

“Dispensation of Baha’u’llah”

by
Shoghi Effendi

*A Course by
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February 2005*

"I remember when I first read it I had the most extraordinary feeling as if the whole universe had suddenly expanded around me and I was looking out into its dazzling star-filled immensity; all the frontiers of our understanding flew outwards; the glory of this Cause and the true station of its Central Figures were revealed to us and we were never the same again."

By Ruhiyyih Khanum

- In 1934, just 13 years after the passing of `Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, wrote *The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh to the Bahá'ís throughout the West*:
- "to call the attention of those who are destined to be the champion-builders of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh to certain fundamental verities the elucidation of which must tremendously assist them in the effective prosecution of their mighty enterprise." (Par. 5)

- In "The Dispensation Of Bahá'u'lláh," Shoghi Effendi contrasts the "slow and steady consolidation that characterizes the growth" of the "infant" Bahá'í Faith with the "devastating onrush of the forces of disintegration that are assailing the outworn institutions, both religious and secular, of present-day society" (Par. 124) in order to mobilize the faithful to a deepened understanding of this divinely inspired New World Order.

- In that letter he asked the believers:
- "[m]ight we not look upon the momentous happenings which, in the course of the past twenty years, have so deeply agitated every continent of the earth, as ominous signs simultaneously proclaiming the agonies of a disintegrating civilization and the birthpangs of that World Order -- that Ark of human salvation -- that must needs arise upon its ruins?" (Par. 127)
- In Par 126 and 128, Shoghi Effendi paints a picture of an "ailing and chaotic world" in which numerous catacstrophic events have occurred, some of which, as he notes, were foretold by Baha'u'llah -- these references though are general, not to specific events.

- To what disintegration was he referring?
- While Shoghi Effendi does not specifically identify the "disintegration" occurring in the world, a brief review of a history text quickly sets the historical framework for that 20-year period which is referenced (from 1914 to 1934).

World Events from 1914 to 1934

- World War I began in 1914 following the murder of Archduke Ferdinand - the heir to the Austrian throne - by a Serb terrorist in Sarajevo
- The United States declared war against Germany and Austria-Hungary in 1917
- World War I ended in 1918
- Women were given right to vote in 1920 with the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution
- Lindbergh completed his Trans-Atlantic flight in 1927

World Events from 1914 to 1934

- Stock Market crashed in October 1929, sending millions of people into bankruptcy and beginning what many called "The Great Depression"
- Franklin D. Roosevelt elected President of the US in 1932
- The World Economic Conference was held in London in 1933, but the participants failed to agree on international policies which would combat the worldwide depression.
- Adolph Hitler was appointed chancellor of Germany in January 1933
- The first prison camp used by Hitler to exterminate millions - Dachau - was opened in March 1933.

Bahá'í Events from 1914 to 1934

- In June 1914, `Abdu'l-Bahá instructed the Pilgrims in the Holy Land to leave
- Fall 1914, Haifa is bombarded and the remaining Bahá'ís are sent to the Druze village of Abu-Sinan for asylum
- The first International Bahá'í Congress was held in San Francisco in 1915
- `Abdu'l-Bahá revealed the Tablets of The Divine Plan in 1916 and 1917
- In 1918, Shoghi Effendi received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the American University at Beirut and began two years of service as `Abdu'l-Bahá's secretary.

Bahá'í Events from 1914 to 1934

- In 1919 the `Convention of the Covenant' was held in New York, New York
- October 1920, Shoghi Effendi began studies at Balliol College, Oxford University; he was 23 years old at the time
- In March 1921 construction began on the House of Worship in Wilmette
- In November 1921 `Abdu'l-Bahá passed away in Haifa
- In late December 1921 Shoghi Effendi returned to Haifa from England

Bahá'í Events from 1914 to 1934

- In January 1922 Mirza Muhammad-Ali's cohorts forcibly took the keys to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh; the governor of Akka ordered the keys to be handed to authorities and a guard was posted at the Shrine; the keys were returned to Shoghi Effendi in early 1923
- Bahá'í Scriptures, edited by Horace Holley, was published in 1923 -- it is the first comprehensive collection of Bahá'í Writings translated into English; later that same year, Shoghi Effendi sent an early translation of Hidden Words to America (the revised version was published in 1925 and it was retranslated in 1927)

Bahá'í Events from 1914 to 1934

- The first National Spiritual Assemblies in the Baha'i world were elected in Europe and Africa.
- In 1925 the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States was elected for the first time; Horace Holley was the first full-time secretary
- In 1926 Queen Marie of Romania learned of the Bahá'í Faith from Martha Root and later in that same year the Queen wrote a testimonial about the Faith which appeared in over 200 US and Canadian newspapers
- In February 1929, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh"

Bahá'í Events from 1914 to 1934

- During the summer of 1929, Shoghi Effendi planned and then canceled an international conference to consider how to establish national spiritual assemblies so that the Universal House of Justice may eventually be created; Shoghi Effendi canceled such a meeting because he feared confusion and misunderstanding among the believers
- The Covenant-breakers finally left the Mansion of Bahji in November 1929
- In March 1930, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh Further Considerations"
- In July 1930 Shoghi Effendi finished translation of the Kitab-i-Iqan (Book of Certitude)

Bahá'í Events from 1914 to 1934

- In November 1931, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Goal of a New World Order"
- In March 1932, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Golden Age of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh"; that same year Shoghi Effendi's translation of Nabil's *The Dawnbreakers* was published.
- In July 1932, the Greatest Holy Leaf, Bahiyyih Khanum passed away in Haifa
- In April 1933, Shoghi Effendi wrote "America and the Most Great Peace"
- In February 1934, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh"

Paragraph 1

- On the 23rd of May of this auspicious year the Bahá'í world will celebrate the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.
- We, who at this hour find ourselves standing on the threshold of the last decade of the first century of the Bahá'í era, might well pause to reflect upon the mysterious dispensations of so august, so momentous a Revelation.
- How vast, how entrancing the panorama which the revolution of four score years and ten unrolls before our eyes!
- Its towering grandeur well-nigh overwhelms us.

Paragraph 1

- To merely contemplate this unique spectacle, to visualize, however dimly, the circumstances attending the birth and gradual unfoldment of this supreme Theophany, to recall even in their barest outline the woeful struggles that proclaimed its rise and accelerated its march, will suffice to convince every unbiased observer of those eternal truths that motivate its life and which must continue to impel it forward until it achieves its destined ascendancy.

Paragraph 2

- Dominating the entire range of this fascinating spectacle towers the incomparable figure of Bahá'u'lláh, transcendental in His majesty, serene, awe-inspiring, unapproachably glorious.
- Allied, though subordinate in rank, and invested with the authority of presiding with Him over the destinies of this supreme Dispensation, there shines upon this mental picture the youthful glory of the Báb, infinite in His tenderness, irresistible in His charm, unsurpassed in His heroism, matchless in the dramatic circumstances of His short yet eventful life.

Paragraph 2

- And finally there emerges, though on a plane of its own and in a category entirely apart from the one occupied by the twin Figures that preceded Him, the vibrant, the magnetic personality of `Abdu'l-Bahá, reflecting to a degree that no man, however exalted his station, can hope to rival, the glory and power with which They who are the Manifestations of God are alone endowed.

Paragraph 3

- With `Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension, and more particularly with the passing of His well-beloved and illustrious sister the Most Exalted Leaf -- the last survivor of a glorious and heroic age -- there draws to a close the first and most moving chapter of Bahá'í history, marking the conclusion of the Primitive, the Apostolic Age of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

Paragraph 3

- It was `Abdu'l-Bahá Who, through the provisions of His weighty Will and Testament, has forged the vital link which must for ever connect the age that has just expired with the one we now live in -- the Transitional and Formative period of the Faith -- a stage that must in the fullness of time reach its blossom and yield its fruit in the exploits and triumphs that are to herald the Golden Age of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.

Paragraph 4

- Dearly-beloved friends!
- The onrushing forces so miraculously released through the agency of two independent and swiftly successive Manifestations are now under our very eyes and through the care of the chosen stewards of a far-flung Faith being gradually mustered and disciplined.
- They are slowly crystallizing into institutions that will come to be regarded as the hall-mark and glory of the age we are called upon to establish and by our deeds immortalize.

Paragraph 4

- For upon our present-day efforts, and above all upon the extent to which we strive to remodel our lives after the pattern of sublime heroism associated with those gone before us, must depend the efficacy of the instruments we now fashion -- instruments that must erect the structure of that blissful Commonwealth which must signalize the Golden Age of our Faith.

Paragraph 5

- It is not my purpose, as I look back upon these crowded years of heroic deeds, to attempt even a cursory review of the mighty events that have transpired since 1844 until the present day.
- Nor have I any intention to undertake an analysis of the forces that have precipitated them, or to evaluate their influence upon peoples and institutions in almost every continent of the globe.
- The authentic record of the lives of the first believers of the primitive period of our Faith, together with the assiduous research which competent Bahá'í historians will in the future undertake, will combine to transmit to posterity such masterly exposition of the history of that age as my own efforts can never hope to accomplish.

Paragraph 5

- My chief concern at this challenging period of Bahá'í history is rather to call the attention of those who are destined to be the champion-builders of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh to certain fundamental verities the elucidation of which must tremendously assist them in the effective prosecution of their mighty enterprise.

Paragraph 6

- The international status which the Religion of God has thus far achieved, moreover, imperatively demands that its root principles be now definitely clarified.
- The unprecedented impetus which the illustrious deeds of the American believers have lent to the onward march of the Faith;
- the intense interest which the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the West is fast awakening among divers races and nations;
- the rise and steady consolidation of Bahá'í institutions in no less than forty of the most advanced countries of the world;
- the dissemination of Bahá'í literature in no fewer than twenty-five of the most widely-spoken languages;

Paragraph 6

- the success that has recently attended the nationwide efforts of the Persian believers in the preliminary steps they have taken for the establishment, in the outskirts of the capital-city of their native land, of the third Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the Bahá'í world;
- the measures that are being taken for the immediate formation of their first National Spiritual Assembly representing the interests of the overwhelming majority of Bahá'í adherents;
- the projected erection of yet another pillar of the Universal House of Justice, the first of its kind, in the Southern Hemisphere;

Paragraph 6

- the testimonies, both verbal and written, that a struggling Faith has obtained from Royalty, from governmental institutions, international tribunals, and ecclesiastical dignitaries;
- the publicity it has received from the charges which unrelenting enemies, both new and old, have hurled against it;
- the formal enfranchisement of a section of its followers from the fetters of Muslim orthodoxy in a country that may be regarded as the most enlightened among Islamic nations
- these afford ample proof of the growing momentum with which the invincible community of the Most Great Name is marching forward to ultimate victory.

Paragraph 7

- Dearly-beloved friends!
- I feel it incumbent upon me, by virtue of the obligations and responsibilities which as Guardian of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh I am called upon to discharge, to lay special stress, at a time when the light of publicity is being increasingly focussed upon us, upon certain truths which lie at the basis of our Faith and the integrity of which it is our first duty to safeguard.
- These verities, if valiantly upheld and properly assimilated, will, I am convinced, powerfully reinforce the vigor of our spiritual life and greatly assist in counteracting the machinations of an implacable and vigilant enemy.

Paragraph 8

- To strive to obtain a more adequate understanding of the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's stupendous Revelation must, it is my unalterable conviction, remain the first obligation and the object of the constant endeavor of each one of its loyal adherents.
- An exact and thorough comprehension of so vast a system, so sublime a revelation, so sacred a trust, is for obvious reasons beyond the reach and ken of our finite minds.
- We can, however, and it is our bounden duty to seek to derive fresh inspiration and added sustenance as we labor for the propagation of His Faith through a clearer apprehension of the truths it enshrines and the principles on which it is based.

Paragraph 9

- In a communication addressed to the American believers I have in the course of my explanation of the station of the Báb made a passing reference to the incomparable greatness of the Revelation of which He considered Himself to be the humble Precursor.
- He Whom Bahá'u'lláh has acclaimed in the Kitáb-i-Íqán as that promised Qá'im Who has manifested no less than twenty-five out of the twenty-seven letters which all the Prophets were destined to reveal -- so great a Revealer has Himself testified to the preeminence of that superior Revelation that was soon to supersede His own.

Paragraph 9

- The Báb asserts in the Persian Bayán:
- *The germ that holds within itself the potentialities of the Revelation that is to come is endowed with a potency superior to the combined forces of all those who follow me.*
- *Of all the tributes I have paid to Him Who is to come after Me, the greatest is this, My written confession, that no words of Mine can adequately describe Him, nor can any reference to Him in My Book, the Bayán, do justice to His Cause.*
- *The Bayán and whosoever is therein revolve round the saying of 'Him Whom God shall make manifest,' even as the Alif (the Gospel) and whosoever was therein revolved round the saying of Muhammad, the Apostle of God.*

Paragraph 9

- The Báb asserts in the Persian Bayán:
- *A thousand perusals of the Bayán cannot equal the perusal of a single verse to be revealed by `Him Whom God shall make manifest.' ... Today the Bayán is in the stage of seed; at the beginning of the manifestation of `Him Whom God shall make manifest' its ultimate perfection will become apparent.... The Bayán and such as are believers therein yearn more ardently after Him than the yearning of any lover after his beloved.... The Bayán deriveth all its glory from `Him Whom God shall make manifest.' All blessing be upon him who believeth in Him and woe betide him that rejecteth His truth.*

Paragraph 10

- Addressing Siyyid Yahyáy-i-Darábí surnamed Vahíd, the most learned, the most eloquent and influential among His followers, the Báb utters this warning:
- *By the righteousness of Him Whose power causeth the seed to germinate and Who breatheth the spirit of life into all things, were I to be assured that in the day of His manifestation thou wilt deny Him, I would unhesitatingly disown thee and repudiate thy faith.... If, on the other hand, I be told that a Christian, who beareth no allegiance to My Faith, will believe in Him, the same will I regard as the apple of Mine Eye.*

Paragraph 11

- In one of His prayers He thus communes with Bahá'u'lláh:
- *Exalted art Thou, O my Lord the Omnipotent! How puny and contemptible my word and all that pertaineth unto me appear unless they be related to Thy great glory. Grant that through the assistance of Thy grace whatsoever pertaineth unto me may be acceptable in Thy sight.*

Paragraph 12

- In the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá--the Báb's commentary on the Súrih of Joseph--characterized by the Author of the Íqán as "*the first, the greatest and mightiest*" of the books revealed by the Báb, we read the following references to Bahá'u'lláh:
- *Out of utter nothingness, O great and omnipotent Master, Thou hast, through the celestial potency of Thy might, brought me forth and raised me up to proclaim this Revelation. I have made none other but Thee my trust; I have clung to no will but Thy will... O Thou Remnant of God! I have sacrificed myself wholly for Thee: I have accepted curses for Thy sake, and have yearned for naught but martyrdom in the path of Thy love. Sufficient witness unto me is God, the Exalted, the Protector, the Ancient of Days.*

Paragraph 12

- The Báb again Bahá' u' lláh in that same commentary:
- *And when the appointed hour hath struck, do Thou, by the leave of God, the All-Wise, reveal from the heights of the Most Lofty and Mystic Mount a faint, an infinitesimal glimmer of Thy impenetrable Mystery, that they who have recognized the radiance of the Sinaiic Splendor may faint away and die as they catch a lightening glimpse of the fierce and crimson Light that envelops Thy Revelation.*

Paragraph 13

- As a further testimony to the greatness of the Revelation identified with Bahá'u'lláh may be cited the following extracts from a Tablet addressed by `Abdu'l-Bahá to an eminent Zoroastrian follower of the Faith:
- *Thou hadst written that in the sacred books of the followers of Zoroaster it is written that in the latter days, in three separate Dispensations, the sun must needs be brought to a standstill. In the first Dispensation, it is predicted, the sun will remain motionless for ten days; in the second for twice that time; in the third for no less than one whole month. The interpretation of this prophecy is this:*

Paragraph 13

- *the first Dispensation to which it refers is the Muhammadan Dispensation during which the Sun of Truth stood still for ten days. Each day is reckoned as one century. The Muhammadan Dispensation must have, therefore, lasted no less than one thousand years, which is precisely the period that has elapsed from the setting of the Star of the Imamate to the advent of the Dispensation proclaimed by the Báb.*
- *The second Dispensation referred to in this prophecy is the one inaugurated by the Báb Himself, which began in the year 1260 A.H. and was brought to a close in the year 1280 A.H.*

Paragraph 13

- *As to the third Dispensation -- the Revelation proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh -- inasmuch as the Sun of Truth when attaining that station shineth in the plenitude of its meridian splendor its duration hath been fixed for a period of one whole month, which is the maximum time taken by the sun to pass through a sign of the Zodiac.*
- *From this thou canst imagine the magnitude of the Bahá'í cycle -- a cycle that must extend over a period of at least five hundred thousand years.*

Paragraph 14

- From the text of this explicit and authoritative interpretation of so ancient a prophecy it is evident how necessary it is for every faithful follower of the Faith to accept the divine origin and uphold the independent status of the Muhammadan Dispensation.
- The validity of the Imamate is, moreover, implicitly recognized in these same passages -- that divinely-appointed institution of whose most distinguished member the Báb Himself was a lineal descendant, and which continued for a period of no less than two hundred and sixty years to be the chosen recipient of the guidance of the Almighty and the repository of one of the two most precious legacies of Islám.

Paragraph 15

- This same prophecy, we must furthermore recognize, attests the independent character of the Bábí Dispensation and corroborates indirectly the truth that in accordance with the principle of progressive revelation every Manifestation of God must needs vouchsafe to the peoples of His day a measure of divine guidance ampler than any which a preceding and less receptive age could have received or appreciated.
- For this reason, and not for any superior merit which the Bahá'í Faith may be said to inherently possess, does this prophecy bear witness to the unrivaled power and glory with which the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh has been invested -- a Dispensation the potentialities of which we are but beginning to perceive and the full range of which we can never determine.

Paragraph 16

- The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh should indeed be regarded, if we wish to be faithful to the tremendous implications of its message, as the culmination of a cycle, the final stage in a series of successive, of preliminary and progressive revelations.
- These, beginning with Adam and ending with the Báb, have paved the way and anticipated with an ever-increasing emphasis the advent of that Day of Days in which He Who is the Promise of All Ages should be made manifest.

Paragraph 17

- To this truth the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh abundantly testify.
- A mere reference to the claims which, in vehement language and with compelling power, He Himself has repeatedly advanced cannot but fully demonstrate the character of the Revelation of which He was the chosen bearer.
- To the words that have streamed from His pen -- the fountainhead of so impetuous a Revelation -- we should, therefore, direct our attention if we wish to obtain a clearer understanding of its importance and meaning.

Paragraph 17

- Whether in His assertion of the unprecedented claim He has advanced, or in His allusions to the mysterious forces He has released, whether in such passages as extol the glories of His long-awaited Day, or magnify the station which they who have recognized its hidden virtues will attain, Bahá'u'lláh and, to an almost equal extent, the Báb and `Abdu'l-Bahá, have bequeathed to posterity mines of such inestimable wealth as none of us who belong to this generation can befittingly estimate.
- Such testimonies bearing on this theme are impregnated with such power and reveal such beauty as only those who are versed in the languages in which they were originally revealed can claim to have sufficiently appreciated.

Paragraph 17

- So numerous are these testimonies that a whole volume would be required to be written in order to compile the most outstanding among them.
- All I can venture to attempt at present is to share with you only such passages as I have been able to glean from His voluminous writings.

Paragraph 18

- Proclaims Bahá'u'lláh:
- *I testify before God to the greatness, the inconceivable greatness of this Revelation. Again and again have We in most of Our Tablets borne witness to this truth, that mankind may be roused from its heedlessness.*
- He unequivocally announces:
- *In this most mighty Revelation all the Dispensations of the past have attained their highest, their final consummation.*
- *That which hath been made manifest in this preeminent, this most exalted Revelation, stands unparalleled in the annals of the past, nor will future ages witness its like.*

Paragraph 18

- Referring to Himself He further proclaims:
- *He it is Who in the Old Testament hath been named Jehovah, Who in the Gospel hath been designated as the Spirit of Truth, and in the Qur'án acclaimed as the Great Announcement.*
- *But for Him no Divine Messenger would have been invested with the robe of prophethood, nor would any of the sacred scriptures have been revealed. To this bear witness all created things.*
- *The word which the one true God uttereth in this day, though that word be the most familiar and commonplace of terms, is invested with supreme, with unique distinction.*

Paragraph 18

- *The generality of mankind is still immature. Had it acquired sufficient capacity We would have bestowed upon it so great a measure of Our knowledge that all who dwell on earth and in heaven would have found themselves, by virtue of the grace streaming from Our pen, completely independent of all knowledge save the knowledge of God, and would have been securely established upon the throne of abiding tranquillity.*

Paragraph 18

- *The Pen of Holiness, I solemnly affirm before God, hath writ upon My snow-white brow and in characters of effulgent glory these glowing, these musk-scented and holy words: `Behold ye that dwell on earth, and ye denizens of heaven, bear witness, He in truth is your Well-Beloved. He it is Whose like the world of creation hath not seen, He Whose ravishing beauty hath delighted the eye of God, the Ordainer, the All-Powerful, the Incomparable!'*

Paragraph 19

- Bahá' u' lláh addressing the whole of Christendom exclaims:
- *Followers of the Gospel behold the gates of heaven are flung open. He that had ascended unto it is now come. Give ear to His voice calling aloud over land and sea, announcing to all mankind the advent of this Revelation -- a Revelation through the agency of which the Tongue of Grandeur is now proclaiming: `Lo, the sacred Pledge hath been fulfilled, for He, the Promised One, is come!'*

Paragraph 19

- *The voice of the Son of Man is calling aloud from the sacred vale: 'Here am I, here am I, O God my God!' ... whilst from the Burning Bush breaketh forth the cry: 'Lo, the Desire of the world is made manifest in His transcendent glory!' The Father hath come. That which ye were promised in the Kingdom of God is fulfilled. This is the Word which the Son veiled when He said to those around Him that at that time they could not bear it... Verily the Spirit of Truth is come to guide you unto all truth... He is the One Who glorified the Son and exalted His Cause...*
- *The Comforter Whose advent all the scriptures have promised is now come that He may reveal unto you all knowledge and wisdom. Seek Him over the entire surface of the earth, haply ye may find Him.*

Paragraph 20

- Bahá' u' lláh writes:
- *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... 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.'*
- In another connection He affirms:
- *I am the One Whom the tongue of Isaiah hath extolled, the One with Whose name both the Torah and the Evangel were adorned.*

Paragraph 20

- *The glory of Sinai hath hastened to circle round the Day-Spring of this Revelation, while from the heights of the Kingdom the voice of the Son of God is heard proclaiming: 'Bestir yourselves, ye proud ones of the earth, and hasten ye towards Him.' Carmel hath in this day hastened in longing adoration to attain His court, whilst from the heart of Zion there cometh the cry: 'The promise of all ages is now fulfilled. That which had been announced in the holy writ of God, the Beloved, the Most High, is made manifest.'*

Paragraph 20

- *Hijáz is astir by the breeze announcing the tidings of joyous reunion. 'Praise be to Thee,' We hear her exclaim, 'O my Lord, the Most High. I was dead through my separation from Thee; the breeze laden with the fragrance of Thy presence hath brought me back to life. Happy is he that turneth unto Thee, and woe betide the erring.'*

Paragraph 20

- *By the one true God, Elijah hath hastened unto My court and hath circumambulated in the day-time and in the night-season My throne of glory.*
- *Solomon in all his majesty circles in adoration around Me in this day, uttering this most exalted word: `I have turned my face towards Thy face, O Thou omnipotent Ruler of the world! I am wholly detached from all things pertaining unto me, and yearn for that which Thou dost possess.'*

Paragraph 20

- Bahá'u'lláh writes in a Tablet revealed on the eve of His banishment to the penal colony of Akká:
- *Had Muhammad, the Apostle of God, attained this Day, He would have exclaimed: 'I have truly recognized Thee, O Thou the Desire of the Divine Messengers!' Had Abraham attained it, He too, falling prostrate upon the ground, and in the utmost lowliness before the Lord thy God, would have cried: 'Mine heart is filled with peace, O Thou Lord of all that is in heaven and on earth! I testify that Thou hast unveiled before mine eyes all the glory of Thy power and the full majesty of Thy law!'... Had Moses Himself attained it, He, likewise, would have raised His voice saying: 'All praise be to Thee for having lifted upon me the light of Thy countenance and enrolled me among them that have been privileged to behold Thy face!'*

Paragraph 20

- *North and South both vibrate to the call announcing the advent of our Revelation. We can hear the voice of Mecca acclaiming: 'All praise be to Thee, O Lord my God, the All-Glorious, for having wafted over me the breath redolent with the fragrance of Thy presence!' Jerusalem, likewise, is calling aloud: 'Lauded and magnified art Thou, O Beloved of earth and heaven, for having turned the agony of my separation from Thee into the joy of a life-giving reunion!'*

Paragraph 21

- Bahá'u'lláh wishing to reveal the full potency of His invincible power asserts:
- *By the righteousness of God, should a man, all alone, arise in the name of Bahá and put on the armor of His love, him will the Almighty cause to be victorious, though the forces of earth and heaven be arrayed against him.*
- *By God besides Whom is none other God! Should any one arise for the triumph of our Cause, him will God render victorious though tens of thousands of enemies be leagued against him. And if his love for Me wax stronger, God will establish his ascendancy over all the powers of earth and heaven. Thus have We breathed the spirit of power into all regions.*

Paragraph 22

- He thus extols the age that has witnessed the advent of His Revelation:
- *This is the King of Days, the Day that hath seen the coming of the Best-beloved, Him Who through all eternity hath been acclaimed the Desire of the World.*
- *The world of being shineth in this Day with the resplendency of this Divine Revelation. All created things extol its saving grace and sing its praises. The universe is wrapt in an ecstasy of joy and gladness. The Scriptures of past Dispensations celebrate the great jubilee that must needs greet this most great Day of God. Well is it with him that hath lived to see this Day and hath recognized its station.*

Paragraph 22

- *Were mankind to give heed in a befitting manner to no more than one word of such a praise it would be so filled with delight as to be overpowered and lost in wonder. Entranced, it would then shine forth resplendent above the horizon of true understanding.*

Paragraph 23

- He thus appeals to mankind:
- *Be fair, ye peoples of the world, is it meet and seemly for you to question the authority of one Whose presence `He Who conversed with God' (Moses) hath longed to attain, the beauty of Whose countenance `God's Well-beloved' (Muhammad) had yearned to behold, through the potency of Whose love the `Spirit of God' (Jesus) ascended to heaven, for Whose sake the `Primal Point' (the Báb) offered up His life?*

Paragraph 23

- He admonishes His followers:
- *Seize your chance, inasmuch as a fleeting moment in this Day excelleth centuries of a bygone age... Neither sun nor moon hath witnessed a day such as this... It is evident that every age in which a Manifestation of God hath lived is divinely ordained and may, in a sense, be characterized as God's appointed Day. This Day, however, is unique and is to be distinguished from those that have preceded it. The designation 'Seal of the Prophets' fully reveals and demonstrates its high station.*

Paragraph 24

- Expatiating on the forces latent in His Revelation Bahá'u'lláh reveals the following:
- *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.*

Paragraph 24

- He in another passage exclaims:
- *How great is the Cause! How staggering the weight of its message! This is the Day of which it hath been said: 'O my son! verily God will bring everything to light though it were but the weight of a grain of mustard seed, and hidden in a rock, or in the heavens or in the earth; for God is subtile, informed of all.'*
- *By the righteousness of the one true God! If one speck of a jewel be lost and buried beneath a mountain of stones, and lie hidden beyond the seven seas, the Hand of Omnipotence will assuredly reveal it in this day, pure and cleansed from dross.*

Paragraph 24

- *He that partaketh of the waters of My Revelation will taste all the incorruptible delights ordained by God from the beginning that hath no beginning to the end that hath no end.*
- *Every single letter proceeding from Our mouth is endowed with such regenerative power as to enable it to bring into existence a new creation -- a creation the magnitude of which is inscrutable to all save God. He verily hath knowledge of all things.*

Paragraph 24

- *It is in Our power, should We wish it, to enable a speck of floating dust to generate, in less than the twinkling of an eye, suns of infinite, of unimaginable splendor, to cause a dewdrop to develop into vast and numberless oceans, to infuse into every letter such a force as to empower it to unfold all the knowledge of past and future ages.*
- *We are possessed of such power which, if brought to light, will transmute the most deadly of poisons into a panacea of unfailing efficacy.*

Paragraph 25

- Estimating the station of the true believer He remarks:
- *By the sorrows which afflict the beauty of the All-Glorious! Such is the station ordained for the true believer that if to an extent smaller than a needle's eye the glory of that station were to be unveiled to mankind, every beholder would be consumed away in his longing to attain it. For this reason it hath been decreed that in this earthly life the full measure of the glory of his own station should remain concealed from the eyes of such a believer.*
- *If the veil be lifted, and the full glory of the station of those who have turned wholly towards God, and in their love for Him renounced the world, be made manifest, the entire creation would be dumbfounded.*

Paragraph 26

- Stressing the superlative character of His Revelation as compared with the Dispensation preceding it, Bahá'u'lláh makes the following affirmation:
- *If all the peoples of the world be invested with the powers and attributes destined for the Letters of the Living, the Báb's chosen disciples, whose station is ten thousand times more glorious than any which the apostles of old have attained, and if they, one and all, should, swift as the twinkling of an eye, hesitate to recognize the light of My Revelation, their faith shall be of no avail and they shall be accounted among the infidels.*

Paragraph 26

- *So tremendous is the outpouring of Divine grace in this Dispensation that if mortal hands could be swift enough to record them, within the space of a single day and night there would stream verses of such number as to be equivalent to the whole of the Persian Bayán.*

Paragraph 27

- He thus addresses His countrymen:
- *Give heed to my warning, ye people of Persia, If I be slain at your hands, God will assuredly raise up one who will fill the seat made vacant through my death; for such is God's method carried into effect of old, and no change can ye find in God's mode of dealing.*

Paragraph 27

- *Should they attempt to conceal His light on the continent, He will assuredly rear His head in the midmost heart of the ocean and, raising His voice, proclaim: 'I am the lifegiver of the world!'... And if they cast Him into a darksome pit, they will find Him seated on earth's loftiest heights calling aloud to all mankind: 'Lo, the Desire of the world is come in His majesty, His sovereignty, His transcendent dominion!' And if He be buried beneath the depths of the earth, His Spirit soaring to the apex of heaven shall peal the summons: 'Behold ye the coming of the Glory; witness ye the Kingdom of God, the most Holy, the Gracious, the All-Powerful!'*

Paragraph 27

- *Within the throat of this Youth there lie prisoned accents which, if revealed to mankind to an extent smaller than a needle's eye, would suffice to cause every mountain to crumble, the leaves of the trees to be discolored and their fruits to fall; would compel every head to bow down in worship and every face to turn in adoration towards this omnipotent Ruler Who, at sundry times and in diverse manners, appeareth as a devouring flame, as a billowing ocean, as a radiant light, as the tree which, rooted in the soil of holiness, lifteth its branches and spreadeth out its limbs as far as and beyond the throne of deathless glory.*

Paragraph 28

- Anticipating the System which the irresistible power of His Law was destined to unfold in a later age, He writes:
- *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.*
- *The Hand of Omnipotence hath established His Revelation upon an unassailable, an enduring foundation. Storms of human strife are powerless to undermine its basis, nor will men's fanciful theories succeed in damaging its structure.*

Paragraph 29

- In the Súratu'l-Haykal, one of the most challenging works of Bahá'u'lláh, the following verses, each of which testifies to the resistless power infused into the Revelation proclaimed by its Author, have been recorded:
- *Naught is seen in My temple but the Temple of God, and in My beauty but His Beauty, and in My being but His Being, and in My self but His Self, and in My movement but His Movement, and in My acquiescence but His Acquiescence, and in My pen but His Pen, the Mighty, the All-Praised. There hath not been in My soul but the Truth, and in Myself naught could be seen but God.*

Paragraph 29

- *The Holy Spirit Itself hath been generated through the agency of a single letter revealed by this Most Great Spirit, if ye be of them that comprehend.*
- *Within the treasury of Our Wisdom there lies unrevealed a knowledge, one word of which, if we chose to divulge it to mankind, would cause every human being to recognize the Manifestation of God and to acknowledge His omniscience, would enable every one to discover the secrets of all the sciences, and to attain so high a station as to find himself wholly independent of all past and future learning. Other knowledges We do as well possess, not a single letter of which We can disclose, nor do We find humanity able to hear even the barest reference to their meaning. Thus have We informed you of the knowledge of God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.*

Paragraph 29

- *The day is approaching when God will have, by an act of His Will, raised up a race of men the nature of which is inscrutable to all save God, the All-Powerful, the Self-Subsisting.*
- *He will, ere long, out of the Bosom of Power draw forth the Hands of Ascendancy and Might -- Hands who will arise to win victory for this Youth and who will purge mankind from the defilement of the outcast and the ungodly. These Hands will gird up their loins to champion the Faith of God, and will, in My name the self-subsistent, the mighty, subdue the peoples and kindreds of the earth. They will enter the cities and will inspire with fear the hearts of all their inhabitants. Such are the evidences of the might of God; how fearful, how vehement is His might!*

Paragraph 30

- Such is, dearly-beloved friends, Bahá'u'lláh's own written testimony to the nature of His Revelation.
- To the affirmations of the Báb, each of which reinforces the strength, and confirms the truth, of these remarkable statements, I have already referred.
- What remains for me to consider in this connection are such passages in the writings of `Abdu'l-Bahá, the appointed Interpreter of these same utterances, as throw further light upon and amplify various features of this enthralling theme.
- The tone of His language is indeed as emphatic and His tribute no less glowing than that of either Bahá'u'lláh or the Báb.

Paragraph 31

- He affirms in one of His earliest Tablets:
- *Centuries, nay ages, must pass away ere the Day-Star of Truth shineth again in its mid-summer splendor, or appeareth once more in the radiance of its vernal glory... How thankful must we be for having been made in this Day the recipients of so overwhelming a favor! Would that we had ten thousand lives that we might lay them down in thanksgiving for so rare a privilege, so high an attainment, so priceless a bounty!*
- *The mere contemplation of the Dispensation inaugurated by the Blessed Beauty would have sufficed to overwhelm the saints of bygone ages -- saints who longed to partake for one moment of its great glory.*

Paragraph 31

- *The holy ones of past ages and centuries have, each and all, yearned with tearful eyes to live, though for one moment, in the Day of God. Their longings unsatisfied, they repaired to the Great Beyond. How great, therefore, is the bounty of the Abhá Beauty Who, notwithstanding our utter unworthiness, hath through His grace and mercy breathed into us in this divinely-illumined century the spirit of life, hath gathered us beneath the standard of the Beloved of the world, and chosen to confer upon us a bounty for which the mighty ones of bygone ages had craved in vain.*

Paragraph 31

- *The souls of the well-favored among the concourse on high, the sacred dwellers of the most exalted Paradise, are in this day filled with burning desire to return unto this world, that they may render such service as lieth in their power to the threshold of the Abhá Beauty.*

Paragraph 32

- In a passage alluding to the growth and future development of the Faith, He declares:
- *The effulgence of God's splendorous mercy, hath enveloped the peoples and kindreds of the earth, and the whole world is bathed in its shining glory... The day will soon come when the light of Divine unity will have so permeated the East and the West that no man dare any longer ignore it.*

Paragraph 32

- *Now in the world of being the Hand of divine power hath firmly laid the foundations of this all-highest bounty and this wondrous gift. Whatsoever is latent in the innermost of this holy cycle shall gradually appear and be made manifest, for now is but the beginning of its growth and the dayspring of the revelation of its signs. Ere the close of this century and of this age, it shall be made clear and evident how wondrous was that spring-tide and how heavenly was that gift!*

Paragraph 33

- In confirmation of the exalted rank of the true believer, referred to by Bahá'u'lláh, He reveals the following:
- *The station which he who hath truly recognized this Revelation will attain is the same as the one ordained for such prophets of the house of Israel as are not regarded as Manifestations `endowed with constancy.'*

Paragraph 34

- In connection with the Manifestations destined to follow the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, `Abdu'l-Bahá makes this definite and weighty declaration:
- *Concerning the Manifestations that will come down in the future `in the shadows of the clouds,' know verily that in so far as their relation to the source of their inspiration is concerned they are under the shadow of the Ancient Beauty. In their relation, however, to the age in which they appear, each and every one of them `doeth whatsoever He willeth.'*

Paragraph 35

- He thus addresses in one of His Tablets a man of recognized authority and standing:
- *O my friend! The undying Fire which the Lord of the Kingdom hath kindled in the midst of the holy Tree is burning fiercely in the midmost heart of the world. The conflagration it will provoke will envelop the whole earth. Its blazing flames will illuminate its peoples and kindreds. All the signs have been revealed; every prophetic allusion hath been manifested. Whatever hath been enshrined in all the Scriptures of the past hath been made evident. To doubt or hesitate is no more possible... Time is pressing. The Divine Charger is impatient, and can tarry no longer. Ours is the duty to rush forward and, ere it is too late, win the victory.*

Paragraph 35

- And finally, is this most stirring passage which He, in one of His moments of exultation, was moved to address to one of His most trusted and eminent followers in the earliest days of His ministry:
- *What more shall I say? What else can my pen recount? So loud is the call that reverberates from the Abhá Kingdom that mortal ears are well-nigh deafened with its vibrations. The whole creation, methinks, is being disrupted and is bursting asunder through the shattering influence of the Divine summons issued from the throne of glory. More than this I cannot write.*

Paragraph 36

- Dearly-beloved friends!
- Enough has been said, and the quoted excerpts from the writings of the Báb, of Bahá'u'lláh and of `Abdu'l-Bahá are sufficiently numerous and varied, to convince the conscientious reader of the sublimity of this unique cycle in the world's religious history.
- It would be utterly impossible to over-exaggerate its significance or to overrate the influence it has exerted and which it must increasingly exert as its great system unfolds itself amidst the welter of a collapsing civilization.

Paragraph 37

- To whoever may read these pages a word of warning seems, however, advisable before I proceed further with the development of my argument.
- Let no one meditating, in the light of the afore-quoted passages, on the nature of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, mistake its character or misconstrue the intent of its Author.
- The divinity attributed to so great a Being and the complete incarnation of the names and attributes of God in so exalted a Person should, under no circumstances, be misconceived or misinterpreted.

Paragraph 37

- The human temple that has been made the vehicle of so overpowering a Revelation must, if we be faithful to the tenets of our Faith, ever remain entirely distinguished from that "*innermost Spirit of Spirits*" and "*eternal Essence of Essences*" -- that invisible yet rational God Who, however much we extol the divinity of His Manifestations on earth, can in no wise incarnate His infinite, His unknowable, His incorruptible and all-embracing Reality in the concrete and limited frame of a mortal being.
- Indeed, the God Who could so incarnate His own reality would, in the light of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, cease immediately to be God.

Paragraph 37

- So crude and fantastic a theory of Divine incarnation is as removed from, and incompatible with, the essentials of Bahá'í belief as are the no less inadmissible pantheistic and anthropomorphic conceptions of God -- both of which the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh emphatically repudiate and the fallacy of which they expose.

Paragraph 38

- He Who in unnumbered passages claimed His utterance to be the "Voice of Divinity, the Call of God Himself" thus solemnly affirms in the Kitáb-i-Íqán:
- *To every discerning and illumined heart it is evident that God, the unknowable Essence, the Divine Being, is immeasurably exalted beyond every human attribute such as corporeal existence, ascent and descent, egress and regress... He is, and hath ever been, veiled in the ancient eternity of His Essence, and will remain in His Reality everlastingly hidden from the sight of men... He standeth exalted beyond and above all separation and union, all proximity and remoteness... 'God was alone; there was none else beside Him' is a sure testimony of this truth.*

Paragraph 39

- Bahá'u'lláh, speaking of God, explains:
- *From time immemorial, He, the Divine Being, hath been veiled in the ineffable sanctity of His exalted Self, and will everlasting continue to be wrapt in the impenetrable mystery of His unknowable Essence... Ten thousand Prophets, each a Moses, are thunderstruck upon the Sinai of their search at God's forbidding voice, 'Thou shalt never behold Me!'; whilst a myriad Messengers, each as great as Jesus, stand dismayed upon their heavenly thrones by the interdiction 'Mine Essence thou shalt never apprehend!'*

Paragraph 39

- Bahá'u'lláh in His communion with God affirms:
- *How bewildering to me, insignificant as I am, is the attempt to fathom the sacred depths of Thy knowledge! How futile my efforts to visualize the magnitude of the power inherent in Thine handiwork -- the revelation of Thy creative power!*
- He, in yet another prayer revealed in His own handwriting, testifies:
- *When I contemplate, O my God, the relationship that bindeth me to Thee, I am moved to proclaim to all created things `verily I am God!'; and when I consider my own self, lo, I find it coarser than clay!*

Paragraph 40

- Bahá' u' lláh further states in the Kitáb-i-Íqán:
- *The door of the knowledge of the Ancient of Days being thus closed in the face of all beings, He, the Source of infinite grace ... hath caused those luminous Gems of Holiness to appear out of the realm of the spirit, in the noble form of the human temple, and be made manifest unto all men, that they may impart unto the world the mysteries of the unchangeable Being and tell of the subtleties of His imperishable Essence... All the Prophets of God, His well-favored, His holy and chosen Messengers are, without exception, the bearers of His names and the embodiments of His attributes... These Tabernacles of Holiness, these primal Mirrors which reflect the Light of unfading glory, are but expressions of Him Who is the Invisible of the Invisibles.*

Paragraph 41

- That Bahá'u'lláh should, notwithstanding the overwhelming intensity of His Revelation, be regarded as essentially one of these Manifestations of God, never to be identified with that invisible Reality, the Essence of Divinity itself, is one of the major beliefs of our Faith -- a belief which should never be obscured and the integrity of which no one of its followers should allow to be compromised.

Paragraph 42

- Nor does the Bahá'í Revelation, claiming as it does to be the culmination of a prophetic cycle and the fulfillment of the promise of all ages, attempt, under any circumstances, to invalidate those first and everlasting principles that animate and underlie the religions that have preceded it.
- The God-given authority, vested in each one of them, it admits and establishes as its firmest and ultimate basis.
- It regards them in no other light except as different stages in the eternal history and constant evolution of one religion, Divine and indivisible, of which it itself forms but an integral part.

Paragraph 42

- It neither seeks to obscure their Divine origin, nor to dwarf the admitted magnitude of their colossal achievements.
- It can countenance no attempt that seeks to distort their features or to stultify the truths which they instill.
- Its teachings do not deviate a hairbreadth from the verities they enshrine, nor does the weight of its message detract one jot or one tittle from the influence they exert or the loyalty they inspire.

Paragraph 42

- Far from aiming at the overthrow of the spiritual foundation of the world's religious systems, its avowed, its unalterable purpose is to widen their basis, to restate their fundamentals, to reconcile their aims, to reinvigorate their life, to demonstrate their oneness, to restore the pristine purity of their teachings, to coordinate their functions and to assist in the realization of their highest aspirations.
- These divinely-revealed religions, as a close observer has graphically expressed it, "*are doomed not to die, but to be reborn... `Does not the child succumb in the youth and the youth in the man; yet neither child nor youth perishes?`*"

Paragraph 43

- Bahá' u' lláh explains in the Kitáb-i-Íqán:
- *They Who are the Luminaries of Truth and the Mirrors reflecting the light of Divine Unity in whatever age and cycle they are sent down from their invisible habitations of ancient glory unto this world to educate the souls of men and endue with grace all created things, are invariably endowed with an all-compelling power and invested with invincible sovereignty... These sanctified Mirrors, these Day-Springs of ancient glory are one and all the exponents on earth of Him Who is the central Orb of the universe, its essence and ultimate purpose. From Him proceed their knowledge and power; from Him is derived their sovereignty.*

Paragraph 43

The beauty of their countenance is but a reflection of His image, and their revelation a sign of His deathless glory... Through them is transmitted a grace that is infinite, and by them is revealed the light that can never fade... Human tongue can never befittingly sing their praise, and human speech can never unfold their mystery.

Paragraph 43

- He adds:
- *Inasmuch as these Birds of the celestial Throne are all sent down from the heaven of the Will of God, and as they all arise to proclaim His irresistible Faith, they therefore are regarded as one soul and the same person... They all abide in the same tabernacle, soar in the same heaven, are seated upon the same throne, utter the same speech, and proclaim the same Faith... They only differ in the intensity of their revelation and the comparative potency of their light... That a certain attribute of God hath not been outwardly manifested by these Essences of Detachment doth in no wise imply that they Who are the Day-Springs of God's attributes and the Treasuries of His holy names did not actually possess it.*

Paragraph 44

- It should also be borne in mind that, great as is the power manifested by this Revelation and however vast the range of the Dispensation its Author has inaugurated, it emphatically repudiates the claim to be regarded as the final revelation of God's will and purpose for mankind.
- To hold such a conception of its character and functions would be tantamount to a betrayal of its cause and a denial of its truth.
- It must necessarily conflict with the fundamental principle which constitutes the bedrock of Bahá'í belief, the principle that religious truth is not absolute but relative, that Divine Revelation is orderly, continuous and progressive and not spasmodic or final.

Paragraph 44

- Indeed, the categorical rejection by the followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh of the claim to finality which any religious system inaugurated by the Prophets of the past may advance is as clear and emphatic as their own refusal to claim that same finality for the Revelation with which they stand identified.
- *To believe that all revelation is ended, that the portals of Divine mercy are closed, that from the daysprings of eternal holiness no sun shall rise again, that the ocean of everlasting bounty is forever stilled, and that out of the tabernacle of ancient glory the Messengers of God have ceased to be made manifest*
- must constitute in the eyes of every follower of the Faith a grave, an inexcusable departure from one of its most cherished and fundamental principles.

Paragraph 45

- A reference to some of the already quoted utterances of Bahá'u'lláh and `Abdu'l-Bahá will surely suffice to establish, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the truth of this cardinal principle.
- Might not the following passage of the Hidden Words be, likewise, construed as an allegorical allusion to the progressiveness of Divine Revelation and an admission by its Author that the Message with which He has been entrusted is not the final and ultimate expression of the will and guidance of the Almighty?

Paragraph 45

- *O Son of Justice! In the night-season the beauty of the immortal Being hath repaired from the emerald height of fidelity unto the Sadratu'l-Muntahá, and wept with such a weeping that the concourse on high and the dwellers of the realms above wailed at His lamenting. Whereupon there was asked, Why the wailing and weeping? He made reply: As bidden I waited expectant upon the hill of faithfulness, yet inhaled not from them that dwell on earth the fragrance of fidelity. Then summoned to return I beheld, and lo! certain doves of holiness were sore tried within the claws of the dogs of earth.*

Paragraph 45

Thereupon the Maid of heaven hastened forth unveiled and resplendent from Her mystic mansion, and asked of their names, and all were told but one. And when urged, the first letter thereof was uttered, whereupon the dwellers of the celestial chambers rushed forth out of their habitation of glory. And whilst the second letter was pronounced they fell down, one and all, upon the dust. At that moment a voice was heard from the inmost shrine: 'Thus far and no farther.' Verily We bear witness to that which they have done and now are doing.

Paragraph 46

- In a more explicit language Bahá'u'lláh testifies to this truth in one of His Tablets revealed in Adrianople:
- *Know verily that the veil hiding Our countenance hath not been completely lifted. We have revealed Our Self to a degree corresponding to the capacity of the people of Our age. Should the Ancient Beauty be unveiled in the fullness of His glory mortal eyes would be blinded by the dazzling intensity of His revelation.*

Paragraph 47

- In the Súriy-i-Sabr, revealed as far back as the year 1863, on the very first day of His arrival in the garden of Ridván, He thus affirms:
- *God hath sent down His Messengers to succeed to Moses and Jesus, and He will continue to do so till 'the end that hath no end'; so that His grace may, from the heaven of Divine bounty, be continually vouchsafed to mankind.*

Paragraph 48

- Bahá' u' lláh still more explicitly declares:
- *I am not apprehensive for My own self. My fears are for Him Who will be sent down unto you after Me -- Him Who will be invested with great sovereignty and mighty dominion.*
- And again He writes in the Súratu'l-Haykal:
- *By those words which I have revealed, Myself is not intended, but rather He Who will come after Me. To it is witness God, the All-Knowing.*
- *Deal not with Him as ye have dealt with Me.*

Paragraph 49

- In a more circumstantial passage the Báb upholds the same truth in His writings. He writes in the Persian Bayán:
- *It is clear and evident that the object of all preceding Dispensations hath been to pave the way for the advent of Muhammad, the Apostle of God. These, including the Muhammadan Dispensation, have had, in their turn, as their objective the Revelation proclaimed by the Qá'im. The purpose underlying this Revelation, as well as those that preceded it, has, in like manner, been to announce the advent of the Faith of Him Whom God will make manifest.*

Paragraph 49

And this Faith -- the Faith of Him Whom God will make manifest -- in its turn, together with all the Revelations gone before it, have as their object the Manifestation destined to succeed it. And the latter, no less than all the Revelations preceding it, prepare the way for the Revelation which is yet to follow. The process of the rise and setting of the Sun of Truth will thus indefinitely continue -- a process that hath had no beginning and will have no end.

Paragraph 50

- Bahá'u'lláh explains in this connection:
- *Know of a certainty that in every Dispensation the light of Divine Revelation hath been vouchsafed to men in direct proportion to their spiritual capacity. Consider the sun. How feeble its rays the moment it appeareth above the horizon. How gradually its warmth and potency increase as it approacheth its zenith, enabling meanwhile all created things to adapt themselves to the growing intensity of its light. How steadily it declineth until it reacheth its setting point. Were it all of a sudden to manifest the energies latent within it, it would no doubt cause injury to all created things... In like manner, if the Sun of Truth were suddenly to*

Paragraph 50

reveal, at the earliest stages of its manifestation, the full measure of the potencies which the providence of the Almighty hath bestowed upon it, the earth of human understanding would waste away and be consumed; for men's hearts would neither sustain the intensity of its revelation, nor be able to mirror forth the radiance of its light. Dismayed and overpowered, they would cease to exist.

Paragraph 51

- In the light of these clear and conclusive statements it is our clear duty to make it indubitably evident to every seeker after truth that from "*the beginning that hath no beginning*" the Prophets of the one, the unknowable God, including Bahá'u'lláh Himself, have all, as the channels of God's grace, as the exponents of His unity, as the mirrors of His light and the revealers of His purpose, been commissioned to unfold to mankind an ever-increasing measure of His truth, of His inscrutable will and Divine guidance, and will continue to "*the end that hath no end*" to vouchsafe still fuller and mightier revelations of His limitless power and glory.

Paragraph 52

- We might well ponder in our hearts the following passages from a prayer revealed by Bahá'u'lláh which strikingly affirm, and are a further evidence of, the reality of the great and essential truth lying at the very core of His Message to mankind:
- *Praise be to Thee, O Lord my God, for the wondrous revelations of Thine inscrutable decree and the manifold woes and trials Thou hast destined for myself. At one time Thou didst deliver me into the hands of Nimrod; at another Thou hast allowed Pharaoh's rod to persecute me. Thou alone canst estimate, through Thine all-encompassing knowledge and the operation of Thy Will, the incalculable afflictions I have suffered at their hands.*

Paragraph 52

Again Thou didst cast me into the prison-cell of the ungodly for no reason except that I was moved to whisper into the ears of the well-favored denizens of Thy kingdom an intimation of the vision with which Thou hadst, through Thy knowledge, inspired me and revealed to me its meaning through the potency of Thy might. And again Thou didst decree that I be beheaded by the sword of the infidel. Again I was crucified for having unveiled to men's eyes the hidden gems of Thy glorious unity, for having revealed to them the wondrous signs of Thy sovereign and everlasting power. How bitter the humiliations heaped upon me, in a subsequent age, on the plain of Kárbilá! How lonely did I feel amidst Thy people; to what state of helplessness I was reduced in that land!

Paragraph 52

Unsatisfied with such indignities, my persecutors decapitated me and carrying aloft my head from land to land paraded it before the gaze of the unbelieving multitude and deposited it on the seats of the perverse and faithless. In a later age I was suspended and my breast was made a target to the darts of the malicious cruelty of my foes. My limbs were riddled with bullets and my body was torn asunder. Finally, behold how in this day my treacherous enemies have leagued themselves against me, and are continually plotting to instill the venom of hate and malice into the souls of Thy servants. With all their might they are scheming to accomplish their purpose...

Paragraph 52

Grievous as is my plight, O God, my Well-beloved, I render thanks unto Thee, and my spirit is grateful for whatsoever hath befallen me in the path of Thy good-pleasure. I am well pleased with that which Thou didst ordain for me, and welcome, however calamitous, the pains and sorrows I am made to suffer.