

A serene sunset scene with a large, bright sun in the upper left corner, casting a golden glow over a calm body of water. The foreground is filled with tall, dark grasses and reeds, silhouetted against the light. The sky transitions from a pale yellow near the horizon to a soft, hazy blue at the top. The overall mood is peaceful and comforting.

Little Book of Comfort

by
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The Reason for Suffering

We live in a beautiful world. Every time we step out of our homes, we are bombarded by the incredible majesty of nature – towering verdant mountains; an azure sea edged with pearly sand; flowing rivers gurgling down ebony rocks; majestic trees providing a leafy canopy with birds carolling in their branches. These are only a few of the beauties of nature. And we, God’s noblest creation, are also part of this beautiful world. What joys we experience in our lives at the birth of a child,



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a love found between two souls that grows and matures through time, precious friendships that enrich us and expand our hearts and souls. And for many of us, a connection with a Creator who blesses our lives in a myriad ways.

But into this beautiful world must also come pain and suffering. Sometimes the pain forces us to slow down and recognize that our lives are out of control. When pain arrives at our doorstep we have two choices – to become overwhelmed by it and to stay stuck in it or to work through it, trying to understand why and allow it to help us grow, change and evolve. In this little volume I have included an explanation of why we experience suffering in our lives and some suggestions for coping in difficult times. This is followed by a selection of words of comfort. Finally I have written about the power of prayer in our lives and provided some prayers for healing for yourself and for your loved ones.

Why do we have suffering, tests, difficulties and adversity in our lives? There are always challenges and they are part of life. We can grow stronger through challenges but sadly we are not just given

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one test to pass in life; they are never over and we are always given more. Learning to face the tests and trials of life may be a life-long journey. And we need a Guide to accompany us on this journey if we are to reach our true potential. When something really terrible happens to you or those you love and there seems to be no reasonable explanation for it, it is difficult for us to have faith that God is on our side, that He truly loves us. We really need to understand why bad things happen to good people.

Justice St. Rain, in his book, Why Me, A Spiritual Guide to Growing through Tests,¹ uses the analogy of four bushes to illustrate this point. Four rose bushes in a garden did their best all summer to grow long and produce many blossoms, only to be shocked when the gardener chopped off their branches at the end of the season. The first rose bush was angry and yelled at the gardener about the injustice of being cut down after trying to please him. It decided to rebel and concentrated on its root system the next spring, so that eventually it had only a few leaves and began to die. The second rose bush thought it was being punished for blossoming and so decided in the spring not to

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grow or blossom, but to do nothing so it might as well have been dead. The third rose bush thought that things happened in life quite haphazardly and didn't have to be fair so in the spring it did the same thing it had done before, growing long branches with blossoms. Knowing that the gardener

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might just chop it down again at the end of the summer, it did not resist when the aphids began munching on leaves and petals. But the fourth bush trusted the gardener and wondered what he wanted it to do or learn from the experience. In the spring it noticed that it had many nodes on each branch and could branch out in many directions and blossom. And so with effort it could become a better rose bush with more blossoms rather than a leggy bush with only one blossom at the end of each stalk. We need to be like the fourth rose bush. In the face of calamities, we need to trust in God and know we can cope with any situation because we have faith in His love. And just like the fourth rose bush, we need to learn about ourselves and strive to achieve our potential by making efforts to be the best we can be. In the Bible we are told that “God is love”; the Bahá’í Writings state that God is “more friend to me than I am to myself“. We can only understand why bad things happen by believing in this view of God.

Life is meant to be difficult and fraught with problems and we know that facing them is very painful. The Bahá’í Writings offer an explanation of the purpose of tests:

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“Suffering, of one kind or another, seems to be the portion of man in this world. Even the Beloved ones, the Prophets of God, have never been exempt from the ills that are to be found in our world; poverty, disease, bereavement, - they seem to be part of the polish God employs to make us finer, and enable us to reflect more of His attributes!”²

“Tests are benefits from God, for which we should thank Him. Grief and sorrow do not come to us by chance, they are sent to us by the Divine Mercy for our own perfecting.”³

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the son of the founder and Messenger of the Bahá’í Faith, wants us to experience suffering and tribulation because He knows how it benefits us:

“The more difficulties one sees in the world the more perfect one becomes. The more you plough and dig the ground the more fertile it becomes. The more you cut the branches of a tree the higher

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*and stronger it grows. The more you put the gold in the fire the purer it becomes. The more you sharpen the steel by grinding the better it cuts. Therefore, the more sorrows one sees the more perfect one becomes... Therefore I am happy that you have had great tribulations and difficulties...Strange it is that I love you and still I am happy that you have sorrows.”*⁴

Here is a story that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá told related to suffering:

“A certain ruler wished to appoint one of his subjects to a high office: so, in order to train him, the ruler cast him into prison and caused him to suffer much. The man was surprised at this, for he expected great favours. The ruler had him taken from prison and beaten with sticks. This greatly astonished the man, for he thought the ruler loved him. After this he was hanged on the gallows until he was nearly dead. After he

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recovered he asked the ruler, 'If you love me, why did you do these things?' The ruler replied: 'I wish to make you prime minister. By having gone through these ordeals you are better fitted for that office. I wish you to know how it is yourself. When you are obliged to punish, you will know how it feels to endure these things. I love you so I wish you to become perfect.' Even so with you. After this ordeal you will reach maturity. God sometimes causes us to suffer much and to have many misfortunes that we may become strong... ⁵

"...so suffering and tribulation free man from the petty affairs of this worldly life until he arrives at a state of complete detachment. His attitude in this world will be that of divine happiness. Man is, so to speak, unripe: the heat of the fire of suffering will mature him. Look back to the times past and you will find that the greatest men have suffered most." ⁶

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One of our greatest difficulties in life is dealing with physical pain.

Again, from the Bahá'í Writings:

“Physical pain is a necessary accompaniment of all human existence, and as such is unavoidable...But suffering, although an inescapable reality, can nevertheless be utilized as a means for the attainment of happiness. This is the interpretation given to it by all the prophets and saints who, in the midst of severe tests and trials, felt happy and joyous and experienced what is best and holiest in life. Suffering is both a reminder and a guide. It stimulates us to better adapt ourselves to our environmental conditions, and thus leads the way to self-improvement. In every suffering one can find a meaning and a wisdom. But it is not always easy to find the secret of that wisdom. It is sometimes only when all our suffering has passed that we become aware of its usefulness.

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What man considers to be evil turns often to be a cause of infinite blessings.” ⁷

“Verily the Will of God acts sometimes in a way for which mankind is unable to find out the reason. The causes and reasons shall appear. Trust in God and confide in Him, and resign thyself to the Will of God. Verily thy God is affectionate, compassionate and merciful ... and will cause His Mercy to descend upon Thee.” ⁸

And we are promised that God will never test us beyond our capacity:

“He will never deal unjustly with any one, neither will He task a soul beyond its power. He, verily, is the Compassionate, the All-Merciful.” ⁹

“Whatever hath befallen you, hath been for the sake of God. This is the truth, and in this there is no doubt. You should, therefore, leave all your affairs in His Hands, place your trust in Him, and

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*rely upon Him. He will assuredly not forsake you. In this, likewise, there is no doubt. No father will surrender his sons to devouring beasts; no shepherd will leave his flock to ravening wolves. He will most certainly do his utmost to protect his own.”*¹⁰

*“Rest assured in the protection of God. He will preserve his own children under all circumstances. Be ye not afraid nor be ye agitated. He holds the scepter of power in his hand, and like unto a hen he gathereth his chickens under his wings. ‘To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the sun. A time to be born, and a time to die, a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to keep silent and a time to speak.’ Now, friends, this is the time of assurance and faith and not fear and dread.”*¹¹

We are also promised days of “blissful joy”:

“Sorrow not if, in these days and on this earthly plane, things contrary to

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*your wishes have been ordained and manifested by God, for days of blissful joy, of heavenly delight, are assuredly in store for you. Worlds, holy and spiritually glorious, will be unveiled to your eyes. You are destined by Him, in this world and hereafter, to partake of their benefits, to share in their joys, and to obtain a portion of their sustaining grace. To each and every one of them you will, no doubt, attain.”*¹²

And here’s a story that illustrates clearly why we suffer in this world:

A couple vacationing in Europe went strolling down a little street and saw a quaint little gift shop with a beautiful teacup in the window. The lady collected teacups and she wanted this one for her collection so she went inside to pick up the teacup, and as the story goes the teacup spoke and said:

“I want you to know that I have not always looked like this. It took the process of pain to

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bring me to this point. You see, there was a time when I was just clay and the master came and he pounded me and he squeezed me and he kneaded me and I screamed: 'STOP THAT'. But he just smiled and he said, 'Not yet'.

Then he took me and put me on the wheel and I went round and round and round and round ... and while I was spinning and getting dizzier and dizzier I screamed again and I said, 'Please get me off this thing ... please get me off!!!' And the master was looking at me and he was smiling, as he said, 'Not yet'.

Then he took me and walked toward the oven and he shut the door and turned up the heat and I could see him through the window of the oven and it was getting hotter and hotter and I thought, 'He's going to burn me to death'. And I started pounding on the inside of the oven and I said 'Master, let me out, let me out, let me out, and I could see that he was smiling as he said 'Not yet'.

Then he opened the door and I was fresh and free and he took me out of the oven and he

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put me on the table and then he got some paint and a paintbrush. And he started dabbing me and making swirls all over me and I started to gag and I said: 'Master, stop it ... stop it ... stop it please ... you're making me gag' and he just smiled as he said 'Not yet'.

Then very gently he picked me up again and he started walking toward the oven and I said, 'Master, NO! Not again, pleeeeeease'. He opened the oven door and he slipped me inside and he shut the door and this time he turned the heat up twice as hot as before and I thought, 'He's going to kill me', and I looked through the window of the oven and I started to pound saying, 'Master ... Master, please let me out ... please let me out ...let me out ... let me out'. And I could see that he was smiling, but I also noticed a tear trickle down his cheek as I watched him mouth the words, 'Not yet!'

Just as I thought I was about to die, the door opened and he reached in ever so gently and took me out, fresh and free and he went and placed me on a high shelf and he said: 'There,

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I have created what I intended. Would you like to see yourself?' I said 'Yes', so he handed me a mirror and I looked and I looked and I looked again and I said, 'That's not me, I'm just a lump of clay.' And he said: 'Yes, that IS you, but it took the process of pain to bring you to this place. 'You see, had I not worked you when you were clay, then you would have dried up. If I had not subjected you to the stress of the wheel, you would have crumbled. If I had not put you into the heat of the oven you would have cracked. If I had not painted you there would be no color in your life. But, it was the second oven that gave you the strength to endure. And now you are everything that I intended you to be – from the beginning.'

And I, the tea cup, heard myself saying something I never thought I would hear myself saying: 'Master, forgive me, I did not trust you, I thought you were going to harm me, I did not know you had a glorious future and a hope for me. I was too short-sighted, but I want to thank you. I want to thank you for suffering.'

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I want to thank you for the process of pain. Here I am! I give you myself - fill me, pour from me, use me as you see fit. I really want to be a vessel that brings you glory within my life." ¹³



Tools to Transform Suffering

Now let us consider how we can cope with suffering. We know that we are going to have difficulties in life and that God has given us these tests for our own perfecting. Knowing God and feeling His presence in our lives gives our soul a protective armor, an immunity that aids us from being bounced around by all the difficult circumstances we must face in life. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá tells us:

“In this world we are influenced by two sentiments, Joy and Pain. Joy gives us wings! In times of joy our strength is more vital, our intellect keener, and our understanding less clouded. We seem better able to cope with the world and to find our sphere of usefulness. But when sadness visits us we become weak, our strength leaves us, our comprehension is dim and our intelligence veiled. The actualities of life seem to elude our grasp, the eyes of

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our spirits fail to discover the sacred mysteries, and we become even as dead beings.

There is no human being untouched by these two influences; but all the sorrow and the grief that exist come from the world of matter — the spiritual world bestows only the joy!

If we suffer it is the outcome of material things, and all the trials and troubles come from this world of illusion.

For instance, a merchant may lose his trade and depression ensues. A workman is dismissed and starvation stares him in the face. A farmer has a bad harvest, anxiety fills his mind. A man builds a house which is burnt to the ground and he is straightway homeless, ruined, and in despair.

All these examples are to show you that the trials which beset our every step, all our sorrow, pain, shame and grief, are born in the world of matter; whereas

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the spiritual Kingdom never causes sadness. A man living with his thoughts in this Kingdom knows perpetual joy. The ills all flesh is heir to do not pass him by, but they only touch the surface of his life, the depths are calm and serene.

Today, humanity is bowed down with trouble, sorrow and grief, no one escapes; the world is wet with tears; but, thank God, the remedy is at our doors. Let us turn our hearts away from the world of matter and live in the spiritual world! It alone can give us freedom! If we are hemmed in by difficulties we have only to call upon God, and by His great Mercy we shall be helped.

If sorrow and adversity visit us, let us turn our faces to the Kingdom and heavenly consolation will be outpoured.

If we are sick and in distress let us implore God's healing, and He will answer our prayer.

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When our thoughts are filled with the bitterness of this world, let us turn our eyes to the sweetness of God's compassion and He will send us heavenly calm! If we are imprisoned in the material world, our spirit can soar into the Heavens and we shall be free indeed!

I myself was in prison forty years — one year alone would have been impossible to bear — nobody survived that imprisonment more than a year! But, thank God, during all those forty years I was supremely happy! Every day, on waking, it was like hearing good tidings, and every night infinite joy was mine. Spirituality was my comfort, and turning to God was my greatest joy. If this had not been so, do you think it possible that I could have lived through those forty years in prison?"¹⁴

Here's a story to illustrate our need to trust in God:

"One day a despondent little Jewish girl, all in black, was brought into the

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Master's presence. With tears flowing, she told Him her tale of woes: her brother had been unjustly imprisoned three years before – he had four more years to serve; her parents were constantly depressed; her brother-in-law, who was their support, had just died. She claimed the more she trusted in God the worse matters became. She complained, '...my mother reads the Psalms all the time; she doesn't deserve that God should desert her so. I read the Psalms myself, - the ninety-first Psalm and the twenty-third Psalm every night before I go to bed. I pray too.'

Comforting and advising her, 'Abdu'l-Bahá replied, 'To pray is not to read Psalms. To pray is to trust in God, and to be submissive in all things to Him. Be submissive, then things will change for you. Put your family in God's hands. Love God's will. Strong ships are not conquered by the sea, - they ride the waves. Now be a strong ship, not a battered one.'" ¹⁵

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And we are told that living in the spiritual realm may aid our physical health:

“Spiritual health is conducive to physical health, but physical health depends upon many factors, some of which are outside the control of the individual. Even the most exemplary spiritual attitude on the part of the individual, therefore, may not ensure physical health in every case. The holiest men and women sometimes suffer illness. Nevertheless, the beneficent influence on bodily health which results from a right spiritual attitude is far more potent than is generally imagined, and is sufficient to banish ill-health in a large proportion of cases.” ¹⁶

It is often difficult for us to see beyond our immediate circumstance and we are fearful of terrible things that can happen to us in life. We try to avoid calamities, not seeing beyond the present to realize that we may need difficult situations in our lives to grow. We want to avoid health problems but through physical ailments we learn

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to appreciate health. Physical suffering also touches the deepest emotions of our hearts and we want to avoid the pain at all costs. Our rewards for suffering only come much later. So we need some tools to transform our suffering to another plane. We need to learn to be patient, to be contented, to be grateful, to be happy in the face of adversity, to learn to serve others in the midst of our own grief and to forgive. Words of comfort in relation to these valuable virtues are offered in this section.

The tool of happiness:

“On his way to church, a scholar was surprised to see a man in tattered clothes and barefoot. Nevertheless, as a good Christian, he greeted the poor man: ‘May God give you a good morning!’

The poor man replied cheerfully, ‘I have never yet had a bad morning.’

‘Then may God give you good luck!’

‘I have never yet had bad luck.’

‘Well, may God give you happiness!’ ‘I have never yet been unhappy.’

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The scholar then asked the man, 'Could you please explain yourself to me? I do not understand.'

And the poor man replied, 'With pleasure! You wish me a good morning, yet I have never had a bad morning. For when I am hungry, I praise God; when I feel cold, or when it is raining or snowing, I praise God; and that is why I have never had a bad morning. You wish that God may give me luck. However, I have never had bad luck. This is because I live with God and always feel what he does for me is the best. Whatever God sends me, be it pleasant or unpleasant, I accept with a grateful heart. That is why I have never had bad luck. Finally, you wish that God should make me happy. But I have never been unhappy. For all I desire is to follow God's will; I have surrendered my will so totally to God's will that, whatever God wants, that is what I also want. That is why I have never been unhappy.'" ¹⁷

And so we can approach life with happiness and with "radiant acquiescence". "Radiant acquiescence" means not only to give up your will to the Divine

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Will, but to do so joyfully and with radiance, knowing it is the best way. We cannot control what happens to us but we can control how we respond. Our deepest happiness often comes through our suffering and we reach new spiritual horizons and bask in the joy of the presence of God.

*“A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person’s strength.”*¹⁸

*“To attain eternal happiness one must suffer. He who has reached the state of self-sacrifice has true joy. Temporal joy will vanish.”*¹⁹

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*“If ye were aware of what God hath destined for you in the kingdom of His glory, verily ye would rejoice exceedingly and soar with the wings of joy unto the heights of happiness, crying with the most loud voice: ‘Blessings and happiness from this great attainment and evident bounty.’”*²⁰

*“Abdu’l-Bahá loved laughter and His laughter was often a source of solace . . . When they were in prison, He said, and under the utmost deprivation and difficulties, each of them at the close of the day would relate the most ludicrous event which had happened. Sometimes it was difficult to find one but always they would laugh until the tears would run down their cheeks. Happiness, He said, is never dependent upon material surroundings, otherwise, how sad those years would have been. As it was they were always in the utmost state of joy and happiness . . .”*²¹

We are blessed with the ability to laugh. It is a medicine for healing. Studies have indicated that laughter can boost our immune and circulatory

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systems, stimulate our lungs and heart, help digestion, serve as a pain reliever by triggering the release of endorphins, balance our blood pressure, improve our alertness, creativity and memory and reduce stress and relax us. Norman Cousins in his book Anatomy of an Illness tells the story of how he cured himself of ankylosing spondylitis (a very painful degenerative disease) mostly by watching funny movies and laughing.

The tool of serving others:

When we are able to forget our woes for a time and reach out to help others, then we relieve our own sorrows and are truly blessed.



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“To ease another’s heartache is to forget one’s own.” ²²

*“If you want happiness for an hour take a nap.
If you want happiness for a day, go fishing.
If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune.
If you want happiness for a lifetime, help someone else.”* ²³

“If you learn from your suffering, and really come to understand the lesson you were taught, you might be able to help someone else who’s now in the phase you may have just completed. Maybe that’s what it’s all about after all...” ²⁴

“This is my simple religion. There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness.” ²⁵

“Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.” ²⁶

“I shall pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I can do or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again” ²⁷

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“A person starts to live when he can live outside himself.” ²⁸

“No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.” ²⁹

“Thousands of candles can be lit from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared.” ³⁰

“Strive that your actions day by day may be beautiful prayers. Turn towards God, and seek always to do that which is right and noble. Enrich the poor, raise the fallen, comfort the sorrowful, bring healing to the sick, reassure the fearful, rescue the oppressed, bring hope to the hopeless, shelter the destitute!” ³¹

“Man is he who forgets his own interests for the sake of others. His own comfort he forfeits for the well-being of all. Nay, rather, his own life must he be willing to forfeit for the life of mankind. Such a man is the honor of the world of humanity. Such a man is the glory of

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the world of mankind. Such a man is the one who wins eternal bliss. Such a man is near to the threshold of God. Such a man is the very manifestation of eternal happiness.” ³²

And it is important to visit the sick:

“We should all visit the sick. When they are in sorrow and suffering, it is a real help and benefit to have a friend come. Happiness is a great healer to those who are ill...call upon the patient often and meet him individually...show the utmost kindness and compassion to the sick and suffering. This has greater effect than the remedy itself. You must always have this thought of love and affection when you visit the ailing and afflicted.” ³³

“The work of healing the sick, however, is a matter that concerns not the patient and the practitioner only, but everyone. All must help, by sympathy and service, by right living and right thinking, and especially by prayer, for of all remedies

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prayer is the most potent. 'Supplication and prayer on behalf of others,' says 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'will surely be effective.' The friends of the patient have a special responsibility, for their influence, either for good or ill, is most direct and powerful. In how many cases of sickness the issue depends mainly on the ministrations of parents, friends or neighbors of the helpless sufferer! Even the members of the community at large have an influence in every case of sickness. In individual cases that influence may not appear great, yet in the mass the effect is potent. Everyone is affected by the social 'atmosphere' in which he lives, by the general prevalence of faith or materialism, of virtue or vice, of cheerfulness or depression; and each individual has his share in determining the state of that social 'atmosphere.' It may not be possible for everyone, in the present state of the world, to attain to perfect health, but it is possible for everyone

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*to become a 'willing channel' for the health-giving power of the Holy Spirit and thus to exert a healing, helpful influence both on his own body and on all with whom he comes in contact."*³⁴

"The Prophet Muhammad used to comfort the ill when he visited them and would say the following prayer:

'O Allah remove the hardship, O Lord of mankind, grant cure for You are the Healer. There is no cure but from You, a cure which leaves no illness behind.'

He would also make the following prayer for his own health:

'O Allah cure my body, cure my heart and cure my eyesight from any illness.' (repeated 3 times).³⁵

The tool of patience:

Because we are always going to experience suffering in our lives, developing patience is a valuable tool. Dealing with an illness is one example of the need for an ampler share of

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patience. A patient often has to wait for tests after seeing a doctor, then for the test results that could indicate something serious. Patience is needed when a diagnosis is not clear or doctors differ in their diagnoses. Then there are treatment options to choose from and finally the waiting time for the necessary treatment. And throughout this process one must deal with the physical pain. Other hardships and difficulties in our lives similarly test

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our ability to be patient. We need patience to cope with life and we are promised blessings for the virtue of patience.

“He, verily, shall increase the reward of them that endure with patience...Blessed are the steadfastly enduring, they that are patient under ills and hardships, who lament not over anything that befalleth them, and who tread the path of resignation.” ³⁶

“For everything there is a sign. The sign of love is fortitude under My decree and patience under My trials.” ³⁷

“Verily! I have rewarded them this Day for their patience; they are indeed the ones that are successful.” ³⁸

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” ³⁹

“...to be firm or patient in pain or suffering, and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God fearing.” ⁴⁰

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*“Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.”*⁴¹

*“Patience does not mean to passively endure. It means to be farsighted enough to trust the end result of a process. What does patience mean? It means to look at the thorn and see the rose, to look at the night and see the dawn. Impatience means to be shortsighted as to not be able to see the outcome. The lovers of God never run out of patience, for they know that time is needed for the crescent moon to become full.”*⁴²

*“Patience is the key to joy.”*⁴³

“If thy daily living become difficult, soon thy Lord will bestow upon thee that which shall satisfy thee. Be patient in the time of affliction and trial, endure every difficulty and hardship with a dilated heart, attracted spirit and eloquent tongue in remembrance of the Merciful. Verily this is the life of satisfaction, the spiritual existence, heavenly repose, divine

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benediction and the celestial table! Soon thy Lord will extenuate thy straitened circumstances even in this world.” ⁴⁴

“O ye who believe! Persevere in patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance; strengthen each other; and fear Allah, that ye may prosper.” ⁴⁵

“I seek patience only in God. Verily He is the best protector and the best helper. No refuge do I seek save God. Verily He is the guardian and the best supporter...I swear by the glory of God, My Lord, the Most Exalted, the Most Great, He assuredly, as is divinely ordained, will make His Cause shine resplendent, while there will be no helper for the unjust...Verily I seek patience only in God, and Him do I regard as the goal of My desire.” ⁴⁶

The tool of contentment:

If we can accept our lot in life with contentment and even thankfulness, we have truly attained an honorable state.

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“Contentment is real wealth. If one develops within himself the quality of contentment he will become independent. Contentment is the creator of happiness. When one is contented he does not care either for riches or poverty. He lives above the influence of them and is indifferent to them.” ⁴⁷

“The greatest bestowal in the world of existence is a tranquil heart...This station is joy succeeded by joy, confidence after confidence and Paradise after Paradise.” ⁴⁸

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“Christian contentment is that sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, which freely submits to and delights in God’s wise and fatherly disposal in every condition.” ⁴⁹

“Joy is a deeply felt contentment that transcends difficult circumstances and derives maximum enjoyment from every good experience.” ⁵⁰

With the hands of power I made thee and with the fingers of strength I created thee; and within thee have I placed the essence of My light. Be thou content with it and seek naught else, for My work is perfect...” ⁵¹

“Health is the greatest gift, contentment the greatest wealth, faithfulness the best relationship.” ⁵²

“Patience is the key to contentment.” ⁵³

“Be content with what you have; rejoice in the way things are. When you realize there is nothing lacking, the whole world belongs to you.” ⁵⁴

“The greatest wealth is to live content with little.” ⁵⁵

Tools to Transform Suffering

“Anybody can be happy in the state of comfort, ease, health, success, pleasure and joy; but if one will be happy and contented in the time of trouble, hardship and prevailing disease, it is the proof of nobility. Thanks be to God that that dear servant of God is extremely patient under the disastrous circumstances, and in the place of complaining gives thanks.”⁵⁶

The tool of forgiveness:

There is one more gem, one more truth that has been proven to be extremely important in the



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process of healing and dealing with difficulties in life and that is the quality of forgiveness. Studies have indicated that forgiveness can contribute to emotional and physical healing. But if someone holds a grudge, is resentful, wants revenge, is bitter and full of anger and hatred, these negative emotions can exacerbate illness.

Schiraldi and Kerr in The Anger Management Sourcebook state:

“Forgiving means that we choose to release resentment, hatred, bitterness, desires for revenge for wrongs done to us; it is a way to come to peace with the past. In forgiving, we decide to break our troubling connection to the offender. We realize that no offense is worth the price of destroying our peace.

Forgiving is taking the arrows out of our gut, rather than twisting them around inside us. We move away from it beyond the offender and the offense and take full responsibility for our present happiness. We choose to forgive so that we will suffer less and be free to live.

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Forgiving is a personal choice that does not depend on the offender's deserving it, asking for it, or expressing remorse—although this certainly can make forgiving easier. Forgiving is about the offended person's inner strength, rather than the offender's. We voluntarily forgive because we realize that getting even does not heal.” ⁵⁷

“The practice of forgiveness is our most important contribution to the healing of the world.” ⁵⁸

“When asked by an offender for forgiveness, one should forgive with a sincere mind and a willing spirit . . .” ⁵⁹

“And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.” ⁶⁰

“But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also.” ⁶¹

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“Then Peter came and said to Him, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy-seven times.’” ⁶²

“Let not those among you who are endowed with grace and amplitude of means resolve by oath against helping their kinsmen, those in want and those who migrated in the path of God. Let them forgive and overlook. Do you not wish that God should also forgive you. Indeed God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful” ⁶³

‘Abdu’l-Bahá gives us the pearl for living our lives:

“Act in such a way that your heart may be free from hatred. Let not your heart be offended with anyone. If some one commits an error and wrong toward you, you must instantly forgive him. Do not complain of others. Refrain from reprimanding them, and if you wish to

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give admonition or advice, let it be offered in such a way that it will not burden the bearer. Turn all your thoughts toward bringing joy to hearts. Beware! Beware! lest ye offend any heart. Assist the world of humanity as much as possible. Be the source of consolation to every sad one, assist every weak one, be helpful to every indigent one, care for every sick one, be the cause of glorification to every lowly one, and shelter those who are overshadowed by fear.”⁶⁴

“...the constitution of the communities depends upon justice, not upon forgiveness. Then what Christ meant by forgiveness and pardon is not that, when nations attack you, burn your homes, plunder your goods, assault your wives, children and relatives, and violate your honor; you should be submissive in the presence of these tyrannical foes and allow them to perform all their cruelties and

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oppressions. No, the words of Christ refer to the conduct of two individuals toward each other: if one person assaults another, the injured one should forgive him.” ⁶⁵

And how can we forgive and love others? By loving them for the sake of God.

“Love the creatures for the sake of God and not for themselves. You will never become angry or impatient if you love them for the sake of God. Humanity is not perfect. There are imperfections in every human being, and you will always become unhappy if you look toward the people themselves. But if you look toward God, you will love them and be kind to them, for the world of God is the world of perfection and complete mercy. Therefore, do not look at the shortcomings of anybody; see with the sight of forgiveness.” ⁶⁶

“O ye friends of God! Show ye an endeavor that all the nations and

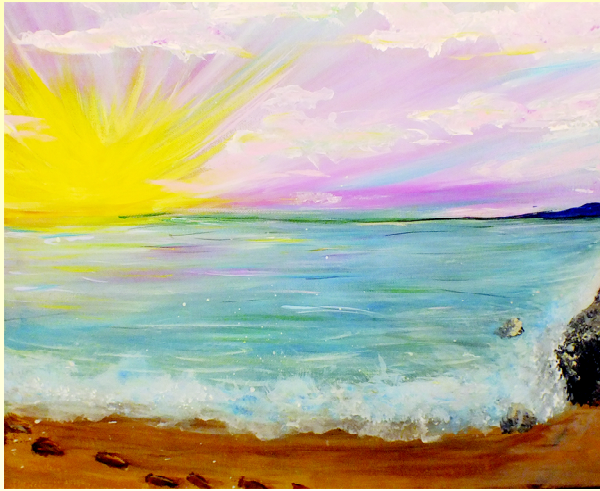
Tools to Transform Suffering

communities of the world, even the enemies, put their trust, assurance and hope in you; that if a person falls into errors for a hundred-thousand times he may yet turn his face to you, hopeful that you will forgive his sins; for he must not become hopeless, neither grieved nor despondent.” ⁶⁷

As a fitting ending to this section and a reminder that we are not alone in all our struggles, I am including this well-known passage:

“One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord. Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky. In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand. Sometimes there were two sets of footprints, other times there were one set of footprints. This bothered me because I noticed that during the low periods of my life, when I was suffering from anguish, sorrow or defeat, I could see only one set of footprints. So I said to the Lord, ‘You promised me Lord, that if I followed you, you would walk with me always. But I have noticed that during the most trying

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periods of my life there has only been one set of footprints in the sand. Why, when I needed you most, have you not been there for me?' The Lord replied, 'The years when you have seen only one set of footprints, my child, is when I carried you.'" ⁶⁸

Words of Comfort

“When a man turns his face to God he finds sunshine everywhere.” ⁶⁹

“Healing may not be so much about getting better, as about letting go of everything that isn't you – all of the expectations, all of the beliefs – and becoming who you are.” ⁷⁰

“Sorrow looks back with sadness. Worry looks up and down, from side to side, with fear.



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Faith looks forward with hope and gladness.” ⁷¹

“Our sorrows and wounds are healed only when we touch them with compassion.” ⁷²

“There is no disaster that can't become a blessing...” ⁷³

“Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy.” ⁷⁴

“When an appreciation for just being alive becomes a daily awareness, your life finds the threshold of bliss.” ⁷⁵

“All healing is first a healing of the heart.” ⁷⁶

“It takes both rain and sunshine to make a rainbow.” ⁷⁷

“When you reach the end of your rope, tie a knot in it and hang on.” ⁷⁸

“My love is My stronghold; he that entereth therein is safe and secure.” ⁷⁹

Words of Comfort

*“Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms – to choose one’s attitude in any given circumstances, to choose one’s own way.”*⁸⁰

“My love is in thee, know it, that thou mayest find Me near unto thee.”⁸¹

*“May the long time sun shine upon you, all love surround you and the sweet light within you guide your way on.”*⁸²

*“If you knew Who walked beside you at all times, on the path that you have chosen, you could never experience fear or doubt again.”*⁸³

“The healer of all thine ills is remembrance of Me, forget it not.”⁸⁴

*“Healing does not mean going back to the way things were before, but rather allowing what is now to move us closer to God.”*⁸⁵

“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you: I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When

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you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze...Do not be afraid, for I am with you.” ⁸⁶

“This, too, shall pass.” ⁸⁷

“You were given this life because you were strong enough to live it.” ⁸⁸

“Armed with the power of Thy name nothing can ever hurt me, and with Thy love in my heart all the world’s afflictions can in no wise alarm me.” ⁸⁹

“Most of the shadows of this life are caused by our standing in our own sunshine.” ⁹⁰

“Don’t confuse your path with your destination. Just because it’s stormy now doesn’t mean you aren’t headed for sunshine.” ⁹¹

“You never know how strong you are until being strong is the only choice you have.” ⁹²

Words of Comfort

*“The wound is the place where the Light enters you.”*⁹³

*“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him.”*⁹⁴

*“Shout for joy, you heavens; rejoice, you earth; burst into song, you mountains! For the LORD comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones”*⁹⁵

*“He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds.”*⁹⁶

*“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened... and I will give you rest.”*⁹⁷

*“Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising each time we fall.”*⁹⁸

*“He who has hope has everything”*⁹⁹

*“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”*¹⁰⁰

“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are

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with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”¹⁰¹

*“Hope is like a bird that senses the dawn and carefully starts to sing while it is still dark.”*¹⁰²

*“It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness.”*¹⁰³

*“There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.”*¹⁰⁴

*“Our care should not be to have lived long as to have lived enough.”*¹⁰⁵

*“God will not look you over for medals, degrees or diplomas, but for scars.”*¹⁰⁶

“O Tender One, Bestowing One, Thou didst calm their pain with the balm of Thy bounty and grace, and didst heal their ailments with the sovereign medicine of Thy compassion.”¹⁰⁷

*“Be not afraid of life. Believe that life is worth living and your belief will help create the fact.”*¹⁰⁸

Words of Comfort



“I think only through suffering all our wonderful human qualities come out in us. Unless and until you suffer, how will you understand other’s suffering?” ¹⁰⁹

“Happiness is different from pleasure. Happiness has something to do with struggling and enduring and accomplishing.” ¹¹⁰

“For He Himself has said, ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.’” ¹¹¹

“To embrace one’s brokenness, whatever it looks like, whatever has caused it, carries

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within it the possibility that one might come to embrace one's healing.” ¹¹²

“O thou who art turning thy face towards God! Close thine eyes to all things else, and open them to the realm of the All-Glorious. Ask whatsoever thou wishest of Him alone; seek whatsoever thou seekest from Him alone. With a look He granteth a hundred thousand hopes, with a glance He healeth a hundred thousand incurable ills, with a nod He layeth balm on every wound, with a glimpse He freeth the hearts from the shackles of grief. He doeth as He doeth, and what recourse have we? He carrieth out His Will, He ordaineth what He pleaseth. Then better for thee to bow down thy head in submission, and put thy trust in the All-Merciful Lord.” ¹¹³

“In the morning when I began to wake, it happened again - That feeling that you, Beloved, had stood over me all night keeping watch, that feeling that as soon as I began to stir you put Your lips on my forehead and lit a Holy lamp inside my heart.” ¹¹⁴

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“Courage doesn’t always roar. Sometimes courage is the little voice at the end of the day that says I’ll try again tomorrow.” ¹¹⁵

“Never fear shadows. They simply mean there’s a light shining somewhere nearby.” ¹¹⁶

“Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers, but to be fearless in facing them. Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain, but for the heart to conquer it.” ¹¹⁷

“Do not fear the winds of adversity. Remember: a kite rises against the wind rather than with it.” ¹¹⁸

“Nothing is impossible to the Divine Benevolence of God.” ¹¹⁹

“Man is, in reality, a spiritual being, and only when he lives in the spirit is he truly happy.” ¹²⁰

“Seek out the beauty in nature and absorb its glory. What your eye sees and what your ear hears can have a dramatic impact on the healing process.” ¹²¹

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“We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.” ¹²²

“God will answer the prayer of every servant if that prayer is urgent. His mercy is vast, illimitable. He answers the prayers of all His servants...But we ask for things which the divine wisdom does not desire for us, and there is no answer to our prayer. His wisdom does not sanction what we wish. We pray, ‘O God! Make me wealthy!’ If this prayer were universally answered, human affairs would be at a standstill. There would be none left to work in the streets, none to till the soil, none to build, none to run the trains. Therefore, it is evident that it would not be well for us if all prayers were answered. The affairs of the world would be interfered with, energies crippled and progress hindered. But whatever we ask for which is in accord with divine wisdom, God will answer. Assuredly!

For instance, a very feeble patient may ask the doctor to give him food which would be

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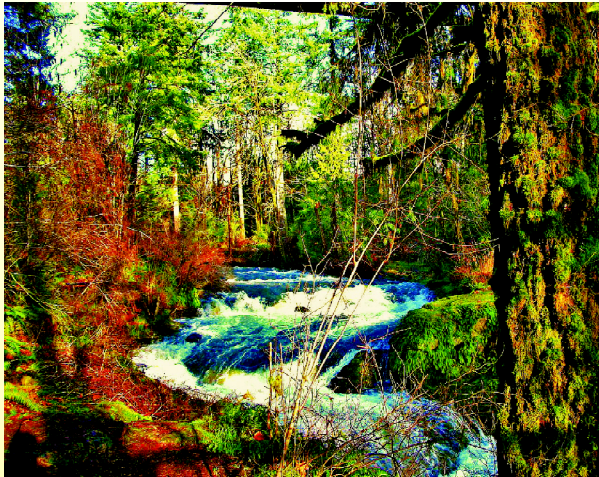
positively dangerous to his life and condition. He may beg for roast meat. The doctor is kind and wise. He knows it would be dangerous to his patient so he refuses to allow it. The doctor is merciful; the patient, ignorant. Through the doctor's kindness the patient recovers; his life is saved. Yet the patient may cry out that the doctor is unkind, not good, because he refuses to answer his pleading.

God is merciful. In His mercy He answers the prayers of all His servants when according to His supreme wisdom it is necessary.”¹²³

Prayers

When we are in distress and when we are suffering, it is a natural act to turn to God in prayer. We want to reach out and beseech Him for help. Perhaps our souls know that our only hope and the true source of our comfort and strength is in God. And there is a power in prayer:

“Prayer and supplication are so effective that they inspire one’s heart



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for the whole day with high ideals and supreme sanctity and calmness.”¹²⁴

“As to thy question, ‘Why pray? What is the wisdom thereof, for God has established everything and executes all affairs after the best order and He ordains everything according to a becoming measure and puts things in their places with the greatest propriety and perfection – therefore what is the wisdom in beseeching and supplicating and in stating one’s wants and seeking help?’ Know thou, verily, it is becoming of a weak one to beseech the glorious, bountiful One. When one supplicates to his Lord, turns to Him and seeks bounty from His ocean this supplication is by itself a light to his heart, an illumination to his sight, a life to his soul and an exaltation to his being.

Therefore during thy supplications to God and thy reciting’ Thy name is my healing’, consider how thy heart is cheered, thy soul delighted by the spirit

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of the love of God and thy mind attracted to the kingdom of God! By these attractions one's ability and capacity increase. When the vessel is widened the water increaseth and when the thirst grows the bounty of the cloud becomes agreeable to the taste of man. This is the mystery of supplication and the wisdom of stating one's wants." ¹²⁵

And so we pray to God and ask for His guidance. We need His guidance because we are lost souls without His help. When we ask Him for assistance, we will receive it. At times we find ourselves bargaining with God and begging Him to meet our request. We ask Him to fulfill our wishes, but He knows best; He may not fulfill our wishes in the way we expect. We need to trust in Him and know that He is responding in a way that He feels is right for us.

"Ask not of Me that which We desire not for thee, then be content with what We have ordained for thy sake, for this is that which profiteth thee, if therewith thou dost content thyself." ¹²⁶

Prayers

We need only to trust in God, to be at peace and contented with His will and believe that He knows best.

Here are some prayers we can use to help us to deal with painful situations in our lives:

1

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. ¹²⁷

2

O Thou Benevolent God, forgive my sins, grant Thy Bestowals, overlook my faults, provide for me a shelter, immerse me in the Fountain of Thy Patience and heal me of all sickness and disease. Purify and sanctify me. Give me a portion from the outpouring of holiness, so that sorrow and sadness may vanish, joy and happiness descend, despondency and hopelessness be changed into cheerfulness and trustfulness, and courage take the place of fear. Verily Thou art the Forgiver, the Compassionate, and Thou art the Generous, the Beloved! (‘Abdu’l-Bahá) ¹²⁸

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3

O Lord, my God and my Haven in my distress!
My Shield and my Shelter in my woes! My Asylum
and Refuge in time of need and in my loneliness my
Companion! In my anguish my Solace, and in my
solitude a loving Friend! The Remover of the pangs
of my sorrows and the Pardoner of my sins!

Wholly unto Thee do I turn, fervently imploring
Thee with all my heart, my mind and my tongue,
to shield me from all that runs counter to Thy will
in this, the cycle of Thy divine unity, and to cleanse
me of all defilement that will hinder me from
seeking, stainless and unsullied, the shade of the
tree of Thy grace. Have mercy, O Lord, on the
feeble, make whole the sick, and quench the
burning thirst...

O God, my God! Stay not from me the gentle
gales of Thy pardon and grace, and deprive me
not of the wellsprings of Thine aid and favor.
'Neath the shade of Thy protecting wings let me
nestle, and cast upon me the glance of Thine all-
protecting eye... Thou art, in all truth, the Gracious,
the Glorified, the Mighty, the Omnipotent.
(‘Abdu’l-Bahá)¹²⁹

Prayers

4

Dispel my grief by Thy bounty and Thy generosity, O God, my God, and banish mine anguish through Thy sovereignty and Thy might. Thou seest me, O my God, with my face set towards Thee at a time when sorrows have compassed me on every side. I implore Thee, O Thou Who art the Lord of all being, and overshadowest all things visible and invisible, by Thy Name whereby Thou hast subdued the hearts and the souls of men, and by the billows of the Ocean of Thy mercy and the splendors of the Day-Star of Thy bounty, to number me with them whom nothing whatsoever hath deterred from setting their faces toward Thee, O Thou Lord of all names and Maker of the heavens!

Thou beholdest, O my Lord, the things which have befallen me in Thy days. I entreat Thee, by Him Who is the Day-Spring of Thy names and the Dawning-Place of Thine attributes, to ordain for me what will enable me to arise to serve Thee and to extol Thy virtues. Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the Most Powerful, Who art wont to answer the prayers of all men!

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And, finally, I beg of Thee by the light of Thy countenance to bless my affairs, and redeem my debts, and satisfy my needs. Thou art He to Whose power and to Whose dominion every tongue hath testified, and Whose majesty and Whose sovereignty every understanding heart hath acknowledged. No God is there but Thee, Who hearest and art ready to answer. (Bahá'u'lláh) ¹³⁰

5

Lauded and glorified art Thou, O my God! I entreat Thee by the sighing of Thy lovers and by the tears shed by them that long to behold Thee, not to withhold from me Thy tender mercies in Thy Day, nor to deprive me of the melodies of the Dove that extolleth Thy oneness before the light that shineth from Thy face. I am the one who is in misery, O God! Behold me cleaving fast to Thy Name, the All-Possessing. I am the one who is sure to perish; behold me clinging to Thy Name, the Imperishable. I implore Thee, therefore, by Thy Self, the Exalted, the Most High, not to abandon me unto mine own self and unto the desires of a corrupt inclination. Hold

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Thou my hand with the hand of Thy power, and deliver me from the depths of my fancies and idle imaginings, and cleanse me of all that is abhorrent unto Thee.

Cause me, then, to turn wholly unto Thee, to put my whole trust in Thee, to seek Thee as my Refuge, and to flee unto Thy face. Thou art, verily, He Who, through the power of His might, doeth whatsoever He desireth, and commandeth, through the potency of His will, whatsoever He chooseth. None can withstand the operation of Thy decree; none can divert the course of Thine appointment. Thou art, in truth, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the Most Bountiful. (Bahá'u'lláh) ¹³¹

6

He is the Compassionate, the All-Bountiful! O God, my God! Thou seest me, Thou knowest me; Thou art my Haven and my Refuge. None have I sought nor any will I seek save Thee; no path have I trodden nor any will I tread but the path of Thy love. In the darksome night of despair, my eye turneth expectant and full of hope to the morn of Thy boundless favor and at the hour of dawn my drooping soul is refreshed and

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strengthened in remembrance of Thy beauty and perfection. He whom the grace of Thy mercy aideth, though he be but a drop, shall become the boundless ocean, and the merest atom which the outpouring of Thy loving-kindness assisteth, shall shine even as the radiant star.

Shelter under Thy protection, O Thou Spirit of purity, Thou Whom art the All-Bountiful Provider, this enthralled, enkindled servant of Thine. Aid him in this world of being to remain steadfast and firm in Thy love and grant that this broken-winged bird attain a refuge and shelter in Thy divine nest that abideth upon the celestial tree. ('Abdu'l-Bahá)¹³²

7

O thou kind God! To me Thou art kinder than myself, and Thy love is more abundant and more ancient. Whenever I am reminded of Thy bestowals I am made happy and hopeful. If I have been agitated I obtain ease of heart and soul. If I am sick, I gain eternal health. If I am disloyal, I become loyal. If I have been hopeless, I become hopeful. O thou Lord of the Kingdom! Cause Thou the rejoicing of my

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heart; empower my weak spirit and strengthen my exhausted nerves. Illumine Thou my eyes: suffer my ears to become hearing, so that I may hearken to the music of the Kingdom and attain to the joy and happiness everlasting. Verily, thou art the Generous, the Giver, and the Kind! ('Abdu'l-Bahá) ¹³³

8

Create in me a pure heart, O my God, and renew a tranquil conscience within me, O my Hope! Through the spirit of power confirm Thou me in Thy Cause, O my Best-Beloved, and by the light of Thy glory reveal unto me Thy path, O Thou the Goal of my desire! Through the power of Thy transcendent might lift me up unto the heaven of Thy holiness, O Source of my being, and by the breezes of Thine eternity gladden me, O Thou Who art my God! Let Thine everlasting melodies breathe tranquillity on me, O my Companion, and let the riches of Thine ancient countenance deliver me from all except Thee, O my Master, and let the tidings of the revelation of Thine incorruptible Essence bring me joy, O Thou Who art the most manifest of the manifest and the most hidden of the hidden! (Bahá'u'lláh) ¹³⁴

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9

O God! Refresh and gladden my spirit. Purify my heart. Illumine my powers. I lay all my affairs in Thy hand. Thou art my Guide and my Refuge. I will no longer be sorrowful and grieved; I will be a happy and joyful being. O God! I will no longer be full of anxiety, nor will I let trouble harass me. I will not dwell on the unpleasant things of life.

O God! Thou art more friend to me than I am to myself. I dedicate myself to Thee, O Lord. ('Abdu'l-Bahá)¹³⁵

10

O God, my God! I beg of Thee by the ocean of Thy healing, and by the splendors of the Day-Star of Thy grace, and by Thy Name through which Thou didst subdue Thy servants, and by the pervasive power of Thy most exalted Word and the potency of Thy most august Pen, and by Thy mercy that hath preceded the creation of all who are in heaven and on earth, to purge me with the waters of Thy bounty from every affliction and disorder, and from all weakness and feebleness.

68

Prayers

Thou seest, O my Lord, Thy suppliant waiting at the door of Thy bounty, and him who hath set his hopes on Thee clinging to the cord of Thy generosity. Deny him not, I beseech Thee, the things he seeketh from the ocean of Thy grace and the Day-Star of Thy loving-kindness.

Powerful art Thou to do what pleaseth Thee. There is none other God save Thee, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous. (Bahá'u'lláh) ¹³⁶

11

Praised be Thou, O Lord my God! I implore Thee, by Thy Most Great Name through Which Thou didst stir up Thy servants and build up Thy cities, and by Thy most excellent titles, and Thy most august attributes, to assist Thy people to turn in the direction of Thy manifold bounties, and set their faces towards the Tabernacle of Thy wisdom. Heal Thou the sicknesses that have assailed the souls on every side, and have deterred them from directing their gaze towards the Paradise that lieth in the shelter of Thy shadowing Name, which Thou didst ordain to be the King of all names unto all who are in heaven and all who are on earth. Potent art Thou to do as pleaseth Thee.

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In Thy hands is the empire of all names. There is none other God but Thee, the Mighty, the Wise.

I am but a poor creature, O my Lord; I have clung to the hem of Thy riches. I am sore sick; I have held fast the cord of Thy healing. Deliver me from the ills that have encircled me, and wash me thoroughly with the waters of Thy graciousness and mercy, and attire me with the raiment of wholesomeness, through Thy forgiveness and bounty. Fix, then, mine eyes upon Thee, and rid me of all attachment to aught else except Thyself. Aid me to do what Thou desirest, and to fulfill what Thou pleasest.

Thou art truly the Lord of this life and of the next. Thou art, in truth, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful. (Bahá'u'lláh)¹³⁷

12

Glory be to Thee, O my God! I beg of Thee by Thy name, the Most Merciful, to protect Thy servants and Thy handmaidens when the tempests of trials pass over them, and Thy manifold tests assail them. Enable them, then, O my God, so to seek refuge within the stronghold of Thy love and

Prayers

of Thy Revelation, that neither Thine adversaries nor the wicked doers among Thy servants, who have broken Thy Covenant and Thy Testament, and turned away most disdainfully from the Day-Spring of Thine Essence and the Revealer of Thy glory, may prevail against them. They themselves, O my Lord, have waited at the door of Thy grace. Do Thou open it to their faces with the keys of Thy bountiful favors. Potent art Thou to do what Thou willest, and to ordain what Thou pleasest. These are the ones, O my Lord, who have set their faces towards Thee, and turned unto Thy habitation. Do with them, therefore, as becometh Thy mercy, which hath surpassed the worlds. (Bahá'u'lláh) ¹³⁸

13

Glory be to Thee, O Lord my God! I beg of Thee by Thy Name through which He Who is Thy Beauty hath been established upon the throne of Thy Cause, and by Thy Name through which Thou changest all things, and gatherest together all things, and callest to account all things, and rewardest all things, and preservest all things, and sustainest all things — I beg of Thee to

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guard this handmaiden who hath fled for refuge to Thee, and hath sought the shelter of Him in Whom Thou Thyself art manifest, and hath put her whole trust and confidence in Thee.

She is sick, O my God, and hath entered beneath the shadow of the Tree of Thy healing; afflicted, and hath fled to the City of Thy protection; diseased, and hath sought the Fountain-Head of Thy favors; sorely vexed, and hath hastened to attain the Well-Spring of Thy tranquillity; burdened with sin, and hath set her face toward the court of Thy forgiveness.

Attire her, by Thy sovereignty and Thy loving-kindness, O my God and my Beloved, with the raiment of Thy balm and Thy healing, and make her quaff of the cup of Thy mercy and Thy favors. Protect her, moreover, from every affliction and ailment, from all pain and sickness, and from whatsoever may be abhorrent unto Thee.

Thou, in truth, art immensely exalted above all else except Thyself. Thou art, verily, the Healer, the All-Sufficing, the Preserver, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful. (Bahá'u'lláh) ¹³⁹

Prayers

14

Thy name is my healing, O my God, and remembrance of Thee is my remedy. Nearness to Thee is my hope, and love for Thee is my companion. Thy mercy to me is my healing and my succor in both this world and the world to come. Thou, verily, art the All-Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. (Bahá'u'lláh) ¹⁴⁰

15

Glory be to Thee, O Lord my God! I implore Thee by Thy Name, through which Thou didst lift up the ensigns of Thy guidance, and didst shed the radiance of Thy loving-kindness, and didst reveal the sovereignty of Thy Lordship; through which the lamp of Thy names hath appeared within the niche of Thine attributes, and He Who is the Tabernacle of Thy unity and the Manifestation of detachment hath shone forth; through which the ways of Thy guidance were made known, and the paths of Thy good pleasure were marked out; through which the foundations of error have been made to tremble, and the signs of wickedness have been abolished; through which the fountains of wisdom have burst forth, and the heavenly table

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hath been sent down; through which Thou didst preserve Thy servants and didst vouchsafe Thy healing; through which Thou didst show forth Thy tender mercies unto Thy servants and revealedst Thy forgiveness amidst Thy creatures — I implore Thee to keep safe him who hath held fast and returned unto Thee, and clung to Thy mercy, and seized the hem of Thy loving providence. Send down, then, upon him Thy healing, and make him whole, and endue him with a constancy vouchsafed by Thee, and a tranquillity bestowed by Thy highness. Thou art, verily, the Healer, the Preserver, the Helper, the Almighty, the Powerful, the All-Glorious, the All-Knowing. (Bahá'u'lláh) ¹⁴¹

16

Thou art He, O my God, through Whose names the sick are healed and the ailing are restored, and the thirsty are given drink, and the sore-vexed are tranquillized, and the wayward are guided, and the abased are exalted, and the poor are enriched, and the ignorant are enlightened, and the gloomy are illumined, and the sorrowful are cheered, and the chilled are warmed, and the downtrodden are raised up. Through Thy name,

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O my God, all created things were stirred up, and the heavens were spread, and the earth was established, and the clouds were raised and made to rain upon the earth. This, verily, is a token of Thy grace unto all Thy creatures.

I implore Thee, therefore, by Thy name through which Thou didst manifest Thy Godhead, and didst exalt Thy Cause above all creation, and by each of Thy most excellent titles and most august attributes, and by all the virtues wherewith Thy transcendent and most exalted Being is extolled, to send down this night from the clouds of Thy mercy the rains of Thy healing upon this suckling, whom Thou hast related unto Thine all-glorious Self in the kingdom of Thy creation. Clothe him, then, O my God, by Thy grace, with the robe of well-being and health, and guard him, O my Beloved, from every affliction and disorder, and from whatever is obnoxious unto Thee. Thy might, verily, is equal to all things. Thou, in truth, art the Most Powerful, the Self-Subsisting. Send down, moreover, upon him, O my God, the good of this world and of the next, and the good of the former and latter generations. Thy might and Thy wisdom are, verily, equal unto this. (Bahá'u'lláh) ¹⁴²

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17

O kind Lord! O Comforter of anguished hearts!

Send down Thy mercy upon us, and Thy grace, bestow upon us patience, give us the strength to endure. With Thy generous hand, lay Thou a balm upon our sores, grant us a medicine for this never-healing woe. Console Thou Thy loved ones, comfort Thy friends and handmaids, heal Thou our wounded breasts, and with Thy bounty's remedy, restore our festering hearts.

With the gentle breeze of Thy compassion, make fresh and green again these boughs, withered by autumn blasts; restore Thou to flourishing life these flowers, shrivelled by the blight of bereavement.

With tidings of the Abha Paradise, wed Thou our souls to joy, and rejoice Thou our spirits with heartening voices from the dwellers in the realm of glory.

Thou art the Bounteous, Thou art the Clement; Thou art the Bestower, the Loving. (Bahiyih Khanum) ¹⁴³

(For more information about The Bahá'í Faith, please contact your local Bahá'í community and the international website www.bahai.org.)

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