

trees

Say: O people of God! Adorn your temples with the adornment of trustworthiness and piety. Help, then, your Lord with the hosts of goodly deeds and a praiseworthy character. We have forbidden you dissension and conflict in My Books, and My Scriptures, and My Scrolls, and My Tablets, and have wished thereby naught else save your exaltation and advancement. Unto this testify the heavens and the stars thereof, and the sun and the radiance thereof, and the **trees** and the leaves thereof, and the seas and the waves thereof, and the earth and the treasures thereof. We pray God to assist His loved ones, and aid them in that which beseemeth them in this blest, this mighty, and wondrous station.
Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 135

"We will now mention unto thee Trustworthiness and the station thereof in the estimation of God, thy Lord, the Lord of the Mighty Throne. One day of days We repaired unto Our Green Island. Upon Our arrival, We beheld its streams flowing, and its **trees** luxuriant, and the sunlight playing in their midst. Turning Our face to the right, We beheld what the pen is powerless to describe; nor can it set forth that which the eye of the Lord of Mankind witnessed in that most sanctified, that most sublime, that blest, and most exalted Spot. Turning, then, to the left We gazed on one of the Beauties of the Most Sublime Paradise, standing on a pillar of light, and calling aloud saying: 'O inmates of earth and heaven! Behold ye My beauty, and My radiance, and My revelation, and My effulgence. By God, the True One! I am Trustworthiness and the revelation thereof, and the beauty thereof. I will recompense whosoever will cleave unto Me, and recognize My rank and station, and hold fast unto My hem. I am the most great ornament of the people of Baha, and the vesture of glory unto all who are in the kingdom of creation. I am the supreme instrument for the prosperity of the world, and the horizon of assurance unto all beings.' Thus have We sent down for thee that which will draw men nigh unto the Lord of creation."
Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 135

Whosoever entereth this city will comprehend every science before probing into its mysteries and will acquire from the leaves of its **trees** a knowledge and wisdom encompassing such mysteries of divine lordship as are enshrined within the treasuries of creation
Bahá'u'lláh, *Gems of Divine Mysteries*, p. 14

All that existeth in this city shall indeed endure and will never perish. Shouldst thou, by the leave of God, enter this sublime and exalted garden, thou wouldst find its sun in its noontide glory, never to set, never to be eclipsed. The same holdeth true of its moon, its firmament, its stars, **trees**, and oceans, and of all that pertaineth thereunto or existeth therein. By Him besides Whom there is none other God! Were I to recount, from this day unto the end that hath no end, its wondrous attributes, the love that My heart cherisheth for this hallowed and everlasting city would never be exhausted. I shall, however, bring My theme to a close, since time is short and the inquirer impatient, and since these secrets are not to be openly divulged save by the leave of God, the Almighty, the All-Compelling.

Erelong shall the faithful behold, in the day of the latter Resurrection, Him Whom God shall make manifest descending with this city from the heaven of the Unseen, together with a company of His exalted and favoured angels. Great, therefore, is the blessedness of him that attaineth unto His presence and beholdeth His countenance. We all, verily, cherish this hope, and exclaim: "Praise be unto Him, for verily He is the Eternal Truth, and unto Him do we return!"
Bahá'u'lláh, *Gems of Divine Mysteries*, p. 72

O people! I swear by the one true God! This is the Ocean out of which all seas have proceeded, and with which every one of them will ultimately be united. From Him all the Suns have been generated, and unto Him they will all return. Through His potency the **Trees** of Divine Revelation have yielded their fruits, every one of which hath been sent down in the form of a Prophet, bearing a Message to God's creatures in each of the worlds whose number God, alone, in His all-encompassing Knowledge, can reckon. This He hath accomplished through the agency of but one Letter of His Word, revealed by His Pen -- a Pen moved by His directing Finger -- His Finger itself sustained by the power of God's Truth.
Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 104

I give praise to Thee, O Lord my God! I entreat Thee by Thy Name through which Thou didst cause the dawn to appear, and the winds to blow, and the seas to surge, and the **trees** to bring forth their fruits, and the earth to be beautified with its rivers, that Thou wilt aid all them that are dear to Thee with both

Thy visible and invisible hosts.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 45

Magnified, O Lord my God, be Thy Name, whereby the **trees** of the garden of Thy Revelation have been clad with verdure, and been made to yield the fruits of holiness during this Springtime when the sweet savors of Thy favors and blessings have been wafted over all things, and caused them to bring forth whatsoever had been preordained for them in the Kingdom of Thine irrevocable decree and the Heaven of Thine immutable purpose. I beseech Thee by this very Name not to suffer me to be far from the court of Thy holiness, nor debarred from the exalted sanctuary of Thy unity and oneness.

Ignite, then, O my God, within my breast the fire of Thy love, that its flame may burn up all else except my remembrance of Thee, that every trace of corrupt desire may be entirely mortified within me, and that naught may remain except the glorification of Thy transcendent and all-glorious Being. This is my highest aspiration, mine ardent desire, O Thou Who rulest all things, and in Whose hand is the kingdom of the entire creation. Tho

Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 160

Glory to Thee, O my God! The first stirrings of the spring of Thy grace have appeared and clothed Thine earth with verdure. The clouds of the heaven of Thy bounty have rained their rain on this City within whose walls is imprisoned Him Whose desire is the salvation of Thy creatures. Through it the soil of this City hath been decked forth, and its **trees** clothed with foliage, and its inhabitants gladdened.

The hearts of Thy dear ones, however, will rejoice only at the Divine Springtime of Thy tender mercies, whereby the hearts are quickened, and the souls are renewed, and the **trees** of human existence bear their fruits.

The plants that have sprung forth, O my Lord, in the hearts of Thy loved ones have withered away. Send down upon them, from the clouds of Thy spirit, that which will cause the tender herbs of Thy knowledge and wisdom to grow within their breasts. Rejoice, then, their hearts with the proclamation of Thy Cause and the exaltation of Thy sovereignty.

Their eyes, O my Lord, are expectantly turned in the direction of Thy bounty, and their faces are set towards the horizon of Thy grace. Suffer them not, through Thy bounty, to be deprived of Thy grace. Potent art Thou, by Thy sovereign might, over all things. No God is there but Thee, the Almighty, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 199

I beseech Thee, O my God, by that Letter which, as soon as it proceeded out of the mouth of Thy will, hath caused the oceans to surge, and the winds to blow, and the fruits to be revealed, and the **trees** to spring forth, and all past traces to vanish, and all veils to be rent asunder, and them who are devoted to Thee to hasten unto the light of the countenance of their Lord, the Unconstrained, to make known unto me what lay hid in the treasures of Thy knowledge and concealed within the repositories of Thy wisdom. Thou seest me, O my God, holding to Thy Name, the Most Holy, the Most Luminous, the Most Mighty, the Most Great, the Most Exalted, the Most Glorious, and clinging to the hem of the robe to which have clung all in this world and in the world to come.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 291

Through the generative power of His utterance the whole earth hath been made the recipient of the wondrous signs and tokens of Thy sovereignty, and the heavens have been filled with the revelations of Thine incomparable majesty, and the seas have been enriched with the sacred pearls of Thine omniscience and wisdom, and the **trees** adorned with the fruits of Thy knowledge. Through Him all things have sung Thy praise, and all the eyes have been turned in the direction of Thy mercy. Through Him the faces of all have been set towards the splendors of the light of Thy countenance, and the souls of all have been inclined unto the revelations of Thy divine greatness.

How great is Thy power! How exalted Thy sovereignty! How lofty Thy might! How excellent Thy majesty! How supreme is Thy grandeur -- a grandeur which He Who is Thy Manifestation hath made known and wherewith Thou hast invested Him as a sign of Thy generosity and bountiful favor. I bear witness, O my God, that through Him Thy most resplendent signs have been uncovered, and Thy mercy hath encompassed the entire creation. But for Him, how could the Celestial Dove have uttered its songs or

the Heavenly Nightingale, according to the decree of God, have warbled its melody?
Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 294

O thou who hast fixed thy gaze upon My countenance! Say: O ye heedless ones! By reason of a droplet ye have deprived yourselves of the ocean of heavenly verses and for the sake of an insignificant atom ye have shut yourselves out from the splendours of the Day-Star of Truth. Who else but Baha hath the power to speak forth before the face of mankind? Judge ye fairly and be not of the unjust. Through Him the oceans have surged, the mysteries have been divulged and the **trees** have lifted up their voices exclaiming: The kingdoms of earth and heaven are God's, the Revealer of signs, the Fountainhead of clear tokens.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 76

Unto this testify the heavens and the stars thereof, and the sun and the radiance thereof, and the **trees** and the leaves thereof, and the seas and the waves thereof, and the earth and the treasures thereof. We pray God to assist His loved ones, and aid them in that which beseemeth them in this blest, this mighty, and wondrous station. Moreover We beseech Him to graciously enable those who surround Me to observe that which My Pen of Glory hath enjoined upon them.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 120

We will now mention unto thee Trustworthiness and the station thereof in the estimation of God, thy Lord, the Lord of the Mighty Throne. One day of days We repaired unto Our Green Island. Upon Our arrival, We beheld its streams flowing, and its **trees** luxuriant, and the sunlight playing in their midst. Turning Our face to the right, We beheld what the pen is powerless to describe; nor can it set forth that which the eye of the Lord of Mankind witnessed in that most sanctified, that most sublime, that blest, and most exalted Spot. Turning, then, to the left We gazed on one of the Beauties of the Most Sublime Paradise, standing on a pillar of light, and calling aloud saying: 'O inmates of earth and heaven! Behold ye My beauty, and My radiance, and My revelation, and My effulgence. By God, the True One! I am Trustworthiness and the revelation thereof, and the beauty thereof. I will recompense whosoever will cleave unto Me, and recognize My rank and station, and hold fast unto My hem. I am the most great ornament of the people of Baha, and the vesture of glory unto all who are in the kingdom of creation. I am the supreme instrument for the prosperity of the world, and the horizon of assurance unto all beings.' Thus have We sent down for thee that which will draw men nigh unto the Lord of creation.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 121

The people of God should make the utmost endeavour that perchance the fire of hatred and malice which smouldereth in the breasts of kindreds and peoples may, through the living waters of utterance and the exhortations of Him Who is the Desire of the world, be quenched and the **trees** of human existence may be adorned with wondrous and excellent fruit. He is, in truth, the Admonisher, the Compassionate, the All-Bountiful.

May the brightness of His glory shining above the horizon of bounty rest upon you, O people of Baha, upon every one who standeth firm and steadfast and upon those that are well grounded in the Faith and are endued with true understanding.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 132

Hearken unto the Voice proceeding out of the Realm of Glory, calling aloud from the celestial Tree which hath risen above the land of Za'faran [1]: Verily, no God is there but Me, the Omniscient, the Wise. Be thou as the breezes of the All-Merciful for the **trees** of the realm of existence and foster their growth through the potency of the Name of thy Lord, the Just, the All-Informed. We desire to acquaint thee with that which will serve as a reminder unto the people, that they may put away the things current amongst them and set their faces towards God, the Lord of the sincere.

[1 In a Tablet Bahá'u'lláh states, 'The Holy Tree [Sadrat] is, in a sense, the Manifestation of the One True God, exalted be He. The Blessed Tree in the land of Za'faran referreth to the land which is flourishing, blessed, holy and all-perfumed, where that the Tree hath been planted.']

We exhort mankind in these days when the countenance of Justice is soiled with dust, when the flames of unbelief are burning high and the robe of wisdom rent asunder, when tranquillity and faithfulness have ebbed away and trials and tribulations have waxed severe, when covenants are broken and ties are severed, when no man knoweth how to discern light and darkness or to distinguish guidance from error.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 137

Yield thou praise unto God for having graciously chosen thee to be a shower of bounty for that which We have sown in the pure and blessed soil and enabled thee to serve as a springtime of tender mercy for the wondrous and sublime **trees** We have planted. Indeed so great is this favour that of all created things in the world of existence, none can ever hope to rival it. We have moreover given thee to drink the choice wine of utterance from the chalice of the heavenly bestowals of thy merciful Lord, which is none other than this Tongue of holiness -- a Tongue that, as soon as it was unloosed, quickened the entire creation, set in motion all beings and caused the Nightingale to pour forth its melodies. This is the Fountain of living water for all that dwell in the realm of being.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 195

BY the righteousness of God! The Mother Book is made manifest, summoning mankind unto God, the Lord of the worlds, while the seas proclaim: The Most Great Ocean hath appeared, from whose waves one can hear the thundering cry: 'Verily, no God is there but Me, the Peerless, the All-Knowing.' And the **trees** raising their clamour exclaim: O people of the world! The voice of the Divine Lote-Tree is clearly sounding and the shrill cry of the Pen of Glory is ringing loud: Give ye ear and be not of the heedless. The sun is calling out: O concourse of the divines! The heaven of religions is split and the moon cleft asunder and the peoples of the earth are brought together in a new resurrection. Fear ye God and follow not the promptings of your passions, rather follow Him unto Whom have testified the Scriptures of God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 247

O MY handmaiden, O My leaf! Render thou thanks unto the Best-Beloved of the world for having attained this boundless grace at a time when the world's learned and most distinguished men have remained deprived thereof. We have designated thee 'a leaf' that thou mayest, like unto leaves, be stirred by the gentle wind of the Will of God -- exalted be His glory -- even as the leaves of the **trees** are stirred by onrushing winds. Yield thou thanks unto thy Lord by virtue of this brilliant utterance. Wert thou to perceive the sweetness of the title 'O My handmaiden' thou wouldst find thyself detached from all mankind, devoutly engaged day and night in communion with Him Who is the sole Desire of the world.

In words of incomparable beauty We have made fitting mention of such leaves and handmaidens as have quaffed from the living waters of heavenly grace and have kept their eyes directed towards God. Happy and blessed are they indeed. Ere long shall God reveal their station whose loftiness no word can befittingly express nor any description adequately describe.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 254

Man is like unto a tree. If he be adorned with fruit, he hath been and will ever be worthy of praise and commendation. Otherwise a fruitless tree is but fit for fire. The fruits of the human tree are exquisite, highly desired and dearly cherished. Among them are upright character, virtuous deeds and a goodly utterance. The springtime for earthly **trees** occurreth once every year, while the one for human **trees** appeareth in the Days of God -- exalted be His glory. Were the **trees** of men's lives to be adorned in this divine Springtime with the fruits that have been mentioned, the effulgence of the light of Justice would, of a certainty, illumine all the dwellers of the earth and everyone would abide in tranquillity and contentment beneath the sheltering shadow of Him Who is the Object of all mankind. The Water for these **trees** is the living water of the sacred Words uttered by the Beloved of the world. In one instant are such **trees** planted and in the next their branches shall, through the outpourings of the showers of divine mercy, have reached the skies. A dried-up tree, however, hath never been nor will be worthy of any mention.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 257

The Prophets and Chosen Ones have all been commissioned by the One True God, magnified be His glory, to nurture the **trees** of human existence with the living waters of uprightness and understanding, that there may appear from them that which God hath deposited within their inmost selves. As may be readily observed, each tree yieldeth a certain fruit, and a barren tree is but fit for fire. The purpose of these Educators, in all they said and taught, was to preserve man's exalted station. Well is it with him who in the Day of God hath laid fast hold upon His precepts and hath not deviated from His true and fundamental Law. The fruits that best befit the tree of human life are trustworthiness and godliness, truthfulness and sincerity

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitab-i-Aqdas*, p. 138

Even as the visible sun that assisteth, as decreed by God, the true One, the Adored, in the development of all earthly things, such as the **trees**, the fruits, and colours thereof, the minerals of the earth, and all that may be witnessed in the world of creation, so do the divine Luminaries, by their loving care and educative influence, cause the **trees** of divine unity, the fruits of His oneness, the leaves of detachment, the blossoms of knowledge and certitude, and the myrtles of wisdom and utterance, to exist and be made manifest. Thus it is that through the rise of these Luminaries of God the world is made new, the waters of everlasting life stream forth, the billows of loving-kindness surge, the clouds of grace are gathered, and the breeze of bounty bloweth upon all created things. It is the warmth that these Luminaries of God generate, and the undying fires they kindle, which cause the light of the love of God to burn fiercely in the heart of humanity. It is through the abundant grace of these Symbols of Detachment that the Spirit of life everlasting is breathed into the bodies of the dead. Assuredly the visible sun is but a sign of the splendour of that Day-star of Truth, that Sun Which can never have a peer, a likeness, or rival. Through Him all things live, move, and have their being. Through His grace they are made manifest, and unto Him they all return. From Him all things have sprung, and unto the treasures of His revelation they all have repaired. From Him all created things did proceed, and to the depositories of His law they did revert.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 33

Reflect thou, how, in one hand, He hath, by His mighty grasp, turned the earth of knowledge and understanding, previously unfolded, into a mere handful, and, on the other, spread out a new and highly exalted earth in the hearts of men, thus causing the freshest and loveliest blossoms, and the mightiest and loftiest **trees** to spring forth from the illumined bosom of man.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 47

O MY SERVANTS! Ye are the **trees** of My garden; ye must give forth goodly and wondrous fruits, that ye yourselves and others may profit therefrom. Thus it is incumbent on every one to engage in crafts and professions, for therein lies the secret of wealth, O men of understanding! For results depend upon means, and the grace of God shall be all-sufficient unto you. **Trees** that yield no fruit have been and will ever be for the fire.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Persian Hidden Words*

Where are the dames of the bridal chambers, and the possessors of beauty? Where are their waving branches and their spreading boughs, their lofty palaces and trellised gardens? Where is the smoothness of the expanses thereof and the softness of their breezes, the rippling of their waters and the murmur of their winds, the cooing of their doves and the rustling of their **trees**?

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 78

"May joy be increased to you as the years go by, and may you become thriving **trees** bearing delicious and fragrant fruits which are the blessings in the path of service."

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in London*, p. 78

O my God! O my God! verily these servants are turning to Thee, supplicating Thy kingdom of mercy. Verily they are attracted by Thy holiness and set aglow with the fire of Thy love, seeking confirmation from Thy wondrous kingdom and hoping for attainment in Thy heavenly realm. Verily they long for the descent of Thy bestowal, desiring illumination from the Sun of Reality. O Lord! make them radiant lamps, merciful signs, fruitful **trees** and shining stars. May they come forth in Thy service and be connected with Thee by the bonds and ties of thy love, longing for the lights of Thy favor. O Lord! make them signs of guidance, standards of Thy immortal kingdom, waves of the sea of Thy mercy, mirrors of the light of Thy majesty. Verily Thou art the generous! Verily Thou art the merciful! Verily Thou art the precious, the beloved!

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í World Faith - 'Abdu'l-Bahá Section*, p. 231

Education makes the ignorant wise, the tyrant just, promotes happiness, strengthens the mind, develops the will and makes fruitless **trees** of humanity fruitful.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í World Faith - 'Abdu'l-Bahá Section*, p. 248

Furthermore, just as the solar cycle has its four seasons the cycle of the Sun of Reality has its distinct and successive periods. Each brings its vernal season or springtime. When the Sun of Reality returns to quicken the world of mankind a divine bounty descends from the heaven of generosity. The realm of

thoughts and ideals is set in motion and blessed with new life. Minds are developed, hopes brighten, aspirations become spiritual, the virtues of the human world appear with freshened power of growth and the image and likeness of God become visible in man. It is the springtime of the inner world. After the spring, summer comes with its fullness and fruitage spiritual; autumn follows with its withering winds which chill the soul; the Sun seems to be going away until at last the mantle of winter overspreads and only faint traces of the effulgence of that divine Sun remain. Just as the surface of the material world becomes dark and dreary, the soil dormant, the **trees** naked and bare and no beauty or freshness remain to cheer the darkness and desolation, so the winter of the spiritual cycle witnesses the death and disappearance of divine growth and extinction of the light and love of God. But again the cycle begins and a new springtime appears. In it the former springtime has returned, the world is resuscitated, illumined and attains spirituality; religion is renewed and reorganized, hearts are turned to God, the summons of God is heard and life is again bestowed upon man. For a long time the religious world had been weakened and materialism had advanced; the spiritual forces of life were waning, moralities were becoming degraded, composure and peace had vanished from souls and satanic qualities were dominating hearts; strife and hatred overshadowed humanity, bloodshed and violence prevailed. God was neglected; the Sun of Reality seemed to have gone completely; deprivation of the bounties of heaven was a fact; and so the season of winter fell upon mankind. But in the generosity of God a new springtime dawned, the lights of God shone forth, the effulgent Sun of Reality returned and became manifest, the realm of thoughts and kingdom of hearts became exhilarated, a new spirit of life breathed into the body of the world and continuous advancement became apparent.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í World Faith - 'Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 255*

If in a garden the flowers and fragrant herbs, the blossoms and fruits, the leaves, branches and **trees** are of one kind, of one form, of one color and of one arrangement, there is no beauty or sweetness, but when there is variety, each will contribute to the beauty and charm of the others and will make an admirable garden, and will appear in the utmost loveliness, freshness and sweetness.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í World Faith - 'Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 295*

Without doubt each being is the center of the shining forth of the glory of God: that is to say, the perfections of God appear from it and are resplendent in it. It is like the sun, which is resplendent in the desert, upon the sea, in the **trees**, in the fruits and blossoms, and in all earthly things. The world, indeed each existing being, proclaims to us one of the names of God, but the reality of man is the collective reality, the general reality, and is the center where the glory of all the perfections of God shine forth.

That is to say, for each name, each attribute, each perfection which we affirm of God, there exists a sign in man; if it were otherwise, man could not imagine these perfections, and could not understand them.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í World Faith - 'Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 310*

The plants, the **trees**, whatever progress they may make, cannot conceive of the power of sight or the powers of the other senses; and the animal cannot imagine the condition of man, that is to say, his spiritual powers.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í World Faith - 'Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 322*

Now concerning our social principles, namely the teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh spread far and wide fifty years ago, they verily comprehend all other teachings. It is clear and evident that without these teachings progress and advancement for mankind are in no wise possible. Every community in the world findeth in these Divine Teachings the realization of its highest aspirations. These teachings are even as the tree that beareth the best fruits of all **trees**. Philosophers, for instance, find in these heavenly teachings the most perfect solution of their social problems, and similarly a true and noble exposition of matters that pertain to philosophical questions. In like manner men of faith behold the reality of religion manifestly revealed in these heavenly teachings, and clearly and conclusively prove them to be the real and true remedy for the ills and infirmities of all mankind. Should these sublime teachings be diffused, mankind shall be freed from all perils, from all chronic ills and sicknesses. In like manner are the Bahá'í economic principles the embodiment of the highest aspirations of all wage-earning classes and of economists of various schools.

In short, all sections and parties have their aspirations realized in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. As these teachings are declared in churches, in mosques and in other places of worship, whether those of the followers of Buddha or of Confucius, in political circles or amongst materialists, all shall bear witness that these teachings bestow a fresh life upon mankind and constitute the immediate remedy for all the ills of social life. None can find fault with any of these teachings, nay rather, once declared they will all

be acclaimed, and all will confess their vital necessity, exclaiming, "Verily this is the truth and naught is there beside the truth but manifest error."

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í World Faith - 'Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 347*

Soon the whole world, as in springtime, will change its garb. The turning and falling of the autumn leaves is past; the bleakness of the winter time is over. The new year hath appeared and the spiritual springtime is at hand. The black earth is becoming a verdant garden; the deserts and mountains are teeming with red flowers; from the borders of the wilderness the tall grasses are standing like advance guards before the cypress and jessamine **trees**; while the birds are singing among the rose branches like the angels in the highest heavens, announcing the glad-tidings of the approach of that spiritual spring, and the sweet music of their voices is causing the real essence of all things to move and quiver.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í World Faith - 'Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 352*

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

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í World Faith - 'Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 382*

O ye beloved of God! When the winds blow severely, rains fall fiercely, the lightning flashes, the thunder roars, the bolt descends and storms of trial become severe, grieve not; for after this storm, verily, the divine spring will arrive, the hills and fields will become verdant, the expanses of grain will joyfully wave, the earth will become covered with blossoms, the **trees** will be clothed with green garments and adorned with blossoms and fruits. Thus blessings become manifest in all countries. These favors are results of those storms and hurricanes.

The discerning man rejoiceth at the day of trials, his breast becometh dilated at the time of severe storms, his eyes become brightened when seeing the showers of rain and gusts of wind, whereby **trees** are uprooted; because he foreseeth the result and the end, the leaves, blossoms and fruits; while the ignorant person becometh troubled when he seeth a storm, is saddened when it raineth severely, is terrified by the thunder and trembleth at the surging of the waves which storm the shores.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í World Faith - 'Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 395*

Lord! Aid us to become seas surging with the billows of Thy wondrous Grace, streams flowing from Thy all-glorious Heights, goodly fruits upon the Tree of Thy heavenly Cause, **trees** waving through the breezes of Thy Bounty in Thy celestial Vineyard. O God! Make our souls dependent upon the Verses of Thy Divine Unity, our hearts cheered with the outpourings of Thy Grace, that we may unite even as the waves of one sea and become merged together as the rays of Thine effulgent Light; that our thoughts, our views, our feelings may become as one reality, manifesting the spirit of union throughout the world. Thou art the Gracious, the Bountiful, the Bestower, the Almighty, the Merciful, the Compassionate."

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í World Faith - 'Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 405*

Consider! When the rain, the heat, the sun and the gentle zephyrs cooperate with each other, what beautiful gardens are produced! How the various kinds of hyacinths, flowers, **trees** and plants associate with each other and are conducive to the adornment and charm of one another! Hence the oneness of the bounty of the sun, the oneness of rain and the oneness of the breeze have so overcome all other considerations, that the variety of hues, fragrances and tastes have increased the adornment, the attraction and sweetness of the whole. In a similar manner, when the divine Collective Center and the outpouring of the Sun of Reality and the breaths of the Holy Spirit are brought together, the variety of races and the differences existing between countries will become the cause of the embellishment, decoration and elegance of the world of humanity.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í World Faith - 'Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 420*

Salutation and praise, blessing and glory rest upon that primal branch of the Divine and Sacred Lote-Tree, grown out, blest, tender, verdant and flourishing from the Twin Holy **Trees**; the most

wondrous, unique and priceless pearl that doth gleam from out the twin surging seas; upon the offshoots of the Tree of Holiness, the twigs of the Celestial Tree, they that in the Day of the Great Dividing have stood fast and firm in the Covenant; upon the Hands pillars of the Cause of God that have diffused widely the Divine Fragrances, declared His Proofs, proclaimed His Faith, published abroad His Law, detached themselves from all things but Him, stood for righteousness in this world, and kindled the Fire of the Love of God in the very hearts and souls of His servants; upon them that have believed, rested assured, stood steadfast in His Covenant and followed the Light that after my passing shineth from the Dayspring of Divine Guidance -- for behold! he is the blest and sacred bough that hath branched out from the Twin Holy **Trees**. Well is it with him that seeketh the shelter of his shade that shadoweth all mankind.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í World Faith - 'Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 438*

"This movement eludes organization -- it is the realization of a new spirit. The foundation of that spirit is the love of God; and its method, the love and service of mankind. Many who have never heard of this revelation teach its laws and spiritual truths. These people are performing what BAHÁ'U'LLÁH hath commanded though they never heard of him. The power of Bahá'u'lláh's words is compelling -- therefore, you must know and love them. For instance, in the spring season **trees** burst forth into verdure, though they are not conscious of the sunshine, of the falling rain or the gentle breeze -- nevertheless, the power of nature urges them on to yield forth their fruits."

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Divine Philosophy, p. 14*

At this moment the sun appears at the meridian and the day and night are equal. Until today the north pole has been in darkness. This sacred day when the sun illumines equally the whole earth is called the equinox and the equinox is the symbol of the divine messenger. The sun of truth rises on the horizon of divine mercy and sends forth its rays on all. This is the beginning of the spring. When the sun appears at the equinox it causes a movement in all living things. The mineral world is set in motion, plants begin to sprout, the desert is changed into a prairie, **trees** bud and every living thing responds, including the bodies of animals and men.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Divine Philosophy, p. 75*

There was a time when the light of Christ shone in the world; when the proclamation of the kingdom was widespread and many spirits and hearts were drawn heavenward; but the law of this world is evanescent. That lamp is lighted and again it is extinguished. This flower starts with a sprout which day by day becomes more verdant, finally bursting into leaves and blossoms. But flowers fade and fruitage yields its seed which is kept and planted again, for the dead tree bears no more fruit. New seed must be sown and again **trees** and flowers will bloom.

The great splendor of the day of Christ has gradually merged into the night, so that in this age there is hardly a ray of that great spiritual luminary lighting the world; but after the drought of summer and the cold of winter comes the new life of spring. After each sunset comes a sunrise.

The spiritual light of the world has risen again from the eastern horizon. The night is finished; the day is come and the first rays of the dawn are destroying the shadows, dispersing the clouds, making the plants to grow, the **trees** to become verdant and ornamenting the flower-beds with roses. The sun of reality hath reappeared with tremendous power and soon the light of BAHÁ'U'LLÁH will be diffused throughout the world. See how the light of Christ's shining star took three hundred years to shed its rays on the world, whereas the light of BAHÁ'U'LLÁH has permeated all regions in less than half a century. His cause has been spread in every country and the mention of BAHÁ'U'LLÁH made in every tongue. In nearly every country there is an assembly of friends from Teheran to Paris, to San Francisco, to Japan. This is a different age and light is spreading with great rapidity

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Divine Philosophy, p. 79*

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This is a different age and light is spreading with great rapidity.
'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Divine Philosophy*, p. 80

The tree which does not bring forth fruit is fit only for the fire. Strive night and day to change men into fruitful **trees**, virgin forests into divine orchards and deserts into rose gardens of significance. Light these lamps, that the dark world may become illumined.
'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Divine Philosophy*, p. 110

But those disciples who were devoted to God - poor people who had neither fortune nor position - are to-day **trees** bearing fruit. Their banner is raised higher every day.
'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Divine Philosophy*, p. 137

The sea of materialism is at flood tide and all the nations of the world are immersed in it. It is my hope that the fish will rise to the surface, so that they may behold other wondrous aspects of creation; for the people are like unto the fish swimming in the deep - ignorant of the rest of the universe. May they be transformed into birds of the air and soar in the nether atmosphere! May they break all bonds of limitation, so that they can observe from the height the lordly processions of infinite creatures; they will see the blue heavens studded with luminous stars, rivers flowing with salubrious water, gardens bedecked with fragrant flowers, **trees** adorned with blossoms and fruits, birds singing songs of light, humanity ever striving forward, every atom of existence breathing life and force - the universe of God a wonderful theatre upon the stage of which every created thing plays its part.
'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Divine Philosophy*, p. 138

The world of existence is like unto an orchard and humanity is like unto the **trees**. All these **trees** are planted in the same orchard, reared through the heat of one sun, watered with one rain. We must be the cause of the adornment of this orchard. The world of humanity is like unto a rose garden and the various races, tongues and people are like unto contrasting flowers. The diversity of colors in a rose-garden adds to the charm and beauty of the scene as variety enhances unity. Why should we not look upon the human world with rose-colored vision?
'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Divine Philosophy*, p. 183

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From every standpoint the world of humanity is undergoing a re-formation. The laws of former governments and civilizations are in process of revision, scientific ideas and theories are developing and advancing to meet a new range of phenomena, invention and discovery are penetrating hitherto unknown fields revealing new wonders and hidden secrets of the material universe; industries have vastly wider scope and production; everywhere the world of mankind is in the throes of evolutionary activity indicating the passing of the old conditions and advent of the new age of re-formation. Old **trees** yield no fruitage; old ideas and methods are obsolete and worthless now. Old standards of ethics, moral codes and methods of living in the past will not suffice for the present age of advancement and progress.
'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 10

Furthermore, just as the solar cycle has its four seasons, the cycle of the Sun of Reality has its distinct and successive periods. Each brings its vernal season or springtime. When the Sun of Reality returns to quicken the world of mankind a divine bounty descends from the heaven of generosity. The realm of thoughts and ideals is set in motion and blessed with new life. Minds are developed, hopes brighten, aspirations become spiritual, the virtues of the human world appear with freshened power of growth and the image and likeness of God become visible in man. It is the springtime of the inner world. After the spring, summer comes with its fullness and fruitage spiritual; autumn follows with its withering winds which chill the soul; the Sun seems to be going away until at last the mantle of winter overspreads and only faint traces of the effulgence of that divine Sun remain. Just as the surface of the material world becomes dark and dreary, the soil dormant, the **trees** naked and bare and no beauty or freshness

remain to cheer the darkness and desolation, so the winter of the spiritual cycle witnesses the death and disappearance of divine growth and extinction of the light and love of God. But again the cycle begins and a new springtime appears. In it the former springtime has returned, the world is resuscitated, illumined and attains spirituality; religion is renewed and reorganized, hearts are turned to God, the summons of God is heard and life is again bestowed upon man. For a long time the religious world had been weakened and materialism had advanced; the spiritual forces of life were waning, moralities were becoming degraded, composure and peace had vanished from souls and satanic qualities were dominating hearts; strife and hatred overshadowed humanity, bloodshed and violence prevailed. God was neglected; the Sun of Reality seemed to have gone completely; deprivation of the bounties of heaven was a fact; and so the season of winter fell upon mankind. But in the generosity of God a new springtime dawned, the lights of God shone forth, the effulgent Sun of Reality returned and became manifest, the realm of thoughts and kingdom of hearts became exhilarated, a new spirit of life breathed into the body of the world and continuous advancement became apparent.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 12

Education makes the ignorant wise, the tyrant just, promotes happiness, strengthens the mind, develops the will and makes fruitless **trees** of humanity fruitful.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 55

Bahá'u'lláh has announced that no matter how far the world of humanity may advance in material civilization, it is nevertheless in need of spiritual virtues and the bounties of God. The spirit of man is not illumined and quickened through material sources. It is not resuscitated by investigating phenomena of the world of matter. The spirit of man is in need of the protection of the Holy Spirit. Just as he advances by progressive stages from the mere physical world of being into the intellectual realm, so must he develop upward in moral attributes and spiritual graces. In the process of this attainment he is ever in need of the bestowals of the Holy Spirit. Material development may be likened to the glass of a lamp whereas divine virtues and spiritual susceptibilities are the light within the glass. The lamp chimney is worthless without the light; likewise man in his material condition requires the radiance and vivification of the divine graces and merciful attributes. Without the presence of the Holy Spirit he is lifeless. Although physically and mentally alive he is spiritually dead. His Holiness Christ announced, "That which is born of flesh is flesh and that which is born of spirit is spirit," meaning that man must be born again. As the babe is born into the light of this physical world so must the physical and intellectual man be born into the light of the world of divinity. In the matrix of the mother the unborn child was deprived and unconscious of the world of material existence but after its birth it beheld the wonders and beauties of a new realm of life and being. In the world of the matrix it was utterly ignorant and unable to conceive of these new conditions but after its transformation it discovers the radiant sun, **trees**, flowers and an infinite range of blessings and bounties awaiting it. In the human plane and kingdom man is a captive of nature and ignorant of the divine world until born of the breaths of the Holy Spirit out of physical conditions of limitation and deprivation. Then he beholds the reality of the spiritual realm and kingdom, realizes the narrow restrictions of the mere human world of existence and becomes conscious of the unlimited and infinite glories of the world of God. Therefore no matter how man may advance upon the physical and intellectual plane he is ever in need of the boundless virtues of divinity, the protection of the Holy Spirit and the face of God.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 58

Trees differ though they grow in the same orchard. All are nourished and quickened into life by the bounty of the same rain; all grow and develop by the heat and light of the one sun; all are refreshed and exhilarated by the same breeze; that they may bring forth varied fruits. This is according to the creative wisdom. If all **trees** bore the same kind of fruit it would cease to be delicious. In their never ending variety man finds enjoyment instead of monotony.

And now as I look into your faces I am reminded of **trees** varying in color and form but all bearing luscious and delectable fruits, fragrant and delightful to the inner and outer senses. The radiance and spirituality of this meeting is through the favor of God. Our hearts are uplifted in thankfulness to Him
'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 62

The reality underlying this question is that the evil spirit, Satan or whatever is interpreted as evil, refers to the lower nature in man. This baser nature is symbolized in various ways. In man there are two expressions, one is the expression of nature, the other the expression of the spiritual realm. The world of nature is defective. Look at it clearly, casting aside all superstition and imagination. If you should

leave a man uneducated and barbarous in the wilds of Africa, would there be any doubt about his remaining ignorant? God has never created an evil spirit; all such ideas and nomenclature are symbols expressing the mere human or earthly nature of man. It is an essential condition of the soil of earth that thorns, weeds and fruitless **trees** may grow from it. Relatively speaking, this is evil; it is simply the lower state and baser product of nature.

It is evident therefore that man is in need of divine education and inspiration; that the spirit and bounties of God are essential to his development. That is to say, the teachings of Christ and the prophets are necessary for his education and guidance. Why? Because they are the divine gardeners who till the earth of human hearts and minds. They educate man, uproot the weeds, burn the thorns and remodel the waste places into gardens and orchards where fruitful **trees** grow. The wisdom and purpose of their training is that man must pass from degree to degree of progressive unfoldment until perfection is attained. For instance, if a man should live his entire life in one city, he cannot gain a knowledge of the whole world. To become perfectly informed he must visit other cities, see the mountains and valleys, cross the rivers and traverse the plains. In other words, without progressive and universal education, perfection will not be attained.

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Man must walk in many paths and be subjected to various processes in his evolution upward. Physically he is not born in full stature but passes through consecutive stages of foetus, infant, childhood, youth, maturity and old age. Suppose he had the power to remain young throughout his life. He then would not understand the meaning of old age and could not believe it existed. If he could not realize the condition of old age he would not know that he was young. He would not know the difference between young and old without experiencing the old. Unless you have passed through the state of infancy how would you know this was an infant beside you? If there was no wrong how would you recognize the right? If it were not for sin how would you appreciate virtue? If evil deeds were unknown how could you commend good actions? If sickness did not exist how would you understand health? Evil is non-existent; it is the absence of good; sickness is the loss of health; poverty the lack of riches. When wealth disappears you are poor; you look within the treasure box but find nothing there. Without knowledge there is ignorance; therefore ignorance is simply the lack of knowledge. Death is the absence of life. Therefore on the one hand we have existence; on the other, nonexistence, negation or absence of existence.

Briefly; the journey of the soul is necessary. The pathway of life is the road which leads to divine knowledge and attainment. Without training and guidance the soul could never progress beyond the conditions of its lower nature which is ignorant and defective.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 77

If the mountains, hills and plains of the material world are left wild and uncultivated under the rule of nature, they will remain an unbroken wilderness; no fruitful tree to be found anywhere upon them. A true cultivator changes this forest and jungle into a garden, training its **trees** to bring forth fruit and causing flowers to grow in place of thorns and thistles. The holy Manifestations are the ideal gardeners of human souls, the divine cultivators of human hearts. The world of existence is but a jungle of disorder and confusion, a state of nature producing nothing but fruitless, useless **trees**. The ideal gardeners train these wild uncultivated human **trees**, cause them to become fruitful, water and cultivate them day by day so that they adorn the world of existence and continue to flourish in the utmost beauty.

Consequently we cannot say that the divine bounty has ceased, that the glory of divinity is exhausted or the Sun of Truth sunk into eternal sunset, into that darkness which is not followed by light, into that night which is not followed by a sunrise and dawn, into that death which is not followed by life, into that error

which is not followed by truth. Is it conceivable that the Sun of Reality should sink into an eternal darkness? No! the sun was created in order that it may shed light upon the world and train all the kingdoms of existence. How then can the ideal Sun of Truth, the Word of God, set forever? For this would mean the cessation of the divine bounty, and the divine bounty by its very nature is continuous and ceaseless. Its sun is ever shining, its cloud is ever producing rain, its breezes are ever blowing, its bestowals are all-comprehending, its gifts are ever perfect. Consequently we must always anticipate, always be hopeful and pray to God that he will send unto us his holy Manifestations in their most perfect might, with the divine penetrative power of his Word, so that these heavenly ones may be distinguished above all other beings in every respect, in every attribute, just as the glorious sun is distinguished above all stars.

Although the stars are scintillating and brilliant, the sun is superior to them in luminous effulgence. Similarly these holy divine Manifestations are and must always be distinguished above all other beings in every attribute of glory and perfection, in order that it may be proven that the Manifestation is the true teacher and real trainer; that he is the Sun of Truth endowed with a supreme splendor and reflecting the beauty of God. Otherwise it is not possible for us to train one human individual and then after training him, believe in him and accept him as the holy Manifestation of divinity. The real Manifestation of God must be endowed with divine knowledge and not dependent upon learning acquired in schools. He must be the educator, not the educated; his standard intuition instead of tuition. He must be perfect and not imperfect, great and glorious instead of being weak and impotent. He must be wealthy in the riches of the spiritual world and not indigent. In a word, the holy divine Manifestation of God must be distinguished above all others of mankind in every aspect and qualification, in order that he may be able to effectively train the human body politic, eliminate the darkness enshrouding the human world, uplift humanity from a lower to a higher kingdom, be able through the penetrative power of his Word to promote and spread broadcast the beneficent message of universal peace among men, bring about the unification of mankind in religious belief through a manifest divine power, harmonize all sects and denominations and convert all nativities and nationalities into one nativity and fatherland.

It is our hope that the bounties of God will encompass us all, the gifts of the divine become manifest, the lights of the Sun of Truth illumine our eyes, inspire our hearts, convey to our souls cheerful glad-tidings of God, cause our thoughts to become lofty and our efforts to be productive of glorious results. In a word, it is our hope that we may attain to that which is the summit of human aspirations and wishes. .
'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 111

When an illness is slight a small remedy will suffice to heal it, but when the slight illness becomes a terrible disease, then a very strong remedy must be used by the Divine Healer. There are some **trees** that blossom and bear fruit in a cool climate, others there are which need the hottest rays of the sun to bring them to perfect maturity. Paris is one of those **trees** for whose spiritual unfoldment a great flaming Sun of the Divine Power of God is needed.
'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 27

All creation, preceding Man, is bound by the stern law of nature. The great sun, the multitudes of stars, the oceans and seas, the mountains, the rivers, the **trees**, and all animals, great or small -- none is able to evade obedience to nature's law.

Man alone has freedom, and, by his understanding or intellect, has been able to gain control of and adapt some of those natural laws to his own needs. By the power of his intellect he has discovered means by which he not only traverses great continents in express trains and crosses vast oceans in ships, but, like the fish he travels under water in submarines, and, imitating the birds, he flies through the air in airships.

Man has succeeded in using electricity in several ways -- for light, for motive power, for sending messages from one end of the earth to the other -- and by electricity he can even hear a voice many miles away!

By this gift of understanding or intellect he has also been able to use the rays of the sun to picture people and things, and even to capture the form of distant heavenly bodies.

We perceive in what numerous ways man has been able to bend the powers of nature to his will.

How grievous it is to see how man has used his God-given gift to frame instruments of war, for breaking the Commandment of God 'Thou shalt not kill', and for defying Christ's injunction to 'Love one another'.

God gave this power to man that it might be used for the advancement of civilization, for the good of humanity, to increase love and concord and peace. But man prefers to use this gift to destroy instead of to build, for injustice and oppression, for hatred and discord and devastation, for the destruction of his fellow-creatures, whom Christ has commanded that he should love as himself!

I hope that you will use your understanding to promote the unity and tranquillity of mankind, to give enlightenment and civilization to the people, to produce love in all around you, and to bring about the universal peace.

Study the sciences, acquire more and more knowledge. Assuredly one may learn to the end of one's life! Use your knowledge always for the benefit of others; so may war cease on the face of this beautiful earth, and a glorious edifice of peace and concord be raised. Strive that your high ideals may be realized in the Kingdom of God on earth, as they will be in Heaven.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 41

Consider the world of created beings, how varied and diverse they are in species, yet with one sole origin. All the differences that appear are those of outward form and colour. This diversity of type is apparent throughout the whole of nature.

Behold a beautiful garden full of flowers, shrubs, and **trees**. Each flower has a different charm, a peculiar beauty, its own delicious perfume and beautiful colour. The **trees** too, how varied are they in size, in growth, in foliage -- and what different fruits they bear! Yet all these flowers, shrubs and **trees** spring from the self-same earth, the same sun shines upon them and the same clouds give them rain.

So it is with humanity. It is made up of many races, and its peoples are of different colour, white, black, yellow, brown and red -- but they all come from the same God, and all are servants to Him. This diversity among the children of men has unhappily not the same effect as it has among the vegetable creation, where the spirit shown is more harmonious. Among men exists the diversity of animosity, and it is this that causes war and hatred among the different nations of the world.

Differences which are only those of blood also cause them to destroy and kill one another. Alas! that this should still be so. Let us look rather at the beauty in diversity, the beauty of harmony, and learn a lesson from the vegetable creation. If you beheld a garden in which all the plants were the same as to form, colour and perfume, it would not seem beautiful to you at all, but, rather, monotonous and dull. The garden which is pleasing to the eye and which makes the heart glad, is the garden in which are growing side by side flowers of every hue, form and perfume, and the joyous contrast of colour is what makes for charm and beauty. So is it with **trees**. An orchard full of fruit **trees** is a delight; so is a plantation planted with many species of shrubs. It is just the diversity and variety that constitutes its charm; each flower, each tree, each fruit, beside being beautiful in itself, brings out by contrast the qualities of the others, and shows to advantage the special loveliness of each and all.

Thus should it be among the children of men! The diversity in the human family should be the cause of love and harmony, as it is in music where many different notes blend together in the making of a perfect chord. If you meet those of different race and colour from yourself, do not mistrust them and withdraw yourself into your shell of conventionality, but rather be glad and show them kindness. Think of them as different coloured roses growing in the beautiful garden of humanity, and rejoice to be among them.

Likewise, when you meet those whose opinions differ from your own, do not turn away your face from them. All are seeking truth, and there are many roads leading thereto. Truth has many aspects, but it remains always and forever one.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 51

If a man were to declare, 'There is a lamp in the next room which gives no light', one hearer might be satisfied with his report, but a wiser man goes into the room to judge for himself, and behold, when he finds the light shining brilliantly in the lamp, he knows the truth!

Again, a man proclaims: 'There lies a garden in which there are **trees** with broken branches bearing no

fruit, and the leaves thereof are faded and yellow! In that garden, also, there are flowering plants with no blooms, and rose bushes withered and dying -- go not into that garden! A just man, hearing this account of the garden, would not be content without seeing for himself whether it be true or not. He, therefore, enters the garden, and behold, he finds it well tilled; the branches of the **trees** are sturdy and strong, being also loaded with the sweetest of ripe fruits amongst the luxuriance of beautiful green leaves. The flowering plants are bright with many-hued blossoms; the rose bushes are covered with fragrant and lovely roses and all is verdant and well tended. When the glory of the garden is spread out before the eyes of the just man, he praises God that, through unworthy calumny, he has been led into a place of such wondrous beauty!

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 103

All those who seek truth in the Heavenly Kingdom shine like the stars; they are like fruit **trees** laden with choice fruit, like seas full of precious pearls.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 118

Look around and see how the world of today is drowned in superstition and outward forms!

Some worship the product of their own imagination: they make for themselves an imaginary God and adore this, when the creation of their finite minds cannot be the Infinite Mighty Maker of all things visible and invisible! Others worship the sun or **trees**, also stones! In past ages there were those who adored the sea, the clouds, and even clay!

Today, men have grown into such adoring attachment to outward forms and ceremonies that they dispute over this point of ritual or that particular practice, until one hears on all sides of wearisome arguments and unrest. There are individuals who have weak intellects and their powers of reasoning have not developed, but the strength and power of religion must not be doubted because of the incapacity of these persons to understand.

A small child cannot comprehend the laws that govern nature, but this is on account of the immature intellect of that child; when he is grown older and has been educated he too will understand the everlasting truths. A child does not grasp the fact that the earth revolves round the sun, but, when his intelligence is awakened, the fact is clear and plain to him.

It is impossible for religion to be contrary to science, even though some intellects are too weak or too immature to understand truth.

God made religion and science to be the measure, as it were, of our understanding. Take heed that you neglect not such a wonderful power. Weigh all things in this balance.

To him who has the power of comprehension religion is like an open book, but how can it be possible for a man devoid of reason and intellectuality to understand the Divine Realities of God?

Put all your beliefs into harmony with science; there can be no opposition, for truth is one. When religion, shorn of its superstitions, traditions, and unintelligent dogmas, shows its conformity with science, then will there be a great unifying, cleansing force in the world which will sweep before it all wars, disagreements, discords and struggles -- and then will mankind be united in the power of the Love of God.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 144

But the love which sometimes exists between friends is not true love, because it is subject to transmutation; this is merely fascination. As the breeze blows, the slender **trees** yield. If the wind is in the East the tree leans to the West, and if the wind turns to the West the tree leans to the East. This kind of love is originated by the accidental conditions of life. This is not love, it is merely acquaintanceship; it is subject to change.

Today you will see two souls apparently in close friendship; tomorrow all this may be changed. Yesterday they were ready to die for one another, today they shun one another's society! This is not love; it is the yielding of the hearts to the accidents of life. When that which has caused this 'love' to exist passes, the love passes also; this is not in reality love.

Love is only of the four kinds that I have explained. a The love of God towards the identity of God. Christ has said God is Love. b The love of God for His children -- for His servants. c The love of man for God and d the love of man for man. These four kinds of love originate from God. These are rays from the Sun of Reality; these are the Breathings of the Holy Spirit; these are the Signs of the Reality.
'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 181

And whensoever thou dost gaze upon creation all entire, and dost observe the very atoms thereof, thou wilt note that the rays of the Sun of Truth are shed upon all things and shining within them, and telling of that Day-Star's splendours, Its mysteries, and the spreading of Its lights. Look thou upon the **trees**, upon the blossoms and fruits, even upon the stones. Here too wilt thou behold the Sun's rays shed upon them, clearly visible within them, and manifested by them.

Shouldst thou, however, turn thy gaze unto a Mirror, brilliant, stainless, and pure, wherein the divine Beauty is reflected, therein wilt thou find the Sun shining with Its rays, Its heat, Its disc, Its fair form all entire. For each separate entity possesseth its allotted portion of the solar light and telleth of the Sun, but that Universal Reality in all Its splendour, that stainless Mirror Whose qualities are appropriate to the qualities of the Sun revealed within It -- expresseth in their entirety the attributes of the Source of Glory. And that Universal Reality is Man, the divine Being, the Essence that abideth forever. 'Say, Call upon God, or call upon the All-Merciful; whichsoever ye call upon, most beauteous are His Names.'[1]
[1 Qur'án 17:110]

This is the meaning of the Messiah's words, that the Father is in the Son.[1] Dost thou not see that should a stainless mirror proclaim, 'Verily is the sun ashine within me, together with all its qualities, tokens and signs', such an utterance by such a mirror would be neither deceptive nor false? No, by the One Who created It, shaped It, fashioned It, and made It to be an entity conformable to the attributes of the glory within It! Praised be He Who created It! Praised be He Who fashioned It! Praised be He Who made It manifest!

[1 John 14:11]

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 41

O thou seeker after truth! The world of the Kingdom is one world. The only difference is that spring returneth over and over again, and setteth up a great new commotion throughout all created things. Then plain and hillside come alive, and **trees** turn delicately green, and leaves, blossoms and fruits come forth in beauty, infinite and tender. Wherefore the dispensations of past ages are intimately connected with those that follow them: indeed, they are one and the same, but as the world groweth, so doth the light, so doth the downpour of heavenly grace, and then the Day-Star shineth out in noonday splendour

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 58

Lord! Aid us to become seas surging with the billows of Thy wondrous Grace, streams flowing from Thine all-glorious Heights, goodly fruits upon the Tree of Thy heavenly Cause, **trees** waving through the breezes of Thy Bounty in Thy celestial Vineyard. O God! Make our souls dependent upon the Verses of Thy Divine Unity, our hearts cheered with the outpourings of Thy Grace, that we may unite even as the waves of one sea and become merged together as the rays of Thine effulgent Light; that our thoughts, our views, our feelings may become as one reality, manifesting the spirit of union throughout the world. Thou art the Gracious, the Bountiful, the Bestower, the Almighty, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 86

Convey thou unto the handmaids of the Merciful the message that when a test turneth violent they must stand unmoved, and faithful to their love for Baha. In winter come the storms, and the great winds blow, but then will follow spring in all its beauty, adorning hill and plain with perfumed plants and red anemones, fair to see. Then will the birds trill out upon the branches their songs of joy, and sermonize in lilting tones from the pulpits of the **trees**. Erelong shall ye bear witness that the lights are streaming forth, the banners of the realm above are waving, the sweet scents of the All-Merciful are wafted abroad, the hosts of the Kingdom are marching down, the angels of heaven are rushing forward, and the Holy Spirit is breathing upon all those regions. On that day thou shalt behold the waverers, men and women alike, frustrated of their hopes and in manifest loss. This is decreed by the Lord, the Revealer of Verses.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 163

Praise be to God, ye are firm and steadfast; be ye thankful that like unto blessed **trees** ye are firmly planted in the soil of the Covenant. It is sure that every firm one will grow, will yield new fruits and will increase daily in freshness and grace. Reflect upon all the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, whether epistles or prayers, and ye shall surely come across a thousand passages wherein Bahá'u'lláh prays: 'O God! Bring to naught the violators of the Covenant and defeat the oppressors of the Testament.' 'He who denieth the Covenant and the Testament is rejected by God, and he who remaineth firm and steadfast therein is favoured at the Threshold of Oneness.' Such sayings and prayers abound, refer to them and ye shall know.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 211

Now amidst all the peoples of the world must the beloved arise, with a heart even as the day-star, a strong inward urge, a shining brow, a musk-scented breath, a tongue speaking ever of God, an exposition crystal-clear, a high resolve, a power born of heaven, a spiritual character, a confirmation nothing short of the divine. Let them one and all become as a splendour on the horizon of heaven, and in the skies of the world a dazzling star. Let them be fruitful **trees** in the celestial bowers, sweet-scented blooms in the divine gardens; let them be verses of perfection on the page of the universe, words of oneness in the Book of Life. This is the first age, and the early beginnings of the dispensation of the Most Great Light, wherefore, within this century, virtues must be acquired, goodly qualities must be perfected within this span of time. In these very days the Abhá Paradise must pitch its pavilions on the plains of the world. The lights of reality must now be revealed, and the secrets of God's bestowals must now be made known, and now must the olden grace shine forth and this world change into the pleasure-ground of heaven, the garden of God. And out of pure hearts, and through heavenly bounties, all the perfections, qualities and attributes of the divine must now be made manifest.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 232

It is incumbent upon you to ponder in your hearts and meditate upon His words, and humbly to call upon Him, and to put away self in His heavenly Cause. These are the things that will make of you signs of guidance unto all mankind, and brilliant stars shining down from the all-highest horizon, and towering **trees** in the Abhá Paradise.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 241

Shine out like the day-star, be unresting as the sea; even as the clouds of heaven, shed ye life upon field and hill, and like unto April winds, blow freshness through those human **trees**, and bring them to their blossoming.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 245

Praise be to Him! The renown of His Cause hath reached to east and west, and word of the power of the Abhá Beauty hath quickened north and south. That cry from the American continent is a choir of holiness, that shout from far and near that riseth even to the Company on high is 'Ya Baha'u'l-Abhá!' Now is the east lit up with a glory, and the west rose-sweet, and all the earth is fragrant with ambergris, and the winds that blow over the Holy Shrine are laden with musk. Erelong shall ye see that even the darkest lands are bright, and the continents of Europe and Africa have turned into gardens of flowers, and forests of blossoming **trees**.

But since the dawning of this Day-Star was in Persia, and since from that orient the sun shone upon the west, it is our fondest hope that the flames of love's fire should blaze ever more vehemently in that land, and that there the splendour of this Holy Faith should grow ever more intense. May the tumult of God's Cause so shake that land to its foundations, may the spiritual force of His Word so manifest itself, as to make Iran the core and focus of well-being and peace. May rectitude and conciliation, and love and trust, issuing forth from Iran, bring immortality to all on earth. May she raise on the highest summits the banner of public order, of purest spirituality, of universal peace.

O ye loved ones of God! In this, the Bahá'í dispensation, God's Cause is spirit unalloyed. His Cause belongeth not to the material world. It cometh neither for strife nor war, nor for acts of mischief or of shame; it is neither for quarrelling with other Faiths, nor for conflicts with the nations. Its only army is the love of God, its only joy the clear wine of His knowledge, its only battle the expounding of the Truth; its one crusade is against the insistent self, the evil promptings of the human heart. Its victory is to submit and yield, and to be selfless is its everlasting glory. In brief, it is spirit upon spirit:

Unless ye must,
Bruise not the serpent in the dust,
How much less wound a man.
And if ye can,
No ant should ye alarm,
Much less a brother harm.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 255

The world of humanity is in need of great improvement, for it is a material jungle wherein **trees** without fruit flourish and useless weeds abound. If at all there is a tree that beareth fruit it is overshadowed by the fruitless ones, and if a flower groweth in this jungle it is hidden and concealed. The world of mankind is in need of expert gardeners who may convert these forests into delectable rose gardens, may substitute for these barren **trees** ones that yield fruit, and may replace these useless weeds with roses and fragrant herbs. Thus active souls and vigilant people rest neither by day nor by night; they strive to be closely linked to the divine Kingdom and thereby become the manifestations of infinite bounty and ideal gardeners for these forests. Thus the world of humanity will be wholly transformed and the merciful bounties become manifest.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 282

How displeasing to the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruits, the branches and the **trees** of that garden were all of the same shape and colour! Diversity of hues, form and shape, enricheth and adorneth the garden, and heighteneth the effect thereof. In like manner, when divers shades of thought, temperament and character, are brought together under the power and influence of one central agency, the beauty and glory of human perfection will be revealed and made manifest. Naught but the celestial potency of the Word of God, which ruleth and transcendeth the realities of all things, is capable of harmonizing the divergent thoughts, sentiments, ideas, and convictions of the children of men. Verily, it is the penetrating power in all things, the mover of souls and the binder and regulator in the world of humanity.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 291

If the earth is not cultivated, it becomes a jungle where useless weeds grow; but if a cultivator comes and tills the ground, it produces crops which nourish living creatures. It is evident, therefore, that the soil needs the cultivation of the farmer. Consider the **trees**: if they remain without a cultivator, they will be fruitless, and without fruit they are useless; but if they receive the care of a gardener, these same barren **trees** become fruitful, and through cultivation, fertilization and engrafting the **trees** which had bitter fruits yield sweet fruits. These are rational proofs; in this age the peoples of the world need the arguments of reason.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 7

In this material world time has cycles; places change through alternating seasons, and for souls there are progress, retrogression and education.

At one time it is the season of spring; at another it is the season of autumn; and again it is the season of summer or the season of winter.

In the spring there are the clouds which send down the precious rain, the musk-scented breezes and life-giving zephyrs; the air is perfectly temperate, the rain falls, the sun shines, the fecundating wind wafts the clouds, the world is renewed, and the breath of life appears in plants, in animals and in men. Earthly beings pass from one condition to another. All things are clothed in new garments, and the black earth is covered with herbage; mountains and plains are adorned with verdure; **trees** bear leaves and blossoms; gardens bring forth flowers and fragrant herbs. The world becomes another world, and it attains to a life-giving spirit. The earth was a lifeless body; it finds a new spirit, and produces endless beauty, grace and freshness. Thus the spring is the cause of new life and infuses a new spirit.

Afterward comes the summer, when the heat increases, and growth and development attain their greatest power. The energy of life in the vegetable kingdom reaches to the degree of perfection, the fruit appears, and the time of harvest ripens; a seed has become a sheaf, and the food is stored for winter. Afterward comes tumultuous autumn when unwholesome and sterile winds blow; it is the season of sickness, when all things are withered, and the balmy air is vitiated. The breezes of spring are changed to autumn winds; the fertile green **trees** have become withered and bare; flowers and fragrant herbs

fade away; the beautiful garden becomes a dustheap. Following this comes the season of winter, with cold and tempests. It snows, rains, hails, storms, thunders and lightens, freezes and congeals; all plants die, and animals languish and are wretched.

When this state is reached, again a new life-giving spring returns, and the cycle is renewed. The season of spring with its hosts of freshness and beauty spreads its tent on the plains and mountains with great pomp and magnificence. A second time the form of the creatures is renewed, and the creation of beings begins afresh; bodies grow and develop, the plains and wildernesses become green and fertile, **trees** bring forth blossoms, and the spring of last year returns in the utmost fullness and glory. Such is, and such ought to be, the cycle and succession of existence. Such is the cycle and revolution of the material world.

It is the same with the spiritual cycles of the Prophets -- that is to say, the day of the appearance of the Holy Manifestations is the spiritual springtime; it is the divine splendor; it is the heavenly bounty, the breeze of life, the rising of the Sun of Reality. Spirits are quickened; hearts are refreshed and invigorated; souls become good; existence is set in motion; human realities are gladdened, and grow and develop in good qualities and perfections. General progress is achieved and revival takes place, for it is the day of resurrection, the time of excitement and ferment, and the season of bliss, of joy and of intense rapture.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 74

But upon the plains, the mountains, the **trees** and fruits, only a portion of the light shines, through which they become visible, and are reared, and attain to the object of their existence, while the Perfect Man [1] is in the condition of a clear mirror in which the Sun of Reality becomes visible and manifest with all its qualities and perfections. So the Reality of Christ was a clear and polished mirror of the greatest purity and fineness. The Sun of Reality, the Essence of Divinity, reflected itself in this mirror and manifested its light and heat in it; but from the exaltation of its holiness, and the heaven of its sanctity, the Sun did not descend to dwell and abide in the mirror. No, it continues to subsist in its exaltation and sublimity, while appearing and becoming manifest in the mirror in beauty and perfection.

[1 The Divine Manifestation.]

Now if we say that we have seen the Sun in two mirrors -- one the Christ and one the Holy Spirit -- that is to say, that we have seen three Suns, one in heaven and the two others on the earth, we speak truly. And if we say that there is one Sun, and it is pure singleness, and has no partner and equal, we again speak truly.

The epitome of the discourse is that the Reality of Christ was a clear mirror, and the Sun of Reality -- that is to say, the Essence of Oneness, with its infinite perfections and attributes -- became visible in the mirror. The meaning is not that the Sun, which is the Essence of the Divinity, became divided and multiplied -- for the Sun is one -- but it appeared in the mirror. This is why Christ said, "The Father is in the Son," meaning that the Sun is visible and manifest in this mirror.

The Holy Spirit is the Bounty of God which becomes visible and evident in the Reality of Christ. The Sonship station is the heart of Christ, and the Holy Spirit is the station of the spirit of Christ. Hence it has become certain and proved that the Essence of Divinity is absolutely unique and has no equal, no likeness, no equivalent.

This is the signification of the Three Persons of the Trinity. If it were otherwise, the foundations of the Religion of God would rest upon an illogical proposition which the mind could never conceive, and how can the mind be forced to believe a thing which it cannot conceive? A thing cannot be grasped by the intelligence except when it is clothed in an intelligible form; otherwise, it is but an effort of the imagination.

It has now become clear, from this explanation, what is the meaning of the Three Persons of the Trinity. The Oneness of God is also proved.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 113