

BAHÁ'Í WORLD FAITH

SELECTED WRITINGS OF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AND
'ABDU'L-BAHÁ

The Prophetic Cycle
hath, verily, ended.
The Eternal Truth is
now come. *Bahá'u'lláh*



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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this book is to offer the student of religion a compilation of Bahá'í Sacred Writings which, in one convenient volume, discloses their universal range of themes, their direct application to modern life and their incomparable spiritual power. Here is a World Bible revealed for men of all races and lands; a new creation which affirms and fulfils the highest assurance which, from age to age, the succession of Prophets have enkindled within the human soul. The past is not denied but extended through the present to establish a firm foundation for a new era of justice and peace. The illumination cast upon our own age, indeed, reveals the former religions and their Founders in a clearer light than they have ever been manifest before. The Bahá'í concept of the unity of the Prophets of God bans religion as creed and ceremony but resurrects faith in realization of one eternal divine Truth which now, for the first time, can be apprehended in its plan and purpose for the human race.

What is the meaning of the word *Bahá'í*?

This word derives from the title by which the Founder of the Faith is known: Bahá'u'lláh, meaning "Glory of God." It designates the individual follower or believer, as Christian or Buddhist identifies the follower of Christ or Buddha. Like those words, it is also the adjective form used to describe whatever is directly related to the Faith, as for example, in the term Bahá'í religion, Bahá'í meeting or Bahá'í community. A Bahá'í is one who accepts Bahá'u'lláh as his Lord, knows His teachings and obeys His precepts; the Bahá'í religion is the religion of Bahá. The name 'Abdu'l-Bahá means "Servant of Bahá" and identifies the rank and mission of Bahá'u'lláh's eldest Son, the One appointed by Him to be the Interpreter of His Word, the Exemplar of His new creation, and the Center of His Covenant with mankind.

The range of theme found in the Bahá'í Writings is indicated by the subjects chosen for the nine chapters. In Chapter One we find passages on Bahá'u'lláh's statement of His Mission, and the nature of this Day. Chapter Two reveals the station of the Prophets in the

in the utmost regularity, but its contents must be the promulgator of the Cause of God—so that both in the East and the West, they may become informed of the most important events.

In short, in all the meetings, whether public or private, nothing should be discussed save that which is under consideration, and all the articles be centered around the Cause of God. Promiscuous talks must not be dragged in and contention is absolutely forbidden.

The teachers traveling in different directions must know the language of the country in which they will enter. For example, a person being proficient in the Japanese language may travel in Japan, or a person knowing the Chinese language may hasten to China, and so forth.

In short, after this universal war, the people have obtained extraordinary capacity to hearken to the divine teachings, for the wisdom of this war is this: That it may become proven to all that the fire of war is world-consuming, whereas the rays of peace are world-enlightening. One is death, the other is life; this is extinction, that is immortality; one is the most great calamity, the other is the most great bounty; this is darkness, that is light; this is eternal humiliation and that is everlasting glory; one is the destroyer of the foundation of man, the other is the founder of the prosperity of the human race.

Consequently, a number of souls may arise and act in accordance with the aforesaid conditions, and hasten to all parts of the world, especially from America to Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia, and travel through Japan and China. Likewise, from Germany teachers and believers may travel to the continents of America, Africa, Japan and China; in brief, they may travel through all the continents and islands of the globe. Thus in a short space of time, most wonderful results will be produced, the banner of Universal Peace will be waving on the apex of the world and the lights of the oneness of the world of humanity may illumine the universe.

In brief, O ye believers of God! The text of the Divine Book is this: If two souls quarrel and contend about a question of the Divine questions, differing and disputing, *both are wrong*. The

wisdom of this incontrovertible law of God is this: That between two souls from amongst the believers of God, no contention and dispute might arise; that they may speak with each other with infinite amity and love. Should there appear the least trace of controversy, they must remain silent, and both parties must continue their discussions no longer, but ask the reality of the question from the Interpreter. This is the irrefutable command!

THE MASTER'S LAST TABLET TO AMERICA

O ye friends of God!

'Abdu'l-Bahá is day and night thinking of you and mentioning you, for the friends of God are dear to Him. Every morning at dawn I supplicate the Kingdom of God and ask that you may be filled with the breath of the Holy Spirit, so that you may become brilliant candles, shine with the light of guidance and dispel the darkness of error. Rest assured that the confirmations of the Abhá Kingdom will continuously reach you.

Through the power of the divine springtime, the downpour of the celestial clouds and the heat of the Sun of Reality, the tree of life is just beginning to grow. Before long, it will produce buds, bring forth leaves and fruits, and cast its shade over the East and the West. This Tree of Life is the Book of the Covenant.

In America, in these days, severe winds have surrounded the Lamp of the Covenant, hoping that this brilliant Light may be extinguished, and this Tree of Life may be uprooted. Certain weak, capricious, malicious and ignorant souls have been shaken by the earthquake of hatred, of animosity, have striven to efface the Divine Covenant and Testament, and render the clear water muddy so that in it they might fish. They have arisen against the Center of the Covenant like the people of Bayán who attacked the Blessed Beauty and every moment uttered a calumny. Every day they seek a pretext and secretly arouse doubts, so that the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh may be completely annihilated in America.

O friends of God! Be awake, be awake; be vigilant, be vigilant! His Holiness, the Báb, made a Covenant for Bahá'u'lláh with all the people of the Bayán, so that on the day of appearance of

"Him Whom God shall manifest"—and of the radiation of the Light of Bahá'u'lláh, they might believe and be assured, arise in service and promulgate the Word of God. Later the people of the Bayán, like Mírzá Yaḥyá and many others, arose against the Blessed Beauty, invented every sort of calumny, aroused doubt in the minds of the people, and from the Books of His Holiness the Báb—that were full of references to "Him Whom God shall manifest"—tried to prove Bahá'u'lláh false. Every day they wrote and spread a pamphlet opposing Bahá'u'lláh, caused trouble and perplexity among the people; they inflicted the greatest injury and cruelty, yet counted themselves firm in the Covenant of His Holiness, the Báb. However, when the light of the Covenant of His Holiness, the Báb, lighted the universe, then all the faithful and sincere souls were freed from the darkness of the violation of the people of the Bayán and shone like brilliant candles.

Bahá'u'lláh, in all the Tablets and Epistles, forbade the true and firm friends from associating and meeting the violators of the Covenant of His Holiness, the Báb, saying that no one should go near them because their breath is like the poison of the snake that kills instantly.

In the Hidden Words, He says: "Esteem the friendship of the just, but withhold both mind and hand from the company of the wicked."

Addressing one of the friends, He says: "It is clear to your honor that before long Satan, in the garb of man, will reach that land and will try to mislead the friends of the Divine Beauty through temptations which arouse the desires of self, and will cause them to follow the footsteps of Satan away from the right and glorious path, and prevent them from attaining the Blessed Shore of the King of Oneness. This is a hidden information of which we have informed the chosen ones lest they may be deprived of their praiseworthy station by associating with the embodiments of hatred. Therefore, it is incumbent upon all the friends of God to shun any person in whom they perceive the emanation of hatred for the Glorious Beauty of Abhá, though he may quote all the Heavenly Utterances and cling to all the Books." He continues—

Glorious be His Name!—"Protect yourselves with utmost vigilance, lest you be entrapped in the snare of deception and fraud." This is the advice of the Pen of Destiny.

In another address, He says: "Therefore, to avoid these people will be the nearest path by which to attain the divine good pleasure; because their breath is infectious, like unto poison."

In another Tablet, He says: "O Kázim, close thine eye to the people of the world; drink the water of knowledge from the heavenly cup bearers, and listen not to the nonsensical utterances of the manifestations of Satan, because the manifestations of Satan are occupying today the observation posts of the glorious path of God, and preventing the people by every means of deception and ruse. Before long you will witness the turning away of the people of Bayán from the Manifestation of the Merciful."

In another Tablet, He says: "Endeavor to your utmost to protect yourselves, because Satan appears in different robes and appeals to everyone according to each person's own way, until he becomes like unto him—then he will leave him alone."

In another Tablet, He says: "Shun any man in whom you perceive enmity for this Servant, though he may appear in the garb of piety of the former and later people, or may arise to the worship of the two worlds."

In another Tablet, He says: "O Mahdi! Be informed by these utterances and shun the manifestations of the people of hell, the rising place of Nimrods, the rising place of Pharees, the fountain of Tagut, and the soothsayers."

Again He says: "Say, O my friend and my pure ones! Listen to the Voice of this Beloved Prisoner in this Great Prison. If you detect in any man the least perceptible breath of violation, shun him and keep away from him." Then He says: "Verily, they are manifestations of Satan."

In another Tablet, He says: "And turn your faces to the Great Countenance for before long the foul odors of the wicked persons will pass over these regions. God willing, you may remain protected during these days."

In the 18th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, 6th to 9th verses,

His Holiness Christ says: "But whosoever shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offenses, for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh. Wherefore if thy hand or thy feet offend thee, cut them off and cast them from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee."

And in the 21st chapter and 38th verse of the Gospel of Matthew, He says: "But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, this is the heir, come let us kill him and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him and cast him out of the vineyard and slew him."

Also in the 22nd chapter and the 14th verse of the Gospel of Matthew, He says "But many are called and few are chosen."

In the Holy Writings of His Holiness, Bahá'u'lláh, in a thousand places at least, the violators of the Covenant are execrated and condemned. Some of the heavenly passages will be mentioned.

In short, all the friends in America know that the founders of this sedition—namely, the violators of the Covenant—are people whose aims are known to all the friends. Yet, O glorious God, they are deceived by them!

Praise be to God, you know with perfect clearness that His Holiness Christ, was extremely kind and loving, yet there were people like Judas Iscariot who—by their own deeds—separated themselves from Christ. Therefore, what fault of Christ's could that be? Now the Nakazene say that 'Abdu'l-Bahá is despotic, drives some people out and excommunicates like the Pope. This is not so at all! Any person who has left (the Cause), did so because of his own actions, intrigues and evil plots. If this objection be raised against 'Abdu'l-Bahá, they must also object to the Blessed Beauty who, with distinct and conclusive command, forbids the friends from companionship and familiarity with the violators of the people of Bayán.

Supplication! O Lord of the Covenant! O luminous Star of the world! The persecuted 'Abdu'l-Bahá has fallen into the hands of persons who appear as sheep and in reality are ferocious wolves; they exercise every sort of oppression, endeavor to destroy the foundation of the Covenant,—and claim to be Bahá'is. They strike at the root of the Tree of the Covenant—and count themselves persecuted—just as did the people of Bayán who broke the Covenant of His Holiness, the Báb, and from six directions shot arrows of reproach and calumny at Thy Blessed Body. Notwithstanding this great oppression, they call themselves oppressed. Now this Servant of Thy Threshold has also fallen into the hands of oppressors. Every hour they contrive new intrigues and fraud, and bring forth new calumny.

Yá-Bahá'u'l-Abhá! Protect the Stronghold of Thy Cause from these thieves, and safeguard the lamps of the Kingdom from these malevolent winds!

Yá-Bahá'u'l-Abhá! 'Abdu'l-Bahá did not rest a moment until He had raised Thy Cause and the Standard of the Kingdom of Abhá waved over the world. Now some people have arisen with intrigues and evil aspirations to trample this flag in America, but My hope is in Thy confirmations. Leave Me not single, alone and oppressed! As Thou didst promise, verbally and in writing, that Thou wouldst protect this deer of the pasture of Thy love from the attacks of the hounds of hatred and animosity, and that Thou wouldst safeguard this persecuted sheep from the claws and teeth of the ferocious wolves,—now do I await the appearance of Thy bounties and the realization of Thy definite promise. Thou art the true Protector, and Thou art the Lord of the Covenant! Therefore, protect this Lamp which Thou hast lighted, from the severe winds.

Yá-Bahá'u'l-Abhá! I have forsaken the world and its people, am heartbroken because of the unfaithful, and am weary. In the cage of this world I flutter like a frightened bird and long for the flight to Thy Kingdom.

Yá-Bahá'u'l-Abhá! Make me to drink the cup of sacrifice, and free Me! Relieve Me from these difficulties, hardships, afflictions

and troubles! Thou art the assister, the helper, the protector and the supporter!

Now some of the writings, prayers and verses of the Blessed Beauty will be mentioned in which association with the violators is forbidden. In the Íránian Commune, He says:

"Protect this Servant from the doubts of the persons who have turned away from Thee and are deprived of the sea of Thy knowledge. O God! O God! Protect this Servant through Thy bounty and generosity from the evil of Thine enemies who have broken Thy Covenant and Testament."

In another place He says: "O My God and the Aim of My Life! Protect this weak one with Thy Mighty hand from the voice of the Naegh."

Also He says: "Ye have taken one whom I hate to be thy beloved, and My enemy to be thy friend."

Also He says: "The company of the wicked ones increaseth sorrow, and the association with the pious ones removeth rust from the heart. The one who desires to associate with God, let him associate with His friends; the one who wishes to hear the Words of God, let him hear the words of His chosen ones."

Also He says: "Do not associate with the wicked, because the company of the wicked changeth the light of life into the fire of remorse. If thou asketh for the bounties of the Holy Spirit, associate with the pure ones, because they have quaffed the eternal chalice from the hands of the Cupbearer of eternity."

Also He says: "The greatest of degradation is to leave the Shadow of God and enter under the shadow of Satan."

Also He says: "O ye servants! There is nothing in this heart save the effulgences of the splendor of the morn of Meeting, and it does not speak but the absolute truth from your Lord. Therefore, do not follow self; break not God's Covenant and violate not His Testament. Proceed with perfect steadfastness, and with heart, soul and tongue, turn unto Him, and be not of the thoughtless."

And still He says: "You have forgotten God's Covenant and violated His Testament."

And again He says: "If anyone comes to you with the book of the wicked, put him behind you."

"Among the people are those who have broken the Covenant, and among them are those who have followed what was ordained by the All-Knower, the All-Wise. My affliction is not from My imprisonment and persecution, or from what comes to Me from My rebellious servants,—but from the actions of those who attribute themselves to this persecuted One and commit among the people that which is degrading to the honor of God. Verily, they are of the seditious."

Likewise speaking for the violators, He says: "Thou hast made the pulpits for Thy mention, the proclamation of Thy Word and the manifestation of Thy Cause, and we have ascended them to proclaim the breaking of Thy Covenant and Testament."

Likewise, He says: "Take what has been ordained for you and follow not those who have broken God's Covenant and Testament, for lo! they are the people of error."

Again He says: "Those who have broken the Covenant of God, notwithstanding His Commands, and have turned away, they are the people of error before the most Opulent, the Exalted."

And He says: "Those who have been faithful to God's Covenant are of the highest ones in the sight of the exalted Lord. Those who have become negligent are of the people of fire in the sight of Thy Lord, the Beloved, the Independent."

Likewise He says: "Blessed is the servant or maid-servant who believes, and woe to the polytheists who have violated the Covenant of God and His Testament, and deviated from My Right Path."

Likewise He says: "I implore of Thee not to deprive me of what Thou possessest or what Thou hast ordained for Thy chosen ones who have not broken Thy Covenant and Testament. Say! Die with your hatred! Verily, He is come by Whom the pillars of the world have been shaken and because of Whom the feet have stumbled—save those who have not broken the Covenant, but have followed what God revealed in His Book."

Likewise He says: "The Supreme Concourse will pray for the one who is adorned with the garment of faithfulness between

heaven and earth; but he who breaks the Covenant is cursed by heaven and earth."

Likewise He says: "Take hold of what has been revealed unto you, with a power superior to that of the hands of the unbelievers who have violated the Covenant of God and His Testament, and have turned from the Face."

Also He says: "O Yahyá! Verily the Book has come! Take it with a power from Us and do not follow those who have broken the Covenant of God and His Testament, and have denied what has been revealed from the Powerful, the All-Knower."

Likewise He says: "I awoke this morning, O My God, under the shadow of Thy great bounty and have taken, with Thy power, the pen to mention Thee with such mention as shall be a light unto the pure, and fire unto the wicked who have violated Thy Covenant, denied Thy Verses and put aside the Kawthar of life which appeared by Thy command and was revealed by the finger of Thy will."

Here, in a Tablet to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, He says also: "O God! This is a Branch which has sprung forth from the Tree of Oneness, the Sadrat of Thy Unity. O God! Thou seest Him looking to Thee and clinging to the rope of Thy Bounties. Protect Him in the shelter of Thy Mercy! Thou knowest, O My God, that I do not desire Him save for what Thou dost desire Him, and I do not choose Him save for what Thou dost choose Him. Assist Him with the Hosts of Thy earth and Thy heaven. Assist, O God, those who assist Him, and choose those who choose Him. Confirm those who draw nigh unto Him, and debase those who deny Him and do not want Him. O God, Thou seest that at this moment of Revelation My Pen shakes and My Being trembles. I ask Thee, By My impatience in Thy Love and My willingness to proclaim Thy Cause, to ordain for Him and His friends, what Thou hast ordained for Thy Messengers and the faithful ones of Thy Revelation. Verily, Thou art the powerful and the omnipotent! By God, O people, My eye weeps, and the eye of 'Alí weeps in the Supreme Concourse; My heart throbs, and the heart of Muḥammad throbs in the Courts of Abhá; My heart and the hearts of the Prophets lament with the people of knowledge, if you are those who are possessed of sight. My sorrow is not for

Myself, but for the One Who comes after Me in the Shadow of the Cause with a clear, undeniable reign; because these will not acknowledge His Manifestation and will deny His evidences and verses, will dispute His power, will antagonize Him and will be traitors to His Cause—as they did to His Person in those days—and ye were witnesses."

Again in a Tablet to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, He says: "O Greatest Branch! Verily, Thy illness caused Me sorrow, but God will cure Thee, and He is the most generous and best helper. Glory be upon Thee and upon those who serve Thee and encircle Thee! Woe and torment be upon him who opposes and torments Thee! Blessed is he who befriends Thee, and hell be for him who opposes Thee!"

Likewise He says: "Is it possible that after the dawning of the sun of Thy Testament from the horizon of Thy greatest Tablet, that any feet shall slip away from the right Path? We said, O My Supreme Pen, it behoves Thee to do as Thou hast been bidden by God, the exalted and the great. Do not ask about that which melts Thy heart and those of the denizens of Paradise who encompass Thy wonderful Cause. Thou shouldst not know what We have hidden from Thee. Thy Lord is the veiler and the knower. Turn Thy most luminous Face to the greatest aspect and say: O My Merciful God! Decorate the Heaven of Bayán with the stars of steadfastness, trust and truth. Verily, Thou art the Powerful over what Thou willest. There is no God save Thee, the wise and the generous."

In short, from these Holy Utterances and those of His Holiness Christ, it becomes clear, evident and proved, that man should associate with people who are firm in the Covenant and Testament, and befriend the pure ones; because bad associates bring about infection of bad qualities. It is like leprosy; it is impossible for a man to associate and befriend a leper and not be infected. This command is for the sake of protection and to safeguard.

Consider this text of the New Testament: the brothers of His Holiness Christ, came to Him and they said: "These are your brothers." He answered that His brothers were those who believed in God, and refused to associate with His own brothers.

Likewise Qurratu'l-'Ayn, who is celebrated in all the world, when she believed in God and was attracted to the Divine Breaths,

she forsook her two eldest sons, although they were her two oldest children, because they did not become believers, and thereafter did not meet them. She said: "All the friends of God are my children, but these two are not. I will have nothing to do with them."

Consider! The Divine Gardener cuts off the dry or weak branch from the good tree and grafts to it, a branch from another tree. He both separates and unites. This is that which His Holiness Christ says: that from all the world they come and enter the Kingdom, and the children of the Kingdom shall be cast out. Noah's grandson, Canaan, was detested in the sight of Noah and others were accepted. The brothers of the Blessed Beauty detached themselves from Him, and the Blessed Beauty never met them. He said: "This is an eternal separation between you and Me." All this was not because the Blessed Beauty was despotic; but because these persons, through their own actions and words deprived themselves from the bounties and bestowals of the Blessed Beauty. His Holiness Christ did not exercise despotism in the case of Judas Iscariot and His own brothers,—but they separated themselves.

In short, the point is this: 'Abdu'l-Bahá is extremely kind, but when the disease is leprosy, what am I to do? Just as in bodily diseases we must prevent intermingling and infection and put into effect sanitary laws—because the infectious physical diseases uproot the foundation of humanity; likewise one must protect and safeguard the blessed souls from the breaths and fatal spiritual diseases; otherwise violation, like the plague, will become a contagion and all will perish. In the early days, after the Ascension of the Blessed Beauty, the center of violation was alone; little by little the infection spread; and this was due to companionship and association.

EXCERPTS FROM THE WILL AND TESTAMENT OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ

All-praise to Him Who, by the Shield of His Covenant, hath guarded the Temple of His Cause from the darts of doubtfulness, Who by the Hosts of His Testament hath preserved the Sanctuary of His Most Beneficent Law and protected His Straight and Luminous Path, staying thereby the onslaught of the company of Covenant-breakers, that have threatened to subvert His Divine Edifice; Who hath watched over His Mighty Stronghold and All-

glorious Faith, through the aid of men whom the slander of the slanderer affects not, whom no earthly calling, glory and power can turn aside from the Covenant of God and His Testament, established firmly by His clear and manifest words, writ and revealed by His All-glorious Pen and recorded in the Preserved Tablet.

Salutation and praise, blessing and glory rest upon that primal branch of the Divine and Sacred Lote-Tree, grown out, blest, tender, verdant and flourishing from the Twin Holy Trees; the most wondrous, unique and priceless pearl that doth gleam from out the twin surging seas; upon the offshoots of the Tree of Holiness, the twigs of the Celestial Tree, they that in the Day of the Great Dividing have stood fast and firm in the Covenant; upon the Hands (pillars) of the Cause of God that have diffused widely the Divine Fragrances, declared His Proofs, proclaimed His Faith, published abroad His Law, detached themselves from all things but Him, stood for righteousness in this world, and kindled the Fire of the Love of God in the very hearts and souls of His servants; upon them that have believed, rested assured, stood steadfast in His Covenant and followed the Light that after my passing shineth from the Dayspring of Divine Guidance—for behold! he is the blest and sacred bough that hath branched out from the Twin Holy Trees. Well is it with him that seeketh the shelter of his shade that shadoweth all mankind.

O ye beloved of the Lord! The greatest of all things is the protection of the True Faith of God, the preservation of His Law, the safeguarding of His Cause and service unto His Word. Ten thousand souls have shed streams of their sacred blood in this path, their precious lives they offered in sacrifice unto Him, hastened wrapt in holy ecstasy unto the glorious field of martyrdom, upraised the Standard of God's Faith and writ with their life-blood upon the Tablet of the world the verses of His Divine Unity. The sacred breast of His Holiness, the Exalted One, (may my life be a sacrifice unto Him) was made a target to many a dart of woe, and in Mázindarán, the Blessed feet of the Abhá Beauty (may my life be offered up for His loved ones) were so grievously scourged as to bleed and be sore wounded. His neck also was put into captive chains and His feet made fast in the stocks. In every hour, for a period of fifty years, a new trial and calamity befell Him and fresh