

GLEANINGS

#13

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.

THIRTEENTH SESSION'S SELECTIONS (CXV-CXXII)

The eight excerpts from the Writings of Baha'u'llah found in this session begin with Lawh-i-Dhabih, addressed to Haji Muhammad Isma'il-i-Kashani, a prominent believer in the Bab and then in Baha'u'llah (CXV); then the Suriy-i-Muluk, with this selection addressed to the Christian kings (CXVI); then the Lawh-i-Maqsud, addressed to Mirza Mahmud, and referring to the Lesser Peace and to the duty of kings to serve humanity (CXVII); then another passage from Suriy-i-Muluk, also referring to the Lesser Peace, the obligation of kings and rulers to serve the poor, and to obey the divine commandments (CXVIII); then an excerpt from the Lawh-i-Maliki, addressed to Queen Victoria of Great Britain, also calling for the Lesser Peace (CXIX); a second excerpt from the same Tablet is addressed to the representatives of the people in every land, which included, at the time it was written, not only the Parliament of Great Britain, but also many of the former colonies of both Great Britain and Spain (CXX); then an excerpt from a Tablet to Javad, admonishing those who sought to harm Him, and assuring them that He did not ask for recompense or thanks from anyone (CXXI); and finally another excerpt from Lawh-i-Maqsud which depicts the purpose of religion, which is to unify all of mankind (CXXII).

– CXV –

The Pen of Revelation, O Dhabih, hath, in most of the divinely revealed Tablets, recorded these words: We have admonished all the loved ones of God to take heed lest the hem of Our sacred vesture be smirched with the mire of unlawful deeds, or be stained with the dust of reprehensible conduct. We have, moreover, exhorted them to fix their gaze upon whatsoever hath been revealed in Our Tablets. Had their inner ears been attentive to the Divine counsels which have shone forth from the Dayspring of the Pen of the All-Merciful, and hearkened unto His Voice, most of the peoples of the earth would have by now been adorned with the ornament of His guidance. What had been preordained, however, hath come to pass.

Baha'u'llah calls upon all of the believers to adhere to His teachings, indicates that if they had done so, “most of the peoples of the earth would have by now been adorned with the ornament of His guidance” but that they did not do so and that “What had been preordained, however, hath come to pass.” The rejection of human was predicted...not compelled, for if it were compelled then God would not punish mankind for its disobedience to His Will. But excepted, because this has been the response of humanity to all of the Manifestations of God.

Once again doth the Tongue of the Ancient of Days reveal, while in this Most Great Prison, these words which are recorded in this snow-white Scroll: O ye the beloved of the one true God! Pass beyond the narrow retreats of your evil and corrupt desires, and advance into the vast immensity of the realm of God, and abide ye in the meads of sanctity and of detachment, that the fragrance of your deeds may lead the whole of mankind to the ocean of God's unfading glory. Forbear ye from concerning yourselves with the affairs of this world and all that pertaineth unto it, or from meddling with the activities of those who are its outward leaders.

Baha'u'llah once more calls His followers to the highest standard of conduct, a theme He wrote about many times.

The one true God, exalted be His glory, hath bestowed the government of the earth upon the kings. To none is given the right to act in any manner that would run counter to the considered views of them who are in authority. That which He hath reserved for Himself are the cities of men's hearts; and of these the loved ones of Him Who is the Sovereign Truth are, in this Day, as the keys. Please God they may, one and all, be enabled to unlock, through the power of the Most Great Name, the gates of these cities. This is what is meant by aiding the one true God—a theme to which the Pen of Him Who causeth the dawn to break hath referred in all His Books and Tablets.

Baha'u'llah insists that His followers not “act in any manner that would run counter to the considered views of them who are in authority” and to engage in teaching His Faith, which He calls the unlocking of the “cities of men's hearts...through the power of the Most Great Name”, which recalls 'Abdu'l-Baha's summons to chant Ya Baha'u'l-Abha throughout the world in the Tablets of the Divine Plan.

It behooveth, likewise, the loved ones of God to be forbearing towards their fellowmen, and to be so sanctified and detached from all things, and to evince such sincerity and fairness, that all the peoples of the earth may recognize them as the trustees of God amongst men. Consider to what lofty heights the injunctions of the Almighty have soared, and how abject is the habitation wherein these feeble souls are now abiding. Blessed are they who, on the wings of certitude, have flown in the heavens which the Pen of thy Lord, the All-Merciful, hath spread.

Not only are His followers to teach His Faith, but they are to “be forbearing towards their fellowmen...and detached from all things...to evince such sincerity and fairness that all the peoples of the earth may recognize them as the trustees of God amongst men.” Why is this significant? Because the members of the Houses of Justice are called “the trustees of God amongst men”. This calls upon all of the believers to act according to the same uncompromising standard of holiness and wisdom as those they elect to serve on the Houses of Justice. This is one of the indicators that there is no priesthood in the Faith of Baha’u’llah, and like the Israelites, are all called upon to be holy, as God is holy.

Behold, O Dhabih, the works which God, the Sovereign Truth, hath wrought. Say thou: How great, how very great, is the power of His might that encompasseth all worlds! Exalted, immeasurably exalted, is His detachment above the reach and ken of the entire creation! Glorified, glorified be His meekness—a meekness that hath melted the hearts of them that have been brought nigh unto God!

This appears to be a personal declaration to Dhabih, who met Baha’u’llah and came to believe in His divine station, in which He describes “the power of His might”, “His detachment” and “His meekness”.

Though afflicted with countless tribulations, which We have suffered at the hands of Our enemies, We have proclaimed unto all the rulers of the earth what God hath willed to proclaim, that all nations may know that no manner of affliction can deter the Pen of the Ancient of Days from achieving its purpose. His Pen moveth by the leave of God, Who fashioneth the crumbling and rotten bones.

His sufferings have not impeded Him from achieving the purpose for which God has sent Him, and nothing will succeed in doing so.

Considering this most mighty enterprise, it beseemeth them that love Him to gird up the loins of their endeavor, and to fix their thoughts on whatever will ensure the victory of the cause of God, rather than commit vile and contemptible deeds. Wert thou to consider, for but a little while, the outward works and doings of Him Who is the Eternal Truth, thou wouldst fall down upon the ground, and exclaim: O Thou Who art the Lord of Lords! I testify that Thou art the Lord of all creation, and the Educator of all beings, visible and invisible. I bear witness that Thy power hath encompassed the entire universe, and that the hosts of the earth can never dismay Thee, nor can the dominion of all peoples and nations deter Thee from executing Thy purpose. I confess that Thou hast no desire except the regeneration of the whole world, and the establishment of the unity of its peoples, and the salvation of all them that dwell therein.

Baha'u'llah calls Dhabih, and all of His followers to teach His Faith and abstain from all “vile and contemptible deeds.” His aim is to regenerate “the whole world” and nothing will prevent Him from bringing about “the salvation of all them that dwell on earth”. Whereas Jesus expressed His hope that the gospel would be preached throughout the earth, it is Baha'u'llah Who promises that there will be universal salvation.

Reflect awhile, and consider how they who are the loved ones of God must conduct themselves, and to what heights they must soar. Beseech thou, at all times, thy Lord, the God of Mercy, to aid them to do what He willeth. He, verily, is the Most Powerful, the All-Glorious, the All-Knowing.

Baha'u'llah calls Dhabih to pray “at all times...to aid them to do what He willeth” referring to “the loved ones of God”. Not only are the standards of conduct very high, but believers are to assist one another to achieve those standards by praying for them.

The imprisonment inflicted on this wronged One, O Dhabíh, did to Him no harm nor can it ever do so; nor can the loss of all His earthly goods, His exile, or even His martyrdom and outward humiliation, do Him any hurt. That which can hurt Him are the evil deeds which the beloved of God commit, and which they impute to Him Who

is the Sovereign Truth. This is the affliction from which I suffer, and to this He, Himself, Who is potent over all things, beareth Me witness. That which hath sorely hurt Me are the claims which the people of the Bayán are advancing every day. Some have proclaimed their allegiance to one of My Branches (Sons), while others have asserted independently their claims, and acted after their own desires.

His summons to live according to high standards is a prominent theme and less common but at least as important is His statement that nothing in this world, either “imprisonment...loss of all His earthly goods...exile...martyrdom and outward humiliation, do Him any hurt” while there is one thing that “can hurt Him” and that is “the evil deeds which the beloved of God commit and which they impute to Him”, including “the claims which the people of the Bayan are advancing every day.” When He refers to “their allegiance of one of My Branches (Sons)” He refers to those who believed that Mirza Muhammad ‘Ali revealed verses of God and was a Manifestation of God, like His father, “while others” who have “asserted independently their claims” are the 25 Babis who claimed to be Him Whom God shall make manifest, and those who “acted after their own desires” are those Babis who erroneously assumed that they could act in a lawless manner because the laws based on the Qur’an and the hadith of Islam were abrogated by the Bab.

O Dhabíh! The Tongue of Grandeur saith: By Myself that speaketh the truth! In this most mighty Revelation all the Dispensations of the past have attained their highest and final consummation. Whoso layeth claim to a Revelation after Him, such a man is assuredly a lying impostor. We pray God that He may graciously assist him to retract and repudiate such claim. Should he repent, God will no doubt forgive him. If, however, he persisteth in his error, God will assuredly send down one who will deal mercilessly with him. He, verily, is the Almighty, the Most Powerful.

In this Tablet Baha’u’llah states that “In this most mighty Revelation all the Dispensations of the past have attained their highest and final consummation”. This might be considered to be in contradiction to His affirmation, in the Kitab-i-Aqdas, that Manifestations of God would follow Him, but only after the expiration of one thousand years. However, Baha’u’llah does not say here that “all the Dispensations of the past” and future “have attained their highest and final consummation.” He refers to the Cycle of Prophecy, which reached its “highest and final consummation” in His revelation, which is

synonymously the commencement of the Cycle of Fulfillment, what He elsewhere calls the “coming of age of humanity.”

Behold how the people of the Bayán have utterly failed to recognize that the sole object of whatsoever My Previous Manifestation and Harbinger of My Beauty hath revealed hath been My Revelation and the proclamation of My Cause. Never—and to this He Who is the Sovereign Truth beareth Me witness—would He have, but for Me, pronounced what He did pronounce. Witness how this foolish people have treated the Cause of Him Who is the All-Possessing, the Inaccessible, as a play and pastime! Their hearts devise each day a new device, and their fancy leadeth them to seek a fresh retreat. If what they say be true, how then can the stability of the Cause of thy Lord be ensured? Ponder this in thine heart, and be thou of them who are sharp-sighted, who scan heedfully, who are steadfast in their purpose and confident in their belief. Such should be thy certitude that if all mankind were to advance such claims as no man hath ever advanced, or any mind conceived, thou wouldst completely ignore them, wouldst cast them from thee, and would set thy face towards Him Who is the Object of the adoration of all worlds.

*This is a very important declaration of Baha’u’llah, inasmuch as we live at a time when there are many false prophets, when many “**advance such claims as no man hath ever advanced, or any mind conceived**” and yet His followers are called to “**completely ignore them**”! During Baha’u’llah’s lifetime only some of the Babis made rival claims to His, but in our day it has become much more of a challenge for seekers to distinguish the true from the false claimant to divine revelation. Nevertheless, His commandment is the same – “**set thy face towards Him Who is the Object of the adoration of all worlds.**” There is nothing in this statement that allows for the ambiguity of the currently popular notion of religious pluralism and relativism being the ultimate aim of God and His Manifestations, let alone the teaching of Baha’u’llah.*

By the righteousness of Mine own Self! Great, immeasurably great is this Cause! Mighty, inconceivably mighty is this Day! Blessed indeed is the man that hath forsaken all things, and fastened his eyes upon Him Whose face hath shed illumination upon all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth.

The intention of Baha'u'llah is as clear as the sun at midday, for those who have eyes to see “Him Whose face hath shed illumination upon all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth.”

Sharp must be thy sight, O Dhabíh, and adamant thy soul, and brass-like thy feet, if thou wishest to be unshaken by the assaults of the selfish desires that whisper in men's breasts. This is the firm injunction which the Pen of the Most Great Name hath, by virtue of the Will of the Ancient King, been moved to reveal. Keep it as the apple of thine eye, and be thou of the thankful. Strive thou day and night to serve the Cause of Him Who is the Eternal Truth, and be thou detached from all else but Him. By Myself! Whatever thou seest in this Day shall perish. Supremely lofty will be thy station, if thou remainest steadfast in the Cause of thy Lord. Towards Him are thy busy movements directed, and in Him is thy final resting-place.

These words recall those of the apostle Paul and also of ‘Abdu’l-Baha, both of whom call upon believers to be militant in their guard against the inward and outward attacks upon their resolve to “serve the Cause of Him Who is the Eternal Truth”.

– CXVI –

O kings of Christendom! Heard ye not the saying of Jesus, the Spirit of God, “I go away, and come again unto you”? Wherefore, then, did ye fail, when He did come again unto you in the clouds of heaven, to draw nigh unto Him, that ye might behold His face, and be of them that attained His Presence? In another passage He saith: “When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth.” And yet, behold how, when He did bring the truth, ye refused to turn your faces towards Him, and persisted in disporting yourselves with your pastimes and fancies. Ye welcomed Him not, neither did ye seek His Presence, that ye might hear the verses of God from His own mouth, and partake of the manifold wisdom of the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the All-Wise. Ye have, by reason of your failure, hindered the breath of God from being wafted over you, and have withheld from your souls the sweetness of its fragrance. Ye continue roving with delight in the valley of your corrupt desires. Ye, and all ye possess, shall pass away. Ye shall, most certainly, return to God, and shall be called to account for your doings in the presence of Him Who shall gather together the entire creation....

Twenty years have passed, O kings, during which We have, each day, tasted the agony of a fresh tribulation. No one of them that were before Us hath endured the things We have endured. Would that ye could perceive it! They that rose up against Us have put us to death, have shed our blood, have plundered our property, and violated our honor. Though aware of most of our afflictions, ye, nevertheless, have failed to stay the hand of the aggressor. For is it not your clear duty to restrain the tyranny of the oppressor, and to deal equitably with your subjects, that your high sense of justice may be fully demonstrated to all mankind?

Baha'u'llah wrote these words when “twenty years have passed” since the Cause of God had “tasted the agony of a fresh tribulation”. If He spoke of the time of His declaration then this began in 1863 and twenty years later was in 1883. During this time no Christian king sought to aid Baha'u'llah or His followers, none came to His defense, none sought to mitigate His or their sufferings. This is a blotch upon the honor of these kings, and their deprivation of power an authority in the near future was well deserved.

God hath committed into your hands the reins of the government of the people, that ye may rule with justice over them, safeguard the rights of the downtrodden, and punish the wrongdoers. If ye neglect the duty prescribed unto you by God in His Book, your names shall be numbered with those of the unjust in His sight. Grievous, indeed, will be your error. Cleave ye to that which your imaginations have devised, and cast behind your backs the commandments of God, the Most Exalted, the Inaccessible, the All-Compelling, the Almighty? Cast away the things ye possess, and cling to that which God hath bidden you observe. Seek ye His grace, for he that seeketh it treadeth His straight Path.

Baha'u'llah assures the kings who have neglected “the duty prescribed unto you by God in His Book” that they will be “numbered with those of the unjust in His sight.” As ‘Abdu’l-Baha pointed out in a number of His talks in the West, all of these kings who failed in their duty, and all of them did, were punished for their actions through the ending of their monarchical rule.

Consider the state in which We are, and behold ye the ills and troubles that have tried Us. Neglect Us not, though it be for a moment, and judge ye between Us and Our enemies with equity. This will, surely, be a manifest advantage unto you. Thus do We

relate to you Our tale, and recount the things that have befallen Us, that ye might take off Our ills and ease Our burden. Let him who will, relieve Us from Our trouble; and as to him that willeth not, My Lord is assuredly the best of helpers.

Nobody can claim that Baha'u'llah did not counsel kings, and did not warn them to do the bidding of God. Nor should Baha'is believe what is generally assumed, that the effectual end of many monarchies, including those of Christian Europe, was caused by the influence of the Enlightenment. They might well have become "enlightened monarchies" had they heeded His summons! But by not heeding His teachings they deprived their heirs of the throne.

Warn and acquaint the people, O Servant, with the things We have sent down unto Thee, and let the fear of no one dismay Thee, and be Thou not of them that waver. The day is approaching when God will have exalted His Cause and magnified His testimony in the eyes of all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth. Place, in all circumstances, Thy whole trust in Thy Lord, and fix Thy gaze upon Him, and turn away from all them that repudiate His truth. Let God, Thy Lord, be Thy sufficing succorer and helper. We have pledged Ourselves to secure Thy triumph upon earth and to exalt Our Cause above all men, though no king be found who would turn his face towards Thee.

God is speaking here to Baha'u'llah, encouraging Him and making this promise, "We have pledged Ourselves to secure Thy triumph upon earth and to exalt Our Cause above all men, though no king be found who would turn his face towards Thee." The Cause of God will triumph regardless of how it is received by "all men". And that includes those of His followers who are not convinced that this triumph will occur, or that it would even be an improvement upon the current state of mankind.

– CXVII –

The Great Being, wishing to reveal the prerequisites of the peace and tranquillity of the world and the advancement of its peoples, hath written: The time must come when the imperative necessity for the holding of a vast, an all-embracing assemblage of men will be universally realized. The rulers and kings of the earth must needs attend it, and, participating in its deliberations, must consider such ways and means as will lay the foundations of the world's Great Peace amongst men. Such a peace demandeth

that the Great Powers should resolve, for the sake of the tranquillity of the peoples of the earth, to be fully reconciled among themselves. Should any king take up arms against another, all should unitedly arise and prevent him. If this be done, the nations of the world will no longer require any armaments, except for the purpose of preserving the security of their realms and of maintaining internal order within their territories. This will ensure the peace and composure of every people, government and nation. We fain would hope that the kings and rulers of the earth, the mirrors of the gracious and almighty name of God, may attain unto this station, and shield mankind from the onslaught of tyranny.... The day is approaching when all the peoples of the world will have adopted one universal language and one common script. When this is achieved, to whatsoever city a man may journey, it shall be as if he were entering his own home. These things are obligatory and absolutely essential. It is incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding to strive to translate that which hath been written into reality and action.... That one indeed is a man who, today, dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race. The Great Being saith: Blessed and happy is he that ariseth to promote the best interests of the peoples and kindreds of the earth. In another passage He hath proclaimed: It is not for him to pride himself who loveth his own country, but rather for him who loveth the whole world. The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens.

*This is one of Baha'u'llah's eloquent depictions of the Lesser Peace, which includes not only the cessation of conflict between nations, but also the adoption of **"one universal language and one common script"**, which Baha'u'llah depicts as one of the signs of the "coming of age of humanity" in the Kitab-i-Aqdas.*

– CXVIII –

Lay not aside the fear of God, O kings of the earth, and beware that ye transgress not the bounds which the Almighty hath fixed. Observe the injunctions laid upon you in His Book, and take good heed not to overstep their limits. Be vigilant, that ye may not do injustice to anyone, be it to the extent of a grain of mustard seed. Tread ye the path of justice, for this, verily, is the straight path.

The "bounds which the Almighty hath fixed" are all of the laws revealed in the Kitab-i-Aqdas, but also they are the principles of private property and of national boundaries, both of which

*have come under attack in the 20th and 21st centuries. Baha'u'llah is uncompromising in His call for justice, using the symbol of the “grain of mustard seed” even as Jesus called for His followers to have faith even like a **“grain of mustard seed”** in order to move mountains. There is no justice without faith, and in both cases, even to the smallest degree it is important.*

Compose your differences, and reduce your armaments, that the burden of your expenditures may be lightened, and that your minds and hearts may be tranquillized. Heal the dissensions that divide you, and ye will no longer be in need of any armaments except what the protection of your cities and territories demandeth. Fear ye God, and take heed not to outstrip the bounds of moderation, and be numbered among the extravagant.

*Baha'u'llah again explains the Lesser Peace, and links it to **“the bounds of moderation”** and not associated with **“the extravagant.”***

We have learned that you are increasing your outlay every year, and are laying the burden thereof on your subjects. This, verily, is more than they can bear, and is a grievous injustice. Decide justly between men, and be ye the emblems of justice amongst them. This, if ye judge fairly, is the thing that behooveth you, and beseemeth your station.

*Overtaking the people is unjust, and the Lesser Peace will make **“increasing your outlay every year”** unnecessary for the king, thereby relieving the people from this burden.*

Beware not to deal unjustly with anyone that appealeth to you, and entereth beneath your shadow. Walk ye in the fear of God, and be ye of them that lead a godly life. Rest not on your power, your armies, and treasures. Put your whole trust and confidence in God, Who hath created you, and seek ye His help in all your affairs. Succor cometh from Him alone. He succoreth whom He will with the hosts of the heavens and of the earth.

*Baha'u'llah reiterates that the monarch must submit his will to the Will of God, and that God **“succoreth whom He will with the hosts of the heavens and of the earth.”** As we know from previously cited verses, God aids many categories of people **“with the hosts of the***

heavens and of the earth". The assistance afforded those who do the Will of God is not only for certain categories of people.

Know ye that the poor are the trust of God in your midst. Watch that ye betray not His trust, that ye deal not unjustly with them and that ye walk not in the ways of the treacherous. Ye will most certainly be called upon to answer for His trust on the day when the Balance of Justice shall be set, the day when unto every one shall be rendered his due, when the doings of all men, be they rich or poor, shall be weighed.

*In many of the selections cited in this collection there are statements that affirm that **"the poor are the trust of God in your midst"**. The way we treat those who are less fortunate than ourselves is an indicator of our true nature, and our actions will speak louder than our sentiments, our intentions or our words. But Baha'u'llah does not state that the poor will get their revenge against the rich, or the powerless against the powerful. Injustice is not to be rightly by the violent action of the oppressed, but by God. It is not for men to assume the position of God but rather to follow what He has directed us to do.*

If ye pay no heed unto the counsels which, in peerless and unequivocal language, We have revealed in this Tablet, Divine chastisement shall assail you from every direction, and the sentence of His justice shall be pronounced against you. On that day ye shall have no power to resist Him, and shall recognize your own impotence. Have mercy on yourselves and on those beneath you. Judge ye between them according to the precepts prescribed by God in His most holy and exalted Tablet, a Tablet wherein He hath assigned to each and every thing its settled measure, in which He hath given, with distinctness, an explanation of all things, and which is in itself a monition unto them that believe in Him.

*In striking language, Baha'u'llah assures those who disobey **"the counsels which...We have revealed in this Tablet"** will suffer the consequences.*

Examine Our Cause, inquire into the things that have befallen Us, and decide justly between Us and Our enemies, and be ye of them that act equitably towards their neighbor. If ye stay not the hand of the oppressor, if ye fail to safeguard the rights of the downtrodden, what right have ye then to vaunt yourselves among men? What is it of which ye can rightly boast? Is it on your food and your drink that ye pride

yourselves, on the riches ye lay up in your treasuries, on the diversity and the cost of the ornaments with which ye deck yourselves? If true glory were to consist in the possession of such perishable things, then the earth on which ye walk must needs vaunt itself over you, because it supplieth you, and bestoweth upon you, these very things, by the decree of the Almighty. In its bowels are contained, according to what God hath ordained, all that ye possess. From it, as a sign of His mercy, ye derive your riches. Behold then your state, the thing in which ye glory! Would that ye could perceive it!

Baha'u'llah explains the true nature of enlightened rule and differentiates it from what is so often supposed to be the cause of its glory, namely, “the riches ye lay up in your treasuries” and “the diversity and cost of the ornaments with which ye deck yourselves”.

Nay! By Him Who holdeth in His grasp the kingdom of the entire creation! Nowhere doth your true and abiding glory reside except in your firm adherence unto the precepts of God, your wholehearted observance of His laws, your resolution to see that they do not remain unenforced, and to pursue steadfastly the right course.

There are some who claim that Baha'u'llah's vision is not of a theocracy. Perhaps this is true if the only kind of theocracy we can imagine is the rule of humanity by religious leaders. But this passage and many more like it attest to the highest laws are “the precepts of God”, and hence that the just ruler but see that “His laws...do not remain unenforced”.

– CXIX –

O ye rulers of the earth! Wherefore have ye clouded the radiance of the Sun, and caused it to cease from shining? Harken unto the counsel given you by the Pen of the Most High, that haply both ye and the poor may attain unto tranquillity and peace. We beseech God to assist the kings of the earth to establish peace on earth. He, verily, doth what He willeth.

Who is called upon “to establish peace on earth”? Kings. Those with the power to make war or make peace.

O kings of the earth! We see you increasing every year your expenditures, and laying the burden thereof on your subjects. This, verily, is wholly and grossly unjust. Fear the sighs and tears of this wronged One, and lay not excessive burdens on your peoples. Do not rob them to rear palaces for yourselves; nay rather choose for them that which ye choose for yourselves. Thus We unfold to your eyes that which profiteth you, if ye but perceive. Your people are your treasures. Beware lest your rule violate the commandments of God, and ye deliver your wards to the hands of the robber. By them ye rule, by their means ye subsist, by their aid ye conquer. Yet, how disdainfully ye look upon them! How strange, how very strange!

In this passage, Baha'u'llah describes the damage done to the people because kings are "increasing every year...expenditures" in order "to rear palaces for themselves".

Now that ye have refused the Most Great Peace, hold ye fast unto this, the Lesser Peace, that haply ye may in some degree better your own condition and that of your dependents.

Baha'u'llah had a backup plan, that "in some degree" rulers could "better your own condition and that of your dependents." This demonstrates that God and His Manifestation are pragmatic and not absolutist in their treatment of humanity.

O rulers of the earth! Be reconciled among yourselves, that ye may need no more armaments save in a measure to safeguard your territories and dominions. Beware lest ye disregard the counsel of the All-Knowing, the Faithful.

The Lesser Peace is not only to establish peace and reduce armaments, but also "to safeguard your territories and dominions". Baha'u'llah does not disparage nations having boundaries and borders.

Be united, O kings of the earth, for thereby will the tempest of discord be stilled amongst you, and your peoples find rest, if ye be of them that comprehend. Should anyone among you take up arms against another, rise ye all against him, for this is naught but manifest justice.

If humanity had followed this counsel alone since it was revealed by Baha'u'llah the devastating wars of the 20th and 21st centuries would have been entirely avoided.

– CXX –

O ye the elected representatives of the people in every land! Take ye counsel together, and let your concern be only for that which profiteth mankind, and bettereth the condition thereof, if ye be of them that scan heedfully. Regard the world as the human body which, though at its creation whole and perfect, hath been afflicted, through various causes, with grave disorders and maladies. Not for one day did it gain ease, nay its sickness waxed more severe, as it fell under the treatment of ignorant physicians, who gave full rein to their personal desires, and have erred grievously. And if, at one time, through the care of an able physician, a member of that body was healed, the rest remained afflicted as before. Thus informeth you the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

*Even as He counsels kings and members of Houses of Justice, He likewise advises the elected legislatures of the world to “take ye counsel together” and to “**let your concern be only for that which profiteth mankind, and bettereth the condition thereof.**” It is not that they are to be concerned only with the people who elected them, but with all of humanity. There are no servants to constituencies, just servants to mankind.*

We behold it, in this day, at the mercy of rulers so drunk with pride that they cannot discern clearly their own best advantage, much less recognize a Revelation so bewildering and challenging as this. And whenever any one of them hath striven to improve its condition, his motive hath been his own gain, whether confessedly so or not; and the unworthiness of this motive hath limited his power to heal or cure.

How well does this describe the rulers of His day? Or of this day?

That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith. This can in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled, an all-powerful and inspired Physician. This, verily, is the truth, and all else naught but error.

While in earlier-cited passages He called the rulers to implement the Lesser Peace, here He indicates that what He calls “one universal Cause, one common Faith” here and the Greater Peace elsewhere is the “sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of the world”. This is probably the most comprehensive prophetic claim in all of recorded history. Baha’u’llah does not simply claim that following Him will bring enlightenment to the individual, or salvation to the individual, or huris in Paradise for the individual, but “the healing of the world.”

– CXXI –

Say: O ye that envy Me and seek My hurt! The fury of your wrath against Me confound you! Lo, the Daystar of Glory hath risen above the horizon of My Revelation, and enveloped with its radiance the whole of mankind. And yet, behold how ye have shut out yourselves from its splendor and are sunk in utter heedlessness. Have mercy upon yourselves, and repudiate not the claim of Him Whose truth ye have already recognized, and be not of them that transgress.

The Babis were the most ferocious opponents of the revelation of Baha’u’llah, and that is why Baha’u’llah says that they should “Have mercy upon yourselves, and repudiate not the claim of Him Whose truth ye have already recognized, and be not of them that transgress.” For the Babis who rejected Baha’u’llah repudiated the claim of the Bab, Who promised the advent of Baha’u’llah.

By the righteousness of the one true God! If ye reject this Revelation, all the nations of the earth will laugh you to scorn and mock you, for it is you that have produced, before their eyes, and for the purpose of vindicating the truth of your Cause, the testimonies of God, the Sovereign Protector, the Most Powerful, the All-Glorious, the All-Knowing. And yet, no sooner was His subsequent Revelation, clothed with the glory of an all-compelling sovereignty, sent down unto you, than ye cast it behind your backs, O ye that are numbered with the heedless ones!

The Babis “produced...the testimonies of God” to promulgate the Faith of the Bab, and then, when the Bab’s “subsequent Revelation” was “sent down unto” them, He says “ye cast it behind your backs”.

What! Believe ye in your hearts that ye possess the power to extinguish the radiance of the Sun, or to eclipse its splendor? Nay, by My life! Ye will never and can never achieve your purpose, though ye summon to your aid all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth. Walk ye in the fear of God, and render not your works vain. Incline your ears to His words, and be not of them that are shut out as by a veil from Him. Say: God is My witness! I have wished nothing whatever for Myself. What I have wished is the victory of God and the triumph of His Cause. He is Himself a sufficient witness between you and Me. Were ye to cleanse your eyes, ye would readily perceive how My deeds testify to the truth of My words, how My words are a guide to My deeds.

The Babis who have rejected Baha'u'llah “will never and can never achieve your purpose, though ye summon to your aid all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth.” They have failed to recognize that He has “wished nothing whatever for Myself.”

Blinded are your eyes! Perceived ye not the greatness of the power of God and of His sovereignty? Beheld ye not His majesty and glory? Woe unto you, ye congregation of the malicious and envious! Harken unto My speech, and tarry not though it be for less than a moment. Thus biddeth you He Who is the Beauty of the All-Merciful, that haply ye may detach yourselves from the things ye possess, and ascend to the heights from which ye can discover the whole creation sheltered beneath the shadow of His Revelation.

Baha'u'llah summons the Babis to recognize what they experienced in the Bab, in Himself.

Say: There is no place of refuge for you, no asylum to which ye can flee, no one to defend or to protect you in this Day from the fury of the wrath of God and from His vehement power, unless and until ye seek the shadow of His Revelation. This, indeed, is His Revelation which hath been manifested unto you in the person of this Youth. Glorified, then, be God for so effulgent, so precious, so wondrous a vision.

Baha'u'llah says that the Manifestation of the Bab is found in His Manifestation. They are inseparable. In so claiming, Baha'u'llah is confirmed by countless references to Him Whom God shall make manifest in the Bayan-i-farsi.

Detach yourselves from all else but Me, and turn your faces towards My face, for better is this for you than the things ye possess. The Tongue of God testifieth to the truth of My words, through Mine own Word that speaketh the truth, and embraceth and comprehendeth all things.

This beautiful passage is reminiscent of the Hidden Words.

Say: Think ye that your allegiance to His Cause can ever profit Him, or your repudiation of its truth cause Him any loss? No, by My Self, the All-Subduing, the Inaccessible, the Most High! Tear ye asunder the veils of names and cleave ye their kingdom. By My Beauty! He Who is the Monarch of all names is come, He at Whose bidding every single name hath, from the beginning that hath no beginning, been created, He Who shall continue to create them as He pleaseth. He, verily, is the All-Powerful, the All-Wise.

I don't think that I realized Who Baha'u'llah was when I first declared, at age 19. I don't think I realize Who He is now because I have no experience of believing in anyone of this rank, of this nature. It is too big for my little brain and heart to grasp. But I know that what He teaches resonates with me, and that I want Him to be Who He claims to be. And someday, if I meet Him, I want to know that I tried to be of service to His Cause, because His Cause is the way to unify humanity.

Beware that ye divest not yourselves of the raiment of Divine guidance. Drink ye your fill from the Cup which the Youths of Heaven have raised above your heads. Thus biddeth you He Who hath more mercy upon you than your own selves, He Who asketh not any recompense or thanks from you. His reward is from Him Who hath, through the power of truth, sent Him down unto you, and singled Him out and proclaimed Him as His own Testimony unto the whole of creation. He it is Who hath empowered Him to manifest all His signs. Repeat the gaze, that ye may perceive the things whereunto the Tongue of the Ancient of Days hath summoned you, that haply ye may be of them that have apprehended the truth. Heard it ye ever reported by your fathers of old, or by the generations that preceded them, even unto the first Adam, that anyone coming in the clouds of revelation, being invested with manifest and transcendent sovereignty, having on his right hand the Kingdom of God and on his left all the power and glory of His everlasting dominion, anyone preceded by the hosts of God, the

Almighty, the All-Compelling, the Most Powerful, and uttering continually verses whose import the minds of the most learned and wisest of men are powerless to fathom, should yet be the bearer of a message that is not of God? Be discerning, then, and speak ye the truth, the very truth, if ye claim to be honest and high-minded.

This is one of the core arguments in favor of the claims of Baha'u'llah, and every Baha'i should employ it regularly in the propagation of the Faith. Every person who is "honest and high-minded" should be able to recognize that God does not conceal the qualifications of His Messengers, that they are manifest to those who are "discerning".

Say: The verses We have revealed are as numerous as those which, in the preceding Revelation, were sent down upon the Báb. Let him that doubteth the words which the Spirit of God hath spoken seek the court of Our presence and hear Our divinely revealed verses, and be an eyewitness of the clear proof of Our claim.

Baha'u'llah indicates that the verses He has revealed "are as numerous as those which, in the preceding Revelation, were sent down upon the Bab". Not only is this remarkable in the case of Baha'u'llah, inasmuch as He Himself stated that He revealed no less than 50 volumes of Tablets, but even more remarkable in the case of the Bab, inasmuch as He revealed around the same multitude of verses but in the course of 6 years, whereas Baha'u'llah did so over the course of 40 years (1852-1892).

Say: By the righteousness of the Almighty! The measure of the favors of God hath been filled up, His Word hath been perfected, the light of His countenance hath been revealed, His sovereignty hath encompassed the whole of creation, the glory of His Revelation hath been made manifest, and His bounties have rained upon all mankind.

Baha'u'llah makes it utterly clear that God has done what He intended and that Baha'u'llah has carried out His wishes. Any failing is therefore not attributable to either God or His Manifestation, but to human behavior.

– CXXII –

Man is the supreme Talisman. Lack of a proper education hath, however, deprived him of that which he doth inherently possess. Through a word proceeding out of the

mouth of God he was called into being; by one word more he was guided to recognize the Source of his education; by yet another word his station and destiny were safeguarded. The Great Being saith: Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom. If any man were to meditate on that which the Scriptures, sent down from the heaven of God's holy Will, have revealed, he would readily recognize that their purpose is that all men shall be regarded as one soul, so that the seal bearing the words "The Kingdom shall be God's" may be stamped on every heart, and the light of Divine bounty, of grace, and mercy may envelop all mankind. The one true God, exalted be His glory, hath wished nothing for Himself. The allegiance of mankind profiteth Him not, neither doth its perversity harm Him. The Bird of the Realm of Utterance voiceth continually this call: "All things have I willed for thee, and thee, too, for thine own sake." If the learned and worldly-wise men of this age were to allow mankind to inhale the fragrance of fellowship and love, every understanding heart would apprehend the meaning of true liberty, and discover the secret of undisturbed peace and absolute composure. Were the earth to attain this station and be illumined with its light it could then be truly said of it: "Thou shall see in it no hollows or rising hills."

What is "a proper education"? This has been debated by educators (and parents, clergy and rulers) for millennia. What Baha'u'llah says is that "a proper education" requires that each of us "recognize the Source of his education", which is God, not his fellow human beings. He then indicates that humanity was created to be united, so that "the light of Divine bounty, of grace, and mercy may envelop all mankind." He states that He seeks nothing from anyone, and that our choice, be it for good or evil, does not harm or benefit Him. He calls upon "the learned and worldly-wise men of this age" to enable humanity to "apprehend the meaning of true liberty", which He defines in Kitab-i-Aqdas as obedience to whatsoever is revealed by the Manifestation of God. It is obedience to this revelation that will unify humanity.