

gardens

O Thou the Compassionate God. Bestow upon me a heart which, like unto glass, may be illumined with the light of Thy love, and confer upon me thoughts which may change this world into a rose **garden** through the outpourings of heavenly grace.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 70

Say: We have made each one of Our Names a wellspring from which We have caused the streams of divine wisdom and understanding to gush forth and flow in the **garden** of Our Cause -- streams whose number none can reckon save Thy Lord, the Most Holy, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, the All-Wise. Say: We have generated all Letters from the Point and have caused them to return unto It, and We have sent It down again in the form of a human temple. All glory be unto the Author of this incomparable and wondrous handiwork! Ere long shall We unfold and expound It again, in Our name, the All-Glorious. This is indeed a token of Our grace, and I, truly, am the Most Bountiful, the Ancient of Days.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 38

By My life, O friend, wert thou to taste of these fruits, from the green **garden** of these blossoms which grow in the lands of knowledge, beside the orient lights of the Essence in the mirrors of names and attributes -- yearning would seize the reins of patience and reserve from out thy hand, and make thy soul to shake with the flashing light, and draw thee from the earthly homeland to the first, heavenly abode in the Center of Realities, and lift thee to a plane wherein thou wouldst soar in the air even as thou walkest upon the earth, and move over the water as thou runnest on the land. Wherefore, may it rejoice Me, and thee, and whosoever mounteth into the heaven of knowledge, and whose heart is refreshed by this, that the wind of certitude hath blown over the **garden** of his being, from the Sheba of the All-Merciful.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Seven Valleys*, p. 3

A divine Mine only can yield the gems of divine knowledge, and the fragrance of the mystic Flower can be inhaled only in the ideal **Garden**, and the lilies of ancient wisdom can blossom nowhere except in the city of a stainless heart.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 191

Consider how all created things eloquently testify to the revelation of that inner Light within them. Behold how within all things the portals of the Ridván of God are opened, that seekers may attain the cities of understanding and wisdom, and enter the **gardens** of knowledge and power. Within every **garden** they will behold the mystic bride of inner meaning enshrined within the chambers of utterance in the utmost grace and fullest adornment.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 139

From the **garden** of whose soul will the blossoms of the invisible realities spring forth?

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 60

Upon the anemones of the **garden** of love It bestoweth the mysteries of truth, and within the breasts of lovers It entrusteth the symbols of the innermost subtleties.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 59

Arise, and proclaim unto the entire creation the tidings that He Who is the All-Merciful hath directed His steps towards the Ridván and entered it. Guide, then, the people unto the **garden** of delight which God hath made the Throne of His Paradise.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 31

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.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gems of Divine Mysteries*, p. 71

And when this stage of the journey is completed and the wayfarer hath soared beyond this lofty station, he entereth the City of Divine Unity, and the **garden** of oneness, and the court of detachment. In this plane the seeker casteth away all signs, allusions, veils, and words, and beholdeth all things with an eye illumined by the effulgent lights which God Himself hath shed upon him. In his journey he seeth all differences return to a single word and all allusions culminate in a single point. Unto this beareth witness he who sailed upon the ark of fire and followed the inmost path to the pinnacle of glory in the realm of immortality: "Knowledge is one point, which the foolish have multiplied."

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gems of Divine Mysteries*, p. 20

Know thou of a truth that the seeker must, at the beginning of his quest for God, enter the **Garden** of Search. In this journey it behoveth the wayfarer to detach himself from all save God and to close his eyes to all that is in the heavens and on the earth. There must not linger in his heart either the hate or the love of any soul, to the extent that they would hinder him from attaining the habitation of the celestial Beauty. He must sanctify his soul from the veils of glory and refrain from boasting of such worldly vanities, outward knowledge, or other gifts as God may have bestowed upon him. He must search after the truth to the utmost of his ability and exertion, that God may guide him in the paths of His favour and the ways of His mercy. For He, verily, is the best of helpers unto His servants. He saith, and He verily speaketh the truth: "Whoso maketh efforts for Us, in Our ways shall We assuredly guide him." And furthermore: "Fear God and God will give you knowledge."

In this journey the seeker becometh witness to a myriad changes and transformations, confluences and divergences. He beholdeth the wonders of Divinity in the mysteries of creation and discovereth the paths of guidance and the ways of his Lord. Such is the station reached by them that search after God, and such are the heights attained by those who hasten unto Him.

When once the seeker hath ascended unto this station, he will enter the City of Love and Rapture, whereupon the winds of love will blow and the breezes of the spirit will waft.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gems of Divine Mysteries*, p. 16

Now that the discourse hath reached this exalted and intractable theme and touched upon this sublime and impenetrable mystery, know that the Christian and Jewish peoples have not grasped the intent of the words of God and the promises He hath made to them in His Book, and have therefore denied His Cause, turned aside from His Prophets, and rejected His proofs. Had they but fixed their gaze upon the testimony of God itself, had they refused to follow in the footsteps of the abject and foolish among their leaders and divines, they would doubtless have attained to the repository of guidance and the treasury of virtue, and quaffed from the crystal waters of life eternal in the city of the All-Merciful, in the **garden** of the All-Glorious, and within the inner reality of His paradise. But as they have refused to see with the eyes wherewith God hath endowed them, and desired things other than that which He in His mercy had desired for them, they have strayed far from the retreats of nearness, have been deprived of the living waters of reunion and the wellspring of His grace, and have lain as dead within the shrouds of their own selves.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gems of Divine Mysteries*, p. 6

And further he -- peace be upon him -- said: "Therefore [the soul] is the Most Sublime Essence of God, the Tree of Blessedness, the Lote-Tree beyond which there is no passing, the **Garden** of Repose."

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 111

Isaiah saith: "The Lord alone shall be exalted in that Day." Concerning the greatness of the Revelation He saith: "Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty." And in another connection He saith: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the splendor of our God."

These passages stand in need of no commentary. They are shining and manifest as the sun, and glowing and luminous as light itself. Every fair-minded person is led, by the fragrance of these words, unto the **garden** of understanding, and attaineth unto that from which most men are veiled and debarred. Say: Fear God, O people, and follow not the doubts of such as shout aloud, who have broken the Covenant of God and His Testament, and denied His mercy that hath preceded all that are in the heavens and all that are on earth.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 146

His questions were presented to Bahá'u'lláh through an intermediary, and this Tablet was revealed in response on the same day. A number of other important themes are addressed in this work as well: the cause of the rejection of the Prophets of the past; the danger of a literal reading of scripture; the meaning of the signs and portents of the Bible concerning the advent of the new Manifestation; the continuity of divine revelation; intimations of Bahá'u'lláh's own approaching declaration; the significance of such symbolic terms as "the Day of Judgement", "the Resurrection", "attainment to the Divine Presence", and "life and death"; and the stages of the spiritual quest through "the **Garden** of Search", "the City of Divine Unity", "the **Garden** of Wonderment", "the City of Absolute Nothingness", "the City of Immortality", and "the City that hath no name or description".

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gems of Divine Mysteries*, p. iii introduction

O My brother! If thou be a champion of this arena, speed within the lands of certitude, that thy soul may be delivered in this day from the bondage of misbelief, and that thou mayest perceive the sweet savours that waft from this **garden**. Verily, the perfume-laden breezes that carry the fragrance of this city blow over all regions. Forfeit not thy portion thereof and be not of the heedless.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gems of Divine Mysteries*, p. 56

After this heavenly journey and mystical ascent the wayfarer will enter within the **Garden** of Wonderment.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gems of Divine Mysteries*, p. 67

From this most august and exalted station, and from this most sublime and glorious plane, the seeker entereth the City of Immortality, therein to abide forever. In this station he beholdeth himself established upon the throne of independence and the seat of exaltation. Then will he comprehend the meaning of that which hath been revealed of old concerning the day "whereon God shall enrich all through His abundance".⁶⁶ Well is it with them that have attained unto this station and drunk their fill from this snow-white chalice before this Crimson Pillar.

Having, in this journey, immersed himself in the ocean of immortality, rid his heart from attachment to aught save Him, and attained unto the loftiest heights of everlasting life, the seeker will see no annihilation either for himself or for any other soul. He will quaff from the cup of immortality, tread in its land, soar in its atmosphere, consort with them that are its embodiments, partake of the imperishable and incorruptible fruits of the tree of eternity, and be forever accounted, in the lofty heights of immortality, amongst the denizens of the everlasting realm.

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.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gems of Divine Mysteries*, p. 71

Arise, and proclaim unto the entire creation the tidings that He Who is the All-Merciful hath directed His steps towards the Ridván and entered it. Guide, then, the people unto the **garden** of delight which God hath made the Throne of His Paradise. We have chosen thee to be our most mighty Trumpet, whose blast is to signalize the resurrection of all mankind.

Say: This is the Paradise on whose foliage the wine of utterance hath imprinted the testimony: "He that was hidden from the eyes of men is revealed, girded with sovereignty and power!" This is the Paradise, the rustling of whose leaves proclaims: "O ye that inhabit the heavens and the earth! There hath appeared what hath never previously appeared. He Who, from everlasting, had concealed His Face from the sight of creation is now come." From the whispering breeze that wafteth amidst its branches there cometh the cry: "He Who is the sovereign Lord of all is made manifest. The Kingdom is God's," while from its streaming waters can be heard the murmur: "All eyes are gladdened, for He Whom none hath beheld, Whose secret no one hath discovered, hath lifted the veil of glory, and uncovered the countenance of Beauty."

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 31

Wherefore, be thankful to God, for having strengthened thee to aid His Cause, for having made the flowers of knowledge and understanding to spring forth in the **garden** of thine heart. Thus hath His grace encompassed thee, and encompassed the whole of creation.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 303

Release yourselves, O nightingales of God, from the thorns and brambles of wretchedness and misery, and wing your flight to the rose-**garden** of unfading splendor. O My friends that dwell upon the dust! Haste forth unto your celestial habitation. Announce unto yourselves the joyful tidings: "He Who is the Best-Beloved is come! He hath crowned Himself with the glory of God's Revelation, and hath unlocked to the face of men the doors of His ancient Paradise." Let all eyes rejoice, and let every ear be gladdened, for now is the time to gaze on His beauty, now is the fit time to hearken to His voice. Proclaim unto every longing lover: "Behold, your Well-Beloved hath come among men!" and to the messengers of the Monarch of love impart the tidings: "Lo, the Adored One hath appeared arrayed in the fullness of His glory!" O lovers of His beauty! Turn the anguish of your separation from Him into the joy of an everlasting reunion, and let the sweetness of His presence dissolve the bitterness of your remoteness from His court.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 319

Hear Me, ye mortal birds! In the Rose **Garden** of changeless splendor a Flower hath begun to bloom, compared to which every other flower is but a thorn, and before the brightness of Whose glory the very essence of beauty must pale and wither. Arise, therefore, and, with the whole enthusiasm of your hearts, with all the eagerness of your souls, the full fervor of your will, and the concentrated efforts of your entire being, strive to attain the paradise of His presence, and endeavor to inhale the fragrance of the incorruptible Flower, to breathe the sweet savors of holiness, and to obtain a portion of this perfume of celestial glory. Whoso followeth this counsel will break his chains asunder, will taste the abandonment of enraptured love, will attain unto his heart's desire, and will surrender his soul into the hands of his Beloved. Bursting through his cage, he will, even as the bird of the spirit, wing his flight to his holy and everlasting nest.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 320

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.

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

From the sweet-scented streams of Thine eternity give me to drink, O my God, and of the fruits of the tree of Thy being enable me to taste, O my Hope! From the crystal springs of Thy love suffer me to quaff, O my Glory, and beneath the shadow of Thine everlasting providence let me abide, O my Light! Within the meadows of Thy nearness, before Thy presence, make me able to roam, O my Beloved, and at the right hand of the throne of Thy mercy, seat me, O my Desire! From the fragrant breezes of Thy joy let a breath pass over me, O my Goal, and into the heights of the paradise of Thy reality let me gain admission, O my Adored One! To the melodies of the dove of Thy oneness suffer me to hearken, O Resplendent One, and through the spirit of Thy power and Thy might quicken me, O my Provider! In the spirit of Thy love keep me steadfast, O my Succorer, and in the path of Thy good-pleasure set firm my steps, O my Maker! Within the **garden** of Thine immortality, before Thy countenance, let me abide for ever, O Thou Who art merciful unto me, and upon the seat of Thy glory stablish me, O Thou Who art my Possessor! To the heaven of Thy loving-kindness lift me up, O my Quickener, and unto the Day-Star of Thy guidance lead me, O Thou my Attractor! Before the revelations of Thine invisible spirit summon me to be present, O Thou Who art my Origin and my Highest Wish, and unto the essence of the fragrance of Thy beauty, which Thou wilt manifest, cause me to return, O Thou Who art my God!

Potent art Thou to do what pleasest Thee. Thou art, verily, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious, the All-Highest.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 258

Lauded be Thy name, O Lord my God, and my Master! Thou bearest witness, and seest, and knowest the things that have befallen Thy loved ones in Thy days, and the continual trials, and the successive tribulations, and the incessant afflictions, which have been sent down upon Thine elect. Such hath been their plight that the earth became too strait for them, and they were encompassed by the evidences of Thy wrath and the signs of Thy fear in every land, and the doors of Thy mercy and Thy loving-kindness were shut against them, and the **garden** of their hearts was deprived of the overflowing showers of Thy grace and Thy bountiful favors. Wilt Thou withhold, O my God, from such as love Thee the wonders of Thine ascendancy and triumph? Wilt Thou shatter, O my Beloved, the hopes which they who are devoted to Thee have fixed on Thy manifold bounties and gifts? Wilt Thou keep back, O my Master, those that have recognized Thee from the shores of Thy sanctified knowledge, or wilt Thou cease to rain down upon the hearts of such as desire Thee the showers of Thy transcendent grace? No, no, and to this Thy glory beareth me witness! I testify this very moment that Thy mercy hath surpassed all created things, and Thy loving-kindness encompassed all that are in heaven and all that are on earth. From everlasting the doors of Thy generosity were open to the faces of Thy servants, and the gentle winds of Thy grace were wafted over the hearts of Thy creatures, and the overflowing rains of Thy bounty were showered upon Thy people and the dwellers of Thy realm.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 332

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

O thou seeker who art gifted with keen insight. I swear by Him Who attracted the Concourse on High through the potency of His most sublime Word! Verily, the birds abiding within the domains of My Kingdom and the doves dwelling in the rose-**garden** of My wisdom utter such melodies and warblings as are inscrutable to all but God, the Lord of the kingdoms of earth and heaven; and were these melodies to be revealed even to an extent smaller than a needle's eye, the people of tyranny would utter such calumnies as none among former generations hath ever uttered, and would commit such deeds as no one in past ages and centuries hath ever committed. They have rejected the bounty of God and His proofs and have repudiated the testimony of God and His signs. They have gone astray and have caused the people to go astray, yet perceive it not. They worship vain imaginings but know it not. They have taken idle fancies for their lords and have neglected God, yet understand not. They have abandoned the most great Ocean and are hastening towards the pool, but comprehend not. They follow their own idle fancies while turning aside from God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 106

Every word is endowed with a spirit, therefore the speaker or expounder should carefully deliver his words at the appropriate time and place, for the impression which each word maketh is clearly evident and perceptible. The Great Being saith: One word may be likened unto fire, another unto light, and the

influence which both exert is manifest in the world. Therefore an enlightened man of wisdom should primarily speak with words as mild as milk, that the children of men may be nurtured and edified thereby and may attain the ultimate goal of human existence which is the station of true understanding and nobility. And likewise He saith: One word is like unto springtime causing the tender saplings of the rose-**garden** of knowledge to become verdant and flourishing, while another word is even as a deadly poison. It behoveth a prudent man of wisdom to speak with utmost leniency and forbearance so that the sweetness of his words may induce everyone to attain that which becometh man's station.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 172

It behoveth whosoever hath set his face towards the Most Sublime Horizon to cleave tenaciously unto the cord of patience, and to put his reliance in God, the Help in Peril, the Unconstrained. O ye loved ones of God! Drink your fill from the well-spring of wisdom, and walk ye in the **garden** of wisdom, and soar ye in the atmosphere of wisdom, and speak forth with wisdom and eloquence. Thus biddeth you your Lord, the Almighty, the All-Knowing.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 212

Great God! When the stream of utterance reached this stage, We beheld, and lo! the sweet savours of God were being wafted from the dayspring of Revelation, and the morning breeze was blowing out of the Sheba of the Eternal. Its tidings rejoiced anew the heart, and imparted immeasurable gladness to the soul. It made all things new, and brought unnumbered and inestimable gifts from the unknowable Friend. The robe of human praise can never hope to match Its noble stature, and Its shining figure the mantle of utterance can never fit. Without word It unfoldeth the inner mysteries, and without speech It revealeth the secrets of the divine sayings. It teacheth lamentation and moaning to the nightingales warbling upon the bough of remoteness and bereavement, instructeth them in the art of love's ways, and showeth them the secret of heart-surrender. To the flowers of the Ridván of heavenly reunion It revealeth the endearments of the impassioned lover, and unveileth the charm of the fair. Upon the anemones of the **garden** of love It bestoweth the mysteries of truth, and within the breasts of lovers It entrusteth the symbols of the innermost subtleties. At this hour, so liberal is the outpouring of Its grace that the holy Spirit itself is envious! It hath imparted to the drop the waves of the sea, and endowed the mote with the splendour of the sun. So great are the overflowings of Its bounty that the foulest beetle hath sought the perfume of the musk, and the bat the light of the sun. It hath quickened the dead with the breath of life, and caused them to speed out of the sepulchres of their mortal bodies. It hath established the ignorant upon the seats of learning, and elevated the oppressor to the throne of justice.

The universe is pregnant with these manifold bounties, awaiting the hour when the effects of Its unseen gifts will be made manifest in this world, when the languishing and sore athirst will attain the living Kawthar of their Well-Beloved, and the erring wanderer, lost in the wilds of remoteness and nothingness, will enter the tabernacle of life, and attain reunion with his heart's desire. In the soil of whose heart will these holy seeds germinate? From the **garden** of whose soul will the blossoms of the invisible realities spring forth? Verily, I say, so fierce is the blaze of the Bush of love, burning in the Sinai of the heart, that the streaming waters of holy utterance can never quench its flame. Oceans can never allay this Leviathan's burning thirst, and this Phoenix of the undying fire can abide nowhere save in the glow of the countenance of the Well-Beloved. Therefore, O brother! kindle with the oil of wisdom the lamp of the spirit within the innermost chamber of thy heart, and guard it with the globe of understanding, that the breath of the infidel may extinguish not its flame nor dim its brightness. Thus have We illuminated the heavens of utterance with the splendours of the Sun of divine wisdom and understanding, that thy heart may find peace, that thou mayest be of those who, on the wings of certitude, have soared unto the heaven of the love of their Lord, the All-Merciful.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitab-i-Iqan*, p. 59

This people have repudiated all these verses, that unmistakably testify to the reality of "attainment unto the Divine Presence." No theme hath been more emphatically asserted in the holy scriptures. Notwithstanding, they have deprived themselves of this lofty and most exalted rank, this supreme and glorious station. Some have contended that by "attainment unto the Divine Presence" is meant the "Revelation" of God in the Day of Resurrection. Should they assert that the "Revelation" of God signifieth a "Universal Revelation," it is clear and evident that such revelation already existeth in all things. The truth of this We have already established, inasmuch as We have demonstrated that all things are the recipients and revealers of the splendours of that ideal King, and that the signs of the revelation of that Sun, the Source of all splendour, exist and are manifest in the mirrors of beings. Nay, were man to gaze with the eye of divine and spiritual discernment, he will readily recognize that nothing whatsoever can exist without the revelation of the splendour of God, the ideal King. Consider how all created things eloquently testify to the revelation of that inner Light within them. Behold how within all things the portals of the Ridván of God are opened, that seekers may attain the cities of understanding and wisdom, and enter the **gardens** of knowledge and power. Within every **garden** they will behold the mystic bride of inner meaning enshrined within the chambers of utterance in the utmost grace and fullest adornment. Most of the verses of the Qur'án indicate, and bear witness to, this spiritual theme. The verse: "Neither is there aught which doth not celebrate His praise"[1] is eloquent testimony thereto; and "We noted all things and wrote them down,"[2] a faithful witness thereof. Now, if by "attainment unto the Presence of God" is meant attainment unto the knowledge of such revelation, it is evident that all men have already attained unto the presence of the unchangeable Countenance of that peerless King. Why, then, restrict such revelation to the Day of Resurrection?

[1 Qur'án 17:44.]

[2 Qur'án 78:29.]

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 139

O my brother! A divine Mine only can yield the gems of divine knowledge, and the fragrance of the mystic Flower can be inhaled only in the ideal **Garden**, and the lilies of ancient wisdom can blossom nowhere except in the city of a stainless heart. "In a rich soil, its plants spring forth abundantly by permission of its Lord, and in that soil which is bad, they spring forth but scantily."[3]

[3 Qur'án 7:57.]

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 191

And yet, in the sight of God, these common people are infinitely superior and exalted above their religious leaders who have turned away from the one true God. The understanding of His words and the comprehension of the utterances of the Birds of Heaven are in no wise dependent upon human learning. They depend solely upon purity of heart, chastity of soul, and freedom of spirit. This is evidenced by those who, today, though without a single letter of the accepted standards of learning, are occupying the loftiest seats of knowledge; and the **garden** of their hearts is adorned, through the showers of divine grace, with the roses of wisdom and the tulips of understanding. Well is it with the sincere in heart for their share of the light of a mighty Day!

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 210

O YE PEOPLE THAT HAVE MINDS TO KNOW AND EARS TO HEAR!

The first call of the Beloved is this: O mystic nightingale! Abide not but in the rose-**garden** of the spirit. O messenger of the Solomon of love! Seek thou no shelter except in the Sheba of the well-beloved, and O immortal phoenix! dwell not save on the mount of faithfulness. Therein is thy habitation, if on the wings of thy soul thou soarest to the realm of the infinite and seekest to attain thy goal.

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

O FRIEND!

In the **garden** of thy heart plant naught but the rose of love, and from the nightingale of affection and desire loosen not thy hold. Treasure the companionship of the righteous and eschew all fellowship with the ungodly.

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

O YE DWELLERS IN THE HIGHEST PARADISE!

Proclaim unto the children of assurance that within the realms of holiness, nigh unto the celestial paradise, a new **garden** hath appeared, round which circle the denizens of the realm on high and the immortal dwellers of the exalted paradise. Strive, then, that ye may attain that station, that ye may unravel the mysteries of love from its wind-flowers and learn the secret of divine and consummate wisdom from its eternal fruits. Solaced are the eyes of them that enter and abide therein!

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

O DWELLERS OF MY PARADISE!

With the hands of loving-kindness I have planted in the holy **garden** of paradise the young tree of your love and friendship, and have watered it with the goodly showers of My tender grace; now that the hour of its fruiting is come, strive that it may be protected, and be not consumed with the flame of desire and passion.

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

O OFFSPRING OF DUST!

Be not content with the ease of a passing day, and deprive not thyself of everlasting rest. Barter not the **garden** of eternal delight for the dust-heap of a mortal world. Up from thy prison ascend unto the glorious meads above, and from thy mortal cage wing thy flight unto the paradise of the Placeless.

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

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*

O HIGH priests! Ears have been given you that they may hearken unto the mystery of Him Who is the Self-Dependent, and eyes that they may behold Him. Wherefore flee ye? The Incomparable Friend is manifest. He speaketh that wherein lieth salvation. Were ye, O high priests, to discover the perfume of the rose-**garden** of understanding, ye would seek none other but Him, and would recognize, in His new vesture, the All-Wise and Peerless One, and would turn your eyes from the world and all who seek it, and would arise to help Him.

WHATSOEVER hath been announced in the Books hath been revealed and made clear. From every direction the signs have been manifested. The Omnipotent One is calling, in this Day, and announcing the appearance of the Supreme Heaven.

THIS is not the day whereon the high priests can command and exercise their authority. In your Book it is stated that the high priests will, on that Day, lead men far astray, and will prevent them from drawing nigh unto Him. He indeed is a high priest who hath seen the light and hastened unto the way leading to the Beloved.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 105

Of this hath the nightingale of oneness sung in the **garden** of Ghawthiyyih.[1] He saith: "And there shall appear upon the tablet of thine heart a writing of the subtle mysteries of 'Fear God and God will give you knowledge'; [2] and the bird of thy soul shall recall the holy sanctuaries of preexistence and soar on the wings of longing in the heaven of 'walk the beaten paths of thy Lord', [3] and gather the fruits of communion in the **gardens** of 'Then feed on every kind of fruit.'" [3]

[1 Sermon by Ali.]

[2 Qur'án 2:282.]

[3 Qur'án 16:71.]

By My life, O friend, wert thou to taste of these fruits, from the green **garden** of these blossoms which grow in the lands of knowledge, beside the orient lights of the Essence in the mirrors of names and attributes -- yearning would seize the reins of patience and reserve from out thy hand, and make thy soul to shake with the flashing light, and draw thee from the earthly homeland to the first, heavenly abode in the Center of Realities, and lift thee to a plane wherein thou wouldst soar in the air even as thou walkest upon the earth, and move over the water as thou runnest on the land. Wherefore, may it rejoice Me, and thee, and whosoever mounteth into the heaven of knowledge, and whose heart is refreshed by this, that the wind of certitude hath blown over the **garden** of his being, from the Sheba of the All-Merciful.

Peace be upon him who followeth the Right Path!

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Seven Valleys*, p. 3

There was once a lover who had sighed for long years in separation from his beloved, and wasted in the fire of remoteness. From the rule of love, his heart was empty of patience, and his body weary of his spirit; he reckoned life without her as a mockery, and time consumed him away. How many a day he found no rest in longing for her; how many a night the pain of her kept him from sleep; his body was worn to a sigh, his heart's wound had turned him to a cry of sorrow. He had given a thousand lives for one taste of the cup of her presence, but it availed him not. The doctors knew no cure for him, and companions avoided his company; yea, physicians have no medicine for one sick of love, unless the favor of the beloved one deliver him.

At last, the tree of his longing yielded the fruit of despair, and the fire of his hope fell to ashes. Then one night he could live no more, and he went out of his house and made for the marketplace. On a sudden, a watchman followed after him. He broke into a run, with the watchman following; then other watchmen came together, and barred every passage to the weary one. And the wretched one cried from his heart, and ran here and there, and moaned to himself: "Surely this watchman is Izra'il, my angel of death, following so fast upon me; or he is a tyrant of men, seeking to harm me." His feet carried him on, the one bleeding with the arrow of love, and his heart lamented. Then he came to a **garden** wall, and with untold pain he scaled it, for it proved very high; and forgetting his life, he threw himself down to the **garden**.

And there he beheld his beloved with a lamp in her hand, searching for a ring she had lost. When the heart-surrendered lover looked on his ravishing love, he drew a great breath and raised up his hands in prayer, crying: "O God! Give Thou glory to the watchman, and riches and long life. For the watchman was Gabriel, guiding this poor one; or he was Israfil, bringing life to this wretched one!"

Indeed, his words were true, for he had found many a secret justice in this seeming tyranny of the watchman, and seen how many a mercy lay hid behind the veil. Out of wrath, the guard had led him who was athirst in love's desert to the sea of his loved one, and lit up the dark night of absence with the light of reunion. He had driven one who was afar, into the **garden** of nearness, had guided an ailing soul to the heart's physician.

Now if the lover could have looked ahead, he would have blessed the watchman at the start, and prayed on his behalf, and he would have seen that tyranny as justice; but since the end was veiled to him, he moaned and made his plaint in the beginning. Yet those who journey in the **garden** land of knowledge, because they see the end in the beginning, see peace in war and friendliness in anger.

Such is the state of the wayfarers in this Valley; but the people of the Valleys above this see the end and the beginning as one; nay, they see neither beginning nor end, and witness neither "first" nor "last." [1] Nay rather, the denizens of the undying city, who dwell in the green **garden** land, see not even "neither first nor last"; they fly from all that is first, and repulse all that is last. For these have passed over the worlds of names, and fled beyond the worlds of attributes as swift as lightning. Thus is it said: "Absolute Unity excludeth all attributes." [2] And they have made their dwelling-place in the shadow of the Essence.

[1 Qur'án 57:3.]

[2 Saying attributed to Ali.]

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Seven Valleys*, p. 13

O friend, till thou enter the **garden** of such mysteries, thou shalt never set lip to the undying wine of this Valley. And shouldst thou taste of it, thou wilt shield thine eyes from all things else, and drink of the wine of contentment; and thou wilt loose thyself from all things else, and bind thyself to Him, and throw thy life down in His path, and cast thy soul away. However, there is no other in this region that thou need forget: "There was God and there was naught beside Him." [1] For on this plane the traveler witnesseth the beauty of the Friend in everything. Even in fire, he seeth the face of the Beloved. He beholdeth in illusion the secret of reality, and readeth from the attributes the riddle of the Essence. For he hath burnt away the veils with his sighing, and unwrapped the shroudings with a single glance; with piercing sight he gazeth on the new creation; with lucid heart he graspeth subtle verities. This is sufficiently attested by: "And we have made thy sight sharp in this day." [2]

[1 Hadith, i.e. action or utterance traditionally attributed to the Prophet Muhammad or to one of the holy Imams.]

[2 From Qur'án 50:21.]

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Seven Valleys*, p. 30

The cloud of the Loved One's mercy raineth only on the **garden** of the spirit, and bestoweth this bounty only in the season of spring.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Seven Valleys*, p. 37

O Brother! Not every sea hath pearls; not every branch will flower, nor will the nightingale sing thereon. Then, ere the nightingale of the mystic paradise repair to the **garden** of God, and the rays of the heavenly morning return to the Sun of Truth -- make thou an effort, that haply in this dust heap of the mortal world thou mayest catch a fragrance from the everlasting **garden**, and live forever in the shadow of the peoples of this city. And when thou hast attained this highest station and come to this mightiest plane, then shalt thou gaze on the Beloved, and forget all else.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Seven Valleys*, p. 37

Ecstasy alone can encompass this theme, not utterance nor argument; and whosoever hath dwelt at this stage of the journey, or caught a breath from this **garden** land, knoweth whereof We speak.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Seven Valleys*, p. 39

O My friend! Many a hound pursueth this gazelle of the desert of oneness; many a talon claweth at this thrush of the eternal **garden**. Pitiless ravens do lie in wait for this bird of the heavens of God, and the huntsman of envy stalketh this deer of the meadow of love.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Seven Valleys*, p. 41

O dwellers of the earth! Would ye contend that if We raise up a soul unto the Sadratu'l-Muntaha,⁶ it shall then cease to be subject to the power of Our sovereignty and dominion? Nay, by Mine own Self! Should it be Our wish, We would return it to the dust in less than the twinkling of an eye. Consider a tree: Behold how We plant it in a **garden**, and nourish it with the waters of Our loving care; and how, when it hath grown tall and mature, and brought forth verdant leaves and goodly fruits, We send forth the tempestuous gales of Our decree, tear it up by its roots, and lay it prostrate upon the face of the earth. So hath it been Our way with all things, and so shall it be in this day. Such, in truth, are the matchless wonders of Our immutable method -- a method which hath ever governed, and shall continue to govern, all things, if ye be of them that perceive. None, however, knoweth the wisdom thereof save God, the All-Powerful, the Almighty, the All-Wise.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*

Say: We have made each one of Our Names a wellspring from which We have caused the streams of divine wisdom and understanding to gush forth and flow in the **garden** of Our Cause -- streams whose number none can reckon save Thy Lord, the Most Holy, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, the All-Wise. Say: We have generated all Letters from the Point and have caused them to return unto It, and We have sent It down again in the form of a human temple. All glory be unto the Author of this incomparable and wondrous handiwork! Erelong shall We unfold and expound It again, in Our name, the All-Glorious. This is indeed a token of Our grace, and I, truly, am the Most Bountiful, the Ancient of Days.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 38

Say: We have made each one of Our Names a wellspring from which We have caused the streams of divine wisdom and understanding to gush forth and flow in the **garden** of Our Cause -- streams whose number none can reckon save Thy Lord, the Most Holy, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, the All-Wise. Say: We have generated all Letters from the Point and have caused them to return unto It, and We have sent It down again in the form of a human temple. All glory be unto the Author of this incomparable and wondrous handiwork! Erelong shall We unfold and expound It again, in Our name, the All-Glorious. This is indeed a token of Our grace, and I, truly, am the Most Bountiful, the Ancient of Days.

We have brought forth all Lights from the Orb of Our name, the True One, have caused them to return unto It, and have again made them manifest in the form of a human temple. All glory be unto the Lord of strength, might, and power! None can withstand the operation of My will or the exercise of My might. I am He Who hath raised up all creatures through a word of My mouth, and My power is, in truth, equal to My purpose.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 40

Where are they who went in quest of earthly pleasures and the fruits of carnal desires? Whither are fled their fair and comely women? Where are their swaying branches, their spreading boughs, their lofty mansions, their trellised **gardens**? And what of the delights of these **gardens** -- their exquisite grounds

and gentle breezes, their purling streams, their sighing winds, their cooing doves and rustling leaves? Where now are their resplendent morns and their brightsome countenances wreathed in smiles? Alas for them! All have perished and are gone to rest beneath a canopy of dust. Of them one heareth neither name nor mention; none knoweth of their affairs, and naught remaineth of their signs.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 132

The first thing to do is to satisfy the enquirer of the need of a Creator and an educator. He must be sure that there can be nothing in the world of existence without a Power to put it into existence, and that nothing can grow or take effect without one who is complete and perfect to care for it. For instance, a plant requires, in order to grow, the rays of the sun to shine upon it, the rain to water it, the breezes to blow upon it; otherwise it will not be properly developed. So too, with a child, unless he has some one to train him and instruct him, he would grow up a savage. Though everything in this world receives growth and development by natural laws, yet we find the cultivator necessary to give order and arrangement. Not only does the plant require for its existence the sun, rain and breezes, but it also needs a **gardener** to watch over and cultivate it, in order that it may gain its full perfection. If a **garden** is left to itself, it quickly becomes a wilderness; the flowers will not attain full beauty, and the trees will not produce good fruit. So it is with the souls. After they have been put into existence by the Being, it is necessary for them to have an instructor, in order that they may progress and develop and attain their highest station, and their every good and progress depends on such a trainer.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í Prayers* 9, p. 38

O God! Rear this little babe in the bosom of Thy love, and give it milk from the breast of Thy Providence. Cultivate this fresh plant in the rose **garden** of Thy love and aid it to grow through the showers of Thy bounty. Make it a child of the kingdom, and lead it to Thy heavenly realm. Thou art powerful and kind, and Thou art the Bestower, the Generous, the Lord of surpassing bounty.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 34

O God! Educate these children. These children are the plants of Thine orchard, the flowers of Thy meadow, the roses of Thy **garden**. Let Thy rain fall upon them; let the Sun of Reality shine upon them with Thy love. Let Thy breeze refresh them in order that they may be trained, grow and develop, and appear in the utmost beauty. Thou art the Giver. Thou art the Compassionate.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 34

O Lord! Make these children excellent plants. Let them grow and develop in the **Garden** of Thy Covenant, and bestow freshness and beauty through the outpourings of the clouds of the Abha Kingdom.

O Thou kind Lord! I am a little child, exalt me by admitting me to the kingdom. I am earthly, make me heavenly; I am of the world below, let me belong to the realm above; gloomy, suffer me to become radiant; material, make me spiritual, and grant that I may manifest Thine infinite bounties.

Thou art the Powerful, the All-Loving.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 34

I am a child of tender years. Nourish me from the breast of Thy mercy, train me in the bosom of Thy love, educate me in the school of Thy guidance and develop me under the shadow of Thy bounty. Deliver me from darkness, make me a brilliant light; free me from unhappiness, make me a flower of the rose **garden**; suffer me to become a servant of Thy threshold and confer upon me the disposition and

nature of the righteous; make me a cause of bounty to the human world, and crown my head with the diadem of eternal life.

Verily, Thou art the Powerful, the Mighty, the Seer, the Hearer.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 36

O Peerless Lord! Be Thou a shelter for this poor child and a kind and forgiving Master unto this erring and unhappy soul. O Lord! Though we are but worthless plants, yet we belong to Thy **garden** of roses. Though saplings without leaves and blossoms, yet we are a part of Thine orchard. Nurture this plant then through the outpourings of the clouds of Thy tender mercy and quicken and refresh this sapling through the reviving breath of Thy spiritual springtime. Suffer him to become heedful, discerning and noble, and grant that he may attain eternal life and abide in Thy Kingdom for evermore.

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- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 37

O my Lord! Purify them from trespasses, dispel their sorrows, and change their darkness into light. Cause them to enter the **garden** of happiness, cleanse them with the most pure water, and grant them to behold Thy splendors on the loftiest mount.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 44

O Lord, glorify his station, shelter him under the pavilion of Thy supreme mercy, cause him to enter Thy glorious paradise, and perpetuate his existence in Thine exalted rose **garden**, that he may plunge into the sea of light in the world of mysteries.

Verily, Thou art the Generous, the Powerful, the Forgiver and the Bestower.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 45

O Lord, shower upon them all the outpourings of Thy mercy, rain down upon them all the waters of Thy grace. Make them to grow as beautiful plants in the **garden** of heaven, and from the full and brimming clouds of Thy bestowals and out of the deep pools of Thine abounding grace make Thou this **garden** to flower, and keep it ever green and lustrous, ever fresh and shimmering and fair.

Thou art, verily, the Mighty, the Exalted, the Powerful, He Who alone, in the heavens and on the earth, abideth unchanged. There is none other God save Thee, the Lord of manifest tokens and signs.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 154

Shield them within the stronghold of Thy protection and safety, preserve them in Thy watchful care, look upon them with the eyes of Thy providence and mercy, make them the signs of Thy divine unity that are manifest throughout all regions, the standards of Thy might that wave above Thy mansions of grandeur, the shining lamps that burn with the oil of Thy wisdom in the globes of Thy guidance, the birds of the

garden of Thy knowledge that warble upon the topmost boughs in Thy sheltering paradise, and the leviathans of the ocean of Thy bounty that plunge by Thy supreme mercy in the fathomless deeps.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 155

O Thou Provider! The dearest wish of this servant of Thy Threshold is to behold the friends of East and West in close embrace; to see all the members of human society gathered with love in a single great assemblage, even as individual drops of water collected in one mighty sea; to behold them all as birds in one **garden** of roses, as peals of one ocean, as leaves of one tree, as rays of one sun.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 158

O Lord! Should the breath of the Holy Spirit confirm the weakest of creatures, he would attain all to which he aspireth and would possess anything he desireth. Indeed, Thou hast assisted Thy servants in the past and, though they were the weakest of Thy creatures, the lowliest of Thy servants and the most insignificant of those who lived upon the earth, through Thy sanction and potency they took precedence over the most glorious of Thy people and the most noble of mankind. Whereas formerly they were as moths, they became as royal falcons, and whereas before they were as brooks, they became as seas, through Thy bestowal and Thy mercy. They became, through Thy most great favor, stars shining on the horizon of guidance, birds singing in the rose **gardens** of immortality, lions roaring in the forests of knowledge and wisdom, and whales swimming in the oceans of life.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 179

O Thou kind Lord! Praise be unto Thee that Thou hast shown us the highway of guidance, opened the doors of the kingdom and manifested Thyself through the Sun of Reality. To the blind Thou hast given sight; to the deaf Thou hast granted hearing; Thou hast resuscitated the dead; Thou hast enriched the poor; Thou hast shown the way to those who have gone astray; Thou hast led those with parched lips to the fountain of guidance; Thou hast suffered the thirsty fish to reach the ocean of reality; and Thou hast invited the wandering birds to the rose **garden** of grace.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 183

O Lord God! Make us as waves of the sea, as flowers of the **garden**, united, agreed through the bounties of Thy love. O Lord! Dilate the breasts through the signs of Thy oneness, and make all mankind as stars shining from the same height of glory, as perfect fruits growing upon Thy tree of life.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 204

Release yourselves, O nightingales of God, from the thorns and brambles of wretchedness and misery, and wing your flight to the rose-**garden** of unfading splendor. O My friends that dwell upon the dust! Haste forth unto your celestial habitation. Announce unto yourselves the joyful tidings: "He Who is the Best-Beloved is come! He hath crowned Himself with the glory of God's Revelation, and hath unlocked to the face of men the doors of His ancient Paradise." Let all eyes rejoice, and let every ear be gladdened, for now is the time to gaze on His beauty, now is the fit time to hearken to His voice. Proclaim unto every longing lover- "Behold, your Well-Beloved hath come among men!" and to the messengers of the Monarch of love impart the tidings- "Lo, the Adored One hath appeared arrayed in the fullness of His glory!" O lovers of His beauty! Turn the anguish of your separation from Him into the joy of an everlasting reunion, and let the sweetness of His presence dissolve the bitterness of your remoteness from His court.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 114

Say: O friends! Why fear, and whom shall ye dread? These clay-pieces of the world shall be disintegrated by a slight moisture. Your union itself will be conducive to scattering superstitious souls. Strife and conflict are characteristic of the ferocious beasts of the earth. By the assistance of God, the sharp swords of the Bábí community have been returned to the scabbards through good words and pleasing deeds. The righteous have always, through good words, taken possession of the **gardens** of existence.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 173

The mineral kingdom abounds with many-colored substances and compositions but we find no strife among them on that account. In the kingdom of the plant and vegetable, distinct and variegated hues exist but the fruit and flowers are not in conflict for that reason. Nay, rather, the very fact that there is difference and variety lends a charm to the **garden**. If all were of the same color the effect would be monotonous and depressing. When you enter a rose-**garden** the wealth of color and variety of floral forms spread before you a picture of wonder and beauty. The world of humanity is like a **garden** and the various races are the flowers which constitute its adornment and decoration. In the animal kingdom also we find variety of color. See how the doves differ in beauty yet they live together in perfect peace, and love each other. They do not make difference of color a cause of discord and strife. They view each other as the same species and kind. They know they are one in kind. Often a white dove soars aloft with a black one. Throughout the animal kingdom we do not find the creatures separated because of color. They recognize unity of species and oneness of kind. If we do not find color distinction drawn in a kingdom of lower intelligence and reason, how can it be justified among human beings, especially when we know that all have come from the same source and belong to the same household? In origin and intention of creation mankind is one. Distinctions of race and color have arisen afterward.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 268

And when you pass by a **garden** wherein vegetable beds and plants, flowers and fragrant herbs are all combined so as to form a harmonious whole, this is an evidence that this plantation and this rose **garden** have been cultivated and arranged by the care of a perfect gardener, while when you see a **garden** in disorder, lacking arrangement and confused, this indicates that it has been deprived of the care of a skillful gardener, nay, rather, it is nothing but a mass of weeds. It has therefore been made evident that fellowship and harmony are indicative of the training by the real Educator, while separation and dispersion prove wildness and deprivation of Divine training.

Should any one object that, since the communities and nations and races and peoples of the world have different formalities, customs, tastes, temperaments, morals, varied thoughts, minds and opinions, it is therefore impossible for ideal unity to be made manifest and complete union among men to be realized, we say that differences are of two kinds: One leads to destruction, and that is like the difference between warring peoples and competing nations who destroy one another, uproot each other's families, do away with rest and comfort and engage in bloodshed and rapacity. That is blameworthy. But the other difference consists in variation. This is perfection itself and the cause of the appearance of Divine bounty. Consider the flowers of the rose **garden**. Although they are of different kinds, various colors and diverse forms and appearances, yet as they drink from one water, are swayed by one breeze and grow by the warmth and light of one sun, this variation and this difference cause each to enhance the beauty and splendor of the others. The differences in manners, in customs, in habits, in thoughts, opinions and in temperaments is the cause of the adornment of the world of mankind. This is praiseworthy. Likewise this difference and this variation, like the difference and variation of the parts and members of the human body, are the cause of the appearance of beauty and perfection. As these different parts and members are under the control of the dominant spirit, and the spirit permeates all the organs and members, and rules all the arteries and veins, this difference and this variation strengthen love and harmony and this multiplicity is the greatest aid to unity. 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. Likewise, when difference and variety of thoughts, forms, opinions, characters and morals of the world of mankind come under the control of one Supreme Power and the influence of the Word of the One True God, they will appear and be displayed in the most perfect glory, beauty, exaltation and perfection. Today nothing but the power of the Word of God which encompasses the realities of things can bring the thoughts, the minds, the hearts and the spirits under the shade of one Tree. He is the potent in all things, the vivifier of souls, the preserver and the controller of the world of mankind. Praise be to God, in this day the light of the Word of God has shone forth upon all regions, and from all sects, communities, nations, tribes, peoples, religions and denominations, souls have gathered under the shadow of the Word of Oneness and have in the most intimate fellowship united and harmonized!

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

To recapitulate: as man in the womb of the mother passes from form to form, from shape to shape, changes and develops, and is still the human species from the beginning of the embryonic period in the same way man, from the beginning of his existence in the matrix of the world, is also a distinct species, that is, man, and has gradually evolved from one form to another. Therefore this change of appearance, this evolution of members, this development and growth, even though we admit the reality of growth and progress, does not prevent the species from being original. Man from the beginning was in this perfect form and composition, and possessed capacity and aptitude for acquiring material and spiritual perfections, and was the manifestation of these words, "We will make man in Our image and likeness." He has only become more pleasing, more beautiful, and more graceful. Civilization has brought him out of his wild state, just as the wild fruits which are cultivated by a gardener became finer, sweeter, and acquire more freshness and delicacy.

The gardeners of the world of humanity are the Prophets of God.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 309

Cleanliness and sanctity in all conditions are characteristics of pure beings and necessities of free souls. The first perfection consists in cleanliness and sanctity and in purity from every defect. When man in all conditions is pure and immaculate, he will become the center of the reflection of the manifest Light. In all his actions and conduct there must first be purity, then beauty and independence. The channel must be cleansed before it is filled with sweet water. The pure eye comprehendeth the sight and the meeting of God; the pure nostril inhaleth the perfumes of the rose-**garden** of bounty; the pure heart becometh the mirror of the beauty of truth. This is why, in the heavenly Books, the divine counsels and commands have been compared to water. So, in the Qur'án it is said, "and we have caused a pure water to descend from heaven;" and in the Gospel, "Except a man hath received the baptism of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." Then it is evident that the divine teachings are the heavenly grace and the showers of the mercy of God, which purify the hearts of men.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 333

And as we reflect, we observe that man is like unto a tiny organism contained within a fruit; this fruit hath developed out of the blossom, the blossom hath grown out of the tree, the tree is sustained by the sap, and the sap formed out of earth and water. How then can this tiny organism comprehend the nature of the **garden**, conceive of the gardener and comprehend his being? That is manifestly impossible. Should that organism understand and reflect, it would observe that this **garden**, this tree, this blossom, this fruit would in nowise have come to exist by themselves in such order and perfection. Similarly the wise and reflecting soul will know of a certainty that this infinite universe with all its grandeur and order could not have come to exist by itself.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 343

This period of time is the Promised Age, the assembling of the human race to the "Resurrection Day" and now is the great "Day of Judgment." 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, *Compilations, Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 351

These shall labor ceaselessly by day and by night, shall heed neither trial nor woe, shall suffer no respite in their efforts, shall seek no repose, shall disregard all ease and comfort and, detached and unsullied, shall consecrate every fleeting moment of their life to the diffusion of the divine fragrance and the exaltation of God's holy Word. Their face will radiate heavenly gladness, and their hearts be filled with joy. Their souls will be inspired, and their foundation stand secure. They shall scatter in the world, and travel throughout all regions. They shall raise their voice in every assembly, and adorn and revive every gathering. They shall speak in every tongue, and interpret every hidden meaning. They shall reveal the mysteries of the Kingdom, and manifest unto every one the signs of God. They shall burn brightly even as a candle in the heart of every assembly, and beam forth as a star upon every horizon. The gentle breeze wafted from the **garden** of their hearts shall perfume and revive the souls of men, and the revelations of their minds, even as showers, reinvigorate the peoples and nations of the world.

I am waiting, eagerly waiting for these holy ones to appear; and yet, how long will they delay their coming? My prayer and ardent supplication, at eventide and at dawn, is that these shining stars may soon shed their radiance upon the world, that their sacred countenance may be unveiled to mortal eyes, and the billows of grace, rising from His oceans above, may flow upon all mankind. Pray ye also and supplicate unto Him that through the bountiful aid of the Ancient Beauty these souls may be unveiled to the eyes of the world.

The glory of God rest upon thee, and upon him whose face is illumined with that everlasting light that shineth from His Kingdom of Glory.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 355

From the death of that beloved youth due to his separation from you the utmost sorrow and grief has been occasioned, for he flew away in the flower of his age and the bloom of his youth, to the heavenly nest.

But as he has been freed from this sorrow-stricken shelter and and has turned his face toward the everlasting nest of the Kingdom and has been delivered from a dark and narrow world and has hastened to the sanctified realm of Light, therein lies the consolation of our hearts. The inscrutable divine wisdom underlies such heart-rending occurrences. It is as if a kind **gardener** transfers a fresh and tender shrub from a narrow place to a vast region. This transference is not the cause of the withering, the waning or the destruction of that shrub, nay rather it makes it grow and thrive, acquire freshness and delicacy and attain verdure and fruition. This hidden secret is well-known to the gardener, while those souls who are unaware of this bounty suppose that the gardener in his anger and wrath has uprooted the shrub. But to those who are aware this concealed fact is manifest and this predestined decree considered a favor. Do not feel grieved and disconsolate therefore at the ascension of that bird of faithfulness, nay under all circumstances pray and beg for that youth forgiveness and elevation of station.

I hope that you will attain to the utmost patience, composure and resignation, and I supplicate and entreat at the Threshold of Oneness and beg pardon and forgiveness. My hope from the infinite bounties of God is that He may cause this dove of the **garden** of faith to abide on the branch of the Supreme Concurrence that it may sing in the best of tunes the praises and the excellencies of the Lord of names and attributes.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 379

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 though 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, *Compilations, Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 382

Though the fact of "Return" is mentioned in the Divine Books, by this is intended the return of the qualities, characters, perfections, truths and lights, which re-appear in every age, and not of certain persons and souls. For example: If we say this lamp is the return of that of last night, or that the last year's flower hath returned in the **garden**, in this sense the return of the individual, or identity, or personality is not meant; nay, rather, it is intended that the same qualities and states existing in that lamp or flower, which are now seen in this lamp or flower, have returned. That is, the same perfections and virtues and properties which existed in the past springtime have returned during this present springtime. For instance: When one says, these fruits are the same as those of last year; in this sense, he hath reference to the freshness and delicacy of the fruit, which hath returned, although there is no doubt that the identical fruit of last year hath not returned.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 392

Therefore, know thou that the True One possesseth invisible worlds which human meditation is unable to comprehend and the intellect of man hath no power to imagine. When thou wilt purify and clarify thy spiritual nostrils from every worldly moisture, then thou wilt inhale the holy fragrances diffusing from the merciful **gardens** of these worlds.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 393

O maid-servant of God! This prison is indeed more precious and sweet than a **garden** to me, this fetter is greater than any liberty and the confinement is broader than the most spacious wilderness. Therefore, grieve not on this account. Verily, if my Lord destine unto me and causes me to taste the sweetness of the cup of the great martyrdom, my greatest desire will be fulfilled. Fear not if this Branch be severed from the material earth and cast aside the leaves nay, rather, its leaves will flourish, for this Branch will grow after it is cut from the earth, will ascend until it shelters the universe, its foliage will reach the supreme Apex and bear fruits, imparting fragrant perfume unto the world.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 394

Cultivation by the farmer maketh of the grain the harvest, and the effort of the **gardener** maketh of the seed a noble tree. The gentle teacher promoteth the children of the school to the lofty altitude and the bestowal of the trainer placeth the little child upon the throne of ether. Therefore, it is demonstrated and proven that minds are different in the original entity or nature, and that education commandeth a

decided and great influence. Were there no educator, all souls would remain savage, and were it not for the teacher, the children would be ignorant creatures.

It is for this reason that, in this New Cycle, education and training are recorded in the Book of God as obligatory and not voluntary. That is, it is enjoined upon the father and mother, as a duty, to strive with all effort to train the daughter and the son, to nurse them from the breast of knowledge and to rear them in the bosom of sciences and arts.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 397

One of the teachings is that love and faithfulness must so prevail in the hearts that men may see the stranger as a friend, the sinner as an intimate fellow, may count enemies as allies, regard foes as loving comrades, call their executioner the giver of life, consider the denier as a believer and the unbeliever as a faithful one -- that is, men must behave in such a manner as may befit the believers, the faithful, the friend and the confidant. If this lamp may shine in a befitting manner in the assemblage of the world you will find that the regions will become fragrant and the world become a delectable paradise, the surface of the earth will become an excellent **garden**, the world will become as one home, the different nations will become as one kind, and the peoples and nationalities of the East and West will become as one household. I hope such a day may come and such lights may dawn and such a Countenance may appear in the utmost beauty.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 414

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, *Compilations, Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 420

O Thou kind Lord! These souls are the birds of Thy meadows, the nightingales of Thy rose-**garden**. Let them dwell within the orchard of Thy forgiveness and grant them access to the concourse wherein Thine eternal glory shineth resplendent, wherein Thy divine beauty is unveiled and perpetual communion with Thee is assured. Enable them to live eternally and to endure forevermore.

Thou art the Forgiving, the Bountiful, the All-Loving.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Fire and Light*, p. 20

O Thou kind Lord! From the horizon of detachment Thou hast manifested souls that, even as the shining moon, shed radiance upon the realm of heart and soul, rid themselves from the attributes of the world of existence and hastened forth unto the kingdom of immortality. With a drop from the ocean of Thy loving kindness Thou didst oft-times moisten the **gardens** of their hearts until they gained incomparable freshness and beauty. The holy fragrance of Thy divine unity was diffused far and wide, shedding its sweet savours over the entire world, causing the regions of the earth to be redolent with perfume.

Raise up then, O Spirit of Purity, souls who, like those sanctified beings, will become free and pure, Will adorn the world of being with a new raiment and a wondrous robe, will seek no one else but Thee, tread no path except the path of Thy good-pleasure and will speak of naught but the mysteries of Thy Cause.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Fire and Light*, p. 20

"O my loved ones! The portals of His most great favour are flung open and the hearts of the people of Baha are dilated with joy. The chalice of His bounty is being borne round and the sweet melodies of the birds of the all-highest Paradise reach every receptive ear. The reviving breeze wafting from the **garden** of the Abha Kingdom is laden with perfume and everyone who hath suffered long is granted intimate communion within the retreats of the Lord of Truth. From the Threshold of the Almighty, the All-Wise, His summons hath gone forth unto all men, and from the realm of the Concourse on high the voice of glad-tidings: Happy are ye! is continually raised."

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Fire and Light*, p. 22

O ye wronged captives! The divines in that land have put forth the hand of aggression and have surpassed in cruelty the Pharaohs who executed their victims upon the stakes, and the people of Nimrod, Thamud and 'Ad. They have closed the eye of justice and with the darts of tyranny have pierced the hearts of the oppressed. They have set on fire the harvest of the wronged ones, and deemed it expedient to inflict upon them every cruelty, molestation and torture, that perchance by so doing the divinely kindled fire might be extinguished, the seething and roaring of the ocean of God's bounty might subside, the outpourings of the clouds of His loving-kindness be stopped, the meteor of heavenly guidance be hindered from shedding its radiance upon those regions, the reviving breezes of divine blessing which blow from the direction of His tender mercy be withheld, the fragrance of the rose of His gracious providence may no longer be diffused from the **garden** of divine unity, the light of its brilliant orb be obscured, and the secrets of the manifestation of heavenly bestowals be forgotten.

Alas! Alas! Those divines are unaware that the waves of the ocean of glory will surge high and the pervasive power of the Cause of God will acquire unprecedented glory. Its orb will shine resplendent and the effulgent light of its meteor will permeate the world. Its spark will develop into a flame, its luminous star into a sun, and its drop into a downpour and a flood. Its grain will grow into a harvest, its glittering gem will sparkle in every gathering, its fame will be noised abroad, and the anthem of its glorification will reach the highest heavens. As to these servants and homeless ones: We were so inebriated with our fill from the draught of the love of God that we yearned to drink deep of that wine of God's Covenant. Thus chalice in hand, dancing and leaping with joy, we hastened into the arena of sacrifice. We offered supplications begging for adversity. We exposed our breasts as a target for the shafts of oppression and with the whole affection of our hearts and souls we welcomed the sword of injustice.

This body is the abode of ills and this darkened self a cage to every warbling bird. One's corporeal frame shall become dust and a target to dreadful darts. Therefore if it were offered up in the field of sacrifice for the sake of God, no favour or blessing could be greater than this. Earthly possessions will certainly be lost, and what hath been accumulated will be dispersed; excessive riches will be cast adrift, and the flush of fortune will wither away and fade into nothingness; immense treasures will be squandered and the wealth gathered up by the wind will eventually be blown away by the wind. Hence, better is it for one's riches to be pillaged and plundered in the path of God, than be a booty of the changes and chances of the world.

As to lofty buildings, imposing mansions, and magnificent palaces: every inhabited and flourishing place will become desolate and every mighty edifice reduced to ruin. Therefore, how much better it is for these habitations which are more fragile than a spider's web to be wrecked and ruined for the love of the sovereign Lord of the Kingdom. For if a house of clay be destroyed, there will be reared in its stead a glorious mansion within the soul-uplifting immensity of the realms above. If one's home and dwelling-

place be laid waste in this transitory dust-heap, one will be provided with a matchless and incomparable nest within the rose-**garden** of eternity.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Fire and Light*, p. 28

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'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Fire and Light*, p. 28

They seek to compress the unlimited ocean; they try to stop forthwith the wondrous outpourings of the vernal showers. But alas for them! The reviving breeze that bloweth from the direction of the Abha Kingdom cannot be halted and the musk-laden fragrance of faithfulness that wafteth from the rose-**garden** of the All-Glorious can never be arrested

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Fire and Light*, p. 30

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'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Fire and Light*, p. 30

I bear witness that ye are the radiant stars, the gleaming meteors, the resplendent full moons, the brilliant orbs in this wondrous Revelation. Well is it with you, O birds that warble in the **gardens** of divine unity; blessed are ye, O lions that roar in the forests of detachment; happy are ye. O leviathans that swim in the waters of His oneness. Verily ye are the signs of divine guidance. ye are the banners that flutter in the field of sacrifice.

I beseech God to bless me, through the breezes of holiness wafted from that glorious centre of sacrifice, and to quicken me with the reviving breath of heavenly communion blowing from that blessed region.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Compilations, Fire and Light*, p. 31

NOTE: This is just a very brief compilation from over 2000 references to "**garden**."