

The Twelve Steps

Bahá'í Writings and the "Twelve-Step" program of recovery from substance abuse

by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá
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Step One: We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction (or for Al-Anon or ACAP) We admitted that we were powerless over the effects of addiction, and that our lives had become unmanageable.

I testify, at this moment, to my powerlessness and to Thy might.
(Bahá'u'lláh: *Aqdas*: Other Sections, pages 100-101)

I love, in this state, O my Lord, to beg of Thee all that is with Thee, that I may demonstrate my poverty, and magnify Thy bounty and Thy riches, and may declare my powerlessness, and manifest Thy power and Thy might.

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Aqdas*: Other Sections, page 94)

Every time I venture to make mention of Thee, I am held back by my mighty sins and grievous trespasses against Thee, and find myself wholly deprived of Thy grace, and utterly powerless to celebrate Thy praise. My great confidence in Thy bounty, however, reviveth my hope in Thee...

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Prayers and Meditations*, page 210)

Powerless though I be to rise to the heavens of Thy glory and soar in the

realms of Thy knowledge, I can but recount Thy tokens that tell of Thy glorious handiwork.

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Bahá'í Prayers* (US), pages 122-123)

And shouldst thou recognize thy powerlessness, do thou rein in thy passions, and return unto thy Lord, that perchance He may forgive thee thy sins ...

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, page 83)

O God! ... We are impotent; give us Thy heavenly power. O Lord! Make us useful in this world; free us from the condition of self and desire.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, page 302)

Step Two: Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God.

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, page 91)

Thou art He Who changeth through His bidding abasement into glory, and weakness into strength, and powerlessness into might, and fear into calm, and doubt into certainty ... Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the Most Powerful.

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Prayers and Meditations*, pages 249-250)

He, verily, is the Lord of strength and power ... Repudiation hath not veiled it, and ten thousand hosts arrayed against it were powerless to withhold it from shining. Thou canst excuse thyself no longer. Either thou must recognize it, or—God forbid—arise and deny all the Prophets!

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, page 119)

Step Three: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand Him.

O BEFRIENDED STRANGER!

The candle of thine heart is lighted by the hand of My power, quench it not with the contrary winds of self and passion. The healer of all thine ills is remembrance of Me, forget it not. Make My love thy treasure and cherish it even as thy very sight and life.

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Persian Hidden Words*, page 33)

The essence of wealth is love for Me; whoso loveth Me is the possessor of all things, and he that loveth Me not is indeed of the poor and needy. This is that which the Finger of Glory and Splendour hath revealed.

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 156)

The Tongue of Wisdom proclaimeth: He that hath Me not is bereft of all things. Turn ye away from all that is on earth and seek none else but Me. I am the Sun of Wisdom and the Ocean of Knowledge. I cheer the faint and revive the dead. I am the guiding Light that illumineth the way. I am the royal Falcon on the arm of the Almighty. I unfold the drooping wings of every broken bird and start it on its flight.

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 169)

O God! Refresh and gladden my spirit. Purify my heart. Illumine my powers. I lay all my affairs in Thy hand. Thou art my Guide and my Refuge. I will no longer be sorrowful and grieved; I will be a happy and joyful being. O God! I will no longer be full of anxiety, nor will I let trouble harass me. I will not dwell on the unpleasant things of life. O God! Thou art more friend to me than I am to myself. I dedicate myself to Thee, O Lord.

(Abdu'l-Bahá: *Bahá'í Prayers* (US edition), page 152)

Step Four: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

The first Ṭaráz and the first effulgence which hath dawned from the horizon of the Mother Book is that man should know his own self and recognize that which leadeth unto loftiness or lowliness, glory or abasement, wealth or poverty.

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 34-35)

The essence of all that We have revealed for thee is Justice, is for man to free himself from idle fancy and imitation, discern with the eye of oneness His glorious handiwork, and look into all things with a searching eye.

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 157)

If the fire of self overcome you, remember your own faults and not the faults of My creatures, inasmuch as every one of you knoweth his own self better than he knoweth others.

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Persian Hidden Words*, page 45)

Be not afraid of anyone, place thy whole trust in God, the Almighty, the All-Knowing.

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 190)

God hath in that Book, and by His behest, decreed as lawful whatsoever He hath pleased to decree, and hath, through the power of His sovereign might, forbidden whatsoever He elected to forbid. To this testifieth the text of that Book. Will ye not bear witness? Men, however, have wittingly broken His law. Is such a behaviour to be attributed to God, or to their proper selves? Be fair in your judgment.

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, page 149)

Step Five: We admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

The Universal House of Justice . . . has instructed us to say that there is no objection to Bahá'ís being members of Alcoholics Anonymous, which is an association that does a great deal of good in assisting alcoholics to overcome their lamentable condition. The sharing of experiences which the members undertake does not conflict with the Bahá'í prohibition on the confession of sins; it is more in the nature of the therapeutic relationship between a patient and a psychiatrist.

(From letter to an individual believer dated 26 August 1986)

I implore Thee by the blood of Thy true lovers who were so enraptured by Thy sweet utterance that they hastened unto the Pinnacle of Glory, the site of the most glorious martyrdom, and I beseech Thee by the mysteries which lie enshrined in Thy knowledge and by the pearls that are treasured in the ocean of Thy bounty to grant forgiveness unto me and unto my father and my mother. Of those who show forth mercy, Thou art in truth the Most Merciful. No God is there but Thee, the Ever-Forgiving, the All-Bountiful.

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 24-25)

O Lord! Thou seest this essence of sinfulness turning unto the ocean of Thy favour and this feeble one seeking the kingdom of Thy divine power and this poor creature inclining himself towards the day-star of Thy wealth. By Thy mercy and Thy grace, disappoint him not, O Lord, nor debar him from the revelations of Thy bounty in Thy days, nor cast him away from Thy door which Thou hast opened wide to all that dwell in Thy heaven and on Thine earth.

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 25)

Alas! Alas! My sins have prevented me from approaching the Court of Thy holiness and my trespasses have caused me to stray far from the Tabernacle of Thy majesty. I have committed that which Thou didst forbid me to do and have put away what Thou didst order me to observe.

I pray Thee by Him Who is the sovereign Lord of Names to write down for me with the Pen of Thy bounty that which will enable me to draw nigh unto Thee and will purge me from my trespasses which have intervened between me and Thy forgiveness and Thy pardon. Verily, Thou art the Potent, the Bountiful. No God is there but Thee, the Mighty, the Gracious.

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 25)

Step Six: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

I am but a poor creature, O my Lord; I have clung to the hem of Thy riches. I am sore sick; I have held fast the cord of Thy healing. Deliver me from the ills that have encircled me, and wash me thoroughly with the waters of Thy graciousness and mercy, and attire me with the raiment of wholesomeness, through Thy forgiveness and bounty. Fix, then, mine eyes upon Thee, and rid me of all attachment to aught else except Thyself. Aid me to do what Thou desirest, and to fulfill what Thou pleasest.

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Prayers and Meditations*, page 22)

Step Seven: Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings.

O Lord! Thou art the Remover of every anguish and the Dispeller of every affliction. Thou art He Who banisheth every sorrow and setteth free every slave, the Redeemer of every soul. O Lord! Grant deliverance through Thy mercy and reckon me among such servants of Thine as have gained salvation.

(The Báb: *Selections from the Báb*, page 193)

‘Bid them recite: “Is there any Remover of difficulties save God? Say: Praised be God! He is God! All are His servants, and all abide by His bidding!” Tell them to repeat it five hundred times, nay, a thousand

times, by day and by night, sleeping and waking, that haply the Countenance of Glory may be unveiled to their eyes, and tiers of light descend upon them.'

(Shoghi Effendi: *God Passes By*, page 119)

Step Eight: Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship. He Who is the Day-Star of Truth beareth Me witness! So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth. The One true God, He Who knoweth all things, Himself testifieth to the truth of these words.

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, page 14)

Exert yourselves that ye may attain this transcendent and most sublime station, the station that can insure the protection and security of all mankind. This goal excelleth every other goal, and this aspiration is the monarch of all aspirations.

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, page 14)

Step Nine: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible except when to do so would injure them or others.

So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Make friends quickly with your accuser, while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison.

(Matthew 5:24-25 (New American Standard))

Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity. Be worthy of the trust of thy neighbor, and look upon him with a bright and friendly face. Be a treasure to the poor, an admonisher to the rich, an answerer of the cry of the needy, a preserver of the sanctity of thy pledge. Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech. Be unjust to no man, and show all meekness to all men. Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts.

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, page 285)

Step Ten: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

O SON OF BEING!

Bring thyself to account each day ere thou art summoned to a reckoning; for death, unheralded, shall come upon thee and thou shalt be called to give account for thy deeds.

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Arabic Hidden Words*, page 11)

Step Eleven: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and for the power to carry that out.

Intone, O My servant, the verses of God that have been received by thee, as intoned by them who have drawn nigh unto Him, that the sweetness of thy melody may kindle thine own soul, and attract the hearts of all men.

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, page 295)

O God! Refresh and gladden my spirit. Purify my heart. Illumine my powers. I lay all my affairs in Thy hand. Thou art my Guide and my Refuge.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Bahá’í Prayers* (US edition), page 152)

Step Twelve: Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Verily, God hath made it incumbent upon every soul to deliver His Cause according to his ability. Thus hath the command been recorded by the finger of might and power upon the Tablet of majesty and greatness.

(Bahá’u’lláh: *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 206)

Unloose your tongues, and proclaim unceasingly His Cause. This shall be better for you than all the treasures of the past and of the future, if ye be of them that comprehend this truth.

(Bahá’u’lláh: *Gleanings*, page 330)

BE A BAHÁ’Í

You must manifest complete love and affection toward all mankind.

Do not exalt yourselves above others, but consider all as your equals, recognizing them as the servants of one God.

Know that God is compassionate toward all; therefore, love all from the depths of your hearts, prefer all religionists before yourselves, be filled with love for every race, and be kind toward the people of all nationalities.

Never speak disparagingly of others, but praise without distinction.

Pollute not your tongues by speaking evil of another.

Recognize your enemies as friends, and consider those who wish you evil as the wishers of good. You must not see evil as evil and then compromise with your

opinion, for to treat in a smooth, kindly way one whom you consider evil or an enemy is hypocrisy, and this is not worthy or allowable. You must consider your enemies as your friends, look upon your evil-wishers as your well-wishers and treat them accordingly.

Act in such a way that your heart may be free from hatred.

Let not your heart be offended with anyone.

If some one commits an error and wrong toward you, you must instantly forgive him.

Do not complain of others.

Refrain from reprimanding them, and if you wish to give admonition or advice, let it be offered in such a way that it will not burden the hearer.

Turn all your thoughts toward bringing joy to hearts.

Beware! Beware! lest ye offend any heart.

Assist the world of humanity as much as possible.

Be the source of consolation to every sad one, assist every weak one, be helpful to every indigent one, care for every sick one, be the cause of glorification to every lowly one, and shelter those who are overshadowed by fear.

In brief, let each one of you be as a lamp shining forth with the light of the virtues of the world of humanity.

Be trustworthy, sincere, affectionate and replete with chastity.

Be illumined, be spiritual, be divine, be glorious, be quickened of God, be a Bahá'í.

(Abdu'l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, page 453)

Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Topeka, Kansas, Inc.
Post Office Box 1962,
Topeka, Kansas 66601

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Assembled by Rick and Sherry
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For more information on BIRF, contact
Bahá'ís in Recovery Fellowship
100 Douglas Street
Bisbee, Arizona 85603