Devotions on FAITH

PRAYER: 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.

 (Baha'u'llah, Prayers and Meditations by Baha'u'llah, p. 258)

PRAYER: O Thou Whose face is the object of my adoration, Whose beauty is my sanctuary, Whose habitation is my goal, Whose praise is my hope, Whose providence is my companion, Whose love is the cause of my being, Whose mention is my solace, Whose nearness is my desire, Whose presence is my dearest wish and highest aspiration, I entreat Thee not to withhold from me the things Thou didst ordain for the chosen ones among Thy servants. Supply me, then, with the good of this world and of the next.

Thou, truly, art the King of all men. There is no God but Thee, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous.

 (Baha'u'llah, Prayers and Meditations by Baha'u'llah, p. 258)

…the love that flows from man to God. This is faith, attraction to the Divine, enkindlement, progress, entrance into the Kingdom of God, receiving the Bounties of God, illumination with the lights of the Kingdom. This love is the origin of all philanthropy; this love causes the hearts of men to reflect the rays of the Sun of Reality.

 (Abdu'l-Baha, Paris Talks, p. 180)

The essence of faith is fewness of words and abundance of deeds; he whose words exceed his deeds, know verily his death is better than his life.

 (Baha'u'llah, Tablets of Baha'u'llah, p. 156)

By faith is meant, first, conscious knowledge, and second, the practice of good deeds…

… the foundation of success and salvation is the knowledge of God, and that the results of the knowledge of God are the good actions which are the fruits of faith.

 (Abdu'l-Baha)

Faith does not consist in belief, it consists in deeds. It is not sufficient to believe in Baha'u’llah and to say, "I am of the people of El-Abha"; we must act in accordance with the teachings of Baha'u'llah, who commands us to become centers of divine attraction, so that the attributes of God may emanate from us, that we may become wise and well intentioned to all the peoples of the earth in order to better the condition of all.

We must look upon our enemies with a sin-covering eye and act with justice when confronted with any injustice whatsoever, forgive all, consider the whole of humanity as our own family, the whole earth as our own country, be sympathetic with all suffering, nurse the sick, offer a shelter to the exiled, help the poor and those in need, dress all wounds and share the happiness of each one. Be compassionate, so that your actions will shine like unto the light streaming forth from the lamp.

 (Abdu'l-Baha, Divine Philosophy, p. 41)

There is still another power which is differentiated from that of the soul and mind. This…power is the spirit which is an emanation from the divine bestower; it is the effulgence of the sun of reality, the radiation of the celestial world, the spirit of faith, the spirit His Holiness the Christ refers to when he says, "Those that are born of the flesh are flesh, and those that are born of the spirit are spirit." The spirit is the axis round which the eternal life revolves. It is conducive to everlasting glory and is the cause of the exaltation of humanity.

In another instance His Holiness the Christ says, "Whosoever has not received a portion of the spirit is as dead. Let the dead bury their dead." This means that although the souls of humanity are living, yet if they are deprived of contact with the spirit they are as dead. In another place Christ says, "You must be baptized with the spirit." This spirit of faith is the flame of reality, the life of humanity and the cause of eternal illumination. It inspires man to attain the virtues and perfections of the divine world.

It is my hope that each one of you may become conscious of this flame.

 (Abdu'l-Baha, Divine Philosophy, p. 122)

Try with all your hearts to be willing channels for God's Bounty. For I say unto you that He has chosen you to be His messengers of love throughout the world, to be His bearers of spiritual gifts to man, to be the means of spreading unity and concord on the earth. Thank God with all your hearts that such a privilege has been given unto you. For a life devoted to praise is not too long in which to thank God for such a favour.

Lift up your hearts above the present and look with eyes of faith into the future! Today the seed is sown, the grain falls upon the earth, but behold the day will come when it shall rise a glorious tree and the branches thereof shall be laden with fruit. Rejoice and be glad that this day has dawned, try to realize its power, for it is indeed wonderful! God has crowned you with honour and in your hearts has He set a radiant star; verily the light thereof shall brighten the whole world!

 (Abdu'l-Baha, Paris Talks, p. 68)

RADIANT STAR SONG

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, 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.

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.

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 life eternal ready for him.

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 life everlasting; it must be attained during this vanishing existence.

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. 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-Baha, Foundations of World Unity, p. 64)

If the heart turns away from the blessings God offers how can it hope for happiness? If it does not put its hope and trust in God's Mercy, where can it find rest? Oh, trust in God! for His Bounty is everlasting, and in His Blessings, for they are superb. Oh! put your faith in the Almighty, for He faileth not and His goodness endureth for ever! His Sun giveth Light continually, and the Clouds of His Mercy are full of the Waters of Compassion with which He waters the hearts of all who trust in Him. His refreshing Breeze ever carries healing in its wings to the parched souls of men!

 (Abdu'l-Baha, Paris Talks, p. 108)

THIS IS FAITH by Ruhiyyih Khanum

To walk where there is no path

 -- -- - To breathe where there is no air

To see where there is no light --

 -- -- -- -- -- This is Faith.

To cry out in the silence,

 -- -- - The silence of the night,

And hearing no echo believe

 -- -- - And believe again and again --

 -- -- -- -- -- This is Faith.

To hold pebbles and see jewels

 -- -- - To raise sticks and see forests

To smile with weeping eyes --

 -- -- -- -- -- This is Faith.

To say: "God, I believe" when others deny,

 -- -- - "I hear" when there is no answer,

"I see" though naught is seen --

 -- -- -- -- -- This is Faith.

And the fierce love in the heart,

 -- -- - The savage love that cries

Hidden Thou art yet there!

 -- -- - Veil Thy face and mute Thy tongue

Yet I see and hear Thee, Love,

 -- -- - Beat me down to the bare earth,

Yet I rise and love Thee, Love!

 -- -- -- -- -- This is Faith.

The first sign of faith is love. The message of the holy, divine Manifestations is love; the phenomena of creation are based upon love; the radiance of the world is due to love; the well-being and happiness of the world depend upon it. Therefore, I admonish you that you must strive throughout the human world to diffuse the light of love. The people of this world are thinking of warfare; you must be peacemakers. The nations are self-centered; you must be thoughtful of others rather than yourselves. They are neglectful; you must be mindful. They are asleep; you should be awake and alert. May each one of you be as a shining star in the horizon of eternal glory. This is my wish for you and my highest hope.

 (Abdu'l-Baha, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 337)

All the teaching of the Prophets is one; one faith; one Divine light shining throughout the world. Now, under the banner of the oneness of humanity all people of all creeds should turn away from prejudice and become friends and believers in all the Prophets.

 (Abdu'l-Baha, Abdu'l-Baha in London, p. 42)

That the divers communions of the earth, and the manifold systems of religious belief, should never be allowed to foster the feelings of animosity among men, is, in this Day, of the essence of the Faith of God and His Religion. These principles and laws, these firmly-established and mighty systems, have proceeded from one Source, and are rays of one Light. That they differ one from another is to be attributed to the varying requirements of the ages in which they were promulgated.

Gird up the loins of your endeavor…that haply the tumult of religious dissension and strife that agitateth the peoples of the earth may be stilled, that every trace of it may be completely obliterated. For the love of God, and them that serve Him, arise to aid this sublime and momentous Revelation. Religious fanaticism and hatred are a world-devouring fire, whose violence none can quench. The Hand of Divine power can, alone, deliver mankind from this desolating affliction. Consider the war that hath involved the two Nations, how both sides have renounced their possessions and their lives. How many the villages that were completely wiped out!

The utterance of God is a lamp, whose light is these words: Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship. He Who is the Daystar of Truth beareth Me witness! So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth. The One true God, He Who knoweth all things, Himself testifieth to the truth of these words.

 (Baha'u'llah, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 13)

PRAYER:

O Thou kind Lord! O Thou Who art generous and merciful! We are servants of Thy threshold and are gathered beneath the sheltering shadow of Thy divine unity. The sun of Thy mercy is shining upon all, and the clouds of Thy bounty shower upon all. Thy gifts encompass all, Thy loving providence sustains all, Thy protection overshadows all, and the glances of Thy favor are cast upon all. O Lord! Grant Thine infinite bestowals, and let the light of Thy guidance shine. Illumine the eyes, gladden the hearts with abiding joy. Confer a new spirit upon all people and bestow upon them eternal life. Unlock the gates of true understanding and let the light of faith shine resplendent. Gather all people beneath the shadow of Thy bounty and cause them to unite in harmony, so that they may become as the rays of one sun, as the waves of one ocean, and as the fruit of one tree. May they drink from the same fountain. May they be refreshed by the same breeze. May they receive illumination from the same source of light. Thou art the Giver, the Merciful, the Omnipotent.

PRAYER:

O Lord my God! Assist Thy loved ones to be firm in Thy Faith, to walk in Thy ways, to be steadfast in Thy Cause. Give them Thy grace to withstand the onslaught of self and passion, to follow the light of divine guidance. Thou art the Powerful, the Gracious, the Self-Subsisting, the Bestower, the Compassionate, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful.