

Weaving of Creation, Nature, Origin, Pre-existence

1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

1:2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

1:3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

1:4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

1:5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

1:6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

1:7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

1:8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

1:9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

1:10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

1:11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

1:12 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

1:13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.

1:14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: 1:15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

1:16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

1:17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, 1:18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

1:19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

1:20 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

1:21 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

1:22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

1:23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

1:24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

1:25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

1:28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

1:29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

1:30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

1:31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

(King James Bible, Genesis Chapter 1.)

O SON OF MAN! I loved thy creation, hence I created thee. Wherefore, do thou love Me, that I may name thy name and fill thy soul with the spirit of life.

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Arabic Hidden Words, 4)

O SON OF MAN! My eternity is My creation, I have created it for thee. Make it the garment of thy temple. My unity is My handiwork; I have wrought it for thee; clothe thyself therewith, that thou mayest be to all eternity the revelation of My everlasting being.

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Arabic Hidden Words, #64.)

As regards thine assertions about the beginning of creation, this is a matter on which conceptions vary by reason of the divergences in men's thoughts and opinions. Wert thou to assert that it hath ever existed and shall continue to exist, it would be true; or wert thou to affirm the same concept as is mentioned in the sacred Scriptures, no doubt would there be about it, for it hath been revealed by God, the Lord of the worlds. Indeed He was a hidden treasure. This is a station that can never be described nor even alluded to. And in the station of 'I did wish to make Myself known', God was, and His creation had ever existed beneath His shelter from the beginning that hath no beginning, apart from its being preceded by a Firstness which cannot be regarded as firstness and originated by a Cause inscrutable even unto all men of learning.

That which hath been in existence had existed before, but not in the form thou seest today. The world of existence came into being through the heat generated from the interaction between the active force and that which is its recipient. These two are the same, yet they are different. Thus doth the Great Announcement inform thee about this glorious structure. Such as communicate the generating influence and such as receive its impact are indeed created through the irresistible Word of God which is the Cause of the entire creation, while all else besides His Word are but the creatures and the effects thereof. Verily thy Lord is the Expounder, the All-Wise.

Know thou, moreover, that the Word of God -- exalted be His glory -- is higher and far superior to that which the senses can perceive, for it is sanctified from any property or substance. It transcendeth the limitations of known elements and is exalted above all the essential and recognized substances. It became manifest without any syllable or sound and is none but the Command of God which pervadeth all created things. It hath never been withheld from the world of being. It is God's all-pervasive grace, from which all grace doth emanate. It is an entity far removed above all that hath been and shall be.

We are loath to enlarge on this subject, inasmuch as the unbelievers have inclined their ears towards Us in order to hear that which might enable them to cavil against God, the

Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. And since they are unable to attain to mysteries of knowledge and wisdom from what hath been unravelled by the Source of divine splendour, they rise in protest and burst into clamour. But it is true to say that they object to that which they comprehend, not to the expositions given by the Expounder, nor the truths imparted by the One true God, the Knower of things unseen. Their objections, one and all, turn upon themselves, and I swear by thy life that they are devoid of understanding.

Every thing must needs have an origin and every building a builder. Verily, the Word of God is the Cause which hath preceded the contingent world -- a world which is adorned with the splendours of the Ancient of Days, yet is being renewed and regenerated at all times. Immeasurably exalted is the God of Wisdom Who hath raised this sublime structure.

Look at the world and ponder a while upon it. It unveileth the book of its own self before thine eyes and revealeth that which the Pen of thy Lord, the Fashioner, the All-Informed, hath inscribed therein. It will acquaint thee with that which is within it and upon it and will give thee such clear explanations as to make thee independent of every eloquent expounder.

Say: Nature in its essence is the embodiment of My Name, the Maker, the Creator. Its manifestations are diversified by varying causes, and in this diversity there are signs for men of discernment. Nature is God's Will and is its expression in and through the contingent world. It is a dispensation of Providence ordained by the Ordainer, the All-Wise. Were anyone to affirm that it is the Will of God as manifested in the world of being, no one should question this assertion. It is endowed with a power whose reality men of learning fail to grasp. Indeed a man of insight can perceive naught therein save the effulgent splendour of Our Name, the Creator. Say: This is an existence which knoweth no decay, and Nature itself is lost in bewilderment before its revelations, its compelling evidences and its effulgent glory which have encompassed the universe.

It ill beseemeth thee to turn thy gaze unto former or more recent times. Make thou mention of this Day and magnify that which hath appeared therein. It will in truth suffice all mankind. Indeed expositions and discourses in explanation of such things cause the spirits to be chilled. It behoveth thee to speak forth in such wise as to set the hearts of true believers ablaze and cause their bodies to soar.

Whoso firmly believeth today in the rebirth of man and is fully conscious that God, the Most Exalted, wieldeth supreme ascendancy and absolute authority over this new creation, verily such a man is reckoned with them that are endued with insight in this most great Revelation. Unto this beareth witness every discerning believer.

Walk thou high above the world of being through the power of the Most Great Name, that thou mayest become aware of the immemorial mysteries and be acquainted with that wherewith no one is acquainted. Verily, thy Lord is the Helper, the All-Knowing, the All-Informed. Be thou as a throbbing artery, pulsating in the body of the entire creation, that

through the heat generated by this motion there may appear that which will quicken the hearts of those who hesitate.

At the time when We were hidden behind countless veils of light thou didst commune with Me and didst witness the luminaries of the heaven of My wisdom and the billows of the ocean of Mine utterance. Verily thy Lord is the Truthful, the Faithful. Great indeed is the blessedness of him who hath attained the liberal effusions of this ocean in the days of his Lord, the Most Bountiful, the All-Wise.

During Our sojourn in Íraq when We were at the house of one named Majíd, We set forth clearly for thee the mysteries of creation and the origin, the culmination and the cause thereof. However since Our departure We have limited Ourselves to this affirmation: ‘Verily, no God is there but Me, the Ever-Forgiving, the Bountiful.’

Teach thou the Cause of God with an utterance which will cause the bushes to be enkindled, and the call ‘Verily, there is no God but Me, the Almighty, the Unconstrained’ to be raised therefrom. Say: Human utterance is an essence which aspireth to exert its influence and needeth moderation. As to its influence, this is conditional upon refinement which in turn is dependent upon hearts which are detached and pure. As to its moderation, this hath to be combined with tact and wisdom as prescribed in the Holy Scriptures and Tablets. Meditate upon that which hath streamed forth from the heaven of the Will of thy Lord, He Who is the Source of all grace, that thou mayest grasp the intended meaning which is enshrined in the sacred depths of the Holy Writings.

Those who have rejected God and firmly cling to Nature as it is in itself are, verily, bereft of knowledge and wisdom. They are truly of them that are far astray. They have failed to attain the lofty summit and have fallen short of the ultimate purpose; therefore their eyes were shut and their thoughts differed, while the leaders among them have believed in God and in His invincible sovereignty. Unto this beareth witness thy Lord, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

When the eyes of the people of the East were captivated by the arts and wonders of the West, they roved distraught in the wilderness of material causes, oblivious of the One Who is the Causer of Causes, and the Sustainer thereof, while such men as were the source and the wellspring of Wisdom never denied the moving Impulse behind these causes, nor the Creator or the Origin thereof. Thy Lord knoweth, yet most of the people know not.

(Bahá’u’lláh, *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 143.)

The entire creation hath been called into being through the Will of God, magnified be His glory, and peerless Adam hath been fashioned through the agency of His all-compelling Word which is the source, the wellspring, the repository, and the dawning-place of the intellect. From it all creation hath proceeded, and it is the channel of God’s primal grace. None can grasp the reality of the origin of creation save God, exalted be His glory, Whose knowledge embraceth all things both before and after they come into being.

Creation hath neither beginning nor end, and none hath ever unraveled its mystery. Its knowledge hath ever been, and shall remain, hidden and preserved with those Who are the Repositories of divine knowledge. The world of existence is contingent, inasmuch as it is preceded by a cause, while essential pre-existence hath ever been, and shall remain, confined to God, magnified by His glory. This statement is being made lest one be inclined to conclude from the earlier assertion, namely that creation hath no beginning and no end, that it is pre-existent. True and essential pre-existence is exclusively reserved to God, while the pre-existence of the world is secondary and relative. All that hath been inferred about firstness, lastness and such hath in truth been derived from the sayings of the Prophets, Apostles and Chosen Ones of God.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Tabernacle of Unity*, pg. 47-78.)

LXXVII. And now, concerning thy question regarding the creation of man. Know thou that all men have been created in the nature made by God, the Guardian, the Self-Subsisting. Unto each one hath been prescribed a pre-ordained measure, as decreed in God's mighty and guarded Tablets. All that which ye potentially possess can, however, be manifested only as a result of your own volition. Your own acts testify to this truth. Consider, for instance, that which hath been forbidden, in the Bayan, unto men. God hath in that Book, and by His behest, decreed as lawful whatsoever He hath pleased to decree, and hath, through the power of His sovereign might, forbidden whatsoever He elected to forbid. To this testifyeth the text of that Book. Will ye not bear witness? Men, however, have wittingly broken His law. Is such a behavior to be attributed to God, or to their proper selves? Be fair in your judgment. Every good thing is of God, and every evil thing is from yourselves. Will ye not comprehend? This same truth hath been revealed in all the Scriptures, if ye be of them that understand. Every act ye meditate is as clear to Him as is that act when already accomplished. There is none other God besides Him. His is all creation and its empire. All stands revealed before Him; all is recorded in His holy and hidden Tablets. This fore-knowledge of God, however, should not be regarded as having caused the actions of men, just as your own previous knowledge that a certain event is to occur, or your desire that it should happen, is not and can never be the reason for its occurrence.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 149.)

LXXVIII. As to thy question concerning the origin of creation. Know assuredly that God's creation hath existed from eternity, and will continue to exist forever. Its beginning hath had no beginning, and its end knoweth no end. His name, the Creator, presupposeth a creation, even as His title, the Lord of Men, must involve the existence of a servant.

As to those sayings, attributed to the Prophets of old, such as, "In the beginning was God; there was no creature to know Him," and "The Lord was alone; with no one to adore Him," the meaning of these and similar sayings is clear and evident, and should at no time be misapprehended. To this same truth bear witness these words which He hath revealed: "God was alone; there was none else besides Him. He will always remain what

He hath ever been.” Every discerning eye will readily perceive that the Lord is now manifest, yet there is none to recognize His glory. By this is meant that the habitation wherein the Divine Being dwelleth is far above the reach and ken of any one besides Him. Whatsoever in the contingent world can either be expressed or apprehended, can never transgress the limits which, by its inherent nature, have been imposed upon it. God, alone, transcendeth such limitations. He, verily, is from everlasting. No peer or partner has been, or can ever be, joined with Him. No name can be compared with His Name. No pen can portray His nature, neither can any tongue depict His glory. He will, for ever, remain immeasurably exalted above any one except Himself.

Consider the hour at which the supreme Manifestation of God revealeth Himself unto men. Ere that hour cometh, the Ancient Being, Who is still unknown of men and hath not as yet given utterance to the Word of God, is Himself the All-Knower in a world devoid of any man that hath known Him. He is indeed the Creator without a creation. For at the very moment preceding His Revelation, each and every created thing shall be made to yield up its soul to God. This is indeed the Day of which it hath been written: “Whose shall be the Kingdom this Day?” And none can be found ready to answer!

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 150.)

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.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 151.)

XXVI. A drop of the billowing ocean of His endless mercy hath adorned all creation with the ornament of existence, and a breath wafted from His peerless Paradise hath invested all beings with the robe of His sanctity and glory. A sprinkling from the unfathomed deep of His sovereign and all-pervasive Will hath, out of utter nothingness, called into being a creation which is infinite in its range and deathless in its duration. The wonders of His bounty can never cease, and the stream of His merciful grace can never be arrested. The process of His creation hath had no beginning, and can have no end.

In every age and cycle He hath, through the splendorous light shed by the Manifestations of His wondrous Essence, recreated all things, so that whatsoever reflecteth in the heavens and on the earth the signs of His glory may not be deprived of the outpourings of His mercy, nor despair of the showers of His favors. How all-encompassing are the wonders of His boundless grace! Behold how they have pervaded the whole of creation. Such is their virtue that not a single atom in the entire universe can be found which doth not declare the evidences of His might, which doth not glorify His holy Name, or is not expressive of the effulgent light of His unity. So perfect and comprehensive is His creation that no mind nor heart, however keen or pure, can ever grasp the nature of the most insignificant of His creatures; much less fathom the mystery of Him Who is the Day Star of Truth, Who is the invisible and unknowable Essence.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 61.)

Having created the world and all that liveth and moveth therein, He, through the direct operation of His unconstrained and sovereign Will, chose to confer upon man the unique distinction and capacity to know Him and to love Him -- a capacity that must needs be regarded as the generating impulse and the primary purpose underlying the whole of creation... Upon the inmost reality of each and every created thing He hath shed the light of one of His names, and made it a recipient of the glory of one of His attributes. Upon the reality of man, however, He hath focused the radiance of all of His names and attributes, and made it a mirror of His own Self. Alone of all created things man hath been singled out for so great a favor, so enduring a bounty.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 65.)

All praise and glory be to God Who, through the power of His might, hath delivered His creation from the nakedness of non-existence, and clothed it with the mantle of life. From among all created things He hath singled out for His special favor the pure, the gem-like reality of man, and invested it with a unique capacity of knowing Him and of reflecting the greatness of His glory. This twofold distinction conferred upon him hath cleansed away from his heart the rust of every vain desire, and made him worthy of the vesture with which his Creator hath deigned to clothe him. It hath served to rescue his soul from the wretchedness of ignorance.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 77.)

Suffer not yourselves to be wrapt in the dense veils of your selfish desires, inasmuch as I have perfected in every one of you My creation, so that the excellence of My handiwork may be fully revealed unto men. It follows, therefore, that every man hath been, and will continue to be, able of himself to appreciate the Beauty of God, the Glorified. Had he not been endowed with such a capacity, how could he be called to account for his failure?

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 142.)

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.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 162.)

His creation hath ever existed, and the Manifestations of His Divine glory and the Day Springs of eternal holiness have been sent down from time immemorial, and been commissioned to summon mankind to the one true God. That the names of some of them are forgotten and the records of their lives lost is to be attributed to the disturbances and changes that have overtaken the world.

Mention hath been made in certain books of a deluge which caused all that existed on earth, historical records as well as other things, to be destroyed. Moreover, many cataclysms have occurred which have effaced the traces of many events. Furthermore, among existing historical records differences are to be found, and each of the various peoples of the world hath its own account of the age of the earth and of its history. Some trace their history as far back as eight thousand years, others as far as twelve thousand years. To any one that hath read the book of Juk it is clear and evident how much the accounts given by the various books have differed.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 173.)

Nature is Governed by One Universal Law

Nature is that condition, that reality, which in appearance consists in life and death, or, in other words, in the composition and decomposition of all things.

This Nature is subjected to an absolute organization, to determined laws, to a complete order and a finished design, from which it will never depart -- to such a degree, indeed, that if you look carefully and with keen sight, from the smallest invisible atom up to such large bodies of the world of existence as the globe of the sun or the other great stars and luminous spheres, whether you regard their arrangement, their composition, their form or their movement, you will find that all are in the highest degree of organization and are under one law from which they will never depart.

But when you look at Nature itself, you see that it has no intelligence, no will. For instance, the nature of fire is to burn; it burns without will or intelligence. The nature of water is fluidity; it flows without will or intelligence. The nature of the sun is radiance; it shines without will or intelligence. The nature of vapor is to ascend; it ascends without will or intelligence. Thus it is clear that the natural movements of all things are compelled; there are no voluntary movements except those of animals and, above all, those of man. Man is able to resist and to oppose Nature because he discovers the constitution of things, and through this he commands the forces of Nature; all the inventions he has made are due to his discovery of the constitution of things. For example, he invented the telegraph, which is the means of communication between the East and the West. It is evident, then, that man rules over Nature.

Now, when you behold in existence such organizations, arrangements and laws, can you say that all these are the effect of Nature, though Nature has neither intelligence nor perception? If not, it becomes evident that this Nature, which has neither perception nor intelligence, is in the grasp of Almighty God, Who is the Ruler of the world of Nature; whatever He wishes, He causes Nature to manifest.

One of the things which has appeared in the world of existence, and which is one of the requirements of Nature, is human life. Considered from this point of view man is the branch; nature is the root. Then can the will and the intelligence, and the perfections which exist in the branch, be absent in the root?

It is said that Nature in its own essence is in the grasp of the power of God, Who is the Eternal Almighty One: He holds Nature within accurate regulations and laws, and rules over it. [1]

[1 On the idea of God, cf. "The Divinity Can Only Be Comprehended through the Divine Manifestations," p. 146; and "Man's Knowledge of God," p. 220. The reader will there

see that the Bahá'í Faith has not an anthropomorphic conception of God, and that if it employs a customary terminology, it is careful to explain its symbolic meaning.]

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 4.)

... that Divinity Who has organized this infinite universe in the most perfect form, and its innumerable inhabitants with absolute system, strength, and perfection.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, pg. 123.)

Know that it is one of the most abstruse spiritual truths that the world of existence -- that is to say, this endless universe -- has no beginning.

We have already explained that the names and attributes of the Divinity themselves require the existence of beings. Although this subject has been explained in detail, we will speak of it again briefly. Know that an educator without pupils cannot be imagined; a monarch without subjects could not exist; a master without scholars cannot be appointed; a creator without a creature is impossible; a provider without those provided for cannot be conceived; for all the divine names and attributes demand the existence of beings. If we could imagine a time when no beings existed, this imagination would be the denial of the Divinity of God. Moreover, absolute nonexistence cannot become existence. If the beings were absolutely nonexistent, existence would not have come into being. Therefore, as the Essence of Unity (that is, the existence of God) is everlasting and eternal -- that is to say, it has neither beginning nor end -- it is certain that this world of existence, this endless universe, has neither beginning nor end. Yes, it may be that one of the parts of the universe, one of the globes, for example, may come into existence, or may be disintegrated, but the other endless globes are still existing; the universe would not be disordered nor destroyed. On the contrary, existence is eternal and perpetual. As each globe has a beginning, necessarily it has an end because every composition, collective or particular, must of necessity be decomposed. The only difference is that some are quickly decomposed, and others more slowly, but it is impossible that a composed thing should not eventually be decomposed.

It is necessary, therefore, that we should know what each of the important existences was in the beginning -- for there is no doubt that in the beginning the origin was one: the origin of all numbers is one and not two. Then it is evident that in the beginning matter was one, and that one matter appeared in different aspects in each element. Thus various forms were produced, and these various aspects as they were produced became permanent, and each element was specialized. But this permanence was not definite, and did not attain realization and perfect existence until after a very long time. Then these elements became composed, and organized and combined in infinite forms; or rather from the composition and combination of these elements innumerable beings appeared.

This composition and arrangement, through the wisdom of God and His preexistent might, were produced from one natural organization, which was composed and combined with the greatest strength, conformable to wisdom, and according to a universal law. From this it is evident that it is the creation of God, and is not a fortuitous composition and arrangement. This is why from every natural composition a being can come into existence, but from an accidental composition no being can come into existence. For example, if a man of his own mind and intelligence collects some elements and combines them, a living being will not be brought into existence since the system is unnatural. This is the answer to the implied question that, since beings are made by the composition and the combination of elements, why is it not possible for us to gather elements and mingle them together, and so create a living being. This is a false supposition, for the origin of this composition is from God; it is God Who makes the combination, and as it is done according to the natural system, from each composition one being is produced, and an existence is realized. A composition made by man produces nothing because man cannot create.

Briefly, we have said that from the composition and combination of elements, from their decomposition, from their measure, and from the effect of other beings upon them, resulted forms, endless realities and innumerable beings. But it is clear that this terrestrial globe in its present form did not come into existence all at once, but that this universal existence gradually passed through different phases until it became adorned with its present perfection. Universal beings resemble and can be compared to particular beings, for both are subjected to one natural system, one universal law and divine organization. So you will find the smallest atoms in the universal system are similar to the greatest beings of the universe. It is clear that they come into existence from one laboratory of might under one natural system and one universal law; therefore, they may be compared to one another. Thus the embryo of man in the womb of the mother gradually grows and develops, and appears in different forms and conditions, until in the degree of perfect beauty it reaches maturity and appears in a perfect form with the utmost grace. And in the same way, the seed of this flower which you see was in the beginning an insignificant thing, and very small; and it grew and developed in the womb of the earth and, after appearing in various forms, came forth in this condition with perfect freshness and grace. In the same manner, it is evident that this terrestrial globe, having once found existence, grew and developed in the matrix of the universe, and came forth in different forms and conditions, until gradually it attained this present perfection, and became adorned with innumerable beings, and appeared as a finished organization.

Then it is clear that original matter, which is in the embryonic state, and the mingled and composed elements which were its earliest forms, gradually grew and developed during many ages and cycles, passing from one shape and form to another, until they appeared in this perfection, this system, this organization and this establishment, through the supreme wisdom of God.

Let us return to our subject that man, in the beginning of his existence and in the womb of the earth, like the embryo in the womb of the mother, gradually grew and developed, and passed from one form to another, from one shape to another, until he appeared with

this beauty and perfection, this force and this power. It is certain that in the beginning he had not this loveliness and grace and elegance, and that he only by degrees attained this shape, this form, this beauty and this grace. There is no doubt that the human embryo did not at once appear in this form; neither did it then become the manifestation of the words “Blessed, therefore, be God, the most excellent of Makers.”[1] Gradually it passed through various conditions and different shapes, until it attained this form and beauty, this perfection, grace and loveliness. Thus it is evident and confirmed that the development and growth of man on this earth, until he reached his present perfection, resembled the growth and development of the embryo in the womb of the mother: by degrees it passed from condition to condition, from form to form, from one shape to another, for this is according to the requirement of the universal system and Divine Law. [1 Qur’án 23:14.]

That is to say, the embryo passes through different states and traverses numerous degrees, until it reaches the form in which it manifests the words “Praise be to God, the best of Creators,” and until the signs of reason and maturity appear. And in the same way, man’s existence on this earth, from the beginning until it reaches this state, form and condition, necessarily lasts a long time, and goes through many degrees until it reaches this condition. But from the beginning of man’s existence he is a distinct species. In the same way, the embryo of man in the womb of the mother was at first in a strange form; then this body passes from shape to shape, from state to state, from form to form, until it appears in utmost beauty and perfection. But even when in the womb of the mother and in this strange form, entirely different from his present form and figure, he is the embryo of the superior species, and not of the animal; his species and essence undergo no change. Now, admitting that the traces of organs which have disappeared actually exist, this is not a proof of the impermanence and the nonoriginality of the species. At the most it proves that the form, and fashion, and the organs of man have progressed. Man was always a distinct species, a man, not an animal. So, if the embryo of man in the womb of the mother passes from one form to another so that the second form in no way resembles the first, is this a proof that the species has changed? that it was at first an animal, and that its organs progressed and developed until it became a man? No, indeed! How puerile and unfounded is this idea and this thought! For the proof of the originality of the human species, and of the permanency of the nature of man, is clear and evident.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 184.)

Therefore, it cannot be said there was a time when man was not. All that we can say is that this terrestrial globe at one time did not exist, and at its beginning man did not appear upon it. But from the beginning which has no beginning, to the end which has no end, a Perfect Manifestation always exists. This Man of Whom we speak is not every man; we mean the Perfect Man. For the noblest part of the tree is the fruit, which is the reason of its existence. If the tree had no fruit, it would have no meaning. Therefore, it cannot be imagined that the worlds of existence, whether the stars or this earth, were once inhabited by the donkey, cow, mouse and cat, and that they were without man! This supposition is false and meaningless. The word of God is clear as the sun. This is a spiritual proof, but

one which we cannot at the beginning put forth for the benefit of the materialists. First we must speak of the logical proofs, afterward the spiritual proofs.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 196.)

THE SPIRIT AND MIND OF MAN HAVE EXISTED FROM THE BEGINNING

Question. -- Does man in the beginning possess mind and spirit, or are they an outcome of his evolution?

Answer. -- The beginning of the existence of man on the terrestrial globe resembles his formation in the womb of the mother. The embryo in the womb of the mother gradually grows and develops until birth, after which it continues to grow and develop until it reaches the age of discretion and maturity. Though in infancy the signs of the mind and spirit appear in man, they do not reach the degree of perfection; they are imperfect. Only when man attains maturity do the mind and the spirit appear and become evident in utmost perfection.

So also the formation of man in the matrix of the world was in the beginning like the embryo; then gradually he made progress in perfectness, and grew and developed until he reached the state of maturity, when the mind and spirit became visible in the greatest power. In the beginning of his formation the mind and spirit also existed, but they were hidden; later they were manifested. In the womb of the world mind and spirit also existed in the embryo, but they were concealed; afterward they appeared. So it is that in the seed the tree exists, but it is hidden and concealed; when it develops and grows, the complete tree appears. In the same way the growth and development of all beings is gradual; this is the universal divine organization and the natural system. The seed does not at once become a tree; the embryo does not at once become a man; the mineral does not suddenly become a stone. No, they grow and develop gradually and attain the limit of perfection.

All beings, whether large or small, were created perfect and complete from the first, but their perfections appear in them by degrees. The organization of God is one; the evolution of existence is one; the divine system is one. Whether they be small or great beings, all are subject to one law and system. Each seed has in it from the first all the vegetable perfections. For example, in the seed all the vegetable perfections exist from the beginning, but not visibly; afterward little by little they appear. So it is first the shoot which appears from the seed, then the branches, leaves, blossoms and fruits; but from the beginning of its existence all these things are in the seed, potentially, though not apparently.

In the same way, the embryo possesses from the first all perfections, such as the spirit, the mind, the sight, the smell, the taste -- in one word, all the powers -- but they are not visible and become so only by degrees.

Similarly, the terrestrial globe from the beginning was created with all its elements, substances, minerals, atoms and organisms; but these only appeared by degrees: first the mineral, then the plant, afterward the animal, and finally man. But from the first these kinds and species existed, but were undeveloped in the terrestrial globe, and then appeared only gradually. For the supreme organization of God, and the universal natural system, surround all beings, and all are subject to this rule. When you consider this universal system, you see that there is not one of the beings which at its coming into existence has reached the limit of perfection. No, they gradually grow and develop, and then attain the degree of perfection.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 199.)

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.)

We cannot prove man was always man for this is a fundamental doctrine, but it is based on the assertion that nothing can exceed its own potentialities, that everything, a stone, a tree, an animal and a human being existed in plan, potentially, from the very “beginning” of creation. We don’t believe man has always had the form of man, but rather that from the outset he was going to evolve into the human form and species and not be a haphazard branch of the ape family.

You see our whole approach to each matter is based on the belief that God sends us divinely inspired Educators; what they tell us is fundamentally true, what science tells us today is true; tomorrow may be entirely changed to better explain a new set of facts.

When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says man breaks the laws of nature, He means we shape nature to meet our own needs, as no animal does. Animals adapt themselves to better fit in with

and benefit from their environment. But men both surmount and change environment. Likewise when He says nature is devoid of memory He means memory as we have it, not the strange memory of inherited habits which animals so strikingly possess.

These various statements must be taken in conjunction with all the Bahá'í teachings; we cannot get a correct picture by concentrating on just one phrase.

(Extract, letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, June 7th 1946; cited in *Letters to New Zealand*, p. 85.)