

# Triumphing over Our Weaknesses

by Báb, The, Bahá'u'lláh and Abdu'l-Bahá

Compiled by Brent Poirier.

GLORY be unto Thee, O Lord, Thou Who hast brought into being all created things, through the power of Thy behest.

O Lord! Assist those who have renounced all else but Thee, and grant them a mighty victory. Send down upon them, O Lord, the concourse of the angels in heaven and earth and all that is between, to aid Thy servants, to succour and strengthen them, to enable them to achieve success, to sustain them, to invest them with glory, to confer upon them honour and exaltation, to enrich them and to make them triumphant with a wondrous triumph.

Thou art their Lord, the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of all the worlds. Strengthen this Faith, O Lord, through the power of these servants and cause them to prevail over all the peoples of the world; for they, of a truth, are Thy servants who have detached themselves from aught else but Thee, and Thou verily art the protector of true believers.

Grant Thou, O Lord, that their hearts may, through allegiance to this, Thine inviolable Faith, grow stronger than anything else in the heavens and on earth and in whatsoever is between them; and strengthen, O Lord, their hands with the tokens of Thy wondrous power that they may manifest Thy power before the gaze of all mankind.

- *Selections from the Writings of the Bab, pp. 192-193*

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It is my hope that you may consider this matter, that you may search out your own imperfections and not think of the imperfections of anybody else. Strive with all your power to be free from imperfections. Heedless souls are always seeking faults in others. What can the hypocrite know of others' faults when he is blind to his own? This is the meaning of the words in the Seven Valleys. It is a guide for human conduct. As long as a man does not find his own faults, he can never become perfect. Nothing is more fruitful for man than the knowledge of his own shortcomings. The Blessed Perfection says, "I wonder at the man who does not find his own imperfections."

- *Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace p. 244.*

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O ye beloved of Bahá'! Do not look at your weakness, nay, rely upon the confirmation of the Holy Spirit. Verily, It maketh the weak strong, the lowly mighty, the child grown, the infant mature and the small great.

I beg of God that He may make you diffusers of His fragrances, servants of His Cause, gazers unto His Face, speakers in His praise, and that He may protect you against tests and trials, so that ye may become shining lights, beaming stars, gleaming lamps and lofty trees. Verily, this is not difficult with God!

- *Abdu'l-Bahá, Tablets of Abdu'l-Bahá, Volume II, p. 274*

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Heed not your weaknesses and frailty; fix your gaze upon the invincible power of the Lord, your God, the Almighty. Has He not, in past days caused Abraham, in spite of His seeming helplessness, to triumph over the forces of Nimrod? Has He not enabled Moses, whose staff was His only companion, to vanquish Pharaoh and his hosts? Has He not established the ascendancy of Jesus, poor and lowly as He was in the eyes of men, over the combined forces of the Jewish people? Has He not subjected the

barbarous and militant tribes of Arabia to the holy and transforming discipline of Muammad, His Prophet? Arise in His name, put your trust wholly in Him, and be assured of ultimate victory.

- *The Bab, Farewell Address to the Letters of the Living, The Dawn-Breakers, p. 94.*

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... Bahá'u'lláh also recognizes that human beings are fallible. He knows that, in our weakness, we shall repeatedly stumble when we try to walk in the path He has pointed out to us. If all human beings became perfect the moment they accepted the call of Bahá'u'lláh this world would be another world. It is in light of our frailty that `Abdu'l-Bahá appealed to the friends everywhere to love each other and stressed the emphatic teaching of Bahá'u'lláh that each of us should concentrate upon improving his or her own life and ignore the faults of others. How many times the Master stressed the need for unity, for without it His Father's Cause could not go forward.

- *Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, letter dated July 24, 1973 to an individual believer; "Developing Distinctive Bahá'í Communities," p. 15.25*

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Of course many wayward thoughts come involuntarily to the mind and these are merely a result of weakness and are not blameworthy unless they become fixed or even worse, are expressed in improper acts.

- *(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, Lights of Guidance, 1988 edition, p. 364, Section 1220)*

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He feels that you should do your utmost to call the attention of the friends to these large things and real triumphs, and away from their personal differences and petty pre-occupations. Now is certainly not the time for any man to think of himself, or busy himself with the weaknesses of his brother; but, rather each and every Bahá'í must concentrate on the tasks ahead and be reborn in the service of Bahá'u'lláh.

- *From a letter on behalf of the Guardian; Lights of Guidance, 1988 edition, Section 317.*

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As you point out, it is particularly difficult to follow the Laws of Bahá'u'lláh in present-day society whose accepted practice is so at variance with the standards of the Faith. However, there are certain laws that are so fundamental to the healthy functioning of human society that they must be upheld whatever the circumstances. Realizing the degree of human frailty, Bahá'u'lláh has provided that other laws are to be applied only gradually, but these too, once they are applied, must be followed, or else society will not be reformed but will sink into an ever worsening condition. It is the challenging task of the Bahá'ís to obey the law of God in their own lives, and gradually to win the rest of mankind to its acceptance.

- *From a letter on behalf of the Guardian; Lights of Guidance, 1988 edition, Section 1147.*

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Stop to be conscious of your frailties, therefore; have a perfect reliance upon God; let your heart burn with the desire to serve His Mission and proclaim His call; and you will observe how eloquence and the power to change human hearts will come as a matter of course.

- *Written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, in The Individual and Teaching: Raising the Divine Call, p. 21*

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The Master assured us that when we forget ourselves, and strive with all our powers to serve and teach the Faith, we receive divine assistance. It is not we who do the work, but we are the instruments used at that time for the purpose of teaching His Cause.

- *Written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, in The Individual and Teaching: Raising the Divine Call, p. 38*

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While the friends are generally conscious of the vital importance of teaching, yet, because of their frailties, many for the most part lack confidence, and feel they do not know what course of action to follow, or how to bring their efforts to a conclusion. Since guidance on such fundamental issues comes

from the writings of the Faith, we asked the Research Department to prepare a compilation of texts on the subject .... A study of the compilation will provide the friends with stimulating information on general guidelines to be followed by them when engaged in the teaching work. While many will be inspired, after reading the compilation, to cast aside their fears and misgivings and their sense of inadequacy, and will arise to speak forth announcing the glad-tidings of the Kingdom to their fellow-men, many more will still be in need of loving education and more detailed guidance on the part of the institutions of the Faith, and patient and wise prodding before they are aroused to action.

*- The Universal House of Justice, Introduction to Compilation, "Teaching: Raising the Divine Call"*

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In order to achieve this cordial unity one of the first essentials insisted on by Bahá'u'lláh and `Abdu'l-Bahá is that we resist the natural tendency to let our attention dwell on the faults and failings of others rather than on our own. Each of us is responsible for one life only, and this is our own. Each of us is immeasurably far from being "perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect" and the task of perfecting our own life and character is one that requires all our attention, our will-power and energy. If we allow our attention and energy to be taken up in efforts to keep others right and remedy their faults, we are wasting precious time. We are like ploughmen each of whom has his team to manage and his plough to direct, and in order to keep his furrow straight he must keep his eye on his goal and concentrate on his own task. If he looks to this side and that to see how Tom and Harry are getting on and to criticise their ploughing, then his own furrow will assuredly become crooked.

On no subject are the Bahá'í teachings more emphatic than on the necessity to abstain from fault-finding and backbiting while being ever eager to discover and root out our own faults and overcome our own failings.

*- From a letter dated May 12, 1925 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, Compilation "On the Bahá'í Life" printed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, p. 3.*

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Such hindrances (i.e. illness and outer difficulties), no matter how severe and insuperable they may at first seem, can and should be effectively overcome through the combined and sustained power of prayer and of determined and continued effort. For have not Bahá'u'lláh and `Abdu'l-Bahá both repeatedly assured us that the Divine and unseen hosts of victory will ever reinforce and strengthen those who valiantly and confidently labour in their name? This assurance should indeed enable you to overcome any feeling of unworthiness, of incapacity to serve, and any inner or outer limitation which threatens to handicap your labours for the Cause. You should therefore arise, and with a heart filled with joy and confidence endeavour to contribute any share that is in your power toward the wider diffusion and greater consolidation of our beloved Faith.

Whatever the particular field of service you may choose, whether teaching or administrative, the essential is for you to persevere, and not to allow any consciousness of your limitations to dampen your zeal, much less to deter you from serving joyously and actively.

*- From a letter dated Feb. 6, 1939 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi "On the Bahá'í Life" p. 6.*

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We must always look ahead and seek to accomplish in the future what we may have failed to do in the past. Failures, tests, and trials, if we use them correctly, can become the means of purifying our spirits, strengthening our characters, and enable us to rise to greater heights of service.

*- From a letter dated December 14, 1941 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, Compilation "On the Bahá'í Life" printed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, p. 8.*

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We must realize our imperfection and not permit ourselves to get too upset over the unfortunate things which occur, sometimes in Conventions, sometimes in Assemblies or on Committees, etc. Such things are essentially superficial and in time will be outgrown.

*- From a letter dated March 17, 1943 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, Compilation "On the Bahá'í Life" printed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, p. 9.*

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Ultimately all the battle of life is within the individual. No amount of organization can solve the inner problems or produce or prevent, as the case may be, victory or failure at a crucial moment. In such times as these particularly, individuals are torn by great forces at large in the world, and we see some weak ones suddenly become miraculously strong, and strong ones fail—we can only try, through loving advice, as your Committee has done, to bring about the act on the part of the believer which will be for the highest good of the Cause. Because obviously something bad for the Cause cannot be the highest good of the individual Bahá'í.

*- From a letter dated December 17, 1943 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, Compilation "On the Bahá'í Life" printed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, p. 10.*

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He is very happy to see that you have put into practice one of the most encouraging precepts of `Abdu'l-Bahá in which He said that we should try and make every stumbling-block a stepping-stone to progress. In the course of your past life you have all stumbled very gravely; but, far from being embittered or defeated by this experience, you are determined to make it a means of purifying your natures, improving your characters, and enabling you to become better citizens in the future. This is truly pleasing in the eyes of God.

*- From a letter dated March 25, 1957 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'ís in H.M. prison, Kitalya, Uganda, Compilation "On the Bahá'í Life" printed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, p. 21.*

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How great, therefore, how staggering the responsibility that must weigh upon the present generation of the American believers, at this early stage in their spiritual and administrative evolution, to weed out, by every means in their power, those faults, habits, and tendencies which they have inherited from their own nation, and to cultivate, patiently and prayerfully, those distinctive qualities and characteristics that are so indispensable to their effective participation in the great redemptive work of their Faith. Incapable as yet, in view of the restricted size of their community and the limited influence it now wields, of producing any marked effect on the great mass of their countrymen, let them focus their attention, for the present, on their own selves, their own individual needs, their own personal deficiencies and weaknesses, ever mindful that every intensification of effort on their part will better equip them for the time when they will be called upon to eradicate in their turn such evil tendencies from the lives and the hearts of the entire body of their fellow-citizens.

*- Shoghi Effendi, The Advent of Divine Justice, pp. 20-21*

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Yet another Hand of the Cause was the revered Mulla `Ali-Akbar, upon him be the glory of God, the All-Glorious. Early in life, this illustrious man attended institutions of higher learning and labored diligently, by day and night, until he became thoroughly conversant with the learning of the day, with secular studies, philosophy, and religious jurisprudence. He frequented the gatherings of philosophers, mystics, and Shaykhis, thoughtfully traversing those areas of knowledge, intuitive wisdom, and illumination; but he thirsted after the wellspring of truth, and hungered for the bread that comes down from Heaven. No matter how he strove to perfect himself in those regions of the mind, he was never satisfied; he never reached the goal of his desires; his lips stayed parched; he was confused, perplexed, and felt that he had wandered from his path. The reason was that in all those circles he had found no passion; no joy, no ecstasy; no faintest scent of love. And as he went deeper into the core of those manifold beliefs, he discovered that from the day of the Prophet Muammad's advent until our own times, innumerable sects have arisen: creeds differing among themselves; disparate opinions, divergent goals, uncounted roads and ways. And he found each one, under some plea or other, claiming to reveal spiritual truth; each one believing that it alone followed the true path—this although the Muammadic sea could rise in one great tide, and carry all those sects away to the ocean floor. "No cry shalt thou hear from them, nor a whisper even."<sup>1</sup>

Whoso ponders the lessons of history will learn that this sea has lifted up innumerable waves, yet in the

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1 Cf. Qur'án 19:98

end each has dissolved and vanished, like a shadow drifting by. The waves have perished, but the sea lives on. This is why `Ali Qabl-i-Akbar could never quench his thirst, till the day when he stood on the shore of Truth and cried:

“Here is a sea with treasure to the brim; Its waves toss pearls under the great wind's thong. Throw off your robe and plunge, nor try to swim, Pride not yourself on swimming—dive headlong.”

Like a fountain, his heart welled and jetted forth; meaning and truth, like soft-flowing crystal waters, began to stream from his lips. At first, with humility, with spiritual poverty, he garnered the new light, and only then he proceeded to shed it abroad. For how well has it been said,

“Shall he the gift of life to others bear

Who of life's gift has never had a share?”

A teacher must proceed in this way: he must first teach himself, and then others. If he himself still walks the path of carnal appetites and lusts, how can he guide another to the “evident signs”<sup>2</sup> of God?

This honored man was successful in converting a multitude.

- `Abdu'l-Bahá, *Memorials of the Faithful*, pp. 9-10

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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”<sup>3</sup>—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.

- `Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions* p. 223-224

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O Thou divine Providence, pitiful are we, grant us Thy succour; homeless wanderers, give us Thy shelter; scattered, do Thou unite us; astray, gather us to Thy fold; bereft, do Thou bestow upon us a share and portion; athirst, lead us to the well-spring of Life; frail, strengthen us that we may arise to help Thy Cause and offer ourselves as a living sacrifice in the pathway of guidance.

- *Selections from the Writings of `Abdu'l-Bahá* p. 315

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All religions teach that we should love one another; that we should seek out our own shortcomings before we presume to condemn the faults of others, that we must not consider ourselves superior to our neighbours! We must be careful not to exalt ourselves lest we be humiliated.

- `Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks* p. 147

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2 Qur'án 3:91

3 John 1:13

We see that God is kind to all. Just as He loves us, He loves all others; just as He provides for us, He provides for the rest. He nurtures and trains all with equal solicitude.

God is great! God is kind! He does not behold human shortcomings; He does not regard human weaknesses. Man is a creature of His mercy, and to His mercy He summons all. Why then should we despise or detest His creatures because this one is a Jew, another a Buddhist or Zoroastrian and so on? This is ignorance, for the oneness of humanity as servants of God is an assured and certain fact.

Bahá'u'lláh has proclaimed the promise of the oneness of humanity. Therefore, we must exercise the utmost love toward each other. We must be loving to all the people of the world. We must not consider any people the people of Satan, but know and recognize all as the servants of the one God. At most it is this: Some do not know; they must be guided and trained. They must be taught to love their fellow creatures and be encouraged in the acquisition of virtues. Some are ignorant; they must be informed. Some are as children, undeveloped; they must be helped to reach maturity. Some are ailing, their moral condition is unhealthy; they must be treated until their morals are purified. But the sick man is not to be hated because he is sick, the child must not be shunned because he is a child, the ignorant one is not to be despised because he lacks knowledge. They must all be treated, educated, trained and assisted in love. Everything must be done in order that humanity may live under the shadow of God in the utmost security, enjoying happiness in its highest degree.

- `Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace* p. 270.

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All mankind are the servants of the glorious God, our Creator. He has created all. Assuredly He must have loved them equally; otherwise, He would not have created them. He protects all. Assuredly He loves His creatures; otherwise, He would not protect them. He provides for all, proving His love for all without distinction or preference. He manifests His perfect goodness and loving-kindness toward all. He does not punish us for our sins and shortcomings, and we are all immersed in the ocean of His infinite mercy. Inasmuch as God is clement and loving to His children, lenient and merciful toward our shortcomings, why should we be unkind and unforgiving toward each other? As He loves humanity without distinction or preference, why should we not love all? Can we conceive of a plan and policy superior to the divine purpose? Manifestly, we cannot. Therefore, we must strive to do the will of the glorious Lord and emulate His policy of loving all mankind. The wisdom and policy of God are reality and truth, whereas human policy is accidental and limited to our finite understanding. The policy of God is infinite. We must emulate His example. If a soul be ailing and infirm, we must produce remedies; if ignorant, we must provide education; if defective, we must train and perfect that which is lacking; if immature and undeveloped, we must supply the means of attainment to maturity. No soul should be hated, none neglected; nay, rather, their very imperfections should demand greater kindness and tender compassion. Therefore, if we follow the example of the Lord of divinity, we will love all mankind from our hearts, and the means of the unity of the world of humanity will become as evident and manifest to us as the light of the sun.

- `Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace* p. 315

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Therefore, O ye friends of God, ye must in perfect purity attain spiritual unity and agreement to a degree that ye may express one spirit and one life.

In this condition physical bodies play no part; the command and authority are in the hand of the spirit. When the spirit becometh all inclusive, the spiritual union shall be attained. Night and day endeavor to attain perfect harmony; be thoughtful concerning your own spiritual developments and close your eyes to the shortcomings of one another.

By good deeds, pure lives, humility and meekness be a lesson for others.

`Abdu'l-Bahá wisheth no one's heart to feel hurt, nor will he be a source of grief to any one; for there is no greater satisfaction than being a source of joy to the hearts.

I ask God that ye may become like angels of heaven, sources of happiness to souls.

- `Abdu'l-Bahá, *Tablets of `Abdu'l-Bahá, Volume I, p. 23.*

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O pure God, O loving God! We are wandering around Thy abode and longing for the gift of Thy meeting, and are loving Thy characteristics. We are helpless, humble, lowly, and weak; confer Thy mercy upon us, favor us with Thy gifts, overlook our shortcomings, and conceal our endless faults. We are Thine, whatever we might be (good or bad), and whatever we may say or hear is but Thy commendation. We seek but Thy face, and we search but Thy path. Thou art the loving God, while we are but sinners and love Thee passionately. O Thou Cloud of Mercy (shower upon us) a few drops! O Flower-garden of Favor (send to us) some fragrances! O Sea of Gifts (flow over us) Thy waves! O Sun of Grace (pour on us) some radiances! Have pity on us, and show us favor. We swear by Thy Beauty that we are full of errors, and we have no deeds, but hopes. Except Thy concealing veil should cover us, and Thy preservation and protection should favor us, these weak souls have not enough power to employ themselves in Thy service, and these indigent ones have not enough wealth to show a rich appearance. Thou art the Powerful, the Mighty!

I beg of Thee to assist them! Do refresh these faded souls with the drops of the cloud of Thy gifts, and do illumine these lowly beings through the effulgences of the sun of Thy Singleness! I pray Thee to cast these thirsty fishes into the sea of Thy mercy; guide their lost caravan unto the asylum of Thy unity; direct these bewildered souls unto the fountain of Thy guidance, and cause these wanderers to abide in the shelter of Thy might. Suffer the thirsty ones to drink from the Salsabil<sup>4</sup> of Thy gifts, and quicken the dead by eternal life. Endow the blind with light, the deaf with hearing, the dumb with speech, the lukewarm with energy, the heedless with mindfulness, the sleepers with wakefulness, and the proud with humility. Verily, Thou art the Powerful, Thou art the Forgiver! Thou art the Loving! Verily, Thou art the Generous, the Most High!

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Volume II, pp. 368- 374*

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Glory be unto Thee, O my God!

Thou seest me rolling my face in the dust of humility and contrition, supplicating toward the Kingdom of Thy Might, yearning for the contemplation of Thy Greatness, entreating Thy Grandeur, invoking at the Threshold of Thy Mercifulness, beseeching the realm of Thy Singleness, acknowledging my shortcomings, longing for Thy bounty, desiring Thy concealing veil and expecting the outpouring of the rain of Thy favor upon all the meadows and mountains!

O my Lord! Verily, Thy power hath enveloped all things, Thy dominion, Thy glory and Thy sovereignty have become manifest as the manifestation of the sun in mid-day; Thy Word hath penetrated the reality of the contingent beings; Thy voice hath been raised on the apex of the world; Thy beaming lights have radiated from the dawning-places of all the horizons and Thy wonderful refulgent signs have become known in all directions; consequently the sights and insights have become dazzled by beholding these manifestations of truth! There is no land in which the fame of Thy Merciful Cause hath not been spread, and there is no region in which Thy manifest ensign hath not been hoisted! Verily, Thy voice hath reached the ears of all inhabitants of the globe, and the attracted ones have become exhilarated by its holy and divine fragrances!

Praise be to Thee, O my God! for the bestowal of this most great bounty upon Thy chosen ones; and thanks be to Thee, O my Lord! for this most eminent favor upon Thy righteous servants in suffering them to become the signs of Thy Oneness in this glorious age and the standards of Thy sanctity in this new cycle!

O my Lord! O my Lord! Assist the weak ones with the Supreme Energy; shelter the indigent ones near the asylum of Thy Greatest Majesty; strengthen the loins of those souls whose faces radiate with Thy lights and whose tongues become eloquent in the glorification and commemoration of Thy Name; make them the plants of Thy luminous orchard, the blossoms of Thy blessed tree, the leaves of Thy Sadrat-el-Montaha<sup>5</sup> and the flowers of Thy exalted rose-garden! Verily, Thou art the Clement, the Lofty, the

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4 Salsabil, i. e., Sweet Water of Life

5 Sadrat-el-Montaha — The name of a tree planted by the Arabs in ancient times at the end of a road, to serve as a guide. As a symbol it denotes a Manifestation in His day.

Magnificent, the Omnipresent and the Omniscient and Thou art the Protector, the Guardian, the Helper, the Powerful, the Merciful and the Generous!

- `Abdu'l-Bahá, *Tablets of `Abdu'l-Bahá, Volume III, pp. 570- 571*

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Abdul-Baha arose with hands extended, palms upward, he uttered the following:

#### SUPPLICATION

O GOD, O GOD, I GLORIFY THEE O MY LORD, MY HOPE, MY BELOVED AND THE OBJECT OF MY LIFE. VERILY THOU KNOWEST MY HUMILITY, MY EVANESCENCE, MY POVERTY, MY AGITATION AND MY SHORTCOMINGS. I CALL ON THEE WITH A HEART OVERFLOWING WITH THY LOVE, A SPIRIT REJOICED BY THE OUTPOURINGS OF THY ONENESS, AND A SOUL RESTING IN THY COMMEMORATION AND PRAISE.

O LORD, O LORD, VERILY THESE ARE SOULS WHO ARE ATTRACTED TO THE KINGDOM OF THY HOLINESS, HEARTS ENKINDLED WITH THE FIRE OF THY LOVE AND SPIRITS SOARING TOWARD THE ATMOSPHERE OF THY GRACE.

O LORD, O LORD, ILLUMINE OUR EYES WITH THE RAYS OF THE SUN OF THY REALITY, SUFFER OUR EARS TO HEAR, UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES, THE CALL OF THY KINGDOM, THE EL-ABHA.

O LORD, O LORD, MAKE US FIRM IN THY CAUSE, HUMBLE BEFORE THY MAJESTY, ACKNOWLEDGING THY DOMINION, ARISING IN THY SERVICE AND BEING ENGAGED IN THY ADORATION.

VERILY THOU ART THE CLEMENT; VERILY THOU ART THE OMNIPOTENT; VERILY THOU ART THE MERCIFUL OF THE MOST MERCIFUL.

- `Abdu'l-Bahá, *Divine Philosophy, pp. 46-47*

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O my God! O my God! Thou seest me in my lowliness and weakness, occupied with the greatest undertaking, determined to raise Thy word among the masses and to spread Thy teachings among Thy peoples. How can I succeed unless Thou assist me with the breath of the Holy Spirit, help me to triumph by the hosts of Thy glorious kingdom, and shower upon me Thy confirmations, which alone can change a gnat into an eagle, a drop of water into rivers and seas, and an atom into lights and suns? O my Lord! Assist me with Thy triumphant and effective might, so that my tongue may utter Thy praises and attributes among all people and my soul overflow with the wine of Thy love and knowledge.

- `Abdu'l-Bahá, *Tablets of the Divine Plan, p. 68*

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Lord! My cup of woe runneth over, and from all sides blows are fiercely raging upon me. The darts of affliction have compassed me round and the arrows of distress have rained upon me. Thus tribulation overwhelmed me and my strength, because of the onslaught of the foemen, became weakness within me, while I stood alone and forsaken in the midst of my woes. Lord! Have mercy upon me, lift me up unto Thyself and make me to drink from the Chalice of Martyrdom, for the wide world with all its vastness can no longer contain me. Thou art, verily, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Gracious, the All-Bountiful!

- *The Will and Testament of `Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 23*

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O thou who art imploring God!

I was indeed acquainted with the great misfortunes and afflictions which have befallen thee, but I hope that through the bounty of thy Lord, He may ordain unto thee heavenly fragrance and spirituality, attractive and internal perceptions and incorporeal susceptibilities; that He may grant thee strength after weakness, give thee rest after trouble, bring thee nigh to Him, and make thee a sign of His love among all His maid- servants, and forgive thy father, mother, brother and grandfather their sins. Verily, He is the Pardoner, the Forgiver.

- `Abdu'l-Bahá, *Tablets of `Abdu'l-Bahá, Volume I, pp. 114*

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As to thee: Do not look at thy weakness and impotence; nay, look at the power of thy Lord, which hath surrounded all regions. The sea of forgiveness hath moved and the waves of pardon and beneficence have submerged the people of sin. Be isolated from the grades of self and desire, so that thou mayest succeed in that which behooveth the service of the Kingdom of God, and that thou mayest be healed from every disease and sickness.

- *Abdu'l-Bahá, Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Volume I, p. 190*

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This is the most great, the most joyful tidings imparted by the Pen of this Wronged One to mankind. Wherefore fear ye, O My well-beloved ones? Who is it that can dismay you? A touch of moisture sufficeth to dissolve the hardened clay out of which this perverse generation is moulded. The mere act of your gathering together is enough to scatter the forces of these vain and worthless people.

- *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh pp. 84-85*

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Perhaps the reason why you have not accomplished so much in the field of teaching is the extent you looked upon your own weaknesses and inabilities to spread the message. Bahá'u'lláh and the Master have both urged us repeatedly to disregard our own handicaps and lay our whole reliance upon God. He will come to our help if we only arise and become an active channel for God's grace. Do you think it is the teachers who make converts and change human hearts? No, surely not. ... Stop being conscious of your frailties, therefore; have a perfect reliance upon God; let your heart burn with the desire to serve His mission and proclaim His call; and you will observe how eloquence and the power to change human hearts will come as a matter course. Shoghi Effendi will surely pray for your success if you should arise and start to teach. In fact the mere act of arising will win for you God's help and blessings.

- *From a letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi dated 31 March 1932 to an individual believer, quoted in the Compilation "The Power of Divine Assistance", and The Compilation of Compilations, Volume II, pp. 219-220.*

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You should never look at your own limitations, much less allow them to deter you from promoting the Message. For the believers, whether capable or not, whether poor or rich, and whether influential or obscure, are after all but mere channels through which God carries His message to mankind. They are instruments whereby He communicates His will to His people The friends, therefore, must cease looking at their own deficiencies in a way that would kill in them the spirit of initiative and of service. They should have confidence in the divine assistance promised to them by Bahá'u'lláh, and strengthened and revived by such an assurance they should continue to toil till the very end of their life.

- *From a letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi dated 18 March 1934 to an individual believer, quoted in the Compilation "The Power of Divine Assistance", and The Compilation of Compilations, Volume II, pp. 220.*

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Smallness of numbers, lack of skilled teachers, and modesty of means should not discourage or deter them. They must remember the glorious history of the Cause, which, both East and West, was established by dedicated souls who, for the most part, were neither rich, famous, nor well educated, but whose devotion, zeal and self-sacrifice overcame every obstacle and won miraculous victories for the Faith of God.... Let them dedicate themselves—young and old, men and women alike—and go forth and settle in new districts, travel, and teach in spite of lack of experience, and be assured that Bahá'u'lláh has promised to aid all those who arise in His Name. His strength will sustain them; their own weakness is unimportant.

- *From a letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi dated 29 June 1941 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India, published in Dawn of A New Day p. 89, and The Compilation of Compilations, Volume II, p. 221.*

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If the friends always waited until they were fully qualified to do any particular task, the work of the Cause would be almost at a standstill! But the very act of striving to serve, however unworthy one may feel, attracts the blessings of God and enables one to become more fitted for the task.

- *From a letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi dated 4 May 1942 to an individual believer, quoted in the Compilation "The Power of Divine Assistance", and The Compilation of Compilations, Volume II, p. 222.*

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When once a few bold, self-sacrificing individuals have arisen to serve, their example will no doubt encourage other timid, would-be pioneers to follow in their footsteps. The history of our Faith is full of records of the remarkable things achieved by really very simple, insignificant individuals, who became veritable beacons and towers of strength through having placed their trust in God, having arisen to proclaim His Message....

*- From a letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi dated 27 March 1945 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of The British Isles, published in the Compilation "The Power of Divine Assistance", and The Compilation of Compilations, Volume II, p. 222.*

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Each one of us, if we look into our failures, is sure to feel unworthy and despondent, and this feeling only frustrates our constructive efforts and wastes time. The thing for us to focus on is the glory of the Cause and the Power of Bahá'u'lláh which can make of a mere drop a surging sea!

*- From a letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi dated 13 October 1947 to an individual believer, quoted in the Compilation "The Power of Divine Assistance", and The Compilation of Compilations, Volume II, p. 222.*

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At all times we must look at the greatness of the Cause, and remember that Bahá'u'lláh will assist all who arise in His service. When we look at ourselves, we are sure to feel discouraged by our shortcomings and insignificance!

*- From a letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi dated 12 December 1950 to an individual believer, quoted in the Compilation "The Power of Divine Assistance", and The Compilation of Compilations, Volume II, p. 223.*

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Know thou, verily, it is becoming to a weak one to supplicate to the Strong One, and it behooveth a seeker of bounty to beseech the Glorious Bountiful One. When one supplicates to his Lord, turns to Him and seeks bounty from His Ocean, this supplication brings light to his heart, illumination to his sight, life to his soul, and exaltation to his being.

During thy supplications to God and thy reciting, "Thy Name is my healing," consider how thine heart is cheered, thy soul delighted by the spirit of the love of God, and thy mind attracted to the Kingdom of God! By these attractions one's ability and capacity increase. When the vessel is enlarged the water increases, and when the thirst grows the bounty of the cloud becomes agreeable to the taste of man. This is the mystery of supplication and the wisdom of stating one's wants.

*- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, quoted in Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, p. 93, and the Compilation, "The Power of Divine Assistance," and The Compilation of Compilations, Volume II, p. 235.*

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The believers, as we all know, should endeavour to set such an example in their personal lives and conduct that others will feel impelled to embrace a Faith which reforms human character. However, unfortunately, not everyone achieves easily and rapidly the victory over self. What every believer, new or old, should realize is that the Cause has the spiritual power to re-create us if we make the effort to let that power influence us, and the greatest help in this respect is prayer. We must supplicate Bahá'u'lláh to assist us to overcome the failings in our own characters, and also exert our own will-power in mastering ourselves.

*- From a letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi dated 27 January 1945 to an individual believer, quoted in the Compilation "The Power of Divine Assistance", and The Compilation of Compilations, Volume II, p. 241.*

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Remember not your own limitations; the help of God will come to you. Forget yourself. God's help will surely come!

When you call on the Mercy of God waiting to reinforce you, your strength will be tenfold.

Look at me: I am so feeble, yet I have had the strength given me to come amongst you: a poor servant of God, who has been enabled to give you this message! I shall not be with you long! One must never consider one's own feebleness, it is the strength of the Holy Spirit of Love, which gives the power to teach. The thought of our own weakness could only bring despair. We must look higher than all earthly

thoughts; detach ourselves from every material idea, crave for the things of the spirit; fix our eyes on the everlasting bountiful Mercy of the Almighty, who will fill our souls with the gladness of joyful service to His command “Love One Another”.

- `Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks* pp. 38-39

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... mental illness is not spiritual, although its effects may indeed hinder and be a burden in one's striving toward spiritual progress. In a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to a believer there is this further passage:

Such hindrances (i.e. illness and outer difficulties), no matter how severe and insuperable they may at first seem, can and should be effectively overcome through the combined and sustained power of prayer and of determined and continued effort.<sup>6</sup>

That effort can include the counsel of wise and experienced physicians, including psychiatrists. Working for the Faith, serving others who may need you, and giving of yourself can aid you in your struggle to overcome your sufferings. One helpful activity is, of course, striving to teach the Cause in spite of personal feelings of shortcomings, thus allowing the healing words of the Cause to flood your mind with their grace and positive power.

- (From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, June 15, 1982; *Lights of Guidance*, 1988 edition, Section 955.)

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Life is based on laws: physical, man-made, and spiritual. As you have broken the laws of the society in which you live, you will have to stand up like a man and take your punishment. The spirit in which you do this is the most important thing, and constitutes a great opportunity for you. He (the Guardian) advises you to turn your face towards the future, to realise that when you are set free you have loving and helpful friends to go to, an upright job awaiting you, and you can also become active in serving our glorious Faith. So really everything lies before you. But at present, until your sentence is up, you must live within yourself in a way not to spoil the new future awaiting you. You must not become bitter—for after all you are only reaping what you planted. Bahá'u'lláh and `Abdu'l-Bahá, through no crime of their own, spent the better part of their lives in exile and imprisoned, but they never became embittered although they were the victims of injustice. You, on the other hand, are the victim of injustice which you have inflicted on yourself - therefore you certainly have no right to be bitter towards the world.

He urges you to grasp firmly the teachings of our Faith, the love of your family and many Bahá'í friends, to put the past behind entirely, realising that it can do you no more harm; on the contrary, through changing you and making you spiritually aware, this very past can be a means of enriching your life in the future! He will certainly ardently pray for your happiness, your victory over yourself, and that you may become an exemplary and active Bahá'í.

- Shoghi Effendi's secretary on his behalf, *Unfolding Destiny*, p. 450

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He (the Guardian) encouraged him to face manfully the future, accept the legitimate sanction of society as punishment for his admittedly anti-social conduct, and realise that his very suffering, humiliation and punishment can—if he will let it—be the means of freeing him from many of his past weaknesses and mistakes, and making him a worthy member of society. He should look to the future, for there is in his power, with Bahá'u'lláh's help, to shape into a worthy and constructive way of life....

The English Bahá'ís did gloriously succeed after all! Hitching one's wagon to a star, however impractical it may seem, does bring results, for man, with God to help him, does possess strengths far beyond the mere materialist's ken!

- Shoghi Effendi's secretary on his behalf, *Unfolding Destiny*, p. 451

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6 From a letter dated 6 February 1939 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer

We must not only be patient with others, infinitely patient!, but also with our own poor selves, remembering that even the Prophets of God sometimes got tired and cried out in despair!

- Shoghi Effendi's secretary on his behalf, *Unfolding Destiny*, p. 456

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He urges you to persevere and add up your accomplishments, rather than to dwell on the dark side of things. Everyone's life has both a dark and bright side. The Master said: turn your back to the darkness and your face to Me.

- Shoghi Effendi's secretary on his behalf, *Unfolding Destiny*, p. 457

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You have voiced the same suffering, the sign of the same mystery, as has been voiced by almost all those who have been called upon to serve God. Even the Prophets of God, we know, suffered agony when the Spirit of God descended on Them and commanded Them to arise and preach. Look at Moses saying, "I am a stutterer!". Look at Muhammad rolled in His rug in agony! The Guardian himself suffered terribly when he learned he was the one who had been made the Guardian.

So you see your sense of inadequacy, your realisation of your own unworthiness is not unique at all. Many, from the Highest to the humblest have had it. Now the wisdom of it is this: it is such seemingly weak instruments that demonstrate that God is the Power achieving the victories and not men. If you were a wealthy, prominent, strong individual who knew all about Africa and looked upon going out there as fun, any service you render, and victories you have, would be laid to your personality, not to the Cause of God! But because the reverse is true, your services will be a witness to the Power of Bahá'u'lláh and Truth of His Faith.

Rest assured, dear sister, you will ever-increasingly be sustained, and you will find joy and strength given to you, and God will reward you. You will pass through these dark hours triumphant. The first Bahá'í going on such an historic mission could not but suffer—but the compensation will be great....

- Shoghi Effendi's secretary on his behalf, *Unfolding Destiny*, p. 459

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"Peter," `Abdu'l-Bahá has testified, "according to the history of the Church, was also incapable of keeping count of the days of the week. Whenever he decided to go fishing, he would tie up his weekly food into seven parcels, and every day he would eat one of them, and when he had reached the seventh, he would know that the Sabbath had arrived, and thereupon would observe it." If the Son of Man was capable of infusing into apparently so crude and helpless an instrument such potency as to cause, in the words of Bahá'u'lláh, "the mysteries of wisdom and of utterance to flow out of his mouth," and to exalt him above the rest of His disciples, and render him fit to become His successor and the founder of His Church, how much more can the Father, Who is Bahá'u'lláh, empower the most puny and insignificant among His followers to achieve, for the execution of His purpose, such wonders as would dwarf the mightiest achievements of even the first apostle of Jesus Christ!

- Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 46

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Say: Beware, O people of Bahá, lest the strong ones of the earth rob you of your strength, or they who rule the world fill you with fear. Put your trust in God, and commit your affairs to His keeping. He, verily, will, through the power of truth, render you victorious, and He, verily, is powerful to do what He willeth, and in His grasp are the reins of omnipotent might.

- Bahá'u'lláh, quoted in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 82

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Life in this world is a succession of tests and achievements, of falling short and of making new spiritual advances. Sometimes the course may seem very hard, but one can witness, again and again, that the soul who steadfastly obeys the law of Bahá'u'lláh, however hard it may seem, grows spiritually ...

- From a letter dated 6 February 1973 written by the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, published in *Messages from the Universal House of Justice 1968-1973*, p. 106; compilation on "A Chaste and Holy Life"; *The Compilation of Compilations*, Vol. I, pp. 63-64.

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O kind Father. Confer Thy blessings. Consider not our shortcomings. Shelter us under Thy protection. Remember not our sins. Heal us with Thy mercy. We are weak; Thou art mighty. We are poor; Thou art rich. We are sick; Thou art the Physician. We are needy; Thou art most generous. O God! Endow us with Thy providence. Thou art the Powerful. Thou art the Giver. Thou art the Beneficent.

- `Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í Prayers* pp. 110-111

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O Thou Lord of the Kingdom! Though our bodies be gathered here together, yet our spellbound hearts are carried away by Thy love, and yet are we transported by the rays of Thy resplendent face. Weak though we be, we await the revelations of Thy might and power. Poor though we be, with neither goods nor means, still take we riches from the treasures of Thy Kingdom. Drops though we be, still do we draw from out Thy ocean deeps. Motes though we be, still do we gleam in the glory of Thy splendid Sun.

- `Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í Prayers* pp. 138-139

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O our Lord! We are weak, and Thou art the Mighty, the Powerful. We are lifeless, and Thou art the great life-giving Spirit. We are needy, and Thou art the Sustainer, the Powerful. O our Lord! Turn our faces unto Thy merciful countenance, feed us from Thy heavenly table with Thine abundant grace, assist us with the hosts of Thy supreme angels and confirm us through the holy ones of the Kingdom of Abha. Verily, Thou art the Generous, the Merciful. Thou art the Possessor of great bounty, and, verily, Thou art the Clement and the Gracious.

- `Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í Prayers* p. 140.

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O Lord! I am weak, strengthen me with Thy power and potency. My tongue falters, suffer me to utter Thy commemoration and praise.

- `Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í Prayers* pp. 187

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Confirm me in Thy service, assist me with the cohorts of Thy angels, make me victorious in the promotion of Thy Word and suffer me to speak out Thy wisdom amongst Thy creatures. Verily, Thou art the helper of the weak and the defender of the little ones, and verily Thou art the Powerful, the Mighty and the Unconstrained.

- `Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í Prayers* pp. 188-189

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God, my God! Thou beholdest this weak one begging for celestial strength, this poor one craving Thy heavenly treasures, this thirsty one longing for the fountain of eternal life, this afflicted one yearning for Thy promised healing through Thy boundless mercy which Thou hast destined for Thy chosen servants in Thy kingdom on high.

- `Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í Prayers* pp. 190

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Thou beholdest, O Lord, the ignorant seeking the ocean of Thy knowledge, the sore athirst the living waters of Thine utterance, the abased the tabernacle of Thy glory, the poor the treasury of Thy riches, the suppliant the dawning-place of Thy wisdom, the weak the source of Thy strength, the wretched the heaven of Thy bounty, the dumb the kingdom of Thy mention.

- *Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 3.

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Praise be to Thee, O Concealer of the sins of the weak and helpless! Magnified be Thy name, O Thou that forgivest the heedless ones that trespass against Thee!

- *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 204

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I beseech Thee, O Thou Who art the Lord of all names and the Creator of the heavens, to aid them to act equitably in Thy Cause, that haply they may discover the sweet smell of the robe of Thy mercy, and set their faces towards the horizon that shineth with the brightness of the light of Thy face. Weak are they, O my Lord, and Thou art the Lord of strength and power. They are but paupers, and Thou art the All-Possessing, the Most Generous.

- *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, p. 181*

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Vouchsafe Thy strength, O Almighty One, unto Thy weak creatures, and quicken them who are as dead, that haply they may find Thee, and may be led unto the ocean of Thy guidance, and may remain steadfast in Thy Cause.

- *Bahá'u'lláh, Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, p. 252*

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We are all sinners, and Thou art the Forgiver of sins, the Merciful, the Compassionate. O Lord! Look not at our shortcomings. Deal with us according to Thy grace and bounty. Our shortcomings are many, but the ocean of Thy forgiveness is boundless. Our weakness is grievous, but the evidences of Thine aid and assistance are clear.

- *Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í Prayers p. 82*

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... purge me with the waters of Thy bounty from every affliction and disorder, and from all weakness and feebleness.

- *Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í Prayers p. 86*

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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. No God is there but Thee, the Mighty, the Beneficent.

- *Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í Prayers p. 119*

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O God! O God! Thou seest my weakness, lowliness and humility before Thy creatures; nevertheless, I have trusted in Thee and have arisen in the promotion of Thy teachings among Thy strong servants, relying on Thy power and might.

- *Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í Prayers pp. 179*

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O Lord! Have pity on my weakness, and strengthen me with Thy power. O Lord! Have pity on my impotence, and assist me with Thy might and majesty.

- *Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í Prayers pp. 180*

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O my God! O my God! Thou seest me in my lowliness and weakness, occupied with the greatest undertaking, determined to raise Thy word among the masses and to spread Thy teachings among Thy peoples. How can I succeed unless Thou assist me with the breath of the Holy Spirit, help me to triumph by the hosts of Thy glorious kingdom, and shower upon me Thy confirmations, which alone can change a gnat into an eagle, a drop of water into rivers and seas, and an atom into lights and suns?

- *Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í Prayers*

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I beseech Thee, by Thy name through which Thou turnest restlessness into tranquillity, fear into confidence, weakness into strength, and abasement into glory, that Thou of Thy grace wilt aid me and Thy servants to exalt Thy name, to deliver Thy Message, and to proclaim Thy Cause, in such wise that

we may remain unmoved by either the assaults of the transgressors or the wrath of the infidels, O Thou Who art my Well-Beloved!

- Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 213

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With the fruits of the Tree of Thine Eternity nourish me, for uttermost weakness hath overtaken me.

- Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 234

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We entreat Thee, O Thou Who art the Cloud of Bounty and the Succorer of the distressed, that Thou wilt aid us to remember Thee, and to make known Thy Cause, and to arise to help Thee. Though all weakness, we yet have clung to Thy Name, the Most Powerful, the Almighty.

- Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 239

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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. No God is there but Thee, the Mighty, the Beneficent.

- Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 249

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I am but a wretched creature, O my Lord, and Thou art the All-Possessing, the Most High; and I am all weakness, and Thou art the Almighty, and the Supreme Ordainer in both the beginning and the end.

- Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 256-257

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O God, my God! I beg of Thee by the ocean of Thy healing, and by the splendors of the Day-Star of Thy grace, and by Thy Name through which Thou didst subdue Thy servants, and by the pervasive power of Thy most exalted Word and the potency of Thy most august Pen, and by Thy mercy that hath preceded the creation of all who are in heaven and on earth, to purge me with the waters of Thy bounty from every affliction and disorder, and from all weakness and feebleness.

- Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 265

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May each one become a radiant candle. May each one become a brilliant star. May each one become beautiful in color and redolent of fragrance in the Kingdom of God.

O kind Father! Confer Thy blessings. Consider not our shortcomings. Shelter us under Thy protection. Remember not our sins. Heal us with Thy mercy. We are weak; Thou art mighty. We are poor; Thou art rich. We are sick; Thou art the Physician. We are needy; Thou art most generous.

O God! Endow us with Thy providence. Thou art the Powerful. Thou art the Giver. Thou art the Beneficent.

- `Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace* p. 56

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Brighten our eyes through the Light of Thy Guidance. Delight our ears with the melody of Thy Word, and shelter us all in the Stronghold of Thy Providence.

Thou art the Mighty and Powerful, Thou art the Forgiving and Thou art the One Who overlooketh the shortcomings of all mankind.

- `Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace* p. 100

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O Thou forgiving Lord ! Thou art the shelter of all these Thy servants. Thou knowest the secrets and art aware of all things. We are all helpless, and Thou art the Mighty, the Omnipotent. We are all sinners, and

Thou art the Forgiver of sins, the Merciful, the Compassionate. O Lord! Look not at our shortcomings. Deal with us according to Thy grace and bounty. Our shortcomings are many, but the ocean of Thy forgiveness is boundless. Our weakness is grievous, but the evidences of Thine aid and assistance are clear. Therefore, confirm and strengthen us. Enable us to do that which is worthy of Thy holy Threshold.

- `Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace* p. 176

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O Lord, Thou possessor of infinite mercy ! O Lord of forgiveness and pardon ! Forgive our sins, pardon our shortcomings, and cause us to turn to the kingdom of Thy clemency, invoking the kingdom of might and power, humble at Thy shrine and submissive before the glory of Thine evidences.

- `Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace* p. 276.

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