

Gifts of Paradise

*Give me to drink of the river that is life indeed, whose waters have
streamed forth from the Paradise (Ridván)...*

Bahá'u'lláh

1. O SON OF MAN!

Veiled in My immemorial being and in the ancient eternity of My essence, I knew My love for thee; therefore I created thee, have engraved on thee Mine image and revealed to thee My beauty.

O SON OF MAN!

I loved thy creation, hence I created thee. Wherefore, do thou love Me, that I may name thy name and fill thy soul with the spirit of life.

Bahá'u'lláh, The Hidden Words / Part One, #s 3, 4

2. O SON OF BEING!

Love Me, that I may love thee. If thou lovest Me not, My love can in no wise reach thee. Know this, O servant.

O SON OF BEING!

Thy Paradise is My love; thy heavenly home, reunion with Me. Enter therein and tarry not. This is that which hath been destined for thee in Our kingdom above and Our exalted dominion.

O SON OF MAN!

If thou lovest Me, turn away from thyself; and if thou seekest My pleasure, regard not thine own; that thou mayest die in Me and I may eternally live in thee.

Bahá'u'lláh, The Hidden Words / Part One, #s 5, 6, 7

3. Consider the hour at which the supreme Manifestation of God revealeth Himself unto men. Ere that hour cometh, the Ancient Being, Who is still unknown of men and hath not as yet given utterance to the Word of God, is Himself the All-Knower in a world devoid of any man that hath known Him. He is indeed the Creator without a creation. For at the very moment preceding His Revelation, each and every created thing shall be made to yield up its soul to God. This is indeed the Day of which it hath been written: "Whose shall be the Kingdom this Day?" And none can be found ready to answer!

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh: LXXVIII

4. Say: This is the Paradise on whose foliage the wine of utterance hath imprinted the testimony: "He that was hidden from the eyes of men is revealed, girded with sovereignty and power!" This is the Paradise, the rustling of whose leaves

proclaims: "O ye that inhabit the heavens and the earth! There hath appeared what hath never previously appeared. He Who, from everlasting, had concealed His Face from the sight of creation is now come." From the whispering breeze that wafteth amidst its branches there cometh the cry: "He Who is the sovereign Lord of all is made manifest. The Kingdom is God's," while from its streaming waters can be heard the murmur: "All eyes are gladdened, for He Whom none hath beheld, Whose secret no one hath discovered, hath lifted the veil of glory, and uncovered the countenance of Beauty."

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh: XIV

5. This is the Day whereon the Ocean of God's mercy hath been manifested unto men, the Day in which the Day Star of His loving-kindness hath shed its radiance upon them, the Day in which the clouds of His bountiful favor have overshadowed the whole of mankind. Now is the time to cheer and refresh the down-cast through the invigorating breeze of love and fellowship, and the living waters of friendliness and charity.

They who are the beloved of God, in whatever place they gather and whomsoever they may meet, must evince, in their attitude towards God, and in the manner of their celebration of His praise and glory, such humility and submissiveness that every atom of the dust beneath their feet may attest the depth of their devotion. The conversation carried by these holy souls should be informed with such power that these same atoms of dust will be thrilled by its influence. They should conduct themselves in such manner that the earth upon which they tread may never be allowed to address to them such words as these: "I am to be preferred above you. For witness, how patient I am in bearing the burden which the husbandman layeth upon me. I am the instrument that continually imparteth unto all beings the blessings with which He Who is the Source of all grace hath entrusted me. Notwithstanding the honor conferred upon me, and the unnumbered evidences of my wealth -- a wealth that supplieth the needs of all creation -- behold the measure of my humility, witness with what absolute submissiveness I allow myself to be trodden beneath the feet of men...."

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh: V

6. Justice is, in this day, bewailing its plight, and Equity groaneth beneath the yoke of oppression. The thick clouds of tyranny have darkened the face of the earth, and enveloped its peoples. Through the movement of Our Pen of glory We have, at the bidding of the omnipotent Ordainer, breathed a new life into every human frame, and instilled into every word a fresh potency. All created things proclaim the evidences of this world-wide regeneration. This is the most great, the most joyful tidings imparted by the Pen of this wronged One to mankind. Wherefore fear ye, O My well-beloved ones? Who is it that can dismay you? A touch of moisture sufficeth to dissolve the hardened clay out of which this perverse generation is molded. The mere act of your gathering together is enough to scatter the forces of these vain and worthless people....

7. Every man of insight will, in this day, readily admit that the counsels which the Pen of this wronged One hath revealed constitute the supreme animating power for the advancement of the world and the exaltation of its peoples. Arise, O people, and, by the power of God's might, resolve to gain the victory over your own selves, that haply the whole earth may be freed and sanctified from its servitude to the gods of its idle fancies -- gods that have inflicted such loss upon, and are responsible for the misery of, their wretched worshipers. These idols form the obstacle that impedeth man in his efforts to advance in the path of perfection. We cherish the hope that the Hand of Divine power may lend its assistance to mankind, and deliver it from its state of grievous abasement.

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh: XLIII

8. This Day a door is open wider than both heaven and earth. The eye of the mercy of Him Who is the Desire of the worlds is turned towards all men. An act, however infinitesimal, is, when viewed in the mirror of the knowledge of God, mightier than a mountain. Every drop proffered in His path is as the sea in that mirror. For this is the Day which the one true God, glorified be He, hath announced in all His Books, unto His Prophets and His Messengers.

This is a Revelation, under which, if a man shed for its sake one drop of blood, myriads of oceans will be his recompense.

Bahá'u'lláh, cited in *The Advent of Divine Justice*

9. The first duty prescribed by God for His servants is the recognition of Him Who is the Day Spring of His Revelation and the Fountain of His

laws, Who representeth the Godhead in both the Kingdom of His Cause and the world of creation. Whoso achieveth this duty hath attained unto all good; and whoso is deprived thereof, hath gone astray, though he be the author of every righteous deed. It behoveth every one 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.

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh: CLV

10. If it be your wish, O people, to know God and to discover the greatness of His might, look, then, upon Me with Mine own eyes, and not with the eyes of anyone besides Me. Ye will, otherwise, be never capable of recognizing Me, though ye ponder My Cause as long as My Kingdom endureth, and meditate upon all created things throughout the eternity of God, the Sovereign Lord of all, the Omnipotent, the Ever-Abiding, the All-Wise. Thus have We manifested the truth of Our Revelation, that haply the people may be roused from their heedlessness, and be of them that understand.

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh: CXXVII

11. We can well perceive how the whole human race is encompassed with great, with incalculable afflictions. We see it languishing on its bed of sickness, sore-tried and disillusioned. They that are intoxicated by self-conceit have interposed themselves between it and the Divine and infallible Physician. Witness how they have entangled all men, themselves included, in the mesh of their devices. They can neither discover the cause of the disease, nor have they any knowledge of the remedy. They have conceived the straight to be crooked, and have imagined their friend an enemy.

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh: CVI

12. Call out to Zion, O Carmel, and announce the joyful tidings: He that was hidden from mortal eyes is come! His all-conquering sovereignty is manifest; His all-encompassing splendor is revealed. Beware lest thou hesitate or halt. Hasten forth and circumambulate the City of God that hath descended from heaven, the celestial Kaaba round which have circled in adoration the favored of God, the pure in heart, and the company of the most exalted angels. Oh, how I long to announce unto every spot on the surface of the earth, and to carry to each one of its cities, the glad-tidings of this Revelation -- a Revelation to which the heart of Sinai hath been attracted, and in whose name the

Burning Bush is calling: 'Unto God, the Lord of Lords, belong the kingdoms of earth and heaven.' Verily this is the Day in which both land and sea rejoice at this announcement, the Day for which have been laid up those things which God, through a bounty beyond the ken of mortal mind or heart, hath destined for revelation. Ere long will God sail His Ark upon thee, and will manifest the people of Bahá who have been mentioned in the Book of Names.

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh: XI

13. The world's equilibrium hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this most great, this new World Order. Mankind's ordered life hath been revolutionized through the agency of this unique, this wondrous System -- the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed.

Immerse yourselves in the ocean of My words, that ye may unravel its secrets, and discover all the pearls of wisdom that lie hid in its depths. Take heed that ye do not vacillate in your determination to embrace the truth of this Cause -- a Cause through which the potentialities of the might of God have been revealed, and His sovereignty established. With faces beaming with joy, hasten ye unto Him. This is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future. Let him that seeketh, attain it; and as to him that hath refused to seek it -- verily, God is Self-Sufficient, above any need of His creatures.

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh: LXX

14. He is the Most Holy, the Most Glorious.

Praise be to Thee, O Thou our Lord, the Most Merciful! This is one of the days of the festival Thou has named Ridvan, a festival wherein Thou has manifest Thy sovereignty over all who are in the Thy heavens and on Thine earth, notwithstanding that the people have arisen to harm Thee and to extinguish Thy light, and wherein the Luminary of Thy oneness hath shone forth from the dayspring of Thy House upon all things visible and invisible.

I beseech Thee, O my God, by this Day and by Him Whom Thou hast made to be the Dawning-Place of Thy revelation and the Dayspring of Thine inspiration, to ordain for Thy loved ones the good of this world and of the world to come, and to number them with those whom naught can distract from Thy remembrance and praise. Strengthen, then, their hearts in such wise that the ascendancy of those who have disbelieved in Thee and in Thy signs may never dismay them.

O Lord! Illumine their eyes with the light of Thy knowledge, and their hearts with the splendor of Thy countenance. Bind, then, their souls and spirits together, that through their unity all the inhabitants of Thy dominion may become united.

Potent art Thou over all who are in the kingdoms of Thy revelation and Thy creation. Thou, verily, art the Almighty, the All-Bountiful. Praised be Thou, O Lord of the worlds!

Bahá'u'lláh, Days of Remembrance / Ridván

Personal Prayers

Reflection on the Texts

Discussion

If God is the Unknowable, what is it to know God?

In 1863 Bahá'u'lláh (The Glory of God) retired to a garden island in the Euphrates River near Baghdad to make ready for His departure to Turkey. He had been forced into exile as a Prisoner of the Ottoman Empire. On this island, over the course of 12 days He welcomed friends and family. Throngs of people displayed their love and devotion for this Personage, known for His remarkable spiritual effect upon the city. It was in this fragrant, peaceful, and joyous atmosphere that Baha'u'llah made His mission public to His companions. This site is now known as the Garden of Paradise (Ridvan).