

# Life after Death

## Our Spiritual Existence

Issues for Discourse with Youth

Bahá'í Discourse - Death

# Life after Death

For young people, death seems far away and is seldom talked about, except for an accident or the loss of a grandparent. Yet death has an important spiritual purpose. We should not be afraid of death, which is inevitable, but see it positively as the next step in a spiritual journey. In this life, we must develop the spiritual qualities and capacities that will be essential to the life beyond this material world after we die.



The Shrine of the Bab where He is buried

# True Life

*...true life is not the life of the flesh but the life of the spirit. For the life of the flesh is common to both men and animals, whereas the life of the spirit is possessed only by the pure in heart who have quaffed from the ocean of faith and partaken of the fruit of certitude. This life knoweth no death, and this existence is crowned by immortality. Even as it hath been said: “He who is a true believer liveth both in this world and in the world to come.” If by “life” be meant this earthly life, it is evident that death must needs overtake it.*

# Fear of Death

*Through his ignorance man fears death, but the death he shrinks from is imaginary and absolutely unreal; it is only human imagination. Some define existence as the expression of reality or being and nonexistence as nonbeing, imagining that death is annihilation. This is a mistaken idea, for total annihilation is an impossibility. At most, composition is ever subject to decomposition or disintegration.... As existence can never become nonexistence, there is no death for man; nay, rather, man is everlasting and ever-living.*

*(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, 4 May 1912, p. 87-91)*

# No Nonexistence

*The conception of annihilation is a factor in human degradation, a cause of human debasement and lowliness, a source of human fear and abjection. It has been conducive to the dispersion and weakening of human thought, whereas the realization of existence and continuity has upraised man to sublimity of ideals, established the foundations of human progress and stimulated the development of heavenly virtues; therefore, it behooves man to abandon thoughts of nonexistence and death, which are absolutely imaginary, and see himself ever-living, everlasting in the divine purpose of his creation.*

# Blessings of Life

*...you must thank God that He has bestowed upon you the blessing of life and existence in the human kingdom. Strive diligently to acquire virtues befitting your degree and station. Be as lights of the world which cannot be hid and which have no setting in horizons of darkness. Ascend to the zenith of an existence which is never beclouded by the fears and forebodings of nonexistence.*

*(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, 4 May 1912, p. 87-91)*

# Sacrifice Imperfections

*...the material world is the world of corruption and death. It is the world of evil and darkness, of animalism and ferocity, bloodthirstiness, ambition and avarice, of self-worship, egotism and passion.... Man must strip himself of all these imperfections, must sacrifice these tendencies which are peculiar to the outer and material world of existence.*

*(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, 133, 29 November 1912, p. 451-452)*

# Acquire Heavenly Qualities

*On the other hand, man must acquire heavenly qualities and attain divine attributes. He must become the image and likeness of God. He must seek the bounty of the eternal, become the manifestor of the love of God, the light of guidance, the tree of life and the depository of the bounties of God. That is to say, man must sacrifice the qualities and attributes of the world of nature for the qualities and attributes of the world of God.*

*(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, 133, 29 November 1912, p. 451-452)*

# Acquiring Divine Perfections

*Every man trained through the teachings of God and illumined by the light of His guidance, who becomes a believer in God and His signs and is enkindled with the fire of the love of God, sacrifices the imperfections of nature for the sake of divine perfections.*

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, 133, 29 November 1912, p. 451-452)

# Death unheralded

*O Son of Being! Bring thyself to account each day ere thou art summoned to a reckoning; for death, unheralded, shall come upon thee and thou shalt be called to give account for thy deeds.*

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Hidden Words*, Arabic 31)

# Preparing for Rebirth

*In the beginning of his human life man was embryonic in the world of the matrix [womb]. There he received capacity and endowment for the reality of human existence.... In this world he needed eyes... he needed ears.... The powers requisite in this world were conferred upon him in the world of the matrix so that when he entered this realm of real existence he not only possessed all necessary functions and powers but found provision for his material sustenance awaiting him.*

*(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, 6 July 1912, p. 225-226)*

# Preparing for the Life Beyond

*Therefore, in this world he must prepare himself for the life beyond. That which he needs in the world of the Kingdom must be obtained here. Just as he prepared himself in the world of the matrix by acquiring forces necessary in this sphere of existence, so, likewise, the indispensable forces of the divine existence must be potentially attained in this world.*

*(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, 6 July 1912, p. 225-226)*

# The Divine Attributes

*What is he in need of in the Kingdom which transcends the life and limitation of this mortal sphere? That world beyond is a world of sanctity and radiance; therefore, it is necessary that in this world he should acquire these divine attributes. In that world there is need of spirituality, faith, assurance, the knowledge and love of God. These he must attain in this world so that after his ascension from the earthly to the heavenly Kingdom he shall find all that is needful in that eternal life ready for him.*

*(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, 6 July 1912, p. 225-226)*

# The Divine World

*That divine world is manifestly a world of lights; therefore, man has need of illumination here. That is a world of love; the love of God is essential. It is a world of perfections; virtues, or perfections, must be acquired. That world is vivified by the breaths of the Holy Spirit; in this world we must seek them. That is the Kingdom of everlasting life; it must be attained during this vanishing existence.*

*(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, 6 July 1912, p. 225-226)*

# Seven Powers

*By what means can man acquire these things? How shall he obtain these merciful gifts and powers? First, through the knowledge of God. Second, through the love of God. Third, through faith. Fourth, through philanthropic deeds. Fifth, through self-sacrifice. Sixth, through severance from this world. Seventh, through sanctity and holiness.*

*(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, 6 July 1912, p. 225-226)*

# Everlasting Existence

*Unless he acquires these forces and attains to these requirements, he will surely be deprived of the life that is eternal. But if he possesses the knowledge of God, becomes ignited through the fire of the love of God, witnesses the great and mighty signs of the Kingdom, becomes the cause of love among mankind and lives in the utmost state of sanctity and holiness, he shall surely attain to second birth, be baptized by the Holy Spirit and enjoy everlasting existence.*

*(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [The Promulgation of Universal Peace](#), 6 July 1912, p. 225-226)*

# Immortality

*In the spiritual world the divine bestowals are infinite, for in that realm there is neither separation nor disintegration, which characterize the world of material existence. Spiritual existence is absolute immortality, completeness and unchangeable being. Therefore, we must thank God that He has created for us both material blessings and spiritual bestowals. He has given us material gifts and spiritual graces, outer sight to view the lights of the sun and inner vision by which we may perceive the glory of God.*

*(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, 4 May 1912, p. 87-91)*

# The World of the Spirit

*In the world of spirit there is no retrogression.... In the realm of spirit there is no retreat possible, all movement is bound to be towards a perfect state.... The intelligence of man, his reasoning powers, his knowledge, his scientific achievements, all these being manifestations of the spirit, partake of the inevitable law of spiritual progress and are, therefore, of necessity, immortal.*

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, 29, p. 90)

# Life After Death

He was surely very sorry to hear of the passing away of your father who was such an old and devoted servant of the Cause. Such persons, at their passing, proceed to the presence of Bahá'u'lláh and partake of His infinite blessings and divine bounties. They enter into a state which, should we only have the eye to see, we would envy and earnestly desire. It is only because we ignore the beautiful and glorious life of the world beyond that we seem attached to our earthly abode and often forget the goal of our very existence here.

(on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 14 May 1932, *Dawn of a New Day*, p. 196)

# Union in the Next World

...the possibility of securing union with his beloved in the next world is one which the Bahá'í Teachings are quite clear about. According to Bahá'u'lláh the soul retains its individuality and consciousness after death, and is able to commune with other souls. This communion, however, is purely spiritual in character, and is conditioned upon the disinterested and selfless love of the individuals for each other.

(on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 10 March 1936, *Dawn of a New Day*, p. 58)

Shrine  
of  
Bahá'u'lláh

for His  
earthly  
remains



# Progress of the Soul

*Know thou of a truth that the soul, after its separation from the body, will continue to progress until it attaineth the presence of God, in a state and condition which neither the revolution of ages and centuries, nor the changes and chances of this world, can alter. It will endure as long as the Kingdom of God, His sovereignty, His dominion and power will endure. It will manifest the signs of God and His attributes, and will reveal His loving kindness and bounty.*

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings*, LXXXI, p. 155-156)

# The Soul

*The nature of the soul after death can never be described, nor is it meet and permissible to reveal its whole character to the eyes of men. The Prophets and Messengers of God have been sent down for the sole purpose of guiding mankind to the straight Path of Truth. The purpose underlying Their revelation hath been to educate all men, that they may, at the hour of death, ascend, in the utmost purity and sanctity and with absolute detachment, to the throne of the Most High. The light which these souls radiate is responsible for the progress of the world and the advancement of its peoples. They are like unto leaven which leaveneth the world of being, and constitute the animating force through which the arts and wonders of the world are made manifest.*

*(Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings, LXXXI, p. 156-157)*

# The Soul in the Presence of God

*The world beyond is as different from this world as this world is different from that of the child while still in the womb of its mother. When the soul attaineth the Presence of God, it will assume the form that best befitteth its immortality and is worthy of its celestial habitation.*

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings*, LXXXI, p. 157)

# Other Worlds of God

*Wert thou to ponder in thine heart the behavior of the Prophets of God thou wouldst assuredly and readily testify that there must needs be other worlds besides this world. The majority of the truly wise and learned have... borne witness to the truth of that which the holy Writ of God hath revealed.*

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings*, LXXXI, p. 157-158)

# The Soul

*...the human soul is exalted above all egress and regress. It is still, and yet it soareth; it moveth, and yet it is still. It is, in itself, a testimony that beareth witness to the existence of a world that is contingent, as well as to the reality of a world that hath neither beginning nor end.*

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings*, LXXXII, p. 161-162)

# Death a messenger of joy

*O Son of the Supreme! I have made death a messenger of joy to thee. Wherefore dost thou grieve? I made the light to shed on thee its splendor. Why dost thou veil thyself therefrom?*

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Hidden Words*, Arabic 32)



Grave of the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, 1957



Grave  
of the  
Guardian

Shoghi  
Effendi

