

CHAPTER SEVEN: SOUL, MIND AND SPIRIT

THE ORIGIN OF MAN

Know that it is one of the most abstruse spiritual truths that the world of existence, that is to say this endless universe, has no beginning.

We have already explained that the names and attributes of the Divinity themselves require the existence of beings. Although this subject has been explained in detail, we will speak of it again briefly. Know that an educator without pupils cannot be imagined, a monarch without subjects could not exist, a master without scholars cannot be appointed, a creator without a creature is impossible, a provider without those provided for cannot be conceived; for all the divine names and attributes demand the existence of beings. If we could imagine a time when no beings existed, this imagination would be the denial of the Divinity of God. Moreover, absolute non-existence cannot become existence. If the beings were absolutely non-existent, existence would not have come into being. Therefore, as the Essence of Unity, that is the existence of God, is everlasting and eternal—that is to say, it has neither beginning nor end—it is certain that this world of existence, this endless universe, has neither beginning nor end. Yes, it may be that one of the parts of the universe, one of the globes, for example, may come into existence, or may be disintegrated, but the other endless globes are still existing; the universe would not be disordered nor destroyed; on the contrary, existence is eternal and perpetual. As each globe has a beginning, necessarily it has an end, because every composition, collective or particular, must of necessity be decomposed; the only difference is that some are quickly decomposed, and others more slowly, but it is impossible that a composed thing should not eventually be decomposed.

It is necessary, therefore, that we should know what each of the important existences was in the beginning—for there is no doubt that in the beginning the origin was one: the origin of all numbers is one and not two. Then it is evident that in the beginning matter was one, and that one matter appeared in different aspects in each element; thus various forms were produced, and these various aspects as they were produced became permanent, and each element was specialized. But this permanence was not definite, and did not attain realization and perfect existence until after a very long time. Then these elements became composed, and organized and combined in infinite forms; or rather from the composition and combination of these elements innumerable beings appeared.

This composition and arrangement through the wisdom of God and His pre-existent might, were produced from one natural organization, which was composed and combined with the greatest strength, conformably to wisdom, and according to a universal law. From this it is evident that it is the creation of God, and is not a fortuitous composition and arrangement. This is why from every natural composition a being can come into existence, but from an accidental composition no being can come into existence. For example, if a man of his own mind and intelligence collects some elements and combines them, a living being will not be brought into existence, since the system is unnatural. This is the answer to the implied question, that, since beings are made by the composition and the combination of elements, why is it not possible for us to gather elements and mingle them together, and so create a living being. This is a false supposition, for the origin of this composition is from God; it is God who makes the combination, and as it is done according to the natural system, from each composition one being is produced, and an existence is realized. A composition made by man produces nothing, because man cannot create.

Briefly, we have said that from the composition and combination of elements, from their decomposition, from their measure, and from the effect of other beings upon them, resulted forms, endless realities, and innumerable beings. But it is clear that this terrestrial globe in its present form did not come into existence all at once; but that this universal existence gradually passed through different phases until it became adorned with its present perfection. Universal beings resemble and can be compared to particular beings, for both are subjected to one natural system, one universal law and divine organization. So you will find the smallest atoms in the universal system are similar to the greatest beings of the universe. It is clear that they come into existence from one laboratory of might under one natural system, and one universal law; therefore they may be compared to one another. Thus the embryo of man in the womb of the mother gradually grows and develops, and appears in different forms and conditions, until in the degree of perfect beauty it reaches maturity, and appears in a perfect form with the utmost grace. And in the same way, the seed of this flower which you see was in the beginning an insignificant thing, and very small; and it grew and developed in the womb of the earth, and after appearing in various forms, came forth in this condition with perfect freshness and grace. In the same manner it is evident that this terrestrial globe having once found existence, grew and developed in the matrix of the universe, and came forth in different forms and conditions, until gradually it attained this present perfection, and became adorned with innumerable beings, and appeared as a finished organization.

Then it is clear that original matter, which is in the embryonic state, and the

mingled and composed elements which were its earliest forms, gradually grew and developed during many ages and cycles, passing from one shape and form to another, until they appeared in this perfection, this system, this organization and this establishment, through the supreme wisdom of God.

Let us return to our subject that man, in the beginning of his existence and in the womb of the earth, like the embryo in the womb of the mother, gradually grew and developed, and passed from one form to another, from one shape to another, until he appeared with this beauty and perfection, this force and this power. It is certain that in the beginning he had not this loveliness and grace and elegance, and that he only by degrees attained this shape, this form, this beauty, and this grace. There is no doubt that the human embryo did not at once appear in this form, neither did it then become the manifestation of the words: "Praise be unto God, the best of Creators." Gradually, it passed through various conditions and different shapes, until it attained this form and beauty, this perfection; grace, and loveliness. Thus it is evident and confirmed that the development and growth of man on this earth, until he reached his present perfection, resembled the growth and development of the embryo in the womb of the mother: by degrees it passed from condition to condition, from form to form, from one shape to another, for this is according to the requirement of the universal system and divine law.

That is to say, the embryo passes through different states and traverses numerous degrees, until it reaches the form in which it manifests the words: "Praise be to God, the best of Creators," and until the signs of reason and maturity appear. And in the same way, man's existence on this earth, from the beginning until it reaches this state, form, and condition, necessarily lasts a long time, and goes through many degrees until it reaches this condition. But from the beginning of man's existence he is a distinct species. In the same way, the embryo of man in the womb of the mother was at first in a strange form; then this body passes from shape to shape, from state to state, from form to form, until it appears in utmost beauty and perfection. But even when in the womb of the mother and in this strange form, entirely different from his present form and figure, he is the embryo of the superior species, and not of the animal; his species and essence undergo no change. Now, admitting that the traces of organs which have disappeared actually exist, this is not a proof of the impermanence and the non-originality of the species. At the most it proves that the form, and fashion, and the organs of man have progressed. Man was always a distinct species, a man, not an animal. So, if the embryo of man in the womb of the mother passes from one form to another, so that the second form in no way resembles the first, is this a proof that the species has changed? that it was at first an animal,

and that its organs progressed and developed until it became a man? No indeed! How puerile and unfounded is this idea and this thought! For the proof of the originality of the human species, and of the permanency of the nature of man, is clear and evident.

MODIFICATION OF SPECIES

We have now come to the question of the modification of species and of organic development: that is to say, to the point of inquiring whether man's descent is from the animal.

This theory has found credence in the minds of some European philosophers, and it is now very difficult to make its falseness understood, but in the future it will become evident and clear, and the European philosophers will themselves realize its untruth. For verily it is an evident error. When man looks at the beings with a penetrating regard, and attentively examines the condition of existences, and when he sees the state, the organization, and the perfection of the world, he will be convinced that in the possible world there is nothing more wonderful than that which already exists. For all existing beings, terrestrial and celestial, as well as this limitless space and all that is in it, have been created and organized, composed, arranged, and perfected as they ought to be; the universe has no imperfection; so that if all beings became pure intelligence and reflected for ever and ever, it is impossible that they could imagine anything better than that which exists.

If, however, the creation in the past had not been adorned with utmost perfection, then existence would have been imperfect and meaningless, and in this case creation would have been incomplete. This question needs to be considered with the greatest attention and thought. For example, imagine that the world of possibility—that is, the world of existence—resembles in a general way the body of man. If this composition, organization, perfection, beauty, and completeness which now exist in the human body were different, it would be absolute imperfection. Now, if we imagine a time when man belonged to the animal world, or when he was merely an animal, we shall find that existence would have been imperfect; that is to say, there would have been no man, and this chief member, which in the body of the world is like the brain and mind in man, would have been missing. The world would then have been quite imperfect. It is thus proved that if there had been a time when man was in the animal kingdom, the perfection of existence would have been destroyed; for man is the greatest member of this world, and if the body was without this chief member, surely it would be imperfect. We consider man as the greatest member

because, among the creatures, he is the sum of all existing perfections. When we speak of man, we mean the perfect one, the foremost individual in the world, who is the sum of spiritual and apparent perfections, and who is like the sun among the beings. Then imagine that at one time the sun did not exist, but that it was a planet—surely at such a time the relations of existence would be disordered. How can such a thing be imagined? To a man who examines the world of existence, what we have said is sufficient.

There is another more subtle proof: all these endless beings which inhabit the world, whether man, animal, vegetable, mineral—whatever they may be—are surely, each one of them, composed of elements. There is no doubt that this perfection which is in all beings, is caused by the creation of God from the composing elements, by their appropriate mingling and proportionate quantities, the mode of their composition, and the influence of other beings. For all beings are connected together like a chain, and reciprocal help, assistance, and influence belonging to the properties of things, are the causes of the existence, development, and growth of created beings. It is confirmed through evidences and proofs that every being universally acts upon other beings, either absolutely or through association. Finally, the perfection of each individual being, that is to say the perfection which you now see in man or apart from him, with regard to their atoms, members, or powers, is due to the composition of the elements, to their measure, to their balance, to the mode of their combination, and to mutual influence. When all these are gathered together, then man exists.

As the perfection of man is entirely due to the composition of the atoms of the elements, to their measure, to the method of their combination, and to the mutual influence and action of the different beings—then, since man was produced ten or a hundred thousand years ago from these earthly elements with the same measure and balance, the same method of combination and mingling, and the same influence of the other beings, exactly the same man existed then as now. This is evident and not worth debating. A thousand million years hence, if these elements of man are gathered together and arranged in this special proportion, and if the elements are combined according to the same method, and if they are affected by the same influence of other beings, exactly the same man will exist. For example, if after a hundred thousand years there is oil, fire, a wick, a lamp, and the lighter of the lamp—briefly, if there are all the necessities which now exist, exactly the same lamp will be obtained.

These are conclusive and evident facts. But the arguments which these European philosophers have used raise doubtful proofs and are not conclusive.

THE KINGDOM OF MAN

Know that people belong to two categories, that is to say, they constitute two parties. One party deny the spirit, and say that man also is a species of animal; for they say, do we not see that animals and men share the same powers and senses? These simple single elements which fill space are endlessly combined, and from each of these combinations one of the beings is produced. Among these beings is the possessor of spirit, of the powers and of the senses. The more perfect the combination, the nobler is the being. The combination of the elements in the body of man is more perfect than the composition of any other being; it is mingled in absolute equilibrium, therefore it is more noble and more perfect. “It is not,” they say, “that he has a special power and spirit which the other animals lack: animals possess sensitive bodies, but man in some powers has more sensation—although, in what concerns the outer senses, such as hearing, sight, taste, smell, touch, and even in some interior powers like memory, the animal is more richly endowed than man.” “The animal, too,” they say, “has intelligence and perception”: all that they concede is that man’s intelligence is greater.

This is what the philosophers of the present state; this is their saying, this is their supposition, and thus their imagination decrees. So with powerful arguments and proofs, they make the descent of man go back to the animal, and say that there was once a time when man was an animal; that then the species changed, and progressed little by little until it reached the present status of man.

But the theologians say: No, this is not so. Though man has powers and outer senses in common with the animal, yet an extraordinary power exists in him of which the animal is bereft. The sciences, arts, inventions, trades, and discoveries of realities, are the results of this spiritual power. This is a power which encompasses all things, comprehends their realities, discovers all the hidden mysteries of beings, and through this knowledge controls them: it even perceives things which do not exist outwardly; that is to say, intellectual realities which are not sensible, and which have no outward existence, because they are invisible; so it comprehends the mind, the spirit, the qualities, the characters, the love and sorrow of man, which are intellectual realities. Moreover, these existing sciences, arts, laws, and endless inventions of man at one time were invisible, mysterious, and hidden secrets; it is only the all-encompassing human power which has discovered and brought them out from the plane of the invisible to the plane of the visible. So telegraphy, photography, phonography, and all such inventions and wonderful arts, were at one time hidden mysteries: the human reality discovered and brought them out from the plane of the invisible to the plane of the visible. There was even a time when the qualities of this iron which you see—indeed of all the metals—were hidden mysteries; men discovered

this metal, and wrought it in this industrial form. It is the same with all the other discoveries and inventions of man, which are innumerable.

This we cannot deny. If we say that these are effects of powers which animals also have, and of the powers of the bodily senses, we see clearly and evidently that the animals are, in regard to these powers, superior to man. For example, the sight of animals is much more keen than the sight of man; so also is their power of smell and taste. Briefly, in the powers which animals and men have in common, the animal is often the more powerful. For example, let us take the power of memory: if you carry a pigeon from here to a distant country, and there set it free, it will return, for it remembers the way. Take a dog from here to the center of Asia, set him free, and he will come back here and never once lose the road. So it is with the other powers such as hearing, sight, smell, taste, and touch.

Thus it is clear that if there were not in man a power different from any of those of the animals, the latter would be superior to man in inventions and the comprehension of realities. Therefore it is evident that man has a gift which the animal does not possess. Now, the animal perceives sensible things, but does not perceive intellectual realities. For example, that which is within the range of its vision the animal sees, but that which is beyond the range of sight it is not possible for it to perceive, and it cannot imagine it. So it is not possible for the animal to understand that the earth has the form of a globe. But man from known things proves unknown things, and discovers unknown truths. For example, man sees the curve of the horizon, and from this he infers the roundness of the earth. The Pole Star at 'Akká, for instance, is at 33° , that is to say, it is 33° above the horizon. When a man goes towards the North Pole, the Pole Star rises one degree above the horizon for each degree of distance that he travels, that is to say, the altitude of the Pole Star will be 34° , then 40° , then 50° , then 60° , then 70° . If he reaches the North Pole the altitude of the Pole Star will be 90° or have attained the zenith, that is to say, will be directly overhead. This Pole Star and its ascension are sensible things. The farther one goes towards the Pole, the higher the Pole Star rises; from these two known truths an unknown thing has been discovered, that is, that the horizon is curved: meaning that the horizon of each degree of the earth is a different horizon from that of another degree. Man perceives this, and proves from it an invisible thing which is the roundness of the earth. This it is impossible for the animal to perceive. In the same way it cannot understand that the sun is the center and that the earth revolves around it. The animal is the captive of the senses and bound by them; all that is beyond the senses, the things that they do not control, the animal can never understand; although in the outer senses it is greater than man. Hence it is proved

and verified that in man there is a power of discovery by which he is distinguished from the animals, and this is the spirit of man.

Praise be to God! man is always turned towards the heights, and his aspiration is lofty; he always desires to reach a greater world than the world in which he is, and to mount to a higher sphere than that in which he is. The love of exaltation is one of the characteristics of man. I am astonished that certain philosophers of America and Europe are content to gradually approach the animal world, and so to go backwards; for the tendency of existence must be towards exaltation. Nevertheless, if you said to one of them, You are an animal—he would be extremely hurt and angry.

What a difference between the human world and the world of the animal; between the elevation of man and the abasement of the animal; between the perfection of man and the ignorance of the animal; between the light of man and the darkness of the animal; between the glory of man and the degradation of the animal! An Arab child of ten years can manage two or three hundred camels in the desert, and with his voice can lead them forward or turn them back. A weak Hindu can so control a huge elephant, that the elephant becomes the most obedient of servants. All things are subdued by the hand of man; he can resist nature, while all other creatures are captives of nature, none can depart from her requirements. Man alone can resist nature. Nature attracts bodies to the center of the earth; man through mechanical means goes far from it, and soars in the air. Nature prevents man from crossing the seas, man builds a ship, and he travels and voyages across the great ocean, and so on; the subject is endless. For example, man drives engines over the mountains and through the wildernesses, and gathers in one spot the news of the events of the East and West. All this is contrary to nature. The sea with its grandeur cannot deviate by an atom from the laws of nature; the sun in all its magnificence cannot deviate as much as a needle's point from the laws of nature, and can never comprehend the conditions, the state, the qualities, the movements, and the nature of man.

What, then, is the power in this small body of man which encompasses all this? What is this ruling power by which he subdues all things?

One more point remains: modern philosophers say: "We have never seen the spirit in man, and in spite of our researches into the secrets of the human body, we do not perceive a spiritual power. How can we imagine a power which is not sensible?" The theologians reply: "The spirit of the animal also is not sensible, and through its bodily powers it cannot be perceived. By what do you prove the existence of the spirit of the animal? There is no doubt that from its effects you prove that in the animal there is a power which is not in the plant, and this is the power of the senses; that is to say, sight, hearing, and also other powers; from these you infer that there is an animal

spirit. In the same way, from the proofs and signs we have mentioned, we argue that there is a human spirit. Since in the animal there are signs which are not in the plant, you say this power of sensation is a property of the animal spirit; you also see in man signs, powers, and perfections which do not exist in the animal; therefore you infer that there is a power in him which the animal is without.”

If we wish to deny everything that is not sensible, then we must deny the realities which unquestionably exist. For example, ethereal matter is not sensible, though it has an undoubted existence. The power of attraction is not sensible, though it certainly exists. From what do we affirm these existences? From their signs. Thus this light is the vibration of that ethereal matter, and from this vibration we infer the existence of ether.

MAN AND EVOLUTION

Certain European philosophers agree that the species grows and develops, and that even change and alteration are also possible. One of the proofs that they give for this theory is that through the attentive study and verification of the science of geology it has become clear that the existence of the vegetable preceded that of the animal, and that of the animal preceded that of man. They admit that both the vegetable and the animal species have changed, for in some of the strata of the earth they have discovered plants which existed in the past and are now extinct; they have progressed, grown in strength, their form and appearance have changed, and so the species have altered. In the same way, in the strata of the earth there are some species of animals which have changed and are transformed. One of these animals is the serpent. There are indications that the serpent once had feet; but through the lapse of time those members have disappeared. In the same way, in the vertebral column of man there is an indication which amounts to a proof that, like other animals, he once had a tail. At one time that member was useful, but when man developed it was no longer of use, and therefore it gradually disappeared. As the serpent took refuge under the ground, and became a creeping animal, it was no longer in need of feet, so they disappeared; but their traces survive. The principal argument is this: that the existence of traces of members proves that they once existed; and as now they are no longer of service, they have gradually disappeared. Therefore while the perfect and necessary members have remained, those which are unnecessary have gradually disappeared by the modification of the species, but the traces of them continue.

The first answer to this argument is the fact that the animal having preceded man is not a proof of the evolution, change, and alteration of the species, nor that

man was raised from the animal world to the human world. For while the individual appearance of these different beings is certain, it is possible that man came into existence after the animal. So when we examine the vegetable kingdom, we see that the fruits of the different trees do not arrive at maturity at one time; on the contrary, some come first and others afterwards. This priority does not prove that the later fruit of one tree was produced from the earlier fruit of another tree.

Secondly, these slight signs and traces of members have perhaps a great reason of which the mind is not yet cognizant. How many things exist of which we do not yet know the reason! So the science of physiology, that is to say the knowledge of the composition of the members, records that the reason and cause of the difference in the colors of animals, and of the hair of men, of the redness of the lips, and of the variety of the colors of birds, is still unknown; it is secret and hidden. But it is known that the pupil of the eye is black, so as to attract the rays of the sun; for if it were another color, that is, uniformly white, it would not attract the rays of the sun. Therefore, as the reason of the things we have mentioned is unknown, it is possible that the reason and the wisdom of these traces of members, whether they be in the animal or man, are equally unknown. Certainly there is a reason, even though it is not known.

Thirdly, let us suppose that there was a time when some animals, or even man, possessed some members which have now disappeared; this is not a sufficient proof of the change and evolution of the species. For man, from the beginning of the embryonic period till he reaches the degree of maturity, goes through different forms and appearances. His aspect, his form, his appearance, and color change; he passes from one form to another, and from one appearance to another. Nevertheless, from the beginning of the embryonic period he is of the species of man; that is to say, an embryo of a man, and not of an animal; but this is not at first apparent, but later it becomes visible and evident. For example, let us suppose that man once resembled the animal, and that now he has progressed and changed; supposing this to be true, it is still not a proof of the change of species; no, as before mentioned, it is merely like the change and alteration of the embryo of man until it reaches the degree of reason and perfection. We will state it more clearly: let us suppose that there was a time when man walked on his hands and feet or had a tail; this change and alteration is like that of the foetus in the womb of the mother; although it changes in all ways, and grows and develops until it reaches the perfect form, from the beginning it is a special species. We also see in the vegetable kingdom that the original species of the genus do not change and alter, but the form, color, and bulk will change and alter, or even progress.

To recapitulate: as man in the womb of the mother passes from form to form,

from shape to shape, changes and develops, and is still the human species from the beginning of the embryonic period in the same way man, from the beginning of his existence in the matrix of the world, is also a distinct species, that is, man, and has gradually evolved from one form to another. Therefore this change of appearance, this evolution of members, this development and growth, even though we admit the reality of growth and progress, does not prevent the species from being original. Man from the beginning was in this perfect form and composition, and possessed capacity and aptitude for acquiring material and spiritual perfections, and was the manifestation of these words, “We will make man in Our image and likeness.” He has only become more pleasing, more beautiful, and more graceful. Civilization has brought him out of his wild state, just as the wild fruits which are cultivated by a gardener became finer, sweeter, and acquire more freshness and delicacy.

The gardeners of the world of humanity are the Prophets of God.

SPIRITUAL NATURE OF MAN

We have many times demonstrated and established that man is the noblest of beings, the sum of all perfections, and that all beings and all existences are the centers from which the glory of God is reflected, that is to say, the signs of the Divinity of God are apparent in the realities of things and of creatures. Just as the terrestrial globe is the place where the rays of the sun are reflected—as its light, its heat, and its influence are apparent and visible in all the atoms of the earth—so, in the same way, the atoms of beings, in this infinite space, proclaim and prove one of the divine perfections. Nothing is deprived of this benefit; it is either a sign of the mercy of God or it is a sign of His power, His greatness, His justice, His lordship which imparts education; or it is a sign of the generosity of God, His vision, His hearing, His knowledge, His grace, and so on.

Without doubt each being is the center of the shining forth of the glory of God: that is to say, the perfections of God appear from it and are resplendent in it. It is like the sun, which is resplendent in the desert, upon the sea, in the trees, in the fruits and blossoms, and in all earthly things. The world, indeed each existing being, proclaims to us one of the names of God, but the reality of man is the collective reality, the general reality, and is the center where the glory of all the perfections of God shine forth. That is to say, for each name, each attribute, each perfection which we affirm of God, there exists a sign in man; if it were otherwise, man could not imagine these perfections, and could not understand them. So we say that God is the seer, and the eye is the sign of His vision; if this sight were not in man, how could we imagine the

vision of God? for the blind, that is one born blind, cannot imagine sight; and the deaf, that is one deaf from birth, cannot imagine hearing; and the dead cannot realize life. Consequently the Divinity of God, which is the sum of all perfections, reflects itself in the reality of man; that is to say, the Essence of Oneness is the gathering of all perfections, and from this unity He casts a reflection upon the human reality. Man then is the perfect mirror facing the Sun of Truth, and is the center of radiation: the Sun of Truth shines in this mirror. The reflection of the divine perfections appears in the reality of man, so he is the representative of God, the messenger of God. If man did not exist, the universe would be without result, for the object of existence is the appearance of the perfections of God.

Therefore it cannot be said there was a time when man was not. All that we can say is that this terrestrial globe at one time did not exist, and at its beginning man did not appear upon it. But from the beginning which has no beginning, to the end which has no end, a perfect manifestation always exists. This man of whom we speak is not every man; we mean the perfect man. For the noblest part of the tree is the fruit, which is the reason of its existence; if the tree had no fruit, it would have no meaning. Therefore it cannot be imagined that the worlds of existence whether the stars or this earth, were once inhabited by the donkey, cow, mouse, and cat, and that they were without man! This supposition is false and meaningless. The word of God is clear as the sun. This is a spiritual proof, but one which we cannot at the beginning put forth for the benefit of the materialists; first we must speak of the logical proofs, afterwards the spiritual proofs.

MAN'S INNATE POWERS

The beginning of the existence of man on the terrestrial globe resembles his formation in the womb of the mother. The embryo in the womb of the mother gradually grows and develops until birth, after which it continues to grow and develop until it reaches the age of discretion and maturity. Though in infancy the signs of the mind and spirit appear in man, they do not reach the degree of perfection; they are imperfect. Only when man attains maturity do the mind and the spirit appear and become evident in utmost perfection.

So also the formation of man in the matrix of the world was in the beginning like the embryo; then gradually he made progress in perfection, and grew and developed until he reached the state of maturity, when the mind and spirit became visible in the greatest power. In the beginning of his formation the mind and spirit also existed, but they were hidden; later they were manifested. In the womb of the world mind and

spirit also existed in the embryo, but they were concealed; afterwards they appeared. So it is that in the seed the tree exists, but it is hidden and concealed; when it develops and grows, the complete tree appears. In the same way the growth and development of all beings is gradual; this is the universal divine organization, and the natural system. The seed does not at once become a tree, the embryo does not at once become a man, the mineral does not suddenly become a stone. No, they grow and develop gradually, and attain the limit of perfection.

All beings, whether large or small, were created perfect and complete from the first, but their perfections appear in them by degrees. The organization of God is one: the evolution of existence is one: the divine system is one. Whether they be small or great beings, all are subject to one law and system. Each seed has in it from the first all the vegetable perfections. For example, in the seed all the vegetable perfections exist from the beginning, but not visibly; afterwards little by little they appear. So it is first the shoot which appears from the seed, then the branches, leaves, blossoms, and fruits; but from the beginning of its existence all these things are in the seed, potentially, though not apparently. In the same way, the embryo possesses from the first all perfections, such as the spirit, the mind, the sight, the smell, the taste—in one word, all the powers—but they are not visible, and become so only by degrees.

Similarly, the terrestrial globe from the beginning was created with all its elements, substances, minerals, atoms, and organisms; but these only appeared by degrees: first the mineral, then the plant, afterward the animal, and finally man. But from the first these kinds and species existed, but were undeveloped in the terrestrial globe, and then appeared only gradually. For the supreme organization of God, and the universal natural system, surrounds all beings, and all are subject to this rule. When you consider this universal system, you see that there is not one of the beings, which at its coming into existence has reached the limit of perfection. No, they gradually grow and develop, and then attain the degree of perfection.

THE SPIRIT IN THE BODY

The wisdom of the appearance of the spirit in the body is this: the human spirit is a Divine Trust, and it must traverse all conditions; for its passage and movement through the conditions of existence will be the means of its acquiring perfections. So, when a man travels and passes through different regions and numerous countries with system and method, it is certainly a means of his acquiring perfection; for he will see places, scenes, and countries, from which he will discover the conditions and states of other nations. He will thus become acquainted with the geography of

countries, and their wonders and arts; he will familiarize himself with the habits, customs, and usages of peoples; he will see the civilization and progress of the epoch; he will become aware of the policy of governments, and the power and capacity of each country. It is the same when the human spirit passes through the conditions of existence: it will become the possessor of each degree and station. Even in the condition of the body it will surely acquire perfections.

Besides this, it is necessary that the signs of the perfection of the spirit should be apparent in this world, so that the world of creation may bring forth endless results, and this body may receive life and manifest the divine bounties. So, for example, the rays of the sun must shine upon the earth, and the solar heat develop the earthly beings; if the rays and heat of the sun did not shine upon the earth, the earth would be uninhabited, without meaning, and its development would be retarded. In the same way, if the perfections of the spirit did not appear in this world, this world would be unenlightened and absolutely brutal. By the appearance of the spirit in the physical form, this world is enlightened. As the spirit of man is the cause of the life of the body, so the world is in the condition of the body, and man is in the condition of the spirit. If there were no man, the perfections of the spirit would not appear, and the light of the mind would not be resplendent in this world. This world would be like a body without a soul.

This world is also in the condition of a fruit-tree, and man is like the fruit; without fruit the tree would be useless.

Moreover, these members, these elements, this composition, which are found in the organism of man, are an attraction and magnet for the spirit; it is certain that the spirit will appear in it. So, a mirror which is clear will certainly attract the rays of the sun. It will become luminous, and wonderful images will appear in it. That is to say, when these existing elements are gathered together according to the natural order, and with perfect strength, they become a magnet for the spirit, and the spirit will become manifest in them with all its perfections.

Under these conditions it cannot be said “what is the necessity for the rays of the sun to descend upon the mirror?”—for the connection which exists between the reality of things, whether they be spiritual or material, requires that when the mirror is clear and faces the sun, the light of the sun must become apparent in it. In the same way, when the elements are arranged and combined in the most glorious system, organization and manner, the human; spirit will appear and be manifest in them. This is the decree of the Powerful, the Wise.

MAN'S RELATION TO GOD

The connection between God and the creatures is that of the creator to the creation; it is like the connection between the sun and the dark bodies of contingent beings, and is the connection between the maker and the things that he has made. The sun in its own essence is independent of the bodies which it lights; for its light is in itself, and is free and independent of the terrestrial globe; so the earth is under the influence of the sun and receives its light, whereas the sun and its rays are entirely independent of the earth. But if there were no sun, the earth and all earthly beings could not exist.

The dependence through the creatures upon God is a dependence of emanation: that is to say, creatures emanate from God, they do not manifest Him. The relation is that of emanation and not that of manifestation. The light of the sun emanates from the sun, it does not manifest it. The appearance through emanation is like the appearance of the rays from the luminary of the horizons of the world: that is to say, the holy essence of the Sun of Truth is not divided, and does not descend to the condition of the creatures. In the same way, the globe of the sun does not become divided and does not descend to the earth: no, the rays of the sun, which are its bounty, emanate from it, and illumine the dark bodies.

But the appearance through manifestation is the manifestation of the branches, leaves, blossoms and fruit from the seed; for the seed in its own essence becomes branches and fruits, and its reality enters into the branches, the leaves, and fruits. This appearance through manifestation would be for God the Most High, simple imperfection, and this is quite impossible; for the implication would be that the Absolute Pre-existent is qualified with phenomenal attributes; but if this were so, pure independence would become mere poverty, and true existence would become non-existence, and this is impossible.

Therefore all creatures emanate from God; that is to say, it is by God that all things are realized, and by Him that all beings have attained to existence. The first thing which emanated from God is that universal reality, which the ancient philosophers termed the "First Mind," and which the people of Bahá call the "First Will." This emanation, in that which concerns its action in the world of God, is not limited by time or place; it is without beginning or end; beginning and end in relation to God are one. The pre-existence of God is the pre-existence of essence, and also pre-existence of time, and the phenomenality of contingency is essential and not temporal....

Though the "First Mind" is without beginning, it does not become a sharer in the pre-existence of God, for the existence of the universal reality in relation to the

existence of God is nothingness, and it has not the power to become an associate of God and like unto Him in pre-existence. This subject has been before explained.

The existence of living things signifies composition, and their death decomposition. But universal matter and the elements do not become absolutely annihilated and destroyed: no, their non-existence is simply transformation. For instance, when man is annihilated he becomes dust, but he does not become absolutely non-existent; he still exists in the shape of dust; but transformation has taken place, and this composition is accidentally decomposed. The annihilation of the other beings is the same, for existence does not become absolute non-existence, and absolute non-existence does not become existence.

SOUL, MIND AND SPIRIT

It has been before explained that spirit is universally divided into five categories: the vegetable spirit, the animal spirit, the human spirit, the spirit of faith, and the Holy Spirit.

The vegetable spirit is the power of growth which is brought about in the seed through the influence of other existences.

The animal spirit is the power of all the senses, which is realized from the composition and mingling of elements; when this composition decomposes, the power also perishes and becomes annihilated. It may be likened to this lamp: when the oil, wick, and fire are combined it is lighted, and when this combination is dissolved, that is to say, when the combined parts are separated from one another, the lamp also is extinguished.

The human spirit which distinguishes man from the animal is the rational soul; and these two names—the human spirit and the rational soul—designate one thing. This spirit, which in the terminology of the philosophers is the rational soul, embraces all beings, and as far as human ability permits discovers the realities of things and becomes cognizant of their peculiarities and effects, and of the qualities and properties of beings. But the human spirit unless assisted by the spirit of faith, does not become acquainted with the divine secrets and the heavenly realities. It is like a mirror which, although clear, polished, and brilliant, is still in need of light. Until a ray of the sun reflects upon it, it cannot discover the heavenly secrets.

But the mind is the power of the human spirit. Spirit is the lamp; mind is the light which shines from the lamp. Spirit is the tree, and the mind is the fruit. Mind is the perfection of the spirit, and is its essential quality, as the sun's rays are the

essential necessity of the sun.

FIVE PHYSICAL AND FIVE SPIRITUAL POWERS

In man five outer powers exist, which are the agents of perception, that is to say, through these five powers man perceives material beings. These are sight, which perceives visible forms; hearing, which perceives audible sounds; smell, which perceives odors; taste, which perceives foods; and feeling, which is in all parts of the body, and perceives tangible things. These five powers perceive outward existences.

Man has also spiritual powers: imagination, which conceives things; thought, which reflects upon realities; comprehension, which comprehends realities, memory, which retains whatever man imagines, thinks, and comprehends. The intermediary between the five outward powers and the inward powers, is the sense which they possess in common, that is to say, the sense which acts between the outer and inner powers, conveys to the inward powers whatever the outer powers discern. It is termed the common faculty, because it communicates between the outward and inward powers, and thus is common to the outward and inward powers.

For instance, sight is one of the outer powers; it sees and perceives this flower, and conveys this perception to the inner power—the common faculty—which transmits this perception to the power of imagination, which in its turn conceives and forms this image and transmits it to the power of thought; the power of thought reflects, and having grasped the reality, conveys it to the power of comprehension; the comprehension, when it has comprehended it, delivers the image of the object perceived to the memory, and the memory keeps it in its repository.

The outward powers are five: the power of sight, of hearing, of taste, of smell, and of feeling.

The inner powers are also five: the common faculty, and the powers of imagination, thought, comprehension, and memory.

INNATE, INHERITED AND ACQUIRED CHARACTER

With regard to the innate character, although the divine creation is purely good, yet the varieties of natural qualities in man come from the difference of degree; all are excellent, but they are more or less so, according to the degree. So all mankind possess intelligence and capacities, but the intelligence, the capacity, and the worthiness of

men differ. This is evident.

For example, take a number of children of one family, of one place, of one school, instructed by one teacher, reared on the same food, in the same climate, with the same clothing, and studying the same lessons—it is certain that among these children some will be clever in the sciences, some will be of average ability, and some dull. Hence it is clear that in the original nature there exists a difference of degree, and varieties of worthiness and capacity. This difference does not imply good or evil, but is simply a difference of degree. One has the highest degree, another the medium degree, and another the lowest degree. So man exists, the animal, the plant, and the mineral exist also—but the degrees of these four existences vary. What a difference between the existence of man and of the animal! Yet both are existences. It is evident that in existence there are differences of degrees.

The variety of inherited qualities comes from strength and weakness of constitution; that is to say, when the two parents are weak, the children will be weak; if they are strong, the children will be robust. In the same way, purity of blood has a great effect; for the pure germ is like the superior stock which exists in plants and animals. For example, you see that children born from a weak and feeble father and mother will naturally have a feeble constitution and weak nerves; they will be afflicted, and will have neither patience, nor endurance, nor resolution, nor perseverance, and will be hasty; for the children inherit the weakness and debility of their parents.

Besides this, an especial blessing is conferred on some families and some generations. Thus it is an especial blessing that from among the descendants of Abraham should have come all the Prophets of the children of Israel. This is a blessing that God has granted to this descent: to Moses from His father and mother, to Christ from His mother's line; also to Muhammad and the Bab, and to all the Prophets and the Holy Manifestations of Israel.

Hence it is evident that inherited character also exists, and to such a degree that if the characters are not in conformity with their origin, although they belong physically to that lineage, spiritually they are not considered members of the family; like Canaan, who is not reckoned as being of the race of Noah.

But the difference of the qualities with regard to culture is very great; for education has great influence. Through education the ignorant become learned, the cowardly become valiant; through cultivation the crooked branch becomes straight, the acid, bitter fruit of the mountains and woods becomes sweet and delicious, and the five-petalled flower becomes hundred-petalled. Through education savage nations become civilized, and even the animals become domesticated. Education must be

considered as most important: for as diseases in the world of bodies are extremely contagious, so, in the same way, qualities of spirit and heart are extremely contagious. Education has a universal influence and the differences caused by it are very great.

Perhaps some one will say, that since the capacity and worthiness of men differ, therefore the difference of capacity certainly causes the difference of characters.

But this is not so; for capacity is of two kinds, natural capacity and acquired capacity. The first, which is the creation of God, is purely good—in the creation of God there is no evil; but the acquired capacity has become the cause of the appearance of evil. For example, God has created all men in such a manner, and has given them such a constitution and such capacities, that they are benefited by sugar and honey, and harmed and destroyed by poison. This nature and constitution is innate, and God has given it equally to all mankind. But man begins little by little to accustom himself to poison, by taking a small quantity each day, and gradually increasing it, until he reaches such a point that he cannot live without a gram of opium every day. The natural capacities are thus completely perverted. Observe how much the natural capacity and constitution can be changed, until by different habits and training they become entirely perverted. One does not criticize vicious people because of their innate capacities and nature, but rather for their acquired capacities and nature.

In creation there is no evil; all is good. Certain qualities and natures innate in some men and apparently blameworthy are not so in reality. For example, from the beginning of his life you can see in a nursing child the signs of desire, of anger, and of temper. Then, it may be said, good and evil are innate in the reality of man, and this is contrary to the pure goodness of nature and creation. The answer to this is that desire, which is to ask for something more, is a praiseworthy quality provided that it is used suitably. So, if a man has the desire to acquire science and knowledge, or to become compassionate, generous, and just, it is most praiseworthy. If he exercises his anger and wrath against the bloodthirsty tyrants who are like ferocious beasts, it is very praiseworthy; but if he does not use these qualities in a right way, they are blameworthy.

Then it is evident that in creation and nature evil does not exist at all; but when the natural qualities of man are used in an unlawful way, they are blameworthy. So, if a rich and generous person gives a sum of money to a poor man for his own necessities, and if the poor man spends that sum of money on unlawful things, that will be blameworthy. It is the same with all the natural qualities of man, which constitute the capital of life; if they be used and displayed in an unlawful way, they

become blameworthy. Therefore it is clear that creation is purely good. Consider that the worst of qualities and most odious of attributes, which is the foundation of all evil, is lying. No worse or more blameworthy quality than this can be imagined to exist; it is the destroyer of all human perfections, and the cause of innumerable vices. There is no worse characteristic than this; it is the foundation of all evils. Notwithstanding all this, if a doctor consoles a sick man by saying: "Thank God you are better, and there is hope of your recovery," though these words are contrary to the truth, yet they may become the consolation of the patient and the turning-point of the illness. This is not blameworthy.

MAN'S KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Know that there are two kinds of knowledge: the knowledge of the essence of a thing, and the knowledge of its qualities. The essence of a thing is known through its qualities, otherwise it is unknown and hidden.

As our knowledge of things, even of created and limited things, is knowledge of their qualities and not of their essence, how is it possible to comprehend in its essence the Divine Reality, which is unlimited? For the substance of the essence of anything is not comprehended, but only its qualities. For example, the substance of the sun is unknown, but is understood by its qualities, which are heat and light. The substance of the essence of man is unknown and not evident, but by its qualities it is characterized and known.

Thus everything is known by its qualities and not by its essence. Although the mind encompasses all things, and the outward beings are comprehended by it, nevertheless these beings with regard to their essence are unknown; they are only known with regard to their qualities.

Then how can the eternal everlasting Lord, who is held sanctified from comprehension and conception, be known by His essence? That is to say, as things can only be known by their qualities and not by their essence, it is certain that the Divine Reality is unknown with regard to its essence, and is known with regard to its attributes. Besides, how can the phenomenal reality embrace the Pre-existent Reality? For comprehension is the result of encompassing—embracing must be, so that comprehension may be—and the Essence of Unity surrounds all, and is not surrounded.

Also the difference of condition in the world of beings is an obstacle to comprehension. For example: this mineral belongs to the mineral kingdom; however

far it may rise, it can never comprehend the power of growth. The plants, the trees, whatever progress they may make, cannot conceive of the power of sight or the powers of the other senses; and the animal cannot imagine the condition of man, that is to say, his spiritual powers. Difference of condition is an obstacle to knowledge; the inferior degree cannot comprehend the superior degree. How then can the phenomenal reality comprehend the Pre-existent Reality? Knowing God, therefore, means the comprehension and the knowledge of His attributes, and not of His Reality. This knowledge of the attributes is also proportioned to the capacity and power of man; it is not absolute. Philosophy consists in comprehending the reality of things as they exist, according to the capacity and the power of man. For the phenomenal reality can comprehend the Pre-existent attributes only to the extent of the human capacity. The mystery of Divinity is sanctified and purified from the comprehension of the beings, for all that comes to the imagination is that which man understands, and the power of the understanding of man does not embrace the Reality of the Divine Essence. All that man is able to understand are the attributes of Divinity, the radiance of which appears and is visible in worlds and souls.

When we look at the worlds and the souls, we see wonderful signs of the divine perfections, which are clear and apparent; for the reality of things proves the Universal Reality. The Reality of Divinity may be compared to the sun, which from the height of its magnificence shines upon all the horizons and each horizon, and each soul, receives a share of its radiance. If this light and these rays did not exist, beings would not exist; all beings express something, and partake of some ray and portion of this light. The splendors of the perfections, bounties, and attributes of God shine forth and radiate from the reality of the Perfect Man, that is to say, the Unique One, the universal Manifestation of God. Other beings receive only one ray, but the universal Manifestation is the mirror for this Sun, which appears and becomes manifest in it, with all its perfections, attributes, signs, and wonders.

The knowledge of the Reality of the Divinity is impossible and unattainable, but the knowledge of the Manifestations of God is the knowledge of God, for the bounties, splendors, and divine attributes are apparent in them. Therefore if man attains to the knowledge of the Manifestations of God, he will attain to the knowledge of God; and if he be neglectful of the knowledge of the Holy Manifestation, he will be bereft of the knowledge of God. It is then ascertained and proved that the Holy Manifestations are the center of the bounty, signs, and perfections of God. Blessed are those who receive the light of the divine bounties from the enlightened Dawning-points!

We hope that the friends of God, like an attractive force, will draw these bounties from the source itself, and that they will arise with such illumination and signs that

they will be evident proofs of the Sun of Reality.

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SPIRIT

The immortality of the spirit is mentioned in the Holy Books; it is the fundamental basis of the divine religions. Now punishments and rewards are said to be of two kinds. Firstly, the rewards and punishments of this life; secondly, those of the other world. But the paradise and hell of existence are found in all the worlds of God, whether in this world or in the spiritual heavenly worlds. Gaining these rewards is the gaining of eternal life. That is why Christ said, "Act in such a way that you may find eternal life, and that you may be born of water and the spirit, so that you may enter into the Kingdom."

The rewards of this life are the virtues and perfections which adorn the reality of man. For example, he was dark and becomes luminous, he was ignorant and becomes wise, he was neglectful and becomes vigilant, he was asleep and becomes awakened, he was dead and becomes living, he was blind and becomes a seer, he was deaf and becomes a hearer, he was earthly and becomes heavenly, he was material and becomes spiritual. Through these rewards he gains spiritual birth, and becomes a new creature. He becomes the manifestation of the verse in the Gospel where it is said of the disciples that they were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God; that is to say, they were delivered from the animal characteristics and qualities which are the characteristics of human nature, and they became qualified with the divine characteristics, which are the bounty of God; this is the meaning of the second birth. For such people there is no greater torture than being veiled from God, and no more severe punishment than sensual vices, dark qualities, lowness of nature, engrossment in carnal desires. When they are delivered through the light of faith from the darkness of these vices, and become illuminated with the radiance of the Sun of Reality, and ennobled with all the virtues, they esteem this the greatest reward, and they know it to be the true paradise. In the same way they consider that the spiritual punishment, that is to say the torture and punishment of existence, is to be subjected to the world of nature, to be veiled from God, to be brutal and ignorant, to fall into carnal lusts, to be absorbed in animal frailties; to be characterized with dark qualities, such as falsehood, tyranny, cruelty, attachment to the affairs of the world, and being immersed in satanic ideas; for them, these are the greatest punishments and tortures.

Likewise the rewards of the other world are the eternal life which is clearly mentioned in all the Holy Books, the divine perfections, the eternal bounties, and

everlasting felicity. The rewards of the other world are the perfections and the peace obtained in the spiritual worlds after leaving this world; whilst the rewards of this life are the real luminous perfections which are realized in this world, and which are the cause of eternal life, for they are the very progress of existence. It is like the man who passes from the embryonic world to the state of maturity, and becomes the manifestation of these words: "Blessed be God, the best of creators." The rewards of the other world are peace, the spiritual graces, the various spiritual gifts in the Kingdom of God, the gaining of the desires of the heart and the soul, and the meeting of God in the world of eternity. In the same way the punishments of the other world, that is to say, the torments of the other world, consist in being deprived of the special divine blessings and the absolute bounties, and falling into the lowest degrees of existence. He who is deprived of these divine favors, although he continues after death, is considered as dead by the people of truth.

The logical proof of the immortality of the spirit is this, that no sign can come from a non-existing thing; that is to say, it is impossible that from absolute non-existence signs should appear, for the signs are the consequence of an existence, and the consequence depends upon the existence of the principle. So, from a non-existing sun no light can radiate, from a non-existing sea no waves appear, from a non-existing cloud no rain falls; a non-existing tree yields no fruit; a non-existing man neither manifests nor produces anything. Therefore as long as signs of existence appear, they are a proof that the possessor of the sign is existent.

Consider that today the Kingdom of Christ exists: from a nonexistent king how could such a great kingdom be manifested? How, from a non-existing sea, can the waves mount so high? From a non-existing garden, how can such fragrant breezes be wafted? Reflect that no effect, no trace, no influence remains of any being after its members are dispersed and its elements are decomposed, whether it be a mineral, a vegetable, or an animal. There is only the human reality and the spirit of man which, after the disintegration of the members, dispersing of the particles, and the destruction of the composition, persists, and continues to act and to have power.

This question is extremely subtle: consider it attentively. This is a rational proof which we are giving, so that the wise may weigh it in the balance of reason and justice. But if the human spirit will rejoice and be attracted to the Kingdom of God, if the inner sight becomes opened, and the spiritual hearing strengthened, and the spiritual feelings predominant, he will see the immortality of the spirit as clearly as he sees the sun, and the glad tidings and signs of God will encompass him.

Know that the power and the comprehension of the human spirit are of two kinds: that is to say, they perceive and act in two different modes. One way is through

instruments and organs: thus with this eye it sees, with this ear it hears, with this tongue it talks. Such is the action of the spirit, and the perception of the reality of man, by means of organs. That is to say, that the spirit is the seer, through the eyes; the spirit is the hearer, through the ear; the spirit is the speaker, through the tongue.

The other manifestation of the powers and actions of the spirit is without instruments and organs. For example, in the state of sleep without eyes it sees, without an ear it hears, without a tongue it speaks, without feet it runs. Briefly, these actions are beyond the means of instruments and organs. How often it happens that it sees a dream in the world of sleep, and its signification becomes apparent two years afterwards in corresponding events. In the same way, how many times it happens that a question which one cannot solve in the world of wakefulness, is solved in the world of dreams. In wakefulness the eye sees only for a short distance, but in dreams he who is in the East sees the West: awake he sees the present, in sleep he sees the future. In wakefulness, by means of rapid transit, at the most he can travel only twenty farsakhs an hour; in sleep, in the twinkling of an eye, he traverses the East and West. For the spirit travels in two different ways: without means, which is spiritual traveling; and with means, which is material traveling: as birds which fly, and those which are carried.

In the time of sleep this body is as though dead; it does not see nor hear, it does not feel, it has no consciousness, no perception: that is to say, the powers of man have become inactive, but the spirit lives and subsists. Nay, its penetration is increased, its flight is higher, and its intelligence is greater. To consider that after the death of the body the spirit perishes, is like imagining that a bird in a cage will be destroyed if the cage is broken, though the bird has nothing to fear from the destruction of the cage. Our body is like the cage, and the spirit is like the bird. We see that without the cage this bird flies in the world of sleep; therefore if the cage becomes broken, the bird will continue and exist: its feelings will be even more powerful, its perceptions greater, and its happiness increased. In truth, from hell it reaches a paradise of delights, because for the thankful birds there is no paradise greater than freedom from the cage. That is why with utmost joy and happiness the martyrs hasten to the plain of sacrifice.

In wakefulness the eye of man sees at the utmost as far as one hour of distance, because through the instrumentality of the body the power of the spirit is thus determined; but with the inner sight and the mental eye it sees America, and it can perceive that which is there, and discover the conditions of things and organize affairs. If, then, the spirit were the same as the body, it would be necessary that the power of the inner sight should also be in the same proportion. Therefore it is evident

that this spirit is different from the body, and that the bird is different from the cage, and that the power and penetration of the spirit is stronger without the intermediary of the body. Now, if the instrument is abandoned, the possessor of the instrument continues to act. For example, if the pen is abandoned or broken, the writer remains living and present; if a house is ruined, the owner is alive and existing. This is one of the logical evidences for the immortality of the soul.

There is another: this body becomes weak, or heavy, or sick, or it finds health; it becomes tired or rested; sometimes the hand or leg is amputated, or its physical power is crippled; it becomes blind or deaf or dumb; its limbs may become paralyzed; briefly, the body may have all the imperfections. Nevertheless, the spirit in its original state, in its own spiritual perception, will be eternal and perpetual; it neither finds any imperfection nor will it become crippled. But when the body is wholly subjected to disease and misfortune, it is deprived of the bounty of the spirit; like a mirror which, when it becomes broken, or dirty, or dusty, cannot reflect the rays of the sun, nor any longer show its bounties.

We have already explained that the spirit of man is not in the body, because it is freed and sanctified from entrance and exit, which are bodily conditions. The connection of the spirit with the body is like that of the sun with the mirror. Briefly, the human spirit is in one condition; it neither becomes ill from the diseases of the body, nor cured by its health; it does not become sick, nor weak, nor miserable, nor poor, nor light, nor small. That is to say, it will not be injured because of the infirmities of the body, and no effect will be visible even if the body becomes weak or if the hands and feet and tongue be cut off, or if it loses the power of hearing or sight. Therefore it is evident and certain that the spirit is different from the body, and that its duration is independent of that of the body; on the contrary, the spirit with the utmost greatness rules in the world of the body, and its power and influence, like the bounty of the sun in the mirror, are apparent and visible. But when the mirror becomes dusty or breaks, it will cease to reflect the rays of the sun.

PERFECTION IS ENDLESS

Know that the conditions of existence are limited to the conditions of servitude, of prophethood, and of Deity, but the divine and the contingent perfections are unlimited. When you reflect deeply, you discover that also outwardly the perfections of existence are also unlimited, for you cannot find a being so perfect that you cannot imagine a superior one. For example, you cannot see a ruby in the mineral kingdom, a rose in the vegetable kingdom, or a nightingale in the animal kingdom, without

imagining that there might be better specimens. As the divine bounties are endless, so human perfections are endless. If it were possible to reach a limit of perfection, then one of the realities of the beings might reach the condition of being independent of God, and the contingent might attain to the condition of the absolute. But for every being there is a point which it cannot overpass; that is to say, he who is in the condition of servitude, however far he may progress in gaining limitless perfections, will never reach the condition of Deity. It is the same with the other beings: a mineral, however far it may progress in the mineral kingdom, cannot gain the vegetable power; also in a flower, however far it may progress in the vegetable kingdom, no power of the senses will appear. So this silver mineral cannot gain hearing or sight; it can only improve in its own condition, and become a perfect mineral, but it cannot acquire the power of growth, or the power of sensation, or attain to life; it can only progress in its own condition.

For example, Peter cannot become Christ. All that he can do is, in the condition of servitude, to attain endless perfections; for every existing reality is capable of making progress. As the spirit of man after putting off this material form has an everlasting life certainly any existing being is capable of making progress; therefore it is permitted to ask for advancement, forgiveness, mercy, beneficence, and blessings for a man after his death, because existence is capable of progression. That is why in the prayers of Bahá'u'lláh forgiveness and remission of sins are asked for those who have died. Moreover, as people in this world are in need of God, they will also need Him in the other world. The creatures are always in need, and God is absolutely independent, whether in this world or in the world to come.

The wealth of the other world is nearness to God. Consequently it is certain that those who are near the Divine Court are allowed to intercede, and this intercession is approved by God. But intercession in the other world is not like intercession in this world: it is another thing, another reality, which cannot be expressed in words.

If a wealthy man at the time of his death bequeaths a gift to the poor and miserable, and gives a part of his wealth to be spent for them, perhaps this action may be the cause of his pardon and forgiveness, and of his progress in the Divine Kingdom.

Also a father and mother endure the greatest troubles and hardships for their children; and often when the children have reached the age of maturity, the parents pass on to the other world. Rarely does it happen that a father and mother in this world see the reward of the care and trouble they have undergone for their children. Therefore children, in return for this care and trouble, must show forth charity and beneficence, and must implore pardon and forgiveness for their parents. So you

ought, in return for the love and kindness shown you by your father, to give to the poor for his sake, with greatest submission and humility implore pardon and remission of sins, and ask for the supreme mercy.

It is even possible that the condition of those who have died in sin and unbelief may become changed; that is to say, they may become the object of pardon through the bounty of God, not through His justice; for bounty is giving without desert, and justice is giving what is deserved. As we have power to pray for these souls here, so likewise we shall possess the same power in the other world, which is the Kingdom of God. Are not all the people in that world the creatures of God? Therefore in that world also they can make progress. As here they can receive light by their supplication, there also they can plead for forgiveness, and receive light through entreaties and supplications. Thus as souls in this world, through the help of the supplications, the entreaties, and the prayers of the holy ones, can acquire development, so is it the same after death. Through their own prayers and supplications they can also progress; more especially when they are the object of the intercession of the Holy Manifestations.

THE EVOLUTION OF MAN IN THE OTHER WORLD

Know that nothing which exists remains in a state of repose, that is to say, all things are in motion. Everything is either growing or declining, all things are either coming from non-existence into being, or going from existence into non-existence. So this flower, this hyacinth, during a certain period of time was coming from the world of non-existence into being, and now it is going from being into non-existence. This state of motion is said to be essential—that is, natural; it cannot be separated from beings because it is their essential requirement, as it is the essential requirement of fire to burn.

Thus it is established that this movement is necessary to existence, which is either growing or declining. Now, as the spirit continues to exist after death, it necessarily progresses or declines: and in the other world, to cease to progress is the same as to decline; but it never leaves its own condition, in which it continues to develop. For example, the reality of the spirit of Peter, however far it may progress, will not reach to the condition of the Reality of Christ; it progresses only in its own environment.

Look at this mineral: however far it may evolve, it only evolves in its own condition; you cannot bring the crystal to a state where it can attain to sight: this is impossible. So the moon which is in the heavens, however far it might evolve, could

never become a luminous sun; but in its own condition it has apogee and perigee. However far the disciples might progress, they could never become Christ. It is true that coal could become a diamond, but both are in the mineral condition and their component elements are the same.

PROGRESS AFTER DEATH

When we consider beings with the seeing eye, we observe that they are limited to three sorts: that is to say, as a whole, they are either mineral, vegetable, or animal; each of these three classes containing species. Man is the highest species because he is the possessor of the perfections of all the classes; that is, he has a body which grows and which feels. As well as having the perfections of the mineral, of the vegetable, and of the animal, he also possesses an especial excellence which the other beings are without; that is, the intellectual perfections. Therefore man is the most noble of beings.

Man is in the highest degree of materiality, and at the beginning of spirituality; that is to say, he is the end of imperfection and the beginning of perfection. He is at the last degree of darkness, and at the beginning of light; that is why it has been said that the condition of man is the end of the night and the beginning of day, meaning that he is the sum of all the degrees of imperfection, and that he possesses the degrees of perfection. He has the animal side as well as the angelic side; and the aim of an educator is to so train human souls, that their angelic aspect may overcome their animal side. Then, if the divine power in man which is his essential perfection, overcomes the satanic power, which is absolute imperfection, he becomes the most excellent among the creatures; but if the satanic power overcomes the divine power, he becomes the lowest of the creatures. That is why he is the end of imperfection and the beginning of perfection. Not in any other of the species in the world of existence is there such a difference, contrast, contradiction, and opposition, as in the species of man. Thus the reflection of the Divine Light was in man, as in Christ, and see how loved and honored He is! At the same time we see man worshipping a stone, a clod of earth, or a tree: how vile he is, in that his object of worship should be the lowest existence that is a stone, or clay, without spirit; a mountain, a forest, or a tree. What shame is greater for man than to worship the lowest existence? In the same way, knowledge is a quality of man, and so is ignorance; truthfulness is a quality of man, so is falsehood; trustworthiness and treachery, justice and injustice, are qualities of man, and so forth. Briefly, all the perfections and virtues, and all the vices, are qualities of man.

Consider equally the differences between individual men. The Christ was in the form of man, and Caiaphas was in the form of man; Moses and Pharaoh, Abel and Cain, Bahá'u'lláh and Yahyá, were men.

Man is said to be the greatest representative of God, and he is the Book of Creation because all the mysteries of beings exist in him. If he comes under the shadow of the True Educator and is rightly trained, he becomes the essence of essences, the light of lights, the spirit of spirits; he becomes the center of the divine appearances, the source of spiritual qualities, the rising-place of heavenly lights, and the receptacle of divine inspirations. If he is deprived of this education he becomes the manifestation of satanic qualities, the sum of animal vices, and the source of all dark conditions.

The reason of the mission of the Prophets is to educate men; so that this piece of coal may become a diamond, and this fruitless tree may be engrafted, and yield the sweetest, most delicious fruits. When man reaches the noblest state in the world of humanity, then he can make further progress in the conditions of perfection, but not in state; for such states are limited, but the divine perfections are endless.

Both before and after putting off this material form, there is progress in perfection, but not in state. So beings are consummated in perfect man. There is no other being higher than a perfect man. But man when he has reached this state can still make progress in perfections but not in state, because there is no state higher than that of a perfect man to which he can transfer himself. He only progresses in the state of humanity, for the human perfections are infinite. Thus, however learned a man may be, we can imagine one more learned.

Hence, as the perfections of humanity are endless, man can also make progress in perfections after leaving this world.

TABLET ON PURITY

Cleanliness and sanctity in all conditions are characteristics of pure beings and necessities of free souls. The first perfection consists in cleanliness and sanctity and in purity from every defect. When man in all conditions is pure and immaculate, he will become the center of the reflection of the manifest Light. In all his actions and conduct there must first be purity, then beauty and independence. The channel must be cleansed before it is filled with sweet water. The pure eye comprehendeth the sight and the meeting of God; the pure nostril inhaleteth the perfumes of the rose-garden of bounty; the pure heart becometh the mirror of the beauty of truth. This is why, in the

heavenly Books, the divine counsels and commands have been compared to water. So, in the *Qur'án* it is said, “and we have caused a pure water to descend from heaven;” and in the Gospel, “Except a man hath received the baptism of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.” Then it is evident that the divine teachings are the heavenly grace and the showers of the mercy of God, which purify the hearts of men.

The meaning is, in all conditions, cleanliness and sanctity, purity and delicacy exalt humanity and make the contingent beings progress. Even when applied to physical things, delicacy causeth the attainment of spirituality, as it is established in the Holy Scriptures.

External cleanliness, although it is but a physical thing, hath a great influence upon spirituality. For example, although sound is but the vibrations of the air which affect the tympanum of the ear, and vibrations of the air are but an accident among the accidents which depend upon the air, consider how much marvelous notes or a charming song influence the spirits! A wonderful song giveth wings to the spirit and filleth the heart with exaltation. To return to the subject, the fact of having a pure and spotless body likewise exerciseth an influence upon the spirit of man.

Now, see how much purity is approved in the Court of God, that it should be especially mentioned in the Holy Books of the Prophets. So the Holy Books forbid the eating of any unclean thing, or the use of anything which is not pure. Certain prohibitions are absolute and imperative for all: he who commits that which is forbidden is detested by God and excluded from the number of the elect. This applieth to the things forbidden by an absolute prohibition and of which the perpetration is a grave sin; they are so vile that even to mention them is shameful. There are other forbidden things which do not cause an immediate evil and of which the pernicious effect is only gradually produced. They are also abhorred, blamed and rejected by God, but their prohibition is not recorded in an absolute way, although cleanliness and sanctity, spotlessness and purity, the preservation of health and independence are required by these interdictions.

One of these last prohibitions is the smoking of tobacco, which is unclean, malodorous, disagreeable and vulgar and of which the gradual harmfulness is universally recognized. All clever physicians have judged, and have also shown by experiment, that one of the constituents of tobacco is a mortal poison and that smokers are exposed to different indispositions and maladies. That is why cleanly people have a marked aversion for its use.

His supreme Highness the Báb—may my soul be His sacrifice!—in the beginning of His Cause, openly forbade it and all the friends abandoned its use. But, as it was a

time for caution and he who abstained from smoking was ill treated, persecuted and even killed, therefore the friends were obliged, as a matter of prudence, to smoke. Later, the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* was revealed and as the prohibition of tobacco was not clearly stated in it, the friends did not renounce it. But the Blessed Perfection had always a marked aversion for its use. At the beginning of the Cause, for certain reasons, He smoked a little, but later He abandoned it completely, and the holy souls who obeyed Him in all circumstances, also entirely gave up smoking. I wish to say that, in the sight of God, the smoking of tobacco is a thing which is blamed and condemned, very unclean, and of which the result is by degrees injurious. Besides it is a cause of expense and of loss of time and it is a harmful habit. So, for those who are firm in the Covenant, it is a thing reprobated by the reason and by tradition, the renouncement of which giveth gradual repose and tranquility, permitteth one to have stainless hands and a clean mouth, and hair which is not pervaded by a bad odor.

Without any doubt, the friends of God on receiving this epistle will renounce this injurious habit by all means, even if it be necessary to do so by degrees. This is my hope.

As to the question of opium, disgusting and execrated, I resign myself to God for its punishment. The formal text of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* forbids and reproves it and, according to reason, its use leads to madness. Experience hath shown that he who giveth himself up to it is completely excluded from the world of humanity. Let us take refuge in God against the perpetration of so shameful a thing, which is the destruction of the foundations of humanity and which causeth a perpetual unhappiness. It taketh possession of the soul of man, killeth the reason, weakeneth the intelligence, maketh a living man dead and extinguisheth the natural heat. It is impossible to imagine anything more pernicious. Happy is he who never mentioneth the word opium! But what is the fate of those who make use of it!

O friends of God! Force and violence, constraint and oppression are condemned in this divine cycle, but to prevent the use of opium, all means must be employed, so that the human species may be delivered and freed from this great calamity. Otherwise, alas! for all the negligent before God.

O Lord! Give to the people of Bahá cleanliness and holiness in all conditions, purify and free them from all defilement, deliver them from the use of all that is execrated, liberate them from the chains of habits, so that they may be pure and free, clean and spotless, that they may be worthy servants of the Sacred Threshold and may deserve to enter into relation with God. Deliver them from alcohol and tobacco, and save them from opium, the purveyor of madness! Make them companions of the holy breezes, in order that they may know the pleasures of the wine of the love of

God, and that they may attain to the joy and the happiness of attraction to the Kingdom of Abha!

Hast Thou not said, "All that thou hast in thy cellar will not appease the thirst of my love—bring me, O cup-bearer of the wine of the spirit, a cup full as the sea!"

O friends of God! Experience hath shown how much the renouncing of tobacco, wine and opium, giveth health, strength and intellectual enjoyments, penetration of judgment and physical vigor. There exists today a tribe which refrains and abstains from tobacco, alcohol and opium and it completely excels all others in power, in bravery, in health, beauty and grace. A single one of these men can withstand ten men of other tribes, and this hath been universally proved; that is to say, generally, the individuals of this tribe are superior to the individuals of the other tribes.

Therefore strive that the greatest cleanliness and sanctity, which is the great desire of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, should be resplendent among the Bahá'ís, and that the companions of God should surpass the rest of mankind in all conditions and perfections; that they may be physically and morally superior to others; that through cleanliness and purity, refinement and health, they may be the chief of wise men, and that by their affranchisement, their prudence, and the control of their desires, they may be the princes of the pure, the free and the wise.

GOD AND THE UNIVERSE

... By materialists, whose belief with regard to Divinity hath been explained, is not meant philosophers in general, but rather that group of materialists of narrow vision that worship that which is sensed, that depend upon the five senses only, and whose criterion of knowledge is limited to that which can be perceived by the senses. All that can be sensed is to them real, whilst whatever falleth not under the power of the senses is either unreal or doubtful. The existence of the Deity they regard as wholly doubtful.

It is as thou hast written, not philosophers in general but narrow-minded materialists that are meant. As to deistic philosophers, such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, they are indeed worthy of esteem and of the highest praise, for they have rendered distinguished services to mankind. In like manner we regard the materialistic, accomplished, moderate philosophers, that have been of service (to mankind).

We regard knowledge and wisdom as the foundation of the progress of mankind, and extol philosophers that are endowed with broad vision. Peruse carefully the San

Francisco University Journal that the truth may be revealed to thee.

Now concerning mental faculties, they are in truth of the inherent properties of the soul, even as the radiation of light is the essential property of the sun. The rays of the sun are renewed but the sun itself is ever the same and unchanged. Consider how the human intellect develops and weakens, and may at times come to naught, whereas the soul changeth not. For the mind to manifest itself, the human body must be whole; and a sound mind cannot be but in a sound body, whereas the soul dependeth not upon the body. It is through the power of the soul that the mind comprehendeth, imagineth and exerteth its influence, whilst the soul is a power that is free. The mind comprehendeth the abstract by the aid of the concrete, but the soul hath limitless manifestations of its own. The mind is circumscribed, the soul limitless. It is by the aid of such senses as those of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch, that the mind comprehendeth, whereas, the soul is free from all agencies. The soul as thou observest, whether it be in sleep or waking, is in motion and ever active. Possibly it may, whilst in a dream, unravel an intricate problem, incapable of solution in the waking state. The mind, moreover, understandeth not whilst the senses have ceased to function, and in the embryonic stage and in early infancy the reasoning power is totally absent, whereas the soul is ever endowed with full strength. In short, the proofs are many that go to show that despite the loss of reason, the power of the soul would still continue to exist. The spirit however possesseth various grades and stations.

As to the existence of spirit in the mineral: it is indubitable that minerals are endowed with a spirit and life according to the requirements of that stage. This unknown secret, too, hath become known unto the materialists who now maintain that all beings are endowed with life, even as He saith in the *Qur'án*, "All things are living."

In the vegetable world, too, there is the power of growth, and that power of growth is the spirit. In the animal world there is the sense of feeling, but in the human world there is an all-embracing power. In all the preceding stages the power of reason is absent, but the soul existeth and revealeth itself. The sense of feeling understandeth not the soul, whereas the reasoning power of the mind proveth the existence thereof.

In like manner the mind proveth the existence of an unseen Reality that embraceth all beings, and that existeth and revealeth itself in all stages, the essence whereof is beyond the grasp of the mind. Thus the mineral world understandeth neither the nature nor the perfections of the vegetable world; the vegetable world understandeth not the nature of the animal world, neither the animal world the

nature of the reality of man that discovereth and embraceth all things.

The animal is the captive of nature and cannot transgress the rules and laws thereof. In man, however, there is a discovering power that transcendeth the world of nature and controlleth and interfereth with the laws thereof. For instance, all minerals, plants and animals are captives of nature. The sun itself with all its majesty is so subservient to nature that it hath no will of its own and cannot deviate a hair's-breadth from the laws thereof. In like manner all other beings, whether of the mineral, the vegetable or the animal world, cannot deviate from the laws of nature, nay, all are the slaves thereof. Man, however, though in body the captive of nature is yet free in his mind and soul, and hath the mastery over nature.

Consider: according to the law of nature man liveth, moveth and hath his being on earth, yet his soul and mind interfere with the laws thereof, and, even as the bird he flieth in the air, saileth speedily upon the seas and as the fish soundeth the deep and discovereth the things therein. Verily this is a grievous defeat inflicted upon the laws of nature.

So is the power of electrical energy: this unruly violent force that cleaveth mountains is yet imprisoned by man within a globe! This is manifestly interfering with the laws of nature. Likewise man discovereth those hidden secrets of nature that in conformity with the laws thereof must remain concealed, and transfereth them from the invisible plane to the visible. This, too, is interfering with the law of nature. In the same manner he discovereth the inherent properties of things that are the secrets of nature. Also he bringeth to light the past events that have been lost to memory, and foreseeth by his power of induction future happenings that are as yet unknown. Furthermore, communication and discovery are limited by the laws of nature to short distances, whereas man, through that inner power of his that discovereth the reality of all things, connecteth the East with the West. This, too, is interfering with the laws of nature. Similarly, according to the law of nature all shadows are fleeting, whereas man fixeth them upon the plate, and this, too, is interference with a law of nature. Ponder and reflect: all sciences, arts, crafts, inventions and discoveries, have been once the secrets of nature and in conformity with the laws thereof must remain hidden; yet man through his discovering power interfereth with the laws of nature and transfereth these hidden secrets from the invisible to the visible plane. This again is interfering with the laws of nature.

In fine, that inner faculty in man, unseen of the eye, wresteth the sword from the hands of nature, and giveth it a grievous blow. All other beings, however great, are bereft of such perfections. Man hath the powers of will and understanding, but nature hath them not. Nature is constrained, man is free. Nature is bereft of

understanding, man understandeth. Nature is unaware of past events, but man is aware of them. Nature forecasteth not the future; man by his discerning power seeth that which is to come.

Nature hath no consciousness of itself, man knoweth about all things.

Should any one suppose that man is but a part of the world of nature, and he being endowed with these perfections, these being but manifestations of the world of nature, and thus nature is the originator of these perfections and is not deprived therefrom, to him we make reply and say:—the part dependeth upon the whole; the part cannot possess perfections whereof the whole is deprived.

By nature is meant those inherent properties and necessary relations derived from the realities of things. And these realities of things, though in the utmost diversity, are yet intimately connected one with the other. For these diverse realities an all-unifying agency is needed that shall link them all one to the other. For instance, the various organs and members, the parts and elements, that constitute the body of man, though at variance, are yet all connected one with the other by that all-unifying agency known as the human soul, that causeth them to function in perfect harmony and with absolute regularity, thus making the continuation of life possible. The human body, however, is utterly unconscious of that all-unifying agency, and yet acteth with regularity and dischargeth its functions according to its will.

Now concerning philosophers, they are of two schools. Thus Socrates the wise believed in the unity of God and the existence of the soul after death; as his opinion was contrary to that of the narrow-minded people of his time, that divine sage was poisoned by them. All divine philosophers and men of wisdom and understanding, when observing these endless beings, have considered that in this great and infinite universe all things end in the mineral kingdom, that the outcome of the mineral kingdom is the vegetable kingdom, the outcome of the vegetable kingdom is the animal kingdom and the outcome of the animal kingdom the world of man. The consummation of this limitless universe with all its grandeur and glory hath been man himself, who in this world of being toileth and suffereth for a time, with divers ills and pains, and ultimately disintegrates, leaving no trace and no fruit after him. Were it so, there is no doubt that this infinite universe with all its perfections has ended in sham and delusion with no result, no fruit, no permanence and no effect. It would be utterly without meaning. They were thus convinced that such is not the case, that this Great Workshop with all its power, its bewildering magnificence and endless perfections, cannot eventually come to naught. That still another life should exist is thus certain, and, just as the vegetable kingdom is unaware of the world of man, so we, too, know not of the Great Life hereafter that followeth the life of man

here below. Our non-comprehension of that life, however, is no proof of its non-existence. The mineral world, for instance, is utterly unaware of the world of man and cannot comprehend it, but the ignorance of a thing is no proof of its non-existence. Numerous and conclusive proofs exist that go to show that this infinite world cannot end with this human life.

Now concerning the essence of Divinity: in truth it is on no account determined by anything apart from its own nature, and can in no wise be comprehended. For whatsoever can be conceived by man is a reality that hath limitations and is not unlimited; it is circumscribed, not all-embracing. It can be comprehended by man, and is controlled by him. Similarly it is certain that all human conceptions are contingent, not absolute; that they have a mental existence, not a material one. Moreover, differentiation of stages in the contingent world is an obstacle to understanding. How then can the contingent conceive the Reality of the absolute? As previously mentioned, differentiation of stages in the contingent plane is an obstacle to understanding. Minerals, plants and animals are bereft of the mental faculties of man that discover the realities of all things, but man himself comprehendeth all the stages beneath him. Every superior stage comprehendeth that which is inferior and discovereth the reality thereof, but the inferior one is unaware of that which is superior and cannot comprehend it. Thus man cannot grasp the Essence of Divinity, but can, by his reasoning power, by observation, by his intuitive faculties and the revealing power of his faith, believe in God, discover the bounties of His Grace. He becometh certain that though the Divine Essence is unseen of the eye, and the existence of the Deity is intangible, yet conclusive (spiritual) proofs assert the existence of that unseen Reality. The Divine Essence as it is in itself is however beyond all description. For instance, the nature of ether is unknown, but that it existeth is certain by the effects it produceth, heat, light and electricity being the waves thereof. By these waves the existence of ether is thus proven. And as we consider the outpourings of Divine Grace we are assured of the existence of God. For instance, we observe that the existence of beings is conditioned upon the coming together of various elements and their non-existence upon the decomposition of their constituent elements. For decomposition causes the dissociation of the various elements. Thus, as we observe the coming together of elements giveth rise to the existence of beings, and knowing that beings are infinite, they being the effect, how can the Cause be finite?

Now, formation is of three kinds and of three kinds only: accidental, necessary, and voluntary. The coming together of the various constituent elements of beings cannot be accidental, for unto every effect there must be a cause. It cannot be

compulsory, for then the formation must be an inherent property of the constituent parts and the inherent property of a thing can in no wise be dissociated from it, such as light that is the revealer of things, heat that causeth the expansion of elements and the (solar) rays which are the essential property of the sun. Thus under such circumstances the decomposition of any formation is impossible, for the inherent properties of a thing cannot be separated from it. The third formation remaineth and that is the voluntary one, that is, an unseen force described as the Ancient Power, causeth these elements to come together, every formation giving rise to a distinct being.

As to the attributes and perfections such as will, knowledge, power and other ancient attributes that we ascribe to that Divine Reality, these are the signs that reflect the existence of beings in the visible plane and not the absolute perfections of the Divine Essence that cannot be comprehended. For instance, as we consider created things we observe infinite perfections, and the created things being in the utmost regularity and perfection we infer that the Ancient Power on whom dependeth the existence of these beings, cannot be ignorant; thus we say He is All-Knowing. It is certain that it is not impotent, it must be then All-Powerful; it is not poor, it must be All-Possessing; it is not non-existent, it must be Ever-Living. The purpose is to show that these attributes and perfections that we recount for that Universal Reality are only in order to deny imperfections, rather than to assert the perfections that the human mind can conceive. Thus we say His attributes are unknowable.

In fine, that Universal Reality with all its qualities and attributes that we recount is holy and exalted above all minds and understandings. As we, however, reflect with broad minds upon this infinite universe, we observe that motion without a motive force, and an effect without a cause are both impossible; that every being hath come to exist under numerous influences and continually undergoeth reaction. These influences, too, are formed under the action of still other influences. For instance, plants grow and flourish through the outpourings of vernal showers, whilst the cloud itself is formed under various other agencies and these agencies in their turn are reacted upon by still other agencies. For example, plants and animals grow and develop under the influence of what the philosophers of our day designate as hydrogen and oxygen and are reacted upon by the effects of these two elements; and these in turn are formed under still other influences. The same can be said of other beings whether they affect other things or be affected. Such process of causation goes on, and to maintain that this process goes on indefinitely is manifestly absurd. Thus such a chain of causation must of necessity lead eventually to Him who is the Ever-Living, the All-Powerful, who is Self-Dependent and the Ultimate Cause. This

Universal Reality cannot be sensed, it cannot be seen. It must be so of necessity, for it is All-Embracing, not circumscribed, and such attributes qualify the effect and not the cause.

And as we reflect, we observe that man is like unto a tiny organism contained within a fruit; this fruit hath developed out of the blossom, the blossom hath grown out of the tree, the tree is sustained by the sap, and the sap formed out of earth and water. How then can this tiny organism comprehend the nature of the garden, conceive of the gardener and comprehend his being? That is manifestly impossible. Should that organism understand and reflect, it would observe that this garden, this tree, this blossom, this fruit would in nowise have come to exist by themselves in such order and perfection. Similarly the wise and reflecting soul will know of a certainty that this infinite universe with all its grandeur and order could not have come to exist by itself.

Similarly in the world of being there exist forces unseen of the eye, such as the force of ether previously mentioned, that cannot be sensed, that cannot be seen. However from the effects it produceth, that is from its waves and vibrations, light, heat, electricity appear and are made evident. In like manner is the power of growth, of feeling, of understanding, of thought, of memory, of imagination and of discernment; all these inner faculties are unseen of the eye and cannot be sensed, yet all are evident by the effects they produce.

Now as to the Power that knoweth no limitations; limitation itself proveth the existence of the unlimited, for the limited is known through the unlimited, just as weakness itself proveth the existence of power, ignorance the existence of knowledge, poverty the existence of wealth. Without wealth there would be no poverty, without knowledge no ignorance, without light no darkness. Darkness itself is a proof of the existence of light for darkness is the absence of light.

Now concerning nature, it is but the essential properties and the necessary relations inherent in the realities of things. And though these infinite realities are diverse in their character yet they are in the utmost harmony and closely connected together. As one's vision is broadened and the matter observed carefully, it will be made certain that every reality is but an essential requisite of other realities. Thus to connect and harmonize these diverse and infinite realities an all-unifying Power is necessary, that every part of existent being may in perfect order discharge its own function. Consider the body of man, and let the part be an indication of the whole. Consider how these diverse parts and members of the human body are closely connected and harmoniously united one with the other. Every part is the essential requisite of all other parts and has a function by itself. It is the mind that is the all-

unifying agency that so uniteth all the component parts one with the other that each dischargeth its specific function in perfect order, and thereby cooperation and reaction are made possible. All parts function under certain laws that are essential to existence. Should that all-unifying agency that directeth all these parts be harmed in any way there is no doubt that the constituent parts and members will cease functioning properly; and though that all-unifying agency in the temple of man be not sensed or seen and the reality thereof be unknown, yet by its effects it manifesteth itself with the greatest power.

Thus it hath been proven and made evident that these infinite beings in this wondrous universe will discharge their functions properly only when directed and controlled by that Universal Reality, so that order may be established in the world. For example, interaction and cooperation between the constituent parts of the human body are evident and indisputable, yet this does not suffice; an all-unifying agency is necessary that shall direct and control the component parts, so that these through interaction and cooperation may discharge in perfect order their necessary and respective functions.

You are well aware, praised be the Lord, that both interaction and cooperation are evident and proven amongst all beings, whether large or small. In the case of large bodies interaction is as manifest as the sun, whilst in the case of small bodies, though interaction be unknown, yet the part is an indication of the whole. All these interactions therefore are connected with that all-embracing power which is their pivot, their center, their source and their motive power.

For instance, as we have observed, cooperation among the constituent parts of the human body is clearly established, and these parts and members render services unto all the component parts of the body. For instance, the hand, the foot, the eye, the ear, the mind, the imagination all help the various parts and members of the human body, but all these interactions are linked by an unseen, all-embracing power, that causeth these interactions to be produced with perfect regularity. This is the inner faculty of man, that is his spirit and his mind, both of which are invisible.

In like manner consider machinery and workshops and the interaction existing among the various component parts and sections, and how connected they are one with the other. All these relations and interactions, however, are connected with a central power which is their motive force, their pivot and their source. This central power is either the power of steam or the skill of the master-mind.

It hath therefore been made evident and proved that interaction, cooperation and interrelation amongst beings are under the direction and will of a motive Power which is the origin, the motive force and the pivot of all interactions in the universe.

Likewise every arrangement and formation that is not perfect in its order we designate as accidental, and that which is orderly, regular, perfect in its relations and every part of which is in its proper place and is the essential requisite of the other constituent parts, this we call a composition formed through will and knowledge. There is no doubt that these infinite beings and the association of these diverse elements arranged in countless forms must have proceeded from a Reality that could in no wise be bereft of will or understanding. This is clear and proven to the mind and no one can deny it. It is not meant, however, that that Universal Reality or the attributes thereof have been comprehended. Neither its Essence nor its true attributes hath any one comprehended. We maintain, however, that these infinite beings, these necessary relations, this perfect arrangement must of necessity have proceeded from a source that is not bereft of will and understanding, and this infinite composition cast into infinite forms must have been caused by an all-embracing Wisdom. This none can dispute save he that is obstinate and stubborn, and denieth the clear and unmistakable evidence, and becometh the object of the blessed Verse: "They are deaf, they are dumb, they are blind and shall return no more."

Now regarding the question whether the faculties of the mind and the human soul are one and the same. These faculties are but the inherent properties of the soul, such as the power of imagination, of thought, of understanding; powers that are the essential requisites of the reality of man, even as the solar ray is the inherent property of the sun. The temple of man is like unto a mirror, his soul is as the sun, and his mental faculties even as the rays that emanate from that source of light. The ray may cease to fall upon the mirror, but it can in no wise be dissociated from the sun.

In short, the point is this, that the world of man is supernatural in its relation to the vegetable kingdom, though in reality it is not so. Relatively to the plant, the reality of man, his power of hearing and sight, are all supernatural, and for the plant to comprehend that reality and the nature of the powers of man's mind is impossible. In like manner for man to comprehend the Divine Essence and the nature of the great Hereafter is in no wise possible. The merciful outpourings of that Divine Essence, however, are vouchsafed unto all beings and it is incumbent upon man to ponder in his heart upon the effusions of the Divine Grace, the soul being counted as one, rather than upon the Divine Essence itself. This is the utmost limit for human understanding. As it hath previously been mentioned, these attributes and perfections that we recount of the Divine Essence, these we have derived from the existence and observation of beings, and it is not that we have comprehended the essence and perfection of God. When we say that the Divine Essence understandeth and is free,

we do not mean that we have discovered the Divine Will and Purpose, but rather that we have acquired knowledge of them through the Divine Grace revealed and manifested in the realities of things.

Now concerning our social principles, namely the teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh spread far and wide fifty years ago, they verily comprehend all other teachings. It is clear and evident that without these teachings progress and advancement for mankind are in no wise possible. Every community in the world findeth in these Divine Teachings the realization of its highest aspirations. These teachings are even as the tree that beareth the best fruits of all trees. Philosophers, for instance, find in these heavenly teachings the most perfect solution of their social problems, and similarly a true and noble exposition of matters that pertain to philosophical questions. In like manner men of faith behold the reality of religion manifestly revealed in these heavenly teachings, and clearly and conclusively prove them to be the real and true remedy for the ills and infirmities of all mankind. Should these sublime teachings be diffused, mankind shall be freed from all perils, from all chronic ills and sicknesses. In like manner are the Bahá'í economic principles the embodiment of the highest aspirations of all wage-earning classes and of economists of various schools.

In short, all sections and parties have their aspirations realized in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. As these teachings are declared in churches, in mosques and in other places of worship, whether those of the followers of Buddha or of Confucius, in political circles or amongst materialists, all shall bear witness that these teachings bestow a fresh life upon mankind and constitute the immediate remedy for all the ills of social life. None can find fault with any of these teachings, nay rather, once declared they will all be acclaimed, and all will confess their vital necessity, exclaiming, "Verily this is the truth and naught is there beside the truth but manifest error."

In conclusion, these few words are written, and unto everyone they will be a clear and conclusive evidence of the truth. Ponder them in thine heart. The will of every sovereign prevaieth during his reign, the will of every philosopher findeth expression in a handful of disciples during his lifetime, but the Power of the Holy Spirit shineth radiantly in the realities of the Messengers of God, and strengtheneth their will in such wise as to influence a great nation for thousands of years and to regenerate the human soul and revive mankind. Consider how great is this power! It is an extraordinary Power, an all-sufficient proof of the truth of the mission of the Prophets of God, and a conclusive evidence of the power of Divine Inspiration.