

***What Are the
Sacred Scriptures of
the Bahá'í Faith?***

The flowers fade, but the word of
our God endures for evermore.
Isaiah 40:8

Never before has such an abundance
of Scriptures been entrusted to human-
kind. Because of the greatness of this
day, the Word of God has poured
forth like a torrent.

For the first time in religious history,
we have reliable evidence of how the
Word of God is revealed. Several in-
dependent observers have testified that
sometimes the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh
spoke the divine Words with such
speed that no one could write them
down. *The Book of Certitude* (257
pages), which resolves the mysteries
of past Scriptures, was written by
Bahá'u'lláh within the span of only
two days.

Authors make corrections, change their
minds, modify their styles, and mature
with time. Like a candle's flame before
the wind, their thoughts flicker and
flutter, and die with little impact on
their surroundings.

The Word of God radiates like the sun
with unmatched splendor, beauty, and
perfection to the farthest reaches of

the earth. It is the source of the spiri-
tual life of the world. The winds and
whims of time can never touch it.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path.
Psalms 119:105

Kahlil Gibran, the famous author from
Lebanon, whose book *The Prophet* has
been hailed as a classic, made this
statement about Bahá'u'lláh's Arabic
works, a language Bahá'u'lláh did not
study:

He [Kahlil Gibran] said it was the
most stupendous literature that ever
was written, and that He even
coined words. That there was no
Arabic that even touched the Arabic
of Bahá'u'lláh.¹

In the Bahá'í archives are treasured
more than 15,000 Tablets or Epistles
written by Bahá'u'lláh to His disci-
ples.² If we assume that each of
those Epistles is an average of three
pages long, we have a total of about
45,000 pages. If 450 pages are put in
each volume, we end up with 100 vol-
umes. Each of those 15,000 Epistles
reveals a glimpse of God's glory, per-
fection, and power. Each of those
Epistles expresses His unwavering and
unfailing love for humanity. And each
of them manifests unparalleled author-
ity, beauty, and majesty.

Those who witnessed the revelation of
these sacred writings have testified
that they were spoken as fast as they
could be recorded. Secretaries could

hardly keep up with the speed with
which the words were uttered. What is
even more astonishing is that they re-
quired no correction, modification, or
change of any kind.

All sacred Scriptures testify to the su-
preme station of the Word of God:

The words which I have spoken to
you are both spirit and life.
Christ (John 6:63)

And the words of the Lord are
flawless, like silver refined in a fur-
nace of clay, purified seven times.
Psalms 18:30

Both the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh declare
repeatedly that their Words are the sur-
est evidence of their divine distinction:

He, the divine King, hath pro-
claimed the undisputed supremacy
of the verses of His Book over all
things that testify to His truth. For
compared with all other proofs and
tokens, the divinely-revealed verses
shine as the sun, whilst all others
are as stars. To the peoples of the
world they are the abiding testi-
mony, the incontrovertible proof,
the shining light of the ideal King.
Their excellence is unrivaled, their
virtue nothing can surpass. They are
the treasury of the divine pearls and
the depository of the divine myster-
ies.³ Bahá'u'lláh

Indeed these manifest verses are
conclusive testimony for those who
seek true guidance.⁴ The Báb

Certainly God's way of thinking and speaking must be distinct from ours—as distinct and exalted as the heavens are from the earth:

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:8-9

Whenever you examine the Writings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, remember that they were spoken as quickly as the secretaries could record. No human being, other than the One endowed and inspired by God, can claim such distinction. The most talented, seasoned, and skillful authors cannot produce, spontaneously and without pause, even as much as one page that would come close, in beauty and novelty, to the works of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh—neither of whom had any education. When we add the dimension of meaning to the dimension of language, we get peerless pearls of celestial perfection.

The Word of God, spoken through His great Messengers, is the mightiest miracle. It is not like a meteor that flashes forth and dies in the moments of history. It is a celestial magic that endures for all generations. It is as bright and enduring as the sun, as ever-present as the universe itself. No evidence, no proof can ever compare with it.

It seems God puts most or all of His miracles in His Word. Consider the Báb. He began His ministry at the age of 25. He had hardly any education. As far as we know, He did not even finish elementary school. His teacher sent Him home, saying that the child knew much more than he did. Imagine a young man, raised in an extremely regressive and repressive culture, who arises with the most incredible news and reveals Scriptures as fast as anyone can write, in the most magnificent and exquisite style, in a language other than His mother tongue—one that He has never studied! What greater miracle does anyone need? This is an ever-present wonder that we can witness any time we wish. This is the evidence God wants us to depend on.

How could the Israelites endure so much pain in the desert? What gave them the strength and courage was the “manna,” the food from heaven. That food symbolized the Word of God. (See John 6:30-58.)

To observe brevity, only a few brief selections from the vast vineyard of Bahá'í sacred works are offered here. It is essential for every seeker of truth to devote much time to the study of those sources.

The Báb and 'Abdu'l-Bahá also wrote extensively. Their works also constitute part of Bahá'í sacred Scriptures. Here are a few references in English:

By Bahá'u'lláh

- *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*
- *The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh*
- *The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys*
- *The Book of Certitude*
- *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*
- *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*
- *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*

By the Báb

- *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*

By 'Abdu'l-Bahá

- *Some Answered Questions*
- *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*
- *The Secret of Divine Civilization*
- *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*
- *Paris Talks*

The following quotations, selected by Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, from Bahá'í Scriptures, are inscribed over the alcoves and entrances to the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois. Each of them is like a facet of diamond harvested from the vast mountains of celestial jewels. As you read, ponder in your heart the meaning of each jewel:

All the prophets of God proclaim the same faith.

Religion is a radiant light and an impregnable stronghold.

Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch.

So powerful is unity's light that it can illumine the whole earth.

Consort with the followers of all religions with friendliness.

O Son of Being! Thou art My lamp and My light is in thee.

O Son of Being! Walk in My statutes for love of Me.

Thy Paradise is My love; thy heavenly home reunion with Me.

The light of a good character surpasseth the light of the sun.

The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens.

The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me.

My love is My stronghold; he that entereth therein is safe and secure.

Breathe not the sins of others so long as thou art thyself a sinner.

Thy heart is My home; sanctify it for My descent.

I have made death a messenger of joy to thee. Wherefore dost thou grieve?

Make mention of Me on My earth, that in My heaven I may remember thee.

O rich ones on earth! The poor in your midst are My trust; guard ye My trust.

The source of all learning is the knowledge of God, exalted be His Glory.⁵

The Scriptures of a religion are its very heart and soul. They come not from human beings, but from the heart of heaven. They are the hallmark of God's Messengers, the most evident sign of their greatness. Anyone interested in knowing Bahá'u'lláh should study His writings diligently. He invites the seekers of truth again and again to test Him by His works—by the heavenly fruits He bears. As Christ declared, a tree must be judged by its fruits. If the fruits are good, the tree must be good.

Love is the greatest law in the universe. It is the light of the world. Here are a few fruits from the vineyard of Bahá'u'lláh's and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's works on love:

Love is the source of all the bestowals of God. Until love takes possession of the heart, no other divine bounty can be revealed in it.⁶

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Order your lives in accordance with the first principle of divine teaching, which is love.⁷

'Abdu'l-Bahá

In the garden of thy heart plant naught but the rose of love.⁸

Bahá'u'lláh

To every human being must ye be infinitely kind.⁹

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Look not upon the creatures of God except with the eye of kindliness

and mercy, for Our loving providence hath pervaded all created things, and Our grace encompasseth the earth and the heavens.¹⁰

Bahá'u'lláh

You must have infinite love for each other; each preferring the other before himself.¹¹

'Abdu'l-Bahá

You must love your friend better than yourself; yes, be willing to sacrifice yourself...I desire that you be ready to sacrifice everything for each other; even life itself.¹²

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Blessed is he who prefers his brother before himself.¹³

Bahá'u'lláh

A thought of hatred must be destroyed by a more powerful thought of love.¹⁴

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Think ye of love and good fellowship as the delights of heaven, think ye of hostility and hatred as the torments of hell.¹⁵

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Love the creatures for the sake of God and not for themselves. You will never become angry or impatient if you love them for the sake of God.¹⁶

'Abdu'l-Bahá

When a man turns his face to God he finds sunshine everywhere...Do not be content with showing friendship in words alone, let your heart burn with loving-kindness for all who may cross your path.¹⁷

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Let them at all times concern themselves with doing a kindly thing for

*one of their fellows, offering to someone love, consideration, thoughtful help. Let them see no one as their enemy, or as wishing them ill, but think of all humankind as their friends; regarding the alien as an intimate, the stranger as a companion, staying free of prejudice, drawing no lines.*¹⁸ *Abdu'l-Bahá*

*Ye were created to show love one to another and not perversity and rancor. Take pride not in love for yourselves but in love for your fellow-creatures. Glory not in love for your country, but in love for all mankind.*¹⁹ *Bahá'u'lláh*

Love, in its fullness and purity, is the mother of all virtues. It is the power that gives birth to everything good and noble. It is the very purpose of human life.

Love, in its fullness, means seeking and embracing truth and goodness. Everything true is good, and everything good is true. God is truth and goodness. Love is truth and goodness. A person who loves truth and goodness understands that:

- There exists a just and caring God who must be known, loved, and glorified for His greatness
- Justice is better than cruelty
- Honesty excels dishonesty
- Knowledge is superior to ignorance
- Wisdom transcends folly
- Doing is nobler than simply sitting and dreaming.

Therefore “love is the great secret.” When we have true love, we discover and live by truth and goodness; we have attained the purpose for which the universe came into being.

*We love to see you at all times consorting in amity and concord...We shall always be with you; if We inhale the perfume of your fellowship, Our heart will assuredly rejoice, for naught else can satisfy Us.*²⁰
Bahá'u'lláh

Let us conclude this section with two quotations on virtues, one by Christ, the other by Bahá'u'lláh:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Christ (Matt. 5:3-10)

Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity.

Be worthy of the trust of thy neighbor, and look upon him with a bright and friendly face.

Be a treasure to the poor, an admonisher to the rich, an answerer of the cry of the needy, a preserver of the sanctity of thy pledge.

Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech.

Be unjust to no man, and show all meekness to all men.

Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts.

Be a home for the stranger, a balm to the suffering, a tower of strength for the fugitive.

Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring.

Be an ornament to the countenance of truth, a crown to the brow of fidelity, a pillar of the temple of righteousness, a breath of life to the body of mankind, an ensign of the hosts of justice, a luminary above the horizon of virtue, a dew to the soil of the human heart, an ark on the ocean of knowledge, a sun in

*the heaven of bounty, a gem on the diadem of wisdom, a shining light in the firmament of thy generation, a fruit upon the tree of humility.*²¹

Bahá'u'lláh

1. *World Order*, Summer 1978, vol. 12, p. 30.
2. *Andalib* (Persian), Fall 1993.
3. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 205.
4. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 26.
5. *Welcome to the Bahá'í House of Worship*, p. 5.
6. *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 15.
7. *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 8.
8. *The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh* (Persian), no. 3.
9. *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 280.
10. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 33.
11. *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 218.
12. *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 218.
13. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 71.
14. *Paris Talks*, p. 29.
15. *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 245.
16. *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 93.
17. *Paris Talks*, p. 15.
18. *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 1-2.
19. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 138.
20. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 315.

21. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 285.



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