The Word of God

Material for Youth Seminar
The Word of God

Drawing on the Power of the Word of God for Our Inner Transformation

*The Word of God hath set the heart of the world afire; how regrettable if ye fail to be enkindled with its flame!*

- *Baha'u'llah -*
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Lecture 1: The Word of God:

This lecture will be about what is the difference between the Word of God and words of men, what qualities and powers the Word of God is endowed with and their Creative Powers.

Lecture 2: Divine Guidance on the Word of God

This lecture will focus on what Divine Guidance has been given as to our relation to the Word of God, its relation to our daily lives and in what ways we are to interact with the Word of God.

Lecture 3: From Writings to Action

This lecture will cover how we can translate that which has been written to reality and action, what obstacles there are, why it is so difficult at times, what is required of us and how we can practically solve or overcome the challenges. This lecture will focus more on the psychological perspective of the process of inner transformation with the aid on the Word of God. The following issues are going to be discussed more in depth.

- Working towards unity in the community by overcoming and detaching ourselves from our ego
- Breaking bad habits and replacing them with constructive habits
- How can we work towards having an integrated life where all aspects such as work, study, family, service, Faith and so on are functioning as one entity rather than living a fragmented life that is stressing us with respect to time, priorities and interests?
- What is the relation of our own will and the Will of God, how do we know when it is which and what is a balanced relation of these wills.

Lecture 4: Questions and Answers

One whole session is dedicated to all the questions that we will have on this matter.

Lecture 5: The Life of Abdul-Baha – Perfect Example of Living by the Word of God

Concluding lecture is on the Life of Abdu-Baha whose life is a perfect example on how we can develop and the level of happiness one can achieve if we live by the Word of God.
The Purpose of the Word of God

“The purpose underlying the revelation of every heavenly Book, nay, of every divinely-revealed verse, is to endue all men with righteousness and understanding, so that peace and tranquillity may be firmly established amongst them. . . .” —Bahá’u’lláh, Gleanings 206

“The fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race, and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst men.” —Bahá’u’lláh, Gleanings 215

“Every man of insight will, in this day, readily admit that the counsels which the Pen of this wronged One hath revealed constitute the supreme animating power for the advancement of the world and the exaltation of its peoples.” —Bahá’u’lláh, Gleanings 93

The Power of the Word of God

CREATIVE POWER

“. . . by a word of His command all that are in heaven and on earth have come to exist, and by His wish, which is the Primal Will itself, all have stepped out of utter nothingness into the realm of being, the world of the visible. . . .” —Bahá’u’lláh, The Kitáb-i-Íqán 98

“Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God is endowed with such potency as can instill new life into every human frame, if ye be of them that comprehend this truth. All the wondrous works ye behold in this world have been manifested through the operation of His supreme and most exalted Will, His wondrous and inflexible Purpose. Through the mere revelation of the word ‘Fashioner,’ issuing forth from His lips and proclaiming His attribute to mankind, such power is released as can generate, through successive ages, all the manifold arts which the hands of man can produce. This, verily, is a certain truth. No sooner is this resplendent word uttered, than its animating energies, stirring within all created things, give birth to the means and instruments whereby such arts can be produced and perfected. All the wondrous achievements ye now witness are the direct consequences of the Revelation of this Name. In the days to come, ye will, verily, behold things of which ye have never heard before.” —Bahá’u’lláh, Gleanings 141-42

“Every single letter proceeding from Our mouth is endowed with such regenerative power as to enable it to bring into existence a new creation—a creation the magnitude of which is inscrutable to all save God.” —Bahá’u’lláh, quoted in The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh 107
“The words of Bahá’u’lláh and the Master, however, have a creative power and are sure to awaken in
the reader the undying fire of the love of God.” —written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, The
Importance of Deepening 34-35

**TRANSFORMATIVE POWER**

“Through the movement of Our Pen of glory We have . . . breathed a new life into every human
frame, and instilled into every word a fresh potency. All created things proclaim the evidences of this
world-wide regeneration.” —Bahá’u’lláh, Gleanings 92-93

“. . . the divine magnet—the power of the Word of God—will attract the hearts and bestow ecstasy
and enthusiasm upon souls!” —Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Vol. II 358

“. . . these holy verses are the most potent elixir, the greatest and mightiest talisman. . . . This
Revelation is endowed with such a power that it will act as the lodestone for all nations and kindreds
of the earth.” —Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh 200

“Whoso reciteth, in the privacy of his chamber, the verses revealed by God, the scattering angels of
the Almighty shall scatter abroad the fragrance of the words uttered by his mouth, and shall cause
the heart of every righteous man to throb. Though he may, at first, remain unaware of its effect, yet
the virtue of the grace vouchsafed unto him must needs sooner or later exercise its influence upon
his soul. Thus have the mysteries of the Revelation of God been de¬creed by virtue of the Will of Him
Who is the Source of power and wisdom.” —Bahá’u’lláh, Gleanings 295

**CHARACTER OF THE WORD OF GOD**

“. . . just as thou firmly believest that the Word of God, exalted be His glory, endureth for ever, thou
must, likewise, believe with undoubting faith that its meaning can never be exhausted.” —
Bahá’u’lláh, Gleanings 175

“... the irresistible Word ... is the Cause of the entire creation, while all else besides His Word are but
the creatures and effects thereof. . . . “Know thou, moreover, that the Word of God . . . is higher and
far superior to that which the senses can perceive, for it is sanctified from any property or substance.
It transcendeth the limitations of known elements and is exalted above all the essential and
recognized substances. It became manifest without any syllable or sound and is none but the
Command of God which pervadeth all created things. It hath never been withheld from the world of
being. It is God’s all-pervasive grace, from which all grace doth emanate. It is an entity far removed
above all that hath been and shall be. . . . “Every thing must needs have an origin and every building a
builder. Verily, the Word of God is the cause which hath preceded the contingent world. . . .” —
Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh 140-41
Divine Guidance

INTEGRATE THE WORD OF GOD WITH OUR OWN LIVES

“The Word of God may be likened unto a sapling, whose roots have been implanted in the hearts of men. It is incumbent upon you to foster its growth through the living waters of wisdom, of sanctified and holy words, so that its root may become firmly fixed and its branches may spread out as high as the heavens and beyond.” —Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh 93-94

“If in this day a soul shall act according to the precepts and the counsels of God, he will serve as a divine physician to mankind . . . he will call the dead of this contingent world to life. . . . Thus shall a sorry gnat become an eagle in the fullness of his strength, and a feeble sparrow change to a royal falcon in the heights of ancient glory.” —Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá 23

“When a person becomes a Bahá’í ... the seed of the spirit starts to grow in the human soul. This seed must be watered by the outpourings of the Holy Spirit. These gifts of the spirit are received through prayer, meditation, study of the Holy Utterances and service to the Cause of God.” —Written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, The Importance of Deepening 51

“There is a vast difference between the soul who merely reads the words of Bahá’u’lláh and the one who tries to live them.” —‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Importance of Deepening 18

It is incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding to strive to translate that which hath been written into reality and action... - Baha’u’llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 249

TRANSFORM OUR INNER SELVES WITH THE WORD OF GOD

“. . . strive to follow the counsels of these Blessed Books . . . that ye may, following the examples set before you, become yourselves the saints of the Most High!” —‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Paris Talks 61-62

“It is easy to read the Holy Scriptures, but it is only with a clean heart and a pure mind that one may understand their true meaning. Let us ask God’s help to enable us to understand the Holy Books. Let us pray for eyes to see and ears to hear. . . .” —‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Paris Talks 56-57

“There can be no doubt whatever that, in consequence of the efforts which every man may consciously exert and as a result of the exertion of his own spiritual faculties, this mirror ['the mirror of His beauty in the world of creation'] can be so cleansed from the dross of earthly defilements and purged from satanic fancies as to be able to draw nigh unto the meads of eternal holiness and attain the courts of everlasting fellowship.” —Bahá’ú’lláh, Gleanings 262

“No matter how strong the measure of Divine grace, unless supplemented by personal, sustained and intelligent effort it cannot become fully effective. . . .” —Shoghi Effendi, Living the Life 15
“. . . the untapped sources of celestial strength . . . will unhesitatingly pour forth their energizing influences if the necessary daily effort be made and the required sacrifices be willingly accepted.” — Shoghi Effendi, Citadel of Faith 85

“Arise, O people, and, by the power of God’s might, resolve to gain the victory over your own selves, that haply the whole earth may be freed and sanctified from its servitude to the gods of its idle fancies. . . .” — Bahá’u’lláh, Gleanings 93

**Pray with the Word of God**

“He should, in addition, cultivate the sense of spirituality which he can achieve chiefly by means of prayer. The Bahá’í Faith, like all other Divine Religions, is thus fundamentally mystic in character. Its chief goal is the development of the individual and society, through the acquisition of spiritual virtues and powers. . . . The believers . . . should therefore fully realize the necessity of praying. For prayer is absolutely indispensable to their inner spiritual development. . . .” — Written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, Spiritual Foundations 14

**Meditate on the Word of God**

“Meditate upon that which hath streamed forth from the heaven of the Will of thy Lord, He Who is the Source of all grace, that thou mayest grasp the intended meaning which is enshrined in the sacred depths of the Holy Writings.” — Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh 143

**Reading the Word of God**

Recite ye the verses of God every morn and eventide. Whoso faileth to recite them hath not been faithful to the Covenant of God and His Testament, and whoso turneth away from these holy verses in this Day is of those who throughout eternity have turned away from God. — Kitab-i-Aqdas §149

Recite ye the verses of God every morn and eventide: Bahá’u’lláh states that the essential "requisite" for reciting "the verses of God" is the "eagerness and love" of the believers to "read the Word of God". With regard to the definition of "verses of God", Bahá’u’lláh states that it refers to "all that hath been sent down from the Heaven of Divine Utterance". Shoghi Effendi, in a letter written to one of the believers in the East, has clarified that the term "verses of God" does not include the writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá; he has likewise indicated that this term does not apply to his own writings. — Kitab-i-Aqdas note 165

**Study and Deepen Oneself in the Word of God**

“It is my hope that you may put forth your most earnest endeavor to accomplish this end [drawing closer to God], that you may investigate and study the Holy Scriptures word by word so that you may attain knowledge of the mysteries hidden therein. Be not satisfied with words, but seek to
understand the spiritual meanings hidden in the heart of the words.” —‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace 458-59

“... if an avowed follower of Bahá’u’lláh were to immerse himself in, and fathom the depths of, the ocean of these heavenly teachings, and with the utmost care and attention deduce from each of them the subtle mysteries and consummate wisdom that lie enshrined therein, such a person’s life, materially, intellectually and spiritually, will be safe from toil and trouble, and unaffected by setbacks and perils, or any sadness or despondency.”—Shoghi Effendi, The Importance of Deepening 20

MEMORIZING THE WORD OF GOD

From the texts of the wondrous, heavenly Scriptures they should memorize phrases and passages bearing on various instances, so that in the course of their speech they may recite divine verses whenever the occasion demandeth it, inasmuch as these holy verses are the most potent elixir, the greatest and mightiest talisman. - Baha’u’llah, Tablets of Baha’u’llah, p. 200

We should memorize the Hidden Words, follow the exhortations of the Incomparable Lord, and conduct ourselves in a manner which befitteth our servitude at the threshold of the one true God. - The Universal House of Justice, 1998 Sept 30, Compilation on the Hidden Words

EXALT THE WORD OF GOD (ACTS OF SERVICE)

If one arise to promote the Word of God with a pure heart, overflowing with the love of God and severed from the world, the Lord of Hosts will assist him with such power as will penetrate the core of existent beings.” —Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Vol. II 348

Be not dismayed, O peoples of the world, when the day star of My beauty is set, and the heaven of My tabernacle is concealed from your eyes. Arise to further My Cause, and to exalt My Word amongst men. We are with you at all times, and shall strengthen you through the power of truth. We are truly almighty. Whoso hath recognized Me, will arise and serve Me with such determination that the powers of earth and heaven shall be unable to defeat his purpose. - Baha’u’llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha’u’llah, p. 137

TRANSLATING THAT WHICH HATH BEEN WRITTEN TO REALITY REQUIRES EFFORT

Effort is needed. “It is incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding,” Bahá’u’lláh states, “to strive to translate that which hath been written into reality and action. . . .”- Bahá’u’lláh Gleanings p 250)

Efforts require:

1. Regularity:

Recite ye the verses of God every morn and eventide – Kitab-i-Aqdas §149
2. Willpower, or volition:

All that which ye potentially possess can, however, be manifested only as a result of your own volition. Your own acts testify to this truth. - Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 149

3. Perseverance:

Thou must exert much effort and show forth perseverance and constancy that, God willing, through the reviving breaths of His mercy, souls may be so educated as to become like radiant candles shining in the assemblage of divine knowledge and understanding. This matter is highly important. It is binding on every one and must be regarded as an obligation – 'Abdu'l-Bahá Compilations, The Compilation of Compilations vol. I, p. 194

Recite ye the verses of God in such measure that ye be not overtaken with fatigue or boredom. Burden not your souls so as to cause exhaustion and weigh them down, but rather endeavour to lighten them, that they may soar on the wings of revealed Verses unto the dawning-place of His signs. This is conducive to nearer access unto God, were ye to comprehend. – Bahá'u'lláh - Compilations, The Compilation of Compilations vol II, p. 225

**Spiritual Development Summarized**

Bahá'u'lláh has stated quite clearly in His Writings the essential requisites for our spiritual growth, and these are stressed again and again by Abdu'l-Baha in His talks and Tablets. One can summarise them briefly in this way:

1. The recital each day of one of the Obligatory Prayers with pure-hearted devotion.
2. The regular reading of the Sacred Scriptures, specifically at least each morning and evening, with reverence, attention and thought.
3. Prayerful meditation on the Teachings, so that we may understand them more deeply, fulfil them more faithfully, and convey them more accurately to others.
4. Striving every day to bring our behaviour more into accordance with the high standards that are set forth in the Teachings.
5. Teaching the Cause of God.
6. Selfless service in the work of the Cause and in the carrying on of our trade or profession.

Letter from the Universal House of Justice to National Spiritual Assembly of Norway 1 September 1983
Our Words and Speech

“No man of wisdom can demonstrate his knowledge save by means of words. This showeth the significance of the Word. . . . For it is through its potency and animating spirit that the people of the world have attained so eminent a position. Moreover words and utterances should be both impressive and penetrating. However, no word will be infused with these two qualities unless it be uttered wholly for the sake of God and with due regard unto the exigencies of the occasion and the people.

“The Great Being saith: Human utterance is an essence which aspireth to exert its influence and needeth moderation. As to its influence, this is conditional upon refinement which in turn is dependent upon hearts which are detached and pure. As to its moderation, this hath to be combined with tact and wisdom as prescribed in the Holy Scriptures and Tablets.

“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.’” — Bahá’u’lláh, Gleanings 176

“He [the true seeker] must . . . observe silence, and refrain from idle talk. For the tongue is a smouldering fire, and excess of speech a deadly poison. Material fire consumeth the body, whereas the fire of the tongue devoureth both heart and soul. The force of the former lasteth but for a time, whilst the effects of the latter endure a century. “That seeker should also regard backbiting as grievous error, and keep himself aloof from its dominion, inasmuch as backbiting quencheth the light of the heart, and extinguisheth the life of the soul.” — Bahá’u’lláh, The Kitáb-i-Íqán 193

“If any soul speak ill of an absent one, the only result will clearly be this: he will dampen the zeal of the friends and tend to make them indifferent. For backbiting is divisive, it is the leading cause among the friends of a disposition to withdraw. If any individual should speak ill of one who is absent, it is incumbent on his hearers, in a spiritual and friendly manner, to stop him. . . . “If, however, a person setteth about speaking well of another, opening his lips to praise another, he will touch an answering chord in his hearers and they will be stirred up by the breathings of God.” — Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá 230-31