

City of the Heart

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from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

The incomparable Creator hath created all men from one same substance, and hath exalted their reality above the rest of His creatures. Success or failure, gain or loss, must, therefore, depend upon man's own exertions. The more he striveth, the greater will be his progress. We fain would hope that the vernal showers of the bounty of God may cause the flowers of true understanding to spring from the soil of men's hearts, and may wash them from all earthly defilements.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 81)

Incline your hearts, O people of God, unto the counsels of your true, your incomparable Friend. The Word of God may be likened unto a sapling, whose roots have been implanted in the hearts of men. It is incumbent upon you to foster its growth through the living waters of wisdom, of sanctified and holy words, so that its root may become firmly fixed and its branches may spread out as high as the heavens and beyond.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 97)

Set thy heart firmly upon justice, and alter not the Cause of God, and be of them whose eyes are directed towards the things that have been revealed in His Book. Follow not, under any condition, the promptings of thine evil desires. Keep thou the law of God, thy Lord, the Beneficent, the Ancient of Days. Thou shalt most certainly return to dust, and shalt perish like all the things in which thou takest delight. This is what the Tongue of truth and glory hath spoken.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 230)

Strive, therefore, to act in such a manner as befitteth so eminent, so august a station. If thou dost depart from following the things We have caused to descend upon thee and taught thee, thou wilt, assuredly, be derogating from that great and priceless honor. Return, then, and cleave wholly unto God, and cleanse thine heart from the world and all its vanities, and suffer not the love of any stranger to enter and dwell therein. Not until thou dost purify thine heart from every trace of such love can the brightness of the light of God shed its radiance upon it, for to none hath God given more than one heart. This, verily, hath been decreed and written down in His ancient Book. And as the human heart, as fashioned by God, is one and undivided, it behoveth thee to take heed that its affections be, also, one and undivided. Cleave thou, therefore, with the whole affection of thine heart, unto His love, and withdraw it from the love of any one besides Him, that He may aid thee to immerse thyself in the ocean of His unity, and enable thee to become a true upholder of His oneness. God is My witness. My sole purpose in revealing to thee these words is to sanctify thee from the transitory things of the earth, and aid thee to enter the realm of everlasting glory, that thou mayest, by the leave of God,

be of them that abide and rule therein....

(Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 237)

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

That seeker must, at all times, put his trust in God, must renounce the peoples of the earth, must detach himself from the world of dust, and cleave unto Him Who is the Lord of Lords. He must never seek to exalt himself above any one, must wash away from the tablet of his heart every trace of pride and vain-glory, must cling unto patience and resignation, observe silence and refrain from idle talk. For the tongue is a smoldering fire, and excess of speech a deadly poison. Material fire consumeth the body, whereas the fire of the tongue devoureth both heart and soul. The force of the former lasteth but for a time, whilst the effects of the latter endureth a century.

That seeker should, also, regard backbiting as grievous error, and keep himself aloof from its dominion, inasmuch as backbiting quencheth the light of the heart, and extinguisheth the life of the soul. He should be content with little, and be freed from all inordinate desire.

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

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 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 being. At that hour will the Mystic Herald, bearing the joyful tidings of the Spirit, shine forth from the City of God resplendent as the morn, and, through the trumpet-blast of knowledge, will awaken the heart, the soul, and the spirit from the slumber of heedlessness. Then will the manifold favors and outpouring grace of the holy and everlasting Spirit confer such new life upon the seeker that he will find himself endowed with a new eye, a new ear, a new heart, and a new mind. He will contemplate the manifest signs of the universe, and will penetrate the hidden mysteries of the soul. Gazing with the eye of God, he will perceive within every atom a door that leadeth him to the stations of absolute certitude. He will discover in all things the mysteries of Divine Revelation, and the evidences of an everlasting Manifestation.

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

Cling ye, with your inmost hearts, to the Cause of God, a Cause that hath been sent down by Him Who is the Ordainer, the All-Wise. We have, with the utmost kindness and mercy, summoned and directed all peoples and nations to that which shall truly profit them.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 270)

He should cleanse his heart from all evil passions and corrupt desires, for the fear of God is the weapon that can render him victorious, the primary instrument whereby he can achieve his purpose. The fear of God is the shield that defendeth His Cause, the buckler that enableth His people to attain to victory. It is a standard that no man can abase, a force that no power can rival. By its aid, and by the leave of Him Who is the Lord of Hosts, they that have drawn nigh unto God have been able to subdue and conquer the citadels of the hearts of men.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 272)

The spirit that animateth the human heart is the knowledge of God, and its truest adorning is the recognition of the truth that "He doeth whatsoever He willeth, and ordaineth that which He pleaseth." Its raiment is the fear of God, and its perfection steadfastness in His Faith. Thus God instructeth whosoever seeketh Him. He, verily, loveth the one that turneth towards Him. There is none other God but Him, the Forgiving, the Most Bountiful. All praise be to God, the Lord of all worlds.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 291)

Intone, O My servant, the verses of God that have been received by thee, as intoned by them who have drawn nigh unto Him, that the sweetness of thy melody may kindle thine own soul, and attract the hearts of all men. Whoso reciteth, in the privacy of his chamber, the verses revealed by God, the scattering angels of the Almighty shall scatter abroad the fragrance of the words uttered by his mouth, and shall cause the heart of every righteous man to throb. Though he may, at first, remain unaware of its effect, yet the virtue of the grace vouchsafed unto him must needs sooner or later exercise its influence upon his soul. Thus have the mysteries of the Revelation of God been decreed by virtue of the Will of Him Who is the Source of power and wisdom.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 295)

Say: O people! Sow not the seeds of discord among men, and refrain from contending with your neighbor, for your Lord hath committed the world and the cities thereof to the care of the kings of the earth, and made them the emblems of His own power, by virtue of the sovereignty He hath chosen to bestow upon them. He hath refused to reserve for Himself any share whatever of this world's dominion. To this He Who is Himself the Eternal Truth will testify. The things He hath reserved for Himself are the cities of men's hearts, that He may cleanse them from all earthly defilements, and enable them to draw nigh unto the hallowed Spot which the hands of the infidel can never profane. Open, O

people, the city of the human heart with the key of your utterance. Thus have We, according to a pre-ordained measure, prescribed unto you your duty.

By the righteousness of God! The world and its vanities, and its glory, and whatever delights it can offer, are all, in the sight of God, as worthless as, nay, even more contemptible than, dust and ashes. Would that the hearts of men could comprehend it! Cleanse yourselves thoroughly, O people of Baha, from the defilement of the world, and of all that pertaineth unto it. God Himself beareth Me witness. The things of the earth ill beseem you. Cast them away unto such as may desire them, and fasten your eyes upon this most holy and effulgent Vision.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 304)

Sanctify thine heart, that thou mayest remember Me; and purge thine ear, that thou mayest hearken unto My words. Set then thy face towards the Spot wherein the throne of thy Lord, the God of Mercy, hath been established, and say: Praise be to Thee, O my Lord, for having enabled me to recognize the Manifestation of Thine own Self, and aided me to fix mine heart on the court of Thy presence, the object of my soul's adoration. I beseech Thee, by Thy name that caused the heavens to be rent and the earth to be cleft asunder, to ordain for me what Thou didst ordain for them that have turned away from all else but Thee, and rested their hearts firmly upon Thee.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 313)

Thine eye is My trust, suffer not the dust of vain desires to becloud its luster. Thine ear is a sign of My bounty, let not the tumult of unseemly motives turn it away from My Word that encompasseth all creation. Thine heart is My treasury, allow not the treacherous hand of self to rob thee of the pearls which I have treasured therein.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 322)

O My servants! Deprive not yourselves of the unfading and resplendent Light that shineth within the Lamp of Divine glory. Let the flame of the love of God burn brightly within your radiant hearts. Feed it with the oil of Divine guidance, and protect it within the shelter of your constancy. Guard it within the globe of trust and detachment from all else but God, so that the evil whisperings of the ungodly may not extinguish its light.

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

It behoveth thee to consecrate thyself to the Will of God. Whatsoever hath been revealed in His Tablets is but a reflection of His Will. So complete must be thy consecration, that every trace of worldly desire will be washed from thine heart. This is the meaning of true unity.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 338)

Open the doors of your hearts. He Who is the Spirit verily standeth before them. Wherefore banish ye Him Who hath purposed to draw you nigh unto a Resplendent Spot? Say: We, in truth, have opened unto you the gates of the Kingdom. Will ye bar the doors of your houses in My face? This indeed is naught but a grievous error. He, verily, hath again come down from heaven, even as He

came down from it the first time.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 11)

Incline your hearts, O people of God, unto the counsels of your true, your incomparable Friend. The Word of God may be likened unto a sapling, whose roots have been implanted in the hearts of men. It is incumbent upon you to foster its growth through the living waters of wisdom, of sanctified and holy words, so that its root may become firmly fixed and its branches may spread out as high as the heavens and beyond.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 93)

Fear ye God and abandon vain imaginings to the begetters thereof and leave superstitions to the devisers thereof and misgivings to the breeders thereof. Advance ye then with radiant faces and stainless hearts towards the horizon above which the Day-Star of certitude shineth resplendent at the bidding of God, the Lord of Revelations.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 104)

It behoveth thee, however, to exert thine utmost to attain the very essence of fidelity. This implieth to be well assured in thy heart and to testify with thy tongue to that whereunto God hath testified for His Own exalted Self, proclaiming: 'Verily, self-subsisting am I within the Realm of Glory.' Whoso is enabled in these days to solemnly affirm this truth, hath attained unto all good, and the heavenly Spirit shall descend upon him in the daytime and in the night season, shall graciously assist him to glorify the Name of his Lord and suffer him to unloose his tongue and uphold with his words the Cause of his Lord, the Merciful, the Compassionate. And none can ever achieve this except he who hath purged his heart from whatsoever is created between heaven and earth, and hath entirely detached himself from all but God, the sovereign Lord, the Almighty, the Gracious.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 181)

Hearken thou unto the Words of thy Lord and purify thy heart from every illusion so that the effulgent light of the remembrance of thy Lord may shed its radiance upon it, and it may attain the station of certitude.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 183)

Purge thou thy heart that We may cause fountains of wisdom and utterance to gush out therefrom, thus enabling thee to raise thy voice among all mankind. Unloose thy tongue and proclaim the truth for the sake of the remembrance of thy merciful Lord. Be not afraid of anyone, place thy whole trust in God, the Almighty, the All-Knowing.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 190)

Great is thy blessedness, inasmuch as thou hast been journeying throughout the lands of God, and been the embodiment of joy and assurance for the people of Baha who have renounced all else but Him, and set their hearts towards this Court which hath shed its radiance upon all realms, and sprinkled them with the surging waters of this Ocean wherewith thou thyself hast been sprinkled -- an Ocean which hath encompassed all created things.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 196)

O My Name! Utterance must needs possess penetrating power. For if bereft of this quality it would fail to exert influence. And this penetrating influence dependeth on the spirit being pure and the heart stainless. Likewise it needeth moderation, without which the hearer would be unable to bear it, rather he would manifest opposition from the very outset. And moderation will be obtained by blending utterance with the tokens of divine wisdom which are recorded in the sacred Books and Tablets. Thus when the essence of one's utterance is endowed with these two requisites it will prove highly effective and will be the prime factor in transforming the souls of men. This is the station of supreme victory and celestial dominion. Whoso attaineth thereto is invested with the power to teach the Cause of God and to prevail over the hearts and minds of men.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 198)

Every receptive soul who hath in this Day inhaled the fragrance of His garment and hath, with a pure heart, set his face towards the all-glorious Horizon is reckoned among the people of Baha in the Crimson Book. Grasp ye, in My Name, the chalice of My loving-kindness, drink then your fill in My glorious and wondrous remembrance.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 220)

O SON OF SPIRIT!

My first counsel is this: Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart, that thine may be a sovereignty ancient, imperishable and everlasting.

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Arabic Hidden Words #1)

O CHILDREN OF MEN!

Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest. Such is My counsel to you, O concourse of light! Heed ye this counsel that ye may obtain the fruit of holiness from the tree of wondrous glory.

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Arabic Hidden Words #68)

This station conferreth the true standard of knowledge, and freeth man from tests. In this realm, to search after knowledge is irrelevant, for He hath said concerning the guidance of travelers on this plane, "Fear God, and God will instruct thee." [1] And again: "Knowledge is a light which God casteth into the heart of whomsoever He willeth." [2]

[1 Qur'an 2:282.]

[2 Hadith.]

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Four Valleys, p. 53)

Wash from your hearts all earthly defilements, and hasten to enter the Kingdom of your Lord, the Creator of earth and heaven, Who caused the world to tremble

and all its peoples to wail, except them that have renounced all things and clung to that which the Hidden Tablet hath ordained.

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitab-i-Aqdas, p. 48)

By the righteousness of God! It is not Our wish to lay hands on your kingdoms. Our mission is to seize and possess the hearts of men. Upon them the eyes of Baha are fastened. To this testifieth the Kingdom of Names, could ye but comprehend it. Whoso followeth his Lord will renounce the world and all that is therein; how much greater, then, must be the detachment of Him Who holdeth so august a station!

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitab-i-Aqdas, p. 49)

He knoweth the inner secrets of the hearts and the meaning hidden in a mocker's wink. How many an embodiment of heedlessness who came unto Us with purity of heart have We established upon the seat of Our acceptance; and how many an exponent of wisdom have We in all justice consigned to the fire. We are, in truth, the One to judge. He it is Who is the manifestation of "God doeth whatsoever He pleaseth", and abideth upon the throne of "He ordaineth whatsoever He chooseth".

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

This is not a Cause which may be made a plaything for your idle fancies, nor is it a field for the foolish and faint of heart. By God, this is the arena of insight and detachment, of vision and upliftment, where none may spur on their chargers save the valiant horsemen of the Merciful, who have severed all attachment to the world of being. These, truly, are they that render God victorious on earth, and are the dawning-places of His sovereign might amidst mankind.

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitab-i-Aqdas, p. 84)

In a letter written on his behalf, Shoghi Effendi uses the analogy of the plant turning in the direction of the sun to explain the spiritual significance of turning towards the Qiblah:

...just as the plant stretches out to the sunlight--from which it receives life and growth--so we turn our hearts to the Manifestation of God, Bahá'u'lláh, when we pray; ... we turn our faces ... to where His dust lies on this earth as a symbol of the inner act.

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitab-i-Aqdas, p. 169)

Dear friend! Now when the light of God's everlasting Morn is breaking; when the radiance of His holy words: "God is the light of the heavens and of the earth"[1] is shedding illumination upon all mankind; when the inviolability of His tabernacle is being proclaimed by His sacred utterance: "God hath willed to perfect His light;"[2] and the Hand of omnipotence, bearing His testimony: "In His grasp He holdeth the kingdom of all things," is being outstretched unto all the peoples and kindreds of the earth; it behooveth us to gird up the loins of

endeavour, that haply, by the grace and bounty of God, we may enter the celestial City: "Verily, we are God's," and abide within the exalted habitation: "And unto Him we do return." It is incumbent upon thee, by the permission of God, to cleanse the eye of thine heart from the things of the world, that thou mayest realize the infinitude of divine knowledge, and mayest behold Truth so clearly that thou wilt need no proof to demonstrate His reality, nor any evidence to bear witness unto His testimony.

[1 Qur'an 24:35.]

[2 Qur'an 9:33.]

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitab-i-Iqan, p. 90)

O my brother! A divine Mine only can yield the gems of divine knowledge, and the fragrance of the mystic Flower can be inhaled only in the ideal Garden, and the lilies of ancient wisdom can blossom nowhere except in the city of a stainless heart. "In a rich soil, its plants spring forth abundantly by permission of its Lord, and in that soil which is bad, they spring forth but scantily." [3]

[3 Qur'an 7:57.]

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitab-i-Iqan, p. 191)

When the channel of the human soul is cleansed of all worldly and impeding attachments, it will unfailingly perceive the breath of the Beloved across immeasurable distances, and will, led by its perfume, attain and enter the City of Certitude. Therein he will discern the wonders of His ancient wisdom, and will perceive all the hidden teachings from the rustling leaves of the Tree -- which flourisheth in that City. With both his inner and his outer ear he will hear from its dust the hymns of glory and praise ascending unto the Lord of Lords, and with his inner eye will he discover the mysteries of "return" and "revival." How unspeakably glorious are the signs, the tokens, the revelations, and splendours which He Who is the King of names and attributes hath destined for that City! The attainment of this City quencheth thirst without water, and kindleth the love of God without fire. Within every blade of grass are enshrined the mysteries of an inscrutable wisdom, and upon every rose-bush a myriad nightingales pour out, in blissful rapture, their melody. Its wondrous tulips unfold the mystery of the undying Fire in the Burning Bush, and its sweet savours of holiness breathe the perfume of the Messianic Spirit. It bestoweth wealth without gold, and conferreth immortality without death. In every leaf ineffable delights are treasured, and within every chamber unnumbered mysteries lie hidden.

They that valiantly labour in quest of God's will, when once they have renounced all else but Him, will be so attached and wedded to that City that a moment's separation from it would to them be unthinkable. They will hearken unto infallible proofs from the Hyacinth of that assembly, and receive the surest testimonies from the beauty of its Rose and the melody of its Nightingale. Once in about a thousand years shall this City be renewed and re-adorned.

Wherefore, O my friend, it behooveth Us to exert the highest endeavour

to attain unto that City, and, by the grace of God and His loving-kindness, rend asunder the "veils of glory"; so that, with inflexible steadfastness, we may sacrifice our drooping souls in the path of the New Beloved. We should with tearful eyes, fervently and repeatedly, implore Him to grant us the favour of that grace. That city is none other than the Word of God revealed in every age and dispensation.

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitab-i-Iqan, p. 197)

O MY BROTHER!

Hearken to the delightful words of My honeyed tongue, and quaff the stream of mystic holiness from My sugar-shedding lips. Sow the seeds of My divine wisdom in the pure soil of thy heart, and water them with the water of certitude, that the hyacinths of My knowledge and wisdom may spring up fresh and green in the sacred city of thy heart.

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Persian Hidden Words #33)

O SON OF MY HANDMAID!

Quaff from the tongue of the merciful the stream of divine mystery, and behold from the dayspring of divine utterance the unveiled splendor of the daystar of wisdom. Sow the seeds of My divine wisdom in the pure soil of the heart, and water them with the waters of certitude, that the hyacinths of knowledge and wisdom may spring up fresh and green from the holy city of the heart.

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Persian Hidden Words #78)

They who soar in the heaven of singleness and reach to the sea of the Absolute, reckon this city -- which is the station of life in God -- as the furthestmost state of mystic knowers, and the farthest homeland of the lovers. But to this evanescent One of the mystic ocean, this station is the first gate of the heart's citadel, that is, man's first entrance to the city of the heart; and the heart is endowed with four stages, which would be recounted should a kindred soul be found.

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Seven Valleys, p. 41)

from the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá

The will of the Eternal King hath ever been to purify the hearts of [His] servants from the promptings of the world and what is therein, so that they may be prepared for illumination by the effulgences of the Lord of the Names and Attributes. Therefore must no stranger find his way into the city of the heart, so that the Incomparable Friend may come unto His own place - that is, the effulgence of His Names and Attributes, not His Essence (exalted is He), for that Peerless King hath been and will be holy for everlasting above ascent or descent.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, A Traveller's Narrative, p. 63)

Everyone, then, who desireth "victory" must first subdue the city of his own heart with the sword of spiritual truth and of the Word, and must protect it from remembering aught beside God: afterwards let him turn his regards towards the cities of [others'] hearts. This is what is intended by "victory": sedition

hath never been nor is pleasing to God, and that which certain ignorant persons formerly wrought was never approved.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, A Traveller's Narrative, p. 64)

God hath ever regarded the hearts of [His] servants, and this too is by reason of [His] most great favor, that perchance mortal souls may be cleansed and sanctified from earthly states and may attain unto everlasting places.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, A Traveller's Narrative, p. 64)

Look how Abraham strove to bring faith and love among the people; how Moses tried to unite the people by sound laws; how the Lord Christ suffered unto death to bring the light of love and truth into a darkened world; how Muhammad sought to bring unity and peace between the various uncivilized tribes among whom he dwelt. And last of all, Bahá'u'lláh has suffered forty years for the same cause -- the single noble purpose of spreading love among the children of men -- and for the peace and unity of the world the Bab gave up his life.

In the sight of God colour makes no difference at all, He looks at the hearts of men. That which God desires from men is the heart.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Abdu'l-Bahá in London, p. 68)

When asked for a definition of a pure heart, Abdu'l-Bahá said, "The pure heart is one that is entirely cut away from self. To be selfless is to be pure."

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Abdu'l-Bahá in London, p. 107)

The most important thing is to polish the mirrors of hearts in order that they may become illumined and receptive of the divine light. One heart may possess the capacity of the polished mirror; another be covered and obscured by the dust and dross of this world. Although the same Sun is shining upon both, in the mirror which is polished, pure and sanctified you may behold the Sun in all its fullness, glory and power revealing its majesty and effulgence, but in the mirror which is rusted and obscured there is no capacity for reflection although so far as the Sun itself is concerned it is shining thereon and is neither lessened nor deprived. Therefore our duty lies in seeking to polish the mirrors of our hearts in order that we shall become reflectors of that light and recipients of the divine bounties which may be fully revealed through them.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith - Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 218)

All the prophets have striven to make love manifest in the hearts of men. His Holiness Jesus Christ sought to create this love in the hearts. He suffered all difficulties and ordeals that perchance the human heart might become the fountain-source of love. Therefore we must strive with all our heart and soul that this love may take possession of us so that all humanity whether it be in the east or in the west may be connected through the bond of this divine affection; for we are all the waves of one sea; we have come into being through the same bestowal and are recipients from the same center. T

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith - Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 218)

For a long time the religious world had been weakened and materialism had advanced; the spiritual forces of life were waning, moralities were becoming

degraded, composure and peace had vanished from souls and satanic qualities were dominating hearts; strife and hatred overshadowed humanity, bloodshed and violence prevailed. God was neglected; the Sun of Reality seemed to have gone completely; deprivation of the bounties of heaven was a fact; and so the season of winter fell upon mankind. But in the generosity of God a new springtime dawned, the lights of God shone forth, the effulgent Sun of Reality returned and became manifest, the realm of thoughts and kingdom of hearts became exhilarated, a new spirit of life breathed into the body of the world and continuous advancement became apparent.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith - Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 256)

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 the exterior may be if the heart be pure and white within. God does not behold differences of hue and complexion; He looks at the hearts. He whose morals and virtues are praiseworthy is preferred in the presence of God; he who is devoted to the Kingdom is most beloved. In the realm of genesis and creation the question of color is of least importance.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith - Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 267)

The hearts should be purified and cleansed from every trace of hatred and rancor and enabled to engage in truthfulness, conciliation, uprightness and love toward the world of humanity; so that the East and the West may embrace each other like unto two lovers, enmity and animosity may vanish from the human world and the universal peace be established!

O ye friends of God! Be kind to all peoples and nations, have love for all of them, exert yourselves to purify the hearts as much as you can, and bestow abundant effort in rejoicing the souls. Be ye a sprinkling of rain to every meadow and a water of life to every tree. Be ye as fragrant musk to every nostril and a soul-refreshing breeze to every invalid. Be ye salutary water to every thirsty one, a wise guide to every one led astray, an affectionate father or mother to every orphan, and, in the utmost joy and fragrance, a son or daughter to every one bent with age. Be ye a rich treasure to every indigent one; consider love and union as a delectable paradise, and count annoyance and hostility as the torment of hell-fire. Exert with your soul; seek no rest in body; supplicate and beseech with your heart and search for divine assistance and favor, in order that ye may make this world the Paradise of Abha and this terrestrial globe the arena of the Supreme Kingdom. If ye make an effort, it is certain that these lights will shine, this cloud of mercy shall rain, this soul-nourishing breeze shall waft, and the scent of this most fragrant musk be diffused.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith - Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 356)

Exert thyself night and day until spiritual powers may penetrate thy heart and soul. Abandon the body and the material, until the merciful powers may become manifest; because not until the soil is become pure will it develop through the heavenly bounty; not until the heart is purified, will the radiance of the Sun of Truth shine therein. I beg of God that thou wilt day by day increase the

purity of thy heart, the cheerfulness of thy soul, the light of thy insight and the search for Truth.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith - Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 362)

If thy daily living become difficult, soon thy Lord will bestow upon thee that which shall satisfy thee. Be patient in the time of affliction and trial, endure every difficulty and hardship with a dilated heart, attracted spirit and eloquent tongue in remembrance of the Merciful. Verily this is the life of satisfaction, the spiritual existence, heavenly repose, divine benediction and the celestial table! Soon thy Lord will extenuate thy straitened circumstances even in this world.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith - Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 375)

Each Manifestation is the heart of the world and the proficient Physician of every patient. The world of humanity is sick, but that skilled Physician hath the healing remedy and He bestoweth divine teachings, exhortations and advices which are the remedy of every ailment and the dressing for every wound. Undoubtedly, the wise physician discovereth the needs of the patient at every season and prescribeth medicine.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith - Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 380)

If thou wishest the divine knowledge and recognition, purify thy heart from all beside God, be wholly attracted to the ideal, 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.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith - Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 383)

Look not at the small number; nay, rather seek the pure hearts. One holy soul is better than one thousand other souls. If a few souls gather together in a beloved meeting with the feelings of the Kingdom, with the divine attractions, with pure hearts and with absolute purity and holiness, to consort in spirit and fragrance, that gathering will have its effect upon all the world. The conditions, the words and the deeds of that gathering will lead a world to eternal happiness and will be an evidence of the favors of the Kingdom. The Holy Spirit will strengthen them and the hosts of the Supreme Concourse will render them victorious and the angels of Abha will come in succession. By angels is meant the divine confirmations and heavenly powers. Angels are also those holy souls who have severed attachment to the earthly world, who are free from the fetters of self and passion and who have attached their hearts to the divine realm and the merciful kingdom. They are of the kingdom, heavenly; they are of the merciful One, divine. They are the manifestations of the divine grace and the dawns of spiritual bounty.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith - Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 409)

O ye beloved of the Lord! Strive with all your heart to shield the Cause of God from the onslaught of the insincere, for souls such as these cause the straight to become crooked and all benevolent efforts to produce contrary results.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith - Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 448)

The greatest gift of man is universal love - that magnet which renders existence eternal. It attracts realities and diffuses life with infinite joy. If this love penetrate the heart of man, all the forces of the universe will be realized in him, for it is a divine power which transports him to a divine station and he will make no progress until he is illumined thereby. Strive to increase the love-power of reality, to make your hearts greater centers of attraction and to create new ideals and relationships.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Divine Philosophy, p. 111)

God has given man a heart and the heart must have some attachment. We have proved that nothing is completely worthy of our heart's devotion save reality, for all else is destined to perish. Therefore the heart is never at rest and never finds real joy and happiness until it attaches itself to the eternal. How foolish the bird that builds its nest in a tree that may perish when it could build its nest in an ever-verdant garden of paradise.

Man must attach himself to an infinite reality, so that his glory, his joy, and his progress may be infinite. Only the spirit is real; everything else is as shadow. All bodies are disintegrated in the end; only reality subsists. All physical perfections come to an end; but the divine virtues are infinite.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Divine Philosophy, p. 136)

Therefore let us yearn for the kingdom of God, so that our works may bear eternal fruit. Otherwise the flower will be lost. Attach your hearts to BAHÁ'U'LLAH. He is the eternal glory. Then from day to day you will become more enlightened; day by day your efforts will increase; day by day your work will become universal, and day by day your horizons will broaden until the end they will embrace the universe.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Divine Philosophy, p. 138)

Each human creature has individual endowment, power and responsibility in the creative plan of God. Therefore depend upon your own reason and judgment and adhere to the outcome of your own investigation; otherwise you will be utterly submerged in the sea of ignorance and deprived of all the bounties of God. Turn to God, supplicate humbly at His threshold, seeking assistance and confirmation, that God may rend asunder the veils that obscure your vision. Then will your eyes be filled with illumination, face to face you will behold the reality of God and your heart become completely purified from the dross of ignorance, reflecting the glories and bounties of the Kingdom.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Foundations of World Unity, p. 76)

The phenomenal world through the resplendent effulgence of the sun is radiant and bright. In the same way the realm of hearts and spirits is illumined and resuscitated through the shining rays of the Sun of Reality and the bounties of the love of God. Thereby the world of existence, the kingdom of hearts and spirits is ever quickened into life. Were it not for the love of God, hearts would be inanimate, spirits would wither and the reality of man would be bereft of the everlasting bestowals.

Consider to what extent the love of God makes itself manifest. Among

the signs of His love which appear in the world are the dawning-point of His Manifestations. What an infinite degree of love is reflected by the divine Manifestations toward mankind! For the sake of guiding the people they have willingly forfeited their lives to resuscitate human hearts.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Foundations of World Unity, p. 89)

Bahá'u'lláh writes that God says, 'Thy heart is My home; purify it for My descent. Thy spirit is My place of revelation; cleanse it for My manifestation'.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 23)

Let your hearts be filled with the great love of God, let it be felt by all; for every man is a servant of God, and all are entitled to a share of the Divine Bounty.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 27)

Let your hearts be filled with the strenuous desire that tranquillity and harmony may encircle all this warring world. So will success crown your efforts, and with the universal brotherhood will come the Kingdom of God in peace and goodwill.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 30)

Let all strive to grow in the light of the Sun of Truth, and reflecting this luminous love on all men, may their hearts become so united that they may dwell evermore in the radiance of the limitless love.

Remember these words which I speak unto you during the short time I am amongst you in Paris. I earnestly exhort you: let not your hearts be fettered by the material things of this world; I charge you not to lie contentedly on the beds of negligence, prisoners of matter, but to arise and free yourselves from its chains!

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 37)

May you receive the clear vision of the Holy Spirit, so that your hearts may be illumined and able to recognize the Sun of Truth shining through all material clouds, His splendour flooding the universe.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 45)

I pray for you one and all that you may receive the Bounties of the Holy Spirit; so will you become in truth enlightened, and progress ever onward and upward to the Kingdom of God. Then shall your hearts be prepared to receive the glad tidings, your eyes shall be opened and you will see the Glory of God; your ears shall be unstopped and you will hear the call of the Kingdom, and with tongue made eloquent shall you call men to the realization of the Divine Power and Love of God!

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 64)

Lift up your hearts above the present and look with eyes of faith into the future! Today the seed is sown, the grain falls upon the earth, but behold the day will come when it shall rise a glorious tree and the branches thereof shall be laden with fruit. Rejoice and be glad that this day has dawned, try to

realize its power, for it is indeed wonderful! God has crowned you with honour and in your hearts has He set a radiant star; verily the light thereof shall brighten the whole world!

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 68)

I pray to God that daily ye may advance in spirituality, that God's love may be more and more manifested in you, that the thoughts of your hearts may be purified, and that your faces may be ever turned towards Him. May you one and all approach to the threshold of unity, and enter into the Kingdom. May each of you be like unto a flaming torch, lighted and burning bright with the fire of the Love of God.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 74)

Every heart should radiate unity, so that the Light of the one Divine Source of all may shine forth bright and luminous. We must not consider the separate waves alone, but the entire sea. We should rise from the individual to the whole. The spirit is as one great ocean and the waves thereof are the souls of men.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 84)

May this boundless love so fill your hearts and minds that sadness may find no room to enter and may you with joyful hearts soar like birds into the Divine Radiance.

May your hearts become clear and pure like unto polished mirrors in which may be reflected the full glory of the Sun of Truth.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 95)

The heart's ambitions should ascend to a more glorious goal, mental activity should rise to higher levels! Men should hold in their souls the vision of celestial perfection, and there prepare a dwelling-place for the inexhaustible bounty of the Divine Spirit.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 99)

We work and pray for the unity of mankind, that all the races of the earth may become one race, all the countries one country, and that all hearts may beat as one heart, working together for perfect unity and brotherhood.

Praise be to God that our efforts are sincere and that our hearts are turned to the Kingdom. Our greatest longing is that truth may be established in the world, and in this hope we draw near to one another in love and affection. Each and all are whole-hearted and selfless, willing to sacrifice all personal ambition to the grand ideal towards which they strive: Brotherly love and peace and union among men!

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 100)

If the heart turns away from the blessings God offers how can it hope for happiness? If it does not put its hope and trust in God's Mercy, where can it find rest? Oh, trust in God! for His Bounty is everlasting, and in His Blessings, for they are superb. Oh! put your faith in the Almighty, for He faileth not and His goodness endureth for ever! 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 parched souls of men! Is it wise to turn away from such a loving Father, Who showers His blessings upon us, and to choose rather to be slaves of matter?

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 108)

. Strive therefore, with heart and soul, to follow the precepts of the Blessed Perfection, and rest assured that if ye succeed in living the life he marks out for you, Eternal Life and everlasting joy in the Heavenly Kingdom will be yours, and celestial sustenance will be sent to strengthen you all your days.

It is my heartfelt prayer that each one of you may attain to this perfect joy!

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 114)

Why is man so hard of heart? It is because he does not yet know God. If he had knowledge of God he could not act in direct opposition to His laws; if he were spiritually minded such a line of conduct would be impossible to him. If only the laws and precepts of the prophets of God had been believed, understood and followed, wars would no longer darken the face of the earth.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 115)

Exert yourselves so that this glorious teaching may encircle the globe, and that spirituality may be infused into the hearts of men.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 167)

Now I say unto you, bear this on your hearts and in your minds. Verily your light shall illumine the whole world, your spirituality shall affect the heart of things. You shall in truth become the lighted torches of the globe. Fear not, neither be dismayed, for your light shall penetrate the densest darkness. This is the Promise of God, which I give unto you. Rise! and serve the Power of God!

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 168)

Thus, strive to follow the example of these Divine Beings, drink from Their fountain, be illumined by Their Light, and to the world be as symbols of the Mercy and Love of God. Be unto the world as rain and clouds of mercy, as suns of truth; be a celestial army, and you shall indeed conquer the city of hearts.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 171)

Be thankful unto God that Bahá'u'lláh has given us a firm and solid foundation. He left no place for sadness in hearts, and the writings of His sacred pen contain consolation for the whole world. He had the words of truth, and anything that is contrary to His teaching is false. The chief aim of all His work was to do away with division.

The testament of Bahá'u'lláh is a Rain of Goodness, a Sun of Truth, Water of Life, the Holy Spirit. Thus open your hearts to receive the full power of His Beauty, and I will pray for you all that this joy may be yours.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 172)

But if you turn the mirror of your spirits heavenwards, the heavenly constellations and the rays of the Sun of Reality will be reflected in your hearts, and the virtues of the Kingdom will be obtained.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 176)

from the writings of Shoghi Effend

With unity of purpose firmly established in our minds, with every trace of personal animosity banished from our hearts, and with the spirit of whole-hearted and sustained fellowship kindled in our souls, can we hope to deliver effectively the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, and execute faithfully the various provisions of our Beloved's Will and Testament.

Steadfast in our faith, firm in our union, abounding in our hope, fervent in our spirit, and selfless in our labors, let us arise and with prayerful hearts make another and supreme effort to fulfill these last words of our Beloved, His most cherished desire:

(Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Administration, p. 36)

Forgetful of the past and its vicissitudes, conscious of the need for renewed and combined effort, freed from all earthly limitations and motives, with every lingering trace of ill-feeling forever banished from our hearts, freshly united and determined, let us join in deep and silent communion with the ever-watchful Spirit of our beloved Abdu'l-Bahá, and with humility and earnestness supplicate for the guidance that will enable us to fulfil the task which is now committed to our charge.

(Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Administration, p. 44)

Is not faith but another word for implicit obedience, whole-hearted allegiance, uncompromising adherence to that which we believe is the revealed and express will of God, however perplexing it might first appear, however at variance with the shadowy views, the impotent doctrines, the crude theories, the idle imaginings, the fashionable conceptions of a transient and troublous age? If we are to falter or hesitate, if our love for Him should fail to direct us and keep us within His path, if we desert Divine and emphatic principles, what hope can we any more cherish for healing the ills and sicknesses of this world?

(Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Administration, p. 62)