

Compilation of quotations from the Bahá'í Writings, from "The Verge of the New: A Series of Talks" ¹

by Stephen Phelps

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Day 1, session 1

The spiritual dislocation of the modern age

“In cycles gone by, though harmony was established, yet, owing to the absence of means, the unity of all mankind could not have been achieved... In this day, however, means of communication have multiplied, and the five continents of the earth have virtually merged into one.... For none is self-sufficiency any longer possible, inasmuch as political ties unite all peoples and nations, and the bonds of trade and industry, of agriculture and education, are being strengthened every day. Hence the unity of all mankind can in this day be achieved. Verily this is none other but one of the wonders of this wondrous age, this glorious century. Of this past ages have been deprived, for this century—the century of light—hath been endowed with unique and unprecedented glory, power and illumination.” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, #15)

“Chaos and confusion are daily increasing in the world. They will attain such intensity as to render the frame of mankind unable to bear them. Then will men be awakened and become aware that religion is the impregnable stronghold and the manifest light of the world, and its laws, exhortations and teachings the source of life on earth.” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Compilation of Compilations* #1587)

“The world is in travail, and its agitation waxeth day by day. Its face is turned towards waywardness and unbelief. Such shall be its plight, that to disclose it now would not be meet and seemly. Its perversity will long continue. And when the appointed hour is come, there shall suddenly appear that which shall cause the limbs of mankind to quake. Then, and only then, will the Divine Standard be unfurled, and the Nightingale of Paradise warble its melody.” (Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* #61)

“Adversity, prolonged, worldwide, afflictive, allied to chaos and universal destruction, must needs convulse the nations, stir the conscience of the world, disillusion the masses, precipitate a

¹ See bahaiblog.net/audio/talks/verge-new-series-talks-steven-phelps and bahai-library.com/phelps_verge_new_talks

radical change in the very conception of society, and coalesce ultimately the disjointed, the bleeding limbs of mankind into one body, single, organically united, and indivisible.”
(Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day Is Come*, p.122-123)

It seems what we need now is a more profound and co-ordinated Bahá'í scholarship in order to attract such men as you are contacting. The world has -- at least the thinking world -- caught up by now with all the great and universal principles enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh over 70 years ago, and so of course it does not sound "new" to them. But we know that the deeper teachings, the capacity of His projected World Order to re-create society, are new and dynamic. It is these we must learn to present intelligently and enticingly to such men!” (Letter dated 3 July 1949)
“All we can reasonably venture to attempt is to strive to obtain a glimpse of the first streaks of the promised Dawn that must, in the fullness of time, chase away the gloom that has encircled humanity.” (Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 35)

Additional related quotes:

[Immediate future dark](#)

[Teachings as sphere](#)

[Independent investigation of reality](#)

[Harmony of science and religion](#)

Day 1, session 2

Science, religion, and the new physics

“What is enlightenment? Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another... Dare to know! Have courage to use your own understanding! – that is the motto of enlightenment.” (Immanuel Kant, found in essay *Answering the Question: What is Enlightenment?*)

“These big ideas—relativity, symmetry, invariance, complementarity—form the heart of modern physics. They should be, though they are not yet, central to modern philosophy and religion.”
(Frank Wilczek, *A Beautiful Question*, p. 75)

Additional related quotes:

[Relativity/complementarity](#)

[Symmetry/invariance \(microcosm and macrocosm\)](#)

[Religious truth is relative](#)

[Progressive revelation](#)

[The oneness of humanity](#)

Day 2, session 1

Maps of reality: the limits of language

“...The essential reality underlying any given phenomenon is unknown. Phenomenal, or created, things are known to us only by their attributes... the qualities appertaining to this organism [a flower] are perceptible to us, but the intrinsic elemental reality, or identity, of it remains unknown.” ('Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p.421)

“It is important to point out that the mathematical formulation of the physicist’s often crude experience leads in an uncanny number of cases to an amazingly accurate description of a large class of phenomena.” (Eugene Wigner)

“Finally, and most interesting, philosophically we are completely wrong with the approximate law. Our entire picture of the world has to be altered even though the mass changes only by a little bit. This is a very peculiar thing about the philosophy, or the ideas, behind the laws. Even a very small effect sometimes requires profound changes in our ideas.” (Richard Feynman, *Feynman Lectures in Physics*, vol. 1, pp. 1-2)

“We humans have the bad habit of giving a name to a certain object with a certain number of attributes, and we think this name exhausts the object thus designated; whereas the object itself has no idea of remaining within the limit prescribed by the name. The object lives, grows, expands, and often changes into something other than the one imprisoned within the name. We who have given the name to it imagine that the object thus named forever remains the same, because, for the practical purposes of life or for the sake of what we call logic, it is convenient to retain the name regardless of whatever changes have taken place and might take place in it. We become a slave to a system of nomenclature we ourselves have invented.” (D.T. Suzuki)

“How great the multitude of truths which the garment of words can never contain! How vast the number of such verities as no expression can adequately describe, whose significance can never be unfolded, and to which not even the remotest allusions can be made! How manifold are the truths which must remain unuttered until the appointed time is come! Even as it hath been said: “Not everything that a man knoweth can be disclosed, nor can everything that he can disclose be regarded as timely, nor can every timely utterance be considered as suited to the capacity of those who hear it.” Of these truths some can be disclosed only to the extent of the capacity of the repositories of the light of Our knowledge.” (Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh* #89)

“Reveal then Thyself, O Lord, by Thy merciful utterance and the mystery of Thy divine being, that the holy ecstasy of prayer may fill our souls – a prayer that shall rise above words and letters

and transcend the murmur of syllables and sounds – that all things may be merged into nothingness before the revelation of Thy splendor.” ('Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 71)

“The fish trap exists because of the fish; once you've gotten the fish, you can forget the trap. The rabbit snare exists because of the rabbit; once you've gotten the rabbit, you can forget the snare. Words exist because of meaning; once you've gotten the meaning, you can forget the words.”
(Chuang Tzu)

“O Sun-like Mirrors! Look ye upon the Sun of Truth. Ye, verily, depend upon it, were ye to perceive it. Ye are all as fishes, moving in the waters of the sea, veiling yourselves therefrom, and yet asking what it is on which ye depend.” (Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 160)

“One might liken Bahá'u'lláh's teachings to a sphere; there are points poles apart, and in between the thoughts and doctrines that unite them.” (letter dated 5 Jul. 1947 on behalf of Shoghi Effendi)

“There are four schools of thought in the world.... As to the four schools mentioned above, it is clear and evident that the second standeth closer to righteousness (taqvá)... One can, however, provide a justification for the tenets of the other schools, for in a sense all things have been and shall ever remain the manifestations of the names and attributes of God. (Bahá'u'lláh, *The Tabernacle of Unity*, #2.6-9)

“...One person envisages the Unseen, the Transcendent, the Inaccessible One in the Person of the Manifestation without making any distinction or connection between them. Others there are who recognize the Person of the Manifestation as the Appearance of God and consider the commands and prohibitions of the Manifestation to be identical with such as originate with the One True God. These two positions are both acceptable before the throne of God.” (Bahá'u'lláh, *Lawh-i-Jamál* – provisional translation)

“In this stage, which marketh the beginning of the journey, thou shalt behold divers stations and differing signs, even as was mentioned in connection with the City of Search. All these hold true in their respective planes. It behoveth thine eminence in this station to consider each created thing in its own place, neither abasing nor exalting its true rank. For instance, if thou wert to reduce the unseen world to the realm of creation, this would be an act of sheer blasphemy, and the converse would likewise be the essence of impiety. Wert thou, however, to describe the unseen world and the realm of creation within their own stations, this would be the undoubted truth.... Comprehend, in like manner, every station, sign, and allusion, that thou mayest perceive all things in their own place and consider all matters in their proper light.”
(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gems of Divine Mysteries* #88)

“This one sayeth, ‘Thou art an extremist,’ and the other one sayeth, ‘Thou art intolerant.’ This one adduceth evidence from a word of God, and that one reasoneth by another word of God. But I affirm unto them: Ye both are true and right, on the condition that thou not say unto him, ‘He is an extremist,’ and he not say unto thee, ‘Thou art intolerant.’” (The Báb, *Gate of the Heart* pp. 175-176)

“Without in any way trying to explicitly define the concept of conferred infallibility, consider that the most extreme possible personal interpretations of this concept produce the same practical result: that the believers should abide by the decision of the Universal House of Justice without giving rise to dissension... Even if the statements in the Baha’i Writings about the infallibility of the Universal House of Justice are personally interpreted by an individual to be nothing more than hyperbole, surely the intention must be to emphasize the importance of obedience and the need to avoid criticism and contention and uphold the authority of the Supreme Body as the central point to which all turn.” (Paul Lample, *Revelation and Social Reality*, p. 253)

Additional related quotes:

[Knowledge of the essence of things not possible](#)

[Essence and substance](#)

[Inability of words to convey reality](#)

Day 2, session 2

Old narratives renewed: God, spirit, nature

“...That which is before this Intellect, this marvel of the One, ... in truth has no fitting name, but if we must give it a name, ‘one’ would be an appropriate ordinary way of speaking of it...” (Ennead VI.9.5)

“The Divine Reality is sanctified from singleness, then how much more from plurality.” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions* p.113)

“Thou hast written concerning the Impersonality of the Divinity. Personality is in the Manifestation of the Divinity, not in the Essence of the Divinity.” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Tablets of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá Abbas* p.204)

“The way that can be spoken of is not the constant way; The name that can be named is not the constant name.” (Lao Tzu, *Tao te Ching* #1)

“I testify that Thou hast been sanctified above all attributes and holy above all names.” (Bahá’u’lláh, *Prayers and Meditations* #183)

“The existence of God can be neither asked nor answered. If asked, it is a question about that which by its very nature is above existence, and therefore the answer—whether negative or affirmative—implicitly denies the nature of God. It is as atheistic to affirm the existence of God as it is to deny it. God is being-itself, not a being.” (Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* 1:235-237)

“When Thou is spoken, the speaker has no thing for his object. For where there is a thing there is another thing. Every It is bounded by others; It exists only through being bounded by others. But when Thou is spoken, there is no thing. Thou has no bounds.” (Martin Buber, *I and Thou*)

“He who worshippeth God through any one but Him, by gazing at his own self as the Worshipper and at God as the Object of his worship, hath joined partners with God and hath never worshipped Him.” (The Báb, *Gate of the Heart* pp. 251-252)

“Whatever duty Thou hast prescribed unto Thy servants of extolling to the utmost Thy majesty and glory is but a token of Thy grace unto them, that they may be enabled to ascend unto the station conferred upon their own inmost being, the station of the knowledge of their own selves.” (Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* #1)

“Nature is God’s Will and is its expression in and through the contingent world. It is a dispensation of Providence ordained by the Ordainer, the All-Wise. Were anyone to affirm that it is the Will of God as manifested in the world of being, no one should question this assertion.” (Bahá'u'lláh, *Lawh-i-Hikmat*, in *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh* p.142)

“[Bahá'u'lláh] says that that nature which they regard as the source of all beings is the manifestation of His Creative Name.... It is the First Cause that is the source of all beings and that has been interpreted as nature. The point is this: All the conditions and perfections that the philosophers attribute to nature are the same as have been attributed to the Primal Will in the Holy Scriptures. It is clear that the Primal Will is the manifestation of the Creative Name. (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, from a commentary on the Tablet of Wisdom, *Ma’idiy-i-Asmani*, vol. 2, p. 70)

“Therefore it is necessary, according to true wisdom, that the Preexistent God describe Himself to His creatures, that they may recognize their Creator and that, out of the grace of the Pre-existent, the contingent beings may attain their supreme End. This divine self-description is itself a created thing.... Whoso hath recognized it hath recognized his Lord.... This description is denoted as the "soul" or "self", and he who hath known himself hath known his Lord.... Behold with the eye of thy heart. Verily thy truth, the truth of thy being, is the divinity of thy Lord revealed unto thee and through thee. Thou art He Himself, and He is thou thyself, except that indeed thou art that thou art, and He is that He is.” (The Báb, *Gate of the Heart*, p.251)

“Every time I am reminded of Thee and muse on Thy virtues, I am seized with such ecstasies and am so enraptured by Thee that I find myself unable to make mention of Thy name and to extol Thee. I am carried back to such heights that I recognize myself to be the same as the remembrance of Thee in Thy realm, and the essence of Thy praise among Thy servants. As long as that self endureth, so long will Thy praise continue to be shed abroad among Thy creatures and Thy remembrance glorified by Thy people.” (Bahá’u’lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, #78)

“God screens us evermore from premature ideas. Our eyes are holden that we cannot see things that stare us in the face until the hour comes when the mind is ripened; then we behold them, and the time when we saw them not is like a dream.” (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

Additional related quotes:

[God as transcendent and unknowable reality](#)

[Positive attributes cannot describe the essence](#)

[The Primal Will](#)

[Nature is God’s Will](#)

[Spirit](#)

[The soul’s relationship to God](#)

Day 3, session 1

Revelation renewed: Bahá’u’lláh and the Bab (I)

“Not only in the character of the revelation of Bahá’u’lláh, however stupendous be His claim, does the greatness of this Dispensation reside. For among the distinguishing features of His Faith ranks, as a further evidence of its uniqueness, the fundamental truth that in the person of its Forerunner, the Báb, every follower of Bahá’u’lláh recognizes not merely an inspired annunciator but a direct Manifestation of God.” (Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, p.65)

“That He is not to be regarded merely as an inspired Precursor of the Baha’i Revelation, that in His person, as He Himself bears witness in the Persian Bayan, the object of all the Prophets gone before Him has been fulfilled, is a truth which I feel it my duty to demonstrate and emphasize.... There can be no doubt that the claim to the twofold station ordained for the Bab by the Almighty ... constitutes the most distinctive feature of the Bahá’í Dispensation. It is a further evidence of its uniqueness, a tremendous accession to the strength, to the mysterious power and authority with which this holy cycle has been invested.” (Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, p.123)

“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.” (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, #1)

“If man did not exist, the universe would be without result, for the purpose of existence is the revelation of the divine perfections.... But from the beginning that has no beginning to the end that has no end, a perfect Manifestation has always existed. This Man of Whom we speak here is not just any man: That which we intend is the Perfect Man. For the noblest part of the tree, and the fundamental purpose of its existence, is the fruit. A tree without fruit is of no use.” (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, #50)

“Say, He Whom God shall make manifest is indeed the Primal Veil of God. Above this Veil ye can find nothing other than God, while beneath it ye can discern all things emanating from God.” (The Báb, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 131)

“Verily the Point possesseth two stations. One is the station that speaketh from God. The other is the station that speaketh from that which is other than God, a station whereby He expresseth His servitude for the former station... He is the possessor of two signs, that of God and that of creation, and through the latter he worshippeth God and boweth in adoration before Him.” (The Báb, *Gate of the Heart*, p. 46)

“Know verily that whenever this Youth turneth His eyes towards His own self, he findeth it the most insignificant of all creation. When He contemplates, however, the bright effulgences He hath been empowered to manifest, lo, that self is transfigured before Him into a sovereign Potency permeating the essence of all things visible and invisible.” (Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh* #49)

“I am the light which is before all things. It is I who am all things. From me all things came forth, and to me all things extend. Split a piece of wood, and I am there; lift up the stone, and you will find me.” (The Gospel of Thomas)

“These Manifestations of God have each a twofold station. One is the station of pure abstraction and essential unity.... The other station is the station of distinction, and pertaineth to the world of creation, and to the limitations thereof.” (Bahá’u’lláh, *Kitáb-i-Iqán* #161ff)

“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.... 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.” (Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, #58.4)

“The Prophets of God should be regarded as physicians whose task is to foster the well-being of the world and its peoples, that, through the spirit of oneness, they may heal the sickness of a divided humanity.” (Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* #34)

“The All-Knowing Physician hath His finger on the pulse of mankind. He perceiveth the disease, and prescribeth, in His unerring wisdom, the remedy.” (Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* #106 and *Tabernacle of Unity* #1.4)

“...The teachings of Christ and the Prophets are necessary for [man's] education and guidance. Why? Because They are the divine Gardeners Who till the earth of human hearts and minds. They educate man, uproot the weeds, burn the thorns and remodel the waste places into gardens and orchards....” (Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 295)

“The Holy Divine Manifestations are Unique and Peerless. They are the Archetypes of Celestial and Spiritual Virtues in their own age and cycle. They stand on the Mount of Vision and they foreshadow the perfection of the evolving race.” (Pilgrim notes of Dr. Fallscheer, 1909-1910)

“White lines in movement symbolize light as a unifying idea which flows through the compartmented units of life bringing a dynamic to men's minds, ever expanding their energies toward a larger relativity.” (Mark Tobey)

“Music is the wine which inspires one to new generative processes, and I am Bacchus who presses out this glorious wine for mankind and makes them spiritually drunken.” (Ludwig van Beethoven)

“...Both the artist and the Prophet employ essentially the same techniques. Both refrain from coercing us, but, instead, employ devices that require us to become artists ourselves, first by investing a sufficient amount of creative thought to comprehend their ideas, and then by reinvesting that understanding with our own creative action.” (John Hatcher, *The Divine Art of Revelation*)

“Every religion has brought with it some form of art -- let us see what wonders this Cause is going to bring along. Such a glorious spirit should also give vent to a glorious art. The Temple with all its beauty is only the first ray of an early dawn; even more wondrous things are to be achieved in the future.” (Shoghi Effendi, letter dated 11 December 1931 published in *Compilations of Compilations, Vol 1*)

“All Art is a gift of the Holy Spirit. When this light shines through the mind of a musician, it manifests itself in beautiful harmonies. Again, shining through the mind of a poet, it is seen in fine poetry and poetic prose. When the Light of the Sun of Truth inspires the mind of a painter, he produces marvellous pictures.” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Chosen Highway*, p. 167)

“Briefly, the supreme Manifestations of God are aware of the reality of the mysteries of beings. Therefore, They establish laws which are suitable and adapted to the state of the world of man, for religion is the essential connection which proceeds from the realities of things.... Religion, then, is the necessary connection which emanates from the reality of things; and as the supreme Manifestations of God are aware of the mysteries of beings, therefore, They understand this essential connection, and by this knowledge establish the Law of God.” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, ch. 41)

“Religion, then, is the necessary connection which emanates from the reality of things.” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, ch. 41)

“By nature is meant those inherent properties and necessary relations derived from the realities of things.” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, letter to Dr. Forel found in *Auguste Forel and the Bahá’i Faith*)

“Love is the cause of God’s revelation unto man, the vital bond inherent, in accordance with the divine creation, in the realities of things” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá* #12)

“These rules and relationships that constitute the basis of human happiness and that attend the descent of the divine favours are none other than the divine law and the social order that ensure the felicity, the integrity and the security of the human race. ...this law and this order consist in the necessary relationships deriving from the realities of things. How could they otherwise bring order to the body politic or be conducive to the well-being and happiness of human society?” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Siyasiyyih*, para. 43, provis. trans.)

[The Manifestations of God](#)

[Interconnectedness](#)

[Essential relationships proceeding from the realities of things](#)

Day 3, session 2

Revelation renewed: Bahá'u'lláh and the Bab (II)

“What an astonishing thing a book is. It's a flat object made from a tree with flexible parts on which are imprinted lots of funny dark squiggles. But one glance and you're inside the mind of another person, perhaps someone dead for thousands of years. Across the millennia, an author is speaking clearly and silently inside your head, directly to you. Writing is perhaps the greatest of human inventions, binding together people who never knew each other, citizens of distant epochs. Books break the shackles of time. A book is proof that humans are capable of working magic.” (Carl Sagan, excerpt from the 11th episode of 1980s television series *Cosmos*)

“No breeze can compare with the breezes of Divine Revelation, whilst the Word which is uttered by God shineth and flasheth as the sun amidst the books of men.” (Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pp. 42-43)

“The word which the one true God uttereth in this day, though that word be the most familiar and commonplace of terms, is invested with supreme, with unique distinction.” (Bahá'u'lláh, cited in *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 104)

“...It is the Divine Word which is the token and sign of a prophet, the convincing proof to all men and all ages, the everlasting miracle.... the essential characteristic of the Divine Word is the penetrative power (nufudh): it is not spoken in vain, it compels, it constrains, it creates, it rules, it works in men's hearts, it lives and dies not.” (words of ‘Andalib, in *Eminent Baha'is in the Time of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 60-61)

“There is a note, a music, a voice in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, even in translations, which never was heard in English literature before and which has such power that it seems to shake the air as one reads. If other proof were lacking, this Mighty Voice would be proof enough.” (George Townshend, cited in *George Townshend* p. 62)

The vibrations of Bahá'u'lláh's writings are so intense they shiver me with an exaltation and a power I can hardly stand: like standing out in a great storm with the winds roaring and the waves raging and the trees shrieking and crashing and the whole scene uplifting one with its tremendous power and energy and beauty till one is transported and feels part of the titanic drama. I think men will have to develop a lot before they can react rhythmically to Bahá'u'lláh's writings: perhaps we are not meant to — the Infinite has come among us nearer than ever before and we are stunned by its Presence.” (George Townshend, cited in *George Townshend*, p. 62)

“Naught but the celestial potency of the Word of God, which ruleth and transcendeth the realities of all things, is capable of harmonizing the divergent thoughts, sentiments, ideas, and convictions of the children of men. Verily, it is the penetrating power in all things, the mover of souls and the binder and regulator in the world of humanity.” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* #225)

“How strange that while the Beloved is visible as the sun, yet the heedless still hunt after tinsel and base metal. Yea, the intensity of His revelation hath covered Him, and the fullness of His shining forth hath hidden Him.” (Bahá’u’lláh, *The Seven Valleys*, p. 39)

“It hath been decreed by Us that the Word of God and all the potentialities thereof shall be manifested unto men in strict conformity with such conditions as have been foreordained by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. We have, moreover, ordained that its veil of concealment be none other except its own Self.” (Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, #33)

“At one time We spoke in the language of the lawgiver; at another in that of the truth-seeker and the mystic, and yet Our supreme purpose and highest wish hath always been to disclose the glory and sublimity of this station [of love and harmony].” (Bahá’u’lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p.15)

“The Word is the master key for the whole world, inasmuch as through its potency the doors of the hearts of men, which in reality are the doors of heaven, are unlocked.” (Bahá’u’lláh, *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 173)

“...Is not the object of every Revelation to effect a transformation in the whole character of mankind, a transformation that shall manifest itself both outwardly and inwardly, that shall affect both its inner life and external conditions? For if the character of mankind be not changed, the futility of God’s universal Manifestation would be apparent.” (Bahá’u’lláh, *Kitab-i-Iqan* #272)

“All Divine Revelation seems to have been thrown out in flashes. The Prophets never composed treatises. That is why in the Qur’án and our own Writings different subjects are so often included in one Tablet. It pulsates, so to speak. That is why it is ‘Revelation’.” (letter dated 8 January 1949 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, in *Unfolding Destiny*, p. 454)

[The Word of God](#)

Day 4, session 1 & 2

Religion reborn: The coming spiritual revolution

“With faces beaming with joy, hasten ye unto Him. This is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future.” (Bahá’u’lláh, *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* #182)

“Know thou that in every age and cycle, all laws and ordinances have been changed according to the requirements of the times, except the law of love which, like a fountain, ever flows, and whose course never suffers change.” (Bahá’u’lláh, *The Dawn*, v5#12 p.1, translated by Shoghi Effendi)

“Love is the vital bond inherent, in accordance with the divine creation, in the realities of things. Love is the unique power that bindeth together the diverse elements of this material world, the supreme magnetic force that directeth the movements of the spheres in the celestial realms.” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá* #12)

“The utterance of God is a lamp, whose light is these words: Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship. He Who is the Day Star of Truth beareth Me witness! So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.” (Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh* #132)

“Bahá’u’lláh has not brought into existence a new religion to stand beside the present multiplicity of sectarian organizations. Rather has He recast the whole conception of religion as the principal force impelling the development of consciousness.” (The Universal House of Justice, *One Common Faith*, p. 23)

“The Navajos have no word or phrase in their language which could possibly be translated as ‘religion.’ Religion is not a separate entity to be believed in or subscribed to, it is ever present.... Religious rites and practices are an essential element of Navajo culture, pervading it to such an extent that, paradoxical as it may seem, it was several decades before white Americans living among the Navajo realized they possessed any form of worship at all.” (Raymond Friday Locke, *The Book of the Navajo*, p. 45)

“The Bahá’í message is a call to religious unity and not an invitation to a new religion, not a new path to immortality, God forbid! It is the ancient path cleared of the debris of imaginations and superstitions of men, of the debris of strife and misunderstanding and is again made a clear path to the sincere seeker, that he may enter therein in assurance, and find that the Word of God is one Word, though the Speakers were many.” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Star of the West*, v15#02 p.028)

“...Refusing to be labeled as a mere philosophy of life, or as an eclectic code of ethical conduct, or even as a new religion, the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh is now visibly succeeding in demonstrating its

claim and title to be regarded as a World Religion, destined to attain, in the fullness of time, the status of a world-embracing Commonwealth... Far from wishing to add to the number of the religious systems, whose conflicting loyalties have for so many generations disturbed the peace of mankind, this Faith is instilling into each of its adherents a new love for, and a genuine appreciation of the unity underlying, the various religions represented within its pale.” (Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 196-197)

“...This Faith is now increasingly demonstrating its right to be recognized, not as one more religious system superimposed on the conflicting creeds which for so many generations have divided mankind and darkened its fortunes, but rather as a restatement of the eternal verities underlying all the religions of the past...” (Shoghi Effendi, statement to the special UN committee on Palestine in 1947)

“...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.” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions* #46.6)

“The chain of creation is interwoven in one universal law and divine order. Everything is interlinked. A link cannot be broken without affecting that universal order. Everything that happens is according to the exigencies of this order and is based on consummate wisdom.” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Mahmúd's Diary*, 19 Jun. 1912, p. 139)

“This material world has an outward appearance, as it has also an inner reality. All created things are interlinked in a chain leading to spirituality and ultimately ending in abstract realities.” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Mahmúd's Diary*, 28 Apr. 1912, p. 66)

“...Those who have thoroughly investigated the questions of divinity know of a certainty that the material worlds terminate at the end of the arc of descent; that the station of man lies at the end of the arc of descent and the beginning of the arc of ascent, which is opposite the Supreme Centre; and that from the beginning to the end of the arc of ascent the degrees of progress are of a spiritual nature.... The arc of descent ends in material realities and the arc of ascent in spiritual realities. The point of the compass in describing a circle does not reverse its motion, for this would be contrary to the natural movement and the divine order and would disrupt the regularity of the circle. (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions* #81.9)

“The dependence of the creatures upon God is a dependence of emanation – that is to say, creatures emanate from God; they do not manifest Him. The relation is that of emanation (sudúr) and not that of manifestation (zuhúr).” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions* p.202)

“We are a way for the cosmos to know itself.” (Carl Sagan, excerpt from 1st episode of 1980s television series *Cosmos*)

“The deniers ask in their disbelief: ‘Where is that world? For that which has no actual material existence is sheer imagination.’ But the truth is that the world of existence is a single world, although its stations are manifold in accordance with the manifold realities of things. For instance, the world of mineral, plant, and animal existence is the same world. Despite this, the animal world in relation to the world of the vegetable is a spiritual reality and another world and abode.” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Amr va Khalq* vol. 1 p. 202 - provis. trans)

“Know thou that whatsoever can be found in this mortal world (*nasut*), this realm of limitation--every name and description, every form and attribute that can be seen or heard--hath, in each world of the worlds of God, manifestations and appearances corresponding to and befitting that world, and appearing with another name, another description, another form and another attribute.” (Bahá’u’lláh, *Ma’idiy-i-Asmani*, vol. 7, p.120 – provis. trans.)

“The world is but a show, vain and empty, a mere nothing, bearing the semblance of reality. Set not your affections upon it... Verily I say, the world is like the vapor in a desert, which the thirsty dreameth to be water and striveth after it with all his might, until when he cometh unto it, he findeth it to be mere illusion.” (Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh* #153)

“‘Progress’ is the expression of spirit in the world of matter.” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*)

“There is no contradiction between true religion and science. When a religion is opposed to science it becomes mere superstition.... The true principles of all religions are in conformity with the teachings of science.” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks* #44:2-3)

“Were one to observe matters with but scant attention, the rank and station of every soul could be plainly read from his conduct and bearing.... Wert thou to consider the motion and stillness, the merits and attainments, the exaltation and abasement of the souls and to examine their conduct and bearing, the inner reality of every soul would become clear and evident and no need would remain for any further proof or evidence.” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Lawh-i-'Ammih*, provis. trans.)

“There is but one reality and one essence that is expounded in the worlds of outer form, and, at each of its stages, is described by a specific name ... in accordance with the degrees of its particular manifestations on the plane of this limited world.” (Bahá’u’lláh, cited in "A Bahá’í Perspective on the Origin of Matter", *Journal of Baha’i Studies* 2:3 p.41-42 – provis. trans.)

“After passing through the Valley of knowledge, which is the last plane of limitation, the wayfarer cometh to the Valley of Unity, and drinketh from the cup of the Absolute, and gazeth

on the Manifestations of Oneness. In this station he pierceth the veils of plurality, fleeth from the worlds of the flesh, and ascendeth into the heaven of singleness.... He stretcheth out the hand of truth from the sleeve of the Absolute; he revealeth the secrets of power. He seeth in himself neither name nor fame nor rank, but findeth his own praise in praising God. He beholdeth in his own name the name of God; to him, "all songs are from the King," 1 and every melody from Him.... He looketh on all things with the eye of oneness, and seeth the brilliant rays of the divine sun shining from the dawning-point of Essence alike on all created things, and the lights of singleness reflected over all creation." (Bahá'u'lláh, *The Seven Valleys*)

"Having recognized thy powerlessness to attain to an adequate understanding of that Reality which abideth within thee, thou wilt readily admit the futility of such efforts as may be attempted by thee, or by any of the created things, to fathom the mystery of the Living God, the Daystar of unfading glory, the Ancient of everlasting days. This confession of helplessness which mature contemplation must eventually impel every mind to make is in itself the acme of human understanding, and marketh the culmination of man's development." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* #83)

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[The divine emanation](#)

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