

THE BEST BELOVED OF ALL THINGS

Baha'u'llah wrote in His Hidden Words in Arabic, the second verse:

O Son of Spirit!

The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbor. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behooveth thee to be. Verily justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness. Set it then before thine eyes.

This teaching is His teaching...and it is the teaching “**revealed unto the Prophets of old**”, as He stated in the preface to the Hidden Words:

This is that which hath descended from the realm of glory, uttered by the tongue of power and might, **and revealed unto the Prophets of old**. We have taken the inner essence thereof and clothed it in the garment of brevity, as a token of grace unto the righteous, that they may stand faithful unto the Covenant of God, may fulfill in their lives His trust, and in the realm of spirit obtain the gem of divine virtue.

Baha'u'llah also stated that the Word of God “**revealed unto the Prophets of old**” is the standard whereby His Word can be recognized:

Say: I am come to you, O people, from the Throne of glory, and bear you an announcement from God, the Most Powerful, the Most Exalted, the Most Great. In mine hand I carry the testimony of God, your Lord and the Lord of your sires of old. **Weigh it with the just Balance that ye possess, the Balance of the testimony of the Prophets and Messengers of God.** (Gleanings LXXIX)

There are many citations in the current discourse that are from “**the just Balance**” that is possessed by those who believe in the divine origin of the verses of the Gospels. And those words will be compared with the words revealed in the Writings of Baha'u'llah, as He stated in the Kitab-i-Aqdas #99):

“...the Book itself is the unerring balance established amongst men. In this most perfect balance whatsoever the peoples and kindreds of the earth possess must be weighed, while the measure of its weight should be tested according to its own standard, did ye but know it.”

In the Gospels, Jesus is quoted in a number of passages that refer to how we are judged, the standard of God's justice:

Gospel of Matthew, chapter 7

15Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. **16**Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? **17**Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. **18**A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. **19**Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. **20**Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. **21**Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. **22**Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? **23**And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Gospel of Matthew, chapter 12

33Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. **34**O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. **35**A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. **36**But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. **37**For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

Gospel of Luke, chapter 6

43For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. **44**For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. **45**A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

In the following accounts, Jesus quoted these verses revealed to the prophet Isaiah (29:13):

13Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men...

Gospel of Matthew, chapter 15

1Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, **2***Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.* **3**But he answered and said unto them, **Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?** **4**For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. **5**But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; **6**And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. **7**Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, **8***This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.* **9***But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* **10**And he called the multitude, and said unto them, **Hear, and understand:** **11***Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.* **12**Then came his disciples, and said unto him, *Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?* **13**But he answered and said, **Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be**

rooted up. **14**Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. **15**Then answered Peter and said unto him, *Declare unto us this parable.* **16**And Jesus said, **Are ye also yet without understanding?** **17**Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? **18**But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. **19**For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: **20**These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

Gospel of Mark, chapter 7

1Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. **2**And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault. **3**For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. **4**And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brassen vessels, and of tables. **5**Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, *Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?* **6**He answered and said unto them, **Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.** **7**Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. **8**For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. **9**And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. **10**For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: **11**But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. **12**And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; **13**Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye. **14**And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, **Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand:** **15**There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. **16**If

any man have ears to hear, let him hear.¹⁷And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable. ¹⁸And he saith unto them, **Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; ¹⁹Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? ²⁰And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. ²¹For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, ²²Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: ²³All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.**

In one of His recorded discourses Jesus also cited the following words revealed to the prophet Isaiah (61:1-2):

¹The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; ²To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD...

The citation is found In the Gospel of Luke (4:16-21):

¹⁶And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. ¹⁷And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, **¹⁸The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, ¹⁹To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. ²⁰And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹And he began to say unto them, **This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.****

While Jesus stated “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears”, as He carried out all of the enumerated actions: **“preach the gospel to the poor...heal the brokenhearted...preach deliverance to the captives...[preach] recovering of sight to the blind...set at liberty them that are bruised...preach the acceptable year of the**

Lord". He also called upon His disciples to do the same, and many stories related to them are to be found in the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles.

The most complete fulfillment of these verses of Isaiah are to be found in His prediction regarding His return, "**when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory**":

Gospel of Matthew, chapter 25

³¹When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: ³²And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: ³³And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: ³⁶Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. ³⁷Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? ³⁸When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? ³⁹Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? ⁴⁰And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. ⁴¹Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: ⁴²For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: ⁴³I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. ⁴⁴Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? ⁴⁵Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. ⁴⁶And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

In His return, what is often called His "second coming", Jesus does not merely "**preach the gospel to the poor...heal the brokenhearted...preach deliverance to the captives...[preach] recovering of sight to the blind...set at liberty them that are**

bruised...preach the acceptable year of the Lord". Humanity, every human being is called upon to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to take in the stranger, to clothe the naked, to take care of the sick, and to visit those in prison. They are to take actions not just utter words, and those who take those actions will be rewarded, while those who do not do so will be punished.

It should be noted that none of the acts cited either by Isaiah or by Jesus are ritual in nature, nor are they related to the laws revealed to govern either Jews or Gentiles. They are actions that directly benefit the most needy, and they are evidences of genuine love for our fellow human beings. These are humanitarian acts, which benefit everyone, not just the followers of one religion, or the people of one nation.

How are these verses related to the teachings of Baha'u'llah? Like the **"Son of man...who shall sit upon his throne of glory"** predicted by Jesus, He affirms that actions are what counts:

Let deeds, not words, be your adorning. (Persian Hidden Words #5)

Guidance hath ever been given by words, and now it is given by deeds. Everyone must show forth deeds that are pure and holy, for words are the property of all alike, whereas such deeds as these belong only to Our loved ones. Strive then with heart and soul to distinguish yourselves by your deeds. In this wise We counsel you in this holy and resplendent tablet. (Persian Hidden Words #76)

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

O people! Words must be supported by deeds, for deeds are the true test of words. (Tabernacle of Wisdom #1)

Words must be followed by deeds. Whoso accepteth the words of the Friend is in truth a man of deeds; otherwise a dead carcass is verily of greater worth. (Tabernacle of Wisdom #4)

O servant of God! The day of deeds hath come: Now is not the time for words. (Tabernacle of Wisdom #5)

In light of these words of wisdom revealed by Baha'u'llah, we may now read the counsels He revealed for the edification of His followers in the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf (Gleanings CXXX), counsels He expected that they translate into deeds:

“Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity. Be worthy of the trust of thy neighbor, and look upon him with a bright and friendly face. Be a treasure to the poor, an admonisher to the rich, an answerer to the cry of the needy, a preserver of the sanctity of thy pledge. Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech. Be unjust to no man, and show all meekness to all men. Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts. Be a home for the stranger, a balm to the suffering, a tower of strength for the fugitive. Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring. Be an ornament to the countenance of truth, a crown to the brow of fidelity, a pillar of the temple of righteousness, a breath of life to the body of mankind, an ensign of the hosts of justice, a luminary above the horizon of virtue, a dew to the soil of the human heart, an ark on the ocean of knowledge, a sun in the heaven of bounty, a gem on the diadem of wisdom, a shining light in the firmament of thy generation, a fruit upon the tree of humility. We pray God to protect thee from the heat of jealousy and the cold of hatred. He verily is nigh, ready to answer...”

Baha'u'llah followed these counsels by stating why these words were revealed to His followers:

“We have mentioned it unto such of Our loved ones as have cast away their idle fancies, and clung unto that which hath been prescribed unto them in the day whereon the Daystar of Certitude hath shone forth above the horizon of the will of God, the Lord of the worlds. This is the day on which the Bird of Utterance hath warbled its melody upon the branches, in the name of its Lord, the God of Mercy. Blessed is the man that hath, on the wings of longing, soared towards God, the Lord of the Judgment Day.”

It is in this context, the context of rendering service through our actions in the ways that Baha'u'llah stipulated in this passage that He intends for us to understand the “transcendent and most sublime station” to which we can attain:

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

“Exert yourselves that ye may attain this transcendent and most sublime station, the station that can insure the protection and security of all mankind. This goal excelleth every other goal, and this aspiration is the monarch of all aspirations...At one time We spoke in the language of the lawgiver; at another in that of the truth-seeker and the mystic, and yet Our supreme purpose and highest wish hath always been to disclose the glory and sublimity of this station. God, verily, is a sufficient witness!”
(Epistle to the Son of the Wolf)

Belief in the unity of humankind, wishing others well, rejecting all prejudices and treating all people **“with friendliness and fellowship”** is not enough. We must show evidence of the sincerity of our conviction that we **“are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch”** by our actions. It is not enough to love our families, our neighbors, our coworkers, our fellow believers...those who love us. Our task is to render service to all those in need. The imperatives spelled forth in the prophetic discourse of Jesus and the enumeration of good deeds spoken of by Baha'u'llah are not ideals, they are not options, they are not wishful thinking, they are not for other people...they are for each of us.

In carrying out these actions, we are not alone. We can help each other. The angels are ready to assist from the Abha Kingdom. The Holy Spirit is confirming our efforts when we take action and ask for its blessing, its guidance and protection. We can remember that the **“supreme purpose and highest wish”** of Baha'u'llah **“hath always been to disclose the glory and sublimity of this station”**.