

# The Call into Being

## Introduction to a Bahá'í Existentialism

Ian Kluge

### 1) Introduction

This paper will demonstrate how, based on the concept of potentials, a Bahá'í existentialism can be developed from the Writings. According to the Writings, human beings, like all other entities, are essentially defined by their potentials,<sup>1</sup> “possibilities,”<sup>2</sup> “capacities,”<sup>3</sup> “susceptibilities”<sup>4</sup> or “powers.”<sup>5</sup> Bahá'u'lláh tells us, “Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value.”<sup>6</sup> Thus, humankind differs from animals in regards to the capacity for rational and abstract thought,<sup>7</sup> while human beings differ from one another in terms of innate intellectual capacity.<sup>8</sup> This naturally leads to questions as what it means to understand ourselves “in terms of [our] possibilities”?<sup>9</sup>

### 2) The Nature of Existentialism

Before proceeding, it is necessary to provide a brief description of existentialism. In a nutshell, existentialism is an analysis of the human situation from the point of view and experience of the human subject who lives and acts as an active participant in the world. All varieties of existentialism reject Descartes' subject-object analysis of our relationship to the world because it is only an abstraction from our actual “being-in-the-world”<sup>10</sup> and does not, therefore, accurately reflect our real situation. The Bahá'í Writings Themselves, that is, the tablets and epistles to particular individuals, verbal answers to specific questions, letters of guidance to personal problems and the like reflect Bahá'u'lláh's and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's understanding that we are always “being-in-the-world”<sup>11</sup> and never isolated like Descartes' subjects.

Existentialists also tend to agree with Sartre that existence precedes essence—although there can be much variation in how we are to understand this. If we understand it to say that by means of decisions in the actual process of existence we create our own personalities, selves or identities, then there is agreement among all existentialist thinkers. However, this agreement would vanish if we asserted that there is no such thing as a general human nature, or, that there is no common structure in what Heidegger calls *Dasein*, that is, a specifically human way of being. Heidegger's *Being and Time*, probably the central work of modern existentialism, dedicates itself to nothing less than outlining the structure inherent in and, in that sense, essential to, all *Dasein*. Vital as it is, this difference must not be allowed to obscure the fact that existentialists tend to concentrate and agree on a number of issues: the unique status of human being; the essential role of freedom, choice, risk and action; the importance of authentic existence and living in good faith; the role of anxiety in illuminating the human situation; concern and engagement with others and the world; the confrontation with human finitude and death; the subject of God; the inherent limitations of abstract, rational analysis, and the role of paradox in human existence. This mix of themes is present whether the existentialist is an atheist such as Sartre or Camus, a theist such as Kierkegaard and Marcel, or a non-theist such

as the Heidegger of *Being and Time*.

### 3) The Unique Status of Human Existence

All existentialists agree that human existence is fundamentally different from other forms of being. Whereas other beings are 'in-themselves', "*en-soi*"<sup>12</sup> and simply exist as they are without being consciously present to themselves or feeling any inner conflicts about themselves, humans alone are 'for-themselves', "*pour-soi*,"<sup>13</sup> that is, consciously present to themselves and required to take a stance in regards to themselves. They can choose—or refuse—to live for themselves. Heidegger reserves the term "*Dasein*" for the human way of being to indicate that *Dasein* is distinguished from other ways of being by that fact that we exist, that is, consciously stand out from our environment and thus have certain unique capabilities as well as liabilities. *Dasein* is always concerned with "its ownmost possibilities of Being in the world."<sup>14</sup> He adds that "*Dasein* exists as an entity for which, in its being, being is itself an issue."<sup>15</sup> Marcel asserts that the human 'I' cannot simply be assimilated into the world of things."<sup>16</sup>

The Bahá'í Writings are in fundamental agreement with this analysis of the human situation. Humankind is not simply a part of nature, but is defined by its potential for rationality or "rational soul"<sup>17</sup> which not only distinguishes us from inanimate nature, plants and animals<sup>18</sup> but also has power over nature. Moreover, it has "no end."<sup>19</sup> The exhortations to evolve, improve and free ourselves<sup>20</sup> indicate that the Bahá'í Writings, like the existentialist philosophers, view humans as being present to themselves, as being objects of action "for-themselves"<sup>21</sup> and deeply concerned with their "ownmost possibilities."<sup>22</sup> In short, they all agree that humankind is self-conscious in a way unlike any other beings.

### 4) The Meaning of "To Exist"

The Bahá'í Writings and existential philosophy also share similar viewpoints of what it means to "exist." The Writings refer to the 'call into being'<sup>23</sup> with its unmistakable suggestion that coming into existence means to 'ex-ist', to stand out from a background, "to emerge, to arise."<sup>24</sup> Elsewhere Marcel writes that to exist means not just to be "present to my own awareness"<sup>25</sup> but also to be a manifest being: "I exist—that is as much to say: I have something to make myself known and recognized both by others and by myself."<sup>26</sup> When things come into existence, they appear, they show or reveal or manifest themselves and are thus differentiated from their background of environment<sup>27</sup> and, consequently, are no longer hidden.

### 5) Being "In Process" and "Being Toward"

If our species and individual essences is defined by our potentials then both as species and as individuals we are always in process and, therefore, incomplete. We are always, as Heidegger says, "Being toward a possibility."<sup>28</sup> On the individual level this is emphasized by the Bahá'í teaching on immortality according to which we develop our potentials without end through the "many worlds"<sup>29</sup> of God. At the collective level, this is emphasized by the Bahá'í view of human evolution as the gradual actualization and manifestation of previously hidden potentials rather than the transformation of one species into another.<sup>30</sup>

### 6) Being "Not-Yet"

Because we are 'being-toward-possibility', human beings (Heidegger's "*Dasein*") are inevitably "not-yet,"<sup>31</sup> that is, we are never completely ourselves because we are works in progress rather than finished products. It also means that "*Dasein* is constantly 'more' than it factually is"<sup>32</sup> because of the unactualized potentials that make up our essence. Both as a species and as individuals, we are "permeated with possibility"<sup>33</sup> that must always be taken into account if we are to understand ourselves correctly and develop an accurate, authentic self-

image. What we see is not all there is. These possibilities represent our more complete, future selves and their presence—even as mere potentials—cannot help but influence us in the present time. We can either accept them, reject them or ignore them but in each case a decision of some kind is required.

Never being finished means that, to some extent, we are always in the position of waiting for ourselves and living in anticipation<sup>34</sup> of a final identity. In the words of Heidegger, “Anticipation makes *Dasein* [human beings] authentically *futural* and in such a way that *Dasein*, as *being*, is always coming towards itself.”<sup>35</sup> Elsewhere he says we are a “Being towards one’s *ownmost, distinctive potentiality-for-being*”<sup>36</sup> We are always approaching, but never fully reaching, ourselves. As Sartre puts it, “man is always separated from what he is by all the breadth of the being which he is not . . . Man is a being of distances.”<sup>37</sup> Final identity recedes like the horizon while forever drawing us onward. In the Bahá'í vision of life and the after-life, the endless quest for ever more adequate self-actualization is a positive vision reflecting the infinite glory God has bestowed on humankind. We are all engaged on an endless voyage of discovery in which every moment is both a sheltering harbor and a point of departure.

Because we are a “being-toward,”<sup>38</sup> we are, whether conscious of it or not, innately vectored, have a direction and live towards a particular future, namely, the actualization of our personal potentials. Our lives are not simply intended to be a random and shapeless succession of events no matter how pleasurable this might be because each of human life is innately and inherently structured as a particular “for-the-sake-of-which.”<sup>39</sup> Having a purpose is an inherent part of our being.

### 7) Self-Transcendence

Another way of portraying our “being-toward”<sup>40</sup> and being “not-yet”<sup>41</sup> is to say that humankind is self-transcendent: we are always trying to overcome ourselves as we are in favour of what we might be.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, Marcel links this “urgent inner need for transcendence”<sup>43</sup> to “an aspiration towards purer and purer modes of experience.”<sup>44</sup> For his part, Sartre links our urge for self-transcendence to the inherently doomed project of becoming God. In short, almost all existentialists agree that if we live authentically, that is, according to our human nature, we are inherently and structurally unsatisfied with ourselves and seek to be better than we are. This suggests that we are inevitably plagued by varying degrees of self-dissatisfaction.

### 8) Self-Dissatisfaction

Because of our nature as “not-yet,”<sup>45</sup> we are bound to suffer a certain amount of eternal dissatisfaction with or alienation from ourselves because it is impossible for us to be ‘all there’. In Marcel’s words, “the need for transcendence presents itself, above all, [as a] deeply experienced . . . kind of dissatisfaction.”<sup>46</sup> Of course, this is not to say that existentialism or the Writings endorse a self-crippling or self-destructive perfectionism that is a pathological perversion of our innate dissatisfaction with ourselves. We should see this dissatisfaction as a sign of our heroic potential for self-conquest and self-overcoming. We need not interpret this dissatisfaction negatively as does Heidegger whose Christian background leads him to interpret this dissatisfaction as guilt, and to claim that “being-guilty belongs to *Dasein*’s [human] being.”<sup>47</sup> Bahá'ís may embrace this innate dissatisfaction as ‘divine’, as one of God’s signs that we reflect the infinity of His names,<sup>48</sup> that we always face an open future, that we are always free to remake and renew ourselves, that we face an infinite number of new possibilities for actualization and, therefore, ought never to despair.

### 9) Detachment

Given our situation as perpetually incomplete, we should not be too 'stuck' on any current version of ourselves, but should, rather, practice the art of detachment from our present personalities since they are all 'just temporary'. "Cast away that which ye possess, and, on the wings of detachment, soar beyond all created things."<sup>49</sup> From this it follows that feeling fully 'at one' with themselves is not an authentic option for Bahá'ís since any such feeling must be, at best, a temporary respite; if such feelings persist, they will inevitably blind the possessors to their real ontological circumstances as a perpetually unfinished work needing improvement. Feelings of profound self-satisfaction with one's current condition and a desire to prolong it are to be understood as signs of an inauthentic existence at variance with our true ontological natures.

### 10) Dialectical Self-Conflict

Since our current condition and identity are being constantly undermined by the potentials of our future, there is an inherent and on-going dialectical struggle with our present selves as we continuously re-create ourselves in new and more adequate forms. It is our nature to be locked in this dialectical self-conflict, and were it to stop, we would immediately fall into inauthentic existence. Therefore, this condition of inner struggle is not to be regarded negatively, but rather as part of our ontological identity as human beings. There is no doubt that this internal self-conflict causes suffering, but we must learn to understand this suffering as 'growing pains', as positive signs of our advancement. We must appropriate to ourselves personally what Bahá'u'lláh says about the conflicts in the world: "The fears and agitation which the revelation of this law provokes in men's hearts should indeed be likened to the cries of the suckling babe weaned from his mother's milk, if ye be of them that perceive. Were men to discover the motivating purpose of God's Revelation, they would assuredly cast away their fears, and, with hearts filled with gratitude, rejoice with exceeding gladness."<sup>50</sup>

### 11) Progressive Revelation

At this point it becomes evident that the innate ontological structure and dynamic of our personal lives reflects the Bahá'í Teaching of "progressive revelation"<sup>51</sup> (in which certain essential religious truths are recapitulated in new forms, and new divine potentials released from them to match the intellectual, material and spiritual conditions of new times). Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny. To live authentically in accordance with our essential natures both the human species and individuals are required to grow, to overcome their own collective and personal "ancestral forms."<sup>52</sup> and advance into higher, that is, more subtle, more inclusive and more adequate versions of ourselves. We must do so despite the fact that the process inevitably involves overcoming a variety of pains including the painful awareness that failure, or the fall into inauthenticity, is always possible. We must, therefore, develop what Paul Tillich calls "the courage to be" lest we fall into the despair of "having lost our destiny."<sup>53</sup>

### 12) Fallen Existence

In Heidegger's terms, we must avoid a "fugitive way of saying 'I'"<sup>54</sup> which is "motivated by *Dasein's* falling; for as falling, it flees in the face of itself into the 'they'."<sup>55</sup> Even though this 'I' seems 'normal' to outsiders and even ourselves, "[w]hen the 'I' talks in the 'natural' manner, this is performed by the they-self,"<sup>56</sup> that is, the mass ('*Das Man*'; the 'they') or crowd identity we inevitably take on when our lives are not filled with genuine content. The crowd speaks and acts through us; we have been appropriated by the crowd. As Heidegger puts it, "It itself is not; Being has been taken away by the Others"<sup>57</sup> although this "inconspicuous domination"<sup>58</sup> may not always be obvious. As a result, we belong to the Others and augment their power by

becoming “dispersed into the ‘they.’”<sup>59</sup> We have “fallen away”<sup>60</sup> from our true possibilities and suffer from “alienation [*Entfremdung*] in which [our] ownmost potentiality-for-Being is hidden from [us].”<sup>61</sup>

Heidegger, like all existentialist philosophers, rejects this kind of inauthentic existence. So do the Bahá'í Writings which make each of us responsible for our own actions and do not allow us to shake off responsibility for our lives on others. If God asks us why we have rejected His Manifestation, we cannot point to others because “such a plea will, assuredly, be rejected. *For the faith of no man can be conditioned by any one except himself.*”<sup>62</sup> In other words, there is no refuge and no flight from personal responsibility in the mass or what Heidegger calls the “they-self.”<sup>63</sup>

Being ‘resolute’, or avoiding “fallen-ness”<sup>64</sup> is also a socially beneficial act since a genuine community in which genuine consultation occurs, can only be found among people who are authentically themselves, and see with their own eyes and speak their own thoughts. The best way for us to help create such a community is to be such a person ourselves which is precisely what the Bahá'í Writings demand. As Heidegger writes, “*Dasein*’s resoluteness towards itself is what first makes it possible to let Others who are with it be in their ownmost potentiality-for-being, and to co-disclose this potentiality in the solicitude which leaps forth and liberates . . . Only by authentically Being-their-Selves in resoluteness can people authentically be with one another—not by ambiguous and jealous stipulations and talkative fraternizing in the ‘they.’”<sup>65</sup> By self-actualizing, each of us attains the authentic being that lets us serve as an example for others.

### 13) Anxiety

The fact that we are always susceptible of “falling”<sup>66</sup> into inauthentic being makes a certain amount of anxiety structurally inherent in human existence. For Heidegger, the anxiety provoked by this prone-ness to falling is the origin of the conscience, since the experience of anxiety is the sign of having or developing a conscience. Thus we should welcome anxiety because it is proof of wanting-to-have-a-conscience which ultimately helps us to gain, preserve and regain our authenticity. It is precisely this anxiety which eventually helps us attain that “resoluteness . . . [which is] that truth of *Dasein* which is most primordial because it is authentic.”<sup>67</sup> Such anxiety is a natural part of being ourselves and we would, in fact, not be well off if this natural anxiety were absent since that would lower our level of concern about our existential condition. The resulting carelessness would not serve us well neither as individuals nor as a community. Clearly, this anxiety is not to be understood as a kind of panic but rather as what ‘Abdu’l-Bahá calls “due concern.”<sup>68</sup>

In the same way, Bahá'u'lláh tells us that we should feel “concern”<sup>69</sup> “only for that which profiteth mankind, and bettereth the condition thereof.”<sup>70</sup> As we have already seen, concern for improving the human condition includes self-actualization of one’s potentialities and the attainment of authentic identity. From this we can see that the Bahá'í Writings accept a certain amount of anxiety and concern as an inevitable part of the human condition. This idea is also inherent in the notion that eventually “Ye shall, most certainly, return to God, and shall be called to account for your doings in the presence of Him Who shall gather together the entire creation.”<sup>71</sup> This idea is further emphasized by the injunction to “weigh in that Balance thine actions *every day, every moment of thy life. Bring thyself to account ere thou art summoned to a reckoning.*”<sup>72</sup> In other words, there is a kind of salutary and growth-promoting anxiety that we must not only learn to live with but accept as a positive part of the human condition. Because this kind of existential anxiety serves a positive life-enhancing function for individu-

als and communities, it must not be confused with the debilitating fears and phobias that prevent personal and social life from being lived to their full potential.

Anxiety not only reveals the continuing possibility of inauthentic existence, it also discloses our situation in the world. According to Heidegger, in anxiety we face our “ownmost-Being-thrown”<sup>73</sup>, that is, confront the fact that we simply exist and that there is no humanly discernible or rational reason why this should be so. We simply are, and find ourselves being: “*Dasein* has been *thrown* into existence”<sup>74</sup> says Heidegger. Sartre also uses this term.<sup>75</sup>

It is precisely on this point that the Bahá'í Writings offer an alternative direction in the development of existentialism. Rather than seeing humankind as “thrown” into existence, a view that in the case of Sartre and Camus, leads to the judgment that existence is somehow absurd and inherently meaningless, the Bahá'í Writings view humankind and indeed, the entire universe as *called* into being.<sup>76</sup> The view that we are “thrown” into existence is a consequence of failing to take into account the fact that the universe and all its inhabitants are the creations of a supreme Being who called everything into being for a particular purpose in the evolutionary world process. We only feel “thrown” when we foreshorten our vision and ignore the existence of God. Whereas “thrown” (*geworfen* in German) connotes a disorderly, haphazard, undignified and even violent arrival which might easily lead to sense of worthlessness, carelessness and despair, being ‘called’ suggests that each thing is wanted, has a place and a task, is invested with the natural dignity and possesses inherent value. Contrary to superficial expectations this does not ease the challenges that we face. Indeed, it intensifies them because being inauthentic is not just being untrue to ourselves but is also a rebellion against God’s will. God’s call is to a particular person who must not squander this call by trying to be someone else; it is issued to our authentic potentials. We must not “flee to the relief which comes with the supposed freedom of the they-self.”<sup>77</sup> Nor can we dismiss this call as absurd since God has His reasons in each case. This fact is emphasized by the Báb’s prayer which states that “All are His servants and all abide by His bidding.”<sup>78</sup> In other words, human existence is inherently meaningful even though we do not always actualize this meaning successfully. This is one issue on which a Bahá'í existentialism differs radically from the atheistic existentialism of Sartre and Camus.

### 14) Not-belonging

Anxiety also reveals our human condition as not being fully ‘at home’ in the world. Unlike other entities and creatures, humans are not fully at home in the world insofar as we possess conscious capabilities other creatures lack. We cannot live with the sensual contentedness of a cow, nor, as Abdu'l-Baha noted, should we because to do so means not actualizing our true potentials.<sup>79</sup> Through their emphasis on detachment from the world, the Bahá'í Writings also emphasize that humankind neither is nor should ever be as at home in the world as animals. “[T]he contingent world is the source of imperfections”<sup>80</sup> and humans should be focussed on divine perfections. Indeed, relative to the divine perfections we are intended to actualize, the world is as ‘nothing’ and we must neither over-value nor undervalue it. In one sense, the world is certainly an illusion, a mirage, a nothing,<sup>81</sup> and, if we foreshorten our vision to exclude God, we will indeed find ourselves “thrown” into nothingness or into a meaningless, seething mass of being. This feeling of not-being-at-home or not-belonging is something that all Bahá'ís can recognize and which the Writings, to a certain extent, approve.<sup>82</sup> Our recognition of the situation in which we are *in* but not fully *of* nature, readily leads to anxiety about our true place, our ‘home’ and our belonging. One of the reasons for the arrival of Manifestations is to alleviate this structurally inherent anxiety and to help us direct this emotional energy to the divine world where we really belong.

### 15) Resoluteness and the Call Into Being

The issues of resoluteness, anxiety and “the call into being”<sup>83</sup> lead naturally to what we might refer to as the ‘call of being’, namely the fact that through anxiety, we hear “the call of conscience [that] summons us to our potentiality-for-Being.”<sup>84</sup> This has two consequences. First, anxiety reveals our freedom to choose for or against the actualization of our possibilities.<sup>85</sup> It discloses the fact that human be-ing is characterized by freedom, a view that underlies the foundation of all Bahá'í ethics. This freedom can, of course, be frightening because it marks the beginning of responsibilities for the conduct of one's life. Second, through anxiety, conscience summons us to an authentic existence by calling on us to self-actualization. “When the call of conscience is understood, our being lost in the ‘they’ is revealed. Resoluteness brings *Dasein* back to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-itself.”<sup>86</sup> The call of conscience “calls *Dasein* forth (and for ward) to its ownmost possibilities, as a summons to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-its-Self.”<sup>87</sup>

We must ask where this call comes from especially since it is often “against our expectations and even against our will”?<sup>88</sup> According to Heidegger, the call comes from us and yet from beyond us. In other words, “the call of conscience”<sup>89</sup> originates as a call from our unactualized potentials, projecting the influence of their presence into our lives; these unactualized potentials are our own future possible selves and their presence makes us uneasy about what we are doing with ourselves. Thus, “[i]n conscience *Dasein* calls itself.”<sup>90</sup> However, the call also comes from outside, a fact that Heidegger recognizes but does not develop. The Bahá'í Writings suffer no such disadvantage, and can frankly assert that the call of being and the call of conscience are one and same: they are signs of God's action in the world through the anxious state of mind or “mood.”<sup>91</sup>

However, even this positive view of the call of conscience still leaves us—and Heidegger's philosophy—with a problem: is conscience by itself actually capable of empowering us to return from our fallen state back into authenticity? As John Macquarrie says, conscience “can at best *awaken* in fallen man the awareness of lost possibility of being. It can disclose to him his ontological possibility of authenticity. *But it cannot by any means empower him to choose that possibility.*”<sup>92</sup> At this point we understand the existential necessity of a Manifestation to re-orient our lives to self-actualization, authenticity and the transcendent aspects of our existence.

### 16) “Being-Toward-Death”

Because we are continuously changing,<sup>93</sup> it follows that our identities are continuously dying as we cast aside outmoded, no longer adequate selves in order actualize new possibilities. This is one way in which human beings are what Heidegger calls “Being-towards-death”<sup>94</sup> since we are, in fact, constantly striving to re-invent ourselves. We die daily, indeed, during periods of challenging, rapid growth or, at times of crisis, hourly or even from moment to moment. It is one of the great paradoxes of human existence that dying is our most authentic way of life. In the words of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, “Until a being setteth his foot in the plane of sacrifice, he is bereft of every favour and grace; and this plane of sacrifice is the realm of dying to the self, that the radiance of the living God may then shine forth. The martyr's field is the place of detachment from self, that the anthems of eternity may be upraised.”<sup>95</sup> We thus live in perpetual anticipation of death, of which the death of the physical body is only one kind. Indeed, the Bahá'í Writings encourage the daily practice of “Being-towards-death”<sup>96</sup> when they tell us to bring ourselves to account each day before we perish.<sup>97</sup>

### 17) “Being-Toward-Death” and Freedom

Once understood and appropriated for oneself, “Being-towards-death”<sup>98</sup> is also a source of ontological freedom because it frees us from any undue attachment to former versions of ourselves. There is no point in holding on to a version of oneself that, if things go well and real growth occurs, is destined to pass out of existence. At this point, we cannot help but remember Bahá’u’lláh’s statement, “I have made death a messenger of joy to thee. Wherefore dost thou grieve? I made the light to shed on thee its splendor. Why dost thou veil thyself therefrom?”<sup>99</sup> Death is “a messenger of joy” because the dying of one identity is a pre-requisite for a more adequate identity, just as our physical dying is a pre-requisite for entrance into the Abhá Kingdom. It is the death that precedes a birth and a life of encountering opportunities.

### 18) Being an “Inexhaustible Mystery”

Another way of viewing our inherent incompleteness and perpetual evolution is to say that we are an “inexhaustible mystery.”<sup>100</sup> As the Writings tell us, “Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value.”<sup>101</sup> Consequently, human beings are always mysterious to themselves, and experience themselves as a mystery, as something that by its very nature can never be fully understood. No amount of factual information can ever provide exhaustive knowledge of even a single person, for, as the Bahá’í Writings say, “Man is My mystery, and I am his mystery.”<sup>102</sup> This is also what the theistic existentialist Gabriel Marcel is getting at in the title of his two volume *The Mystery of Being* and this is precisely the main point of Kierkegaard’s entire oeuvre and his objection to Hegel: human beings are inherently mysterious and cannot be adequately summed up by any abstract, intellectualized system.<sup>103</sup>

How we personally experience our mysteriousness can vary greatly. Some, like the Russian theistic existentialist Nicolas Berdyaev, experience it as an utterly inexplicable irrationality that proves our absolute freedom and creativity beyond any rational, logical limitations.<sup>104</sup> Others, such as the French atheist existentialists Sartre and Camus, experience it as further evidence of our inherent absurdity. Perhaps most interestingly, this inner “inexhaustible mystery”<sup>105</sup> might be experienced as a profound inner emptiness—an emptiness that is, paradoxically, also profoundly full of endless potentials. This line of thought draws an existential understanding of the Bahá’í Writings closer to Buddhism and Taoism.

Our incompleteness is also the source of our inherent creativity as we struggle to find new and more adequate ways to actualize our potentials in the midst of an ever-changing world. This means that we are inherently creative beings who are continuously bringing novelty into this world by manifesting potentials that have previously been hidden. Indeed, humankind also creatively serves cosmic evolution and reveals novelties by bringing out the hidden potentials of matter in our various inventions.<sup>106</sup>

### 19) Man and Super-man

The fact that we—both collectively and individually—are essentially incomplete beings, provides a logical basis for the Bahá’í Faith’s evolutionary view of humankind; we are always on our way to being ‘something better’, that is, an ever more complete actualization of our potentials. This understanding of our species as well as our individual existences bears obvious affinities to Nietzsche’s theory of the super-man or ‘Uebermensch’ since in both views, humans regard themselves as a transition to something better.<sup>107</sup> Of course, whereas Bahá’ís and Nietzsche agree that the new ‘super-man’ has a superior intellect<sup>108</sup> and moral system,<sup>109</sup> they will not necessarily agree on the content of this new moral system. However, it cannot be denied that the evolutionary outlook inherent in the Bahá’í Writings leads to a vision of becoming a type of human superior to what we are today although we can never exceed our

ontological human status. It bears pointing out that even an atheist existentialist such as Sartre recognizes this self-transcendent function in human beings, that is, the notion that ultimately human beings want to be more than what they currently are. In Sartre's view, human beings want to be God, even though this project is, by definition, bound to fail.

### 20) Authenticity

Because we are a "Being-in-the-world,"<sup>110</sup> we can only exist in full authenticity if we have an intimate and authentic relationship to the world in which we live. As Bahá'u'lláh says, "Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in, and center your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements."<sup>111</sup> Concern for the needs—as distinct from the wants and preferences—of the age is the most intimate and authentic way to engaging with our world-as-a-whole, and must not to be confused with relating intimately and authentically to the needs of individuals we encounter. *Both*, not one or the other, are necessary to a full, engaged and authentic existence that actualizes the complete range of our social potentials. Heidegger recognizes the possibilities for authentic engagement with the world under the rubric of 'care' which he characterizes not only as authentic being-toward-one's-own-possibilities but also as "Being-in-the-world"<sup>112</sup> and "being-with."<sup>113</sup> He says that "Being-in-the-world is essentially care"<sup>114</sup> and describes "care as the Being of *Dasein*."<sup>115</sup> Thus care in its social dimension, that is, our "concern and solicitude"<sup>116</sup> for our co-inhabitants on the earth is an integral part of our being and cannot be avoided if we wish to develop authentically. However, unlike Bahá'u'lláh, Heidegger does not specifically explain what characterizes authentic Being-in-the-world.

### 21) Free Will and the Volitional Personality

Another issue on which the Writings agree with existentialism is the inherent mystery of self. According to the Bahá'í Writings, humankind is endowed with free will<sup>116</sup> which, in practical terms means, we define, that is, create ourselves by the choices we make. This has immediate consequences for a Bahá'í existentialism because it means we must carefully qualify Sartre's dictum that existence precedes essence. From the perspective of the Writings, this is true only so far as our volitional, that is, *chosen* personality is concerned, since our choices did not exist before we made them. Nonetheless, those choices are made in the context of having a specifically human nature that is capable of making such choices in the first place. Because we have no choice but to make these choices, we are, in Sartre's memorable phrase "condemned to be free"<sup>117</sup> and, therewith the architects of our own destiny.

### 22) The Mystery of Self

Furthermore, this volitional self or essence is inherently mysterious insofar as it does not exist before any choices are made, yet something is required to make the first choice. What is that something? We could speculate in any number of ways but the final result will always be that we cannot know, at least not intellectually in the manner of logical necessity or physical causality. This is because, in Marcel's terms, the self is a "mystery"<sup>118</sup> and not a "problem."<sup>119</sup> The difference between the two is clear cut: a problem is a difficulty that can be solved with the proper procedure or technique whereas a mystery cannot be solved at all. A "mystery [is] a problem which encroaches on its own data"<sup>120</sup> that is, a problem that does not allow us to study it objectively but irrevocably requires us to be involved: "I cannot place myself outside it or before it; I am engaged."<sup>121</sup> Our personal identity, the self is destined to remain a mystery in Marcel's sense because we cannot reflect on ourselves without involving ourselves.<sup>122</sup> The Writings agree with Marcel's view. However, according to them we are mysteries to ourselves and others because we are "called into being"<sup>123</sup> by the inscrutable will of God<sup>124</sup> who, through Bahá'u'lláh has told us that "Man is My mystery, and I am his mystery."<sup>125</sup> In other words, we

do not know why God has called us or others into being because at this point we have arrived at an inherent limit to rational inquiry. We cannot inquire about the reason's for God's will because all rational inquiry is based on either the law of non-contradiction or cause and effect and God transcends both of these laws.

The mystery of the self is reinforced by the Bahá'í Teaching that the inner essence of things is unknown and unknowable<sup>126</sup>; things are known by their attributes but their essences are beyond the reach of human knowledge. This is especially true of the human soul: "Verily I say, the human soul is, in its essence, one of the signs of God, a mystery among His mysteries. It is one of the mighty signs of the Almighty, the harbinger that proclaimeth the reality of all the worlds of God. *Within it lieth concealed that which the world is now utterly incapable of apprehending.*"<sup>127</sup> For this reason, 'mysteriousness to ourselves' is inherently structured into human existence and the only choice we really have is in deciding how to respond to it.

### 23) Self-Alienation

This sense of mysteriousness to oneself and, therefore, not belonging to oneself, suggests that a certain sense of alienation is structurally inherent in being human. As Marcel writes, "from the moment when I start to reflect, I am bound to appear to myself as a, as it were, non-somebody."<sup>128</sup> However, it can often intensify into a pathological state of alienation insofar as one is alienated from acting in one's own best interests. This idea underlies such injunctions as the following: "Suffer not yourselves to be wrapt in the dense veils of your selfish desires, inasmuch as I have perfected in every one of you My creation."<sup>129</sup> We also read "Every good thing is of God, and every evil thing is from yourselves"<sup>130</sup> and "deprive not yourselves of the liberal effusions of His grace."<sup>131</sup> Each of these quotations suggests that human beings can be so alienated from themselves that they act to inflict harm on themselves. From this point of view, the 'call into being' takes on a new dimension: in addition to being the call by which the original volitional self begins, it is also the call back into authenticity, the call to return to our true selves. Indeed, insofar as we do not really exist when we do not live authentically—a kind of 'substitute' lives in our place—the 'call into being' is also a call to return to existence. If responded to, this call can be considered a kind of "second birth"<sup>132</sup> in which we attain our true spiritual selves or what 'Abdu'l-Bahá calls "the world of the Kingdom."<sup>133</sup> According to Heidegger, this "call says nothing which might be talked about, gives no information about events. The call, which can be identified with the call of conscience points *forward* to *Dasein's* potentiality-for-Being and it does this as a call which comes *from* "uncanniness."<sup>134</sup> Thus, it is possible to experience one's alienation itself positively as a call to return to one's true self. Ignoring this call is a failure to hear oneself or, even worse, an outright refusal to do so and a rejection of oneself.<sup>135</sup> This, of course, leads to inauthentic existence because one is leading a life that reflects the 'they' or the mass instead of one that reflects one's "ownmost"<sup>136</sup> potentials.

### 24) The Mystery of Essence

Because things are known by their attributes and unknowable in their essence,<sup>137</sup> it follows that to some extent we will always find ourselves situated in a world of things that are essentially mysterious to us. We cannot know them completely. Indeed, vis-à-vis essence, we are destined to remain mysterious even to ourselves despite the fact that we have direct interior experience of ourselves.<sup>138</sup> Consequently, we are always remote-from-ourselves<sup>139</sup>; we live in perpetual anticipation for an ever fuller disclosure of ourselves. Given that we know only attributes and not essences, it is not surprising to find that we may feel a certain alienation from all things and thus not feel fully 'at home' in the world. We can choose to lament or resent this

situation, or we can ask ourselves if, in fact, we were ever intended to feel fully at home in the world, and to live without a certain yearning for something more. In other words, is a certain feeling of not-belonging an inherent, structural component of human existence? The answer from the Bahá'í Writings and Heidegger seems to be positive. The Writings certainly suggest that such is the case as seen in their exhortations to become detached from the world.<sup>140</sup> Since Heidegger believes that a kind of inauthenticity results from being too attached to daily existence and becoming “absorbed”<sup>141</sup> in our “Being as everyday Being-with-one-another”<sup>142</sup> we may conclude that he, too, advocates a certain degree of feeling *unheimlich*, not-at-home in the world as a requisite for authenticity.

However, we must bear in mind that detachment does not mean a disinterest or lack of concern for the world; Bahá'u'lláh, after all, tells us to be “anxiously concerned for the needs of the age [we] live in”<sup>143</sup> and Heidegger sees solicitude,<sup>144</sup> an important aspect of the care in which *Dasein* reveals itself,<sup>145</sup> as an integral part of our Being-in-the-world. Rather, it means that we must not see the world as the ultimate and final value in our lives; we must recognize that our relationship to “the things of this world,”<sup>146</sup> meaning both concrete things and worldly affairs, must not be allowed to stand in the way of achieving personal authenticity or an authentic relationship to God. To paraphrase Christ, what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul?<sup>147</sup>

### 25) The Necessity of Faith

The fact that the world is inherently mysterious to us because we know things only by their attributes and not directly by their inner essence<sup>148</sup> means that there are inherent, structural limitations to our knowledge. Our knowledge, our science and our action are limited to the phenomenal level of reality and debarred from the noumenal realm which is the exclusive domain of God. This shows that the Bahá'í Writings espouse a moderate rationalism, that is, they recognize that while reasoned investigation and logic can tell us many things, they cannot tell us everything and certainly not everything we need to know to live appropriately as human beings. The key for an accurate epistemology is to know where to draw the line between the two because this distinction is the basis for asserting the existence of other, supra-rational ways of knowing. As the Writings tell us, we know by “faith and knowledge”<sup>149</sup> which are the “two wings’ of the soul.”<sup>150</sup>

In Marcel’s language, the difference between faith and knowledge is the difference between “believing that”<sup>151</sup> and “believing in.”<sup>152</sup> The first is like a “conviction”<sup>153</sup> of which we have complete intellectual certainty and which—here we are going beyond Marcel—is hedged round with all kinds of careful provisos and qualifications to preserve it from attack. “Believing in,”<sup>154</sup> however, is something quite different. According to Marcel, it means “that I place myself at the disposal of something,”<sup>155</sup> that is, I make myself available to something or someone. In short, faith is the kind of knowledge we get when we willingly open ourselves to the other and give our assent to the knowledge gained in that way. Indeed, such knowledge “absorbs most fully all the powers of [our] being.”<sup>156</sup> It also affects our own being, that is, what we actually are as persons. We are, as the saying goes, ‘touched’.

Now it is obvious that faith has both down-to-earth practical as well as religious applications. Marcel uses the homely example of granting someone credit; we believe *in* that person—perhaps even in contradiction to a past financial mistake. Faith in God, of course, exacts a higher standard, but the principle is the same: we make ourselves available to whatever evidence or knowledge God chooses to bestow. To acquire faith we must prepare ourselves spiritually. As ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says, “If thou wishest the divine knowledge and recognition, purify thy heart from all beside God, be wholly attracted to the ideal, beloved One search for and choose Him”<sup>157</sup>

and Bahá'u'lláh's "first counsel [is to] possess a pure kindly and radiant heart."<sup>158</sup> However, in the Writings, faith and knowledge are not opposed. After telling us to "search for and choose Him [Bahá'u'lláh],"<sup>159</sup> 'Abdu'l-Bahá says, apply thyself to rational and authoritative arguments "for arguments are a guide to the path and by this the heart will be turned unto the Sun of Truth"<sup>160</sup> and have no need of further proofs because we will simply see the truth directly. To do this, we must make use of our freedom and choose to see.

## 26) Kinds of Truth

If knowledge can be acquired by rational inquiry as well as by faith, it follows that the concept of truth in the Writings has at least two levels. The first, is the rational and empirical level. Here the Writings espouse a form of the correspondence theory of truth.<sup>161</sup> The second, existential level concerns the issue of living 'in truth' insofar as we are what we appear to be and appear to be what we are both to others and ourselves. Sartre calls this living in good or "bad faith,"<sup>162</sup> that is, in not lying to others or ourselves. Thus, to the extent that we lie neither to others nor ourselves, we live 'in truth'. We exhibit what Heidegger calls "authentic disclosedness"<sup>163</sup> to others and ourselves. In terms of the correspondence theory of truth, we are consciously at one with ourselves.

However, the Writings suggest that there is yet a second level of existential truth illustrated for example in Bahá'u'lláh's statement that "He, Who is the Eternal Truth, beareth Me witness!"<sup>164</sup> Naturally, the question arises how God can *be* the truth. There are at least three possible answers. In the first place, we might say that God and the Manifestation are the truth because they are ultimately the standard by which all humanly discovered truths are to be assessed. Another, metaphysical answer follows logically from the unity of God, that is, the belief that God is absolutely one and "admits of no division."<sup>165</sup> As 'Abdu'l-Bahá writes, "the essential names and attributes of God are identical with His Essence."<sup>166</sup> Since truth is one of God's attributes we cannot escape the conclusion that God is truth. It is virtually self-evident that God could not possess absolute unity if essence and attribute were distinct and divided. Such a division would reduce God to the level of His creations in which the essence made up of potentials and the attributes made up of actualized attributes are different. For reasons of logic alone, God must *be* truth.

A third way in which God is the truth may be developed on the basis of Heidegger's philosophy. According to Heidegger, "[a]ssertion is not the primary 'locus' of truth."<sup>167</sup> In other words, truth is not simply a matter of statements that correspond to reality. Such statements possess a strictly secondary or "derivative character."<sup>168</sup> Rather, "in the most primordial sense,"<sup>169</sup> truth is the "disclosedness"<sup>170</sup> that allows us to proceed to make judgments about correctness or falsity: "The most primordial 'truth' . . . is the ontological condition for the possibility that assertions can either be true or false—that they may uncover or cover things up."<sup>171</sup> Thus, 'primordial truth' is the pre-condition for all subsequent judgments. As the Prime Mover, the ground of being, the "object of desire" of the entire universe, God is that ontological pre-condition necessary for things to be true or false and indeed, in that sense, God is the Truth of truth. Without this pre-condition of truth, there could be no perception or understanding of the secondary truths. As such a pre-condition for all judgments about truth, God may be compared to light which is not seen in itself but is the necessary pre-condition for seeing. Another way of saying all this is to point out that God is the "disclosedness"<sup>172</sup> of things, that is, the condition of "uncoveredness"<sup>173</sup> or being uncovered by which the secondary or derivative truths can be known.

If God is truth in the Heideggerian sense, then it follows that God is always available in our

quest for knowledge. He is, as Bahá'u'lláh writes, “closer to man than his life vein.”<sup>174</sup> God is, quite literally, the universal pre-condition for all knowledge and discrimination and, in that sense, revelation is occurring at all times and places. As Bahá'u'lláh writes, “Likewise hath the eternal King spoken: ‘No thing have I perceived, except that I perceived God within it, God before it, or God after it.’”<sup>175</sup> God is simply unavoidable for those who have “eyes to see.”<sup>176</sup>

### 27) Being-Between

Further reflection reveals that human existence is characterized by being-between. We are in the paradoxical position of waiting at the door of ourselves caught between eternal anxiety and hope as we ponder both hopefully and anxiously what we shall disclose about our essence. As individuals and as a species, we are in eternal evolutionary development and, therefore, always ‘between’ a point of departure and a port of arrival. Indeed, every arrival is simultaneously a leave-taking; human beings have always just left and never quite arrived. This being-between is reflected even in our situation in creation. According to the Bahá'í Writings, humankind is the mid-point between matter and spirit: “the inner reality of man is a demarcation line between the shadow and the light, a place where the two seas meet; it is the lowest point on the arc of descent, and therefore is it capable of gaining all the grades above.”<sup>177</sup> We exist between animality and the divine<sup>178</sup> and while our nature or essence can be refined, it can never change.<sup>179</sup>

### 28) Conclusion

We shall end this introduction to a Bahá'í existentialism not with an abstract summary but rather with an image that summarizes much of what we have discovered: human beings are not pilgrims headed for a final destination be it Paradise, or Nirvana or Valhalla, but rather, we are all mariners and our lives are a journey that never ends. Days and nights, in different weathers, on different seas and through changing climates we sail ever onward discovering new lands and our prows are aimed at the horizon and the Great Attractor whose brightness draws us forever onward. Each moment is an arrival and departure; a “Land-ho!” and “Anchors aweigh!”; a parting sigh and a welcoming smile, a discovery and a recognition, a being-toward-death and a being-toward-birth, a self-transcendence and a self-disappointment, a “Ready-aye-ready” and a “Not-yet”, a moment of knowledge and a moment of mystery, a falling into the troughs and a rising onto the crests. Like all mariners, we are ‘in-between’. We live between waves and winds, between sea and sky, between being ourselves and never being ourselves, between anticipation and anxiety, between here and not-here, between peace with ourselves and internal conflict, between being true and being untruth. Yet, through this all, we try as best we can to see the light of the Great Attractor and to guide our ships by that light.

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### Abbreviations

BN	Being and Nothingness
BT	Being and Time
MB	The Mystery of Being
PE	The Philosophy of Existentialism

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### Notes

- 1) *The Promulgation of Universal Peace* 38. See also *Bahá’í World Faith*, 262.
- 2) *The Promulgation of Universal Peace* 113.
- 3) *Ibid.* 23. See also *Bahá’í World Faith* 249.
- 4) *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, 23.
- 5) *Ibid.* 17. See also 49.
- 6) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh* CXXII, 260.
- 7) *Some Answered Questions*, 187; see also *Bahá’í World Faith*, 305.
- 8) *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá* 131.

- 9) *BT* 331. See also 185.
- 10) *BT*, 78. See also *BT* 246-250.
- 11) *BT* 78.
- 12) *BN* LXXIV. See also 95.
- 13) *BN* 89.
- 14) *BT* 137.
- 15) *BT* 458.
- 16) *MB* Vol. 1, 110.
- 17) *Some Answered Questions* 151. See also 208.
- 18) *Some Answered Questions* 208.
- 19) *Some Answered Questions* 153.
- 20) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* CLI, 319. See also *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh* 95.
- 21) *BN* 89.
- 22) *BT* 137.
- 23) *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh* 116. See also *Prayers and Meditations* 49; *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* 4.
- 24) *MB* Vol. 2, 35.
- 25) *MB* Vol. 1, 111.
- 26) *MB* Vol. 1, 112.
- 27) See *BT* 53-4.
- 28) *BT* 305.
- 29) *The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys*, 32.
- 30) *Some Answered Questions* 198.
- 31) *BT* 286.
- 32) *BT* 185.
- 33) *BT* 186.
- 34) *BT* 373. See also *BN* 43.
- 35) *Ibid.*
- 36) *BT* 372, italics added.
- 37) *BN* 21.
- 38) *BT* 197.
- 39) *BT* 119.
- 40) *BT* 197.
- 41) *BT* 286.
- 42) *MB*, Vol. 2, 101-2.
- 43) *MB* Vol. 1, 68.
- 44) *Ibid.*
- 45) *BT* 286.
- 46) *MB* Vol. 1, 52.
- 47) *BT* 353.
- 48) *Bahá'í World Faith*, 311.
- 49) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* LXXII, 139.
- 50) *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah* LXXXVIII, 175.
- 51) *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* #126, 280.
- 52) *The Promulgation of Universal Peace* 127.
- 53) *The Courage to Be* 59.
- 54) *BT* 368.
- 55) *Ibid.*
- 56) *Ibid.*
- 57) *BT* 164.
- 58) *Ibid.*
- 59) *BT* 167.

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- 60) *BT 220.*
- 61) *BT 222.*
- 62) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, LXXV, 143; italics added.
- 63) *BT 368.*
- 64) *BT 220.*
- 65) *BT 344-5.*
- 66) *BT 399.*
- 67) *BT 343.*
- 68) *The Secret of Divine Civilization 11.*
- 69) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* CXX, 254. See also CXLIVII, 316.
- 70) *Ibid.*
- 71) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* CXVI, 247. See also LXV, 124.
- 72) *Ibid.* CXIV, 236, italics added.
- 73) *BT 393.*
- 74) *BT 321*; italics added.
- 75) *BN 53.*
- 76) *Prayers and Meditations 177.* See also *Prayers and Meditations 208, 251*; *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* XIV, 29; XCIV, 193; CXXII, 260.
- 77) *BT 321.*
- 78) *Selections from the Writings of the Báb 217.*
- 79) *The Promulgation of Universal Peace 262.*
- 80) *Some Answered Questions 5.*
- 81) *Ibid.*, 278.
- 82) *Paris Talks*, 85. See also *Some Answered Questions 278.*
- 83) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, XIV, 29.
- 84) *BT 347.*
- 85) *BT 237.*
- 86) *BT 354.*
- 87) *BT 318.*
- 88) *BT 320.*
- 89) *BT 347.*
- 90) *BT 320.*
- 91) *BT 296.*
- 92) *An Existentialist Theology 139*, italics added.
- 93) *Some Answered Questions 233.*
- 94) *BT 310.*
- 95) *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá 76.*
- 96) *BT 310.*
- 97) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* CXIV, 236.
- 98) *BT 310.*
- 99) *The Hidden Words #32*, from the Arabic.
- 100) *Existentialism 29.*
- 101) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* CXXII, 260. See also *Some Answered Questions*, chp. 64.
- 102) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* XC, 177.
- 103) *MB*, Vol. 1, 164.
- 104) *Truth and Revelation 77.*
- 105) *Existentialism 29.*
- 106) *Some Answered Questions 186.*
- 107) *Thus Spoke Zarathustra Bk. Four.*
- 108) *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá 141.*
- 109) *Ibid.* 136.
- 110) *BT 236.*

- 111) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* CVI, 213.
- 112) *BT* 236.
- 113) *BT* 163.
- 114) *BT* 237.
- 115) *BT* 241.
- 116) *BT* 238.
- 116) *Some Answered Questions* 248.
- 117) *BN* 537.
- 118) *PE* 21-23.
- 119) *Ibid.*
- 120) *PE* 22.
- 121) *Ibid.*
- 122) *MB* Vol 1, 210. See also 168, 169.
- 123) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, XIV 29.
- 124) See *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* CXXIV, 262.
- 125) *The Kitáb-Íqán* 101. See also *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* LXXXII, 160.
- 126) *Some Answered Questions*, 220.
- 127) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, LXXXII, 160, italics added. See also LXXXIII, 165; XCV, 195.
- 128) *MB* Vol. 1, 106.
- 129) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* LXXV, 143.
- 130) *Ibid.* LXXVII, 149.
- 131) *Ibid.* CI, 206.
- 132) *The Promulgation of Universal Peace* 332.
- 133) *Ibid.*
- 134) *BT* 325.
- 135) *BT* 223; 315.
- 136) *BT* 224; 307.
- 137) *Some Answered Questions* 220.
- 138) *Ibid.*
- 139) Heidegger, quoted in *BN*, 25.
- 140) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* CXL, 306. See also *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* XVII, 40; XXIX, 71; XLVI, 100; LXXVI, 149; *Paris Talks* 74; *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* 86, 177, 186.
- 141) *BT* 163.
- 142) *Ibid.*
- 143) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* CVI, 213.
- 144) *BT* 237.
- 145) *BT* 227.
- 146) *Paris Talks* 18.
- 147) *The Bible, Mark*, 8: 36-38.
- 148) *Some Answered Questions* 220.
- 149) *Bahá'í World Faith*, 382.
- 150) *Ibid.*
- 151) *MB* Vol. 2, 86.
- 152) *Ibid.*
- 153) *Ibid.*
- 154) *Ibid.*
- 155) *MB* Vol. 2, 87.
- 156) *Ibid.*
- 157) *Bahá'í World Faith* 383.
- 158) *The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh* from the Arabic, # 3.

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- 159) *Bahá’í World Faith* 383.  
160) *Ibid.*  
161) See Kluge “*The Aristotelian Substratum of the Bahá’í Writings.*”  
162) *BN* 57.  
163) *BT* 264.  
164) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh* V, 9. See also XXV, 60; XXXV, 82; LXIV, 122.  
165) *Some Answered Questions* 113.  
166) *Some Answered Questions* 148. See also *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh* XCIII, 187; XCIV, 193.  
167) *BT* 269.  
168) *BT* 266.  
169) *Ibid.*  
170) *Ibid.*  
171) *Ibid.*  
172) *BT* 269.  
173) *BT* 267.  
174) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh* XCIII, 185.  
175) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh* XC, 178.  
176) *The Bible, Deuteronomy, 29:4.*  
177) *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá* 130.  
178) *The Promulgation of Universal Peace* 67.  
179) *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá* 132. See also *Some Answered Questions*, 177.