII]; Baha'u'llah praises an individual believer who was loyal to both the Bab and Himself, and states that God has fixed a time after which humanity will be punished for its waywardness [CIII]; another passage from Baha'u'llah's writings which indicates that an unforeseen calamity will befall humanity [CIV]; a passage from the Kitab-i-Aqdas in which the kings of the world are summoned to recognize Him and follow His law [CV]; Baha'u'llah explains that it is futile for humanity to attempt to solve its own problems, that it must turn to the Divine Physician in this Day [CVI]; Baha'u'llah proclaims to Napoleon III that this Day is unlike any other Day [CVII]; Baha'u'llah predicts a day of calamity that will befall humanity because of its disobedience to divine law [CVIII]; there is a fixed time after which this divine punishment will occur [CIX]; is humanity prepared for the revelation predicted for this Day [CX]; how long will injustice continue [CXI]; Baha'u'llah calls for justice to be established on planet earth [CXII].

– C –

The voice of the Divine Herald, proceeding out of the throne of God, declareth: O ye My loved ones! Suffer not the hem of My sacred vesture to be smirched and mired with the things of this world, and follow not the promptings of your evil and corrupt desires. The Daystar of Divine Revelation, that shineth in the plenitude of its glory in the heaven of this Prison, beareth Me witness. They whose hearts are turned towards Him Who is the Object of the adoration of the entire creation must needs, in this Day, pass beyond and be sanctified from all created things, visible and invisible. If they arise to teach My Cause, they must let the breath of Him Who is the Unconstrained stir them, and must spread it abroad on the earth with high resolve, with minds that are wholly centered in Him, and with hearts that are completely detached from and independent of all things, and with souls that are sanctified from the world and its vanities. It behooveth them to

choose as the best provision for their journey reliance upon God, and to clothe themselves with the love of their Lord, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious. If they do so, their words shall influence their hearers.

*This passage is from the Lawh-i-'Ali, written in Persian and Arabic, is not to be found elsewhere than in Gleanings. Baha'u'llah is explaining in this passage the qualifications of those who are called upon to teach His Cause...and all Baha'is have received that call. There are no specially chosen and trained "missionaries" in this Faith. First qualification is this: **"Suffer not the hem of My sacred vesture to be smirched and mired with the things of this world, and follow not the promptings of your evil and corrupt desires...must needs, in this Day, pass beyond and be sanctified from all created things, visible and invisible."** The second qualification is this: **"If they arise to teach My Cause, they must let the breath of Him Who is the Unconstrained stir them, and must spread it abroad on the earth with high resolve..."** In other passages included in Gleanings we will learn what He means by **"let the breath of Him Who is the Unconstrained stir them..."***

How great, how very great, the gulf that separateth Us from them who, in this Day, are occupied with their evil passions, and have set their hopes on the things of the earth and its fleeting glory! Many a time hath the court of the All-Merciful been to outward seeming so denuded of the riches of this world that they who lived in close association with Him suffered from dire want. Despite their sufferings, the Pen of the Most High hath, at no time, been willing to refer, nor even to make the slightest allusion, to the things that pertain to this world and its treasures. And if, at any time, any gift were presented to Him, that gift was accepted as a token of His grace unto him that offered it. Should it ever please Us to appropriate to Our own use all the treasures of the earth, to none is given the right to question Our authority, or to challenge Our right. It would be impossible to conceive any act more contemptible than soliciting, in the name of the one true God, the riches which men possess.

*The Guardian told the Baha'is that they must not try to be like their neighbors...they should distinguish themselves from other people, by adhering stalwartly, without compromise, to the Baha'i teachings. Baha'u'llah forbade begging, and He applies that prohibition to a wide field of behavior: **"It would be impossible to conceive any act more contemptible than soliciting, in the name of the one true God, the riches which men possess."***

It is incumbent upon thee, and upon the followers of Him Who is the Eternal Truth, to summon all men to whatsoever shall sanctify them from all attachment to the things of the earth and purge them from its defilements, that the sweet smell of the raiment of the All-Glorious may be smelled from all them that love Him.

*We are not only to sanctify ourselves, “**from all attachment to the things of the earth**” but do so in such a way that “**the sweet smell of the raiment of the All-Glorious may be smelled from all them that love Him.**” Universal participation in purging ourselves from the “**defilements**” of the world, no less. For we must be a holy people to attract souls to the Cause of God.*

They who are possessed of riches, however, must have the utmost regard for the poor, for great is the honor destined by God for those poor who are steadfast in patience. By My life! There is no honor, except what God may please to bestow, that can compare to this honor. Great is the blessedness awaiting the poor that endure patiently and conceal their sufferings, and well is it with the rich who bestow their riches on the needy and prefer them before themselves.

*Baha’u’llah does not seize the assets of His followers. Nor does He encourage rulers to do so, or permit individuals to engage in theft. Private property is upheld by Baha’u’llah, in the Hidden Words and elsewhere. But if we do attain to riches, He is no less insistent that we “**must have regard for the poor**”. He calls the wealthy not only to “bestow their riches on the needy” but to “**prefer them before themselves.**” We are familiar with the Biblical teaching, to love our neighbor like ourselves, to observe equity, to be fair-minded...Baha’u’llah takes this principle further, for we are to “**prefer**” others to ourselves.*

Please God, the poor may exert themselves and strive to earn the means of livelihood. This is a duty which, in this most great Revelation, hath been prescribed unto every one, and is accounted in the sight of God as a goodly deed. Whoso observeth this duty, the help of the invisible One shall most certainly aid him. He can enrich, through His grace, whomsoever He pleaseth. He, verily, hath power over all things....

*Baha’u’llah wishes “**every one**” to “**strive to earn the means of livelihood**” and ‘Abdu’l-Baha explained that this means that our work is a way of worshipping God, that we are not*

to gamble, not to cheat, and not to force others to provide for us. Each one is called upon to contribute according to his capacity.

Tell, O ‘Alí, the loved ones of God that equity is the most fundamental among human virtues. The evaluation of all things must needs depend upon it. Ponder awhile on the woes and afflictions which this Prisoner hath sustained. I have, all the days of My life, been at the mercy of Mine enemies, and have suffered each day, in the path of the love of God, a fresh tribulation. I have patiently endured until the fame of the Cause of God was spread abroad on the earth. If anyone should now arise and, prompted by the vain imaginations his heart hath devised, endeavor, openly or in secret, to sow the seeds of dissension amongst men—can such a man be said to have acted with equity? No, by Him Whose might extendeth over all things! By My life! Mine heart groaneth and mine eyes weep sore for the Cause of God and for them that understand not what they say and imagine what they cannot comprehend.

*Baha’u’llah depicts “equity” as the opposite of “sowing the seeds of dissension amongst men”, and yet that is the economic model employed virtually everywhere on the planet. Those who believe that equity should be forced upon people, that there should be equality of outcome, “**sow the seeds of dissension**” as we can readily recognize. And those who believe that equity should be options are just as mistaken, for it we do not provide for everyone then that is also a great source of “**dissension amongst men.**”*

It beseemeth all men, in this Day, to take firm hold on the Most Great Name, and to establish the unity of all mankind. There is no place to flee to, no refuge that anyone can seek, except Him. Should any man be led to utter such words as will turn away the people from the shores of God’s limitless ocean, and cause them to fix their hearts on anything except this glorious and manifest Being, that hath assumed a form subject to human limitations—such a man, however lofty the station he may occupy, shall be denounced by the entire creation as one that hath deprived himself of the sweet savors of the All-Merciful.

*As Baha’u’llah has stated in many of His Tablets, including a number that have been rendered into English and other languages, we must adhere to the prescriptions of the Manifestation of God for this Day, and we must establish the “**unity of all mankind**”. There is no other solution... “**There is no place to flee to, no refuge that anyone can seek, except Him.**”*

Say: Observe equity in your judgment, ye men of understanding heart! He that is unjust in his judgment is destitute of the characteristics that distinguish man's station. He Who is the Eternal Truth knoweth well what the breasts of men conceal. His long forbearance hath emboldened His creatures, for not until the appointed time is come will He rend any veil asunder. His surpassing mercy hath restrained the fury of His wrath, and caused most people to imagine that the one true God is unaware of the things they have privily committed. By Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Informed! The mirror of His knowledge reflecteth, with complete distinctness, precision and fidelity, the doings of all men. Say: Praise be to Thee, O Concealer of the sins of the weak and helpless! Magnified be Thy name, O Thou that forgivest the heedless ones that trespass against Thee!

*Baha'u'llah is fully aware of “**what the breasts of men conceal**”, “**the things they have privily committed**”.*

We have forbidden men to walk after the imaginations of their hearts, that they may be enabled to recognize Him Who is the sovereign Source and Object of all knowledge, and may acknowledge whatsoever He may be pleased to reveal. Witness how they have entangled themselves with their idle fancies and vain imaginations. By My life! They are themselves the victims of what their own hearts have devised, and yet they perceive it not. Vain and profitless is the talk of their lips, and yet they understand not.

*Humanity are collectively “**the victims of what**” their “**own hearts have devised**” and only they can liberate themselves from this grievous state and by turning to Baha'u'llah.*

We beseech God that He may graciously vouchsafe His grace unto all men, and enable them to attain the knowledge of Him and of themselves. By My life! Whoso hath known Him shall soar in the immensity of His love, and shall be detached from the world and all that is therein. Nothing on earth shall deflect him from his course, how much less they who, prompted by their vain imaginations, speak those things which God hath forbidden.

Baha'u'llah gives such confident encouragement to all of us, no matter how inadequate or weak we may imagine ourselves to be.

Say: This is the Day when every ear must needs be attentive to His voice. Hearken ye to the Call of this wronged One, and magnify ye the name of the one true God, and adorn yourselves with the ornament of His remembrance, and illumine your hearts with the light of His love. This is the key that unlocketh the hearts of men, the burnish that shall cleanse the souls of all beings. He that is careless of what hath poured out from the finger of the Will of God liveth in manifest error. Amity and rectitude of conduct, rather than dissension and mischief, are the marks of true faith.

*Baha'u'llah reminds us that His teachings are not just for those who love Him, but that **“ever ear must needs be attentive to His voice”** and that being attentive is not just listening, but that action, actual **“amity and rectitude of conduct...are the marks of true faith.”***

Proclaim unto men what He, Who speaketh the truth and is the Bearer of the Trust of God, hath bidden thee observe. My glory be with thee, O thou that callest upon My name, whose eyes are directed towards My court, and whose tongue uttereth the praise of thy Lord, the Beneficent.

We are to teach all what He has called us to observe. For His remedies are for all of humanity. What is good for us is good for everyone. The days when it was sufficient for some souls to follow this Prophet and other souls to follow another Prophet are gone. We have one Manifestation and all of humanity must recognize Him as the source of truth.

– CI –

The purpose underlying the revelation of every heavenly Book, nay, of every divinely revealed verse, is to endue all men with righteousness and understanding, so that peace and tranquillity may be firmly established amongst them. Whatsoever instilleth assurance into the hearts of men, whatsoever exalteth their station or promoteth their contentment, is acceptable in the sight of God. How lofty is the station which man, if he but choose to fulfill his high destiny, can attain! To what depths of degradation he can sink, depths which the meanest of creatures have never reached! Seize, O friends, the chance which this Day offereth you, and deprive not yourselves of the liberal effusions of His grace. I beseech God that He may graciously enable every one of you to adorn

himself, in this blessed Day, with the ornament of pure and holy deeds. He, verily, doeth whatsoever He willeth.

*This passage is from a Tablet revealed in Persian for Ustad Shir-i-Muhammad. As in the previous passages, Baha'u'llah is calling humanity to “**pure and holy deeds**”. This has been the intention and purpose of all the Prophets and of their Books.*

– CII –

Give a hearing ear, O people, to that which I, in truth, say unto you. The one true God, exalted be His glory, hath ever regarded, and will continue to regard, the hearts of men as His own, His exclusive possession. All else, whether pertaining to land or sea, whether riches or glory, He hath bequeathed unto the Kings and rulers of the earth. From the beginning that hath no beginning the ensign proclaiming the words “He doeth whatsoever He willeth” hath been unfurled in all its splendor before His Manifestation. What mankind needeth in this day is obedience unto them that are in authority, and a faithful adherence to the cord of wisdom. The instruments which are essential to the immediate protection, the security and assurance of the human race have been entrusted to the hands, and lie in the grasp, of the governors of human society. This is the wish of God and His decree.... We cherish the hope that one of the kings of the earth will, for the sake of God, arise for the triumph of this wronged, this oppressed people. Such a king will be eternally extolled and glorified. God hath prescribed unto this people the duty of aiding whosoever will aid them, of serving his best interests, and of demonstrating to him their abiding loyalty. They who follow Me must strive, under all circumstances, to promote the welfare of whosoever will arise for the triumph of My Cause, and must at all times prove their devotion and fidelity unto him. Happy is the man that hearkeneth and observeth My counsel. Woe unto him that faileth to fulfill My wish.

*This passage was revealed in Persian for Mirza Abu'l-Fadl Gulpaygani. This text is without ambiguity or exception in depicting three of the cardinal teachings of Baha'u'llah for this Day and Cycle: First, that our hearts belong to God, or, in the word of the Torah, “**Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul and all thy strength.**” Second, that we owe “**obedience unto them that are in authority**”. Third, that we must “**promote the welfare of whosoever will arise for the triumph of My Cause**”.*

– CIII –

God hath, through His tongue that uttereth the truth, testified in all His Tablets to these words: “I am He that liveth in the Abhá Realm of Glory.”

*This passage is from a Tablet revealed for Haji Siyyih Javad-i-Karbila’i, a famous Babi and Baha’i. This affirms that all of the Tablets revealed by Baha’u’llah attest that He “**liveth in the Abha Realm of Glory.**” God is accessible to us through His Manifestation.*

By the righteousness of God! He, from the heights of this sublime, this holy, this mighty, and transcendent station, seeth all things, heareth all things, and is, at this hour, proclaiming: Blessed art thou, O Javád, inasmuch as thou hast attained unto that which no man before thee hath attained. I swear by Him Who is the Eternal Truth! Through thee the eyes of the inmates of the Exalted Paradise have been gladdened. The people, however, are utterly heedless. Were We to reveal thy station, the hearts of men would be sorely agitated, their footsteps would slip, the embodiments of vainglory would be dumbfounded, would fall down upon the ground, and would thrust the fingers of heedlessness into their ears, for fear of hearing.

*This testifies to the exalted station of the one who believes in Baha’u’llah, “**as thou hast attained unto that which no man before thee hath attained.**” It also attests to the all-encompassing knowledge of the Manifestation of God, He Who “**seeth all things, heareth all things**”.*

Grieve thou not over those that have busied themselves with the things of this world, and have forgotten the remembrance of God, the Most Great. By Him Who is the Eternal Truth! The day is approaching when the wrathful anger of the Almighty will have taken hold of them. He, verily, is the Omnipotent, the All-Subduing, the Most Powerful. He shall cleanse the earth from the defilement of their corruption, and shall give it for an heritage unto such of His servants as are nigh unto Him.

*The judgment of God will come, when those who “have busied themselves with the things of this world” will experience “**the wrathful angel of the Almighty**” and that after He cleanses*

“the earth from the defilement of their corruption” He “shall give it for an heritage unto such of His servants as are nigh unto Him.”

Say: O people! Dust fill your mouths, and ashes blind your eyes, for having bartered away the Divine Joseph for the most paltry of prices. Oh, the misery that resteth upon you, ye that are far astray! Have ye imagined in your hearts that ye possess the power to outstrip Him and His Cause? Far from it! To this He, Himself, the All-Powerful, the Most Exalted, the Most Great, doth testify.

Who is in charge – man or God?

Soon shall the blasts of His chastisement beat upon you, and the dust of hell enshroud you. Those men who, having amassed the vanities and ornaments of the earth, have turned away disdainfully from God—these have lost both this world and the world to come. Erelong, will God, with the Hand of Power, strip them of their possessions, and divest them of the robe of His bounty. To this they themselves shall soon witness. Thou, too, shalt testify.

How may those who have “amassed the vanities and ornaments of the earth” retain “their possessions”? Are they entitled to keep those possessions under all circumstances?

Say: O people! Let not this life and its deceits deceive you, for the world and all that is therein is held firmly in the grasp of His Will. He bestoweth His favor on whom He willeth, and from whom He willeth He taketh it away. He doth whatsoever He chooseth. Had the world been of any worth in His sight, He surely would never have allowed His enemies to possess it, even to the extent of a grain of mustard seed. He hath, however, caused you to be entangled with its affairs, in return for what your hands have wrought in His Cause. This, indeed, is a chastisement which ye, of your own will, have inflicted upon yourselves, could ye but perceive it. Are ye rejoicing in the things which, according to the estimate of God, are contemptible and worthless, things wherewith He proveth the hearts of the doubtful?

Who is responsible for having received the “chastisement” of God? What things “are contemptible and worthless”?

– CIV –

O ye peoples of the world! Know, verily, that an unforeseen calamity is following you, and that grievous retribution awaiteth you. Think not the deeds ye have committed have been blotted from My sight. By My beauty! All your doings hath My Pen graven with open characters upon tablets of chrysolite.

This text is from the Persian Hidden Words of Baha'u'llah (#63). Does God know what we have done? Will He let us off the hook for our evil actions?

– CV –

O kings of the earth! He Who is the sovereign Lord of all is come. The Kingdom is God's, the omnipotent Protector, the Self-Subsisting. Worship none but God, and, with radiant hearts, lift up your faces unto your Lord, the Lord of all names. This is a Revelation to which whatever ye possess can never be compared, could ye but know it.

This excerpt is from the Kitab-i-Aqdas, #78-84. Who is the ultimate authority, the King of Kings? To Whom does the world belong, and to Whom does humanity owe worship?

We see you rejoicing in that which ye have amassed for others and shutting out yourselves from the worlds which naught except My guarded Tablet can reckon. The treasures ye have laid up have drawn you far away from your ultimate objective. This ill beseemeth you, could ye but understand it. Wash your hearts from all earthly defilements, and hasten to enter the Kingdom of your Lord, the Creator of earth and heaven, Who caused the world to tremble and all its peoples to wail, except them that have renounced all things and clung to that which the Hidden Tablet hath ordained.

*Does wealth bring us closer to our “ultimate objective”? Which people **will** “tremble” and “wail” and which will be spared?*

This is the Day in which He Who held converse with God hath attained the light of the Ancient of Days, and quaffed the pure waters of reunion from this Cup that hath caused the seas to swell. Say: By the one true God! Sinai is circling round the Dayspring of Revelation, while from the heights of the Kingdom the Voice of the Spirit of God is heard

proclaiming: “Bestir yourselves, ye proud ones of the earth, and hasten ye unto Him.” Carmel hath, in this Day, hastened in longing adoration to attain His court, whilst from the heart of Zion there cometh the cry: “The promise is fulfilled. That which had been announced in the holy Writ of God, the most Exalted, the Almighty, the Best-Beloved, is made manifest.”

What does it mean that “He Who held converse with God hath attained the light of the Ancient of Days”? What was “announced in the holy Writ of God” which “is made manifest”?

O kings of the earth! The Most Great Law hath been revealed in this Spot, this scene of transcendent splendor. Every hidden thing hath been brought to light, by virtue of the Will of the Supreme Ordainer, He Who hath ushered in the Last Hour, through Whom the Moon hath been cleft, and every irrevocable decree expounded.

What do each of these terms mean?

Ye are but vassals, O kings of the earth! He Who is the King of Kings hath appeared, arrayed in His most wondrous glory, and is summoning you unto Himself, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Take heed lest pride deter you from recognizing the Source of Revelation, lest the things of this world shut you out as by a veil from Him Who is the Creator of heaven. Arise, and serve Him Who is the Desire of all nations, Who hath created you through a word from Him, and ordained you to be, for all time, the emblems of His sovereignty.

Are the kings and rulers of the earth supreme in their authority on earth?

By the righteousness of God! It is not Our wish to lay hands on your kingdoms. Our mission is to seize and possess the hearts of men. Upon them the eyes of Bahá are fastened. To this testifieth the Kingdom of Names, could ye but comprehend it. Whoso followeth his Lord, will renounce the world and all that is therein; how much greater, then, must be the detachment of Him Who holdeth so august a station! Forsake your palaces, and haste ye to gain admittance into His Kingdom. This, indeed, will profit you both in this world and in the next. To this testifieth the Lord of the realm on high, did ye but know it.

Does Baha'u'llah “wish to lay hands on your kingdoms” or to “possess the hearts of men”?

How great the blessedness that awaiteth the king who will arise to aid My Cause in My Kingdom, who will detach himself from all else but Me! Such a king is numbered with the companions of the Crimson Ark—the Ark which God hath prepared for the people of Bahá. All must glorify his name, must reverence his station, and aid him to unlock the cities with the keys of My Name, the omnipotent Protector of all that inhabit the visible and invisible kingdoms. Such a king is the very eye of mankind, the luminous ornament on the brow of creation, the fountainhead of blessings unto the whole world. Offer up, O people of Bahá, your substance, nay your very lives, for his assistance.

Are all kings equal in the sight of God and for the “people of Baha”?

– CVI –

The All-Knowing Physician hath His finger on the pulse of mankind. He perceiveth the disease, and prescribeth, in His unerring wisdom, the remedy. Every age hath its own problem, and every soul its particular aspiration. The remedy the world needeth in its present-day afflictions can never be the same as that which a subsequent age may require. Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in, and center your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements.

*This selection is from a Tablet addressed to Manikchi Sahib in Persian, the whole of which found in The Tabernacle of Unity, #1. Does this imply that it is for each of us to “**be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age**” we “**live in**” so that we may be able to attend to those “needs”? Or to seek from the Manifestation of God the remedy that suits “**the needs of the age**”?*

We can well perceive how the whole human race is encompassed with great, with incalculable afflictions. We see it languishing on its bed of sickness, sore-tried and disillusioned. They that are intoxicated by self-conceit have interposed themselves between it and the Divine and infallible Physician. Witness how they have entangled all men, themselves included, in the mesh of their devices. They can neither discover the

cause of the disease, nor have they any knowledge of the remedy. They have conceived the straight to be crooked, and have imagined their friend an enemy.

Did Baha'u'llah answer, in this passage, the previous question?

Incline your ears to the sweet melody of this Prisoner. Arise, and lift up your voices, that haply they that are fast asleep may be awakened. Say: O ye who are as dead! The Hand of Divine bounty proffereth unto you the Water of Life. Hasten and drink your fill. Whoso hath been reborn in this Day, shall never die; whoso remaineth dead, shall never live.

Is the Revelation of Baha'u'llah for only a few, or for all of humanity?

– CVII –

He Who is your Lord, the All-Merciful, cherisheth in His heart the desire of beholding the entire human race as one soul and one body. Haste ye to win your share of God's good grace and mercy in this Day that eclipseth all other created Days. How great the felicity that awaiteth the man that forsaketh all he hath in a desire to obtain the things of God! Such a man, We testify, is among God's blessed ones.

*This selection is from a Tablet addressed to Napoleon III, the Emperor of France, and the Tablet is found in its entirety in Suriy-i-Haykal, The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, #131-157. What does it mean for “**the entire human race**” to become “**as one soul and one body**”? Does it mean that we should be all the same, divested of our individuality, our diversity, as has been imagined by Ayatollah Khomeini, Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Mao-tse Tung?*

– CVIII –

We have a fixed time for you, O people. If ye fail, at the appointed hour, to turn towards God, He, verily, will lay violent hold on you, and will cause grievous afflictions to assail you from every direction. How severe, indeed, is the chastisement with which your Lord will then chastise you!

This excerpt is from a Tablet addressed to Siyyid Yusuf-i-Isfahani, also called Sidihi, and was revealed in Arabic. It is not found translated elsewhere than in Gleanings. Do we have all the time in the world to reform our ways?

– CIX –

O Kamál! The heights which, through the most gracious favor of God, mortal man can attain, in this Day, are as yet unrevealed to his sight. The world of being hath never had, nor doth it yet possess the capacity for such a revelation. The day, however, is approaching when the potentialities of so great a favor will, by virtue of His behest, be manifested unto men. Though the forces of the nations be arrayed against Him, though the kings of the earth be leagued to undermine His Cause, the power of His might shall stand unshaken. He, verily, speaketh the truth, and summoneth all mankind to the way of Him Who is the Incomparable, the All-Knowing.

*This selection was revealed in Persian and addressed to Kamalu'd-Din-i-Naraqi, and is not found elsewhere than in Gleanings. Have the **“heights which the most gracious favor of God”** been revealed or do they await another day? Can the Cause of God withstand **“the forces of the nations”** and **“the kings of the earth”**?*

All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization. The Almighty beareth Me witness: To act like the beasts of the field is unworthy of man. Those virtues that befit his dignity are forbearance, mercy, compassion and loving-kindness towards all the peoples and kindreds of the earth. Say: O friends! Drink your fill from this crystal stream that floweth through the heavenly grace of Him Who is the Lord of Names. Let others partake of its waters in My name, that the leaders of men in every land may fully recognize the purpose for which the Eternal Truth hath been revealed, and the reason for which they themselves have been created.

*What are the characteristics of **“an ever-advancing civilization”**? Are they far greater liberty and wealth or something else altogether?*

– CX –

The Great Being saith: O ye children of men! The fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race, and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst men. Suffer it not to become a source of dissension and discord, of hate and enmity. This is the straight Path, the fixed and immovable foundation. Whatsoever is raised on this foundation, the changes and chances of the world can never impair its strength, nor will the revolution of countless centuries undermine its structure. Our hope is that the world's religious leaders and the rulers thereof will unitedly arise for the reformation of this age and the rehabilitation of its fortunes. Let them, after meditating on its needs, take counsel together and, through anxious and full deliberation, administer to a diseased and sorely-afflicted world the remedy it requireth.... It is incumbent upon them who are in authority to exercise moderation in all things. Whatsoever passeth beyond the limits of moderation will cease to exert a beneficial influence. Consider for instance such things as liberty, civilization and the like. However much men of understanding may favorably regard them, they will, if carried to excess, exercise a pernicious influence upon men.... Please God, the peoples of the world may be led, as the result of the high endeavors exerted by their rulers and the wise and learned amongst men, to recognize their best interests. How long will humanity persist in its waywardness? How long will injustice continue? How long is chaos and confusion to reign amongst men? How long will discord agitate the face of society?... The winds of despair are, alas, blowing from every direction, and the strife that divideth and afflicteth the human race is daily increasing. The signs of impending convulsions and chaos can now be discerned, inasmuch as the prevailing order appeareth to be lamentably defective. I beseech God, exalted be His glory, that He may graciously awaken the peoples of the earth, may grant that the end of their conduct may be profitable unto them, and aid them to accomplish that which beseemeth their station.

*This excerpt is from a Tablet addressed to Mirza Maqsd, revealed in Persian, and included in full in Tablets revealed after the Kitab-i-Aqdas, #11; and in Fountain of Wisdom, #11. What is the “**fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion**”?*

– CXI –

O contending peoples and kindreds of the earth! Set your faces towards unity, and let the radiance of its light shine upon you. Gather ye together, and for the sake of God

resolve to root out whatever is the source of contention amongst you. Then will the effulgence of the world's great Luminary envelop the whole earth, and its inhabitants become the citizens of one city, and the occupants of one and the same throne. This wronged One hath, ever since the early days of His life, cherished none other desire but this, and will continue to entertain no wish except this wish. There can be no doubt whatever that the peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source, and are the subjects of one God. The difference between the ordinances under which they abide should be attributed to the varying requirements and exigencies of the age in which they were revealed. All of them, except a few which are the outcome of human perversity, were ordained of God, and are a reflection of His Will and Purpose. Arise and, armed with the power of faith, shatter to pieces the gods of your vain imaginings, the sowers of dissension amongst you. Cleave unto that which draweth you together and uniteth you. This, verily, is the most exalted Word which the Mother Book hath sent down and revealed unto you. To this beareth witness the Tongue of Grandeur from His habitation of glory.

This selection is from the Lawh-i-Ittihad (Tablet of Unity), revealed in Persian for Siyyid Asadu'llah, not to be confused with Mirza Asadu'llah, father of Dr. Aminu'llah Farid, who published one of the first English translations of Hidden Words, in 1905. Farid later served as one of the translators (also called interpreters) for 'Abdu'l-Baha's talks in North America in 1912. Hippolyte Dreyfus translated the Persian Hidden Words into French which was also published in 1905. Mrs. Stannard's translation of Hidden Words was published in 1921. Shoghi Effendi's translation of the Hidden Words was first published in 1923, and revised in 1924, 1925, 1929 and finally in 1954. What is the source of the "few" teachings of religions "which are the outcome of human perversity"?

– CXII –

Behold the disturbances which, for many a long year, have afflicted the earth, and the perturbation that hath seized its peoples. It hath either been ravaged by war, or tormented by sudden and unforeseen calamities. Though the world is encompassed with misery and distress, yet no man hath paused to reflect what the cause or source of that may be. Whenever the True Counselor uttered a word in admonishment, lo, they all denounced Him as a mover of mischief and rejected His claim. How bewildering, how confusing is such behavior! No two men can be found who may be said to be outwardly

and inwardly united. The evidences of discord and malice are apparent everywhere, though all were made for harmony and union. The Great Being saith: O well-beloved ones! The tabernacle of unity hath been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers. Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. We cherish the hope that the light of justice may shine upon the world and sanctify it from tyranny. If the rulers and kings of the earth, the symbols of the power of God, exalted be His glory, arise and resolve to dedicate themselves to whatever will promote the highest interests of the whole of humanity, the reign of justice will assuredly be established amongst the children of men, and the effulgence of its light will envelop the whole earth. The Great Being saith: The structure of world stability and order hath been reared upon, and will continue to be sustained by, the twin pillars of reward and punishment.... In another passage He hath written: Take heed, O concourse of the rulers of the world! There is no force on earth that can equal in its conquering power the force of justice and wisdom.... Blessed is the king who marcheth with the ensign of wisdom unfurled before him, and the battalions of justice massed in his rear. He verily is the ornament that adorneth the brow of peace and the countenance of security. There can be no doubt whatever that if the daystar of justice, which the clouds of tyranny have obscured, were to shed its light upon men, the face of the earth would be completely transformed.

Like CX, this excerpt is from the Lawh-i-Maqsud, revealed in Persian, and included in full in Tablets revealed after the Kitab-i-Aqdas, #11; and in Fountain of Wisdom, #11. What is Baha'u'llah alluding to in this passage? Is the form of government the most important, or the obedience of that government to the revealed law of God?