

*Hath
the
Hour
Come?*



*Bahá'u'lláh's
Epistle to
Christians*



Hath the Hour Come?

Bahá'u'lláh's Epistle to Christians

With added
footnotes

www.TheKnowledgeOfGod.com



www.GlobalPerspective.org

Then I saw an angel flying in mid-heaven, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those on earth, to every nation and tribe, language and people. He cried in a loud voice, “Fear God and pay him homage; *for the hour of his judgment has come!*”

Christ (Rev. 14:6-7 NEB)

“Hath the Hour come?” “Nay, more; it hath passed, by Him Who is the Revealer of clear tokens! Verily, the Inevitable is come, and He, the True One, hath appeared with proof and testimony.”¹

Bahá'u'lláh

No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven...

Christ (Matt. 24:36 NIV)

The Hour which We had concealed from the knowledge of the peoples of the earth...hath come to pass.¹

Bahá'u'lláh

Verily this is none other than the sovereign Truth; it is the Path which God hath laid out for all that are in heaven and on earth.¹

The Báb

Hath the Hour Come?

Copyright © 2011 by Hushidar Hugh Motlagh

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America.

The New English Bible (NEB). Copyright © the Delegates of the Oxford University Press and the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press, 1961, 1970. Reprinted by permission.

Holy Bible, New International Version (NIV). Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984. International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

The Holy Bible, New King James Version (NKJ). Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

Cover design by Lori Block



Contents

Part I

The Hour of His Judgment Has Come!



*Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to Christians:
The Most Holy Tablet*



Part II

**Selections from
Bahá'í Scriptures**

*Selections from Bahá'u'lláh's Epistle to
the Pope and Religious Leaders of His Time*



*A Brief Passage from the Báb
to Muhammad Sháh*



*The Báb's Meditations and Prayers
to God While in Prison*



*Bahá'u'lláh's Meditations and Prayers
to God While in Prison*



Attributes of a True Seeker



*The Joys and Blessings of
Living in the City of God*

The Hour of His Judgment Has Come

Revelation 14:7

Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to Christians

Bahá'u'lláh wrote an Epistle containing His strongest and most urgent appeals to Christians to investigate His claim. This book contains most of Bahá'u'lláh's Epistle—called *The Most Holy Tablet*—along with biblical references offered by the present author in the footnotes. You may wish to read the Epistle twice, once without looking at the footnotes and again with the footnotes.

As you read it, see if you can remember anyone who has spoken with the power and authority with which Bahá'u'lláh speaks. Look through any sacred Scripture and see if you can find any epistle like it. It is endowed with an unprecedented power and authority. Only God speaks in this language.

Fear, emotionalism, and attachment to names and numbers cause two short-circuits; one in the heart, the other in the mind. The short-circuit in our hearts prevents us from responding with our “spiritual instinct” to the Word of God. The short-circuit in our minds prevents us from reasoning or thinking in a rational way. Mending these short-circuits are the two challenges every seeker of truth faces.

The Word of God is so supreme, so distinguished, that it shines as brightly as the sun. Can anyone with good eyes fail to see the sun? Bahá'u'lláh testifies to the distinction of divine Word:

Behold, how lofty is the station, and how consummate the virtue, of these verses which He hath declared to be His surest testimony, His infallible proof, the evidence of His all-subduing power, and a revelation of the potency of His will. He, the divine King, hath proclaimed the undisputed supremacy of the verses of His Book over all things that testify to His truth. For compared with all other proofs and tokens, the divinely-revealed verses shine as the sun, whilst all others are as stars. To the peoples of the world they are the abiding testimony, the incontrovertible proof, the shining light of the ideal King. Their excellence is unrivaled, their virtue nothing can surpass. They are the treasury of the divine pearls and the depository of the divine mysteries... Through them floweth the river of divine knowledge, and gloweth the fire of His ancient and consummate wisdom.¹

Bahá'u'lláh did not attend school, yet He wrote the equivalent of a hundred volumes, without hesitation or a change of mind! This is not a secret or private miracle, but one visible for all to see for all time.

Once again, Bahá'u'lláh points to the Word of God as the ultimate evidence:

Therefore, should a person arise and bring forth a myriad verses, discourses, epistles, and prayers, none of which have been acquired through learning, what conceivable excuse could justify those that reject them, and deprive themselves of the potency of their grace? What answer could they give when once their soul hath ascended and departed from its gloomy temple? Could they seek to justify themselves by saying: "We have clung to a certain tradition, and not having

beheld the literal fulfillment thereof, we have
therefore...kept remote from the law of God?"²

Read the following Epistle from Bahá'u'lláh with your heart and soul. Ponder its meaning. Allow your "spiritual instinct" to respond. Let your soul bask in its beauty, power, and uniqueness. Try to remember if you have ever heard or seen any human being speak in this language.

The Most Holy Tablet✽

In the name of the Lord, the Lord of great glory.

...Say,¹ O followers of the Son!² Have ye shut out yourselves from Me by reason of My Name? Wherefore ponder ye not in your hearts? Day and night ye have been calling upon your Lord, the Omnipotent, but when He [Bahá'u'lláh] came from the heaven of eternity in His great glory, ye turned aside from him...

Consider those who rejected the Spirit³ when He came unto them with manifest dominion. How numerous the Pharisees who had secluded themselves in synagogues in His name, lamenting over their separation from Him, and yet when the portals of reunion were flung open...they disbelieved in God, the Exalted, the Mighty. They failed to attain His presence, notwithstanding that His advent had been promised them in the Book of Isaiah as well as in the Books of the Prophets and the Messengers. No one from among them turned his face towards the Dayspring of divine bounty except such as were destitute of any power amongst men. And yet, today, every man endowed with power and invested with sovereignty prideth himself on His Name. Moreover, call thou to mind the one who sentenced Jesus to death. He was

✽ The footnotes do not belong to the original text. They are added by this author as an aid to those who may wish to study the links between Bahá'u'lláh's Words and the Bible.

1. The word “*say*” appears frequently in Bahá'u'lláh's Writings. It is an abbreviation of the expression: *Thus says the Lord*.
2. Perhaps a reference to the passage: "No one knows *the Son* [Jesus] except the Father..." (Matt. 11:27).
3. *The Spirit of God*, a title bestowed on Christ, in both the Islamic and the Bahá'í Scriptures.

the most learned of His age in His own country,⁴ whilst he who was only a fisherman⁵ believed in Him. Take good heed and be of them that observe the warning.

...We, verily, have come for your sakes, and have borne the misfortunes of the world for your salvation. Flee ye the One Who hath sacrificed His life that ye may be quickened? Fear God, O followers of the Spirit, and walk not in the footsteps of every divine [religious leader] that hath gone far astray. Do ye imagine that He seeketh His own interests, when He hath, at all times, been threatened by the swords of the enemies; or that He seeketh the vanities of the world, after He hath been imprisoned in the most desolate of cities? Be fair in your judgment and follow not the footsteps of the unjust.

...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.⁶ Beware lest ye dispute that which He proclaimeth, even as the people before you disputed His

4. Most likely Bahá'u'lláh refers to Annas, who was the most prestigious, influential, and learned religious leader among the Jews at the time of Jesus. He served as the high priest and had several sons who also occupied that position. His son-in-law (Caiaphas) was the presiding high priest at the trial of Jesus. Because of Annas' prestige, Jesus was *first* led to him for a preliminary trial and *then* to Caiaphas. Annas and Caiaphas pronounced the same verdict: death. Caiaphas said: "It is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish" (John 11:50).

5. Peter.

6. Most likely Bahá'u'lláh refers to these verses:

I [Jesus] have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me...They [the Jews] said, "Surely this is Jesus son of Joseph; we know his father and mother. How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven?'" (John 6:38, 42).

utterances. Thus instructeth you the True One, could ye but perceive it.

...the Burning Bush calleth aloud: "He Who is the Desired One is come in His transcendent majesty." Say, Lo! The Father is come,⁷ and that which ye were promised in the Kingdom is fulfilled! This is the Word which the Son concealed, when to those around Him He said: "Ye cannot bear it now."⁸ And when the appointed time was fulfilled and the Hour had struck, the Word shone forth above the horizon of the Will of God. Beware, O followers of the Son, that ye cast it not behind your backs. Take ye fast hold of it. Better is this for you than all that ye possess. Verily He is nigh unto them that do good. The Hour which We had concealed from the knowledge of the peoples of the earth and of the favored angels hath come to pass.⁹ Say, verily, He hath testified of Me, and I do testify of Him.¹⁰ Indeed, He hath purposed no one other than Me. Unto this beareth witness every fair-minded and understanding soul.

Though beset with countless afflictions, We summon the people unto God, the Lord of names. Say, strive ye to attain that which ye have been promised in the Books of God, and walk not in the way of the ignorant. My body hath endured imprisonment that ye may be released from the bondage of self. Set your faces then towards His countenance and follow not the footsteps of every hostile oppressor. Verily, He hath

-
7. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father..." (Matt. 16:27).
 8. "I [Jesus] have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12).
 9. "I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" (Rev. 3:3, Also Mark 13:32). "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Matt. 24:36).
 10. "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me" (John 15:26).

consented to be sorely abased that ye may attain unto glory, and yet, ye are disporting yourselves in the vale of heedlessness. He, in truth, liveth in the most desolate of abodes for your sakes, whilst ye dwell in your palaces.

...Lo! He is come in the sheltering shadow of Testimony, invested with conclusive proof and evidence, and those who truly believe in Him regard His presence as the embodiment of the Kingdom of God. Blessed is the man who turneth towards Him, and woe betide such as deny or doubt Him.

Announce thou unto the priests: Lo! He Who is the Ruler is come. Step out from behind the veil in the name of thy Lord, He Who layeth low the necks of all men. Proclaim then unto all mankind the glad-tidings of this mighty, this glorious Revelation. Verily, He Who is the Spirit of Truth is come to guide you unto all truth. He speaketh not as prompted by His own self, but as bidden by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.¹¹

Say, this is the One Who hath glorified the Son¹² and hath exalted His Cause. Cast away, O peoples of the earth, that which ye have and take fast hold of that which ye are bidden by the All-Powerful, He Who is the Bearer of the Trust of God. Purge ye your ears and set your hearts towards Him

-
11. "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak..." (John 16:13).
 12. "...when he, the Spirit of truth, comes...He will bring glory to me [Christ]..." (John 16:13-14).

The deepest wisdom which the sages have uttered, the profoundest learning which any mind hath unfolded, the arts which the ablest hands have produced, the influence exerted by the most potent of rulers, are but manifestations of the quickening power released by His [Jesus'] transcendent, His all-pervasive, and resplendent Spirit. We testify that when He came into the world, He shed the splendor of His glory upon all created things. Bahá'u'lláh (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 85-86).

that ye may hearken to the most wondrous Call which hath been raised from Sinai...

O concourse of priests! Leave the bells, and come forth, then, from your churches. It behoveth you, in this day, to proclaim aloud the Most Great Name among the nations. Prefer ye to be silent, whilst every stone and every tree shouteth aloud: "The Lord¹³ is come in His great glory!"? Well is it with the man who hasteneth unto Him. Verily, he is numbered among them whose names will be eternally recorded¹⁴ and who will be mentioned by the Concourse on High. Thus hath it been decreed by the Spirit in this wondrous Tablet. He that summoneth men in My name is, verily, of Me, and he will show forth that which is beyond the power of all that are on earth. Follow ye the Way of the Lord and walk not in the footsteps of them that are sunk in heedlessness. Well is it with the slumberer who is stirred by the Breeze of God and ariseth from amongst the dead, directing his steps towards the Way of the Lord. Verily, such a man is regarded, in the sight of God, the True One, as a jewel amongst men and is reckoned with the blissful.

Say: In the East the light of His Revelation hath broken; in the West have appeared the signs of His dominion.¹⁵ Ponder this in your hearts, O people, and be not of those who have turned a deaf ear to the admonitions of Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Praised. Let the Breeze of God awaken you. Verily, it hath wafted over the world. Well is it with him that hath discovered the fragrance thereof and been accounted among the well-assured.

13. Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" (Luke 13:35).

14. Revelation 2:15; 21:27.

15. "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man" (Matt. 24:27).

O concourse of bishops! Ye are the stars of the heaven of My knowledge. My mercy desireth not that ye should fall upon the earth. My justice, however, declareth: “This is that which the Son hath decreed.” And whatsoever hath proceeded out of His blameless, His truth-speaking, trustworthy mouth, can never be altered.¹⁶ The bells, verily, peal out My Name, and lament over Me, but My spirit rejoiceth with evident gladness. The body of the Loved One yearneth for the cross, and His head is eager for the spear in the path of the All-Merciful. The ascendancy of the oppressor can in no wise deter Him from His purpose. We have summoned all created things to attain the presence of thy Lord, the King of all names. Blessed is the man that hath set his face towards God, the Lord of the Day of Reckoning.

O concourse of monks! If ye choose to follow Me, I will make you heirs of My kingdom; and if ye transgress against Me, I will, in My long-suffering, endure it patiently, and I, verily, am the Ever-forgiving, the All-Merciful...

I never passed a tree but Mine heart addressed it saying: “O would that thou wert cut down in My Name, and My body crucified upon thee.”...

Say: Blessed the slumberer who is awakened by My Breeze.¹⁷ Blessed the lifeless one who is quickened through

16. Most likely Bahá'u'lláh refers to this prophecy: "...and the stars shall fall from heaven..." (Matt. 24:29).

Bahá'u'lláh states that *stars* symbolize religious leaders. They "fall" when they fail to turn to the new Source of Light. For biblical evidence, see *In the Clouds of Glory*.

17. “Be alert, be wakeful. You do not know when the moment comes. It is like a man away from home: he has left his house and put his servants in charge, each with his own work to do, and he has ordered the doorkeeper to stay awake. Keep awake, then, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming. Evening or midnight, cock-crow or early dawn—if he comes suddenly, he must not find you asleep. And what I say to everyone: Keep awake” (Mark 13:33-37).

My reviving breaths. Blessed the eye that is solaced by gazing at My beauty. Blessed the wayfarer who directeth his steps towards the Tabernacle of My glory and majesty. Blessed the distressed one who seeketh refuge beneath the shadow of My canopy. Blessed the sore athirst who hasteneth to the soft-flowing waters of My loving-kindness. Blessed the insatiate soul who casteth away his selfish desires for love of Me and taketh his place at the banquet table¹⁸ which I have sent down from the heaven of divine bounty for My chosen ones. Blessed the abased one who layeth fast hold on the cord of My glory; and the needy one who entereth beneath the shadow of the Tabernacle of My wealth. Blessed the ignorant one who seeketh the fountain of My knowledge; and the heedless one who cleaveth to the cord of My remembrance. Blessed the soul that hath been raised to life through My quickening breath and hath gained admittance into My heavenly Kingdom. Blessed the man whom the sweet savors of reunion with Me have stirred and caused to draw nigh unto the Dayspring of My Revelation. Blessed the ear that hath heard and the tongue that hath borne witness and the eye that hath seen and recognized the Lord Himself, in His great glory and majesty, invested with grandeur and dominion...Upon him rest My mercy, My loving-kindness, My bounty and My glory.³ Bahá'u'lláh

-
18. “Blessed is the man who will sit at the feast in the kingdom of God” (Luke 14:15).

The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. Then he sent some more servants and said, “Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.” But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them (Matt. 22:2-6, see also Matt. 25:1-13).

Part II

Selections from Bahá'í Scriptures

Selections from Bahá'u'lláh's Epistle to the Pope and Religious Leaders of His Time

Bahá'u'lláh, in His time, sent Epistles to religious leaders in general and to Pope Pius IX in particular. None of them responded to His call. Here are a few messages from His Epistles:

O leaders of religion! Weigh not the Book of God with such standards and sciences as are current amongst you, for the Book itself is the unerring balance established amongst men. In this most perfect balance whatsoever the peoples and kindreds of the earth possess must be weighed, while the measure of its weight should be tested according to its own standard, did ye but know it.

The eye of My loving-kindness weepeth sore over you, inasmuch as ye have failed to recognize the One upon Whom ye have been calling in the daytime and in the night season, at even and at morn...

We have decreed, O people, that the highest and last end of all learning be the recognition of Him Who is the Object of all knowledge; and yet, behold how ye have allowed your learning to shut you out, as by a veil, from Him Who is the Dayspring of this Light, through Whom *every hidden thing hath been revealed*.⁴

O Pope! Rend the veils asunder. He Who is the Lord of Lords is come overshadowed with clouds, and the decree hath been fulfilled by God, the Almighty, the Unrestrained...He, verily, hath again come down from Heaven even as He came down from it the first time. Beware that thou dispute not with Him even as the Pharisees disputed with Him (Jesus) without a clear token or proof. On His right hand flow the living waters of grace, and on His left the choice Wine of justice, whilst before Him march the angels of Paradise, bearing the banners of His signs. Beware lest any name debar thee from God, the Creator of earth and heaven. Leave thou the world behind thee, and turn towards thy Lord, through Whom the whole earth hath been illumined... Dwellst thou in palaces whilst He Who is the King of Revelation liveth in the most desolate of abodes? Leave them unto such as desire them, and set thy face with joy and delight towards the Kingdom...Arise in the name of thy Lord, the God of Mercy, amidst the peoples of the earth, and seize thou the Cup of Life with the hands of confidence, and first drink thou therefrom, and proffer it then to such as turn towards it amongst the peoples of all faiths...

Call thou to remembrance Him Who was the Spirit (Jesus), Who when He came, the most learned of His age pronounced judgment against Him in His own country, whilst he who was only a fisherman believed in Him. Take heed, then, ye men of understanding heart! Thou, in truth, art one of the suns of the heaven of His names. Guard thyself, lest darkness spread its veils over thee, and fold thee away from His light...Consider those who opposed the Son (Jesus), when He

came unto them with sovereignty and power. How many the Pharisees who were waiting to behold Him, and were lamenting over their separation from Him! And yet, when the fragrance of His coming was wafted over them, and His beauty was unveiled, they turned aside from Him and disputed with Him...None save a very few, who were destitute of any power amongst men, turned towards His face...

The Word which the Son concealed is made manifest. It hath been sent down in the form of the human temple in this day. Blessed be the Lord Who is the Father! He, verily, is come unto the nations in His most great majesty. Turn your faces towards Him, O concourse of the righteous...’Lo! The Father is come, and that which ye were promised in the Kingdom is fulfilled!...’ My body longeth for the cross, and Mine head waiteth the thrust of the spear, in the path of the All-Merciful, that the world may be purged from its transgressions.⁵

A Brief Passage from the Báb to Muhammad Sháh

The following quotation comes from an Epistle sent by the Báb to the powerful king who had exiled Him and imprisoned Him. Notice the power and the courage with which the Báb speaks. The Epistle shows that the most powerful King is sending a serious message—an ultimatum—to a lowly servant:

Why dost thou burden thy soul with that which is far more abject than the deeds of Pharaoh, and still callest thyself one of the faithful?...Dost thou not dread the wrath of thy Lord, the Almighty, the Lord of the heavens, the Lord of all worlds? Indeed these manifest verses are conclusive testimony for those who seek true guidance...

...If thou wishest to enter the gates of Paradise, lo, they are open before thy face and no harm can reach Me from anyone...

Unto God do I commit Mine affair and yours, and He verily is the best Judge. Were ye to return, however, ye would be granted whatever ye desire of earthly possessions and of the ineffable delights of the life to come, and ye would inherit such glorious might and majesty as your minds can scarce conceive in this mortal life. But if ye fail to return then upon ye shall be your transgressions.

Ye cannot alter the things which the Almighty hath prescribed unto Me. Naught shall touch Me besides that which God, My Lord, hath pre-ordained for Me. In Him have I placed My whole trust and upon Him do the faithful place their complete reliance.⁶

By the righteousness of Him Who hath called thee into being and unto Whom ere long thou shalt return, if thou remainest, at the moment of death, a disbeliever in the signs of thy Lord thou shalt surely enter the gates of hell, and none of the deeds thy hands have wrought will profit thee, nor shalt thou find a patron nor anyone to plead for thee. Fear thou God and pride not thyself on thine earthly possessions, inasmuch as what God doth possess is better for them that tread the path of righteousness.⁷

***The Báb's Meditations
and Prayers to God
While In Prison***

Praise be unto Thee, O My Lord, for all times, heretofore and hereafter; and thanks be unto Thee, O My God, under all conditions, whether of the past or the future. The gifts Thou hast bestowed upon Me have reached their fullest measure

and the blessings Thou hast vouchsafed unto Me have attained their consummation. Naught do I now witness but the manifold evidences of Thy grace and loving-kindness, Thy bounty and gracious favors, Thy generosity and loftiness, Thy sovereignty and might, Thy splendor and Thy glory, and that which befitteth the holy court of Thy transcendent dominion and majesty and beseemeth the glorious precincts of Thine eternity and exaltation.⁸

How can I praise Thee, O Lord, for the evidences of Thy mighty splendor and for Thy wondrous sweet savors which Thou hast imparted to Me in this fortress, in such measure that nothing in the heavens or on the earth can compare with them? Thou hast watched over Me in the heart of this mountain where I am compassed by mountains on all sides. One hangeth above Me, others stand on My right and My left and yet another riseth in front of Me. Glory be unto Thee, no God is there but Thee. How often have I seen rocks from the mountain hurtling down upon Me, and Thou didst protect Me therefrom and preserved Me within the stronghold of Thy divine Unity.

Glorified and exalted art Thou, and praise be unto Thee for whatsoever Thou lovest and desirest, and thanks be unto Thee for that which Thou hast decreed and preordained. From time immemorial Thy tender mercy hath been sent down and the process of Thy creation hath been and ever is ceaseless. Thy handiwork is unlike the work of anyone besides Thee, and Thy goodly gifts are unparalleled by the gifts of anyone other than Thyself.

Praise be unto Thee, O My Beloved, and magnified be Thy Name. Ever since the hour I set foot upon this fortress till the moment I shall have departed therefrom, I behold Thee established upon Thy seat of glory and majesty, sending down upon Me the manifold tokens of Thy bountiful favor and grace. Thou beholdest that My dwelling place is but the

heart of the mountains, and Thou discernest naught in My Person except the evidences of abasement and loneliness.

Lauded be Thy Name; I render Thee thanks for every instance of Thine inscrutable Decree and offer My praise for every token of Thy tribulations. Having suffered Me to be cast into the prison, Thou didst turn it into a garden of Paradise for Me and caused it to become a chamber of the court of everlasting fellowship.

How numerous the verses Thou didst send down unto Me, and the prayers Thou didst hear Me offer unto Thee. How diverse the revelations which Thou didst call into being through Me and the experiences Thou didst witness in Me.

Magnified be Thy Name. Manifold trials have been powerless to deter Me from yielding thanks unto Thee and My shortcomings have failed to keep Me back from extolling Thy virtues. The infidels had purposed to turn My abode into one of disgrace and humiliation. But Thou hast glorified Me through My remembrance of Thee, hast exalted Me through My praise of Thee, hast graciously aided Me through the revelations of Thy oneness, and hast conferred upon Me a great honor through the effulgent splendors of Thine ancient eternity. To the fire Thou dost command, 'Be thou a soothing balm unto My Servant', and to the prison, 'Be thou a seat of tender compassion to My Servant, as a token from My presence'. Yea, I swear by Thy glory; to Me the prison hath proved to be naught but the most delightful garden of Paradise and hath served as the noblest spot in the realm above.

Praised and glorified art Thou. How often did adversities descend upon Me and Thou didst temper them and avert them through Thy gracious favor; and how many times were commotions stirred up against Me at the hand of the people, while Thou didst cause them to subside through Thy tender mercy. How numerous the occasions when the Nimrods

kindled fires wherewith to burn Me, but Thou didst make them balm for Me; and how manifold the instances when the infidels decreed My humiliation and Thou didst turn them into marks of honor for Me...

Verily Thou art the highest aspiration of every earnest seeker and the Goal of the desire of them that yearn after Thee.

Thou art He Who is ready to answer the call of such as recognize Thy divine unity, and He before Whom the faint-hearted stand in awe. Thou art the Helper of the needy, the Deliverer of the captives, the Abaser of the oppressors, the Destroyer of the wrong-doers, the God of all men, the Lord of all created things. Thine are the kingdoms of Creation and Revelation, O Thou Who art the Lord of all the worlds.

O All-Sufficient One! Thou dost suffice Me in every hardship that may descend upon Me and in every affliction that may wax great before Me. Thou art My sole Companion in My loneliness, the Delight of My heart in My solitude and My Best Beloved in My prison and in My Abode. No God is there but Thee!

Whomsoever Thou dost suffice shall not be put to grief; whomsoever Thou dost protect shall never perish; whomsoever Thou dost help shall never be abased; and he unto whom Thou turnest Thy gaze shall never be far removed from Thee.

Write down for us then whatsoever is of Thee, and forgive us for what we are. Verily Thou art the Lord of power and glory, the Lord of all the worlds. 'Far be the glory of Thy Lord, the Lord of all greatness, from what they impute to Him, and peace be upon His Apostles, and praise be unto God, the Lord of all the worlds.'⁹

***Bahá'u'lláh's Meditations
and Prayers to God
While in Prison***

Ponder and meditate these prayers and see if the One who uttered them was moved by God or by self-interest and self-glory.

Glorified art Thou, O Lord my God! Thou seest me dwelling in this prison-house that lieth behind the seas and the mountains, and knowest full well what I have endured for love of Thee and for the sake of Thy Cause. Thou art He, O my God, Who hath raised me up at Thy behest, and bidden me to occupy Thy seat, and to summon all men to the court of Thy mercy. It is Thou Who hast commanded me to tell out the things Thou didst destine for them...and Who hast enjoined on me the duty of kindling the fire of Thy love in the hearts of Thy servants, and of drawing all the peoples of the earth nearer to the habitation of Thy throne.

And when, as bidden by Thee, I arose and called out, by Thy leave, all Thy creatures, the wayward among Thy servants opposed me. Some turned away from me, others disowned my claim, a few hesitated, while others were sore perplexed, notwithstanding that Thy testimony was set forth before the followers of all religions, and Thy proof demonstrated unto all the peoples of the earth, and the signs of Thy might so powerfully manifested as to encompass the entire creation.¹⁰



...O my God! Every trouble that hath touched me in Thy path hath added to my joy and increased my gladness. I swear by Thee, O Thou Who art the King of Kings! None of the kings of the earth hath power to hinder me from remembering Thee or from extolling Thy virtues. Were they

to be leagued—as they have been leagued - against me, and to brandish their sharpest swords and most afflictive spears against me, I would not hesitate to magnify Thy name before all them that are in Thy heaven and on Thy earth. Nay rather, I would cry out and say: “This, O my Beloved, is my face which I have offered up for Thy face, and this is my spirit which I have sacrificed for Thy spirit, and this is my blood that seetheth in my veins, in its longing to be shed for love of Thee and in Thy path.”

Though—as Thou beholdest me, O my God - I be dwelling in a place within whose walls no voice can be heard except the sound of the echo, though all the gates of ease and comfort be shut against us...yet my soul hath been so inflamed by its love for Thee, that nothing whatsoever can either quench the fire of its love or abate the consuming flame of its desire. Lifting up its voice, it crieth aloud amidst Thy servants, and calleth them, at all times and under all conditions, unto Thee.

I beseech Thee, by Thy Most Great Name, to open the eyes of Thy servants, that they may behold Thee shining above the horizon of Thy majesty and glory...

Potent art Thou to do what pleaseth Thee. Thou art, verily, the Inaccessible, the All-Glorious.¹¹



I have no will but Thy will, O my Lord, and cherish no desire except Thy desire. From my pen floweth only the summons which Thine own exalted pen hath voiced, and my tongue uttereth naught save what the Most Great Spirit hath itself proclaimed in the kingdom of Thine eternity. I am stirred by nothing else except the winds of Thy will, and breathe no word except the words which, by Thy leave and Thine inspiration, I am led to pronounce.

Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art the Well-Beloved of all that have known Thee, and the Desire of the hearts of such as are devoted to Thee, inasmuch as Thou hast made me a target for the ills that I suffer in my love for Thee, and the object of the assaults launched against me in Thy path. Thy glory beareth me witness! I can, on no account, feel impatient of the adversities that I have borne in my love for Thee. From the very day Thou didst reveal Thyself unto me, I have accepted for myself every manner of tribulation. Every moment of my life my head crieth out to Thee and saith: “Would, O my Lord, that I could be raised on the spear-point in Thy path!” while my blood entreateth Thee saying: “Dye the earth with me, O my God, for the sake of Thy love and Thy pleasure!” Thou knowest that I have, at no time, sought to guard my body against any affliction, nay rather I have continually anticipated the things Thou didst ordain for me in the Tablet of Thy decree...

Thou art, verily, the Lord of Bahá, and the Beloved of his heart, and the Object of his desire, and the Inspirer of his tongue, and the Source of his soul. No God is there but Thee, the Inaccessible, the Most High. Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the Most Exalted, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.¹²



As these tribulations...were sustained in Thy path and for love of Thee, they who were afflicted by them render thanks, under all conditions, unto Thee, and say: “O Thou Who art the Delight of our hearts and the Object of our adoration! Were the clouds of Thy decree to rain down upon us the darts of affliction, we would, in our love for Thee, refuse to be impatient. We would yield Thee praise and thanksgiving, for we have recognized and are persuaded that Thou hast ordained only that which will be best for us. If our bodies be,

at times, weighed down by our troubles, yet our souls rejoice with exceeding gladness.¹³

Attributes of a True Seeker

To succeed in any task, one must be prepared. The chance of knowing God without spiritual preparation is as remote as discovering gold simply by walking and looking through gravels in the vast deserts of Africa. It is amazing, we take it for granted that to succeed in our search for gold, we must meet certain conditions, and yet when we think about knowing or discovering God, we simply wait for a miracle. Some people assume that if there was a God, He Himself would come and introduce Himself to them!

Consider this well-known verse from Jesus:

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Matthew 5:8

What is the chance that an impure heart will be able to see God? The same chance that blind eyes can see the sun. If preparation were not essential, why would Jesus say:

Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like men waiting for their Master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when He comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for Him. Christ (Luke 12:35 NIV)

In the following statement Bahá'u'lláh gives us a detailed description of the virtues that must be present in the soul, and the conditions that must be met, before we are ready or able to know God and the Manifestations of His supreme splendor in this age: Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God.

A True Seeker

When a true seeker determineth to take the step of search in the path leading to the knowledge of the Ancient of Days, he must, before all else, cleanse and purify 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, 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 vainglory, must cling unto patience and resignation, observe silence, and refrain from idle talk. For the tongue is a smouldering 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 endure a century.

That seeker should also regard backbiting as grievous error, and keep himself aloof from its dominion, inasmuch as backbiting quenqueth 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. He should treasure the companionship of those that have renounced the world, and regard avoidance of boastful and worldly people a precious benefit. At the dawn of every day he should commune with God, and with all his soul persevere in the quest of his Beloved. He should consume every wayward thought with the flame of His loving mention, and, with the swiftness of lightning, pass by all else save Him. He should succor the dispossessed, and never withhold his favor from the destitute. He should show kindness to animals, how much more unto his fellow-man, to him who is endowed with the power of utterance. He should not hesitate to offer up his life for his Beloved, nor allow the censure of the people to turn him away from the Truth. He should not wish for others that which he doth not wish for himself, nor promise that which he doth not fulfill. With all his heart should the seeker avoid fellowship with evil doers, and pray for the remission of their sins. He should forgive the sinful, and never despise his low estate, for none knoweth what his own end shall be. How often hath a sinner, at the hour of death, attained to the essence of faith, and, quaffing the immortal draught, hath taken his flight unto the celestial Concourse. And how often hath a devout believer, at the hour of his soul's ascension, been so changed as to fall into the nethermost fire. Our purpose in revealing these convincing and weighty utterances is to impress upon the seeker that he should regard all else beside God as transient, and count all things save Him, Who is the Object of all adoration, as utter nothingness.

...When the detached wayfarer and sincere seeker hath fulfilled these essential conditions, then and only then can he be called a true seeker. Whosoever he hath fulfilled the conditions implied in the verse: "Whoso maketh efforts for Us," he shall enjoy the blessing conferred by the words: "In Our ways shall We assuredly guide him."

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 negligence. 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.

...Each and every thing, however small, would be to him a revelation, leading him to his Beloved, the Object of his quest. So great shall be the discernment of this seeker that he will discriminate between truth and falsehood even as he doth distinguish the sun from shadow...He will likewise clearly distinguish all the signs of God—His wondrous utterances, His great works, and mighty deeds - from the doings, words and ways of men, even as the jeweler who knoweth the gem from the stone, or the man who distinguisheth the spring from autumn and heat from cold.¹⁴

Bahá'u'lláh

The Joys and Blessings of Living in the City of God

And he...showed me *the Holy City*, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with *the glory of God*...

Revelation 21:10-11

When the channel of the human soul is cleansed of all worldly and impeding attachments, it will...attain and enter the City of Certitude...How unspeakably glorious are the signs, the tokens, the revelations, and splendors 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 savors 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 labor 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...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 endeavor 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 favor of that grace. That city is none other than

the Word of God revealed in every age and dispensation... In these cities spiritual sustenance is bountifully provided, and incorruptible delights have been ordained. The food they bestow is the bread of heaven, and the Spirit they impart is God's imperishable blessing. Upon detached souls they bestow the gift of Unity, enrich the destitute, and offer the cup of knowledge unto them who wander in the wilderness of ignorance. All the guidance, the blessings, the learning, the understanding, the faith, and certitude, conferred upon all that is in heaven and on earth, are hidden and treasured within these Cities.¹⁵

Bahá'u'lláh

References

1. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 205.
2. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 220.
3. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 9-17
4. *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 73-74.
5. *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 83-85.
6. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, pp. 26-27.
7. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 19.
8. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, pp. 181-182.
9. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, pp. 183-186.
10. *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 106-107.
11. *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 105-106.
12. *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 108-110.
13. *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 135.
14. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 192-197.
15. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 197-220.