

PREPARING OURSELVES FOR LIFE AFTER DEATH

The quotation below addresses the topic of preparing ourselves for the life that follows our physical death, a time when perhaps we may join those who have passed on before us.

“Therefore, in this world he must prepare himself for the life beyond. That which he needs in the world of the Kingdom must be obtained here. Just as he prepared himself in the world of the matrix by acquiring forces necessary in this sphere of existence, so, likewise, the indispensable forces of the divine existence must be potentially attained in this world.

“What is he in need of in the Kingdom which transcends the life and limitation of this mortal sphere? That world beyond is a world of sanctity and radiance; therefore, it is necessary that in this world he should acquire these divine attributes. In that world there is need of spirituality, faith, assurance, the knowledge and love of God. These he must attain in this world so that after his ascension from the earthly to the heavenly Kingdom he shall find all that is needful in that eternal life ready for him.

“That divine world is manifestly a world of lights; therefore, man has need of illumination here. That is a world of love; the love of God is essential. It is a world of perfections; virtues, or perfections, must be acquired. That world is vivified by the breaths of the Holy Spirit; in this world we must seek them. That is the Kingdom of everlasting life; it must be attained during this vanishing existence.

“By what means can man acquire these things? How shall he obtain these merciful gifts and powers? First, through the knowledge of God. Second, through the love of God. Third, through faith. Fourth, through philanthropic deeds. Fifth, through self-sacrifice. Sixth, through severance from this world. Seventh, through sanctity and holiness. Unless he acquires these forces and attains to these requirements, he will surely be deprived of the life that is eternal. But if he possesses the knowledge of God, becomes ignited through the fire of the love of God, witnesses the great and mighty signs of the Kingdom, becomes the cause of love among mankind and lives in the utmost state of sanctity and holiness, he shall surely attain to second birth, be baptized by the Holy Spirit and enjoy everlasting existence.”

~ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 226

Reflection Questions and Goal Setting

1. How can you increase your “knowledge and love of God”?

2. How can you increase your “faith” and your “assurance”? How will you know when these are strong?

3. What “virtues” will you focus on strengthening? What specific ways can you act differently?

4. What is your understanding of “self-sacrifice”? What actions can you do that will demonstrate this quality?

5. What “philanthropic deeds” can you now do?

6. What would be examples of “the great and mighty signs of the Kingdom”?

7. What ways can you be the “cause of love among mankind”?

8. How can you increase your “spirituality” and “severance from this world”?

9. What words, actions, and visible signs would show that you are acquiring and expanding your “illumination” and “radiance”?

10. How can you “seek” “the breaths of the Holy Spirit”?

11. What words and actions would show that you are living in a “state of sanctity and holiness”?

“By thy life, O my beloved! if thou didst know what God had ordained for thee, thou wouldst fly with delight, and thy happiness, gladness, and joy would increase every hour.”

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *BWF*, p. 363)