

## Inner Reality

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About sixty years ago Bahá'u'lláh appeared upon the eastern horizon. He caused love and unity to become manifest among these antagonistic peoples. He united them with the bond of love; their former hatred and animosity passed away; love and unity reigned instead. It was a dark world; it became radiant. A new springtime appeared through him, for the Sun of Truth had risen again. In the fields and meadows of human hearts variegated flowers of inner significance were blooming and the good fruits of the kingdom of God became manifest.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Bahá’í World Faith - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Section, p. 219)

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When the Sun of Reality returns to quicken the world of mankind a divine bounty descends from the heaven of generosity. The realm of thoughts and ideals is set in motion and blessed with new life. Minds are developed, hopes brighten, aspirations become spiritual, the virtues of the human world appear with freshened power of growth and the image and likeness of God become visible in man. It is the springtime of the inner world.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Bahá’í World Faith - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Section, p. 255)

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Man has two powers, and his development two aspects. One power is connected with the material world and by it he is capable of material advancement. The other power is spiritual and through its development his inner, potential nature is awakened. These powers are like two wings. Both must be developed, for flight is impossible with one wing.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Bahá’í World Faith - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Section, p. 262)

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.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Bahá’í World Faith - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Section, p. 317)

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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.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Bahá’í World Faith - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Section, p. 326)

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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 no wise 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.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Bahá’í World Faith - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Section, p. 343)

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Man has a sacred power which permits him to discover the inner significances, the reality of invisible things. Ponder over these statements, so that the portals of divine wisdom and infinite knowledge may open before thy face.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Divine Philosophy, p. 37)

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I pray that your inner sight may become clear, that you may be able to perceive things the heedless do not see, that you may understand the infinite worlds of God. A man who has no knowledge of the heavenly universe has missed a portion of his heritage and is like unto a stone which knows nothing of humanity. May God open your inner sight, so that you may know his secrets, attain to the highest degree of existence, become manifestors of a spiritual humanity and have your share of the heavenly wisdom that BAHÁ’O’LLÁH bestows.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Divine Philosophy, p. 118)

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Thus it is certain that in man there is a reality which is not the physical body. Sometimes the body becomes weak but that other reality is in its own normal state. The body goes to sleep, becomes as one dead but that reality is moving about, comprehending things, expressing them and is even conscious of itself.

This other and inner reality is called the heavenly body, the ethereal form which corresponds to this body. This is the conscious reality which discovers the inner meaning of things, for the outer body of man does not discover anything. The inner ethereal reality grasps the mysteries of existence, discovers scientific truths and indicates their technical application. It discovers electricity, produces the telegraph, the telephone and opens the door to the world of arts. If the outer material body did this,

the animal would likewise be able to make scientific and wonderful discoveries, for the animal shares with man all physical powers and limitations. What then is that power which penetrates the realities of existence and which is not to be found in the animal? It is the inner reality which comprehends things, throws light upon the mysteries of life and being, discovers the heavenly Kingdom, unseals the mysteries of God and differentiates man from the brute. Of this there can be no doubt.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 109)

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The most vital duty, in this day, is to purify your characters, to correct your manners, and improve your conduct. The beloved of the Merciful must show forth such character and conduct among His creatures, that the fragrance of their holiness may be shed upon the whole world, and may quicken the dead, inasmuch as the purpose of the Manifestation of God and the dawning of the limitless lights of the Invisible is to educate the souls of men, and refine the character of every living man—so that blessed individuals, who have freed themselves from the murk of the animal world, shall rise up with those qualities which are the adornings of the reality of man. The purpose is that earthlings should turn into the people of Heaven, and those who walk in darkness should come into the light, and those who are excluded should join the inner circle of the Kingdom, and those who are as nothing should become intimates of the everlasting Glory. It is that the portionless should gain their share of the boundless sea, and the ignorant drink their fill from the living fount of knowledge; that those who thirst for blood should forsake their savagery, and those who are barbed of claw should turn gentle and forbearing, and those who love war should seek instead for true conciliation; it is that the brutal, their talons razor-sharp, should enjoy the benefits of lasting peace; that the foul should learn that there is a realm of purity, and the tainted find their way to the rivers of holiness.

Unless these divine bestowals be revealed from the inner self of humankind, the bounty of the Manifestation will prove barren, and the dazzling rays of the Sun of Truth will have no effect whatever.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 12)

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...it is my hope that thine inner eye may be opened wide, so that unto thee the very core of the divine mysteries may be disclosed.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 33)

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Those who had eyes to see rejoiced at the glad tidings and cried out: 'O blessed, blessed are we!', and they witnessed the inner reality of all things, and uncovered the mysteries of the Kingdom. Delivered then from their fancies and their doubts, they beheld the light of truth, and so exhilarated did they become from draining the chalice of God's love, that they utterly forgot the world and their own selves. Dancing for joy they hastened to the place of their own martyrdom and there, where men die for love, they flung away their heads and hearts.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 36)

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These are the counsels of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. It is my hope that out of the bestowals of the Lord of Hosts ye will become the spiritual essence and the very radiance of humankind, binding the hearts of all with bonds of love; that through the power of the Word of God ye will bring to life the dead now buried in the graves of their sensual desires; that ye will, with the rays of the Sun of Truth, restore the sight of those whose inner eye is blind; that ye will bring spiritual healing to the spiritually sick. These things do I hope for, out of the bounties and the bestowals of the Beloved.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 40)

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But that Essence of Essences, that Invisible of Invisibles, is sanctified above all human speculation, and never to be overtaken by the mind of man. Never shall that immemorial Reality lodge within the compass of a contingent being. His is another realm, and of that realm no understanding can be won. No access can be gained thereto; all entry is forbidden there. The utmost one can say is that Its existence can be proved, but the conditions of Its existence are unknown.

That such an Essence doth exist, the philosophers and learned doctors one and all have understood; but whenever they tried to learn something of Its being, they were left bewildered and dismayed, and at the end, despairing, their hopes in ruins, they went their way, out of this life. For to comprehend the state and the inner mystery of that Essence of Essences, that Most Secret of Secrets, one needs must have another power and other faculties; and such a power, such faculties would be more than humankind can bear, wherefore no word of Him can come to them.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 58)

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Direct thine attention to the holy Tablets; read thou the *Ishráqát*, *Tajallíyát*, the Words of Paradise, the Glad Tidings, the *Ṭarázát*, the Most Holy Book. Then wilt

thou see that today these heavenly Teachings are the remedy for a sick and suffering world, and a healing balm for the sores on the body of mankind. They are the spirit of life, the ark of salvation, the magnet to draw down eternal glory, the dynamic power to motivate the inner self of man.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 65)

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It is my hope that thou wilt attain unto the true meeting with Him, which is to behold Him with the inner, not the outer eye.

The essence of Bahá’u’lláh’s Teaching is all-embracing love, for love includeth every excellence of humankind. It causeth every soul to go forward. It bestoweth on each one, for a heritage, immortal life.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 71)

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For the inner reality of man is a demarcation line between the shadow and the light, a place where the two seas meet;<sup>1</sup> it is the lowest point on the arc of descent,<sup>2</sup> and therefore is it capable of gaining all the grades above. With education it can achieve all excellence; devoid of education it will stay on, at the lowest point of imperfection.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 137)

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<sup>1</sup> Qur’án 25:53, 35:12, 55:19–25. See also Marriage Prayer revealed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá beginning ‘He is God! O peerless Lord! In Thine almighty wisdom Thou hast enjoined marriage upon the peoples...’

<sup>2</sup> See Some Answered Questions, pp. 285–286 for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s comments on the arc of descent and ascent.

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That is to say, education cannot alter the inner essence of a man, but it doth exert tremendous influence, and with this power it can bring forth from the individual whatever perfections and capacities are deposited within him. A grain of wheat, when cultivated by the farmer, will yield a whole harvest, and a seed, through the gardener’s care, will grow into a great tree. Thanks to a teacher’s loving efforts, the children of the primary school may reach the highest levels of achievement; indeed, his benefactions may lift some child of small account to an exalted throne. Thus is it clearly demonstrated that by their essential nature, minds vary as to their capacity, while education also playeth a great role and exerteth a powerful effect on their development.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 139)

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My meaning is this, that in every aspect of life, purity and holiness, cleanliness and refinement, exalt the human condition and further the development of man's inner reality. Even in the physical realm, cleanliness will conduce to spirituality, as the Holy Writings clearly state. And although bodily cleanliness is a physical thing, it hath, nevertheless, a powerful influence on the life of the spirit. It is even as a voice wondrously sweet, or a melody played: although sounds are but vibrations in the air which affect the ear's auditory nerve, and these vibrations are but chance phenomena carried along through the air, even so, see how they move the heart. A wondrous melody is wings for the spirit, and maketh the soul to tremble for joy. The purport is that physical cleanliness doth also exert its effect upon the human soul.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 154)

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Reflect upon the inner realities of the universe, the secret wisdoms involved, the enigmas, the inter-relationships, the rules that govern all. For every part of the universe is connected with every other part by ties that are very powerful and admit of no imbalance, nor any slackening whatever. In the physical realm of creation, all things are eaters and eaten: the plant drinketh in the mineral, the animal doth crop and swallow down the plant, man doth feed upon the animal, and the mineral devoureth the body of man. Physical bodies are transferred past one barrier after another, from one life to another, and all things are subject to transformation and change, save only the essence of existence itself—since it is constant and immutable, and upon it is founded the life of every species and kind, of every contingent reality throughout the whole of creation.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 165)

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The handmaids of God must rise to such a station that they will, by themselves and unaided, comprehend these inner meanings, and be able to expound at full length every single word; a station where, out of the truth of their inmost hearts, a spring of wisdom will well up, and jet forth even as a fountain that leapeth from its own original source.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 175)

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Thus is it clear that the human spirit is an all-encompassing power that exerteth its dominion over the inner essences of all created things, uncovering the well kept mysteries of the phenomenal world. The divine spirit, however, doth unveil divine

realities and universal mysteries that lie within the spiritual world. It is my hope that thou wilt attain unto this divine spirit, so that thou mayest uncover the secrets of the other world, as well as the mysteries of the world below.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 179)

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O thou who seekest the Kingdom of heaven! This world is even as the body of man, and the Kingdom of God is as the spirit of life. See how dark and narrow is the physical world of man’s body, and what a prey it is to diseases and ills. On the other hand, how fresh and bright is the realm of the human spirit. Judge thou from this metaphor how the world of the Kingdom hath shone down, and how its laws have been made to work in this nether realm. Although the spirit is hidden from view, still its commandments shine out like rays of light upon the world of the human body. In the same way, although the Kingdom of heaven is hidden from the sight of this unwitting people, still, to him who seeth with the inner eye, it is plain as day.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 201)

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The blessings of Bahá’u’lláh are a shoreless sea, and even life everlasting is only a dewdrop therefrom. The waves of that sea are continually lapping against the hearts of the friends, and from those waves there come intimations of the spirit and ardent pulsings of the soul, until the heart giveth way, and willing or not, turneth humbly in prayer unto the Kingdom of the Lord. Wherefore do all ye can to disengage your inner selves, that ye may at every moment reflect new splendours from the Sun of Truth.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 202)

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It is my hope that the breaths of the Holy Spirit will so be breathed into your hearts that your tongues will disclose the mysteries, and set forth and expound the inner meanings of the Holy Books; that the friends will become physicians, and will, through the potent medicine of the heavenly Teachings, heal the long-standing diseases that afflict the body of this world; that they will make the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the dead to come alive; that they will awaken those who are sound asleep.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 287)

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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.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Tablet to August Forel, p. 12)

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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.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Tablet to August Forel, p. 19)

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For instance, as we have observed, co-operation 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.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Tablet to August Forel, p. 22)

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I beseech God to ordain thee as a sign of His great signs, to confirm thee to shine as a light in the lantern of America; to cause thee to be stripped and cut from all positions, to announce the good tidings of God, to diffuse the breaths of God, to speak the praise of God and to turn thy face to the Kingdom of ABHÁ, to be freed from depending on this world, to be kindled by the fire of the love of God, to be adorned with the ornament of perfection; to be the center of those virtues and characteristics wherewith the inner qualities of man are ornamented, to be confirmed by the breaths of the Holy Ghost, to call on the name of God.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá v1, p. 172)

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The insight (or inner perception) is a correct sight, for it never blundereth. But the outward sight doth err (or misjudgeth); it seeth the mirage as water, considereth the revolving flame as a circle, imagineth the images reflected in a mirror as a reality and judgeth huge bodies as small ones, from a remote distance. There are many evidences as to the blundering of the sight; but the insight apprehendeth the reality and discovereth the mysteries.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá v1, p. 195)

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Those eminent divines and men of learning who walk the straight pathway and are versed in the secrets of divine wisdom and informed of the inner realities of the sacred Books; who wear in their hearts the jewel of the fear of God, and whose luminous faces shine with the lights of salvation—these are alert to the present need and they understand the requirements of modern times, and certainly devote all their energies toward encouraging the advancement of learning and civilization.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Secret of Divine Civilization, p. 32)

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Other attributes of perfection are to fear God, to love God by loving His servants, to exercise mildness and forbearance and calm, to be sincere, amenable, clement and compassionate; to have resolution and courage, trustworthiness and energy, to strive and struggle, to be generous, loyal, without malice, to have zeal and a sense of honor, to be high-minded and magnanimous, and to have regard for the rights of others. Whoever is lacking in these excellent human qualities is defective. If We were to explain the inner meanings of each one of these attributes, “the poem would take up seventy maunds<sup>3</sup> of paper.”

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Secret of Divine Civilization, p. 40)

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<sup>3</sup> A measure of weight, in Tīhrán equivalent to six and two-thirds pounds.

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Wert thou to incline thine inner ear unto all created things, thou wouldst hear: ‘The Ancient of Days is come in His great glory!’ Everything celebrateth the praise of its Lord.

(Bahá’u’lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 47)

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It is now incumbent upon them who are endowed with a hearing ear and a seeing eye

to ponder these sublime words, in each of which the oceans of inner meaning and explanation are hidden, that haply the words uttered by Him Who is the Lord of Revelation may enable His servants to attain, with the utmost joy and radiance, unto the Supreme Goal and Most Sublime Summit—the dawning-place of this Voice.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 147)

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O concourse of the fair-minded! Observe and reflect upon the billows of the ocean of the utterance and knowledge of God, so that ye may testify with your inner and outer tongues that with Him is the knowledge of all that is in the Book.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 150)

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Were ye to incline your inner ears unto Him, ye would hear from every limb and member and vein and even from every single hair of this Wronged One that which would stir and enrapture the Concourse on high and the world of creation.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 163)

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Ponder a while thereon, that with both your inner and outer eye, ye may perceive the subtleties of Divine wisdom and discover the gems of heavenly knowledge which, in clear and weighty language, I have revealed in this exalted and incorruptible Tablet, and that ye may not stray far from the All-Highest Throne, from the Tree beyond which there is no passing, from the Habitation of everlasting might and glory.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 144)

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Be fair: Is the testimony of those acceptable and worthy of attention whose deeds agree with their words, whose outward behavior conforms with their inner life? The mind is bewildered at their deeds, and the soul marveleth at their fortitude and bodily endurance. Or is the testimony of these faithless souls who breathe naught but the breath of selfish desire, and who lie imprisoned in the cage of their idle fancies, acceptable? Like the bats of darkness, they lift not their heads from their couch except to pursue the transient things of the world, and find no rest by night except as they labor to advance the aims of their sordid life. Immersed in their selfish schemes, they are oblivious of the Divine decree. In the daytime they strive with all their soul after worldly benefits, and in the night season their sole occupation is to gratify their carnal desires. By what law or standard could men be justified in cleaving to the denials of

such petty-minded souls and in ignoring the faith of them that have renounced, for the sake of the good pleasure of God, their life and substance, their fame and renown, their reputation and honor?...

With what love, what devotion, what exultation and holy rapture, they sacrificed their lives in the path of the All-Glorious! To the truth of this all witness. And yet, how can they belittle this Revelation? Hath any age witnessed such momentous happenings? If these companions be not the true strivers after God, who else could be called by this name? Have these companions been seekers after power or glory? Have they ever yearned for riches? Have they cherished any desire except the good pleasure of God? If these companions, with all their marvelous testimonies and wondrous works, be false, who then is worthy to claim for himself the truth? I swear by God! Their very deeds are a sufficient testimony, and an irrefutable proof unto all the peoples of the earth, were men to ponder in their hearts the mysteries of Divine Revelation. "And they who act unjustly shall soon know what lot awaiteth them!"...

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 181)

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I am but a servant of God Who hath believed in Him and in His signs, and in His Prophets and in His angels. My tongue, and My heart, and My inner and My outer being testify that there is no God but Him, that all others have been created by His behest, and been fashioned through the operation of His Will.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 228)

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

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 264)

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 117)

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

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

(Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 267)

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God is Our witness! Whoever hath tasted the sweetness of those words will never consent to transgress the bounds which God hath fixed, neither will he turn his gaze towards any one except his Well-Beloved. Such a man will, with his inner eye, readily recognize how altogether vain and fleeting are the things of this world, and will set his affections on things above.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 298)

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With ears that are sanctified from vain-glory and worldly desires hearken unto the counsels which I, in My merciful kindness, have revealed unto you, and with your inner and outer eyes contemplate the evidences of My marvelous Revelation....

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 325)

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O My servants! Could ye apprehend with what wonders of My munificence and bounty I have willed to entrust your souls, ye would, of a truth, rid yourselves of attachment to all created things, and would gain a true knowledge of your own selves—a knowledge which is the same as the comprehension of Mine own Being. Ye would find yourselves independent of all else but Me, and would perceive, with your inner and outer eye, and as manifest as the revelation of My effulgent Name, the seas of My loving-kindness and bounty moving within you. Suffer not your idle fancies, your evil passions, your insincerity and blindness of heart to dim the luster, or stain the sanctity, of so lofty a station. Ye are even as the bird which soareth, with the full force of its mighty wings and with complete and joyous confidence, through the immensity of the heavens, until, impelled to satisfy its hunger, it turneth longingly to the water and clay of the earth below it, and, having been entrapped in the mesh of its desire, findeth itself impotent to resume its flight to the realms whence it came. Powerless to shake off the burden weighing on its sullied wings, that bird, hitherto an inmate of the heavens, is now forced to seek a dwelling-place upon the dust. Wherefore, O My servants, defile not your wings with the clay of waywardness and vain desires, and suffer them not to be stained with the dust of envy and hate, that ye may not be hindered from soaring in the heavens of My divine knowledge.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 326)

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This is the day when the gems of constancy that lie hid in the mine of men's inner selves should be made manifest. O people of Justice! Be as brilliant as the light and as splendid as the fire that blazed in the Burning Bush. The brightness of the fire of your love will no doubt fuse and unify the contending peoples and kindreds of the earth, whilst the fierceness of the flame of enmity and hatred cannot but result in strife and ruin. We beseech God that He may shield His creatures from the evil designs of His enemies. He verily hath power over all things.

All praise be to the one true God—exalted be His glory—inasmuch as He hath, through the Pen of the Most High, unlocked the doors of men's hearts. Every verse which this Pen hath revealed is a bright and shining portal that discloseth the glories of a saintly and pious life, of pure and stainless deeds.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 88)

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I am the one, O Lord, whose heart and soul, whose limbs, whose inner and outer tongue testify to Thy unity and Thy oneness, and bear witness that Thou art God and that there is no God but Thee. Thou didst bring mankind into being to know Thee and to serve Thy Cause, that their station might thereby be elevated upon Thine earth and their souls be uplifted by virtue of the things Thou hast revealed in Thy Scriptures, Thy Books and Thy Tablets.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 111)

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Blessed is the one who discovereth the fragrance of inner meanings from the traces of this Pen through whose movement the breezes of God are wafted over the entire creation, and through whose stillness the very essence of tranquillity appeareth in the realm of being. Glorified be the All-Merciful, the Revealer of so inestimable a bounty.

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 76)

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Shoghi Effendi indicates that the fasting period, which involves complete abstention from food and drink from sunrise till sunset, is ...essentially a period of meditation and prayer, of spiritual recuperation, during which the believer must strive to make the necessary readjustments in his inner life, and to refresh and reinvigorate the spiritual forces latent in his soul.

(The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 176)

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This is a reference to people who claim access to esoteric knowledge and whose attachment to such knowledge veils them from the Revelation of the Manifestation of God. Elsewhere Bahá'u'lláh affirms: "They that are the worshippers of the idol which their imaginations have carved, and who call it Inner Reality, such men are in truth accounted among the heathen."

(The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 194)

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'Abdu'l-Bahá refers to the effect of "purity and holiness, cleanliness and refinement" on the exaltation of "the human condition" and "the development of man's inner reality". He states: "The fact of having a pure and spotless body exercises an influence upon the spirit of man."

(The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 212)

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Verily, I say, so fierce is the blaze of the Bush of love, burning in the Sinai of the heart, that the streaming waters of holy utterance can never quench its flame. Oceans can never allay this Leviathan's burning thirst, and this Phoenix of the undying fire can abide nowhere save in the glow of the countenance of the Well-Beloved. Therefore, O brother! kindle with the oil of wisdom the lamp of the spirit within the innermost chamber of thy heart, and guard it with the globe of understanding, that the breath of the infidel may extinguish not its flame nor dim its brightness.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 57)

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Yea, inasmuch as the peoples of the world have failed to seek from the luminous and crystal Springs of divine knowledge the inner meaning of God's holy words, they therefore have languished, stricken and sore athirst, in the vale of idle fancy and waywardness.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 96)

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And yet, is not the object of every Revelation to effect a transformation in the whole character of mankind, a transformation that shall manifest itself both outwardly and inwardly, that shall affect both its inner life and external conditions? For if the character of mankind be not changed, the futility of God's universal Manifestations would be apparent.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 222)

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O SON OF SPIRIT!

The time cometh, when the nightingale of holiness will no longer unfold the inner mysteries and ye will all be bereft of the celestial melody and of the voice from on high.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Persian Hidden Words*, #15, p. 26)

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Wert thou to incline thine inner ear unto all created things, thou wouldst hear: 'The Ancient of Days is come in His great glory!' Everything celebrateth the praise of its Lord. Some have known God and remember Him; others remember Him, yet know Him not. Thus have We set down Our decree in a perspicuous Tablet.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 18)

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 68)



Not by the force of numbers, not by the mere exposition of a set of new and noble principles, not by an organized campaign of teaching—no matter how worldwide and elaborate in its character—not even by the staunchness of our faith or the exaltation of our enthusiasm, can we ultimately hope to vindicate in the eyes of a critical and sceptical age the supreme claim of the Abha Revelation. One thing and only one thing will unfailingly and alone secure the undoubted triumph of this sacred Cause, namely, the extent to which our own inner life and private character mirror forth in their manifold aspects the splendor of those eternal principles proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh.

(Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Administration, p. 66)

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There are two kinds of Bahá'ís, one might say: those whose religion is Bahá'í and those who live for the Faith. Needless to say if we can belong to the latter category, if we can be in the vanguard of heroes, martyrs and saints, it is more praiseworthy in the sight of God.

It is good for the Bahá'ís to learn that being a Bahá'í is essentially an inner thing, or way of life, and not dependent on fixed patterns.

(Shoghi Effendi, Directives from the Guardian, p. 10)

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The fasting period, which lasts nineteen days starting as a rule from the second of March every year and ending on the twentieth of the same month, involves complete abstention from food and drink from sunrise till sunset. It is essentially a period of meditation and prayer, of spiritual recuperation, during which the believer must strive to make the necessary readjustments in his inner life, and to refresh and reinvigorate the spiritual forces latent in his soul.

(Shoghi Effendi, Directives from the Guardian, p. 28)

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Laws and institutions, as viewed by Bahá'u'lláh, can become really effective only when our inner spiritual life has been perfected and transformed. Otherwise religion will degenerate into a mere organization, and becomes a dead thing. The believers, particularly the young ones, should therefore fully realize the necessity of praying. For prayer is absolutely indispensable to their inner spiritual development, and this, as already stated, is the very foundation and purpose of the religion of God.

(Shoghi Effendi, Directives from the Guardian, p. 87)

Through His numerous discourses and epistles He disclosed new vistas to their eyes, resolved the perplexities that agitated their minds, unfolded the inner meaning of many hitherto obscure passages in the writings of various commentators, poets and theologians, of which they had remained unaware, and reconciled the seemingly contradictory assertions which abounded in these dissertations, poems and treatises.

(Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 123)

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The Guardian feels ... should study more deeply the teachings, and meditate on what he studies. We liken God to the Sun, which gives us all our life. So the Spirit of God reaches us through the Souls of the Manifestations. We must learn to commune with Their Souls, and this is what the Martyrs seemed to have done, and what brought them such ecstasy of joy that life became nothing. This is the true mysticism, and the secret, inner meaning of life which humanity has at present, drifted so far from.

(Shoghi Effendi, *The Unfolding Destiny of the British Bahá'í Community*, p. 406)

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In another passage of the same Book, Bahá'u'lláh, referring to the transformation effected by every Revelation in the ways, thoughts and manners of the people, reveals these words: "Is not the object of every Revelation to effect a transformation in the whole character of mankind, a transformation that shall manifest itself, both outwardly and inwardly, that shall affect both its inner life and external conditions? For if the character of mankind be not changed, the futility of God's universal Manifestations would be apparent."

(Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 25)

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INDEED, WE WILL PRAY ARDENTLY AT THE HOLY SHRINES THAT YOU MAY REALIZE IN YOUR LIVES THE IDEALS THEY SO PERSISTENTLY UPHELD, THAT YOU MAY THUS "ACQUIRE BOTH INNER AND OUTER PERFECTIONS" AS YOU INCREASE YOUR STUDY OF THE HEAVENLY WRITINGS, STRIVE TOWARDS EXCELLENCE IN THE SCIENCES AND ARTS AND BECOME KNOWN FOR YOUR INDEPENDENCE OF SPIRIT, YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND YOUR SELF-CONTROL. MAY YOU, AS 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ WISHED, BE "FIRST AMONG THE PURE, THE FREE AND THE WISE."

The Universal House of Justice

(Letters of The Universal House of Justice, 1984 Aug 23, Cable to Youth Conference in London, Ontario)

The dark horizon faced by a world which has failed to recognize the Promised One, the Source of its salvation, acutely affects the outlook of the younger generations; their distressing lack of hope and their indulgence in desperate but futile and even dangerous solutions make a direct claim on the remedial attention of Bahá'í youth, who, through their knowledge of that Source and the bright vision with which they have thus been endowed, cannot hesitate to impart to their despairing fellow youth the restorative joy, the constructive hope, the radiant assurances of Bahá'u'lláh's stupendous Revelation.

The words, the deeds, the attitudes, the lack of prejudice, the nobility of character, the high sense of service to others—in a word, those qualities and actions which distinguish a Bahá'í must unfailingly characterize their inner life and outer behavior, and their interactions with friend or foe.

(Letters of The Universal House of Justice, 1985 May 08, Bahá'í Youth of the World)

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Every individual believer—man, woman, youth and child— is summoned to this field of action; for it is on the initiative, the resolute will of the individual to teach and to serve, that the success of the entire community depends. Well-grounded in the mighty Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, sustained by daily prayer and reading of the Holy Word, strengthened by a continual striving to obtain a deeper understanding of the divine Teachings, illumined by a constant endeavour to relate these Teachings to current issues, nourished by observance of the laws and principles of His wondrous World Order, every individual can attain increasing measures of success in teaching. In sum, the ultimate triumph of the Cause is assured by that “one thing and only one thing” so poignantly emphasized by Shoghi Effendi, namely, “the extent to which our own inner life and private character mirror forth in their manifold aspects the splendour of those eternal principles proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh”.

(Ridván 1988 to the Bahá'ís of the World)  
(Unlocking the Power of Action)

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The foundation of your preparation to meet the many unforeseeable changes that will come about rests with your determination and ability to internalize and act upon the divine principles expounded in the literature of our Faith - principles which direct one's inner development and private character, and which guide one's active life of teaching and service. These make for a righteous life - the wellspring of progress for the

individual and society as a whole, the harbinger of the very triumph of the Cause of God.

(Letters of The Universal House of Justice, 1994 Dec 22, To National Youth Conference, Phoenix Arizona)

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