

Philosophical statements by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Some Answered Questions

extracted from Ian Kluge’s article

"Some Answered Questions: A Philosophical Perspective"

in *Lights of Irfan*, Volume 10 (2009)

(bahai-library.com/kluge_saq_philosophical_perspective)

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2019

Note: For all quotations from Some Answered Questions, the newly revised translation of 2014 has been used. The numbers on the right side refer to the chapter and paragraph numbers. Where a quotation starts without capitalization or ends without a full stop, it is part of a phrase (this to avoid too many ‘...’ throughout this compilation).

This compilation is intended as a summarized outline, that shows which subjects are dealt with in which chapters and paragraphs. For a full understanding of the quotations, please refer to the complete text of the referenced chapters.

Ian Kluge writes in this article:

“One of the signature doctrines of Bahá’í onto-theology is the doctrine of emanation, which, historically gets its first thorough explication in the Enneads of Plotinus in the 3rd Century AD. The Enneads were a synthesis of Plato and Aristotle and has great influence both in the Christian and Muslim traditions of philosophy. Plotinus’ main metaphor for the emanative process was the sun and its light. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá also uses this metaphor... The emanationist ontology of SAQ (and the Writings in general) creates bridges between Bahá’í teachings and teachings found in other spiritual traditions such as Sufism, Kabbalah, Advaita Vedanta and the Vijñānavada school of Buddhism. Moreover, it establishes connections with such philosophers as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd in the Muslim tradition, with Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, John Scotus Erigena and Nicholas of Cusa in the Christian tradition and with Maimonides in the Jewish tradition.”

Ian Kluge, pp. 200-203

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Compilation

Introduction

3.2 rational arguments ... are what the people of the world require in this day.

1.2 nature is subject to a sound organization, to inviolable laws, to a perfect order and a consummate design.

Part I: Ontology

1. SAQ's Ontology: Some Basic Principles

79.1-2 The sophists hold that all existence is illusory, indeed, that each and every being is an absolute illusion that has no existence whatsoever—in other words, that the existence of created things is like a mirage, or like the reflection of an image in water or in a mirror, which is merely an appearance devoid of any basis, foundation, or ascertainable reality. This notion is false...

2. Ontological Realism

79.2 in the contingent world it [the existence of things] is established, proven, and undeniable.

79.2-3 for although the existence of things is an illusion compared to the existence of God, yet in the contingent world it is established, proven, and undeniable. For example, the existence of the mineral is non-existence compared to that of man... but the mineral indeed exists within the mineral realm... It is therefore evident that although created things have no existence compared to that of God, being instead like a mirage or an image reflected in a mirror, yet in their own degree they exist.

80.4 The world of existence, in relation to its Creator, is intrinsically originated.

3. Ontological Pluralism

50.3 the world of existence, indeed every created thing, proclaims but one of the names of God...

79.1 Each being [has it's own] basis, foundation or ascertainable reality.

1.2 all are subject to one universal law from which they never depart.

79.3 created things... in their own degree... exist.

57.4 Thus man, the animal, the plant, and the mineral all exist, but the existence of these four kinds of beings is different. Indeed, what a difference there is between the existence of man and that of the animal! Yet all these do exist, and it is evident that in existence there are differences of degree.

- 80.7 The Creator has ever had a creation, and the rays have ever emanated and shone forth from the Sun of Truth; for a lightless sun would be impenetrable darkness. The names and attributes of God require the existence of things, and no cessation in the outpouring of God's ancient grace can ever be contemplated, for this would be contrary to the divine perfections.

4. Distinctions of Being and Power

- 55.3-5 The vegetable spirit is that power of growth...
 The animal spirit is that all-embracing sensory power...
 The human spirit, which distinguishes man from the animal, is the rational soul... encompasses all things and as far as human capacity permits, discovers their realities and becomes aware of the properties and effects, the characteristics and conditions of earthly things.
- 64.1 Beyond the mineral, vegetable, and animal perfections, however, he also possesses a special perfection of which other created things are bereft, namely, the perfections of the mind.
- 48.11 There is no doubt that it is from its effects that you infer in the animal the existence of a power which is lacking in the plant, and that is the power of the senses—sight, hearing, and the other powers. It is from these that you infer that there is an animal spirit. Infer, likewise, from the aforementioned signs and arguments the existence of a human spirit. Thus, since there are signs in the animal that cannot be found in the plant, you say that this sensory power is one of the hallmarks of the animal spirit. You see likewise in man signs, powers, and perfections that do not exist in the animal: Infer then that there is a power in him of which the animal is bereft.

5. Ontological Hierarchism

- 69.6 all beings, whether universal or particular, are mutually connected in accordance with God's consummate wisdom and mutually influence one another. Were it not so, the all-embracing organization and universal arrangement of existence would become disordered and disrupted. And as all created things are most soundly connected one with another, they are well ordered, arranged, and perfected.
- The innumerable created things that are found in the world of existence—be they man, animal, plant, or mineral—... all beings are linked together like a chain; and mutual aid, assistance, and interaction are among their intrinsic properties and are the cause of their formation, development, and growth.
- 32.5 so long as the degrees of created things are different, some will naturally rank above the others... the singling out of man for the highest degree...
- 32.6 material beings, they are not to be blamed, judged, or held accountable for their own degrees and stations.

- 32.7 the differences among mankind are twofold: One is a difference of degree, and this difference is not blameworthy. The other is a difference with respect to faith and certitude, the absence of which is blameworthy... However praiseworthy and acceptable it may be in its human degree, yet as it is deprived of the perfections of that degree, it has become a source of deficiency and is held accountable for that reason.
- 70.5 the mineral, has no right to object, saying, "O God, why have you denied me the (SAQ note: perfections of the plant?" Likewise, the plant has no right to protest that it has been See Chapters 32, 62, 63) the plant has no right to protest that it has been deprived of the perfections of the animal realm... No, all these things are perfect in their own degree and must pursue the perfections of that degree. As we have said previously, that which is inferior in rank has no right or qualification to aspire to the station and perfections of that which is superior, but must progress within its own degree.
- 57.4 It is therefore clear that in man's innate nature there is a difference in degree, aptitude, and capacity, but it is not a matter of good or evil—it is merely a difference of degree. One occupies the highest degree, another the middle degree, and yet another the lowest degree.
- 30.3 the Divinity Himself, Who has arranged this infinite universe in the most perfect form and arrayed its countless beings in the utmost order, soundness, and perfection.
- 69.3 this endless universe is like the human body, and that all its parts are connected one with another and are linked together in the utmost perfection. That is, in the same way that the parts, members, and organs of the human body are interconnected, and that they mutually assist, reinforce, and influence each other, so too are the parts and members of this endless universe connected with, and spiritually and materially influenced by, one another.

6. Hierarchy After Death

- 60.4 ultimate retributions and punishments consist in... sinking to the lowest degrees of existence. And whoso is deprived of these favours, though he continue to exist after death, is accounted as dead in the eyes of the people of truth.
- 67.10 Likewise, those souls who are veiled from God, although they exist both in this world and in the world to come, are non-existent and forgotten in relation to the sanctified existence of the children of the divine Kingdom.
- 59.6 differences of degree in the world of creation are a barrier to knowledge.

7. Kinds and their Perfections

- 32.2 Know that the order and perfection of the universe require that existence should

appear in countless forms. Created things cannot therefore be realized in a single degree, station, manner, kind, or species: Differences of degree, distinctions in form, and a multiplicity of kinds and species are inevitable. So there must necessarily be mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms; for through man alone the world of existence could not be adequately arranged, adorned, organized, and perfected.

8. A Dynamic Ontology

- 15.7 the exaltation of man resides primarily in such virtues and attainments as are the adornments of the human reality.
- 63.1 Know that nothing that exists remains in a state of repose—that is, all things are in motion. They are either growing or declining, either coming from non-existence into existence or passing from existence into non-existence.
- 46.6 every single thing has an effect and influence upon every other, either independently or through a causal chain.

9. A Nested Hierarchy

- 37.2 the divine Essence is an all-encompassing reality, and all created things are encompassed. The all-encompassing must assuredly be greater than that which is encompassed, and thus the latter can in no wise discover the former or comprehend its reality.
- 59.5 the divine Essence is all-encompassing and can never be encompassed.
- 40.6 those sanctified realities, the universal Manifestations of God, encompass all created things both in their essence and in their attributes...
- 40.7 The noblest of all earthly beings is man. In him are realized the animal, the vegetable, and the mineral kingdoms; that is, all these degrees are contained in him...
- See also
71.6
- 40.5 the spirit encompasses the body...
- 55.5 This spirit, which in the terminology of the philosophers is called the rational soul, encompasses all things...

10. Panentheism

No quotations [see SAQ chapter 82 – Ed.]

11. Ontology: Causality

- 46.6 It is established through numerous proofs and arguments that every single thing has

See also
22.2,
36.1-3,
42.4-5,
53.2,
55.3-5
46.6

an effect and influence upon every other, either independently or through a causal chain. In sum, the completeness of each and every thing—that is, the completeness which you now see in man, or in other beings, with regard to their parts, members, and powers—arises from their component elements, their quantities and measures, the manner of their combination, and their mutual action, interaction, and influence.

There is no doubt that the completeness seen in each and every thing arises, by divine creation, from the component elements, their appropriate combination, their proportionate measure, the manner of their composition, and the influence of other created things. For all beings are linked together like a chain; and mutual aid, assistance, and interaction are among their intrinsic properties and are the cause of their formation, development, and growth.

11.1 Four-Fold Causality

80.3 the existence of each and every thing depends upon four causes: the efficient cause, the material cause, the formal cause and the final cause. So this chair has a creator who is a carpenter, a matter which is wood, a form which is that of a chair, and a purpose which is to serve as a seat. Therefore, this chair is essentially originated, for it is preceded by, and its existence is conditioned upon, a cause. This is called essential or intrinsic origination.

11.2 Consequences of Four-Fold Causality

No quotations

12. Teleology

47.5 This composition and arrangement arose, through the wisdom of God and His ancient might, from one natural order. Thus, as this composition and combination has been produced according to a natural order, with perfect soundness, following a consummate wisdom, and subject to a universal law, it is clear that it is a divine creation and not an accidental composition and arrangement.

13. Intelligent Design

1.2 nature is subject to a sound organization, to inviolable laws, to a perfect order, and to a consummate design, from which it never departs. To such an extent is this true that were you to gaze with the eye of insight and discernment, you would observe that all things—from the smallest invisible atom to the largest globes in the world of existence, such as the sun or the other great stars and luminous bodies—are most perfectly organized, be it with regard to their order, their composition, their outward form, or their motion, and that all are subject to one universal law from which they never depart.

2.7 The change in the outward form of the smallest thing proves the existence of a

creator: Then how could this vast, boundless universe have created itself and come to exist solely through the mutual interaction of the elements? How patently false is such a notion!

14. Hylomorphism

18.2 The sun is born of matter and form, which can be likened to father and mother, and still it is absolute perfection; darkness has neither matter nor form, neither father nor mother, and yet it is sheer imperfection.

15. An Application of Four-Fold Causality

No quotations

16. Platonic Trends in SAQ

81.6 the outward is the expression of the inward: The earthly realm is the mirror of the heavenly Kingdom, and the material world is in accordance with the spiritual world.

67.1 the Kingdom is not a material location but is sanctified above time and place. It is a spiritual realm, a divine world... It is exalted above bodies and all that is corporeal...

10.8 this world will mirror forth the heavenly Kingdom...

11.1 what is meant by the term "Holy of Holies" is that spiritual law which can never be changed or abrogated, and what is meant by the "Holy City" is the material law which may indeed be abrogated...

14.12 The Sun of Truth can be likened to the material sun, which rises from many different points.

17. The Reality of Universals

55.2-4 spirit is divided into five categories: the vegetable spirit, the animal spirit, the human spirit, the spirit of faith, and the Holy Spirit. The vegetable spirit is that power of growth which is brought about in the seed through the influence of other created things. The animal spirit is that all-embracing sensory power which is realized through the composition and combination of the elements...

55.5 The human spirit, which distinguishes man from the animal, is the rational soul, and these two terms—the human spirit and the rational soul—designate one and the same thing. This spirit, which in the terminology of the philosophers is called the rational soul, encompasses all things and as far as human capacity permits, discovers their realities and becomes aware of the properties and effects, the

characteristics and conditions of earthly things. But the human spirit, unless it be assisted by the spirit of faith, cannot become acquainted with the divine mysteries and the heavenly realities. It is like a mirror which, although clear, bright, and polished, is still in need of light. Not until a sunbeam falls upon it can it discover the divine mysteries.

- 32.2 Know that the order and perfection of the universe require that existence should appear in countless forms. Created things cannot therefore be realized in a single degree, station, manner, kind, or species: Differences of degree, distinctions in form, and a multiplicity of kinds and species are inevitable. So there must necessarily be mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms; for through man alone the world of existence could not be adequately arranged, adorned, organized, and perfected. By the same token, with the animals, plants, or minerals alone, this world would not possess such a wondrous appearance, sound arrangement, and subtle adornment: There must be differences of degrees and stations, of kinds and species, for existence to shine forth with the utmost perfection.
- 47.10-11 But from the beginning of his existence man has been a distinct species... But even when it possesses, in the womb of the mother, a strange form entirely different from its present shape and appearance, it is the embryo of a distinct species... For the originality of the human species and the independence of the essence of man are clear and evident.
- 64.1 Man is the most distinguished species in that he combines the perfections of all three classes—that is, he possesses a material body, the power of growth, and the power of sensation. Beyond the mineral, vegetable, and animal perfections, however, he also possesses a special perfection of which other created things are bereft, namely, the perfections of the mind. Thus man is the noblest of all existing things.
- 82.17 The Prophets, however, hold that there are the world of God, the world of the Kingdom, and the world of creation: three things. The first emanation is the outpouring grace of the Kingdom, which has emanated from God and has appeared in the realities of all things...
- 51.5 the terrestrial globe was created, from the beginning, with all its elements, substances, minerals, parts, and components, but these appeared only gradually: first the minerals, then the plants, then the animals, and finally man. But from the beginning, these kinds and species were latent in the earthly realm and appeared gradually thereafter. For the supreme law of God and the universal natural order encompasses all things and subjects them to its rule.

18. Reflection and Participation

- 50.3 Our meaning is that every existing thing is of necessity the seat of the revelation of the divine splendours; that is, the perfections of God are manifested and revealed

therein... the world of existence, indeed every created thing, proclaims but one of the names of God, but the reality of man is an all-encompassing and universal reality which is the seat of the revelation of all the divine perfections.

- 59.8 all created things tell of this [divine] light, partake of its rays, and receive their portion thereof...
- 27.5 All created things are resplendent signs of God.
- 50.4 The splendour of all the divine perfections is manifest in the reality of man, and it is for this reason that he is the vicegerent and apostle of God. If man did not exist, the universe would be without result, for the purpose of existence is the revelation of the divine perfections.
- 50.5 the noblest part of the tree, and the fundamental purpose of its existence, is the fruit.
- 50.4-5 We cannot say, then, that there was a time when man was not... What a false and vacuous notion!

19. Existence and Nonexistence

- 80.5 The second consideration is that existence and non-existence are both relative. If it be said that a certain thing was brought forth from non-existence, the intent is not absolute non-existence; rather, it is meant that the former condition was non-existence in relation to the present one. For absolute non-existence cannot become existence, as it lacks the very capacity to exist. Man exists, and the mineral likewise exists, but the existence of the mineral is non-existence in relation to that of man; for when the body of man is destroyed, it becomes dust and mineral, and when dust progresses into the human world, and that inanimate body of matter becomes living, man comes into existence. Though the dust—the mineral—enjoys existence in its own station, yet in relation to man it is non-existence. Our meaning is that both exist, but the existence of dust and mineral, in relation to man, is non-existence...
- 80.7 no cessation in the outpouring of God's ancient grace can ever be contemplated, for this would be contrary to the divine perfections.
- 47.2-3 the very names and attributes of Divinity require the existence of created things... a creator without a creation is impossible... since all the divine names and attributes call for the existence of created things. If we were to imagine a time when created things did not exist, it would be tantamount to denying the divinity of God... Thus, as that Essence of Oneness, or divine Being, is eternal and everlasting—that is, as it has neither beginning nor end—it follows that the world of existence, this endless universe, likewise has no beginning.
- 60.5 it is impossible that any effect should appear from absolute nothingness. For the

effect of a thing is secondary to its existence...

47.3 Apart from this, absolute non-existence lacks the capacity to attain existence. If the universe were pure nothingness, existence could not have been realized.

38.5 the world of existence has always been...

20. The Structure of Beings

51.4 So it is the shoot which first appears from the seed, then the branches, leaves, and blossoms, and finally the fruit. But from the beginning of its formation, all of these existed potentially, albeit invisibly, in the seed.

51.5 Similarly, the terrestrial globe was created, from the beginning, with all its elements, substances, minerals, parts, and components, but these appeared only gradually...

51.4 Likewise, from the beginning the embryo possesses all perfections, such as the spirit, the mind, sight, smell, and taste—in a word, all the powers—but they are invisible and become apparent only gradually.

59.3 Know that there are two kinds of knowledge: the knowledge of the essence of a thing and the knowledge of its attributes. The essence of each thing is known only through its attributes; otherwise, that essence is unknown and unfathomed.

66.2 Some hold that the body is the substance and that it subsists by itself, and that the spirit is an accident which subsists through the substance of the body. The truth, however, is that the rational soul is the substance through which the body subsists. If the accident—the body—is destroyed, the substance—the spirit—remains.

37.7 for the essential names and attributes of God are identical with His Essence, and His Essence is sanctified above all understanding. If the essential attributes were not identical with the Essence, then there would be a multiplicity of pre-existences and the distinction between the Essence and the attributes would therefore also be firmly established and pre-existent. But this would imply an infinite chain of pre-existences, which is an evident error.

21. Essence and Existence

No quotations

22. God — an Epistemological Preview

37.2 the essence and the attributes of the all-glorious Lord are enshrined in the inaccessible heights of sanctity, and human minds and understandings will never find a path to that station. “The way is barred, and all seeking rejected.”

37.3-4 It is evident that whatsoever man understands is a consequence of his existence, and that man is a sign of the All-Merciful: How then can the consequence of the sign encompass the Creator of the sign? That is, how can human understanding, which is a consequence of man's existence, comprehend God? Thus the reality of the Divinity lies hidden from all understanding and is concealed from the minds of all men, and to ascend to that station is in no wise possible. We observe that every lower thing is incapable of comprehending the reality of that which is higher.

37.5 all these descriptions, all these expressions of praise and glory, refer to these holy Manifestations; that is, every description, praise, name, or attribute of God that we mention applies to Them. But no soul has ever fathomed the reality of the Essence of the Divinity ... all that the human reality knows, discovers, and understands of the names, attributes, and perfections of God refers to these holy Manifestations and leads nowhere else: "The way is cut off, and all seeking rejected."

23. The Existence of God: The Argument from Contingency

2.1 Among the proofs and arguments for the existence of God is the fact that man has not created himself, but rather that his creator and fashioner is another than he.

24. The Ontological Argument

2.3 the contingent world is the source of deficiencies and God is the source of perfection. The very deficiencies of the contingent world testify to God's perfections.

2.6 It is therefore evident that there is an Eternal and Almighty One Who is the sum of all perfections, for otherwise He would be even as the creatures.

25. The Argument from Design

2.6 the smallest created thing attests to the existence of a creator. For instance, this piece of bread attests that it has a maker.

2.5 It is certain that the entire contingent world is subject to an order and a law which it can never disobey. Even man is forced to submit to death, sleep, and other conditions—that is, in certain matters he is compelled, and this very compulsion implies the existence of One Who is All-Compelling.

26. The Argument from Change

2.7 The change in the outward form of the smallest thing proves the existence of a creator: Then how could this vast, boundless universe have created itself and come to exist solely through the mutual interaction of the elements? How patently false is such a notion!

2.8 These are theoretical arguments adduced for weak souls, but if the eye of inner

vision be opened, a hundred thousand clear proofs will be seen.

27. The Perfection of Creation

- 46.2 all existing things, whether on earth or in the heavens, even this limitless firmament and all that it contains, have been most befittingly created, arranged, composed, ordered, and completed, and suffer no imperfection. To such an extent is this true that if all beings were to become pure intelligence and to reflect until the end that has no end, they could not possibly imagine anything better than that which already exists.
- 51.4 All beings, whether universal or particular, were created perfect and complete from the beginning.
- 74.5 scorpions and snakes are evil, but only in relation to us and not to themselves, for their venom is their weapon and their sting their means of defence. But as the constituent elements of their venom are incompatible with those of our bodies—that is, as these constituent elements are mutually opposed—the venom is evil, or rather, those elements are evil in relation to each other, while in their own reality they are both good.

28. A Process Ontology

- 63.1 Know that nothing that exists remains in a state of repose—that is, all things are in motion. They are either growing or declining, either coming from non-existence into existence or passing from existence into non-existence. So this flower, this hyacinth, was for a time coming from non-existence into existence and is now passing from existence into non-existence. This is called essential or natural motion, and it can in no wise be dissociated from created things, for it is one of their essential requirements, just as it is an essential requirement of fire to burn.
- 14.1 In this material world, time has changing cycles... and individuals progress, regress, and develop.
- 64.6 Both before and after casting off this elemental frame, the human soul progresses in perfections but not in station.
- 63.2 as the human spirit continues after death, it must either advance or decline...
- 25.3 egress and regress, descent and inherence are characteristics of bodies and not of spirits—that is, egress and inherence pertain only to sensible realities, not to intelligible subtleties; and intelligible realities, such as reason, love, knowledge, imagination, and thought, do not enter, exit, or inhere, but rather denote relationships.
- 25.5 intelligible realities do not enter or inhere, it follows that it is in no wise possible for

the Holy Spirit to ascend, descend, enter, exit, commingle, or inhere. At most it appears as the sun appears in a mirror.

- 66.3 the rational soul... never entered this body to begin with, that it should require, upon leaving it, some other abode. No, the connection of the spirit with the body is even as the connection of this lamp with a mirror. If the mirror is polished and perfected, the light of the lamp appears therein, and if the mirror is broken or covered with dust, the light remains concealed.

Part II: Onto-Theology

29. The Ontological Attributes of God

- 27.2 The reality of the Divinity... admits of no division, for division and multiplicity are among the characteristics of created and hence contingent things, and not accidents impinging upon the Necessary Being.
- 27.3 For that divine reality to descend into stations and degrees would be tantamount to deficiency, contrary to perfection, and utterly impossible.
- 37.7 the essential names and attributes of God are identical with His Essence, and His Essence is sanctified above all understanding. If the essential attributes were not identical with the Essence, then there would be a multiplicity of pre-existences and the distinction between the Essence and the attributes would therefore also be firmly established and pre-existent. But this would imply an infinite chain of pre-existences, which is an evident error.
- 54.7 The Sun of Truth, as we have said, has ever remained in the same condition and undergoes neither change nor alteration, neither transformation nor vicissitude. It has neither beginning nor end.
- 39.7 Time holds sway over the creatures but not over God.
- 53.5 in relation to God the beginning and the end are one and the same.
- 27.6 there is only one Sun, that it is absolute singleness, and that it has no peer or partner...
- 27.3 The reality of the Divinity is sanctified above singleness, then how much more above plurality.
- 47.2 the very names and attributes of Divinity require the existence of created things.
- 45.5 "He doeth whatsoever He willeth."
- 54.6 There is no place here for inherence, egress, commingling, or descent; for egress,

regress, inherence, descent, and commingling are among the characteristics and requirements of bodies, not of spirits—how much less of the holy and sanctified Reality of the Divinity.

1.5 It is therefore evident that this nature, which has neither consciousness nor understanding, is in the grasp of the omnipotent Lord, Who is the Ruler of the world of nature and Who causes it to manifest whatsoever He desires.

37.4 “He is the Subtile, the All-Informed.”

30. Emanationism

53.3 The light of the sun emanates from the sun; it does not manifest it. Appearance through emanation is like the appearance of the rays from the sun: The sanctified Essence of the Sun of Truth cannot be divided or descend into the condition of the creation. In the same way, the sun does not divide itself or descend upon the earth, but its rays—the outpourings of its grace—emanate from it and illumine the dark bodies.

54.4 The true Speaker, the divine Essence, ever remains in the same condition and experiences no change or alteration, no transformation or vicissitude.

54.4 The spirits of men proceed from God by emanation, in the same way as the discourse proceeds from the speaker and the writing from the writer; that is, the speaker himself does not become the speech, any more than the writer becomes the writing...

64.2 Man is in the ultimate degree of materiality and the beginning of spirituality; that is, he is at the end of imperfection and the beginning of perfection. He is at the furthest degree of darkness and the beginning of the light. That is why the station of man is said to be the end of night and the beginning of day, meaning that he encompasses all the degrees of imperfection and that he potentially possesses all the degrees of perfection.

31. The Manifestations

62.1 Know that the degrees of existence are finite—the degrees of servitude, of prophethood, and of Divinity...

82.17 The Prophets... hold that there are the world of God, the world of the Kingdom, and the world of creation: three things.

53.5 It follows that all things have emanated from God; that is, it is through God that all things have been realized, and through Him that the contingent world has come to exist. The first thing to emanate from God is that universal reality which the ancient philosophers termed the “First Intellect” and which the people of Bahá call the

“Primal Will”.

- 37.5 Yet for that Essence of essences, that Truth of truths, that Mystery of mysteries, there are splendours, effulgences, manifestations, and appearances in the world of existence. The Daysprings of those effulgences, the Dawning-places of those revelations, and the Sources of those manifestations are those Exponents of holiness, those universal Realities and divine Beings Who are the true mirrors of the sanctified Essence of the Divinity.
- 44.4 Surely, such a glorious Being, Who is the channel of God’s grace...
- 59.8 the full splendour of the perfections, bounties, and attributes of the Divinity shines forth from the reality of the Perfect Man, that is, that unique Individual Who is the universal Manifestation of God. For the other beings have each received only a portion of that light, but the universal Manifestation of God is the mirror held before this Sun, and the latter manifests itself therein with all its perfections, attributes, signs, and effects.
- 27.5 The Perfect Man... is even as a clear mirror in which the Sun of Truth is revealed and manifested in the fullness of its attributes and perfections.
- 38.4 The third station is that of divine manifestation and heavenly splendour, which is the Word of God, the everlasting Grace, and the Holy Spirit.
- 36.7 the Holy Spirit, which is the mediator between God and His creation.

32. The Manifestation as World-Soul

- 39.1 the heavenly manifestation, which consists in the divine perfections and is the source of the life of the world, the education of the souls, the guidance of the people, and the enlightenment of all creation.
- 38.8 that holy Reality... has neither beginning nor end: Its “beginning” refers merely to His revelation of His own station.
- 3.12 One sanctified Soul revives the world of humanity, transforms the face of the globe, develops the minds, quickens the souls, inaugurates a new life, establishes new foundations, orders the world, gathers the nations and religions under the shadow of one banner, delivers man from the realm of baseness and deficiency, and exhorts and encourages him to develop his innate and acquired perfections.
- 28.4 the reality of Christ, Who is the Word of God, undoubtedly precedes all created things in essence, in attributes, and in distinction.

33. Three Comments

- 62.2 every created thing has been assigned a degree which it can in no wise overpass. So he who occupies the degree of servitude, no matter how far he may progress and acquire endless perfections, can never reach the degree of divine Lordship. The same holds true of all other created things. No matter how far a mineral may progress, it can never acquire the power of growth in the mineral kingdom.
- 58.5 Their heavenly station encompasses all things, is aware of all mysteries, is informed of all signs, and rules supreme over all things.
- 39.3 the individual reality of the Manifestations of the All-Merciful is a sanctified reality, and it is so because it surpasses in essence and in attributes all created things.
- 40.6 Since those sanctified realities, the universal Manifestations of God, encompass all created things both in their essence and in their attributes, since They transcend and discover all existing realities, and since They are cognizant of all things, it follows that Their knowledge is divine and not acquired—that is, it is a heavenly grace and a divine discovery.

34. The Manifestations' Superior Knowledge

- 40.8 If the Manifestation of God—the divine Lawgiver—were not informed of the realities of things, if He did not understand the necessary relationships deriving from these realities, He would assuredly be incapable of establishing a religion consonant with the needs and conditions of the time.
- 58.4 the universal divine Intellect, which transcends nature, is the outpouring grace of the pre-existent Power. It encompasses all existing realities and receives its share of the lights and mysteries of God. It is an all-knowing power, not a power of investigation and sensing... This divine intellectual power is confined to the holy Manifestations and the Daysprings of prophethood.

Part III: Epistemology

- 37.4 every lower thing is incapable of comprehending the reality of that which is higher.
- 59.6 differences of degree in the world of creation are a barrier to knowledge... The inferior degree cannot comprehend the superior.
- 59.9 whoso attains to the knowledge of the Manifestations of God attains to the knowledge of God...
- 59.7 Philosophy consists in comprehending, so far as human power permits, the realities of things as they are in themselves.

35. Realism and the Correspondence Theory of Truth

- 58.3 All the sciences, branches of learning, arts, inventions, institutions, undertakings, and discoveries have resulted from the comprehension of the rational soul. These were once impenetrable secrets, hidden mysteries, and unknown realities, and the rational soul gradually discovered them and brought them out of the invisible plane into the realm of the visible. This is the greatest power of comprehension in the world of nature, and the uttermost limit of its flight is to comprehend the realities, signs, and properties of contingent things.
- 71.8 The mind and thought of man at times discovers certain truths, and this thought and discovery produce definite results and benefits. Such thoughts have a solid foundation. But many things come to mind that are like the waves of the sea of delusion; they bear no fruit and produce no result.
- 1.4 Man is able to resist and oppose nature inasmuch as he discovers the natures of things and, by virtue of this discovery, has mastery over nature itself.
- 55.5 the rational soul, encompasses all things and as far as human capacity permits, discovers their realities and becomes aware of the properties and effects, the characteristics and conditions of earthly things.
- 36.4 The human spirit... deduces that which is unknown from known and visible realities. For example, man is in this hemisphere, but through the power of reason he discovers, as Columbus did, another one—the Americas—which until then was unknown.
- 71.3 Consider that man's contemplative powers produce two kinds of conceptions. One kind consists in sound and true conceptions, which, when combined with resolution, become outwardly realized, such as proper arrangements, wise opinions, scientific discoveries, and technological inventions.

36. Rejection of Nominalism and Conceptualism

- 59.4 our knowledge of things, even of created and limited ones, is of their attributes and not of their essence...
- 59.3 Know that there are two kinds of knowledge: the knowledge of the essence of a thing and the knowledge of its attributes. The essence of each thing is known only through its attributes; otherwise, that essence is unknown and unfathomed.

37. Sources of Knowledge

- 83.2 The first criterion is that of the senses... the criterion of the senses is defective, as it can err.
- 83.5 the criterion of reason is imperfect...

- 83.6 The third criterion is that of tradition... This criterion is not perfect either, because the traditions must be understood by the mind... [and] the mind itself is liable to error...
- 83.8 But the grace of the Holy Spirit is the true criterion regarding which there is no doubt or uncertainty. That grace consists in the confirmations of the Holy Spirit which are vouchsafed to man and through which certitude is attained.
- 12.5 Now, in this glorious age, which is the century of Bahá'u'lláh, consider how far knowledge and learning have progressed, how fully the mysteries of creation have been unveiled, and how many great undertakings have been embarked upon and are multiplying day by day! Soon will material knowledge and learning, as well as spiritual knowledge, make such progress and display such wonders as to dazzle every eye...
- 36.8 the Holy Spirit... disperses the darkness of ignorance...
- 2.8 if the eye of inner vision be opened, a hundred thousand clear proofs will be seen. Thus, when man feels the indwelling spirit, he is in no need of arguments for its existence; but for those who are deprived of the grace of the spirit, it is necessary to set forth external arguments.
- 25.2 By "the Holy Spirit" is meant the outpouring grace of God and the effulgent rays that emanate from His Manifestation.

38. A Reflection on `Abdu'l-Bahá's Statements

- 83.7 Know, therefore, that what the people possess and believe to be true is liable to error.
- 3.9-10 It is therefore clear and evident that man stands in need of an educator.
... he must so educate human minds and thoughts that they may become capable of substantive progress; that science and knowledge may expand; that the realities of things, the mysteries of the universe, and the properties of all that exists may be revealed; that learning, discoveries, and major undertakings may day by day increase; and that matters of the intellect may be deduced from and conveyed through the sensible.
- 12.5 Now, in this glorious age, which is the century of Bahá'u'lláh, consider how far knowledge and learning have progressed...
- 42.5 with the advent of each of the Manifestations of God, astonishing progress was attained in the realm of human minds, thoughts, and spirits.
- 3.2 These are rational arguments, which are what the people of the world require in this day.

39. The Question of Certainty: Between Scylla and Charybdis

14.3 Then comes summertime, when the heat intensifies and growth and development manifest the fullness of their power. The life force reaches its plenitude in the vegetable kingdom: Fruits and crops appear, the harvest time arrives, the seed becomes the sheaf, and provision is made for the winter months.

3.6 Human education, however, consists in civilization and progress, that is, sound governance, social order, human welfare, commerce and industry, arts and sciences, momentous discoveries, and great undertakings, which are the central features distinguishing man from the animal.

40. Moderate Rationalism

No quotations

41. Knowledge of Essences

59.3 Know that there are two kinds of knowledge: the knowledge of the essence of a thing and the knowledge of its attributes. The essence of each thing is known only through its attributes; otherwise, that essence is unknown and unfathomed.

59.4 our knowledge of things, even of created and limited ones, is of their attributes and not of their essence...

59.4 For example, the inner reality of the sun is unknown, but it is understood through its attributes, which are heat and light. The inner essence of man is unknown and unfathomed, but it is known and characterized by its attributes. Thus everything is known by its attributes and not by its essence: Even though the human mind encompasses all things, and all outward things are in turn encompassed by it, yet the latter are unknown with regard to their essence and can only be known with regard to their attributes. How then can the ancient and everlasting Lord, Who is sanctified above all comprehension and imagining, be known in His Essence? That is, as created things can only be known through their attributes and not in their essence, the reality of the Divinity, too, must be unknown with regard to its essence and known only with respect to its attributes.

42. Objective and Subjective Knowledge

40.2 Knowledge is of two kinds: existential knowledge and formal knowledge, that is, intuitive knowledge and conceptual knowledge.

- 40.3 The knowledge that people generally have of things consists in conceptualization and observation; that is, either the object is conceived through the rational faculty, or through its observation a form is produced in the mirror of the heart. The scope of this knowledge is quite limited, as it is conditioned upon acquisition and attainment.
- 40.4 The other kind of knowledge, however, which is existential or intuitive knowledge, is like man's knowledge and awareness of his own self.
- 40.5 For example, the mind and the spirit of man are aware of all his states and conditions, of all the parts and members of his body, and of all his physical sensations, as well as of his spiritual powers, perceptions, and conditions. This is an existential knowledge through which man realizes his own condition. He both senses and comprehends it, for the spirit encompasses the body and is aware of its sensations and powers. This knowledge is not the result of effort and acquisition: It is an existential matter; it is pure bounty.
- 40.6 Since those sanctified realities, the universal Manifestations of God, encompass all created things both in their essence and in their attributes, since They transcend and discover all existing realities, and since They are cognizant of all things, it follows that Their knowledge is divine and not acquired—that is, it is a heavenly grace and a divine discovery.
- 40.8 If the Manifestation of God—the divine Lawgiver—were not informed of the realities of things, if He did not understand the necessary relationships deriving from these realities, He would assuredly be incapable of establishing a religion consonant with the needs and conditions of the time.
- 40.9 Religion, then, consists in the necessary relationships deriving from the reality of things. The universal Manifestations of God, being aware of the mysteries of creation, are fully informed of these necessary relationships and establish them as the religion of God.

43. Knowledge of God

- 37.2 “The way is barred, and all seeking rejected.”
- 37.4 every lower thing is incapable of comprehending the reality of that which is higher.
- 37.5 Yet for that Essence of essences, that Truth of truths, that Mystery of mysteries, there are splendours, effulgences, manifestations, and appearances in the world of existence. The Daysprings of those effulgences, the Dawning-places of those revelations, and the Sources of those manifestations are those Exponents of holiness, those universal Realities and divine Beings Who are the true mirrors of the sanctified Essence of the Divinity. All the perfections, bounties, and splendours of the one true God are plainly visible in the realities of His Holy Manifestations... Thus all that the human reality knows, discovers, and understands of the names, attributes, and perfections of God refers to these holy Manifestations...

59.9 Thus, whoso attains to the knowledge of the Manifestations of God attains to the knowledge of God...

59.6 differences of degree in the world of creation are a barrier to knowledge. For example, as this mineral belongs to the mineral kingdom, however far it may rise, it can never comprehend the power of growth. The plants and trees, however far they may progress, cannot imagine the powers of sight or of the other senses. The animal cannot imagine the human degree, that is, the spiritual powers. Thus, differences of degree are a barrier to knowledge: The inferior degree cannot comprehend the superior. How then can a reality which is originated comprehend that Reality which has existed from all eternity?

44. God's Knowledge

37.5 "No vision taketh in Him, but He taketh in all vision, and He is the Subtile, the All-Informed!" (Qur'án 6:103)

70.8 God is almighty and all-powerful and bestows His assistance upon all creation.

82.13-14 the Prophets teach that God's knowledge does not require the existence of created things, whereas the knowledge of the creatures requires the existence of objects of knowledge. If the divine knowledge stood in need of aught else, then it would be like the knowledge of the creatures and not that of God... the knowledge of the originated is in need of objects of knowledge, the knowledge of the Pre-existent must be independent of their existence.

82.13 to be sanctified and exalted above all imperfections is one of the characteristics of the Necessary Being.

82.14 the attributes of divine perfection are not so yielding to the exertions of the human mind as to enable us to determine whether the divine knowledge is in need of objects or not.

45. Mind

55.6 As for the mind, it is the power of the human spirit. The spirit is as the lamp, and the mind as the light that shines from it. The spirit is as the tree, and the mind as the fruit. The mind is the perfection of the spirit and a necessary attribute thereof, even as the rays of the sun are an essential requirement of the sun itself.

59.4 the human mind encompasses all things...

71.8 The mind and thought of man at times discovers certain truths, and this thought and discovery produce definite results and benefits. Such thoughts have a solid foundation. But many things come to mind that are like the waves of the sea of

delusion; they bear no fruit and produce no result. In the world of sleep, too, one may have a dream which exactly comes true, while on another occasion one will have a dream which has absolutely no result.

46. Mind is Not Brain

- 67.1 Time and place encompass the body, not the mind and the soul.
- 67.2 the spirit and mind of man traverses all countries and regions and even the limitless expanse of the heavens...
- 74.2 the mind itself is an intelligible reality and has no outward existence.
- 39.6 Consider, for example, that thousands of vicissitudes may occur to the body of man of which the spirit remains wholly unaware. It is even possible for certain members of the body to be completely impaired and for the essence of the mind to remain unaffected.
- 25.3 egress and regress, descent and inherence are characteristics of bodies and not of spirits—that is, egress and inherence pertain only to sensible realities, not to intelligible subtleties; and intelligible realities, such as reason, love, knowledge, imagination, and thought, do not enter, exit, or inhere, but rather denote relationships.
- 61.6 the connection of the spirit with the body is like that of the sun with the mirror.
- 36.3 This perfect body can be compared to a mirror, and the human spirit to the sun: If the glass is shattered or the mirror destroyed, no harm befalls the outpouring grace of the sun, which continues unabated.
- 66.3 the connection of the spirit with the body is even as the connection of this lamp with a mirror.
- 67.5 The sun occupies no place within the mirror, but it has a connection with it.

47. Brain and Mind — A Formal Connection

- 25.4 [knowledge] is a relationship of acquisition, even as images are reflected in a mirror.
- 40.3 The knowledge that people generally have of things consists in conceptualization and observation; that is, either the object is conceived through the rational faculty, or through its observation a form is produced in the mirror of the heart.
- 67.6 The mind... has no place, although it is connected with the brain.
- 61.4, 61.6 the spirit is different from the body

- 61.6 the spirit of man is not contained within the body, for it is freed and sanctified from egress and regress
- 55.7 This explanation, however brief, is complete. Reflect upon it and, God willing, you will grasp the details.
- 53.5 The first thing to emanate from God is that universal reality which the ancient philosophers termed the “First Intellect” and which the people of Bahá call the “Primal Will”. This emanation, with respect to its action in the world of God, is not limited by either time or place and has neither beginning nor end, for in relation to God the beginning and the end are one and the same.
- 58.4 But the universal divine Intellect, which transcends nature, is the outpouring grace of the pre-existent Power. It encompasses all existing realities and receives its share of the lights and mysteries of God. It is an all-knowing power, not a power of investigation and sensing.
- 58.4 This divine intellectual power is confined to the holy Manifestations and the Daysprings of prophethood. A ray of this light falls upon the mirrors of the hearts of the righteous, that they may also receive, through the holy Manifestations, a share and benefit of this power.

48. Infallibility

- 45.2 Know that infallibility is of two kinds: infallibility in essence and infallibility as an attribute.
- 40.4 existential or intuitive knowledge, is like man’s knowledge and awareness of his own self.
- 45.2 Infallibility in essence is confined to the universal Manifestations of God...
- 45.3 infallibility as an attribute is not an essential requirement; rather, it is a ray of the gift of infallibility which shines from the Sun of Truth upon certain hearts and grants them a share and portion thereof. Although these souls are not essentially infallible, yet they are under the care, protection, and unerring guidance of God—which is to say, God guards them from error.
- 45.3 if God did not preserve them from error they would have led all the faithful to fall likewise into error, which would have wholly undermined the foundations of the religion of God and which would be unbefitting and unworthy of His exalted Reality.
- 45.4 the members of the House of Justice are not essentially infallible as individuals, but the body of the House of Justice is under the protection and unerring guidance of God: This is called conferred infallibility.

- 45.5 since the essential infallibility of the universal Manifestations of God has been established, whatsoever proceeds from Them is identical with the truth and conformable to reality.

IV. Philosophical Anthropology

49. Human Nature

- 47.11 the originality of the human species and the independence of the essence of man are clear and evident.
- 60.3 [through the light of faith] they were delivered from the animal characteristics and qualities that are inherent to human nature...
- 29.5 bestial attributes exist in the nature of man.
- 49.7 the changes and transformations that the human embryo undergoes before reaching its full development and maturity.
- 48.10 All other beings are captives of nature ... cannot stray so much as a needle's point from the rule of nature, nor can it ever comprehend the states, conditions, properties, movements, and nature of man.
- 66.2 If the accident—the body—is destroyed, the substance—the spirit—remains.
- 29.3 This spiritual nature, which has come to exist through the grace of the divine Reality, is the sum of all perfections and proceeds from the breath of the Holy Spirit. It is the divine perfections; it is light, spirituality, guidance, exaltation, high-mindedness, justice, love, generosity, kindness to all, and charitable deeds: It is life upon life.
- 29.5 The body of man is a prisoner of nature and will act in accordance with whatsoever nature dictates. It follows that sins—such as wrathfulness, envy, contentiousness, greed, avarice, ignorance, rancour, corruption, pride, and cruelty—must exist in the material world.
- 60.3 Existential rewards consist in the virtues and perfections that adorn the human reality.

50. The Soul and Immortality

- 60.2 the immortality of the spirit, which is the very foundation of the divine religions.
- 61.2 The other mode of the spirit's influence and action is without these bodily instruments and organs. For example, in the state of sleep, it sees without eyes, it hears without ears, it speaks without a tongue, it runs without feet—in brief, all these

powers are exerted without the mediation of instruments and organs.

- 61.5 Man's body may become weak or robust, sick or healthy, tired or rested; it may suffer the loss of a hand or leg; it may decline in material powers; it may become blind, deaf, dumb, or paralysed—in short, it may become gravely impaired. And yet, despite this, the spirit maintains its original condition and spiritual perceptions, suffering no impairment or disruption.
- 61.6 the spirit is different from the body
- 66.4 The rational soul is endowed from the beginning with individuality; it does not acquire it through the intermediary of the body. At most, what can be said is that the individuality and identity of the rational soul may be strengthened in this world, and that the soul may either progress and attain to the degrees of perfection or remain in the lowest abyss of ignorance and be veiled from and deprived of beholding the signs of God.
- 60.5 A rational proof for the immortality of the spirit is this, that no effect can be produced by a non-existent thing; that is, it is impossible that any effect should appear from absolute nothingness. For the effect of a thing is secondary to its existence, and that which is secondary is conditioned upon the existence of that which is primary.
- 60.6 the human spirit and reality ... continues to manifest its signs, to exert its influence, and to sustain its effects even after the dissociation and decomposition of the various parts and members of the body.
- 60.7 if the human spirit be rejoiced and attracted to the Kingdom, if the inner eye be opened and the spiritual ear attuned, and if spiritual feelings come to predominate, the immortality of the spirit will be seen as clearly as the sun ...

51. The Rational Soul

- 55.5 The human spirit, which distinguishes man from the animal, is the rational soul, and these two terms—the human spirit and the rational soul—designate one and the same thing. This spirit, which in the terminology of the philosophers is called the rational soul, encompasses all things ...
- 58.3 The foremost degree of comprehension in the world of nature is that of the rational soul. This power and comprehension is shared in common by all men, whether they be heedless or aware, wayward or faithful.

52. Humankind's Dual Nature

- 29.2 Know that there are two natures in man: the material and the spiritual. The material nature is inherited from Adam, while the spiritual nature is inherited from the reality of the Word of God, which is the spirituality of Christ. The material nature is born of

Adam, but the spiritual nature is born of the grace of the Holy Spirit. The material nature is the source of every imperfection, and the spiritual nature is the source of all perfection.

53. Inherent Struggle Between Higher and Lower Natures

- 64.2 Man is in the ultimate degree of materiality and the beginning of spirituality; that is, he is at the end of imperfection and the beginning of perfection. He is at the furthestmost degree of darkness and the beginning of the light. That is why the station of man is said to be the end of night and the beginning of day, meaning that he encompasses all the degrees of imperfection and that he potentially possesses all the degrees of perfection. He has both an animal side and an angelic side, and the role of the educator is to so train human souls that the angelic side may overcome the animal.

54. The Purpose of Earthly Existence

- 52.2 The wisdom of the appearance of the spirit in the body is this: The human spirit is a divine trust which must traverse every degree, for traversing and passing through the degrees of existence is the means of its acquiring perfections.
- 52.3 Moreover, it is necessary that the signs of the perfections of the spirit appear in this world, that the realm of creation may bring forth endless fruits, and that this body of the contingent world may receive life and manifest the divine bounties. ... if the rays and heat of the sun were not to reach the earth, it would remain idle and desolate and its development would be arrested. Likewise, were the perfections of the spirit not to appear in this world, it would become dark and wholly animalistic. It is through the appearance of the spirit in the material body that this world is illumined.
- 52.4 this world is even as a tree and man as the fruit; without the fruit the tree would be of no use.
- 52.5 the members, constituent parts, and composition that are found within man attract and act as a magnet for the spirit: The spirit is bound to appear in it. Thus, when a mirror is polished, it is bound to attract the rays of the sun, to be illumined, and to reflect splendid images. That is, when these physical elements are gathered and combined together, according to the natural order and with the utmost perfection, they become a magnet for the spirit, and the spirit will manifest itself therein with all its perfections.
- 52.6 the relationships that bind together the realities of all things, whether spiritual or material, require that when the mirror is polished and turned towards the sun it should manifest the rays thereof. In like manner, when the elements are composed and combined according to the noblest order, arrangement, and manner, the human spirit will appear and manifest itself therein. Such is the decree of the All-Glorious, the All-Wise.

- 52.3 Just as the spirit of man is the cause of the life of his body, so is the whole world even as a body and man as its spirit. If man did not exist, if the perfections of the spirit were not manifested and the light of the mind were not shining in this world, it would be like a body without a spirit.

55. Innate, Inherited and Acquired Character

- 57.3 As to the innate character, although the innate nature bestowed by God upon man is purely good, yet that character differs among men according to the degrees they occupy: All degrees are good, but some are more so than others. Thus every human being possesses intelligence and capacity, but intelligence, capacity, and aptitude differ from person to person.
- 57.5 As to differences in inherited character, they arise from the strength and weakness of man's constitution; that is, if the parents are of weak constitution, then the children will be likewise
- 57.9 It is not on account of their innate capacity and disposition that one reproaches the wicked, but rather on account of that which they themselves have acquired.

56. Free Will

- 70.3 Certain matters are subject to the free will of man, such as acting with justice and fairness or injustice and iniquity; in other words, in the choice of good or evil actions. It is clear and evident that the will of man figures greatly in these actions. But there are certain matters where man is forced and compelled, such as sleep, death, sickness, failing powers, misfortune and material loss; these are not subject to the will of man and he is not accountable for them, for he is compelled to endure them. But he is free in the choice of good and evil actions and it is of his own accord that he performs them.

57. Ethics

- 84.2 Know that such ways, words, and deeds are to be lauded and approved, and they redound to the glory of the human world. But these actions alone are not sufficient: They are a body of the greatest beauty, but without a spirit.
- 57.12 Consider that the worst of all qualities and the most odious of all attributes, and the very foundation of all evil, is lying, and that no more evil or reprehensible quality can be imagined in all existence. It brings all human perfections to naught and gives rise to countless vices. There is no worse attribute than this, and it is the foundation of all wickedness. Now, all this notwithstanding, should a physician console a patient and say, "Thank God, you are doing better and there is hope for your recovery", although these words may be contrary to the truth, yet sometimes they will ease the patient's mind and become the means of curing the illness. And this is not blameworthy.

58. Virtue Ethics

- 64.2 [Man] has both an animal side and an angelic side, and the role of the educator is to so train human souls that the angelic side may overcome the animal. Thus, should the divine powers, which are identical with perfection, overcome in man the satanic powers, which are absolute imperfection, he becomes the noblest of all creatures, but should the converse take place, he becomes the vilest of all beings.
- 11.9 Those foundations of the religion of God ..., which are spiritual and consist in human virtues, are never subject to abrogation but are eternal and everlasting, and are renewed in every prophetic Dispensation.
- 11.7 It is faith, knowledge, certitude, justice, piety, high-mindedness, trustworthiness, love of God, and charity. It is mercy to the poor, assistance to the oppressed, generosity to the needy, and upliftment of the fallen. It is purity, detachment, humility, forbearance, patience, and constancy. These are divine qualities. These commandments will never be abrogated, but will remain in force and effect for all eternity. These human virtues are renewed in every Dispensation; for at the close of each Dispensation the spirit of the law of God, which consists in the human virtues, vanishes in substance and persists only in form.
- 36.5 this human spirit has two aspects: one divine and one satanic—that is, it is capable of both the greatest perfection and the greatest deficiency. Should it acquire virtues, it is the noblest of all things; and should it acquire vices, it becomes the most vile.
- 19.6 the heavenly water and spirit, which are knowledge and life, cleanse and purify the heart of man. In other words, the heart that partakes of the outpouring grace of the Holy Spirit and becomes sanctified is made goodly and pure. The purpose is that the reality of man be purified and sanctified from the defilements of the world of nature, which are vile attributes such as anger, lust, worldliness, pride, dishonesty, hypocrisy, deceit, self-love, and so on.
- 84.6 The third virtue of humanity is goodly intention, which is the foundation of all good deeds. ... for a goodly intention is absolute light and is entirely sanctified from the least trace of malice, scheming, or deception. Now, one can perform an action which appears to be righteous but which is in reality prompted by self-interest.
- 84.2 that which leads to everlasting life, eternal honour, universal enlightenment, and true success and salvation is, first and foremost, the knowledge of God. ... the knowledge of God is the cause of spiritual progress and attraction, true vision and insight, the exaltation of humanity, the appearance of divine civilization, the rectification of morals, and the illumination of the conscience.
- 65.3 When this recognition is not attained, man remains veiled from God and, as he is veiled, his good works fail to achieve their full and desired effect.

84.3 the love of God. The light of this love is kindled, through the knowledge of God, in the lamp of the heart, and its spreading rays illumine the world and bestow upon man the life of the Kingdom. And in truth the fruit of human existence is the love of God, which is the spirit of life and grace everlasting. Were it not for the love of God, the contingent world would be plunged in darkness, ... the hearts of men would be bereft of life and deprived of the stirrings of conscience, ... spiritual union would be lost, ... the light of the oneness of mankind would be extinguished ...

60.3 Existential rewards consist in the virtues and perfections that adorn the human reality. ... When these souls are delivered from the darkness of these vices through the light of faith, when they are illumined by the rays of the Sun of Truth and endowed with every human virtue, they reckon this as the greatest reward and regard it as the true paradise.

59. Progress

42.5 with the advent of each of the Manifestations of God, astonishing progress was attained in the realm of human minds, thoughts, and spirits.

3.8 we need an educator who can be at the same time a material, a human, and a spiritual educator ...

3.9 This educator must undeniably be perfect in every way and distinguished above all men.

3.5 Material education aims at the growth and development of the body, and consists in securing its sustenance and obtaining the means of its ease and comfort. This education is common to both man and animal.

3.6 Human education, however, consists in civilization and progress, that is, sound governance, social order, human welfare, commerce and industry, arts and sciences, momentous discoveries, and great undertakings, which are the central features distinguishing man from the animal.

3.10 he must so educate human minds and thoughts that they may become capable of substantive progress; that science and knowledge may expand; that the realities of things, the mysteries of the universe, and the properties of all that exists may be revealed; that learning, discoveries, and major undertakings may day by day increase; and that matters of the intellect may be deduced from and conveyed through the sensible.

3.7 As to divine education, it is the education of the Kingdom and consists in acquiring divine perfections. This is indeed true education, for by its virtue man becomes the focal centre of divine blessings

- 3.11 that perchance all the names and attributes of God may be reflected in the mirror of the human reality
- 14.8 universal progress is made in the human realm
- 12.5 Now, in this glorious age, which is the century of Bahá'u'lláh, consider how far knowledge and learning have progressed, how fully the mysteries of creation have been unveiled, and how many great undertakings have been embarked upon and are multiplying day by day! Soon will material knowledge and learning, as well as spiritual knowledge, make such progress and display such wonders as to dazzle every eye
- 77.12 if the masses were educated so that knowledge and learning increased day by day, understanding was broadened, perceptions were refined, morals were rectified and manners reformed—in a word, that progress was made with respect to every degree of perfection—then the occurrence of crime would subside.
- 64.7 as the perfections of man are infinite, he can also advance in these perfections after his ascension from this world.
- 62.2 every created thing has been assigned a degree which it can in no wise overpass. So he who occupies the degree of servitude, no matter how far he may progress and acquire endless perfections, can never reach the degree of divine Lordship. ... It can only progress in its own degree.
- 63.3 however much this mineral may progress, its progress remains within its own degree; you cannot possibly bring this crystal, for example, to a state where it gains the power of sight. The moon, howsoever it may progress, can never become the shining sun, and its apogee and perigee will always remain within its own degree. And however far the Apostles might have progressed, they could never have become Christ. It is true that coal can become a diamond, but both are in the mineral degree and their constituent parts are the same

60. Human Evolution

- 49.6 For man, from the conception of the embryo until the attainment of maturity, assumes different forms and appearances. His appearance, form, features, and colour change; that is, he passes from form to form and from appearance to appearance. Yet, from the formation of the embryo he belongs to the human species; that is, it is the embryo of a man and not of an animal. But at first this fact is not apparent; only later does it become plain and visible.
- 51.4 from the beginning the embryo possesses all perfections, such as the spirit, the mind, sight, smell, and taste—in a word, all the powers—but they are invisible and become apparent only gradually.

- 47.10 from the beginning of his existence man has been a distinct species. ... The essence of the species and the innate reality undergo no transformation at all.
- 51.3 From the beginning of his formation, the mind and the spirit existed, but they were hidden and appeared only later.
- 47.11 man has always been a distinct species; he has been man, not an animal.
- 51.5 the terrestrial globe was created, from the beginning, with all its elements, substances, minerals, parts, and components, but these appeared only gradually: first the minerals, then the plants, then the animals, and finally man. But from the beginning, these kinds and species were latent in the earthly realm and appeared gradually thereafter.