

Extraterrestrial Life

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Through His potency the Trees of Divine Revelation have yielded their fruits, every one of which hath been sent down in the form of a Prophet, bearing a Message to God's creatures in each of the worlds whose number God, alone, in His all-encompassing knowledge, can reckon. (ADJ Page 80)

When we contemplate this vast machinery of omnipresent power, perceive this illimitable space and its innumerable worlds it will become evident to us that the lifetime of this infinite creation is more than six thousand years; nay, it is very, very ancient. (FWU 108)

The world of Divinity presupposes creation, presupposes recipients of bounty, presupposes the existence of worlds. No Divinity can be conceived as separate from creation, for otherwise it would be like imagining an empire without a people. A king must needs have a kingdom, must needs have an army and subjects. Is it possible to be a king and have no country, no army, no subjects? This is an absurdity. If we say that there was a time when there was no country, no army and no subjects, how then could there have been a king and ruler? For these things are essential to a king. Consequently, just as the reality of Divinity never had a beginning--that is, God has ever been a Creator, God has ever been a Provider, God has ever been a Quickener, God has ever been a Bestower--so there never has been a time when the attributes of God have not had expression. The sun is the sun because of its rays, because of its heat. Were we to conceive of a time when there was a sun without heat and light, it would imply that there had been no sun at all and that it became the sun afterward. So, likewise, if we say there was a time when God had no creation or created beings, a time when there were no recipients of His bounties and that His names and attributes had not been manifested, this would be equivalent to a complete denial of Divinity, for it would mean that Divinity is accidental. To explain it still more clearly, if we think that fifty thousand years ago or one hundred thousand years ago there was no creation, that there were then no worlds, no human beings, no animals, this thought of ours would mean that previous to that period there was no Divinity. If we should say that there was a time when there was a king but there were no subjects, no army, no country for him to rule over, it would really be asserting that there was a time when no king existed and that the king is accidental. It is, therefore, evident that inasmuch as the reality of Divinity is without a beginning, creation is also

without a beginning. This is as clear as the sun. When we contemplate this vast machinery of omnipresent power, perceive this illimitable space and its innumerable worlds, it will become evident to us that the lifetime of this infinite creation is more than six thousand years; nay, it is very, very ancient. Notwithstanding this, we read in Genesis in the Old Testament that the lifetime of creation is but six thousand years. This has an inner meaning and significance; it is not to be taken literally. For instance, it is said in the Old Testament that certain things were created in the first day. The narrative shows that at that time the sun was not yet created. How could we conceive of a day if no sun existed in the heavens? For the day depends upon the light of the sun. Inasmuch as the sun had not been made, how could the first day be realized? Therefore, these statements have significances other than literal. To be brief: Our purpose is to show that the divine sovereignty, the Kingdom of God, is an ancient sovereignty, that it is not an accidental sovereignty, just as a kingdom presupposes the existence of subjects, of an army, of a country; for otherwise the state of dominion, authority and kingdom cannot be conceived of. Therefore, if we should imagine that the creation is accidental, we would be forced to admit that the Creator is accidental, whereas the divine bounty is ever flowing, and the rays of the Sun of Truth are continuously shining. No cessation is possible to the divine bounty, just as no cessation is possible to the rays of the sun. This is clear and obvious. Thus there have been many holy Manifestations of God. One thousand years ago, two hundred thousand years ago, one million years ago, the bounty of God was flowing, the radiance of God was shining, the dominion of God was existing. Why do these holy Manifestations of God appear? What is the wisdom and purpose of Their coming? What is the outcome of Their mission? It is evident that human personality appears in two aspects: the image or likeness of God, and the aspect of Satan. The human reality stands between these two: the divine and the satanic. It is manifest that beyond this material body, man is endowed with another reality, which is the world of exemplars constituting the heavenly body of man. (Prmlgtn Unvrsl Peace 462-464)

Existence is of two kinds: one is the existence of God which is beyond the comprehension of man. He, the invisible, the lofty and the incomprehensible, is preceded by no cause but rather is the Originator of the cause of causes. He, the Ancient, hath had no beginning and is the all-independent. The second kind of existence is the human existence. It is a common existence, comprehensible to the human mind, is not ancient, is dependent and hath a cause to it. The mortal substance does not become

eternal and vice-versa; the human kind does not become a Creator and vice-versa. The transformation of the innate substance is impossible. (SFTW A-B 61)

The sciences of today are bridges to reality; if then they lead not to reality, naught remains but fruitless illusion. By the one true God! If learning be not a means of access to Him, the Most Manifest, it is nothing but evident loss. (SFTW A-B 110)

If one were to travel through the deserts of Central Asia he would observe how many cities, once great and prosperous like Paris and London, are now demolished and razed to the ground. From the Caspian Sea to the River Oxus there stretch wild and desolate plains, deserts, wildernesses and valleys. For two days and two nights the Russian railway traverseth the ruined cities and uninhabited villages of that wasteland. Formerly that plain bore the fruit of the finest civilizations of the past. Tokens of development and refinement were apparent all around, arts and sciences were well protected and promoted, professions and industries flourished, commerce and agriculture had reached a high stage of efficiency, and the foundations of government and statesmanship were laid on a strong and solid basis. Today that vast stretch of land hath become mostly the shelter and asylum of Turkoman tribes, and an arena for the display of wild beasts. The ancient cities of that plain, such as Gurgan, Nissa, Abyord and Shahrstan, famous throughout the world for their arts, sciences, culture, industry, and well known for their wealth, greatness, prosperity and distinction, have given way to a wilderness wherein no voice is heard save the roaring of wild beasts and where bloodthirsty wolves roam at will. (SFTW A-B 288-289)

In this mortal world every important matter hath an end; and every remarkable achievement a termination; none having permanent existence. For instance, consider how the important achievements of the ancient world have been totally exterminated and not a trace remaineth therefrom save the great Cause of the Kingdom of God, which hath no beginning and will have no end. (SFTW A-B 311)

The philosophers of the ancients, the thinkers of the Middle Ages and the scientists of this and the former centuries have all agreed upon the fact that the best and the most ideal region for the habitation of man is the temperate zone, for in this belt the intellects and thoughts rise to the highest stage of maturity, and the capability and ability of civilization manifest themselves in full efflorescence. When you read history critically and with a penetrating eye, it becomes evident that the majority of the famous men have been born, reared and have

done their work in the temperate zone, while very very few have appeared from the torrid and frigid zones. (TDP 65)

Question.--What is the real explanation of the cycles which occur in the world of existence? Answer.--Each one of the luminous bodies in this limitless firmament has a cycle of revolution which is of a different duration, and every one revolves in its own orbit, and again begins a new cycle. So the earth, every three hundred and sixty-five days, five hours, forty-eight minutes and a fraction, completes a revolution; and then it begins a new cycle--that is to say, the first cycle is again renewed. In the same way, for the whole universe, whether for the heavens or for men, there are cycles of great events, of important facts and occurrences. When a cycle is ended, a new cycle begins; and the old one, on account of the great events which take place, is completely forgotten, and not a trace or record of it will remain. As you see, we have no records of twenty thousand years ago, although we have before proved by argument that life on this earth is very ancient. It is not one hundred thousand, or two hundred thousand, or one million or two million years old; it is very ancient, and the ancient records and traces are entirely obliterated. (SAQ 160)

God is eternal and ancient; not a new God. His sovereignty is of old, not recent; not merely existent these five or six thousand years. This infinite universe is from everlasting. The sovereignty, power, names and attributes of God are eternal, ancient. His names presuppose creation and predicate His existence and will. We say God is creator. This name creator appears when we connote creation. We say God is the provider. This name presupposes and proves the existence of the provided. God is love. This name proves the existence of the beloved. In the same way God is mercy, God is justice, God is life, etc., etc. Therefore as God is creator, eternal and ancient, there were always creatures and subjects existing and provided for. There is no doubt that divine sovereignty is eternal. Sovereignty necessitates subjects, ministers, trustees and others subordinate to sovereignty. Could there be a king without country, subjects and armies? If we conceive of a time when there were no creatures, no servants, no subjects of divine lordship we dethrone God and predicate a time when God was not. It would be as if He had been recently appointed and man had given these names to Him. The divine sovereignty is ancient, eternal. God from everlasting was love, justice, power, creator, provider, the omniscient, the bountiful. As the divine entity is eternal, the divine attributes are co-existent, co-eternal. The divine bestowals are therefore without beginning, without end. God is infinite; the works of God are infinite; the bestowals of God are

infinite. (FWU 102)

Bahá'u'lláh says, "The universe hath neither beginning nor ending." He has set aside the elaborate theories and exhaustive opinions of scientists and material philosophers by the simple statement, "There is no beginning, no ending." (Prmlgtn Unvrsl Peace 220)

Therefore, if we should imagine that the creation is accidental, we would be forced to admit that the Creator is accidental, whereas the divine bounty is ever flowing, and the rays of the Sun of Truth are continuously shining. No cessation is possible to the divine bounty, just as no cessation is possible to the rays of the sun. This is clear and obvious. Thus there have been many holy Manifestations of God. One thousand years ago, two hundred thousand years ago, one million years ago, the bounty of God was flowing, the radiance of God was shining, the dominion of God was existing. (Prmlgtn Unvrsl Peace 463)

The Spiritual Meetings, which are organized in this cycle of God and this divine century, have never had their simile or likeness in bygone cycles. (TAB Vol. I 10)

Though Pythagoras, and Plato during the latter part of his life, adopted the theory that the annual movement of the sun around the zodiac does not proceed from the sun, but rather from the movement of the earth around the sun, this theory had been entirely forgotten, and the Ptolemaic system was accepted by all mathematicians. But there are some verses revealed in the Qur'an contrary to the theory of the Ptolemaic system. One of them is "The sun moves in a fixed place," which shows the fixity of the sun, and its movement around an axis. Again, in another verse, "And each star moves in its own heaven." Thus is explained the movement of the sun, of the moon, of the earth, and of other bodies. When the Qur'an appeared, all the mathematicians ridiculed these statements and attributed the theory to ignorance. Even the doctors of Islam, when they saw that these verses were contrary to the accepted Ptolemaic system, were obliged to explain them away. It was not until after the fifteenth century of the Christian era, nearly nine hundred years after Muhammad, that a famous astronomer made new observations and important discoveries by the aid of the telescope, which he had invented. The rotation of the earth, the fixity of the sun, and also its movement around an axis, were discovered. It became evident that the verses of the Qur'an agreed with existing facts, and that the Ptolemaic system was imaginary. In short, many Oriental peoples have been reared for thirteen centuries under the shadow of the religion of Muhammad. During the Middle Ages, while Europe was in the lowest depths of barbarism, the Arab

peoples were superior to the other nations of the earth in learning, in the arts, mathematics, civilization, government and other sciences. The Enlightener and Educator of these Arab tribes, and the Founder of the civilization and perfections of humanity among these different races, was an illiterate Man, Muhammad. (SAQ 23-24)

This limitless universe is like the human body, all the members of which are connected and linked with one another with the greatest strength. How much the organs, the members and the parts of the body of man are intermingled and connected for mutual aid and help, and how much they influence one another! In the same way, the parts of this infinite universe have their members and elements connected with one another, and influence one another spiritually and materially. (SAQ 245-246)

The second is the station of the rational soul, which is the human reality. This also is phenomenal, and the Holy Manifestations share it with all mankind. Know that, although the human soul has existed on the earth for prolonged times and ages, yet it is phenomenal. As it is a divine sign, when once it has come into existence, it is eternal. The spirit of man has a beginning, but it has no end; it continues eternally. In the same way the species existing on this earth are phenomenal, for it is established that there was a time when these species did not exist on the surface of the earth. Moreover, the earth has not always existed, but the world of existence has always been, for the universe is not limited to this terrestrial globe. The meaning of this is that, although human souls are phenomenal, they are nevertheless immortal, everlasting and perpetual; for the world of things is the world of imperfection in comparison with that of man, and the world of man is the world of perfection in comparison with that of things.

When imperfections reach the station of perfection, they become eternal. This is an example of which you must comprehend the meaning. (SAQ 151-152)

The reflection of the divine perfections appears in the reality of man, so he is the representative of God, the messenger of God.

If man did not exist, the universe would be without result, for the object of existence is the appearance of the perfections of God.

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. (SAQ 196-197)

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. (SAQ 198-199)

Some people believe that the divinity of God had a beginning. They say that before this particular beginning man had no knowledge of the divinity of God. With this principle they have limited the operation of the influences of God. For example, they think there was a time when man did not exist, and that there will be a time in the future when man will not exist. Such a theory circumscribes the power of God, because how can we understand the divinity of God except through scientifically understanding the manifestations of the attributes of God? How can we understand the nature of fire except from its heat, its light? Were not heat and light in this fire, naturally we could not say that the fire existed. Thus, if there was a time when God did not manifest His qualities, then there was no God, because the attributes of God presuppose the creation of phenomena. For example, by present consideration we say that God is the creator. Then there must always have been a creation - since the quality of creator cannot be limited to the moment when some man or men realize this attribute. The attributes that we discover one by one - these attributes themselves necessarily anticipated our discovery of them. Therefore, God has no beginning and no ending; nor is His creation limited ever as to degree. Limitations of time and degree pertain to things created, never to the creation as a whole. They pertain to the forms of things, not to their realities. The effulgence of God

cannot be suspended. The sovereignty of God cannot be interrupted. As long as the sovereignty of God is immemorial, therefore the creation of our world throughout infinity is presupposed. When we look at the reality of this subject, we see that the bounties of God are infinite, without beginning and without end. (FWU 52-53)

God's graces and bounties are without limit, and the coming of the Manifestations of God are not circumscribed by time. (FWU 53)

It is confirmed through evidences and proofs that every being universally acts upon other beings, either absolutely or through association. Finally, the perfection of each individual being--that is to say, the perfection which you now see in man or apart from him, with regard to their atoms, members or powers--is due to the composition of the elements, to their measure, to their balance, to the mode of their combination, and to mutual influence. When all these are gathered together, then man exists. As the perfection of man is entirely due to the composition of the atoms of the elements, to their measure, to the method of their combination, and to the mutual influence and action of the different beings--then, since man was produced ten or a hundred thousand years ago from these earthly elements with the same measure and balance, the same method of combination and mingling, and the same influence of the other beings, exactly the same man existed then as now. This is evident and not worth debating. A thousand million years hence, if these elements of man are gathered together and arranged in this special proportion, and if the elements are combined according to the same method, and if they are affected by the same influence of other beings, exactly the same man will exist. For example, if after a hundred thousand years there is oil, fire, a wick, a lamp and the lighter of the lamp--briefly, if there are all the necessaries which now exist, exactly the same lamp will be obtained. (SAQ 179)

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The spirit of man has a beginning, but it has no end; it continues eternally. In the same way the species existing on this earth are phenomenal, for it is established that there was a time when these species did not exist on the surface of the earth. Moreover, the earth has not always existed, but the world of existence has always been, for the universe is not limited to this terrestrial globe. The meaning of this is that, although human souls are phenomenal, they are nevertheless immortal,

everlasting and perpetual; for the world of things is the world of imperfection in comparison with that of man, and the world of man is the world of perfection in comparison with that of things.

When imperfections reach the station of perfection, they become eternal. This is an example of which you must comprehend the meaning. (SAQ 151-152)

For all existing beings, terrestrial and celestial, as well as this limitless space and all that is in it, have been created and organized, composed, arranged and perfected as they ought to be; the universe has no imperfection, so that if all beings became pure intelligence and reflected for ever and ever, it is impossible that they could imagine anything better than that which exists. (SAQ 177)

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. (SAQ 196)

But from the beginning of man's existence he is a distinct species. ... admitting that the traces of organs which have disappeared actually exist [in the human body], this is not a proof of the impermanence and the non-originality 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. -- Some Answered Questions, pp. 211, 212, 213, 214. (Baha-&-New Era 1980 207)

For the teachings of His Highness BAHA'O'LLAH are the keys to all the doors. Every hidden secret will become discovered and every hidden mystery will become manifest and apparent.*** (TAB Vol. III 692)

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. (GLEANINGS 163)

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. Please God thou wilt turn thine eyes towards the Most Great Revelation, and entirely disregard these conflicting tales and traditions. (GLEANINGS 174-175)

O SON OF MAN! Veiled in My immemorial being and in the ancient eternity of My essence, I knew My love for thee; therefore I created thee, have engraved on thee Mine image and revealed to thee My beauty. (Hidden Words)

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. (Hidden Words; BWF 156)

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. (Tblts of Bahá'u'lláh 187-188)

Know thou, moreover, that the people aforetime have produced things which the contemporary men of knowledge have been unable to produce. (Tblts of Bahá'u'lláh 150)

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. (BWF 296-298)

In like manner the mind proveth the existence of an unseen Reality that embraceth all beings, and that existeth and revealeth itself in all stages, the essence whereof is beyond the grasp of the mind. (BWF 338)

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. (GLEANINGS 150)

Though all the dwellers of heaven and earth unite to glorify the least of Thy signs, wherein and whereby Thou hast revealed Thyself, yet would they fail, how much more to praise Thy holy Word, the creator of all Thy tokens. (BP 122)

O Thou kind Lord! Thou hast created all humanity from the same stock. (BP 101)

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No. 7 No. But 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated there are other worlds than ours which are inhabited by beings capable of knowing God. (Lght Dvn Gdnc Vol 2 82)

And it is your Lord that knoweth best all beings that are in the heavens and on earth: (AY Ali trans. Quran Surih 17:55)

Not one of the beings in the heavens and the earth but must come to (God) Most Gracious as a servant. (AY Ali trans. Quran Surih 19:93)

And when the Garden is brought near--

14 (Then) shall each soul know what it has put forward.

15 So verily I call to witness the planets--that recede,

16 Go straight, or hide; (AY Ali trans. Quran Surih 81:13-16)

It is He Who created the Night and the Day, and the sun and the moon: all (the celestial bodies) swim along, each in its rounded course. (AY Ali Quran Surih 21:33)

"Regarding your questions: There is no record in history, or in the teachings, of a Prophet similar in Station to Bahá'u'lláh, having lived 500,000 years ago. There will, however, be one similar to Him in greatness after the lapse of 500,000 years, but we cannot say definitely that His Revelation will be inter-planetary in scope. We can only say that such a thing may be possible. What Bahá'u'lláh means by His appearance in 'other worlds' He has not defined, as we could not visualize them in our present state, hence He was indefinite, and we cannot say whether He meant other planets or not..." (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 24, 1941) (Lights of Guidance 472.)

"Regarding the passage on p. 163 of the 'Gleanings'; the creatures which Bahá'u'lláh states to be found in every planet cannot be considered to be necessarily similar or different from human beings on this earth. Bahá'u'lláh does not specifically state whether such creatures are like or unlike us. He simply refers to the fact that there are creatures in every planet. It remains for science to discover one day the exact nature of these creatures." (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 9, 1937) (Lights of Guidance 478.)

"As to your question whether the power of Bahá'u'lláh extends over our solar system and to higher worlds: while the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, it should be noted, is primarily for this planet, yet the spirit animating it is all-embracing, and the scope therefore cannot be restricted or defined." (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, July

14, 1938) (Lights of Guidance 481.)

He had been speaking of the great technological and scientific strides of the age; it would be meet, He said, if ways and means of reaching other planets were now devised. ('Abdu'l-Bahá by HM Balyuzi Pg 377)

Today, man is possessed of such power that he can travel in space and may soon reach other planets. On the other hand, such achievements if not coupled with spiritual progress will bring in their wake man's destruction upon this earth. (Rev Baha V. 1 Taherzadeh 120)

I also understand that 'Abdu'l-Bahá's "Tablet of the Universe" contains important statements on this topic. -D.T.

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