

An examination of the one particularly fascinating passage in the Kitáb-i-Ahd, Bahá'u'lláh's *Book of My Covenant*.

**“O ye My Branches! A mighty force, a consummate power lieth concealed in the world of being. Fix your gaze upon it and upon its unifying influence, and not upon the differences which appear from it.”**

(Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Ahd)

Notes: Simple reading of the Text

1. **Consummate**: In this context used as an intensifier of the word **power**, elevating the word power to a supreme and complete degree
2. **Branches**: A reference to the Aghsán or Bahá'u'lláh's male descendants

**[This is a new passage that has been added to consider in connection with the above verse. In my own understanding the word recorded in the Crimson Book spoken of in The Epistle to the Son of the Wolf is the above passage from Baha'u'llah's Book of the Covenant. The below passage had me thinking that perhaps my thoughts below are completely wrong. Still confused! (1/27/07)**

In the treasuries of the knowledge of God there lieth concealed a knowledge which, when applied, will largely, though not wholly, eliminate fear. This knowledge, however, should be taught from childhood, as it will greatly aid in its elimination. Whatever decreaseth fear increaseth courage. Should the Will of God assist Us, there would flow out from the Pen of the Divine Expounder a lengthy exposition of that which hath been mentioned, and there would be revealed, in the field of arts and sciences, what would renew the world and the nations. **A word hath, likewise, been written down and recorded by the Pen of the Most High in the Crimson Book which is capable of fully disclosing that force which is hid in men, nay of redoubling its potency.** We implore God -- exalted and glorified be He -- to graciously assist His servants to do that which is pleasing and acceptable unto Him.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 32)]

### **One relative understanding of the verse:**

Bahá'u'lláh could be alluding to the eventual unlocking of the many secrets that an atom holds, which still continues today, on the one hand, and its spiritual counterpart, demonstrated by each individual atom, the “oneness of the world of mankind”, a truth which has yet to manifest its full implications in society, on the other. In relation to the second part of this view ‘Abdu'l-Bahá in *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, expounds and unfolds the “subtle principle...of the essential oneness in all existing things”, explains

that no composition of atoms can ever be the same as another (**differences**), illustrates the path any atom may take in its journey through the different Kingdoms, and elucidates how any given atom possesses the capacity to express all the virtues of the universe.

*27 August 1912, Talk at Metaphysical Club  
Boston, Massachusetts, Notes by Edna McKinney*

Upon the faces of those present I behold the expression of thoughtfulness and wisdom; therefore, I shall discourse upon a subject involving one of the divine questions, a question of religious and metaphysical importance -- namely, the progressive and perpetual motion of **elemental atoms** throughout the various degrees of phenomena and the kingdoms of existence. It will be demonstrated and become evident that the origin and outcome of phenomena are identical and that there is an **essential oneness in all existing things**. This is a subtle principle appertaining to divine philosophy and requiring close analysis and attention.

The **elemental atoms** which constitute all phenomenal existence and being in this illimitable universe are in perpetual motion, undergoing continuous degrees of progression. For instance, let us conceive of an atom in the mineral kingdom progressing upward to the kingdom of the vegetable by entering into the composition and fibre of a tree or plant. From thence it is assimilated and transferred into the kingdom of the animal and finally, by the law and process of composition, becomes a part of the body of man. That is to say, it has traversed the intermediate degrees and stations of phenomenal existence, entering into the composition of various organisms in its journey. This motion or transference is progressive and perpetual, for after disintegration of the human body into which it has entered, it returns to the mineral kingdom whence it came and will continue to traverse the kingdoms of phenomena as before. This is an illustration designed to show that the constituent elemental atoms of phenomena undergo progressive transference and motion throughout the material kingdoms.

In its ceaseless progression and journeyings the **atom** becomes imbued with the virtues and powers of each degree or kingdom it traverses. In the degree of the mineral it possessed mineral affinities; in the kingdom of the vegetable it manifested the augmentative virtue or power of growth; in the animal organism it reflected the intelligence of that degree; and in the kingdom of man it was qualified with human attributes or virtues.

Furthermore, the forms and organisms of phenomenal being and existence in each of the kingdoms of the universe are myriad and numberless. The vegetable plane or kingdom, for instance, has its infinite variety of types and material structures of plant life -- each distinct and different within itself, no two exactly alike in composition and detail -- for there are no repetitions in nature, and the augmentative virtue cannot be confined to any given image or shape. Each leaf has its own particular identity -- so to speak, its own individuality as a leaf. Therefore, each atom of the innumerable **elemental atoms**, during its ceaseless

motion through the kingdoms of existence as a constituent of organic composition, not only becomes imbued with the powers and virtues of the kingdoms it traverses but also reflects the attributes and qualities of the forms and organisms of those kingdoms. As each of these forms has its individual and particular virtue, therefore, each **elemental atom** of the universe has the opportunity of expressing an infinite variety of those individual virtues. No atom is bereft or deprived of this opportunity or right of expression. Nor can it be said of any given atom that it is denied equal opportunities with other **atoms**; nay, all are privileged to possess the virtues existent in these kingdoms and to reflect the attributes of their organisms. In the various transformations or passages from kingdom to kingdom the virtues expressed by the atoms in each degree are peculiar to that degree. For example, in the world of the mineral the **atom** does not express the vegetable form and organism, and when through the process of transmutation it assumes the virtues of the vegetable degree, it does not reflect the attributes of animal organisms, and so on.

It is evident, then, that each **elemental atom** of the universe is possessed of a capacity to express all the virtues of the universe. This is a subtle and abstract realization. Meditate upon it, for within it lies the true explanation of pantheism. From this point of view and perception pantheism is a truth, for every **atom** in the universe possesses or reflects all the virtues of life, the manifestation of which is effected through change and transformation. Therefore, the origin and outcome of phenomena is, verily, the omnipresent God; for the reality of all phenomenal existence is through Him. There is neither reality nor the manifestation of reality without the instrumentality of God. Existence is realized and possible through the bounty of God, just as the ray or flame emanating from this lamp is realized through the bounty of the lamp, from which it originates. Even so, all phenomena are realized through the divine bounty, and the explanation of true pantheistic statement and principle is that the phenomena of the universe find realization through the one power animating and dominating all things, and all things are but manifestations of its energy and bounty. The virtue of being and existence is through no other agency. Therefore, in the words of Bahá'u'lláh, the first teaching is the **oneness of the world of humanity**.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 285)

What more powerful and supreme force can be understood than the oneness of the world of mankind, which derives its essence from the oneness of God Himself, the Almighty, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. As a further consideration here are a few quotations that declare the principle of the oneness of mankind.

**1. Here again the connection between our earthly composition and our heavenly oneness is emphasized and reinforced:**

“O Children Of Men. Know ye not why We created you all from the **same dust**? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is

incumbent on you to be even as **one soul**, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the **signs of oneness** and the essence of detachment may be made manifest. Such is My counsel to you, O concourse of light! Heed ye this counsel that ye may obtain the fruit of holiness from the tree of wondrous glory.”  
(Bahá’u’lláh, The Arabic Hidden Words)

“O Brethren! Be forbearing one with another and set not your affections on things below. Pride not yourselves in your glory, and be not ashamed of abasement. By My beauty! I have created all things from dust, and to dust will I return them again.”

(Bahá’u’lláh, The Persian Hidden Words)

“Nay, whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth is a direct evidence of the revelation within it of the attributes and names of God, inasmuch as within every atom are enshrined the signs that bear eloquent testimony to the revelation of that most great Light. Methinks, but for the potency of that revelation, no being could ever exist. How resplendent the luminaries of knowledge that shine in an atom, and how vast the oceans of wisdom that surge within a drop!”  
(Bahá’u’lláh, The Kitáb-i-Íqán, p. 100)

## **2. The Manifestations of God are the portal to understanding the oneness of God, which generates and imbeds such a concept in the fiber of our own beings:**

“If thou be of the inmates of this city within the ocean of divine unity, thou wilt view all the Prophets and Messengers of God as one soul and one body, as one light and one spirit, in such wise that the first among them would be last and the last would be first. For they have all arisen to proclaim His Cause and have established the laws of divine wisdom. They are, one and all, the Manifestations of His Self, the Repositories of His might, the Treasuries of His Revelation, the Dawning-Places of His splendour and the Daysprings of His light. Through them are manifested the signs of sanctity in the realities of all things and the tokens of **oneness in the essences of all beings.**”  
(Bahá’u’lláh, Gems of Divine Mysteries, p. 32)

## **3. So great is this oneness that it will change war, the age long ill of society, into a lasting and abiding peace:**

“The gift of God to this enlightened age is the knowledge of the **oneness of mankind** and of the fundamental oneness of religion. War shall cease between nations, and by the will of God the Most Great Peace shall come; the world will be seen as a new world, and all men will live as brothers.”  
(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London, p. 19)

**4. So mighty is the oneness of mankind that when its implications are realized the hearts of the world will blend together:**

“The most important principle of divine philosophy is the **oneness of the world of humanity**, the unity of mankind, the bond conjoining East and West, the tie of love which blends human hearts.”

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Foundations of World Unity, p. 50)

**5. Could not Shoghi Effendi’s elucidation on the theme of the oneness of mankind make one ponder the future unfolding of this deeply embedded truth:**

“Of the principles enshrined in these Tablets the most vital of them all is **the principle of the oneness and wholeness of the human race, which may well be regarded as the hall-mark of Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation and the pivot of His teachings**. Of such cardinal importance is this principle of unity that it is expressly referred to in the Book of His Covenant, and He unreservedly proclaims it as the central purpose of His Faith. “We, verily,” He declares, “have come to unite and weld together all that dwell on earth.” “So potent is the light of unity,” He further states, “that it can illuminate the whole earth.” “At one time,” He has written with reference to this central theme of His Revelation, “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.” Unity, He states, is the goal that “excelleth every goal” and an aspiration which is “the monarch of all aspirations.” “The world,” He proclaims, “is but one country, and mankind its citizens.” He further affirms that the unification of mankind, the last stage in the evolution of humanity towards maturity is inevitable, that “soon will the present day order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead,” that “the whole earth is now in a state of pregnancy,” that “the day is approaching when it will have yielded its noblest fruits, when from it will have sprung forth the loftiest trees, the most enchanting blossoms, the most heavenly blessings.”

(Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 216)

6. “Twinkle, twinkle little star”:

“And whensoever thou dost gaze upon creation all entire, and dost observe the very **atoms** thereof, thou wilt note that the rays of the Sun of Truth are shed upon all things and shining within them, and telling of that Day-Star’s splendours, Its mysteries, and the spreading of Its lights.”

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 41)

**7. A prayer from one of the Branches who was to ponder the “hidden truths that are written and embedded in the heart of all that is.”:**

“O God, O Thou Who hast cast Thy splendour over the luminous realities of men, shedding upon them the resplendent lights of knowledge and guidance, and hast

chosen them out of all created things for this supernal grace, and hast caused them to encompass all things, to understand their inmost essence, and to disclose their mysteries, bringing them forth out of darkness into the visible world! “He verily showeth His special mercy to whomsoever He will.”[1] O Lord, help Thou Thy loved ones to acquire knowledge and the sciences and arts, and to **unravel the secrets that are treasured up in the inmost reality of all created beings**. Make them to hear the hidden truths that are written and embedded in the heart of all that is. Make them to be ensigns of guidance amongst all creatures, and piercing rays of the mind shedding forth their light in this, the “first life”. [2] Make them to be leaders unto Thee, guides unto Thy path, runners urging men on to Thy Kingdom.”

[1 Qur’án 3:67] [2 Qur’án 56:62]

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Compilations, The Compilation of Compilations vol. I, p. 251)

**8. Also one comment made during class was the force that binds atoms together and this truth must interweave with the oneness of mankind as well:**

“Love is the most great law that ruleth this mighty and heavenly cycle, the unique power that bindeth together the divers elements of this material world, the supreme magnetic force that directeth the movements of the spheres in the celestial realms.”

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 27)

It would be lovely if anyone has any other opinions on this examined quotation that they could share with everyone, especially if you have any thoughts about the future development of atomic research and how such scientific understands will relate to the spiritual worlds. This is only the early beginnings of a study that can assume must great dimensions and it is the hope that you will use this along the way, adding to these quotations, and continuing to think about the oneness of mankind and how it is our duty to transform this principle into a reality, a reality which is at the heart of our very existence.