

Springtime metaphors and spring-related imagery

by Bahá'u'lláh, Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi

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Preface

This document provides Bahá'ís some notes they may wish to use in preparing readings or discussions during springtime, especially between Ayyam-I-Ha and the month of Núr. This document is not intended for widespread distribution or publication. [note: permission given to the Bahá'í Library for posting. -J.W.]

The following pages include a collection of simplified English versions of Bahá'í scriptures adapted from authorized translations of Bahá'í Writings (these adaptations are wherever possible gender-neutral and use modern English verb endings). Since they are simplified, they should not be considered actual Bahá'í Holy Writings. Every adaptation has a source, and I encourage you to look up the originals. Only the originals or other authorized translations can be considered Bahá'í Holy Writings. This document is not intended for publication or widespread distribution. It is simply a collection of simplified adaptations to help Bahá'ís study the use of the metaphor of springtime imagery in Bahá'í writings.

If you are interested in why official publications use the standard Victorian style of English translations, please look at *Unveiling the Hidden Words* by Diana Malouf. Chapter six of this work is the best discussion of this issue I have encountered.

A letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice dated 20 September, 1973 states, “Obviously teaching literature and books about the Faith can be written in Simple English. However, we feel that when the Sacred Writings are published the standard English translation should be used, but there would be no objection to printing alongside it the translation into Simple English which should be described as a paraphrase of the Holy Word.”

Introduction

This material has been collected and arranged for a meeting of Bahá'ís on April 15, 2000. We have had lovely weather the past couple weeks, with crisp, cool evenings, and warm, sunny days. Tulips are at their peak. Many trees have been in full bloom. During this time of year I thought it would be lovely to collect all the Bahá'í Writings that use springtime imagery or metaphor. I found this task was too great, as these sorts of metaphors are very common in our Faith's scriptures. But I have collected most of the references to springtime and the spring season. I hope the Friends will study these adaptations or else consult the original scriptures and deepen their appreciation for these words in this lovely time of year.

I have tried to be brief, and have tried to focus on the primary sources. My comments and arrangements are not authoritative, but are simply my personal views for now.

Back in October of 1995 someone posted a message to the soc.religion.bahai newsgroup about a speech Pope John Paul II had recently given at the United Nations. The persons rhetorically asked how many times in the Writings have our central figures called this age the spiritual springtime. The post is included below. After you study this collection, you will have an answer.

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Here's the final paragraph of the Pope's recent speech to the UN General Assembly this past week:

"We must not be afraid of the future. We must not be afraid of man. It is no accident that we are here. Each and every human person has been created in the 'image and likeness' of the One who is the origin of all that is. We have within us the capacities for wisdom and virtue. With these gifts, and with the help of God's grace, we can build in the next century and the next millennium a civilization worthy of the human person, a true culture of freedom. We can and must do so! And in doing so, we shall see that the tears of this century have prepared the ground for a new springtime of the human spirit."

I find this quote very interesting. Though it is unlikely that the Pope would recognize the validity of Bahá'u'lláh and His mission, when I read this paragraph, I can almost hear 'Abdu'l-Bahá saying these words. Note the Pope's mentioning a "new springtime of the human spirit." How many times in the Writings have Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá referred to this time as a spiritual springtime, when all things are made new?

We may wonder why the Bahá'í Writings and revealed religion in general uses metaphor and allusions so often, and does not often present teachings plainly in simple and direct language. This question was once posed to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and we have his answer:

Divine things are too deep to be expressed by common words. The heavenly teachings are expressed in parable in order to be understood and preserved for ages to come. When the spiritually minded dive deeply into the ocean of their meaning they bring to the surface the pearls of their inner significance. There is no greater pleasure than to study God's Word with a spiritual mind.

'Abdu'l-Bahá in London, page 80

John S. Hatcher has written a book called, *The Ocean of His Words* available here in the Bahá'í Information Center in which he examines how Bahá'u'lláh uses images of nature and gardens. Today we are examining some of these images in the Bahá'í texts, but we are especially going to focus on the words "spring" (meaning the season) and the "springtime" as these are closely related to other garden and nature imagery in Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation.

Hatcher examines the 78th Hidden Word from the Persian:

O SON OF MY HANDMAID!

Quaff from the tongue of the merciful the stream of divine mystery, and behold from the dayspring of divine utterance the unveiled splendor of the daystar of wisdom. Sow the seeds of My divine wisdom in the pure soil of the heart, and water them with the waters of certitude, that the hyacinths of knowledge and wisdom may spring up fresh and green from the holy city of the heart.

From this Hatcher suggests that in one possible reading "seeds" represent divine wisdom, or "the insights and wisdom contained in the Prophet's words, wisdom that is expansive and thus capable of producing further understanding." (p. 188). On the same page he suggests that "pure soil" represents the heart, or "that part of yourself that is receptive to spiritual insights..." Also, hyacinths represent knowledge and wisdom. The phrase "fresh and green" represent new and startling wisdom, "such as the concept of progressive revelation or the unity of the plant, that offers some new vision of ourselves." Water represents certitude. Sowing represents study and contemplation. You get the idea.

Later in his book Hatcher talks about tree imagery and garden imagery (pages 215-220). He observes that tree imagery often represents the continuity of Revelation. Thus, we have important figures in the faith as branches, and major Prophets are trees of life or get their Revelations from a burning bush or the "source of the celestial Tree," or from the light of an oil of an olive from the blessed tree. I think you will find in the adaptations I've collected herein that trees are often used at representations of our souls.

Gardens, says Hatcher, often represent paradise. Flowers, he says, may represent the growth of spiritual attributes.

Hatcher might well have examined the similar Hidden Word referring to hyacinths, which are spring flowers:

O Son of Dust!

The wise are they that speak not unless they obtain a hearing, even as the cup-bearers, who proffer not their cups till they find a seeker, and the lovers who cry not out from the depths of their heart until they gaze upon the beauty of their beloved. Wherefore sow the seeds of wisdom and knowledge in the pure soil of the heart, and keep them hidden, till the hyacinths of divine wisdom spring from the heart and not from mire and clay.

(Hidden Words Number 33 from the Persian)

As we read the many examples of the metaphor of “springtime” in Bahá’í writings, see what possible meanings and representations seems plausible to you.

You will find that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá made the most references to the springtime. However, his use of this imagery is based on Bahá’u’llah’s own writings. For example, Shoghi Effendi cited on page 154 of *God Passes By* a passage from Bahá’u’lláh we find on pages 27-28 of the *Gleanings*:

XIV. The Divine Springtime is come, O Most Exalted Pen, for the Festival of the All-Merciful is fast approaching. Bestir yourself, and magnify, before the entire creation, the name of God, and celebrate God’s praise, in such wise that all created things may be regenerated and made new. Speak, and hold not thy peace. The day star of blissfulness shines above the horizon of Our name, the Blissful, inasmuch as the kingdom of the name of God has been adorned with the ornament of the name of thy Lord, the Creator of the heavens. Arise before the nations of the earth, and arm yourself with the power of this Most Great Name, and be not of those who tarry.

What is this “Festival” that is fast approaching? A springtime festival that comes to mind is Ridvan. This quote seems to use “Divine Springtime” to refer to the latest Revelation from God and the early years of that revelation.

Verily I say, such is the greatness of this Cause that the father flies from his son, and the son flies from his father. Call to mind the story of Noah and Canaan. God grant that, in these days of heavenly delight, you may not deprive yourselves of the sweet savors of the All-Glorious God, and may partake, in this spiritual Springtime, of the outpourings of God’s grace.

Arise in the name of the One Who is the Object of all knowledge, and, with absolute detachment from the learning of men, lift up your voices and proclaim God’s Cause. I swear by the Day Star of Divine Revelation! The very moment you arise, you will witness how a flood of Divine knowledge will gush out of your hearts, and will behold the wonders of God’s heavenly wisdom manifested in all their glory before you. Were you to taste of the sweetness of the sayings of the All-Merciful, you would unhesitatingly forsake your selves, and would lay down your lives for the Well-Beloved.

Page 84 in Gleanings from Bahá’u’lláh

The first paragraph refers to the spiritual Springtime, and says these are days of heavenly delight. The imagery in the second paragraph, with a “flood” of Divine knowledge “gushing” out of our hearts also matches the springtime, when rainfall is heavy. Spring rains are refreshing, and so is the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh:

...O friends! It behooves you to refresh and revive your souls through the gracious favors which in this Divine, this soul stirring Springtime are being showered upon you. The Day Star of God’s great glory has shed its radiance upon you, and the clouds of God’s limitless grace have overshadowed you....

This is from the From the LAWH-I-DUNYA (Tablet of the World), and is found on page 86 in Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh. It is also found on page 94 in Gleanings from Bahá’u’lláh

There are many more cases of rain imagery in both Bahá'u'lláh's writings and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's. Consider the LAWH-I-SIYYID-I-MIHDIY-I-DAHAIJI (Tablet to Siyyid Mihdiy-i-Dahaji):

...Yield thou praise unto God for having graciously chosen thee to be a shower of bounty for that which We have sown in the pure and blessed soil and enabled thee to serve as a springtime of tender mercy for the wondrous and sublime trees We have planted. Indeed so great is this favor that of all created things in the world of existence, none can ever hope to rival it. We have moreover given thee to drink the choice wine of utterance from the chalice of the heavenly bestowals of thy merciful Lord, which is none other than this Tongue of holiness—a Tongue that, as soon as it was unloosed, quickened the entire creation, set in motion all beings and caused the Nightingale to pour forth its melodies. This is the Fountain of living water for all that dwell in the realm of being...

Page 195 in Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh.

These water images are also very common in the Bahá'í writings. They may be especially powerful to people who live in arid lands, as did Bahá'u'lláh for all of His life. Recently a commentator on the BBC's religion program discussed gardens in religion. He explained how the terraces in the Bahá'í gardens in Haifa have a stream of water flowing down the center. The order of the gardens is most pronounced right in the center of the terraces nearest the water. The order diminishes as one moves away toward the edges of the terraces, and then as one moves off the terraces and goes onto the rest of the mountain one is returning to the disorganized and chaotic areas. And so in this way the water in those gardens seems to represent the aspects of Revelation that bring us order and calm. Or so it seemed to this particular commentator.

Here, now, is a passage from Bahá'u'lláh in which trees represent us:

People are like trees. If we are adorned with fruit, we have been and will ever be worthy of praise and commendation. Otherwise fruitless trees are but fit for fire. The fruits of the human tree are exquisite, highly desired and dearly cherished. Among them are upright character, virtuous deeds and a goodly utterance. The springtime for earthly trees occurs once every year, while the one for human trees appears in the Days of God—exalted be God's glory. Were the trees of human lives to be adorned in this divine Springtime with the fruits that have been mentioned, the effulgence of the light of Justice would, of a certainty, illumine all the dwellers of the earth and everyone would abide in tranquillity and contentment beneath the sheltering shadow of the One Who is the Object of all humanity. The Water for these trees is the living water of the sacred Words uttered by the Beloved of the world. In one instant are such trees planted and in the next their branches shall, through the outpourings of the showers of divine mercy, have reached the skies. A dried-up tree, however, has never been nor will be worthy of any mention.

Page 257 in Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh

I found another beautiful water image where Shoghi Effendi quotes Bahá'u'lláh in a short passage on page 107 of *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*.

“One who partakes of the waters of My Revelation will taste all the incorruptible delights ordained by God from the beginning that hath no beginning to the end that hath no end.”

Here, then, are more examples of sermons and tablets in which 'Abdu'l-Bahá or others have used springtime as a representation of a new Revelation from God and specifically the Bahá'í Revelation:

...There is no separation between a thing and its inherent qualities.

It is the inherent nature of things on this earth to change, thus we see around us the change of the seasons. Every spring is followed by a summer and every autumn brings a winter—every day a night and every evening a morning. There is a sequence in all things.

Thus when hatred and animosity, fighting, slaughtering, and great coldness of heart were governing this world, and darkness had overcome the nations, Bahá'u'lláh, like a bright star, rose from the horizon of Persia and shone with the great Light of Guidance, giving heavenly radiance and establishing the new Teaching...

'Abdu'l-Bahá in London, page 27

There are living nations and dead nations. Syria lost its civilization through lethargy of spirit. The English nation is a living one, and when in this spiritual springtime the divine truth come forth with renewed vitality, the English will be like fruitful trees, and the Holy Spirit will enable them to flourish in abundance. Then will they gain not only materially, but in that which is far more important, spiritual progress, which will enable them to render a greater service to the world of humanity.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London, page 79

ABDU’L-BAHA spent the week end of September 23rd to 25th, at the Clifton Guest House at Clifton, Bristol.

On the first afternoon, while driving, he expressed much interest in rural England, marveling at the century-old trees, and the vivid green of the woods and downs, so unlike the arid East. Though it is autumn it seems like spring, he said. The houses with their little plots of ground, suggested a quotation which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá gave from Bahá’u’lláh’s writings in which the latter alludes to each family having a house with a piece of land. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá likened the country to the soul and the city to the body of man, saying, The body without the soul cannot live. It is good, he remarked, to live under the sky, in the sunshine and fresh air.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London, page 81

Men keep their possessions for their own enjoyment and do not share sufficiently with others the bounty received from God. Spring is thus changed into the winter of selfishness and egotism. Jesus Christ said ‘Ye must be born again’ so that divine Life may spring anew within you. Be kind to all around and serve one another; love to be just and true in all your dealings; pray always and so live your life that sorrow cannot touch you. Look upon the people of your own race and those of other races as members of one organism; sons of the same Father; let it be known by your behavior that you are indeed the people of God. Then wars and disputes shall cease and over the world will spread the Most Great Peace.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London, page 83

O Peerless Lord! Be Thou a shelter for this poor child and a kind and forgiving Master unto this erring and unhappy soul. O Lord! Though we are but worthless plants, yet we belong to Thy garden of roses. Though saplings without leaves and blossoms, yet we are a part of Thine orchard. Nurture this plant then through the outpourings of the clouds of Thy tender mercy and quicken and refresh this sapling through the reviving breath of Thy spiritual springtime. Suffer him to become heedful, discerning and noble, and grant that he may attain eternal life and abide in Thy Kingdom for evermore.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Bahá’í Prayers, page 35

...I beseech Thee, O my God, by the rustling of the Divine Lote-Tree and the murmur of the breezes of Thine utterance in the kingdom of Thy names, to remove me far from whatsoever Thy will abhors, and draw me nigh unto the station wherein He Who is the Dayspring of Thy signs hath shone forth. Thou sees me, O my God, holding to Thy Name, the Most Holy, the Most luminous, the Most Mighty, the Most Great, the Most Exalted, the Most Glorious, and clinging to the hem of the robe to which have clung all in this world and in the world to come.

I beseech Thee, O my God, by that Letter which, as soon as it proceeded out of the mouth of Thy will, hath caused the oceans to surge, and the winds to blow, and the fruits to be revealed, and the trees to spring forth, and all past traces to vanish, and all veils to be rent asunder, and them who are devoted to Thee to hasten unto the light of the countenance of their Lord, the Unconstrained, to make known unto me what lay hid in the treasures of Thy knowledge and concealed within the repositories of Thy wisdom. Thou sees me, O my God, holding to Thy Name, the Most Holy, the Most Luminous, the Most Mighty, the Most Great, the Most Exalted, the Most Glorious, and clinging to the hem of the robe to which have clung all in this world and in the world to come....

Bahá’í Prayers, pages 237-238

5 May 1912

Talk at Plymouth Congregational Church
935 East Fiftieth Street
Chicago, Illinois

Notes by Marzieh Moss

The Sun of Reality is one Sun but it has different dawning-places, just as the phenomenal sun is one although it appears at various points of the horizon. During the time of spring the luminary of the physical world rises far to the north of the equinoctial; in summer it dawns midway and in winter it appears in the most southerly point of its zodiacal journey. These day springs or dawning-points differ widely but the sun is ever the same sun whether it be the phenomenal or spiritual luminary. Souls who focus their vision upon the Sun of Reality will be the recipients of light no matter from what point it rises, but those who are fettered by adoration of the dawning-point are deprived when it appears in a different station upon the spiritual horizon.

Furthermore, just as the solar cycle has its four seasons the cycle of the Sun of Reality has its distinct and successive periods. Each brings its vernal season or springtime. When the Sun of Reality returns to quicken the world of mankind a divine bounty descends from the heaven of generosity. The realm of thoughts and ideals is set in motion and blessed with new life. Minds are developed, hopes brighten, aspirations become spiritual, the virtues of the human world appear with freshened power of growth and the image and likeness of God become visible in man. It is the springtime of the inner world. After the spring, summer comes with its fullness and fruitage spiritual; autumn follows with its withering winds which chill the soul; the Sun seems to be going away until at last the mantle of winter overspreads and only faint traces of the effulgence of that divine Sun remain. Just as the surface of the material world becomes dark and dreary, the soil dormant, the trees naked and bare and no beauty or freshness remain to cheer the darkness and desolation, so the winter of the spiritual cycle witnesses the death and disappearance of divine growth and extinction of the light and love of God. But again the cycle begins and a new springtime appears. In it the former springtime has returned, the world is resuscitated, illumined and attains spirituality; religion is renewed and reorganized, hearts are turned to God, the summons of God is heard and life is again bestowed upon man. For a long time the religious world had been weakened and materialism had advanced; the spiritual forces of life were waning, moralities were becoming degraded, composure and peace had vanished from souls and satanic qualities were dominating hearts; strife and hatred overshadowed humanity, bloodshed and violence prevailed. God was neglected; the Sun of Reality seemed to have gone completely; deprivation of the bounties of heaven was a fact; and so the season of winter fell upon mankind. But in the generosity of God a new springtime dawned, the lights of God shone forth, the effulgent Sun of Reality returned and became manifest, the realm of thoughts and kingdom of hearts became exhilarated, a new spirit of life breathed into the body of the world and continuous advancement became apparent.

'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Promulgation of Universal Peace, pages 94-96 also found in Bahá'í World Faith ('Abdu'l-Bahá), pages 255-256 Also pages 11-12 in Foundations of World Unity

SPIRITUAL SPRING

Do ye know in what cycle ye are created and in what age ye exist? This is the age of the Blessed Perfection and this is the time of the Greatest Name! This is the century of the Manifestation, the age of the Sun of the Horizons and the beautiful springtime of His Holiness the Eternal One!

The earth is in motion and growth; the mountains, hills and prairies are green and pleasant; the bounty is overflowing; the mercy universal; the rain is descending from the cloud of mercy; the brilliant Sun is shining; the full moon is ornamenting the horizon of ether; the

great ocean-tide is flooding every little stream; the gifts are successive; the favors consecutive; and the refreshing breeze is blowing, wafting the fragrant perfume of the blossoms. Boundless treasure is in the hand of the King of Kings! Lift the hem of thy garment in order to receive it.

If we are not happy and joyous at this season, for what other season shall we wait and for what other time shall we look?

This is the time for growing; the season for joyous gathering! Take the cup of the Testament in thy hand; leap and dance with ecstasy in the triumphal procession of the Covenant! Lay your confidence in the everlasting bounty, turn to the presence of the generous God; ask assistance from the Kingdom of Abha; seek confirmation from the Supreme World; turn thy vision to the horizon of eternal wealth; and pray for help from the Source of Mercy!

Soon shall ye see the friends attaining their longed-for destination and pitching their tents, while we are but in the first day of our journey.

This period of time is the Promised Age, the assembling of the human race to the Resurrection Day and now is the great Day of Judgment. Soon the whole world, as in springtime, will change its garb. The turning and falling of the autumn leaves is past; the bleakness of the winter time is over. The new year hath appeared and the spiritual springtime is at hand. The black earth is becoming a verdant garden; the deserts and mountains are teeming with red flowers; from the borders of the wilderness the tall grasses are standing like advance guards before the cypress and jessamine trees; while the birds are singing among the rose branches like the angels in the highest heavens, announcing the glad-tidings of the approach of that spiritual spring, and the sweet music of their voices is causing the real essence of all things to move and quiver....

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith , pages 351-352

O thou seeker of Truth! The realm of the Kingdom is a unit. The only difference lies in this: That when the season of spring dawns, a new and wonderful motion and rejuvenation is witnessed in all the existing things; the mountains and meadows are revived; the trees find freshness and delicacy and are clothed with radiant and bright leaves, blossoms and fruits. In a like manner the preceding Manifestations form an inseparable link with the subsequent dispensations; nay, rather they are identical with each other. Since the world is constantly developing itself, the rays become stronger, the outpouring becomes greater and the sun appears in the meridian orbit.

Bahá'í World Faith ('Abdu'l-Bahá), page 380

Though the fact of Return is mentioned in the Divine Books, by this is intended the return of the qualities, characters, perfections, truths and lights (of the past age), which re-appear in every age, and not (the return) of certain persons and souls. For example: If we say this lamp is the return of that of last night, or that the last year's flower hath returned in the garden (this year), in this sense the return of the individual, or identity, or personality is not meant; nay, rather, it is intended that the same qualities and states existing in that lamp or flower, which are now seen in this lamp or flower, have returned. That is, the same perfections and virtues and properties, which existed in the past springtime, have returned during this present springtime. For instance: When one says, these fruits are the same as those of last year; in this sense, he hath reference to the freshness and delicacy of the fruit, which hath returned, although there is no doubt that the identical fruit of last year hath not returned.

From a letter to a Bahá'í in Baku, found on page 643 in Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá This differs slightly from the version found in Bahá'í World Faith ('Abdu'l-Bahá), page 392.

AFTER THIS STORM

O ye beloved of God! When the winds blow severely, rains fall fiercely, the lightning flashes, the thunder roars, the bolt descends and storms of trial become severe, grieve not; for after this storm, verily, the divine spring will arrive, the hills and fields will become

verdant, the expanses of grain will joyfully wave, the earth will become covered with blossoms, the trees will be clothed with green garments and adorned with blossoms and fruits. Thus blessings become manifest in all countries. These favors are results of those storms and hurricanes.

The discerning man rejoices at the day of trials, his breast becomes dilated at the time of severe storms, his eyes become brightened when seeing the showers of rain and gusts of wind, whereby trees are uprooted; because he foresees the result and the end, the leaves, blossoms and fruits; while the ignorant person becomes troubled when he sees a storm, is saddened when it rains severely, is terrified by the thunder and trembles at the surging of the waves which storm the shores.

Bahá'í World Faith ('Abdu'l-Bahá), page 395

THE CAUSE OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

The Cause of Bahá'u'lláh is the same as the Cause of Christ. It is the same Temple and the same Foundation. Both of these are spiritual springtimes and seasons of the soul-refreshing awakening and the cause of the renovation of the life of mankind. The spring of this year is the same as the spring of last year. The origins and ends are the same. The sun of today is the sun of yesterday. In the coming of Christ, the divine teachings were given in accordance with the infancy of the human race. The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh have the same basic principles, but are according to the stage of the maturity of the world and the requirements of this illumined age.

Bahá'í World Faith ('Abdu'l-Bahá), page 401

Through the power of the divine springtime, the downpour of the celestial clouds and the heat of the Sun of Reality, the tree of life is just beginning to grow. Before long, it will produce buds, bring forth leaves and fruits, and cast its shade over the East and the West. This Tree of Life is the Book of the Covenant.

Bahá'í World Faith ('Abdu'l-Bahá), page 429

Whatever hath come to pass is from the confirmations of the Beloved; for otherwise, what merit had we, or what capacity? We are as a helpless babe, but fed at the breast of heavenly grace. We are no more than weak plants, but we flourish in the spring rain of His bestowals.

(from a letter 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote to Bahiyyih Khanum) Bahiyyih Khanum, page 11

Consider the flowers of a garden. Though differing in kind, color, form, and shape, yet, inasmuch as they are refreshed by the waters of one spring, revived by the breath of one wind, invigorated by the rays of one sun, this diversity increaseth their charm, and addeth unto their beauty. How unpleasing to the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruits, the branches and the trees of that garden were all of the same shape and color! Diversity of hues, form and shape, enricheth and adorneth the garden, and heighteneth the effect thereof. In like manner, when divers shades of thought, temperament and character, are brought together under the power and influence of one central agency, the beauty and glory of human perfection will be revealed and made manifest. Naught but the celestial potency of the Word of God, which ruleth and transcendeth the realities of all things, is capable of harmonizing the divergent thoughts, sentiments, ideas, and convictions of the children of men.

Pages 103-104 of Tablets of the Divine Plan

These holy Manifestations have been as the coming of springtime in the world. Although the springtime of this year is designated by another name according to the changing calendar, yet as regards its life and quickening it is the same as the springtime of last year. For each spring is the time of a new creation, the effects, bestowals, perfections and life-giving forces of which are the same as those of the former vernal seasons although the names are many and

various. This is 1912, last year's was 1911 and so on, but in fundamental reality no difference is apparent.

Foundations of World Unity, pages 14-15

SPIRITUAL SPRINGTIME

In the world of existence man has traversed successive degrees until he has attained the human kingdom. In each degree of his progression he has developed capacity for advancement to the next station and condition. While in the kingdom of the mineral he was attaining the capacity for promotion into the degree of the vegetable. In the kingdom of the vegetable he underwent preparation for the world of the animal and from thence he has come onward to the human degree or kingdom. Throughout this journey of progression he has ever and always been potentially man.

In the beginning of his human life man was embryonic in the world of the matrix. There he received capacity and endowment for the reality of human existence. The forces and powers necessary for this world were bestowed upon him in that limited condition. In this world he needed eyes; he received them potentially in the other. He needed ears; he obtained them there in readiness and preparation for his new existence. The powers requisite in this world were conferred upon him in the world of the matrix, so that when he entered this realm of real existence he not only possessed all necessary functions and powers but found provision for his material sustenance awaiting him.

Therefore in this world he must prepare himself for the life beyond. That which he needs in the world of the Kingdom must be obtained here. Just as he prepared himself in the world of the matrix by acquiring forces necessary in this sphere of existence, so likewise the indispensable forces of the divine existence must be potentially attained in this world.

What is he in need of in the Kingdom which transcends the life and limitation of this mortal sphere? That world beyond is a world of sanctity and radiance; therefore it is necessary that in this world he should acquire these divine attributes. In that world there is need of spirituality, faith, assurance, the knowledge and love of God. These he must attain in this world so that after his ascension from the earthly to the heavenly Kingdom he shall find all that is needful in that life eternal ready for him.

That divine world is manifestly a world of lights; therefore man has need of illumination here. That is a world of love; the love of God is essential. It is a world of perfections; virtues or perfections must be acquired. That world is vivified by the breaths of the Holy Spirit; in this world we must seek them. That is the Kingdom of life everlasting; it must be attained during this vanishing existence.

By what means can man acquire these things? How shall he obtain these merciful gifts and powers? First, through the knowledge of God. Second, through the love of God. Third, through faith. Fourth, through philanthropic deeds. Fifth, through self-sacrifice. Sixth, through severance from this world. Seventh, through sanctity and holiness. Unless he acquires these forces and attains to these requirements he will surely be deprived of the life that is eternal. But if he possesses the knowledge of God, becomes ignited through the fire of the love of God, witnesses the great and mighty signs of the Kingdom, becomes the cause of love among mankind, and lives in the utmost state of sanctity and holiness, he shall surely attain to second birth, be baptized by the Holy Spirit and enjoy everlasting existence.

Is it not astonishing that although man has been created for the knowledge and love of God, for the virtues of the human world, for spirituality, heavenly illumination and life eternal, nevertheless he continues ignorant and negligent of all this? Consider how he seeks knowledge of everything except knowledge of God. For instance, his utmost desire is to penetrate the mysteries of the lowest strata of the earth. Day by day he strives to know what can be found ten meters below the surface, what he can discover within the stone, what he can learn by archaeological research in the dust. He puts forth arduous labors to fathom

terrestrial mysteries but is not at all concerned about knowing the mysteries of the Kingdom, traversing the illimitable fields of the eternal world, becoming informed of the divine realities, discovering the secrets of God, attaining the knowledge of God, witnessing the splendors of the Sun of Truth and realizing the glories of everlasting life. He is unmindful and thoughtless of these. How much he is attracted to the mysteries of matter and how completely unaware he is of the mysteries of divinity! Nay, he is utterly negligent and oblivious of the secrets of divinity. How great his ignorance! How conducive to his degradation! It is as if a kind and loving father had provided a library of wonderful books for his son in order that he might be informed of the mysteries of creation; at the same time surrounding him with every means of comfort and enjoyment; but the son amuses himself with pebbles and playthings, neglectful of all his father's gifts and provision. How ignorant and heedless is man! The Father has willed for him glory eternal and he is content with blindness and deprivation. The Father has built for him a royal palace but he is playing with the dust; prepared for him garments of silk but he prefers to remain unclothed; provided for him delicious foods and fruits while he seeks sustenance in the grasses of the field.

Praise be to God! you have heard the call of the Kingdom. Your eyes are opened; you have turned to God. Your purpose is the good-pleasure of God, the understanding of the mysteries of the heart and investigation of the realities. Day and night you must strive that you may attain to the significances of the heavenly kingdom, perceive the signs of divinity, acquire certainty of knowledge and realize that this world has a creator, a vivifier, a provider, an architect,—knowing this through proofs and evidences and not through susceptibilities,—nay, rather, through decisive arguments and real vision; that is to say, visualizing it as clearly as the outer eye beholds the sun. In this way may you behold the presence of God and attain to the knowledge of the holy, divine Manifestations.

Pages 63-65 in Foundations of World Unity

As to thy question regarding the sayings of the leaders of past religions. Every wise and praiseworthy man will no doubt eschew such vain and profitless talk. The incomparable Creator hath created all men from one same substance, and hath exalted their reality above the rest of His creatures. Success or failure, gain or loss, must, therefore, depend upon man's own exertions. The more he strives, the greater will be his progress. We fain would hope that the vernal showers of the bounty of God may cause the flowers of true understanding to spring from the soil of men's hearts, and may wash them from all earthly defilements.

Page 81-82 in Gleanings from Bahá'u'lláh

Naw-Ruz is the first day of the new year. It coincides with the spring equinox in the northern hemisphere, which usually occurs on 21 March. Bahá'u'lláh explains that this feast day is to be celebrated on whatever day the sun passes into the constellation of Aries (i.e. the vernal equinox), even should this occur one minute before sunset (Q and A 35). Hence Naw-Ruz could fall on 20, 21, or 22 March, depending on the time of the equinox.

Kitab-i-Aqdas, page 177.

O the pity! that man should deprive himself of this goodly gift, this imperishable bounty, this everlasting life. It behooveth him to prize this food that comes from heaven, that perchance, through the wondrous favors of the Sun of Truth, the dead may be brought to life, and withered souls be quickened by the infinite Spirit. Make haste, O my brother, that while there is yet time our lips may taste of the immortal draught, for the breeze of life, now blowing from the city of the Well-Beloved, cannot last, and the streaming river of holy utterance must needs be stilled, and the portals of the Ridvan cannot for ever remain open. The day will surely come when the Nightingale of Paradise will have winged its flight away from its earthly abode unto its heavenly nest. Then will its melody be heard no more, and the beauty of the rose cease to shine. Seize the time, therefore, ere the glory of the divine springtime hath spent itself, and the Bird of Eternity ceased to warble its melody, that thy inner hearing may not be deprived of hearkening unto its call.

Kitab-i-Iqan, pages 23-24.

Reflect thou, how, in one hand, He hath, by His mighty grasp, turned the earth of knowledge and understanding, previously unfolded, into a mere handful, and, on the other, spread out a new and highly exalted earth in the hearts of men, thus causing the freshest and loveliest blossoms, and the mightiest and loftiest trees to spring forth from the illumined bosom of man.

Kitab-i-Iqan, page 48.

Furthermore, how numerous are those peoples of divers beliefs, of conflicting creeds, and opposing temperaments, who, through the reviving fragrance of the Divine springtime, breathing from the Ridvan of God, have been arrayed with the new robe of divine Unity, and have drunk from the cup of His singleness!

Kitab-i-Iqan, pages 112-113

Should We wish to impart unto thee a glimmer of the mysteries of Husayn's martyrdom, and reveal unto thee the fruits thereof, these pages could never suffice, nor exhaust their meaning. Our hope is that, God willing, the breeze of mercy may blow, and the divine Springtime clothe the tree of being with the robe of a new life; so that we may discover the mysteries of divine Wisdom, and, through His providence, be made independent of the knowledge of all things. We have, as yet, descried none but a handful of souls, destitute of all renown, who have attained unto this station.

Kitab-i-Iqan, pages 129-130

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 distinguishes 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 unflinching perceive the breath of the Beloved across immeasurable distances, and will, led by its perfume, attain and enter the City of Certitude.

Kitab-i-Iqan, page 197 Also found on page 268 in Gleanings from Bahá'u'lláh

God leaves not His children comfortless, but, when the darkness of winter overshadows them, then again He sends His Messengers, the Prophets, with a renewal of the blessed spring. The Sun of Truth appears again on the horizon of the world shining into the eyes of those who sleep, awaking them to behold the glory of a new dawn. Then again will the tree of humanity blossom and bring forth the fruit of righteousness for the healing of the nations.

Paris Talks, page 32.

Behold a beautiful garden full of flowers, shrubs, and trees. Each flower has a different charm, a peculiar beauty, its own delicious perfume and beautiful color. The trees too, how varied are they in size, in growth, in foliage—and what different fruits they bear! Yet all these flowers, shrubs and trees spring from the self-same earth, the same sun shines upon them and the same clouds give them rain.

So it is with humanity. It is made up of many races, and its peoples are of different color, white, black, yellow, brown and red—but they all come from the same God, and all are servants to Him. This diversity among the children of men has unhappily not the same effect as it has among the vegetable creation, where the spirit shown is more harmonious. Among men exists the diversity of animosity, and it is this that causes war and hatred among the different nations of the world.

Differences which are only those of blood also cause them to destroy and kill one another. Alas! that this should still be so. Let us look rather at the beauty in diversity, the beauty of harmony, and learn a lesson from the vegetable creation. If you beheld a garden in which all the plants were the same as to form, color and perfume, it would not seem beautiful to you at

all, but, rather, monotonous and dull. The garden which is pleasing to the eye and which makes the heart glad, is the garden in which are growing side by side flowers of every hue, form and perfume, and the joyous contrast of color is what makes for charm and beauty. So is it with trees. An orchard full of fruit trees is a delight; so is a plantation planted with many species of shrubs. It is just the diversity and variety that constitutes its charm; each flower, each tree, each fruit, beside being beautiful in itself, brings out by contrast the qualities of the others, and shows to advantage the special loveliness of each and all.

Paris Talks, pages 52-53.

Faded now is all that erstwhile flourished in the Paradise of Thy transcendent oneness, O my God! Where are the rain-giving clouds of Thy mercy? Shorn are the branches of the Tree of Thy unity of the vesture of Thy majesty and wisdom; where is the spring-time of Thy gifts and bounties? Motionless lies the Ark of Thy Cause on the sea of Thy creation; where are the winds of Thy grace and favors?

This lamentation begins the 70th meditation in Prayers and Meditations (found on page 115)

Magnified, O Lord my God, be Thy Name, whereby the trees of the garden of Thy Revelation have been clad with verdure, and been made to yield the fruits of holiness during this Springtime when the sweet savors of Thy favors and blessings have been wafted over all things, and caused them to bring forth whatsoever had been preordained for them in the Kingdom of Thine irrevocable decree and the Heaven of Thine immutable purpose. I beseech Thee by this very Name not to suffer me to be far from the court of Thy holiness, nor debarred from the exalted sanctuary of Thy unity and oneness.

The 94th meditation in Prayers and Meditations (found on pages 160-161)

Glory to Thee, O my God! The first stirrings of the spring of Thy grace have appeared and clothed Thine earth with verdure. The clouds of the heaven of Thy bounty have rained their rain on this City within whose walls is imprisoned Him Whose desire is the salvation of Thy creatures. Through it the soil of this City hath been decked forth, and its trees clothed with foliage, and its inhabitants gladdened.

The hearts of Thy dear ones, however, will rejoice only at the Divine Springtime of Thy tender mercies, whereby the hearts are quickened, and the souls are renewed, and the trees of human existence bear their fruits.

The plants that have sprung forth, O my Lord, in the hearts of Thy loved ones have withered away. Send down upon them, from the clouds of Thy spirit, that which will cause the tender herbs of Thy knowledge and wisdom to grow within their breasts. Rejoice, then, their hearts with the proclamation of Thy Cause and the exaltation of Thy sovereignty.

Their eyes, O my Lord, are expectantly turned in the direction of Thy bounty, and their faces are set towards the horizon of Thy grace. Suffer them not, through Thy bounty, to be deprived of Thy grace. Potent art Thou, by Thy sovereign might, over all things. No God is there but Thee, the Almighty, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

The 117th meditation in Prayers and Meditations (found on pages 199-200)

Glorified art Thou, O God of all names and Creator of the heavens! I render Thee thanks that Thou has made known unto Thy servants this Day whereon the river that is life indeed hath flowed forth from the fingers of Thy bounty, and the springtime of Thy revelation and Thy presence hath appeared through Thy manifestation unto all who are in Thy heaven and all who are on Thy earth.

This is the Day, O my Lord, whose brightness Thou has exalted above the brightness of the sun and the splendors thereof. I testify that the light it sheds proceeds out of the glory of the light of Thy countenance, and is begotten by the radiance of the morn of Thy Revelation. This is the Day whereon the hopeless have been clothed with the raiment of confidence, and the sick attired with the robe of healing, and the poor drawn nigh unto the ocean of Thy riches.

From the 176th prayer in Prayers and Meditations (found on pages 272-273)

I beseech Thee, O my God, by that Letter which, as soon as it proceeded out of the mouth of Thy will, hath caused the oceans to surge, and the winds to blow, and the fruits to be revealed, and the trees to spring forth, and all past traces to vanish, and all veils to be rent asunder, and them who are devoted to Thee to hasten unto the light of the countenance of their Lord, the Unconstrained, to make known unto me what lay hid in the treasures of Thy knowledge and concealed within the repositories of Thy wisdom. Thou sees me, O my God, holding to Thy Name, the Most Holy, the Most Luminous, the Most Mighty, the Most Great, the Most Exalted, the Most Glorious, and clinging to the hem of the robe to which have clung all in this world and in the world to come.

From the 177th prayer in Prayers and Meditations (found on pages 291-292)

The doors of the Kingdom are opened. The lights of the Sun of Truth are shining. The clouds of divine mercy are raining down their priceless jewels. The zephyrs of a new and divine springtime are wafting their fragrant breaths from the invisible world. Know ye then the value of these days.

Awake ye to the realization of this heavenly opportunity. Strive with all the power of your souls, your deeds, actions and words to assist the spread of these glad tidings and the descent of this merciful bounty. You are the reality and expression of your deeds and actions. If you abide by the precepts and teachings of the Blessed Perfection, the heavenly world and ancient Kingdom will be yours—eternal happiness, love and everlasting life. The divine bounties are flowing. Each one of you has been given the opportunity of becoming a tree yielding abundant fruits. This is the springtime of Bahá'u'lláh. The verdure and foliage of spiritual growth are appearing in great abundance in the gardens of human hearts. Know ye the value of these passing days and vanishing nights. Strive to attain a station of absolute love one toward another. By the absence of love, enmity increases. By the exercise of love, love strengthens and enmities dwindle away.

'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 9.

13 April 1912

Talk at Home of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Morten
141 East Twenty-first Street, New York

Notes by Esther Foster

...The spiritual world is like unto the phenomenal world. They are the exact counterpart of each other. Whatever objects appear in this world of existence are the outer pictures of the world of heaven. When we look upon the phenomenal world, we perceive that it is divided into four seasons; one is the season of spring, another the season of summer, another autumn and then these three seasons are followed by winter. When the season of spring appears in the arena of existence, the whole world is rejuvenated and finds new life. The soul-refreshing breeze is wafted from every direction; the soul-quickening bounty is everywhere; the cloud of mercy showers down its rain, and the sun shines upon everything. Day by day we perceive that the signs of vegetation are all about us. Wonderful flowers, hyacinths and roses perfume the nostrils. The trees are full of leaves and blossoms, and the blossoms are followed by fruit. The spring and summer are followed by autumn and winter. The flowers wither and are no more; the leaves turn gray and life has gone. Then comes another springtime; the former springtime is renewed; again a new life stirs within everything.

The appearances of the Manifestations of God are the divine springtime. When Christ appeared in this world, it was like the vernal bounty; the outpouring descended; the effulgences of the Merciful encircled all things; the human world found new life. Even the physical world partook of it. The divine perfections were upraised; souls were trained in the school of heaven so that all grades of human existence received life and light. Then by degrees these fragrances of heaven were discontinued; the season of winter came upon the world; the beauties of spring vanished; the excellences and perfections passed away; the lights and quickening were no longer evident; the phenomenal world and its materialities conquered everything; the spiritualities of life were lost; the world of existence became life

unto a lifeless body; there was no trace of the spring left.

Bahá'u'lláh has come into this world. He has renewed that springtime. The same fragrances are wafting; the same heat of the Sun is giving life; the same cloud is pouring its rain, and with our own eyes we see that the world of existence is advancing and progressing. The human world has found new life.

I hope that each and all of you may become like unto verdant and green trees so that through the breezes of the divine spring, the outpouring of heaven, the heat of the Sun of Truth, you may become eternally refreshed; that you may bear blossoms and become fruitful; that you may not be as fruitless trees. Fruitless trees do not bring forth fruits or flowers. I hope that all of you may become friends of the paradise of Abha, appearing with the utmost freshness and spiritual beauty. I pray in your behalf and beg of God confirmation and assistance.

'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Promulgation of Universal Peace, pages 10-11

14 April 1912

Talk at Union Meeting of Advanced Thought Centers
Carnegie Lyceum
West Fifty-seventh Street, New York

Notes by Mountfort Mills and Howard MacNutt

In the Orient there were great differences among races and peoples. They hated each other and there was no association among them. Various and divergent sects were hostile, irreconcilable. The different races were in constant war and conflict. About sixty years ago Bahá'u'lláh appeared upon the eastern horizon. He caused love and unity to become manifest among these antagonistic peoples. He united them with the bond of love; their former hatred and animosity passed away; love and unity reigned instead. It was a dark world; it became radiant. A new springtime appeared through him, for the Sun of Truth had risen again. In the fields and meadows of human hearts variegated flowers of inner significance were blooming and the good fruits of the kingdom of God became manifest.

'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Promulgation of Universal Peace, pages 15-16 Bahá'í World Faith ('Abdu'l-Bahá), page 219

17 April 1912

Talk at Home of Mr. and Mrs. Edward B. Kinney
780 West End Avenue, New York

Notes by John G. Grundy

The bounties of the Blessed Perfection are infinite. We must endeavor to increase our capacity daily, to strengthen and enlarge our capabilities for receiving them, to become as perfect mirrors. The more polished and clean the mirror, the more effulgent is its reflection of the lights of the Sun of Truth. Be like a well-cultivated garden wherein the roses and variegated flowers of heaven are growing in fragrance and beauty. It is my hope that your hearts may become as ready ground, carefully tilled and prepared, upon which the divine showers of the bounties of the Blessed Perfection may descend and the zephyrs of this divine springtime may blow with quickening breath. Then will the garden of your hearts bring forth its flowers of delightful fragrance to refresh the nostril of the heavenly Gardener. Let your hearts reflect the glories of the Sun of Truth in their many colors to gladden the eye of the divine Cultivator Who has nourished them. Day by day become more closely attracted in order that the love of God may illumine all those with whom you come in contact. Be as one spirit, one soul, leaves of one tree, flowers of one garden, waves of one ocean.

As difference in degree of capacity exists among human souls, as difference in capability is found, therefore, individualities will differ one from another. But in reality this is a reason for unity and not for discord and enmity. If the flowers of a garden were all of one color, the effect would be monotonous to the eye; but if the colors are variegated, it is most pleasing and wonderful. The difference in adornment of color and capacity of reflection among the flowers gives the garden its beauty and charm. Therefore, although we are of different

individualities, different in ideas and of various fragrances, let us strive like flowers of the same divine garden to live together in harmony. Even though each soul has its own individual perfume and color, all are reflecting the same light, all contributing fragrance to the same breeze which blows through the garden, all continuing to grow in complete harmony and accord. Become as waves of one sea, trees of one forest, growing in the utmost love, agreement and unity.

'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 2421 April 1912

Talk at Studio Hall

1219 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D.C.

Notes by Joseph H. Hannen

Therefore, thank ye God that ye have come into the plane of existence in this radiant century wherein the bestowals of God are appearing from all directions, when the doors of the Kingdom have been opened unto you, the call of God is being raised, and the virtues of the human world are in the process of unfoldment. The day has come when all darkness is to be dispelled, and the Sun of Truth shall shine forth radiantly. This time of the world may be likened to the equinoctial in the annual cycle. For, verily, this is the spring season of God. In the Holy Books a promise is given that the springtime of God shall make itself manifest; Jerusalem, the Holy City, shall descend from heaven; Zion shall leap forth and dance; and the Holy Land shall be submerged in the ocean of divine effulgence.

At the time of the vernal equinox in the material world a wonderful vibrant energy and new life-quickenning is observed everywhere in the vegetable kingdom; the animal and human kingdoms are resuscitated and move forward with a new impulse. The whole world is born anew, resurrected. Gentle zephyrs are set in motion, wafting and fragrant; flowers bloom; the trees are in blossom, the air temperate and delightful; how pleasant and beautiful become the mountains, fields and meadows. Likewise, the spiritual bounty and springtime of God quicken the world of humanity with a new animus and vivification. All the virtues which have been deposited and potential in human hearts are being revealed from that Reality as flowers and blossoms from divine gardens. It is a day of joy, a time of happiness, a period of spiritual growth. I beg of God that this divine spiritual civilization may have the fullest impression and effect upon you. May you become as growing plants. May the trees of your hearts bring forth new leaves and variegated blossoms. May ideal fruits appear from them in order that the world of humanity, which has grown and developed in material civilization, may be quickened in the bringing forth of spiritual ideals. Just as human intellects have revealed the secrets of matter and have brought forth from the realm of the invisible the mysteries of nature, may minds and spirits, likewise, come into the knowledge of the verities of God, and the realities of the Kingdom be made manifest in human hearts. Then the world will be the paradise of Abha, the standard of the Most Great Peace will be borne aloft, and the oneness of the world of humanity in all its beauty, glory and significance will become apparent. And now in your presence I wish to pray in your behalf. Let your hearts be attentive and directed to the Kingdom of Abha.

'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Promulgation of Universal Peace, pages 38-39

24 April 1912

Talk at Home of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Parsons

1700 Eighteenth Street, NW, Washington, D.C.

Notes by Joseph H. Hannen

Every spring has an autumn, and every autumn has its spring. The coming of a Manifestation of God is the season of spiritual spring. For instance, the appearance of Christ was a divine springtime. Therefore, it caused a great commotion and vibrant movement in the world of humanity. The Sun of Reality dawned, the cloud of mercy poured down its rain, the breezes of providence moved, the world became a new world, mankind reflected an extraordinary radiance, souls were educated, minds were developed, intelligences became acute, and the

human world attained a new freshness of life, like unto the advent of spring.

'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Promulgation of Universal Peace, pages 54-55

19 May 1912

Talk at Church of the Divine Paternity
Central Park West, New York

Notes by Esther Foster

The divine religions are like the progression of the seasons of the year. When the earth becomes dead and desolate and because of frost and cold no trace of vanished spring remains, the springtime dawns again and clothes everything with a new garment of life. The meadows become fresh and green, the trees are adorned with verdure and fruits appear upon them. Then the winter comes again, and all the traces of spring disappear. This is the continuous cycle of the seasons—spring, winter, then the return of spring. But though the calendar changes and the years move forward, each springtime that comes is the return of the springtime that has gone; this spring is the renewal of the former spring. Springtime is springtime, no matter when or how often it comes. The divine Prophets are as the coming of spring, each renewing and quickening the teachings of the Prophet Who came before Him. Just as all seasons of spring are essentially one as to newness of life, vernal showers and beauty, so the essence of the mission and accomplishment of all the Prophets is one and the same. Now the people of religion have lost sight of the essential reality of the spiritual springtime. They have held tenaciously to ancestral forms and imitations, and because of this there is variance, strife and altercation among them.

'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Promulgation of Universal Peace, pages 126-127

28 May 1912

Talk at Reception at Metropolitan Temple
Seventh Avenue and Fourteenth Street, New York

Notes by Esther Foster

...These holy Manifestations have been as the coming of springtime in the world. Although the springtime of this year is designated by another name according to the changing calendar, yet as regards its life and quickening it is the same as the springtime of last year. For each spring is the time of a new creation, the effects, bestowals, perfections and life-giving forces of which are the same as those of the former vernal seasons, although the names are many and various. This is 1912, last year was 1911 and so on, but in fundamental reality no difference is apparent. The sun is one, but the dawning points of the sun are numerous and changing. The ocean is one body of water, but different parts of it have particular designations—Atlantic, Pacific, Mediterranean, Antarctic, etc. If we consider the names, there is differentiation; but the water, the ocean itself, is one reality.

Likewise, the divine religions of the holy Manifestations of God are in reality one, though in name and nomenclature they differ. Man must be a lover of the light, no matter from what dayspring it may appear. He must be a lover of the rose, no matter in what soil it may be growing. He must be a seeker of the truth, no matter from what source it come. Attachment to the lantern is not loving the light. Attachment to the earth is not befitting, but enjoyment of the rose that develops from the soil is worthy. Devotion to the tree is profitless, but partaking of the fruit is beneficial. Luscious fruits, no matter upon what tree they grow or where they may be found, must be enjoyed. The word of truth, no matter which tongue utters it, must be sanctioned. Absolute verities, no matter in what book they be recorded, must be accepted. If we harbor prejudice, it will be the cause of deprivation and ignorance. The strife between religions, nations and races arises from misunderstanding. If we investigate the religions to discover the principles underlying their foundations, we will find they agree; for the fundamental reality of them is one and not multiple....

...Praise be to God! the springtime of God is at hand. This century is verily the spring season. The world of mind and the kingdom of soul have become fresh and verdant by its

bestowals. It has resuscitated the whole realm of existence. On one hand the lights of reality are shining; on the other the clouds of divine mercy are pouring down the fullness of heavenly bounty. Wonderful material progress is evident and great spiritual discoveries are being made.

'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 151-153 The final quoted paragraphs is also found in Foundations of World Unity, page 16

2 June 1912

Talk at Church of the Ascension
Fifth Avenue and Tenth Street, New York

Notes by Esther Foster

...He established harmony and agreement among the various peoples of religious beliefs, denominations, sects and cults by freeing them from the fetters of past imitations and superstitions, leading them to the very foundation of the divine religions. From this foundation shines forth the radiance of spirituality, which is unity, the love of God, the knowledge of God, praiseworthy morals and the virtues of the human world. Bahá'u'lláh renewed these principles, just as the coming of spring refreshes the earth and confers new life upon all phenomenal beings. For the freshness of the former springtimes had waned, the vivification had ceased, the life-giving breezes were no longer wafting their fragrances, winter and the season of darkness had come. Bahá'u'lláh came to renew the life of the world with this new and divine springtime, which has pitched its tent in the countries of the Orient in the utmost power and glory. It has refreshed the world of the Orient, and there is no doubt that if the world of the Occident should abandon dogmas of the past, turn away from empty imitations and superstitions, investigate the reality of the divine religions, holding fast to the example of Jesus Christ, acting in accordance with the teachings of God and becoming unified with the Orient, an eternal happiness and felicity would be attained....

'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 165

TALKS ABDU'L-BAHA DELIVERED IN MONTCLAIR AND WEST ENGLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY

23 June 1912

Talk at Montclair, New Jersey
Notes by Frank E. Osborne

...This is the springtime of manifestation. The vernal shower has descended from the cloud of divine mercy; the life-giving breeze of the Holy Spirit is wafting the perfume of blossoms. From field and meadow rises a fragrant breath of thanksgiving like pure incense ascending to the throne of God. The world has become a new world; souls are quickened, spirits renewed, refreshed. Truly it is a time for happiness....

'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 210

6 July 1912

Talk at 309 West Seventy-eighth Street, New York

Notes by Emma C. Melick

The spiritual springtime has come. Infinite bounties and graces have appeared. What bestowal is greater than this? We must appreciate the divine generosity and act in accordance with the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh so that all good may be stored up for us and in both worlds we shall become precious and acceptable to God, attain to everlasting blessings, taste the delicacy of the love of God, find the sweetness of the knowledge of God, perceive the heavenly bestowal and witness the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is my advice, and this is my admonition.

'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 228

6 August 1912

2

Talk at Home of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Parsons
Dublin, New Hampshire

Notes by Howard MacNutt

Today we are enjoying temperate weather. As there are many strangers present, we will answer questions.

Question: Are not all Christians Bahá'is? Is there any difference?

Answer: When Christians act according to the teachings of Christ, they are called Bahá'is. For the foundations of Christianity and the religion of Bahá'u'lláh are one. The foundations of all the divine Prophets and Holy Books are one. The difference among them is one of terminology only. Each springtime is identical with the former springtime. The distinction between them is only one of the calendar—1911, 1912 and so on. The difference between a Christian and a Bahá'i, therefore, is this: There was a former springtime, and there is a springtime now. No other difference exists because the foundations are the same. Whoever acts completely in accordance with the teachings of Christ is a Bahá'i. The purpose is the essential meaning of Christian, not the mere word. The purpose is the sun itself and not the dawning points. For though the sun is one sun, its dawning points are many. We must not adore the dawning points but worship the sun. We must adore the reality of religion and not blindly cling to the appellation Christianity. The Sun of Reality must be worshiped and followed. We must seek the fragrance of the rose from whatever bush it is blooming—whether oriental or western....

'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Promulgation of Universal Peace, pages 247-248

17 August 1912

5

Talk at Green Acre
Eliot, Maine

Notes by Edna McKinney

When the phenomenal sun appears from the vernal point of dawning in the zodiac, a wondrous and vibrant commotion is set up in the body of the earthly world. The withered trees are quickened with animation, the black soil becomes verdant with new growth, fresh and fragrant flowers bloom, the world of dust is refreshed, renewed life forces surge through the veins of every animate being, and a new springtime carpets the meadows, plains, mountains and valleys with wondrous forms of life. That which was dead and desolate is revived and resuscitated; that which was withered, faded and stricken is transformed by the spirit of a new creation. In the same way the Sun of Reality, when it illumines the horizon of the inner world, animates, vivifies and quickens with a divine and wonderful power. The trees of human minds clothe themselves in new and verdant robes, putting on leaves and blossoms and bearing spiritual fruits of the heavenly glad tidings. Then fragrant flowers of inner significances appear from the soil of human souls, and the whole being of man awakens to a new and divine activity. This is the growth and development of the inner world through the effulgent light of divine guidance and the heat of the fire of the love of God.

'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 271

25 August 1912

Talk at the New Thought Forum
Metaphysical Club
Boston, Massachusetts

Notes by Edna McKinney

There are certain means for its accomplishment by which mankind is regenerated and quickened with a new birth. This is the second birth mentioned in the heavenly Books. Its accomplishment is through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The resuscitation or rebirth of the spirit of man is through the science of the love of God. It is through the efficacy of the water

of life. This life and quickening is the regeneration of the phenomenal world. After the coming of the spiritual springtime, the falling of the vernal showers, the shining of the Sun of Reality, the blowing of the breezes of perfection, all phenomena become imbued with the life of a new creation and are reformed in the process of a new genesis. Reflect upon the material springtime. When winter comes, the trees are leafless, the fields and meadows withered, the flowers die away into dustheaps; in prairie, mountain and garden no freshness lingers, no beauty is visible, no verdure can be seen. Everything is clad in the robe of death. Wherever you look around, you will find the expression of death and decay. But when the spring comes, the showers descend, the sun floods the meadows and plains with light; you will observe creation clad in a new robe of expression. The showers have made the meadows green and verdant. The warm breezes have caused the trees to put on their garments of leaves. They have blossomed and soon will produce new, fresh and delightful fruits. Everything appears endowed with a newness of life; a new animus and spirit is everywhere visible. The spring has resuscitated all phenomena and has adorned the earth with beauty as it wills.

Even so is the spiritual springtime when it comes. When the holy, divine Manifestations or Prophets appear in the world, a cycle of radiance, an age of mercy dawns. Everything is renewed. Minds, hearts and all human forces are reformed, perfections are quickened, sciences, discoveries and investigations are stimulated afresh, and everything appertaining to the virtues of the human world is revitalized. Consider this present century of radiance, and compare it with the past centuries. What a vast difference exists between them! How minds have developed! How perceptions have deepened! How discoveries have increased! What great projects have been accomplished! How many realities have become manifest! How many mysteries of creation have been probed and penetrated! What is the cause of this? It is through the efficacy of the spiritual springtime in which we are living....

... Therefore, we must strive with life and heart that the material and physical world may be reformed, human perception become keener, the merciful effulgence manifest and the radiance of reality shine. Then the star of love shall appear and the world of humanity become illumined. The purpose is that the world of existence is dependent for its progress upon reformation; otherwise, it will be as dead. Consider: If a new springtime failed to appear, what would be the effect upon this globe, the earth? Undoubtedly it would become desolate and life extinct. The earth has need of an annual coming of spring. It is necessary that a new bounty should be forthcoming. If it comes not, life would be effaced. In the same way the world of spirit needs new life, the world of mind necessitates new animus and development, the world of souls a new bounty, the world of morality a reformation, the world of divine effulgence ever new bestowals. Were it not for this replenishment, the life of the world would become effaced and extinguished. If this room is not ventilated and the air freshened, respiration will cease after a length of time. If no rain falls, all life organisms will perish. If new light does not come, the darkness of death will envelop the earth. If a new springtime does not arrive, life upon this globe will be obliterated....

'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Promulgation of Universal Peace, pages 277-279

26 October 1912

Talk at Assembly Hall, Hotel Sacramento
Sacramento, California

Notes by Bijou Straun

This has been the case also with the religious teachings so long set forth in the temples and churches, because they were not based upon the fundamental principles of the religions of God. In other words, the foundation of the divine religions had become obscured and nonessentials of form and ceremony were adhered to—that is, the kernel of religion had apparently disappeared, and only the shell remained. Consequently, it was necessary that the fundamental basis of all religious teaching should be restored, that the Sun of Reality which had set should rise again, that the springtime which had refreshed the arena of life in ages

gone by should appear anew, that the rain which had ceased should descend, that the breezes which had become stilled should blow once more.

'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 379.

Nu'man said, Let me inhale these sweet aromas of the Spirit.

So it was that Hanzala drew out the white hand of guidance from the bosom of the love of God, and illumined the sight and the insight of the beholders with the Gospel light. After he had in bell-like accents recited some of the divine verses out of the Evangel, Nu'man and all his ministers sickened of their idols and their idol-worship and were confirmed in the Faith of God. And they said, Alas, a thousand times alas, that up to now we were careless of this infinite mercy and veiled away therefrom, and were bereft of this rain from the clouds of the grace of God. Then straightway the king tore down the two monuments called the Smearred-With-Blood, and he repented of his tyranny and established justice in the land.

From Secret of Divine Civilization, page 51.

When the unworthy acts and thoughts and the discreditable purposes of the leaders had stilled the sweet savors of the Spirit of God (Jesus) and they ceased to stream across the world, and the darkness of ignorance and bigotry and of actions that were displeasing to God, encompassed the earth, then the dawn of hope shone out and the Divine spring drew on; a cloud of mercy overspread the world, and out of the regions of grace the fecund winds began to blow. In the sign of Muhammad, the Sun of Truth rose over Yathrib (Medina) and the Hijaz and cast across the universe the lights of eternal glory. Then the earth of human potentialities was transformed, and the words 'The earth shall shine with the light of her Lord,' were fulfilled. The old world turned new again, and its dead body rose into abundant life. Then tyranny and ignorance were overthrown, and towering palaces of knowledge and justice were reared in their place. A sea of enlightenment thundered, and science cast down its rays.

From Secret of Divine Civilization. Page 87

O People of Persia! Open your eyes! Pay heed! Release yourselves from this blind following of the bigots, this senseless imitation which is the principal reason why men fall away into paths of ignorance and degradation. See the true state of things. Rise up; seize hold of such means as will bring you life and happiness and greatness and glory among all the nations of the world.

The winds of the true springtide are passing over you; adorn yourselves with blossoms like trees in the scented garden. Spring clouds are streaming; then turn you fresh and verdant like the sweet eternal fields. The dawn star is shining, set your feet on the true path. The sea of might is swelling, hasten to the shores of high resolve and fortune. The pure water of life is welling up, why wear away your days in a desert of thirst? Aim high, choose noble ends; how long this lethargy, how long this negligence! Despair, both here and hereafter, is all you will gain from self-indulgence; abomination and misery are all you will harvest from fanaticism, from believing the foolish and the mindless. The confirmations of God are supporting you, the succor of God is at hand: why do you not cry out and exult with all your heart, and strive with all your soul!

From Secret of Divine Civilization. Pages 104-105

When, through the Divine bestowals, three things appear on earth, this world of dust will come alive, and stand forth wondrously adorned and full of grace. These are first, the fruitful winds of spring; second, the welling plenty of spring clouds; and third, the heat of the bright sun. When, out of the endless bounty of God, these three have been vouchsafed, then slowly, by His leave, dry trees and branches turn fresh and green again, and array themselves with many kinds of blossoms and fruits. It is the same when the pure intentions and the justice of the ruler, the wisdom and consummate skill and statecraft of the governing authorities, and the determination and unstinted efforts of the people, are all combined; then day by day the

effects of the advancement, of the far-reaching reforms, of the pride and prosperity of government and people alike, will become clearly manifest.

From Secret of Divine Civilization. Page 108

Happy the soul that shall forget his own good, and like the chosen ones of God, vie with his fellows in service to the good of all; until, strengthened by the blessings and perpetual confirmations of God, he shall be empowered to raise this mighty nation up to its ancient pinnacles of glory, and restore this withered land to sweet new life, and as a spiritual springtime, array those trees which are the lives of men with the fresh leaves, the blossoms and fruits of consecrated joy.

From Secret of Divine Civilization. Page 116

...O ye loved ones of God, ye helpers of this evanescent Servant! When the Sun of Reality shed its endless bounties from the Dawning-Point of all desires, and this world of being was lit with that sacred light from pole to pole, with such intensity did it cast down its rays that it blotted out the Stygian dark forever, whereupon this earth of dust became the envy of the spheres of heaven, and this lowly place took on the state and panoply of the supernal realm. The gentle breeze of holiness blew over it, scattering abroad sweet savors; the spring winds of heaven passed by it, and over it, from the Source of all bestowals, were wafted fruitful airs that carried boundless grace. Then the bright dawn rose, and there came tidings of great joy. The divine springtime was here, pitching its tents in this contingent world, so that all creation leapt and danced. The withered earth brought forth immortal blooms, the dead dust woke to everlasting life. Then came forth flowers of mystic learning, and, bespeaking the knowledge of God, fresh greenery from the ground. The contingent world displayed God's bounteous gifts, the visible world reflecting the glories of realms that were hidden from sight. God's summons was proclaimed, the table of the Eternal Covenant was readied, the cup of the Testament was passed from hand to hand, the universal invitation was sent forth. Then some among the people were set afire with the wine of heaven, and some were left without a share of this greatest of bestowals. ...

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 7-8.

O ye beloved of Abdu'l-Bahá and ye handmaids of the Merciful! It is early morning, and the reviving winds of the Abha Paradise are blowing over all creation, but they can stir only the pure of heart, and only the pure sense can detect their fragrance. Only the perceiving eye beholds the rays of the sun; only the listening ear can hear the singing of the Concourse on high. Although the plentiful rains of spring, the bestowals of Heaven, pour down upon all things, they can only fructify good soil; they love not brackish ground, where no results of all the bounty can be shown.

Today the soft and holy breathings of the Abha Realm are passing over every land, but only the pure in heart draw nigh and derive a benefit therefrom. It is the hope of this wronged soul that from the grace of the Self-Subsistent One and by the manifest power of the Word of God, the heads of the unmindful may be cleared, that they may perceive these sweet savors which blow from secret rosebeds of the spirit. ...

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, page 22.

In cycles gone by, each one of the Manifestations of God hath had His own rank in the world of existence, and each hath represented a stage in the development of humanity. But the Manifestation of the Most Great Name—may my life be a sacrifice for His loved ones—was an expression of the coming of age, the maturing of man's inmost reality in this world of being. For the sun is the source and well-spring of light and heat, the focal point of splendors, and it comprises all the perfections that are made manifest by the other stars, which have dawned upon the world. Make thou an effort that thou may take thy place under the sun and receive an abundant share of its dazzling light. In truth do I tell thee, once thou has attained this station, thou shall behold the saints bowing down their heads in all humility before Him. Haste thou to life before death comes; haste thou to the spring season before autumn draws in; and before illness strikes, haste thou to healing—that thou may become a

physician of the spirit who, with the breaths of the Holy Spirit, heals all manner of sickness in this famed and glorious age.

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 56-57.

O thou seeker after truth! The world of the Kingdom is one world. The only difference is that spring returns over and over again, and sets up a great new commotion throughout all created things. Then plain and hillside come alive, and trees turn delicately green, and leaves, blossoms and fruits come forth in beauty, infinite and tender. Wherefore the dispensations of past ages are intimately connected with those that follow them: indeed, they are one and the same, but as the world grows, so doth the light, so doth the downpour of heavenly grace, and then the Day-Star shines out in noonday splendor.

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, page 58.

O ye blessed souls! [The Bahá'is of Najaf-Abad] The letter ye had written to Rahmatu'llah hath been perused. Many and various were the joyful tidings it conveyed, namely, that through the power of faith and constancy in the Covenant, numerous gatherings have been convened, and the loved ones are everywhere astir and active.

'Abdu'l-Bahá's ardent desire hath ever been that the soil of that hallowed spot, which in the earliest days of the Cause hath been refreshed and made verdant with the spring showers of grace, may so bloom and blossom as to fill every heart with joy.

Praised be the Lord, the Cause of God hath been proclaimed and promoted throughout the East and the West in such wise that no mind had ever conceived that the sweet savors of the Lord would so rapidly perfume all regions....

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 97-98.

...O ye friends of God! Because, in this most momentous of ages, the Sun of Truth hath risen at the highest point of the spring equinox, and cast its rays on every clime, it shall kindle such tremulous excitement, it shall release such vibrations in the world of being, it shall stimulate such growth and development, it shall stream out with such a glory of light, and clouds of grace shall pour down such plentiful waters, and fields and plains shall teem with such a galaxy of sweet-smelling plants and blooms, that this lowly earth will become the Abha Kingdom, and this nether world the world above. Then will this fleck of dust be as the vast circle of the skies, this human place the palace-court of God, this spot of clay the dayspring of the endless favors of the Lord of Lords....

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 128-129.

...It is incumbent upon the Spiritual Assemblies to provide the mothers with a well-planned program for the education of children, showing how, from infancy, the child must be watched over and taught. These instructions must be given to every mother to serve her as a guide, so that each will train and nurture her children in accordance with the Teachings.

Thus will these young plants in the garden of God's love grow and flourish under the warmth of the Sun of Truth, the gentle spring winds of Heaven, and their mother's guiding hand. Thus, in the Abha Paradise, will each become a tree, bearing his clustered fruit, and each one, in this new and wondrous season, out of the bounties of the spring, will become possessed of all beauty and grace.

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 138-139.

Convey thou unto the handmaids of the Merciful the message that when a test turns violent they must stand unmoved, and faithful to their love for Bahá. In winter come the storms, and the great winds blow, but then will follow spring in all its beauty, adorning hill and plain with perfumed plants and red anemones, fair to see. Then will the birds trill out upon the branches their songs of joy, and sermonize in lilting tones from the pulpits of the trees. Erelong shall ye bear witness that the lights are streaming forth, the banners of the realm above are waving, the sweet scents of the All-Merciful are wafted abroad, the hosts of the Kingdom are marching down, the angels of heaven are rushing forward, and the Holy Spirit is breathing upon all those regions. On that day thou shall behold the waverers, men and

women alike, frustrated of their hopes and in manifest loss. This is decreed by the Lord, the Revealer of Verses.

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 163-164.

It may be said, for instance, that this lamplight is last night's come back again, or that last year's rose hath returned to the garden this year. Here the reference is not to the individual reality, the fixed identity, the specialized being of that other rose, rather doth it mean that the qualities, the distinctive characteristics of that other light, that other flower, are present now, in these. Those perfections, that is, those graces and gifts of a former springtime are back again this year. We say, for example, that this fruit is the same as last year's; but we are thinking only of the delicacy, bloom and freshness, and the sweet taste of it; for it is obvious that that impregnable center of reality, that specific identity, can never return.

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, page 184.

These few brief days shall pass away, this present life shall vanish from our sight; the roses of this world shall be fresh and fair no more, the garden of this earth's triumphs and delights shall droop and fade. The spring season of life shall turn into the autumn of death, the bright joy of palace halls give way to moonless dark within the tomb. And therefore is none of this worth loving at all, and to this the wise will not anchor his heart.

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 220-221.

Affliction beat upon this captive like the heavy rains of spring, and the victories of the malevolent swept down in a relentless flood, and still 'Abdu'l-Bahá remained happy and serene, and relied on the grace of the All-Merciful. That pain, that anguish, was a paradise of all delights; those chains were the necklace of a king on a throne in heaven. Content with God's will, utterly resigned, my heart surrendered to whatever fate had in store, I was happy. For a boon companion, I had great joy.

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, page 226.

Now the new age is here and creation is reborn. Humanity hath taken on new life. The autumn hath gone by, and the reviving spring is here. All things are now made new. Arts and industries have been reborn, there are new discoveries in science, and there are new inventions; even the details of human affairs, such as dress and personal effects—even weapons—all these have likewise been renewed. The laws and procedures of every government have been revised. Renewal is the order of the day.

And all this newness hath its source in the fresh outpourings of wondrous grace and favor from the Lord of the Kingdom, which have renewed the world. The people, therefore, must be set completely free from their old patterns of thought, that all their attention may be focused upon these new principles, for these are the light of this time and the very spirit of this age.

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 252-253.

O ye loved ones of God! The wine-cup of Heaven overflows, the banquet of God's Covenant is bright with festive lights, the dawn of all bestowals is breaking, the gentle winds of grace are blowing, and out of the invisible world come good tidings of bounties and gifts. In flower-spangled meadows hath the divine springtime pitched its tents, and the spiritual are inhaling sweet scents from the Sheba of the spirit, carried their way by the east wind. Now doth the mystic nightingale carol its odes, and buds of inner meaning are bursting into blossoms delicate and fair. The field larks are become the festival's musicians, and lifting wondrous voices they cry and sing to the melodies of the Company on high, 'Blessed are ye! Glad Tidings! Glad Tidings!' And they urge on the revellers of the Abha Paradise to drink their fill, and they eloquently hold forth upon the celestial tree, and utter their sacred cries. All this, that withered souls who tread the desert of the heedless, and faded ones lost in the sands of unconcern, may come to throbbing life again, and present themselves at the feasts and revels of the Lord God. Praise be to Him! The renown of His Cause hath reached to east and west, and word of the power of the Abha Beauty hath quickened north and south. That cry from the American continent is a choir of holiness, that shout from far and near that rises

even to the Company on high is `Ya Bahá'u'l-Abha!' Now is the east lit up with a glory, and the west rose-sweet, and all the earth is fragrant with ambergris, and the winds that blow over the Holy Shrine are laden with musk. Erelong shall ye see that even the darkest lands are bright, and the continents of Europe and Africa have turned into gardens of flowers, and forests of blossoming trees.

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 255-256.

It behooves the loved ones of the Lord to be the signs and tokens of His universal mercy and the embodiments of His own excelling grace. Like the sun, let them cast their rays upon garden and rubbish heap alike, and even as clouds in spring, let them shed down their rain upon flower and thorn. Let them seek but love and faithfulness, let them not follow the ways of unkindness, let their talk be confined to the secrets of friendship and of peace. Such are the attributes of the righteous, such is the distinguishing mark of those who serve His Threshold.

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, page 257.

O ye steadfast loved ones! The grace of God is beating down upon mankind, even as the rains in spring, and the rays of the manifest Light have made this earth to be the envy of heaven. But alas, the blind are deprived of this bounty, the heedless are closed off from it, the withered despair of it, the faded are dying away—so that even as flooding waters, this endless stream of grace passes back into its primal source in a hidden sea. Only a few receive this grace and take their share of it. Wherefore, let us put our hopes in whatever the strong arm of the Beloved can bring about.

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, page 277.

... The holy breezes were diffused, the light of truth shone forth, the season of the life-giving spring came, and the morn of guidance dawned....

Some Answered Questions, page 54.

...In the day of the manifestation of the Lord of Hosts, and at the epoch of the divine cycle of the Omnipotent which is promised and mentioned in all the books and writings of the Prophets—in that day of God, the Spiritual and Divine Kingdom will be established, and the world will be renewed; a new spirit will be breathed into the body of creation; the season of the divine spring will come; the clouds of mercy will rain; the sun of reality will shine; the life-giving breeze will blow; the world of humanity will wear a new garment; the surface of the earth will be a sublime paradise; mankind will be educated; wars, disputes, quarrels and malignity will disappear; and truthfulness, righteousness, peace and the worship of God will appear; union, love and brotherhood will surround the world; and God will rule for evermore—meaning that the Spiritual and Everlasting Kingdom will be established. Such is the day of God....

Some Answered Questions, page 56-57.

In this material world time has cycles; places change through alternating seasons, and for souls there are progress, retrogression and education.

At one time it is the season of spring; at another it is the season of autumn; and again it is the season of summer or the season of winter.

In the spring there are the clouds which send down the precious rain, the musk-scented breezes and life-giving zephyrs; the air is perfectly temperate, the rain falls, the sun shines, the fecundating wind wafts the clouds, the world is renewed, and the breath of life appears in plants, in animals and in men. Earthly beings pass from one condition to another. All things are clothed in new garments, and the black earth is covered with herbage; mountains and plains are adorned with verdure; trees bear leaves and blossoms; gardens bring forth flowers and fragrant herbs. The world becomes another world, and it attains to a life-giving spirit. The earth was a lifeless body; it finds a new spirit, and produces endless beauty, grace and freshness. Thus the spring is the cause of new life and infuses a new spirit.

Afterward comes the summer, when the heat increases, and growth and development attain

their greatest power. The energy of life in the vegetable kingdom reaches to the degree of perfection, the fruit appears, and the time of harvest ripens; a seed has become a sheaf, and the food is stored for winter. Afterward comes tumultuous autumn when unwholesome and sterile winds blow; it is the season of sickness, when all things are withered, and the balmy air is vitiated. The breezes of spring are changed to autumn winds; the fertile green trees have become withered and bare; flowers and fragrant herbs fade away; the beautiful garden becomes a dustheap. Following this comes the season of winter, with cold and tempests. It snows, rains, hails, storms, thunders and lightens, freezes and congeals; all plants die, and animals languish and are wretched.

When this state is reached, again a new life-giving spring returns, and the cycle is renewed. The season of spring with its hosts of freshness and beauty spreads its tent on the plains and mountains with great pomp and magnificence. A second time the form of the creatures is renewed, and the creation of beings begins afresh; bodies grow and develop, the plains and wildernesses become green and fertile, trees bring forth blossoms, and the spring of last year returns in the utmost fullness and glory. Such is, and such ought to be, the cycle and succession of existence. Such is the cycle and revolution of the material world.

It is the same with the spiritual cycles of the Prophets—that is to say, the day of the appearance of the Holy Manifestations is the spiritual springtime; it is the divine splendor; it is the heavenly bounty, the breeze of life, the rising of the Sun of Reality. Spirits are quickened; hearts are refreshed and invigorated; souls become good; existence is set in motion; human realities are gladdened, and grow and develop in good qualities and perfections. General progress is achieved and revival takes place, for it is the day of resurrection, the time of excitement and ferment, and the season of bliss, of joy and of intense rapture.

Some Answered Questions, page 73-74.

When the season of winter has had its effect, again the spiritual springtime returns, and a new cycle appears. Spiritual breezes blow, the luminous dawn gleams, the divine clouds give rain, the rays of the Sun of Reality shine forth, the contingent world attains unto a new life and is clad in a wonderful garment. All the signs and the gifts of the past springtime reappear, with perhaps even greater splendor in this new season.

Some Answered Questions, pages 75-76.

The excellency, the adornment and the perfection of the earth is to be verdant and fertile through the bounty of the clouds of springtime. Plants grow; flowers and fragrant herbs spring up; fruit-bearing trees become full of blossoms and bring forth fresh and new fruit. Gardens become beautiful, and meadows adorned; mountains and plains are clad in a green robe, and gardens, fields, villages and cities are decorated. This is the prosperity of the mineral world.

The height of exaltation and the perfection of the vegetable world is that a tree should grow on the bank of a stream of fresh water, that a gentle breeze should blow on it, that the warmth of the sun should shine on it, that a gardener should attend to its cultivation, and that day by day it should develop and yield fruit. But its real prosperity is to progress into the animal and human world, and replace that which has been exhausted in the bodies of animals and men.

Some Answered Questions, page 78.

For example, it is a Persian and Arabic expression to say that the earth was asleep, and the spring came, and it awoke; or the earth was dead, and the spring came, and it revived. These expressions are metaphors, allegories, and mystic explanations in the world of signification.

Briefly, the Holy Manifestations have ever been, and ever will be, Luminous Realities; no change or variation takes place in Their essence. Before declaring Their manifestation, They are silent and quiet like a sleeper, and after Their manifestation, They speak and are illuminated, like one who is awake.

Some Answered Questions, pages 85-86.

The explanation is this: not the personality, but the reality of the perfections, is meant—that is to say, the same perfections that were in Elias existed in John the Baptist and were exactly realized in him. Therefore, John the Baptist was the promised Elias. In this case not the essence, [i.e., the individuality.] but the qualities, are regarded. For example, there was a flower last year, and this year there is also a flower; I say the flower of last year has returned. Now, I do not mean that same flower in its exact individuality has come back; but as this flower has the same qualities as that of last year—as it has the same perfume, delicacy, color and form—I say the flower of last year has returned, and this flower is the former flower. When spring comes, we say last year's spring has come back because all that was found in last year's spring exists in this spring. That is why Christ said, You will see all that happened in the days of the former Prophets.

We will give another illustration. The seed of last year is sown, branches and leaves grow forth, blossoms and fruits appear, and all has again returned to seed. When this second seed is planted, a tree will grow from it, and once more those branches, leaves, blossoms and fruits will return, and that tree will appear in perfection. As the beginning was a seed and the end is a seed, we say that the seed has returned. When we look at the substance of the tree, it is another substance, but when we look at the blossoms, leaves and fruits, the same fragrance, delicacy and taste are produced. Therefore, the perfection of the tree has returned a second time.

Some Answered Questions, pages 133-134.

...This Holy Spirit is the mediator between God and His creatures. It is like a mirror facing the sun. As the pure mirror receives light from the sun and transmits this bounty to others, so the Holy Spirit is the mediator of the Holy Light from the Sun of Reality, which it gives to the sanctified realities. It is adorned with all the divine perfections. Every time it appears, the world is renewed, and a new cycle is founded. The body of the world of humanity puts on a new garment. It can be compared to the spring; whenever it comes, the world passes from one condition to another. Through the advent of the season of spring the black earth and the fields and wildernesses will become verdant and blooming, and all sorts of flowers and sweet-scented herbs will grow; the trees will have new life, and new fruits will appear, and a new cycle is founded. The appearance of the Holy Spirit is like this. Whenever it appears, it renews the world of humanity and gives a new spirit to the human realities: it arrays the world of existence in a praiseworthy garment, dispels the darkness of ignorance, and causes the radiation of the light of perfections. Christ with this power has renewed this cycle; the heavenly spring with the utmost freshness and sweetness spread its tent in the world of humanity, and the life-giving breeze perfumed the nostrils of the enlightened ones.

In the same way, the appearance of Bahá'u'lláh was like a new springtime, which appeared with holy breezes, with the hosts of everlasting life, and with heavenly power. It established the Throne of the Divine Kingdom in the center of the world and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, revived souls and established a new cycle.

Some Answered Questions, page 145.

Now consider the influence of the sun upon the earthly beings, what signs and results become evident and clear from its nearness and remoteness, from its rising or its setting. At one time it is autumn, at another time spring; or again it is summer or winter. When the sun passes the line of the equator, the life-giving spring will become manifest in splendor, and when it is in the summer solstice, the fruits will attain to the acme of perfection, grains and plants will yield their produce, and earthly beings will attain their most complete development and growth.

In like manner, when the Holy Manifestation of God, Who is the sun of the world of His creation, shines upon the worlds of spirits, of thoughts and of hearts, then the spiritual spring and new life appear, the power of the wonderful springtime becomes visible, and marvelous benefits are apparent. As you have observed, at the time of the appearance of each Manifestation of God extraordinary progress has occurred in the world of minds, thoughts

and spirits. For example, in this divine age see what development has been attained in the world of minds and thoughts, and it is now only the beginning of its dawn. Before long you will see that new bounties and divine teachings will illuminate this dark world and will transform these sad regions into the paradise of Eden.

Some Answered Questions, page 163.

The Manifestations of universal Prophethood Who appeared independently are, for example, Abraham, Moses, Christ, Muhammad, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. But the others who are followers and promoters are like Solomon, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. For the independent Prophets are founders; They establish a new religion and make new creatures of men; They change the general morals, promote new customs and rules, renew the cycle and the Law. Their appearance is like the season of spring, which arrays all earthly beings in a new garment, and gives them a new life.

With regard to the second sort of Prophets who are followers, these also promote the Law of God, make known the Religion of God, and proclaim His word. Of themselves they have no power and might, except what they receive from the independent Prophets.

Some Answered Questions, page 164-165.

The meaning of eternal life is the gift of the Holy Spirit, as the flower receives the gift of the season, the air, and the breezes of spring. Consider: this flower had life in the beginning like the life of the mineral; but by the coming of the season of spring, of the bounty of the clouds of the springtime, and of the heat of the glowing sun, it attained to another life of the utmost freshness, delicacy and fragrance. The first life of the flower, in comparison to the second life, is death.

Some Answered Questions, page 242.

A lamp shone in this room last night, and when tonight another lamp shines, we say the light of last night is again shining. Water flows from a fountain; then it ceases; and when it begins to flow a second time, we say this water is the same water flowing again; or we say this light is identical with the former light. It is the same with the spring of last year, when blossoms, flowers and sweet-scented herbs bloomed, and delicious fruits were brought forth; next year we say that those delicious fruits have come back, and those blossoms, flowers and blooms have returned and come again. This does not mean that exactly the same particles composing the flowers of last year have, after decomposition, been again combined and have then come back and returned. On the contrary, the meaning is that the delicacy, freshness, delicious perfume and wonderful color of the flowers of last year are visible and apparent in exactly the same manner in the flowers of this year. Briefly, this expression refers only to the resemblance and likeness, which exist between the former and latter flowers.

Some Answered Questions, page 288-289.

O ye beloved of God! When the winds blow severely, rains fall fiercely, the lightning flashes, the thunder roars, the bold descends and storms of trial become severe, grieve not; for after this storm, verily, the divine spring will arrive, the hills and fields will become verdant, the expanses of grain will joyfully wave, the earth will become covered with blossoms, the trees will be clothed with green garments and adorned with blossoms and fruits. Thus blessings become manifest in all countries. These favors are results of those storms and hurricanes.

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 12-13.

I wish this blessing to appear and become manifest in the faces and characteristics of the believers, so that they, too, may become a new people, and having found new life and been baptized with fire and spirit, may make the world a new world, to the end that the old earth may disappear and the new earth appear; old ideas depart and new thoughts come; old garments be cast aside and new garments put on; ancient politics whose foundation is war be discarded and modern politics founded on peace raise the standard of victory; the new star shine and gleam and the new sun illumine and radiate; new flowers bloom; the new spring become known; the new breeze blow; the new bounty descend; the new tree give forth new

fruit; the new voice become raised and this new sound reach the ears, that the new will follow the new, and all the old furnishings and adornments be cast aside and new decorations put in their places.

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, page 39.

O thou spiritual lad!

May God uphold thee and edify thee in the flower of thy youth and in the spring-time of thy life and may He illumine thy face with the lights of advancement unto God and turning unto the Kingdom of God. If thou become firm and steadfast in the love of God, thou shall be confirmed with a confirmation whereby thy face will be gladdened, thy heart rejoiced and all thy family will be happy and pleased. Therefore, confine thy thoughts and ideas in turning to God and submitting unto Him and chant the signs (verses) of thanks and praise for that by reason of which He hath strengthened thee to attain this great gift.

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 59-60.

As to thee, convey unto the maid-servants of the Merciful that they must be firm in the love of El-Bahá at the time of the severe trials and tests; for as much as the storms and winds occur during the winter seasons; then comes the spring with the wonderful scenery and it adorns the hills and plains with flowers and beautiful birds sing the melodies of joy on the branches of the trees and warble beautiful tunes on the roofs of bowers, in wonderful melodies. Soon shall thou see that the lights have shone forth, the banners of the Kingdom have been raised, the fragrances of God diffused, the hosts of the Kingdom descending, the angels of heaven confirmed and the Holy Spirit breathed into those horizons (regions).

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 88-89.

Now is the springtime and the bounty of heaven is pouring on earth and the fields and rose-gardens are in growth and development. Exert yourself as much as thou can, in order that through this everlasting bounty and the sprinklings of the clouds of the divine gift, thou may grow and thrive like unto a fruitful tree, with the utmost freshness and purity.

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, page 208.

O maid-servant of God! The radiance of favor is (cast) upon thy head and thou art clad with the robe of gift. Praise be unto God, that the breeze of the divine spring maketh the soul thrive and the fragrances of holiness are quickening the heart of man. Favor is perfect and bounty is overflowing—the doors of prosperity are opened and hearts are expanded and dilated. The drops of the cloud of favor are continually (falling) and the lakes of graces are successively overflowing. The wine of the love of God is circulating, and the melodies of thankful birds are astonishing all people distant and near.

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 279-280.

If thou art a hero of the field and a melodious bird in the garden of the Merciful One, speak of the Beauty of Abha, for it is ready and present. Consider that the last year's springtime is past and all that thou may say or hear (about it) is but a story (or narrative); but appreciate thou this New Year's Spring—which is this present time—hath pitched its tent with the utmost magnificence in the field and plain and hath made the mountain and desert verdant and fresh, hath made the trees to appear pure and fresh, blooming with flowers and blossoms through the vernal bounty and caused them to bring forth pure fruits. Nor all that thou may speak of the past springtime, be it even spoken with all excellence and eloquence and in accord with reality, all that will, nevertheless, be a past story.

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, page 298

Be thou a cause of unifying hearts as much as thou can and guide thou the heedless souls, and in this spiritual springtime perfume thou nostrils with the sweet fragrances of the rose-garden of the Kingdom. This is eternal life; this everlasting Glory! And this is a peace which is not followed by any trouble! All else save this is a plaything of children and is useless and nonsense!

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, page 305

...This period of time is the Promised Age, the assembling of the human race to the Resurrection Day and now is the great Day of Judgment. Soon the whole world, as in springtime, will change its garb. The turning and falling of the autumn leaves is past; the bleakness of the winter time is over. The new year hath appeared and the spiritual springtime is at hand. The black earth is becoming a verdant garden; the deserts and mountains are teeming with red flowers; from the borders of the wilderness the tall grasses are standing like advance guards before the cypress and jessamine trees; while the birds are singing among the rose branches like the angels in the highest heavens, announcing the glad-tidings of the approach of that spiritual spring, and the sweet music of their voices is causing the real essence of all things to move and quiver.

O my spiritual friend! Do thou know from what airs emanate the notes sung by those birds? They are from the melodies of peace and reconciliation, of love and unity, of justice and security, of concord and harmony. In a short time this heavenly singing will intoxicate all humanity; the foundations of enmity shall be destroyed; unity and affection shall be witnessed in every assembly; and the lovers of the love of God at these great festivals shall behold their splendor....

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 318-319.

When the Sun of Truth shone forth with His infinite bounties from the dawning-place of hopes, and the horizon of existence was illuminated through the radiance of sanctity—then He cast forth such splendor whereby the gloomy darkness disappeared! Therefore, the earth became the envy of the celestial world, and the realm of dust was made a scene of the exalted kingdom. Then the fragrances of holiness exhaled, and the sweet odors were diffused. The breeze of the divine spring blew, and the fruitful winds of infinite generosity passed by from the point of favor. The brilliant morning dawned and the glad-tidings of the greatest gift were announced. The divine spring appeared throughout the contingent world. The earth of existence moved and the material world was put in motion. The barren and dried up soil turned into an eternal garden, and the inanimate earth was endowed with eternal life. The flowers and myrtles of knowledge grew, and the fresh herbage of the knowledge of God flourished. The material world showed forth the bounties of the Merciful, and the visible world displayed the scene of the invisible world. The call of God was raised, the divine banquet celebrated, the cup of the Testament was circulated and the universal acclamation was uttered!

Among the people, a multitude became intoxicated with this divine wine—and a multitude were deprived of this great favor. Many a soul enlightened his sight and insight by the radiance of grace, and many were cheered and rejoiced at the melodies of unity. Some birds sang melodies and harmonies, and some nightingales began to warble on the branches of the rose-tree of mercifulness.

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 370-371.

The numbered days (of life) will vanish away, and the present existence disappear. The garden of being will lose its freshness and fragrance, the orchard of mirth will miss its joy and beauty. The spring of life will change into the autumn of death, the joy of happiness of the palaces will change into the gloomy darkness of the grave. Therefore, it is not worth attachment and the wise person will not set his heart thereon. The wise and great man seeketh heavenly glory and divine might, desires eternal life and seeketh nearness to the Threshold of God.

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, page 380.

The season of seclusion in quiet nooks is the season of winter when the cold and the winds increase. But during the spring, the wafting of gentle breezes, the passing of fragrances from the rose, the state of equilibrium in the atmosphere and the green hue of valleys and prairies, it is best for man to leave solitude and enjoy out-of-door blessings. Thus be thou happy in the commemoration of thy Lord.

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 520-521.

O maid-servant of God!

Thy letter was read. The doors of the Kingdom are open and the bounty of God is like unto spring rain. Although the signs of material bounty are great, yet the true bounty is that of heaven, spiritual, which gives life eternal. Follow this and thy heart will become as beautiful as a garden, thine eyes bright, thy spirit happy and thy thought a comfort to souls.

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, page 523.

The Cause of Bahá'u'lláh is the same as the Cause of Christ. It is the same Temple and the same Foundation. Both of these are spiritual springtimes and seasons of the soul-refreshing awakening and the cause of the renovation of the life of mankind. The spring of this year is the same as the spring of last year. The origins and ends are the same. The sun of today is the sun of yesterday.

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, page 535.

O thou seeker of Truth! The realm of the Kingdom is a unit. The only difference lies in this: That when the season of spring dawns, a new and wonderful motion and rejuvenation is witnessed in all the existing things; the mountains and meadows are revived; the trees find freshness and delicacy and are clothed with radiant and bright leaves, blossoms and fruits. In a like manner the preceding Manifestations form an inseparable link with the subsequent dispensations; nay, rather they are identical with each other. Since the world is constantly developing itself, the rays become stronger, the outpouring becomes greater and the sun appears in the meridian orbit.

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 537-538.

O Creator! Although we are but useless grass, still we are of Thy garden; though we are but young trees, bare of leaves and blossoms, still we are of Thy orchard; therefore, nourish this grass with the rain of Thy county; refresh and vivify these young, languishing trees with the breeze of Thy spiritual springtime.

Awaken us, enlighten us, sustain us, give us eternal life and accept us into Thy Kingdom!

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, page 588.

Thank thou God that thou has stepped into the arena of existence in this glorious age, has become the manifestor of never-ending outpouring, has attained to the most great gift, has found the season of the divine springtime, has perfumed thy nostrils with heavenly flowers, has discovered the way to the celestial Kingdom and has partaken a share from eternal life.

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 623-624.

Do ye know in what cycle ye are created and in what age ye exist? This is the age of the Blessed Perfection and this is the time of the Greatest Name! This is the century of the Manifestation, the age of the Sun of the Horizons and the beautiful springtime of His Holiness the Eternal One!

The earth is in motion and growth; the mountains, hills and prairies are green and pleasant; the bounty is overflowing; the mercy universal; the rain is descending from the cloud of mercy; the brilliant Sun is shining; the full moon is ornamenting the horizon of ether; the great ocean-tide is flooding every little stream; the gifts are successive; the favors consecutive; and the refreshing breeze is blowing, wafting the fragrant perfume of the blossoms. Boundless treasure is in the hand of the King of Kings! Lift the hem of thy garment in order to receive it.

If we are not happy and joyous at this season, for what other season shall we wait and for what other time shall we look?

This is the time for growing; the season for joyous gathering! Take the cup of the Testament in thy hand; leap and dance with ecstasy in the triumphal procession of the Covenant! Lay your confidence in the everlasting bounty, turn to the presence of the generous God; ask assistance from the Kingdom of Abha; seek confirmation from the Supreme World; turn thy vision to the horizon of eternal wealth; and pray for help from the Source of Mercy!

From a letter to the Samarkand assembly found in Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 641-642.

Know, that the divine springtime hath come with its rains and abundance, with the heat of its sun, the breeze of its life and the scent of its fragrance; and through this universal and great abundance, the land of the holy truth and facts hath moved and brought forth of every kind, good and beautiful fruits. But the barren, wicked land will not bring forth save the thorn of denial, of haughtiness and disdain. Therefore, thank thou God for He hath made thee a good, fertile land by the clouds of the abundance of God the Chosen.

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, page 651.

Unless the season of winter appear, thunder roll, lightening flash, snow and rain fall, hail and frost descend and the intensity of cold execute its command, the season of the soul-refreshing spring would not come, the fragrant breeze would not waft, the moderation of temperature would not be realized, the roses and hyacinths would not grow, the surface of the heart would not become a delectable paradise, the trees would not bloom, neither would they bring forth fruits and leaves. That was the beginning of the manifestation of these roses, hyacinths, buds, blossoms and fruits.

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, page 655.

O ye friends! O ye maid-servants of the Merciful! Those assemblies are the emblems of the Supreme Concourse and the prototypes of the congregations of the spirits in the Kingdom of Abha. Avail yourselves of the opportunities of this time, neither let the occasion slip by unheeded. The season of the soul-refreshing springtime will not appear at all time, neither will the breezy dawn be at every moment. Now is the time of proclamation and the occasion of supplication and invocation toward the Kingdom of Abha.

A letter to the Brooklyn Assembly Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, page 666.

...Verily, the bounty of the Kingdom is unlimited and the favors of the Lord of Majesty are like unto the rains of springtime.

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, page 673.

Know thou the value of the day of the Lord and take a portion and a share of the bounty in this glorious cycle. If a tree doth not thrive and grow in this divine springtime, in what season will it bear fruit? I hope that, though the life-nurturing breeze of the rose-garden of the Kingdom, thou may become a tree full of blossoms and fruit.

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, page 696.

O greatest of glad-tidings, for the Sun of Truth of the Beauty of Abha hath dawned from the horizon of the contingent world and illumined the regions with the lights of the mightiest guidance! The reality of the Pentateuch and the Gospel have become manifest and the mysteries of the heavenly Books have appeared! Now is the age of the Merciful One and the time of joy and gladness! O ye heedless ones, be ye conscious! O ye sleepers, be ye awake! O ye blind ones, see! O ye deaf ones, hear! O ye dumb ones, speak! O ye dead ones, be quickened! O ye destitute ones, receive a portion and share! It is the irradiation of the Merciful One and the moving of the boundless sea! It is the bounty of the wonderful springtime and the downpour of the rain of the gift of the Great Lord!

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 718-719.

...In other words, He says the earth is black, but when the spring showers descend upon it that black soil is quickened, and variegated flowers are pushed forth. This means the souls of humanity belonging to the world of nature are black like unto the soil. But when the heavenly outpourings descend and the radiant effulgences appear, the hearts are resuscitated, are liberated from the darkness of nature and the flowers of divine mysteries grow and become luxuriant....

Page 6 in Tablets of the Divine Plan.

A person declaring the glad tidings of the appearance of the realities and significances of the Kingdom is like unto a farmer who scatters pure seeds in the rich soil. The spring cloud will pour upon them the rain of bounty, and unquestionably the station of the farmer will be raised in the estimation of the lord of the village, and many harvests will be gathered....

Page 12 in Tablets of the Divine Plan.

Not so with the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. Born in an environment of appalling degradation, springing from a soil steeped in age-long corruptions, hatreds and prejudice, inculcating principles irreconcilable with the accepted standards of the times, and faced from the beginning with the relentless enmity of government, church and people, this nascent Faith of God has, by virtue of the celestial potency with which it has been endowed, succeeded, in less than four score years and ten, in emancipating itself from the galling chains of Islamic domination, in proclaiming the self-sufficiency of its ideals and the independent integrity of its laws, in planting its banner in no less than forty of the most advanced countries of the world, in establishing its outposts in lands beyond the farthest seas, in consecrating its religious edifices in the midmost heart of the Asiatic and American continents, in inducing two of the most powerful governments of the West to ratify the instruments essential to its administrative activities, in obtaining from royalty befitting tributes to the excellence of its teachings, and, finally, in forcing its grievances upon the attention of the representatives of the highest Tribunal in the civilized world, and in securing from its members written affirmations that are tantamount to a tacit recognition of its religious status and to an express declaration of the justice of its cause.

Page 54-55 in World Order of Bahá'u'lláh (Shoghi Effendi)

“The effulgence of God’s splendorous mercy,” He, in a passage alluding to the growth and future development of the Faith, declares, “hath enveloped the peoples and kindreds of the earth, and the whole world is bathed in its shining glory... The day will soon come when the light of Divine unity will have so permeated the East and the West that no man dare any longer ignore it.” “Now in the world of being the Hand of divine power hath firmly laid the foundations of this all-highest bounty and this wondrous gift. Whatsoever is latent in the innermost of this holy cycle shall gradually appear and be made manifest, for now is but the beginning of its growth and the dayspring of the revelation of its signs. Ere the close of this century and of this age, it shall be made clear and evident how wondrous was that springtide and how heavenly was that gift!”

Page 111 in World Order of Bahá'u'lláh (Shoghi Effendi)

“One of the great events,” affirms ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, “which is to occur in the Day of the manifestation of that incomparable Branch is the hoisting of the Standard of God among all nations. By this is meant that all nations and kindreds will be gathered together under the shadow of this Divine Banner, which is no other than the Lordly Branch itself, and will become a single nation. Religious and sectarian antagonism, the hostility of races and peoples, and differences among nations, will be eliminated. All men will adhere to one religion, will have one common faith, will be blended into one race and become a single people. All will dwell in one common fatherland, which is the planet itself.” “Now, in the world of being,” He has moreover explained, “the Hand of Divine power hath firmly laid the foundations of this all-highest bounty, and this wondrous gift. Whatsoever is latent in the innermost of this holy Cycle shall gradually appear and be made manifest, for now is but the beginning of its growth, and the dayspring of the revelation of its signs. Ere the close of this century and of this age, it shall be made clear and evident how wondrous was that spring-tide, and how heavenly was that gift.”

Pages 204-205 in World Order of Bahá'u'lláh (Shoghi Effendi)

The Springtime metaphor is picked up and used by Bahá'í writers. For example, the historian Nab'il uses it in describing the year 1845:

The Naw-Ruz of that year, which heralded the advent of a new springtime, was also symbolic of that spiritual rebirth, the first stirring of which could already be discerned throughout the length and breadth of the land. A number of the most eminent and learned among the people of that country emerged from the wintry desolation of heedlessness, and were quickened by the reviving breath of the new-born Revelation.

Nabi'il's Narrative, page 157

Compared with the eighteenth century the present time is as the dawn after darkness, or as

the spring after winter. The world is stirring with new life, thrilling with new ideals and hopes. Things that but a few years ago seemed impossible dreams are now accomplished facts. Others that seemed centuries ahead of us have already become matters of practical politics. We fly in the air and make voyages under the sea. We send messages around the world with the speed of lightning. Within a few decades we have seen miracles too numerous to mention.... Just as the material sun shines over the earth and causes the growth and development of material organisms, so also, through the Divine Manifestation, the Sun of Truth shines upon the world of heart and soul, and educates the thoughts, morals and characters of men. And just as the rays of the natural sun have an influence which penetrates into the darkest and shadiest corners of the world, giving warmth and life even to creatures that have never seen the sun itself, so also, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit through the Manifestation of God influences the lives of all, and inspires receptive minds even in places and among peoples where the name of the Prophet is quite unknown. The advent of the Manifestation is like the coming of the Spring. It is a day of Resurrection in which the spiritually dead are raised to new life, in which the Reality of the Divine Religions is renewed and reestablished, in which appear new heavens and a new earth.

But, in the world of nature, the Spring brings about not only the growth and awakening of new life but also the destruction and removal of the old and effete; for the same sun, that makes the flowers to spring and the trees to bud, causes also the decay and disintegration of what is dead and useless; it loosens the ice and melts the snow of winter, and sets free the flood and the storm that cleanse and purify the earth. So is it also in the spiritual world. The spiritual sunshine causes similar commotion and change. Thus the Day of Resurrection is also the Day of Judgment, in which corruptions and imitations of the truth and outworn ideas and customs are discarded and destroyed, in which the ice and snow of prejudice and superstition, which accumulated during the season of winter, are melted and transformed, and energies long frozen and pent up are released to flood and renovate the world.

Esslemont, Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, pages 3-5.

Education and religion are alike based on the assumption that it is possible to change human nature. In fact, it requires but little investigation to show that the one thing we can say with certainty about any living thing is that it cannot keep from changing. Without change there can be no life. Even the mineral cannot resist change, and the higher we go in the scale of being, the more varied, complex, and wonderful do the changes become. Moreover, in progress and development among creatures of all grades we find two kinds of change — one slow, gradual, often almost imperceptible; and the other rapid, sudden and dramatic. The latter occur at what are called critical stages of development. In the case of minerals we find such critical stages at the melting and boiling points, for example, when the solid suddenly becomes a liquid or the liquid becomes a gas. In the case of plants we see such critical stages when the seed begins to germinate, or the bud bursts into leaf. In the animal world we see the same on every hand, as when the grub suddenly changes into a butterfly, the chick emerges from its shell, or the babe is born from its mother's womb. In the higher life of the soul we often see a similar transformation, when a man is born again and his whole being becomes radically changes in its aims, its character and activities. Such critical stages often affect a whole species or multitude of species simultaneously, as when vegetation of all kinds suddenly bursts into new life in springtime.

Bahá'u'lláh declares that just as lesser living things have times of sudden emergence into new and fuller life, so for mankind also a critical stage, a time of rebirth, is at hand. Then modes of life which have persisted from the dawn of history up till now will be quickly, irrevocably, altered, and humanity enter on a new phase of life as different from the old as the butterfly is different from the caterpillar, or the bird from the egg. Mankind as a whole, in the light of new Revelation, will attain to a new vision of truth; as a whole country is illumined when the sun rises, so that all men see clearly, where but an hour before everything was dark and dim. This is a new cycle of human power, says 'Abdu'l-Bahá. All the horizons of the world are luminous, and the world will become indeed as a rose garden and a paradise.

The analogies of nature are all in favor of such a view; the Prophets of old have with one accord foretold the advent of such a glorious day; the signs of the times show clearly that profound and revolutionary changes in human ideas and institutions are even now in progress. What could be more futile and baseless therefore, than the pessimistic argument that, although all things else change, human nature cannot change?

Esselmont, Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, pages 118-119.

The Bahá'í women, therefore, although well aware that the antiquated custom of wearing the veil is, for enlightened people, unnecessary and inconvenient, yet quietly put up with the inconvenience, rather than rouse a storm of fanatical hatred and rancorous opposition by uncovering their faces in public. This conformity to custom is in no way due to fear, but to an assured confidence in the power of education and in the transforming and life-giving effect of true religion. Bahá'ís in these regions are devoting their energies to the education of their children, especially their girls, and to the diffusion and promotion of the Bahá'í ideals, well knowing that as the new spiritual life grows and spreads among the people, antiquated customs and prejudices will by and by be shed, as naturally and inevitably as bud scales are shed in spring when the leaves and flowers expand in the sunshine.

Esselmont, Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, page 150

The nineteenth month, following immediately on the hospitality of the intercalary days, is the month of the fast. During nineteen days the fast is observed by abstaining from both food and drink from sunrise to sunset. As the month of the fast ends at the March equinox, the fast always falls in the same season, namely, spring in the Northern, and autumn in the Southern, Hemisphere; never in the extreme heat of summer nor in the extreme cold of winter, when hardship would be likely to result. At that season, moreover, the interval between sunrise and sunset is approximately the same all over the habitable portion of the globe, namely, from about 6 A.M. to 6 P.M.

Esselmont, Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, page 183

This compilation is online at http://bahai-library.com/compilation_springtime_metaphors