

On Souls, Death, and True Life

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1. Actions in this world affecting soul's state in the next

(1a) Such earnest souls, when they pass out of this life, enter a state of being far nobler and more beautiful than this one. We fear it only because it is unknown to us and we have little faith in the words of the Prophets who bring a true message of certainty from that realm of the spirit. We should face death with joy especially if our life upon this plane of existence has been full of good deeds.

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 31, 1932)

(1b) As to the question regarding the soul of a murderer, and what his punishment would be. The answer given was that the murderer must expiate his crime; that is, if they put the murderer to death, his death is his atonement for his crime, and following the death, God in His justice will impose no second penalty upon him, for Divine Justice would not allow this.

(Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá)

(1c) Thou hast, moreover, asked Me concerning the state of the soul after its separation from the body. Know thou, of a truth, that if the soul of man hath walked in the ways of God, it will, assuredly, return and be gathered to the glory of the Beloved. By the righteousness of God! It shall attain a station such as no pen can depict, or tongue describe. The soul that hath remained faithful to the Cause of God, and stood unwaveringly firm in His Path shall, after his ascension, be possessed of such power that all the worlds which the Almighty hath created can benefit through him. Such a soul provideth, at the bidding of the Ideal King and Divine Educator, the pure leaven that leaveneth the world of being, and furnisheth the power through which the arts and wonders of the world are made manifest. Consider how meal needeth leaven to be leavened with. Those souls that are the symbols of detachment are the leaven of the world. Meditate on this, and be of the thankful.

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh)

(1d) Thou hast asked Me concerning the nature of the soul. Know, verily, that the soul is a sign of God, a heavenly gem whose reality the most learned of men hath failed to grasp, and whose mystery no mind, however acute, can ever hope to unravel. It is the first among all created things to declare the excellence of its Creator, the first to recognize His glory, to cleave to His truth, and to bow down in adoration before Him. If it be faithful to God, it will reflect His light, and will, eventually, return unto Him. If it fail, however, in its allegiance to its Creator, it will become a victim to self and passion, and will, in the end, sink in their depths.

Whoso hath, in this Day, refused to allow the doubts and fancies of men to turn him away from Him Who is the Eternal Truth, and hath not suffered the tumult provoked by the ecclesiastical and secular authorities to deter him from recognizing His Message, such a man will be regarded by God, the Lord of all men, as one of His mighty signs, and will be numbered among them whose names have been inscribed by the Pen of the Most High in His Book. Blessed is he that hath recognized the true stature of such a soul, that hath acknowledged its station, and discovered its virtues. ...

Every soul that walketh humbly with its God, in this Day, and cleaveth unto Him, shall find itself invested with the honor and glory of all goodly names and stations.

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh)

(1e) [Bahá'u'lláh] explicitly states that, had we the vision to see the other world, and the mind to conceive its glory, we would not desire to remain here even for a moment. Man is destined by God to undergo a spiritual development that extends throughout eternity. His life upon this earth is only the first stage of that development. When we outgrow our physical form, and are considered by God ready to reap the fruit of our spiritual development, we proceed to the other world. We term it death only because of our shortsightedness. A more proper term would be "a more abundant life". It is a forward step we have taken.

...the world is full of suffering. Bahá'u'lláh tells us that the deeper are the furrows it digs into our very being, the greater will be the fruit of our life and the more enhanced our spiritual development. All the Saints that shine in the history of society had to pass through tribulations. Their form was various but their effect has always been the same, namely, the purification of our heart and soul for receiving the light of God.

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 9, 1931)

2. Nothing is certain; ask for mercy

(2a) To “get to heaven” as you say is dependent on two things—faith in the Manifestation of God in His Day, in other words in this age in Bahá'u'lláh; and good deeds, in other words living to the best of our ability a noble life and doing unto others as we would be done by. But we must always remember that our existence and everything we have or ever will have is dependent upon the mercy of God and His bounty, and therefore He can accept into His heaven, which is really nearness to Him, even the lowliest if He pleases. We always have the hope of receiving His mercy if we reach out for it.

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, January 12, 1957)

(2b) He should forgive the sinful, and never despise his low estate, for none knoweth what his own end shall be. How often hath a sinner, at the hour of death, attained to the essence of faith, and, quaffing the immortal draught, hath taken his flight unto the celestial Concourse. And how often hath a devout believer, at the hour of his soul's ascension, been so changed as to fall into the nethermost fire.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Íqán)

3. Physical bodies as a throne/temple for the soul

(3a) As this physical frame is the throne of the inner temple, whatever occurs to the former is felt by the latter. In reality that which takes delight in joy or is saddened by pain is the inner temple of the body, not the body itself. Since this physical body is the throne whereon the inner temple is established, God hath ordained that the body be preserved to the extent possible, so that nothing that causeth repugnance may be experienced. The inner temple beholdeth its physical frame, which is its throne. Thus, if the latter is accorded respect, it is as if the former is the recipient. The converse is likewise true. Therefore, it hath been ordained that the dead body should be treated with the utmost honour and respect.

(Selections From the Writings of the Báb)

(3b) ‘Abdu'l-Bahá says: “The body of man, which has been formed gradually, must similarly be decomposed gradually. This is according to the real and natural order and Divine Law. If it had been better for it to be burned after death, in its very creation it would have been so planned that the body would automatically become ignited after death, be consumed and turned into ashes. But the divine order formulated by the heavenly ordinance is that after death, this body shall be transferred from one stage to another different from the preceding one, so that according to the relations which exist in the world, it may gradually combine and mix other elements, thus going through stages until it arrives in the vegetable kingdom, there turning into plants and flowers, developing into trees of the highest paradise, becoming perfumed and attaining the beauty of color. Cremation suppresses it speedily from attainment to these transformations, the elements becoming so quickly decomposed that transformation to these various stages is checked.”

When we realize that our physical bodies are composed of elements placed in the earth by their Creator, and which through the orderly processes of His Law are continually being used in the formation of beings, we can better understand the necessity for our physical bodies to be subjected to the gradual process of decomposition. As at the time of death, the real and eternal self of man, his soul, abandons its physical garment to soar in the realms of God, we may compare the body to a vehicle which has been used for the journey through earthly life and no longer needed once the destination has been reached.

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, June 6, 1971)

(3c) There is nothing in the teachings against leaving our bodies to medical science. The only thing we should stipulate is that we do not wish to be cremated, as it is against our Bahá'í laws.

As many people make arrangements to leave their bodies to medical science for investigation, he suggests that you inquire, either through some lawyer friend or through some hospital, how you could do this, and then make the necessary provision in your Will, stipulating that you wish your body to be of service to mankind in death, and that, being a Bahá'í, you request that your remains not be cremated and not be taken more than an hour's journey from the place of your death.

The spirit has no more connection with the body after it departs, but as the body was once the temple of the spirit, we Bahá'ís are taught that it must be treated with respect.

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, March 22, 1957)

4. Fellowship between souls after death

(4a) The possibility of securing union with his beloved in the next world is one which the Bahá'í Teachings are quite clear about. According to Bahá'u'lláh the soul retains its individuality and consciousness after death, and is able to commune with other souls. This communion, however, is purely spiritual in character, and is conditioned upon the disinterested and selfless love of the individuals for each other.

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the NSA of India, March 10, 1936: Dawn of a New Day)

(4b) As to the question whether the souls will recognize each other in the spiritual world: This fact is certain; for the Kingdom is the world of vision where all the concealed realities will become disclosed. How much more the well-known souls will become manifest. The mysteries of which man is heedless in this earthly world, those he will discover in the heavenly world, and there will he be informed of the secret of truth; how much more will he recognize or discover persons with whom he hath been associated. Undoubtedly, the holy souls who find a pure eye and are favored with insight will, in the kingdom of lights, be acquainted with all mysteries, and will seek the bounty of witnessing the reality of every great soul. Even they will manifestly behold the Beauty of God in that world. Likewise will they find all the friends of God, both those of the former and recent times, present in the heavenly assemblage.

(Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá)

(4c) The difference and distinction will naturally become realized between all men after their departure from this mortal world. But this (distinction) is not in respect to place, but it is in respect to the soul and conscience. For the Kingdom of God is sanctified (or free) from time and place; it is another world and another universe. But the holy souls are promised the gift of intercession. And know thou for a certainty, that in the divine worlds, the spiritual beloved ones (believers) will recognize each other, and will seek union (with each other), but a spiritual union. Likewise, a love that one may have entertained for any one will not be forgotten in the world of the Kingdom. Likewise, thou wilt not forget (there) the life that thou hast had in the material world.

(Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá)

(4d) There is no teaching in the Bahá'í Faith that "soul mates" exist. What is meant is that marriage should lead to a profound friendship of spirit, which will endure in the next world, where there is no sex, and no giving and taking in marriage; just the way we should establish with our parents, our children, our brothers and sisters and friends a deep spiritual bond which will be ever-lasting, and not merely physical bonds of human relationship.

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, December 4, 1954)

(4e) And now concerning thy question whether human souls continue to be conscious one of another after their separation from the body. Know thou that the souls of the people of Baha, who have entered and been established within the Crimson Ark, shall associate and commune intimately one with another, and shall be so closely associated in their lives, their aspirations, their aims and strivings as to be even as one soul. ...

They that are of the same grade and station are fully aware of one another's capacity, character, accomplishments and merits. They that are of a lower grade, however, are incapable of comprehending adequately the station, or of estimating the merits, of those that rank above them. Each shall receive his share from thy Lord. Blessed is the man that hath turned his face towards God, and walked steadfastly in His love, until his soul hath winged its flight unto God, the Sovereign Lord of all, the Most Powerful, the Ever-Forgiving, the All-Merciful.

The souls of the infidels, however, shall — and to this I bear witness — when breathing their last be made aware of the good things that have escaped them, and shall bemoan their plight, and shall humble themselves before God. They shall continue doing so after the separation of their souls from their bodies.

It is clear and evident that all men shall, after their physical death, estimate the worth of their deeds, and realize all that their hands have wrought. I swear by the Day Star that shineth above the horizon of Divine power! They that are the followers of the one true God shall, the moment they depart out of this life, experience such joy and gladness as would be impossible to describe, while they that live in error shall be seized with such fear and trembling, and shall be filled with such consternation, as nothing can exceed. Well is it with him that hath quaffed the choice and incorruptible wine of faith through the gracious favor and the manifold bounties of Him Who is the Lord of all Faiths.

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh)

5. Benefits to non-Bahá'í family members

(5a) One of the distinguishing characteristics of this most great Dispensation is that the kin of such as have recognized and embraced the truth of this Revelation and have, in the glory of His name, the Sovereign Lord, quaffed the choice, sealed wine from the chalice of the love of the one true God, will, upon their death, if they are outwardly non-believers, be graciously invested with divine forgiveness and partake of the ocean of His Mercy.

This bounty, however, will be vouchsafed only to such souls as have inflicted no harm upon Him Who is the Sovereign Truth nor upon His loved ones. Thus hath it been ordained by Him Who is the Lord of the Throne on High and the Ruler of this world and of the world to come.

(Bahá'u'lláh, from an unnamed tablet, found in *Compilation on Family Life*)

(5b) With reference to Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet in which He says that all the relatives of believers will reach the Kingdom in the other world: By this is meant only a partial attainment. They can, however, progress indefinitely, as spiritual progress in the other world is limitless, and is not confined to those who have attained unto the knowledge and recognition of the Cause while still in this world.

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, April 30, 1940)

6. Intercession for & by souls in Kingdom

(6a) The progress of man's spirit in the divine world, after the severance of its connection with the body of dust, is through the bounty and grace of the Lord alone, or through the intercession and the sincere prayers of other human souls, or through the charities and important good works which are performed in its name.

(‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*)

(6b) The Master has told us that gifts and good deeds done in memory of those who have passed on, are most helpful to the development of their souls in the realms beyond.

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 10, 1952)

(6c) Concerning your question whether a soul can receive knowledge of the Truth in the world beyond. Such a knowledge is surely possible, and is but a sign of the loving mercy of the Almighty. We can, through our prayers, help every soul to gradually attain this high station, even if it has failed to reach it in this world. The progress of the soul does not come to an end with death. It rather starts along a new line. Bahá'u'lláh teaches that great and far-reaching possibilities await the soul in the other world. Spiritual progress in that realm is infinite, and no man, while on this earth, can visualize its full power and extent.

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, May 22, 1935)

(6d) The soul acts in the physical world with the help of the body. When it is detached from the body, it acts without an intermediary. ... The body is the horse, the soul is the rider, and sometimes the rider moves without a mount. But people who do not reflect say that when the soul has left the body it can no longer act. Spirit has no body. Reflect on this subject.

(‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Divine Philosophy*, 1928 ed.)

(6e) As to the question that the holy and spiritual souls influence, help and guide the creatures after they have cast off this elemental mould—this is an established truth of the Bahá'ís...

(Tablets of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, Vol. III)

(6f) The wealth of the other world is nearness to God. Consequently, it is certain that those who are near the Divine Court are allowed to intercede, and this intercession is approved by God. But intercession in the other world is not like intercession in this world. It is another thing, another reality, which cannot be expressed in words.

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

Therefore, children, in return for this care and trouble, must show forth charity and beneficence, and must implore pardon and forgiveness for their parents. So you ought, in return for the love and kindness shown you by your father, to give to the poor for his sake, with greatest submission and humility implore pardon and remission of sins, and ask for the supreme mercy.

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

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions)

7. Bad souls affecting physical world

(7a) There are no earth-bound souls. When the souls that are not good die they go entirely away from this earth and so cannot influence anyone. They are spiritually dead. Their thoughts can have influence only when they are alive on the earth... But the good souls are given eternal life and sometimes God permits their thoughts to reach the earth to help the people. ...

There is no power exercised over the people by those evil souls that have passed away. Good is stronger than evil and even when alive they had very little power. How much less have they after they are dead, and besides they are nowhere near this planet.

(Questions answered by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Akka: Daily Lessons, Received at Akka, 1976 ed.)

8. Descriptions of the Kingdom, true nature of souls

(8a) With regard to the soul of man. According to the Bahá’í Teachings the human soul starts with the formation of the human embryo, and continues to develop and pass through endless stages of existence after its separation from the body. Its progress is thus infinite.

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 31, 1937)

(8b) O My servants! Sorrow not if, in these days and on this earthly plane, things contrary to your wishes have been ordained and manifested by God, for days of blissful joy, of heavenly delight, are assuredly in store for you. Worlds, holy and spiritually glorious, will be unveiled to your eyes. You are destined by Him, in this world and hereafter, to partake of their benefits, to share in their joys, and to obtain a portion of their sustaining grace. To each and every one of them you will, no doubt, attain.

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh)

(8c) The answer to the first question: The souls of the children of the Kingdom, after their separation from the body, ascend unto the realm of everlasting life. But if ye ask as to the place, know ye that the world of existence is a single world, although its stations are various and distinct. For example, the mineral life occupieth its own plane, but a mineral entity is without any awareness at all of the vegetable kingdom...

As to the second question: The tests and trials of God take place in this world, not in the world of the Kingdom.

The answer to the third question is this, that in the other world the human reality doth not assume a physical form, rather doth it take on a heavenly form, made up of elements of that heavenly realm.

And the answer to the fourth question: The centre of the Sun of Truth is in the supernal world—the Kingdom of God. Those souls who are pure and unsullied, upon the dissolution of their elemental frames, hasten away to the world of God, and that world is within this world. The people of this world, however, are unaware of that world, and are even as the mineral and the vegetable that know nothing of the world of the animal and the world of man.

(Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá)

(8d) You question about eternal life and the entrance into the Kingdom. The outer expression used for the Kingdom is heaven; but this is a comparison and similitude, not a reality or fact, for the Kingdom is not a material place; it is sanctified from time and place. It is a spiritual world, a divine world, and the center of the Sovereignty of God; it is freed from body and that which is corporeal, and it is purified and sanctified from the imaginations of the human world. To be limited to place is a property of bodies and not of spirits. Place and time surround the body, not the mind and spirit. Observe that the body of man is confined to a small place; it covers only two spans of earth. But the spirit and mind of man travel to all countries and regions—even through the limitless space of the heavens—surround all that exists, and make discoveries in the exalted spheres and infinite distances. This is because the spirit has no place; it is placeless; and for the spirit the earth and the

heaven are as one since it makes discoveries in both. But the body is limited to a place and does not know that which is beyond it.

For life is of two kinds: that of the body and that of the spirit. The life of the body is material life, but the life of the spirit expresses the existence of the Kingdom, which consists in receiving the Spirit of God and becoming vivified by the breath of the Holy Spirit. Although the material life has existence, it is pure nonexistence and absolute death for the holy saints. So man exists, and this stone also exists, but what a difference between the existence of man and that of the stone! Though the stone exists, in relation to the existence of man it is nonexistent. ...

The meaning is that the life of the Kingdom is the life of the spirit, the eternal life, and that it is purified from place, like the spirit of man which has no place. For if you examine the human body, you will not find a special spot or locality for the spirit, for it has never had a place; it is immaterial. It has a connection with the body like that of the sun with this mirror. The sun is not within the mirror, but it has a connection with the mirror.

In the same way the world of the Kingdom is sanctified from everything that can be perceived by the eye or by the other senses—hearing, smell, taste or touch. The mind which is in man, the existence of which is recognized—where is it in him? If you examine the body with the eye, the ear or the other senses, you will not find it; nevertheless, it exists. Therefore, the mind has no place, but it is connected with the brain. The Kingdom is also like this. In the same way love has no place, but it is connected with the heart; so the Kingdom has no place, but is connected with man.

Entrance into the Kingdom is through the love of God, through detachment, through holiness and chastity, through truthfulness, purity, steadfastness, faithfulness and the sacrifice of life.

These explanations show that man is immortal and lives eternally. For those who believe in God, who have love of God, and faith, life is excellent—that is, it is eternal; but to those souls who are veiled from God, although they have life, it is dark, and in comparison with the life of believers it is nonexistence.

For example, the eye and the nail are living; but the life of the nail in relation to the life of the eye is nonexistent. This stone and this man both exist; but the stone in relation to the existence of man is nonexistent; it has no being; for when man dies, and his body is destroyed and annihilated, it becomes like stone and earth. Therefore, it is clear that although the mineral exists, in relation to man it is nonexistent. In the same way, the souls who are veiled from God, although they exist in this world and in the world after death, are, in comparison with the holy existence of the children of the Kingdom of God, nonexistent and separated from God.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions)

9. Why more about the Kingdom is not known

(9a) Know thou that every hearing ear, if kept pure and undefiled, must, at all times and from every direction, hearken to the voice that uttereth these holy words: “Verily, we are God's, and to Him shall we return.” The mysteries of man's physical death and of his return have not been divulged, and still remain unread. By the righteousness of God! Were they to be revealed, they would evoke such fear and sorrow that some would perish, while others would be so filled with gladness as to wish for death, and beseech, with unceasing longing, the one true God—exalted be His glory—to hasten their end.

Death proffereth unto every confident believer the cup that is life indeed. It bestoweth joy, and is the bearer of gladness. It conferreth the gift of everlasting life. As to those that have tasted of the fruit of man's earthly existence, which is the recognition of the one true God, exalted be His glory, their life hereafter is such as We are unable to describe. The knowledge thereof is with God, alone, the Lord of all worlds.

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh)

(9b) Concerning the future life, what Bahá'u'lláh says is that the soul will continue to ascend through many worlds. What those worlds are and what their nature is we cannot know. The same way that the child in the matrix cannot know this world so we cannot know what the other world is going to be.

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 18, 1932)

(9c) Bahá'u'lláh says that were we to have the proper vision to see the blessings of the other world we would not bear to endure one more hour of existence upon the earth. The reason why we are deprived of that vision is because otherwise no one would care to remain and the whole fabric of society will be destroyed.

Shoghi Effendi wishes you therefore to think of her blessings and rejoice in her happiness. Should we have true faith in the words of the prophets we would not fear death nor feel despondent over the passing of our loved ones.

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, October 22, 1932)

(9d) You ask an explanation of what happens to us after we leave this world: This is a question which none of the Prophets have ever answered in detail, for the very simple reason that you cannot convey to a person's mind something entirely different from everything they have ever experienced. 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave the wonderful example of the relation of this life to the next life being like the child in the womb; it develops eyes, ears, hands, feet, a tongue, and yet it has nothing to see or hear, it cannot walk or grasp things or speak; all these faculties it is developing for this world. If you tried to explain to an embryo what this world is like it could never understand—but it understands when it is born, and its faculties can be used. So we cannot picture our state in the next world. All we know is that our consciousness, our personality, endures in some new state, and that that world is as much better than this one as this one is better than the dark womb of our mother was. ...

Our past is not the thing that matters so much in this world as what we intend to do with our future. The inestimable value of religion is that when a man is vitally connected with it, through a real and living belief in it and in the Prophet Who brought it, he receives a strength greater than his own which helps him to develop his good characteristics and overcome his bad ones. The whole purpose of religion is to change not only our thoughts but our acts; when we believe in God and His Prophet and His Teachings, we find we are growing, even though we perhaps thought ourselves incapable of growth and change!

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, October 3, 1943)

10. State or progress of souls after death

(10a) And now concerning thy question regarding the soul of man and its survival after death. Know thou of a truth that the soul, after its separation from the body, will continue to progress until it attaineth the presence of God, in a state and condition which neither the revolution of ages and centuries, nor the changes and chances of this world, can alter. It will endure as long as the Kingdom of God, His sovereignty, His dominion and power will endure. It will manifest the signs of God and His attributes, and will reveal His loving kindness and bounty. The movement of My Pen is stilled when it attempteth to befittingly describe the loftiness and glory of so exalted a station. The honor with which the Hand of Mercy will invest the soul is such as no tongue can adequately reveal, nor any other earthly agency describe. Blessed is the soul which, at the hour of its separation from the body, is sanctified from the vain imaginings of the peoples of the world. Such a soul liveth and moveth in accordance with the Will of its Creator, and entereth the all-highest Paradise. The Maids of Heaven, inmates of the loftiest mansions, will circle around it, and the Prophets of God and His chosen ones will seek its companionship. With them that soul will freely converse, and will recount unto them that which it hath been made to endure in the path of God, the Lord of all worlds.

The world beyond is as different from this world as this world is different from that of the child while still in the womb of its mother. When the soul attaineth the Presence of God, it will assume the form that best befitteeth its immortality and is worthy of its celestial habitation. Such an existence is a contingent and not an absolute existence, inasmuch as the former is preceded by a cause, whilst the latter is independent thereof. Absolute existence is strictly confined to God, exalted be His glory. Well is it with them that apprehend this truth.

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh)

(10b) The purpose of God in creating man hath been, and will ever be, to enable him to know his Creator and to attain His Presence. To this most excellent aim, this supreme objective, all the heavenly Books and the divinely-revealed and weighty Scriptures unequivocally bear witness. Whoso hath recognized the Day Spring of Divine guidance and entered His holy court hath drawn nigh unto God and attained His Presence, a Presence which is the real Paradise, and of which the loftiest mansions of heaven are but a symbol. Such a man hath attained the knowledge of the station of Him Who is "at the distance of two bows," Who standeth beyond the Sadratu'l-Muntaha. Whoso hath failed to recognize Him will have condemned himself to the misery of remoteness, a remoteness which is naught but utter nothingness and the essence of the nethermost fire. Such will be his fate, though to outward seeming he may occupy the earth's loftiest seats and be established upon its most exalted throne.

He Who is the Day Spring of Truth is, no doubt, fully capable of rescuing from such remoteness wayward souls and of causing them to draw nigh unto His court and attain His Presence. "If God had pleased He had surely made all men one people." His purpose, however, is to enable the pure in spirit and the detached in heart to ascend, by virtue of their own innate powers, unto the shores of the Most Great Ocean, that thereby they who seek the Beauty of the All-Glorious may be distinguished and separated from the wayward and perverse. Thus hath it been ordained by the all-glorious and resplendent Pen.

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh)