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Instructions Concerning Genesis and the Mystery of Baptism

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Instruction Concerning Genesis

Chapters 1, 2 and 3, Given by Mirza Assad'Ullah, and Translated by
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He is The One Who inspires to the hearts of His servants that which He Willeth.

Lesson containing the interpretation of Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of the Book of Genesis.

Before beginning to treat of our subject, we should preface it with an introduction, as follows: First it should be known that God hath created man to be the most noble among His creatures and hath deposited in him the brilliant faculty of judgment, so that man may thereby comprehend the realities of all things, accepting that which he finds to agree with intellectual proof, and rejecting that which is against reason by showing it to be opposed to the common sense, or to leave it as it is in the contingent world so that the condition thereof be unfolded and its truth or falsity become manifest.

Now, it is known to the readers of the Holy Scriptures to be a fact that the statements in Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of the Book of Genesis, and also the story of the Deluge, is something utterly contradictory to sound judgment if it is to be judged according to the literal sense of the record without undergoing any further interpretation or elucidation.

For instance, the question of the creation of heavens and earth, sun, moon, stars, night and day, in the manner as stated, can never be approved by anyone's judgment if it is to be taken according to the literal statement; because the Most Holy Essence of God is pre-existent on account of Its Identity and Attributes. One of His Attributes is that of Creation, and after it is realized that this Attribute of God is most Ancient, how can it be said that God was forever and creation was not? The likeness of God and the creation is similar to the sun and the rays of the sun. The rays of the sun had existence since the earliest existence of the sun, and have ever been inseparable from the sun; the difference is that the sun of truth is Ancient in Its Identity as it had no maker or originator, while the rays of the sun owe their existence to the Sun; and this pre-eminence of the Sun over the

rays is an essential and original pre-eminence and not one of time, for the rays are coexistent but from causality and identity.

Therefore, concerning what is mentioned, that in the beginning God created the heaven and earth, in the second day—the waters, the third day—the plants, in the fourth day—the sun, moon and stars, in the fifth day—the animals, and in the sixth day—man, and on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made and He rested from all His work which God created and made, etc., the human mind can see that other meanings than the literal ones have been intended by such statements.

Likewise, examine the story of Adam and the Garden of Eden, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life. God forbade their eating of the fruit of the tree, but Eve was deceived by the serpent and they did eat and were sent out from the Garden of Eden, and the Cherubim were placed at the east of the Garden to keep the way of the Tree of Life from the approach of Adam and Eve. According to common sense and sound judgment, another interpretation and explanation must be intended for these texts, and not the literal meaning of the words.

For example, where have this tree of life and this tree of the knowledge of good and evil been, of which naught is mentioned in history, and at what time was this tree withered so that no seeds thereof remained that new trees might grow therefrom? All the earth is surveyed and all the trees are classified and their names and forms and fruits are shown in books, while nothing is mentioned of these two trees, which fact clearly proves that such have never existed on the earth.

Ponder ye over this question with the brilliant Power of sound Judgment! Moreover all the men who exist on the earth are believed, in the opinion of people, to have descended from Adam and Eve, and the latter were their parents. Was there a certain peculiarity in the left rib of Adam only, from which Eve was made, or should a similar effect be had from the bones of all the generation of Adam? If we say that this specialty was assigned to Adam alone, what is our proof thereof? And if we say that all the children of Adam are endowed with the same potency, then why has none of them ever shown forth such a thing? Is it possible that mankind could ever be created from a piece of bone? If we say that this is utterly impossible, then what is meant by the statement that God created Eve from the rib of Adam?

Ponder ye therefore with the brilliant Power of sound Judgment! As to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the literal meaning of this is no other than the tree of goodness and badness. Is it possible to believe that God, Who created Adam and Eve, could have forbidden their understanding the good and evil of things? Then, what is meant by this point? Even the animals can discriminate between good and evil or harm and kindness; how then should man, who is the most noble among all existing beings, be forbidden from having that much of understanding?

Moreover, what does it mean that a serpent may have greater knowledge than man, and know that eating of the fruit of the tree of good and evil openeth the eyes of man? (As is said in Ch. 3, v. 4-5) while man, of whom

God hath said: "We have created man after Our Own Image," may not comprehend that much?

Besides, God Himself hath said the same thing concerning the Tree of Good and Evil as was said by the serpent: (Ch. 3, v. 22). "And the Lord God said—Behold, the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil." So, from this statement it may be known that as it is said by God, eating of the Tree of Good and Evil would make Adam understand the good and evil and that when he should become conscious thereof, his eyes would be opened. The same thing was said by the serpent (to Eve). Now, if we judge this verse according to its literal expression, it will become known to us that the serpent hath been more knowing than Adam, and that it directed them to do good. If this was the case, why then were they forbidden (by God) from eating of the tree, and why was the serpent cursed therefor? (as it is said in Ch. 3, v. 14—"And the Lord God said unto the serpent—because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, etc.")

Ponder ye thereupon with the brilliant Power of sound Judgment. Moreover, who are the Cherubim who are placed at the east of the Garden of Eden to prevent Adam from access to the Tree of Life and thus to live the Eternal Life? What is the meaning of these words? Has not God created Adam in order that he may enter the Kingdom of Eternity? If this be not the case, then, what is meant by the words which the Divine Manifestations have said regarding this matter?

Jesus Christ said to His disciples: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know." (John 14: 19-20.) Likewise He has said: "Yet a little while and the world seeth Me no more, but ye see Me; because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in ye."

The Blessed Perfection (Glorified is His Honor!) hath said in the Arabic Hidden Words: "O son of blindness! I beckon thee to life and thou desirest death, for thou hast deserted what We wish for thee and followed that which thou desirest." In another place He hath said: "O son of man! Thou art My possession and My possession will never be destroyed; how is it that thou art afraid of thy destruction? Thou art My Light and My Light will never be extinguished; why darest thou extinction? Thou art My Splendor, and My Splendor will never be darkened; Thou art My Garment, and My Garment will never be worn out; therefore dwell in thy love to Me that thou mayst find Me in the Highest Horizon." In another place He hath said: "I was in My Ancient Identity and in My Everlasting Being. I know My Love in thee; therefore I created thee and laid upon thee the Garment of My Likeness, and manifested to thee My Beauty." In another place He hath said: "O son of man! Because I loved thy creation, thus I created thee; therefore love Me; that I may mention thee and in the Spirit of Life confirm thee." Likewise: "O son of Existence! My Bowl thou art and My Light is in thee; therefore be enlightened by it and seek not any beside Me, for I have created thee rich and bestowed abundantly grace upon thee." Likewise: "O son of the

Highest Appearance! I deposited in thee a spirit from Me that thou mightst be My Lover; why hast thou left Me and sought another lover (the world)?" In another place He hath said: "O son of Spirit! The Gospel of Light I herald to thee; gladden thyself with it; and to the state of Holiness I call thee; shelter thyself in it that thou mayst be in rest forever and ever."

There are many similar statements which indicate the fact that Adam should eat from the Tree of Life in order to attain Eternal Life, and the principal object of the mission of the prophets and the appearance of the Divine Manifestations in the world, has been for this same purpose. Therefore it is evidently proved that by the Cherubim being placed at the eastern Gate of the Garden of Eden to prevent the access of Adam to the Tree of Life another meaning is intended.

Ponder ye upon this through the brilliant Faculty of sound Judgment!

As previously stated and demonstrated that, for the texts of the Holy Scriptures ideal meanings other than the literal sense is intended, and the chief purpose of the heavenly books and their revelation has been based on those real meanings, so, herewith we begin to interpret the texts according to their ideal sense, and say that in the second and third chapter of Genesis, two important and high subjects are explained in a symbolical way.

First, the account of the states and positions of perfect man is briefly stated, so that every one of mankind may presume that God has deposited these lofty states in the being of man, and has hidden and concealed these precious gems therein, so that every man may endeavor himself to attain to perfection. But He has explained this high subject in the story of Adam, the Garden of Eden, and the four rivers, so that the children of Adam (mankind) may understand that the mentioned states which have existed in their father (Adam) ought to be obtained by them as a heritage; otherwise they would not be accounted of the real children of Adam.

Consequently we bring the followning verses of Genesis chapter 2 to the notice of our readers, and then we will give the interpretation thereof: (7th verse) "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul."

(8th verse) "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed."

(9th verse) "And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the Tree of Life also in the midst of the Garden, and the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil."

(10th verse) "And a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from thence it was parted and became into four heads."

(11th verse) "The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;"

(12th verse) "And the gold of that land is good; there is bdellium and the onyx stone."

(13th verse) "And the name of the second river is Gihon; the same is that which compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia."

(14th verse) "And the name of the third river is Hiddekel; that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria, and the fourth river is Euphrates."

The above verses tend to explain that God created Adam and endowed

him with six states: 1st—The mineral state; 2nd—The vegetable state; 3rd—The animal state; 4th and 5th—The human state; 6th—The state of the Kingdom and Faith. He gives these five states in symbols.

For instance, in the 2nd chapter, 7th verse, He says—"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the earth, etc." This refers to the fact that the first state of man is dust, that is—the mineral. Then it is said—"And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden," and also "And out of the garden made the Lord God to grow every tree." This refers to the fact that the vegetable state in man, which is the virtue augmentative and nutritive, (nourishing)—comes after the mineral. Furthermore this shows that, when the virtue vegetative became manifest in him, then the capacity of the animal state ensued, because the vegetable and animal states are very near to each other, (on account of the virtue augmentative which each of them share; besides, worms and small insects are naturally formed within apples, other plants, etc.)—which is proved by the fact that, after the statement "And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree" (which refers to the vegetable state) the words "that is pleasant to the sight and good for food" are explained. Moreover, this statement indicates that the animal state which is endowed with the virtue perceptive, and with that of eating food, because manifest in man after the vegetable state or virtue augmentative. That is, the five senses, such as sight, taste, etc., were shown forth in him after the vegetative state. This subject was alluded to be the words "pleasant to the sight," for the sense of sight is perceptive, and the faculty of discernment in animals comprehends things by sight; and also the words "And good for food" refers to the animal desire for food.

Then it is said "The tree of Life—, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil." This statement alludes to the fact that, after the animal state, comes the human state (the fourth and fifth state); that is the rational (logical or reasonable) faculty (knowledge of good and evil) which apprehends general ideas and things. Then the sixth state (in man) is that of the Spirit of Faith, which is of the Kingdom of God (the tree of Life).

As to the "four rivers", this subject is explained as follows: The four rivers are mentioned in a symbolical way in the Holy Scriptures. This subject was veiled and hidden until the time of the appearance of Mohammed, when the Koran was revealed. There it is recorded that God hath a paradise of Eden, in which four rivers are flowing, and the people of the Paradise drink therefrom. He has explained the said rivers according to the following names:

- 1st—"The river of milk (the taste whereof changeth not)".
- 2nd—"The river of wine (pleasant unto those who drink)".
- 3rd—"The river of clarified honey."
- 4th—"The river of incorruptible and limpid water."

Also, it is mentioned in the Koran that, in the Paradise, there are to be found Houris, Palaces, and all kinds of fruits and foods "which souls shall desire and eyes shall delight in"; but the meanings of these words and statements are not clearly explained therein, and no one can be informed

of their real meanings, except whosoever is well informed in the mysteries of God.

When the cycle of Mohammed (the period of Islam) was ended in the advent of the First Point (may the souls of all else redeem him!) the Day of Whose appearance was the early dawn of the Sun of Realities and Mysteries, and the time of the Manifestation of the explanation of all things, then His Highness (the Bab) interpreted the four rivers.

He said that, by the "River of Milk" is meant the Spirit of prayer and supplications, which river is everlastingly running and flowing in the Paradise of the beings of the Divine Manifestations, and that they are permanently in prayer and supplication with God, with their spiritual and mental, as well as with their physical tongue.

By the "River of Wine" is meant the river of the interpretations—commentaries (given) by them on the Holy Scriptures, which is flowing in them, whereby they explain the real meanings thereof for their believers.

By the "River of clarified Honey" is meant the river of the answers which they give to scientific questions forwarded to them by the doctors of every age.

By the "River of incorruptible and limpid Water" is meant the revealed Verses, doctrines and precepts which descended from the Retreat of Oneness upon the hearts of the Manifestations of God and which flowed from their Tongues and gave new life unto the hearts and minds of the people of the world; as it is said—"And we made every living thing of water." Likewise it is said by Christ—"Except ye be born of water and spirit, ye cannot enter the Kingdom of God."

The mystery of the fact that these four rivers which flow in the temple of a perfect man are explained in Genesis by the names Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel and Euphrates, is this—that whenever the prophets of God and the Divine philosophers intended to explain mysteries belonging to spiritual facts, they expressed them in figures and parables on account of the lack of capacity in the people who attended their teachings. For example—when Jesus could find capable and sagacious souls in His presence, He would explain to them spiritual subjects in a clear way, while in contrary cases He would give His points in forms and parables and symbols. As a proof of this fact, take the numerous parables which Jesus pronounced in explaining the Kingdom, which, were they to be interpreted according to their literal sense, would not have any connection with spiritual subjects.

Therefore, in the day of Adam, these four rivers which flow in the being of a perfect man are symbolized by four physical rivers, and as these mentioned rivers have been accounted to be the largest on the then discovered earth, so these four spiritual virtues in man have been likened unto them. Moreover, this is one of the usages of God to symbolize different subjects by the wellknown things, which have been familiar to every age.

To sum up, the four rivers were mentioned in all the former Books which preceded the appearance of the First Point (May the soul of all else redeem Him!). When His Highness appeared, another river besides the four rivers was made to flow in His Blessed Being which was called the Supreme Paradise. It was the River of Homilies. A Book was revealed from His

Blessed Tongue in which He wrote commentaries on all the Names of God, and interpreted every one of the Names in five different styles or grades of writing. That Book He entitled—"The Book of Five Styles (or Grades)." For instance, one of the Names of God is Unit. He has here explained this Name in five various styles; thus—the style of prayers, the style of scientific treatises, the style of commentaries, the style of homilies and the style of verses. Likewise with the other Names of God, such as—Merciful—Clement—Beneficent—Forgiving, etc.

When the Age of the Blessed Perfection arrived, and the Sun of Truth dawned forth from behind the clouds of the Unseen, and the Beloved of all the creatures unveiled His Face, then the Paradise of EL ABHA became manifest and seven rivers began to flow therein, and the mysteries of the knowledge of all that was and is were unfolded. Then the sealed Wine, which was prophesied by all the prophets in their books, became unsealed, and the Dawning-places of Sanctity and the people of the Supreme Concourse and Cherubim drank of that ideal Wine and found Eternal Life.

In the following we bring to the notice of the readers some of the Verses which were revealed by the Blessed Perfection concerning the Seven Rivers—"In every garden seven rivers were made to flow. Perchance ye may drink therefrom."

(1st) "The River of the Wine of Eternity, which flows from the right hand of the Garden like a liquid ruby of Holiness.

(2nd) A River of bright Milk: The color thereof changeth not with the duration of the world of Dominion; were ye of those who are assured.

(3rd) A River of Clarified Honey, the taste whereof changeth not, and only those taste therefrom who have relied upon God, the Protector, the Self-subsistent!

(4th) A River of incorruptible, Limpid Water, wherein man finds every luxury and delight, and this is that which is ordained thereto through the Providence of God, the Mighty, the Powerful, the Glorious.

(5th) A River which is made to flow in the Name of the Beloved (i. e., Mohammed.) This, the people of the Paradise do implore of God at all times, to drink a draught therefrom. This is that for which they are asking God every morn and eve.

(6th) A River which is made to flow in the Figure Three and in the Word Four (i. e., Figure Three refers to "Alī" and the Word Four refers to "Mohammed" which is composed of only four letters in the Arabic—MHMD. This was the name of the Bab), which commemorates God in its course; were ye of those who understand: Around which, the people of Paradise assemble that they may hear the mentioning of God, the Conqueror, the Powerful! Whosoever may drink a drop thereof will attain to that which he desireth, and will reach to such a position as can only be attained by him whom God desired and willed. Thus have we revealed unto ye the Wonders of the Creation of God: Perchance ye may hasten unto Him!

(7th) A River which God hath sanctified from every color and purified from every taste, inasmuch as it is created of the essential Nature of God; were ye of the knowing: In which God hath ordained that which cannot be stated by explanation, and the purport of which cannot be accomplished by

Pen; were ye of the assured ones. Whosoever may drink a draught therefrom, to him will become manifest the Mystery of that which was and will be, and he will know everything in its place and will be informed of the Treasures of Wisdom, and will soar up with wings of Ruby in the worlds of the Nearness to the Beloved!

Consequently the garden of Eden finally became the Paradise of EL-ABHA and the four rivers became the seven rivers, and heavenly Tables, Houris, and Palaces were created therein. This incomparable Paradise was a Favor shown to the people of Baha on the part of God, the Bahi-ul-ABHA! During the Manifestation of the Beauty of EL-ABHA, the Door of the Paradise was opened before the righteous and the drinkers of the Cup of Meeting. Just before He repaired to the Exalted Destination, and the Sea of Meeting began to sink, and the sun of the Beauty of the True One set on the Horizon of the contingent world and rose on the Horizon of the Placeless, He delivered the Key of that Paradise to the Branch who is extended from the Ancient Root, "the Greatest Mystery of God", His Highness "The One who is desired by God"—Abdul Baha (May the souls of all the creatures redeem Him!).

As it is said by the Blessed Perfection—"When the Nightingale flew from the Grove of Praise and repaired to the Farthest Destination, then return ye that which ye do not understand in the Book to the Branch who is extended from this Firm Root."

Thus HE appointed the Commentator of the Book with such clear record in order to stop the way of any misunderstanding, so that people may recognize the Person who is the bearer of the Mysteries of the Divine Book after the Departure of the Blessed Perfection.

Now hearken ye to the melodies of the Nightingale of Unity in the Paradise of EL-ABHA, Who is warbling in the Tones of Servitude.

Revealed by Abdul-Baha.

If any one chant the following Commune with entire humility and submissiveness, it will cause joy and fragrance within the heart of this Servant, and he will be considered as having met or visited (Me). (I. e. This Commune has the remuneration of My Visitation or meeting.)

HE IS EL-ABHA!

O my God! O my God! I extend toward Thee the hands of invocation, supplication and submissiveness, and rolling my face in the dust of the Threshold which is holy above the comprehension of the people of realities, and above commendations among the intellectual ones, I beg of Thee to gaze unto Thy servant who is submissive and humble before the Door of Thy Oneness, with the glances of the eye of Thy Mercy, and to immerse him into the Oceans of the Mercy of Thy Eternity.

O my Lord! Verily, he is Thy miserable, poor servant, and Thy beseeching and captive slave, humbling himself before Thee, relying upon Thee, supplicating within Thy Hands, calling upon Thee and invoking Thee, saying—"Oh my Lord! Strengthen me to serve Thy beloved and enable me to be of service to the Threshold of Thy Oneness, and illuminate my brow with the Light of adoration in the Court of Thy Holiness and with supplication to the Kingdom of Thy Grandeur, and confirm me to become evanes-

cent at the Threshold of Thy Divinity, and aid me to continue to be as nothing (entirely humble) in the Court of Thy Lordship.

O my Lord! Cause me to drink the cup of evanescence and clothe me with its mantle and immerse me in its sea; make me as dust in the path of the beloved (believers); make me as a ransom (sacrifice) to the ground printed by the feet of the chosen ones in Thy Way.

O Thou, Lord of Might and Exaltation! Verily, Thou art The Generous! The Merciful! The Most High! This is that which this servant implores Thee every morn and eve. O my Lord! Grant his desire! Illumine his inmost heart, dilate his breast, kindle his lamp in the service of Thy Cause and to Thy servants.

Verily, Thou art The Mighty! The Loving! The Clement!

As to the second subject, it treats of the journey of man from the material world to the Divine World. The purpose of the mission of all Prophets and Divine Manifestations in this world has been to explain this journey and to instruct concerning it. Every one of them has made certain statements and revealed certain Books regarding this matter.

According to the language of the mystic Sufis, this traveling is said to be the "Journey from the creatures to the True One." The Blessed Perfection hath revealed a Treatise according to the Sufi terminology, in which He hath classified into seven the stages whereby the traveler ascends from the material abode to the Divine Home. Therein He hath stated that—"except a traveler emigrates from self and journeys through the seven stages, he will never arrive at the Sea of Union nor taste of the Peerless Wine." This Treatise on traveling is revealed in both Persian and Arabic. Likewise, in the Book of Ikan, He hath treated of the life of the travelers toward God, and, if it please God, some of the blessed Verses thereof will be quoted in the course of this lecture.

Now, I bring to the notice of the readers the interpretation of the stages of Adam's journey. This statement as recorded in the Books of the Bible is similar to the language of the philosophers of that age, for that was the age of the promulgation of ideas and questions which proceeded from the natural philosophers, and as the Tree of the Divine Wisdom and Spiritual Knowledge was then in its early state of growth, and the fruit of enlightenment and spirituality was still concealed and hidden within the branches and twigs of the tree; so they used to explain spiritual subjects by clothing them in the forms of words and parables. Therefore, Adam and Eve, Paradise and Serpent, the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil have there been mentioned.

Know thou that the philosophers hold that there is a faculty in man called the Human Soul and this is endowed with two states:

1. The superior state which is that of the incorporeality of his identity, individual and separated from matter: This, they call "Mind", to which faculty they refer all the discoveries made through mental intelligence, and they believe all the modern inventions and arts to result therefrom.
2. That state which controls the body and conduces to its protection and stability: This state they call the "soul," and say that the soul of man

is as a defender and a ruler in his body, while the "mind" they hold to be like unto the King in the Kingdom of the body.

Furthermore, they say that all the other faculties which exist in the body of man are under the domination of the soul, and that there is a faculty in the human brain, which is intermediary between the soul and the other powers. To this they give different names, such as the power of thought and reflection, the penetrative ability, the faculty of contemplation, etc. Whenever this intermediary faculty is dominated by the soul, and the soul by the mind, all the affairs of the dominion of the body, both material and spiritual continue to revolve about the axis of equilibrium and steadfastness, but as long as this faculty is influenced by animal and natural traits, it withholds the soul from bearing allegiance to the Mind, and thus inclines it to the base actions of nature. Then the Mind also will certainly be detained from inclining toward either mental or spiritual worlds and will decline to the world of nature.

In this case the spiritual affairs of man will also be led to adversity and destruction, and thus the mental (rational) man will be cast out from the Garden of comprehension of intellectual facts and from inclination toward the Spiritual Worlds, and will descend to the earth of nature. The Spirit of Life will become the body of death, and then the meaning of verse 17.—"but of the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die", will be brought to light.

(When man reaches maturity and the station of responsibility and takes cognizance of good and evil, if he chooses to obey the Commandments of God and partakes only of the good, his natural self will die; but if he prefers to disobey God's Commands, and yields to worldly appetites, partaking of the evil, his spiritual self must be dead. Therefore, in the day that he eats of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, he will surely die.)

The mentioned faculty which exists in the brain is interpreted as the "Serpent", according to the terminology of Adam, and as the "Devil", when expressed by other Prophets.

Consequently, according to the idiom of the philosophers, numerous states exist in the being of man, such as the material state, vegetable state, animal state, power of thought or reflection, the penetrative ability and the power of mental comprehension.

Most of the ancient philosophers never spoke of the Spirit of Faith and that of the Kingdom. They believed that the Mind (power of judgment) was the same immortal essence, and held that there were four states in the mind, the highest of which they admitted to be the Spirit of the Kingdom as was said by the Prophets.

Moreover, the term "Adam" is used in numerous places. Sometimes by the word Adam is meant the whole body of man including his soul and mind. Sometimes by Adam is intended the Divine Gift which is created in him by the Word of Command, and sometimes is meant the essence of Mind or judgment. Consequently, the term "Adam" is to be interpreted according to the requirement of the place where it is used, so that it may not lead to the confusion of understanding.

For example—Adam is spoken of with Eve, and then by Adam is meant the faculty of Mind, and by Eve—the Soul; by “Serpent” is meant the power of thought. Therefore, in the following, we briefly state the meanings of the terms as used in these chapters, and then begin to interpret the statements in question.

1. The Garden of Eden means the material body of man.
2. Adam means the mental faculty—judgment.
3. Eve means the soul.
4. The serpent means the faculty of thought.
5. The Tree of Knowledge of good and evil means the Commandments and the Prohibitions made in the Laws of God.
6. The Tree of Life means the Eternal Life of the Kingdom.
7. Bruising the head of the serpent means abstaining from and abandoning lustful desires.
8. The serpent bruising the heel of Adam means the tempting by the “Devil” to attract man to the material conditions of nature.
9. The east of the Garden of Eden means the Door of entrance to the Kingdom.
10. The fig leaves mean adhering to such excuses as soothe one’s heart when censured by people.
11. Coats of skin mean the clothing of repentance, which gains the Acceptance of God.
12. Cherubim are the holy and pure souls who are the Guardians of the House of the Testament. In another case, by Cherubim is intended three Spirits—1. The Spirit of Sanctity. 2. The Spirit of Virtue. 3. The Spirit of Separation from aught else save God.

By the saying—“God said to Adam, etc.”—is meant the creative and essential speech, and not the literal, vocal speech.

This indicates that God created the being of Adam according to the mentioned stages in order to show that such will be the development of Adam, and such is his traveling and journey from the material world to the Divine Home. Therefore, whoever walked in the right Path of God, attained and is saved, and whoever deviated therefrom, he erred and is deprived of the Paradise of the Visit of God.

Now, in the following, we give the interpretation of the remaining verses of Genesis, Ch. 2 and 3.

It is said in Ch. 2 v. 15.—“And the Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it”. This means that God deposited the hidden and Divine essence or individuality of man in an earthly body, so that man might unfold that treasury concealed within himself, through the Divine Teachings, through obeying the Laws of God, and by becoming ingrafted with the qualities and characteristics of God.

This position can only be attained by man through his own deeds and by his keeping to it. Therefore it is said—“to dress it and to keep it”. This means that the son of man in this world, by means of exertion and by accepting the Teachings and complying with the Commands and Prohibitions of God, should manifest in his own being those states which were mentioned in the exposition of the being of a perfect man, represented by the name—

"Adam", the Father of Mankind, so that the title—"son of Adam" may become true of him. Therefore it is said by God, Bahi-ul-ABHA, in His "Hidden Words".

O Son of Existence!

By the Hands of Power I made thee, and by the Fingers of Strength I created thee and deposited in thee the essence of My Light. Therefore, depend upon it and not upon anything else, for My Action is perfect, and My Command must take its effect. Do not disbelieve this, and have no doubt in it".

As to the verse—"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. But of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"; the explanation of this saying is that as long as man hath not reached the state of intellectual judgment, and does not distinguish between good and evil, nothing is imposed upon him, and he enjoys the garden of the animal state and is not subject to any reward or punishment. But as soon as he is endowed with judgment, and eats from the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil, that is—hears the Commandments and the Prohibitions of the Books of God; then if he commit acts against the Law, he will be considered as dead.

By eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil is meant—hearkening to the Words of God and comprehending them, as it is said in the Book of Ezekiel, Ch. 3, v. 1-5. "Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, etc. And he said unto me, Son of man, —fill thy bowels with this roll that I gave thee, etc." This statement proves the fact that by eating the roll (the Book) is meant absorbing the Teachings of God.

As to the statement—"for in the day thou shalt eat thereof, thou shalt surely die."—this death is the spiritual death and the death of Names and Attributes. This we will treat of in another place (if it please God), because the question of Death is a very important one. The First Point (May all else be a ransom to Him!) hath explained this subject in detail. He hath said—"Death is an endless Sea, and for this there are infinite meanings and states".

To sum up—when every one of the good qualities of man is degraded into a blameworthy quality, this will be certain death to him in that state. The grades of this death are innumerable. Among them the first is the death of Faith: So it is with a disbeliever, who is declared to be dead. If it please God, I will explain to you the meaning of death, after the conclusion of the story of Adam.

As to the verses—"And the Lord God said: It is not good that the man should be alone: I will make him an help meet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: And He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof: And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman (Eve)," etc.: by this statement that although the Mind (Adam) and the Soul (Eve) are literally named by two names, yet they are in reality one, as is before mentioned.

(Ch. 2, 19-24.) "And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man, made he a woman. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

In one sense the meaning of the mentioned verses is that as the Mind was from the world of Spirit, and could not be connected with material states, therefore God made the Soul, which was disjoined from the Mind and is in reality of the same substance with the Mind, to be its mate, so that the soul may be intermediary between the Mind and the body of man. Thus the Soul became a consort for the Mind and as an aid to man. It is for this reason that man cannot be independent except when he is free from all concerns, and the Mind and Soul in him are united in commune with each other. This state is alluded to in the verse—"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." (Ch. 2, 24.) This means that when man becomes mindful of himself, and free from all other matters, then he will be at rest, and then the Mind and Soul will be as one.

As to the verse—"And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." (Ch. 2, 25.) This means that the Mind and Soul were in their own identity, devoid of the cares and concerns of the material states, because they were according to their Divine original Nature, and they were honored with that position of incorporeality, for they were the essence of Sanctity, and no sin had emanated from them to conduce to their shame. This nakedness was, therefore, to them a Divine Robe and a Supreme Garment.

But as soon as temptations, made by the faculty of thought (which is interpreted as the serpent), sprung forth, lustful cravings became excited, the lightning of carnal desires glowed, and the Soul declined to the states of nature and withheld the Mind from aspiring unto the Divine States; then Eve was deceived by the Serpent, Adam followed Eve, the Heavenly Bounties ceased, and the death of the Spiritual States ensued, and the

meaning became manifest of the words—"For in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."

Then the Mind was dismantled of the Robe of its Origin and the Soul was stripped of the Garment of its Creation. The brilliant Spiritual States became pitfalls of darkness. The holy Soul of the Kingdom turned into the appetite of brutish lust. Therefore, Adam and Eve, having become stripped from the Gifts of the Kingdom, were astonished and bewildered, experienced remorse and found themselves ashamed and abashed.

Now consider how great an honor for them was the former nakedness which indicated their purity and sanctity, while the latter destitution caused their shame and abasement which was a proof of their attachment to natural and worldly states. Therefore, it is said—"And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked" (dstitute).

In the following, we quote some of the passages of the "Hidden Words" regarding our above statement: It is said by God, the Bahi-ul-ABHA—Exalted is His Utterance!—"O Son of Man! Deprive not thyself from the Beauty of My Garment, and lose not thy portion of drinking from My Beautiful Fountains, that thou mayst not suffer intense thirst throughout My Everlasting Being."

"O Son of Existence! Keep My Commands because of Thy love for Me, and cut thyself from that which thou desirest if thou seekest My Pleasure."

"O Son of Man! Neglect not My Laws if thou lovest My Beauty, and forget not My Commandments if thou wishest My Pleasure."

"O Son of Man! My Eternity is My Creation and I have created it for thee; therefore make it as a garment to thy temple. My Oneness is My Invention and I have invented it for thee; therefore clothe thy soul with it that thou mayst be a dawning-star of My Unity forever."

As to the words—"And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons"—these fig leaves signify the excuses whereby a sinful man seeks to comfort and console his heart. For instance—when man commits an error and thus falls into remorse and becomes ashamed and abashed before God and His Creatures, his soul which is prone to evil, and in such aspect is the Serpent, finds suitable and agreeable reasons for those evil actions, thus soothing his heart. This self-consoling is likened to fig leaves which mean useless and inconstant protection.

As to the verse—"And they heard the Voice of the Lord God, walking in the Garden in the cool of the day, etc."—this means that when Adam realized consciousness and wakefulness within himself, he heard the Voice of God from the tree of his own being, calling unto him—"O Adam! Did I not tell you not to eat from the prohibited tree, not to commit that which is forbidden, and to prevent thy soul from following its own desire? Now that thou hast not obeyed Me but hast followed thine own self (soul), thou art bereaved of the Paradise of Nearness and Meeting."

Then He turned to the Serpent and said—"O Serpent, as thou didst deceive the Eve of Soul, therefore thou art the Tempter of the being of man, and art cursed forever." Then addressing the Soul, He says—"The only way for thy deliverance, and for thee to obtain forgiveness is to always abandon thine own desires, and bruise the head of thine own wishes and inclinations." Thus the verse—"It shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel"—means that as long as man is in his material state, the demands of the flesh allure him to the enticements of nature, while the requirements of Mind and Soul invite him to the Divine State. Therefore, the Soul should turn its face to the state of Mind (Judgment) and keep the state of nature behind its back.

As to the verse—"And unto Adam He said, 'Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying—Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed be the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground'" (Ch. 3. 18-19).

These statements mean that God said—"O Adam! I created thee from the essence of Knowledge, Wisdom, Abundance and Honor, and I commanded thee not to pollute thyself with the stains and allurements of the world. But when thou camest into the world, thou wast deceived by the enticements of the (brutish) states of nature and thus became bewildered, perplexed and afflicted. Thou wast dispossessed of thine essential enlightenment. Thy affluence changed to indigence and thy knowledge into ignorance. Therefore, only with great pain canst thou acquire human perfections, and with difficulty obtain the Heavenly Table."

For a further proof to this fact, it is said by the Blessed Perfection in the "Hidden Words"—"O Son of Spirit! I have created thee Rich. How is it that thou art poor? And made thee Mighty. How is it that

thou art abased? And from the essence of Knowledge I manifested thee. How is it that thou seekest some one beside Me? And from the clay of Love I kneaded thee. How is it that thou occupiest thyself with some one else? Turn thy sight to thyself that thou mayst find Me standing in thee, Powerful! Mighty! and Supreme!"

As to the verse—"Unto Adam, also unto his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." (Ch. 3. v. 21.); by this coat of skins is meant the penitence of Adam being accepted by God, for God treats him after His Mercy and Favor, and not after His Justice; and this refers to the adherence of man to the literal form of the Laws of God. That is—whichever has outwardly held to the Commandments of the Law, he is in appearance accounted of the people of Faith and Religion. Therefore an outward Faith is interpreted by the skins, and therefore those who are related to a Religion are accounted as the followers of that religion, and consider themselves as being the followers of the True One. But when the tests come, then these distinguish between the true believer and the false one. Before the Advent of Christ, all the Jews knew themselves as the saved nation of Truth, but when His Highness, Jesus, appeared, whose Blessed Person was a test and trial unto them, then a discrimination occurred between the true and false believers. Likewise the same test has been during the Appearance of all the Divine Manifestations.

As to the verses: "And the Lord God said: Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat, and live forever: Therefore, the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the Garden of Eden a cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the Tree of Life."

The above verses contain some points referring to the tests in the days of the Divine Manifestations, and explanations concerning the mystery of the Journey of Man.

Know thou that numerous meanings are intended by the Tree of Life. According to its primary sense, it means the position of the greatest Divinity and the Highest Infallibility. This position is assigned to the Dawning-place of the Command of God. Therefore the Blessed Perfection (Exalted is His Grandeur) has said: "No one shares the Dawning-place of the Command with the Highest Infallibility." The greatest risk

or danger for man in the course of his "Journey from the creatures to the True One" is that he may reach such high states that he supposes within himself that he has attained the position of the Highest Divinity; and as soon as he forms such an imagination, he will immediately descend from a high position to the lowest of the low. Therefore it is said—Ch. III, v. 23-24 "Therefore the Lord God sent him forth . . . So He drove out the man."

Another meaning of the Tree of Life is the knowledge of the Divine Book, which is compiled in the hand of the Successor of the Cause and the Center of the Covenant. This second meaning of the Tree of Life we explain in the course of the following statement: As to the Cherubim whom God has placed as guardians to the Tree of Life: By Cherubim is intended the holy souls among those who are firm in the Covenant and the Testament of God, whom God hath appointed as guardians to the House of the Covenant, so that they may keep the Nakazeen and the people of evil desires, from claiming the position of the firm ones who are travelers towards God.

In another sense, by the Cherubim are meant the virtues of holiness and devotion, which qualities are the necessities for the entrance into the Kingdom. That is, whoever is not indeed ingrafted with these characteristics is prevented from entering the Kingdom.

The Blessed Perfection hath said in the Hidden Words: "O Sons of Adam: Good words, and pure and holy deeds ascend to the glorious heaven of the Unity. Strive, and thy deeds will be purged from the dust of hypocrisy, and from the turbidness of passion and desire; then enter the glorious Court of Acceptance. For, in a short while, the Assayers of the Existence, in the Portico of the Presence of the Worshipped One, shall accept naught but pure virtue and shall admit naught besides pure deeds. This is the Sum of Wisdom and Significance which hath arisen from the Horizon of the Mouth of the Divine Will. Blessed are those who approach."

By the Assayers of the Existence is meant the Cherubim, who are, in this day, interpreted as the firm ones in the Covenant.

As to the words "the flaming sword which turned every way:" By sword is meant the sword of explanation. This refers to the fact that, as the Divine Manifestations open the doors of the Kingdom before the faces of people in this material world, and bestow upon them freely the mysteries and knowledges, so the people of desires and those of right-

cousness each present themselves at the Table of their gifts. The people of righteousness take those teachings, and this conduces to save them and cut them from the world. These gifts serve them as food in the course of their Journey to the World of the Kingdom, and aid them to guide pure souls unto God. But the people of lustful desire, when gaining these teachings, use them as means for satisfying their selfish desires, and they rend the helpless people like wolves in sheep's clothing, and with the claim that they are the people of the Kingdom they seduce the creatures. Therefore, the Manifestations of God, just before their departure from the world of the flesh, appoint some one who is worthy to guard the door of the Kingdom, and make him their own Successor, and teach him the mysteries of the Book, place the key of the Kingdom in his charge, and give him that sword which divides between the oppressor and the oppressed, truth and falsehood, and firm believers from Naka-zéen, so that he may guard the Tree of Life after the disappearance of the Sun of Truth, and keep the impure hands of the people of lustful desires from stretching towards the sacred and pure Tree of the Book of God. As a proof of this statement, it is said by God: "None shall touch the Book, except those who are clean." That sword is His Speech, whereby he clearly explains the interpretation of the Book, so that no one may audaciously and obstinately interfere with the Texts of God, and interpret and explain meanings for them according to his own selfishness. Therefore it is said by the First Point (May the soul of all else be a ransom to Him!) "No one is permitted to interpret the Beyan except "He Whom God shall manifest."

Now, in this glorious century, which is as a King over all ages, the firm ones among the Behais have realized these mentioned states with the utmost clearness, and have seen the flaming sword, and have recognized the Cherubim. This Divine Sword was no other than the following blessed Verse, which was revealed by the Blessed Perfection in the Book of Akdas twenty-four years before His Departure: "When the Sea of My Presence hath disappeared, and the Book of Origin is achieved to the end, turn your faces unto Him whom God hath desired, who is extended from this Ancient Root." Although this sword (verse) was thoroughly keen and acute, yet He made it sharper 'to turn every way' by the following words, revealed in His Kitab-el-Ahd: "By the mentioned verse as revealed in the Kitab-el-Akdas, is meant the Greatest Branch. Thus We have caused the subject to appear as a Favor on our Part, and

I am The Gracious, The Ancient." Then follows His explanation in Persian, thus: "The Branches, Twigs and the relatives (believers) should all gaze towards the Greatest Branch."

To sum up, He gave this sharp sword into the Hand of the Greatest Branch of God, Abdul Beha, His Successor, so that He (Abdul Beha) may cut off the tree of violation and extirpate the root of infringement, and prevent the people of ignorance and lustful desires from entering the Kingdom of El-ABHA, and keep the hands of the Nakazeen from stretching to the Tree of Life. In this sense, by the 'Tree of Life' is meant the Book of God. Other meanings are also explained for the Book of God. In the Book of Ikan, it is interpreted to be the Holy City, while in the Scriptures it is Jerusalem, Zion, the Sea of Life, etc.

He hath placed the Cherubim as guardians by the words of the following verse: "When the Nightingale flies from the Grove of Praise, and departs to the farthest destination, return that which ye do not understand from the Book, to the Branch which is extended from this firm Root."

In another sense, by Cherubim is meant the 'hands of the Cause of God'; that is, those souls who are firm and steadfast in the Covenant and the Testament. Their sword is the blessed verse: "When the Nightingale flies," etc., by which verse and through the teachings given by the Expounder of the Book, they prevent the Nakazeen from claiming the knowledge of the Book, and from interpreting it. This is proved by the fact that in this day, no one of the Nakazeen has any power to interpret any of the Utterances of the Blessed Perfection in the presence of even one of the children of the firm believers; because, according to the clear Texts of the Bab and the Blessed Perfection, no one hath the right to do this except the Center of the Covenant, Abdul Beha (May the soul of all the creatures be a ransom to Him!). Thus the doors of the Kingdom were closed to one man and opened to another. Verily, He doeth whatsoever He desireth, and ordereth that which He willeth!

The wisdom of the fact that he laid such a solid foundation to this edifice was that, as the Day of the Blessed Perfection is the Day of the appearance of realities, and is the Day wherein all the secrets are unveiled, and is the Day of Greatest Resurrection, and in it all the hidden realities were to become manifest, so He has made His Covenant and Testament with such solidity that the Nakazeen and infringers shall reveal themselves in this Great Resurrection by their own acknowledg-

ment. For instance, when one questions one of the Nakazeen— "Is the blessed verse 'When the Sea of My Presence,' etc., revealed in the Book of Akdas," he will say "yes." Is the Book of Ahd revealed by the Blessed Perfection," he says "yes." "Is this verse 'Turn your faces to the Greatest Branch commanded by the Blessed Perfection?'" he says "yes." "Did the Blessed Perfection appoint Abdul Beha to be the Expounder of the Book?" he says "yes." When you ask him "Why then do you deny him?" finding himself confused, he answers: "I do not deny His Highness, Abdul Beha; He is in this day the Successor of the Blessed Perfection, and to obey Him is incumbent upon all." While saying these words with his tongue, he still publishes pamphlets with his hands against Abdul Beha, and spreads them all over the country. Whereunto hath testified God, The Most High, The Most Great: "In this day We will seal up their mouths, and their hands shall speak unto us, and their feet shall bear witness of that which they have committed." Likewise it is said by the First Point: "On that day the word of denial will boast in glory because of his having denied (the Truth), and imagined himself to be of the people of approval." Consider how His (the Bab's) blessed words are literally fulfilled by the fact that these Nakazeen are with their entire boldness falsely denying the Blessed Perfection, while they boast in glory thereof. Sometimes they say "As Abdul Beha lays claim to the position of Divinity, we have turned away from Him"; while Abdul Beha has called out in a thousand Tablets that "I am a servant to the servants of the Blessed Perfection!" When they thus find themselves disappointed and their plans frustrated, they say "Abdul Beha says Reincarnation is not true, while the Blessed Perfection has confirmed it." Praise be unto God! No one hath till the present day ever heard or seen such downright falsehood attributed to God! The Blessed Perfection Himself will punish them for this great calumny.

To sum up, "God hath sealed up their hearts and their hearing; and dimness covereth their sight, and they shall suffer a grievous punishment."

O ye who are firm in the Covenant and the Testament of the Blessed Perfection (Exalted is His Glory!) say unto those who are asleep in the tombs of nature and brutality; O Thou who art sleeping in water and dust, awake! awake! O thou soulless and heartless dead, awake! awake! The horizons are illuminated, and the mysteries are unfolded, and the trees are covered with fruits: Be mindful! be mindful! O thou who art

drunken with the wine of denial and contradiction! Open thy mental ears, and hearken to the Melodies of the Nightingale of Servitude Who is warbling on the Branch of the Tree of Life which is planted in the center of the Paradise of EL-ABHA!

In a Tablet revealed by Him to A. K. Khan, He says: Say: 'O people, the Lights of God have risen; the signs of God have appeared, the Sea of Bounty is waving, and the Sun of Truth hath poured forth the Rays of Providence and Favor. The Horizon of the Existence is illuminated; the surface of the earth hath become a brilliant page; and the Divine Springtime hath set up its Tent and Pavillon with an infinite grandeur. The cloud of Mercy is showering in profusion, and the Orb of Favor is shining with effulgence. The Breeze of the Eternal Life is blowing, and the Doors of the Divine Kingdom are being opened. How long are ye faded and withered? Awake! Awake! Be ye mindful! Be ye mindful!

To sum up, the above mentioned was a brief explanation concerning the journey of Adam. There is also another for Ch. III v. 22 to 24, which is to be heard by other ears, and explained another time.

As we have formerly promised the readers to bring to their notice some of the blessed verses revealed in the Excellent Book of Ikan in connection with the stages and conditions of the Journey, so we mention those passages as follows: It is said by Him (Exalted is His Utterance!)

"But, O my brother, when a seeker of truth intends to direct his steps of research and journey in the Path of the Knowledge of the King of Pre-existence, he should first cleanse and purify his heart—which is the place where the splendors of the Invisible and Divine Mysteries are made to become manifest—and sanctify it from all the gloomy dust of the acquired sciences, and from the suggestions made by Satanic appearances; and he should purge and refine his breast, which is the Throne whereon the Love of the Eternal Beloved is established. He should likewise, sanctify his heart from all kinds of material attachments; that is, from all illusionary traces and spectral images—to such an extent that the least trace of love or enmity may not remain therein, lest the love of a thing may incline him to a direction despite reason, and that enmity (for a thing) may prevent him from other tendencies, as is the case in this day when most of the people are bereft of the Immortal Face and of the Summit of Meanings because of these contrasting tendencies, and are grazing without shepherds in the deserts of error and oblivion. But they should trust in God at all times and turn away from the creatures (of God); to be severed and detached from the world of dust, and be united with the Lord of Lords; not to seek superiority, but to cleanse the tablet of their hearts from self-exaltation and vain-glory; to attach their hearts to patience and endurance; to practice silence and avoid useless

speech,—because the tongue is a smouldering fire, and loquacity is a deadly poison. The material fire only inflames bodies, but the fire of tongues consumes soul and mind. The effect made by the former vanishes in an hour, while the latter continues for a century. Backbiting is to be considered as an error, and one should never step into that court, because backbiting extinguishes the brilliant light of the heart, and numbs the life of the mind. To be contented with little and free from avarice; to make the most of the companionship of godly souls, and regard avoidance of the haughty and worldly people as beneficial: To spend the morning in communions and prayers, and to seek for the Beloved One with entire earnestness and constancy; To consume heedlessness with the fire of Love and Commemoration; To pass with the swiftness of lightning, over all else save God: To share with those who are in need, and not to refuse kindness and favor to the unfortunate: To show kindness even to the animals, and how much more to mankind, (especially) to the people of El-Beyan (the true believers): Not to refuse to give even life for the Beloved, and not to deviate from God if reproached by His creatures: Not to wish for others that which one does not wish for himself, nor to promise that which he cannot fulfill: To overlook the evil doers with all power, and ask the forgiveness (of God) in their behalf; To pardon the sin of the sinners and despise them not, because no one knows what will be proved of them at the end: Many a sinner who is favored with Faith previous to his death, tastes the Wine of Immortality and hastens to the Supreme Concourse, and many an obedient and believing soul who is estranged during his last hour, is thus cast into the lowest depth of fire (remorse).

“To sum up, by all these definite explanations and well-founded references is meant that a traveler and truth-seeker should realize that everything save God is mortal and consider aught else save the Adored One as nothing. The above conditions are of the attributes and qualities of the godly and spiritual souls, which we have mentioned concerning the conditions of those who strive after truth and travel in the Paths of Indubitable Knowledge. When a sincere traveler realizes these qualities in himself, then the term, ‘endeavorer for truth’ will become true of him. After one has attained to the position— ‘Whosoever makes his utmost endeavor to promote our true religion he will certainly rejoice at the Glad Tidings: We will direct them into our ways.’ When the lamp of research, endeavor, longing, fervor, love, affection and attraction is lighted in the heart, and the Breeze of Love hath blown forth from the Point of Oneness, then the darkness of error, doubt and superstition will be dispelled, and the Lights of Knowledge and Assurance will encompass all the pillars of the existence. Then the Ideal Herald will dawn as the truthful morn, from the Divine City (heart) with spiritual Glad Tidings, and will awaken the heart, soul and spirit from the sleep of heedlessness with the Trumpet of Knowledge. Then the Favors and Confirmations of the Holy Spirit of Eternity will grant a new life to such an extent that one will find himself endowed with new eyes, new ears, new

heart and new soul, and will perceive the manifest physical signs and the hidden psychical mysteries. He will see with the Eye of God, a door opened in every atom whereby he may attain to the position of indisputable Truth, indubitable Knowledge and evident Light, and realize the mysteries of the Splendors of Oneness, and the Signs of the Manifestations of Eternity in all things.

"I swear by God that, should the traveler in the Path of Guidance and the seeker of the Apex of Righteousness attain to this supreme and holy state, he would be able to inhale the fragrance of the True One from remote distances, and comprehend the brilliant Morn of Guidance from the Dawning-places of all things; and then every atom and particle will guide him to the Beloved and to the Desired One. He will become so discerning that he will distinguish between truth and error as easily as he knows the sun from shadow. For example: if the Breeze of Truth may blow forth from the east of the world of Creation, he will surely inhale it even though he be in the west of the world of Emanation (from God.) Likewise he will distinguish between all the Signs and Qualities of God—such as wonderful words and brilliant actions—and the deeds, acts and traces of others than God, just as the jeweler does between the pearl and the stone, and man does between spring and autumn, and heat and cold.

"When the cold (sickness) of the contingent and existent world is removed from the head of the soul, it will inhale the fragrance of the Beloved from a distance, and the soul will be attracted and will enter the City of Assurance of the Generous God through the effect of this Fragrance, and will behold the wonders of the Wisdom of the Glorious One in that Spiritual City, and will hear the praising and glorifying of the Lord of Lords, out of the very ground of that City, with his mental as well as material ears, and will consider the mysteries of the 'Return' and the mission, with the eye of mind.

"How can I ever mention the signs, marks, appearances and splendors which are ordained for that city through the Command of the King of Names and Attributes? It quenches the thirst without water, and increases the heat of the Love of God without fire. In that city, the real and perfect wisdom is hidden in every plant, and thousands of the Nightingales of Speech warble and cheer on every flowery tree. The mystery of the Fire of Moses is revealed in its wonderful tulips, and the Breath of the Holy Spirit of Christ emanates from its Fragrances of Holiness. It bestows wealth without gold, and grants immortality without death. A paradise is concealed in every one of its leaves, and hundreds of thousands of wisdoms are treasured in every one of its chambers. Those who earnestly endeavor in the Path of God, after being severed from all else, will so become attached to that City that they will never desire to be separated from it, not even for one instant. They will breathe the irrefutable proofs from the hyacinth of that assemblage, and will receive evident arguments from the Beauty of the Flowers and the Melody of the Nightingale. This City is renewed and adorned every one thousand

years or more. Therefore, O my friends, we should make an effort to attain to that City, and to rend asunder the veils of Glory through the Divine Favors and Supreme Compassion, so that we may sacrifice the withered soul in the Path of that new Beloved, and in order to attain to that prosperity we should show forth a hundred thousand ways of submissiveness and meekness. This City is no other than the Books of God in every age. For instance: in the cycle of Moses, it was the Bible; in the time of Jesus, it was the Gospels; in the Day of Mohammed, it was the Koran; and in this age, it is the Beyan, and in the Day of Him Whom God shall manifest (Beha'ullah) it will be His Own Book which will be superior to all, and to which all the books will have recourse. In these Cities, sustenance is provided, and Eternal Blessings are furnished. They bestow spiritual Food, and grant ancient Benediction. They confer the Gift of Oneness to the people of Unity. They generously give a portion to those unprovided, and favor the wanderers in the desert of Ignorance with the Cup of Knowledge. In these Cities are treasured and deposited Guidance, Providence, Knowledge, Understanding, Faith and the Assurance of all in the heavens and on the earths. For example: the Koran was a solid stronghold for the people of the Apostle (Mohammed), and whosoever entered therein during that Day, was protected against the thrust of the devil, the spear of contradictors, and against the vain superstitions and ungodly desires, and also partook of the pure fruits of Oneness, and of the products of the Knowledge of the Divine Tree, and tasted from the Wines of the Mysteries of Oneness and Singleness.

"To sum up, all the needs of that people, as to precepts of the Religion and the laws of Mohammed, existed and were established in that manifest Rizwan (the Koran). It was a permanent proof to him who held thereto after the departure of the Point of the Koran (Mohammed). Its laws were confirmed, and its commands were irrefutable. All were commanded to obey it until the Day of the new Manifestation in the year of 'sixty.' It was the Koran which conducted the seekers to the Rizwan of Union, and directed the endeavorers to the Tent of Nearness. It is a well-founded proof, and a most great argument."

Consequently it is proved by the above blessed Utterances that the Book of God (Revelation) is the primary proof and the Greatest Argument concerning a Manifestation.

The second proof thereof is the steadfastness with which they (the Prophets) act in the Cause of God, and the calamities and tribulations which they endure.

The third proof is the prophecies given in former Books concerning the succeeding Manifestations. All these proofs, as well as others, became perfectly manifest and fulfilled in the Appearance of His Highness Beha'ullah. For more information regarding this fact, refer to the

Blessed Book of Ikan and to the works of argument written by the people of Beha.

By this servant's quoting the passages of the Blessed Book of Ikan, is mainly meant to bring to the attention of the readers the record of the states of Journey, as briefly revealed from His Blessed Pen, as well as the fact that He hath interpreted the Book of God to be the Divine City. But facts concerning the stages of the Journey are revealed in detail in the Book of "The Seven Valleys." For acquiring knowledge thereof, let the readers refer to that Blessed Book, which contains such regulations for the Journey, the like of which hath neither been thought of by any mind, nor heard of by any ear, nor has such a book been ever visited by any one. The Book of Assurance (Ikan), being a book of argument concerning this Greatest Manifestation, such scientific foundation is laid therein that, were one to read it with perfect attention and with a purified heart, he would realize such a power of knowledge unfolded in him as would enable him to produce proofs in argument with all the various religions which exist upon the earth, and to prove to them the truth concerning the Divine Manifestations from all the former Books. Were one of the Christians to be informed that the Texts of this Book, and of the way of demonstration recorded therein, such power will become manifest in him that he will be able to demonstrate the truth of Jesus through solid and irrefutable proofs and arguments to the followers of Moses, to the Zoroastrians and to other living nations including the idolaters, etc.

Therefore, in this day, God hath endowed the people of Beha with such power of knowledge among the people of the world that one single soul of them overcomes and defeats the learned men of all sects and creeds, and proves the Religion of the Prince of the world—Beha'ullah—to every religion and nation. They prove it to the Islam through the Verses of the Koran; to the Christians through the New And Old Testaments; to the Jews from the Bible, and to the Zoroastrians from the Zend Avesta; to the Buddhists from their writings, and to the idol-worshipping nations from their own records. The Behais believe that, according to the clear records and obvious prophecies given in the Scriptures, His Highness—Beha'ullah—is the same Great Manifestation who has been foreshadowed and announced by all the Heavenly Books.

Now the above facts stand as an accomplished and ultimate proof to every one who believes in the Oneness of God, and in the fact that, in

accordance with the records mentioned in the Scriptures, a Greatest Manifestation should appear in the last days, whose religion and laws shall encompass all the world: The Tent of Peace shall be set up through His wonderful Laws: The foundation of strife and conflict shall be led to destruction: The darkness of tyranny and bloodshed shall disappear from the universe, and the feast of Union, Love and Agreement shall be celebrated. All the earth will become the Paradise of El-ABHA; one language should be adopted, and one style of writing should be taught. The mysteries of sciences should be unfolded, and the old world should be clothed in a new robe. The Supreme Kingdom will become manifest on the earth of dust. The secret of the fifth verse of the Fourth Chapter of Isaiah will be brought to light. The Day of God shall appear, and the New Jerusalem will descend. A new heaven and new earth will be seen. Death will cease to be named, and the Sun of Eternal Life will rise. The first Alpha will become the last Omega, and the point 'Zero' shall be removed, and 'He is The First and He is The Last' shall become unveiled.

Peace be unto him who may follow the Path of God, the Bahi-ul-ABHA.

THE MYSTERY OF BAPTISM.

Knowest thou that Baptism, in the terminology of the Prophets, means sanctification and purification. This has been an instituted law during the ages of all the Divine Manifestations, but was given in different forms according to the extent of the understanding of the people of their time.

For instance—in the time of Abraham baptism was instituted under the form of circumstances, in the day of Moses it appeared in the form of sacrifices, in the ages of the Israelitish Prophets it was anointing, and in the day of John the Baptist it consisted of bathing in water, in the day of Jesus Christ baptism was by the Spirit, during the age of Mohammed it was through reciting the Formula of Unity—"There is no God but God, and Mohammed is His Prophet!"—and in the day of the First Point (the Bab) it was in sanctifying one's hearing, seeing and the whole body, heart and soul. But in the day of the Appearance of the Beauty of El-Baha, the Greatest Manifestation, baptism was instituted under the form of sacrificing one's life in the Path of the Beloved of all the creatures.

When we consider the real meaning and the aim of these different forms of baptism, it will be understood that the intention of all of them has been to cleanse and sanctify the souls of men, but this purification man can only attain through being taught the Truth. By teaching the Truth is meant the delivery of the Spiritual Teachings which tend to cut the soul from lustful and brutish tendencies-and to conduct them to worlds of spirituality, sanctity and purity, that they may become enabled to enter the Kingdom of God.

Therefore every soul who is delivered from the concerns of the world of nature, and who is ready to know God, is said to be baptized with the Water of the Knowledge of God, and he, who is baptized with this water, has sacrificed his own will to the Will of God, and he, who has sacrificed his will to the Will of God, will attain Eternal Life.

As in the Day of the Blessed Perfection, the first one who sacrificed his will to the Will of Baha' Ullah was His Highness, the Greatest Mystery of God, Abdul-Baha, therefore the Manifestations entitled him: "The One who is desired by God" and appointed him to be the Successor and the Expounder of His Books, as He hath said in the Book of Akdas: "When the Sea of My Presence hath disappeared and the Book of Origin is achieved to the end, turn your faces unto him whom God hath desired, who is extended from this Ancient Root." This means that after the Departure of the Blessed Perfection to His Supreme Horizon, all the people of Baha are commanded unanimously to turn unto "Him whom God hath desired," that is His Highness, the Greatest Branch, according to the clear statement made in the Kitab-el-Ahd. This is because He is the One who hath sacrificed His Desire to the Will of the Blessed Perfection and thus hath attained the Eternal Life.

Consequently it is said that when His Highness, Abraham, was appointed by the Will of God for the Guidance of the people, and invited them to the Knowledge of God, to entire separation from the world and to turn unto the exalted Kingdom of God, those souls among them who were capable of receiving His Teachings, apprehended them and were guided to the Truth and thus received Spiritual Baptism. But since others were not able to comprehend the Knowledge of God, they were commanded to perform the material forms of baptism. Therefore He said that whosoever should desire to be enrolled among the children of Abraham should be circumcised. By circumcision Abraham meant that whoever intended to enter the Kingdom of God should turn away from

lustful desires. Then, first, Abraham Himself and his family were circumcised, and after them the same was carried out by all His people. This was a Covenant that God entered into with Abraham and His Generation and since that time this law has been performed by His followers to the present day.

When the Day of Moses arrived, He baptized people with the Divine Knowledges, Unity and Spiritual Characters. Capable souls were directed thereby and turned unto God, but as the other people were not able to understand the Divine Mysteries, He commanded them to offer sacrifices and He instituted certain sacrifices to be offered for certain sins, and thus this became a Jewish custom.

Offering sacrifices had reference to the fact that whosoever intended to enter the Divine Kingdom should abandon the lusts and desires of the flesh and clear himself from material qualities and become endowed with Divine Characteristics.

When John the Baptist came, he baptized with water. The real meaning thereof was that all the body, both material and spiritual, should be cleansed and sanctified with the water of Spiritual Knowledges. He said: "Be prepared, for the Kingdom of God is at hand." Those of the people who received knowledge, purified and sanctified their hearts for the Advent of Christ, while others, who were not spiritual, followed the literal form of baptism by water, and it is so done until this day.

After the Advent of Jesus, as His Mission was in the purest form of Spirituality, so He instituted Baptism in the form of Spiritual, Divine and acquired Spiritual Characteristics, He was accounted of the people of the Kingdom and found a dwelling place in the Presence of the Heavenly Father.

When the Day of Mohammed, the Seal of the Prophets, came, as His Day was that of the last of the prophetic dispensations, and the early dawn of the Appearance of the Day of God, so He baptized people by their confession of the Unity of God.

As to the first Point (the Bab), His Highness, the Supreme, the Greatest Door of God, He baptized people by announcing to them the Advent of the Day of God, and taught them of the Manifestation of the Blessed Perfection. He opened the Door of Knowledge before the face of the people and baptized them with knowledges, mysteries and understandings, so that they should be naturalized with such ceremonies whereby

they could gain the honor of attaining to the Presence and the meeting of His Highness, The Promised One, Baha' Ullah.

When the morning of hopes dawned and the Ideal Sun of the Beauty of El-ABHA shone forth from behind the veils, and the Real Beloved lifted up the covering from His Face, then the lovers who had suffered long through separation from Him, held their heads and their lives in their hands and hastened to His Presence. He said: "Do not come hither if thou thinkst of thy head or life, but if thou hast the intention to sacrifice these in this Path, come forth and bring them with ye." There were thousands who sacrificed their heads, lives and properties in this Path.

"Wert thou to count the riches of God, they are innumerable!" Now, consider how the time hath evolved and advanced. In the Day of Jesus people would sacrifice sheep and calves, while in the Age of Baha' Ullah, thousands of Apostles, Saints, Appearances of Names and Attributes, Chosen ones and Cherubim glory in sacrificing their lives. What a difference between this and bygone ages!

Therefore, it is now understood that except man sacrifice his life for the sake of the Beloved of all the creatures, he is not really baptized and taught the Truth.

O dear Brothers! Do ye know by what form the Successor of the Blessed Perfection, His Highness, Abdul-Baha, baptizes the people? Abdul-Baha's form of baptism is the Servitude to the dust of the Threshold of the Blessed Tomb! Abdul-Baha's baptism is love and unity among the people of the world! Abdul-Baha's baptism is the uprooting of the tree of discord and disharmony! Abdul-Baha's baptism is humbleness and meekness before the servants of God! Abdul-Baha's baptism is extirpating the tree of pride and deceit! Abdul-Baha's baptism is agreement and universal peace! His Highness, Abdul-Baha, calls Himself a servant of the servants of Baha' Ullah, so that the firm servants of the Blessed Perfection may receive these instructions of Servitude from Him and consort with people in the same way as He.

Now, we will chant one of the Tablets given by His Highness, Abdul-Baha, so that we may hear His beautiful Teachings and put them into practice.

REVEALED BY ABDUL-BAHA.

(If anyone read or repeat the following Commune with sincere (perfect) craving and submissiveness, it will cause joy and fragrance to be

within the heart of this Servant (Abdul-Baha), and he will be considered as having met or visited (Me). (i. e. This Commune has the remuneration of My visitation or meeting).

O my God! O my God! I extend toward Thee the hands of invocation, supplication and submissiveness, and rolling my face in the dust of the Threshold which is holy above the comprehension of the people of realities and beyond the commendations of the intellectual ones, I beg of Thee to gaze unto Thy servant who is submissive and humble before the Door of Thy Oneness, with the glances of the Eye of Thy Mercy, and to immerse him into the Oceans of the Mercy of Thy Eternity.

O my Lord! Verily, he is Thy miserable, poor servant and Thy invoking, beseeching and captive slave, humbling himself before Thee, relying upon Thee, supplicating within Thy Hands, calling upon Thee and invoking Thee, saying: "O my Lord! Strengthen me to serve Thy beloved and enable me to be of service to the Threshold of Thy Oneness, and illuminate my brow with the Light of adoration in the Court of Thy Holiness, and with supplication to the Kingdom of Thy Grandeur, and confirm me to become evanescent at the Threshold of Thy Divinity, and aid me to continue to be as nothing (entire humility) in the Court of Thy Lordship.

O my Lord! Cause me to drink the cup of evanescence and clothe me with its mantle and immerse me in its sea. Make me as dust in the path of the beloved (believers) and make me as a ransom (sacrifice) to the ground printed by the feet of the chosen ones in Thy Way.

O Thou, Lord of Might and Exaltation! Verily, Thou art the Generous! The Merciful! The Most High! This is that which this servant implores Thee every morn and eve. O my Lord! Grant his desire! Illuminate his inmost heart, dilate his breast, kindle his lamp in the service of Thy Cause and to Thy servants!

Verily, Thou art The Mighty! The Loving! The Clement!

The servant of Abdul Beha,

M. ASSAD'ULLAH.