

Psychology and Knowledge of Self: Some quotations ¹

Quotes by Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá,
Shoghi Effendi, and Universal House of Justice

compiled by the Research Department of the
Universal House of Justice

1. From the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

The first Ṭaráz and the first effulgence which hath dawned from the horizon of the Mother Book is that man should know his own self and recognize that which leadeth unto loftiness or lowliness, glory or abasement, wealth or poverty. ²

Bahá'u'lláh

True loss is for him whose days have been spent in utter ignorance of his self. ³

Bahá'u'lláh

Through the Teachings of this Daystar of Truth every man will advance and develop until he attaineth the station at which he can manifest all the potential forces with which his inmost true self hath been endowed. It is for this very purpose that in every age and dispensation the Prophets of God and His chosen Ones have appeared amongst men, and have evinced such power as is born of God and such might as only the Eternal can reveal. ⁴

Bahá'u'lláh

Let your vision be world-embracing, rather than confined to your own self. ⁵

Bahá'u'lláh

¹ Origin: https://bahai-library.com/compilation_psychology_knowledge_self (updated quotes & references per Bahá'í World Centre's Website)

² *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*: www.bahai.org/r/420808045

³ *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*: www.bahai.org/r/442955312

⁴ *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*: www.bahai.org/r/289135476

⁵ *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*: www.bahai.org/r/294539200

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 preordained 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. ⁶

Bahá'u'lláh

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! To a supreme degree is this true of man, who, among all created things, hath been invested with the robe of such gifts, and hath been singled out for the glory of such distinction. For in him are potentially revealed all the attributes and names of God to a degree that no other created being hath excelled or surpassed. All these names and attributes are applicable to him. Even as He hath said: "Man is My mystery, and I am his mystery." Manifold are the verses that have been repeatedly revealed in all the Heavenly Books and the Holy Scriptures, expressive of this most subtle and lofty theme. Even as He hath revealed: "We will surely show them Our signs in the world and within themselves." Again He saith: "And also in your own selves: will ye not, then, behold the signs of God?" And yet again He revealeth: "And be ye not like those who forget God, and whom He hath therefore caused to forget their own selves." In this connection, He Who is the eternal King—may the souls of all that dwell within the mystic Tabernacle be a sacrifice unto Him—hath spoken: "He hath known God who hath known himself." ⁷

Bahá'u'lláh

⁶ *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*: www.bahai.org/r/919240596

⁷ *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*: www.bahai.org/r/500100567

The All-Knowing Physician hath His finger on the pulse of mankind. He perceiveth the disease, and prescribeth, in His unerring wisdom, the remedy. Every age hath its own problem, and every soul its particular aspiration. The remedy the world needeth in its present-day afflictions can never be the same as that which a subsequent age may require. Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in, and centre your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements. ⁸

Bahá'u'lláh

Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom. ⁹

Bahá'u'lláh

From the exalted source, and out of the essence of His favour and bounty He hath entrusted every created thing with a sign of His knowledge, so that none of His creatures may be deprived of its share in expressing, each according to its capacity and rank, this knowledge. This sign is the mirror of His beauty in the world of creation. ¹⁰

There can be no doubt whatever that, in consequence of the efforts which every man may consciously exert and as a result of the exertion of his own spiritual faculties, this mirror can be so cleansed from the dross of earthly defilements and purged from satanic fancies as to be able to draw nigh unto the meads of eternal holiness and attain the courts of everlasting fellowship. ¹¹

Bahá'u'lláh

Whoso ariseth among you to teach the Cause of his Lord, let him, before all else, teach his own self, that his speech may attract the hearts of them that hear him. Unless he teacheth his own self, the words of his mouth will not influence the heart of the seeker. Take

⁸ *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*: www.bahai.org/r/096510150

⁹ *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*: www.bahai.org/r/610383368

¹⁰ *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*: www.bahai.org/r/384219536

¹¹ *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*: www.bahai.org/r/943018489

heed, O people, lest ye be of them that give good counsel to others but forget to follow it themselves. ¹²

Bahá'u'lláh

Blessed art thou for having utterly abolished the idol of self and of vain imagination, and for having rent asunder the veil of idle fancy, through the power of the might of thy Lord, the Supreme Protector, the Almighty, the one Beloved. ¹³

Bahá'u'lláh

O My servants! Could ye apprehend with what wonders of My munificence and bounty I have willed to entrust your souls, ye would, of a truth, rid yourselves of attachment to all created things, and would gain a true knowledge of your own selves—a knowledge which is the same as the comprehension of Mine own Being. Ye would find yourselves independent of all else but Me, and would perceive, with your inner and outer eye, and as manifest as the revelation of My effulgent Name, the seas of My loving-kindness and bounty moving within you. Suffer not your idle fancies, your evil passions, your insincerity and blindness of heart to dim the lustre, or stain the sanctity, of so lofty a station. ¹⁴

Bahá'u'lláh

... certain feeble souls have confined the wide expanse of knowledge within the walls of self and passion, and beneath the cloak of ignorance and blindness, and have thereby veiled themselves from the light of the mystic Sun and the mysteries of the eternal Beloved. They have strayed far from the gem-like wisdom of the resplendent Faith of the Lord of the Messengers ¹⁵, have been shut out of the inner court of the All-Beauteous, and have been banished from the Kaaba of glory. Such is the worth of the people of this age! ¹⁶

Bahá'u'lláh

¹² *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*: www.bahai.org/r/244439518

¹³ *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*: www.bahai.org/r/011576755

¹⁴ *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*: www.bahai.org/r/897308121

¹⁵ The Prophet Muḥammad.

¹⁶ *The Call of the Divine Beloved*: www.bahai.org/r/846577030

2. From the Utterances of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Today the confirmations of the Kingdom of Abhá are with those who renounce themselves, forget their own opinions, cast aside personalities and are thinking of the welfare of others. Whosoever has lost himself has found the universe and the inhabitants thereof. Whosoever is occupied with himself is wandering in the desert of heedlessness and regret. The "master-key" to self-mastery is self-forgetting. The road to the palace of life is through the path of renunciation. ¹⁷

'Abdu'l-Bahá

3. From letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi

. . . self has really two meanings, or is used in two senses, in the Bahá'í writings; one is self, the identity of the individual created by God. This is the self mentioned in such passages as "he hath known God who hath know himself", etc. The other self is the ego, the dark, animalistic heritage each one of us has, the lower nature that can develop into a monster of selfishness, brutality, lust and so on. It is this self we must struggle against, or this side of our natures, in order to strengthen and free the spirit within us and help it to attain perfection ¹⁸

Shoghi Effendi

Life is a constant struggle, not only against forces around us, but above all against our own "ego". We can never afford to rest on our oars, for if we do, we soon see ourselves carried downstream again. Many of those who drift away from the Cause do so for the reason that they had ceased to go on developing. They became complacent, or indifferent, and consequently ceased to draw the spiritual strength and vitality from the Cause which they should have. Sometimes, of course, people fail because of a test they just do not meet, and often our severest tests come from each other. Certainly the believers should try to avert such things, and if they happen, remedy them

¹⁷ *Star of the West*, vol. 17, no. 2, p. 348

¹⁸ From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 10, 1947

through love. Generally speaking nine-tenths of the friends' troubles are because they don't do the Bahá'í thing, in relation to each other, to the administrative bodies or in their personal lives.¹⁹

Shoghi Effendi

¹⁹ From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, January 8, 1949