

THE ETERNAL EXAMPLE

Ascension

QUOTATIONS | STORIES | REFLECTIONS



QUOTATIONS

Know thou of a truth that the soul, after its separation from the body, will continue to progress until it attaineth the presence of God, in a state and condition which neither the revolution of ages and centuries, nor the changes and chances of this world, can alter. It will endure as long as the Kingdom of God, His sovereignty, His dominion and power will endure. It will manifest the signs of God and His attributes, and will reveal His loving kindness and bounty... The light which these souls radiate is responsible for the progress of the world and the advancement of its peoples. They are like unto leaven which leaveneth the world of being, and constitute the animating force through which the arts and wonders of the world are made manifest.

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Through them the clouds rain their bounty upon men, and the earth bringeth forth its fruits. All things must needs have a cause, a motive power, an animating principle. These souls and symbols of detachment have provided, and will continue to provide, the supreme moving impulse in the world of being.

Gleanings From the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

A friend asked: ‘How should one look forward to death?’

Abdu’l-Baha answered: ‘How does one look forward to the goal of any journey? With hope and with expectation. It is even so with the end of this earthly journey. In the next world, man will find himself freed from many of the disabilities under which he now suffers. Those who have passed on through death, have a sphere of their own. It is not removed from ours; the work of the Kingdom, is ours; but it is sanctified from what we call “time and place.” Time with us is measured by the sun. When there is no more sunrise, and no more sunset, that kind of time does not exist for man. Those who have ascended have different attributes from those who are still on earth, yet there is no real separation....’

‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London

O ye roses in the garden of God's love! O ye bright lamps in the assemblage of His knowledge! May the soft breathings of God pass over you, may the Glory of God illumine the horizon of your hearts. Ye are the waves of the deep sea of knowledge, ye are the massed armies on the plains of certitude, ye are the stars in the skies of God's compassion, ye are the stones that put the people of perdition to flight, ye are clouds of divine pity over the gardens of life, ye are the abundant grace of God's oneness that is shed upon the essences of all created things.

On the outspread tablet of this world, ye are the verses of His singleness; and atop lofty palace towers, ye are the banners of the Lord. In His bowers are ye the blossoms and sweet-smelling herbs, in the rose garden of the spirit the nightingales that utter plaintive cries. Ye are the birds that soar upward into the firmament of knowledge, the

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royal falcons on the wrist of God.

Why then are ye quenched, why silent, why leaden and dull? Ye must shine forth like the lightning, and raise up a clamouring like unto the great sea. Like a candle must ye shed your light, and even as the soft breezes of God must ye blow across the world. Even as sweet breaths from heavenly bowers, as musk-laden winds from the gardens of the Lord, must ye perfume the air for the people of knowledge, and even as the splendours shed by the true Sun, must ye illumine the hearts of humankind. For ye are the life-laden winds, ye are the jessamine-scents from the gardens of the saved. Bring then life to the dead, and awaken those who slumber. In the darkness of the world be ye radiant flames; in the sands of perdition, be ye well-springs of the water of life, be ye guidance from the Lord God. Now is the time to serve, now is the time to be on fire. Know ye the value of this chance, this favourable juncture that is limitless grace, ere it slip from your hands.

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Soon will our handful of days, our vanishing life, be gone, and we shall pass, empty-handed, into the hollow that is dug for those who speak no more; wherefore must we bind our hearts to the manifest Beauty, and cling to the lifeline that faileth never. We must gird ourselves for service, kindle love's flame, and burn away in its heat. We must loose our tongues till we set the wide world's heart afire, and with bright rays of guidance blot out the armies of the night, and then, for His sake, on the field of sacrifice, fling down our lives.

Thus let us scatter over every people the treasured gems of the recognition of God, and with the decisive blade of the tongue, and the sure arrows of knowledge, let us defeat the hosts of self and passion, and hasten onward to the site of martyrdom, to the place where we die for the Lord. And then, with flying flags, and to the beat of drums, let us pass into the realm of the All-Glorious, and join the Company on high.

Selections From the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

*Y*á Bahá'u'l-Abha! (O Thou the Glory of Glories) I have renounced the world and the people thereof, and am heart-broken and sorely afflicted because of the unfaithful. In the cage of this world, I flutter even as a frightened bird, and yearn every day to take my flight unto Thy Kingdom.

Ya Bahá'u'l-Abha! Make me to drink of the cup of sacrifice and set me free. Relieve me from these woes and trials, from these afflictions and troubles. Thou art He that aideth, that succoureth, that protecteth, that stretcheth forth the hand of help.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith

*T*hese are the days of my farewell to you...I must, therefore, give you my instructions and exhortations today, and these are none other than the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

You must manifest complete love and affection toward all mankind. Do not exalt yourselves above others, but consider all as your equals, recognizing them as the servants of one God. Know that God is compassionate toward all; therefore, love all from the depths of your hearts, prefer all religionists before yourselves, be filled with love for every race, and be kind toward the people of all nationalities. Never speak disparagingly of others, but praise without distinction. Pollute not your tongues by speaking evil of another. Recognize your enemies as friends, and consider those who wish you evil as the wishers of good.

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You must not see evil as evil and then compromise with your opinion, for to treat in a smooth, kindly way one whom you consider evil or an enemy is hypocrisy, and this is not worthy or allowable. You must consider your enemies as your friends, look upon your evil-wishers as your well-wishers and treat them accordingly. Act in such a way that your heart may be free from hatred. Let not your heart be offended with anyone. If some one commits an error and wrong toward you, you must instantly forgive him. Do not complain of others. Refrain from reprimanding them, and if you wish to give admonition or advice, let it be offered in such a way that it will not burden the bearer. Turn all your thoughts toward bringing joy to hearts. Beware! Beware! lest ye offend any heart. Assist the world of humanity as much as possible. Be the source of consolation to every sad one, assist every weak one, be helpful to every indigent one, care for every sick one, be the cause of glorification to every lowly one, and shelter those who are overshadowed by fear.

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In brief, let each one of you be as a lamp shining forth with the light of the virtues of the world of humanity. Be trustworthy, sincere, affectionate and replete with chastity. Be illumined, be spiritual, be divine, be glorious, be quickened of God, be a Bahá'í.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace

An aerial photograph of a coastline, showing a mix of dark and light teal colors. A white rectangular box is superimposed over the center of the image. The word "STORIES" is written in white, uppercase letters within this box.

STORIES

An account of the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

On Sunday morning, November 27, He said. "I am quite well and will get up as usual and have tea with you in the tea-room." After He had dressed, He was persuaded to remain on the sofa in His room.

In the afternoon He sent all the friends to the tomb of the Báb, where on the occasion of the anniversary of the declaration of the Covenant a feast was being held, offered by a Pársí pilgrim who had lately arrived from India.

At four in the afternoon, being on the sofa in His room, He said, "Ask my sister and all the family to come and have tea with me."

His four sons-in-law and Rúhí Effendi came to Him after returning from the gathering on the mountain. They said to Him, "The giver

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of the feast was unhappy because You were not there”. He said unto them:

But I was there, though my body was absent, my spirit was there in your midst. I was present with the friends at the tomb. The friends must not attach any importance to the absence of my body. In spirit I am, and shall always be, with the friends, even though I be far away.

The same evening He asked after the health of every member of the household, of the pilgrims, and of the friends in Haifa. “Very good, very good,” He said when told that none were ill. This was His very last utterance concerning His friends.

At eight in the evening He retired to bed after taking a little nourishment, saying, “I am quite well.”

He told all the family to go to bed and rest. Two of His daughters, however, stayed with Him. That night the Master had gone to sleep

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very calmly, quite free from fever. He awoke about 1.15 a.m., got up, and walked across to a table where He drank some water. He took off an outer night garment, saying, "I am too warm." He went back to bed; and, when His daughter Ruha Khanum, later on, approached, she found Him lying peacefully; and, as He looked into her face, He asked her to lift up the net curtains saying:

"I have difficulty in breathing, give me more air." Some rose water was brought of which He drank, sitting up in bed to do so, without any help. He again lay down, and as some food was offered Him, He remarked in a clear and distinct voice:

"You wish me to take some food, and I am going?" He gave them a beautiful look. His face was so calm, His expression so serene, they thought Him asleep.

He had gone from the gaze of His loved ones!

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The eyes that had always looked out with loving-kindness upon humanity, whether friends or foes, were now closed. The hands that had ever been stretched forth to give alms to the poor and the needy, the halt and the maimed, the blind, the orphan and the widow, had now finished their labour. The feet that, with untiring zeal, had gone upon the ceaseless errands of the Lord of Compassion were now at rest. The lips that had so eloquently championed the cause of the suffering sons of men, were now hushed in silence. The heart that had so powerfully throbbed with wondrous love for the children of God was now stilled. His glorious spirit had passed from the life of earth, from the persecutions of the enemies of righteousness, from the storm and stress of well nigh eighty years of indefatigable toil for the good of others.

His long martyrdom was ended!

Shoghi Effendi and Lady Blomfield , An account of the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

*T*he funeral of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, “a funeral the like of which Palestine had never seen,” drew “no less than ten thousand people...representing every class, religion and race in that country.” “A great throng,” the British High Commissioner wrote, “had gathered together, sorrowing for His death, but rejoicing also for His life.” The Governor of Jerusalem at the time also wrote in describing the funeral: “I have never known a more united expression of regret and respect than was called forth by the utter simplicity of the ceremony.”

“The coffin containing the remains of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was borne to its last resting-place on the shoulders of His loved ones.... The long train of mourners, amid the sobs and moans of many a grief-stricken heart, wended its slow way up the slopes of Mt. Carmel to the Mausoleum of the Báb... Close to the eastern entrance of the Shrine, the sacred casket was placed upon a plain table, and, in the presence of that vast

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concourse, nine speakers, who represented the Muslim, the Jewish and Christian Faiths...delivered their several funeral orations... The coffin was then removed to one of the chambers of the Shrine, and there lowered, sadly and reverently, to its last resting-place in a vault adjoining that in which were laid the remains of the Báb.”

Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By

And now, what appeal more direct, more moving, with which to close this sad yet stirring account of His last days, than these His most touching, most inspiring words?

Friends! The time is coming when I shall be no longer with you. I have done all that could be done. I have served the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh to the utmost of my ability. I have laboured night and day, all the years of my life. O how I long to see the loved ones taking upon themselves the responsibilities of the Cause! Now is the time to proclaim the Kingdom of Bahá! Now is the hour of love and union! This is the day of the spiritual harmony of the loved ones of God! All the resources of my physical strength I have exhausted, and the spirit of my life is the welcome tidings of the unity of the people of Bahá. I am straining my ears toward the East and toward the West, toward the North and toward the South that haply I may hear the songs of love and fellowship chanted in the meetings of the faithful. My days

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are numbered, and, but for this, there is no joy left unto me. O how I yearn to see the friends united even as a string of gleaming pearls, as the brilliant Pleiades, as the rays of the sun, as the gazelles of one meadow!

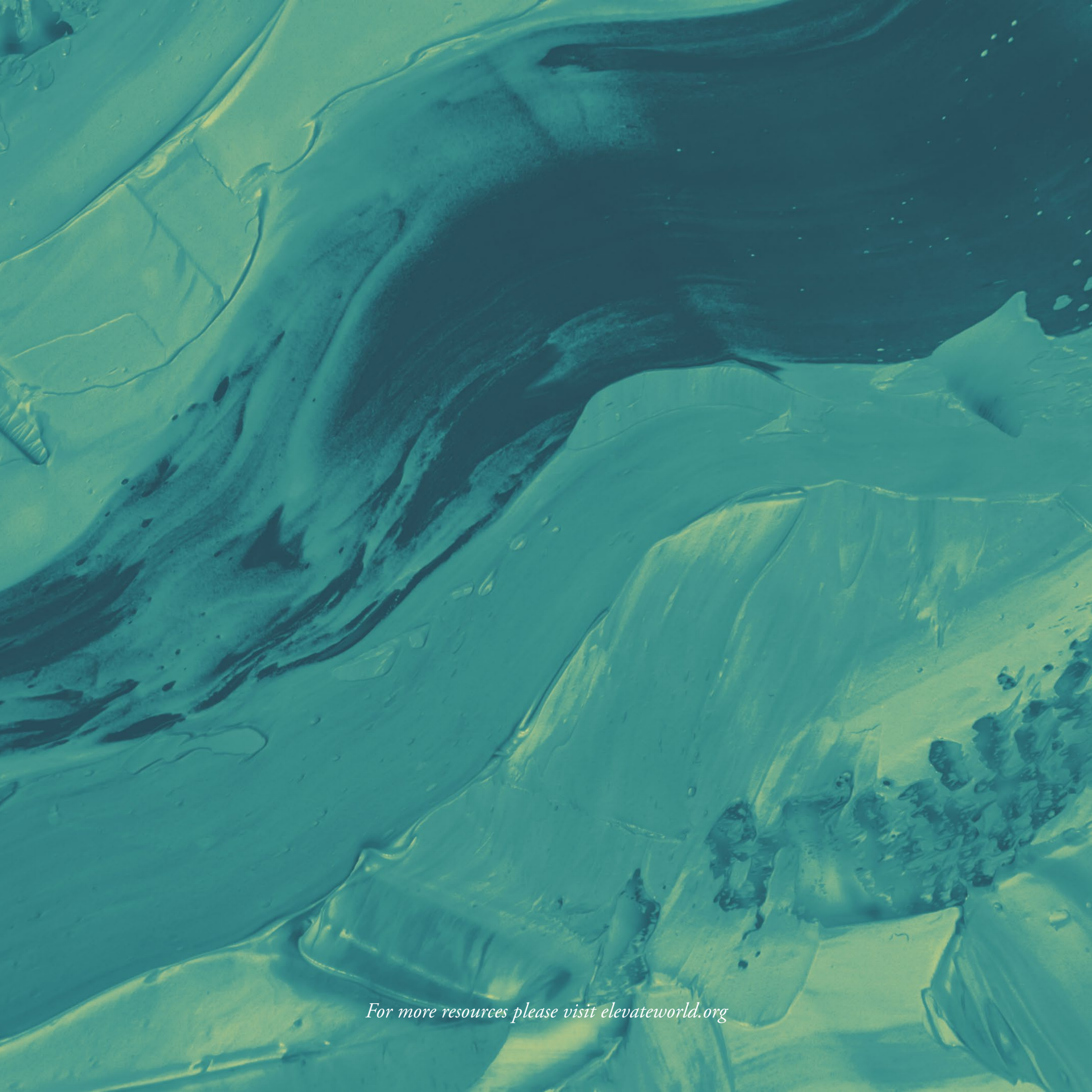
The mystic nightingale is warbling for them all; will they not listen? The bird of paradise is singing; will they not heed? The angel of Abhá is calling to them; will they not hearken? The herald of the Covenant is pleading; will they not obey?

Ah me, I am waiting, waiting, to hear the joyful tidings that the believers are the very embodiment of sincerity and truthfulness, the incarnation of love and amity, the living symbols of unity and concord. Will they not gladden my heart? Will they not satisfy my yearning? Will they not manifest my wish? Will they not fulfil my heart's desire? Will they not give ear to my call?

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I am waiting, I am patiently waiting.

Shoghi Effendi and Lady Blomfield , An account of the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá



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