Compilation on Faith

“For the faith of no man can be conditioned by any one except himself.”
DEFINING FAITH

Knowledge and Action

1. Question. -- It is said in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas "...whoso is deprived thereof, hath gone astray, though he be the author of every righteous deed." What is the meaning of this verse? Answer. -- This blessed verse means that the foundation of success and salvation is the knowledge of God, and that the results of the knowledge of God are the good actions which are the fruits of faith. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions, p. 238)

2. Although a person of good deeds is acceptable at the Threshold of the Almighty, yet it is first "to know," and then "to do." Although a blind man produceth a most wonderful and exquisite art, yet he is deprived of seeing it. Consider how most animals labor for man, draw loads and facilitate travel; yet, as they are ignorant, they receive no reward for this toil and labor. The cloud raineth, roses and hyacinths grow; the plain and meadow, the garden and trees become green and blossom; yet they do not realize the results and outcome of all these. The lamp is lighted, but as it hath not a conscious knowledge of itself, no one hath become glad because of it. Moreover, a soul of excellent deeds and good manners will undoubtedly advance from whatever horizon he beholdeth the lights radiating. Herein lies the difference: By faith is meant, first, conscious knowledge, and second, the practice of good deeds. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Bahá’í World Faith - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Section, p. 382)

3. How can a man believe to be a fact that which science has proved to be impossible? If he believes in spite of his reason, it is rather ignorant superstition than faith. The true principles of all religions are in conformity with the teachings of science. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 141)

Deeds

4. The essence of faith is fewness of words and abundance of deeds; he whose words exceed his deeds, know verily his death is better than his life. (Bahá’u’lláh, Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh, p. 156)

5. Do thou beseech God to enable thee to remain steadfast in this path, and to aid thee to guide the peoples of the world to Him Who is the manifest and sovereign Ruler, Who hath revealed Himself in a distinct attire, Who giveth utterance to a Divine and specific Message. This is the essence of faith and certitude. (Bahá’u’lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, p. 338)

6. Is not faith but another word for implicit obedience, whole-hearted allegiance, uncompromising adherence to that which we believe is the revealed and express will of God, however perplexing it might first appear, however at variance with the shadowy views, the impotent doctrines, the crude theories, the idle imaginings, the fashionable conceptions of a transient and troublous age? (Shoghi Effendi, Bahá’í Administration, p. 62)

7. In the time of Christ, those who believed in the divinity of the father and that Jesus was the word, became disciples. Faith consisted in the blind acceptance of these truths and those who accepted were considered saved, the rest were doomed to perdition. But in this day the
question is far more important. Faith does not consist in belief, it consists in deeds. It is not sufficient to believe in Baha’u’llah and to say, "I am of the people of El-Abha"; we must act in accordance with the teachings of Baha’u’llah, who commands us to become centers of divine attraction, so that the attributes of God may emanate from us, that we may become wise and well intentioned to all the peoples of the earth in order to better the condition of all. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Divine Philosophy, p. 41)

8. Man must prove whatsoever he speaketh by deeds and actions. If he claim faith, he must live and do according to the teachings of the Kingdom of ABHA. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá v3, p. 507) He is a true Bahá’í who strives by day and by night to progress and advance along the path of human endeavour, whose most cherished desire is so to live and act as to enrich and illuminate the world, whose source of inspiration is the essence of divine virtue, whose aim in life is so to conduct himself as to be the cause of infinite progress. Only when he attains unto such perfect gifts can it be said of him that he is a true Bahá’í. For in this holy Dispensation, the crowning glory of bygone ages and cycles, true faith is no mere acknowledgement of the unity of God, but rather the living of a life that will manifest all the perfections and virtues implied in such belief. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Excellence in All Things, Compilation of Compilations).

Love

9. The second is the love that flows from man to God. This is faith, attraction to the Divine, enkindlement, progress, entrance into the Kingdom of God, receiving the Bounties of God, illumination with the lights of the Kingdom. This love is the origin of all philanthropy; this love causes the hearts of men to reflect the rays of the Sun of Reality. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 180)

SIGNS OF FAITH

10. Regard thou faith as a tree. Its fruits, leaves, boughs and branches are, and have ever been, trustworthiness, truthfulness, uprightness and forbearance. (Bahá’u’lláh From a Tablet - translated from the Persian quoted in Trustworthiness Compilation)

11. The first sign of faith is love. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 337)

12. Faith is the magnet which draws the confirmation of the Merciful One. Service is the magnet which attracts the heavenly strength. I hope thou wilt attain both. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá v1, p. 62)

13. If we ponder a while over the Quranic verses and proofs, and the traditional accounts which have come down to us from those stars of the heaven of Divine Unity, the Holy Imams, we shall be convinced of the fact that if a soul is endowed with the attributes of true faith and characterized with spiritual qualities he will become to all mankind an emblem of the outstretched mercies of God. For the attributes of the people of faith are justice and fair-mindedness; forbearance and compassion and generosity; consideration for others; candor,
trustworthiness, and loyalty; love and loving-kindness; devotion and determination and humanity. If therefore an individual is truly righteous, he will avail himself of all those means which will attract the hearts of men, and through the attributes of God he will draw them to the straight path of faith and cause them to drink from the river of everlasting life. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Secret of Divine Civilization, p. 55)

14. Say: This is the Day when every ear must needs be attentive to His voice. Hearken ye to the Call of this wronged One, and magnify ye the name of the one true God, and adorn yourselves with the ornament of His remembrance, and illumine your hearts with the light of His love. This is the key that unlocketh the hearts of men, the burnish that shall cleanse the souls of all beings. He that is careless of what hath poured out from the finger of the Will of God liveth in manifest error. Amity and rectitude of conduct, rather than dissension and mischief, are the marks of true faith. (Bahá’u’lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, p. 205)

15. Such was their faith, that most of them renounced their substance and kindred, and cleaved to the good pleasure of the All-Glorious. They laid down their lives for their Well-Beloved, and surrendered their all in His path. (Bahá’u’lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, p. 180)

16. If the whole earth were to be converted into silver and gold, no man who can be said to have truly ascended into the heaven of faith and certitude would deign to regard it, much less to seize and keep it. (Bahá’u’lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, p. 297)

17. Contributions to this fund constitute, in addition, a practical and effective way whereby every believer can test the measure and character of his faith, and prove in deeds the intensity of his devotion and attachment to the Cause. (In a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 25 September 1934 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, published in "Bahá’í News" 88 (November 1934), pp. 1-2)

Qualities of Faith

18. The **staunchness** of the faith of its members, their unyielding resolve, their ceaseless efforts, their willingness to sacrifice, their exemplary loyalty, their steadfast courage, have, time and again, been strikingly displayed, and served to fortify the hopes which I have always cherished for their future destiny. (Shoghi Effendi, Messages to Canada, p. 60)

19. Your magnificent endeavours, your tenacity of purpose, your **firmness** of faith, the ardour of your love and your grasp of the Divine Teachings are assets which I greatly prize and value. (Shoghi Effendi, The Light of Divine Guidance v I, p. 32)

20. May the vision of its members remain undimmed, their resolution, never flag, their steps never falter. May they, as the years go by, demonstrate afresh the **solidity** of their faith, the nobility of their motives, the sublimity of their devotion, the tenacity of their resolution, in the service of a Faith they have served so devotedly in the past and which they will,
29. Undoubtedly, promote with unabated zeal, in the future, ... (Shoghi Effendi, The Light of Divine Guidance v I, p. 221)

21. Having received such favour be thankful unto God, and never doubt His Goodness and Loving Kindness but have **undying** faith in the Bounties of the Kingdom. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 170)

22. My heart is filled with joy, pride and gratitude as I witness, thru the receipt of your most welcome letter, the evidences of the protection of the Almighty and of the **vitality** of the faith of the long-suffering German believers, who have laboured so devotedly and valiantly during so long and crucial a period and who as a community have survived the greatest ordeal in the history of their Faith in that land. (Shoghi Effendi, The Light of Divine Guidance v I, p. 101)

23. But I assure you such remarkable solicitude as you have shown for the protection of His Cause, such **tenacity** of faith and unceasing activity as you have displayed for its promotion, cannot but in the end be abundantly rewarded by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, who from His station above is the sure witness of all that you have endured and suffered for Him. (Shoghi Effendi, The Unfolding Destiny of the British Bahá’í Community, p. 28)

24. In her [Martha Root] case we have verily witnessed in an unmistakable manner what the power of **dauntless** faith, when coupled with sublimity of character, can achieve, what forces it can release, to what heights it can rise. (Shoghi Effendi, The Unfolding Destiny of the British Bahá’í Community, p. 58)

25. The determination of the English believers to extend rapidly and systematically the range of their teaching and administrative activities is a welcome evidence of the **genuineness** of their faith, the nobility of their purpose and the depth of their devotion. (Shoghi Effendi, The Unfolding Destiny of the British Bahá’í Community, p. 131)

26. It is from you and through you that he expects to see emanating that glorious Spirit for which our departed Master gave his entire life; and with your earnest endeavours, your consummate wisdom and your **unshakable** faith he awaits to see you lead the humble workers of that great country to an ultimate victory. (Shoghi Effendi, Messages to the Indian Subcontinent, p. 30)

27. Her deep-rooted and **unshakable** faith, her unqualified loyalty to the Cause of the Administration, and her profound knowledge of the Teachings, all these fully entitled her to occupy such an eminent rank among the faithful. (Shoghi Effendi, Messages to the Indian Subcontinent, p. 105)

28. Nothing short of the spirit of **unwavering** faith, of continuous vigilance and patient endeavor can hope to secure eventually the realization of this our cherished desire. (Shoghi Effendi, Bahá’í Administration, p. 109)

29. It is within the power of the organized body of the American believers to further demonstrate the **imperturbability** of their faith, the serenity of their confidence and the unyielding tenacity of their resolve. (Shoghi Effendi, Messages to America, p. 37)
30. Hope is welling up in my anxious, overburdened heart that the North American Bahá’í Community may yet emerge triumphant over the prevailing crisis, demonstrate its capacity to preserve its hard-won prizes and redeem its pledges through a further display of its qualities of unquenchable faith, unbreakable solidarity, dauntless valor and heroic self-sacrifice, and vindicate its right to primacy in the world community of the followers of Bahá’u’lláh. (Shoghi Effendi, Citadel of Faith, p. 46)

31. American believers, heirs of Bahá’u’lláh’s covenant, prosecutors of `Abdu’l-Bahá’s Plan, are confronted by supreme opportunity to vindicate indestructibility of their faith, inflexibility in their resolution, their incorruptibility, sanctity for appointed task. (Shoghi Effendi, Messages to America, p. 29)

32. Theirs is a God-sent opportunity to demonstrate, at this grave hour through which the overwhelming majority of their brethren are passing, the incorruptible character of their faith, the indomitable spirit which animates them, the sublimity of the principles which motive their action, providing thereby an abiding and sorely needed consolation to the victims of the brutal, the wide spread and repeated persecutions engulfing so many of their co-religionists in the cradle of their Faith. (Shoghi Effendi, The Light of Divine Guidance v I, p. 240)

33. The Six Year Plan which the national elected representatives of the English believers have spontaneously launched is a further evidence of their unquenchable faith and noble and unyielding determination to prosecute energetically the teaching work in the British Isles and to exploit to the full the notable advantages derived from the successful celebrations of the Bahá’í Centenary in London. (Shoghi Effendi, The Unfolding Destiny of the British Bahá’í Community, p. 171)

HAVE FAITH IN …

God and His Word

34. If the heart turns away from the blessings God offers how can it hope for happiness? If it does not put its hope and trust in God’s Mercy, where can it find rest? Oh, trust in God! for His Bounty is everlasting, and in His Blessings, for they are superb. Oh! put your faith in the Almighty, for He faileth not and His goodness endureth for ever! His Sun giveth Light continually, and the Clouds of His Mercy are full of the Waters of Compassion with which He waters the hearts of all who trust in Him. His refreshing Breeze ever carries healing in its wings to the parched souls of men! Is it wise to turn away from such a loving Father, Who showers His blessings upon us, and to choose rather to be slaves of matter? (`Abdu’l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 108)

35. This should not mean that the ideal which these societies are promoting are contrary to those proclaimed by Bahá’u’lláh. Most of them present great similarities to the Bahá’í teachings. But the chief difference is that the Bahá’í principles and the Bahá’í institutions are divine in their origin and their character and that they are under the divine protection of
Bahá’u’lláh. It is in His Name therefore, that the Baha’is should strive. It is to Him that they should look for help, and it is in His Bounty that they should have an unswerving faith. (Shoghi Effendi, Extracts from the USBN)

36. The Guardian hopes that the financial part of the work will also be solved. Such matters have never blocked the way of the friends or even retarded their progress. Let us have faith in God’s mighty hand and He will surely help us. (Shoghi Effendi, Messages to the Indian Subcontinent, p. 89)

37. The second Tajalli is to remain steadfast in the Cause of God -- exalted be His glory -- and to be unswerving in His love. And this can in no wise be attained except through full recognition of Him; and full recognition cannot be obtained save by faith in the blessed words: ‘He doeth whatsoever He willeth.’ Whoso tenaciously cleaveth unto this sublime word and drinketh deep from the living waters of utterance which are inherent therein, will be imbued with such a constancy that all the books of the world will be powerless to deter him from the Mother Book. O how glorious is this sublime station, this exalted rank, this ultimate purpose! (Bahá’u’lláh, Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh, p. 51)

38. Know assuredly that 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. They who are its appointed interpreters, they whose hearts are the repositories of its secrets, are, however, the only ones who can comprehend its manifold wisdom. Whoso, while reading the Sacred Scriptures, is tempted to choose therefrom whatever may suit him with which to challenge the authority of the Representative of God among men, is, indeed, as one dead, though to outward seeming he may walk and converse with his neighbors, and share with them their food and their drink. (Bahá’u’lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, p. 175)

39. "As regards your question concerning the membership of the Universal House of Justice, there is a Tablet from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in which He definitely states that the membership of the Universal House is confined to men and that the wisdom of it will be fully revealed in the future. In the local, as well as the National Houses of Justice, however, women have the full right of membership. It is therefore, only to the International House that they cannot be elected. The Bahá’ís should accept this statement of the Master in a spirit of deep faith, confident that there is a divine guidance and wisdom behind it, which will be gradually unfolded to the eyes of the world." (Shoghi Effendi, Directives from the Guardian, p. 79)

The Future

40. Lift up your hearts above the present and look with eyes of faith into the future! Today the seed is sown, the grain falls upon the earth, but behold the day will come when it shall rise a glorious tree and the branches thereof shall be laden with fruit. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 68)

41. Do not allow your minds to dwell on the present, but with eyes of faith look into the future, for in truth the Spirit of God is working in your midst. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 169)
42. Love and obey your Heavenly Father, and rest assured that Divine help is yours. Verily I say unto you that you shall indeed conquer the world! Only have faith, patience and courage -- this is but the beginning, but surely you will succeed, for God is with you! (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 101)

43. What, in the last resort, is most essential to every believer is a conscious and an unwavering faith in the mission which the Cause has been called upon to fulfill. Through the light of faith the darkness which envelops our thoughts and feelings gives way to a radiance and a splendour before which every gloom vanishes. (Shoghi Effendi, Dawn of a New Day, p. 197)

44. With hearts cleansed from the least trace of suspicion and filled with hope and faith in what the spirit of love can achieve, we must one and all endeavor at this moment to forget past impressions, and with absolute good-will and genuine cooperation unite in deepening and diffusing the spirit of love and service that the Cause has thus far so remarkably shown to the world. (Shoghi Effendi, Bahá’í Administration, p. 18)

GROWTH OF FAITH

Through Tests

45. Now show thou forth firmness and steadfastness without wavering. If any test fall upon thee, it will be conducive to the strength of thy faith. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá v3, p. 552)

46. I deeply sympathize with the increasing difficulties confronting the believers in Great Britain, but I feel that these will serve to deepen their faith in the power of the Cause and will enable them to reinforce the spirit of Bahá’í solidarity among them. (Shoghi Effendi, Extracts from the USBN)

47. For the history of the Cause, particularly in Persia, is a clear illustration of the truth that such persecutions invariably serve to strengthen the believers in their faith, by stimulating the spiritual powers latent in their hearts, and by awakening in them a new and deeper consciousness of their duties and responsibilities towards the Faith. (Shoghi Effendi, Messages to the Indian Subcontinent, p. 125)

48. Though grief-stricken and horrified at this cruel blow, let us be on our guard lest we give way to despair, lest we forget that in the Almighty’s inscrutable Wisdom this sudden calamity may prove to be but a blessing in disguise. For what else can it do but to stir the inmost depths of our souls, set our faith ablaze, galvanise our efforts, dissolve our differences, and provide one of the chief instruments which the unhampered promoters of the Faith can utilise to attract the attention, enlist the sympathy, and eventually win the allegiance of all mankind? (Shoghi Effendi, The Unfolding Destiny of the British Bahá’í Community, p. 51)

49. We should feel truly thankful for such futile attempts to undermine our beloved Faith -- attempts that protrude their ugly face from time to time, seem for a while able to create a breach in the ranks of the faithful, recede finally into the obscurity of oblivion, and are
thought of no more. Such incidents we should regard as the interpositions of Providence, designed to fortify our faith, to clarify our vision, and to deepen our understanding of the essentials of His Divine Revelation. (Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh, p. 3)

Through Study and Deepening

50. In the same proportion that the body of man is developing, the spirit of man must be strengthened; and just as his outer perceptions have been quickened, his inner intellectual powers must be sensitized so that he need not rely wholly upon tradition and human precedent. In divine questions we must not depend entirely upon the heritage of tradition and former human experience; nay, rather, we must exercise reason, analyze and logically examine the facts presented so that confidence will be inspired and faith attained. Then and then only the reality of things will be revealed to us. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 327)

51. Every superior stage comprehendeth that which is inferior and discovereth the reality thereof, but the inferior one is unaware of that which is superior and cannot comprehend it. Thus man cannot grasp the Essence of Divinity, but can, by his reasoning power, by observation, by his intuitive faculties and the revealing power of his faith, believe in God, discover the bounties of His Grace. He becometh certain that though the Divine Essence is unseen of the eye, and the existence of the Deity is intangible, yet conclusive spiritual proofs assert the existence of that unseen Reality. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Tablet to August Forel, p. 15)

52. Examine the wondrous behaviour of the Prophets, and recall the defamations and denials uttered by the children of negation and falsehood, perchance you may cause the bird of the human heart to wing its flight away from the abodes of heedlessness and doubt unto the nest of faith and certainty, and drink deep from the pure waters of ancient wisdom, and partake of the fruit of the tree of divine knowledge. (Bahá’u’lláh, The Kitab-i-Iqan, p. 5)

53. Moreover, the more closely you observe the denials of those who have opposed the Manifestations of the divine attributes, the firmer will be your faith in the Cause of God. (Bahá’u’lláh, The Kitab-i-Iqan, p. 6)

54. Do thou ponder these momentous happenings in thy heart, so that thou mayest apprehend the greatness of this Revelation, and perceive its stupendous glory. Then shall the spirit of faith, through the grace of the Merciful, be breathed into thy being, and thou shalt be established and abide upon the seat of certitude. The one God is My witness! Wert thou to ponder a while, thou wilt recognize that, apart from all these established truths and above-mentioned evidences, the repudiation, cursing, and execration, pronounced by the people of the earth, are in themselves the mightiest proof and the surest testimony of the truth of these heroes of the field of resignation and detachment. Whenever thou dost meditate upon the cavils uttered by all the people, be they divines, learned or ignorant, the firmer and the more steadfast wilt thou grow in the Faith. For whatsoever hath come to pass, hath been
prophesied by them who are the Mines of divine knowledge, and Recipients of God’s eternal law. (Bahá’u’lláh, The Kitab-i-Iqan, p. 236)

55. Another essential thing is that those who do embrace the Faith should be constantly urged to study the literature of the Cause. It is not sufficient that our numbers should increase, we want people whose faith stands on a rock no trial can move. We want people who in turn arise and carry the message to other people and guide other souls. (Shoghi Effendi, Extracts from the USBN)

56. You may have heard of the projected publication by the Publishing Committee of the National Assembly of the United States of a monumental and most authoritative history on the early beginnings of the Movement recently translated by our Guardian and it is hoped that the friends will not fail to purchase one copy of this history as it will assuredly serve to deepen their knowledge and to strengthen their faith in the Cause. (Shoghi Effendi, Messages to the Indian Subcontinent, p. 73)

57. A world, dimmed by the steadily dying-out light of religion, heaving with the explosive forces of a blind and triumphant nationalism; scorched with the fires of pitiless persecution, whether racial or religious; deluded by the false theories and doctrines that threaten to supplant the worship of God and the sanctification of His laws; enervated by a rampant and brutal materialism; disintegrating through the corrosive influence of moral and spiritual decadence; and enmeshed in the coils of economic anarchy and strife--such is the spectacle presented to men’s eyes, as a result of the sweeping changes which this revolutionizing Force, as yet in the initial stage of its operation, is now producing in the life of the entire planet. So sad and moving a spectacle, bewildering as it must be to every observer unaware of the purposes, the prophecies, and promises of Bahá’u’lláh, far from casting dismay into the hearts of His followers, or paralyzing their efforts, cannot but deepen their faith, and excite their enthusiastic eagerness to arise and display, in the vast field traced for them by the pen of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, their capacity to play their part in the work of universal redemption proclaimed by Bahá’u’lláh. (Shoghi Effendi, The Advent of Divine Justice, p. 39)

58. Let such remarkable revelations of the reality and continuity of the divine purpose, made manifest from time to time to us His feeble children, serve to fortify our faith in Him, to warm the chill which fleeting misfortunes may leave behind, and fill us with that celestial potency which alone can enable us to withstand the storm and stress that lives dedicated to His service must needs encounter. (Shoghi Effendi, Bahá’í Administration, p. 113)

Different Types of Faith

59. There are three kinds of Faith: first, that which is from tradition and birth. For example: a child is born of Muhammadan parents, he is a Muhammadan. This faith is weak traditional faith: second, that which comes from Knowledge, and is the faith of understanding. This is
good, but there is a better, the faith of practice. This is real faith. We hear there is an invention, we believe it is good; then we come and see it. We hear that there is wealth, we see it; we work hard for it, and become rich ourselves and so help others. We know and we see the Light, we go close to it, are warmed by it, and reflect its rays on others; this is real faith, and thus we receive power to become the eternal sons of God. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London, p. 64)

60. A faith born of sword thrusts could hardly be relied upon, and would for any trifling cause revert to error and unbelief. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Secret of Divine Civilization, p. 44)

61. Thou hast written of a verse in the Gospels, asking if at the time of Christ all souls did hear His call. Know that faith is of two kinds. The first is objective faith that is expressed by the outer man, obedience of the limbs and senses. The other faith is subjective, and unconscious obedience to the will of God. There is no doubt that, in the day of a Manifestation such as Christ, all contingent beings possessed subjective faith and had unconscious obedience to His Holiness Christ. For all parts of the creational world are of one whole. Christ the Manifestor reflecting the divine Sun represented the whole. All the parts are subordinate and obedient to the whole. The contingent beings are the branches of the tree of life while the Messenger of God is the root of that tree. The branches, leaves and fruit are dependent for their existence upon the root of the tree of life. This condition of unconscious obedience constitutes subjective faith. But the discerning faith that consists of true knowledge of God and the comprehension of divine words, of such faith there is very little in any age. That is why His Holiness Christ said to His followers, "Many are called but few are chosen." (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Bahá’í World Faith - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Section, p. 364)

*The Spirit of Faith*

62. Know that spirit in general is divided into five sorts -- the vegetable spirit, the animal spirit, the human spirit, the spirit of faith, and the divine spirit of sanctity. The vegetable spirit is the virtue augmentative, or growing or vegetative faculty, which results from the admixture of the simple elements, with the cooperation of water, air and heat. The animal spirit is the virtue perceptive resulting from the admixture and absorption of the vital elements generated in the heart, which apprehend sense-impressions. The human spirit consists of the rational, or logical, reasoning faculty, which apprehends general ideas and things intelligible and perceptible.

Now these "spirits" are not reckoned as Spirit in the terminology of the Scriptures and the usage of the people of the Truth, inasmuch as the laws governing them are as the laws which govern all phenomenal being in respect to generation, corruption, production, change and reversion, as is clearly indicated in the Gospel where it says: "Let the dead bury their dead;" "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit"; inasmuch as he who would bury these dead was alive with the vegetative, animal and
rational human soul, yet did Christ -- to whom be glory! -- declare such dead and devoid of life, in that this person was devoid of the spirit of faith, which is of the Kingdom of God.

In brief, for these three spirits there is no restitution or "return," but they are subordinate to reversions and production and corruption. But the spirit of faith which is of the Kingdom consists of the all-comprehending grace and the perfect attainment and the power of sanctity and the divine effulgence from the Sun of Truth on luminous light-seeking essences from the presence of the divine Unity. And by this Spirit is the life of the spirit of man, when it is fortified thereby, as Christ saith: "That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." And this Spirit hath both restitution and return, inasmuch as it consists of the Light of God and the unconditioned grace. So, having regard to this state and station, Christ announced that John the Baptist was Elias, who was to come before Christ. And the likeness of this station is as that of lamps kindled: for these in respect to their glasses and oil-holders, are different, but in respect to their light, One, and in respect to their illumination, One; nay, each one is identical with the other, without imputation of plurality, or diversity or multiplicity or separateness. This is the Truth and beyond the Truth there is only error. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Bahá’í World Faith - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Section, p. 371)

63. The fourth degree of spirit is the heavenly spirit; it is the spirit of faith and the bounty of God; it comes from the breath of the Holy Spirit, and by the divine power it becomes the cause of eternal life. It is the power which makes the earthly man heavenly, and the imperfect man perfect. It makes the impure to be pure, the silent eloquent; it purifies and sanctifies those made captive by carnal desires; it makes the ignorant wise. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions, p. 144)

64. The human spirit which distinguishes man from the animal is the rational soul, and these two names -- the human spirit and the rational soul -- designate one thing. This spirit, which in the terminology of the philosophers is the rational soul, embraces all beings, and as far as human ability permits discovers the realities of things and becomes cognizant of their peculiarities and effects, and of the qualities and properties of beings. But the human spirit, unless assisted by the spirit of faith, does not become acquainted with the divine secrets and the heavenly realities. It is like a mirror which, although clear, polished and brilliant, is still in need of light. Until a ray of the sun reflects upon it, it cannot discover the heavenly secrets. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions, p. 208)

---

**FAITH, SOUL AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT**

65. If, in the Day when all the peoples of the earth will be gathered together, any man should, whilst standing in the presence of God, be asked: "Wherefore hast thou disbelieved in My Beauty and turned away from My Self," and if such a man should reply and say: "Inasmuch as all men have erred, and none hath been found willing to turn his face to the Truth, I, too, following their example, have grievously failed to recognize the Beauty of the Eternal," such a plea will, assuredly, be rejected. For the faith of no man can be conditioned by any one except himself. (Bahá’u’lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, p. 143)
66. For those who believe in God, who have love of God, and faith, life is excellent -- that is, it is eternal; but to those souls who are veiled from God, although they have life, it is dark, and in comparison with the life of believers it is nonexistence. For example, the eye and the nail are living; but the life of the nail in relation to the life of the eye is nonexistent. This stone and this man both exist; but the stone in relation to the existence of man is nonexistent; it has no being; for when man dies, and his body is destroyed and annihilated, it becomes like stone and earth. Therefore, it is clear that although the mineral exists, in relation to man it is nonexistent. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions, p. 242)

67. For the life of the flesh is common to both men and animals, whereas the life of the spirit is possessed only by the pure in heart who have quaffed from the ocean of faith and partaken of the fruit of certitude. This life knoweth no death, and this existence is crowned by immortality. Even as it hath been said: "He who is a true believer liveth both in this world and in the world to come." If by "life" be meant this earthly life, it is evident that death must needs overtake it. (Bahá’u’lláh, The Kitab-i-Iqán, p. 120)

68. Man is endowed with ideal virtues, for example intellection, volition, -- among them faith, confession and acknowledgment of God, while nature is devoid of all these. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Foundations of World Unity, p. 61)

69. Regarding the "two wings" of the soul: These signify wings of ascent. One is the wing of knowledge, the other of faith, as this is the means of the ascent of the human soul to the lofty station of divine perfections. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Bahá’í World Faith - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Section, p. 382)

70. That divine world is manifestly a world of lights; therefore man has need of illumination here. That is a world of love; the love of God is essential. It is a world of perfections; virtues or perfections must be acquired. That world is vivified by the breaths of the Holy Spirit; in this world we must seek them. That is the Kingdom of life everlasting; it must be attained during this vanishing existence. By what means can man acquire these things? How shall he obtain these merciful gifts and powers? First, through the knowledge of God. Second, through the love of God. Third, through faith. Fourth, through philanthropic deeds. Fifth, through self-sacrifice. Sixth, through severance from this world. Seventh, through sanctity and holiness. Unless he acquires these forces and attains to these requirements he will surely be deprived of the life that is eternal. But if he possesses the knowledge of God, becomes ignited through the fire of the love of God, witnesses the great and mighty signs of the Kingdom, becomes the cause of love among mankind, and lives in the utmost state of sanctity and holiness, he shall surely attain to second birth, be baptized by the Holy Spirit and enjoy everlasting existence. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Foundations of World Unity, p. 64)

71. The essence of these words is this: they that tread the path of faith, they that thirst for the wine of certitude, must cleanse themselves of all that is earthly -- their ears from idle talk, their minds from vain imaginings, their hearts from worldly affections, their eyes from that which perisheth. (Bahá’u’lláh, The Kitab-i-Iqán, p. 3)
72. The requirements are that your minds must be illumined, your souls must be rejoiced with the glad tidings of God, you must become imbued with spiritual moralities, your daily life must evidence faith and assurance, your hearts must be sanctified and pure, reflecting a high degree of love and attraction toward the Kingdom of Abha. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 460)

73. The differences among mankind are of two sorts: one is a difference of station, and this difference is not blameworthy. The other is a difference of faith and assurance; the loss of these is blameworthy, for then the soul is overwhelmed by his desires and passions, which deprive him of these blessings and prevent him from feeling the power of attraction of the love of God. Though that man is praiseworthy and acceptable in his station, yet as he is deprived of the perfections of that degree, he will become a source of imperfections, for which he is held responsible. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions, p. 130)

74. To thank Him for this, make ye a mighty effort, and choose for yourselves a noble goal. Through the power of faith, obey ye the teachings of God, and let all your actions conform to His laws. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 35)

75. Arise and, armed with the power of faith, shatter to pieces the gods of your vain imaginings, the sowers of dissension amongst you. (Bahá’u’lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, p. 217)

76. If we all choose to tread faithfully His path, surely the day is not far distant when our beloved Cause will have emerged from the inevitable obscurity of a young and struggling Faith into the broad daylight of universal recognition. (Shoghi Effendi, Bahá’í Administration, p. 70)

77. The most important thing we know from the Teachings is to serve. In carrying out the Plans of God we are strengthened, blessed and purified; we attract the loving attention of Bahá’u’lláh; our efforts are confirmed; and we are enabled through His power to achieve great victories for His Faith. He urges you, one and all, as one soul in many bodies, to consecrate yourselves to fulfilling the objectives of the Ten-Year Plan. He feels sure that when the proper unity and dedication prevail in the National Body, it will be sensed by the mass of the believers, and react upon their efforts. As ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, nothing is impossible if we have faith; and this must always be the standard for all the Bahá’ís. As we have faith, so are our powers and our blessings. (Shoghi Effendi, Dawn of a New Day, p. 160)

FAITH AS ONE OF THE ESSENTIAL ORDINANCES OF RELIGION

78. "It is God who hath reared the heavens without pillars thou canst behold; then mounted His throne, and imposed laws on the sun and moon: each travelleth to its appointed goal. He ordereth all things. He maketh His signs clear, that ye may have firm faith in the presence of your Lord." Ponder then, O My friend, the words "firm faith" that have been mentioned in this verse. It saith that the heavens and the earth, the throne, the sun and the moon, all have
been created to the end that His servants may have unswerving faith in His presence in His days. (*Bahá’u’lláh, Gems of Divine Mysteries*, p. 38)

79. During His lifetime He was intensely active. His energy was unlimited. Scarcely one night was passed in restful sleep. He bore these ordeals, suffered these calamities and difficulties in order that a manifestation of selflessness and service might become apparent in the world of humanity; that the Most Great Peace should become a reality; that human souls might appear as the angels of heaven; that heavenly miracles would be wrought among men; that human faith should be strengthened and perfected; that the precious, priceless bestowal of God, the human mind, might be developed to its fullest capacity in the temple of the body; and man become the reflection and likeness of God, even as it hath been revealed in the Bible: "We shall create man in Our own image." (*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá’í World Faith - 'Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 223)

80. Time changes conditions, and laws change to suit conditions. We must remember that these changing laws are not the essentials; they are the accidentals of religion. The essential ordinances established by a Manifestation of God are spiritual; they concern moralities, the ethical development of man and faith in God. They are ideal and necessarily permanent; expressions of the one foundation and not amenable to change or transformation. Therefore the fundamental basis of the revealed religion of God is immutable, unchanging throughout the centuries, not subject to the varying conditions of the human world. (*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá’í World Faith - 'Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 275)

81. The divine religions embody two kinds of ordinances. First, there are those which constitute essential, or spiritual, teachings of the Word of God. These are faith in God, the acquirement of the virtues which characterize perfect manhood, praiseworthy moralities, the acquisition of the bestowals and bounties emanating from the divine effulgences -- in brief, the ordinances which concern the realm of morals and ethics. This is the fundamental aspect of the religion of God, and this is of the highest importance because knowledge of God is the fundamental requirement of man. (*'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 403)