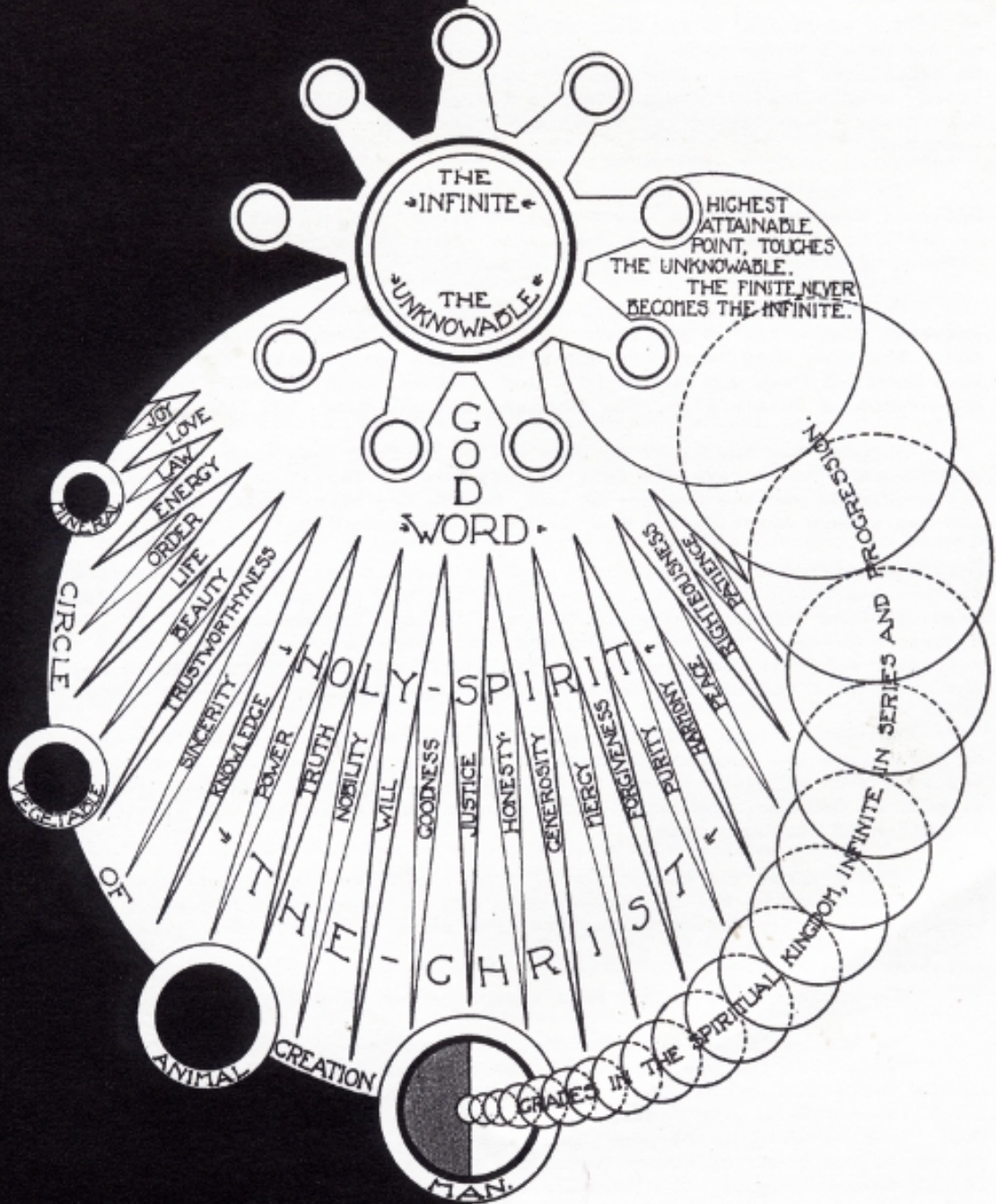


- MATTER -

OF

- WORLD



- THE UNIVERSE -

EXPLANATION OF SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION AS
AS TAUGHT FROM THE BAHAI TEACHINGS

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The evolution of the soul of man is one of the most fundamental teachings of the Baha'i World Faith. For centuries men have struggled over the question of Evolution. Shortly after Charles Darwin produced his work on evolution, a stormy battle ensued between certain fundamental religionists and the Darwinists. Men fought and died over this issue. But nothing was ever resolved.

The fury that erupted over the evolution question has been filed in the halls of history, but the issue remains alive, burning unanswered in the hearts of millions of people around the world. From where did man come? What is the purpose of life? Does life end with death?

Unlike other periods of history, the answers to these questions can be answered today, for we are living in the era all mankind has longed for...prayed for...the time when "the Holy Books that were sealed until the time of the end", have been unlocked and explained. And this has been achieved through the appearance of Baha'u'llah, the Promised ^{One} of all Ages, THE LORD OF HOSTS.

Through the teachings of Baha'u'llah we find that both the 19th century religionists and Darwinists were in-part right. Certainly God is the source of all knowledge and the Creator of man, but on the other hand, evolution is real and has always existed, but not as Darwin described it.

Only the creator of Evolution can explain what it really is and describe how it works. And since God is unapproachable, for how can any creation comprehend its creator...God informs and enlightens man through His messengers. So it is a

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Christ, a Moses, a Buddha, a Mohammed, who singularly possess the power of providing man with God's teachings and instructions for a particular age. Only the prophet of God can tell us definitely what is right...what is wrong.

And Baha'u'llah, the Messenger for this day, has cast God's simple light of truth into the deepest recesses of the evolution question, transforming what was once a great mystery into an understandable process. He explains as only a Prophet of God can, the truth about the physical evolution and the spiritual evolution of the human soul.

Abdu'l Baha, the eldest son of Baha'u'llah and appointed interpreter and perfect exemplar of His teachings, gave Mrs. Lua Getsinger, an early American believer, a diagram illustrating the true story of evolution. (The diagram is attached to the script.)

The following is Abdu'l Baha's explanation of His evolution diagram:

"As the world follows a circle, so human beings travel in cycles."

"This illustration represents the cycle of man. All existence is created by the Infinite Essence. Man starts with God and first attains the mineral condition which is only matter, but this condition contains a latent power from God. Then he attains the vegetable kingdom which is also matter but which possesses the power of growth which the mineral kingdom lacked. Next he arrives in the animal kingdom which possesses the united powers of those preceding, but with a third power, that of sensation (the five senses)."

"At birth he enters the human kingdom. This progression is simply through the power of God. Souls are not created independently of bodies. The germ of the child grows by the power

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of God in the human body, just as the seed of the tree grows to be a tree through the power of the sun. The human being has the power of all the other conditions and has attained the furthest point and the most distant from God. He has passed through all the conditions of the material side of the circle by the hidden power of God. The first or descending circle is the natural or material circle, the second or ascending circle is the spiritual. The first half is the night, the second half is the day. The human world is the point furthest away from God, but the rays of God shine directly on man. The world is in darkness and obscurity reigns always before the dawn, and on the side of the ascending circle light appears. Thus the world is the worst condition for the soul if that soul lives in that condition, because it is the point furthest from God. It is a worse condition than the kingdoms of the mineral, the vegetable or animal because it is the furthest point from God. But if a man desires the light, he may receive the Rays powerfully and directly, while the other kingdoms receive only the indirect rays of the Holy Spirit. If he does not desire the Light, man's condition is worse than all the others. Thus, the Manifestation of God appears always in human form, because the Sun of Truth shines directly on that Manifestation and he thus receives the entire power of God."

"The soul leaves God and if it enters the spiritual world, it returns to God."

"There are three births, first the material birth; second to be born of the water; third to be born of the Spirit. When man enters the spiritual world he is born of the water of truth, and of the knowledge of God. He should become as a little child, detached from the world, without jealousy, without hate, without envy, without the love of money or earthly desires."

"To be born of the Spirit means to renounce all earthly desires, to aspire to the qualities of God and to begin to ascend the second half of the circle. The spiritual grades have infinite degrees and conditions ever ascending upward. It is possible

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in one step to leave the lowest condition and to enter the highest. The Blessed Perfection, Baha'u'llah, said that the believers will go directly to God, but that all will not be in the same condition, each one will have his degree in accordance with his spiritual progress. When we die we can see those who are in the same condition as ourselves and we can understand those who are in a lower degree, but we cannot understand those who are in conditions above us."

If a soul journeys through the cycle, can it return and begin again? Will it return to the mineral kingdom? "This would not be possible, but the same spirit can return."

"Each nation has awaited the re-incarnation of its greatest Prophet in accordance with its religious belief. The Jews awaited the return of Moses as the Messiah; the Christians, Christ; the Mohammedans, Husein, son of Fatima and the twelve Imams. They awaited the return of the soul and of the personality. When they asked Christ if John the Baptist was Elijah, he answered, "Yes"; and when they interrogated John the Baptist, he replied "No". Both replies were the truth. The reply of Christ was spiritual, that is John the Baptist has returned in the same spirit of God, but not in the same soul, but John the Baptist meant that his soul and his body were not the same as those of Elijah."

All human beings have two stations, the one of the body, the other of the soul. Neither the body nor the soul will return to this world, but the spirit of God in them may return, and thus it is with all the Prophets; the same spirit is speaking in Baha'u'llah today as spoke in Christ; all the Prophets of God were Manifestations of God. Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, and the Bab were the four greatest prophets, because they reflect the light of God in a higher degree than others and they left Books to guide the people in the path of God."

Let us suppose that the mirror represents the Prophet, the sun represents God and the rays of the sun the Holy Spirit. The mirror of Adam was dim, because the people were not sufficiently advanced at that time to receive the greater rays than the mirror of Adam reflected; consequently God caused the light

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to reflect from a dim mirror. The mirror of Moses was more brilliant and could thus receive greater rays, because the people of that time of Moses were more advanced than the people in the time of Adam. The mirror of Jesus was absolutely clear and could receive the full light of the Sun. He was the Perfect Image of the Sun. This is the significance of the words of Jesus, "The Father is in Me, I and the Father are one." But when the Manifestation of God (Baha'u'llah) came, He was a magnifying mirror who received all the rays of the sun as did Jesus, but received also its heat to shed upon the world. The Blessed Perfection was like a fine glass of crystal filled with wine. The crystal was so perfect that the glass was not visible and one beheld only the precious wine. Thus the Manifestation of God was so perfect that by itself alone the Holy Spirit was seen in Him."

In the study of this subject, as illustrated in the chart, the thought to realize is that the human station has its limitations the same as the Mineral, the Vegetable or Animal kingdoms. It is not possible to transcend our human station without a plus quality, the same as seen in previous stations of the chart. For instance, on page 55 of PUP., Abdu'l-Baha states, "It (the human station) cannot comprehend the phenomena of the kingdom transcending the human station, for it is captive of powers and life forces which have their operation upon its own plane of existence and it cannot go beyond that boundary."

Therefore, if we cannot go beyond our human boundary, what is the plus quality needed to transcend the human station? The Baha'i teachings tell us that it is the Spirit of Faith, Faith is "Conscious knowledge plus action." It is a bounty, a gift, a bestowal, bestowed upon the soul at a given point of readiness. We are all familiar with the statement of Christ concerning the dead, "Let the dead bury the dead. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the spirit is spirit." He meant (page 241 PUP) that those who were simply born of the human body were dead spiritually, while those . . .

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quicken by the breaths of the Holy Spirit were living and eternally alive.

It is written that "God screens us evermore from premature ideas...our eyes are holden that we cannot see things that stare us in the face until the hour arrives when the mind is ripened,...then we behold them, and the time when we saw them not is like a dream." This readiness of the human soul is known only to God.

References:

- P.U.P. page 220 through 223 on Evolution
- A.Q. page 205 Modification of Species
- A.Q. page 209 The Universe is without Beginning.
- A.Q. page 270 State of man and his progress after death
- A.Q. page 267 Perfections are without limit.

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