

Mystics Magazine

Bahai Mystical Theology

Conversations with Bahauallah

Compiled by Marilyn Hughes

The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation!

www.outofbodytravel.org



Bahauallah

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Having worked primarily in radio broadcasting, Marilynn Hughes spent several years as a news reporter, producer and anchor before deciding to stay at home with her three children. She's experienced, researched, written, and taught about out-of-body travel since 1987.

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Journal Ten: The Great Beyond

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*Journal Twelve: The 800th Anniversary of Jalalludin Rumi, and
the True Spiritual Heritage of Afghanistan and the Middle East*

Journal Thirteen: Pensatia - Forgotten Rosicrucian Mystic

*Journal Fourteen: Reverend John Macgowan - Forgotten
Protestant Mystic*

*Journal Fifteen: A. Farnese - Forgotten Mystic Amanuensis (to
Franchezzo)*

*Journal Sixteen: Comte St. Germain - Forgotten Immortal
Mystic of the Mystery Schools*

Journal Seventeen: Franz Hartmann - Forgotten Mystical Adept

*Journal Eighteen: SA'D UD DIN MAHMŪD SHABISTARĪ -
Forgotten Islamic Sufi Mystic*

*Journal Nineteen: Dionysius - Forgotten Christian Mystic of the
Early Church*

*Issue Twenty: Acvaghosha - Forgotten Buddhist Mystic of the
Mahayana Path*

*Issue Twenty One: Bishop Shelemon of Armenia - Forgotten
Nestorian Christian Mystic*

*Issue Twenty Two: Abú Sa'íd Ibn Abi 'l-Khayr- Forgotten
Islamic Mystic*

*Issue Twenty Three: Rev. G. Vale Owen - Forgotten Christian
Mystic*

*Issue Twenty Four: Swami Abhedânanda- Forgotten Hindu
Mystic*

*Issue Twenty Five: Moses Maimonides - Forgotten Jewish
Mystic*

Issue Twenty Six: The Bab - Forgotten Baha'i Mystic

*Issue Twenty Seven: Shinran Shonin - Forgotten Mystic of Pure
Land Buddhism*

*Issue Twenty Eight: Bustan of Sadi - Forgotten Persian Islamic
Mystic*

*Issue Twenty Nine: John Bunyan - Forgotten Protestant
Christian Mystic*

*Issue Thirty: Ixtlilxochitl and Nezahualcoyotl - Forgotten
Aztec Mystics and Myth Bearers*

Mystics Magazine

*Issue One - Christian Mystical Theology, Conversations with Jacob
Boehme*

*Issue Two - Buddhist Mystical Theology, Conversations with Charaka
and Acvagosha*

*Issue Three – Islamic Mystical Theology, Conversations with Imam
Ghazzali*

*Issue Four – Egyptian Mystical Theology, Conversations with W.
Marsham Adams*

*Issue Five – Hindu Mystical Theology, Conversations with Sri
Ramakrishna*

*Issue Six – Jewish Mystical Theology, Conversations with Rabbi
Simeon*

*Issue Seven – Sikh Mystical Theology, Conversations with Guru
Nanak*

*Issue Eight – Zoroastrian Mystical Theology, Conversations with
Charles William King*

Issue Nine – Bahai Mystical Theology, Conversations with Bahauallah

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CONTENTS:

Mystics Magazine

Bahai Mystical Theology
Conversations with Bahauallah
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Conversations with Bahauallah
Great Bahai Mystical Theologians

Excerpts from the Faith of Bahauallah
(Including the Divine Standard of Knowledge, the
Quickening Spirit, Spiritual Existence is
Immortality)
By Bahauallah

11

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 Conversations with Bahauallah
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Mystics Magazine ventures to take on the issues of Mystical Theology in Different Faiths and World Religions in a new and unique way. It is the purpose of each issue of the magazine to embrace the personal dialogue and teachings of a great Master of the Mystical Path within that religion and allow them to speak of their personal experience and conclusions based on their years of inquiry into the supersensual world.

We've utilized many texts which involve actual dialogue between the Great Mystics and others wherein they explain important aspects and understanding of the mystical theology (and sometimes moral theology) of their own unique religious path.

The Author does not necessarily agree with all views presented, but wishes to present the similarities and differences between some of the Great Mystics the world over. In doing so, we can see better where we agree and where we disagree. We can also pick up points from other paths that may enhance our own.

Look upon this journey into Mystics Magazine as an opportunity to discern for yourself as to how these things may be able to help you in your own spiritual journey.

This is an opportunity to have a conversation with some of the greatest mystical minds in history. So consider listening in . . .

Teachings of Baha'u'llah

By Baha'u'llah, circa 1900

THE DIVINE STANDARD OF KNOWLEDGE

During my visit to London and Paris last year I had many talks with the materialistic philosophers of Europe. The basis of all their conclusions is that the acquisition of knowledge of phenomena is according to a fixed, invariable law,—a law mathematically exact in its operation through the senses. For instance, the eye sees a chair; therefore there is no doubt of the chair's existence. The eye looks up into the heavens and beholds the sun; I see flowers upon this table; I smell their fragrance; I hear sounds outside, etc, etc. This, they say, is a fixed mathematical law of perception and deduction, the operation of which admits of no doubt whatever; for inasmuch as the universe is subject to our sensing, the proof is self-evident that our knowledge of it must be gained through the avenues of the senses. That is to say, the materialists announce, that the criterion and standard of human knowledge is sense perception. Among the Greeks and Romans the criterion of knowledge was reason; that whatever is provable and acceptable by reason must necessarily be admitted as true. A third standard or criterion is the opinion held by theologians that traditions or prophetic statement and interpretations constitute the basis of human

knowing. There is still another, a fourth criterion, upheld by religionists and metaphysicians who say that the source and channel of all human penetration into the unknown is through inspiration. Briefly then, these four criteria according to the declarations of men are: First--Sense Perception; Second--Reason; Third--Traditions; Fourth--Inspiration.

In Europe I told the philosophers and scientists of materialism that the criterion of the senses is not reliable. For instance, consider a mirror and the images reflected in it. These images have no actual corporeal existence. Yet if you had never seen a mirror you would firmly insist and believe that they were real. The eye sees a mirage upon the desert as a lake of water but there is no reality in it. As we stand upon the deck of a steamer the shore appears to be moving, yet we know the land is stationary and we are moving. The earth was believed to be fixed and the sun revolving about it but although this appears to be so, the reverse is now known to be true. A whirling torch makes a circle of fire appear before the eye, yet we realize there is but one point of light. We behold a shadow moving upon the ground but it has no material existence, no substance. In deserts the atmospheric effects are particularly productive of illusions which deceive the eye.

Once I saw a mirage in which a whole caravan appeared traveling upward into the sky. In the far north other deceptive phenomena appear and baffle human vision. Sometimes three or four suns called by scientists "mock suns" will be shining at the same time whereas we know the great solar orb is one and

that it remains fixed and single. In brief, the senses are continually deceived and we are unable to separate that which is reality from that which is not.

As to the second criterion, reason, this likewise is unreliable and not to be depended upon. This human world is an ocean of varying opinions. If reason is the perfect standard and criterion of knowledge, why are opinions at variance and why do philosophers disagree so completely with each other? This is a clear proof that human reason is not to be relied upon as an infallible criterion.

For instance, great discoveries and announcements of former centuries are continually upset and discarded by the wise men of today. Mathematicians, astronomers, chemical scientists continually disprove and reject the conclusions of the ancients; nothing is fixed, nothing final; everything continually changing because human reason is progressing along new roads of investigation and arriving at new conclusions every day. In the future much that is announced and accepted as true now will be rejected and disproved.

And so it will continue ad infinitum. When we consider the third criterion, traditions, upheld by theologians as the avenue and standard of knowledge, we find this source equally unreliable and unworthy of dependence. For religious traditions are the report and record of understanding and interpretation of the Book. By what means has this understanding, this interpretation been reached? By the analysis of human reason. When we read the Book of God the faculty of comprehension by which

we form conclusions is reason. Reason is mind. If we are not endowed with perfect reason, how can we comprehend the meanings of the Word of God? Therefore human reason, as already pointed out, is by its very nature finite and faulty in conclusions.

It cannot surround the Reality Itself, the Infinite Word. Inasmuch as the source of traditions and interpretations is human reason, and human reason is faulty, how can we depend upon its findings for real knowledge?

The fourth criterion I have named is inspiration through which it is claimed the reality of knowledge is attainable. What is inspiration? It is the influx of the human heart. But what are satanic promptings which afflict mankind? They are the influx of the heart also. How shall we differentiate between them? The question arises, How shall we know whether we are following inspiration from God or satanic promptings of the human soul? Briefly, the point is that in the human material world of phenomena these four are the only existing criterions or avenues of knowledge, and all of them are faulty and unreliable. What then remains? How shall we attain the reality of knowledge? By the breaths and promptings of the Holy Spirit which is light and knowledge Itself. Through it the human mind is quickened and fortified into true conclusions and perfect knowledge. This is conclusive argument showing that all available human criterions are erroneous and defective, but the divine standard of knowledge is infallible. Therefore man is not justified in saying: "I know because I perceive through my senses"; or: "I know because it is

proved through my faculty of reason"; or: "I know because it is according to tradition and interpretation of the holy book"; or: "I know because I am inspired." All human standard of judgment is faulty, finite.

THE QUICKENING SPIRIT

The greatest power in the realm and range of human existence is spirit,--the divine breath which animates and pervades all things. It is manifested throughout creation in different degrees or kingdoms. In the vegetable kingdom it is the spirit augmentative or power of growth, the animus of life and development in plants, trees and organisms of the floral world. In this degree of its manifestation, spirit is unconscious of the powers which qualify the kingdom of the animal. The distinctive virtue or plus of the animal is sense perception; it sees, hears, smells, tastes and feels but is incapable in turn, of conscious ideation or reflection which characterize and differentiate the human kingdom. The animal neither exercises nor apprehends this distinctive human power and gift. From the visible it cannot draw conclusions regarding the invisible whereas the human mind from visible and known premises attains knowledge of the unknown and invisible. For instance, Christopher Columbus from information based upon known and provable facts drew conclusions which led him unerringly across the vast ocean to the unknown continent of America. Such power of accomplishment is beyond the range of

animal intelligence.

Therefore this power is a distinctive attribute of the human spirit and kingdom. The animal spirit cannot penetrate and discover the mysteries of things. It is a captive of the senses. No amount of teaching, for instance, would enable it to grasp the fact that the sun is stationary and the earth moves around it. Likewise the human spirit has its limitations. It cannot comprehend the phenomena of the kingdom transcending the human station, for it is a captive of powers and life forces which have their operation upon its own plane of existence and it cannot go beyond that boundary.

There is however another spirit which may be termed the divine, to which Jesus Christ refers when He declares that man must be born of its quickening and baptized with its living fire. Souls deprived of that spirit are accounted as dead, though they are possessed of the human spirit. His Holiness Jesus Christ has pronounced them dead inasmuch as they have no portion of the divine spirit. He says: "Let the dead bury their dead." In another instance He declares: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." By this He means that souls though alive in the human kingdom are nevertheless dead if devoid of this particular spirit of divine quickening. They have not partaken of the divine life of the higher kingdom; for the soul which partakes of the power of the divine spirit is verily living.

This quickening spirit has spontaneous emanation from the Sun of Truth, from the reality of divinity and

is not a revelation or a manifestation. It is like the rays of the sun. The rays are emanations from the sun. This does not mean that the sun has become divisible; that a part of the sun has come out into space. This plant beside me has risen from the seed; therefore it is a manifestation and unfoldment of the seed. The seed, as you can see, has unfolded in manifestation and the result is this plant. Every leaf of the plant is a part of the seed. But the reality of divinity is indivisible and each individual of human kind cannot be a part of it as is often claimed. Nay, rather, the individual realities of mankind when spiritually born are emanations from the reality of divinity, just as the flame, heat and light of the sun are the effulgence of the sun and not a part of the sun itself. Therefore a spirit has emanated from the reality of divinity, and its effulgences have become visible in human entities or realities. This ray and this heat are permanent. There is no cessation in the effulgence. As long as the sun exists the heat and light will exist, and inasmuch as eternity is a property of divinity, this emanation is everlasting. There is no cessation in its outpouring. The more the world of humanity develops, the more the effulgences or emanations of divinity will become revealed, just as the stone when it becomes polished and pure as a mirror will reflect in fuller degree the glory and splendor of the sun.

The mission of the prophets, the revelation of the holy books, the manifestation of the heavenly teachers and the purpose of divine philosophy all center in the training of the human realities so that they may

become clear and pure as mirrors and reflect the light and love of the Sun of Reality. Therefore I hope that whether you be in the east or the west you will strive with heart and soul in order that day by day the world of humanity may become glorified, more spiritual, more sanctified; and that the splendor of the Sun of Reality may be revealed fully in human hearts as in a mirror. This is worthy of the world of mankind. This is the true evolution and progress of humanity. This is the supreme bestowal. Otherwise, by simple development along material lines man is not perfected. At most, the physical aspect of man, his natural or material conditions may become stabilized and improved but he will remain deprived of the spiritual or divine bestowal. He is then like a body without a spirit, a lamp without the light, an eye without the power of vision, an ear that hears no sound, a mind incapable of perceiving, an intellect minus the power of reason.

Man has two powers, and his development two aspects. One power is connected with the material world and by it he is capable of material advancement. The other power is spiritual and through its development his inner, potential nature is awakened. These powers are like two wings. Both must be developed, for flight is impossible with one wing. Praise be to God! material advancement has been evident in the world but there is need of spiritual advancement in like proportion. We must strive unceasingly and without rest to accomplish the development of the spiritual nature in man, and endeavor with tireless energy to advance humanity

toward the nobility of its true and intended station. For the body of man is accidental; it is of no importance. The time of its disintegration will inevitably come. But the spirit of man is essential and therefore eternal. It is a divine bounty. It is the effulgence of the Sun of Reality and therefore of greater importance than the physical body.

SPIRITUAL EXISTENCE IS IMMORTALITY

According to divine philosophy, there are two important and universal conditions in the world of material phenomena; one which concerns life, the other concerning death; one relative to existence, the other non-existence; one manifest in composition, the other in decomposition. Some define existence as the expression of reality or being, and non-existence as non-being, imagining that death is annihilation. This is a mistaken idea, for total annihilation is an impossibility. At most, composition is ever subject to decomposition or disintegration; that is to say, existence implies the grouping of material elements in a form or body, and non-existence is simply the decomposing of these groupings. This is the law of creation in its endless forms and infinite variety of expression.

Certain elements have formed the composite creature man. This composite association of the elements in the form of a human body is therefore subject to disintegration which we call death, but after disintegration the elements themselves persist unchanged. Therefore total annihilation is an

impossibility, and existence can never become non-existence. This would be equivalent to saying that light can become darkness, which is manifestly untrue and impossible.

As existence can never become non-existence, there is no death for man; nay, rather, man is everlasting and everliving. The rational proof of this is that the atoms of the material elements are transferable from one form of existence to another, from one degree and kingdom to another, lower or higher. For example, an atom of the soil or dust of earth may traverse the kingdoms from mineral to man by successive incorporations into the bodies of the organisms of those kingdoms. At one time it enters into the formation of the mineral or rock; it is then absorbed by the vegetable kingdom and becomes a constituent of the body and fibre of a tree; again it is appropriated by the animal, and at a still later period is found in the body of man. Throughout these degrees of its traversing the kingdoms from one form of phenomenal being to another, it retains its atomic existence and is never annihilated nor relegated to non-existence.

Non-existence therefore is an expression applied to change of form, but this transformation can never be rightly considered annihilation, for the elements of composition are ever present and existent as we have seen in the journey of the atom through successive kingdoms, unimpaired; hence there is no death; life is everlasting.

So to speak, when the atom entered into the composition of the tree, it died to the mineral

kingdom, and when consumed by the animal, it died to the vegetable kingdom, and so on until its transference or transmutation into the kingdom of man; but throughout its traversing it was subject to transformation and not annihilation. Death therefore is applicable to a change or transference from one degree or condition to another. In the mineral realm there was a spirit of existence; in the world of plant life and organisms it reappeared as the vegetative spirit; thence it attained the animal spirit and finally aspired to the human spirit. These are degrees and changes but not obliteration; and this is a rational proof that man is everlasting, everliving. Therefore death is only a relative term implying change. For example, we will say that this light before me, having reappeared in another incandescent lamp, has died in the one and lives in the other. This is not death in reality. The perfections of the mineral are translated into the vegetable and from thence into the animal, the virtue always attaining a plus or superlative degree in the upward change. In each kingdom we find the same virtues manifesting themselves more fully, proving that the reality has been transferred from a lower to a higher form and kingdom of being. Therefore non-existence is only relative and absolute non-existence inconceivable.

This rose in my hand will become disintegrated and its symmetry destroyed, but the elements of its composition remain changeless; nothing affects their elemental integrity. They cannot become non-existent; they are simply transferred from one state to another.

Through his ignorance, man fears death; but the death he shrinks from is imaginary and absolutely unreal; it is only human imagination.

The bestowal and grace of God have quickened the realm of existence with life and being. For existence there is neither change nor transformation; existence is ever existence; it can never be translated into non-existence. It is gradation; a degree below a higher degree is considered as non-existence. This dust beneath our feet, as compared with our being is non-existent. When the human body crumbles into dust we can say it has become non-existent; therefore its dust in relation to living forms of human being is as non-existent but in its own sphere it is existent, it has its mineral being. Therefore it is well proved that absolute non-existence is impossible; it is only relative.

The purpose is this;--that the everlasting bestowal of God vouchsafed to man is never subject to corruption. Inasmuch as He has endowed the phenomenal world with being, it is impossible for that world to become non-being, for it is the very genesis of God; it is the realm of origination; it is a creational and not a subjective world, and the bounty descending upon it is continuous and permanent. Therefore man the highest creature of the phenomenal world is endowed with that continuous bounty bestowed by divine generosity without cessation. For instance, the rays of the sun are continuous, the heat of the sun emanates from it without cessation; no discontinuance of it is conceivable. Even so the bestowal of God is

descending upon the world of humanity, never ceasing, continuous, forever. If we say that the bestowal of existence ceases or falters it is equivalent to saying that the sun can exist with cessation of its effulgence. Is this possible? Therefore the effulgences of existence are ever-present and continuous.

The conception of annihilation is a factor in human degradation, a cause of human debasement and lowliness, a source of human fear and abjection. It has been conducive to the dispersion and weakening of human thought whereas the realization of existence and continuity has upraised man to sublimity of ideals, established the foundations of human progress and stimulated the development of heavenly virtues; therefore it behoves man to abandon thoughts of non-existence and death which are absolutely imaginary and see himself ever living, everlasting in the divine purpose of his creation. He must turn away from ideas which degrade the human soul, so that day by day and hour by hour he may advance upward and higher to spiritual perception of the continuity of the human reality. If he dwells upon the thought of non-existence he will become utterly incompetent; with weakened will-power his ambition for progress will be lessened and the acquisition of human virtues will cease.

Therefore you must thank God that He has bestowed upon you the blessing of life and existence in the human kingdom. Strive diligently to acquire virtues befitting your degree and station. Be as lights of the world which cannot be hid and which have no setting in horizons of darkness. Ascend to the zenith

of an existence which is never beclouded by the fears and forebodings of non-existence.

When man is not endowed with inner perception he is not informed of these important mysteries. The retina of outer vision though sensitive and delicate may nevertheless be a hindrance to the inner eye which alone can perceive. The bestowals of God which are manifest in all phenomenal life are sometimes hidden by intervening veils of mental and mortal vision which render man spiritually blind and incapable but when those scales are removed and the veils rent asunder, then the great signs of God will become visible and he will witness the eternal light filling the world. The bestowals of God are all and always manifest. The promises of heaven are ever present. The favors of God are all-surrounding but should the conscious eye of the soul of man remain veiled and darkened he will be led to deny these universal signs and remain deprived of these manifestations of divine bounty. Therefore we must endeavor with heart and soul in order that the veil covering the eye of inner vision may be removed, that we may behold the manifestations of the signs of God, discern His mysterious graces, and realize that material blessings as compared with spiritual bounties are as nothing. The spiritual blessings of God are greatest.

When we were in the mineral kingdom, although endowed with certain gifts and powers, they were not to be compared with the blessings of the human kingdom. In the matrix of the mother we were the recipients of endowments and blessings of God, yet

these were as nothing compared to the powers and graces bestowed upon us after birth into this human world. Likewise if we are born from the matrix of this physical and phenomenal environment into the freedom and loftiness of the life and vision spiritual, we shall consider this mortal existence and its blessings as worthless by comparison.

In the spiritual world, the divine bestowals are infinite, for in that realm there is neither separation nor disintegration which characterize the world of material existence. Spiritual existence is absolute immortality, completeness and unchangeable being. Therefore we must thank God that He has created for us both material blessings and spiritual bestowals. He has given us material gifts and spiritual graces, outer sight to view the lights of the sun and inner vision by which we may perceive the glory of God. He has designed the outer ear to enjoy the melodies of sound and the inner hearing wherewith we may hear the voice of our creator. We must strive with energies of heart, soul and mind to develop and manifest the perfections and virtues latent within the realities of the phenomenal world, for the human reality may be compared to a seed. If we sow the seed, a mighty tree appears from it. The virtues of the seed are revealed in the tree; it puts forth branches, leaves, blossoms, and produces fruits. All these virtues were hidden and potential in the seed. Through the blessing and bounty of cultivation these virtues became apparent. Similarly the merciful God our creator has deposited within human realities certain virtues latent and potential. Through education and culture, these

virtues deposited by the loving God will become apparent in the human reality even as the unfoldment of the tree from within the germinating seed.

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Author, Marilynn Hughes, Photo by Harvey Kushner

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