

## Feeling Abandoned by God

By Susan Gammage <sup>1</sup>

Those who've experienced extreme trauma in their lives will know how lonely and desolate it feels when we believe with every fibre of our being that God has abandoned us.

Bahá'u'lláh too felt abandoned by God as we see in this quote:

O Lord my God! Thou beholdest my dwelling-place, and the prison into which I am cast, and the woes I suffer. By Thy might! No pen can recount them, nor can any tongue describe or number them. I know not, O my God, for what purpose Thou hast abandoned me to Thine adversaries. Thy glory beareth me witness! I sorrow not for the vexations I endure for love of Thee, nor feel perturbed by the calamities that overtake me in Thy path. My grief is rather because Thou delayest to fulfill what Thou hast determined in the Tablets of Thy Revelation, and ordained in the books of Thy decree and judgment. (Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, VIII, pp. 10-11)

But He never does:

God, the Vigilant, the Just, the Loving, the All-Wise ... will [not] be willing to abandon His children to their fate. (Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day is Come*, pp. 4-5)

Have you ever heard the expression: When you point a finger at someone, there are three fingers pointing back at you? This is what is really happening. Often it's we who are blaming Him because we don't understand a particular test, or we aren't deepened enough in the Writings to know the purpose of tests, or we think that life should go a certain way:

They have abandoned their God, and clung unto their desires. They truly have strayed and are in error. (Baha'u'llah, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 135)

Or we think we know what is best for us:

The counterfeit or imitation of true religion has adulterated human belief and the foundations have been lost sight of ... This is verily the century when these imitations must be forsaken, superstitions abandoned and God alone worshiped. We must look at the reality of the prophets and their teachings in order that we may agree. ('Abdu'l-Bahá, *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 16)

God wants us to trust him, and we can't do that without faith:

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That individual, however, who puts his faith in God and believes in the words of God -- because he is promised and certain of a plentiful reward in the next life, and because worldly benefits as compared to the abiding joy and glory of future planes of existence are nothing to him -- will for the sake of God abandon his own peace and profit and will freely consecrate his heart and soul to the common good. ('Abdu'l-Bahá, The Secret of Divine Civilization, p. 97)

God wants us to return to Him, and He tells us how:

Out of the essence of knowledge I gave thee being, why seekest thou enlightenment from anyone beside Me? Out of the clay of love I molded thee, how dost thou busy thyself with another? Turn thy sight unto thyself, that thou mayest find Me standing within thee, mighty, powerful and self-subsisting. (Baha'u'llah, The Arabic Hidden Words 13)

We need to give up our will and submit to the will of God:

Commit thyself to God; give up thy will and choose that of God; abandon thy desire and lay hold on that of God; that thou mayest be a holy, spiritual and heavenly example among the maid-servants of God. (Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá v1, pp. 89-90)

He gives us a prayer we can use to help us return to Him:

I implore Thee, O my God, by Thy mercy that hath surpassed all created things, and to which all that are immersed beneath the oceans of Thy names bear witness, not to abandon me unto my self, for my heart is prone to evil. Guard me, then, within the stronghold of Thy protection and the shelter of Thy care. I am he, O my God, whose only wish is what Thou hast determined by the power of Thy might. All I have chosen for myself is to be assisted by Thy gracious appointments and the ruling of Thy will, and to be aided with the tokens of Thy decree and judgment.

I beseech Thee, O Thou Who art the Beloved of the hearts which long for Thee, by the Manifestations of Thy Cause and the Day-Springs of Thine inspiration, and the Exponents of Thy majesty, and the Treasuries of Thy knowledge, not to suffer me to be deprived of Thy holy Habitation, Thy Fane and Thy Tabernacle. Aid me, O my Lord, to attain His hallowed court, and to circle round His person, and to stand humbly at His door.

Thou art He Whose power is from everlasting to everlasting. Nothing escapeth Thy knowledge. Thou art, verily, the God of power, the God of glory and wisdom.

Praised be God, the Lord of the worlds! (Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, CXXIV, pp. 210-211)