

GLEANINGS

#16

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 so that I can share them with everyone taking this course.

SIXTEENTH SESSION'S SELECTIONS (CXXXVIII-CL)

The thirteen excerpts from the Writings of Baha'u'llah found in this session begin with a citation from the Tablet of the Fast, in Arabic, containing a prayer for the Fast and for parents; the second is from a Tablet addressed to Nabil-i-'Azam, principally regarding teaching the Cause; the third is from a Tablet addressed to Mirza Muhammad 'Ali, eldest son of Baha'u'llah with His second wife, Fatimah (Mahd-i-'Ulya), states that "the day is approaching" when the honor due to God and those who love Him "will have appeared, as manifest as the sun"; the fourth is a Tablet in Arabic and refers to "they that commit wickedness and impute it to God"; the fifth is a Tablet addressed to Mirza Muhammad 'Ali indicating that "the faith of no man can be conditioned by any one except himself"; the sixth is a Tablet to Haji Faraj, in Arabic, praising its recipient for having "recognized the Truth, and withdrawn from him who repudiated the All-Merciful, and was condemned as wicked in the Mother Tablet", likely a reference to Mirza Yahya, His principle opponent and head of the Babis who did not recognize Baha'u'llah; the seventh addresses teaching the Faith; the eighth is from the Suratu'l-Bayan, revealed in Arabic and cited earlier in Gleanings, and explaining how the poor and downtrodden are to be treated; the ninth is from a Tablet to Muhammad Mustafa Baghadi, in Arabic, which calls upon the believers to adhere to the highest standards of behavior; the tenth is from the Laylatu'l-Quds, in Persian, revealed for Darvish Sidq, who praises and encourages the believers who "Arise, and cling firmly to the Cause of God"; the eleventh is from the Lawh-i-Salman, which explains that the knowledge and wisdom of the "sages and mystics" can never compare to the revelation from God; the twelfth is from a Tablet in Arabic, wherein Baha'u'llah promises that "Should any man, in this Day, arise and with absolute detachment from all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth, set his affections on Him Who is the Day Spring of God's holy Revelation, he will, verily, be empowered to subdue all created things"; the thirteenth and final excerpt in this selection is from a Tablet to Isma'il-i-Sabbagh, in Arabic, praises those believers who, "in the days of world-encompassing trials have stood

fast in the Cause and have refused to swerve from its truth" and contrasts then with the triumph of the Cause, when "every man shall profess himself as believer".

– CXXXVIII –

Thou seest, O God of Mercy, Thou Whose power pervadeth all created things, these servants of Thine, Thy thralls, who, according to the good-pleasure of Thy Will, observe in the daytime the fast prescribed by Thee, who arise, at the earliest dawn of day, to make mention of Thy Name, and to celebrate Thy praise, in the hope of obtaining their share of the goodly things that are treasured up within the treasuries of Thy grace and bounty. I beseech Thee, O Thou that holdest in Thine hands the reins of the entire creation, in Whose grasp is the whole kingdom of Thy names and of Thine attributes, not to deprive, in Thy Day, Thy servants from the showers pouring from the clouds of Thy mercy, nor to hinder them from taking their portion of the ocean of Thy good-pleasure.

Baha'u'llah prays for the believers, and this recalls Jesus, who did the same.

All the atoms of the earth bear witness, O my Lord, to the greatness of Thy power and of Thy sovereignty; and all the signs of the universe attest the glory of Thy majesty and of Thy might. Have mercy, then, O Thou Who art the sovereign Lord of all, Who art the King of everlasting days, and Ruler of all nations, upon these Thy servants, who have clung to the cord of Thy commandments, who have bowed their necks to the revelations of Thy laws which have been sent down from the heaven of Thy Will.

Baha'u'llah reminds us of the universal revelation of God, and asks that God treat those who follow His commandments with mercy.

Behold, O my Lord, how their eyes are lifted up towards the dawning-place of Thy loving-kindness, how their hearts are set upon the oceans of Thy favors, how their voices are lowered before the accents of Thy most sweet Voice, calling, from the most sublime Station, in Thy name the All-Glorious. Help Thou Thy loved ones, O my Lord, them that have forsaken their all, that they may obtain the things Thou dost possess, whom trials and tribulations have encompassed for having renounced the world and

set their affections on Thy realm of glory. Shield them, I entreat Thee, O my Lord, from the assaults of their evil passions and desires, and aid them to obtain the things that shall profit them in this present world and in the next.

Baha'u'llah asks God to “help” those who have sacrificed this world for “Thy realm of glory”, to “shield them...from the assaults of their evil passions and desires” and “aid them to obtain the things that shall profit them in this present world and in the next.” Baha'u'llah shows us that all good things come from God, as He said in another Tablet “Be fair in your judgment. Every good thing is of God, and every evil thing is from yourselves. Will ye not comprehend? This same truth hath been revealed in all the Scriptures, if ye be of them that understand.” (LXXVII) Jesus said something quite similar in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark: “10And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: 11Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.” (Matthew 15:10-11) “14And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand: 15There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. 16If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.” (Mark 7:14-16)

In both Gospels He then explains what meaning He intends:

“16And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? 17Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? 18But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. 19For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: 20These are the things which defile a man: but

*to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.” (Matthew 15:16-20) **17**And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable. **18**And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; **19**Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? **20**And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. **21**For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, **22**Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: **23**All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.”*

(Mark 7:17-23)

I pray Thee, O my Lord, by Thy hidden, Thy treasured Name, that calleth aloud in the kingdom of creation, and summoneth all peoples to the Tree beyond which there is no passing, the seat of transcendent glory, to rain down upon us, and upon Thy servants, the overflowing rain of Thy mercy, that it may cleanse us from the remembrance of all else but Thee, and draw us nigh unto the shores of the ocean of Thy grace. Ordain, O Lord, through Thy most exalted Pen, that which will immortalize our souls in the Realm of glory, will perpetuate our names in Thy Kingdom, and safeguard our lives in the treasuries of Thy protection and our bodies in the stronghold of Thy inviolable fastness. Powerful art Thou over all things, be they of the past or of the future. No God is there but Thee, the omnipotent Protector, the Self-Subsisting.

It is only “through Thy most exalted Pen”, the Writings of Baha’u’llah that we will receive “that which will immortalize our souls in the Realm of glory” – that is, in the afterlife – “perpetuate our names in Thy Kingdom” – assure that we will be recognized in this world and the next as His true followers – “safeguard our lives in the treasuries of Thy protection and our bodies in the stronghold of Thy inviolable fastness” – our lives in this world and the next world, including our bodies. We are accustomed to having lots of options to choose from, and to be able to change our minds whenever we wish. But Baha’u’llah tells us that there is one way to win the good-pleasure of God and that is for

“the overflowing rain of Thy mercy” to “cleanse us from the remembrance of all else but Thee”.

Thou seest, O Lord, our suppliant hands lifted up towards the heaven of Thy favor and bounty. Grant that they may be filled with the treasures of Thy munificence and bountiful favor. Forgive us, and our fathers, and our mothers, and fulfill whatsoever we have desired from the ocean of Thy grace and Divine generosity. Accept, O Beloved of our hearts, all our works in Thy path. Thou art, verily, the Most Powerful, the Most Exalted, the Incomparable, the One, the Forgiving, the Gracious.

Baha'u'llah states that the reason why we are directed not to confess our sins to priests or to any human being is because this brings about our humiliation and because they cannot forgive us. Only God can forgive us. Hence, we ask Him to “forgive us, and our fathers, and our mothers”. Baha'u'llah also explicitly confirms the teaching of Jesus in the Gospels, that in order for our sins to be forgiven by God, we must forgive those who sin against us.

- CXXXIX -

Let thine ear be attentive, O Nabil-i-A'zam, to the Voice of the Ancient of Days, crying to thee from the Kingdom of His all-glorious Name. He it is Who is now proclaiming from the realms above, and within the inmost essence of all created things: “I truly am God, there is none other God but Me. I am He Who, from everlasting, hath been the Source of all sovereignty and power, He Who shall continue, throughout eternity, to exercise His kingship and to extend His protection unto all created things. My proof is the greatness of My might and My sovereignty that embraceth the whole of creation.”...

Go is proclaiming His existence and His influence “from the realms above, and within the inmost essence of all created things”, that is, to cite the language of the Kitab-i-Iqan, the progressive revelation of the Manifestations and the universal revelation in all things.

Blessed art thou, O My name, inasmuch as thou hast entered Mine Ark, and art speeding, through the power of My sovereign and most exalted might, on the ocean of grandeur, and art numbered with My favored ones whose names the Finger of God hath inscribed. Thou hast quaffed the cup which is life indeed from the hands of this Youth, around Whom revolve the Manifestations of the All-Glorious, and the

brightness of Whose presence they Who are the Daysprings of Mercy extol in the day time and in the night season.

Baha'u'llah is not just the latest Manifestation of God...He is also the one “around Whom revolve the Manifestations of the All-Glorious, and the brightness of Whose presence they Who are the Daysprings of Mercy extol in the day time and in the night season.” The Manifestations of God extol Baha'u'llah day and night.

His glory be with thee, inasmuch as thou hast journeyed from God unto God, and entered within the borders of the Court of unfading splendor—the Spot which mortal man can never describe. Therein hath the breeze of holiness, laden with the love of thy Lord, stirred thy spirit within thee, and the waters of understanding have washed from thee the stains of remoteness and ungodliness. Thou hast gained admittance into the Paradise of God’s Remembrance, through thy recognition of Him Who is the Embodiment of that Remembrance amongst men.

Baha'u'llah is apparently addressing a Babi in this Tablet, inasmuch as He uses the language “from God unto God”, meaning from the Bab to Baha'u'llah, by citing the “Court of unfading splendor”, referred to in the Writings of the Bab, and also refers to “God’s Remembrance”, which is also used by the Bab in reference to Himself and to Him Whom God shall make manifest, His successor, Baha'u'llah.

Wherefore, be thankful to God, for having strengthened thee to aid His Cause, for having made the flowers of knowledge and understanding to spring forth in the garden of thine heart. Thus hath His grace encompassed thee, and encompassed the whole of creation. Beware, lest thou allow anything whatsoever to grieve thee. Rid thyself of all attachment to the vain allusions of men, and cast behind thy back the idle and subtle disputation of them that are veiled from God. Proclaim, then, that which the Most Great Spirit will inspire thee to utter in the service of the Cause of thy Lord, that thou mayest stir up the souls of all men and incline their hearts unto this most blessed and all-glorious Court....

By calling upon His reader to “Beware, lest thou allow anything whatsoever to grieve thee” Baha'u'llah affirms a principle that is found throughout His Writings, that He has come not to bring sorrow or travail but rather to bring joy and happiness. Consider the

opening references to this principle in the Kitab-i-Aqdas. Baha'u'llah also reiterates a teaching of Jesus, which promises that His followers will be aided by the Holy Spirit whenever they open their mouths to teach His Cause: “Proclaim, then, that which the Most Great Spirit will inspired thee to utter in the service of the Cause of thy Lord”.

Know thou that We have annulled the rule of the sword, as an aid to Our Cause, and substituted for it the power born of the utterance of men. Thus have We irrevocably decreed, by virtue of Our grace. Say: O people! Sow not the seeds of discord among men, and refrain from contending with your neighbor, for your Lord hath committed the world and the cities thereof to the care of the kings of the earth, and made them the emblems of His own power, by virtue of the sovereignty He hath chosen to bestow upon them. He hath refused to reserve for Himself any share whatever of this world's dominion. To this He Who is Himself the Eternal Truth will testify. The things He hath reserved for Himself are the cities of men's hearts, that He may cleanse them from all earthly defilements, and enable them to draw nigh unto the hallowed Spot which the hands of the infidel can never profane. Open, O people, the city of the human heart with the key of your utterance. Thus have We, according to a preordained measure, prescribed unto you your duty.

Baha'u'llah proclaimed the same principles in His Tablets to the kings and other rulers. When addressing them He assured those in power that He and His followers did not seek power. When addressing His followers He assured them that power is not what they are called to exercise but rather the devotion of our hearts to God, so “that He may cleanse them from all earthly defilements...”

By the righteousness of God! The world and its vanities, and its glory, and whatever delights it can offer, are all, in the sight of God, as worthless as, nay, even more contemptible than, dust and ashes. Would that the hearts of men could comprehend it! Cleanse yourselves thoroughly, O people of Bahá, from the defilement of the world, and of all that pertaineth unto it. God Himself beareth Me witness. The things of the earth ill beseem you. Cast them away unto such as may desire them, and fasten your eyes upon this most holy and effulgent Vision.

This ardent rejection of “the world and its vanities, and its glory, and whatever delights it can offer” is key to understand that Baha'u'llah does not treat a middle road between God and Mamon, but rather prescribes complete dedication to God.

That which beseemeth you is the love of God, and the love of Him Who is the Manifestation of His Essence, and the observance of whatsoever He chooseth to prescribe unto you, did ye but know it.

This is perhaps the most succinct statement of the obligation of every believer in Baha'u'llah.

Say: Let truthfulness and courtesy be your adorning. Suffer not yourselves to be deprived of the robe of forbearance and justice, that the sweet savors of holiness may be wafted from your hearts upon all created things. Say: Beware, O people of Bahá, lest ye walk in the ways of them whose words differ from their deeds. Strive that ye may be enabled to manifest to the peoples of the earth the signs of God, and to mirror forth His commandments. Let your acts be a guide unto all mankind, for the professions of most men, be they high or low, differ from their conduct. It is through your deeds that ye can distinguish yourselves from others. Through them the brightness of your light can be shed upon the whole earth. Happy is the man that heedeth My counsel, and keepeth the precepts prescribed by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

*These moral precepts of Baha'u'llah were espoused by all of the previous Manifestations of God, but today we are far removed from carrying them out. Baha'is cannot tread the path of hypocrisy, “**of them whose words differ from their deeds**”.*

- CXL -

O Muḥammad-‘Ali! Great is the blessedness awaiting thee, inasmuch as thou hast adorned thine heart with the ornament of the love of thy Lord, the All-Glorious, the All-Praised. He that hath attained this station in this day, all good shall be his.

There are Baha'is who sincerely believe that anyone who does evil was consistently doing so, and could never change. Baha'u'llah rejects that notion categorically. Not only can we change for the better but we can change for the worse. In this case, His son Mirza Muḥammad ‘Ali is praised for doing good, and he could have continued to do good for the rest of his life.

Pay thou no heed to the humiliation to which the loved ones of God have in this Day been subjected. This humiliation is the pride and glory of all temporal honor and worldly elevation. What greater honor can be imagined than the honor conferred by the Tongue of the Ancient of Days when He calleth to remembrance His loved ones in His Most Great Prison? The day is approaching when the intervening clouds will have been completely dissipated, when the light of the words, "All honor belongeth unto God and unto them that love Him," will have appeared, as manifest as the sun, above the horizon of the Will of the Almighty.

It is not the praise or condemnation of those who reject the Manifestation of God that matters, but only that which is bestowed upon us by God.

All men, be they high or low, have sought and are still seeking so great an honor. All, however, have, as soon as the Sun of Truth shed its radiance upon the world, been deprived of its benefits, and have been shut out as by a veil from its glory, except them that have clung to the cord of the unfailing providence of the one true God, and have with complete detachment from all else but Him turned their faces towards His holy court.

*Baha'u'llah affirms that "**all men, be they high or low**" wish to receive the highest honor, but that they have treated the Manifestation of God in such manner that they are not worthy of this honor.*

Render thanks unto Him Who is the Desire of all worlds for having invested thee with such high honor. Erelong the world and all that is therein shall be as a thing forgotten, and all honor shall belong to the loved ones of thy Lord, the All-Glorious, the Most Bountiful.

Contemplate the honor of 'Abdu'l-Baha and the other believers who have been obedient to Baha'u'llah, and the disappearance of the rest of the souls that lived during their lifetimes.

and carnal desires, if perchance the children of men might be roused from their slumber.

This is the purpose of the revealed Book of God.

Say: Follow, O people, what hath been prescribed unto you in Our Tablets, and walk not after the imaginations which the sowers of mischief have devised, they that commit wickedness and impute it to God, the Most Holy, the All-Glorious, the Most Exalted. Say: We have accepted to be tried by ills and troubles, that ye may sanctify yourselves from all earthly defilements. Why, then, refuse ye to ponder Our purpose in your hearts? By the righteousness of God! Whoso will reflect upon the tribulations We have suffered, his soul will assuredly melt away with sorrow. Thy Lord Himself beareth witness to the truth of My words. We have sustained the weight of all calamities to sanctify you from all earthly corruption, and ye are yet indifferent.

The Manifestations “have sustained the weight of all calumnies to sanctify” us “from all earthly corruption”. Does this mean that the earth that God has created is corrupt? No, Baha'u'llah and the other Manifestations are not among those who reject the created world, including this material realm, as evil to any degree. It is the corruption of that world that we are called upon to avoid.

Say: It behooveth every one that holdeth fast to the hem of Our Robe to be untainted by anything from which the Concourse on high may be averse. Thus hath it been decreed by thy Lord, the All-Glorious, in this His perspicuous Tablet. Say: Set ye aside My love, and commit what grieveth Mine heart? What is it that hindereth you from comprehending what hath been revealed unto you by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise?

Not only the laws revealed by the Manifestation of God but “anything from which the Concourse on high may be averse” is the standard to which we must attain. To discern the wishes of the Concourse requires that we receive the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

We verily behold your actions. If We perceive from them the sweet smelling savor of purity and holiness, We will most certainly bless you. Then will the tongues of the

inmates of Paradise utter your praise and magnify your names amidst them who have drawn nigh unto God.

*God rewards us if we follow His commandments, if He perceives from our actions “**the sweet smelling savor of purity and holiness**”.*

Cling thou to the hem of the Robe of God, and take thou firm hold on His Cord, a Cord which none can sever. Beware that the clamor of them that have repudiated this Most Great Announcement shall not deter thee from achieving thy purpose. Proclaim what hath been prescribed unto thee in this Tablet, though all the peoples arise and oppose thee. Thy Lord is, verily, the All-Compelling, the Unfailing Protector.

Baha'u'llah would not frequently warn us of the consequences of following anyone but Him if it were not absolutely indispensable.

My glory be with thee and with those of My loved ones that associate with thee. These indeed are they with whom it shall be well.

This reminds us that we must associate with His “loved ones” and not live our lives in isolation from others.

- CXLII -

I swear by the beauty of the Well-Beloved! This is the Mercy that hath encompassed the entire creation, the Day whereon the grace of God hath permeated and pervaded all things. The living waters of My mercy, O 'Alí, are fast pouring down, and Mine heart is melting with the heat of My tenderness and love. At no time have I been able to reconcile Myself to the afflictions befalling My loved ones, or to any trouble that could becloud the joy of their hearts.

*We witness the tender lovingkindness of Baha'u'llah in His statement that “**at no time have I been able to reconcile Myself to the afflictions befalling My loved ones.**”*

Every time My name “the All-Merciful” was told that one of My lovers had breathed a word that runneth counter to My wish, it repaired, grief-stricken and disconsolate to

its abode; and whenever My name “the Concealer” discovered that one of My followers had inflicted any shame or humiliation on his neighbor, it, likewise, turned back chagrined and sorrowful to its retreats of glory, and there wept and mourned with a sore lamentation. And whenever My name “the Ever-Forgiving” perceived that anyone of My friends had committed any transgression, it cried out in its great distress, and, overcome with anguish, fell upon the dust, and was borne away by a company of the invisible angels to its habitation in the realms above.

While God and His Manifestation are merciful, the believer is called upon to do only what is good and does not require forgiveness.

By Myself, the True One, O ‘Alí! The fire that hath inflamed the heart of Bahá is fiercer than the fire that gloweth in thine heart, and His lamentation louder than thy lamentation. Every time the sin committed by anyone amongst them was breathed in the Court of His Presence, the Ancient Beauty would be so filled with shame as to wish He could hide the glory of His countenance from the eyes of all men, for He hath, at all times, fixed His gaze on their fidelity, and observed its essential requisites.

Baha'u'llah refers to His great suffering when informed of “the sin committed by anyone amongst them in the Court of His Presence”, elsewhere stating that this is the only tribulation which causes Him sorrow. We may appreciate then the disappointment of Jesus when His followers failed to do as He bid them, such as when he fell asleep on Mount Tabor and the Mount of Olives.

The words thou hadst written have, as soon as they were read in My Presence, caused the ocean of My fidelity to surge within Me, and the breeze of My forgiveness to be wafted over thy soul, and the tree of My loving-kindness to overshadow thee, and the clouds of My bounty to rain down upon thee their gifts. I swear by the Daystar that shineth above the horizon of eternity, I sorrow for thee in thy grief, and lament with thee in thy tribulation.... I bear witness to the services thou hast rendered Me, and testify to the various troubles thou hast sustained for My sake. All the atoms of the earth declare My love for thee.

This loving appreciation that Baha'u'llah expresses towards a believer when his letter is “read in My Presence” is without parallel as far as a I know in the Writings of the Manifestations.

The call thou didst raise, O 'Alí, is highly acceptable in My sight. Proclaim with both thy pen and tongue My Cause. Cry out and summon the people to Him Who is the Sovereign Lord of all worlds, with such zeal and fervor that all men may be set on fire by thee.

Baha'u'llah indicates that teaching “with both thy pen and tongue My Cause” is “highly acceptable in My sight.” In previously cited passages Baha'u'llah has called for His followers to teach His Cause, and in this Tablet He praises the one who does so and says that it much appreciated.

Say: O my Lord, my Best-Beloved, the Mover of my actions, the Lode Star of my soul, the Voice that crieth in mine inmost being, the Object of mine heart's adoration! Praise be to Thee for having enabled me to turn my face towards Thee, for having set my soul ablaze through remembrance of Thee, for having aided me to proclaim Thy Name and to sing Thy praises.

This paragraph and the two subsequent paragraphs are a prayer that Baha'u'llah has revealed for this believer. It is highly suited to all believers.

My God, my God! If none be found to stray from Thy path, how, then, can the ensign of Thy mercy be unfurled, or the banner of Thy bountiful favor be hoisted? And if iniquity be not committed, what is it that can proclaim Thee to be the Concealer of men's sins, the Ever-Forgiving, the Omniscient, the All-Wise? May my soul be a sacrifice to the trespasses of them that trespass against Thee, for upon such trespasses are wafted the sweet savors of the tender mercies of Thy Name, the Compassionate, the All-Merciful. May my life be laid down for the transgressions of such as transgress against Thee, for through them the breath of Thy grace and the fragrance of Thy loving-kindness are made known and diffused amongst men. May my inmost being be offered up for the sins of them that have sinned against Thee, for it is as a result of such sins that the Daystar of Thy manifold favors revealeth itself above the horizon of Thy bounty, and

the clouds of Thy never-failing providence rain down their gifts upon the realities of all created things.

I am he, O my Lord, that hath confessed to Thee the multitude of his evil doings, that hath acknowledged what no man hath acknowledged. I have made haste to attain unto the ocean of Thy forgiveness, and have sought shelter beneath the shadow of Thy most gracious favor. Grant, I beseech Thee, O Thou Who art the Everlasting King and the Sovereign Protector of all men, that I may be enabled to manifest that which shall cause the hearts and souls of men to soar in the limitless immensity of Thy love, and to commune with Thy Spirit. Strengthen me through the power of Thy sovereignty, that I may turn all created things towards the Dayspring of Thy Manifestation and the Source of Thy Revelation. Aid me, O my Lord, to surrender myself wholly to Thy Will, and to arise and serve Thee, for I cherish this earthly life for no other purpose than to compass the Tabernacle of Thy Revelation and the Seat of Thy Glory. Thou seest me, O my God, detached from all else but Thee, and humble and subservient to Thy Will. Deal with me as it beseemeth Thee, and as it befitteth Thy highness and great glory.

O 'Alí! The bounty of Him Who is the Lord of all worlds hath been, and is still being, vouchsafed unto thee. Arm thyself with His strength and power, and arise to aid His Cause and to magnify His holy name. Let not thine ignorance in human learning and thy inability to read or write grieve thine heart. The doors of His manifold grace are within the mighty grasp of the power of the one true God. He hath opened, and will continue to open, them in the face of all them that serve Him. I fain would hope that this breeze of Divine sweetness will, at all times, continue to be wafted from the meadow of thine heart upon the whole world, in such wise that its effects may be manifested in every land. He it is that hath power over all things. He, verily, is the Most Powerful, the All-Glorious, the Almighty.

As Baha'u'llah stated in Kitab-i-Iqan, no believer should allow his “ignorance in human learning and...inability to read or write grieve” his heart. God will aid him with “His manifold grace” and “this breeze of Divine sweetness will, at all times, continue to be wafted from the meadow of thine heart upon the whole world”. This is the promise Baha'u'llah makes to 'Ali, who taught His Cause, and, as we have seen in other passages this promise is made to every believer who will take us this calling.

- CXLIII -

Blessed art thou, O My servant, inasmuch as thou hast recognized the Truth, and withdrawn from him who repudiated the All-Merciful, and was condemned as wicked in the Mother Tablet. Walk thou steadfastly in the love of God, and keep straight on in His Faith, and aid Him through the power of thine utterance. Thus biddeth thee the All-Merciful Who is suffering imprisonment at the hands of His oppressors.

Baha'u'llah encourages another believer to teach His Faith, saying “aid Him through the power of thine utterance.”

If tribulation touch thee for My sake, call thou to mind My ills and troubles, and remember My banishment and imprisonment. Thus do We devolve on thee what hath descended upon Us from Him Who is the All-Glorious, the All-Wise.

When believers suffer for His sake, they are called upon to remember His “banishment and imprisonment”. This is not to sorrow them but to encourage them, for He accepted all sufferings as gifts from God. They should also regard their own sufferings in this light.

By My Self! The day is approaching when We will have rolled up the world and all that is therein, and spread out a new order in its stead. He, verily, is powerful over all things.

Sanctify thine heart, that thou mayest remember Me; and purge thine ear, that thou mayest hearken unto My words. Set then thy face towards the Spot wherein the throne of thy Lord, the God of Mercy, hath been established, and say: “Praise be to Thee, O my Lord, for having enabled me to recognize the Manifestation of Thine own Self, and aided me to fix mine heart on the court of Thy presence, the object of my soul’s adoration. I beseech Thee, by Thy name that caused the heavens to be rent and the earth to be cleft asunder, to ordain for me what Thou didst ordain for them that have turned away from all else but Thee, and rested their hearts firmly upon Thee. Grant that I may be seated in Thy presence on the seat of truth, within the Tabernacle of Glory. Powerful art Thou to do what Thou willest. There is none other God but Thee, the All-Glorious, the All-Wise.”

After encouraging His follower of the ultimate triumph of the Faith, Baha'u'llah reveals a special prayer in his honor.

- CXLIV -

The Pen of the Most High hath decreed and imposed upon every one the obligation to teach this Cause.... God will, no doubt, inspire whosoever detacheth himself from all else but Him, and will cause the pure waters of wisdom and utterance to gush out and flow copiously from his heart. Verily, thy Lord, the All-Merciful, is powerful to do as He willeth, and ordaineth whatsoever He pleaseth.

We have seen that most of the passages in this selection are related to teaching His Faith. Clearly Shoghi Effendi wished the English-speaking Baha'is, in North America and the United Kingdom to read these passages and recall them as they taught the Faith.

Wert thou to consider this world, and realize how fleeting are the things that pertain unto it, thou wouldst choose to tread no path except the path of service to the Cause of thy Lord. None would have the power to deter thee from celebrating His praise, though all men should arise to oppose thee.

The “path of service to the Cause of thy Lord” and “celebrating His praise” are one and the same.

Go thou straight on and persevere in His service. Say: O people! The Day, promised unto you in all the Scriptures, is now come. Fear ye God, and withhold not yourselves from recognizing the One Who is the Object of your creation. Hasten ye unto Him. Better is this for you than the world and all that is therein. Would that ye could perceive it!

*Among the first passages in Gleanings are those which state that “**The Day, promised unto you in all the Scriptures, is now come**”. The Guardian wishes us to remember this as this Gleanings approaches its conclusion.*

- CXLV -

If ye meet the abased or the downtrodden, turn not away disdainfully from them, for the King of Glory ever watcheth over them and surroundeth them with such tenderness as none can fathom except them that have suffered their wishes and desires to be merged in the Will of your Lord, the Gracious, the All-Wise. O ye rich ones of the earth! Flee not from the face of the poor that lieth in the dust, nay rather befriend him and suffer him to recount the tale of the woes with which God's inscrutable Decree hath caused him to be afflicted. By the righteousness of God! Whilst ye consort with him, the Concourse on high will be looking upon you, will be interceding for you, will be extolling your names and glorifying your action. Blessed are the learned that pride not themselves on their attainments; and well is it with the righteous that mock not the sinful, but rather conceal their misdeeds, so that their own shortcomings may remain veiled to men's eyes.

Baha'u'llah, like Jesus before Him, calls upon the rich to love the poor, the learned who are humble and the righteous not to judge the behavior of "the sinful...so that their own shortcomings may remain veiled to men's eyes".

- CXLVI -

It is Our wish and desire that every one of you may become a source of all goodness unto men, and an example of uprightness to mankind. Beware lest ye prefer yourselves above your neighbors. Fix your gaze upon Him Who is the Temple of God amongst men. He, in truth, hath offered up His life as a ransom for the redemption of the world. He, verily, is the All-Bountiful, the Gracious, the Most High. If any differences arise amongst you, behold Me standing before your face, and overlook the faults of one another for My name's sake and as a token of your love for My manifest and resplendent Cause. We love to see you at all times consorting in amity and concord within the paradise of My good-pleasure, and to inhale from your acts the fragrance of friendliness and unity, of loving-kindness and fellowship. Thus counseleth you the All-Knowing, the Faithful. We shall always be with you; if We inhale the perfume of your fellowship, Our heart will assuredly rejoice, for naught else can satisfy Us. To this beareth witness every man of true understanding.

This call for the loving unity of the believers recalls many statements of Jesus in the Gospel of John and other gospels.

- CXLVII -

The Most Great Name beareth Me witness! How sad if any man were, in this Day, to rest his heart on the transitory things of this world! Arise, and cling firmly to the Cause of God. Be most loving one to another. Burn away, wholly for the sake of the Well-Beloved, the veil of self with the flame of the undying Fire, and with faces joyous and beaming with light, associate with your neighbor. Ye have well observed, in all its aspects, the behavior of Him Who is the Word of Truth amidst you. Ye know full well how hard it is for this Youth to allow, though it be for one night, the heart of anyone of the beloved of God to be saddened by Him.

Baha'u'llah expresses His mercy and lovingkindness in a particularly disarming and comforting manner in the last sentence of this paragraph.

The Word of God hath set the heart of the world afire; how regrettable if ye fail to be enkindled with its flame! Please God, ye will regard this blessed night as the night of unity, will knit your souls together, and resolve to adorn yourselves with the ornament of a goodly and praiseworthy character. Let your principal concern be to rescue the fallen from the slough of impending extinction, and to help him embrace the ancient Faith of God. Your behavior towards your neighbor should be such as to manifest clearly the signs of the one true God, for ye are the first among men to be recreated by His Spirit, the first to adore and bow the knee before Him, the first to circle round His throne of glory. I swear by Him Who hath caused Me to reveal whatever hath pleased Him! Ye are better known to the inmates of the Kingdom on high than ye are known to your own selves. Think ye these words to be vain and empty? Would that ye had the power to perceive the things your Lord, the All-Merciful, doth see—things that attest the excellence of your rank, that bear witness to the greatness of your worth, that proclaim the sublimity of your station! God grant that your desires and unmortified passions may not hinder you from that which hath been ordained for you.

This paragraph so resembles the discourses in the Gospels in which the followers of Jesus are encouraged by Him that many a Christian will recognize Baha'u'llah to be the return of Jesus just by reading these blessed words.

- CXLVIII -

O Salmán! All that the sages and mystics have said or written have never exceeded, nor can they ever hope to exceed, the limitations to which man's finite mind hath been strictly subjected. To whatever heights the mind of the most exalted of men may soar, however great the depths which the detached and understanding heart can penetrate, such mind and heart can never transcend that which is the creature of their own conceptions and the product of their own thoughts. The meditations of the profoundest thinker, the devotions of the holiest of saints, the highest expressions of praise from either human pen or tongue, are but a reflection of that which hath been created within themselves, through the revelation of the Lord, their God. Whoever pondereth this truth in his heart will readily admit that there are certain limits which no human being can possibly transgress. Every attempt which, from the beginning that hath no beginning, hath been made to visualize and know God is limited by the exigencies of His own creation—a creation which He, through the operation of His own Will and for the purposes of none other but His own Self, hath called into being. Immeasurably exalted is He above the strivings of human mind to grasp His Essence, or of human tongue to describe His mystery. No tie of direct intercourse can ever bind Him to the things He hath created, nor can the most abstruse and most remote allusions of His creatures do justice to His being. Through His world-pervading Will He hath brought into being all created things. He is and hath ever been veiled in the ancient eternity of His own exalted and indivisible Essence, and will everlastingly continue to remain concealed in His inaccessible majesty and glory. All that is in heaven and all that is in the earth have come to exist at His bidding, and by His Will all have stepped out of utter nothingness into the realm of being. How can, therefore, the creature which the Word of God hath fashioned comprehend the nature of Him Who is the Ancient of Days?

The absolute transcendence of God from His creation is her reiterated. All too often expressions of intimacy found in the scriptures have been understood as indicating that God is one of us. These verses remind us that He is infinitely exalted above anything else in existence, and that His Manifestations are the first to assert this truth.

Should any man, in this Day, arise and, with absolute detachment from all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth, set his affections on Him Who is the Dayspring of God's holy Revelation, he will, verily, be empowered to subdue all created things, through the potency of one of the Names of the Lord, his God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. Know thou of a certainty that the Daystar of Truth hath, in this Day, shed upon the world a radiance, the like of which bygone ages have never witnessed. Let the light of His glory, O people, shine upon you, and be not of the negligent.

How does “any man, in this Day, arise and....set his affections on Him Who is the Dayspring of God's holy Revelation”? By teaching His Cause.

- CL -

When the victory arriveth, every man shall profess himself a believer and shall hasten to the shelter of God's Faith. Happy are they who in the days of world-encompassing trials have stood fast in the Cause and refused to swerve from its truth.

*Baha'u'llah promises here that the day will come when “**every man shall profess himself a believer and shall hasten to the shelter of God's Faith**” – and that day is prophesied in many of His Writings and in His spoken words to Varqa cited in one of the volumes of The Revelation of Baha'u'llah by Adib Taherzadeh. But the greatest blessing will be bestowed upon those “**who in the days of world-encompassing trials**” – the time in which we are living – “**have stood fast in the Cause and refused to swerve from its truth.**” This, then, is what we are called up to do.*