**Lesson 9: Seeking Knowledge:**

**Knowledge helps us contribute to the betterment of the world**

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**

**Practice new prayer with movements:**

**“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**. Having our actions **praise of God and that God is our companion** on the journey of our life. He is with us at all times- we are NEVER alone.

## 4:10-4:25:

**Intro. To Lesson**

We have been learning about the importance of seeking knowledge- both knowledge of the teachings of God and also of the sciences and arts, so that we can develop spiritually and also help the world to become a better place. To acquire knowledge, we spend our lives striving to learn about the world around us and searching after truth. Our love for learning grows as we study the sciences and the arts, draw insight from the teachings of God, put into action the knowledge we gain, and feel the joys of true understanding. We ask questions of our parents, elders, and teachers and we reflect on what we discover. Searching after truth requires us to be attentive- to listen, to observe, to think deeply. We strive, and we persevere. What does that mean? We work hard and we stick with it, even if it is difficult, right? Often we make mistakes, but our understanding increases as we think about what we did and continue to put forth effort.

Abdu’l-Baha tells us that truth is one, no matter where we may find it. For example, light is good, from whatever lamp it may shine. A rose is beautiful, in whatever garden it may grow. Abdu’l-Baha explains that, in our search after truth, we must let go of prejudice and superstition. We must keep our minds open at all times, looking for answers. He always encouraged questions from the many people who came to visit Him, and He responded to them with great courtesy, love, patience, and wisdom. Through His answers, people were able to further their knowledge and understanding about physical and spiritual reality and to see how they could contribute to the betterment of society. Abdu’l-Baha tells us that we can continue to learn throughout our lives.

**Memorization:** To help us remember to make every effort to search after truth and to acquire knowledge, let us memorize the following quotation:

**HAND OUT QUOTE: “He must search after truth to the utmost of his ability and exertion, that God may guide him in the paths of His favor and the ways of His mercy.”**

**Utmost**

Li Yong pushed with all his strength but could not move the cart up the road. Li Yong made his utmost effort to move the cart.

Stella tries her hardest to assist her little sister with her homework, no matter how much effort it takes. Stella tries her utmost to help her sister.

**Ability**

Carmen is learning to do additions and subtractions at school. By carrying out exercises every day, Carmen is developing the ability to add and subtract.

Naim’s job is to design building. As part of his job he must draw the buildings he wishes to create. The ability to draw is important to Naim’s work.

**Exertion**

Nabil wanted to help his mother to carry a bucket of water from the well to their home, even though it was very heavy. So, with great exertion, Nabil lifted up the bucket and carried it home.

The boys needed to meet their friends up the river, so they began to swim upstream. Swimming upstream, against the flow of the river, requires great exertion.

**So what does it say we need to do with the utmost of our ability and exertion? Search after truth. When we do that, what does God do? He guides us in the paths of His favor and the ways of His mercy. What is favor? What is mercy? What a blessing! We make steps towards him and He runs to us!**

## 4:25-4:35:

**Story**

There are many stories of those who have sought the truth and acquired knowledge in order to better understand and grow closer to God. This is the story of a brave and knowledgeable woman, to whom Baha’u’llah gave the name Tahirih, meaning “The Pure One”.

Tahirih was born in Persia in the early 1800s, some 200 years ago. From a young age, she had a thirst for knowledge; she loved to study from books and was eager to learn as much as she could. She would listen to her parents and family as they discussed spiritual and religious matters, and her father, who was a famous clergyman in the country, would give her lessons, which she followed with great ease. At that time, it was rare for women to be educated, but Tahirih’s desire for knowledge was so keen that her father eventually found a teacher for her who guided her studies of the arts and sciences. As Tahirih progressed, her father even arranged for her to listen to his own religious classes, though she had to do so from behind a curtain, as customs would not permit her to mix with the male students. Such was the degree of her accomplishments that her father was heard to remark that, had she been a boy, she would have succeeded him.

Of course, for everything she had learned, Tahirih still had many questions and was eager to learn more. One day, while visiting a relative, she noticed some books in his library which interested her. They were written by Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim, two notable scholars of religion. Tahirih’s relative was hesistant to lend her the books, which he feared were not in line with her father’s views. But Tahirih was persistent and eventually persuaded her relative to give her the books to take home.

She read the writings of Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim with great care and attention and found in them many gems of wisdom. She tried to share their writings with her father, but he refused to listen to their words. Still, Tahirih’s heart was attracted to the beauty of their ideas, and she began to correspond (which means write to and communicate with) Siyyid Kazim, asking him the many questions that her studies had raised in her mind. She sensed that she was being led to a new spiritual truth and determined that she must go to the city of Karbila to study with Siyyid Kazim. As a woman, she would not be permitted to travel alone in those days, so she convinced her father to allow her to travel to Karbila with her sister, and they set out on the long journey.

When they eventually arrived, Tahirih discovered that Siyyid Kazim had passed away just a few days earlier! Imagine her disappointment! She had traveled so far and had hoped to learn so much from him. Siyyid Kazim’s family could see how disappointed she was and how sincere was her desire to learn. So they invited her to stay for a while and made available to her the writings of Siyyid Kazmin that had not been published. What joy she must have felt to be able to study his words of wisdom and gain new insights. She was even able to share her understanding of profound matters with some of Siyyid Kazim’s students, sitting behind a curtain, just as she had done in her father’s classes.

Tahirih did not return home for several years. In the city of Karbila her search for truth would, by the grace of God, eventually yield its most precious fruit. For in that city she would be blessed to recognize the truth of the Divine message which had been brought to the people of Persia by the person of the Bab. How she was guided to recognize the Bab is another story that we will hear in a later class. But you should know that, after declaring her belief in the Bab, Tahirih went on to become one of the most outstanding heroines of the Bahai Faith and a champion of the cause of women. Her courage and strength were indomitable, and her breadth of learning vast. She dedicated the rest of her life to gaining knowledge, composing poems and articles that reflected her deep understanding of the teachings of God and leading many a searching soul to the truth they were looking for.

4:35-4:45 **Songs**

* Free from Prejudice by Tim Urbonya- Angels in the World CD
* Tahirih The Pure One
* Light of Thy Knowledge by Tim Urbonya- Angels in the World CD

## 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. For this next exercise, the children will remain in their imaginary squares. Ask them to create a shape with their bodies, using their heads, arms and legs. This is shape number 1. Tell them to hold that shape for a few seconds. Next, have them move into a second shape. This is shape number 2. Again have them hold the shape for a few seconds. Now count- 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2 as the children move from shape to shape. Call freeze when children are in shape number 2. Now ask the students to find a completely new shape. This is shape number 3. Have them hold it for a few seconds, and then go back to shape number 1. Now count 1, 2, 3, 2, 1, 3, 1, 2, 1, 3- as the children move from shape to shape. Call freeze when children are in the shape number 3. Finally have children create a fourth shape and ask them to hold it for a few seconds. Then ask them to go back to shape number 1 and count, 1, 2, 3, 4 (mix it up) having children move from shape to shape. Try to establish as rhythm as you count.
2. For the next activity, you can have the children act out parts of a story, which will help to consolidate in their minds, if only in a rudimentary way, what it means to search after the truth. Begin by asking the children to demonstrate each of the following actions, without stepping outside of their imaginary squares:

* walking
* running
* climbing
* jumping
* stomping
* pushing
* looking/gazing

Next explain to the children that you will tell them a story about a group of children, much like themselves, living in the village of Karu Karu. They will need to listen attentively while you speak. Whenever you refer to one of the actions mentioned earlier- for example, walking- they should follow suit, pretending to be the child in the story. (to assist them, you may wish to carry out the relevant action yourself in each specific instance)

The village of Karu Karu was next to a beautiful river. All of the people in the village used the water from the river to cook, clean, and grow their crops/food. On very hot days the children from the local school would WALK down to the river to swim in the cool water. One hot summer’s day after their school lessons were over, the children RAN down to the river. But when they arrived, to their surprise, they saw that there was just a trickle of water coming down the mountain, where once an abundance of water had flowed. They knew that if the water was drying up down river, there must be problems up river. With such little water available, the whole village would be in trouble. How would the farmers grow their crops? How would everyone cook their food? If only they knew what the problem was they could try to find a solution. They wondered whether perhaps the source of the water had dried up. In consultation with their teacher and their parents they decided that the next day they would set out on a journey with their teacher to WALK to the top of the mountain to try and discover the problem and see what they could do.

The next morning at dawn the children set out with their teacher and WALKED until they reached the foot of the mountain. Looking up at the mountain some commented, “The top of the mountain is very far; how can we ever make it all the way up?” The teacher explained, “We will have to go slowly and be patient with each other and with ourselves”. Taking each other’s hands, they hesitantly began to WALK up the mountain. They CLIMBED and CLIMBED and the higher they went, the harder it became. But they learned to draw on their strength. Sometimes their feet would slip but they would help one another to keep going. They WALKED and WALKED and it seemed like the journey would never end. When they reached a muddy path, some STOMPED through it while others RAN across as quickly and carefully as they could. After WALKING for some time, they suddenly came upon a tree fallen on the ground. At first each of the children individually tried different things to move the tree, but nothing happened. Then, putting all their efforts together, and with all their strength, they PUSHED until the tree rolled out of the way.

The further up they went, the steeper the mountain became. They had to use their hands and legs and they CLIMBED up the steep path leading to the very top. When one of them wanted to give up, the others would remind him or her that they had to keep going to help the village. Finally, they reached the top of the mountain and in their excitement, they RAN to the source of the river. But the water was flowing normally an there seemed to be nothing wrong. Realizing the problem was not at the source, the children WALKED to another part of the mountain where they could LOOK down at the river, and as they stared into the distance, they suddenly saw that there was a blockage in the river, which was causing it to flow away from the village. At last, after their long journey, that had found the problem! The children starting JUMPING for joy, for they finally knew what to do to help bring water back to the village.

5:00-5:15: **Drawing**

Today in your drawing journals, you can draw a scene or an image that will reinforce the ideas that you have learned in this lesson. A picture of Tahirih reading a book might be one choice. You can think of others!

## 5:15-5:22: **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 TRUSTWORTHINESS and RADIANCE

**“Trustworthiness is the greatest portal leading unto the tranquility and security of the people.” (song from Los Nice Guys)**

**“O Son of Being! Thou art My lamp and My light is in thee. Get thou from it thy radiance and seek none other than Me.” (song from Los Nice Guys)**

## 5:27-5:30:

**Closing Prayers**

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