**Lesson 7: Seeking Knowledge:**

**The importance of seeking knowledge, particularly the knowledge of God**

Slightly modified from Ruhi Grade 2 Material

## 4-4:10:

**Opening Prayers:**

To begin the class, you and a few children recite some prayers.

**Practice previous quotes and prayers**

**New Prayer:**

**“O my Lord! Make Thy beauty to be my food, and Thy presence my drink, and Thy pleasure my hope, and praise of Thee my action, and remembrance of Thee my companion, and the power of Thy sovereignty my succorer, and Thy habitation my home, and my dwelling-place the seat Thou hast sanctified from the limitations imposed upon them who are shut out as by a veil from Thee. Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the Most Powerful.”**

This prayer is talking about **feeding our spirit with God’s guidance, love and light**. What does it say is **our hope**? **God’s good pleasure**- we want God to be happy with our actions, and **our actions should be what?** What does it say in the prayer? Our actions should **show forth praise of God.**  What do you think that means? What does that look like?

What is **a companion for us** on the journey of our life? **Remembrance of God.** He is with us at all times- we are NEVER alone. **God’s power is our succorer- our helper** and then it says **our true home- is with God- God’s habitation- where God is**.

**The place that we want to dwell- or live- is the place that is far above any things that veil us from God**. Can everyone close their eyes please? Do you see that your eyelids are veiling you from seeing. Now open your eyes- now you are not veiled and can see fully. **Our spiritual eyes need to be open and seeing the beauty and glory of God all around us**, rather than veiled from that beauty. Sometimes not looking into truth on our own, and just believing what others say without investigating truth can be a veil that separates us from seeing the beauty of God in the world. Sometimes getting too caught up in our own life and forgetting about God can be a veil that blinds our eyes. That is why God has called us to pray each day- **prayer can burn away those veils that shut us out from seeing God’s beauty.** Then we end this prayer by saying that God, truly, is the Almighty, the All-Glorious and **the Most what? Powerful!** He can do all things.

## 4:10-4:25:

**Intro. To Lesson**

Throughout our lives, we strive to obey the commandments of God and to reflect in all our actions qualities such as love, justice, humility and generosity, praying to Him daily to guide us and to strengthen us. We are also dedicated to **SEEKING KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND OF HIS CREATION** in all that we do. As our knowledge of God increases, so does our love for Him. But what does it mean to gain knowledge of God? **How do we know God?** We know God through those Special Beings that He sends to humanity from time to time Who brings us His laws and teachings. These Special Beings include Abraham, Moses, Zoroaster, Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, Muhammad, the Bab and Baha’u’llah. By LISTENING to the Words of the Manifestation of God for today, by STUDYING His laws and teachings and APPLYING them to our lives, we DRAW CLOSER TO GOD. (Can talk about the Bahai Houses of Worship if you want briefly- and how they are dedicated to the remembrance of all these Messengers of God).

Of course, we also have to learn more and more about God’s creation and do our best to study the universe and understand its workings. And as we do so, we see that EVERY CREATED THING speaks to us of God’s GREATNESS and GLORY.

Abdu’l-Baha explains that, when we look at the world, we see the signs of God’s perfections everywhere. As we think about His words and try to understand their meaning, we are able to see God’s tokens and signs all around us. The sun shines and gives light, warmth and life to the world, reminding us of the love of God, without which we would perish. The rain falls on the earth just as the bounties of God are continuously showered upon our souls. A mountain rises towards the heavens calling to mind His majesty and grandeur.

Let’s play a little game called the signs of God and see what these items remind us of about God. (Have a basket that is covered by a sock with items from nature that remind us of God- such as a rock- His steadfast love, a pearl- the treasures hidden in the ocean of His words, etc. Can also be PICTURES of things)

**Memorization:** To help us to remember the importance of acquiring knowledge, especially the knowledge of God, let us memorize the following quotation:

**HAND OUT QUOTE: “The purpose of God in creating man hath been, and will ever be, to enable him to know his Creator and to attain His Presence.”**

**Purpose**

1. The room was very dark, so Nina lit a candle. The purpose of a candle is to give light
2. The teacher gave the students some exercises to help them improve their mathematical skills. The purpose of the exercises was to strengthen the students’ ability to add and subtract.

In this quote we are talking about the purpose of God in creating us. It says it is to enable (let) us know our Creator and attain His Presence. Let’s talk about what those last couple of words mean.

**Attain**

1. Ming’s family had to take a train for 3 days and then a bus for 2 more in order to reach their ancestral village. Only after several days of travel by train and by bus did they attain their destination.
2. The farmers decided that a fence was needed to stop their cattle (cows) from going onto the road. They worked together in building the fence and, through diligence and cooperation, attained their goal.

**Presence**

1. Whenever the king enters the room, his subjects bow down before him. His subjects bow in His presence.
2. Emilio’s parents asked him to take his little sister out of the room, because they did not want to carry on their discussion in her presence.

Why were we created? To enable us to know our Creator and to attain His Presence. This is really about being near to God. Nearness means likeness- sameness. When we develop our spiritual virtues- the qualities of God within us- we draw nearer to God. In the next world those virtues that we have developed in this world will also help us to be very close to God. **Will this purpose change?** No- it says that knowing God and attaining His **Presence has been and will ever be** the purpose of God in creating us. So then we have to think, our we using our lives for the purpose that we were created? Are we getting to know God more in our lives?
Are we drawing nearer to God by becoming more spiritual?

4:25-4:35 **Songs**

* Man is in reality a spiritual being…
* Ask the children which songs they would like to sing.

## 4:35-4:45:

**Story (have the picture of Mirza Abu’l-Fadl on display)**

Today I am going to tell you the story of how Mirza Abu’l-Fadl, one of the early believers in the time of Bahau’llah, became a Bahai. Mirza Abu’l-Fadl was very well-known for his penetrating insight, his wealth of knowledge, and his ability to understand and explain complex spiritual ideas. In his youth, he studied in depth such subjects as mathematics, astronomy (study of the stars), philosophy, and the Arabic language, which he mastered in addition to his native Persian language. When he was still a young man, Mirza Abu’l-Fadl became a professor at one of the oldest universities in Tihran, the capital of Iran. **This is the story of how he, while in that city, gained a knowledge beyond any he had acquired in all his broad studies**- knowledge of the Revelation of Baha’u’llah, the Manifestation of God for this day.

One afternoon, Mirza Abu’l-Fadl and a few of his companions set out on donkeys to visit the countryside. One their way out of the city, one of the donkeys lost a shoe (Show picture of a horse/donkey shoe), and the party called at the nearest blacksmith’s shop to help. Does anyone know what a blacksmith is? (Show picture and explain). When the blacksmith, who had very little formal education, saw Mirza Abu’l-Fadl’s long beard and large turban, in that country those were considered symbols of his vast learning, **he asked whether the scholarly man might be willing to answer a question that had perplexed the blacksmith for some time**.

Before I tell you the rest of the story, it is important to know that when a Messenger of God comes to the world, His Teachings are pure and bring life to the souls, but over time, people change the words, and bring in ideas and traditions that are not taught by the Messengers of God themselves. This is what had happened at the time that Mirza Abu’l-Fadl was meeting the blacksmith.

So, the blacksmith asked Mirza Abu’l-Fadl, “Is it true,” began the blacksmith, referring to an old written religious tradition- one of those that had become changed by human beings- **“Is it true that each drop of rain is accompanied by an angel from heaven, and that this angel brings down the rain to the ground?**” “This is true,” Mirza Abu’l-Fadl responded, for it had long been believed by the people in that region that this was so- and remember that He had not yet become a Bahai. After a pause, the blacksmith begged to be allowed another question, to which Mirza Abu’l-Fadl gave his assent. **“Is it true,” the blacksmith asked once more, “that if there is a dog in a house no angel will ever visit that house?”** Again, Mirza Abu’l-Fadl responded in the affirmative, saying YES, for this too was a belief held by those who followed these written traditions. “**In that case,” commented the blacksmith, arriving at his point, “no rain should ever fall on a house where a dog is kept.”** Mirza Abu’l-Fadl had no answer. He left the shop embarrassed and angry, for he had been stumped by a blacksmith with no formal schooling!

Mirza Abu’l-Fadl had learned from his companions that the blacksmith was a Bahai. Now, it happened that he and the blacksmith shared a mutual friend, a local draper who had a shop in the bazaar that Mirza Abu’l-Fadl would sometimes visit. When the draper, who was also a Bahai, heard about the incident at the blacksmith’s, he invited Mirza Abu’l-Fadl to take part in some discussions. He accepted the invitation, and the meeting was arranged. In that meeting, Mirza Abu’l-Fadl posed numerous questions and raised many objections. **Each one was answered in such simple terms and in such a wise manner** that Mirza Abu’l-Fadl found himself at a loss, for he had though he could easily prove wrong the Bahai beliefs.

For several months Mirza Abu’l-Fadl continued to meet many different Bahais, some of them quite scholarly themselves.  **Finally, forever unable to deny the proofs offered by the followers of Baha’u’llah, he turned his heart in earnest to God and begged to be shown the truth.** Soon, he was overwhelmed with the truth of Baha’u’llah’s mission, and became, after nearly a year of protest, a staunch and steadfast believer and an avid teacher of the Cause.

**The story of how Mirza Abu’l-Fadl came to recognize the truth of Baha’u’llah’s Revelation shows us how important it is to acquire knowledge not only through the study of God’s creation but also through His Manifestation in the day in which we live. Also- the importance of really seeking truth, rather than just following blindly the traditions of others. We need to look for answers to our questions and seek truth.**

## 4:45-5:00:

**Drama**

The activities that follow will help the children continue developing the skills and abilities of creative drama.

1. Ask your students to stand in their imaginary squares. As you did in the previous lesson, have the children stand about 5 feet apart and imagine that they are in their own squares. Ask them to walk along the border of his/her imaginary square.

Ask children to: raise up your arms and stretching from the tips of your toes to the tips of your fingers, reach towards the sky. Now you are going to relax and let your arms and head hang freely. *Repeat this several times.*

1. Ask students to stand in a circle. Choose one child to be the “investigator” and tell him/her to leave the area where the class is being held. Now choose another child to be the “initiator”. Explain to the children that this child will lead the group in a series of simple movements. For example, he or she may do several circles with the left arm, several with the right arm, then bend down and touch the ground several times, and so on. The rest of the children should try to follow the movements so quickly and so closely that the “investigator” is unable to discover who the “initiator” is. Are you ready? Ok- have the investigator come and stand in the middle of the circle. Can he/she discover the “initator”? Once the child has guessed correctly, repeat the exercise, choosing a new child to be the “investigator” and another to be the “initiator”. **If time allows, repeat the game several times so that every child can be the “investigator” or the “initiator” at least once.**
2. Now we are going to move on to an activity that relates to the theme of today’s lesson- the importance of seeking knowledge, particularly knowledge of God. In all created things, we see the signs of God. I am going to ask you to act out, in turn, different things we see in nature. Each of you are going to have a turn to act something out, while the rest of the class guess what it is. I will come and whisper in your ear the thing from nature that you are going to act out- one at a time and the class will then get a chance to guess as you act it out.
* **RAIN**
* **A CLOUD**
* **A MOUNTAIN**
* **A FLOWER**
* **A RIVER**
* **THE OCEAN**
* **THE WIND**
* **A TREE**
* **THE SUN**
* **A ROCK**
* **LIGHTNING**
* **THE MOON**
* **FLAME OF FIRE**
* **BIRD**
* **RAINBOW**
* **STAR**
* **ANT**

5:00-5:17: **Drawing**

Today in your drawing journals, you can choose to draw some aspect of nature that reminds you of God.

## 5:17-5:22:**Give children a chance to share their drawings with the group if they would like to share.**

## 5:22-5:27: **Review**

Repeat the quotations from today's lesson and help the children to recite the following quotations that they learned in Grade 1 about STEADFASTNESS and DETACHMENT

**“Supremely lofty will be thy station, if thou remainest steadfast in the Cause of thy Lord.”**

**“Know that thy true adornment consisteth in the love of God and in thy detachment from all save Him.“** (SONG)

## 5:27-5:30:

**Closing Prayers**

The class closes with a prayer or quotation recited in the usual manner. **BLESSED IS THE SPOT**