

Program for the Feast of Knowledge (Ilm)

By Susan Gammage ¹

Opening Prayer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVW6_zy-Gc8

The beginning of all things is the knowledge of God, and the end of all things is strict observance of whatsoever hath been sent down from the empyrean of the Divine Will that pervadeth all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth. (Gleanings From the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 5, #II)

Were you to ponder, but for a while, these utterances in your heart, you would surely find the portals of understanding unlocked before your face, and would behold all knowledge and the mysteries thereof unveiled before your eyes. Such things take place only that the souls of men may develop and be delivered from the prison-cage of self and desire. Otherwise, that ideal King hath, throughout eternity, been in His Essence independent of the comprehension of all beings, and will continue, for ever, in His own Being to be exalted above the adoration of every soul. A single breeze of His affluence doth suffice to adorn all mankind with the robe of wealth; and one drop out of the ocean of His bountiful grace is enough to confer upon all beings the glory of everlasting life. But inasmuch as the divine Purpose hath decreed that the true should be known from the false, and the sun from the shadow, He hath, therefore, in every season sent down upon mankind the showers of tests from His realm of glory. (Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Íqán, pp. 52 53)

In truth, knowledge is a veritable treasure for man, and a source of glory, of bounty, of joy, of exaltation, of cheer and gladness unto him. Happy the man that cleaveth unto it, and woe betide the heedless. (Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 27)

O SON OF DUST!

Blind thine eyes, that thou mayest behold My beauty; stop thine ears, that thou mayest hearken unto the sweet melody of My voice; empty thyself of all learning, that thou mayest partake of My knowledge; and sanctify thyself from riches, that thou mayest obtain a lasting share from the ocean of My eternal wealth. Blind thine eyes, that is, to all save My beauty; stop thine ears to all save My word; empty thyself of all learning save the knowledge of Me; that with a clear vision, a pure heart and an attentive ear thou mayest enter the court of My holiness. (Bahá'u'lláh, The Hidden Words, Persian #11)

O my brother! A divine Mine only can yield the gems of divine knowledge, and the fragrance of the mystic Flower can be inhaled only in the ideal Garden, and the lilies of ancient wisdom can blossom nowhere except in the city of a stainless heart. "In a rich soil, its plants spring forth abundantly by permission of its Lord, and in that soil which is bad, they spring forth but scantily". (Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Íqán, p. 191)

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Knowledge is as wings to man's life, and a ladder for his ascent. Its acquisition is incumbent upon everyone. The knowledge of such sciences, however, should be acquired as can profit the peoples of the earth, and not those which begin with words and end with words. Great indeed is the claim of scientists and craftsmen on the peoples of the world.... In truth, knowledge is a veritable treasure for man, and a source of glory, of bounty, of joy, of exaltation, of cheer and gladness unto him. Thus hath the Tongue of Grandeur spoken in this Most Great Prison. (Tablets of Baha'u'llah, pp. 51-52)

Gather ye together with the utmost joy and fellowship and recite the verses revealed by the merciful Lord. By so doing the doors to true knowledge will be opened to your inner beings, and ye will then feel your souls endowed with steadfastness and your hearts filled with radiant joy. (Bahá'u'lláh, Compilation of Compilations vol. I, p. 188, #364)

O SON OF SPIRIT! I created thee rich, why dost thou bring thyself down to poverty? Noble I made thee, wherewith dost thou abase thyself? 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. (Bahá'u'lláh, The Hidden Words, Arabic #13)

We beseech God to aid thee to be just and fair-minded, and to acquaint thee with the things that were hidden from the eyes of men. He, in truth, is the Mighty, the Unconstrained. We ask thee to reflect upon that which hath been revealed, and to be fair and just in thy speech, that perchance the splendors of the daystar of truthfulness and sincerity may shine forth, and may deliver thee from the darkness of ignorance, and illumine the world with the light of knowledge. (Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 10-11)

And if, confirmed by the Creator, the lover escapes from the claws of the eagle of love, he will enter THE VALLEY OF KNOWLEDGE and come out of doubt into certitude, and turn from the darkness of illusion to the guiding light of the fear of God. His inner eyes will open and he will privily converse with his Beloved; he will set ajar the gate of truth and piety, and shut the doors of vain imaginings.

He in this station is content with the decree of God, and seeth war as peace, and findeth in death the secrets of everlasting life. With inward and outward eyes he witnesseth the mysteries of resurrection in the realms of creation and the souls of men, and with a pure heart apprehendeth the divine wisdom in the endless Manifestations of God. In the ocean he findeth a drop, in a drop he beholdeth the secrets of the sea. (Bahá'u'lláh, Seven Valleys and Four Valleys, pp 11-12)

Praise be unto Thee, O my God, that we have wakened to the splendors of the light of Thy knowledge. Send down, then, upon us, O my Lord, what will enable us to dispense with any one but Thee, and will rid us of all attachment to aught except Thyself. Write down, moreover, for me, and for such as are dear to me, and for my kindred, man and woman alike, the good of this world and the world to come. Keep us safe, then, through Thine

unfailing protection, O Thou the Beloved of the entire creation and the Desire of the whole universe, from them whom Thou hast made to be the manifestations of the Evil Whisperer, who whisper in men's breasts. Potent art Thou to do Thy pleasure. Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. (Prayers and Meditations of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 233)