

# GLEANINGS

#14

## *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'u'llah 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](mailto:peterry19@gmail.com) so that I can share them with everyone taking this course.*

## **FOURTEENTH SESSION'S SELECTIONS (CXXIII-CXXVIII)**

*The six excerpts from the Writings of Baha'u'llah found in this session begin with a Tablet revealed in Arabic which addresses humanity to learn from history (CXXIII); followed by a selection from *Kitab-i-Hadi*, which distinguishes between divine and human learning (CXXIV); then an excerpt from *Kitab-i-Iqan* which addresses the individual's search for truth (CXXV); then in a Tablet to Mirza Haydar 'Ali, Baha'u'llah describes the conduct expected of His followers (CXXVI); this extract from a Tablet to Hajji Muhammad-Ibrahim Muballigh refers to the greatest proof of the Manifestation of God, and the opposition to His claims by some of the Babis (CXXVII); in the *Suratu'l-Bayan*, addressed to the same believer, Baha'u'llah sets forth the behavioral requirements pertaining to His followers, and calls them to be teachers of His Faith, according to His precise instructions (CXXVIII).*

### **– CXXIII –**

**The generations that have gone on before you—whither are they fled? And those round whom in life circled the fairest and the loveliest of the land, where now are they? Profit by their example, O people, and be not of them that are gone astray.**

*Learn from history and don't keep making the same mistakes.*

**Others ere long will lay hands on what ye possess, and enter into your habitations. Incline your ears to My words, and be not numbered among the foolish.**

*None of our earthly possessions are of any permanent value to us.*

**For every one of you his paramount duty is to choose for himself that on which no other may infringe and none usurp from him. Such a thing—and to this the Almighty is My witness—is the love of God, could ye but perceive it.**

*It is our choice to make, that “which no other can infringe and none usurp from him”, or what others can infringe and usurp from us.*

**Build ye for yourselves such houses as the rain and floods can never destroy, which shall protect you from the changes and chances of this life. This is the instruction of Him Whom the world hath wronged and forsaken.**

*Choose what is of permanent and inviolable value.*

**– CXXIV –**

**How wondrous is the unity of the Living, the Ever-Abiding God—a unity which is exalted above all limitations, that transcendeth the comprehension of all created things! He hath, from everlasting, dwelt in His inaccessible habitation of holiness and glory, and will unto everlasting continue to be enthroned upon the heights of His independent sovereignty and grandeur. How lofty hath been His incorruptible Essence, how completely independent of the knowledge of all created things, and how immensely exalted will it remain above the praise of all the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth!**

*Reiteration of the unity and transcendency of God. All of our conceptions to the contrary are wrong.*

**From the exalted source, and out of the essence of His favor and bounty, He hath entrusted every created thing with a sign of His knowledge, so that none of His creatures may be deprived of its share in expressing, each according to its capacity and rank, this knowledge. This sign is the mirror of His beauty in the world of creation. The greater the effort exerted for the refinement of this sublime and noble mirror, the more faithfully will it be made to reflect the glory of the names and attributes of God, and reveal the wonders of His signs and knowledge. Every created thing will be enabled (so great is this reflecting power) to reveal the potentialities of its preordained station, will recognize its capacity and limitations, and will testify to the truth that “He, verily, is God; there is none other God besides Him.”...**

*Everything is a sign of one or more of the attributes of God.*

There can be no doubt whatever that, in consequence of the efforts which every man may consciously exert and as a result of the exertion of his own spiritual faculties, this mirror can be so cleansed from the dross of earthly defilements and purged from satanic fancies as to be able to draw nigh unto the meads of eternal holiness and attain the courts of everlasting fellowship. In pursuance, however, of the principle that for every thing a time hath been fixed, and for every fruit a season hath been ordained, the latent energies of such a bounty can best be released, and the vernal glory of such a gift can only be manifested, in the Days of God. Invested though each day may be with its preordained share of God's wondrous grace, the Days immediately associated with the Manifestation of God possess a unique distinction and occupy a station which no mind can ever comprehend. Such is the virtue infused into them that if the hearts of all that dwell in the heavens and the earth were, in those days of everlasting delight, to be brought face to face with that Daystar of unfading glory and attuned to His Will, each would find itself exalted above all earthly things, radiant with His light, and sanctified through His grace. All hail to this grace which no blessing, however great, can excel, and all honor to such a loving-kindness the like of which the eye of creation hath not seen! Exalted is He above that which they attribute unto Him or recount about Him!

*The efforts of the individual are rewarded by attainment to divine rewards. The Day of God is the time of the greatest blessings for man, when he is “brought face to face with that Daystar of unfading glory”, the Manifestation of God in His appearance on earth.*

It is for this reason that, in those days, no man shall ever stand in need of his neighbor. It hath already been abundantly demonstrated that in that divinely appointed Day the majority of them that have sought and attained His holy court have revealed such knowledge and wisdom, a drop of which none else besides these holy and sanctified souls, however long he may have taught or studied, hath grasped or will ever comprehend. It is by virtue of this power that the beloved of God have, in the days of the Manifestation of the Daystar of Truth, been exalted above, and made independent of, all human learning. Nay, from their hearts and the springs of their innate powers hath gushed out unceasingly the inmost essence of human learning and wisdom.

*In the Day of God, “no man shall ever stand in need of his neighbor” and shall be “made independent of all, human learning.”*

O My brother! When a true seeker determineth to take the step of search in the path leading unto the knowledge of the Ancient of Days, he must, before all else, cleanse his heart, which is the seat of the revelation of the inner mysteries of God, from the obscuring dust of all acquired knowledge, and the allusions of the embodiments of satanic fancy. He must purge his breast, which is the sanctuary of the abiding love of the Beloved, of every defilement, and sanctify his soul from all that pertaineth to water and clay, from all shadowy and ephemeral attachments. He must so cleanse his heart that no remnant of either love or hate may linger therein, lest that love blindly incline him to error, or that hate repel him away from the truth. Even as thou dost witness in this Day how most of the people, because of such love and hate, are bereft of the immortal Face, have strayed far from the Embodiments of the Divine mysteries, and, shepherdless, are roaming through the wilderness of oblivion and error.

*If we seem truth we must cleanse our hearts “from the obscuring dust of all acquired knowledge.”*

That seeker must, at all times, put his trust in God, must renounce the peoples of the earth, must detach himself from the world of dust, and cleave unto Him Who is the Lord of Lords. He must never seek to exalt himself above anyone, must wash away from the tablet of his heart every trace of pride and vainglory, must cling unto patience and resignation, observe silence and refrain from idle talk. For the tongue is a smoldering fire, and excess of speech a deadly poison. Material fire consumeth the body, whereas the fire of the tongue devoureth both heart and soul. The force of the former lasteth but for a time, whilst the effects of the latter endure a century.

*We must “renounce the peoples of the earth”, that is, no longer imitate the behavior of others.*

That seeker should, also, regard backbiting as grievous error, and keep himself aloof from its dominion, inasmuch as backbiting quencheth the light of the heart, and extinguisheth the life of the soul. He should be content with little, and be freed from all inordinate desire. He should treasure the companionship of them that have renounced the world, and regard avoidance of boastful and worldly people a precious

benefit. At the dawn of every day he should commune with God, and, with all his soul, persevere in the quest of his Beloved. He should consume every wayward thought with the flame of His loving mention, and, with the swiftness of lightning, pass by all else save Him. He should succor the dispossessed, and never withhold his favor from the destitute. He should show kindness to animals, how much more unto his fellowman, to him who is endowed with the power of utterance. He should not hesitate to offer up his life for his Beloved, nor allow the censure of the people to turn him away from the Truth. He should not wish for others that which he doth not wish for himself, nor promise that which he doth not fulfill. With all his heart he should avoid fellowship with evildoers, and pray for the remission of their sins. He should forgive the sinful, and never despise his low estate, for none knoweth what his own end shall be. How often hath a sinner attained, at the hour of death, to the essence of faith, and, quaffing the immortal draught, hath taken his flight unto the Concourse on high! And how often hath a devout believer, at the hour of his soul's ascension, been so changed as to fall into the nethermost fire!

*The seeker must not consider himself superior to any other human being, “for none knoweth what his own end shall be.”*

Our purpose in revealing these convincing and weighty utterances is to impress upon the seeker that he should regard all else beside God as transient, and count all things save Him, Who is the Object of all adoration, as utter nothingness.

*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy strength...”*

These are among the attributes of the exalted, and constitute the hallmark of the spiritually minded. They have already been mentioned in connection with the requirements of the wayfarers that tread the path of Positive Knowledge. When the detached wayfarer and sincere seeker hath fulfilled these essential conditions, then and only then can he be called a true seeker. Whosoever he hath fulfilled the conditions implied in the verse: “Whoso maketh efforts for Us,” he shall enjoy the blessings conferred by the words: “In Our Ways shall We assuredly guide him.”

*The forementioned characteristics are the “essential conditions” of the search for truth, and whosoever adheres to them is promised “in Our Ways shall We assuredly guide him.”*

Only when the lamp of search, of earnest striving, of longing desire, of passionate devotion, of fervid love, of rapture, and ecstasy, is kindled within the seeker's heart, and the breeze of His loving-kindness is wafted upon his soul, will the darkness of error be dispelled, the mists of doubts and misgivings be dissipated, and the lights of knowledge and certitude envelop his being. At that hour will the Mystic Herald, bearing the joyful tidings of the Spirit, shine forth from the City of God resplendent as the morn, and, through the trumpet-blast of knowledge, will awaken the heart, the soul, and the spirit from the slumber of heedlessness. Then will the manifold favors and outpouring grace of the holy and everlasting Spirit confer such new life upon the seeker that he will find himself endowed with a new eye, a new ear, a new heart, and a new mind. He will contemplate the manifest signs of the universe, and will penetrate the hidden mysteries of the soul. Gazing with the eye of God, he will perceive within every atom a door that leadeth him to the stations of absolute certitude. He will discover in all things the mysteries of Divine Revelation, and the evidences of an everlasting Manifestation.

*The moment of the new birth is described in detail and is assured to the one who makes his utmost effort to attain to the knowledge and love of God.*

I swear by God! Were he that treadeth the path of guidance and seeketh to scale the heights of righteousness to attain unto this glorious and exalted station, he would inhale, at a distance of a thousand leagues, the fragrance of God, and would perceive the resplendent morn of a Divine guidance rising above the dayspring of all things. Each and every thing, however small, would be to him a revelation, leading him to his Beloved, the Object of his quest. So great shall be the discernment of this seeker that he will discriminate between truth and falsehood, even as he doth distinguish the sun from shadow. If in the uttermost corners of the East the sweet savors of God be wafted, he will assuredly recognize and inhale their fragrance, even though he be dwelling in the uttermost ends of the West. He will, likewise, clearly distinguish all the signs of God—His wondrous utterances, His great works, and mighty deeds—from the doings, the words and ways of men, even as the jeweler who knoweth the gem from the stone, or the man who distinguisheth the spring from autumn, and heat from cold. When the channel of the human soul is cleansed of all worldly and impeding attachments, it will unfailingly perceive the breath of the Beloved across immeasurable distances, and will, led by its perfume, attain and enter the City of Certitude.

*The seeker can only attain to this new birth when “the channel of the human soul is cleansed of all worldly and impeding attachments”.*

Therein he will discern the wonders of His ancient Wisdom, and will perceive all the hidden teachings from the rustling leaves of the Tree that flourisheth in that City. With both his inner and outer ear, he will hear from its dust the hymns of glory and praise ascending unto the Lord of Lords, and with his inner eye will he discover the mysteries of “return” and “revival.”

*If we persist until we attain to the second birth, the scriptures promise that we will comprehend the mysteries that are not revealed to them who are not born again.*

How unspeakably glorious are the signs, the tokens, the revelations, and splendors which He, Who is the King of Names and Attributes, hath destined for that City! The attainment unto this City quencheth thirst without water, and kindleth the love of God without fire. Within every blade of grass are enshrined the mysteries of an inscrutable Wisdom, and upon every rosebush a myriad nightingales pour out, in blissful rapture, their melody. Its wondrous tulips unfold the mystery of the undying Fire in the Burning Bush, and its sweet savors of holiness breathe the perfume of the Messianic Spirit. It bestoweth wealth without gold, and conferreth immortality without death. In each one of its leaves ineffable delights are treasured, and within every chamber unnumbered mysteries lie hidden.

*The consciousness of the new born seeker is expanded to include realities that are unknown otherwise. The potential is unlimited, within the human nature. Important for us to recognize, is that we will never attain to a knowledge of the essence of Divinity, let alone become that essence of Divinity ourselves.*

They that valiantly labor in quest of God will, when once they have renounced all else but Him, be so attached and wedded unto that City, that a moment’s separation from it would to them be unthinkable. They will hearken unto infallible proofs from the Hyacinth of that assembly, and will receive the surest testimonies from the beauty of its Rose, and the melody of its Nightingale. Once in about a thousand years shall this City be renewed and readorned....

*The new born soul will attain to the City and so great will be their attachment to it “that a moment’s separation from it would to them be unthinkable.”*

That City is none other than the Word of God revealed in every age and dispensation. In the days of Moses it was the Pentateuch; in the days of Jesus, the Gospel; in the days of Muḥammad, the Messenger of God, the Qur’án; in this day, the Bayán; and in the Dispensation of Him Whom God will make manifest, His own Book—the Book unto which all the Books of former Dispensations must needs be referred, the Book that standeth amongst them all transcendent and supreme.

*Many souls have supposed that the attainment to this City is to the presence of God Himself, or the Manifestation of God...but Baha'u'llah indicates that this City “is none other than the Word of God revealed in every age and dispensation” and “in the Dispensation of Him Whom God will make manifest”, that is, Baha'u'llah, “His own Book...the Book that standeth amongst them all transcendent and supreme.”*

– CXXVI –

To whatever place We may be banished, however great the tribulation We may suffer, they who are the people of God must, with fixed resolve and perfect confidence, keep their eyes directed towards the Dayspring of Glory, and be busied in whatever may be conducive to the betterment of the world and the education of its peoples. All that hath befallen Us in the past hath advanced the interests of Our Revelation and blazoned its fame; and all that may befall Us in the future will have a like result. Cling ye, with your inmost hearts, to the Cause of God, a Cause that hath been sent down by Him Who is the Ordainer, the All-Wise. We have, with the utmost kindliness and mercy, summoned and directed all peoples and nations to that which shall truly profit them.

*Many souls have supposed that the attainment to this City is to the presence of God Himself, or the Manifestation of God...but Baha'u'llah indicates that this City “is none other than the Word of God revealed in every age and dispensation” and “in the Dispensation of Him Whom God will make manifest”, that is, Baha'u'llah, “His own Book...the Book that standeth amongst them all transcendent and supreme.”*

The Daystar of Truth that shineth in its meridian splendor beareth Us witness! They who are the people of God have no ambition except to revive the world, to ennable its life, and regenerate its peoples. Truthfulness and goodwill have, at all times, marked their relations with all men. Their outward conduct is but a reflection of their inward life, and their inward life a mirror of their outward conduct. No veil hideth or obscureth the verities on which their Faith is established. Before the eyes of all men these verities have been laid bare, and can be unmistakably recognized. Their very acts attest the truth of these words.

*Baha'u'llah defines “the people of God” not by their beliefs, but rather by “outward conduct” that “is but a reflection of their inward life” and “inward life a mirror of their outward conduct.” In such people there is no contradiction between what they believe, what they espouse and what they do.*

Every discerning eye can, in this Day, perceive the dawning light of God's Revelation, and every attentive ear can recognize the Voice that was heard from the Burning Bush. Such is the rushing of the waters of Divine mercy, that He Who is the Dayspring of the signs of God and the Revealer of the evidences of His glory is without veil or concealment associating and conversing with the peoples of the earth and its kindreds. How numerous are those who, with hearts intent upon malice, have sought Our Presence, and departed from it loyal and loving friends! The portals of grace are wide open before the face of all men. In Our outward dealings with them We have treated alike the righteous and the sinner, that perchance the evildoer may attain the limitless ocean of Divine forgiveness. Our name “the Concealer” hath shed such a light upon men that the foward hath imagined himself to be numbered with the pious. No man that seeketh Us will We ever disappoint, neither shall he that hath set his face towards Us be denied access unto Our court....

*Baha'u'llah promises that “no man that seeketh Us will We ever disappoint” no “denied access unto Our court...”*

O friends! Help ye the one true God, exalted be His glory, by your goodly deeds, by such conduct and character as shall be acceptable in His sight. He that seeketh to be a helper of God in this Day, let him close his eyes to whatever he may possess, and open them to the things of God. Let him cease to occupy himself with that which profiteth

him, and concern himself with that which shall exalt the all-compelling name of the Almighty. He should cleanse his heart from all evil passions and corrupt desires, for the fear of God is the weapon that can render him victorious, the primary instrument whereby he can achieve his purpose. The fear of God is the shield that defendeth His Cause, the buckler that enableth His people to attain to victory. It is a standard that no man can abase, a force that no power can rival. By its aid, and by the leave of Him Who is the Lord of Hosts, they that have drawn nigh unto God have been able to subdue and conquer the citadels of the hearts of men.

*The requirements of the true believer are set forth with clarity and command.*

– CXXVII –

If it be your wish, O people, to know God and to discover the greatness of His might, look, then, upon Me with Mine own eyes, and not with the eyes of anyone besides Me. Ye will, otherwise, be never capable of recognizing Me, though ye ponder My Cause as long as My Kingdom endureth, and meditate upon all created things throughout the eternity of God, the Sovereign Lord of all, the Omnipotent, the Ever-Abiding, the All-Wise. Thus have We manifested the truth of Our Revelation, that haply the people may be roused from their heedlessness, and be of them that understand.

*Look upon the Manifestation of God with His own eyes, and do not judge Him according to any human standard.*

Behold the low estate of these men who know full well how I have offered up Mine own Self and My kindred in the path of God and for the preservation of their faith in Him, who are well aware how Mine enemies have compassed Me about, in the days when the hearts of men feared and trembled, the days when they hid themselves from the eyes of the loved ones of God and of His enemies, and were busied in ensuring their own security and peace.

*He describes the character of those who reject Him.*

We eventually succeeded in manifesting the Cause of God, and exalted it to so eminent a position that all the people, except those who cherished ill-will in their hearts

against this Youth and joined partners with the Almighty, acknowledged the sovereignty of God and His mighty dominion. And yet, notwithstanding this Revelation whose influence hath pervaded all created things, and despite the brightness of this Light, the like of which none of them hath ever beheld, witness how the people of the Bayán have denied and contended with Me. Some have turned away from the Path of God, rejected the authority of Him in Whom they had believed, and acted insolently towards God, the Most Powerful, the Supreme Protector, the Most Exalted, the Most Great. Others hesitated and halted in His Path, and regarded the Cause of the Creator, in its inmost truth, as invalid unless substantiated by the approval of him who was created through the operation of My Will. Thus have their works come to naught, and yet they failed to perceive it. Among them is he who sought to measure God with the measure of his own self, and was so misled by the names of God as to rise up against Me, who condemned Me as one that deserved to be put to death, and who imputed to Me the very offenses of which he himself was guilty.

*He ends this portrayal of those who have rejected Him by referring to Mirza Yahya, who attempted to assassinate Him and who “imputed to Me the very offences of which he himself was guilty.”*

Wherefore, do I plead My grief and My sorrow to Him Who created Me and entrusted Me with His Message. Unto Him do I render thanks and praise for the things He hath ordained, for My loneliness, and the anguish I suffer at the hands of these men who have strayed so far from Him. I have patiently sustained, and will continue to sustain, the tribulation that touched Me, and will put My whole trust and confidence in God. Him will I supplicate saying: Guide Thy servants, O My Lord, unto the court of Thy favor and bounty, and suffer them not to be deprived of the wonders of Thy grace and of Thy manifold blessings. For they know not what Thou hast ordained for them by virtue of Thy mercy that encompasseth the whole of creation. Outwardly, O Lord, they are weak and helpless; inwardly they are but orphans. Thou art the All-Bountiful, the Munificent, the Most Exalted, the Most Great. Cast not, O My God, the fury of Thy wrath upon them, and cause them to tarry until such time when the wonders of Thy mercy will have been made manifest, that haply they may return unto Thee, and ask forgiveness of Thee for the things they have committed against Thee. Verily, Thou art the Forgiving, the All-Merciful.

*Notwithstanding the hatred of His enemies, He wishes them mercy and redemption, “that happy they may return unto Thee, and ask forgiveness of Thee for the things they have committed against Thee.”*

– CXXVIII –

**Say:** Doth it beseem a man while claiming to be a follower of his Lord, the All-Merciful, he should yet in his heart do the very deeds of the Evil One? Nay, it ill beseemeth him, and to this He Who is the Beauty of the All-Glorious will bear Me witness. Would that ye could comprehend it!

*Sincerity and holiness are enjoined.*

Cleanse from your hearts the love of worldly things, from your tongues every remembrance except His remembrance, from your entire being whatsoever may deter you from beholding His face, or may tempt you to follow the promptings of your evil and corrupt inclinations. Let God be your fear, O people, and be ye of them that tread the path of righteousness.

*The behavior of the true believers, attributed in the Kitab-i-Iqan to those who have been born again, is enjoined.*

**Say:** Should your conduct, O people, contradict your professions, how think ye, then, to be able to distinguish yourselves from them who, though professing their faith in the Lord their God, have, as soon as He came unto them in the cloud of holiness, refused to acknowledge Him, and repudiated His truth? Disencumber yourselves of all attachment to this world and the vanities thereof. Beware that ye approach them not, inasmuch as they prompt you to walk after your own lusts and covetous desires, and hinder you from entering the straight and glorious Path.

*Baha'u'llah distinguishes between the Divine and the Satanic here and in many other passages.*

**Know ye that by “the world” is meant your unawareness of Him Who is your Maker, and your absorption in aught else but Him. The “life to come,” on the other hand,**

signifieth the things that give you a safe approach to God, the All-Glorious, the Incomparable. Whatsoever deterreth you, in this Day, from loving God is nothing but the world. Flee it, that ye may be numbered with the blest. Should a man wish to adorn himself with the ornaments of the earth, to wear its apparels, or partake of the benefits it can bestow, no harm can befall him, if he alloweth nothing whatever to intervene between him and God, for God hath ordained every good thing, whether created in the heavens or in the earth, for such of His servants as truly believe in Him. Eat ye, O people, of the good things which God hath allowed you, and deprive not yourselves from His wondrous bounties. Render thanks and praise unto Him, and be of them that are truly thankful.

*Baha'u'llah distinguishes between the “**wish to adopt himself with the ornaments of the earth, to wear its apparels, or partake of the benefits it can bestow...for God hath ordained every good thing, whether created in the heavens or on the earth, for such of His servants as truly believe in Him.**” Baha'u'llah does not call for His follower to divest himself of “**every good thing**” but, first and foremost, to “**deprive not yourselves from His wondrous bounties.**”*

O thou that hast fled thy home and sought the presence of God! Proclaim unto men the Message of thy Lord, that it may haply deter them from following the promptings of their evil and corrupt desires, and bring them to the remembrance of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Great. Say: Fear God, O people, and refrain from shedding the blood of anyone. Contend not with your neighbor, and be ye of them that do good. Beware that ye commit no disorders on the earth after it hath been well ordered, and follow not the footsteps of them that are gone astray.

*Baha'u'llah addresses in this passage the one “**that hast fled thy home**” in order to do the bidding of his Lord. In the next paragraph He explains what God requires of him.*

Whoso ariseth among you to teach the Cause of his Lord, let him, before all else, teach his own self, that his speech may attract the hearts of them that hear him. Unless he teacheth his own self, the words of his mouth will not influence the heart of the seeker. Take heed, O people, lest ye be of them that give good counsel to others but forget to follow it themselves. The words of such as these, and beyond the words the realities

of all things, and beyond these realities the angels that are nigh unto God, bring against them the accusation of falsehood.

*Teach yourself first, and then teach others.*

Should such a man ever succeed in influencing anyone, this success should be attributed not to him, but rather to the influence of the words of God, as decreed by Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Wise. In the sight of God he is regarded as a lamp that imparteth its light, and yet is all the while being consumed within itself.

*It is not ourselves that bring about the conversion of souls to His Cause, but rather it is due “to the influence of the Words of God”.*

**Say:** Commit not, O people, that which will bring shame upon you or dishonor the Cause of God in the eyes of men, and be not of the mischief-makers. Approach not the things which your minds condemn. Eschew all manner of wickedness, for such things are forbidden unto you in the Book which none touch except such as God hath cleansed from every taint of guilt, and numbered among the purified.

*His followers must abstain from “such things” as “are forbidden unto you in the Book”. While the seeker may be attracted to the Faith by hearing of certain teachings that are dear to him, but he will be transformed when he follows the laws of God.*

Be fair to yourselves and to others, that the evidences of justice may be revealed, through your deeds, among Our faithful servants. Beware lest ye encroach upon the substance of your neighbor. Prove yourselves worthy of his trust and confidence in you, and withhold not from the poor the gifts which the grace of God hath bestowed upon you. He, verily, shall recompense the charitable, and doubly repay them for what they have bestowed. No God is there but Him. All creation and its empire are His. He bestoweth His gifts on whom He will, and from whom He will He withholdeth them. He is the Great Giver, the Most Generous, the Benevolent.

*Teach through your deeds.*

**Say: Teach ye the Cause of God, O people of Bahá, for God hath prescribed unto every one the duty of proclaiming His Message, and regardeth it as the most meritorious of all deeds. Such a deed is acceptable only when he that teacheth the Cause is already a firm believer in God, the Supreme Protector, the Gracious, the Almighty. He hath, moreover, ordained that His Cause be taught through the power of men's utterance, and not through resort to violence. Thus hath His ordinance been sent down from the Kingdom of Him Who is the Most Exalted, the All-Wise. Beware lest ye contend with anyone, nay, strive to make him aware of the truth with kindly manner and most convincing exhortation. If your hearer respond, he will have responded to his own behoof, and if not, turn ye away from him, and set your faces towards God's sacred Court, the seat of resplendent holiness.**

*Every one of the “people of Baha” are to teach His message, and this is “the most meritorious of all deeds.” But before he can teach, he must be “a firm believer in God.” What is required of the teacher is a “kindly manner and most convincing exhortation.”*

**Dispute not with anyone concerning the things of this world and its affairs, for God hath abandoned them to such as have set their affection upon them. Out of the whole world He hath chosen for Himself the hearts of men—hearts which the hosts of revelation and of utterance can subdue. Thus hath it been ordained by the Fingers of Bahá, upon the Tablet of God's irrevocable decree, by the behest of Him Who is the Supreme Ordainer, the All-Knowing.**

*Baha'u'llah not only calls upon His followers to be obedient to government, not to meddle in the affairs of state, but also “Dispute not with anyone concerning the things of this world and its affairs.” The job of the Baha'i teacher is to answer the summons of God, Who, “Out of the whole world...hath chosen for Himself the hearts of men—hearts which the hosts of revelation and utterance can subdue.” God provides “revelation” and the believers are to provide “utterance”. Together they “subdue” the hearts of humanity. But that does not make us partners with God. For it is He commands us to cite the words of His revelation, and Who endows us with the gift of “utterance”.*