

THE WORLDS OF GOD

LXXIX. As to thy question concerning the worlds of God. Know thou of a truth that the worlds of God are countless in their number, and infinite in their range. None can reckon or comprehend them except God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. Consider thy state when asleep. Verily, I say, this phenomenon is the most mysterious of the signs of God amongst men, were they to ponder it in their hearts. Behold how the thing which thou hast seen in thy dream is, after a considerable lapse of time, fully realized. Had the world in which thou didst find thyself in thy dream been identical with the world in which thou livest, it would have been necessary for the event occurring in that dream to have transpired in this world at the very moment of its occurrence. Were it so, you yourself would have borne witness unto it. This being not the case, however, it must necessarily follow that the world in which thou livest is different and apart from that which thou hast experienced in thy dream. This latter world hath neither beginning nor end. It would be true if thou wert to contend that this same world is, as decreed by the All-Glorious and Almighty God, within thy proper self and is wrapped up within thee. It would equally be true to maintain that thy spirit, having transcended the limitations of sleep and having stripped itself of all earthly attachment, hath, by the act of God, been made to traverse a realm which lieth hidden in the innermost reality of this world. Verily I say, the creation of God embraceth worlds besides this world, and creatures apart from these creatures. In each of these worlds He hath ordained things which none can search except Himself, the All-Searching, the All-Wise. Do thou meditate on that which We have revealed unto thee, that thou mayest discover the purpose of God, thy Lord, and the Lord of all worlds. In these words the mysteries of Divine Wisdom have been treasured. We have refrained from dwelling upon this theme owing to the sorrow that hath encompassed Us from the actions of them that have been created through Our words, if ye be of them that will hearken unto Our voice.

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, Page: 151)

Know thou of a truth that the soul, after its separation from the body, will continue to progress until it attaineth the presence of God, in a state and condition which neither the revolution of ages and centuries, nor the changes and chances of this world, can alter. It will endure as long as the Kingdom of God, His sovereignty, His dominion and power will endure. It will manifest the signs of God and His attributes, and will reveal His loving kindness and bounty. The movement of My Pen is stilled when it attempteth to befittingly describe the loftiness and glory of so exalted a station. The honor with which the Hand of Mercy will invest the soul is such as no tongue can adequately reveal, nor any other earthly agency describe. Blessed is the soul which, at the hour of its separation from the body, is sanctified from the vain imaginings of the peoples of the world. Such a soul liveth and moveth in accordance with the Will of its Creator, and entereth the all-highest Paradise. The Maids of Heaven, inmates of the loftiest mansions, will circle around it, and the Prophets of God and His chosen ones will seek its companionship. With them that soul will freely converse, and will recount unto them that which it hath been made to endure in the path of God, the Lord of all worlds. If any man be told that which hath been ordained for such a soul in the worlds of God, the

Lord of the throne on high and of earth below, his whole being will instantly blaze out in his great longing to attain that most exalted, that sanctified and resplendent station.... The nature of the soul after death can never be described, nor is it meet and permissible to reveal its whole character to the eyes of men. The Prophets and Messengers of God have been sent down for the sole purpose of guiding mankind to the straight Path of Truth. The purpose underlying Their revelation hath been to educate all men, that they may, at the hour of death, ascend, in the utmost purity and sanctity and with absolute detachment, to the throne of the Most High. The light which these souls radiate is responsible for the progress of the world and the advancement of its peoples. They are like unto leaven which leaveneth the world of being, and constitute the animating force through which the arts and wonders of the world are made manifest. Through them the clouds rain their bounty upon men, and the earth bringeth forth its fruits. All things must needs have a cause, a motive power, an animating principle. These souls and symbols of detachment have provided, and will continue to provide, the supreme moving impulse in the world of being. The world beyond is as different from this world as this world is different from that of the child while still in the womb of its mother. When the soul attaineth the Presence of God, it will assume the form that best becometh its immortality and is worthy of its celestial habitation. Such an existence is a contingent and not an absolute existence, inasmuch as the former is preceded by a cause, whilst the latter is independent thereof. Absolute existence is strictly confined to God, exalted be His glory. Well is it with them that apprehend this truth.”
(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, Page: 155-157)

Verily I say, the human soul is, in its essence, one of the signs of God, a mystery among His mysteries. It is one of the mighty signs of the Almighty, the harbinger that proclaimeth the reality of all the worlds of God. Within it lieth concealed that which the world is now utterly incapable of apprehending. Ponder in thine heart the revelation of the Soul of God that pervadeth all His Laws, and contrast it with that base and appetitive nature that hath rebelled against Him, that forbiddeth men to turn unto the Lord of Names, and impelleth them to walk after their lusts and wickedness. Such a soul hath, in truth, wandered far in the path of error....

Thou hast, moreover, asked Me concerning the state of the soul after its separation from the body. Know thou, of a truth, that if the soul of man hath walked in the ways of God, it will, assuredly, return and be gathered to the glory of the Beloved. By the righteousness of God! It shall attain a station such as no pen can depict, or tongue describe. The soul that hath remained faithful to the Cause of God, and stood unwaveringly firm in His Path shall, after his ascension, be possessed of such power that all the worlds which the Almighty hath created can benefit through him. Such a soul provideth, at the bidding of the Ideal King and Divine Educator, the pure leaven that leaveneth the world of being, and furnisheth the power through which the arts and wonders of the world are made manifest. Consider how meal needeth leaven to be leavened with. Those souls that are the symbols of detachment are the leaven of the world. Meditate on this, and be of the thankful.

In several of Our Tablets We have referred to this theme, and have set forth the various stages in the development of the soul. Verily I say, the human soul is exalted above all

egress and regress. It is still, and yet it soareth; it moveth, and yet it is still. It is, in itself, a testimony that beareth witness to the existence of a world that is contingent, as well as to the reality of a world that hath neither beginning nor end. Behold how the dream thou hast dreamed is, after the lapse of many years, re-enacted before thine eyes. Consider how strange is the mystery of the world that appeareth to thee in thy dream. Ponder in thine heart upon the unsearchable wisdom of God, and meditate on its manifold revelation....

Witness the wondrous evidences of God's handiwork, and reflect upon its range and character. He Who is the Seal of the Prophets hath said: "Increase my wonder and amazement at Thee, O God!"

As to thy question whether the physical world is subject to any limitations, know thou that the comprehension of this matter dependeth upon the observer himself. In one sense, it is limited; in another, it is exalted beyond all limitations. The one true God hath everlastingly existed, and will everlastingly continue to exist. His creation, likewise, hath had no beginning, and will have no end. All that is created, however, is preceded by a cause. This fact, in itself, establisheth, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the unity of the Creator.

Thou hast, moreover, asked Me concerning the nature of the celestial spheres. To comprehend their nature, it would be necessary to inquire into the meaning of the allusions that have been made in the Books of old to the celestial spheres and the heavens, and to discover the character of their relationship to this physical world, and the influence which they exert upon it. Every heart is filled with wonder at so bewildering a theme, and every mind is perplexed by its mystery. God, alone, can fathom its import. The learned men, that have fixed at several thousand years the life of this earth, have failed, throughout the long period of their observation, to consider either the number or the age of the other planets. Consider, moreover, the manifold divergencies that have resulted from the theories propounded by these men. Know thou that every fixed star hath its own planets, and every planet its own creatures, whose number no man can compute.

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, Page: 160)

Indeed, O Brother, if we ponder each created thing, we shall witness a myriad perfect wisdoms and learn a myriad new and wondrous truths. One of the created phenomena is the dream. Behold how many secrets are deposited therein, how many wisdoms treasured up, how many worlds concealed. Observe, how thou art asleep in a dwelling, and its doors are barred; on a sudden thou findest thyself in a far-off city, which thou enterest without moving thy feet or wearying thy body; without using thine eyes, thou seest; without taxing thine ears, thou hearest; without a tongue, thou speakest. And perchance when ten years are gone, thou wilt witness in the outer world the very things thou hast dreamed tonight.

Now there are many wisdoms to ponder in the dream, which none but the people of this Valley can comprehend in their true elements. First, what is this world, where without eye and ear and hand and tongue, a man puts all of these to use? Second, how is it that in the outer world thou seest today the effect of a dream, when thou didst vision it in the world of sleep some ten years past? Consider the difference between these two worlds

and the mysteries which the conceal, that thou mayest attain to divine confirmations and heavenly discoveries and enter the regions of holiness.

God, the Exalted, hath placed these signs in men, to the end that philosophers may not deny the mysteries of the life beyond nor belittle that which hath been promised them. For some hold to reason and deny whatever the reason comprehendeth not, and yet weak minds can never grasp the matters which we have related, but only the Supreme, Divine Intelligence can comprehend them:

How can feeble reason encompass the Qur'aan,
Or the spider snare a phoenix in his web?¹³

All these states are to be witnessed in the Valley of Wonderment, and the traveler at every moment seeketh for more, and is not wearied. Thus the Lord of the First and the Last (A title denoting Muhammad) in setting forth the grades of contemplation, and expressing wonderment hath said:

"O Lord, increase my astonishment at Thee!"

Likewise, reflect upon the perfection of man's creation, and that all these planes and states are folded up and hidden away within him.

Dost thou reckon thyself only a puny form When within thee the universe is folded?
(Alái)

(The Seven Valleys and The Four Valleys, Page: 32)

Thus, too, Luqmán, who had drunk from the wellspring of wisdom and tasted of the waters of mercy, in proving to his son Nathan the planes of resurrection and death, advanced the dream as an evidence and an example. We relate it here, that through this evanescent Servant a memory may endure of that youth of the school of Divine Unity, that elder of the art of instruction and the Absolute. He said: "O Son, if thou art able not to sleep, then thou art able not to die. And if thou art able not to waken after sleep, then thou shall be able not to rise after death."

(The Seven Valleys and The Four Valleys, Page: 34)

Furthermore man sees in the world of dreams. He travels in the East, he travels in the West, although his body is stationary, his body is here. It is that reality in him which makes the journey while the body sleeps. There is no doubt that a reality exists other than the outward, physical reality. Again for instance a person is dead, is buried in the ground. Afterward you see him in the world of dreams and speak with him although his body is interred in the earth. Who is the person you see in your dreams, talk to and who also speaks with you? This again proves that there is another reality different from the physical one which dies and is buried. Thus it is certain that in man there is a reality which is not the physical body. Sometimes the body becomes weak but that other reality is in its own normal state. The body goes to sleep, becomes as one dead but that reality is moving about, comprehending things, expressing them and is even conscious of itself.

This other and inner and reality is called the heavenly body, the ethereal form which corresponds to this body. This is the conscious reality which discovers the inner meaning of things, for the outer body of man does not discover anything. The inner ethereal reality grasps the mysteries of existence, discovers scientific truths and

indicates their technical application. It discovers electricity, produces the telegraph, the telephone and opens the door to the world of arts. If the outer material body did this, the animal would likewise be able to make scientific discoveries, for the animal shares with man all physical powers and limitations. What then is that power which penetrates the realities of existence and which is not to be found in the animal? It is the inner reality which comprehends things, throws light upon the mysteries of life and being, discovers the heavenly Kingdom, unseals the mysteries of God and differentiates man from the brute. Of this there can be no doubt.

(Foundations of World Unity, Page: 109)

The letter thou hast enclosed was perused. When man's soul is rarified and cleansed, spiritual links are established, and from these bonds sensations felt by the heart are produced. The human heart resembleth a mirror. When this is purified human hearts are attuned and reflect one another, and thus spiritual emotions are generated. This is like the world of dreams when man is detached from things which are tangible and experienceth those of the spirit. What amazing laws operate, and what remarkable discoveries are made! And it may even be that detailed communications are registered...

(Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Page: 108)

Yesterday we were occupied in discussing the immortality of the spirit. Know that the power and the comprehension of the human spirit are of two kinds - that is to say, they perceive and act in two different modes. One way is through instruments and organs: thus with this eye it sees; with this ear it hears; with this tongue it talks. Such is the action of the spirit, and the perception of the reality of man, by means of organs - that is to say, that the spirit is the seer, through the eyes; the spirit is the hearer, through the ear; the spirit is the speaker, through the tongue.

The other manifestation of the powers and actions of the spirit is without instruments and organs. For example, in the state of sleep without eyes it sees; without an ear it hears; without a tongue it speaks; without feet it runs. Briefly, these actions are beyond the means of instruments and organs. How often it happens that it sees a dream in the world of sleep, and its signification becomes apparent two years afterward in corresponding events. In the same way, how many times it happens that a question which one cannot solve in the world of wakefulness is solved in the world of dreams. In wakefulness the eye sees only for a short distance, but in dreams he who is in the East sees the West. Awake he sees the present; in sleep he sees the future. In wakefulness, by means of rapid transit, at the most he can travel only twenty farsakhs (One farsakh is equivalent to about four miles) an hour; in sleep, in the twinkling of an eye, he traverses the East and West. For the spirit travels in two different ways: without means, which is spiritual traveling; and with means, which is material traveling: as birds which fly, and those which are carried.

In the time of sleep this body is as though dead; it does not see nor hear; it does not feel; it has no consciousness, no perception - that is to say, the powers of man have become inactive, but the spirit lives and subsists. Nay its penetration is increased, its flight is higher, and its intelligence is greater.

(Some Answered Questions, Page: 227)

The mind and the thought of man sometimes discover truths, and from this though and discovery signs and results are produced. This thought has a foundation. But many things come to the mind of man which are like the ways of the sea of imaginations; they have no fruit, and no result comes from them. In the say way, man sees in the world of sleep a vision which becomes exactly realized; at another time, he sees a dream which has absolutely no result.

What we mean is that this state, which we call the converse and communications of spirits, is of two kinds: one is simply imaginary, and the other is like the visions which are mentioned in the Holy Book, such as the revelations of St. John and Isaiah and the meeting of Christ with Moses and Elias. These are real, and produce wonderful effects in the minds and thoughts of men, and cause their hearts to be attracted.

(Some Answered Questions, Page: 253)

O thou beloved maid-servant of God! If thou art not seeing dreams (and visions), be thou not sad. Thou are going to see, whilst thou art awake. A wakeful eye is acceptable in the Threshold of the Almighty. Therefore, I hope that thou wilt open the eye of thine insight, travel in all the realms of God, see the splendor of the Kingdom and behold the effulgence of the Realm of Might.

(Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Page: 530)

That merciful maid-servant (i.e., thyself) seeth some spiritual dreams (or visions). These are, in reality, discoveries of the heart and are spiritual visions. I beg of God that, through the power of insight, thou mayest continually witness the lights of the Kingdom of Abhá.

(Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Page: 729)

Even as in the world of dreams when all the physical faculties are in abeyance and the soul travels in all realms seeing, hearing, speaking, so when the physical body decomposes, the soul is not affected.

('Abdu'l-Bahá on Divine Philosophy, Page: 128)

"In prayer there is a mingling of station, a mingling of condition. Pray for them as they pray for you! When you do not know it, and are in a receptive attitude, they are able to make suggestions to you, if you are in difficulty. This sometimes happens in sleep, but there is no phenomenal intercourse! That which seems like phenomenal intercourse has another explanation." The questioner exclaimed; "But I have heard a voice!" 'Abdu'l-Bahá said: "Yes, that is possible; we hear voices clearly in dreams. It is not with the physical ear that you heard; the spririt of those that have passed on are freed from sense-life, and no not use physical means. It is not possible to put these great matters into human words; the language of man is the language of children, and man's explanation often leads astray".

('Abdu'l-Bahá in London, Page: 96)

Consider man while in the state of sleep; it is evident that all his parts and members are at a standstill, are functionless. His eye does not see, his ear does not hear, his feet and hands are motionless; but, nevertheless, he does see in the world of dreams, he does hear, he speaks, he walks, he may even fly in an airplane. Therefore, it becomes evident that though the body be dead, yet the spirit is alive and permanent. Nay, the perceptions may be keener when man's body is asleep, the flight may be higher, the hearing may be more acute; all the functions are there, and yet the body is at a standstill. Hence, it is proof that there is a spirit in the man, and in this spirit there is no distinction as to whether the body be asleep or absolutely dead and dependent. The spirit is not incapacitated by these conditions; it is not bereft of its existence; it is not bereft of its perfections. The proofs are many, innumerable.

These are all rational proofs. Nobody can refute them. As we have shown that there is a spirit and that this spirit is permanent and everlasting, we must strive to learn of it. May you become informed of its power, hasten to render it divine, to have it become sanctified and holy and make it the very light of the world illumining the East and the West.

(The Promulgation of Universal Peace, Page: 243)

For the spirit of man is everlasting. Sometimes the body sleeps, the eyes do not see, the ears do not hear, the members cease to act, every function is as inactive as death; nevertheless, the spirit sees, hears and soars on high. For it is possessed of these faculties which operate without the instrumentality of the body. In the world of thought it sees without eyes, hears without ears and travels without the motion of foot. Without physical force it exercises every function. This makes it evident that during sleep the spirit is alive though the body is as dead. In the world of dreams the body becomes absolutely passive, but the spirit still functions actively, possessed of all susceptibilities. This leads to the conclusion that the life of the spirit is neither conditional nor dependent upon the life of the body. At most it can be said that the body is a mere garment utilized by the spirit. If that garment be destroyed, the wearer is not affected but is, in fact, protected.

(The Promulgation of Universal Peace, Page: 259)

Second, consider the world of dreams, wherein the body of man is immovable, seemingly dead, not subject to sensation; the eyes do not see, the ears do not hear nor the tongue speak. But the spirit of man is not asleep; it sees, hears, moves, perceives and discovers realities. Therefore, it is evident that the spirit of man is not affected by the change or condition of the body. Even though the material body should die, the spirit continues eternally alive, just as it exists and functions in the inert body in the realm of dreams. That is to say, the spirit is immortal and will continue its existence after the destruction of the body.

(The Promulgation of Universal Peace, Page: 306)

But in the world of dreams the soul sees when the eyes are closed. The man is seemingly dead, lies there as dead; the ears do not hear, yet he hears. The body lies there, but he - that is, the soul - travels, sees, observes. All the instruments of the body

are inactive, all the functions seemingly useless. Notwithstanding this, there is an immediate and vivid perception by the soul. Exhilaration is experienced. The soul journeys, perceives, senses. It often happens that a man in a state of wakefulness has not been able to accomplish the solution of a problem, and when he goes to sleep, he will reach that solution in a dream. How often it has happened that he has dreamed, even as the prophets have dreamed, of the future; and events which have thus been foreshadowed have come to pass literally.

(The Promulgation of Universal Peace, Page: 416)

The spirit can conduct its affairs without the body. In the world of dreams it is precisely as this light without the chimney glass. It can shine without the glass. The human soul by means of this body can perform its operations, and without the body it can, likewise, have its control. Therefore, if the body be subject to disintegration, the spirit is not affected by these changes or transformations.

(The Promulgation of Universal Peace, Page: 416)

Furthermore, man sees in the world of dreams. He travels in the East; he travels in the West; although his body is stationary, his body is here. It is that reality in him which makes the journey while the body sleeps. There is no doubt that a reality exists other than the outward, physical reality. Again, for instance, a person is dead, is buried in the ground. Afterward, you see him in the world of dreams and speak with him, although his body is interred in the earth. Who is the person you see in your dreams, talk to and who also speaks with you? This again proves that there is another reality different from the physical one which dies and is buried. Thus it is certain that in man there is a reality which is not the physical body. Sometimes the body becomes weak, but that other reality is in its own normal state. The body goes to sleep, becomes as one dead; but that reality is moving about, comprehending things, expressing them and is even conscious of itself.

(The Promulgation of Universal Peace, Page: 464)

'Can a departed soul converse with someone still on earth?'

'Abdu'l-Bahá. - 'A conversation can be held, but not as our conversation. There is no doubt that the forces of the higher worlds interplay with the forces of this plane. The heart of man is open to inspiration; this is spiritual communication. As in a dream one talks with a friend while the mouth is silent, so is it in the conversation of the spirit. A man may converse with the ego within him saying: "May I do this? Would it be advisable for me to do this work?" Such as this is conversation with the higher self.'

(Paris Talks, Page: 179)