

PREFACE

"Thy Word is a light unto my path and a lamp unto my feet," sang the Psalmist. Jesus Christ spoke of Himself and His Teachings as "The Way, the Truth, and the Life," and said: "The words that I speak ... are spirit and life." Buddha taught His followers the "Eightfold Path." The great preoccupation of all the Messengers of God has been to guide mankind along the pathway to real life and truth. For this They have lived and suffered and given mankind words of Divine counsel and inspiration. The Guardian of the Baha'i Faith, Shoghi Effendi, assures us that progress along the line of spiritual development is endless. 'Abdu'l-Baha called the "Highway of the Kingdom," "a straight and far-stretching path." It is a glorious path to follow.

Such thoughts as these led the editors of World Order, the Baha'i Magazine, to arrange for a compilation on the "Divine Art of Living" to appear in successive numbers of that magazine from April, 1940 through September, 1941. This book is a revision of the compilation which appeared in the magazine. The limitations of space in the magazine had tended to make the treatment deficient in some ways, and it was felt that a revision would better fulfill the original purpose.

The title is borrowed from a previous compilation having the same aim and same general character, which was made by Mrs. Mary M. Rabb. Mrs. Rabb's book was much loved by many readers. She has kindly consented to the use of her title in this compilation. This is, however, a completely new compilation. The sources of the compilation are, mainly, the written words

6 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

of Baha'u'llah, the Founder of the Baha'i Faith, and the written words and public addresses of 'Abdu'l-Baha, the Interpreter of that Faith. In a few instances, where the source seemed reliable, reported words of 'Abdu'l-Baha have been used. There are also a few selections from the New Testament. As Baha'u'llah and 'Abdu'l-Baha both presented the Baha'i Teachings to the Western world as the carrying on and fulfillment of the Message of Christ it seemed fitting to include some passages from the New Testament, especially as this book will be read by those who have grown up in the Christian Faith.

The chapters of the book treat of outstanding qualities which characterize holy living, goals along the shining pathway of the Kingdom. The words of Baha'u'llah and 'Abdu'l-Baha on this all-absorbing subject fill many volumes. It is hoped that these chapters of selections will stimulate the reader to search these scriptures himself and thus drink deep of the very Water of Life.

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CHAPTER ONE

TRUST IN GOD

HEthem

not fi ve sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of
is forgotten before God?

But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear
not, therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows. 1
o trust in God! for His bounty is everlasting, and in His
blessings for they are superb. 0 put your faith in the Almighty,
for He faileth not and His goodness endureth forever! His Sun
giveth light continually, and the clouds of His mercy are full of
the waters of compassion with which He waters the hearts of all
who trust in Him. His refreshing breeze ever carries healing in its
wings to the par-hed souls of men. 2

Do not look at thy weakness; nay look at the power of thy
Lord, which hath surrounded all regions. . 3

Trust in the assistance of thy Master, and ask what thou
wishest of the gifts of Thy Lord, the Unconstrained. 4

If thou art seeking after spiritual tranquillity, turn thy face at
all times toward the Kingdom of Abba * ... Let not thy hands
tremble nor thy heart he disturbed, but rather be confident and
firm in the love of thy Lord, the Merciful, the Clement. 5,6

Trust in God, and be unmoved by either praise or false accusations . . . depend
entirely on God. 7

In all thine affairs put thy reliance in God, and commit them
unto Him. 8

.. Abhi, literally, The Most Glorious One, i.e. God.

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10 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

TRUST IN GOD 11

The source of all good is trust in God, submission unto His As
to the subject of babes and infants and weak ones who are
command, and contentment in His holy will and pleasure. 9

afflicted by the hands of oppressors: this contains great wisdom
and this subject is of paramount importance. In brief,-for those
souls there is a recompense in another world and many details

TRUST WHEN IN DIFFICULTIES

are connected with this matter. For those souls that suffering is
the greatest mercy of God. Verily that mercy of the Lord is far
Today, humanity is bowed down with trouble, sorrow and
better and preferable to all the comfort of this world and the

grief, no one escapes; the world is wet with tears; but, thank
growth and developme! It of .this place of mortality. 14

God, the remedy is at our doors. Let us turn our hearts away
from the world of matter and live in the spiritual world. It alone

TRUST GOD RATHER THAN SELF

can give us freedom. If we are hemmed in by difficulties we have

These events (such as the Titanic disaster) have deeper reasons.

only to call upon God, and by His great mercy we shall be helped.

Their object is to teach man certain lessons. We are living in a

If sorrow and adversity visit us, let us turn our faces to the

Kingdom and heavenly consolation will be outpoured. day

of reliance upon material conditions. Men imagine that the

If we are sick and in distress let us implore God's healing, and great

size and strength of a ship, perfection of machinery or the

He will answer our prayer.

skill of a navigator will insure safety, but these disasters some-

When our thoughts are filled with the bitterness of this world, times

take place that men may know that God is the real protector. If it be the will

of God to protect man, a little ship may .

let us turn our eyes to the sweetness of God's compassion and He

will send us heavenly calm! If we are imprisoned in the material

escape destruction whereas the greatest and most perfectly conworld, our spirit

can soar into the Heavens and we shall be free structed vessel with

the best and most skilful navigator may not

survive a danger such as was present on the ocean. The purpose

indeed!

is that the people of the world may turn to God, the one Pro-

When our days are drawing to a close let us think of the eternal

tector; that human souls may rely upon His preservation and

worlds, and we shall be full of joy! 10

know that He is the real safety. These events happen in order

Be not in despair, but rather smile by the mercy of thy Lord; that

man's faith may be increased and strengthened. Therefore,

and be not sorrowful when meeting with worldly difficulties and

although we feel sad and disheartened, we must supplicate God to

depressions, for they pass away-and th~ne shall be immortality turn

our hearts to the Kingdom, and pray for these departed souls

during ages and centuries, times and cycles. 11 with

faith in His infinite mercy, so that although they have been

deprived of this earthly life they may enjoy a new existence in

And when I am anxious . . . I anticipate the manifestations the

supreme mansions of 'the heavenly Father.

of Thy bounties from all sides! 12

Let no one imagine that these words imply that man should

not be thorough and careful in his undertakings. God has endowed

But thou must submit to and rely upon God under all condi- man

with intelligence so that he may safeguard and protect himtions and He will

bestow upon thee that which is conducive to self. Therefore he must provide and surround himself with all thy well-being. Verily He is merciful and compassionate! For that scientific skill can produce. He must be deliberate, though how many an affair was involved in difficulty and then was ful and thorough in his purposes, build the best ship and provide straightened, and how many a problem was solved by the permission of God. the most experienced captain, yet withal let him rely upon God 13 and consider God as the one keeper. 15

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12 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING
TRUST IN GOD

GRACE, FORGIVENESS AND MERCY OF GOD

From eternity the tokens of Thy bounty have encompassed the universe, and the splendors of Thy Most Great Name have Thou art He, O my God, through Whose names the sick are been shed over all created things. Deny not Thy servants the healed and the ailing are restored, and the thirsty are given drink, wonders of Thy grace. Cause them to be made aware of Thee, and the sore-vexed are tranquillized, and the wayward are guided, that they may bear witness to Thy unity, and enable them to recand the abased are exalted, and the poor are enriched, and the ognize Thee, that they may hasten towards Thee. Thy mercy ignorant are enlightened, and the gloomy are illumined, and the hath embraced the whole creation, and Thy grace hath pervaded sorrowful are cheered, and the chilled are warmed, and the down-all things. From the billows of the ocean of Thy generosity the trodden are raised up. Through Thy Name, O my God, all cre-seas of eagerness and enthusiasm were revealed. Thou art what ated things were stirred up, and the heavens were spread, and the Thou art. Aught except Thee is unworthy of any mention unles~ earth was established, and the clouds were raised and made to it entereth beneath Thy shadow, and gaineth admittance into rain upon the earth. This, verily, is a token of Thy grace unto

Thy court.

all Thy creatures.

16

Whatever betide us, we beseech Thine ancient
forgiveness,

and seek Thine all-pervasive grace.

20

Every existence, whether seen or unseen, O my Lord, testifyeth
that Thy mercy hath surpassed all created things, and Thy lov-
TRUST IN GOD TO SEND HIS DIVINE MANIFESTATIONS'~
ing-kindness embraced the entire creation.

17

We cannot say that the Divine bounty has ceased, that the
Thou are the All-Bountiful, the overflowing showers of whose
glory of Divinity is exhausted or the Sun of Truth sunk

into

mercy have rained down upon high and low alike, and the splen-
eternal sunset, into that night that is not followed by a
sunrise

dors of whose grace have been shed over both the obedient and
and dawn, into that death which is not followed by life,

into that

the rebellious.

18

error which is not followed by Truth. Is it conceivable
that the

Sun of Reality should sink into an eternal darkness? No! The
Wash away, then, my sins, O my God, by Thy grace and
sun was created in order that it may shed light upon the world
bounty, and reckon me among such as are not overtaken by fear
and train all the kingdoms of existence. How then can the ideal
nor put to grief.

19

Sun of Truth, the Word of God, set forever? For this would
o Thou Who art the All-Knowing! Wayward though we be,
mean the cessation of the divine bounty, and the divine
bounty

we still cling to Thy bounty; and though ignorant, we still set
by its very nature is continuous and ceaseless. Its sun
is ever shinour faces toward the ocean of Thy wisdom. Thou art that All-
ing, its cloud is ever proqucing rain, its
breezes are ever blowing,

Bountiful Who art not deterred by a multitude of sins from
its bestowals are all-comprehending, its gifts are ever
perfect.

vouchsafing Thy bounty, and the flow of Whose gifts is not
Consequently we must always anticipate, always be hopeful
and

arrested by the withdrawal of the peoples of the world. From
pray to God that He will send unto us His Holy
Manifestations*

eternity the door of Thy grace hath remained wide open. A dew-

in their most perfect might, with the Divine penetrative
power of
drop out of the ocean of Thy mercy is able to adorn all things
His Word.

21

with the ornament of sanctity, and a sprinkling of the waters of
* i.e. great world prophets. "Manifestations" when
spelled with a capital "M" signi-
Thy bounty can cause the entire creation to attain unto true
fies in these pages a divinely perfect master who
manifests the attributes of God as a
wealth

pure polished mirror reflects the lun.

ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

15

the latter sees the world of the Kingdom. The former's judgment is temporary,
while the latter's vision is everlasting. . . . 3

Spiritual creation is rebirth, it is supreme guidance, eternal life,
universal qualities, the acquirement of the all-inclusive divine
perfections, and progress in all. stages of human endowments .

CHAPTER Two

. . . Re-creation

and re-birth are progress in the stages of Divine
perfections, the training of human capacities and the rising of
ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

the light of God.

4

May you be given life! . . .

SECOND BIRTH

Turn your faces

away from the contemplation of your own
finite selves and fix your eyes upon the Everlasting Radiance;
EXCEPT a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of
then will your souls receive in full measure the divine power of
God

the Spirit and the blessings of the Infinite Bounty. ;
Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter
into the Kingdom of God. . . .

HAPPINESS AND POWER

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is
born of the Spirit is spirit. 1

I was happy in imprisonment. I was in the utmost elation, for
I was not a criminal, they had imprisoned me in the path of God.
Although the life of the creature is called life, in reality, com-
. . . I was happy that-praise be to God-I was a prisoner in the
pared to the life of the children (of the Kingdom) it is not life;

Cause of God, that my life was not wasted, that it was spent in
on the contrary it is death.

the Divine service. Nobody who saw me imagined that I was in
For instance a mineral substance contains life, but this life

prison. They beheld me in the utmost joy, complete thankful compared to the life of the vegetable is death; in like manner, the ness and health, paying no attention to the prison. 6

life of the vegetable compared to the life of an animal is death; in like manner the life of human beings compared to the life of the

At another time 'Abdu'l-Baha described His imprisonment in children of the Kingdom is death. As His Holiness Christ said, such words as these:

"Let the dead bury their dead, because he who is born of the flesh

The soul of man must be happy no matter where he is. One is flesh and he who is born of the Spirit is spirit."

must attain to that condition of inward beatitude and peace, then

Therefore it is evident that life (in its true sense) is the life of

outward circumstances will not alter his spiritual calmness and the spirit, and that life is the love of God, divine inspiration,

joyousness. No one can imagine a worse place than the barracks spiritual joys, and glad tidings of God. Seek, O servant of God,

of 'Akka.'~ The climate was bad, the water was no better .. The this life until day and night you remain in limitless joy. 2

surroundings were filthy, the treatment of the officials was unbearable and we were looked upon as the enemies of religion and

Know thou, verily, God hath preferred the insight to the sight;

corrupters of morals. The government had given an order that because the sight sees the ,material things, while the insight appre-

• The prison in Palestine to which Baha'u'llah and His family and some Baha'is

hends the spiritual. The former witnesses the earthly world, while were sent in 1868.

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16 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

ENTRANCE INTO' THE KINGDOM OF GOD 17

during the stay in 'Akk:i no one must talk with us and we must mals is

more simple than that of man. Animals have all their

not talk with each other. needs

supplied for them. All the grasses of the meadows are free

When we arrived in 'Akk:i it was found there were not enough to them. The

birds build their nests in the branching trees and

rooms in the barracks to imprison us separately so they put us all the

palaces of kings are not so beautiful. If earthly needs are all,

in two rooms with no furniture at all. The court of the barracks then the

animals are better supplied than man. But man has

had a most gloomy aspect. There were three or four fig trees, over another

food, the heavenly manna of the knowledge of God. All

the branches of which several ominous owls screeched all night. the

Divine prophets and Manifestations appeared in the world

Everyone got sick, and there were neither provisions nor medicine. At the entrance of the barracks there was an undertaker's room. It was a horrible room, yet I lived there two years, with illumination in the souls of men. They become filled with the utmost happiness. Up to that period I had not had time to read the Qur'an from first to last, but then I had ample time and those virtues which belong to the world of humanity. I used to read this holy book with fervor and enthusiasm. Going over the incidents and events of the lives of former prophets and created in us a divine holy spirit-the human spirit with finding how parallel they were with that of Baha'u'llah I was intellectual powers which are above the powers of nature. By consoled and encouraged. I would read for instance the following enjoy the ecstasies of the spirit and see the world illumined verse: "How thoughtless are the people! Whenever a prophet is sent to them they either ridicule Him or persecute Him." And then I would read this verse, "Verily, our host is victorious over power gives man effectual control over nature. He is enabled them." I was very happy all the time because I was a free man. Shut off in that room, my spirit traveled throughout the invisible. Thus he is enabled to render effective the will of God in the immensity of space. 7 and give it material station. This is what is meant by Baha'u'llah: "Then know, O thou virtuous soul, that as soon as thou be- said, "Verily We have created you rich, why have ye comest separated from aught else save God and dost cut thyself yourselves poor?" And Jesus Christ when He said, "The from the worldly things, thy heart will shine with the lights of is in Me and I in you." It was this power which through divinity and with the effulgence of the Sun of Truth from the Baha'u'llah said, "Noble have I created you, why do ye degrade horizon of the Realm of Might, and then thou wilt be filled by yourselves?" This power distinguishes you above all other creatures, why do you power from God and become capable of doing that devotes, why do you devote it only to your material conditions? which thou desirest. This is the confirmed truth. 8 This is that which should be used for the acquisition and manifestation of the bounties of God, that ye may establish the Kingdom of God. When a man is thirsty he drinks water. When he is hungry he among men and attain to happiness in both worlds,

eats food. But if a man be not thirsty, water gives him no the
visible and the invisible. 9

pleasure and if his hunger be already satisfied, food is distasteful
to him. Know

thou that there are two kinds of happiness, spiritual and

This is not so with spiritual enjoyments. Spiritual enjoyments material.

bring always joy. The love of God brings endless happiness. As to

material happiness, it never exists; nay, it is but imagina-

These are joys in themselves and not alleviations. The life of ani- tion, an
image reflected in mirrors, a specter and shadow. Con-

18 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM OF Goo 19

sider the nature of material happiness. It is something which but for the
reality of human existence. The forces and powers necslightly removes one's

afflictions; yet the people imagine it to be essary for this world were
bestowed upon him in that limited

joy, delight, exultation and blessing. All the material blessings,

condition. In this world he needed eyes; he received them potenincluding food,

drink, etc., tend only to allay thirst, hunger and tially in the other. He

needed ears; he obtained them there in

fatigue. They bestow no delight on the mind nor pleasure on the

readiness and preparation for his new existence. The powers

soul; nay they furnish only the bodily wants. So this kind of

requisite in this world were conferred upon him in the world

happiness has no real existence. . of the

matrix.

As to spiritual happiness, this is the true basis of the hfe of

Therefore in this world he must prepare himself for the life

man, for life is created for happiness, not for sorrow; for pleasure, beyond.

That which he needs in the world of the Kingdom must

not for grief. Happiness is life; sorrow is death. Spiritual happi- be

obtained here. Just as he prepared himself in the world of the

ness is life eternal. This is a light which is not followed by dark- matrix

by acquiring forces necessary in this sphere of existence,

ness. This is an honor which is not followed by shame. This is a so

likewise the indispensable forces of the divine existence must be

life that is not followed by death. This is an existence that is not

potentially obtained in this world.

followed by annihilation. This great blessing and precious gift What

is he in need of in the Kingdom, which transcends the life

is obtained by man only through the guidance of God.

and limitation of this mortal sphere? That world beyond is a

This happiness is the fundamental basis from which ma~ is world of

sanctity and radiance; therefore it is necessary that in

created, worlds are originated, the contingent beings have eXIst- this

world he should acquire these divine attributes. In that world

ence and the world of God appears like unto the appearance of there

is need of spirituality, faith, assurance, the knowledge and
the sun at mid-day. love of
God. These he must attain in this world so that after his
This happiness is but the love of God . . . , ascension
from the earthly to the heavenly Kingdom he shall find
Were it not for this happiness the world of existence would not all that is
needful in that life eternal ready for him.
have been created. 10 That
divine world is manifestly a world of lights; therefore
o Son of Man! Rejoice in the gladness of thine heart, that thou man has
need of illumination here. That is a world of love; the
mayest be worthy to meet Me and to mirror forth My beauty. 11 love of
God is essential. It is a world of perfection; virtues or perfections must be
acquired. That world is vivified by the breaths
This is the day of rejoicing and the hour of ecstasy! This is the of the
Holy Spirit; in this world we must seek them. That is the
season of the dead arising from the graves and gathering together! kingdom
of life everlasting; it must be attained during this
And this is the promised time for the attainment of plenteous
vanishing existence.
grace. By

what means can man acquire these things? How shall he
Be calm, be strong, be grateful, and become a lamp full of obtain
these merciful gifts and powers? First, through the
light, that the darkness of sorrows be annihilated, and that the
knowledge of God. Second, through the love of God. Third,
sun of everlasting joy arise from the dawning-place of heart and through
faith. Fourth, through philanthropic deeds. Fifth,
soul, shining brightly. 12 through
self-sacrifice. Sixth, through severance from this world.

Seventh, through sanctity and holiness. Unless he acquires these
NEED OF CAPACITY

forces and attains to these requirements he will surely be deprived
In the beginning of his human life man was embryonic in the . of the
life that is eternal. But if he possesses the knowledge. of
world of the matrix. There he received capacity and endowment God,
becomes ignited through the fire of the love of God, be-

20 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

comes the cause of love among mankind, and lives in the utmost
state of sanctity and holiness, he shall surely attain to second
birth be baptized by the Holy Spirit and enjoy everlasting
existence. 13

A PRAYER BY 'ABDU'L-BAHA

o Thou the Compassionate God! Bestow upon me a heart

CHAPTER THREE

which, like unto glass, may be illumined with the light .of Thy

motive. Consider the people of the West. Witness how, in their and in the solution of the problem of life. . . . "Verily in the pursuit of that which is vain and trivial, they have sacrificed, and souls of men lieth their only glory." 8

are still sacrificing, countless lives for the sake of its establishment and promotion O friends! Be not careless of the . You ask if, through the appearance of the Kingdom of God, virtues with which ye have been endowed, neither be neglectful every soul hath been saved. The Sun of Reality hath appeared to of your high destiny. Suffer not your labors to be wasted through all the world. This luminous appearance is salvation and life; th~ I;lin im,l.gin;n:oll s which ccrt:tin hearts have deviscd. 6 but only he who hath opened the eye of reality and who hath seen these lights will be saved. 9

. . . Happy are the wise that have recognized the straight path of God :tnd turned unto His Kingdom; happy are the glad all(j sincerc, the lamps of whose hearts burn with the knowledge

THE PURPOSE OF OUR LIVES

of the All-Merciful and are protected by self-abnegation from I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know the rough winds of tests and sorrows; happy are the brave whose Thee and to worship Thee. I testify, at this moment, to my hearts the power of the oppressor cannot daunt; happy are the powerlessness and to Thy might, to my poverty and to Thy clear-sighted that have learned to distinguish the transitory from wealth. the eternal, that have turned their faces to the Imperishable and There is none other God but Thee, the Help-in-Peril, the Self-are named ;lmgong the Immortals in the realm of power and Subsisting. 10 glory. . . . 7

The purpose of God in creating man hath been, and will ever How noble and excellent is man, if he only attain to that state be, to enable him to know his Creator and to attain His Presence. for which he was designed. And how mean and contemptible, To this most excellent aim, this supreme objective, all the heavif he close his eyes to the public weal, and spend his preciolls enly Books and the divinely-revealed and weighty Scriptures uncapacities on personal and selfish ends. The greatest happiness equivocally bear witness:

11

lies in the happiness of others

Unhappily they imagine that greatness and glory follow on According to the words of the Old Testament, God has said, the accumulation of worldly riches and similar vanities. Now "Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness." This indiclearly consider! If a man gives a thought he will see that the cates that man is of the image and likeness of God; that is to say, omnipotwt God has distinguished him from amongst His crea- the

perfections of God, the divine virtues are reflected or revealed
tures by the dress of honor, of virtue and intelligence. . . . in the
human reality. Just as the light and effulgence of the sun
Man has become the spring of divine wonders and the center of when
cast upon a polished mirror are reflected fully, gloriously,
the mysteries of the heavenly Kingdom. so

likewise the qualities and attributes of divinity are radiated

24 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

ADVANCING TOWARD THE IMMORTAL REALM 25

from the depths of a pure human heart. This is an evidence that
Wherefore it is incumbent upon all Baha'is to ponder this very
man is the most noble of God's creatures. . . .

delicate and vital matter in their hearts, that, unlike other reli-
Let us now discover more specifically how he is the image and gions,
they may not content themselves with the noise, the

likeness of God and what is the standard or criterion by which he
clamor, the hollowness of religious doctrine. Nay, rather, they
can be measured and estimated. This standard can be no other should

exemplify in every aspect of their lives those attributes
than the divine virtues which are revealed in him. Therefore and

virtues that are born of God and should arise to distinguish
every man imbued with divine qualities, who reflects heavenly
themselves by their goodly behavior They should justify their
moralities and perfections, who is the expression of ideal and claim

to be Baha'is by deeds and not by name. He is a true
praiseworthy attributes, is verily in the image and likeness of Baha'i
who strives by day and by night to progress and advance
God. 12 along

the path of human endeavor, whose most cherished desire
Man is said to be the greatest representative of God, he is the is so to
live and act as to enrich and illuminate the world, whose
Book of Creation because all the mysteries of being exist in him. source

of inspiration is the essence of Divine virtue, whose aim in
If he comes under the shadow of the True Educator and is rightly life
is so to conduct himself as to be the cause of infinite progress.

trained, he becomes the essence of essences, the light of lights, the Only
when he attains unto such perfect gifts can it be said of
spirit of spirits; he becomes the center of the divine appearances, him

that he is a true Baha'i. For in this holy Dispensation, the
the source of spiritual qualities, the rising place of heavenly lights
crowning glory of bygone ages, and cycles, true Faith is no mere
and the receptacle of divine inspirations. If he is deprived of this
acknowledgment of the Unity of God, but the living of a life
education he becomes the manifestation of satanic qualities, the that
would manifest all the perfections and virtues implied in such
sum of animal vices, and the source of all dark conditions. 13

belief. . . .

o army of life! East and West have joined to worship stars of

A PRAYER BY 'ABDU'L-BAHA

faded splendor and have turned in prayer unto darkened horizons. Both have utterly neglected the broad foundation of God's o Lord, I have turned my face unto Thy Kingdom of onesacred laws, and have grown unmindful of the merits and virtues ness and am drowned in the sea of Thy mercy! O

Lord,

of His religion. They have regarded certain customs and conven- enlighten my sight by, beholding Thy lights in this dark night tions as the immutable basis of the Divine Faith, and have firmly and make me happy With the wine of Thy love in this wonderful established themselves therein. They have imagined themselves age! O

Lord, make me hear Thy call and open before my face as having attained the glorious pinnacle of achievement and pros-' the doors of Thy heaven, so that I may see the light of Thy glory perity when in reality they have touched the innermost depths of and become attracted to Thy beauty!

heedlessness and deprived themselves wholly of God's bountiful Verily, Thou art the Giver, the Generous the Merciful the gifts.

Forgiving! " 15

The corner-stone of the religion of God is the acquisition of the Divine perfections and the sharing in His manifold bestowals. The essential purpose of Faith and Belief is to ennoble the inner being of man with the outpourings of grace from on high. If this be not attained, it is indeed deprivation itself. It is the torment of infernal fire.

PRAYER AND MEDITATION 27

The wisdom of prayer is this, that it causes a connection between the servant and the True One, because in that state of

prayer man with all his heart and soul turns his face towards His Highness the Almighty, seeking His association and desiring His love and compassion. The greatest happiness for a lover is CHAPTER FOUR to converse with his beloved,

and the greatest gift for a seeker is to become familiar with the object of his longing. That is why PRAYER AND MEDITATION the greatest hope of every soul who is attracted to the kingdom

of God is to find ,an opportunity to entreat and supplicate at the BENEFITS OF PRAYER ocean of His utterance, goodness and generosity.

Besides all this, prayer and fasting is the cause of awakening N TO thy question, "Why pray? What is the wisdom there~f, and mindfulness and is conducive to protection and preservation from tests. 2

for God has established everything and executes all affaIrs- after the best order and He ordains everything according to a

Your faces shall be enlightened with the radiance of supplication becoming measure and puts things in their places with the invitation to God (and) in vocation to Him. 3

greatest propriety and perfection-therefore what IS the wisdom Know that in every home where God is praised and prayed to, in beseeching and supplicating and in stating one's wants and His kingdom proclaimed, that home is a garden of God and a seeking help?" Know thou, verily, it is becoming of a weak one paradise of His happiness. 4

to supplicate to the strong One and it behoveth a seeker of bounty to beseech the glorious, bountiful One. When one supplicates to

How TO PRAY

his Lord turns to Him and seeks bounty from HIS ocean this Trust in the favors of thy Lord; supplicate unto Him and besupplication is by itself a light to his heart, a illumination to his beseech in the middle of the night and at early morn just as a sight, a life to his soul and an exaltation to his being. . . needy and captive one beseeches. It is incumbent upon thee to Therefore during thy supplications to God and thy reclining, turn unto the Kingdom of God and to pray, supplicate and in- "Thy name is my healing," consider how thy heart IS cheered, why voke during all times. This is the means by which thy soul shall soul delighted by the spirit of the love of God and why mm? ascend upward to the apex of the gift of God. 5

attracted to the kingdom of God! By these attractions one s Know that nothing will benefit thee in this life save supplicability and capacity increase. When the vessel is widened the invitation and invocation unto God, service in His vineyard, and, with water increaseth and when the thirst grows the bounty of the a heart full of love, to be in constant servitude unto Him. 6

cloud becomes agreeable to the taste of man. This is the mystery Blessed is the man that hath, on the wings of longing, soared of supplication and the wisdom of stating one's wants. 1. towards God, the Lord of the Judgment Day. 7

o thou spiritual friend! Thou hast asked the wisdom of Set all thy hope in God and cleave tenaciously to His unfailing prayer. Know thou that prayer is indispensable and obligatory mu~

8

and man under no pretext whatsoever is excused therefrom unless o Son of Light! Forget all save Me and commune with My he be mentally unsound or an insurmountable obstacle prevent spirit. This is the essence of My command, therefore turn him. unto

it. 9

28 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

PRAYER AND MEDITATION

29

Turn your faces away from the contemplation of your own my Shelter

in my woes! My Asylum and Refuge in time of need
 finite selves and fix your eyes upon the Everlasting Radiance; and in my
 loneliness my Companion! In my anguish my Solace,
 then will your souls receive in full measure the Divine power of and in my
 solitude a loving Friend. The Remover of the pangs
 the Spirit and the blessings of the Infinite Bounty. 10 of my
 sorrows and the Pardoner of my sins!
 o Son of Spirit! Ask not of Me that which We desire not for Wholly
 unto Thee do I turn, fervently imploring Thee with
 thee, then be content with what We have ordained for thy sake, all my
 heart, my mind and my tongue, to shield me from all that
 for this is that which profiteth thee, if therewith thou dost con- runs
 counter to Thy will, in this, the Cycle of Thy Divine Unity,
 tent thyself. 11 and to
 cleanse me of all defilement that will hinder me from seeking, stainless and
 unsullied, the shade of the tree of Thy grace.
 Commit thyself to God; give up thy will and choose that of Have
 mercy, O Lord, on the feeble, make whole the sick, and
 God; abandon thy desire and lay hold on that of God. 12 quench the
 burning thirst.
 The truest adorning (of the human heart) is the recognition Gladden
 the bosom wherein the fire of Thy love doth smolder
 of the truth that "He doeth whatsoever He willeth, and ordaineth and set it
 aglow with the flame of Thy celestial love and spirit.
 that which He pleaseth." 13 Robe
 the Tabernacles of Divine Unity with the vesture of
 Draw nigh unto God and persevere in (thy) communion with holiness and
 set upon my head the crown of Thy favor.
 (or prayer to) thy Lord, so that the fire of God's love may glow
 Illumine my face with the radiance of the Orb of Thy bounty and
 more luminously in the heart, its heat grow stronger and give
 graciously aid me in ministering at Thy holy threshold.
 warmth to that region and its sound reach the Supreme Con- Make
 my heart overflow with love for Thy creatures and grant
 course. 14 that I may
 become the sign of Thy mercy, the token of Thy
 o thou advancer toward the Kingdom! Endeavor thou day by grace; the
 promoter of concord amongst Thy loved ones, devoted
 day to increase thy yearning and attraction so that the attitude unto Thee,
 uttering Thy commemoration, and forgetful of self
 but ever mindful of what is Thine.
 of supplication and prayer may be realized more often. 15
 o God! my God! Stay not from me the gentle gales of Thy
 I render Thee thanks, O Thou Who hast lighted Thy fire pardon and
 grace and deprive me not of the wellsprings of Thine
 within my soul, and cast the beams of light into my heart, that aid and
 favor.

Thou hast taught Thy servants how to make mention of Thee, 'N
 eath the shade of Thy protecting wings let me nestle, and
 ,IId revealed unto them the ways whereby they can supplicate cast upon
 me the glance of Thine all-protecting eye.
 Thee, through Thy most holy and exalted tongue, and Thy most
 Loo~e my tongue. to laud Thy Name amidst Thy people, that my VOIce
 august and precious speech. But for Thy leave, who is there that
 may be raised 111 great assemblies and from my lips may stream the
 could venture to express Thy might and Thy grandeur; and were
 flood of Thy praise.

it not for Thine instruction, who is the man that could discover
 Thou art, in all truth, the Gracious, the Glorified, the Mighty,
 the ways of Thy pleasure in Thy creation? 16 the
 Omnipotent! 17

A PRAYER OF 'ABDU'L-BAHA's

In the Name of the Lord!

Two PRAYERS OF THE BAB

o Lord, my God and my Haven in my distress! My Shield and Is there any
 remover of difficulties save God! Say, Praise be to
 r

30 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING I
 PRAYER AND MEDITATION 31

God! He is God! All are His servants and all are standing by May
 your eyes be opened to see the signs of the Kingdom of
 His cOlllll and. God,
 and may your ears be unstopped so that you may hear with
 a perfect understanding the heavenly Proclamation sounding
 Say, God sufficeth all things above all things. and nothing in in your
 midst.

the heavens or in the earth but God sufficeth. Verily, He is in May
 your souls receive help and comfort, and, being so
 Himself, the Knower, the Sustainer, the Omnipotent. 18
 strengthened, may they be enabled to live in accordance with the
 teachings of Baha'u'llah.

~HAT TO PRAY FOR

I pray for each and all that you may be as flames of love in the
 Grid and sorrow do not come to us by chance, they are sent world,
 and that the brightness of your light and the warmth of
 to us by the Divine Mercy for our own perfecting. your
 affection may reach the heart of every sad and sorrowing
 ~hile a man is happy he may forget his God; but when grief child of
 God. 23

comes and sorrows overwhelm him, then will he remember his
 Father ~ho is in Heaven, and ~ho is able to deliver him from
 ~aft, then, unto me, O my God and my Beloved, from the
 his humiliations. 19 right
 hand of Thy mercy and loving-kindness, the holy breaths

of Thy favors, that they may draw me away from myself and
Endeavor and supplicate and pray God that, day unto day, thy from the
world unto the courts of Thy nearness and Thy presii.rmness and steadfastness
may grow and that thy countenance ence. Potent art Thou to do what
pleaseth Thee. 24

may radiate through the light of guidance. 20

ANSWERS TO PRAYER

Pray to God that He may strengthen you in divine virtue, so
that YOll may be as angels in the world, and beacons of light to You
have asked concerning approval of Christian Science treatdisclosl: the
mysteries of the Kingdom to those with understand- ment and healing.
Spirit has influence; prayer has spiritual effect.
ing hearts. 21

Therefore we pray "O God! heal this sick one!" Perchance
God will answer. Does it matter who prays? God will answer the
Forget all else save God, be in communion with Him, supplipraye~ ?f .every
servant if that prayer is urgent. His mercy is
cate and pray to Him to'make thee conqueror over the material
vast, IllImItable. He answers the prayers of all His servants. He
things, impressed by the bounties of the Kingdom, commemorating the name of thy
Lord, pure from all else save Him, and answers the prayer of this
plant. The plant prays potentially "O
God! send me rain!" God answers the prayer and the plant
imbued with the spiritual attributes of those who are holy . . .
then shall thy breaths have effect upon the hearts. . . . 22
g.rows. God will answer anyone. He answers prayers potentially. . . .

Day and night I pray to Heaven for you that strength may be . . .
Did we not pray potentially for needed blessings before
yours, and that, one and all, you may participate in the blessings we
were created? ~hen we came into this world did we not find
of Baha'u'Ilah, and enter into the Kingdom. our
prayers answered? Did we not find mother, father food
I supplicate that you may become as new beings illumined li\$ht,
home and every other necessity and blessing, altho~gh w~
with the Divine Light . . . and that from one end of Europe to dId
nol' actually ask for them? Therefore it is natural that God
the other the knowledge of the love of God may spread. will
give to us when we ask Him. His mercy is all-encircling.
May this boundless love so fill your hearts and minds that sad- But we
ask for things which the divine wisdom does not desire
ness may find no room to enter. for us
and there is no answer to our prayer. . . . ~e pray, "O

32 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

PRAYER AND MEDITATION

33

God! make me wealthy!" If this prayer were univ{!rsally an-
Thou disappointest no one who hath sought Thee, nor dost

swered, human affairs would be at a standstill. There would be Thou
keep back from Thee anyone who hath desired Thee.
none left to work in the streets, none to till the soil, none to build,
Ordain Thou for me what becometh the heaven of Thy genernone to run the trains.
. . . The affairs of the world would be osity, and the ocean of Thy
bounty. Thou art, verily, the
interfered with, energies crippled and progress hindered. But
Almighty, the Most Powerful. 27

whatever we ask for, which is in accord with divine wisdom,
God will answer.
Regarding thy question about the morning prayer. Both
For instance, a very feeble patient may ask the doctor to give meanings
are included in the word dawn (morning)-the
him food which would be positively dangerous to his life and con-
natural dawn, and the dawn of the Kingdom. 28

dition. He may beg for roast meat. The doctor is kind and wise.
He knows it would be dangerous to his patient so he refuses to

WHEN TO PRAY

allow it. The doctor is merciful; the patient ignorant. Through
When a soul rises in the morning from sleep, before everythe doctor's kindness
the patient recovers; his life is saved. Yet thing else he must
commemorate the name of God in order that
the patient may cry out that the doctor is unkind, not good, he
may obtain spirituality and illumination. 29

because he refuses to answer his pleading.
God is merciful. In His mercy He answers the prayers of all At the
dawn of every day he (the true seeker) should commune
His servants when according to His supreme wisdom it is nec- with
God, and with all his soul persevere in the quest of his
essary. 25

Beloved. 30
A servant is drawn unto Me through prayers until I answer
Supplication to God at morn and eve is conducive to the joy
Him; and when I have answered his prayers, I become the ear of
hearts and prayer causes spirituality and fragrance. Thou
wherewith he heareth. 26

shouldst necessarily continue therein. 31
I give praise unto Thee, O my God, that Thou hast awakened
Trust in the favors of Thy Lord; supplicate unto Him and beme out of my sleep,
and brought me forth after my disappear- seech in the middle of
the night and at early morn just as a needy
ance and raised me up from my slumber. I have wakened this and
captive one beseeches. It is incumbent upon thee to turn
morning with my face set toward the splendors of the Day-Star unto
the Kingdom of God and to pray, supplicate and invoke
of Thy Revelation, through which the Heavens of Thy power
during all times. This is the means by which thy soul shall ascend

and Thy majesty have been illumined, acknowledging Thy signs,
upward to the apex of the gift of God. 32

believing in Thy Book, and holding fast unto Thy cord. . . .

Do Thou ordain for me, O my Lord, the good of this world

PRAYER FOR OTHERS

and of the next. I testify that within Thy grasp are held the reins

of all things. Thou changest them as Thou pleasest. No God is In

these (warring) countries there is hardly a house free from

there save Thee, the Strong, the Faithful. the

sound of bitter weeping, scarcely can one find a home un-

Thou art He Who changeth through His bidding abasement touched

by the cruel hand of war.

into glory, and weakness into strength, and powerlessness into

Alas! we see on all sides how cruel, prejudiced and unjust is

might, and fear into calm, and doubt into certainty. No God is man,

and how slow he is to believe in God and follow His comthere but Thee, the

Mighty, the Beneficent. mandments.

34 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

PRAYER AND MEDITATION 35

Why is man so hard of heart? It is because he does not yet

Supplication and prayer on behalf of others will surely be

know God. If he had knowledge of God he could not act in

effective. When hearts are united, when faces are turned towards

direct opposition to His laws. If only the laws and precepts of the

the Kingdom of Abha, surely enlightenment will be the result.

Prophets of God had been believed, understood and followed,

wars would no longer darken the face of the earth.

If man had even the rudiments of justice, such a state of things As the

spirit of man after putting off this material form has

would be impossible. an

everlasting life, certainly any existing being is capable of mak-

Therefore, I say unto you pray-pray and turn your faces to ing

progress; therefore it is permitted to ask for advancement,

God, that He, in His infinite compassion and mercy, may help

forgiveness, mercy, beneficence, and blessings for a man after his death,

and succor these misguided ones. Pray that He will grant them

because existence is capable of progression. That is why in the

spiritual understanding and teach them tolerance and mercy, that the

prayers of Baha'u'llah, forgiveness and remission of sins are

the eyes of their minds may be opened and that they may be asked for

those who have died. Moreover, as people in this world

endued with the gift of the Spirit. . . . I beseech you all to pray are in

need of God, they will also need Him in the other world.

with heart and soul that this may be accomplished. 33 The

creatures are always in need, and God is absolutely independent, whether in

this world or in the world to come.

With all his heart should the seeker avoid fellowship with evil The

wealth of the other world is nearness to God. Consedoers, and pray for the remission of their sins. 34 quently it is certain that those who are near the Divine Court are

Pray thou that the ill-natured become good-natured and the allowed to intercede, and this intercession is approved by God.

weak become strong. 35 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. 40

of God must conduct themselves, and to what heights they must soar. Beseech thou, at all times, Thy Lord, the God of Mercy, to GRA TITUDE AND PRAISE

aid them to do what He willeth. He, verily is the Most Powerful, the All-Glorious. 36

Do you realize how much you should thank God for His blessed maid-servant of God! Do beseech and pray constantly for things? If you should thank Him a thousand times with each

'Abdu'l-Baha and beg the confirmation and assistance of God in breath it would not be sufficient, because God has created and

his behalf, because I am earnestly fond of the prayers of the maid-trained you. He has protected you from every affliction and preservatives of God in my behalf, and of their asking the blessing of compared every gift and bestowal.

Consider what a kind Father He

God for this servant. is. . . .

He has given us a kind father and compassionate mother, I begged of God to ordain all good for thee for thy praying . . . refreshing water, gentle breezes and the sun shining above 1

for 'Abdu'l-Baha. 37 our heads. In brief, He has supplied all the necessities of life

, although we did not ask for any of these great gifts. . . . He ~ ~ . . . Establish a spiritual meeting-place wherefrom the incense has created us in this radiant century, a century longed for and ;1 of sanctity and purity will rise up to God, assemble there with expected by all the sanctified souls in past periods. . . . The i!

fragrance and spirituality and celebrate the Name of your Lord philosophers of history have agreed that this century is equal to II by day and by night.. 38 one

hundred past centuries. This is true from every standpoint.

I

36 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

PRAYER AND MEDITATION 37

This is the century of science, inventions, discoveries and uni- heaven I may remember thee, thus shall Mine eyes and thine be

versallaws. This is the century of the revelation of the mysteries solaced.

46

of God. . . . Therefore you must render thanks and glorifica-
I give praise to Thee, O my God, that the fragrance of Thy
tion to God that you were born in this age. Furthermore you
loving-kindness hath enraptured me, and the gentle winds of
have listened to the call of Baha'u'llah. . . . You were asleep j
Thy mercy hav,: inclined me in the direction of Thy bountiful
you are awakened. Your ears are attentive; your hearts are infavors.

47

formed. You have acquired the love of God. You have attained
to the knowledge of God. This is the most great bestowal of God. Glory
be to Thee, O my God! The power of Thy might
. . . You must appreciate the value of this bounty and engage beareth me
witness! I can have no doubt that should the holy
your time in mentioning and thanking the True One. You must breaths of
Thy loving-kindness and the breeze of Thy bountiful
live in the utmost happiness. If any trouble or vicissitude comes favor
cease, for less than the twinkling of an eye, to breathe over
into your lives, if your heart is d.epressed on account of health, all
created things, the entire creation would perish, and all that
livelihood or vocation, let not these things affect you. They are in
heaven and earth would be reduced to utter nothingness.
should not cause unhappiness, for Baha'u'llah has brought you Magnified,
therefore, be the marvellous evidences of Thy transdivine happiness
Render continual thanks unto God so cendent power! Magnified be the
potency of Thine exalted
that the confirmations of God may encircle you all. 41 might!
Magnified be the majesty of Thine all-encompassing
greatness, and the energizing influence of Thy will! 48
Be thou happy and well pleased and arise to offer thanks to
God, in order that thanksgiving may conduce to the increase of Exalted
art Thou above my praise and the praise of anyone
bounty. 42 beside me,
above my description and the description of all who are
in heaven and all who are on earth! 49
Thank thou the kind Father . . . that the world of creation
and the heart of the universe found comfort in His mercy. 43
Magnified be Thy name, O my God, for that Thou hast manifested the Day which is
the King of Days, the Day which Thou
Reflect upon this: What a bounty and what a favor it is that didst
announce unto Thy chosen ones and Thy Prophets in 111Y
the sages of the world and the wise among mankind are incompe- most
excellent Tablets, the Day whereon Thou didst shed the
tent of comprehension, yet the little children of the Kingdom splendor
of the glory of all Thy names upon all created things.
have attained the Truth, dwell and abide under the shadow of the

Tree of Life and are assisted by the eternal and everlasting Intone,
 O My servant, the verses of God that have been re-
 ~ft! << ceived by
 thee, as intoned -by them that have drawn nigh unto
 Wherefore be thankful to God, for having strengthened thee Him, that the
 sweetness of Thy melody may kindle thine own
 to aid His Cause, for having made the flowers of knowledge and soul, and
 attract the hearts of all men. Whoso reciteth, in the
 understanding to spring forth in the garden of thine heart. Thus privacy of
 his chamber, the verses revealed by God, the scattering
 hath His grace encompassed thee, and encompassed the whole angels of
 the Almighty shall scatter abroad the fragrance of the
 of creation. Beware, lest thou allow anything whatsoever to words
 uttered by his mouth, and shall cause the heart of every
 grieve thee. 45 righteous
 man to throb. Though he may, at first, remain unaware
 of its effect, yet the virtue of the grace vouchsafed unto him must
 o Son of Being! Make mention of Me on My earth, that in My needs sooner or
 later exercise its influence upon his soul. 51

r

38 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

I

II PRAYER AND MEDITATION 39

I

THE GRATITUDE OF BAHĀ'U'LLĀH all sins and

trespasses, and to fulfill the needs of the peoples of all
 Glorified art Thou, O my God! Thou knowest that my sole
 religions, and to waft the fragrances of pardon over the entire
 aim in revealing Thy Cause hath been to reveal Thee and not my-
 creation . . . I yield Thee such thanks as can satisfy the wants
 self, and to manifest Thy glory rather than my glory. In Thy of
 all such as seek Thee, and realize the aims of them that have
 path and to attain Thy pleasure, I have scorned rest, joy, delight.
 recognized Thee. I yield Thee such thanks as can blot out from
 the hearts of men all suggestions of limitations . . . " 55

At all times and under all conditions my gaze 'hath been fixed
 on Thy precepts, and mine eyes bent upon the things Thou hast
 bidden me observe in Thy Tablets. I have wakened every morn-

MEDITATION AND THE REVEALED WORD OF GOD

ing to the light of Thy praise and Thy remembrance, and reached
 every evening inhaling the fragrance of Thy mercy. 52

One hour's reflection is preferable to seventy years of pious
 worship. 56

Every time I lift mine eyes unto Thy heaven, I call to mind
 Thy highness and Thy loftiness, and Thine incomparable glory
 Through the faculty of meditation man attains to eternal life;

and greatness; and every time I turn my gaze to Thine earth, I
Through it he receives the breath of the Holy Spirit-the beam made to recognize
the evidences of Thy power and the tokens stowal of the Spirit is
given in reflection and meditation.

of Thy bounty. And when I behold the sea, I find that it speak-
This faculty of meditation frees man from the animal nature,
eth to me of Thy majesty, and of the potency of Thy might, and
discerns the reality of things, puts man in touch with God.

of Thy sovereignty and of Thy grandeur. And at whatever time I
This faculty brings forth from the invisible plane the sciences
contemplate the mountains, I am led to discover the ensigns of and
arts. Through the meditative faculty inventions are made
Thy victory and the standards of Thine omnipotence. 5?

possible, colossal undertakings are carried out; through it governments can run
smoothly. Through this faculty man enters into
Every trouble that hath touched me in Thy path hath added to
my joy and increased my gladness. I swear by Thee, O Thou the
very Kingdom of God. . . . '

Nevertheless some thoughts are useless to man; they are like
Who art the King of Kings! None of the kings of the earth hath
waves moving in the sea without result. But if the faculty of
power to hinder me from remembering Thee or from extolling
meditation is bathed in the inner light and characterized with
Thy virtues. 54

divine attributes, the results will be confirmed.
I yield Thee such thanks, as can direct the steps of the wayward The
meditative faculty is akin to the mirror; if you put it betowards the splendors
of the morning light of Thy guidance. fore earthly objects it
will reflect them. Therefore if the spirit of

. . . I yield Thee such thanks as can cause the sick to draw nigh man
is contemplating earthly subjects he will be informed of
11 n to the waters of Thy healing, and can help those who are far
these.

from Thee to approach the living fountain of Thy presence.
But if you turn the mirror of your spirits heavenwards . . .
. . . I yield Thee such thanks as can stir up all things to extol the
rays of the Sun of Reality will be reflected in your hearts, and
Thee . . . and can unloose the tongues of all beings to . . . the
virtues of the Kingdom will be obtained.

magnify Thy beauty . . . I yield Thee such thanks as can make
Therefore let us keep this faculty rightly directed-turning it
the corrupt tree to bring forth good fruit . . . and revive the to
the heavenly Sun and not to earthly objects-so that we may
bodies of all beings with the gentle winds of Thy transcendent
discover the secrets of the Kingdom, and comprehend the allegrace . . . I yield
Thee such thanks as can cause Thee to forgive gories of the Bible and
the mysteries of the Spirit. 57

Investigate and study the Holy Scriptures word by word so Fear God, O
my people! Let not too much reading (of the Sacred Word) .
that you may attain knowledge of the mysteries hidden therein. . . . make you proud. To chant but one verse with joy
Be not satisfied with words, but seek to understand the spiritual and
gladness is better for you than reading all the revelations of
meanings hidden in the heart of the words. . . . the
omnipotent God with carelessness. Chant the Tablets of God
For instance, . . . consider the symbolical meanings of the in such
measure that ye be not overtaken with fatigue and drowsiness: Ind teachings of
Christ. His Holiness said, "I am the living pression. Burden not the soul so
as to cause exhaustion and
bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this languor,
but rather refresh it that thus it may soar on the wings
bread he shall live forever." When the Jews heard this they took of
revelation to the Dawning-place of proofs. This brings you
it literally and failed to understand the significance of His mean- nearer
to God, were ye of those who understand. S9
ing and teaching. The spiritual truth which Christ wished to
Immerse yourselves in the ocean of My words, that ye may convey to them was
that the reality of Divinity within Him was ravel its secrets, and
discover all the pearls of wisdom that lie hid
like a blessing which had come down from heaven and that he
in its depths. 60
who partook of this blessing should never die. That is to say,
"bread" was the symbol of the perfections which had descended
upon Him from God, and he who ate of this bread or endowed
himself with the perfections of Christ would undoubtedly attain
to life everlasting. The Jews did not understand Him, and taking
the words literally said, "How can this man give us his flesh to
eat?" Had they understood the real meaning of the Holy Book
they would have become believers in Christ.
All the texts and teachings of the Holy Testaments have intrinsic spiritual
meanings. They are not to be taken literally .
. . . These are the mysteries of God I therefore pray in
your behalf that you may be given the power of understanding
these inner real meanings of the Holy Scriptures and may become informed of the
mysteries deposited in the words of the
Bible so that you may attain eternal life and that your hearts may
be attracted to the Kingdom of God. May your souls be illumined
by the light of the words of God and may you become repositories of the
mysteries of God, for no comfort is greater and no
happiness is sweeter than spiritual comprehension of the Divine
teachings. S8

Chant (or recite) the words of God every morning and evening. The one who neglects this has not been faithful to the Covenant of God and His agreement, and he who turns away from it today is of those who have turned away from God.

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT 43

the power of the Holy Spirit revived souls and established a new cycle. 1

The Divine Reality is Unthinkable, Limitless, Eternal, Immortal and Invisible. The world of creation is bound by natural law, finite and mortal.

CHAPTER FIVE mortal.

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT beyond the

The Infinite Reality cannot be said to ascend or descend. It is understanding of man, and cannot be described in terms which apply to the phenomenal sphere of the created world.

WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT? world.

Man, then, is in extreme need of the only Power by which he is able to receive help from the Divine Reality, that Power alone brings him into contact with the Source of all life.

THE Holy, Spirit is the Mediator between God and His creatures, It is like a mirror facing the sun. As the pure mirror brings him into contact with the Source of all life, receives light from the sun and transmits this bounty to others, An intermediary is needed to bring two extremes into relation so the Holy Spirit is the mediator of the Holy Light from the Sun with each other. Riches and poverty, plenty and need; without of Reality, which it gives to the sanctified realities. It is adorned an intermediary power there could be no relation between these with all the divine perfections. Every time it appears the world is pairs of opposites.

renewed, and a new cycle is founded. The body of the world of So we can say that there must be a Mediator between God and man, and this is none other than the Holy Spirit, which brings the created earth into relation with the "Unthinkable One," the another. Through the advent of spring the earth becomes ver- Divine Reality.

Reality. , . The dant and blooming, and all sorts of flowers and sweet-scented . The Divine Reality may be likened to the sun and the Holy ~pirit herbs grow; the trees have new life, new fruits appear, and a new ~pirit to the rays of the sun. As the rays of the sun bring the light cycle is founded. The appearance of the Holy Spirit is like this. It brings and warmth of the sun to the earth, giving life to all created beings, Whenever it appears, it renews the world of humanity and gives beings, so do the "Manifestations" bring the power of the Holy Spirit a new spirit to the human realities; it arrays the world of existence from the Divine Sun of Reality to give Light and Life to the Spirit from the Divine Sun of Reality to give Light and Life to the existence in a praiseworthy garment, dispels the darkness of ignorance the

souls of men. . . .

an~ causes the radiation of the light of perfections. Christ with The Holy Spirit it is, :which, through the mediation of the thIS power has renewed this cycle; the heavenly spring with the Prophets of God, teaches spiritual virtues to man and enables him utmost freshness and sweetness spread its tent in the world of to attain Eternal life. 2

humanity and the life-giving breeze perfumed the nostrils of the It is evident that the souls receive grace from the bounty of enlightened ones. the

Holy Spirit which appears in the Manifestations of God, and , In the same way, the appearance of Baha'u'tih was like a new not from the personality of the Manifestation. 3

springtime which appeared with holy breezes, with the hosts of . . . The spirit of man is not illumined and quickened

everlasting life, and with heavenly power. It established the through material sources. It is not resuscitated by investigating Throne of the Divine Kingdom in the center of the world, and by phenomena of the world of matter. The spirit of man is in need r!

I
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44 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING I

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT 45

of the protection of the Holy Spirit. Just as he advances by To gain control over physical bodies is an extremely easy matprogressive stages from the mere physical world of being into the ter, but to bring spirits within the bonds of serenity is a most

intellectual realm, so must he develop upward in moral attributes arduous undertaking. This is not the work of everybody. It and spiritual graces. In the process of this attainment he is ever necessitates a Divine and holy potency, the potency of inspirain need of the bestowals of the Holy Spirit. Material develop- tion, the power of the Holy Spirit. For example, His Holiness

ment may be likened to the glass of a lamp whereas divine virtues Christ was capable of leading spirits into that abode of serenity.

and spiritual susceptibilities arc the light within the glass. The He was capable of guiding hearts into that haven of rest. From

lamp chimney is worthless without the light; likewise man in his the day of His manifestation to the present time He has been

material condition requires the radiance and vivification of the resuscitating hearts and quickening spirits. He has exercised that

divine virtues and merciful attributes. Wilhout the presence of vivifying influence in the realm of hearts and spirits; therefore the Holy Spirit he is lifeless. Although physically and mentally His

resuscitating is everlasting. In this century of the "latter alive he is spiritually dead. His Holiness Christ announced,

times" Baha'u'llah has appeared and so resuscitated spirits that
"That which is born of flesh is flesh and that which is born of they
have manifested powers more than human. Thousands of
spirit is spirit," meaning that man must be born again. As the His
followers have given their lives and while under sword, shedbabe is born into
the light of this physical world so must the ding their blood, they
have proclaimed "Ya-Baha'u'l-Abha!"~
physical and intellectual man be born into the light of the world Such
resuscitation is impossible except through a heavenly poof divinity.

4 tency, a power supernatural,

the Divine power of the Holy
Spirit.

6

ITS POWER

When Christ appeared with those marvelous breaths of the We
understand that the Holy Spirit is the energizing factor
Holy Spirit, the children of Israel said, "We are quite independ- in
the life of man. Whosoever receives this power is able to inent of Him; we can
do without Him and follow Moses; we have fluence all with whom
he comes in contact. . . .

a book and in it are found the teachings of God; what need
The difference between spiritual philosophers and others is
therefore have we of this man?" Christ said to them, "The book
shown by their lives. The Spiritual Teacher shows his belief in
sufficeth you not." It is possible for a man to hold to a book of his
own teaching by himself being what he recommends to
medicine and say, "I have no need of a doctor; I will act accord-
others.

i ng to the book; in it every disease is named, all symptoms are
An humble man without learning, but filled with the Holy
explained, the diagnosis of each ailment is completely written
Spirit, is more powerful than the most profound scholar, without and a
prescription for each malady is furnished; therefore out that
inspiration. He :who is educated by the Divine Spirit
why do I need a doctor?" This is sheer ignorance. A physician is can,
in his time, lead others to receive the same Spirit.

needed to prescribe. Through his skill, the principles of the book I
pray for you that you may be informed by the life of the
are correctly and effectively applied until the patient is restored
Divine Spirit, so that you may be the means of educating others.
to health. Christ was a heavenly physician. He brought spiritual The
life and morals of a spiritual man are, in themselves, an eduhealth and healing
into the world. Baha'u'llah is likewise a divine cation to those who
know him.

physician. He has revealed prescriptions for removing disease
Think not of your own limitations, dwell only on the welfare
from the body-politic and has remedied human conditions by

spiritual power.

5

• 0 Thou Glory of the Most Glorious!

46 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

47

of the Kingdom of Glory. Consider the influence of Jesus Christ enable thee to penetrate all things, and a Dazzling Spark which on His Apostles, then think of their effect upon the world.

enlightens all sides; a Brilliant Flame in the zenith of the heavens,

These simple men were enabled by the Power of the Holy will teach thee that which thou dost not know of the facts of the Spirit to spread the glad tidings! universe

and of the divine doctrine. Verily, I say unto thee,

So may you all receive Divine assistance! No capacity is lim- every soul that ariseth today to guide others to the path of safety ited when led by the Spirit of God! 7 and

infuse into them the Spirit of Life, the Holy Spirit will inspire that soul with evidences, proofs and facts, and the lights

How TO ATTRACT THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

will shine upon it from the Kingdom of God. Do not forget what I have conveyed unto thee from the breath of the Spirit.

Know thou that the Messianic Spirit and the outpouring of the Verily it is the shining morn and the rosy dawn which will im-

Holy Spirit is always manifest, but capacity and ability (to part unto thee the lights, reveal the mysteries and make thee

receive it) is more in some and less in others. After the Cruci- competent in science, and through it the pictures of the Supreme

fixion the Apostles had not in the beginning the capacity and World will be printed in thy heart and the facts of the secrets

ability to witness the Messianic reality; for they were agitated. of the Kingdom of God will shine before thee. 13

But when they found firmness and steadfastness, their inner sight became opened, and they saw the reality of the Messiah as manifest. 8

A soul who is firm will become a son of the Kingdom of God and will be confirmed with the power of the Holy Spirit. 9

The Holy Spirit speaketh to the pure hearts and to the good and righteous souls in every spot of the earth . . . Turn thyself wholly to it-thus thou shalt be enabled to ascertain its influence and power, the strength of its life and the greatness of its confirmation.

10

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 . . . and the small great. 11

The Holy Spirit breathes in this day unto the hearts which are moving, beating, pure and attracted by the love of God. 12

I now assure thee, 0 servant of God, that, if thy mind become empty and pure from every mention and thought and thy heart

attracted wholly to the Kingdom of God, forgetting all else besides God and coming into communion with the Spirit of God,

then the Holy Spirit will assist thee with a power which will

FAITH AND CERTITUDE 49

Blessed is the man that hath acknowledged his belief in God and in His signs, and recognized that "He shall not be asked of His doings." Such a recognition hath been made by God the ornament of every belief, and its very foundation. Upon it must

CHAPTER SIX

depend the acceptance of every goodly deed. Fasten your eyes upon it, that haply the whisperings of the rebellious may not

FAITH AND CERTITUDE cause you to slip. . . .

He that hath acknowledged this principle

will be endowed with the most perfect constancy. Such is the

FAITH AN AWARENESS OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD teaching which

God bestoweth upon you, a teaching which will

deliver you from all manner of doubt and perplexity, and enable

THE Hand of Omnipotence hath established His Revelation you to

attain unto salvation in both this world and the next. He,

upon an unassailable, an enduring foundation. Storms of verily, is the

Ever-Forgiving, the Most Bountiful. 4

human strife are powerless to undermine its basis, nor will men's

fanciful theories succeed in damaging its structure. 1 Now

faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of

things not seen. . . . By faith we understand that the worlds

I, testify, O my God, to that whereunto Thy chosen Ones have have been

framed by the Word of God, so that what is seen hath

testified and acknowledge that which the inmates of the all- not been

made out of things which appear. . . .

highest Paradise and those who have circled round Thy mighty He that

cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is

Throne have acknowledged. The kingdoms of earth and heaven a rewarder

of them that seek after Him. By faith Noah, being

are Thine, O Lord of the worlds! 2 warned of

God of things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear,

prepared an ark to the saving of his house. . . . By faith Abra-

SIGNS OF TRUE FAITH

ham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he

Although a person of good deeds is acceptable at the threshold was to receive

for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing

of the Almighty, yet it is first "to know" and then "to do." whither he

went. By faith he became a sojourner in the land of

Although a blind man produceth a most wonderful and exquisite promise, as

in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac

art, yet he is deprived of seeing it. Consider how most animals and Jacob,

the heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked

!abor for man, draw loads and facilitate travel; yet, as they are for the

city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is Ignorant, they receive no reward for this toil and labor. The God. By faith Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. . . . the gar~en and trees become green and blossom; yet they do And what more shall I say? for the time will fail me if I tell of ~ot realize the ;esults and outcom~ of all these. The lamp is Gideon, . . . of David and Samuel and the prophets, who through lighted, but as It hath not a conSCIOUS knowledge of itself, no through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obone hath become glad because of it. Moreover, a soul of excel- tained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power lent deeds and good manners will undoubtedly advance, from of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made whatever horizon he beholdeth the lights radiating. Herein lies strong. . . . Others had trials of mockings and scourgings, yea, the difference: By faith is meant, first, conscious knowledge, moreover of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they and second, the practice of good deeds. 3 were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the

50 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

FAITH AND CERTITUDE 51

sword: they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins being desti- He that par taketh of the 'waters of My Revelation will t~ste. all tute, afflicted, ill-treated-of whom the world was ~ot worthy- the incorruptible delights ordained by God from the begInmng wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and the holes of that hath no beginning to the end that hath no end. 9 the earth. . . .

Therefore, let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so The first sign of faith is Love. 10 gre~t a cloud of ~itnesses, lay aside every weight and the sin Verily I read thy letter, which indicated that the Truth (of God) hath whIch doth so easIly beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. 5 that thou hast attained unto composure, assuredly believing in this ~n this most resplendent Dispensation, this most mighty Sov- great Cause. ereIgnty, a number of illumined divines, of men of consummate Know thou, verily, there are many veils in which the Truth is learning, of doctors of mature wisdom, have attained unto His is enveloped; gloomy veils; then delicate and transparent veils; then the Court, drunk the cup of His divine Presence and been invested with the honor of His most excellent fav~r. They have re- eyes. . . .

nounced for the sake of the Beloved the world and all that is therein. . . . Faith

is the magnet which draws the confirmation of the Merciful One. Service is the magnet which attracts the heavenly

~II these were guided by the light of that Sun of divine Revestrength. I hope thou wilt attain both. 12

la~lOn, confessed and acknowledged His truth. Such was their faith that most of them renounced their substance and kindred, and cleaved to the good-pleasure of the All-Glorious. They laid

How Is FAITH GAINED?

down their lives for their Well-Beloved and surrendered their Rely upon God, thy God and the Lord of thy fathers. For the all in His path. Their breasts were made targets for the darts of people are wandering in the paths of delusion, bereft of discern the enemy, and their heads adorned the spears of the infidel. No ment to see God with their own eyes, or hear His Melody with

land remained which did not drink the blood of these embodi- their own ears. 13

ments of detachment, and no sword that did not bruise their necks. Their deeds alone testify to the truth of their words. 6 . . .

Every man hath been, and will continue to be, able of The essence of faith is fewness of words and abundance of himself to appreciate the Beauty of God, the Glorified. Had he deeds; he whose words exceed his deeds, know verily his death is not been endowed with such a capacity, how could he be called better than his life. . . . 7 to account

for his failure? If, in the day when all the peoples of the earth will be gathered" together, any man should reply and Just as the conception of faith hath existed from the beginning say:

"Inasmuch as all men have erred, and none hath been found that hath no beginning, and will endure to the end that hath no willing to turn his face to the Truth, I, too, following their

end, in like manner will the true believer eternally live and en- example, have grievously failed to recognize the Beauty of the dure .. HIS spirit Will everlastingly circle round the Will of God. Eternal," such a plea will, assuredly, be rejected. For the faith

He will last as long as God Himself will last. . . . It is evident of no man can be conditioned by anyone except himself. 14

that the loftiest mansions in the Realm of Immortality have been ordained as the abitation of them that have truly believed in If thou wishest. the divine knowledge and recognition, purify God and In HIS Signs. Death can never invade that holy seat. 8 thy heart from all beside God, be wholly attracted to the ideal,

tt? nre lITa hT1' ""X t

72 • t 11m" tt 'II 5 ""W 't 't

beloved One; search for and choose Him and apply thyself to rational and authoritative arguments. For arguments are a guide to the path and by this the heart will be turned unto the Sun of Truth. And when the heart is turned unto the Sun, then the eye will be opened and will recognize the Sun through the Sun itself. Then (man) will be in no need of arguments (or proofs) ,

CHAPTER SEVEN

for the sun is altogether independent, and absolute independence is in need of nothing, and proofs are one of the things (of which HEALING AND HEALTH

absolute independence has no need). Be not like Thomas; be thou like Peter. 15

DIFFERENT KINDS OF HEALING

Only when the lamp of search, of earnest striving, of longing desire, of passionate devotion, of fervid love, of rapture, and ecstasy, is kindled within the seeker's heart, and the breeze of

T HERE are two ways of healing sickness, material means and spiritual means. The first IS by the use of remedies, of medicine. His loving-kindness is wafted upon his soul, will the darkness

of error be dispelled, the mists of doubts and misgivings be dissipated, and the lights of knowledge and certitude envelop his

Illness caused by physical accident should be treated with being. 16

medical remedies' those which are due to spiritual causes disappear through spiritual means. Thus an illness caused by affliction, Verily, I beseech the Lord of Hosts to increase thy faith each day over that of the previous day. 17

by physical treatment. Hence, both kinds of remedies should be considered. Moreover they are not contradictory, and thou shouldst accept the physical remedies as coming from the mercy

Say: The first and foremost testimony establishing His truth and favor of God, Who hath revealed and made manifest medical is His own Self. Next to this testimony is His Revelation. For science so that His servants may profit from this kind of treatment so that His servants may profit from this kind of treatment also. Thou shouldst give equal attention to spiritual established the words He hath revealed as proof of His reality treatments, for they produce marvelous effects. and truth. This is, verily, an evidence of His tender mercy unto

Now, if thou wishest to know the Divine remedy which will men. He hath endowed every soul with the capacity to recognize the signs of God He will never deal unjustly with any

Divine Kingdom, know that it is the precepts and teachings of one, neither will he task a soul beyond its power. He, verily, is God. Guard them sacredly. 1

the Compassionate, the All-Merciful. 19

Should ye be attacked by illness or disease, consult skillful Faith in God, and the knowledge of Him, cannot be fully physicians. . . .

realized except through believing in all that hath proceeded from

Do not neglect medical treatment when it is necessary, but Him (the Manifestation), and by practicing all that He hath

leave it off when health has been restored. Treat disease through commanded and all that is revealed in the Book from the

diet, by preference, refraining from the use of drugs; and if you Supreme Pen. 20

find what is required in a single herb, do not resort to a comn HEALING AND HEALTH 55

54 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

pounded medicament . . . Abstain from drugs when the health is nervous excitement is produced, which will make the malady en-

is good, but administer them when necessary. 2

tirely disappear. In the same way, if a cause of terror suddenly occurs, perhaps an excitement may be produced in the nerves of

When . . . the science of medicine . . . has reached ma- a strong (well) person, which will immediately cause a malady.

turity cures will be performed by things which are not repulsive The cause of the sickness will be no material thing, for that perto the smell and taste of man; that is to say by aliments, fruits son has not eaten anything, and nothing harmful has touched

and vegetables which arc agreeable to the taste and have an agree- him; the excitement of the nerves is then the only cause of the able smell. . . .

illness. In the same way the sudden realization of a chief desire

The cause of the entrance of disease into the human body is will give such joy that the nerves will be excited by it, and this

either a physical one or is the effect of excitement of the nerves. excitement may produce health.

But the principal causes of disease are physical; for the human To conclude, the complete and perfect connection between the

body is composed of numerous elements, but in the measure of spiritual doctor and the sick person-that is, a connection ~f such

an especial equilibrium. As long as this equilibrium is main- a kind that the spiritual doctor entirely concentrates himself,

tained, man is preserved from disease; but if this essential balance, and all the attention of the sick person is given to the spiritual

which is the pivot of the constitution is disturbed, the constitu- doctor

from whom he expects to realize health-causes an excitement is disordered, and disease will supervene. . . . ment of the nerves, and health is produced.

. . . So long as the aim is the readjustment of the constituents . . . But all this has effect only to a certain extent, and that not of the body, it can be effected either by medicine or by food. always. For if some one is afflicted with a very violent disease, or is wounded, these means will not remove the disease nor close the wound. It is therefore evident that it is possible to cure by foods, ali- and heal the wound. That is to say, these means have no power in severe maladies, unless the constitution helps, because a strong 1 fact, this fact is not yet fully grasped. When the science of constitution often overcomes disease. j.

medicine reaches perfection, treatment will be given by foods, ali- But (another) kind of healing is produced through the power . . . , I ments, fragrant fruits, and vegetables, and .by various waters, of the Holy Spirit. This does not depend on contact, nor on hot and cold in temperature. 3 sight, nor upon presence; it is not dependent upon any condition ..

(Healing may result) from the entire concentration of the Whether the disease be light or severe, whether there be a contact of bodies or not, whether a personal connection be established "i,' mind of a strong person upon a sick person, when the latter ex- ih,

pects with all his concentrated faith that a cure will be effected between the sick person and the healer or not, this healing takes place from the spiritual power of the strong person to such an extent through the power of the Holy Spirit. 4

that there will be a cordial connection between the strong person Joy gives us wings! In times of joy our strength is more vital, 1.1:.

and the invalid. The strong person makes every effort to cure the our intellect keener. . . . But when sadness visits us our strength leaves us. 5

From the effect of these mental impressions an excitement of the nerves is produced, and this impression and this excitement of the All true healing comes from God. There are two causes for nerves will become the cause of the recovery of the sick person. sickness, one is material, the other spiritual. If the sickness is of So when a sick person has a strong desire and intense hope for the body, a material remedy is needed, if of the soul, a spiritual , something, and hears suddenly the tidings of its realization, a

remedy.

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56

THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

HEALING AND HEALTH

57

If the heavenly benediction be upon us while we are being

This knowledge (of the healing art) is the most important~ of
healed then only can we be made whole, for medicine is but the

all the sciences, for it is the greatest means from God, the

Life outward and visible means through which we can obtain the

giver to the dust, for preserving the bodies of ~ll people, and

~e

heavenly healing. Unless the spirit be healed, the cure of the

has put it in the forefront of all sciences and wls.doms. For thiS

IS

body is worth nothing. All is in the hands of God, and without

the day when you must arise for My Victory.

Him there can be no health in us.

6

Say: Thy name is my healing, O my God, and remembrance
of Thee is my remedy. Nearness to Thee is my hope, and love

HEALING AS AN ANSWER TO PRAYER

for Thee is my companion. Thy mercy to me is my healing and

my succor in both this world and the world to come. Tho1,1,

Without the help of God man is even as the beasts that perish,

verily, art the All-Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

but God has bestowed such wonderful power upon him that he

10

might ever look upward, and receive, among other gifts, healing

from His Divine Bounty.

7

MEANS OF PRESERVING HEALTH

o thou pure and spiritual one!

Be the essence of cleanliness among mankind . . . under all

"I'

Turn thou toward God with thy heart beating with His love,

circumstances conform yourselves to refined manners . . . let

devoted to His praise, gazing toward His Kingdom and seeking

no trace of uncleanness appear on your clothes. . . . Immerse

help from His Holy Spirit in a state of ecstasy, rapture, love,
yourselves in pure water. . . . Verily We have desired to see in
yearning, joy and fragrance. God will assist thee, through a
you the manifestations of Paradise on earth, so that there may be
Spirit from His Presence, to heal sickness and diseases. 8
diffused from you that whereat the hearts of the favored ones
You have asked concerning approval of Christian Science
shall rejoice. 11

treatment and healing. Spirit has influence; prayer has spiritual
Cleanliness and sanctity in all conditions are characteristics
of
effect. Therefore we pray, "O God! heal this sick one!" Per-
pure beings and necessities of free souls. . . .
chance God will answer. Does it matter who prays? God will
In all conditions, cleanliness and sanctity, purity and
delicacy ..,"

~,

answer the prayer of every servant if that prayer is urgent. His
exalt humanity and make the contingent beings progress. Even
mercy is vast, illimitable. 9

when applied to physical things, delicacy causeth the attainment
of spirituality, as it is established in the Holy Scriptures.

:~

In God must be our trust. There is no God but Him, the
External cleanliness, although it is but a physical thing, hath a
Healer, the Knower, the Helper. . . . Nothing in earth or
great influence upon spirituality. For example, although sound
heaven is outside the grasp of God.

is but the vibrations of the air, which affect the tympanum of the
o physician! In treating the sick, first mention the name of
ear, and vibrations of the air are but an accident among the acci-
Thy God, the Possessor of the Day of Judgment and then use
dents which depend upon the air, consider how much marvelous
what God hath destined for the healing of His creatures. By My
notes or a charming song influence the spirits! A wonderful song

Life! The physician who has drunk from the Wine of My Love,
giveth wings to the spirit and filleth the heart with exaltation.

..!

,/

his visit is healing, and his breath is mercy and hope. Cling to
To return to the subject, the fact of having a pure and spotless
him for the welfare of the constitution. He is confirmed by
body likewise exerciseth an influence upon the spirit of man.
God in his treatment.

. . . O friends of God! Experience hath shown how much the

'lof, , "".

THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

59

HEALING AND HEALTH

reno~ncing of tob~cco, wine and opium, giveth health, strength eases,
in the same way the spirit will be cured of all spiritual
and Intellectual enjoyments, penetration of judgment and physi-
diseases. A cure of physical disease is very easy, but the cure. of
cal vIgor. . . .

spiritual disease is very difficult. If one has fever and you give
~he~efore strive that the greatest cleanliness and sanctity, him
medicine, the fever will vanish; but if the spirit is afflicted
whIch IS the gr~~,t desire of 'Abdu'l-Baha, should be resplendent with
the disease of ignorance, it is difficult to remove that disease.
among the Baha IS, and that the companions of God should sur- For
example, if the spiritual health is afflicted with the love of the
pass the rest of mankind in all conditions and perfections' that world,
spiritual medicine must be given. These medicines are the
they may be physically and morally superior to others.' that advices
and commands of God, which will have effect upon it. 17
through ~leanlin~ss and purity, refinement and health, the~ may
be the cJIIc of Wise men, and that by their affranchisement their I
beseech God to ordain prosperity unto thee in this world,
prudence and the control of their desires, they may be the p~inces to
confer favor upon thee in His supreme Kingdom, and to heal
of the pure, the free and the wise. 12 thee
from the illness which has befallen thee for some hidden
reason which no one knows save God. Verily, the will of God
The drinking of wine . . . is the cause of chronic diseases,
weakeneth the nerves, and consumeth the mind. 13 engages
occasionally in some matter for which mankind is unable to find out the reason.
The causes and reasons shall appear.

T~e powers of the sympathetic nerve are neither entirely Trust in
God and confide in Him, and resign thyself to the will
r:
phYSIcal or spiritual, but are between the two. The nerve is con- of God.
Verily, thy God is affectionate, compassionate and mer-
?ected wIth both. Its phenomena shall be perfect when its spir- ciful.
He will look at thee with the glances of the eye of merci-
Itual and physical relations are normal.
fulness, will guard thee with the eye of bounty, and will cause
'\«"hen the material world and the divine world are well co- His mercy
to descend upon thee. 18

re!~ted, when the h~a.rts become heavenly and the aspirations
become pure. and dlVme, perfect connection shall take place. . .
. For these thy prevailing diseases are not on account of

Then shall thy sins, Physical
but they are to make thee detest this world and know that
and spiritual diseases will then receive absolute healing. 14 there
is no rest and composure in this temporal life.

I beg of God that thou mayest find a cheerful life in-
I hope thou shalt become as a rising light and obtain spiritual increase
the longing . . . of the maidservants of the Merciful One
health, and Spiritual health IS conducive to physical health. 15 and
bring joy and happiness to the handmaidens of God; so that
thou mayest diffuse the fragrances and chant the (revealed)
Verily the most necessary thing is contentment under all cir- verses.

19

circumstances; by this one is preserved from morbid conditions and
from lassitude. Yield not to grief and sorrow; they cause the If
the health and well-being of the body be expended in the
greatest misery. Jealousy consumeth the body and anger doth path of
the Kingdom, this is very acceptable and praiseworthy;
burn the liver; avoid these two as you would a lion. 16 and if
it is expended to the benefit of the human world in general-even though it be
to their material benefit and be a means

SPIRITUAL HEALTH of doing good-that also is
acceptable. But if the health and welfare of man be spent in sensual desires in
a life on the animal plane,

I hope, as you have received physical health, you will receive . . .
then disease is better than such health; nay, death itself is
your spiritual health. As the body will be cured of physical dis-
preferable to such a life. If thou art desirous of health, wish thou

60 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

health for serving the Kingdom. I hope thou mayest attain a perfect. Insight,
an inflexible resolution, a complete health and
spiritual and physical strength in order that thou mayest drink
from the fountain of eternal life and be assisted by the spirit of
Divine confirmation. 20

CHAPTER EIGHT

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF THE
SPIRITUAL LIFE

SERVICE

THERE is no greater result than bonds of service in the Divine
kingdom and attainment to the good-pleasure of the Lord. II
Therefore I desire that your hearts may be directed to the king- II
dom of God, that your intentions may be pure and sincere,
your purposes turned toward altruistic accomplishment unmindful of your own
welfare; nay, rather, may all your intentions
center in the welfare of humanity, and may you seek to sacrifice yourselves in
the pathway of devotion to mankind. Even as

His Holiness Jesus Christ forfeited his life, may you likewise offer yourselves in the threshold of sacrifice for the betterment of the world; and just as His Holiness Baha'u'llih suffered severe ordeals and calamities nearly fifty years for you, may you be willing to undergo difficulties and withstand catastrophes for humanity in general.

1

There can be no true satisfaction or contentment apart from the general prosperity.

2

O people of God! Be not occupied with yourselves. Be intent on the betterment of the world and the training of nations. The betterment of the world can be accomplished through pure and excellent deeds and well-approved and agreeable conduct.

3

The fruits of the tree of man have ever been and are goodly deeds and a praiseworthy character. Withhold not these fruits from the heedless. If they be accepted, your end is attained, and if they be rejected, your end is attained, and if they be withheld, your end is attained.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

63

62 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

The beloved of God and the maidservants of the Merciful must have the purpose of life achieved. If not, leave them in their pastime to train their children with life and heart and teach them in the school of vain dispute. Strive, O people of God, that haply the hearts of the diverse kindreds of the earth may, through the waters of matter; they must not be inefficient. Truly, if a babe did not grow up in your forbearance and loving-kindness, be cleansed and sanctified in life at all it were better than to let it grow ignorant, for that from amosity and hatred, and be made worthy and befitting innocent babe, in later life, would become afflicted with innumerable recipients of the splendors of the Sun of Truth.

4

erable defects, responsible to and questioned by God, reproached. If thou seekest eternal glory, let thyself be humble and meek and rejected by the people. What a sin this would be and what in the presence of the beloved God; make thyself the servant of an omission!

all, and serve all alike. The service of the friends belongs to God, The first duty of the beloved of God and the maid-servants of

not to them. Strive to become a source of harmony, spirituality, the Merciful is this: they must strive by all possible means to

and

and Joyfulness to the hearts of the friends.

5

educate both sexes, male and female; girls like boys; there is no difference whatsoever between them. The ignorance of both is

and

difference whatsoever between them. The ignorance of both is

Be not idle, but active, and fear not.

6

blameworthy, and negligence in both cases is reprobable. "Are
. If thou seekest after a work which is brighter and more attrac-
they who know and they who do not know equal?"

tive, sweeter and more delightful than all the affairs it is the

The command is decisive concerning both. If it be considered

li

th~alldom in the Threshold of the Almighty and servit~de to His

through the eye of reality the training and culture of daughters is

"1,I

Highness the Lord of Might.

7

more necessary than that of sons, for these girls will come to the
Ere long the word of God will display a wonderful influence
station of motherhood and will mold the lives of the children.

The first trainer of the child is the mother. The babe, like unto a
fif

and ~nally that region (~merica) will become the paradise of

green and tender branch, will grow according to the way it is

, '

Abha. ~onse~uently, stnve ye bravely that this aim may be

trained. If the training be right, it will grow right, and if

,,

l~ "

a.ccompltshed III the near future. Striving means this: ye must

crooked, the growth likewise, and unto the end of life it will

Itve and move according to the Divine commands and behests

conduct itself accordingly.

be united in loving with joy and ecstasy; .. engage contin:

Hence, it is firmly established that an untrained and uneduually
in the service of the Cause of God.

8

cated daughter, on becoming a mother, will be the prime factor

TRAINING OF CHILDREN

in the

deprivation, ignorance, negligence and the lack of training \\'1 1

of many children.

As to thy question concerning training children: it is incumbent upon thee to
nurture them from the breast of the love of

o ye beloved of God and the maid-servants of the Merciful!

Teaching and learning, according to the decisive texts of the

God, to urge, them toward spiritual matters, to turn unto God

Blessed Beauty (Bahi'u'llih), is a duty. Whosoever is indifferent
and to a~quIre good m~n.ner,s, best characteristics and prllise-

therein depriveth himself of the great bounty. Beware! Beware!

worthy ~Irtues a?d qualltIes III the world of humanity, and to

that ye fail not in this matter. Endeavor with heart, with life to

study s~I~nces wIth the utmost diligence; so that they may be-

train your children, especially the daughters. No excuse is

'acc?me spmtual? hea~enly and attracted to the fragrances of sanc-
ceptable in this matter.

tfty from theIr c~I~dhood and be reared in a religious, spiritual
Th~s may eternal glory and everlasting supremacy, like unto
and ~eavenly trallllllg. Verily I beg of God to confirm them
the mId-day sun, shine forth in the assemblage of the people of
therelll. 9

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tTY fWtrW

64 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING
PRACTICAL ApPLICATIONS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

65
BaM, and the heart of 'Abdu'l-Baha become happy and thank-
the delivery of this Truth, it is indeed acceptable and beloved,
ful. 10

but if thou acquire both it would be better and more perfect,
Teach your children what hath been revealed through the
because in this new century the attainment of science, arts, and
Supreme Pen. Instruct them in what hath descended from the
belles lettres whether divine or worldly, material or spiritual, is
heaven of greatness and power. Let them memorize the Tablets
a matter which is acceptable before God and a duty which is inof the
Merciful. . 11

cumbent upon us to accomplish. Therefore, never deny the
spiritual things to the material, rather, both are incumbent upon
PRA YERS FOR CHILDREN thee.

Nevertheless, at the time when thou art working for such
o God! Educate these children. These children are the young
a scientific attainment thou must be controlled by the attraction
trees of Thy orchard, the flowers of Thy meadow, the roses of
of the love of thy Glo~ious Lord and mindful of menti?ning His
Thy garden. Let Thy rain fall upon them; let the Sun of Reality
splendid Name. This being the case, thou must attam the art
shine upon them with Thy love. Let Thy breeze refresh them in
thou art studying to its perfection. 15

order that they may be trained, grow and develop and appear in
the utmost beauty. Thou art the Giver! Thou art the Com-

WORK AND WEALTH
passionate! 12

Man should know his own self, and know those things which
o unequalled Lord! For this helpless child be a protector, for
lead to loftiness or to baseness, to shame or to honor, t9 affluence
this weak and sinful one be kind and forgiving.

or to poverty. After man has realized his own ~eing and beco~e mature, then for him wealth (or competence) IS needed. If thIS o Creator! Although we are but useless grass, still we are of wealth is acquired through a craft or profession, it is approvable. Thy garden; though we are but young trees, bare of leaves and blossoms, still we are of Thy orchard; therefore nourish this grass

16

with the rain of Thy bounty; refresh and vivify these young,

In the Baha'i Cause arts, sciences and all crafts are counted as languishing trees with the breeze of Thy spiritual springtime.

worship. The man who makes a piece o.f notepa~er to the best of Awaken us, enlighten us, sustain us, give us eternal life and

his ability, conscientiously, concentratmg all hIS forces on peraccept us in Thy kingdom.

13

fecting it, is giving praise to God. Briefly, all effort put forth by man from the fullness of his heart is worship, if it is prompted by EDUCATION

the highest motives and the will to do service to humanity. This To acquire knowledge is incumbent on all, but of those

is worship: to serve mankind and to minister tothe needs of the sciences which may profit the people of the earth, and not such people. Service is prayer.. t' •

17

sciences as begin in mere words, and end in mere words. The

True reliance is for the servant to pursue his profession and possessors of sciences and arts have a great right among the peo-

calling in this world, to hold fast unto the Lor~, to seek naug~t ple of the world. . . . Indeed, the real treasury of man is his

but His grace, inasmuch as in His hands is the destiny of all HIS knowledge. Knowledge is the means of honor, prosperity, joy,

servan ts.

18

gladness, happiness and exultation.

14

Now as to what thou hast asked concerning giving up the

o My Servant! The best of men are they that earn a livel~-

hood by their calling and spend upon themselves and upon theIr

~cientific attainment in Paris for the sake of confining thy days to

kindred for the love of God, the Lord of all worlds. 19

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66 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

PRACTICAL ApPLICATIONS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

67

It behoveth thee to sever thyself from all desires save thy Lord,

this

duty, the help of the invisible One shall most certainly aid

the Supreme, expecting no help or aid from anyone in the uni-

him. He can enrich, through His grace, whomsoever He pleaseth.

verse, not even from thy father or children. Resign thyself to

He,

verily, hath power over all things. . . . 22

God! Content thyself with but little of this world's goods!

Verily, economy is a great treasure. If one of thy relations op-

A PRAYER FOR THE NECESSITIES OF LIFE

press thee, complain not against him before the magistrate; rather

manifest magnificent patience during every calamity and hard-

Lord! Pitiful are we, grant us Thy favor; poor, bestow upon us

ship. Verily thy Master is the Lord of Faithfulness! Forgive and

a share from the ocean of Thy wealth; needy, do Thou satisfy us;

overlook the shortcomings which have appeared in that one, for

abased, give us Thy glory. The birds of the air and the beasts of

the sake of love and affection. Know that nothing will benefit

the field receive their meat each day from Thee and all beings

thee in this life save supplication and invocation unto God, serv-

partake of Thy care and loving-kindness.

ice in His vineyard, and, with a heart full of love, (to) be in

Deprive not this feeble one of Thy wondrous grace and vouchconstant servitude

unto Him. 20 safe by Thy might unto

this helpless soul Thy bounty.

Give us our daily bread and grant Thy increase in the necessioye that pride

yourself on mortal riches! Know ye in ties of life; that we

may be dependent on none other but Thee.

truth that wealth is a mighty barrier between the seeker and his may

commune wholly with Thee, may walk in Thy ways and dedesire, the lover and his

beloved. The rich, but for a few, shall in clare Thy mysteries. Thou art

the Almighty and the Loving and

no wise attain the court of His presence nor enter the city of con- the

Provider of all mankind. 23

tent and resignation. Well is it, then, with him, who, being rich,

is not hindered by his riches from the eternal kingdom, nor de-

GENEROSITY AND GIVING

prived by them of imperishable dominion. By the Most Great Name! The splendor of such a wealthy man shall illuminate the o

Ye Rich Ones on Earth! The poor in your midst are My dwellers of heaven, even as the sun enlightens the people of the

trust; guard ye My trust, and be not intent only on your own

earth! 21

ease. 24

They who are possessed of riches must have the utmost A

man should be a constant source of well-being and a ready

regard for the poor, for great is the honor destined by God for

help to prosperity for multitudes of people. 25

those poor who are steadfast in patience. By My life! There is no

He (the true seeker) should succor the dispossessed, and never

honor, except what God may please to bestow, that can compare

withhold his favor from the destitute. He should show kindness

to this honor. Great is the blessedness awaiting the poor that to animals, how much more unto his fellow-man, to him who is endure patiently and conceal their sufferings, and well is it with endowed with the power of utterance. 26

the rich who bestow their riches on the needy and prefer them before themselves.

God does not ask from any soul except according to his Please God, the poor may exert themselves and strive to earn ability

the means of livelihood. This is a duty which, in this most great Whosoever comes with one good act, God will give him ten- Revelation, hath been prescribed unto everyone, and is ac- fold. There is no doubt that the living Lord shall assist and concouted in the sight of God as a goodly deed. Whoso observeth firm the generous soul. 27

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THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

PRAC'TICAL ApPLICATIONS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

69

STRENGTH AND BEAUTY OF CHARACTER

Moderation is necessary in all affairs. Man must take a lesson from Divine actions and deeds for God suffers a tree to grow a Ask thou God that thou may est attain to the age of maturity

long time before it grows to perfection. He is able ~o make a tree so that thou mayest recognize the beauty and ugliness of deeds grow to fruition in an instant, but wisdom reqUIres a gradual and actions. 28

development. 33

His Highness Christ has addressed the world, saying, "Except

The essence of wisdom is the fear of God, the dread of His ye become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the scourge and the apprehension of His justice and decree. 34 Kingdom" j that is, men must become pure in heart to know God.

This fear (of God) is the chief commander of the army of thy . . . The hearts of all children are of utmost purity. They are

Lord. Its hosts are a praiseworthy character and goodly deeds. mirrors upon which no dust has fallen. But this purity is on

Through it have the cities of men's hearts been opened throughaccount of weakness and innocence, not on account of any

out the ages and centuries, and the standards of ascendancy and strength and testing, for as this is the early period of their childtriumph raised above all other standards. 35

hood their hearts and minds are unsullied by the world. They cannot display any great intelligence. They have neither hypocrisy nor deceit. This is on account of the child's weakness whereas the man becomes pure through his strength. Through the power of intelligence he becomes simple; through the great

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power of reason and understanding and not through the power of weakness, he becomes sincere. When he attains to the state of

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perfection he will receive these qualities; his heart becomes purified, his spirit enlightened, his soul is sensitized and tender; all through his great strength. This is the difference between the perfect man and the child. Both have the underlying qualities of simplicity and sincerity. 29

The source of courage and power is the promotion of the Word of God, and steadfastness in His Love. 30

o My Son! The company of the ungodly increaseth sorrow, whilst fellowship with the righteous cleaneth the rust from off the

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I'

heart. He that seeketh to commune with God, let him betake

I'

himself to the companionship of His loved ones; and he that de-

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sireth to hearken unto the word of God, let him give ear to the word of His chosen ones. 31

Courtesy is, in truth, a raiment which fitteth all men, wheth~r young or old. Well is it with him that adorneth his temple therewith, and woe unto him who is deprived of this great bounty.

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DETACHMENT AND SACRIFICE

71

the world and all that is therein; for My will and the will of another than Me, even as fire and water, cannot dwell together in

one heart.

4

Detachment is as the sun; in whatsoever heart it doth shine it
CHAPTER NINE quencheth the fire

of covetousness and self. He whose sight is
illumined with the light of understanding will assuredly detach
DETACHMENT AND SACRIFICE himself

from the world and the vanities thereof. ••• Let not
the world and its vileness grieve you. Happy is he whom riches
DETACHMENT fill not with
vain-glory, nor poverty with sorrow. 5

WHEN people said to 'Abdu'l-Baha, "We are glad, oh so glad
that you are free," he replied:

The source of all glory is acceptance of whatsoever the Lord
hath bestowed, and contentment with that which God hath
ordained. 6

"Freedom is not a matter of place, but of condition. I was
happy in that prison, for those days were passed in the path of

That seeker must at all times put his trust in God, must renounce the

peoples of the earth, detach himself from the world
To me prison was freedom.

of dust, and cleave unto Him Who is the Lord of Lords. . . .

Troubles are a rest to me.

(He) should also regard backbiting as grievous error, and keep
Death is life.

himself aloof from its dominion, inasmuch as backbiting quenches
To be despised is honor.

eth the light of the heart, and extinguisheth the life of the soul.

Therefore was I full of happiness all through that prison time.

He should be content with little, and be freed from all inordinate

When one is released from the prison of self, that is indeed
desire. He should treasure the companionship of those that have
freedom! For self is the greatest prison.

renounced the world, and regard avoidance of boastful and

When this release takes place one can never be imprisoned.

worldly people a precious benefit. . . . He should consume

Unless one accepts dire vicissitudes, not with dull resignation,

every wayward thought with the flame of His loving mention, ~
but with radiant acquiescence, one cannot attain this freedom." 1

and, with the swiftness of lightning, pass by all else save Him .

. . . He should not hesitate to offer up his life for his Beloved

O My Servant! Free thyself from the fetters of this world, and

nor allow the censure of the people to turn him away from the

loose thy soul from the prison of self. Seize thy chance, for it

Truth. He should not wish for others that which he doth not

will come to thee no more.

2

wish for himself, nor promise that which he doth not fulfil., 7
o Befriended Stranger! The candle of thine heart is lighted by
The essence of detachment is for man to turn his face toward
the hand of My power, quench it not with the contrary winds of
the courts of the Lord, to enter His presence, behold His countesself and
passion. The healer of all thine ills is remembrance of
nance, and stand as witness before Him. 8

Me, forget it not. Make My love thy treasure and cherish it even
as thy very sight and life. 3

DETACHMENT NOT ASCETICISM

o Son of Earth! Wouldst thou have Me, seek none other than
Disencumber yourselves of all attachment to this world and the
Me; and wouldst thou gaze upon My beauty, close thine eyes to
vanities thereof. . . . Beware that ye approach them not, inas-

72 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

DETACHMENT AND SACRIFICE 73

much as they prompt you to walk after your own lusts and

THE MYSTERY OF SACRIFICE

cove to His desires, and hinder you from entering the straight and The
mystery of sacrifice is a most great subject and is inexglorious Path.
haustible.

Know ye that by the world is meant your unawareness of Him Briefly
it is as follows: The moth is a sacrific~ to the can~le.

Who is your Maker, and your absorption in aught else but Him.

The spring is' a sacrifice to the th~rsty. o~e. The Sill cere lover IS a

The "life to come," on the other hand signifieth the things that sacrifice
to the loved one. The pomt lies m thiS: He must wholly

give you a safe approach to God, the All-Glorious, the Incomforget himself. . .

. He must seek the good ple~sure of the True

parable. Whatsoever deterreth you, in this Day, from loving One'

desire the face of the True One; and walk 111 the Path of the

God, is nothing but the world. Flee it that ye may be numbered

with the blest. Should a man wish to adorn himself with the

Tru~ One. . . . This is the first station of sacrifice.

The second station of sacrifice is as follows: Man must become

ornaments of the earth, to wear its apparels, or partake of the like unto

the iron thrown within the furnace of fire. The qualibenefits it can bestow, no

harm can befall him, if he alloweth ties of iron such as blackness,

coldness and solidity, which belong

to the ear~h, disappear and vanish, while the characteristics of

nothing whatever to intervene between him and God, for God

hath ordained every good thing, whether created in the heavens fire,

such as redness, glowing and heat, which ~elong to the ,

I; •

or in the earth, for such of His servants as truly believe in Him.

Kingdom, become apparent and visible. Ther~f?re Iron ~ath sac-

Eat ye, O people, of the good things which God hath allowed
its qualities and grades to the fire, acqumng the virtues of
you, and deprive not yourselves of His wondrous bounties.
that element.

Render thanks and praise unto Him, and be of them that are
truly thankful.

9

Likewise when the souls are released from the fetters of the
world the 'imperfections of mankind and the animalistic dark-
The pious practices of the monks and priests among the people
have . . . partaken a share from the outpouring of the
of His Holiness the Spirit (i.e. Christ) are remembered before
and have acquired Lordly perfections, they are the "ran-
God; but in this Day they must abandon solitude for (the society
ones" of the Sun of Truth. . . .

13

of men), and engage in that which may profit both themselves
and other men.

10 It is

incumbent upon thee, since thou hast attained the know~
edge of God and His love, to sacrifice ~hy spirit a~d all thy condi-
It is made incumbent on everyone of you to engage in some
one occupation, such as arts, trades, and the like. We have made
tions for the life of the world, beanng every difficulty for the
comfort of the souls, sinking to the depth of the sea of ordeals for
i!

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this-your occupation-identical with the worship of God, the
of the love of faithfulness. . . .

the sake

True One. Reflect O people, upon the mercy of God and upon
mystery of sacrifice i\$ that man should sacri~ce all his co~
His favors, then thank Him in mornings and evenings.
for the divine station of God. The station of God IS
mercy, kindness, forgiveness, sacrifice, favo~, grac~ and giving

The

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ditions

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As to the fact that man must entirely forget himself, by this is
spirits and lighting the fire of HIS love 111 the hearts

1-1

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meant that he should arise in the mystery of sacrifice and that is
arteries.

14 t:

the disappearance of mortal sentiments and extinction of blamable morals which
constitute the temporal gloom, and not that . . . Nearness to God is
possible through devotion to Him, I,."

the physical health should be changed into weakness and de-
entrance into the Kingdom, and service to ~uma~ity; it

1.1

bilit~

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12 is attained by unity with mankind and through loving-kindness

74 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

to ~ll; it is dependent upon investigation of truth, acquisition of praiseworthy virtues, service in the cause of Universal Peace, and DETACHMENT AND SACRIFICE

fashion amidst (God's) servants that by their actions they may lead all unto the Lord of Glory. I swear by the Sun of the Ir

personal sanctification. In a word, nearness to God necessitates

f

Horizon of Holiness that the friends of God never have regarded !' sacrifice of self, severance and the giving up of all to Him. Nearness is likeness.

15 nor will regard the earth or its transitory riches. 18 ,,:t:

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o Son of Being! Thy heart is My home; sanctify ~t for My ~ne of the requirements of faithfulness is that thou mayest descent.

Thy spirit is My place of revelation; cleanse It for My }! . sacrifice thyself .and, !n the divine path, close thine eye to every manifestation. 19 I'

pleasure and strive With all thy soul that thou mayest disappear and be lost, like unto a drop, in the ocean of God's love.

Know thou that when the Son of Man yielded up His breath to ~od t~e whole creation wept with a great weeping. By sacrific- Be not content with the ease of a passing day, and deprive not thyself of everlasting rest. Barter not the garden of eternal. delight for the dust-heap of a mortal world. Up from thy person

ascend unto the glorious meads above, and from thy mortal cage I

ing Himself, however, a fresh capacity was infused into all cre- wing thy flight unto the paradise of the Placeless. 20

ated things. Its evidences, as witnessed in all the peoples of the Blind thine eyes, that thou mayest behold My beauty; stop earth, are now manifest before thee. The deepest wisdom which thine ears that thou mayest hearken unto the sweet melody of My

'l.~

the sages have uttered, the profoundest learning which any mind voice; empty thyself of all learning, that thou ~ayest partake of hatl~ unfolded, the arts which the ablest hands have produced, the influence exerted by the most potent of rulers, are but mani- My knowledge; and sanctify thyself from riches, that thou mayest obtain a lasting share from the ocean of My eternal i

I,

fe~tations of the quickening power released by His transcendent, wealth.

Blind thine eyes, that is, to all save My beauty; stop
His all-pervasive, and resplendent Spirit. 17 thine
ears to all save My word; empty thyself of all learning save
the knowledge of Me; that with a clear vision, a pure heart and
H

i

"!

VICTORY THROUGH DETACHMENT

an attentive ear thou

mayest enter the court of My holiness. 21

Therefore, to-day "victory" neither hath been nor will be Man must

become evanescent in God, must forget his own

opposition to anyone, nor strife with any person; but rather selfish

conditions that he may thus arise to the station of sacrifice.

what IS well-pleasing is that the cities of (men's) hearts, which It

should be to such a degree that if he sleep, it should not be for

are under the dominion of the hosts of selfishness and lust, should

pleasure, but to rest the body in order to do better, to speak

be subdued by the sword of the Word, of wisdom and of exhorta- better

to explain more beautifully, to serve the servants of God

tion. Everyone, then, who desireth "victory" must first subdue

the city of his Own heart with the sword of spiritual truth and

and to prove the truths. When he remains awake, he should seek

to be attentive, serve the Cause of God and sacrifice his own

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of the Word, and must protect it from remembering aught be- stations

for those of God. When he attains to this station, the consider God: afterwards

let him turn his regards towards the cities affirmations of the Holy Spirit

will surely reach him, and man with it. ~;

of (other's) hearts. This is what is intended by "victory": sedi- this

power can withstand all who inhabit the earth. 22 I

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tion hath never been nor is pleasing to God, and that which cer-

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tain ignorant persons formerly wrought was never approved. If

Verily, I say, the world is like the vapor in a desert, which the

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i,:

ye be slain for His good pleasure verily it is better for you than thirsty

dreameth to be water and serveth after it. With all his i

might, until when he cometh unto It, he findeth It to be mere

that ye should slay. Today the friends of God must appear in such

illusion

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76 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

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 un veiled to your eyes. You are destjned by Him, in this world and hereafter, to partake of their benefits, to share

CHAPTER TEN

in their joys, and to obtain a portion of their sustaining grace.

To each and everyone of them you will no doubt attain. 23

RECTITUDE AND PURITY

PRA YERS FOR DETACHMENT

o Lord, help me to be meek and lowly and strengthen me in

DEEDS MORE POWERFUL THAN WORDS

severing myself from all things and in holding to the hem of the garment of Thy Glory, so that my heart may be filled with Thy love and leave no space for the love of the world and the attachment to its qualities. . . . Verily, Thou art! merciful and, verily,

T HOU hast said aright, that verily, Abdu'l-Baha looketh to deeds and not to words. Even as it was said by Christ, "Ye

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"

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shall know them by their fruits." 1 II!

Thou art the Generous, the Helper. 24

. . . O God, my God! Look not upon my hopes and my

The companions of God are in this day, the lump that must r.

I

leaven the peoples of the world. They must show forth such I doings, nay rather look upon Thy Will that hath encompassed

I

trustworthiness such truthfulness, and perseverance, such deeds I

the heavens and the earth. 25 and

character ~hat all mankind may profit by their example.

He is the Compassionate, the All-Bountiful! ... Within

the very breath of such souls as are pure and sanctio God, my God! Thou seest

me, Thou knowest me; Thou art fied far-reaching potentialities are

hidden. So great are these

\'

my Haven and my Refuge. None have I sought nor any will I
potentialities that they exercise their influence upon all created
seek save Thee, no path have I trodden nor any will I tread but things.

2

the path of Thy love. In the darksome night of despair, mine
eye turneth expectant and full of hope to the morn of Thy o
army of God! Through the protection and help vouchboundless favor, and at the
hour of dawn my drooping soul is safed by the Blessed Beauty, ye must
conduct yourselves in such

refreshed and strengthened in remembrance of Thy beauty and a manner
that ye may stand out distinguished and brillian~ as
perfection. He whom the grace of Thy mercy aideth, though he the sun
among other souls. ,Should anyone of you enter ~ Cl~y,
be but a drop, shall become the boundless ocean, and the merest he
should become a center of attraction by reason of hiS SIII- I

atom which the outpouring of Thy loving-kindness assisteth, cerity,
his faithfulness and love, his honesty and fidelity, his
truthfulness :md loving-kindness towards all the people of the
I
shall shine even as the radiant star.

Shelter under Thy protection, 0 Thou Spirit of Purity, Thou world, so
that the people of that city cry out and. say: "~his 1

I

Who art the All-Bountiful Provider, this enthralled, enkindled man is
unquestionably a ~ah;l'i, for his m~nne:s? hiS behaVIOr, " I

his conduct, his morals, hiS nature, and dispOSition reflect the ~ I
servant of Thine. Aid him in this world of being to remain steadfast and firm
in Thy love and grant that this broken-winged attributes of the
Baha'is. 3

bird may attain a refuge and shelter in Thy Divine Nest, that
Beware, 0 people of Baha, lest ye walk in the ways of them "

abideth upon the Celestial Tree. 26 whose
words differ from their deeds. Strive that ye may be ~.

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78

THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

RECTITUDE AND PURITY

79

enabled to manifest to the peoples of the earth the signs of God,
If the whole earth were to be converted into silver and gold,
and to mirror forth His commandments. Let your acts be a no
man who can be said to have truly ascended into the heaven
guide unto all mankind, for the professions of most men, be of
faith and certitude would deign to regard it, much less to

they high or low, differ from their conduct. It is through your seize and keep it. . . . They who dwell within the tabernacle of deeds that ye can distinguish yourselves from others. A good God, and are established upon the seats of everlasting glory, will character is, verily, the best mantle from God. With it He refuse though they be dying of hunger to stretch their hands, and adorneth the temple of His loved ones. By My life! The light seize unlawfully the property of their neighbor, however vile and of a good character surpasseth the light of the sun and the worthless he may be. 8

radiance thereof.

One righteous act is endowed with a potency that can so ele-

JUSTICE AND EQUITY

vate the dust as to pass beyond the heaven of heavens. It can tear every bond asunder, and hath the power to restore the force Turn treachery to trust, slander to brotherly counsel, oppresthat hath spent itself and vanished Be pure, O people of sion to justice, heedlessness to the remembrance of God. 9

God, be pure; be righteous, be righteous. 4

Be fair to yourselves and to others that the evidences of Justice may be revealed through your deeds among our faithful servants.

HONESTY

Equity is the most fundamental

among human virtues. The

evaluation of all things must needs depend upon it Ob-

Truthfulness is the foundation of all human virtues. Without serve

equity in your judgment, ye men of understanding heart!

truthfulness progress and success, in all the worlds of God, are He

that is unjust in his judgment is destitute of the characterimpossible for any

soul. When this holy attribute is established in istics that

distinguish man's station. 10

man, all the divine qualities will also be acquired. 5

The light of men is Justice, quench it not with the contrary

You must live and act with the utmost truthfulness, righteous- winds

of oppression and tyranny. The purpose of justice is the

ness, chastity, uprightness, purity, sanctity, justice and equity.

appearance of unity among men. 11

But if-I seek refuge in God-anyone betray the least of trusts

Know thou, of a truth, these great oppressions that have befallor neglect and be

remiss in the performance of duties which are len the world, are

preparing it for the advent of the Most Great

intrusted to him, or by oppression takes one penny of extortion

Justice. . . . 12

from the subjects, or seeks after his own personal, selfish aims and

ends in the attainment of his own interests, he shall undoubtedly

The sun of Justice hath risen above the horizon of Baha'u'llah.

remain deprived of the outpourings of His Highness the Al- For

in His Tablets the fo'undations of such a justice have been

mighty! Beware! Beware! lest ye fall short in that which ye are
laid as no mind hath from the beginning of creation conceived.
commanded in this Tablet! 6

13

Let truthfulness and courtesy be your adorning. Suffer not

PURITY

yourselves to be deprived of the robe of forbearance and justice,
Disencumber yourselves of all attachment to this world and
that the sweet savors of holiness may be wafted from your hearts the
vanities thereof. Beware that ye approach them not, inasupon all created
things. 7 much as they prompt
you to walk after your own lusts and

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80 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

RECTITUDE AND PURITY

81

cove.tous desires, and hinder you from entering the straight and
Purity and chastity have been and still are, the most great
ornaglorious Path . . . They that follow their lusts and corrupt in-
ments for the handmaidens of God. . . The brightness of the
clinations have erred and dissipated their efforts. They indeed
light of chastity sheddeth its illumination upon the worlds of the
are of the lost. 14

spirit.

19

o Friends! Prefer not your will to Mine, never desire that

The drinking of wine is . . . the cause of chronic diseases,
which I have not desired for you, and approach Me not with life-
weakeneth the nerves, and consumeth the mind. 20

less hearts defiled with worldly desires and cravings. 15

Beware lest ye barter the River that is life indeed for that
Blessed thou art and more blessed thou shalt be if thy feet be
which the pure-hearted detest. Become yc intoxicated with the
firm, thy heart tranquil through the fragrance of His Holy
wine of the love of God, and not with that which deadeneth your
Spirit and thy secret and hidden thoughts pure before the Lord
minds, O ye that adore Him! 21

of Hosts.

16

The civilization so often vaunted by the learned exponents of
arts and sciences, will, if allowed to overleap the bounds of moderation, bring
great evil upon men. . . . If carried to excess,
civilization will prove as prolific a source of evil as it had been of
goodness when kept within the restraints of moderation
He hath chosen out of the whole world the hearts of His servants,

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and made them each a seat for the revelation of His glory.

Wherefore sanctify them from every defilement, that the things

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for which they were created may be eng raven upon them. 17

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o Quintessence of Passion! Put away all covetousness and seek contentment; for the covetous hath ever been deprived, and the contented hath ever been loved and praised. 18

.."

He is not to be numbered with the people of Baha who followeth his mundane desires, or fixeth his heart on the things of the earth. He is my true follower who, if he come to a valley of pure gold, will pass straight through it aloof as a cloud, and will neither turn back nor pause. Such a man is assuredly of Me. . . . And if he met the fairest and most comely of women, he would not feel his heart seduced by the least shadow of desire for her beauty. Such an one indeed is the creation of spotless chastity.

They that have tarnished the fair name of the Cause of God by following the things of the flesh-these are in palpable error!

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OBEDIENCE AND HUMILITY 83

It behooveth everyone who reacheth this most sublime station, this summit of transcendent glory, to observe every ordinance of Him Who is the Desire of the world. These twin duties are inseparable. Neither is acceptable without the other. Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the Source of Divine inspiration.

CHAPTER ELEVEN
They whom God hath endued with insight will readily recognize that the precepts

OBEDIENCE AND HUMILITY I
laid down by God constitute the highest means for the maintenance of order in the world and the security of its peoples We, verily, have commanded you to "

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refuse the dictates of your evil passions and corrupt desires, and

KNOW ye that the emblem of liberty, and its symbol is not to transgress the bounds which the pen of the Most High the almighty. That which becometh man is submission unto hath fixed, for these are the breath of life unto all created such restraints will protect him from his own ignorance, and things .

... guard him against the harm of the mischief-maker. Liberty O ye peoples of the world! Know assuredly that My commandments are the lamps of My loving providence among My

on the dignity of his station. It debaseth him to the level of servants, and the feys of My mercy for My creatures. Thus extreme depravity and wickedness hath it

been sent down from the heaven of the Will of your Regard men as a flock of sheep that need a shepherd for their Lord, the Lord of Revelation. Were any man to taste the protection. . . . sweetness

of the words which the lips of the All-Merciful have . The liberty that profiteth you is to be found nowhere except willed to utter, he would, though the treasures of the earth be i, I

in complete servitude unto God, the Eternal Truth. Whoso in his possession, renounce them one and all, that he might vindicate the truth of even one sweetness will refuse to barter it for all the cate the truth of even one of His commandments, shining above dominion of earth and heaven. 1 the

dayspring of His bountiful care and loving-kindness. . . . Think not that We have revealed unto you a mere code of The essence of religion is to testify unto that which the Lord laws. Nay, rather, We have unsealed the choice wine with the hath revealed, and follow that which He hath ordained in His .fingers of might and power. To this beareth witness that which I, I, ;, J

mighty Book. 2 the Pen of Revelation hath revealed. Meditate upon this, O men I.

Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not mine but of insight! 4 His that sent me. '

OBEDIENCE THROUGH FEAR AND THROUGH LOVE

If any man shall do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." 3

Schools must first train the children in the principles of religion so that the Promise- and the Threat, recorded in the Books . The first duty prescribed by God for His servants is the recognition of God, may prevent them from the things forbidden and adorn Illusion of Him Who IS the Day Spring of His Revelation and

them with the mantle of the commandments. But this
the Fountain of His laws, Who representeth the Godhead in both in such a
measure that it may not injure the children by resulting
the Kingdom of His Cause and the world of creation. in
ignorant fanaticism and bigotry. 5

84 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING
OBEDIENCE AND HUMILITY

The people of wealth and men of honor and power must have They who
are the beloved of God, in whatever place they
the best possible regard for the respect of Religion. Religion is a gather
and whomsoever they may meet, must evince, in their
majesty and a strong fortress for the protection and tran- attitude
towards God, and in the manner of their celebration of
quintessence of the people of the world. For the fear of God com- His
praise and glory, such humility and submissiveness that every
man desires, people to do that which is just and forbids them that atom of
the dust beneath their feet may attest the depth of their
which is evil. If the lamp of religion remain concealed agitation devotion.
. . . They should conduct themselves in such manner
and anarchy will prevail, and the orb of Justice and Equity and that the
earth upon which they tread may never be allowed to
the sun of Peace and Tranquillity will be withheld from giving address
them such words as these: "I am to be preferred above
light. Every man of discernment testifies to that which is you. For
witness, how patient I am in bearing the burden which
(here) mentioned. 6 the

husbandman layeth upon me. I am the instrument that continually imparteth unto
all beings the blessings with which He
O Son of Man! Neglect not My commandments if thou Who is the
Source of all grace hath entrusted me. Notwithstanding My beauty, and forget
not My counsels if thou wouldst in the honor conferred upon me, the
unnumbered evidences of
attain My good pleasure. ' 7

my wealth—a wealth that supplieth the needs of all creation—
behold the measure of my humility, witness with what absolute
HUMILITY

submissiveness I allow myself to be trodden beneath the feet of
Verily, through meekness, man is elevated to the heaven of men. . . .
power; and again pride degrades him to the lowest station of Show
forbearance and love to one another. Should anyone
humiliation and abasement. 8 among you
be incapable of grasping a certain truth, or be striv-
, We are all poor at His door, weak before His power, lowly at ing to
comprehend it, show forth, when conversing with him, a
HIS threshold, and we possess the power of neither good nor spirit of
extreme kindness and good-will. Help him to see and

harm, He is indeed the Con firmer, the Strengtheners, the recognize
the truth, without esteeming yourself to be, in the
Benevolent! 9 least,
superior to him, or to be possessed of greater endowments.
The whole duty of man in this day is to attain that share of the
Verily I supplicate God to confirm thee in that which He flood of
grace which God poureth forth for him. Let none, theredesireth, to protect thee
from conceit and self-exaltation and fore, consider the largeness or
smallness of the receptacle. The
from selfish concerns, to make thee devoted unto Him and portion
of some might lie in the palm of a man's hand, the porresigned unto Him.

• 10' tion of others might fill a cup,
and of others even a gallon-
If thou art seeking everl;sting glory, choose humility in the measure. .
.. !
path of the True One. 11 ,

Beseech ye the one trife God to grant that ye may taste the
savor of such deeds as are performed in His path, and partake of
o Son of Man! Transgress not thy limits, nor claim that the
sweetness of such humility and submissiveness as are shown
which beseemeth thee not. Prostrate ~hysself before the Coun- for His
sake. ' 14

tenance of thy God, the Lord of might and power. 12
.o Son .o~ Man! Hu~ble thyself before Me that I may gra- If a
person humbles himself for the sake of God before the
clo~sly VISIt thee. ArISe for the triumph of .My cause, that friends
of God, this is humbleness shown to the True One HimwhIle yet on earth thou
mayest obtain the victory. 13 self; for this is done by the one
as consideration of the other's

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5"\$" HZ n :r rn t. NN ••

OBEDIENCE AND HUMILITY 87.
86 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

faith in God. Hence to be humble for the sake of God befor~
o Son of Being! How couldst thou forget thine own faults
another means to be humble before God Himself. In this case
and busy thyself with the faults of others? Whoso doeth ihis is
if the other does not behave in like manner, or if he shows forth
accursed of Me. 19

haughtiness, the discerning man will attain to the loftiness of his
own action and to the reward thereof; while the detriment in the
o Son of Dust! 'Verily I say unto thee: Of all meA the most
negligent is he that disputeth idly and seeketh to advance himself
action of the other will return to the latter himself. Likewise, if
over his brother. 20,
anyone acts with haughtiness, that haughtiness will be directed ,to

the True One.

15

He (the seeker) must never seek to exalt himself above any one, must wash away from the tablet of his heart every trace of Beware that ye swell not with pride before God and disdain-pride and vainglory, must cling unto patience and 'resignation, fully reject His loved ones. Defer ye humbly to the faithful, observe silence, and refrain from idle talk. For the tongue is a they that have believed in God and in His signs, whose hearts smoldering fire, and ,excess of speech'a deaaly poison. Material witness to His unity, whose tongues proclaim His oneness, and fire consumeth the body, whereas the fire of the tongue de-, who speak not except by His leave. Thus do we exhort you with voureth both heart and soul. The force of the former lasteth justice, an~ warn you with truth" lest perchance ye may be but for a time whilst the effects of the latter endure a century.

21 .

awakened.

16

The fear of God hath ever been the pr~me factor in the educa';
If ye meet the abased or down-trodden, turn not away dis-
tion of His creatures. Well is it with them that have attained
.! :1

dainfully from them, for the King of Glory ever watcheth over
thereunto. . . . Verily I say: The fear of God hath ever been'
them and surroundeth them with 'such tenderness as none can
a sure 'defence and a safe stronghold for all the peoples of the
fathom except them that have suffered their wishes and desires
world. It is the chief cause of the protection of mankind, and
to be merged in the will of your Lord, the Gracious, the All-
the supreme instrument for its preservation. 22

Wise. O yerich ones of the earth! Flee not from the face of the
poor that lieth in the dust, nay rather befriend him and suffer
PRAYERS FOR HUMILITY AND OBEDIENCE
him to recount the tale of the woes with which God's inscrutable
decree hath caused him to be afflicted. By the righteousness of God!
~hilst ye consort with him, the Concourse on high will be look-
I beseech Thee, O Thou who art the Lord of all names, by' Thy
mg upon you, will be interceding for you, will be extolling your
name through which Thou hast subdued all created things, to
,names and glorifying your action. Blessed 'are the learned that
graciously aid Thy loved ones . . . to fix their gaze at all times
pride not themselves on their attainments; and well is it with the
upon Thy'pleasure, and tofyield Thee thanks for the evlderices of
righteous that mock not the sinful, but rather conceal their mis-
Thine irrevocable decree. For Thou art verily praiseworthy in all
deeds, so that their own shortcomings may remain unveiled to
that Thou hast done in the past, or wilt do in the future, and art

men's eyes.

17

to be obeyed in whatsoever Thou hast ~ished or wilt wish, and to' be loved in all that Thbu hast desired or wilt desire. Thou lookest o Son of Spirit! Vaunt not thyself over the poor, for I lead

upon them that are dear to Thee with the eyes of Thy lovinghim on his way and behold thee in thy evil plight and confound

kindness, and sendestdown for them only that which will profit thee for evermore.

18

them through Thy grace and Thy gifts.

23

88

THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

If it be Thy pleasure, make me to grow as a tender herb in the m~adows of Thy grace, that the gentle winds of Thy will may stlr me. up and bend me into conformity with Thy pleasure, in s~ch WIsE that my movement and my stillness may be wholly dIrected by Thee.

24-

CHAPTER TWELVE

Thine is the command at all times, O Thou who art the Lord of all names and mine is resignation and willing submission to

TESTS AND AFFLICTIONS

Thy will, O Creator of the heavens!

25

THOU hast questioned concerning ordeals and dii6culties and catastrophes: "Are these from God or the result of man's evil deeds?"

Know thou that ordeals are of two kinds: One kind is to test the soul, and the other is punishmerit for actions. That which is for testing is educational and developmental and that which is the punishment of deeds is severe retribution.

The father and the teacher sometimes humor the children and sometimes discipline them. This discipline is for educational purposes and is indeed to give them true happiness; it is absolute kindness and true providence. Although in appearance it is wrath, yet in reality it is kindness. Although outwardly it is an ordeal, yet inwardly it is purifying water.

Verily, in both cases we must supplicate and implore and commune to the Divine threshold in order to be patient iri ordeals. 1

Tests are benefits from God, for which we should thank Him.

Grief and sorrow do not come to us by chance, they are sent to us by the Divine. mercy for our own perfecting.

While 'a man is happy he may forget his God; but when grief comes and sorrows overwhelm him, then will he remember his Father Who is in Heaven, and Who is able to deliver him from his humiliations.

Men who suffer not, attain rio perfection. The plant' most pruned by the gardeners is that one which, when the summer comes, will have the most beautiful blossoms and the mOst abundant fruit.

The laborer cuts up the earth with his plow, and from that earth comes the rich and plentiful harvest. The more a man is

90 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING
TESTS AND APPLICATIONS

91

chastened, the greater is the harvest of spiritual virtues mown man
entirely and prevent him from receiving a portion from
forth by him. A soldier is no good general until he has been in the
eternal bounty.

the front of the fiercest battle and has received the deepest
wounds.

of Man! If adversity befall thee not in My path, how
canst thou walk in the ways of them that are content with My
Does the soul progress more through sorrow or through joy pleasure? If
trials afflict thee not in thy longing to meet Me, how
in this world?

wilt thou attain the light in thy love for My beauty? . ' 5

The mind and spirit of man advance when he is tried by suffering. . . . Just as
the plow furrows the earth deeply, puri- o Son of Man! My calamity
is My providence, outwardly it is

rying it of weeds and thistles, so suffering and tribulation free fire and
vengeance, but inwardly it is light and mercy. flasten

man from the petty affairs of this worldly life until he arrives at thereunto
that thou mayest become an eternal light and an ima state of complete
detachment. His attitude in this world will mortal spirit. This is My
command unto thee, do thou observe

be that of divine happiness. Man is, so to speak, unripe; the heat it.

6

of the fire of suffering will mature him. Look back to the times
past and you will find that the greatest men have suffered

TESTS DISTINGUISH THE SINCERE

most. . . .

Through suffering (one) will attain to an eternal happiness As to
trillis (tests in the path of God), verily they are neceswhich nothing can take
from him. The Apostles of Christ suf- sary. Hast thou not heard and
read how there appeared trials

ferred: they attained eternal happiness. . . . from God

in the days of Jesus, and thereafter, and how the whirl-

To attain eternal happiness one must suffer. He who has wind of

tests became severe? Even the glorious Peter was not
,reached the state of self-sacrifice has true joy. Temporal joy will rescued
from the flame of trials, and wavered. Then he repented
vanish.

mourned the mourning of a bereaved one. . . . Is it then
possible to be saved from the trials of God? No, verily. There

Thou hast written concerning the tests that have come upon is a great

wisdom therein of which no one is aware save the wise
 thee. To the sincere ones, tests are as a gift from God, the Ex- and
 knowing.
 altered, for a heroic person hasteneth, with the utmost joy and Were
 it not for tests, genuine gold could not be distinguished
 gladness, to the tests of a violent battlefield, but the coward is from
 the counterfeit. Were it not for tests, the courageous could
 afraid and trembles and utters moaning and lamentation. Like- not be
 known 'from the coward. Were it not for tests, the people
 wise, an expert student prepares and memorizes his lessons and of
 faithfulness could not be known from the people of selfishness.
 exercises with the utmost effort, and in the day of examination Were it
 not for' tests, the intellects and faculties of the scholars
 he appears with infinite joy before the master. Likewise, the pure in the
 great colleges would not be developed. Were it not for
 gold shines radiantly in the fire of test. Consequently, it is made tests,
 the sparkling gems could not be known from worthless
 clear that for holy souls, trials are as the gift of God, the
 pebbles. Were it not for tests, the fisherman could not be dis-
 Exalted; but for weak souls they are an unexpected calamity.
 distinguished from Annas and Caiaphas, who had great' worldly
 This test is just as thou hast written; it removes the rust of
 dignity.

egotism from the mirror of the heart until the Sun of Truth
 Were. it not for tests the face of Mary Magdalene would not
 may shine therein. For no veil is greater than egotism and no glisten
 with the light of firmness and certainty unto all the .
 matter how thin that covering may be, yet it will finally veil
 'horizons. These are some of the mysteries of tests which We have

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92 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING
 TESTS AND AFFLICTIONS 93

un~olded to t~ee that thou mayest become cognizant of the mys- As to
 the subject of babes and infants and weak ones who are
 tenes of. God 10 every cycle. Verily I pray God to -illumine the
 faces as pure gold in the fire of tests., ' 7
 afflicted by the hands of oppressors: this contains great wisdom
 and this subject is of paramount importance. In bri~£, for those.
 Anybody can be happy in the state of cOIIIfort, ease, health, souls there
 is a recompense in another world and many details
 ~uccess, pleasure and joy; but if one can be happy and contented are
 connected with this matter. For those S9uls that suffering is
 10 t~~ ttme of trouble, hardship and disease, ~t is the proof of the
 greatest mercy of God. Verily that mercy of the Lord is far

nobility. - 8 better
and preferable to all the comfort of this world and the
The souls who bear the tests of God become the manifestations growth and
development of this place of mortality. 13

of great bounties; for the divine trials cause some souls to become
entirely lifeless, while they cause the holy souls to ascend to the

DIVINE ASSISTANCE

highest degree of love and firmness. They cause progress and they Be
not grieved if affairs become difficult and troubles wax
also cause retrogression. 9

intense on all sides! Verily, thy Lord. changeth hardship into
But for tribulations, how could the assured be distinguished facility,
troubles into ease and afflictions into greatest comfort from the doubters among Thy
servants? 10. posture.

14

How many the leaves which the tempests of trials have caused If thy
daily living become difficult, soon (God) thy Lord will
to fall, and how many, too, are those which, clinging tenaciously bestow
upon thee that which will satisfy thee. Be patient in the
to the tree of Thy Cause, have remained unshaken by the tests time of
affliction and trial, endure every difficulty and hardship
that have assailed them, O Thou Who art our Lord the Most with a
dilated heart, attracted spirit and eloquent tongue in re-
Merciful! 11

membrane of the Merciful. Verily this is the life of satisfaction,
the spiritual existence, heavenly repose, divine benediction and the
FRUITS OF TESTS AND AFFLICTIONS celestial table! Soon
thy Lord will extenuate thy straitened cir-

Do ye not look upon the beginning of affairs; attach your cumstances
even in this world. 15

hearts to the ends and results. The present period is like unto the Be
patient under all conditions, and place your whole trust and
sowing time. Undoubtedly it is impregnated with perils and
confidence in God. 16

difficulties, but in the future many a harvest shall be gathered,
and benefits and results will become apparent. When one con- Be
generous in prosperity and thankful in adversity. 17

siders the issue and the end, inexhaustible joy and happiness will
Blessed are they who consider all in the world as non-existent
dawn. and

nothing before the mention of the King of Pre-existence;
Everything of importance in this world demands the close and who so
adhere unto the Firm Handle of God that neither
attention of its seeker. The one in pursuit of anything must un- doubts
dergo difficulties and hardships until the object in view is attained or
deprive them! Blessed are the steadfast; blessed are the

and, the great Success is obtained. This is the case of things per- firm!

18

tatntng to the world. How much higher is that which ~oncerns the Supreme Concourse! That Cause involves every favor, glory If anyone revile you, or trouble touch you, in the path of God, and eternal bliss in the world of God. 12 be

patient, and. put your trust in Him Who heareth, Who seeth. 19

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94 THE' DIVINE ART OF LIVING TESTS AND AFFLICTIONS

95

• Armed with the power of Thy name nothing can ever hurt Verily, Thou art the Protector, the Guardian, the Preserver, ?te and .with Thy love in my heart all the world's afflictions can the Sufficer, and verily Thou art the Merciflll of the MOst In no wise alarm me. 20 ~~~!

~

. W~os<;>ever, O my Lord, is impatient in the tribulations befall- Ing him In Thy path, hath not drunk of the cup of Thy love nor How BAHA'ULLAH AND 'ABDU'L-BAHA MET AFFLICTIONS

. !

tasted of the sweetness of Thy remembrance. 21 Though my bODy be 'pained by the trials that befall me from Thee, though Aware as I am, O my God, that Thou wilt send down upon it b~ afflicted by the revelations of Thy Decree, yet my soul Thy servants only what is good for them, I nevertheless beseech Beauty, rejoiceth at having partaken of the wa.ters of Thy Thee, ~y T~y name which overshadoweth all things, to raise up, and at having attained the shores of the ocean of Thine eternity. for their assistance and as a sign of Thy grace and as an evidence Doth it become a lover to flee from his belov~d, or. to of Thy .power, those who will keep them safe from all their desert the object of his heart's desire?' Nay; we all'~lieve in Thee, and adversarxes. 25

eagerly hope to enter Thy presence: 25 Potent art Thou to do .Thy pleasure. Thou art, verily, the Ye have expressed words of solicitude and anllciety over the troubles Supr~IJ?e Ruler, the Almighty, the Help in Peril, the Self- and persecutions which have befallen this imprisoned SubsistIng. ' 22

one. Do not be, at all sad, be ye not affected .•. Persecutions I fe~r no tri~ulation in His path, nor a~y affliction in My love and adversities are merciful gifts. • ~ • Through the appearan~

i

for Hill~. Verxly God hath made adverSity as a morning dew of tests,
my heart IS consoled, and through the experiencing of
dire afflictions my soul is calmed. 26,

...

upon HIS green pasture, and a wick for His lamp which lighteth
earth and heaven. 23

o th~u friend! Be not,sorrowful because of my imprisonment
and lament not over my difficulties; nay, rather, ask Godto in-

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A PRA YER FOR PROTECTION AND PRESER VA TION IN TESTS crellse my
hardship in Hispath,,for therein lies a wisdom which
AND AFFLICTIONS none are able to comprehend
save the near angels. . . ' 27

.1

~ my Lord! .~hou knowest that the people are encircled with Thou hast
manifested joy at the freedom of 'Abdu'l-Baha.

paIn and cala~ltles and are environed with hardships and trou- This
happiness came from thy great love. There is no doubt that

bles: E~ery: trxal doth attack man and every dire adversity doth the
friends have become joyful on account of the liberation ~f

assail him hke unto the assault of a serpent. There is no shelter
'Abdu'l-Baha. But I wasthankful for this prison in the path of

and asyl~m for him except under the wing of Thy protection, God, and
the lack of liberty was very pleasing to me, for those

preservatIOon, guard and custody. days were
passed in the path of the love of God with the utmost

o Thou the Merciful One! 0 my Lord! Make Thy protection difficulty
and trials, bearing fruits and results. Unless one accept

my armory, Thy preservation my shield, humbleness before the
suffering, undergo trials. and endure vicissitudes he will reap no .

door of Thy Oneness my guard, and Thy custody and defense reward
nor ~ill he attain success and prosperity. 28

my fortress and IJ?Y abode. Preserve me from the suggestions
o~ myself and deSire and guard me from every sickness, trial,

I

difficulty and ordeal.

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LEARNING TO KNOW AND LOVE GOD 97

love is the spirit of life, and the eternal bounty. If the lov~ of God did not exist, the hearts· of men would be dead, and dep,rived of the sensations of existence; if the love of God· did not exist, spiritual union would be lost; if the love of God did not exist, ".~

.. the light of unity would not illwminate huma~ty; if the love of ~

CHAPTER THIRTEEN God did not exist,

the East and West, like two lovers would not embrace each other; if the love of God did not exist; division and disunity would not be changed into fraternity; if the love of God LEARNING TO KNOW AND LOVE GOD

did not exist, indifference would not end in affection; if the love of God did not exist the stranger_ would not become the friend.

THE NECESSITY OF KNOWING AND LOVING GOD

The love of the human world has shone forth from the love of God, and has appeared by the bounty and grace of God.

uestion.-Those who are blessed with good actions and uni- Q versal benevolence, who have praiseworthy characteristics, who act with love and kindness towards all creatures, who care for

It is clear that the reali~y of mankind is diverse, that opinions are various and sentiments different; and this difference of opinions, of thoughts, of intelligence, of sentiments among the the poor, and who strive to est~blish unive~sal peace---:wha.t need human species, arises from essential necessity; for the differences

have they of the. Divine teachmgs? o~ whIch the~ ~hmk Indeed in the degrees of existence of cr~atures is ,one of the necessities of that they are independent? What IS the condItIOn of these existence, which unfolds itself in infinite forms. Therefore we people?

have need of a general power which may dominate the senti- Answer.-Know that such actIOns, such efforts, and such ments, the opinions, and the thoughts of all, thanks to which words are praiseworthy and approved, and ar~ the glory of

these divisions may no longer have effect, and all individuals may humanity. But these actions alone are ~ot SUFFI.CI~~t; they are a be brought under the influence of the unity of the world of body of the greatest lovelines.s, b~t wIthout SpIrIt. No? t,Pat

humanity. It is clear and evident that this greatest power in the which is the cause of everlastIng hfe, eternal honor, unIversal

human world is the love of God. It brings the different people enlightenment, real salvation and prosperity, is, first of all, the

under the shadow of the tent of affection; it gives to the antagoknowledge of God. It is known that the knowle~ge of God IS nistic

and hostile nations and families the greatest love and beyond all knowledge, and it is the greatest glory of the human union.

1

world. For in the existing knowledge of the reality of things there is material advantage, and through it outward civilization

There are four kinds of love. The first is the love that flows progresses; but the knowledge of God is the cause of spiritual

from God to man; it consists of the inexhaustible graces, the progress and attraction, and through it the perception of truth,

Divine effulgence and heavenly illumination. Through this love the exaltation of humanity, divine civilization, rightness of

the world of being receives life. Through this love man is endowed with physical existence, until, through the breath of the

Secondly comes the love of God, the light of which shines in Holy Spirit-this same love-he receives eternal life and becomes

the lamps of the hearts of those who know God; its brilliant rays the image of the Living God. This love is the origin of all the

illuminate the horizon and give to man the life of the Kingdom.

love in the world of creation.

In truth, the fruit of human existence is the love of God, for this

The second is the love that flows from man to God. This is the love of God towards the Self or Identity of

the world; the love of God towards the

98 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

LEARNING TO KNOW AND LOVE GOD

99

faith, attraction to the Divine, enkindlement, progress, entrance

These four kinds of love originate from God. These are rays

into the Kingdom of God, receiving the bounties of God illumina-

from

the Sun of Reality; these are the breathings of the Holy

Love,

tion with the lights of the Kingdom. This love is the origin of all Spirit; these are the signs of the Reality.

2

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philanthropy; this love causes the hearts of men to reflect the rays

Having created the world and all that liveth and moveth

of the Sun of Reality.

therein) He, through the direct operation of His unconstrained

The third is the love of God towards the Self or Identity of and

sovereign Will, chose to confer upon man the unique distinc-

tion of God. This is the transfiguration of His Beauty, the reflection of

and capacity to know Him and to love Him-a capacity

Himself the mirror of His creation. This is the Reality of that

must needs be regarded as the generating impulse and the

Love, the Ancient Love, the Eternal Love. Through one ray of

primary purpose underlying the whole of creation . . . Upon
this Love all other love exists. the
inmost reality of each and every created thing He hath shed
The fourth is the love of man for man. The love which exists the
light. of one of His names, and made it a recipient of one of
between the hearts of believers is prompted by the ideal of the His
attributes. Upon the reality of man, however, He hath
unity of spirits. This love is attained through the knowledge of
God, so that men see the Divine love reflected in the heart. Each
sees in the other the beauty of God reflected in the soul, and, finding this
point of similarity, they are attracted to one another in
focused the radiance of all of His names and attributes, and made
it a mirror of His own Self. Alone of all created things man hath
been singled out for so great a favor, so enduring a bounty.
Is it not astonishing that although man has been created for
3 I

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love. This love will make all men the waves of one sea. This love
will make them all the stars of one heaven and the fruits of one the
knowledge and love of God, for the virtues of the human
tree. This love will. bring the realization of true accord, the
world, for spirituality; heavenly illumination and life eternal,
foundation of real unity.

nevertheless he continues ignorant and negligent of all this? Con-
But the love which sometimes exists between friends is not sider
how he seeks knowledge of everything except knowledge of
(true) love, because it is subject to transmutation; this is merely God.
For instance, his utmost desire is to penetrate the mysteries
fascination. As the breeze blows, the slender trees yield. If the of
the lowest strata of the earth. Day by day he strives to know:
wind is in the east, the tree leans to the west, and if the wind is wha~
can be found ten meters below the surface, what he can
in the west, the tree leans to the east. This kind of love is origi-
discover within the stone, what he can learn by archaeological
nated by the accidental conditions of life. ' This is not love, it is
research in the dust. He put forth arduous labors to fathom ter-
merely acquaintanceship; it is subject to change.

restrial mysteries, but is not at all concerned about knowing the
Today you will see two souls apparently in dose friendship;
mysteries of the Kingdom, traversing the illimitable fields of the
tomorrow all this may be changed. Yesterday they were ready to
eternal world, becoming in:formed of the divine realities, discovdie for one
another, today they shun one another's society; This ering the secrets
of God, attaining the knowledge of God, witis not love; it is the yielding of
the hearts to the accidents of life. nensing the splendors of the Sun of
Truth and realizing the glories
When that which has caused this "love" to exist passes, the love of

~verlasting life. . . . How much he is attracted to the mys-passes also; this is not in reality love. . . . terles of matter and how

completely unaware he 'is of the

Love is only of the four kinds I have explained. (a) The love mysteries. of divi?ity. . . . It is as if a kind and loving father of God towards the identity of God. Christ has said God is love. . . . had

providEd a hbrary of wonderful books for his son in order (b) The love of God for His children (for His servants). (c) that

he might be infoQIled of ,the mysteries of creation 'at the The love of man for God and, (d) The love of man for man. . . . same

time surrounding him with every means of comf~rt and

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100 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

LEARNING TO KNOW AND LOVE GOD

101

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enjoyment; but the son amuses himself with pebbles and play- . . . face of

the mirror it can never represent the image of the sun nor thIngs, neglectful of all his father's gifts and provision. . . . reflect

its light and glory:: ' .

. ' . ?ay and night you must strive that you may attain to . . . And

since there can be no tie of direct intercourse to bind the.e ~I~mficanc~s of the .heavenly Kingdom, perceive the signs of the one

true God with His creation, and no resemblance whatever, Dlvlmty, acquIre certaInty of knowledge and realize that this can

exist between the transient and the Eternal, the contingent . world has a Creator, a Vivifier, a Provider, an Architect-know- and the

Absolute, He hath ordained that in every age and disi~~ ~his through proofs and evidences and not through suscepti- pensation a pure and stainless Soul

be mad~ manifest in. the kingblmes-nay, rather through decisive arguments and real vision; . . . doms of earth and heaven.... These Essences of

Detachmertt,

that is to say, visualizing it as. clearly as the outer eye beholds these

resplendent Realities are th~. ~annels of G~d',S,~p.~r.vasiy<;

the sun. . . . 4 grace.

led by the light of unfailing guidance, and invested with o th~u son of the Kingdom! If one possesses the love of God supreme

sovereignty, they are commissioned to use the inspiration ~ver?'thInng that he undertakes is useful, but if the undertaking of

their words, the effusions of their infallible 'grace' and the
IS Without the love of God, then it is hurtful and the cause of
sanctifying breeze of their Revelation for the cleansing of every
veiling oneself from the Lord of the Kingdom. But with the love longing
heart and receptive spirit from the dross and dust of
of God every bitterness is changed into sweetness and every gift earthly
cares and limitations. Then, and only then, will the Trust
becometh precious. For Instance, a musical and melodious voice of
God,' latent in the reality of man, emerge, as resplendent as
imparteth life to an attracted heart, but lureth toward lust those the
rising Orb of Divine Revelation, from behind the veil of
souls who are engulfed in passion and desire.

concealment, and implant the ensign of its revealed glory upon
.With the love of God all sciences are accepted and beloved, but the
summits of men's hearts. 6

without. It is fruitless; nay rather, the cause of insanity. Every
science is like unto a tree; If the fruit of it is the love of God The
knowledge of the Reality of Divinity is impossible and
that is a blessed tree. Otherwise it is dried wood and finally unattainable, but the knowledge of the Manifestations of God
food for fire. 5 is the

knowledge of God, for the bounties, splendors, and divine
attributes are apparent in them. Therefore if man attains to. the
LEARNING TO KNOW GOD knowledge of the

Manifestations of God, he will attain to the
knowledge of God; and if he be neglectful of the knowledge of
(The) energies with which the Day Star of Divine bounty and the Holy
Manifestations, he will be bereft of the knowledge of
source of heaven's universe hath endowed the reality of man God. It
is then ascertained and proved that the Holy Manifestation . . . latent Within Him
even as the flame is hidden within the Manifestations are the center of the
bounty, signs, and perfections of

candle and the rays of light are potentially present in the lamp. God.

Blessed are those who receive the light of the divine bounty
The radiance of these energies may be obscured by worldly desires
from the enlightened Dawning-points. .7

even as the light of the sun can be concealed beneath the
dust and dross which cover the mirror. Neither the candle nor He
hath called into being His creatures, that they know
the lamp can be lighted through their Own unaided efforts nor Him Who

is the Compassionate, the All-Merciful. . Unto the
can it ever be possible for the mirror to free itself from its dross. cities

of all nations He hath sent His Messengers, Whom He hath
It is clear and evident that until a fire is kindled the lamp will
commissioned to announce unto men tidings of the Paradise of
never be ignited, and unless the dross is blotted out from the His
good pleasure, and to draw them nigh unto the Haven of

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102 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING 103
LEARNING TO KNOW AND LOVE GOD

abiding security, the Seat of e~ernal holiness and transcendent

What outpouring flood can compare with, the stream .of His glory. 8

all-embracing grace, and what blessing can excel the, eVIDences In the past they that were the daysprings and mines of wisdom of so great and pervasive a mercy? There can. be no doubt wh~.t-, in no wise ignored its ultimate Cause or denied its Fountain and ever that if for one moment the tIde of .HIS mercy and grace Source. . . .

were to be withheld from the world, it would completely perish. Remarkable and far-reaching as the intellectual and industrial For this reason, from the beginning that hath no beginning the accomplishments of the leaders of thought have been in modern portals of Divine mercy have been flun~ op~n to ~he face of .,'. times, yet to every discerning observer it is clear and manifest all created things, and the clouds of Truth will contInue to ?te that they have derived the greatest part of their knowledge from end that hath no end to rain on the soil of human capaCIty, the.sages of the past.... These sages of 9ld in their turn acquired reality and personality their favors and.bounties~ Su~ hath been theIr knowledge from the Prophets of God, for these verily were God's method continued from everlastIng to everlastIng~ 15 the Manifestations of Divine Wisdom and the Revealers of

Thou art, in truth, He Whose mercy hath encompassed all the heavenly mysteries. 9

worlds, and whose grace hath embraced all that dwell on earth Immerse yourselves in the ocean of My words, thatye may and in heaven. Who is there that hath cried after Thee, and whose unravel its secrets, and discover all the pearls of wisdom that prayer hath remained unanswered? Where is he to be found lie hid in its depths. 10

who hath reached forth towards Thee, and whom Thou hast failed to approach? Who is he that Can claim to have fixed his The source of all learning is the knowledge of God, exalted be gaze upon Thee, and toward whom the eye of Thy loving-kind-

His Glory, and this cannot be attained save through the knowl-
ness hath not been directed? I bear witness that Thou hast turned
edge of His Divine Manifestation. II

toward Thy servants ere they had turned toward Thee, and hadst
remembered them ere they had remembered Thee. All grace is

Ponder God in your heart, reflect on His Manifestations, and

Thine, O Thou in Whose hand is the kingdom of Divine gifts

be not of them that are void of understanding. 12

and the source of every irrevocable decree. 16

Turn to God, supplicate humbly at His threshold, seeking

... The manifold bounties of the Lord of all beings have, at .

assistance and confirmation, that God may rend asunder the

all times through the Manifestations of His Divine Essence,

veils that obscure your vision. Then will your eyes be filled with

encompassed the earth and all that dwell therein. Not for a

illumination, face to face you will behold the reality of God and

moment hath His grace been withheld, nor have the showers of

your heart become completely purified from the dross of ignor-

His loving-kindness cease to rain upon mankind. 17

ance, reflecting the glories and bounties of the kingdom. 13

Consider to what extent the love of God makes itself manifest.

God's LOVE FOR US

Among the signs of His

love which appear in the world are the

dawning-points of His Manifestations. What an Infinite degree

of Son of Man! Veiled in My immemorial being and in the

love is reflected by the divine Manifestations toward mankind

ancient eternity of My essence, I knew My Love for Thee; there-

For the sake of guiding the people they have Willingly forfeited

for I created thee, have engraved on thee Mine image and

their lives to resuscitate human hearts. They have accepted the

revealed to thee My beauty. 14

cross. To enable human souls to attain the supreme degree of .

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104 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

LEARNING, TO KNOW AND LOVE GOD 10,5

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advancement, they have suffered during their limited years '1

Know verily nothing will benefit a person save the love of the

extreme ordeals and difficulties. . . .

Merciful One. Nothing illuminates a man's heart save the radi-

Observe how rarely human souls sacrifice their pleasure or ance

which shines forth from the Kingdom of God I Put away

comfort for others; how improbable that a man would offer his

every thought and doubtful mentioning and keep thy thug-
ts

eye or suffer himself to be dismembered for the benefit of an-

entirely on that which uplifts man to the heaven of the gift

other. Yet all the divine Manifestations suffered, offered their of
God. . . . 23

lives and blood, sacrificed their existence, comfort and all they
possessed for the sake of mankind. Therefore consider how much

WHAT THE LOVE OF GOD BRINGS TO US

they love. Were it not for their love for humanity, spiritual o
love would be mere nomenclature .. Were it not for their illumi-
Son of Man! I loved thy creation, hence I created thee. ,.1.. '

nation, human souls would not be radiant. How effective is their
Wherefore, do' thou' love Me that I may name thy name and fill
love! This is a sign of the love of God; a ray of the Sun of thy
soul with the spirit of life. 2:"1-

Reality. '18 o
Son of Man! Love Me that I may love thee. If thou lovest j>, •

;' ..

LEARNING TO LOVE GOD Me not, My love can_ in

no wise reach thee. Know this, ()

servant. 25

. To the heaven of Thy loving-kindness lift me up, O my Quickener, and unto the
Day Star of Thy guidance lead me, O Thou o Son of Being! My
love is my stronghold; he that entereth

my Attractor! 19

therein shall be safe and secure, and he that turneth away shall
surely stray and perish. 26

The essence of love is for man to turn his heart to the Bel~ved o
One, and sever himself from all else but God, and desire nought
Son of Utterance! Thou art My stronghold; enter therein
save that which is the desire of his Lord. . 20

that thou mayest abide in safety. My love is in thee, know it;
Help me to guard the pearls of Thy love which by Thy decree, that
thou mayest find Me nigh unto thee. 27

Thou hast enshrined within my heart. 21

o Befriended Stranger! The healer of all thy ills is thy re-
Let the flame of the love of God burn brightly within your
membrance of Me, forget it not. Make My love thy all-precious ;'
radiant hearts. Feed it with the oil of Divine guidance, and

protect it within the shelter of your constancy. Guard it within
. treasure and cherish. it even as thine own sight and life.

.
The day is approaching when the intervening clouds will have
the globe of trust and detachment from all else but God, so that
been completely dissipated, when the light of the words, "All
the evil whisperings of the ungodly may not extinguish its light.
honor belongeth unto God and unto them that love. Him" will
o My servants! My holy, My divinely ordained Revelation may

have appeared, as manifest as the sun, above the horizon of the
be likened unto an ocean in whose depths are concealed innumer-
Will of the Almighty. 29

able pearls of great price, of surpassing luster. 'It is the duty of
every seeker to bestir himself and strive to obtain the shores of

PRA YERS FOR ATTAINING THE KNOWLEDGE AND
this ocean, so that he may, in proportion to the eagerness of his
THE LOVE OF GOD

search and the efforts he hath exerted, partake of such benefits

as have been preordained in God's irrevocable and hidden o

Thou kind God! 'To me Thou art kinder than myself, and

Tablets. 22 Thy

love is more abundant and more ancient. Whenever I am

106 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

reminded of Thy bestowals, I am made happy and hopeful. If
I have been agitated, I obtain ease of heart and soul. If I am
disloyal, I become loyal. If I have been hopeless, I become hopeful. O Thou
Lord of the Kingdom! Cause Thou the rejoicing
of my heart; empower my weak spirit and strengthen my
exhausted nerves, illumine Thou mine eyes; suffer my ears to

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

become hearing, so that I may hearken to the music of the
Kingdom and attain to the joy and happiness everlasting. Verily,

LOVE AND UNITY

Thou art the Generous, the Giver, and the Kind! . 30

O Thou forgiving Lord! These servants are turning to Thy
Kingdom and seeking Thy grace and bounty. O God! Make T HE

prophets of God one and all, Christ Himself as well as
the Blessed Beauty (Baha'u'llah), have all appeared and raised
their hearts good and pure in order that they may become worthy the call

with the one purpose of transforming the world of man
of Thy love. Purify and sanctify the spirits that the light of into the
Kingdom of God. Their common aim was to turn the

the Sun of Reality may shine through them. Purify and sanctify earthly
into heavenly, darkness into light, things that are satanic

the eyes so that they may perceive Thy lights. Purify and sanctify into
things Divine. They strove to establish the reign of heaven on earth, so that
they may hear the call of Thy kingdom. Unity and love amongst the

children of men, to unfold to their

O Lord, Verily we are weak, but Thou art mighty. Verily we eyes the
fundamental unity of all mankind, to demolish the foundations of the
rich. We are seekers, but Thou art the foundations of differences in the

world, and to confer upon it the

One sought. O Lord! Have compassion upon us and forgive
imperishable blessings of eternal life.

us; bestow, upon us capacity and readiness in order that we may o thou
honored one! Ponder in thine heart the world of
b~ respon~Ive to Thy favors, attracted to Thy kingdom, en- being.
Association, harmony and union are the source of life,
kmdled wIth the fire of Thy love and resuscitated through the whilst
differences and division are the cause of ultimate destrucbreaths of Thy Holy
Spirit in this radiant century. Thou art tion. Shouldst thou reflect on
all created things, thou 'I'ilt observe
powerful; Thou art most generous. 3I that the

existence of every being dependeth upon the association
and combination of divers elements the disintegration of which
will terminate the. existence of that being .
. . . This mutual helpfulness is realized either directly or
through mediation, and if, for the twinkling of an eye, this confirmation and
assistanceloes not descend upon the living being,
it will become non-existent, for .all the existing things are linked
together and draw help from each other. Therefore the greatest
foundation of the world of existence is this cooperation and
mutuality.

Liken the world of existence to the temple of man. All the
limbs and organs of the human body assist one another; therefore
life continues. When, in this wonderful organism, there is a
disconnection, life is changed to death and the parts of the body

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108 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

109

LOVE AND UNITY

disintegrate. Likewise, among the parts of existence there is a
civilization in this mortal world, and the shedder of imperishable
wonderful con.necton and interchange of forces, which is the
glory upon every high.;aiming race and nation. .
cause of the lIfe of the world and the continuation of these
Whatsoever people is graciously favored therewIth by God, ItS
countless ,Phenomena. Wh~n one considers the living beings and name
shall surely be magnified and extolled by the ~!;lcourse
the grOWIng plants, he reahzes that the animals and man sustain from
on high, by, the company of angels, and thede~lzens of
lif~ by inhaling t?e emanations from the vegetable world, and the
Abha kingdom., And whatsoever pe~ple turneth ItS. heart

this . . . element IS called oxygen. The vegetable kingdom also away
from this Divine love-the revelatION of the Merciful draws life from the living
creatures in the substance called shall err grievously, shall
fall in despair, and be utterly destroyed.

~arbo~. In brie~, the beings of sensation draw life fromp. the grow- That
people shall be denied all refuge, shall become ev~n ag the
Ing .b~Ings and In turn the growing things receive life from the
vilest creatures of the eart;h, victims of degradation and sh~me.
senSIItIve creatures. Therefore this interchange of forces and
intercommunication is continued and uninterrupted.

o ye beloved of the Lord! Strive .to bec?methe x:n~nifestatIons
of the love of God, the lamps of DiVIne gUIDance shining amongst,
,From this illustration one can see the base of life is this mutual the
kind reds of the earth with the light of love and concord. ,2
aid' and helpfulness, and the cause of destruction and nonexistence would be
the interruption of this mutual assistance. LOVE AND

UNITY MUST BE ALL-EMBRACING

The more the world aspires to civilization the more this most
important matter of cooperation becomes manifest. Therefore
Should any one con~end that true and endu~ing unity c~n in ,
in t~e world. of humanity one sees this ma'tter of he'pfulness
nowise be realized in this world inasmuch. as Its people WIdely
attaIn to a hIgh degree of efficiency; so much so that the con-
differ in their manners and habits, their ta~tes,. their temperatInuance of
humanity entirely depends upon this interrelation. 1 'ment and
character, their thoughts and th~Ir VIEWS, to t~IS we
make reply that differences are of twO kInd~;. the one IS ~he
.Know ~hou of a cert~inty ~hat Love is the secret of God's holy cause
of destruction, as exemplified by the spmt of conten~IO.n
DISpensatION, the mamfestatION of the All-Merciful, the foun-
and strife which animates mutually conflicting and antagonistic
tain of spi.ritual outpourings. Love is heaven's kindly light, the
peoples and nations, whilst the oth~r is the sign of diversity, the
Holy Spint's eternal breath that vivifies the human soul. Love
symbol and the secret of perfectION, and the revealer of the
is the cause of God's revelation unto man, the vital bond inherent
bounties of the All-glorious.' . . .

according to Divine creation, in the realities of things. Love i~
. . . Consider, the flowers of the garden; though dlffennng In
the one means that insures true felicity both in this world and
kind, color, form and shape, yet, inasll }uch as they are: refres.hed
t~e next. L~ve is the lig?t that guideth in darkness, the living
by the waters of one spring, revived by t~e b~eat~ of, ?ne WInd,
hnk t~at u~llteth God wIth. man, that assureth the progress of
invigorated by the rays of one. sun, thIS dlventy. In~r~aseth
every IllumIned soul. Love IS the most great law that ruleth this
their charm and ad4eth unto theIr beauty. How ~npleasIng to

mighty and heavenly Cycle, the unique power that bindeth the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves, and blossoms, the together the divers elements of this material world, the supreme fruit, the branches, and the trees' of the garden were all of the magnetic. force that directs the movements of the spheres in same shape and color I Diversity of color, form and shape in the celestial realms. Love revealeth with unfailing and limitless richness and adorneth the garden, and heighteneth the effect to power the mysteries latent in the universe. Love is the spirit of 'thereof. In like manner, when divers shades of, thought, temperance hfe unto the adorned body of mankind, the establisher of true permanent and character, are brought together under the power

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110 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING
LOVE AND UNITY 111

and influence of one central agency, the beauty and glory of Some are ignorant; they must be trained and educated. One is human perfection will be revealed and made manifest. Nought sick; he must be healed. Another is as a child, we must wait until but the celestial potency of the Word of God, which ruleth and him to attain maturity. We must not detest him who is ailing, transcendeth the realities of all things, is capable of harmonizing neither shun him, scorn, nor curse him; but care for him. With the divergent thoughts, sentiments, ideas and convictions of the the utmost kindness and tenderness. An infant must not be children of men. 3 treated with disdain simply because it is an infant. Our responsibility is to train, educate and develop it. In order that it may advance In the estimation of God there is no distinction of color; all are one in the color and beauty of servitude to Him. Color is not important; the heart is all-important. It matters not what I charge you all that, each one of you concentrate all the thoughts the exterior may be if the heart is pure and white within. God thoughts of your heart on love and unity. When a thought of war does not behold differences of hue, and complexion; He looks of comes to oppose it by a stronger thought of peace. A thought of hatred must be destroyed by a more powerful thought of love. preferred in the presence of God; he who is devoted to the Thoughts of war bring destruction to all harmony, well-being, Kingdom is most beloved. . . . 4 resfulness and content. Thoughts of love are constructive of brotherhood, peace, friendship and happiness: . . . If you When the racial elements of the American nation unite in

desire with all yo~~ heart fnd~lp wlt.h every ~a~e
 actual fellowship and accord, the lights of the oneness of hu- on
 'earth, your thought, spmtual and pOSitive, wll spread, It
 manity will shine, the day of eternal glory and bliss will dawn, will
 become the desire of others, growing stronger and stronger,
 the spirit of God encompass and the Divine favors descend. until it
 reaches the minds of all men. 7

Under the leadership and training of God, the real shepherd, all When
 you love a member of your famil,>: or a .compatriot, let
 will be protected and preserved. He will lead them in green it be
 with a ray of the Infinite Love! Let It be In God and for
 pastures of happiness and sustenance and they will attain to the God!

8

real goal of existence. This is the blessing and benefit of unity;
 this is the outcome of love: 5

MAN'S LACK OF LOVE

'Abdu'l-Baha said:-I have just been told that there has been
 Every human creature is the servant of God. All have been
 a terrible accident in this country. A train has fallen into the
 created and reared by the power and favor of God; all have been
 river and at least twenty people have been killed.♦♦. I a?l filled
 blessed with the bounties ,of the same Sun of Divine truth; all
 with wonder and surpris~, to notice what interest and eXCItment
 have quaffed from the fountain of the infinite mercy of God;
 has been aroused throughout the whole country on account of
 and all in His estimation and love are equal as servants. He is
 the death of twenty people, while t~ey remain cold and indifferbeneficent and
 kind to all. Therefore no one should glorify himent to the fact that thousands
 of Italians, Turks and Arabs are
 self over another; no one should manifest pride or superiority
 killed in Tripoli!" ... Yet these unfortunate peopl~ are human
 toward another; no one should look upon another with scorn
 and contempt and no one should deprive or oppress a fellow beings,
 too.

Why is there so much interest and eager sympathy shown
 creature. All must be considered as submerged in the ocean of
 towards these twenty individuals, while for five thousand persons
 God's mercy. We must associate with all humanity with gentleness and
 kindness. We must love all with love of the heart. .. A reference to
 t~e Italo-Turkish war, of 1111.

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there is none? They are all men, they all belong to the family bounties and spiritual bestowals which have descended from God of mankind, but they are of other lands and races. It is no concern in this day for that purpose. This is an exigency of the times of the disinterested countries if these men are cut to pieces, and the Divine remedy has been provided. The spiritual teaching this wholesale slaughter does not affect them! How unjust, how wrongings of the religion of God can alone create this love, unity and accord in human hearts.

11

The people of these other lands have children and wives, mothers, daughters and little ones! In these countries today there is hardly

God's REMEDY

a house free from the sound of bitter weeping, scarcely can one find a home untouched by the cruel hand of war.

The

unity which is productive of unlimited resources is first a

Alas! we see on all sides how cruel, prejudiced and unjust is the unity of mankind which recognizes that all are sheltered beneath the same sun, and how slow he is to believe in God and follow His teaching the overshadowing glory of the All-Glorious; that all receive, serve and obey His

commandments.

. 9 ants of

one God; for all breathe the same atmosphere, live upon'

the same earth move beneath the same heavens, receive effulgence

Although the body-politic is one family, yet because of the distance from the same sun and are under the protection of one God. It is

lack of symmetry some members are comfortable, and some are in the most great unity, and its results are amazing of mankind in the utmost misery; some members are satisfied, and some are strangers to it but mankind has hitherto violated it, adhering to

hungry; some are clothed with the most costly garments, while

some are in need of food and shelter. Why? Because this family

sectarian; other limited unities such as racial, political or unity

of self interests; therefore no great results have been forthcoming that

reciprocity and symmetry needed. This household is wrong. Nevertheless it is certain, that the radiance and favor of God

is not well arranged Is it possible for a member of a family God, are

encompassing, in which have developed, perceptible have

to be subjected to the utmost misery and abject poverty, and for them to become

acute sciences and arts are widespread and capacity exists

the rest of the family to be comfortable? It is impossible, unless for the

proclamation and promulgation of the real and ultimate

the rest of the family be without feeling, having become spiritless unity of

mankind which will bring forth marvelous results. It

usually atrophied, inhospitable, unkind. 10 will

reconcile all religions, make warring nations loving, cause

-or

... The disease which afflicts the body-politic is lack of love hostile
 kings to become friendly and bring peace and happiness
 and absence of altruism. In the hearts of men no real love is to the
 human world. It will cement together the Orient and the
 found~ and the condition is such that unless their susceptibilities Occident
 remove forever the foundations of war and upraise'
 ar~ qUicke~ed. by some power so that unity, love and accord may the
 ensig~ of the Most Great Peace. These limited unities are
 develop withm them, there can be no healing, no agreement
 therefore signs of that great unity which will make-all the human
 among mankind. Love and unity are the needs of the body- family
 one by being pr6ductive of the attractions of conscience
 pol~tic toda,Y. Without these there can be no progress or pros- in
 mankind. - 12
 perItY obtamed. Therefore the friends of God must adhere to

"

The great mass of humanity does not exercise re~llove and fe,lthe power which
 will create this love and unity in the hearts lowship. The elect of
 humanity are those who hve together m
 of ~e sons. of men. Science cannot cure the illness of the body- love
 and unity. They are preferable before God because the
 polItIC. SCI~nce cannot create amity and fellowship in human Divine
 attributes are already manifest in them, The Supreme
 hearts. NeIther can patriotism or racial allegiance effect a Love
 and Unity is witnessed in the Divine Manifestatio~s.
 remedy. It must be accomplished solely through the Divine , Among
 them unity is indissoluble, changeless, eternal and ever-

" ~ '.,'f'"

114 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

LOVE AND UNITY

115

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 lasting. Each one is expressive and representative of all. If we of this
 age were to allow mankind to. inhale the fragrance of fel- .
 deny on~ of the Mani~estations of God we deny all. To inflict Ipwship
 and love, every understandmg heart would apprehe1.1d
 persecutIon upon one IS to persecute all. In all degrees of exist- the
 meaning of true liberty, and discover the secret of undiS-
 ence each one praises and sanctifies the others. Each of them turbed
 peace and absolute composure. 16

holds to the solidarity of mankind and promotes the unity of
 human hearts. Next to the Divine Manifestations come the be-

ApPLYING THE REMEDY

lievers whose characteristics are agreement, fellowship and
 love. 13 When a

man turns his face to God he finds sunshine everywhere. All men are his

brothers. Let not conventionality cause
 From the heaven of God's Will, and for the purpose of enlightening you to seem
 cold and unsympathetic, when you meet strange
 nobbling the world of being and of elevating the minds and souls people
 from other countries. Do not look at them as if you suspected
 of men, hath been sent down that which is the most effective
 them of being evil-doers, thieves and bores. You think It
 instrument for the education of the whole human race. The necessary
 to be very careful, not to expose yourselves to the risk
 highest essence and most perfect expression of whatsoever the of making
 acquaintance with such, possibly, undesirable people.
 peoples of old have either said or written hath, through this most
 I ask you not to think only of yourselves. Be kind to the
 potent Revelation, been sent down from the heaven of the Will
 strangers, whether they come from Turkey, Japan, Persia, Russia,
 of the All-Possessing, the Ever-Abiding God. Of old it hath been China or
 any other country in the world. Help to make them
 revealed: "Love of one's country is an element of the Faith of feel at
 home; find out where they are staying, ask if you may.
 God." The Tongue of Grandeur hath, however, in the day of render
 them any service; try to make their lives a little happier.
 His manifestation proclaimed: "It is not his to boast who loveth In
 this way, even if, sometimes, what you at first suspected
 his country, but it is his who loveth the world." Through the should be
 true, still go out of your way to be kind to them-think
 power released by these exalted words He hath lent a fresh im- kindness
 will help them to become better. . . .
 pulse, and set a new direction, to the birds of men's hearts and Let
 those who meet you know, without your proclaiming the
 hath obliterated every trace of restriction and limitation from fact,
 that you are indeed a Baha'i. ..

God's holy Book. . . .

14

Put into practice the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh that if kinness
 Though the world is encompassed with misery and distress, to all
 nations. Do not be content with showing friendship; m
 yet no man hath paused to reflect what the cause or source of that words
 alone; let your heart burn with loving-kindness for all
 who may cross your path. . 17

may be. . . . The evidences of discord and malice are apparent
 everywhere, though all were made for harmony and union. The

Pray to God that thou mayest become a lover of men
 Great Being saith: O well-beloved ones! The tabernacle of unity and
 well-wisher of humankind. 18

hath been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers. Ye are
 the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. . . . 15 Be in
 perfect unity. Never become angry with one another.

... Love the creatures for the sake of God and not for themselves. You
 If any man were to meditate on that which the Scriptures, selves. You
 will never become angry or impatient if you~ove
 se?t dow? from the heaven of God's holy Will have revealed, he them for
 the sake of God. Humanity is not pel;'fect.. There are
 Will readlly recognize that their purpose is that all men shall be
 imperfections in every human being and you will always b~coine
 regarded as one soul. . . . If the learned and worldly wise men- unhappy
 if you look toward the people themselves. But If yO\~

116 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

LOVE AND UNITY

117

look toward God you will love them and be kind to them for
 a language of utm~t kindness and good-will. If it be accepted,
 the world of God is the world of perfection and complete m;rcy.
 Ther~fore do not .look at the shortcomings of anybody; see with if it
 fulfill its purpose, your object is attained. If anyon~ sho~ld
 t~e sight of forgiveness. The imperfect eye beholds imperfec- refuse it
 leave him unto himself, and beseech God to gwde. hIm.
 Beware iest ye deal unkindly with him. A kindly tongue.I~ t~e
 tIOns. The eye that covers faults looks towards the Creator of
 lodestone of the hearts of men. It is the bread of the spIrl~, It
 souls. J:le create~ them, ~rains. and provides for them, endows clotheth
 the words with meaning, it is the fountain of the light
 them with capacity and hfe, sight and hearing. therefore they
 are the signs of His grandeur. ' 19 of wisdom
 and understanding. 24-

The great and fundamental teachings of BaM'u'llah are the Consort
 with the peoples o~ religions ~ith l' oy and fragrance;

::~

oneness of ~~d and unity of mankind. This is the bond of union . . .
 The followers of sincenty and faithfu ness must co~ort

!

among Baha IS. aU over the world. They become united them- with all
 the people of the world with joy and fragrance; for as~o-
 selves, then UnIte others. It is impossible to unite unless united. ciation
 is always conducive to union and harmony, and UOI?n
 and harmony are the cause of the order of the world and the hfe
 20 of the nations. Blessed are' they who hold fast to ~he ~ope of
 . I desire to make manifest among the friends in America a new
 compassion and kindness and are detached from anImosity and
 hght that they may become a new people, that a new foundation hatred!

. 25

may be est~bhsh.ed and complete harmony be realized. . . . You
 must ha,e mfinIte love for each other, each preferring the other When
 you meet those whose opinions differ from your own, do
 before himself. . . . You must love your friend better than not

turn your face from them. . . .
yourself; yes, be willing to sacrifice yourself. . . . I desire that Do
not allow difference of opinion, or diversity of thought to
you be ready to sacrifice everything for each other, even life
separate you from your fellow-men, or to be the cause of dispute,
Itself; then I will know that the cause of Baha'u'Uah has been hatred
and strife in your hearts. 26

established. . . . 21
. . . Blessed is he who is illumined with the light of courtesy; .

The advent of the prophets and the revelation of the Holy and is
adorned with the mantle of uprightness! He who IS en-

Books is intended to create love between souls and friendship dowed
with courtesy is endowed with a great station. 27.

between the inhabitants of the earth. Real love is impossible o Son
of Man! If thou lookest toward mercy, regard not that which
unless one turn his face towards God and be attracted to His which
benefits thee, and hold to that which will benefit the servant.

22 ants. If thou lookest
toward justice, choose thou for others what
Be most loving one to another. Burn away, wholly for the thou
choosest for thyself. 28

'j
sake of the Well-Beloved, the veil of self with the flame of the This
is the Day when the ocean of God's mercy hath been!

undying Fire, and with faces, joyous and beaming with light
manifested unto men, the Day in which the Day Star of~
associate with your neighbor. 23

loving-kindness hath shed its radiance upon them, the Day~

Consort with all men, O people of Baha, in a spirit of friendli- which the
clouds of HIS bountiful favor have overshadowed the

ness and fellowship. If ye be aware of a certain truth, if ye whole
of mankind. Now is the time to cheer and refresh the
possess a Jewel, of which others are deprived, share it with them in
down-cast through the invigorating breeze of love and fellow:.. .

ship, and the living waters of friendliness and charity. i' .. ~

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118 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

LOVE AND UNITY

119

O ye friends of God! Show ye an endeavor that all the nations manding them,

and if you wish to give admonition or advice let

and communities of the world even the enemies put their trust, it be

offered in such a way that it will not burden the receiver. 32

assurance and hope IN YOU; that if a person falls into error for a

hundred thousand times he may yet turn his face to you hopeful Beware

lest ye offend any heart, lest ye speak against anyone

that you will forgive his sins; for he must not become hopeless, in his

absence, lest ye estrange yourselves from the servants of

neither grieved nor despondent! This is the conduct of the God. You

must consider all His servants as your own family

people of Baha! . 30 and

relations. Direct your whole effort towards the happiness of

those who are despondent, bestow food upon the hungry, clothe

O ye beloved of the Lord! In this sacred Dispensation con- the needy and

glorify the humble. Be a helper to every helpless

fact and contention are in no wise permitted. Every aggressor one, and

manifest kindness to your fellow creatures In order that

deprives himself of God's grace. It is incumbent upon everyone you may

attain the good pleasure of God. 33

to show the utmost love, righteousness, straightforwardness and Should

ye attribute a mistake to a person, it will be because of

heartfelt kindness unto all the peoples and kindreds of the offense and

grief to him-how much greater would this be If It

world, were they friends or strangers. Nay, the spirit of affection is

attributed to a number of people! How often it hath occurred

and indignity must so prevail that the stranger may find that a

slight difference hath caused a great dissension and hath

helped a friend, the enemy a true companion, and every least been made

a reason for division. 34

that a difference be removed. For universality is of God and

all limitations earthly. Hence man must strive to show forth

Self-love is a strange trait and the means of destruction of

such virtues and perfections as may illumine all mankind. The many

important souls in the world. If man be imbued with all

light of the sun shineth upon all the world and the merciful good

qualities but be selfish, all the other virtues will fade or pass
showers o~ Providence fall upon all people. The life-giving away and
eventually he will grow worse. 35

breeze revlveth every soul, and all living creatures obtain their It
hath been decided by the Desire of God that union and harshare .and portion. at
His heavenly board. In like manner the mony may day by day increase
among the friends of God an~

affectIOns and lovIng-kindness of the servants of the One True the
maid-servants of the Merciful One In the West. Not until
G.od must be .bountifully and universally extended to all man- this is
realized will the affairs advance by any means whatever!
kInd. RegardIng this, restrictions and limitations are in no wise And the
greatest means for the union and harmony of all is spirpermitted.

itual meetings. This matter is
very important and is as a magnet
W~erefore, O my loving friends! Consort with all the peoples (to attract)
Divine confirmation. 36

and kInd reds and religions of the world with the utmost truth-
When a man ariseth to expound the arguments of God and to
fulness, uprightness, faithfulness, kindness good-will and
friendliness. '31 invite
people to enter the religion of God, . . . and advanceth •
consummate proofs concerning the appearance of the great Kingdom,. then intense
love shall become manifest in his heart. This

WARNINGS AND PROMISES

love causeth the development of his spirit by the grace of the
Act in such a way that your heart may be free from beneficent Lord.
37

hatred. L~t not your heart be offended with anyone. If some Souls
are liable to estrangement. Such methods should be
one ~om~lts an error and wrong toward you, you must instantly adopted
that the estrangement should be first removed, then the
forgive him. Do not complain of others. Refrain from retri- Word
will have effect. 38

!"

120 THE DIVINE ART OF LrVING

LOVE AND UNITY 1

: O My servant I Purge thy heart from malice and, innocent of Thy
mercy. The Sun of Thy providence is shining upon.
envy, enter the divine court of holiness. 39 Thy
gifts encompass all, Thy providence sustains all, Thy prot,
o son of being! Ascribe' not to any soul that which thou tion
overshadows all and the glances of Thy favor illumine :
wouldst not have ascribed to thee, and say not that which thou o
LordI grant unto. us Thine infinite bestowals and let the li~
doest not. This is My command to thee, do thou observe it. 40 of

mystery no mind, however acute, can ever hope to unravel. It
 WHAT IS ETERNAL LIFE? 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,
 'The immortality of the spirit is mentioned in the Holy Books';
 and to bow down in adoration before Him. If it be faithful to
 Him. It IS the fundamental basis of the divine religions. Now pun-
 God, it will reflect His light, and will, eventually, return unto
 His rewards and punishments are said to be of two kinds. First, the re-
 Him. If it fail, however, in its allegiance to its Creator, it will
 punishments of this life; secondly, those of the other
 become a victim to self and passion, and will, in the end, sink
 world. But the paradise and hell of existence are found in all the
 in their depths. 2

worlds of God, whether in this world or in the spiritual heavenly worlds.
 Gaining the rewards is the gaining of eternal life.

DEATH IS CHANGE OF CONDITION

That IS why Christ said, Act in such a way that you may find

If the body undergoes a change, the spirit need not be
 eternal life, and that you may be born of water and the spirit so
 touched. When you break a glass on which the sun shines, the
 that you may enter into the Kingdom."
 glass is broken, but the sun still shines! . . . If a lamp is broken,
 . . . " . The rewards of the other world are the eternal life which
 the flame can still burn bright!

IS clearly mentioned in all the Holy Books, the divine perfections

The same thing applies to the spirit of man. Though death
 the eternal bounties, and everlasting felicity. The rewards of th-
 destroys his body, it has no power over the spirit-this is eternal,
 of the other world are the perfections and the peace obtained in the
 everlasting. . . . 3

spiritual worlds after leaving this world; whilst the rewards of

!

These are the alluminous perfections which are realized in this

. . . To consider that after the death of the body the spirit
 world, and which are the cause of eternal life, for they are the
 perishes, is like imagining that a bird in a cage will be destroyed
 very progress of existence. It is like the man who passes from
 if the cage is broken, though the bird has nothing to fear from
 the embryonic world to the state of maturity, and becomes the
 the destruction of the cage. Our body is like the cage and the
 manifestation of these words: "Blessed be God, the best of Cre-
 spirit is like the bird. We see that without the cage this bird

ators. The rewards of the other world are peace, the spiritual
flies in the world of sleep; therefore if the cage becomes broken,
graces, the various spiritual gifts in the Kingdom of God, the
the bird will continue and exist; its feeling will be even more
gammg of the desires of the heart and the soul, and the meeting
powerful, its perceptions greater, and its happiness increased.. 4
of God, in the world of eternity. In the same way the punish-

I.:

A friend asked: "How should one look forward to death?"
ments of the other world, that is to say, the torments of the
'Abdul-aha answered: "How does one look forward to the end'
122

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124 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

125

of any journey? With hope and with expectation. It is even so
tainty, that in the divine worlds, the spirit, the beloved ones (with
with the end of this earthly journey. In the next world man will
Hevers) will recognize each other, and will seek, reunion (With, find
himself freed from many of the disabilities under which he
each other), but a spiritual union. Likewise, a love that one
now suffers. Those who have passed on through death, have a
have entertained for anyone will not be forgotten in the world
sphere of their own. It is not removed from ours: their work of
of the Kingdom. Likewise, thou wilt not forget (there) the life
the Kingdom, is ours; but it is sanctified from what we call time
that thou hast had in the material world. ' 6 ,

and place. Time with us is measured by the sun. When there is
no more sunrise, and no more sunset, that kind of time does not

Death proffereth unto every confident believer the cup that is
exist for man. Those who have ascended have different attributes
life indeed. It bestoweth joy, and is the bearer of gladness. It
(conditions) from those who are still on earth, yet there is no
conferreth the gift of everlasting life. I .. • 7

"

real separation.

"In prayer there is a mingling of stations, a mingling of conditions Son of the
Supreme! .. ' ..

I have made death a messenger of joy to thee. Wherefore dost thou
tion. Pray for them as they pray for you." 5

thou grieve? I made the light to shed on thee its splendor. Why
(dost thou veil thyself therefrom? ' . :8

LIFE AFTER DEATH

It is clear and evident that all men shall, after their physical'

The mysteries of which man is heedless in this earthly world, death, estimate the worth of their deeds, and realize all that 'their' those will he discover in the heavenly world, and there will he hands have wrought. . . . They that are the f9110",,er~ of the o~,e be informed of the secret of truth; how much more will he rec.,, true God, shall, the moment they depart out of thls,hfe, exp~tl:'<, ognize or discover persons with whom he hath been associated. ence such joy and gladness as would be impossible to desctl~e" Undoubtedly, the holy souls who find a pure eye and are favored while they that live in error shall)e seized With. such fear ,~n~, with insight will, in the kingdom of lights, be acq\!..ainted with all trembling, and shall be filled with such consternatlpn,as~o~~g mysteries, and will seek the, bounty of. witnessing the reality of can exceed. Well is it with him that hath quaffed the choice and every great soul. Even they will manifestly behold the Beauty incorruptible wine of faith through the gracious ~avor and.the , of God in that world. Likewise will they find all the friends of Q1anifold bounties of Him Who is the Lord of all Faiths. . •• 9 God, both those of the former and recent times, present in the How often hath a sinner attained, at the hour of death, to the heavenly assemblage.

essence of faith, and, quaffing the immortal draught, hath taken. As to the difference and distinction between Lazarus and that his flight unto the Concourse on high! 10

It is evide~t that the loftiest mansions in the Realm On~?~J" . ,.,~i •., "rich man": the first was spiritual, while the second was material. One was in the highest degree of knowledge and the other in the lowest depths of ignorance. The difference and distinction will tality have been ordained as the habitation of them tha~; ~ve .'~., . naturally become realized between all men after their departure truly believed in God and in His signs. Death can,neV'er, 1J1~ge; ";:'! " t hat h0Iy sea.t , , ... H.,';, ',, ;,; :";,5.

from this mortal world. But this (distinction) is not in respect

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to place, but it is in respect to the soul and conscience. For the Know thou of a truth, that if the soul of man hath.walked . Kingdom of God is sanctified (or free) from time and place; it is in the ways ;f God, it will, assuredly, retur? andb~;ga~ered" another world and another universe. But the holy souls are 'to the glory of the Beloved. . . . It.shall attam a statlOn~slich:~S' . promised the gift of intercession. And know thou for acer- no pen can depict, or tongue desctlbe. The soul that. hath; ;r~-

'~.. .!r'~'
"/

~ ..',..
';

theCa~se of God, Il'ld stood un'w:t'l/'erlno'lv:~ ,11i111."~"~" t~ the
.sanc#fiedrealm of Light, the~ein lies. the con-
":~:~'j#~.,w,~M\!'"~'u~ shall, after ,his ,ascension, ,be 'posse~sed of

,
.~nl .. ,..nn of our hearts. ' d'
. ,worlds which the Almighty hath created can The inscrutable-
divine wisdom underlies such heart-ren mg
.. , , 'him. Such a soul provideth, at the bidding of
occurrences. It is as if a kind gardener trans~ers a fr,esh and
h-

. ,the and Divine Educator, the pure leaven that leav-
" tender shrub from a narrow place to a vast regIOOn. ~hIs tran
;ene;h the'-world of being, and furnisheth the power through
. whIch the. arts and wonders of the world are made manifest.
, ference is not the cause of the witherin.g, the w~nmg or t e
. Consider. h0'Y mealneedeth leaven to C leavened with. Those -:':
destruction of that shrub, nay, rather, It mak~s It gd'OW an~
thrive acquire freshness and delicacy, and attam ver ure an
'souls that are .the symbols of detachment are the leaven of the'
f -t'~n This hidden secret is well-known to the gardener,
world. Meditate on this, and be of the thankful. '12

wh:l; those souls who are unaware of this bounty supposeh thi,t
the ardener in his anger and wrath has upro~ted t~e s ru .
But ~o those who are aware this concealed fact IS mamfes~ and
It is ,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
this predestined decree considered a favor. Do not ,feel gne~ed
and disconsolate therefore at the ascension of that bIrd of falth
through His justice; for bounty is giving without desert, and
just~ce isgi-ving what is deserved. As we have power to pray for
fulness, nay under all ~ircumsta~ces pray and beg for that yout h
. these souls here, so likewise we shall possess the same power in the
forgiveness and elevatIOOn of statIOOn.

I hope that you will attain to the utmost patIence, composuri
other world, which is the Kingdom of God. Are not all the
, 'people in the world the creatures of God? In that world also they
and resignation and I supplicate rod entreat at the threshold h
carimake progress. :As here they can receive'light by their sup-
Oneness and b~g pardon and forgiveness. My h~pe from t e
plications, there also they can plead for forgiveness, and receive
infinite bounties of God is that He may cause thIS dove of the
light through entreaties and supplications. Thus as souls in this
garden of faith to abide on the branch of the S~preme Chncourie

world; through the help of the supplications, the entreaties, and that it may sing in the best of tunes the praises and the excellencies of the Lord of names and attributes.

the same after death. Through their own prayers they can also

PRAYERS FOR THE DEPARTED

progress; more especially when they are the object of the intercession of the Holy Manifestations.

13, O my

God! O Thou Forgiver of sins! Bestower of Gifts!

Dispeller of afflictions! h h b

Verily I beseech Thee to forgive the sins of those who have adorned the physical garment and hastened to the spiritual world

CONSOLATION FOR THE BEREAVED (

From the death of that beloved youth, due to his separation

O Lord! Purify them from trespasses, dispel their sorrow from you the utmost sorrow and grief has been occasioned, for and bring their darkness into light. Cause them to enter the

he flew away in the flower of his age and the bloom of his youth,

Garden of Happiness, cleanse them with the most pure water to the heavenly nest.

em to behold Thy splendours on the Loftiest Mount

128 THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

of Thy forgiveness is, verily, able to redeem and make free the sinners by one of its waves. Thou redeemest whomsoever Thou wilt and deprivest whomsoever Thou wilt not! Shouldst Thou treat justly, we all are sinners and deserve to be deprived; and shouldst Thou observe mercy, every sinner shall be made

REFERENCE NOTES

pure and every stranger shall become a friend. Therefore forgive

(.b"l,ler Olle-TRUST IN GOD

and pardon and grant Thy mercy unto all. Thou art the For-

I. Luke 12:6,7. 2. WAB p. 99. 3. TALi p. 190.

giver, the Light-Giver, and the Compassionate! 16

4. TAB p. 200. 5. TAB p. 517. 6. TAB p. 170.

7. TAB p. 158. 8. ESW p. 76. 9. BWF p. 140.

10. WAB p. 101. 11. TAB p. 177. 12. TAB p. 381.

REFERENCE NOTES 13. TAB p. 415.

14. TAB pp. 337, 338. 15. PUP pp. 45, 46.

16. P&M p. 236. 17. P&M pp. 113, 114. 18. P&M p. 250.

ABBREVIATIONS USED 19. P&M p. 212. 20.

P&M pp. 245-246. 21. PUP p. 463.

Chapter Two-ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

ADJ Advent of Divine Justice

I. John 3:3, 5,6. 2. SW vol. 7, p. 150. ~. TAB vol. 3, Pp. 604-605.

AHW Arabic Hidden Words

4. WF pp. 22, 23. 5. WAB p. 155. 6. PUP p. 220.

AL 'Abdu'l-Baha in London
7. SW vol. 7, p. 172. 8. TAB vol. 3, p. 709. 9. SW vol. 7, p. 155.
10. SW vol. 7, p. 163. 11. AHW No. 36. 12. TAB p. 405.

BNE Baha'u'llah and the New Era
13. PUP pp. 220, 221. 14. TAB p. 641.

BP Baha'i Prayers
Chillier T}ree-ADVANCING TOWARD THE IMMORTAL REALM

BS Baha'i Scriptures
1. PHW No.7. 2. AHW No.2. 3. BWF p. 229.

BW Baha'i World
4. TAB p. 206. 5. AHW No.3 I. 6. Gl. p. 196.

BWF Baha'i World Faith
7. BW vol. 1, p. 43. 8. MFC PI'.
8, 26, 30. 9. BWF pp. 389, 390.

EB
10. P&M p. 314. 11. Gl. p. 70. 12. PUP PI'. 66, 67.
Episode of the Bab 13. SAQ
pp. 273-274. 14. BW vol. I, p. 12. 15. TAB p. 67(,.

ESW Epistle to the Son of the Wolf
Gl.

Cb"l,ler l'our-PRA YER AND MEDITATION
Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah
1. SW vol. 8, pp. 44, 45. 2. TAB p. 683. 3. TAB p. 3.

Iq. The Kirab-i-Iqan (The Book of Certitude)
4. TAB p. 69. 5. TAB p. 694. 6. TAB p. 98.

MFC Mysterious Forces of Civilization
7. ESW p. 94. 8. Gl. p. 323. 9. AHW No. 16.

P&M Prayers and Meditations by Baha'u'llih
10. WAB p. 155. 11. AHW No. 18. 12. TAB p. 89.
13. Gl. p. 291. 14. TAB p. 639. 15. TAB p. 122.

PHW Persian Hidden Words
16. WO vol. 9, p. 271. 17. BP cd. 41, p. 60. 18. BP cd. 41, p. 49.

PUP Promulgation of Universal Peace
19. WAB p. 45. 20. TAB p. 168. 21. WAB p. 51.

SAQ
22. TAB p. 247. 23. WAB pp. 86, 87. 24. P&M p. 312.

Some Answered Questions 25. PUP
pp. 241, 242. 26. SV p. 21. 27. P&M p. 249.

SV Seven Valleys
28. SW vol. 8, p. 48. 29. Idem. 30. Gl. p. 265.

SW Star of the West
31. TAB p. 186. 32. TAB PI'. 694-5. 33. WAB p. 105.
34. Gl. p. 266. 35. TAB p. 277. 36. Gl. p. 243.

TAB Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Baha
37. TAB p. 113. 38. TAB p. 661. 39. SW vol. 8, p. 47.

TB Tablets of Baha'u'llah
40. SAQ p. 268. 41. PUP pp. 182, 183. 42. TAB p'. 483.

WAB Wisdom of 'Abdu'l-Baha

43. TAB p. 426. 44. TAB p. 427. 45. Gl. p. 303.

46. AHW No. 43. 47. P&M p. 240. 48. P&M p. 90.

WF The World Faith

49. P&M p. 315. 50. P&M p. 117. 51. Gl. p. 295.

WOB World Order of Baha'u'llih

52. P&M p. 103. 53. P&M p. 272. 54. P&M p. 105.

WOM World Order Magazine

55. P&M p. 329. 56. Iq. p. 238. 57. WAB pp. 163-164.

58. PUP pp. 454-456. 59. BNE pp. 114-115. 60. Gl. p. 136.

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