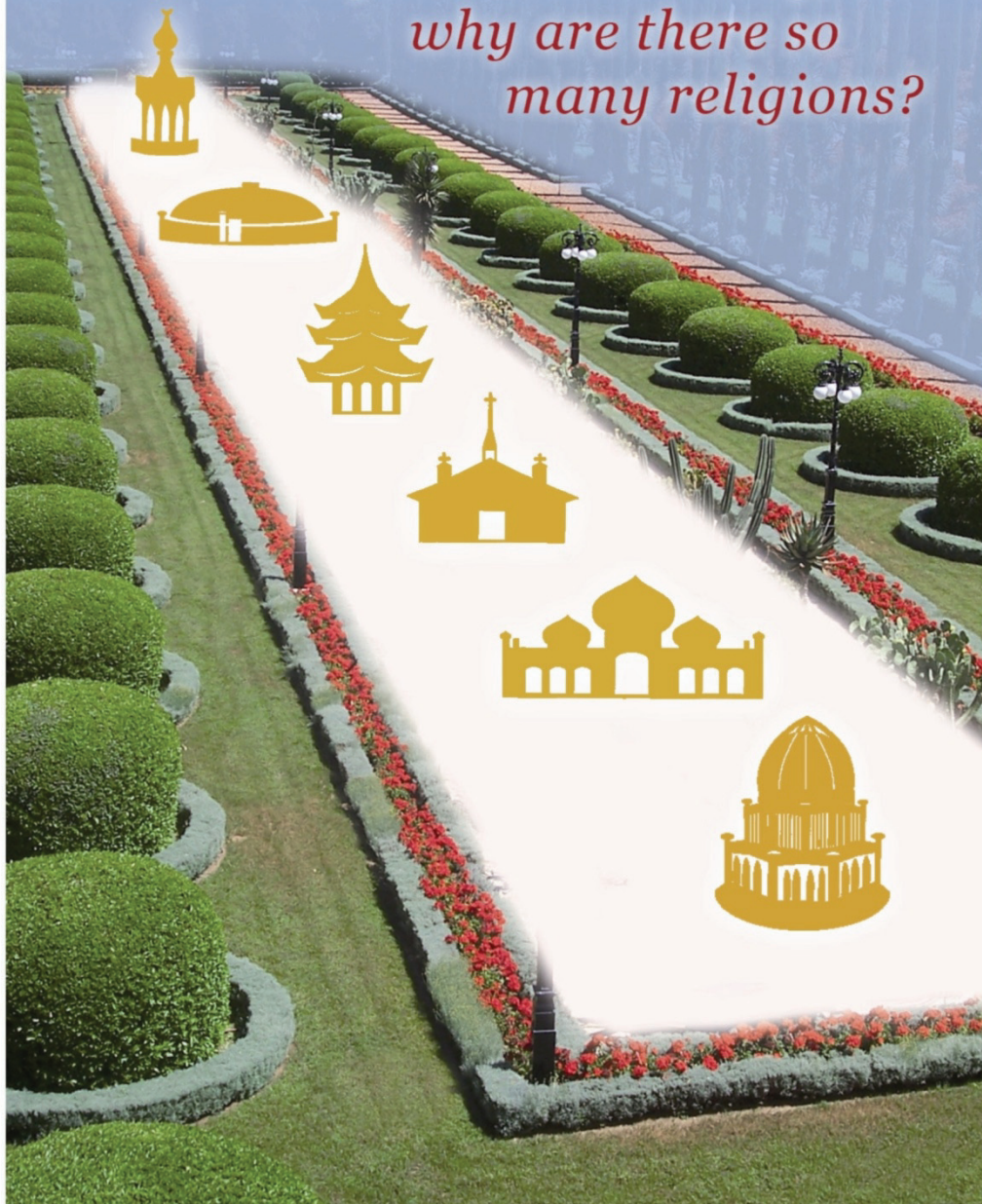


One Way!

*If there is one way,
why are there so
many religions?*



One Way!

**If There is One Way,
Why Are There So Many
Religions?**

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If There Is One God, Why Are There So Many Religions?

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Contents

Part I

One Sun With Many Dawnings...5

Religion is One...7

God—The Great Spirit...9

When a Religion is Outdated...10

Differences Are Not Essential...10

Oneness of Religion

The Most Essential Remedy...11

To Conclude...12



Part II

*If There Is One God, Why
Are there So Many Religions?...13*

*My Dialogue
with a Christian...14*



Part III

*Can You Tell Where These
Verses Come From?...14*

Part I



**One God One Faith
One People**

One Sun With Many Dawnings

Everything in the universe follows the principle of “cyclic repetition:”

The universe moves in rhythm, circles, cycles. What does this mean? That history repeats itself...the wheel of time turns on and brings us periodically to a new spring...and to a new dawn...As regularly as the ticking of a clock the cycles of life go on. Is it not reasonable to believe that the phenomenon of religion...follows exactly the same principles...?¹

But beneath the seeming diversity and changing cycles dawns the sun of unity:

...the Revelation of God may be likened to the sun. No matter how innumerable its risings, there is but one sun, and upon it depends the life of all things.² The Báb

A chief barrier to global unity is diversity of religion. In His works, Bahá'u'lláh unveils the wisdom of the diversity of faiths, and uses it as a basis and a means of unity. The first question He settles is this: if God is one, why should the Teachers be so many and their Message so diverse? That the Teachers are so many and their Message so diverse simply point to the perfection of divine Wisdom. For, as time advances and unfolds, so do our potentials and powers to comprehend ever-emerging-and-advancing truths. Also as civilization changes and grows more complex, so do its needs and requirements.

In the following passage Christ clearly proclaims the principle of “progressive revelation” or gradual unfolding of truth:

I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. John 16:12-13 NIV

The Qur'án confirms the same message:

Naught is there, but its treasures are with Us, and We send it not down but in a known measure. Qur'án 15:21 A³

Thus when a new age unfolds, and conditions change, new Teachers must come to renew religion, to adapt it and make it relevant to the changing times.

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.⁴ Bahá'u'lláh

The All-Knowing Physician hath His finger on the pulse of mankind. He perceiveth the disease, and prescribeth, in His unerring wisdom, the remedy. Every age hath its own problem, and every soul its particular aspiration. The remedy the world needeth in its present-day afflictions can never be the same as that which a subsequent age may require. Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in, and centre your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements.⁵ Bahá'u'lláh

God's Wisdom ordains that the human race move progressively toward maturity, exactly as a child moves from weakness to strength, from ignorance to knowledge and wisdom. Each religion represents a new stage in the spiritual evolution of mankind, leading the world one step further toward maturity. Maturity cannot come by force; it must grow gradually, like a seed. The completion of each stage of growth is essential for the successful arrival of the next, for it paves the way and lays the basis on which to build. At birth we nourish the infant's body with milk and then, later, little by little with solid foods. Our Creator and Sustainer does exactly the same with our spirits:

I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. I Cor. 3:2 NIV
See also I Cor. 13:11; Isa. 28:9-10

God reveals nothing but the truth, nothing but absolute perfection.

As for God, His way is perfect. The word of the Lord is flawless. Psalms 18:30 NIV

But what is perfection for one age may not be for the next. Every faith is complete in its own dispensation, in its own age, but insufficient for the next.

The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached... Christ (Luke 16:16 NIV)

Jesus changed some of the laws of Moses (the law of divorce, for instance), yet He declared that He had come not "to destroy the law, or the prophets...but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17; Luke 16:16). How could Jesus change the laws and still declare to have fulfilled them? The seed sacrifices itself to give rise to the flower, to give birth to the fruit; the flower and the fruit do not destroy the seed, they merely fulfill the seed's desire to grow, to unfold its charm, to manifest its potential. Thus not only did Jesus not destroy the laws that preceded Him, He fulfilled them by making them more relevant, by allowing them to unfold, to adapt to an ever-changing world. In the same way, the Bahá'í Faith does not destroy the past religions, it merely expands them, allowing them to grow with time.

The following verse from the Gospel points to the oneness and wholeness of God's Purpose, and indicates that by accepting the new Faith no believer in Christ can lose even one iota from what he has already received—love, hope, faith, and salvation:

And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. Christ (John 6:39 NIV)

Does yesterday's sun excel today's sun or transcend tomorrow's? The Báb describes the purpose of progressive revelation in these terms:

The purpose underlying this Revelation, as well as those that preceded it, has, in like manner, been to announce the advent of the Faith of Him Whom God will make manifest [Bahá'u'lláh]. And this Faith—the Faith of Him Whom God will make manifest—in its turn, together with all the Revelations gone before it, have as their object the Manifestation destined to succeed it...The process of the rise and setting of the Sun of Truth will thus indefinitely continue—a process that hath had no beginning and will have no end.

Well is it with him who in every Dispensation recognizeth the Purpose of God for that Dispensation, and is not deprived therefrom by turning his gaze towards the things of the past.⁶

As the words of the Báb signify, every seeker of truth should strive to recognize the divine Purpose for the age in which he lives. The seeker who fails to acknowledge the new Revelation, who declines to harmonize his life with the new teachings, who refuses to live by the standards of the new age declared by the new Manifestation or Messenger of God, may be likened to a mature person who follows the childish ways, who tries to satisfy his needs by regressing to an earlier age, to live as if he were still a child. Obviously such a person cannot attain contentment, in spite of every sincere effort. This is why so many—despite their deep desire to believe, and despite pressures both from within and without to conform to prevailing conventions, to follow the faith of the ancestors—stand helpless, unable to please either themselves or others and to submit graciously to God.

Religion is One

This is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future.⁷ Bahá'u'lláh Though called by many and different names and revealed in diverse forms, there has been, and there will always be, only one divine and indivisible faith inspired and sustained by the same transcendent spirit. In the words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Truth has many aspects, but it remains always and forever one.”⁸ Religions can be likened to the chapters of an ever-growing anthology written periodically and progressively by seemingly different writers, who in essence are one. It is not too difficult to recognize the close and unbreakable links between the various chapters of the one ever-expanding Book. Only the ink, the paper, and the pen seem to have changed, not the Author or the Hand inscribing the words.

Here are the words of Christ testifying to the oneness of divine Spirit, revealed again and again throughout the ages.

Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. Christ (Rev. 22:12-13 NIV)

These are the divine Words addressed to the Báb:

I [God] have appointed Thee [the Báb] to be the Beginning and the End, the Seen and the Hidden. Verily We are the All-Knowing.

No one hath been or will ever be invested with prophethood other than Thee, nor hath any sacred Book been or will be revealed unto any one except Thee. Such is the decree ordained by Him Who is the All-Encompassing, the Best Beloved.⁹

And here are the words of Bahá'u'lláh proclaiming His own advent:

He Who is both the Beginning and the End, He Who is both Stillness and Motion, is now manifest before your eyes.¹⁰

Muhammad testifies to this same timeless Truth:

I am the first Adam, Noah, Moses, and Jesus.¹¹

Likewise Buddha and Krishna declare:

I am not the first Buddha Who came upon this earth, nor shall I be the last. In due time another Buddha will arise in the world...He will reveal to you the same eternal truths which I have taught you.¹² Buddha

Whenever there is decay of righteousness, O Bharata, and there is exaltation of unrighteousness, then I Myself come forth; for the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers, for the sake of firmly establishing righteousness, I am born from age to age.¹³ Krishna

In the following verse the Qur'án refers to several Messengers and confirms the oneness and truth of their teachings:

To you [Muslims] hath He prescribed the faith which He commanded unto Noah...and which we [God] commanded unto Abraham and Moses and Jesus, saying: "Observe this faith, and be not divided into sects therein." Qur'án 42:13

These Voices, speaking so harmoniously across the vast expanse of time, cannot but be the same single Voice, all expounding and unveiling a truth as timeless and unchanging as God Himself.

To recognize the oneness of the divine Spirit and divine Purpose, let us consider the following example. If we have a temple with one dome standing above and crowning many gates, with each gate carrying the sign "I am the way," would the many signs belie each other? Would they not all proclaim the truth? Would they not all lead the worshipers to the same center, the same altar, the same purpose? Would they not all assemble the wanderers in the path of truth under one Heavenly Dome?

Every Teacher by His advent unfolds a new gate to divine Wisdom, to Knowledge and Truth. The unfolding of Knowledge and Truth and Wisdom will continue indefinitely. No religion can be final, no Savior the last Savior. The outpouring of heavenly bounties can never cease. The Voice of the eternal will continue to call, the Mirrors of guidance will continue to shine forevermore. Bahá'u'lláh declares:

These Mirrors will everlastingly succeed each other, and will continue to reflect the light of the Ancient of Days. They that reflect their glory will, in like manner, continue to exist for evermore, for the Grace of God can never cease from flowing. This is a truth that none can disprove.¹⁴

The Báb confirms the same truth:

Indeed no religion shall We ever inaugurate unless it be renewed in the days to come. This is a promise We solemnly have made. Verily We are supreme over all things...¹⁵

Bahá'u'lláh discloses even the approximate timing of the renewal of divine Revelation in the future:

Once in about a thousand years shall this City* be renewed and re-adorned.¹⁶

* "City," "City of God," and "Holy City" (Jerusalem), as used in both Biblical and Bahá'í scriptures, signify divine Law or divine Revelation. Bahá'u'lláh writes: "That city is none other than the Word of God revealed in every age and dispensation" (*The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 199). See also *Some Answered Questions*, p. 68.

Belief in “exclusive salvation” stands contrary not only to the ways of reason, but to the words of the Scriptures as well. For we know both by reason and revelation that “God does not show favoritism...” (Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11). How can He, the impartial Father called love (John 3:16; I John 4:8), ignore His children, leave them comfortless, keep them deprived, up to a certain point in history, and then—and not before—decide to save them, to redeem them, to offer them the gift of eternal life? Can such an unjustified partiality, such a gross injustice, be expected from the all-knowing—the God of grace, compassion, love, and mercy? Can we accept or tolerate such a treatment even from our own fallible parents?

Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Romans 3:29 NIV

Like parents who give their growing children new gifts, our Creator crowns each age and each of His Messengers with special blessings and bounties. What makes the gifts unique is that they all come from the same Source and are tokens of love from the same great Spirit.

There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. I Corinthians 12:4 NEB

God—The Great Spirit

<i>God’s Messengers or Manifestations</i>	<i>The Gift of Names</i>
Abraham	The Friend of God
Moses	The Converser With God
Jesus	The Son of God The Son of Man
Muhammad	The Seal [✦] of the Messengers
The Báb	The Gate of God The Lord of the Age
Bahá’u’lláh	The Glory of God The Son of Man Come in the Glory of His Father

Should we adore the Name instead of the divine Spirit that bestows the Name? Should we say my way is the only way or better than your way?

Is not My way equal? Are not your ways unequal? Ezekiel 18:25

This is the way, walk ye in it.* Isaiah 30:21

I am the way—and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. Christ (John 14:6 NIV)

✦ “Seal” implies both adornment and approval. It also implies the termination of the “Prophetic Cycle.”

* This verse points to the Revelation destined for our time.

Just this path, there is no other.¹⁷ Buddha

This is the true Path of God...¹⁸ The Báb

...this Book is verily the Straight Path. This is the Way of God unto all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth.¹⁹ Bahá'u'lláh

This is the right Faith, but the greater part of them know it not. Qur'án 30:29

There is only one religious way. This one way is that of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, the way of heaven, of light and of purity, of the infinite Creator. Zoroaster

When a Religion is Outdated

Sometimes we tend to judge some of the past religions because we find the believers preoccupied with dogmas or doctrines that are utterly alien to divine Purpose. But to judge a religion, whose time has passed and whose mission is fulfilled, by the beliefs and deeds and dogmas of the followers is to disregard the difference between the divine and the human.

So drastic has been the alteration of religious truths taught by the previous Messengers and so numerous the teachings that have been subjected to the misjudgments of succeeding generations of interpreters as to distort the divine truths beyond the recognition of even those who revealed them. Thus in judging a religion it is essential to differentiate between the divine and the human, between man-made and God-made. We should differentiate between the gem that is genuine—pure, radiant, divine—and the gem that seems genuine. The knowledge bestowed by Bahá'u'lláh clearly guides us to tell the difference between God-made and man-made.

Only have faith, patience and courage—this is but the beginning...surely you will succeed, for God is with you!²⁰ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Differences Are Not Essential

Differences between the teachings of God’s Messengers do exist, but they are minor, related to the cultural context of the time. Every Messenger renews the essential or enduring truths taught by His Predecessors, but to meet the needs of the time, He alters or modifies some of their nonessential teachings, such as those pertaining to rites and rituals, ways of worship, forbidden foods, or holy days.

Here are the words of the Scriptures indicating the necessity of change in the Mosaic laws:

For he [Jesus] has cancelled the bond which pledged us to the decrees of the law [of Moses]...he has set it aside, nailing it to the cross...Allow no one therefore to take you to task about what you eat or drink, or over the observance of festival, new moon, or

sabbath. These are no more than a shadow of what was to come; the solid reality is Christ's.*

Colossians 2:14-17 NEB

To rest on Saturday or on Sunday, to baptize or to sprinkle, to eat fish and pork or to avoid them, do not constitute the basis of divine teachings; to love or to hate, to be selfish or unselfish, loyal or disloyal, open-minded or closed-minded, do. The latter constitute the basis and the essence of all great Faiths, even though the masses of the followers fail to honor them. Once again we see an expression of the universal law, unity in diversity, manifesting the divine Wisdom in the realm of religion as in the universe as a whole.

Love is the wellspring of all virtues, the essence of all Revelations. It is the unchanging reality of God and of Christ, indeed of all divine Teachers. The changing names (Jesus, Moses, Abraham) and the changing rules (Saturday, Sunday, Friday) stand only as shadows. But the sun, which casts the light and the shadows, stands still, unchanging, eternal. The divine Voice eternally warns us saying:

...take heed lest forms and apparels debar you from recognizing Him. Render ye thanksgiving unto God that perchance He may deal mercifully with you.²¹ The Báb

Oneness of Religion The Most Essential Remedy

Among Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, recognition of the oneness of religion and its realization as one universal faith dominating the conscience of the whole human race is a most vital step toward the ultimate potential and destiny of our age: the oneness of mankind. Religious unity is the foundation of a peaceful world, and the most urgent remedy for the ills of mankind. Bahá'u'lláh states:

That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith. This can in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled, an all-powerful and inspired Physician.²² Bahá'u'lláh

And again:

Gird up the loins of your endeavor, O people of Bahá, 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.²³ Bahá'u'lláh

Bahá'u'lláh's plan of religious unity is a promise confirmed in past scriptures:

...They will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees. Ezekiel 37:24 NIV

* For further references, see Mark 12:24-34; Luke 5:36-39; Hebrews 10:1-4; 7:12-18; 8:13; 5:12-14; Matthew 9:16-17; Galatians 5:6; 6:5; 2:19.

To Conclude

There exists but one divine and indivisible Purpose, which the seekers of discord have disguised and divided into many deceptively plausible forms. Truth is one, but the traditions and dogmas are many. If we seek the one universal Truth, we shall all arrive at one point—the point of unity and oneness. Otherwise, we shall remain divided and in disarray.

The main reason for the present divisions and differences among the followers of various religions is that instead of seeking the one universal truth—the point of agreement—they are preoccupied and concerned with traditions, superstitions, and dogmas, the points of disagreement. Each believer considers his belief flawless, his way the straight way, each claiming to be the sole possessor of truth, without ever objectively examining the universal truths underlying all religions.

As long as such an attitude persists, hope cannot dawn, justice cannot triumph, unity cannot reign, fellowship cannot flourish. As long as the belief in exclusive salvation, or the superiority of a given Faith over others, dominates the hearts and minds of the masses, peace and prosperity cannot prevail. Bahá'u'lláh declares:

Beware, O believers in the Unity of God, lest ye be tempted to make any distinction between any of the Manifestations of His Cause, or to discriminate against the signs that have accompanied and proclaimed their Revelation. This indeed is the true meaning of Divine Unity, if ye be of them that apprehend and believe this truth. Be ye assured, moreover, that the works and acts of each and every one of these Manifestations of God, nay whatever pertaineth unto them, and whatsoever they may manifest in the future, are all ordained by God, and are a reflection of His Will and Purpose.²⁴

Part II

**If There Is One God,
Why Are There
So Many Religions?**

My Dialogue with a Christian

This is a true story of a young man named Paul who felt comfortable in his small “fish bowl.” Yet one day he ventured out for an hour and entered a bigger bowl, to see other fish and to taste fresher waters. After this uplifting and exciting experience, he returned to his original bowl with a heart slightly refreshed and a mind slightly stretched:

A mind, stretched to a new idea, never goes back to its original dimension.

Oliver Holmes

We often talk about racial prejudice, seldom about religious prejudice. Let me illustrate the point with a true story. Once I taught a course in child development to 30 teachers (graduate students). We sat in a big circle and enjoyed excellent communication and exchange of ideas. The theme I emphasized was positive thinking. Everyone was encouraged to find the best in himself and in others.

During the second week I noticed a gloomy face in the circle. It belonged to Paul, who was about 30 years old. I wondered why he was sad and began to entertain theories. Suddenly it dawned on me. Earlier the students had been asked to reveal their most cherished goals. Most of them said things like: I want to be a good mother, to be happy, to build the house of my dream, to travel, to be a better teacher. No one mentioned anything spiritual except Paul, who said, “I want to please the Lord.”

I was delighted to hear him say this. His thought came as a fresh breath of air. The word “God” or “Lord” is seldom heard in universities. It seems college professors talk about everything except God. In places of learning, the idea of the supernatural seems out of place and outdated.

From Paul’s response, I guessed that he must have heard from me something contrary to his religious beliefs.

Paul always sat next to a 50-year-old lady, who was vibrant, spiritual, and sociable. I decided to get to the heart of the problem by seeking her help. One day I asked if she knew Paul’s problem. She seemed prepared, and gave this quick and candid response: “At first Paul thought you were a Christian. Then from reading certain passages in your workbook, he now believes you are not a Christian.” I asked her to assure Paul that I believe Christ was divine and spoke the word of God. Then I added, “Please also tell him this “Christ says love your enemies. I am not his enemy. But even if I were, he must still love me. If one loves a person, he must also respect him.” She was pleased and promised to convey my message to him. The next day I was astonished by what I saw in Paul’s face: uninterrupted smiles.

After observing this dramatic change, I felt Paul was ready for an exchange of ideas. One day after the class I asked him to see me in my office. At that point I wanted to have a friendly dialogue with him and to assure him of my love for Christ, but I did not want to

reveal my religion. Destiny had planned otherwise. As soon as he entered my office, he saw one of several poster with the words “Bahá’í Faith.” He immediately asked, “What is the Bahá’í Faith?” I said that it was my religion. He could not wait to quiz me about it. He had never heard the word *Bahá’í* before.

I told him Bahá’ís accept not only Christianity but all great religions. They believe God has spoken to humanity in distant times through many Spokesmen. He loves all His children equally and has sent and will continue to send Saviors to guide them.

He asked if there was any reference in the Bible to support this. I asked him if he remembered these words from Jesus: “I have other sheep that are not of this fold” (John 10:16). He knew the passage. Then I said, “Jesus came to save primarily the Israelites. In fact He said, ‘I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel’ (Matthew 15:24). Israelites were the sheep that He tended. But there were other ‘sheep’ or societies (Chinese, Native Americans, Icelandics, Alaskans, etc.) that had a different history and lived far away from Palestine. They too belonged to God. A true shepherd loves *all* His sheep.” Paul said he had never thought about the meaning of this verse in this way and felt the interpretation seemed reasonable.

I asked, if he had several babies, would he love some of them more than the others. He said no. Then I said, “When Jesus and Moses and Abraham speared, America was not yet discovered. But people lived in that continent. Would God ignore His Native American babies? Would He leave them in the dark of unbelief for thousands of years?” He listened with interest and could detect no flaws in my reasoning.

Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.

Acts 10:34-35 NIV

Then Paul said, “But Native Americans have some strange beliefs.” I answered, “A great portion of the pure teachings of God’s ancient Messengers has been lost. New ideas have been added by people to all ancient faiths. Don’t you think that some Christian denominations have beliefs that appear strange to you and to non-Christians?” He said yes. Then I said, “Would God send the members of those denominations to hell? Would God send someone to hell because he believed in the wrong doctrines?” He said no. Then I said, “Think of those religions as denominations of Christianity. Most religious conflict and intolerance is due to misunderstanding. We need to learn more about other faiths.”

He asked, “Why do Muslims believe in polygamy?” I said, “Because in tribal Arabia unmarried women could not live in safety. They were often kidnapped and abused. Polygamy absorbed single women and protected them.” Then I said, “Have you ever seen anything in the Bible against polygamy?” He said no, but he was sure a reference could be found. I asked him to try. He promised he would inquire from his pastor and let me know later.

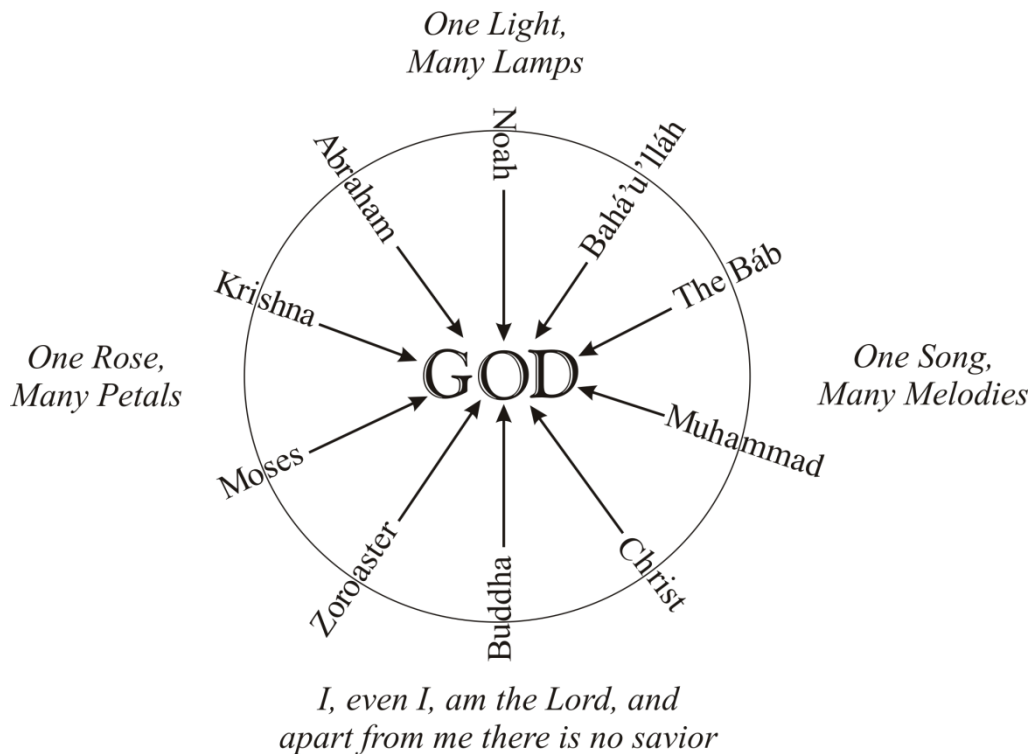
Then Paul said the Bible predicts the coming of Antichrists and wondered if the non-Christian religions were not the fulfillment of this prophecy. I said the Gospel defines an Antichrist as one who denies the station or mission of Jesus Christ (I John 4:2-3). Muhammad as well as Bahá’u’lláh (the Founder of the Bahá’í Faith) and the Báb (Bahá’u’lláh’s Herald) glorified Christ. The title in no way applies to them. In fact, the prophecy about the Antichrist confirms the divine origin of both Islam and the Bahá’í

Faith. For it declares that anyone who acknowledges Jesus Christ (His divine mission and station) is of God (I John 4:2). I showed him this passage from Bahá'u'lláh about the supreme station of Christ:

We testify that when He came into the world, He shed the splendor of His glory upon all created things...Blessed is the man who, with a face beaming with light, hath turned towards Him.¹ Bahá'u'lláh

I asked if he knew how much Muhammad loved and glorified Jesus. He said no. I indicated that the Qur'an repeatedly confirms the divine origin of Jesus. And asked him why this was unknown to Christians. He had no answer.

He then introduced his favorite quotation from Jesus: "I am the way and the truth. No one comes to the Father but by Me." In response, I took a piece of paper and made this drawing:



Then I said, "Think of each of these great Teachers or Redeemers as a pathway to God. Each of them came in a different age and called Himself *the way*, one that led people to God. In fact, all great Messengers have made the same claim." I showed him these quotations:

This is the way, walk ye in it. *Isaiah 30:21*

I am the way—and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. *Christ (John 14:6 NIV)*

*This is the path.*² *Buddha*

This is the true Path of God...³

The Báb

...this book is verily the Straight Path. This is the Way of God unto all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth.⁴

Bahá'u'lláh

This is the right Faith, but the greater part of them know it not.

Qur'án 30:29

There is only one religious way. This one way is that of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, the way of heaven, of light and of purity, of infinite Creator.

Zoroaster

Then I said, “The best way to know if these religions came from God is to look at their scriptures and see if they are alike.” I told him that I had compiled a few quotations from the Scriptures of five major faiths without giving their source. I asked if he was interested in receiving a copy. He showed an interest, and I gave him a copy of the test. (See the appendix.)

Then he said, “But there are many cults. How can I tell a religion is not a cult?” I said, “Jesus gave this precise answer to your question: ‘**By their fruits shall ye know them.**’” He nodded his head; he knew the passage. Then I said, “How can you differentiate between a Mother Theresa, a saint, and a Ted Bundy, a serial killer? Only by their deeds, only by their fruits. There is no other way.” Then I added, “What do you think is the difference between your beliefs and my beliefs?” He appeared puzzled. I said, “I am absolutely sure that our moral values are identical. In fact, there is no difference between a good Christian, a good Muslim, and a good Bahá’í. There is also no difference between a mediocre Christian, a mediocre Bahá’í, and a mediocre Muslim. They are exactly alike. They differ only in their theologies. Some Christians believe that to be saved you must be baptized; others deny this. Some people believe in a personal devil, others do not. These differences are not critical.”

He asked, “How can one be saved?” I said, “Every religion teaches two requirements. The first is to love God and the Ones who speak for Him—His Messengers. If God made us, we must acknowledge Him, thank Him, and love Him. How would you feel if your son or daughter, whom you loved dearly, abandoned or ignored you? The second requirement is to love people, which results from the first requirement. Can one love God and hate His children? These are the fundamentals; everything else is secondary. In addition to loving God, we are also asked to fear Him. But fear does not mean phobia; it means having respect for His justice.”

What then, O Israel, does the Lord your God ask of you? Only to fear the Lord your God, to conform to all his ways, to love him and to serve him with all your heart and soul.

Deuteronomy 10:12 NEB

He who walks [acts] righteously and speaks what is right [acknowledges the truth...this is the man who will dwell on the heights...

Isaiah 33:15-16 NIV

Christian teachers often give the impression that forgiveness of sins was initiated by Christ, and that only through Him can it be obtained. Does God change His ways? Did He become a forgiver of sins at a given point in history and not earlier?

Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

Isaiah 55:7 NIV

Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.

Psalms 32:1-2 NIV

Christians often give the false impression that the only requirement for being saved is to say, "My Lord and Savior is Jesus Christ." Seldom do they mention the verses that emphasize deeds, that underline living the law. How many believers remember hearing or reading these beautiful verses?

For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.

Romans 2:13 NIV

I told Paul "Suppose a person loved both God and His children (Jesus called these His greatest commandments) but practiced the wrong doctrines. Would God send this person to hell? For instance, would a person go to hell for not receiving communion?" He said no. "Yet," I added "many people think that anyone who doesn't belong to their faith or fails to support specific doctrines is damned to eternal hell. Many Muslims think Christians go to hell. Many Christians believe Muslims do. This is prejudice, for it is based on suppositions, prejudgments, and wishful thinking. Are not these the ingredients that shape prejudice?"

Then Paul said, "I believe when Jesus comes, He will conquer the world with great power and glory." I asked if that was not the way He was supposed to come the first time. He said: "No, In His first advent, Jesus was supposed to come as a suffering servant." I said, "You are not alone in your belief. Most Christians believe the same way." The following statement from Dr. Barry Chant is typical of books of prophecy written by Christian writers:

On that day [our day], He would not come as the suffering servant, but as the reigning King! The angels whose aid He refused at the cross (Matt. 26:53) would now be at His side to enforce His rule!

In this way, the Lord made it clear that just as He had come to earth the first time, so He would come again a second time. The difference, however, would lie in the manner of His coming. Not in lowliness, but in exaltation! Not in obscurity, but in glory! Not in weakness, but in power! Not in sacrifice, but in supremacy! Not in meekness, but in majesty!

When we look at the Old Testament promises of the coming of Christ, we must draw a distinction between those which speak of His coming as Savior, and those which speak of His coming as Sovereign.⁵

To prove this point, Dr. Chant then quotes this verse:

He [the Messiah] is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Isaiah 53:3

But like many other Christian writers, Dr. Chant makes no mention of the following prophecies:

You [Mary] will...give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus...The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end. *Luke 1:31-33 NIV*

The promise that the angel gave to Mary was already given to the people of Israel:

...I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom...I will be his father, and he will be my son...I will set him over my house and my kingdom forever; his throne will be established forever. *I Chronicles 17:11-14 NIV*

The promise was even confirmed by Jesus Himself:

Art thou a king?...To this end I [Christ] was born... *John 18:37*
See also Psalms 132:11, Micah 5:2

Did God fail to keep His promise of sending a king to the people of Israel? No, God does not fail; humans fail to understand His language. In both advents, the power and glory of Christ were spiritual. Both Christ and Bahá'u'lláh revealed the greatest glory and power and experienced the greatest pain and suffering. (For biblical prophecies that point to Bahá'u'lláh's suffering, see *Lord of Lords* and *King of Kings*.)

Then I asked, "Why do Christian writers always refer to the prophecies that point to the sufferings of Jesus but not to His Davidic Kingdom?" Paul had no answer.

At this point he smiled gently and said, "My mind can accept what you say; it makes sense. But my heart still says, 'Stay with Jesus. He is different.'" I said, "Please remember that I am not trying to take Jesus away from you. My love for Him is as supreme, as strong, and as unending as yours. I am only trying to expand your vision, to give you a new perspective. In fact, because of this new knowledge your understanding of God's plan and purpose for humans and your love for Jesus will grow abundantly. Reason always strengthens faith. Faith is like the flower, reason like the root. Each needs the other.

"It is clear your mind appreciates the evidence, but your heart remains unsure. This is to be expected. When we deal with emotional issues such as family or religious matters, reasoning can touch only the mind, not the heart. Further, the human heart does not change instantly. It may take months or even years and decades before the seeds of reason can grow roots and branches into the heart. Our heart may be the toughest muscle we have."

I concluded the discussion with a few more passages from a Book we both acknowledged. I asked him to consider these quotations, written long before anyone had heard the name of Jesus:

The Lord has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations...all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. *Psalms 98:2-3 NIV*

I said "Notice the phrase, all the ends of the earth ***have seen*** the salvation of our God. The statement was made centuries before the birth of Jesus; it was made long before America was discovered by the people of the East. At that time the Native Americans

knew nothing about the Bible, yet as the verse declares, *they had already seen God's salvation. How could have they seen God's salvation if they had not received their own Savior?* Consider these magnificent and timely words of Paul:

As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."
Romans 10:11-13 NIV

The word "Gentile" means anyone who is not of the Jewish Faith. It includes not only Christians of the West but also Chinese, Africans, East Indians, and Native Americans, who, for the most part, do not follow Judaism. Paul's intention was to teach the Jews the universality of God's love, to help them overcome the same obstacle that Christians of today are facing: exclusive salvation through Jesus.

I quoted also this brief and beautiful passage:

Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Romans 3:29 NIV

A key to appreciating other faiths is humility. When we think that our way of life is the only way, we lose humility. The absence of humility leads to pride, and pride dims the light of the Spirit. It becomes a veil between the heart and Heaven. "Nothing sets a person so much out of the devil's reach as humility."

For the Lord takes delight in his people; *he crowns the humble with salvation* [emphasis added]. Psalms 149:4 NIV

...*he shall save the humble person.* Job 22:29

O SON OF MAN!

*Humble thyself before Me, that I may graciously visit thee.*⁶ Bahá'u'lláh

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable:

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable:

Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: "God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get." But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner." I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.
Luke 18:9-14 NIV

Jesus said that "*Many who are first will be last, and the last first*" (Mark 10:31; Luke 13:30). What does that mean? It means Christians who put themselves ahead of all others, who think they are the only ones saved, the only ones who will be raptured (taken to heaven) will, in God's estimation, actually occupy the last position. This is what pride does to a person. If a person is humble, he will say, "How do I know the truth? Can I know it without making a thorough and impartial investigation? Can a jury member make

a sound judgment by hearing only one side of a question?” I said “I encourage you to take time and examine Bahá’u’lláh’s claim.”

Paul responded with a positive attitude. I was surprised at his openness. He was in no mood to argue. I felt good to have had such a receptive listener. He continued to smile for the rest of the semester.

What would be the consequences if I had not talked with him? By holding this dialogue, I took a heavy weight off his shoulders and mine too. How much more accepting will he become toward others, especially his own students from religions and denominations other than his own? The seed of understanding and tolerance planted in his heart will make it easier for him to relate to them intimately, understand them, love them, and respect them. (One cannot respect a person who is worthy of hell!)

By the way, after the original dialogue, I asked Paul if his pastor had found a biblical reference that forbids polygamy. He said not yet.



A man asked a woman, “Where did King Solomon get all his wisdom from?” The woman answered, “He had hundreds of wives to consult with.”

No one should be forced out of his fishbowl; he should only be invited to taste fresh waters.

Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Revelation 22:17

O SON OF MAN!

...forfeit not thy portion from My wondrous fountain, lest thou shouldst thirst for evermore.⁷

Bahá’u’lláh

Noted author Robert Anthony declares:

Every person has been hypnotized to some degree either by ideas he has accepted from others or ideas he has convinced himself are true...⁸

Once a person *believes* that something is true, whether or not it is, he then *acts* as if it were. He will instinctively seek to collect facts to support the belief no matter how false it may be. No one will be able to convince him otherwise unless, through personal experience or study, he is ready to change. Hence, it is easy to see that, if one accepts something which is not true, *all subsequent actions and reactions will be based upon a false belief...*

The average person never comes near reaching his unlimited potential because he is living under the false assumption that he already *knows* the truth. He believes what his parents have told him, what his teachers have taught him, what he has read, and what his religion preaches WITHOUT ACTUALLY PROVING ANYTHING FOR HIMSELF.⁹

Truth can never be revealed to the so-called “firm believer.” You know the type, always quoting “facts.” He does not want to recognize anything outside of his beliefs, and sees everything with which he disagrees as a threat. He goes through life labeling all that is new, different, and enlightening as “evil” or at least “unacceptable,” and all that is old, traditional, and suppressing as “good.”¹⁰

The following statement from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s *Paris Talks*, delivered on November 10, 1911, is a fitting conclusion to this dialogue:

A star has the same radiance whether it shines from the East or from the West. Be free from prejudice...if the Divine light of truth shone in Jesus Christ, it also shone in Moses and in Buddha...we must be willing to clear away all that we have previously learned, all that would clog our steps on the way to truth; we must not shrink if necessary from beginning our education all over again. We must not allow our love for any one religion or any one personality to so blind our eyes that we become fettered by superstition! When we are freed from all these bonds, seeking with liberated minds, then shall we be able to arrive at our goal.

“Seek the truth, the truth shall make you free.” So shall we see the truth in all religions, for truth is in all and truth is one!¹¹

Flowers are Red

*The little boy went first day of school
He got some crayons and started to draw
He put colors all over the paper
For colors was what he saw
And the teacher said, “What you doin’ young man”
“I’m paintin’ flowers” he said
She said, “It’s not the time for art young man
And anyway flowers are green and red
There’s a time for everything young man
And a way it should be done
You’ve got to show concern for everyone else
For you’re not the only one.*

*And she said, “Flowers are red young man
Green leaves are green
There’s no need to see flowers any other way
Than the way they always have been seen.”*

*But the little boy said...
“There are so many colors in the rainbow
So many colors in the morning sun
So many colors in the flower and I see every one.”*

*“Well,” the teacher said, “You’re sassy
There’s ways that things should be
And you’ll paint flowers the way they are
So repeat after me” ...*

*And she said,
“Flowers are red young man
Green leaves are green*

*There's no need to see flowers any other way
Than they way they always have been seen."*

But the little boy said...

*"There are so many colors in the rainbow
So many colors in the morning sun
So many colors in the flower and I see every one."*

*The teacher put him in a corner
She said, "It's for your own good.
And you won't come out 'til you get it right
And are responding like you should."*

*Well! finally he got lonely
Frightened thoughts filled his head
And he went up to the teacher
And this is what he said...*

And he said...

*"Flowers are red, green leaves are green
There's no need to see flowers any other way
Than the way they always have been seen."*

*Time went by like it always does
And they moved to another town
And the little boy went to another school
And this is what he found
The teacher there was smilin'
She said, "Painting should be fun
And there are so many colors in a flower
So let's use every one*

*But that little boy painted flowers
In neat rows of green and red
And when the teacher asked him why
This is what he said...*

And he said,

*"Flowers are red, green leaves are green
There's no need to see flowers any other way
Than the way they always have been seen."*

But there still must be a way to have our children say...

*"There are so many colors in the rainbow,
So many colors in the morning sun
So many colors in the flower and I see every one."*

—Harry Chapin

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Part III



Can You Tell Where These Verses Come From?

**284 Quotations from
Various Scriptures**

*Every one of them is the Way of God that
connecteth this world with the realms above,
and the Standard of His Truth unto every one
in the kingdoms of earth and heaven.*

Bahá'u'lláh

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 50.)

Can You Tell Where These Verses Come From?

Section I

The following are 284 quotations from the Scriptures of four great religions: the Bahá'í Faith, Christianity, Islám, and Judaism. The quotations are offered in two sections, each containing 142 quotations. *The references are provided at the end of each section.* See if you can recognize the source of each quotation. Check the appropriate letter in the left column.

Code: B = Bahá'í Faith; C = Christianity; I = Islám; J = Judaism

B C I J	Listen, my people, and I will speak...I am God, your God... ¹
B C I J	The Lord our God is one Lord... ²
B C I J	Truly your God is but one, Lord of the heavens and of the earth... ³
B C I J	Verily there is no God besides me... ⁴
B C I J	I am the Lord, who has made all things... ⁵
B C I J	Is there any doubt concerning God, maker of the heavens and the earth...? ⁶
B C I J	Glory to God... ⁷
B C I J	Glory be to God the Lord of the worlds. ⁸
B C I J	Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways...Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? ⁹
B C I J	Blessed be the name of the Lord, full of majesty and glory. ¹⁰
B C I J	Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and for evermore. ¹¹
B C I J	The heavens declare the glory of God... ¹²
B C I J	...all things...declare His glory...yet ye understand not... ¹³
B C I J	No one is good except God alone. ¹⁴
B C I J	Lord God Almighty...you alone are holy... ¹⁵
B C I J	Only what is revealed to me [from God] do I follow. ¹⁶
B C I J	...God is the source of my being... ¹⁷
B C I J	I call only upon my Lord... ¹⁸
B C I J	I can of my own self do nothing... ¹⁹

B C I J	I have no power to help or harm myself, except as God pleases. ²⁰
B C I J	I only follow my Lord's utterances to me. ²¹
B C I J	This is God, my Lord; in Him do I put my trust... ²²
B C I J	I am...the truth... ²³
B C I J	We have come to you with the truth... ²⁴
B C I J	This book is...the truth from thy Lord. ²⁵
B C I J	These are the true words of God. ²⁶
B C I J	This is the way [to God], walk ye in it. ²⁷
B C I J	This is the true Path of God, the Almighty... ²⁸
B C I J	I have come down from heaven. ²⁹
B C I J	God is my witness! The Promised One hath come down from heaven... ³⁰
B C I J	Be thou content with Me and seek no other helper. For none but Me can ever suffice thee. ³¹
B C I J	Set all thy hope in God, and cleave tenaciously to His unfailing mercy. ³²
B C I J	Do not forget the covenant I have made with you... ³³
B C I J	Be faithful to the covenant of God... ³⁴
B C I J	Trust always in God, my people, pour out your hearts before him. God is our shelter. ³⁵
B C I J	My will and the will of another than Me, even as fire and water, cannot dwell together in one heart. ³⁶
B C I J	How goodly the reward of those who labor, who patiently endure, and put their trust in their Lord! ³⁷
B C I J	It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord... ³⁸
B C I J	God [is] rich without you...yet if ye be thankful He will be pleased with you. ³⁹
B C I J	...it behooveth thee to glory in My name, not in thine own; to put thy trust in Me and not in thyself... ⁴⁰
B C I J	...be grateful for the favors of God... ⁴¹
B C I J	Detach yourselves from all else but Me, and turn your faces towards My face, for better is this for you than the things ye possess. Withhold not from yourselves the grace of God and His mercy. ⁴²
B C I J	Cast away the things that keep you back from God and persevere on this far-stretching Way. ⁴³
B C I J	...thy Lord is nigh, ready to answer. ⁴⁴

B C I J	...He is the hearer, the near at hand. ⁴⁵
B C I J	Withhold not from yourselves the grace of God and His mercy. Whoso withholdeth himself therefrom is indeed in grievous loss. ⁴⁶
B C I J	Beware lest the transitory things of human life withhold you from turning unto God, the True One. ⁴⁷
B C I J	There is no power nor strength but in God alone. ⁴⁸
B C I J	I know of a certainty that since I have God, the Ever-Living, the Adored One, I am the possessor of all things, visible and invisible... ⁴⁹
B C I J	The source of all evil is for man to turn away from his Lord and set his heart on things ungodly. ⁵⁰
B C I J	The source of error is to disbelieve in the One true God... ⁵¹
B C I J	Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. ⁵²
B C I J	Break not the bond that uniteth you with your Creator... ⁵³
B C I J	There is no peace for thee save by renouncing thyself and turning unto Me. ⁵⁴
B C I J	...God is with those who fear him and do good deeds. ⁵⁵
B C I J	The source of all learning is the knowledge of God... ⁵⁶
B C I J	Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; and walketh in His ways. ⁵⁷
B C I J	For everything there is a sign. The sign of love is fortitude under My decree and patience under My trials. ⁵⁸
B C I J	...we all believe in Thee, and eagerly hope to enter Thy presence. ⁵⁹
B C I J	...men ought always to pray... ⁶⁰
B C I J	True knowledge...is the knowledge of God, and this is none other than the recognition of His Manifestation in each Dispensation. ⁶¹
B C I J	He hath endowed every soul with the capacity to recognize the signs of God... ⁶²
B C I J	Blessed are the steadfastly enduring, they that are patient under ills and hardships... ⁶³
B C I J	...the prayer of the upright is His delight. ⁶⁴
B C I J	And make mention of the name of thy Lord at morn, at even, and at night. Adore him, and praise him all nightlong. ⁶⁵
B C I J	For every one of you his paramount duty is to choose for himself that on which no others may infringe and none usurp from him. Such a thing...is the love of God, could ye but perceive it. ⁶⁶
B C I J	Let the flame of the love of God burn brightly within your radiant hearts. ⁶⁷

B C I J	Make my love thy vesture, and thy shield remembrance of Me, and thy provision reliance upon God... ⁶⁸
B C I J	Walk in My statutes for love of Me and deny thyself that which thou desirest if thou seekest My pleasure. ⁶⁹
B C I J	Call unto me, and I will answer thee... ⁷⁰
B C I J	Call on Me and I will answer you. ⁷¹
B C I J	Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. ⁷²
B C I J	The station of absolute self-surrender transcendeth, and will ever remain exalted above, every other station. ⁷³
B C I J	...men should merge their will wholly in the Will of God, and regard their desires as utter nothingness beside His Purpose. ⁷⁴
B C I J	The source of all glory is acceptance of whatsoever the Lord hath bestowed, and contentment with that which God hath ordained. ⁷⁵
B C I J	I, the Lord, search the mind and test the heart... ⁷⁶
B C I J	...God will test you... ⁷⁷
B C I J	Be not afraid of anyone, place thy whole trust in God, the Almighty, the All-Knowing. ⁷⁸
B C I J	Prefer not your will to Mine, never desire that which I have not desired for you... ⁷⁹
B C I J	And we [God] test you by means of each other. ⁸⁰
B C I J	Put thy whole confidence in the grace of God, thy Lord... ⁸¹
B C I J	O Lord of Hosts, thou dost test the righteous and search the depths of the heart... ⁸²
B C I J	If anyone revile you, or trouble touch you, in the path of God, be patient, and put your trust in Him Who heareth, Who seeth. ⁸³
B C I J	...know ye that your possessions...are only a test... ⁸⁴
B C I J	And He it is who hath made the heavens and the earth...that He might test you to show who would excel in works. ⁸⁵
B C I J	Let Him be thy helper and enrich thyself with His treasures, for with Him are the treasures of the heavens and of the earth. ⁸⁶
B C I J	He that giveth up himself wholly to God, God shall, assuredly, be with him... ⁸⁷
B C I J	...he that placeth his complete trust in God, God shall, verily, protect him from whatsoever may harm him... ⁸⁸
B C I J	Nothing save that which profiteth them can befall My loved ones. ⁸⁹

B C I J	Happy are they that have cast behind their backs all else save God and have held fast unto that which the Lord of strength and power hath enjoined upon them. ⁹⁰
B C I J	...my yoke is easy and my burden light. ⁹¹
B C I J	We [God] will not burden a soul beyond its power... ⁹²
B C I J	If you love only those who love you, what reward can you expect? ⁹³
B C I J	Happy is the man that heedeth My counsel, and keepeth the precepts prescribed by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. ⁹⁴
B C I J	Happy are they that observe God's precepts; happy are they that have recognized the Truth... ⁹⁵
B C I J	...happy are they that judge with fairness in all matters and hold fast to the Cord of My irrevocable Justice. ⁹⁶
B C I J	Sorrow not save that thou art far from Us. Rejoice not save that thou art drawing near and returning unto Us. ⁹⁷
B C I J	Turn away evil by what is better, and lo! he between whom and thyself was enmity, shall be as though he were a warm friend. But none attain to this [high standard] save those steadfast in patience, and none attain to it except the most highly favored. ⁹⁸
B C I J	Honor your father and your mother... ⁹⁹
B C I J	Blessed is he that draweth nigh unto Him, and woe betide them that are far away. ¹⁰⁰
B C I J	O ye the beloved of the one true God! Pass beyond the narrow retreats of your evil and corrupt desires, and advance into the vast immensity of the realm of God, and abide ye in the meads of sanctity and of detachment... ¹⁰¹
B C I J	Thou art He Who changeth through His bidding abasement into glory, and weakness into strength, and powerlessness into might, and fear into calm, and doubt into certainty. ¹⁰²
B C I J	Honor your father and mother...that it may go well with you... ¹⁰³
B C I J	Thy Lord hath ordained...kindness to your parents...speak to them both with respectful speech; and treat them tenderly and humbly; and say, "Lord, have compassion on them both." ¹⁰⁴
B C I J	...repent to God of your sins. ¹⁰⁵
B C I J	When the sinner findeth himself wholly detached and freed from all save God, he should beg forgiveness and pardon from Him. ¹⁰⁶
B C I J	...return ye to God and repent, that He, through His grace, may have mercy upon you, may wash away your sins, and forgive your trespasses. ¹⁰⁷

B C I J	The greatness of His mercy surpasseth the fury of His wrath, and His grace encompasseth all who have been called into being and been clothed with the robe of life, be they of the past or of the future. ¹⁰⁸
B C I J	...loyalty is my desire, not [the ceremony of] sacrifice, not whole-offerings but the knowledge of God. ¹⁰⁹
B C I J	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. ¹¹⁰
B C I J	The supreme cause for creating the world and all that is therein is for man to know God. ¹¹¹
B C I J	But for man, who, on My earth, would remember Me, and how could My attributes and My names be revealed. ¹¹²
B C I J	The Word of God is the king of words and its pervasive influence is incalculable. ¹¹³
B C I J	Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God is endowed with such potency as can instill new life into every human frame... ¹¹⁴
B C I J	Woe to those who... make a show of devotion, but refuse to help the needy. ¹¹⁵
B C I J	...whenever thou shalt long for Me, thou shalt find Me close to thee. ¹¹⁶
B C I J	Humble thyself before Me, that I may graciously visit thee. ¹¹⁷
B C I J	...he who forgiveth...shall be rewarded by God himself... ¹¹⁸
B C I J	God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. ¹¹⁹
B C I J	...nor walk loftily on earth; for God loveth not the arrogant and the proud. ¹²⁰
B C I J	Ask not of Me that which We desire not for thee, then be content with what We have ordained for thy sake... ¹²¹
B C I J	...within thee have I placed the essence of My light. Be thou content with it and seek naught else, for My work is perfect and My command is binding. ¹²²
B C I J	...his [God's] work is perfect... ¹²³
B C I J	He [God] truly loveth not the men of pride. ¹²⁴
B C I J	It is the waywardness of the heart that removeth it far from God, and condemneth it to remoteness from Him. ¹²⁵
B C I J	He who hath made everything...most good... ¹²⁶
B C I J	...the heart is the most deceitful of all things...who can fathom it? ¹²⁷
B C I J	...the heart is prone to evil. ¹²⁸
B C I J	Be not content with the ease of a passing day... ¹²⁹

B C I J	Bestow upon me my portion, O Lord, as Thou pleasest, and cause me to be satisfied with whatsoever Thou hast ordained for me. ¹³⁰
B C I J	Sorrow not save that thou art far from Us. Rejoice not save that thou art drawing near and returning unto Us. ¹³¹
B C I J	Let not the happenings of the world sadden you. ¹³²
B C I J	Let not the world and its vileness grieve you. Happy is he whom riches fill not with vain-glory, nor poverty with sorrow. ¹³³
B C I J	Sorrow not if, in these days and on this earthly plane, things contrary to your wishes have been ordained and manifested by God, for days of blissful joy, of heavenly delight, are assuredly in store for you. ¹³⁴
B C I J	They hasten forward to Hell Fire, and mistake it for light. ¹³⁵
B C I J	In my Father's house are many mansions... ¹³⁶
B C I J	...the mansions of the next life shall be better for those who fear God. ¹³⁷
B C I J	But seek, by means of what God hath given thee, to attain the future Mansion; and neglect not thy part in this world but be gracious to others as God hath been gracious to thee... ¹³⁸
B C I J	...if thou art overtaken by affliction in My path, or degradation for My sake, be not thou troubled thereby...Rely upon God, thy God and the Lord of thy fathers. ¹³⁹
B C I J	Be patient under all conditions, and place your whole trust and confidence in God. ¹⁴⁰
B C I J	He, verily, shall increase the reward of them that endure with patience. ¹⁴¹
B C I J	Be patient, for thy Lord is patient. ¹⁴²

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Can You Tell Where These Verses Come From?

Section II

B C I J	Cast away, O concourse of divines [religious leaders], the things ye have composed with the pens of your idle fancies and vain imaginings. ¹
B C I J	This is the Cause that hath caused all your superstitions and idols to tremble. ²
B C I J	We have found you behind the veils...measure not the Book of God with your selfish desires. ³
B C I J	Nowhere doth your true and abiding glory reside except in your firm adherence unto the precepts of God. ⁴
B C I J	No soul knoweth what joy of the eyes is reserved for the good... ⁵
B C I J	...those who go down to the pit. ⁶
B C I J	...the bottomless pit... ⁷
B C I J	Verily the hypocrites shall be in the lowest abyss [the bottomless pit] of the fire... ⁸
B C I J	Free thyself from the fetters of this world, and loose thy soul from the prison of self. Seize thy chance, for it will come to thee no more. ⁹
B C I J	Thine heart is My treasury, allow not the treacherous hand of self to rob thee of the pearls which I have treasured therein. ¹⁰
B C I J	...hell, where the fire never goes out. ¹¹
B C I J	...in the fire shall they abide for ever. ¹²
B C I J	For he will command his angels...to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you in their hands... ¹³
B C I J	...verily over you (are appointed angels) to protect you—kind and honorable, recording (your deeds). They know (and understand) all that ye do. ¹⁴
B C I J	The angels of the Lord encompass around those who fear him. ¹⁵
B C I J	The candle of thine heart is lighted by the hand of My power, quench it not with the contrary winds of self and passion. ¹⁶
B C I J	To give and to be generous are attributes of Mine; well is it with him that adorneth himself with My virtues. ¹⁷

B C I J	The spirit shall return to God who gave it. ¹⁸
B C I J	To us [God] shall all return. ¹⁹
B C I J	...they take with them the record of their deeds. ²⁰
B C I J	O ye rich ones on earth! The poor in your midst are My trust; guard ye My trust, and be not intent only on your own ease. ²¹
B C I J	Be ye trustworthy on earth, and withhold not from the poor the things given unto you by God through His grace. ²²
B C I J	And everything they do is in the Books; each action, both small and great, is written down. ²³
B C I J	And each shall have his book put into his hands...they shall find all that they have done, and thy Lord will not deal unjustly with anyone. ²⁴
B C I J	[Their sins are] recorded...engraved on the tablets of their heart [soul]... ²⁵
B C I J	...this earthly life shall come to an end, and everyone shall expire and return unto my Lord God Who will reward with the choicest gifts the deeds of those who endure with patience. ²⁶
B C I J	Busy not thyself with this world, for with fire We test the gold, and with gold We test Our servants. ²⁷
B C I J	I know of a certainty, by virtue of my love for Thee, that Thou wilt never cause tribulations to befall any soul unless Thou desirest to exalt his station in Thy celestial Paradise ²⁸
B C I J	Nothing save that which profiteth them can befall My loved ones. ²⁹
B C I J	He verily, shall increase the reward of them that endure with patience. ³⁰
B C I J	...whatever good works ye send on before [death]...ye shall find with God. ³¹
B C I J	Overstep not the bounds of moderation... ³²
B C I J	It is through your deeds that ye can distinguish yourselves from others. Through them the brightness of your lights can be shed upon the whole earth. ³³
B C I J	Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die... ³⁴
B C I J	I will call you to account for your doings. ³⁵
B C I J	Be not troubled in poverty nor confident in riches, for poverty is followed by riches, and riches are followed by poverty. ³⁶
B C I J	Rejoice not in the things ye possess; tonight they are yours, tomorrow others will possess them. ³⁷
B C I J	Thou dost wish for gold and I desire thy freedom from it. Thou thinkest thyself rich in its possession, and I recognize thy wealth in thy sanctity therefrom. ³⁸

B C I J	Should a man wish to adorn himself with the ornaments of the earth, to wear its apparels, or partake of the benefits it can bestow, no harm can befall him, if he alloweth nothing whatever to intervene between him and God, for God hath ordained every good thing, whether created in the heavens or in the earth, for such of His servants as truly believe in Him. ³⁹
B C I J	On a certain day shall every soul come to plead for itself, and every soul shall be repaid according to its deeds... ⁴⁰
B C I J	...God brings everything we do to judgment, and every secret, whether good or bad. ⁴¹
B C I J	Ye were created to show love one to another and not perversity and rancor. Take pride not in love for yourselves but in love for your fellow-creatures. Glory not in love for your country, but in love for all mankind. ⁴²
B C I J	Man's merit lieth in service and virtue and not in the pageantry of wealth and riches. ⁴³
B C I J	Let each morn be better than its eve, and each morrow richer than its yesterday. ⁴⁴
B C I J	And that which we have revealed...is the very truth... ⁴⁵
B C I J	Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty. ⁴⁶
B C I J	Let those who do not find the means for marriage, keep themselves chaste, until God gives them the means out of His grace. ⁴⁷
B C I J	Deliver your souls, O people, from the bondage of self, and purify them from all attachment to anything besides Me. ⁴⁸
B C I J	Arise, O people, and, by the power of God's might, resolve to gain the victory over your own selves... ⁴⁹
B C I J	...pride not yourselves in your learning. ⁵⁰
B C I J	He is indeed a captive who hath not recognized the Supreme Redeemer, but hath suffered his soul to be bound, distressed and helpless, in the fetters of his desires. ⁵¹
B C I J	God loveth those who are pure. Naught...in the sight of God is more loved than purity... ⁵²
B C I J	Earth and heaven cannot contain Me; what can alone contain Me is the heart of him that believeth in Me, and is faithful to My Cause." ⁵³
B C I J	Come, all you who are thirsty... ⁵⁴
B C I J	Let him then who will, take the way to his Lord. ⁵⁵
B C I J	...those that seek me shall find me. ⁵⁶

B C I J	He hath chosen out of the whole world the hearts of His servants, and made them each a seat for the revelation of His glory. ⁵⁷
B C I J	Thine heart is My treasury, allow not the treacherous hand of self to rob thee of the pearls which I have treasured therein. ⁵⁸
B C I J	O peoples of the world! Forsake all evil, hold fast that which is good. ⁵⁹
B C I J	And follow not that of which thou hast no knowledge; because the hearing and the sight and the heart, each of these shall be questioned. ⁶⁰
B C I J	Every man shall bear his own burden... ⁶¹
B C I J	By My life, the light of a good character surpasseth the light of the sun and the radiance thereof. Whoso attaineth unto it is accounted as a jewel among men. ⁶²
B C I J	Ye are the trees of My garden; ye must give forth goodly and wondrous fruits, that ye yourselves and others may profit therefrom. ⁶³
B C I J	Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts. ⁶⁴
B C I J	Be fair to yourselves and to others, that the evidence of justice may be revealed, through your deeds, among Our faithful servants. ⁶⁵
B C I J	Be ye a refuge to the fearful; bring ye rest and peace to the disturbed...be a healing medicine for those who suffer pain... ⁶⁶
B C I J	No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another. ⁶⁷
B C I J	...proclaim the message... ⁶⁸
B C I J	To proclaim a clear message is our only duty. ⁶⁹
B C I J	Ye shall surely make it known to mankind and not hide it... ⁷⁰
B C I J	Be worthy of the trust of thy neighbor and look upon him with a bright and friendly face. ⁷¹
B C I J	The brightness of the light of chastity sheddeth its illumination upon the worlds of the spirit. ⁷²
B C I J	Let your eye be chaste, your hand faithful, your tongue truthful and your heart enlightened. ⁷³
B C I J	They that follow their lusts...are of the lost. ⁷⁴
B C I J	Unless ye march forth...He will place another people in your stead... ⁷⁵
B C I J	I tell you...if you keep quiet, the stones will cry out. ⁷⁶
B C I J	Knowledge is as wings to man's life, and a ladder for his ascent. ⁷⁷
B C I J	True liberty consisteth in man's submission unto My commandments, little as ye know it. ⁷⁸

B C I J	The liberty that profiteth you is to be found nowhere except in complete servitude unto God, the Eternal Truth. ⁷⁹
B C I J	If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse... ⁸⁰
B C I J	Surely, therefore, will we call those to account, to whom a Messenger hath been sent... ⁸¹
B C I J	We verily behold your actions. If we perceive from them the sweet-smelling savor of purity and holiness, we will most certainly bless you. ⁸²
B C I J	Look not upon the creatures of God except with the eye of kindness and mercy, for Our loving providence hath pervaded all created things, and Our grace encompasseth the earth and the heavens. ⁸³
B C I J	Blessed is he who prefers his brother before himself. ⁸⁴
B C I J	We love to see you at all times consorting in amity and concord...We shall always be with you; if We inhale the perfume of your fellowship, Our heart will assuredly rejoice, for naught else can satisfy Us. ⁸⁵
B C I J	Seek the Lord, all you <i>humble</i> of the land...Seek <i>righteousness</i> and <i>humility</i> , perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the Lord's anger. ⁸⁶
B C I J	Take thou thy portion of the ocean of His grace, and deprive not thyself of the things that lie hidden in its depths. ⁸⁷
B C I J	In the garden of thy heart plant naught but the rose of love... ⁸⁸
B C I J	...God guideth all <i>who seek His good pleasure</i> to ways of peace and safety. ⁸⁹
B C I J	For the Lord takes delight in his people; he crowns <i>the humble</i> with salvation. ⁹⁰
B C I J	Be ye as the fingers of one hand, the members of one body. ⁹¹
B C I J	...regard ye not one another as strangers. Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. ⁹²
B C I J	One must see in every human being only that which is worthy of praise. When this is done, one can be a friend to the whole human race. ⁹³
B C I J	Lay not on any soul a load which ye would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for any one the things ye would not desire for yourselves. This is My best counsel unto you, did ye but observe it. ⁹⁴
B C I J	Ascribe not to any soul that which thou wouldst not have ascribed to thee... ⁹⁵
B C I J	Happy...the believers, who...keep aloof from vain words. ⁹⁶
B C I J	The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me... ⁹⁷

B C I J	If any differences arise amongst you, behold Me standing before your face, and overlook the faults of one another for My name's sake... ⁹⁸
B C I J	And woe, on that day [our day] to those...who plunge into vain disputes... ⁹⁹
B C I J	These are they whose hearts and ears and eyes God hath sealed up; these are <i>the careless one</i> . ¹⁰⁰
B C I J	If ye become aware of a sin committed by another, conceal it, that God may conceal your own sin. ¹⁰¹
B C I J	...forgive the sinful, and never despair his low estate, for none knoweth what his own end shall be. ¹⁰²
B C I J	Be generous in your days of plenty, and be patient in the hour of loss. ¹⁰³
B C I J	Be generous in prosperity and thankful in adversity... ¹⁰⁴
B C I J	My Lord! Bestow on me wisdom... ¹⁰⁵
B C I J	Give me now wisdom... ¹⁰⁶
B C I J	...he to whom wisdom is given hath much good given him... ¹⁰⁷
B C I J	Great is the blessedness awaiting the poor that endure patiently and conceal their sufferings, and well is it with the rich who bestow their riches on the needy and prefer them before themselves. ¹⁰⁸
B C I J	If ye be aware of a certain truth, if ye possess a jewel, of which others are deprived, share it with them in a language of utmost kindness and good-will. ¹⁰⁹
B C I J	Should any one among you be incapable of grasping a certain truth, or be striving to comprehend it, show forth, when conversing with him, a spirit of extreme kindness and good-will. ¹¹⁰
B C I J	...Wisdom proclaimeth: He that hath Me not is bereft of all things: Turn ye away from all that is on earth and seek none else but Me. ¹¹¹
B C I J	Blessed is he who hath kept it [his soul] pure... ¹¹²
B C I J	Humility exalteth man to the heaven of glory and power, whilst pride abaseth him to the depths of wretchedness and degradation. ¹¹³
B C I J	...the heart wherein the least remnant of envy yet lingers, shall never attain My everlasting dominion... ¹¹⁴
B C I J	...no one should sadden another, not even for a moment... ¹¹⁵
B C I J	Be not the cause of grief, much less of discord and strife. ¹¹⁶
B C I J	...those who have eyes but are blind, who have ears but are deaf. ¹¹⁷
B C I J	They know nothing, they understand nothing; their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see, and their minds closed so they cannot understand. ¹¹⁸
B C I J	Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful... ¹¹⁹

B C I J	Blessed are such as hold fast to the cord of kindness and tender mercy and are free from animosity and hatred. ¹²⁰
B C I J	A kindly tongue is...the fountain of the light of wisdom and understanding. ¹²¹
B C I J	Breathe not the sins of others so long as thou art thyself a sinner. ¹²²
B C I J	Give then the good tidings to those who hear an utterance and follow the best [they find] therein. These are they whom God guideth and are endowed with wisdom. ¹²³
B C I J	...backbiting quencheth the light of the heart and extinguisheth the life of the soul. ¹²⁴
B C I J	...the tongue is a smoldering fire, and excess of speech a deadly poison. ¹²⁵
B C I J	Beware lest ye contend with anyone, nay, strive to make him aware of the truth with kindly manner and most convincing exhortation. ¹²⁶
B C I J	Show honor to your parents and pay homage to them. This will cause blessings to descend upon you from the clouds of the bounty of your Lord, the Exalted, the Great! ¹²⁷
B C I J	Woe to you...you yourselves do not enter [the Kingdom of God], nor will you let those enter who are trying to. ¹²⁸
B C I J	Beware lest ye commit that which would sadden the hearts of your fathers and mothers. ¹²⁹
B C I J	It is seemly that the servant should, after each prayer, supplicate God to bestow mercy and forgiveness upon his parents. ¹³⁰
B C I J	Blessed is he who remembereth his parents when communing with God. ¹³¹
B C I J	As for those who...turned others aside from the way of God, to them we will add punishment on punishment... ¹³²
B C I J	Blessed are the learned that pride not themselves on their attainments... ¹³³
B C I J	Purge thy heart from malice and, innocent of envy, enter the divine court of holiness. ¹³⁴
B C I J	If a suggestion from Satan assail thy [mind], seek refuge with God. For He heareth and knoweth [all things]. ¹³⁵
B C I J	Well is it with him who is illumined with the light of courtesy and is attired with the vesture of uprightness. Whoso is endued with courtesy hath indeed attained a sublime station. ¹³⁶
B C I J	I am reproached and mocked all the time for uttering the word of Lord. ¹³⁷
B C I J	God desireth not to straiten the heart of anyone, be it even an ant, how much less the heart of a superior creature... ¹³⁸

B C I J	O companion of My throne!...Speak no evil, that thou mayest not hear it spoken unto thee, and magnify not the faults of others that thine own faults may not appear great... ¹³⁹
B C I J	Take heed, O people, lest ye be of them that give good counsel to others, but forget to follow it themselves. ¹⁴⁰
B C I J	...never came Messengers to them whom they did not deride. ¹⁴¹
B C I J	He releases them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are upon them. ¹⁴²

References

Section II

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