

O QUESTIONING LOVER!

Ready is He to answer whosoever calleth upon Him. . .

Bahá'u'lláh

#1 O my God! O my God! Glory be unto Thee for that Thou hast confirmed me to the confession of Thy oneness, attracted me unto the word of Thy singleness, enkindled me by the fire of Thy love, and occupied me with Thy mention and the service of Thy friends and maidservants.

O Lord, help me to be meek and lowly, and strengthen me in 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 love of the world and attachment to its qualities.

O God! Sanctify me from all else save Thee, purge me from the dross of sins and transgressions, and cause me to possess a spiritual heart and conscience.

Verily, Thou art merciful and, verily, Thou art the Most Generous, Whose help is sought by all men.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

#2 And now concerning thy question regarding the nature of religion. Know thou that they who are truly wise have likened the world unto the human temple. As the body of man needeth a garment to clothe it, so the body of mankind must needs be adorned with the mantle of justice and wisdom. Its robe is the Revelation vouchsafed unto it by God. Whenever this robe hath fulfilled its purpose, the Almighty will assuredly renew it. For every age requireth a fresh measure of the light of God. Every Divine Revelation hath been sent down in a manner that befitted the circumstances of the age in which it hath appeared.

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XXXIV

#3 As to thy question concerning the origin of creation. Know assuredly that God’s creation hath existed from eternity, and will continue to exist forever. Its beginning hath had no beginning, and its end knoweth no end. His name, the Creator, presupposeth a creation, even as His title, the Lord of Men, must involve the existence of a servant.

As to those sayings, attributed to the Prophets of old, such as, “In the beginning was

God; there was no creature to know Him,” and “The Lord was alone; with no one to adore Him,” the meaning of these and similar sayings is clear and evident, and should at no time be misapprehended. To this same truth bear witness these words which He hath revealed: “God was alone; there was none else besides Him. He will always remain what He hath ever been.” Every discerning eye will readily perceive that the Lord is now manifest, yet there is none to recognize His glory. By this is meant that the habitation wherein the Divine Being dwelleth is far above the reach and ken of anyone besides Him. Whatsoever in the contingent world can either be expressed or apprehended, can never transgress the limits which, by its inherent nature, have been imposed upon it. God, alone, transcendeth such limitations. He, verily, is from everlasting. No peer or partner has been, or can ever be, joined with Him. No name can be compared with His Name. No pen can portray His nature, neither can any tongue depict His glory. He will, forever, remain immeasurably exalted above anyone except Himself.

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

#4 And now, concerning thy question regarding the creation of man. Know thou that all men have been created in the nature made by God, the Guardian, the Self-Subsisting. Unto each one hath been prescribed a preordained measure, as decreed in God’s mighty and guarded Tablets. All that which ye potentially possess can, however, be manifested only as a result of your own volition. Your own acts testify to this truth. Consider, for instance, that which hath been forbidden, in the Bayán, unto men. God hath in that Book, and by His behest, decreed as lawful whatsoever He hath pleased to decree, and hath, through the power of His sovereign might, forbidden whatsoever He elected to forbid. To this testifieth the text of that Book. Will ye not bear witness? Men, however, have wittingly broken His law. Is such a behavior to be attributed to God, or to their proper selves? Be fair in your judgment. Every good thing is of God, and every evil thing is from yourselves. Will

ye not comprehend? This same truth hath been revealed in all the Scriptures, if ye be of them that understand. Every act ye meditate is as clear to Him as is that act when already accomplished. There is none other God besides Him. His is all creation and its empire. All stands revealed before Him; all is recorded in His holy and hidden Tablets. This knowledge of God, however, should not be regarded as having caused the actions of men, just as your own previous knowledge that a certain event is to occur, or your desire that it should happen, is not and can never be the reason for its occurrence.

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, LXXVII

#5 Thou hast, moreover, asked Me concerning the nature of the celestial spheres. To comprehend their nature, it would be necessary to inquire into the meaning of the allusions that have been made in the Books of old to the celestial spheres and the heavens, and to discover the character of their relationship to this physical world, and the influence which they exert upon it. Every heart is filled with wonder at so bewildering a theme, and every mind is perplexed by its mystery. God, alone, can fathom its import. The learned men, that have fixed at several thousand years the life of this earth, have failed, throughout the long period of their observation, to consider either the number or the age of the other planets. Consider, moreover, the manifold divergencies that have resulted from the theories propounded by these men. Know thou that every fixed star hath its own planets, and every planet its own creatures, whose number no man can compute.

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, LXXXII

#6 As to thy question whether the physical world is subject to any limitations, know thou that the comprehension of this matter dependeth upon the observer himself. In one sense, it is limited; in another, it is exalted beyond all limitations. The one true God hath everlastingly existed, and will everlastingly continue to exist. His creation, likewise, hath had no beginning, and will have no end. All that is created, however, is preceded by a cause. This fact, in itself, establisheth, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the unity of the Creator.

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, LXXXII

#7 As to thy question regarding the sayings of the leaders of past religions. Every wise and praiseworthy man will no doubt eschew such vain and profitless talk. 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.

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XXXIV

#8 Thou hast asked Me whether man, as apart from the Prophets of God and His chosen ones, will retain, after his physical death, the self-same individuality, personality, consciousness, and understanding that characterize his life in this world. If this should be the case, how is it, thou hast observed, that whereas such slight injuries to his mental faculties as fainting and severe illness deprive him of his understanding and consciousness, his death, which must involve the decomposition of his body and the dissolution of its elements, is powerless to destroy that understanding and extinguish that consciousness? How can anyone imagine that man's consciousness and personality will be maintained, when the very instruments necessary to their existence and function will have completely disintegrated?

Know thou that the soul of man is exalted above, and is independent of all infirmities of body or mind. That a sick person showeth signs of weakness is due to the hindrances that interpose themselves between his soul and his body, for the soul itself remaineth unaffected by any bodily ailments. ...

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, LXXX

#9 As to thy question regarding discoveries made by the soul after it hath put off its human form: certainly, that world is a world of perceptions and discoveries, for the interposed veil will be lifted away and the human spirit will

gaze upon souls that are above, below, and on a par with itself. It is similar to the condition of a human being in the womb, where his eyes are veiled, and all things are hidden away from him. Once he is born out of the uterine world and entereth this life, he findeth it, with relation to that of the womb, to be a place of perceptions and discoveries, and he observeth all things through his outer eye. In the same way, once he hath departed this life, he will behold in that world whatsoever was hidden from him here: but there he will look upon and comprehend all things with his inner eye. There will he gaze on his fellows and his peers, and those in the ranks above him, and those below. As for what is meant by the equality of souls in the all-highest realm, it is this: the souls of the believers, at the time when they first become manifest in the world of the body, are equal, and each is sanctified and pure. In this world, however, they will begin to differ one from another, some achieving the highest station, some a middle one, others remaining at the lowest stage of being. Their equal status is at the beginning of their existence; the differentiation followeth their passing away.

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: 145

#10 Today questions of the utmost importance are facing humanity, questions peculiar to this radiant century. In former centuries there was not even mention of them. Inasmuch as this is the century of illumination, the century of humanity, the century of divine bestowals, these questions are being presented for the expression of public opinion, and in all the countries of the world, discussion is taking place looking to their solution.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace: 51.

#11 Pure and sanctified art Thou, O my God! How can the pen move and the ink flow after the breezes of loving-kindness have ceased, and the signs of bounty have vanished, when the sun of abasement hath risen, and the swords of calamity are drawn, when the heavens of sorrow have been

upraised, and the darts of affliction and the lances of vengeance have rained from the clouds of power — in such wise that the signs of joy have departed from all hearts, and the tokens of gladness have been erased from every horizon, the gates of hope have been shut, the mercy of the supernal breeze hath ceased to waft over the rose-garden of faithfulness, and the whirlwind of extinction hath struck the tree of existence. The pen is groaning, and the ink bewaileth its plight, and the tablet is awestruck at this cry. The mind is in turmoil from the taste of this pain and sorrow, and the divine Nightingale calleth: “Alas! Alas! for all that hath been made to appear.” And this, O my God, is from naught but Thy hidden bounties.

Bahá'u'lláh

Your Personal Prayers

Reflections on the Text

Discussion

Quote

- 1 What is meant by the “fire of Thy love”?
- 2 What garment needs adorn the body of mankind?
- 4 What role does volition play in reaching our potential?
- 5 In our solar system, life only exists on earth. *T or F*
- 7 Success or failure, gain or loss, must, therefore, depend upon man’s good fortune. *T or F*
- 8 Please comment on the following quote of Bahá'u'lláh: *How can anyone imagine that man’s consciousness and personality will be maintained, when the very instruments necessary to their existence and function will have completely disintegrated?*
- 9 Here we find the expression the “inner eye”. What is it likened to?