

## TESTS AND DIFFICULTIES

Say: The first and foremost testimony establishing His truth is His own Self. Next to this testimony is His Revelation. For whoso faileth to recognize either the one or the other He hath established the words He hath revealed as proof of His reality and truth. This is, verily, an evidence of His tender mercy unto men. He hath endowed every soul with the capacity to recognize the signs of God. How could He, otherwise, have fulfilled His testimony unto men, if ye be of them that ponder His Cause in their hearts. He will never deal unjustly with any one, neither will He task a soul beyond its power. He, verily, is the Compassionate, the All-Merciful.

(Gleanings of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, Page: 105)

It is Our wish and desire that every one of you may become a source of all goodness unto men, and an example of uprightness to mankind. Beware lest ye prefer yourselves above your neighbors. Fix your gaze upon Him Who is the Temple of God amongst men. He, in truth, hath offered up His life as a ransom for the redemption of the world. He, verily, is the All-Bountiful, the Gracious, the Most High. If any differences arise amongst you, behold Me standing before your face, and overlook the faults of one another for My name's sake and as a token of your love for My manifest and resplendent Cause. We love to see you at all times consorting in amity and concord within the paradise of My good-pleasure, and to inhale from your acts the fragrance of friendliness and unity, of loving-kindness and fellowship.

(Gleanings of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, Page: 315)

A48. O SON OF MAN! For everything there is a sign. The sign of love is fortitude under My decree and patience under My trials.

A49. O SON OF MAN! The true lover yearneth for tribulation even as doth the rebel for forgiveness and the sinful for mercy.

A50. O SON OF MAN! If adversity befall thee not in My path, how canst thou walk in the ways of them that are content with My pleasure? If trials afflict thee not in thy longing to meet Me, how wilt thou attain the light in thy love for My beauty?

A51. O SON OF MAN! My calamity is My providence, outwardly it is fire and vengeance, but inwardly it is light and mercy. Hasten thereunto that thou mayest become an eternal light and an immortal spirit. This is My command unto thee, do thou observe it.

A52. O SON OF MAN! Should prosperity befall thee, rejoice not, and should abasement come upon thee, grieve not, for both shall pass away and be no more.

A55. O SON OF BEING! Busy not thyself with this world, for with fire We test the gold, and with gold We test Our servants.

A66. O CHILDREN OF THE DIVINE AND INVISIBLE ESSENCE! Ye shall be hindered from loving Me and souls shall be perturbed as they make mention of Me. For minds cannot grasp Me nor hearts contain Me.  
(Hidden Words, Page: 15-19)

150. O thou handmaid aflame with the fire of God's love! Grieve thou not over the troubles and hardships of this nether world, nor be thou glad in times of ease and comfort, for both shall pass away.  
(Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Page: 177)

O ye Cohorts of God! In the moment of catastrophe, find ye patience, resignation and submission. The more the calamities are intensified the less become ye disturbed. Withstand ye, with perfect assurance, the flood of trials and calamities, through the power of His Highness, the Almighty.  
(Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Page: 45)

If thy daily living become difficult, soon (God) thy Lord will bestow upon thee that which shall satisfy thee. Be patient in the time of affliction and trial, endure every difficulty and hardship with dilated heart, attracted spirit and eloquent tongue in remembrance of the Merciful. Verily this is the life of satisfaction, the spiritual existence, heavenly repose, divine benediction and the celestial table! Soon thy Lord will extenuate thy straightened circumstances even in this world.  
(Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Page: 98)

O dear servant of God! The tests of God are surrounding you from all directions and many afflictions have occurred; but thanks be to God that you and your honorable husband are patient, thankful and constant. The necessity and the particularity of the assured and believing ones is to be firm in the Cause of God and withstand the hidden and evident tests. Thanks be to God that you are distinguished and made eminent by this blessing. Anybody can be happy in the state of comfort, ease, health, success, pleasure and joy; but if one will be happy and contented in the time of trouble, hardship and prevailing disease, it is the proof of nobility. Thanks be to God that that dear servant of God is extremely patient under the disastrous circumstances, and in the place of complaining gives thanks.  
(Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Page: 263)

O believers! The tests of God are very severe; you should beseech and cry unto Him that you may be firm and steadfast during all temptations.  
(Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Page: 647)

Be in perfect unity. Never become angry with one another. Let your eyes be directed toward the kingdom of truth and not toward the world of creation. Love the creatures for the sake of God and not for themselves. You will never become angry or impatient if you love them for the sake of God. Humanity is not perfect. There are imperfections in

every human being, and you will always become unhappy if you look toward the people themselves. But if you look toward God, you will love them and be kind to them, for the world of God is the world of perfection and complete mercy. Therefore, do not look at the shortcomings of anybody; see with the sight of forgiveness. The imperfect eye beholds imperfections. The eye that covers faults looks toward the Creator of souls. He created them, trains and provides for them, endows them with capacity and life, sight and hearing; therefore, they are the signs of His grandeur. You must love and be kind to everybody, care for the poor, protect the weak, heal the sick, teach and educate the ignorant.

(Promulgation of Universal Peace, Page: 93)

Tests are benefits from God, for which we should thank Him. Grief and sorrow do not come to us by chance, they are sent to us by the Divine Mercy for our own perfecting. While a man is happy he may forget his God; but when grief comes and sorrows overwhelm him, then will he remember his Father who is in Heaven, and who is able to deliver him from his humiliations. Men who suffer not, attain no perfection. The plant most pruned by the gardeners is that one which, when the summer comes, will have the most beautiful blossoms and the most abundant fruit. The labourer cuts up the earth with his plough, and from that earth comes the rich and plentiful harvest. The more a man is chastened, the greater is the harvest of spiritual virtues shown forth by him. A soldier is no good General until he has been in the front of the fiercest battle and has received the deepest wounds.

(Paris Talks, Page: 50)

### The Progress of the Soul

"Does the soul progress more through sorrow or through the joy in the world?' 'Abdu'l-Bahá.- 'The mind and spirit of man advance when he is tried by suffering. The more the ground is ploughed the better the seed will grow, the better the harvest will be. Just as the plough furrows the earth deeply, purifying it of weeds and thistles, so suffering and tribulation free man from the petty affairs of this worldly life until he arrives at a state of complete detachment. His attitude in this world will be that of divine happiness. Man is, so to speak, unripe: the heat of the fire of suffering will mature him. Look back to the times past and you will find that the greatest men have suffered most.' 'He who through suffering has attained development, should he fear happiness?' 'Abdu'l-Bahá. - 'Through suffering he will attain to an eternal happiness which nothing can take from him. The apostles of Christ suffered: they attained eternal happiness.' 'Then it is impossible to attain happiness without suffering?' 'Abdu'l-Bahá. - 'To attain eternal happiness one must suffer. He who has reached the state of self-sacrifice has true joy. Temporal joy will vanish.' 'Can a departed soul converse with someone still on earth?' 'Abdu'l-Bahá. - 'A conversation can be held, but not as our conversation. There is no doubt that the forces of the higher worlds interplay with the forces of this plane. The heart of man is open to inspiration; this is spiritual communication. As in a dream one talks with a friend while the mouth is silent, so is it in the conversation of the spirit. A man may converse

with the ego within him saying: "May I do this? Would it be advisable for me to do this work?" Such as this is conversation with the higher self.'  
(Paris Talks, Page: 178)

The more difficulties one sees in the world the more perfect one becomes. The more you plough and dig the ground the more fertile it becomes. The more you cut the branches of a tree, the higher and stronger it grows. The more you put the gold in the fire the purer it becomes. The more you sharpen the steel by grinding the better it cuts. Therefore, the more sorrows one sees the more perfect one becomes. That is why, in all times the Prophets of God have had tribulations and difficulties to withstand. The more often the captain of a ship is in the tempest and difficult sailing the greater his knowledge becomes. Therefore I am happy that you have had great tribulations and difficulties. For this I am very happy that you have had many sorrows. Strange it is that I love you and still I am happy that you have sorrows."  
(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: Star of the West, Vol.XIV, No.2, p.41)

O ye beloved of God! When the winds blow severely, rains fall fiercely, the lightning flashes, the thunder roars, the bolt descends and storms of trial become severe, grieve not; for after this storm, verily, the divine springtime will arrive, the hills and fields will become verdant, the expanses of grain will joyfully wave, the earth will become covered with blossoms, the trees will be clothed with green garments and adorned with blossoms and fruits. Thus blessings become manifest in all countries. These favors are results of those storms and hurricanes.  
(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Bahá’í World Faith, Page: 395)

990. The darkness of this gloomy night shall pass away. Again the Sun of Reality will dawn from the horizon of the hearts. Have patience, wait but do not sit idle; work while you are waiting; smile when you are wearied with monotony; be firm while everything around you is being shaken; be joyous while the ugly face of despair grins at you; speak aloud while the malevolent forces of the nether world try to crush your mind; be valiant and courageous while men all around you are cringing with fear and cowardice. Do not yield to the overwhelming power of tyranny and despotism. Serve the cause of democracy and freedom. Continue your journey to the end. The bright day is coming. The nucleus of the new race is forming. The harbinger of the new ideals of international justice is appearing. The trees of hope will become verdant; the copper of scorn and derision will be transmuted into the gold of honor and praise; the arid desert of ignorance will be transformed into the luxuriant garden of knowledge; the threatening clouds shall be dispelled and the stars of faith and charity will again twinkle in the clear heaven of consciousness.  
("Bahá’í Scriptures" -- Selection from the Utterances of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá edited by Horace Holley, Page 551)

"While he would urge you to courageously meet and overcome the many obstacles that stand in your way, he would at the same time advise you that in case of failure and no matter what befalls you, you should remain radiantly content at, and entirely submissive

to the Divine Will. Our afflictions, tests and trials are sometimes blessings in disguise, as they teach us to have more faith and confidence in God, and bring us nearer to Him." (From letter dated April 28, 1936, written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer)

"Sufferings and Privations are Blessings in Disguise "Has not Bahá'u'lláh assured us that sufferings and privations are blessings in disguise, that through them our inner spiritual forces become stimulated, purified and ennobled? Remain, therefore, confident that your material hardships will far from hindering your activities for the Cause, impart to your heart a powerful impetus to better serve and promote its interests."

(From letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, November 22, 1936)

"The greater your trials and sufferings, the stronger should wax your attachment and devotion to the Cause. For only through repeated tribulations and trials does God test His servants, and these they should therefore view as blessings in disguise, and as opportunities whereby they can acquire a fuller consciousness of the Divine Will and Purpose."

(From letter dated February 23, 1939, written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer)

The prime requisites for them that take counsel together are purity of motive, radiance of spirit, detachment from all else save God, attraction to His Divine Fragrances, humility and lowliness amongst His loved ones, patience and long-suffering in difficulties and servitude to His exalted Threshold. Should they be graciously aided to acquire these attributes, victory from the unseen Kingdom of Bahá shall be vouchsafed to them. (Bahá'í Administration, Page: 21)

And yet, how often we seem to forget the clear and repeated warnings of our beloved Master, who, in particular during the concluding years of His mission on earth, laid stress on the "severe mental tests: that would inevitably sweep over His loved ones of the West - tests that would purge, purify and prepare them for their noble mission in life."

(Bahá'í Administration, Page: 50)

Life is a constant struggle, not only against forces around us, but above all against our own ego. We can never afford to rest on our own oars, for if we do, we soon see ourselves carried down stream again. Many of those who drift away from the Cause do so for the reason that they had ceased to go on developing. They became complacent or indifferent, and consequently ceased to draw the spiritual strength and vitality from the Cause which they should have. Sometimes, of course, people fail because of a test they just do not meet, and often our severest tests come from each other. Certainly the believer should try to avert such things, and if they happen, remedy them through love. Generally speaking nine-tenths of the friends' troubles are because they don't do the

Bahá'í thing, in relation to each other, to the administrative bodies or in their personal lives.

(The Unfolding Destiny of the British Bahá'í Community, Page: 454)

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O my God! Thou seest me detached from everything save Thee, clinging to Thee.  
Guide me, then, in my doings in a manner which profiteth me for the glory of Thy Cause  
and the loftiness of the state of Thy servants.  
(Bahá'u'lláh, provisional translation)

The accompanying note should be revised to read: (This prayer was revealed by the  
Blessed Beauty to Jinabi Samandar [Shaykh Kazim Samandar], the father of the late  
Hand of the Cause Tarazu'lláh Samandari, to assist him to make a difficult decision. It  
should be recited 19 times and then that which comes to mind should be acted upon.)  
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