



Ruhí Sampler

a selection from Ruhí Book 1
"Reflections on the Life of the Spirit"

from

Unit 1

Understanding the Bahá'í Writings

SECTION 1

In this unit you will study short passages from the Writings of the Faith and think about how you can apply them to your life. You will begin at the simplest level, by reading a one-sentence statement from the Writings and then responding to a question, the answer to which is the statement itself. For the purpose of this exercise, it will be useful for you to study the sentence with the aid of another participant in the course. In that case, one of you would pose the question and the other reply. You would then change roles. This type of exercise is not one that you will repeat throughout the courses of the Ruhi Institute, although, in the future, there might be passages that lend themselves to the use of this technique. While simple, the exercise will help you to reflect on the meaning of passages and to memorize them.

"The betterment of the world can be accomplished through pure and goodly deeds, through commendable and seemly conduct."¹

1. How can the betterment of the world be accomplished? _____

"Beware, O people of Baha, lest ye walk in the ways of them whose words differ from their deeds."²

2. In whose ways should we not walk? _____

"O Son of Being! Bring thyself to account each day ere thou art summoned to a reckoning ..."³

3. What should we do before we are summoned to a reckoning? _____

"Say: O brethren! Let deeds, not words, be your adorning."⁴

4. What should be our true adorning?

"Holy words and pure and goodly deeds ascend unto the heaven of celestial glory."⁵

5. What do holy words and pure and goodly deeds do? _____

SECTION 2

Below are a number of exercises related to the quotations you have just studied. Some of the questions are easy to answer, and it is not worthwhile to spend too much time discussing them. When the exercise is challenging, however, you should pause and, with the help of your tutor, explore it thoroughly.

1. Commendable means something that merits praise. Which of the following are commendable?

- a. To be a good worker? _____
- b. To respect others? _____
- c. To be studious? _____
- d. To be a liar? _____
- e. To be lazy? _____
- f. To help others progress? _____

2. What does the phrase "ere thou art summoned to a reckoning" mean?

3. Decide whether the following statements are true or false:

- a. There are so few good people in the world that their actions do not have any effect. T € F €
- b. Something is correct when it is in agreement with the opinions of other people. T € F €
- c. Something is correct when it is in agreement with the teachings of God. T € F €

4. The following are pure and goodly deeds:

a. Teaching the Faith

T € F €

b. Stealing.

T € F €

c. Taking care of and teaching children

T € F €

d. Praying for the progress of others

T € F €

e. Telling a small lie to get out of trouble

T € F €

f. Helping others and expecting a reward.

T € F €

5. The following actions are in agreement with the words of a Bahá'í:

a. Having an alcoholic drink.

T € F €

b. Being kind.

T € F €

c. Treating everyone equally.

T € F €

d. Having sexual relations outside of marriage.

T € F €

6. Is it permissible for a Bahá'í to confess to another person? _____.

7. What should we do instead of confessing?

8. What does "the heaven of celestial glory" mean? -

9. What is the effect of bad deeds on the world?

10. What effect do bad deeds have on those who commit them?

from

Unit 2

Prayer

SECTION 3

Study the following words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and meditate on them:

"There is nothing sweeter in the world of existence than prayer. Man must live in a state of prayer. The most blessed condition is the condition of prayer and supplication. Prayer is conversation with God. The greatest attainment or the sweetest state is none other than conversation with God. It creates spirituality, creates mindfulness and celestial feelings, begets new attractions of the Kingdom and engenders the susceptibilities of the higher intelligence."²

1. What is the sweetest state in the world of existence?

2. What does "state of prayer" mean?

3. Mention some of the conditions created by prayer.

SECTION 5

We know that God created us. He is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. He knows what we want and what we need. Then why should we pray? God does not need our prayers; nevertheless, the progress of our souls depends on prayer, because prayer is the food of the soul. When we pray we are taking in spiritual nourishment. Through the bonds of love connecting us to the divine worlds, we receive the blessings of God. Prayer increases our capacity to enjoy spiritual gifts and to experience true happiness.

The pathway to God is straight and narrow. Innumerable obstacles may block our way. By means of ardent, sincere and constant supplication, we can overcome the obstacles and be guided along this path. Prayer helps us to advance towards God and not lose sight of our special destiny. This is why we should pray constantly that through the love of God our souls may develop and be strengthened, and that we may firmly walk the path of eternal happiness with steadfastness. 'Abdu'l-Bahá says:

"In the highest prayer, men pray only for the love of God, not because they fear Him or hell, or hope for bounty or heaven. . . . When a man falls in love with a human being, it is impossible for him to keep from mentioning the name of his beloved. How much more difficult is it to keep from mentioning the Name of God when one has come to love Him. . . . The spiritual man finds no delight in anything save in commemoration of God."

"If one friend loves another, is it not natural that he should wish to say so? Though he knows that that friend is aware of his love, does he still not wish to tell him of it? ... It is true that God knows the wishes of all hearts; but the impulse to pray is a natural one, springing from man's love to God."

1. Why should we pray? _____

2. Complete the following sentences:

In the _____ prayer, men _____ only for _____ of God, not because they fear Him or _____, or hope for _____ or heaven. When a _____ talk _____ with a human being, it is _____ for him to keep from mentioning the _____ of his _____, How much more _____ is it to keep from _____ the Name of _____ when one has come to _____ Him. The spiritual man finds no _____ in anything save in _____ of God.

from

Unit 3

Life and Death

SECTION 3

Bahá'u'lláh says:

"And now concerning thy question regarding the soul of man and its survival after death. 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."

1. Questions:

a. What is the separation of the soul and the body called? _____

b. How long will the soul continue to progress? _____

c. What are the attributes and signs that the soul will manifest in the other world?

d. What will it reveal? _____

e. Does the soul continue living after death? _____

2. The above words of Bahá'u'lláh imply that:

a. The soul will attain the presence of God.

T € F €

b. The soul's condition will be affected by the changes of this world, even after death

T € F €

c. The Kingdom of God will last forever.

T € F €

d. The soul has the capacity to manifest the attributes of God, like loving-kindness and generosity.

T € F €

e. The state of the soul after death is more exalted than its state in this world.

T € F €

SECTION 6

'Abdu'l-Bahá says:

"In the beginning of his human life man was embryonic in the world of the matrix. There he received capacity and endowment for the reality of human existence. The forces and powers necessary for this world were bestowed upon him in that limited condition. In this world he needed eyes; he received them potentially in the other. He needed ears; he obtained them there in readiness and preparation for his new existence. The powers requisite in this world were conferred upon him in the world of the matrix ...

"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."

1. Mark true or false:

- a. We received the capacities and endowments we need for this world in the world of the matrix. T € F €
- b. Our condition in the matrix was not limited. T € F €
- c. All forces and powers necessary for this world were bestowed upon us in the world of the matrix. T € F €
- d. There is no need to prepare oneself for the next life. T € F €
- e. What we need in the world of the Kingdom can be obtained there. T € F €
- f. The purpose of this life is to acquire the forces and powers necessary for the next life. T € F €
- g. True life begins when one dies and goes to the divine Kingdom. T € F €
- h. True life is the life of the soul T € F €
- i. True life begins in this world and continues after physical death. T € F €

2. Questions:

a. How does man begin his life? _____

b. Where does he receive his capacities and endowments?

c. What are some of the things that man needs in this life that are given to him in the world of the matrix?

d. Which endowments should be obtained here for life after death?
